

National Adult Learning Survey 2001

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Acknowledgements

The authors of the report would like to thank their colleagues at the National Centre who have made a significant contribution to the project, including: Del Russell, the team's secretary; Heather Clements, Lesley Mullender and Brenda Jeyes in the Operations Department; Christos Korovessis and Kevin Pickering in the Survey Methods Centre; Iain Templeton and Steve Elder in the Computing Department; and last, but not least, the many fieldwork interviewers who worked on this survey.

We would like to thank Professor Tom Schuller from Birkbeck College for his advice at the design stage and his valuable feedback on the draft report. We would also like to thank Peter Vallely the DfES project manager.

Finally we would like to thank all respondents who gave up their time to take part in the survey.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1997 the former Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) commissioned the first National Adult Learning Survey (NALS 1997), which explored participation in a wide range of learning activities. This was a baseline study followed by repeat surveys in 2000 and 2001. The NALS series is used by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to monitor the effectiveness of their adult learning policies and progress in meeting the National Learning Target for adult participation, which aims to reduce the proportion of non-learners found in 1997 by seven per cent, that is, to reduce this group from 26 to 24 per cent by 2002.

Key findings

- In 1997, 26 per cent of adults had not taken part in learning, four years later this figure has gone down, with 24 per cent of NALS 2001 respondents being classified as non-learners.
- Despite an overall increase in learning (from 74 to 76 per cent), participation levels are considerably lower than average among some groups, including: people aged 70 and over (25 per cent), respondents with no qualifications (31 per cent), those looking after the family (52 per cent), adults with a work limiting disability (56 per cent), benefit dependents (56 per cent) and people living in the most deprived areas (63 per cent).
- While (negative) attitudes to learning might influence the behaviour of some non-learners, many in this group faced more practical obstacles, including: lack of time due to work and family, financial difficulties, lack of knowledge about learning opportunities and concern about their perceived inadequacy (e.g. reading and writing problems).
- Forty-four per cent of non-learners would have liked to have done some learning, funding (25 per cent), advice (19 per cent) and improved job chances (17 per cent) were the main incentives to learning mentioned by this group.
- The majority of respondents started learning for job related reasons and believed that their work life had benefited from vocational learning in many different ways, from increased competence in one's job to more job satisfaction.
- Wider motivators and benefits, such as increased confidence, self-esteem and better social life, were also mentioned by many respondents and were particularly important for certain groups, such as older people and those not in paid employment.
- Sixty-seven per cent of adults had used ICT at some point in their life, while around half were current users. A computer had been used for learning by around half of learners.
- Participation in learning was linked to a range of measures of social capital, for example, those involved in voluntary and community activities were more likely than others to have engaged in learning.
- The most common sources of advice and information about learning were employers (mentioned by 31 per cent of learners) and educational institutions (28 per cent).
- A third of respondents had heard of **learnirect**, a quarter of Career Development Loans and 15 per cent of Individual Learning Accounts.
- Finally the survey found that the likelihood of participating in future learning was strongly related to involvement in learning in the past.

Introduction

The report presents the results from NALS 2001, which was carried out by the *National Centre for Social Research* on behalf of the DfES. The survey, conducted between January and May 2001, achieved a 63 per cent response rate and included 6,459 face-to-face interviews with adults aged 16 or over¹ in England and Wales. For the first time in 2001, those over the age of 69 were included in the survey to monitor participation in learning among older people. In order to maintain comparability with previous NALS, the results for older respondents are usually presented separately.

Learning trends

The survey asked a number of questions about a variety of learning experiences in the previous three years (i.e. since January 1998) or since leaving continuous full-time education, if the latter was more recent. Learning activities were classified either as taught learning, if they involved some formal teaching (including distance learning), or as self-directed learning, if people taught themselves without receiving any form of tuition.

In 1997, 26 per cent of respondents had not taken part in any of the learning activities covered by the survey in the previous three years. Four years later this figure has gone down, with 24 per cent of NALS 2001 respondents being classified as non-learners, thus meeting the National Target set for participation in adult learning.

There have been some small increases in participation in different types of learning:

- the overall learning participation rate has gone up slightly from 74 per cent in 1997 to 76 per cent in 2001
- the proportion of taught learners has hardly changed, with 58 per cent of respondents reporting this type of learning in 1997 and 59 per cent in 2001
- in the same period there has been a small increase in participation in self-directed learning, from 57 to 60 per cent
- participation in vocational learning has also remained virtually static, this was 67 per cent in 1997 and 68 per cent in 2001².

For the first time, NALS 2001 also analysed participation in learning using a 12 month reference period. The results show that 68 per cent of respondents reported some learning in the previous year and only eight per cent had done some learning since January 1998, but not in the previous 12 months.

Learning among different groups

Previous NALS, as well as numerous other studies of adult learning, have shown some consistent variations in participation in learning among different groups.

- Participation in learning tends to decline as age increases: the highest learning participation rates (between 80-86 per cent) were found among those aged 20-49, while only 25 per cent of those in the 70+ group had undertaken some learning in the previous three years. The main changes since 1997 have been a decline in learning among young people (under 20) from 82 to 76 per cent, and an increase from 67 to 74 per cent among those in the 50-59 age group.
- Women were less likely than men to report some learning, with the respective figures being 73 and 79 per cent, this difference is even larger when looking at vocational learning.
- Disability seems to be associated with lower than average participation rates: 56 per cent of people with a work limiting disability and 71 per cent of respondents with another type of disability reported some learning.

¹ The survey excluded adults in continuous full-time education.

² Vocational learning was defined as learning, either taught or self-directed, which was started to help with current or future work, paid or voluntary.

A strong link was also found between adult learning and educational background.

- Fifty-five per cent of those who left continuous full-time (CFT) education with no qualifications reported some learning, compared with 94.5 per cent of those who left with a qualification above NVQ level three. The main change since 1997 has been an increase in participation, from 71 to 78 per cent, among those qualified at level one.
- Nearly three quarters (73 per cent) of respondents gained a qualification after completing CFT education. Those least qualified at the end of their full-time studies were most likely to have achieved a qualification since leaving, for example, over 80 per cent of those qualified at level one or two and 71 per cent who left school with no qualifications subsequently obtained one.
- The highest qualification achieved shows an even stronger link with involvement in adult learning, than that found in relation to qualifications on leaving CFT education. This is particularly evident when looking at adults with no qualifications at the time of the survey, with less than a third (31 per cent) reporting some learning.

As previous NALS found, participation in learning is closely linked to employment circumstances.

- The highest participation rates were found among respondents in paid work: 89 per cent of full-time employees, 82 per cent of self-employed and 81 per cent of part-time employees had done some learning. Sixty-eight per cent of unemployed people and just over half (52 per cent) of those looking after the family reported some learning. The lowest participation figures were found among those outside the labour market, that is retired people (48 per cent) and those unable to work due to a health problem or disability (42 per cent). Predictably, differences among these groups were even more marked when looking at vocational learning.
- Participation in learning has gone up since 1997 among the self-employed (from 77 to 82 per cent), respondents looking after a family (from 47 to 52 per cent), those who have retired (from 43 to 48 per cent). There has been a small decline in the proportion of unemployed who reported some learning, from 72 to 68 per cent.

For the first time in 2001, data on financial circumstances was collected to explore any links with propensity to engage in learning:

- 91 per cent of respondents with a household income of £31,200+ reported some learning, the equivalent figure for those in the lowest income bracket (below £10,400) was 53 per cent
- 56 per cent of people dependent on means tested benefits¹ had done some learning.

The results on regional differences seem to point to a North-South divide in terms of participation in learning.

- The highest figures for participation in learning were found in the South East (84 per cent), Eastern region (81 per cent), South West (79 per cent) and London (76 per cent). The learning participation rate was between 74 and 76 per cent in the Midlands, drops to 69-72 per cent in the Northern regions and is lowest in Wales (64 per cent).
- A comparison with 1997 shows an increase in learning in the North East from, 64 to 72 per cent, while participation has declined in Wales (from 71 to 64 per cent).
- A strong association was also found between learning and local deprivation²: participation in learning ranges from 85 per cent in the least deprived areas to 63 per cent in the most deprived ones.

Obstacles and incentives to learning

Time constraints (e.g. because of work or family commitments), the cost of courses and lack of knowledge about learning opportunities were the difficulties most commonly mentioned by both learners and non-learners. Predictably

¹ Respondents were classified as being benefit dependent if they reported any of the following sources of household income: job seekers allowance, income support, invalid care allowance, working families tax credit, severe disablement allowance.

² This analysis was carried out by using the DETR multiple deprivation index, only respondents in England were included.

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the latter were more likely to report obstacles to learning, although a substantial minority also said they preferred to do other things in their spare time (43 per cent), they were not interested in learning (26 per cent) or did not see the point of education (11 per cent). While attitudes to learning and perceptions about its relevance might influence the behaviour of some non-learners, many in this group faced more practical obstacles, including:

- lack of time due to work (24 per cent), family (30 per cent) and childcare responsibilities (19 per cent)
- difficulties in paying for course fees (27 per cent) and fear of losing benefits if started a course (nine per cent)
- lack of knowledge about local learning opportunities (28 per cent) and learning advice sources (15 per cent)
- being nervous about going back to the classroom (26 per cent), lack the necessary qualifications to join a course (24 per cent), concern about not being able to keep up with the course (21 per cent) and difficulties with reading and writing (11 per cent), English (seven per cent) and numeracy (six per cent)
- a quarter of non-learners thought they were too old to learn.

While, as discussed above, there is a group of non-learners who do not appear to be interested in or motivated to learn, there is another large group who would or may have liked to learn and are very clear about what would encourage or enable them to do so:

- 44 per cent of non-learners would or may have liked to have done some learning, with the figure being highest among lone parents (59 per cent)
- the most common subjects they would have liked to have learnt about were computing (30 per cent), training for professions (20 per cent) or leisure activities (19 per cent)
- the main factors that would facilitate their learning were funding (25 per cent), advice (19 per cent) and improved job chances (17 per cent).

Taught learning

Eighty per cent of taught courses¹ were vocational, considerable variations were found between the characteristics of job related and non-vocational courses:

- the most common source of information about vocational courses was the employer (36 per cent), whereas respondents were more like to have heard about non-vocational courses from their friends or relatives (29 per cent)
- while over half of vocational courses were provided by an employer (59 per cent), the most common providers of non-vocational courses were educational institutions (41 per cent)
- vocational courses tended to be shorter, for example, 60 per cent lasted a month or less, compared with 20 per cent of non-vocational courses
- computers were much more likely to have been used for vocational than for non-vocational taught learning (48 per cent and 25 per cent respectively).

The survey also explored the problems people might have experienced while on the course, the influences on their decision to undertake taught learning and what they perceived as the benefits of it.

- The majority of taught learners reported no problems with their course. The most frequently mentioned difficulties were lack of time because of work (18 per cent) and family responsibilities (10 per cent).
- Common reasons for starting vocational courses² included: to develop one's career (57 per cent), learn new skills

¹ The analysis of the characteristics of taught learning is based on one course selected randomly from the three most recent ones.

² Looking only at those who started the course by their own choice.

for the current job (54 per cent) and increase job satisfaction (39 per cent). Many wider motivators were also mentioned by those doing both vocational and non-vocational courses: skill and knowledge improvement was reported by 78 per cent, followed by the desire to do something interesting (39 per cent), curiosity about the subject (27 per cent), the wish to meet new people (13 per cent) and to have fun (12 per cent).

- The majority of respondents benefited from the course in a variety of ways. Forty-nine per cent of those who had done a vocational course had learnt new job skills, 45 per cent said they were able to their job better and 26 per cent got more satisfaction from their job. Wider benefits included: improved knowledge (71 per cent), finding the course interesting (66 per cent), acquisition of new skills (63 per cent), enjoyment (61 per cent), the opportunity to meet new people (33 per cent) and boosted confidence (31 per cent). Older people (i.e. 70+) were particularly likely to report wider benefits from taught learning, 77 per cent found it interesting, three-quarters enjoyed it, about half gained new skills, 46 per cent met new people and a fifth said it helped with their disability.

Self-directed learning

As found with taught learning, most self-directed learning episodes were job related and the subjects people were most likely to learn reflected this: computing was mentioned by over a third (34 per cent), while 21 per cent were doing learning related to a particular profession or trade. Leisure activities were reported by 24 per cent of respondents. As well as being the most likely cited subject of self-directed learning, computers were used by 60 per cent of respondents for their learning, for example, to do research or to exchange Emails.

Again the problems, motivators and outcomes of this type of learning were explored by the survey.

- Nearly half of respondents (46 per cent) reported some difficulties while undertaking self-directed learning, including lack of time because of work (31 per cent) and family responsibilities (17 per cent).
- As was found for taught courses, work remains a strong motivator for undertaking self-directed learning. Factors associated with the need to maintain and enhance one's employability came very high on the list of reasons for doing this type of vocational learning, including: the need to gain skills for the current job (55 per cent), develop one's career (52 per cent) and increase job satisfaction (47 per cent). Learning experiences seem to be meeting peoples' expectations, as most respondents believed that their work life had benefited in a variety of ways from the learning, from increased competence in one's job (48 per cent) and skill acquisition (39 per cent), to increased job satisfaction (31 per cent).
- People also engaged in self-directed learning for a variety of non-work related reasons, including improvement of skills and knowledge (82 per cent), curiosity about the subject (47 per cent) and the desire to do something interesting (46 per cent). The learning had a positive impact on many aspects of respondents' lives; apart from the expected improvement in skills and knowledge (75 per cent), a third said the learning experience had boosted their confidence, improved their social life (13 per cent) and health (seven per cent said that the learning helped to keep their body active and four per cent that it helped with their health problem/disability). The wider motivators and benefits of learning seemed particularly important for some groups, such as older people and those not in paid employment. Worth noting also, given the growing interest in family learning, is that a substantial minority of parents, and mothers in particular, were learning so they could help their children to learn (24 per cent of mothers and 15 per cent of fathers).

Use of and attitudes towards ICT

For the first time in 2001, the survey explored the use of Information Communication and Technology (ICT):¹

- 55 per cent of respondents had a computer at home and 45 per cent could access the Internet from home
- 67 per cent of adults had used ICT at some point in their life, while around half were current users (55 per cent were current computer users and 44 per cent were current Internet users)

¹ The results in this section include respondents of all ages and not only those under 70 as in the previous sections.

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- most people who have used ICT seem to use it frequently: nearly half (48 per cent) use a computer five or more days a week, the equivalent figure for the Internet is 33 per cent
- the majority of current ICT users (76-77 per cent) use a computer and the Internet at home. Other frequently mentioned places included: work (60 and 42 per cent for computers and the Internet respectively) and at a friend's home (10 and 12 per cent for computers and the Internet respectively).

Looking at ICT use among different groups we find that:

- between 71 and 78 per cent of under 50s were ICT users, compared with 29 per cent of those in the 60-69 age group and 10 per cent of older people
- women were less likely than men to use ICT (52 and 62 per cent respectively)
- just over a third (35 per cent) of disabled people were ICT users
- only 27 per cent of people not in paid employment were ICT users, compared with 78 per cent of employees and 67 per cent of self-employed
- only a quarter of those in the lowest income group (under £10,400) were ICT users, compared with 86 per cent of those with a family income of £31,200+
- predictably, given the result above, ICT use was considerably less likely to be reported by those dependent on means tested benefits (34 per cent)
- less than half (45 per cent) of respondents in the most deprived areas were ICT users, compared with 64 per cent in the least deprived areas.

While a third of ICT non-users said they were not interested in using a computer, the majority reported a wide range of obstacles to ICT use, including: lack of knowledge about computers (68 per cent), not having a computer at home (34 per cent), not being very good with computers (28 per cent) and the cost of ICT (27 per cent).

Social capital and learning

For the first time in 2001, NALS collected information about respondents' leisure activities and involvement in a variety of voluntary and community activities, to investigate the extent to which these measures of social capital are associated with learning¹.

- There was a relationship between television watching and low participation in learning, with those who watched high levels (more than two hours a day during the week or weekends) being least likely to have done some learning (58 per cent). Even when controlling for factors such as level of education and income, those who watched high levels of television were still least likely to have participated in learning.
- Looking at newspaper reading, it was found that people who read broadsheets were considerably more likely than others to have done some learning (85 per cent) and this relationship remained even after controlling for socio-economic characteristics.
- Respondents were asked how often they engaged in activities such as helping their neighbours, going to a group or place of worship or tackling local issues. Almost three quarters (73 per cent) had been involved in at least one of these activities in the last 12 months. Those who were involved in none of these activities were least likely to have participated in learning (57 per cent), while the more activities people were involved in, the more likely they were to have done some learning; for example, 81 per cent of those who reported three or more activities had done some learning.

¹ The results in this section include all respondents.

Information, knowledge and attitudes about learning

Respondents were asked a series of questions about use of advice and information about learning and their awareness of government initiatives:

- 68 per cent of learners had received some information or advice about learning, and this was most common among those who had done both taught and self-directed learning (79 per cent) and among those who had done both vocational and non-vocational learning (77 per cent)
- the main sources of advice were: employers (31 per cent), educational institutions (28 per cent), friends and family (19 per cent) and work colleagues (17 per cent), though the relative importance of these varied by the types of learning
- learners received a wide range of different types of advice, but the most common were about courses available (54 per cent), places to do learning (50 per cent) and courses for particular jobs (40 per cent)
- a third of respondents had heard of **learndirect**¹, a quarter of Career Development Loans and 15 per cent of Individual Learning Accounts. Use of these among respondents was very low, although this might reflect the relatively recent introduction of some of these schemes.

Finally the survey explored future learning intentions and found that the likelihood of participating in future learning was strongly related to involvement in learning in the past. While three-quarters of learners were likely to do job related learning in the next three years, only a third of non-learners said they were likely to do so. The corresponding figures for future non-vocational learning were 54 per cent for learners and 23 per cent for non-learners.

¹ Interviewees were asked only about their awareness of the **learndirect** helpline and website, and not about the full range of **learndirect** learning services developed by Ufi Ltd. These comprise a network of learning centres, the free 0800 100 900 learning information helpline, the **learndirect** website and a range of **learndirect** branded learning materials.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1997 the former Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) commissioned the first National Adult Learning Survey (NALS 1997), which explored participation in a wide range of learning experiences. This was a baseline study followed by repeat surveys in 2000 and 2001. The NALS series has been used by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to monitor the effectiveness of their adult learning policies, and progress in meeting the National Learning Target for adult participation, which aims to reduce the proportion of non-learners from 26 per cent found in 1997 to 24 per cent by 2002.

This report presents the results from NALS 2001 which was carried by the *National Centre for Social Research* on behalf of the DfES.

1.1 Background

In recent years the globalisation of the economy, changes in the labour market and organisational structures have pushed lifelong learning high on the political agenda. It is now widely recognised that in order to maintain and improve the country's competitiveness, skills and knowledge must be developed and up-dated throughout people's working lives.

While economic factors have largely shaped the debate about lifelong learning, wider social and cultural influences have also played a part. There is a growing emphasis on the role of learning in helping in the regeneration of local communities, encouraging active citizenship, as well as combating social exclusion. At the heart of lifelong learning lies the principle of inclusion, the need for this is dictated by economic reasons, as much as by concerns for social justice, as was emphasised in the Fryer report:

'This country needs to develop a new learning culture, a culture of lifelong learning for all. It is essential to help the country and all of its people meet the challenges they now face, as they move towards the 21st century.' (Fryer, 1997, p.3)

1.2 Types of learning covered by NALS

Changes in learning policy and provision have stimulated considerable research activities. The development of the concept of lifelong learning has required new research tools to define its boundaries and explore patterns of participation among different groups. The unprecedented expansion and diversification of post-compulsory education, the emergence of new learning and assessment methods and the increased emphasis on autonomous and self-reliant learners, all require new and more complex research tools, which can accurately reflect the increasing variety of learning experiences and outcomes.

In the mid 1990s a number of development and exploratory studies were commissioned by the former DfEE. The aims of these studies were twofold: first, to establish the information needed to monitor trends in learning; and, second, to develop the research tools to collect data on a variety of learning experiences and outcomes (e.g. Campanelli and Rutherford, 1995; Lewis and Smith, 1996). This work culminated in NALS 1997, which successfully operationalised a definition of learning much broader than that used in previous research and which encompassed a very wide variety of experiences.

Two broad categories of learning, taught and self-directed¹, were identified and operationalised in NALS 1997. As shown in the box, a series of questions were asked in the 1997 survey to establish if respondents had undertaken any of these types of learning in the previous three years (i.e. since January 1994) or since leaving continuous full-time (CFT) education, whichever was more recent.

¹ The terminology used to refer to this type of learning has changed over time, in NALS 1997 this was described as 'non-taught' learning, while in NALS 2000 this was referred to as self-taught, as well as non-taught learning. In NALS 2001 the term self-directed learning has been used.

Taught learning

1. any taught courses that were meant to lead to a qualification
2. any taught courses designed to help develop skills used in a job
3. any courses, instructions or tuition in driving, playing a musical instrument, art or craft, sport or any practical skill
4. evening classes
5. learning involving an individual working on their own from a package of materials provided by an employer, college, commercial organisation or other training provider
6. any other taught course, instruction or tuition

Self-directed learning

7. studying for qualifications without taking part in a taught course
8. supervised training while doing a job
9. time spent keeping up to date with developments in one's work or profession – for example, by reading books or attending seminars.
10. deliberately trying to improve one's knowledge about anything or teach oneself a skill without taking part in a taught course.

Thus in the NALS series a **learner** is defined as:

A respondent who has left continuous full-time (CFT) education and has taken part in at least one of the above taught or self-directed learning activities within three years prior to the field work (i.e. since January 1998) or since leaving CFT education (whichever period was shorter).

The other key distinction made in the NALS series is between vocational and non-vocational learning. Again a series of questions were asked to determine whether a learning episode was vocational or not, and the same questions have been used for all the surveys in the series.

Vocational learning

1. related to the respondent's job at the time of starting the learning, or
2. started in order to help with a future job, or
3. started in order to help with voluntary work

Non-vocational learning

4. not related to the respondent's job at the time of starting the learning, and
5. not started in order to help with a future job, and
6. not started in order to help with voluntary work.

1.3 Previous NALS and main changes in 2001

Some changes were introduced in NALS 2001 which affected both the sample composition and content of the survey.

1.3.1 Sample composition

While the samples for NALS 1997 and 2000 were selected from all adults aged 16-69 (in England and Wales), the

age cap was lifted in the 2001 survey, which has covered all adults, excluding those in CFT education¹. This change was introduced as it was considered important to collect information on older people and learning, given the growing recognition of the benefits all adults, and not just those who are economically active, can gain from engaging in learning.

As explained later, in order to compare the 2001 results with those from previous surveys, in most of the report the analysis focuses on the 16-69 age group, while the findings for older respondents are presented separately.

1.3.2 Survey content

Another major change in NALS 2001 has been the collection of detailed information on one randomly selected course, instead of the three most recent courses as was done in 1997 and 2000. This decision was taken following concerns about the length of the interview and the affect this had on the quality of the data collected.

Concern about the length of the interview also led to a review of the issues covered by the series and the identification of core topics to be included in all NALS, and non-core topics to be covered less frequently. The core topics included in NALS 2001, as well as its predecessors, were:

- levels of participation in different types of adult learning, that is taught, self-directed, non-vocational and vocational learning
- the subject and mode of learning and how much time people spend on different learning activities
- information on where and when adult learning takes place and satisfaction with different aspects of the learning experience
- motivators, benefits and outcomes of learning
- guidance and advice on learning
- obstacles and incentives to learning and future learning plans
- key socio-economic indicators (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, disability, educational background and employment circumstances).

In NALS 2001 some new topics were included and existing ones were covered in more detail to explore areas of growing policy interest, including:

- access to and use of Information Communication and Technology (ICT), including different uses of ICT for learning
- involvement in a range of voluntary and leisure activities to explore how these might interact with the propensity to undertake different types of learning
- awareness of and involvement in government lifelong learning initiatives, (i.e. Learning Accounts, Career Loans and **learndirect**) and learning campaigns (i.e. Adult Learners Week, Learning at Work Day, Family Learning Weekend).

1.4 Summary of methodology

The survey methodology is described in detail in the Technical Report, in this section we present a summary of the sampling and weighting procedures.

The survey fieldwork was conducted between January and May 2001. 8,690 addresses in England and Wales were randomly selected from the Postcode Address File (PAF) and interviews were attempted with up to two eligible adults

¹ A gap of two years or less was disregarded in the NALS definition of CFT education; that is, those who returned to full-time education within two years of leaving it for the first time were classified as being in CFT education and were therefore excluded from the survey

in each household. 10,302 potential respondents were identified and 6,459 computer assisted interviews (CAPI) were conducted¹, giving a response rate of 63 per cent.

In line with previous surveys in the series, the 2001 data have been weighted to correct for different household and individual selection probabilities, and non-response. Data on the course selected for the interview have also been weighted to take into account the number courses reported by a respondent.

1.5 Guidance on the interpretation of the data

As explained above, the survey data were weighted to correct for differential selection probabilities and non-response. The percentages presented in the tables have been calculated from the weighted responding bases. The weighted and unweighted eligible bases (i.e. all respondents who were asked the question) and base descriptions are shown at the bottom of the table. Respondents who did not answer a question have been excluded from the calculations, unless stated otherwise. The number of missing cases are not generally reported as in the overwhelming majority of questions this figure is very low, however, a note is added at the bottom of the table if the number of missing cases is above 20. When a 'total' column is presented, as well as columns for different sub-groups, the sum of the sub-groups' bases might not be the same as the base of the 'total' column, because of missing cases.

Tables which present data from all the surveys in the NALS series indicate this in the title (e.g. Participation in different types of learning – NALS 1997-2001), when this is not specified it means tables only present the 2001 data. The base descriptions always refer to the 2001 survey; due to the changes in the sample composition discussed earlier, the 2001 base descriptions are slightly different from those of previous surveys. For example, most of the analysis in previous surveys included: 'All respondents, excluding those in CFT education', the equivalent base in 2001 is: 'All respondents under the age of 70'. While there are variations in base descriptions, when comparative data are presented, the base compositions are the same for all surveys in the series.

Due to rounding, percentage figures may not add up to exactly 100 per cent, but may total between 98 and 102 per cent. A note is included when percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply.

The following symbols have been used in the tables:

[] to indicate a percentage based on fewer than 100 respondents

* to indicate a percentage value of less than 0.5 per cent

- to indicate a percentage value of zero

NA to indicate that information on a variable or category is not available for one or more surveys in the series.

¹ Eight interviews were only partially completed and these have been excluded from the analysis, so the base used throughout the report for the whole sample is 6,451.

2. LEARNING TRENDS

As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the main aims of the NALS series is to monitor trends in participation in adult learning and progress towards meeting the National Learning Target for adult participation, which aims to reduce the proportion of non-learners from the 26 per cent found in NALS 1997 to 24 per cent by 2002.

As well as the overall figures for participation in learning since 1997, the chapter shows changes in participation in the different types of learning discussed earlier, that is, taught, self-directed, vocational and non-vocational learning. In order to maintain comparability with previous NALS¹, the analysis in this chapter is based only on respondents under 70, the learning patterns of older people will be explored in the next chapter.

2.1 Changes in learning patterns since 1997

NALS 1997 found that just over a quarter (26 per cent) of adults interviewed had not taken part in any of the learning activities covered by the survey, four years later this figure has decreased, with 24 per cent of NALS 2001 respondents being classified as non-learners, thus meeting the National Target set for participation in adult learning.

Table 2.1 shows that since 1997 there have been small increases in the level of participation in different types of learning:

- the overall learning participation rate has gone up slightly from 74 per cent in 1997 to 76 per cent in 2001
- the proportion of taught learners has hardly changed, with 58 per cent of respondents reporting this type of learning in 1997 and 59 per cent in 2001
- in the same period, there has been a small increase in participation in self-directed learning, from 57 to 60 per cent
- participation in vocational learning has also remained virtually static, this was 67 per cent in 1997 and 68 per cent in 2001.

Table 2.1 Participation in different types of learning – NALS 1997-2001

	1997	2001
	%	%
Any learning	74	76
Taught learning	58	59
Self-directed learning	57	60
Vocational learning	67	68
Non-vocational learning	30	25
<i>Weighted base</i>	5245	5505
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5386	5532

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Looking at the combination of the different types of learning people reported, the 2001 results are largely in line with the findings from previous surveys in the series. As shown in Table 2.2:

¹ Only the results from NALS 1997 are presented, as the NALS 2000 report has not been published yet.

² As it was explained in Chapter 1, vocational learning was defined as learning, either taught or self-directed, which was started to help with current or future work, paid or voluntary.

- as found in 1997, there is a great deal of overlap between taught and self-directed learning, with the largest group of respondents (over 40 per cent) reporting both types of learning
- in 2001 only 16 per cent of people mentioned only taught learning, a figure very similar to that found in 1997 (17 per cent)
- the proportion reporting self-directed learning in 2001 (17 per cent) has again hardly changed since 1997 (16 per cent).

Table 2.2 Participation in combination of taught and self-directed learning

	1997	2001
		%
Taught & self-directed learning	41	43
Taught learning only	17	16
Self-directed learning only	16	17
No learning	26	24
<i>Weighted base</i>	5245	5505
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5386	5532

Base: all respondents aged under 70

While, as discussed earlier, the overall proportion reporting some vocational learning had hardly changed since 1997, the results on the combination of vocational and non-vocational learning show some relatively large changes (Table 2.3). The proportion of respondents reporting only work related learning has increased from 44 per cent in 1997 to 51 per cent in 2001. While the proportion of people who reported non-vocational learning only has remained almost constant (7-8 per cent), there was a decline in respondents who undertook both vocational and non-vocational learning, from 23 per cent in 1997 to 17 per cent in 2001.

Table 2.3 Participation in combination of vocational and non-vocational learning – NALS 1997-2001

	1997	2001
	%	%
Non-vocational learning only	7	8
Vocational & non-vocational learning	23	17
Vocational learning only	44	51
No learning	26	24
<i>Weighted base</i>	5245	5505
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5386	5532

Base: all respondents aged under 70

The strong link between learning and work is also illustrated by the small proportion of 2001 respondents who had engaged in some learning which was not work related: only 16 per cent of people had done some non-vocational taught learning and the corresponding figure was even lower (11 per cent) for non-vocational self-directed learning.

2.2 Learning in the past year

As discussed in Chapter 1, the NALS series uses a three year reference period to measure participation in learning.

However, a review of policymakers' needs for data on adult learning indicated that there is a growing interest in monitoring participation in learning using a shorter reference period. As the report explains:

'Some people felt that the reference period used by NALS was too long, as the development of a "learning culture" is likely to require a more frequent and sustained involvement in learning. A reference period of 12 months was favoured by those who raised this as an issue. Establishing the frequency of learning would allow a distinction between, for example, 'frequent' and 'sporadic' learners. In future, the latter, together with 'non-learners', could become a key target group for the government.' (La Valle et. al., 1999, p.2).

NALS 2001 therefore collected data to measure participation in learning in the previous year, which is presented in this section. However, it must be emphasised that in the rest of the report all the findings are based on the learning people did in the previous three years (or since leaving CFT education if this happened more recently).

The results in Table 2.4 show that the majority of 2001 respondents had done some learning in the past year:

- 68 per cent of respondents reported some learning in the previous year, only eight per cent had done some learning since January 1998, but not in the previous 12 months
- some taught learning in the past year was mentioned by 45 per cent of the sample, with only 13 per cent of taught learners having completed their course more than a year ago
- a higher proportion of respondents (54 per cent) reported some self-directed learning in the past year, which seems to indicate that this type learning might be undertaken more frequently than taught learning.

These results are in line with the findings from a follow-up study to NALS 1997, which explored learning paths over four and a half years and showed that most learners engage in some form of learning relatively frequently (La Valle and Finch, 1999). It is interesting to note that the NALS 1997 follow-up, which was conducted one and a half years after the baseline survey, found that 63 per cent of respondents had done some learning in the previous 18 months, while in 2001 we have found that a higher proportion of respondents (68 per cent) reported some learning using a shorter reference period (i.e. 12 months). This could indicate an increase in the frequency with which learners engage in learning activities.

Table 2.4 Participation in learning over different periods

	%
Learning in the past year	68
Learning but not in past year	8
No learning	24
Taught learning in the past year	45
Taught learning but not in past year	13
No taught learning	41
Self-directed in the past year	54
Self-directed but not in the past year	6
No self-directed learning	40
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

2.3 'Substantial' learning

The review of policy makers' needs for information on learning mentioned earlier also highlighted the importance of monitoring not only if adults do some learning, but also how much learning they do, as explained in the report:

'NALS 1997 classification of a 'learner' as someone who had done some learning, regardless of the length and content of the learning episode, was also considered inadequate by some respondents. It was argued that some measure of 'substantial' learning must be developed, as in future it will be increasingly important to establish, not only whether people engage in learning, but also whether they do enough learning to remain employable in a rapidly changing labour market.' (La Valle et. al., 1999, p.6)

In response to the need for information on the 'quantity' of learning, a question was added to the series to establish if a respondent had spent 10 or more hours on the self-directed learning episode reported. A question on the total number of hours of tuition courses involved is also included in the survey. These results show that in 2001:

- 74 per cent of taught learners reported a course which involved 10 or more hours of tuition¹
- 88 per cent of respondents who mentioned self-directed learning said they spent 10 or more hours on the reported learning episode.

2.4 Conclusion

The 2001 results show that four years after the baseline survey was conducted, the proportion of non-learners has decreased from 26 to 24 per cent, thus meeting the National Learning Target for adult participation set for 2002.

Trends in participation in different types of learning have hardly changed since 1997, with the largest group of people having undertaken both taught and self-directed learning. The strong link between learning and work, established by previous NALS, as well as many other studies on adult learning, seems to have become even stronger, with an increased proportion of adults saying they had undertaken only vocational learning. It must be noted, however, that the NALS definition of vocational learning is a rather broad one, which includes learning started to help with voluntary work, as well as with current or future paid employment.

Further analysis of learning patterns was carried out to provide some indication of the frequency and 'quantity' of learning adults do. This shows that the majority of 2001 respondents had engaged in some learning in the previous year and most of the learners reported learning episodes of 10 or more hours. These results, coupled with the findings showing that most adults do different types of learning, seem to suggest that engagement in some form of learning is likely to act as a stimulus to carry on learning. This conclusion was supported by the results of NALS 1997 follow-up, which showed past learning to be one of the strongest predictors of future learning. The NALS 2001 results seem to suggest that the group of 'infrequent' or 'occasional' learners is rather small, although with cross-sectional data it is difficult to explore learning patterns over time and the potential effect on future propensity to learn. What the 2001 survey clearly shows is that there is a substantial minority of adults who still do not engage in any of the wide range of learning activities covered by NALS. The interplay of socio-economic factors which affect adults' propensity to learn are discussed in the next chapter, which explores participation in learning among different groups.

¹ Further information about the length of courses is provided in Chapter 5. However, the figure reported in Chapter 5 on the proportion of courses involving 10 or more hours of tuition is slightly different, because in order to make it comparable with previous NALS, it is based only on completed courses, while the figure quoted in this chapter is based on all courses.

3. LEARNING AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS

Previous NALS, as well as numerous other studies of adult learning, have shown some consistent variations in participation in learning among different groups. NALS 1997 found that those most likely to take part in learning were men, younger people and those in paid employment. Managers, professionals and those in other non-manual occupations reported particularly high learning participation rates. On the other hand, older people, those not in paid employment, and people who left full-time education at 16 or younger were the least likely to have undertaken some learning.

This chapter presents the results on the participation of different groups in the types of learning discussed earlier, that is: taught, self-directed, job related and non-vocational learning. The first part of the chapter explores the relationship between learning and key demographic characteristics. Section 3.2 looks at the association between learning and educational background, while Section 3.3 focuses on variations among groups with different employment and financial circumstances. The final part of the chapter explores the spatial dimension and presents the results on learning participation rates in different regions and in deprived areas. Information on the sample profile in terms of the variables explored in this chapter can be found in Appendix A.

As mentioned earlier, for the first time in the series, people aged over 69 were included in the survey and the results on their participation in learning are presented in Table 3.1, as a separate category. In order to maintain comparability with previous NALS, all the other tables in this chapter exclude older respondents and, unless otherwise stated, figures in the text refer to the 16-69 age group.

3.1 Demographic characteristics

This section explores the relationship between learning and key demographic characteristics, including: age, gender, ethnicity, disability and caring responsibilities. The results on age and gender are compared with the findings from NALS 1997.

3.1.1 Age

The 2001 data on participation in learning among different age groups confirm the results from previous NALS and show a tendency for learning to decline as age increases (Table 3.1):

- the highest learning participation rates (between 80 and 86 per cent) are found among adults aged 20-49
- the learning participation figures declines to 74 per cent among the 50-59 group and to 49 per cent among those aged 60-69
- the sharpest decline, however, occurs among older respondents: only 25 per cent of those aged 70 or over had undertaken some learning in the previous three years, this is a third of the learning participation rate for those under 70.

Similar patterns are repeated when looking at different types of learning, although differences among younger and older respondents are, not surprisingly, more marked when comparing participation in vocational learning. For example, while between 75 and 84 per cent of 20-49 year olds reported some vocational learning, the equivalent figure is 28 per cent for the 60-69 age group and drops to five per cent among older respondents.

Table 3.1 Percentages of age groups reporting different types of learning

	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	76	86	83	80	74	49	25
Taught learning	56	70	66	63	55	32	15
Self-directed learning	47	70	67	64	59	34	15
Vocational learning	63	84	79	75	65	28	5
Non-vocational learning	27	20	23	23	28	30	22
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>149</i>	<i>892</i>	<i>1401</i>	<i>1192</i>	<i>1029</i>	<i>842</i>	<i>946</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>807</i>	<i>1435</i>	<i>1233</i>	<i>1059</i>	<i>877</i>	<i>919</i>

Base: all respondents

The proportion of 16-19 year olds who reported some learning is lower than that reported by other young respondents, 76 per cent of the former mentioned some learning compared with between 80-86 per cent of those in the 20-49 age group. An even larger difference is observed when looking at vocational learning, which was mentioned by 63 per cent of 16-19 year olds and 75-84 per cent of respondents in the 20-49 age group.

The results in Table 3.2 also show that participation in learning among 16-19 year olds has declined from 82 per cent in 1997 to 76 per cent in 2001.

The proportion of 16-19 year olds included in the calculation of the adult learning participation rate has also declined from eight per cent in 1997 to three per cent in 2001¹. This is due to the increase in recent years in the proportion of young people who remain in full-time education beyond the age of 16 and who are therefore excluded from the calculation of the adult participation rate.

When comparing the 1997 with the 2001 learning figures for other age groups, the only other change worth noting is the increase in learning from 67 to 74 per cent among 50-59 years old (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Percentages of age groups reporting some learning – NALS 1997-2001

	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
NALS 1997	82	85	82	78	67	47	NA	5245	5386
NALS 2001	76	86	83	80	74	49	25	6451	6451

Base: all respondents

3.1.2 Gender

The 2001 results for women and men still show a gap in participation, with 73 per cent of women and 79 per cent of men having undertaken some learning (Table 3.3). This gap is mainly due to the difference in proportion of women and men reporting self-directed learning (54 and 66 per cent respectively), while there is virtually no gender difference in relation to taught learning. As previous NALS found, in 2001 women were still less likely than men to have done some vocational learning (63 and 73 per cent respectively), but more likely to have done non-vocational learning (27 and 22 per cent respectively).

¹ In NALS 1997 young people in CFT education were included in the survey, but excluded from the calculation of the adult learning participation rate and from most of the analysis. As discussed in Chapter 1, those still in full-time education were excluded from the 2001 survey.

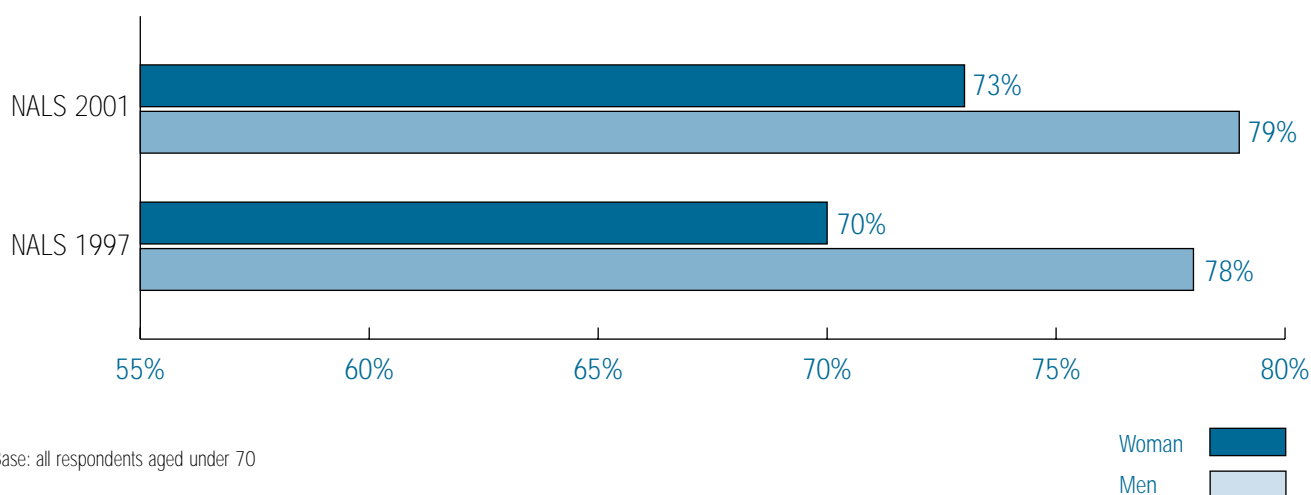
Table 3.3 Percentages of men and women reporting different types of learning

	All	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Any learning	76	79	73
Taught learning	59	59	58
Self-directed learning	60	66	54
Vocational learning	68	73	63
Non-vocational learning	25	22	27
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	2713	2792
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	2431	3101

Base: all respondents aged under 70

The results in Figure 3.1 indicate that there has been little change since 1997 in the respective proportions of women and men reporting some learning. While the gender gap has been narrowing slightly between 1997 and 2001, from eight to six percentage points, this is a very small change, too small to draw any conclusions.

Figure 3.1 Percentages of men and women reporting some learning – NALS 1997-2001



3.1.3 Ethnicity

The 2001 question on ethnicity was changed in line with the revised 2001 Census ethnic groups classification and the new ethnic classification is not directly comparable with that used in previous NALS.

As shown in Table 3.4, the lowest learning participation rates are found among Asians: just over half (52 per cent) reported some learning, 42 per cent had done some taught learning and 38 per cent some self-directed learning. Less than half of Asians (48 per cent) reported job related learning and only 15 per cent had done non-vocational learning.

All the other ethnic minority groups appear to have higher than average learning participation levels, however, the numbers in these groups are too small to draw any definite conclusions.

Table 3.4 Percentages of ethnic groups reporting different types of learning

	All	White	Mixed ethnic origin	Asian (British)	Black (British)	Chinese and other
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	76	76	[83]	52	[81]	[90]
Taught learning	59	59	[69]	42	[69]	[73]
Self-directed learning	60	60	[71]	38	[68]	[67]
Vocational learning	68	68	[76]	48	[78]	[81]
Non-vocational learning	25	25	[31]	15	[26]	[21]
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	5071	50	209	92	66
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	5132	46	187	88	63

Base: all respondents aged under 70

3.1.4 Disability

Just under a quarter (23 per cent) of respondents said they had a long term health problem or disability, with 12 per cent saying that this affected the type and amount of work they were able to do.

Participation in learning was lower than average among people with a disability and was particularly low among those with a work limiting disability (Table 3.5):

- 56 per cent of people with a work limiting disability reported some learning, compared with 71 per cent of respondents with another type of disability and 80 per cent of those with no disability
- not surprisingly, differences between these groups were particularly marked in relation to vocational learning, this was mentioned by 43 per cent of adults with a work limiting disability, 58 per cent of respondents with another type of disability and 73 per cent of those with no disability.

Table 3.5 Percentages of respondents with and without a disability reporting different types of learning

	All	Work limiting disability	Other long term disability	No disability
	%	%	%	%
Any learning	76	56	71	80
Taught learning	59	37	56	62
Self-directed learning	60	40	55	63
Vocational learning	68	43	58	73
Non-vocational learning	25	24	31	23
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	639	645	4220
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	651	657	4223

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Predictably the proportion of older people reporting a long term health problem or disability was considerably higher than the rest of the sample, 60 per cent of respondents aged 70 or over reported this. As with younger respondents, an association was found between disability and propensity to learn among the 70+ group: older people with a disability were less likely to report some learning than those without a disability, with the respective figures being 23 and 28 per cent.

3.1.5 Caring responsibilities

The relationship between learning and caring responsibilities was explored in NALS 2001 by looking: first, at people with dependent children (i.e. under 18) in dual and lone parent families; and, second, those with responsibility for caring for a household member who required special care due to a long standing health problem or disability.

Looking at parental responsibilities first, the results in Table 3.6 show that:

- parents living in a couple were the most likely to report some learning (81 per cent)
- the equivalent figure was lower, at 74 per cent, among respondents with no children under 18
- the lowest learning participation rate was found among lone parents (70 per cent) and this was even lower (67 per cent) when looking at lone mothers only
- the widest gap between dual and lone parent families was found in relation to job related learning, reported by 77 per cent of the former and 62 per cent of the latter.

Turning to people with responsibility for caring for a sick or disabled family member (six per cent of respondents under 70), we find that 65 per cent had done some learning, compared with 78 per cent of the rest of the sample. There was a similar gap (9-15 percentage points) between these two groups for the different types of learning.

Table 3.6 Percentages of respondents with and without caring responsibilities reporting different types of learning

	All	Parent with partner	Lone parent	No dependent children	Carer for sick/disabled*	Not a carer for sick/disabled*
	%	%	%	%		%
Any learning	76	81	70	74	65	78
Taught learning	59	63	57	57	48	61
Self-directed learning	60	64	50	59	52	61
Vocational learning	68	77	62	65	56	71
Non-vocational learning	25	21	21	26	21	24
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>1535</i>	<i>410</i>	<i>3559</i>	<i>267</i>	<i>4423</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>1583</i>	<i>459</i>	<i>3490</i>	<i>261</i>	<i>4435</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

*Respondents who lived in a single person household were not asked if they were carers for sick/disabled family members.

As might be expected, the proportion of people in the 70+ group saying they had responsibility for caring for a sick or disabled family member was higher, at 16 per cent, than for the rest of the sample. As for younger respondents, older people with this kind of caring responsibility were less likely to report some learning than others, with the respective figures being 12 and 20 per cent.

3.2 Educational background

This section discusses the relationship between engagement in different types of learning and educational background, the latter is explored by looking at the age adults left CFT education, the qualification level obtained on leaving and at the time of the survey.

The sample only included 13 respondents who were never in CFT education, these are excluded from the analysis in Tables 3.7-3.10, but are included in Table 3.11.

Appendixes B and C include some further analysis of educational background and learning. Appendix B provides information on the demographic characteristics, employment and financial circumstances of respondents with no formal qualifications. Appendix C focuses on those with an NVQ qualification and compares their profile and learning status with the rest of the sample.

3.2.1 Age of completion of CFT education

As noted in Chapter 1, if a respondent returned to full-time education within two years of first leaving it, this gap is disregarded in the NALS definition of CFT education. Thus in the analysis presented in this section, when looking at the age respondents left CFT education any short gaps (e.g. between completing A levels and going into higher education) are disregarded.

Table 3.7 Percentages of respondents leaving CFT education at different ages reporting different types of learning

	All	16 or younger	17 – 18	19 – 20	21 or older
	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	76	65	85	88	93
Taught learning	59	48	68	71	76
Self-directed learning	60	48	69	72	82
Vocational learning	68	56	79	81	87
Non-vocational learning	25	21	27	28	32
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5490</i>	<i>2999</i>	<i>1164</i>	<i>337</i>	<i>990</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5519</i>	<i>3041</i>	<i>1180</i>	<i>333</i>	<i>965</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who have been in CFT education

As previous NALS found there is a strong association between the years of (continuous) full time education and the propensity to engage in adult learning. Looking first at respondents at two ends of the spectrum (Table 3.7):

- 65 per cent of respondents who left full-time education at 16 or younger reported some learning, compared with 93 per cent those who left when they were 21 or older
- the largest gap was found in relation to self-directed learning, this was mentioned by less than half (48 per cent) of those who left school at 16 or earlier, compared with 82 per cent of those who left at 21 or later
- a similar gap was found in relation to vocational learning, with the respective figures being 56 and 87 per cent.

The learning participation rate of respondents who left CFT education between the age of 17 and 20 was somewhat lower than that of those who left CFT education later, but it was well above the average for the sample as a whole:

- between 85 and 88 per cent of these respondents reported some learning

- taught learning was mentioned by 68-71 per cent of adults in this group
- the corresponding figure for self-directed learning was very similar (69-72 per cent)
- between 79 and 81 per cent of people in this group had undertaken some job related learning and 27-28 per cent non-vocational learning.

Table 3.8 shows that the 1997 and 2001 figures for adults who left CFT education at different ages remain largely unchanged.

Table 3.8 Percentages of respondents leaving CFT education at different ages reporting some learning – NALS 1997-2001

	16 or younger	17 – 18	19 – 20	21 or older	<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
	%	%	%	%		
NALS 1997	64	84	86	93	5245	5386
NALS 2001	65	85	88	93	5490	5519

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who have been in CFT education

3.2.2 Qualification level on leaving CFT education

Vocational and academic qualifications were classified according to NVQ level using the Labour Force Survey code frame, below we provide an indication of the academic equivalent for each NVQ level:

- level five: post-graduate qualifications
- level four: first degree or sub-degree qualifications
- level three: two A levels, four AS levels or Scottish equivalent
- level two: one A level, two/three AS levels, five or more GCSEs grades A*-C or Scottish equivalent
- level one: academic qualifications lower than those classified as level two.

Predictably the results on the propensity to learn and qualification level on leaving CFT education (Table 3.9) are similar to those discussed in the previous section:

- the overwhelming majority (94-95 per cent) of respondents qualified at NVQ level four or above on leaving CFT education had done some learning
- the equivalent figure is 85 per cent among those qualified at levels two and three, while it decreases to 78 per cent among adults qualified at level one on leaving CFT education
- however, the main drop occurs among those who left CFT education without achieving any qualifications: just over half (55 per cent) reported some learning and less than half (45 per cent) had done some vocational learning.

Table 3.9 Percentages of respondents leaving CFT education with different qualification levels* reporting different types of learning

	All	NVQ level 5	NVQ level 4	NVQ level 3	NVQ level 2	NVQ level 1	No qualif's
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	76	95	94	85	85	78	55
Taught learning	59	75	78	67	68	60	37
Self-directed learning	60	85	80	73	69	58	39
Vocational learning	68	92	87	80	78	70	45
Non-vocational learning	25	39	31	23	28	23	19
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5490</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>939</i>	<i>461</i>	<i>770</i>	<i>1581</i>	<i>1580</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5519</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>924</i>	<i>449</i>	<i>794</i>	<i>1588</i>	<i>1608</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who have been in CFT education

*Academic and vocational qualifications were categorised according to NVQ level, using the Labour Force Survey code frame

Looking at Table 3.10, we can see some changes between 1997 and 2001, although no clear pattern seems to emerge. Since 1997 participation in learning:

- has increased from 90 to 94 per cent among those who left CFT education with a level four qualification
- has also gone up from 71 per cent to 78 per cent among adults qualified at level one
- while it has declined from 90 to 85 per cent among those qualified at level three.

There has also been an increase in learning among those with no qualifications, however, this is too small to draw any conclusions.

Table 3.10 Percentages of respondents leaving CFT education with different qualification levels* reporting some learning – NALS 1997-2001

	NVQ level 5	NVQ level 4	NVQ level 3	NVQ level 2	NVQ level 1	No qualif's	<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%		
NALS 1997	95	90	90	85	71	53	5245	5386
NALS 2001	95	94	85	85	78	55	5490	5519

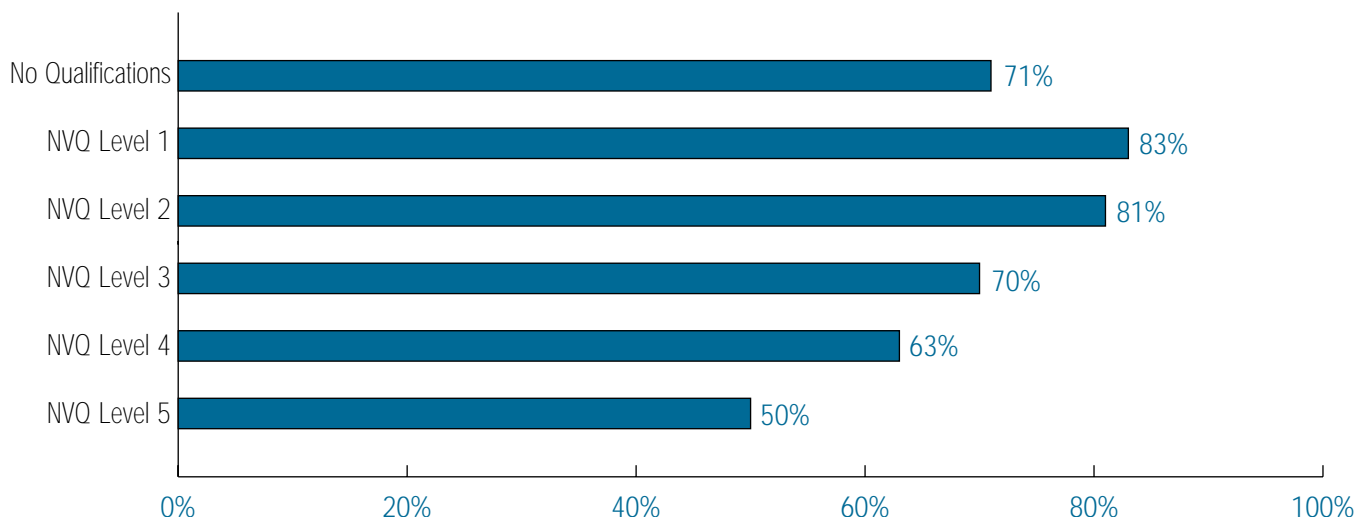
Base: all respondents aged under 70 who have been in CFT education

*Academic and vocational qualifications were categorised according to NVQ level, using the Labour Force Survey code frame

3.2.3 Current qualification level

Since a growing number of people update their skills and gain qualifications at various stages in their adult life, NALS 2001 gathered information on any qualifications respondents had gained since leaving CFT education. This kind of analysis was not carried out in NALS 1997, therefore this section focuses on the 2001 results.

Figure 3.2 Percentages at each qualification level on leaving CFT education who subsequently obtained other qualifications



Base: all respondents aged under 70 who have been in CFT education

Seventy three per cent of respondents had gained qualifications after completing their (continuous) full time studies. From Figure 3.2, we can see that those least qualified at the end of their full-time studies were most likely to have achieved a qualification since leaving CFT education:

- over 80 per cent of those qualified at level one or two on leaving CFT education had obtained a qualification after leaving
- 70-71 per cent of people who left CFT education with a level three qualification or with no qualifications had obtained a qualification after completing their full-time studies
- the equivalent figure for those qualified at levels four and five were 63 and 50 per cent respectively.

Looking at those qualified at level three or below on leaving CFT education, we find that:

- 27 per cent of those qualified at level three had obtained a higher NVQ level qualification since leaving CFT education
- 34 per cent of people who left their full-time studies with a level two had achieved a higher NVQ level qualification after leaving
- the corresponding figure was slightly higher (37 per cent) among those who left school with a level one qualification.

Most people who left school with no qualifications subsequently obtained a qualification: 44 per cent achieved a level one, five per cent had obtained a level two, 14 per cent a level three and eight per cent a level four or five.

Turning to those who had no qualifications at the time of the survey (nine per cent) we find that those most likely to be found in this group were:

- people at two extremes of the age scale: 15 per cent of 16-19 year olds, 20 per cent of 60-69 year olds and 35 per cent in the 70+ group had no qualifications
- women (12 per cent had no qualifications)
- people with a disability (17 per cent)

- lone parents (15 per cent)
- those who left school at 16 or earlier (15 per cent)
- people not in the labour market, that is those looking after the family (19 per cent), retired people (21 per cent) and those incapable of work (26 per cent)
- people with the lowest household income (24 per cent of those with an income below £10,400 had no qualifications)
- people dependent on means tested benefits (21 per cent)
- respondents in unskilled manual occupations (33 per cent).

More information on the profile of respondents without qualifications is included in Appendix B.

Table 3.11 Percentages of highest current qualification* groups reporting different types of learning

	All	NVQ level 5	NVQ level 4	NVQ level 3	NVQ level 2	NVQ level 1	No qualif's
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	76	95	93	81	81	66	31
Taught learning	59	76	77	62	63	48	19
Self-directed learning	60	84	79	66	62	46	17
Vocational learning	68	91	85	75	74	57	20
Non-vocational learning	25	37	32	21	27	20	13
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>289</i>	<i>1453</i>	<i>858</i>	<i>721</i>	<i>1698</i>	<i>480</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>293</i>	<i>1460</i>	<i>835</i>	<i>724</i>	<i>1720</i>	<i>494</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

*Academic and vocational qualifications were categorised according to NVQ level, using the Labour Force Survey code frame

Like the results on the qualification achieved at the time of completing CFT education, the findings on the highest qualification level at the time of the survey show a strong link between formal, certified learning and the likelihood of being involved in different kinds of adult learning. However, the figures in Table 3.11 show even more marked differences in learning patterns between the highly qualified and those with basic or no qualifications:

- 66 per cent of respondents qualified at NVQ level one and less than a third (31 per cent) of those with no qualifications had done some learning, the equivalent figure for those more highly qualified is between 81 and 95 per cent
- 57 per cent of adults qualified at level one and only 20 per cent of people with no qualifications had done some vocational learning, compared with between 74-91 per cent of the rest of the sample.

3.3 Employment circumstances and income

In the first part of this section we present the 2001 results on participation in learning and respondents' main current activity, and then compare them with the 1997 data. We then look more closely at the link between occupational status and learning by exploring patterns of participation among different socio-economic groups (SEG), standard occupational classifications (SOC), employment status and those employed in organisations of different sizes. Any changes since 1997 are explored by analysing the SEG data. The relationship between learning and financial circumstances is then explored by looking at household income and benefit dependency. Information on financial

circumstances was not collected by previous NALS, so no comparative analysis is included here. The last part of the section presents the results on learning patterns in different government office regions (GOR) and compares them with the 1997 data. An analysis of learning by local deprivation is also included here, this analysis has been conducted for the first time this year, so again no comparative data are available.

3.3.1 Main current activity

Respondents were asked about their main activity (i.e. the one they spent most of their time on) at the time of the survey. As we can see from Table 3.12, there was strong link between paid employment and participation in learning:

- those most likely to report some learning were respondents in paid work, within this group variations were found according to employment status: 89 per cent of full-time employees, 82 per cent of self-employed and 81 per cent of part-time employees had done some learning
- 68 per cent of people unemployed (and available for work) and just over half (52 per cent) of those looking after the family reported some learning
- the lowest learning participation figures were found among those outside the labour market, that is, retired people (48 per cent) and those unable to work due to a health problem or disability (42 per cent).

As it was found by previous NALS, the largest variations between these groups were found in relation to job related learning:

- 86 per cent of full-time employees, 78 per cent of self-employed and 75 per cent of part-time employees reported some vocational learning
- the corresponding figure was 64 per cent among the unemployed
- participation in job related learning declines to 38 per cent among people who were looking after the family and to 21 and 26 per cent respectively among the retired and those incapable of work. Interestingly though, the level of non-vocational learning among the retired (37 per cent) was well above the average for the sample as a whole (25 per cent).

Table 3.12 Percentages of main current activity groups reporting different types of learning

	All	FT	PT	Self-	Un-	Looking	Incapable		
	empl'ee	empl'ee	empl	employed	after the	Retired	of work	Other*	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	76	89	81	82	68	52	48	42	88
Taught learning	59	72	64	53	51	39	32	26	72
Self-directed learning	60	75	62	69	48	29	30	28	66
Vocational learning	68	86	75	78	64	38	21	26	78
Non-vocational learning	25	22	26	27	16	21	37	22	33
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>2622</i>	<i>707</i>	<i>413</i>	<i>212</i>	<i>575</i>	<i>594</i>	<i>279</i>	<i>103</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>2497</i>	<i>796</i>	<i>409</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>632</i>	<i>620</i>	<i>274</i>	<i>106</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

*This category includes: doing voluntary work (43 cases), in FT education (32 cases), on Government Supported Training (11 cases) and other activity (20 cases)

Table 3.13 shows that participation in learning has gone up since 1997 among most groups, the main (but still relatively small) increases were found among:

- the self-employed (from 77 to 82 per cent)
- respondents looking after a family (from 47 to 52 per cent)
- those who have retired (from 43 to 48 per cent).

There has been a decline, albeit small, in the proportion of unemployed who reported some learning: from 72 per cent in 1997 to 68 per cent in 2001. In the same period, there has also been a decrease in the proportion from this group who reported some vocational learning (from 66 to 64 per cent), however, this change is too small to draw any firm conclusions.

Table 3.13 Percentages of current main activity groups reporting some learning – NALS 1997-2001

	FT empl'ee	PT empl'ee	Self- empl	Un- employed	Looking after the family	Retired	Incapable of work	Weighted base	Unweighted base
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
NALS 1997	88	78	77	72	47	43	41	5245	5386
NALS 2001	89	81	82	68	52	48	42	5505	5532

Base: all respondents aged under 70

NB The 'other' category has been left out from this table, but the reported bases still include all respondents (under 70)

3.3.2 Occupational status

Detailed information was collected on respondents' current or most recent job to explore further the link between learning and occupational status. In line with the occupational analysis in previous NALS, only respondents who were employed at the time of the survey or had been in paid work in the past 10 years are included in Tables 3.14-3.18. The overall figures for participation in different types of learning presented in these tables are higher than those presented so far, because they exclude people who had not worked in the past 10 years.

As previous NALS found, participation in learning is closely linked to occupational status:

- 88 per cent of professionals and managers and 85 per cent of respondents in other non-manual occupations had done some learning
- this figure drops to 70-71 per cent among people in skilled and semi-skilled manual jobs
- the lowest learning participation figure (53 per cent) is found among unskilled manual workers.

Differences among these groups are even more evident in relation to job related learning:

- between 78 and 82 per cent of respondents in the non-manual groups had undertaken some vocational learning
- the corresponding figure was 62-66 per cent among people in skilled and semi-skilled manual occupations
- only 42 per cent of unskilled workers reported some job related learning.

Table 3.14 Percentages of SEG groups reporting different types of learning

	All	Professional /managerial	Other non- manual	Skilled manual	Semi-skilled manual	Unskilled manual	Other/ unclassified
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	80	88	85	70	71	53	[91]
Taught learning	62	70	69	48	54	32	[76]
Self-directed learning	64	77	67	55	50	33	[82]
Vocational learning	74	82	78	66	62	42	[82]
Non-vocational learning	25	27	29	19	20	16	[22]
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>4953</i>	<i>1682</i>	<i>1534</i>	<i>670</i>	<i>820</i>	<i>209</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>4962</i>	<i>1654</i>	<i>1584</i>	<i>637</i>	<i>837</i>	<i>212</i>	<i>38</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 currently employed or self-employed or who have been in paid employment in the past 10 years

Comparing the 1997 and 2001 results, there appear to have been hardly any changes in the learning participation rates of different socio-economic groups (Table 3.15).

Table 3.15 Percentages of SEG groups reporting some learning – NALS 1997-2001

	Professional /managerial	Other non- manual	Skilled manual	Semi-skilled manual	Unskilled manual	<i>Weighted Base</i>	<i>Unweighted Base</i>
	%	%	%	%	%		
NALS 1997	90	86	70	69	50	4529	4659
NALS 2001	88	85	70	71	53	4953	4962

Base: all respondents aged under 70 currently in paid employment or who have been in paid employment in the past 10 years

NB The 'other' category has been left out from this table, but the reported bases still include all respondents included in the analysis

The analysis included below on learning patterns and SOC (Table 3.16), and employment status (Table 3.17) shows a similar picture to that presented earlier:

- people in non-manual occupations were the ones most likely to have undertaken some learning and they were particularly likely to have done so if they were in a senior or management position; like the analysis of socio-economic groups, SOC analysis shows that little has changed since 1997
- participation is higher among employees than those self-employed, although the gap has been narrowing slightly in the past four years due to an increase in the proportion of self-employed people reporting some learning: in 1997, 73 per cent of people who were or had been self-employed in their last job reported some learning, this figure went up to 78 per in 2001.

Table 3.16 Percentages of SOC groups reporting different types of learning

	Manager & admin's	Profess- ional	Associat prof. & technical	Clerical & secretarial	Craft & related	Personal & protective services	Sales	Plant & machine operative	Other/ un- classified
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	86	96	94	85	73	78	73	65	57
Taught	68	78	75	70	49	64	55	47	37
Self-directed	74	85	84	64	60	56	59	43	40
Vocational	82	89	88	77	68	70	68	58	47
Non-vocational	24	34	29	29	19	23	24	17	19
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>724</i>	<i>549</i>	<i>504</i>	<i>806</i>	<i>562</i>	<i>620</i>	<i>386</i>	<i>443</i>	<i>359</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>729</i>	<i>552</i>	<i>501</i>	<i>841</i>	<i>513</i>	<i>652</i>	<i>396</i>	<i>419</i>	<i>359</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 currently in paid employment or who have been in paid employment in the past 10 years

Table 3.17 Percentages of employment status groups reporting different types of learning

	All	Employee	Self-employed
	%	%	%
Any learning	80	81	78
Taught learning	62	64	51
Self-directed learning	64	64	64
Vocational learning	74	74	72
Non-vocational learning	25	25	27
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>4953</i>	<i>4435</i>	<i>517</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>4962</i>	<i>4446</i>	<i>515</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 currently in paid employment or who have been in paid employment in the past 10 years

Table 3.18 Percentages of those in different sized organisations reporting different types of learning

	All	Less than 25 employees	24-499 employees	500+ employees
	%	%	%	%
Any learning	81	75	83	85
Taught learning	64	56	67	71
Self-directed learning	64	57	67	72
Vocational learning	74	68	76	80
Non-vocational learning	25	23	25	28
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>4435</i>	<i>1541</i>	<i>2159</i>	<i>715</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>4446</i>	<i>1565</i>	<i>2149</i>	<i>713</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 currently employees or were employees in their last job and have been in paid employment in the past 10 years

Table 3.18 shows a link between learning and the size of the organisation people were working in:

- 75 per cent of people working in small organisations (i.e. less than 25 employees) reported some learning, compared with 83 per cent of those employed by a medium sized enterprise (24-499 employees) and 85 per cent of employees in large companies (i.e. 500+ employees)
- the gap in vocational learning was even larger with 68 per cent from a small enterprise, 76 per cent from a medium one and 80 per cent of employees from large organisations mentioning job related learning.

3.3.3 Financial circumstances

In 2001, data on financial circumstances were collected and analysed for the first time to explore any links with propensity to engage in learning. Given the earlier results on the association between occupational status and learning, it was not surprising to find that those most likely to report some learning were found at the top of the income scale (Table 3.19):

- 91 per cent of respondents with a household income of £31,200 or above reported some learning
- this figure is only slightly lower, at 86 per cent, among those in the £20,800 - £31,199 income group
- it then declines steadily among the lowest income groups: 73 per cent of respondents in the £10,400-£20,799 income bracket and 53 per cent of those with a family income below £10,400 reported some learning.

Even larger differences are found when looking at job related learning:

- 80 per cent or over of those in the top two income groups (i.e. £20,880+) had done some vocational learning
- 64 per cent of respondents in the £10,400-£20,799 income bracket reported some vocational learning
- the equivalent figure for those in the lowest income group is 42 per cent.

Table 3.19 Percentages of household income groups reporting different types of learning

	All	£10,399 or less	£10,400- £20,799	£20,800- £31,199	£31,200+
	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	76	53	73	86	91
Taught learning	59	38	52	68	75
Self-directed learning	60	37	55	70	80
Vocational learning	68	42	64	80	87
Non-vocational learning	25	21	21	26	29
Weighted base	5505	994	1291	976	1513
Unweighted base	5532	1035	1306	1000	1478

Base: all respondents aged under 70

NB 713 respondents did not answer the question on household income.

Dependency on benefits was also explored in this year's survey. Respondents were classified as being benefit dependent if they reported any of the following sources of household income: job seekers allowance, income support, invalid care allowance, working families tax credit, severe disablement allowance. The results in Table 3.20 show again a clear link between financial circumstances and learning:

- 56 per cent of those dependent on the benefits listed above reported some learning, compared with 81 per cent of the rest of the sample
- less than half (48 per cent) of benefit dependents reported some vocational learning, compared with more than two thirds (73 per cent) of other respondents.

Table 3.20 Percentages of benefit dependency groups reporting different types of learning

	All	Benefit dependent	Not benefit dependent
	%	%	%
Any learning	76	56	81
Taught learning	59	42	63
Self-directed learning	60	37	65
Vocational learning	68	48	73
Non-vocational learning	25	17	27
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>1024</i>	<i>4415</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>1049</i>	<i>4418</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

NB 65 respondents did not answer the question on sources of household income.

3.4 Learning in different regions

Previous NALS found some regional variations in learning patterns and the 2001 results were analysed again by government office regions (GOR) to explore this link between learning and geographical area.

The results in Table 3.21 seem to point to a North-South divide in terms of participation in learning:

- the highest figures for participation in learning were found in the South East (84 per cent), Eastern region (81 per cent) South West (79 per cent) and London (76 per cent)
- the learning participation rate was between 74 and 76 per cent in the Midlands
- participation in learning drops to 69-72 per cent in the Northern regions
- the lowest learning participation rate was found in Wales, where 64 per cent of people reported some learning.

Similar differences are found when looking at vocational learning:

- between 70 and 75 per cent of respondents in the Southern regions (including London) reported some vocational learning
- in the Midlands, vocational learning was less likely to be reported in the West Midlands (66 per cent) than in the East Midlands (71 per cent)
- in the Northern regions vocational learning had been undertaken by 60-63 per cent of respondents
- the equivalent figure for Wales was 57 per cent.

Table 3.21 Percentages of respondents in different GORs reporting different types of learning

	N. East	N. West	Mersey- side	Yorks & Humber	E. Mids	W. Mids	S. West	Eastern	London	S. East	Wales
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	72	71	[69]	70	76	74	79	81	76	84	64
Taught learning	55	56	[53]	54	56	60	57	61	61	66	49
Self-directed learning	53	53	[50]	50	63	55	66	65	64	69	47
Vocational learning	63	61	[60]	63	71	66	72	73	70	75	57
Non-vocational learning	23	23	[20]	20	22	22	27	27	27	28	19
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>267</i>	<i>655</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>516</i>	<i>449</i>	<i>543</i>	<i>521</i>	<i>586</i>	<i>736</i>	<i>853</i>	<i>310</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>300</i>	<i>596</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>526</i>	<i>499</i>	<i>422</i>	<i>625</i>	<i>572</i>	<i>630</i>	<i>922</i>	<i>377</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

A comparison of the 1997 and 2001 results shows changes have occurred in some areas:

- in the North East there has been an increase in the reported learning from 64 to 72 per cent
- smaller increases (between 4-6 percentage points) in participation in learning are also observed in the East Midlands, the South West, London and the South East
- participation in learning has declined in Wales (from 71 to 64 per cent) and in Yorkshire and Humberside (from 74 to 70 per cent).

Table 3.22 Percentages of respondents in different GORs reporting some learning –NALS 1997-2001

	N. East	N. West	Mersey- side	Yorks & Humber	E. Mids	W. Mids	S. West	Eastern	London	S. East	Wales
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
NALS 1997	64	71	68	74	71	74	73	80	72	78	71
NALS 2001	72	71	[69]	70	76	74	79	81	76	84	64

Base: all respondents aged under 70

3.5 Learning and local deprivation

The analysis in this section was carried out using the DETR multiple deprivation index (DETR, 2000) and only includes respondents in England. England and Wales have different deprivation indexes, which need to be analysed separately. However, the number of Welsh respondents was not large enough to carry out a separate analysis for this group.

NALS 2001 respondents were split into quintiles according to the multiple deprivation index in their area. As shown in Table 3.23, people in least deprived areas (in the sample) are in the first quintile, while those in the most deprived areas (in the sample) are included in the fifth quintile. Because Table 3.23 includes only respondents in England, some of the overall figures for different types of learning are slightly higher than those presented earlier.

Table 3.23 Percentages of respondents in multiple deprivation index quintiles reporting different types of learning

	All	1st quintile (least deprived)	2nd quintile	3rd quintile	4th quintile	5th quintile (most deprived)
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	77	85	81	79	75	63
Taught learning	59	67	65	60	57	48
Self-directed learning	61	68	65	65	57	48
Vocational learning	69	76	73	72	67	56
Non-vocational learning	25	30	30	23	24	18
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5195</i>	<i>1019</i>	<i>1070</i>	<i>984</i>	<i>1047</i>	<i>1060</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5155</i>	<i>1055</i>	<i>1075</i>	<i>989</i>	<i>1010</i>	<i>1012</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 in England

The results show a strong association between local deprivation and learning:

- the learning participation rate reported by those in the least deprived area, at 85 per cent, is well above the average for England as whole
- the proportions reporting learning in the second and third quintiles were also above the average (81 and 79 per cent respectively)
- the corresponding figure is slightly below the average (75 per cent) in the fourth quintile and drops significantly, to 63 per cent, among respondents living in the most deprived areas.

A similar pattern can be seen in relation to different types of learning, for example, looking at vocational learning:

- around three quarters of respondents in the first, second and third quintiles reported job related learning
- the equivalent figure in the fourth quintile is 67 per cent, while it drops to 56 per cent among adults living in the most deprived areas.

3.6 Conclusion

The NALS 2001 results confirm previous conclusions on the characteristics of adults who are most and least likely to engage in learning. This year's findings have also shown that, apart from a few notable exceptions, in the past four years, there have been no significant changes in the learning participation rates of different groups. Data collected this year for the first time have allowed analysis of learning among groups that had not been explored before, including older people, those on low income and dependent on benefits, and adults living in deprived areas.

As previous surveys have shown, there is a strong association between learning and age, with those at the two extremes of the age scale reporting the lowest learning participation rates. 16-19 year olds were less likely to report some learning than other young respondents and participation in learning among this group has declined since 1997. In recent years, the contraction of the youth labour market has raised concerns, not only about young people's ability to secure a job if they enter the labour market soon after the completion of compulsory education, but also about the lack of development and training opportunities in the jobs accessible to this group (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999). The results from NALS 2001 seem to confirm concerns about the lack of learning opportunities for young people who leave full-time education in their mid teens.

The learning participation rate for the 70+ age group is a third of the rate for the rest of the adult population, and it is even lower among older people with a disability and those who have responsibility for caring for another household member. The results also show that, unlike the rest of the adult population, very few people in this group undertake job related learning, a predictable result given that many have left the labour market. Differences not only in the propensity to engage in learning, but also in the type of learning older people do, have clear implications for learning provision, an issue which will be explored in detail in the next chapter.

Worth highlighting, given the recent large expansion in welfare to work programmes, is the lower than average learning participation rate among one of the key New Deal target groups, namely lone parents, and also the decline, albeit small, in participation in learning among the unemployed.

This year's results have confirmed the strong link between educational background and the propensity to engage in adult learning, with rather low learning participation rates reported by those who left full-time studies at an early age with basic or no qualifications. Interestingly though, the survey found that a majority of respondents had gained qualifications after leaving CFT education, with those with the lowest qualification levels on leaving being particularly likely to have done so. However, participation in learning was particularly low among those who left school with no qualifications and had not gained any since then.

The link between employment circumstances and learning remains strong, not surprising given that, as shown in the previous chapter, there has been an increase in work related learning. People at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy and outside the labour market are the least likely to report some learning and little seems to have changed in the past four years. One of the main changes since 1997 has been the increase in the proportion of self-employed who reported some learning, a finding which could reflect the increase and changing profile of this group, as a growing number of professionals become self-employed.

The results on financial circumstances and learning largely reflect the above results on labour market participation and learning: those in the lowest income group and dependent on benefits were less likely than the rest of the sample to engage in learning.

Finally, the regional analysis shows that Wales remains the area with the lowest learning participation rate. The 2001 results also seem to point to a North-South divide in participation in learning, a pattern which seems to have emerged more clearly than four years ago. Analysis carried out using the multiple deprivation index has also shown an association between learning and local deprivation, participation in different types of learning in the most deprived areas is considerably lower than that in more affluent areas.

4. OBSTACLES AND INCENTIVES TO LEARNING

This chapter examines the problems and obstacles respondents face in learning, whether or not they had done any in the last three years. The chapter also looks at what incentives would persuade non-learners to participate in learning and what subjects they would like to study. Respondents' attitudes to participating in learning in the future are also investigated.

Only those aged under 70 are included in analyses in this chapter and all the figures reported in the text refer to this group, unless stated otherwise. The groups analysed in each sub-section vary. Only non-learners were asked what would encourage them to learn in the future and what subject they would like to study, but all respondents were asked about the obstacles to learning and their likelihood of participating in learning in the future.

The results for obstacles to learning are also presented for NALS 1997. The questions about incentives were not included in the 1997 NALS so no trends over time can be examined.

4.1 Obstacles to learning

All respondents were asked about the problems they faced in learning, whether or not they had done any (Table 4.1).

- In 2001 the most common reason for not learning was that the respondent preferred to spend their time doing other things (34 per cent). In addition, some people mentioned a lack of interest (12 per cent) or not needing to learn for work (12 per cent).
- Time constraints of various kinds are acting as an obstacle to learning. Lack of time due to work was mentioned by 29 per cent, with a further fifth saying it was hard to get time off work. Over a fifth mentioned lack of time due to family commitments and 13 per cent mentioned childcare responsibilities.
- A quarter mentioned that it was hard to pay course fees (26 per cent) and 14 per cent said they would only learn if someone paid for the course.
- Lack of information also seemed to be a problem: a quarter said that they did not know about learning opportunities locally, 10 per cent did not know where to find out about courses and 11 per cent could not find local learning opportunities.
- A significant proportion appears inhibited from learning by the feeling that they are inadequately qualified and equipped: 17 per cent were nervous about going back to the classroom, lack of qualifications and concern about their ability to keep up with the course were each mentioned by 15 per cent of respondents. In addition, a small group mentioned literacy, language and numeracy problems.

Table 4.1 Obstacles to learning by learning status*

	All	Learner	Non-learner
	%	%	%
Prefer to spend time doing other things	34	31	43
Not interested in learning	12	8	26
Do not need to learn for my work	12	10	16
Do not see any point in education	4	3	11
Lack of time due to work	29	30	24
Hard to get time off work to learn	19	21	12
Lack of time due to family	22	19	30
Lack of time due to children	13	11	19
Lack of time because care for an adult	4	3	9
Hard to pay course fees	26	26	27
Would only do learning if someone paid fees	14	14	15
Benefits would be cut if did course	4	3	9
Does not know about local learning opportunities	24	23	28
Cannot find local opportunities to learn	11	10	12
Does not know where to find out about course	10	8	15
Nervous about going back to classroom	17	14	26
Do not have quals to get onto course	15	13	24
Worried about keeping up with course	15	13	21
Difficulties reading and writing	6	5	11
Difficulties with English	4	4	7
Problems with numbers	4	4	6
Too old to learn	11	7	25
Problem arranging transport to course	9	8	15
Course difficult due to health/ disability	4	2	9
None of the above obstacles	15	18	7
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>4175</i>	<i>1331</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>4182</i>	<i>1350</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

* Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could mention more than one obstacle

Looking at learners and non-learners, the key differences are (Table 4.1):

- non-learners were much more likely to say that they preferred doing other things (43 per cent) or that they were not interested in learning (26 per cent); however, it is interesting that even among learners, 31 per cent said that they preferred to do other things with their time

- a lack of time due to work and difficulties in getting time off were most likely to be mentioned by those who had done some learning (30 per cent and 21 per cent respectively)
- in contrast, a lack of time due to family and children were most likely to be mentioned by non-learners (30 per cent and 19 per cent respectively)
- non-learners were more likely than learners to mention that they did not have the qualifications necessary (24 per cent), they were worried about keeping up with the course (21 per cent) and they were nervous about going back to the classroom (26 per cent)
- non-learners were also more likely to mention problems with reading and writing (11 per cent), English (seven per cent) and numeracy (six per cent)
- non-learners were more likely to say that they were too old to learn (25 per cent), partly reflecting the fact that non-learners tend to be older.

Table 4.2 compares the obstacles to learning reported in 1997 and 2001. There has been a small decrease in the proportion who said that:

- they prefer to do other things (from 39 per cent to 34 per cent)
- they are not interested and do not need to learn (from 15-16 per cent to 12 per cent).

There has been a small increase in mentions of the following obstacles:

- the cost of fees (from 21 to 26 per cent) and that they would only do learning if someone else pays (from 11 to 14 per cent)
- a lack of knowledge about local learning opportunities (from 20 to 24 per cent).

The percentage reporting a lack of time due to various commitments or saying they do not have the qualifications, skills or confidence to do learning has not changed significantly between 1997 and 2001.

Looking at learners and non-learners separately the changes from 1997 to 2001 are the same as the overall changes, except that among non-learners the percentage reporting lack of qualifications, skills and confidence has increased slightly:

- 21 per cent of non-learners said they did not have the necessary qualifications in 1997, compared with 24 per cent in 2001
- 17 per cent were worried about keeping up with the course in 1997, compared with 21 per cent in 2001
- the percentages reporting literacy and language problems have also increased.

Table 4.2 Obstacles to learning – NALS 1997-2001*

	1997	2001
	%	%
Prefer to spend time doing other things	39	34
Not interested in learning	16	12
Do not need to learn for my work	15	12
Do not see any point in education	NA	4
Lack of time due to work	29	29
Lack of time due to family	24	22
Hard to get time off work to learn	18	19
Lack of time due to children	NA	13
Lack of time because care for an adult	NA	4
Hard to pay course fees	21	26
Would only do learning if someone paid fees	11	14
Benefits would be cut if did course	5	4
Does not know about local learning opportunities	20	24
Cannot find local opportunities to learn	11	11
Does not know where to find out about course	NA	10
Nervous about going back to classroom	NA	17
Do not have quals to get onto course	15	15
Worried about keeping up with course	13	15
Difficulties reading and writing	5	6
Difficulties with English	4	4
Problems with numbers	NA	4
Too old to learn	13	11
Problem arranging transport to course	NA	9
Course difficult due to health/ disability	7	4
Did not enjoy learning at school	17	NA
None of the above obstacles	13	15
<i>Weighted base</i>	5245	5505
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5386	5532

Base: all respondents aged under 70

* Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could mention more than one obstacle

The obstacles to learning can be distinguished between three types:

- societal or peer pressure
- practical obstacles
- deep-seated personal difficulties.

Societal obstacles would include preferring to spend time doing other things, not being interested and not needing to learn. Practical problems include cost, time, transport and lack of skills. More deep-seated personal difficulties include being nervous of going back to the classroom or feeling too old to learn.

While this distinction is useful, it is also important to recognise that these types are overlapping and some obstacles to learning given by respondents may hide the 'real' reasons. For example, among those who say they do not have time, there may be some who are just giving this as an excuse and their reason for not learning has more to do with peer pressure or their perceived inadequacy. Among those who say they have too few qualifications or insufficient English, most will actually have sufficient skills to take part in learning of some kind, the obstacle may mainly be the respondent's feelings of inadequacy.

The underlying reasons for not participating in learning have implications for policy and so it is important to identify those for whom the practical obstacles could be overcome by appropriate policy initiatives.

As would be expected, the obstacles mentioned by different groups varied, Table 4.3 shows that:

- men were more likely than women to say they preferred to spend their time doing other things (38 per cent), that they did not have time because of work (34 per cent) and that it was hard to get time off work (23 per cent)
- women were more likely to mention a lack of time due to family (27 per cent), that it is hard to pay course fees (29 per cent), being worried about keeping up with course (19 per cent) and being nervous about going back to the classroom (22 per cent).

Table 4.3 Obstacles to learning by sex*

	All	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Prefer to spend time doing other things	34	38	30
Not interested in learning	12	12	12
Do not need to learn for my work	12	13	10
Do not see any point in education	4	5	4
Lack of time due to work	29	34	24
Lack of time due to family	22	16	27
Hard to get time off work to learn	19	23	14
Lack of time due to children	13	6	20
Lack of time because care for an adult	4	3	6
Hard to pay course fees	26	22	29
Would only do learning if someone paid fees	14	15	13
Benefits would be cut if did course	4	3	5
Does not know about local learning opportunities	24	25	23
Cannot find local opportunities to learn	11	10	11
Does not know where to find out about course	10	9	11
Nervous about going back to classroom	17	12	22
Do not have quals to get onto course	15	14	17
Worried about keeping up with course	15	10	19
Difficulties reading and writing	6	8	5
Difficulties with English	4	5	4
Problems with numbers	4	3	5
Too old to learn	11	10	12
Problem arranging transport to course	9	6	12
Course difficult due to health/ disability	4	3	4
None of the above obstacles	15	15	14
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>2713</i>	<i>2792</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>2431</i>	<i>3101</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could mention more than one obstacle

Looking at household composition:

- parents were more likely to mention a lack of time due to their family (42 per cent, compared with 10 per cent with no children) and lack of time due to childcare responsibilities (27 per cent of those with a partner and 38 per cent of lone parents)

- lone parents were the group most likely to mention that it is hard for them to pay the fees (42 per cent, compared with 30 per cent of parents with a partner and 22 per cent of those with no children)
- lone parents were also twice as likely as the other groups to mention transport problems (17 per cent) and three to four times as likely to say that their benefit would be cut if they did a course (13 per cent).

Looking at respondents' qualification level:

- those with no qualifications were most likely to mention a lack of time due to their family (29 per cent), lack of time due to children (18 per cent), that it is hard to pay course fees (30 per cent), lack of qualifications (35 per cent), difficulties with writing (20 per cent), worries about keeping up with the course (28 per cent) and they were also the group most likely to mention problems with English (10 per cent) and numeracy (nine per cent)
- however, they were also more likely to mention that they preferred to do other things (41 per cent) and were not interested in learning (30 per cent)
- while 30 per cent of those with level five qualifications said there were no obstacles to their learning, only four per cent of those with no qualifications said that
- the result for those with level one qualifications were similar to those with no qualifications.

Comparing people of different activity status:

- those working full-time and self-employed were most likely to mention a lack of time because of work (42-43 per cent) and full-time workers were also the group most likely to report difficulties getting time off work (31 per cent)
- over half of those who were looking after the family said they lacked time due to the family (54 per cent) and 47 per cent of them mentioned problems of time due to childcare responsibilities
- over half of the unemployed mentioned that it was hard for them to pay fees (54 per cent) and they were also the group most likely not to know about local learning opportunities (38 per cent)
- retired people were the most likely to say they preferred to do other things (45 per cent), they were not interested in learning (25 per cent) and that they were too old to learn (24 per cent).

Thirty-nine per cent of those with household incomes of less than £10,400 said it was hard for them to pay course fees, compared with only 14 per cent of those with incomes of £31,200 or more.

Those with disabilities and health problems were most likely to say that their disability made it difficult for them to do a course (14 per cent) and that they were too old to learn (20 per cent).

4.2 Non-learners' attitudes to learning

Those who had done no learning in the past three years were asked whether they would like to have done some learning. Table 4.4 shows that 63 per cent would not have liked to have done any learning, only 16 per cent said they definitely would have and 20 per cent said maybe. The table also shows a clear age pattern with younger respondents being more likely to say that they would or may have liked to have done some learning; among 16-29 year olds, 60 per cent said they would or may have liked to. This indicates a possible lack of opportunities for younger people, while among the older groups (aged 50 and over) the low level of participation in learning could be partly due to a lack of desire to participate.

Table 4.4 Whether respondent would like to have done some learning by age

	All	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 +
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes definitely	16	[39]	31	31	21	17	11	7
Yes maybe	20	[21]	29	27	32	23	19	13
No	63	[40]	40	41	46	58	70	80
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>2040</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>244</i>	<i>235</i>	<i>264</i>	<i>430</i>	<i>709</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2031</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>254</i>	<i>239</i>	<i>267</i>	<i>439</i>	<i>681</i>

Base: all respondents who had done no learning in the past three years

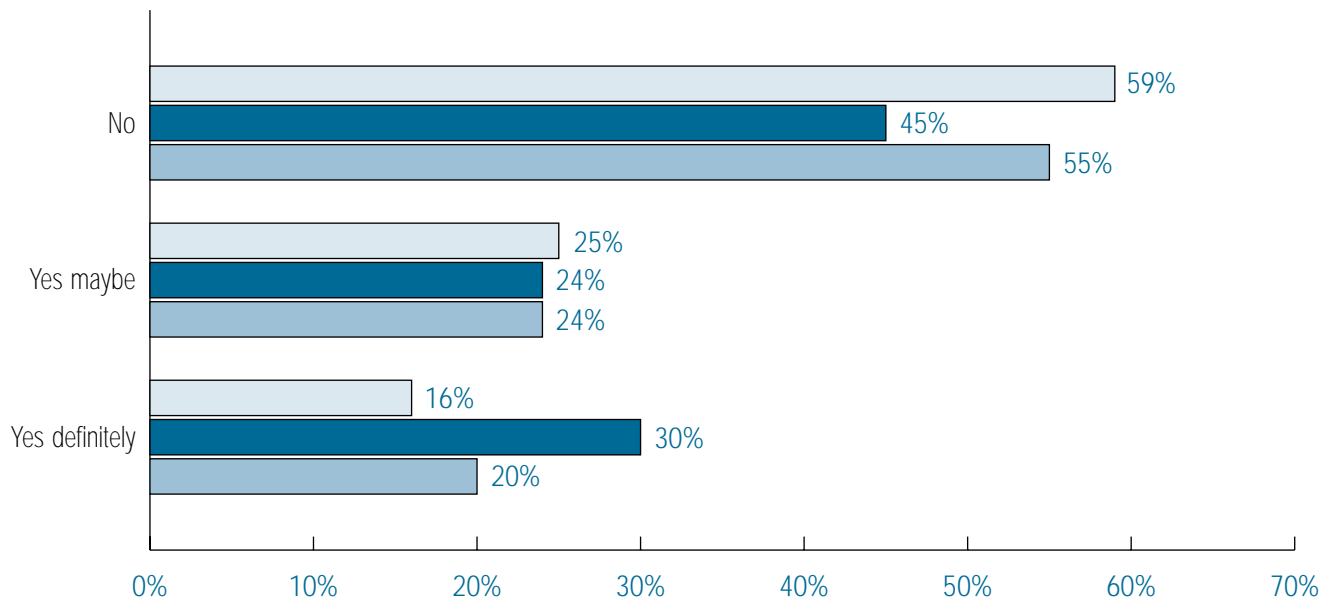
While there were no gender differences in the desire to have done some learning, there is a clear pattern by household type (Table 4.5). Lone parents were the group most likely to say they would have liked to have done some learning (36 per cent definitely, and a further 23 per cent maybe). Among those with no children, only 40 per cent overall said they would or may have liked to have done some learning.

Table 4.5 Whether respondent would like to have done some learning by household type

	All	Parent with partner	Lone parent	No children
	%	%	%	%
Yes definitely	20	27	36	16
Yes maybe	24	27	23	24
No	55	45	39	60
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1331</i>	<i>287</i>	<i>124</i>	<i>920</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1350</i>	<i>295</i>	<i>134</i>	<i>921</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done no learning in the past three years

Respondents dependent on means tested benefits were much more likely than non-recipients to say that they would or may have liked to have done some learning (54 per cent and 41 per cent respectively) and were more likely to be definite (30 per cent, compared with 16 per cent of non-recipients) (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Whether respondent would like to have done some learning by benefit dependency*

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done no learning in the past three years

NB 23 respondents did not answer the question from which benefit dependency was derived

*Respondents were classified as being benefit dependent if they reported any of the following sources of household income: Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support, Invalid Care Allowance, Working Families Tax Credit, Severe Disablement Allowance.

All ■
 Benefit dependent ■
 Not benefit dependent ■

4.3 Incentives to learning

All those who had done no learning in the last three years were also asked what would have encouraged them to do some learning (Table 4.6). The two most mentioned incentives were funding and advice (17 per cent and 15 per cent respectively). Twelve per cent said they would have considered learning if it had improved their job chances, 10 per cent if learning had been at the right times and nine per cent if learning had been in the right place. It is striking that 59 per cent of respondents said that nothing would have encouraged them to do any learning.

Looking at the responses by different age groups it can be seen that:

- the need for funding was most likely to be mentioned by the under 50s (35-46 per cent), as was advice (25-33 per cent)
- the need for childcare was mentioned by 34-36 per cent of 20-39 year olds
- improved job chances were most likely to be mentioned by the younger age groups (under 40 year olds), as was learning at the right times (33-36 per cent and 23-24 per cent respectively)
- only 23 per cent of 20-39 year olds said nothing would have encouraged them to learn, compared with 82 per cent of those aged 70 and over.

Thus the results show that it is the younger age groups who were most likely to have wanted to do some learning and for whom certain incentives such as advice or funding would encourage them to do so. In contrast, it seems that many older non-learners do not wish to do any learning. This is similar to the findings in 1997, when 70 per cent of 60-69 year olds said nothing would encourage them to learn, compared with 20 per cent of 16-19 year olds.

Table 4.6 What would encourage the respondent to learn by age*

	All	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 +
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Funding	17	[42]	46	37	35	16	9	3
Advice	15	[33]	25	28	30	14	8	7
If improved job chances	12	[33]	36	33	27	10	2	1
Learning at right times	10	[12]	23	24	17	12	6	4
Learning in right place	9	[18]	14	16	13	9	7	6
Childcare	8	[12]	36	34	8	3	1	*
Learning relevant to needs	8	[15]	15	15	14	11	4	3
Help with health/ disab	7	[-]	5	5	11	13	4	7
Time off to learn	6	[4]	18	14	16	7	*	*
Help with literacy/ English	5	[9]	10	9	13	7	4	1
Learning at work	5	[13]	14	11	8	8	1	1
Care for dependents	2	[5]	2	7	2	3	2	1
Other things	2	[-]	3	3	3	2	1	1
None of these	59	[30]	23	23	34	50	74	82
<i>Weighted base</i>	2040	36	121	244	235	264	430	709
<i>Unweighted base</i>	2031	31	120	254	239	267	439	681

Base: all respondents who had done no learning in the past three years

*Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply

Lone parents were the group least likely to say that that nothing would have encouraged them to learn (19 per cent, compared with 56 per cent of those with no children) (Table 4.7). Lone parents were particularly likely to mention the need for funding (46 per cent), childcare (44 per cent) and advice (32 per cent). All parents were more likely than those without children to mention the need for learning at the right times (23-28 per cent).

Table 4.7 What would encourage the respondent to learn by household type*

	All	Parent with partner	Lone parent	No children
	%	%	%	%
Funding	25	33	46	19
Advice	19	24	32	15
If improved job chances	17	31	27	12
Learning at right times	14	23	28	9
Childcare	12	27	44	3
Learning in right place	11	14	17	9
Learning relevant to needs	10	14	13	9
Time off to learn	9	16	6	7
Help with literacy/ English	8	11	17	5
Help with health/ disab	7	7	5	8
Learning at work	7	10	6	6
Care for dependents	3	5	7	2
Other things	2	4	3	1
None of these	47	29	19	56
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1331</i>	<i>287</i>	<i>124</i>	<i>920</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1350</i>	<i>295</i>	<i>134</i>	<i>921</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done no learning in the past three years

*Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply

Table 4.8 shows that those who received means tested benefits were much less likely than non-recipients to say that none of the incentives listed would have encouraged them to learn (33 per cent, compared with 54 per cent of non-recipients). However, they were also much more likely than others to say that funding, childcare, advice and improved job chances would have encouraged them to learn.

Table 4.8 What would encourage the respondent to learn* by benefit dependency**

	All	Benefit dependent	Not benefit dependent
	%	%	%
Funding	25	38	18
Advice	19	27	15
If improved job chances	17	25	14
Learning at right times	14	15	14
Childcare	12	23	7
Learning in right place	11	14	9
Learning relevant to needs	10	12	10
Time off to learn	9	5	11
Help with literacy/ English	8	12	5
Help with health/ disab	7	15	3
Learning at work	7	7	7
Care for dependents	3	6	1
Other things	2	2	2
None of these	47	33	54
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1331</i>	<i>453</i>	<i>855</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1350</i>	<i>464</i>	<i>863</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done no learning in the past three years

NB 23 respondents did not answer the question from which benefit dependency is derived

*Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply

**Respondents were classified as being benefit dependent if they reported any of the following sources of household income: Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support, Invalid Care Allowance, Working Families Tax Credit, Severe Disablement Allowance.

As was discussed earlier, some of those who give practical reasons for not participating in learning may have more deep-seated reasons for not taking part. Thus removing obstacles will not necessarily mean they would take part in learning. This can be seen among respondents who said that nothing would encourage them to learn, while also reporting practical obstacles to learning: 22 per cent mentioned a lack of time due to work, 23 per cent a lack of time due to their family, 17 per cent lack of knowledge about local learning opportunities, 14 per cent said it would be hard to pay the fees, six per cent that they would learn if someone else paid the fees and nine per cent had difficulty reading and writing. Yet when given the hypothetical offer of time off work, funding, advice, childcare, help with literacy and other incentives they said nothing of these would encourage them to learn.

4.4 Desired subject of learning

All non-learners who would like to have done some learning were asked what subject they would like to have studied (Table 4.9). The most common one was keyboard and computing skills (29 per cent), followed by leisure activities (22 per cent) and training for professions or trades (18 per cent). Eleven per cent mentioned an academic subject and all other subjects were reported by fewer than five per cent of respondents.

Table 4.9 also shows the age pattern of responses:

- those in the middle age groups (40-59 years) were most likely to mention that they would have liked to study computing (36-37 per cent)
- those in the older age groups were most likely to mention wanting to learn about leisure activities (35 per cent of those aged 60 and over)

- the youngest age groups were most likely to mention training for professions or trades (34 per cent of 20-29 year olds).

Table 4.9 Subject respondent would like to learn by age

	All	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 +
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Keyboard and computing	29	[18]	27	31	36	37	22	22
Leisure activities	22	[12]	10	11	17	22	35	35
Training for professions	18	[50]	34	23	19	13	11	6
Academic	11	[6]	2	9	5	11	15	17
Basic skills	4	[-]	5	5	4	4	4	1
Admin and management	2	[-]	4	5	3	1	2	-
English/ writing skills	2	[-]	4	-	3	2	1	1
Driving lessons	1	[-]	1	1	-	-	1	2
Communication skills	1	[-]	2	-	-	-	-	1
Official guidelines	*	[-]	1	-	-	-	-	1
Use of equipment	*	[-]		1	-	-	-	-
Self development	-	[-]		-	-	-	-	-
Other subject	1	[-]	1	1	1	1	-	1
Irrelevant or vague answer	12	[14]	9	13	12	10	10	15
<i>Weighted base</i>	740	22	73	143	124	108	127	144
<i>Unweighted base</i>	743	18	73	152	126	105	130	139

Base: all respondents who had done no learning and said they would like to do some learning

Table 4.10 shows that there were also clear gender patterns, with men being more likely than women to mention computing (37 per cent) and women being more likely to mention training for professions and trades (24 per cent) and leisure activities (22 per cent).

Table 4.10 Subject respondent would like to learn by sex

	All	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Keyboard and computing	30	37	26
Training for professions	20	15	24
Leisure activities	19	16	22
Academic	9	9	9
Basic skills	4	5	4
Admin and management	3	4	2
English/ writing skills	2	1	2
Driving lessons	1	*	1
Official guidelines	*	-	*
Communication skills	*	1	-
Use of equipment	*	1	-
Self development	-	-	-
Other subject	1	-	1
Irrelevant or vague answer	11	13	10
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>596</i>	<i>247</i>	<i>349</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>604</i>	<i>223</i>	<i>381</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done no learning and said they would or may have liked to do some learning

Looking at the main activity at the time of the survey:

- self-employed were the group most likely to report computing (44 per cent)
- those looking after the family were the most likely to want to do training for professions or trades (27 per cent)
- retired people were the most likely to want to do learning related to leisure activities (38 per cent) and least likely to mention learning related to professions or trades (7 per cent) or computing (21 per cent)

Among different socio-economic groups, skilled manual workers were the group most likely to want to learn about computing (35 per cent). Looking at parental status, lone parents were the most likely to want to do training for professions or trades (30 per cent) and least likely to want to learn computing (25 per cent), while those with no children were most likely to want to do learning related to leisure activities (21 per cent).

4.5 Conclusion

Obstacles to learning were reported by the majority of respondents, both learners and non-learners. The main problems mentioned were lack of time, lack of suitable skills and qualifications, and lack of awareness of learning opportunities. However, a substantial minority, particularly among non-learners, preferred to do other things with their time and were not interested in learning. It is important to distinguish between those who want to learn, but face practical difficulties, who are quite different from those with no interest in doing so. The results in this chapter have

shown that even among those who give practical reasons for not learning, there may be deep-seated difficulties which would require a change in attitudes, as well as the removal of practical obstacles, before they would become learners.

The findings on attitudes and incentives to learning clearly show the groups who are likely to engage in learning if some practical obstacles are removed. Younger people and lone parents were most likely to say they would like to have done learning and were quite clear about what would have enabled them to do so: advice, funding, childcare facilities and improved job chances. The incentives mentioned did differ between groups; initiatives and assistance in learning should be flexible so as to take account of the different obstacles faced and support needed by different groups. The subjects that different groups would like to study also varied and it seems that in order to widen participation in adult learning, this 'variety' needs to be reflected in the courses available.

The results in this chapter have shown that there is unmet need for learning and have highlighted possible areas for intervention. It should also be remembered that even learners face obstacles to learning, and that some non-learners do not wish to learn and do not see its relevance.

5. TAUGHT LEARNING

This chapter looks in more detail at the characteristics of the taught learning done by the respondents in the three years before the survey. The chapter focuses on the 2001 results, with references to previous NALS made only where there have been significant changes.

After a brief overview of all the taught courses respondents participated in, the chapter looks in detail at the selected course. The subject of the course, provider and source of information about the course are examined, followed by the type of course, where and when it took place. The length of the course and hours of teaching are also examined. The chapter also looks at the use of learning aids and ICT. The relationship between the course and the respondent's employment is examined, as well as non-vocational motivations and outcomes.

Tables in this chapter only include respondents under 70 for comparability with previous NALS and all the figures reported in the text refer to this group, unless stated otherwise. Only 137 respondents in the 70+ age group had done some taught learning; when appropriate, results for this group are referred to. The results show that the characteristics of their learning episodes were quite different from the younger groups.

5.1 Overview

Respondents were asked to give some information about all the taught courses they had done in the last three years, including the start and end date, whether the tuition lasted 10 hours or more and whether it was job related. Table 5.1 shows the number of courses reported by those who had done any taught learning. Almost half (46 per cent) had done only one course, and 25 per cent had done two, and just under a third (29 per cent) had done three or more courses. The median number of courses was 1.16 compared with 1.25 in 1997.

Table 5.1 Number of taught courses undertaken in reference period

	Percentage having done each number
	%
One	46
Two	25
Three	14
Four	8
Five	3
Six or more	4
Median number per respondent	1.16
<i>Weighted base</i>	3226
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3230

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done taught learning in past three years

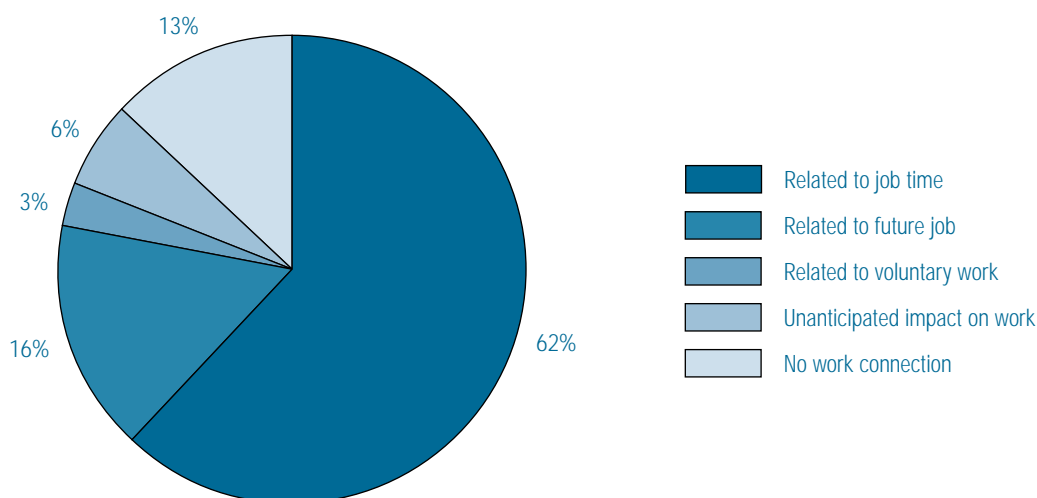
From the details of courses done by the respondent in the last three years, one was randomly selected from among the three most recent ones. This selected course was then asked about in detail during the interview. The rest of this chapter is based on analysis of data for this selected course. In NALS 1997, these detailed questions about the course were asked about the three most recent courses or all the courses if there were three or less. The 2001 data have been weighted in such a way that the results for the selected course are comparable with the 1997 results (see the Technical Report for more details). In the rest of this chapter 'All taught learning' refers to the selected course.

Courses were divided into five types according to their relation to the respondent's employment. These categories were derived from a series of questions asked about the reasons for doing the course. It should be noted that courses may have been done for more than one purpose, but for this analysis they were assigned to the first applicable category. Figure 5.1 shows that 62 per cent of the selected courses were connected with a job held by the respondent at the time they started it and 16 per cent were done with a future job in mind. Three per cent were done in connection with voluntary work and six per cent had a potential impact on working life, even if that was not the original intention behind the learning. Thus, only 13 per cent of courses had no work connection at all.

Among those who were working at the time of starting the course, 74 per cent of courses had a work connection and only nine per cent no work connection.

Those aged 70 or over reported different types of taught learning: only eight per cent had done learning connected with a current or future job and 77 per cent had no work connection. This means that other characteristics of the courses reported by the 70+ group are likely to be very different from those for the other age groups.

Figure 5.1 Types of taught learning*



Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done taught learning in past three years

*The categories presented in the table are mutually exclusive, learning episodes were placed in categories following a priority order with the first category taking priority over the second, even if both applied to the same learning episode

Table 5.2 shows the percentage of courses which were vocational; that is connected with current, future or voluntary work. Eighty per cent of courses were vocational, including 10 per cent related to voluntary work. Most of the analysis in this chapter will look at the characteristics of the selected course by whether it was vocational or non-vocational.

Table 5.2 Types of taught learning in selected course*

	All taught learning
	%
Vocational taught learning	80
Non-vocational taught learning	20
<i>Weighted base</i>	3258
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3230

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done taught learning in past three years

5.2 Subject, information about course and learning provider

5.2.1 Subject of course

Respondents were asked to describe the subject of the taught learning episode. This was recorded verbatim by the interviewer and then coded in the office. Table 5.3 shows that:

- the most common subject was training for particular professions or trades (32 per cent), but this varied from 39 per cent of vocational courses to only six per cent of non-vocational courses
- 18 per cent reported computing courses, this varied from 20 per cent for vocational courses and 10 per cent for non-vocational ones.
- the two subjects more common among non-vocational courses were leisure activities (50 per cent compared with four per cent of vocational courses) and academic (15 per cent compared with four per cent of vocational).

Computing was the only subject which showed a significant change since 1997, when 14 per cent of courses reported were about it. This reflects the general increase in the use of computers in recent years.

Those over the age of 70 were much less likely to have done training for professions or trades (two per cent) than those under 70 and, interestingly, they were more likely to have done a course on computing (26 per cent).

Table 5.3 Subject of taught learning

	All taught learning	Vocational taught learning	Non-vocational taught learning
	%	%	%
Training for particular professions or trades	32	39	6
Keyboard and computing skills	18	20	10
Leisure activities	13	4	50
Training as a result of official guidelines	9	11	2
Administration and management	8	10	2
Academic	6	4	15
Driving lessons	3	2	7
Use of specific equipment – such as machinery, transport etc	3	3	*
Communication skills - customer care, public speaking	1	2	*
Basic Skills (literacy, numeracy, writing etc)	1	1	1
English language/ Writing skills	1	1	2
Self development – self awareness/ esteem, assertiveness training	*	*	*
Other subject	3	2	3
Irrelevant or vague answer	2	2	1
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>3258</i>	<i>2622</i>	<i>636</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3230</i>	<i>2532</i>	<i>698</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done taught learning in past three years

5.2.2 Information about the course

Respondents were asked how they first found out about the course (Table 5.4):

- an employer was mentioned by 27 per cent, unsurprisingly, this was much higher for vocational courses (36 per cent) than non-vocational (three per cent)
- friends and relatives were the second most common way to find out about a course (14 per cent), particularly for non-vocational learning for which the figure was 29 per cent
- the other more common sources of information were educational institutions (10 per cent), newspapers and magazines (nine per cent), leaflets and work colleagues (eight per cent)
- respondents heard about their course from a wide range of other sources, but none of them were mentioned by more than two percent of respondents.

Table 5.4 Where respondent first heard about taught learning episode

	All taught learning	Vocational taught learning	Non-vocational taught learning
	%	%	%
My employer	27	36	3
Friends/relatives	14	9	29
School/ college/ univ/ adult ed. institute	10	10	11
Newspapers/magazines	9	8	14
Leaflets through letterbox	8	6	14
Work colleagues	8	10	2
Internet/online/website	2	2	2
Job Centre/Jobclub/UBO/ New Deal	2	2	*
Public library	2	1	6
Community/volunt./religious group	2	1	2
From existing course	2	2	1
Training centre	1	1	*
Business Link/TEC/LEC	1	1	-
Careers service	1	1	-
Learning advice or adult guidance centre	1	1	1
Shop or other commercial organisation	1	1	3
Professional organisation/ Trade Union	1	2	*
TV	*	*	1
Radio	*	*	-
learndirect (phone and Internet helpline)	-	-	-
Learning Resource Centre	*	*	*
Citizens Advice Bureau	*	*	-
Social /community outreach worker	*	*	*
Leisure/ sports centre	*	*	*
Local Authority	*	*	-
Other place	8	7	10
<i>Weighted base</i>	2493	1859	634
<i>Unweighted base</i>	2502	1806	696

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done taught learning in past three years

5.2.3 Course providers

Respondents were asked who had provided the course; this is the organisation or person who ran the course, not the person who arranged for them to go on it. Table 5.6 shows that:

- almost half (48 per cent) of courses were provided by the respondent's employer (59 per cent of vocational courses and three per cent of non-vocational)
- the next most common provider, a professional organisation, was mentioned by only eight per cent of respondents

- 22 per cent of courses were arranged by an educational institution (FE college, adult education institute, university, HE college or school)
- none of the other providers were mentioned by more than two per cent of respondents
- a relatively high percentage of respondents said that the course was arranged by none of these organisations listed (16 per cent) and this was over a third (37 per cent) for non-vocational courses.

Those aged 70 or over were much more likely to have done a course provided by an educational institution, religious organisation or charity, than were those under 70. None of the oldest age group had done a course provided by an employer.

Table 5.5 Taught course provider

	All taught learning	Vocational taught learning	Non-vocational taught learning
	%	%	%
Employer	48	59	3
Professional organisation	8	10	3
Further Education or tertiary college	7	6	10
Adult education institute	7	3	21
University or Higher Education college	6	6	6
Charity/voluntary group	2	2	2
School/other educational institution	2	2	4
Business Link/TEC/LEC	1	1	-
Job centre/club	1	1	1
Religious organisation	1	1	2
Community organisation	1	1	4
Sports club/ association	1	*	2
Commercial organisation	1	1	2
Trade Union/Staff association	*	1	*
Other organisation	3	2	4
None of these organisations	16	10	37
<i>Weighted base</i>	3258	2622	636
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3230	2532	698

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done taught learning in past three years.

5.3 Mode, place and time of tuition, hours of teaching and length

5.3.1 Mode of and place of tuition

The survey collected information on the mode of learning and way in which the tuition was provided.

Figure 5.2 shows that the majority of courses involved face-to-face teaching (92 per cent) and this did not vary much between vocational and non-vocational learning. Seven per cent had done learning by correspondence and five per cent online. Only four per cent had received no personal teaching.

The mode of teaching for those aged 70 or over was not significantly different from that for those aged less than 70.

Figure 5.2 Mode of tuition*

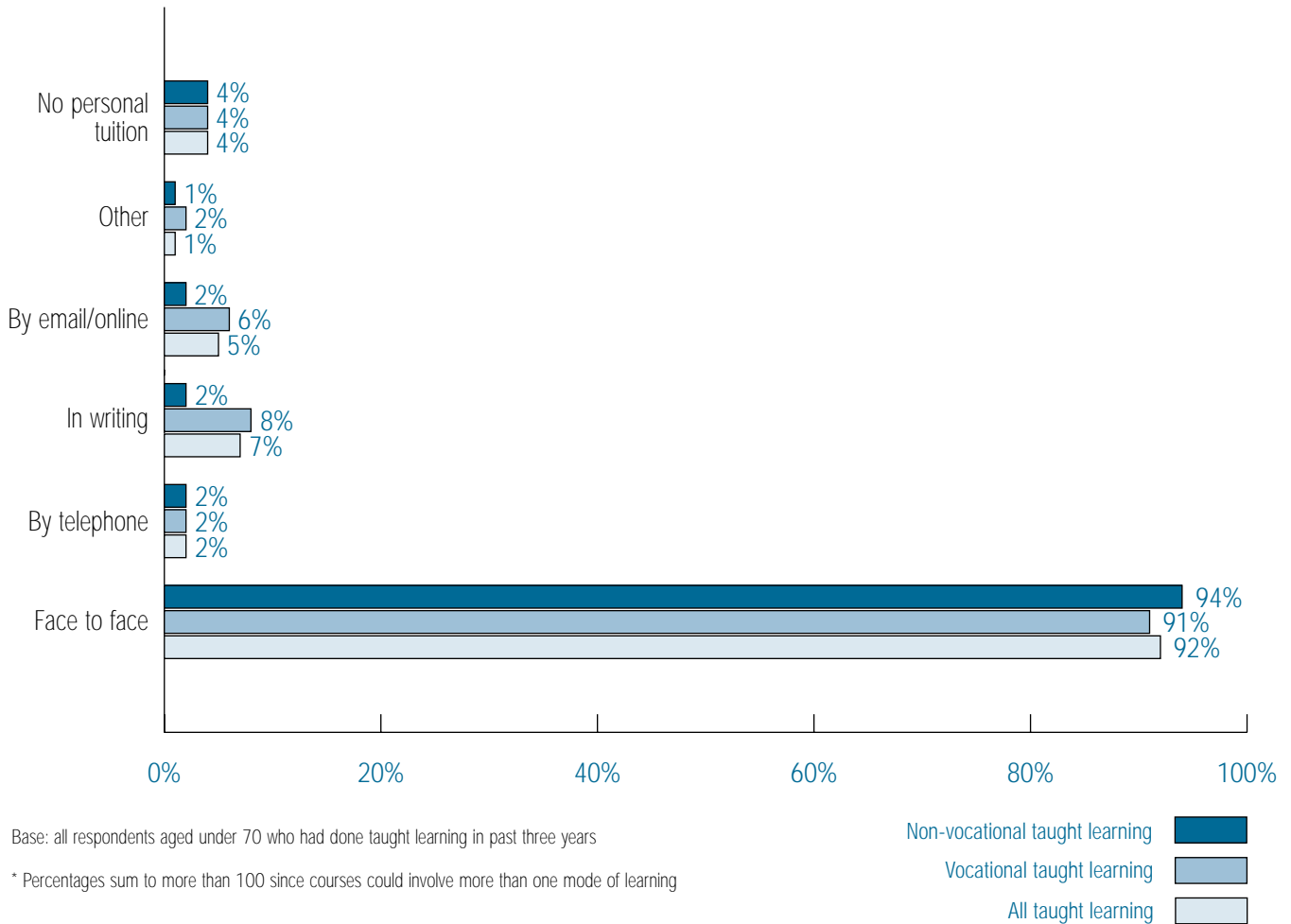


Table 5.6 shows the main place of tuition:

- the most common venue for face-to-face teaching was an educational institution (34 per cent) and this was more common for non-vocational courses, half of which (51 per cent) took place in an educational institution
- the next most common venue was the workplace, which showed the opposite pattern, being most common for vocational learning (30 per cent)
- 18 per cent of courses were held in a training centre
- each of the wide range of other locations for learning shown in Table 5.6 were mentioned by fewer than 10 per cent of respondents.

Those aged 70 or over were more likely than younger people to do their course in an education institution (52 per cent) and none mentioned the workplace. A fifth of that age group (21 per cent) had attended the course in a community centre, compared with only four per cent of under 70s.

Table 5.6 Main place of face-to-face teaching

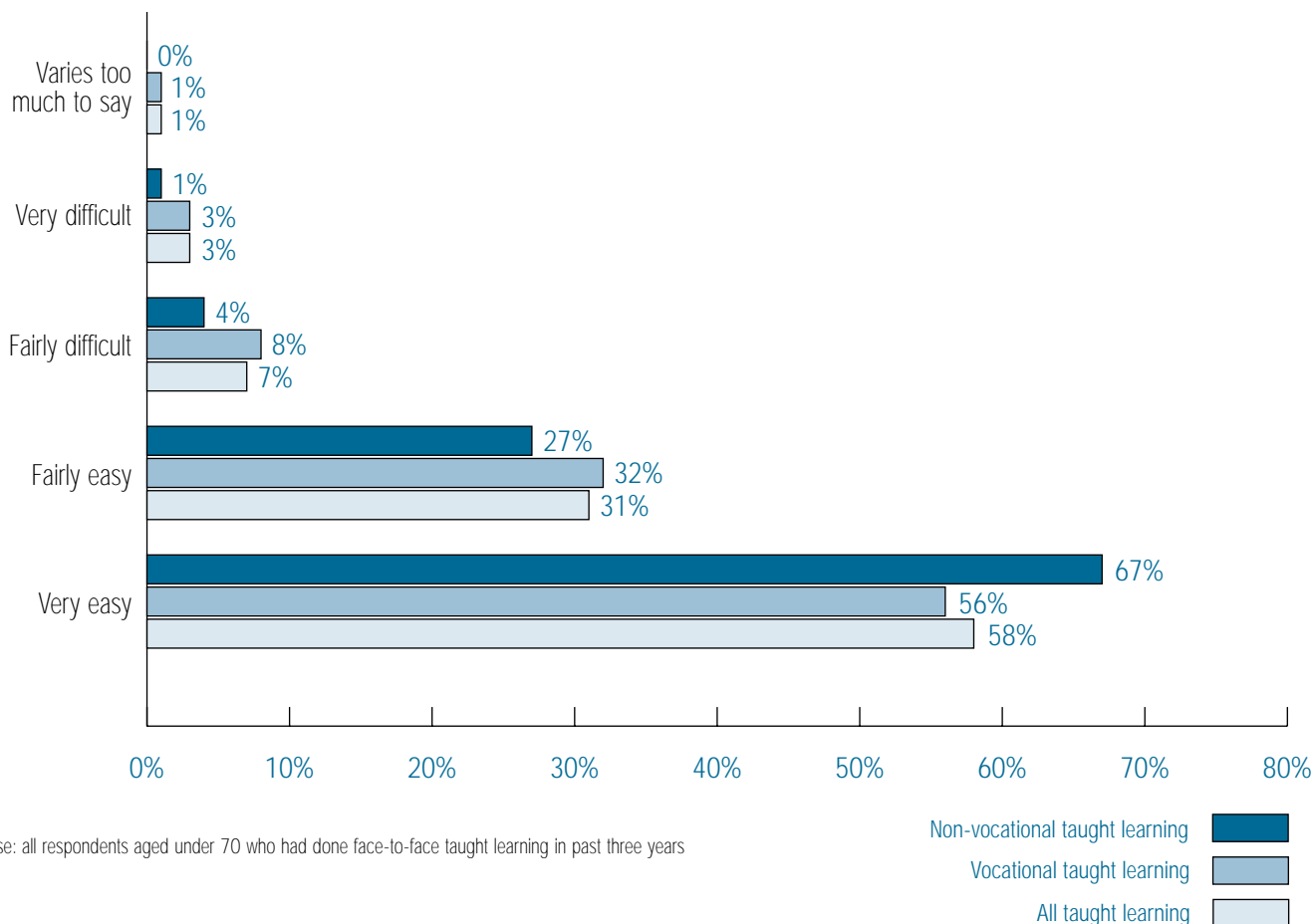
	All taught learning	Vocational taught learning	Non-vocational taught learning
	%	%	%
School/ college/ university/ adult ed	34	29	51
Workplace	25	30	2
Training Centre	18	22	3
Tutor's home/ rented premises	7	7	7
Community centre	4	2	11
Leisure or sports centre	3	1	11
Driving school/ instructors' car	3	2	7
Learning Resource Centre	2	2	2
Own home	1	1	2
Professional organisation/ Trade Union	1	1	*
Hospital/ health centre/ surgery	1	1	*
Job Centre/Job Club	*	*	-
Public library	*	*	*
Other place	3	2	3
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>2980</i>	<i>2384</i>	<i>596</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2951</i>	<i>2300</i>	<i>651</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done face-to-face taught learning in past three years

Respondents whose face-to-face teaching took place anywhere except their own home were asked how easy it was to get to the place (Figure 5.3). Eighty-nine percent found it easy (58 per cent very and 31 per cent fairly). Non-vocational learners were more likely than vocational to find it very easy to get to their course. Only three per cent said they found it very difficult.

Interestingly, respondents aged 70 or over had no more difficulty getting to the course than younger groups.

Figure 5.3 How easy it is to get to main place of face-to-face teaching



The few people who found it fairly or very difficult to get to the place where the course took place were asked why (Table 5.7). By far the most common reason was that it was inaccessible by public transport (68 per cent gave this reason). Forty-one per cent mentioned that it was too far to walk and 17 per cent that it was a long way. Less than one per cent mentioned cost reasons making it difficult for them to get to their course.

Table 5.7 Why main place of face-to-face teaching is difficult to get to*

	All taught learning %
Inaccessible by public transport	68
Too far to walk	41
Far away, takes a long time to get there	17
No (free) parking	12
Dislike going there alone	7
Does not have car	1
Expense	*
Other reason for inaccessibility	13
<i>Weighted base</i>	291
<i>Unweighted base</i>	250

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done face-to-face taught learning in past three years and found it very or fairly difficult to get to place of teaching

* Percentages sum to more than 100 since respondents could give more than one reason

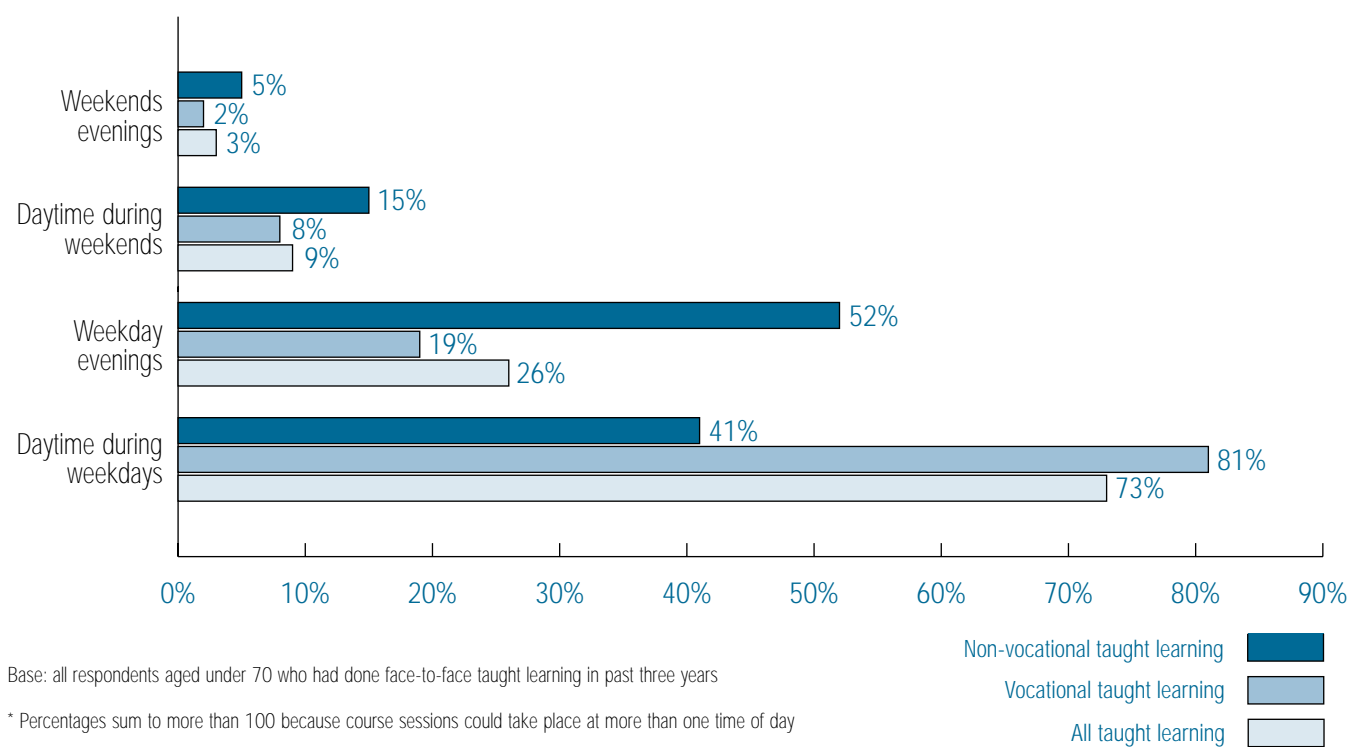
Figure 5.4 shows that:

- most courses took place in daytime during weekdays (73 per cent), but this varied greatly from 81 per cent of vocational courses to 41 per cent of non-vocational
- a quarter of courses (26 per cent) had sessions during weekday evenings, but this was most common for non-vocational courses (52 per cent)
- sessions during the weekend were much less common, although even for vocational learning, eight per cent mentioned sessions during the day at weekends

The patterns are very similar to those found in the NALS 1997 survey.

The patterns of attendance are not significantly different when looking at those aged 70 or over. Although older people were more likely to be able to do learning during the day, they were less likely than younger people to do vocational learning, which mainly happens during the daytime.

Figure 5.4 Timing of face-to-face tuition*



5.3.2 Length of course

Taught learning can vary considerably in length, from a half day course or a half hour lesson once a week to a three year degree course. Respondents were asked how many hours of tuition they had received or expected to receive as part of their course. In this section we present these data only for completed courses in order to be comparable with previous NALS.

Table 5.8 shows that:

- 41 per cent of courses involved between 10 and 39 hours of tuition
- 17 per cent of courses involved 70 or more hours of tuition

- vocational courses were generally shorter than non-vocational: 29 per cent of courses involved less than 10 hours, which varied from 31 per cent of vocational courses to 17 per cent of non-vocational
- the median hours of tuition was 19.33 compared with 19.51 in 1997.

Those aged 70 or over tended to do courses involving more hours than younger people: only 12 per cent did a course of less than 10 hours and a quarter (26 per cent) did a course of 70 or more hours.

Table 5.8 Number of hours tuition (completed episodes only)

	All taught learning	Vocational taught learning	Non-vocational taught learning
	%	%	%
Less than 6 hours	10	10	7
6-9 hours	19	21	10
10-19 hours	17	17	20
20-29 hours	14	13	17
30-39 hours	10	10	9
40-49 hours	7	7	8
50-59 hours	2	2	4
60-69 hours	4	3	7
70 or more hours	17	17	17
Unclear	1	1	1
Median hours of tuition	19.33	18.83	22.86
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>2187</i>	<i>1836</i>	<i>350</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2080</i>	<i>1699</i>	<i>381</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done face-to-face taught learning in past three years and whose selected course was completed

The length of the course has been derived from the start and end dates (Table 5.9):

- over half of the completed courses had lasted a month or less (53 per cent), but this varied from 60 per cent of vocational learning to 20 per cent of non-vocational
- almost a quarter of courses had lasted more than one but less than six months
- nine per cent of courses had lasted more than a year, varying from eight per cent of vocational courses to 12 per cent of non-vocational.

As was found with number of hours, people aged 70 or over generally did longer courses than younger people. Only 17 per cent did a course of a month or less and a fifth did a course of more than 12 months. This is again partly because they did non-vocational courses which tend to be longer.

Table 5.9 Length of taught learning course (completed episodes only)

	All taught learning	Vocational taught learning	Non-vocational taught learning
	%	%	%
A month or less	53	60	20
2-3 months	14	12	23
4-5 months	9	7	16
6-9 months	8	7	17
10-12 months	7	6	12
13-18 months	3	3	3
19-24 months	2	2	3
More than 2 years	4	3	6
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>2329</i>	<i>1961</i>	<i>368</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2214</i>	<i>1812</i>	<i>402</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 whose selected course was completed

5.4 Use of learning materials

Many courses require the learners to work on their own at some point. Respondents were asked whether or not they had used a range of learning materials (shown in Table 5.10) to work on their own. Seventy-one per cent used learning materials for their course, this varied from 75 per cent of vocational courses to 56 per cent of non-vocational. This differs sharply from NALS 1997 when only 26 per cent responded positively to the same question. The reason for this change is probably due to a change in the wording of the 2001 question in order to collect information about a wider range of materials than previously.

Those who reported having used any learning materials were asked which types they had used (Table 5.10):

- the vast majority (92 per cent) had used written materials and while this was slightly higher for vocational learning (93 per cent), there was not much difference between the two types of learning
- videos and television programmes were used by 16 per cent of respondents and there was little difference by type of learning
- use of all computing materials was higher for vocational than non-vocational learning: computing software packages (16 per cent and five per cent respectively), Internet pages (13 per cent and five per cent respectively), CD Roms (13 per cent and five per cent respectively)
- audio tapes and cassettes were used for 10 per cent of courses.

Table 5.10 Types of materials used for course*

	All taught learning	Vocational taught learning	Non-vocational taught learning
	%	%	%
Written materials or books	92	93	87
Videos/TV programmes	16	16	18
Computer software package	14	16	5
Information pages on the Internet	12	13	5
CD Rom	11	13	5
Audiotapes/CDs	10	8	22
Technical equipment/ materials	2	2	3
Other materials	1	1	1
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>2309</i>	<i>1954</i>	<i>355</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2256</i>	<i>1872</i>	<i>384</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years and who used materials for course

* The percentages sum to more than 100 since respondents may have used more than one type of material for their course.

Respondents were also asked who provided the materials they had used for the course (Table 5.11). This was the organisation or person who produced the materials, not who made them available to the respondent. The most common provider of materials was the employer (35 per cent) and, as would be expected, this varied from 41 per cent for vocational learning to two per cent for non-vocational. A third were provided by the universities and colleges (including the Open University and Open College of Arts). Materials provided by a commercial organisation were used for 16 per cent of courses and all other providers of materials shown in Table 5.11 were each mentioned by five per cent or less of respondents.

Table 5.11 Provider of materials used for course

	All taught learning	Vocational taught learning	Non-vocational taught learning
	%	%	%
Employer	35	41	2
University/ college	29	28	31
Commercial organisation	16	17	16
Learning Resource Centre	5	6	4
Trainer/ tutor	4	3	13
Community/ volun/ religious org	3	2	5
Open University	2	2	5
Open College of Arts	1	1	1
Professional organisation/ Trade Union	1	1	1
Open Business School	*	*	-
Other	12	9	29
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>2309</i>	<i>1954</i>	<i>355</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2256</i>	<i>1872</i>	<i>384</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years and who used materials for course

5.5 Use of computers

Because of the increase in the use of ICT over recent years, new questions were added in 2001 to find out about the use of computers for learning. Forty-four per cent of respondents had used a computer for their course. This varied from 48 per cent for vocational courses to 25 per cent for non-vocational.

Table 5.12 shows the ways in which computers were used for learning:

- the most common use of computers was for word-processing and spreadsheets (30 per cent)
- a fifth used computers to do research for the course
- 16 per cent were doing a course about IT skills and five per cent were doing a course about using the Internet
- 13 per cent used a computer to find out information about the course, five per cent for enrolling and 20 per cent for communicating with the tutor and other students.

Despite being more likely to do computing courses than other age groups, those aged 70 or older were less likely to use a computer for learning (only 26 per cent had done so) than younger people.

Table 5.12 Use of computers for taught learning*

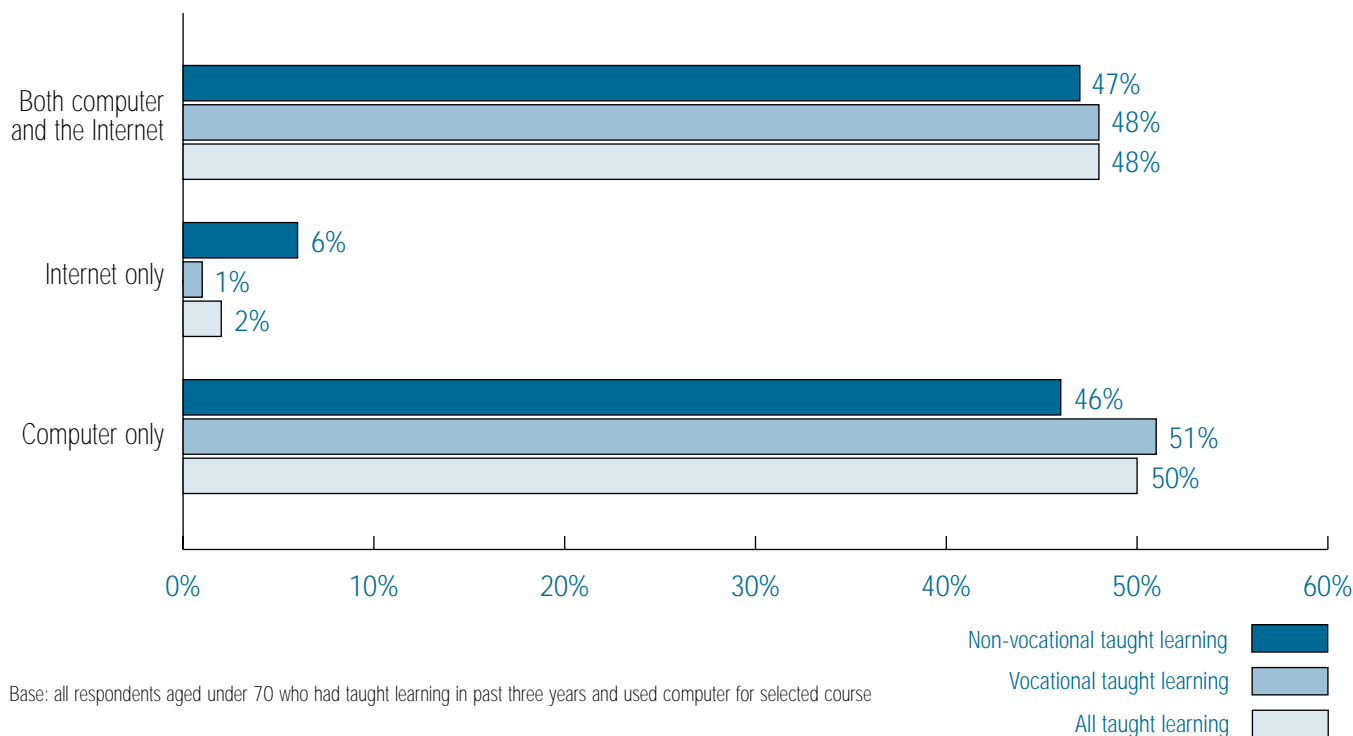
	All taught learning	Vocational taught learning	Non-vocational taught learning
	%	%	%
Used wordprocessor/ spreadsheet	30	34	14
To do research for course	20	22	11
Course about learning IT skills	16	18	7
To get information about the course	13	15	7
To get course information from provider	11	13	5
Exchanged emails with course tutor	11	12	5
Exchanged email with others	9	10	3
Enrolled on course on computer	5	6	2
Course about how to use Internet	5	6	3
Computer used in other way for course	1	1	*
Not used a computer for the course	56	52	75
<i>Weighted base</i>	3258	2622	636
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3230	2532	698

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years

* Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could use computers in more than one way

Among those who had used a computer for their course, half had used a computer but not the Internet, just under half had used both the Internet and a computer, and only two per cent had used the Internet only (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 Whether used computer and or Internet for taught learning



About half of those who used a computer for their course used it all or most of the time that they were studying, this was slightly higher for those doing vocational learning (49 per cent) than those doing non-vocational (45 per cent) (Table 5.13).

Table 5.13 Time spent using computer/ Internet for taught learning

	All taught learning %	Vocational taught learning %	Non-vocational taught learning %
All/ most of the time	49	49	45
Some of the time	27	29	19
Little of the time	24	22	37
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1378</i>	<i>1229</i>	<i>149</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1323</i>	<i>1162</i>	<i>161</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years and used computer for selected course, not just to get information about the course or enrol

The place in which respondents used a computer varied very much according to the type of learning (Table 5.14):

- about half of respondents had used a computer for their course in their own home, but this varied from 49 per cent for vocational learning to 67 per cent for non-vocational
- about half of those who did a vocational course (48 per cent) used a computer at work, while 12 per cent of those who did a non-vocational course did
- in contrast, 48 per cent of those who did a non-vocational course used a computer in an educational institution, compared with a quarter (26 per cent) of those who did a vocational course
- apart from training centres (17 per cent), computers were used in all other places shown in Table 5.14 for less than five per cent of courses.

Table 5.14 Place where computer was used for taught course*

	All taught learning	Vocational taught learning	Non-vocational taught learning
	%	%	%
Own home	51	49	67
Place of work	44	48	12
Educational institution	29	26	48
Training centre	17	18	4
Friend's house	4	4	3
Library	3	3	3
Learning Resource Centre	3	3	4
Tutor's home	2	2	-
Community Centre	1	1	2
On laptop while travelling	1	1	1
Job Centre	*	*	-
Internet café/ shop	*	*	1
Other place	*	1	-
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1428</i>	<i>1268</i>	<i>160</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1375</i>	<i>1201</i>	<i>174</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years and used computer for selected course

* Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could mention more than one place in which they used a computer for taught learning

5.6 Problems with course

Respondents were asked about two types of possible difficulty with their course: problems associated with the way it was organised and problems associated with their own personal circumstances, although the two can overlap. Table 5.15 shows that none of the course related problems were mentioned by more than six per cent of respondents and 71 per cent reported no course related problems. Non-vocational learners were more likely than vocational to mention that the course was too expensive and were less likely to say that it was held in an inconvenient place. Otherwise there were no very clear differences between these two groups.

Looking at respondents with different characteristics, a few interesting points can be noted. Those aged 16-19 (21 per cent) and lone parents (11 per cent) were more likely than other groups to say that the course was too expensive. Looking at socio-economic group, professionals and managers were least likely to mention expense as a problem (six per cent), while those in the unskilled manual group were most likely to mention this (12 per cent).

Comparing the 2001 results with 1997, no significant differences were found in the percentage mentioning each of the problems covered by the survey.

Table 5.15 Problems experienced with taught course: way it was organised*

	All taught learning	Vocational taught learning	Non-vocational taught learning
	%	%	%
Too expensive	6	6	9
Inconvenient time	6	6	5
Inconvenient place	6	7	2
Badly organised	6	6	5
Course was too short	4	4	4
Not practical enough	4	5	2
Badly taught	4	5	4
Too many students/trainees in group	4	4	6
Course was too long	3	3	2
Too few students / trainees in group	1	1	2
None of these problems	71	72	71
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>3258</i>	<i>2622</i>	<i>636</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3230</i>	<i>2532</i>	<i>698</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years

* Percentages sum to more than 100 since respondents could mention more than one problem

Table 5.16 shows problems related to the respondent's circumstances. Two were mentioned more than any others: hard to find time because of work (18 per cent) and because of family (10 per cent). Other problems were each mentioned by fewer than five per cent of respondents and 67 per cent reported none of the problems listed. Looking at differences between groups:

- lack of time owing to work was mentioned more by those doing vocational courses than non-vocational (19 per cent and 13 per cent respectively) (Table 5.16)
- the groups most likely to mention that it was hard to find time because of work were 30-39 year olds (22 per cent) and professionals and managers (24 per cent)
- lack of time for learning because of their families and childcare were mentioned most by women (13 per cent and five per cent respectively), those aged 30-39 (14 per cent and six per cent respectively), and lone parents (19 per cent and 13 per cent respectively).

Those aged 70 or over were much less likely than other age groups to mention problems with their course: 85 per cent had experienced none of the problems shown in Table 5.16. Only one per cent mentioned that it was hard to find time because of work or family.

Comparing the results with 1997, in 2001 respondents were slightly more likely to mention a lack of time because of work (18 per cent compared with 13 per cent in 1997). No other differences were found.

Table 5.16 Problems experienced with taught course: respondent's circumstances

	All taught learning	Vocational taught learning	Non-vocational taught learning
	%	%	%
Hard to find time because of work	18	19	13
Hard to find time because of family	10	10	9
Pace too slow	4	4	3
Problems with child care	3	3	3
Hard to find place to study alone	3	4	2
Pace too quick	3	3	3
Hard to get access to computer	3	3	2
Had difficulties using the computer	2	2	1
Problems because of care for elderly or disabled adult	1	1	3
Other problems with course	3	3	4
None of these problems	67	66	71
<i>Weighted base</i>	3258	2622	636
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3230	2532	698

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years

* Percentages sum to more than 100 since respondents could mention more than one problem

5.7 Taught learning and work

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the connection of their course to work and about their employer's involvement in their learning. This section focuses on courses related to a job, as the issues covered are only relevant to this type of learning.

Eighty-three per cent of taught learners were in employment when they started their course. Among this group, almost three-quarters (74 per cent) said the course was related to a job at the time (Table 5.17).

Table 5.17 Whether course was related to job at the time

	All taught learning
	%
Related to job at the time	74
Not related to job at the time	26
<i>Weighted base</i>	2706
<i>Unweighted base</i>	2587

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years who were employed or self-employed when course started

Those who did learning related to a job they held at the time were asked whether it was compulsory and if so, who made it compulsory (Table 5.18). In the majority of cases the course was not compulsory (61 per cent). In a third of cases (34 per cent) the employer made it compulsory.

The percentage of courses made compulsory by the employer was lower in 2001 (34 per cent) than in 1997 (40 per cent) and respondents in 2001 were more likely to say the course was not compulsory (61 per cent compared with 54 per cent in 1997).

Table 5.18 Whether course was made compulsory

	All job related taught learning
	%
Employer made it compulsory	34
Professional body made it compulsory	2
Trade Union/ Staff Assoc made it comp	-
Other person made it compulsory	*
Course compulsory by legislation	3
Course not compulsory	61
Other situation	1
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>2008</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1856</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years and whose selected course was related to job

Those whose course was not compulsory were asked who suggested it (Table 5.19). Just over half (52 per cent) said their employer had suggested the course and 43 per cent chose to do the course themselves. Very few mentioned that the course was suggested by anyone else.

Among those whose learning was not compulsory there were no differences between 1997 and 2001 in who had suggested it.

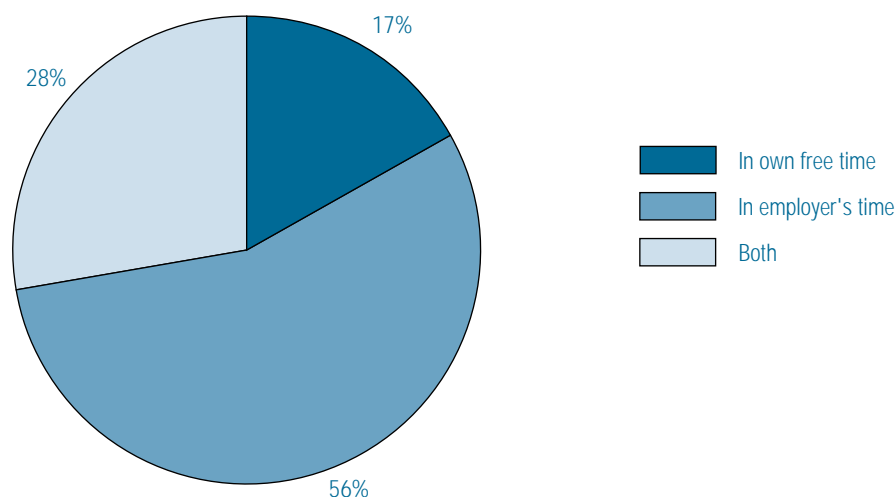
Table 5.19 Who suggested course if not compulsory

	All job related taught learning %
Employer	52
Professional body	3
Work colleague	2
Friend/ relative	2
Trade Union/ Staff Association	1
Someone else	1
Employment Service	*
Chose to do course him/herself	43
Weighted base	1249
Unweighted base	1134

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years and whose selected course was related to job but not compulsory

Figure 5.6 shows that over half of those who were doing learning related to a job they held at the time of starting the course, did the learning in their employer's time only (56 per cent). Over a quarter did it in both their and their employer's time (28 per cent). However, a sizeable minority (17 per cent) did their job related learning entirely in their own time.

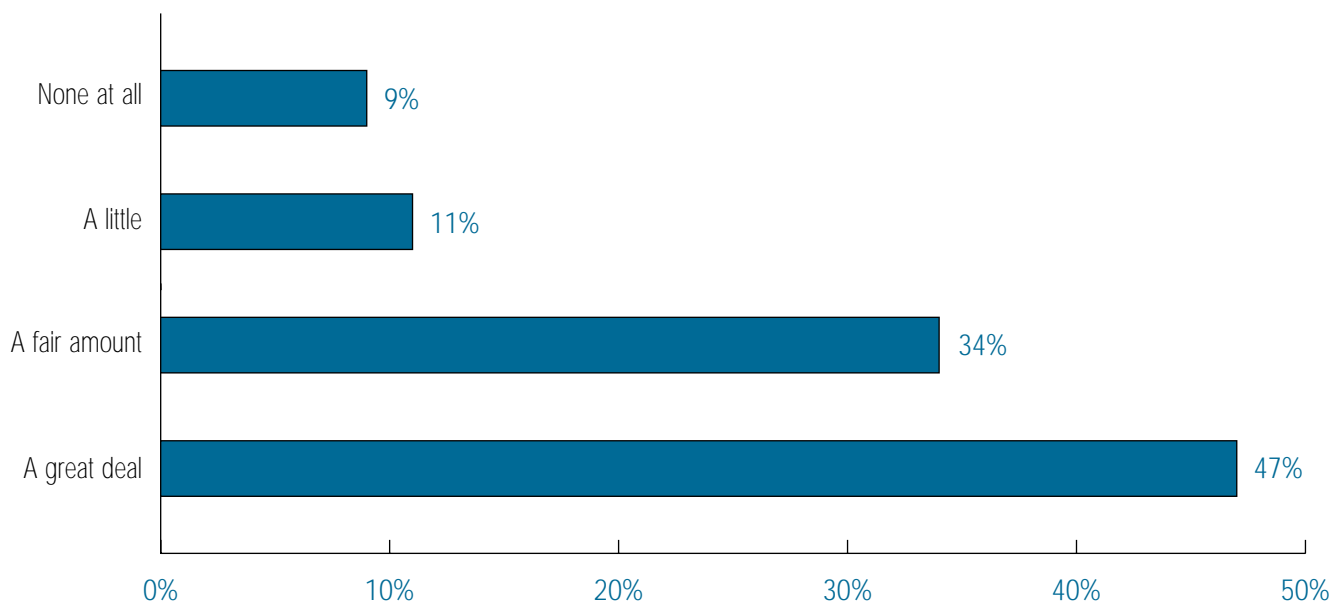
Figure 5.6 Whether course done in own time



Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years who were employees when course started and whose selected course was related to job

Those whose course was related to a job at the time and who were employees were asked about how much encouragement their employer gave them to learn job related skills at the time of starting the course (Figure 5.7). The majority had been given at least some encouragement; only nine per cent had been given none and almost half had been given a great deal (47 per cent). There was no clear pattern in the amount of encouragement given by socio-economic group.

Figure 5.7 Encouragement from employer to learn more job related skills



Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years who were employees when course started and whose selected course was related to job

Among those who were employees when they started the course, even if it was not related to their job, 32 per cent had a training plan at work (Table 5.21). Training plans were reported most by those in professional and managerial jobs (39 per cent, compared with 15 per cent of those in the unskilled manual grades).

Table 5.20 Whether respondent had a training plan at work when started course

	All taught learning
	%
Yes	32
No	68
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>2530</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2398</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years who were employees when course started

It seems that although employers were willing to encourage learning, in many cases vocational learning was instigated by the respondent and sometimes happened partly or entirely in the respondent's own time.

5.8 Motivators for doing the course

Those whose course was related to a current or future job were asked about the job related motivations for doing it (Table 5.21). The reasons given differed depending on whether the course was related to their current job or to a future one:

- over half said they did the learning to develop their career, ranging from 61 per cent for whom the course was related to a job at the time and 47 per cent of those whose course was related to a future job

- over half said it was to give them new skills for their job at the time and the figure was much higher for those who were doing a course related to their job at the time
- 46 per cent of those doing a course related to a current job said it was to get job satisfaction
- among those who were doing a course with future work in mind, 46 per cent said it was to get a new job and 36 per cent said it was to change their type of work.

The reasons for starting a course have not changed much in the past four years, although each of the most common reasons were mentioned by more respondents in 2001 than 1997.

Table 5.21 Employment related reasons for starting the course*

	All work related taught learning	Connected with current job	With future work in mind
	%	%	%
To develop career	57	61	47
To give new skills for job at time	54	71	15
To get job satisfaction	39	46	22
To get a new job	19	7	46
To change type of work	17	9	36
To get a promotion	9	12	2
To get a pay rise	7	9	1
To help set up business	7	3	16
To stay in job, that may have lost	4	5	1
To help with work related health problems	1	1	3
Not for any job related reasons above	9	7	15
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1783</i>	<i>1249</i>	<i>534</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1714</i>	<i>1134</i>	<i>580</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years which was not compulsory and was related to current or future job

* Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could give more than one motivation

There were also clear patterns among different socio-economic groups in the job related motivations for learning. These may in part be related to the fact that those in professional and managerial jobs were the most likely to be doing learning related to a current job (73 per cent), while those in unskilled manual jobs were the group least likely to be doing learning related to a current job (45 per cent).

Table 5.22 shows that professionals and managers were the group most likely to do the course to develop their career (61 per cent), give them skills for their current job (64 per cent), to get job satisfaction (44 per cent) or to get a promotion (11 per cent). In contrast, the skilled manual group was more likely to do learning to get a new job (27 per cent) and to change their type of work (22 per cent). The figures for unskilled manual workers were even higher but are based on only 29 cases. The percentage giving the other reasons did not vary much by socio-economic group.

Table 5.22 Employment related reasons for starting the course by respondent’s socio-economic grade

	All work related taught learning	Professional managerial	Other non-manual	Skilled manual	Semi-skilled manual	Unskilled manual	Other
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To develop career	58	61	57	46	56	[57]	[63]
To give new skills for job at time	55	64	53	44	43	[35]	[58]
To get job satisfaction	40	44	42	29	29	[27]	[29]
To get a new job	18	11	19	27	26	[56]	[38]
To change type of work	17	13	19	22	20	[25]	[41]
To get a promotion	9	11	9	4	8	[2]	[27]
To get a pay rise	7	8	7	4	5	[2]	[8]
To help set up business	7	6	6	9	8	[15]	[13]
To stay in job, that may have lost	4	5	3	6	5	[5]	[10]
To help with work related health problems	1	1	1	2	2	[6]	[-]
Not for any job related reasons above	9	9	10	11	7	[6]	[-]
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1749</i>	<i>724</i>	<i>583</i>	<i>163</i>	<i>235</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1674</i>	<i>644</i>	<i>576</i>	<i>167</i>	<i>242</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>16</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who were or had been in employment in the past 10 years and had taught learning in past three years which was not compulsory and was related to current or future job

All those who had done taught learning in the last three years were asked about non-work related reasons for doing the course. Table 5.23 shows the results of this question by the type of learning episode. A more detailed breakdown of types of episodes is used here because the distinction between vocational and non-vocational learning hides some important differences between groups. Table 5.23 shows that:

- the majority of respondents started the course to improve their knowledge and skills (78 per cent); this was most likely to be reported by those doing learning related to their current job (87 per cent) and least by those doing learning with no work connection (60 per cent)
- the next most mentioned reason for learning was to do something interesting (39 per cent); 54 per cent of those doing learning with no work connection mentioned this, compared with 43 per cent of those doing the course for voluntary work (based on 80 cases) and only 26 per cent of those doing work related to their current job
- just over a quarter were curious about the subject and this did not vary much according to whether the course was work related, but was mentioned more by those doing learning connected with a future job than learning related to the current job (33 per cent and 23 per cent respectively)
- interestingly, social reasons (i.e. to meet new people, have fun) were the next most common reasons for doing a course, which were mentioned most by those doing a course with no work connection
- those doing the course with future work in mind were the group most likely to say they did it to fill their spare time (20 per cent), compared with only two per cent of those doing a course connected with their current job.

People aged 70 or over were more likely than younger people to mention most of the non-employment reasons for starting the course:

- while wanting to improve their knowledge or skills was still the most common reason, it was mentioned less than for younger people (63 per cent)
- those aged 70 and over were almost as likely to mention that they started the course to do something interesting (61 per cent) and 40 per cent said they were curious about the subject
- social reasons were also important for this group with a quarter mentioning that they wanted to meet new people or to fill their spare time.

The percentages giving each of the non-work related motivations for learning were very similar in 1997 and 2001.

Table 5.23 Other reasons for starting the course

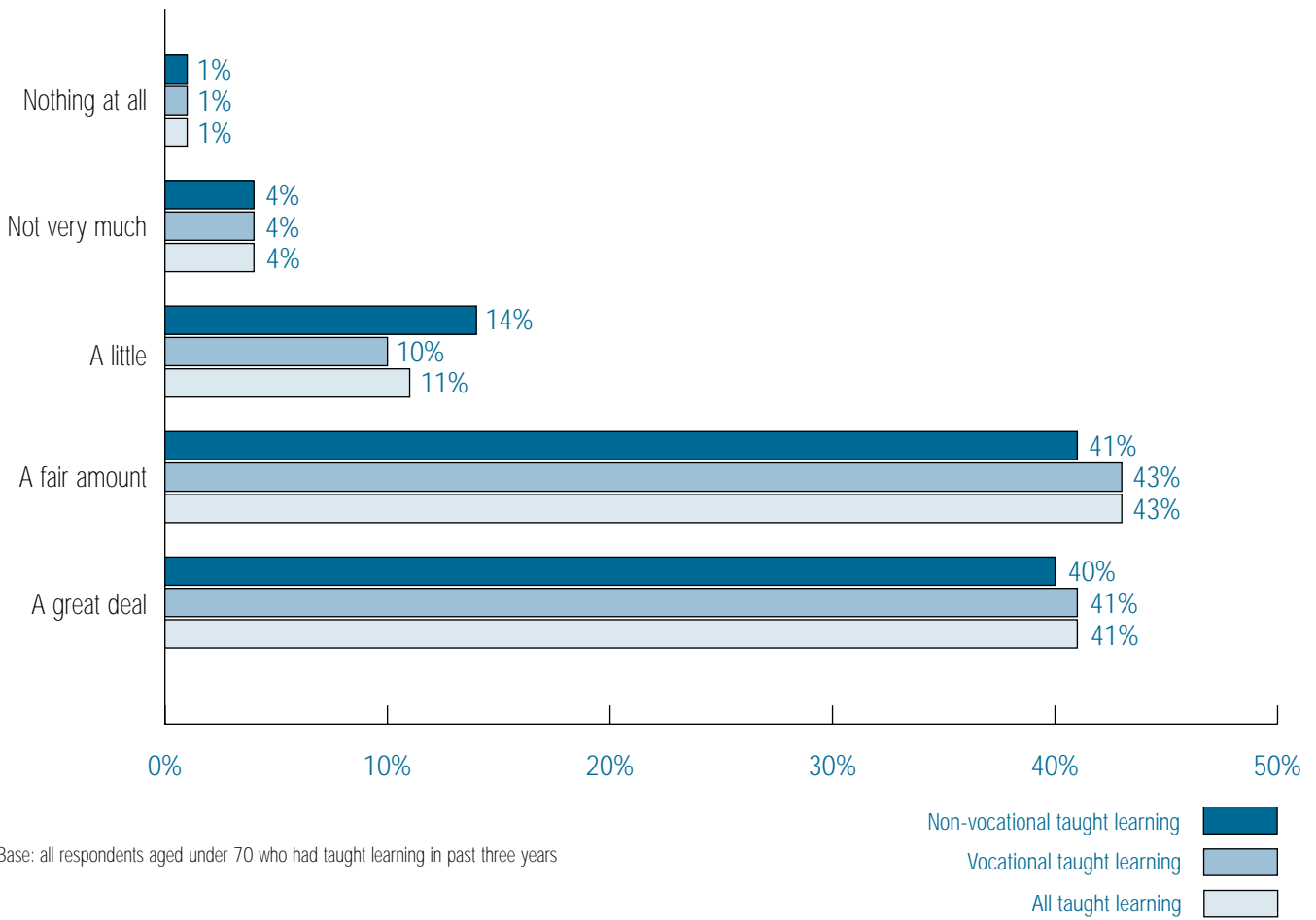
	All taught learning	Connected with current job	With future work in mind	With voluntary work in mind	With potential impact on working life	No current or future work connection
	%	%	%	%	%	%
To improve skills/ knowledge	78	87	72	[73]	72	60
To do something interesting	39	26	51	[43]	54	54
Curious about subject	27	23	33	[27]	29	32
To meet new people	13	4	18	[21]	19	29
To have fun	12	3	10	[19]	22	34
To fill spare time	10	2	20	[19]	18	17
To keep body active	8	2	7	[14]	17	24
To start another course	6	5	13	[3]	3	1
To get involved in volunteering	5	3	9	[38]	1	1
To help child with school work	5	3	9	[8]	8	4
To help with disability	4	1	4	[9]	5	9
None of these	6	6	6	[5]	8	4
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>2499</i>	<i>1249</i>	<i>534</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>207</i>	<i>428</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2508</i>	<i>1134</i>	<i>580</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>226</i>	<i>472</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years which was not compulsory

5.9 Benefits of course

All respondents were asked how much they had learnt from their course. Figure 5.8 shows that only five per cent thought they had learnt not very much or nothing at all and 41 per cent felt they had learnt a great deal. There were no marked differences in the amount respondents felt they had learnt according to whether it was a vocational or non-vocational course.

Figure 5.8 How much respondent learnt from the course



Those whose course was completed and had been related to a current or future job were asked about the employment related benefits of their course (Table 5.24):

- about half said they learned new job skills (49 per cent), but this was much more common among those whose course was related to their current job (56 per cent) than a future job (14 per cent)
- 45 percent said that they were able to do their job better and a quarter (26 per cent) got more job satisfaction and both of these more most common among those who did courses related to their current job
- 18 per cent of those who did the course with future work in mind had been able to get a new job as a result of the course and nine percent had changed their type of work
- in terms of direct economic benefits, among those doing learning connected with their current job, seven per cent got a pay rise, five per cent got a promotion and five percent obtained a new job as a result of the course
- overall about a quarter (27 per cent) reported no actual job related benefits as a result of their course, among those who had done the course with future work in mind 57 per cent reported no job related benefits.

Thus it seems that learning undertaken in connection with a current job was more likely to have a beneficial employment related outcome than courses undertaken with the idea that it would help with a future job.

The job related benefits of learning have not changed much between 1997 and 2001 for those doing their course with current or future work in mind. The main change has been that, among those doing the course for a future job, there has been an increase in the percentage who reported learning new job skills (from 10 per cent to 14 per cent).

Table 5.24 Job related benefits of the course*

	All taught work related learning	Connected with current job	With future work in mind
	%	%	%
Learned new job skills	49	56	14
Able to do job better	45	51	12
Got more job satisfaction	26	30	9
Got a new job	7	5	18
Changed type of work	7	6	9
Pay rise in existing job	6	7	1
Got a promotion	5	5	1
Stayed in job	4	5	2
Set up own business	2	1	5
Helped with disability	1	1	2
Other job related outcome	1	1	1
None of the above	27	21	57
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1907</i>	<i>1581</i>	<i>326</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1750</i>	<i>1400</i>	<i>350</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years and was related to current or future job and whose course was finished

* Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could give more than one benefit

Those who had started the course with neither their current or a future job in mind and who were working or likely to work in the future were asked whether it had had any unanticipated employment outcomes (Table 5.25). Overall 36 per cent mentioned some work related outcome. Almost a third said that it had given them skills to use in a new job.

Table 5.25 Unanticipated employment related benefits

	Learning not related to current or future job
	%
Given new skills to use in job	31
Given ideas for a career change	9
Other impact on working life	31
Any unanticipated employment outcome	36
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>571</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>626</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years which was not related to current or future job at the time of starting and who were likely to work in future

NB The figures include those who said both yes and maybe to each question

Percentages in this table should not be summed as they relate to different questions

Taught Learning

All taught learners were asked about the wider benefits of learning, even if they had not completed the selected course (Table 5.26):

- the most frequently mentioned outcome was that they had improved their knowledge and skills (71 per cent) and many said that they had learnt new skills (63 per cent), although these outcomes were more common for vocational than non-vocational learning
- almost as many had found the course interesting (66 per cent) and this was more common among non-vocational learners
- 61 per cent of learners had enjoyed the course and, although this was highest for non-vocational learning (78 per cent), it is notable that 57 per cent of vocational learners also reported this
- there were many other outcomes of learning, some of which may not have been anticipated when the course started; taught learning enabled respondents to meet new people (33 per cent), boosted their confidence (31 per cent), encouraged them to do more learning (22 per cent) and increased their self-esteem (19 per cent).

Older people (aged 70 or more) seemed to gain different benefits from learning than younger respondents:

- the main benefit mentioned by older people was that they found the course interesting (77 per cent) and three-quarters said they enjoyed it
- about half said that they learned new skills or improved their skills and almost as many (46 per cent) mentioned that they met new people
- a fifth said it helped with their health or disability.

Therefore it seems that learning among older people has more social benefits, whereas for younger people the acquisition of skills and knowledge are more important benefits.

The wider benefits of learning in 1997 were similar although the four most common reasons were each mentioned by a slightly higher percentage of respondents in 2001.

Table 5.26 The wider benefits of taught learning*

	All taught learning	Vocational taught learning	Non-vocational taught learning
	%	%	%
Improved knowledge and skills	71	74	59
Found course interesting	66	64	71
Learned new skills	63	65	57
Enjoyed it	61	57	78
Met new people	33	29	49
Boosted confidence	31	33	25
Encouraged more learning	22	23	15
Increased self-esteem	19	19	16
Did something useful with time	19	15	37
Kept body active	7	4	21
Able to help child with schoolwork	4	4	5
Encouraged voluntary activity	3	4	2
Helped with health/ disability	3	2	7
Other benefit	1	1	1
None of the above	3	3	2
<i>Weighted base</i>	3258	2622	636
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3230	2532	698

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had taught learning in past three years and was related to current or future job

*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could give more than one benefit

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the most common form of taught course was vocational, particularly that related to a job held by the respondent when they started the course. The distinction between the different types of learning is important because the characteristics of vocational and non-vocational courses differ in many ways.

Predictably, those who had done a vocational course were most likely to have done training related to a profession or trade and computing, while half of non-vocational courses were related to leisure activities. The next most common type of non-vocational course was academic.

For vocational courses, respondents most often heard about the course from their employer, while for non-vocational courses respondents most often heard about it from their friends or relatives. Employers were also the most common providers of vocational courses, and work was the most common place of study for vocational courses, while educational institutions were the most common providers and places of study for non-vocational courses.

Vocational courses tend to involve fewer hours of tuition and most lasted a month or less, while non-vocational courses involved longer hours and the majority lasted more than a month. Those who had done vocational courses were much more likely than those who had done non-vocational courses to have used computing materials for their course and were most likely to have some learning materials provided by their employer. Use of computers was much higher for vocational courses, with half of learners having used a computer compared with only a quarter of those doing non-vocational courses.

Interestingly, the problems experienced did not differ much between vocational and non-vocational courses, though for vocational courses finding time because of work was more a problem.

The motivations for and outcomes of learning are also quite different for vocational and non-vocational learning. For vocational courses developing a career, acquiring new skills and getting more job satisfaction are important job related motivations. Looking at wider motivations, improving skills was a very important reason for doing vocational courses, while doing something interesting, social and personal motivators were relatively more important for non-vocational courses. The outcomes of learning were similar, with skills being mentioned more for vocational courses and enjoyment, interest, socialising and good use of time being more common outcomes of non-vocational learning. However, the results also show that vocational learning has many wider benefits too; increased self-confidence and self-esteem were mentioned slightly more by those who had done vocational courses, than those who had done non-vocational ones.

Among those who had done courses related to their current job, most had chosen to do so; some with encouragement from their employer and almost half had to do at least some of the learning in their own time.

The characteristics of courses undertaken by older people are very different, partly because their learning is in most cases non-vocational.

This chapter has shown that in encouraging people to learn and in investigating the benefits of learning, it should be remembered that different approaches are needed for different groups who expect to and do gain very differently from participating in taught learning.

This chapter has also shown that there are some groups who face particular problems while learning, such as women, lone parents and particular occupational groups. Any policies to encourage participation in learning should take account of the fact that, not only are motivations for learning different, but that problems which inhibit learning vary from group to group, as it was shown in the previous chapter.

Comparisons with NALS 1997 shows that not much has changed since then. The places in which and times at which learning takes place have not changed significantly. While there is now evidence of widespread use of ICT, over half of taught learners had not used a computer for their course.

6. SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

This chapter looks at the characteristics of the self-directed learning episodes reported by 2001 respondents. Previous NALS found that this type of learning was most commonly undertaken to develop job related skills. While many people started self-directed learning for work related reasons, personal interest and 'self-improvement' were also often mentioned as factors influencing the decision to undertake this type of learning. Similarly, while many respondents reported a range of employment related outcomes of self-directed learning, wider, non-work related benefits featured high on the list of what people thought they had gained from engaging in this type of learning.

In addition to the motivators and benefits, NALS 2001 also collected information on the length of self-directed learning, the use of Learning Resource Centres, educational materials and ICT.

As in previous chapters, in order to maintain comparability with previous NALS, the tables in this chapter only include respondents under 70 and all the figures reported in the text refer to this group, unless stated otherwise. Only 142 respondents in the 70+ age group reported some self-directed learning and, for the reasons explained below, the base for the analysis of the characteristics on self-directed learning episodes is even smaller (i.e. 130 people aged 70 or over). Because of this, the scope for the analysis of older people and self-directed learning is limited, however, where possible and appropriate the results for this group are reported separately.

6.1 Overview of different types of self-directed learning

As mentioned in Chapter 2, 60 per cent of respondents had undertaken some self-directed learning in the previous three years. Looking at the different types of self-directed learning mentioned, we find that:

- just over a quarter of respondents (26 per cent) reported on the job training, with 74 per cent of these saying they had done this type of learning in the past year
- professional development was reported by 44 per cent of people, with the overwhelming majority of these (93 per cent) saying they had undertaken this type of learning in the past year
- 29 per cent mentioned other types of self-directed learning, with again a majority of this group (89 per cent) saying they had done this in the past 12 months.

On the job training and professional development are not relevant to people who are no longer active in the labour market. Respondents in the 70+ group were therefore only asked questions on these types of learning if they were or had recently been economically active, that is: if they were in paid employment, had been in work in the previous three years or were likely to go back to work. Only nine per cent of older respondents were classified as being 'economically active' according to this definition, and among these six per cent reported on the job training and 21 per cent professional development. However, these figures should be interpreted with caution because the 70+ economically active group only included 83 respondents.

Detailed information was collected about the last type of self-directed learning mentioned in the bullets above (i.e. 'other' self-directed learning). The rest of the chapter will present the data collected on this type of learning, which will be referred to as self-directed learning.

6.2 Main features of self-directed learning

As discussed in Chapter 2, information was collected to gauge how much learning people do. Given the nature of self-directed learning, a quantity measure can only be approximate, so respondents were asked if the learning

episode involved more or less than 10 hours: the majority of respondents (88 per cent) said they had spent or were planning to spend 10 or more hours on the reported learning episode.

As previous NALS had found, very few people undertake this type of learning to gain a qualification: in 2001, seven per cent of respondents said they had studied for a qualification as part of the self-directed learning. While this group is small, there appears to have been a considerable increase since 1997, when only two per cent of people who reported self-directed learning were studying for a qualification.

While this type of learning was 'non-taught', 43 per cent of respondents said there was a teacher or another person they could contact for help in connection with the reported self-directed learning episode.

Eight per cent of people said they had used a Learning Resource Centre while engaging in self-directed learning. However, it must be noted that the pilot work we conducted showed that people's understanding of what a Learning Resource Centre is varied considerably, as this and similar names are used to describe a variety of facilities in many different places (e.g. Job Centres, public libraries, universities).

Looking at the subject of self-directed learning (Table 6.1) we can see that, as previous NALS have shown, the most commonly reported subjects were related to work:

- the largest group (34 per cent) mentioned keyboard and computing skills
- just over a fifth (21 per cent) had undertaken some training for a particular profession
- 4 per cent reported administration and management
- other work related subjects (e.g. training as a result of official guidelines, communication skills, use of specific equipment) were mentioned by a very small number of respondents (one per cent or less).

Leisure activities were mentioned by just under a quarter (24 per cent) of respondents, while 11 per cent reported academic subjects. Very few people (one per cent or less) mentioned basic skills and English language/writing skills.

Table 6.1 Subject of self-directed learning

	%
Keyboard and computing skills	34
Leisure activities	24
Training for particular professions or trades	21
Academic	11
Administration and management	4
Training as a result of official guidelines	1
Self development (e.g. self awareness/ esteem, assertiveness training)	1
Basic skills (literacy, numeracy, writing)	1
English language/ writing skills	1
Driving lessons	*
Communication skills (e.g. customer care, public speaking)	*
Use of specific equipment (e.g. machinery, transport)	*
Other subject	2
Irrelevant or vague answer	1
<hr/>	
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1579</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1560</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who reported 'other' self directed learning in the past three years

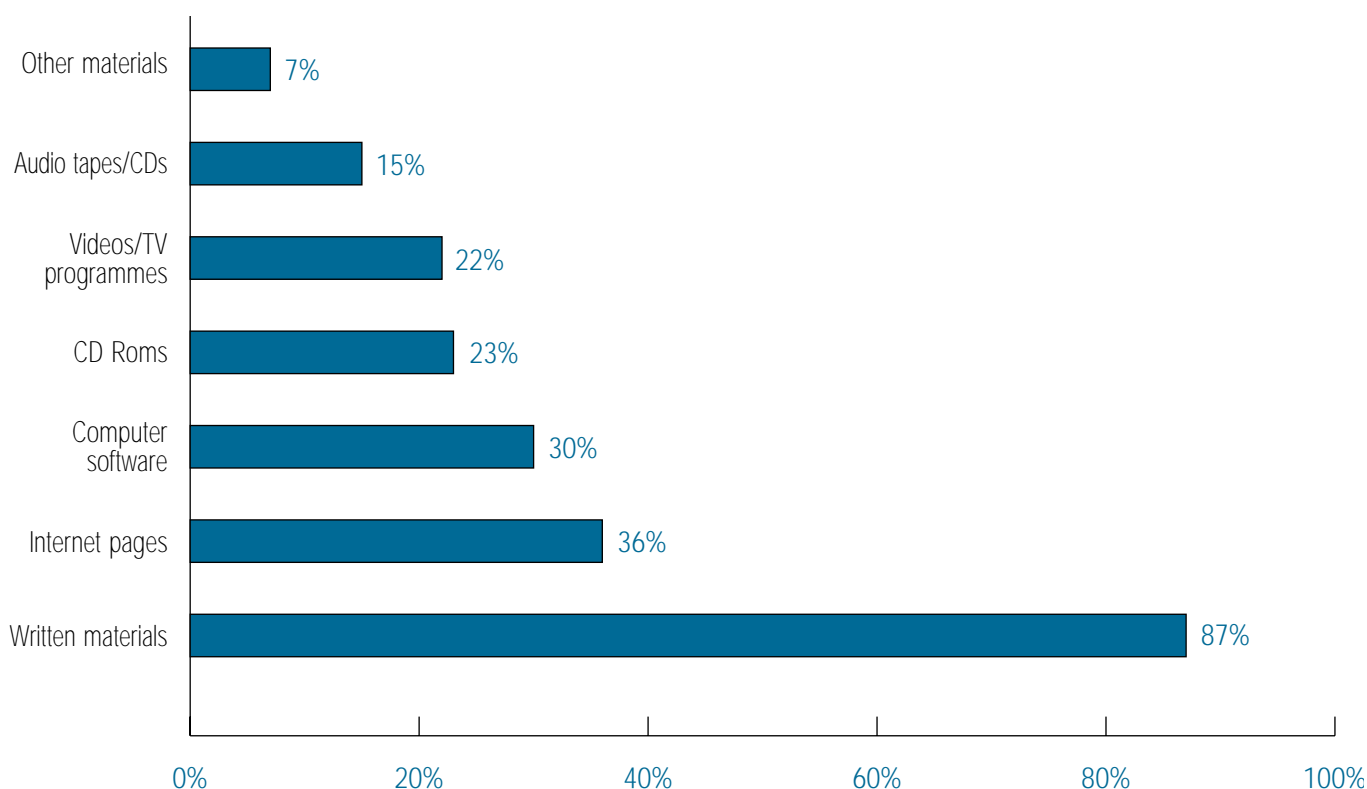
The 2001 results on the subject of self-directed learning are broadly in line with the 1997 findings. The main changes have been an increase in the proportion of people reporting IT training (in 1997 this was mentioned by 25 per cent), and a decrease in the proportion reporting training for a particular profession (26 per cent in 1997). As discussed in the previous chapter, an increase in IT training was also found in relation to taught courses.

Predictably, hardly any respondents in the 70+ group reported subjects related to work and the learning they undertook was mainly related to leisure activities (45 per cent) and academic subjects (29 per cent). The proportion of older people mentioning keyboard and computing (14 per cent) was considerably lower than that for younger respondents.

In 2001, 88 per cent of respondents said they had worked from materials which had been designed so that they could study on their own, at their own pace. The equivalent figure in 1997 was much lower (15 per cent), however, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the question was changed and therefore the 1997 and 2001 questions are not comparable.

As shown in Figure 6.1, written materials were most commonly mentioned (87 per cent). However, many respondents had also used Internet pages (36 per cent), computer software (30 per cent) and CD Roms (23 per cent). Fewer people mentioned more 'traditional' materials, such as videos/TV programmes (22 per cent), audio tapes and CDs (15 per cent).

Figure 6.1 Materials used for self-directed learning



Base: all respondents aged under 70 who reported 'other' self directed learning in the past three years and used educational materials for this type of learning

6.3 Use of ICT for self-directed learning

As explained earlier on, a new area covered by the 2001 survey was the use of ICT for self-directed learning, the questions asked were very similar to those discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to taught courses.

Sixty per cent of respondents who reported self-directed learning said they had used a computer. Table 6.2 shows the various ways in which this was used:

- the most commonly cited use of ICT (45 per cent) was to do research for the self-directed learning
- nearly a third of respondents had used a computer package (e.g. word processing or spreadsheet) for their learning
- a fifth mentioned exchanging Emails in connection with their learning
- a slightly smaller proportion (15-17 per cent) said their self-directed learning was about developing their IT and Internet skills.

Table 6.2 Use of ICT for self-directed learning*

	%
To do research for learning episode	45
Used wordprocessor/ spreadsheet	32
Exchanged emails	20
Learning about IT skills	17
Learning about using the Internet	15
Computer used in other way	2
Not used a computer for the course	40
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1579</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1560</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who reported 'other' self directed learning in the past three years

* Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply

As with taught courses, the majority of respondents (70 per cent) had used both a computer and Internet for self-directed learning, a quarter had used only a computer and five percent only the Internet (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 Use of computer and/or Internet for self-directed learning

	%
Computer only	25
Internet only	5
Both	70
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>948</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>931</i>

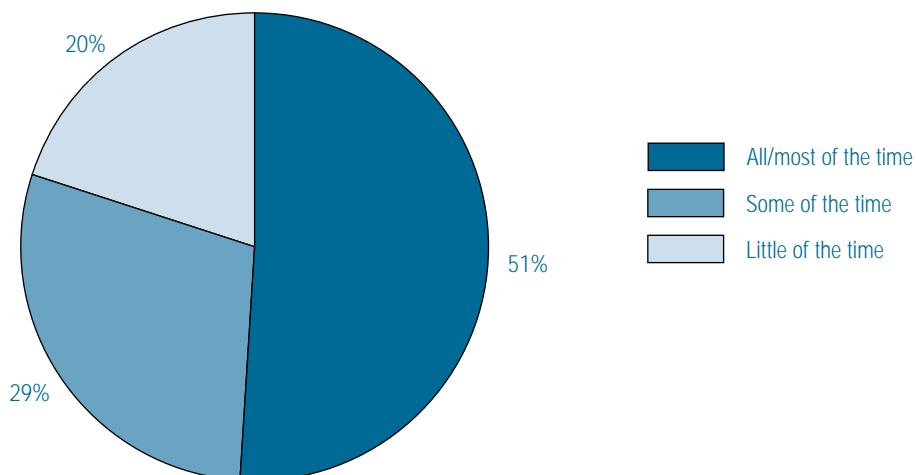
Base: all respondents aged under 70 who reported 'other' self directed learning in the past three years and used ICT for this learning

As shown in Figure 6.2, just over half (51 per cent) of those who used ICT for self-directed learning used it for all or most of the time, 29 per cent for some of the time, while a fifth used it for little of the time they spent on their learning episode.

As we saw with taught courses in the previous chapter, Table 6.4 shows that the most commonly cited places where people used a computer for self-directed learning were their home (83 per cent) and their workplace (45 per cent).

People were much more likely to use a computer at home for self-directed than for taught learning. Other places mentioned, by considerably smaller proportions of respondents, included: friend's homes (eight per cent), educational institutions (six per cent) and public libraries (five per cent). All the other places listed in Table 6.4, including Internet cafés and Learning Resource Centres, were mentioned by a very small proportion of people (two per cent or less).

Figure 6.2 Time spent using ICT for self-directed learning



Base: all respondents aged under 70 who reported 'other' self directed learning in the past three years and used ICT for this learning

Table 6.4 Place where ICT is used for self-directed learning*

	%
Own home	83
Place of work	45
Friend's house	8
Educational institution	6
Library	5
Training centre	2
Learning Resource Centre	2
Internet café/ shop	2
Used lap/palmtop while travelling	1
Community centre	*
Job centre	*
Other place	*
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>948</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>931</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who reported 'other' self directed learning in the past three years and used ICT for this learning

* Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply

The proportion of people aged 70 or over who had used a computer for self-directed learning (23 per cent) was much smaller than the equivalent figure for the rest of the sample (60 per cent). Since so few older people had used ICT for this type of learning, any further analysis of this group was not possible.

6.4 Problems with self-directed learning

The survey explored any problems respondents might have experienced while they were undertaking self-directed learning. The majority of people (54 per cent) did not report any of the problems shown in Table 6.5. Difficulties people encountered included:

- not having sufficient time either because of work (31 per cent) or family commitments (17 per cent)
- difficulties in using a computer were mentioned by seven per cent, while problems in getting access to a computer were reported by a smaller proportion (three per cent)
- six per cent said they had difficulties finding a suitable space to study.

Table 6.5 Problems experienced with self-directed learning*

	%
Hard to find time because of work	31
Hard to find time because of family	17
Had difficulties using the computer	7
Hard to find place to study alone	6
Problems with child care	3
Hard to get access to computer	3
Problems because of care for elderly/disabled adult	1
Other problems with course	3
None of these problems	54
<hr/>	
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1579</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1560</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who reported 'other' self directed learning in the past three years

* Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply

Some of the problems listed above are more likely to be more relevant to specific groups. For example, parents would be expected to be more likely to face difficulties associated with their caring responsibilities. Around a third of parents (39 per cent of mothers and 32 per cent of fathers) mentioned lack of time due to family commitments, while eight per cent (11 per cent of mothers and five per cent of fathers) reported lack of childcare as a problem.

Those with responsibility for caring for a disabled or sick household member were also more likely than others to report lack of time due to family commitments, 25 per cent mentioned this.

Lack of time because of work was considerably more likely to be mentioned by those in professional and managerial occupations, 42 per cent reported this, compared with less than a quarter of other occupational groups.

Respondents in the 70+ group were considerably less likely than others to report problems experienced in connection to their learning, 86 per cent said they had not had any of the problems listed above.

6.5 Motivators for self-directed learning

As with taught courses a range of factors which influenced the decision to undertake self-directed learning were explored by the survey.

Looking at the motivators at the time of starting the self-directed learning, we find that:

- nearly half (47 per cent) of respondents who were in paid work at the time of starting the self-directed learning said the learning was related to their job
- just under a third (31 per cent) of those who were not in employment or whose learning was not related to their current job said they started the learning to help with a future job
- 11 per cent of respondents who had done self-directed learning said this was related to voluntary work.

Respondents who said the self-learning was not related to current or future paid employment were asked whether they thought their learning could potentially have an impact on their working life. Thirty per cent replied positively to this question, but for the majority (70 per cent) a learning episode not initially connected to work was not perceived as likely to have an impact on their career.

The employment related reasons for starting self-directed learning were explored further among those who said the learning was started in connection with current or future paid work. As show in Table 6.6:

- the most commonly cited reasons for this type of learning included: development of new skills for current job (55 per cent), career development (52 per cent) and increased job satisfaction (47 per cent)
- considerably lower down the list of job motivators we find learning undertaken to change type of work (21 per cent), get a new job (20 per cent), set up a business (13 per cent), get a promotion (12 per cent) and keep an existing job (nine per cent).

While in NALS 1997 skill acquisition, career development and increased job satisfaction were also the most commonly mentioned job related motivators, they were reported by a smaller proportion of respondents, around a third, compared with around half who mentioned these in 2001.

Table 6.6 Employment motivators for self-directed learning*

	%
To gain new skills for current job	55
To develop career	52
To get job satisfaction	47
To change type of work	21
To get a new job	20
To help set up business	13
To get a promotion	12
To get a pay rise	10
To stay in job, that may have lost	9
To help with work related health problems	2
Not for any job related reasons above	10
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>930</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>899</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who reported 'other' self directed learning in the past three years and whose learning was connected to current or future paid employment

* Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply

There appears to be an association between employment circumstances and the type of job related factors which motivate people to do some learning. Below we present some examples of variations between groups, but these results should be interpreted with caution because the bases for some of the analysis were rather small¹:

- professionals and managers were more likely than those in other occupations to have started the learning to develop skills for their job (63 per cent) and increase their job satisfaction (52 per cent)
- those in skilled and semi-skilled manual occupations were more likely to mention starting the learning to change type of work (around a third), and 26 per cent of the former said they were hoping the learning would help them to set up a business
- around a quarter of the self-employed and people not in paid work also mentioned setting up a business as one of the motivators for doing self-directed learning
- a high proportion (42 per cent) of those not in work said they were hoping the learning would help them to get a job.

Turning to the wider motivators for self-directed learning, at the top of the list came the intention to improve one's skills and knowledge, this was reported by 82 per cent of respondents. Other motivators included:

- curiosity about the subject and the desire to do something interesting which were reported by nearly half of respondents (47 and 46 per cent respectively)
- wanting to have fun and the need to fill spare time were reported by a similar proportion of people (18 and 15 per cent respectively)
- nine per cent of respondents said they were doing self-directed learning to be able to help their children with their school work
- the need to meet new people and keep the body active were mentioned by eight and seven per cent respectively
- five per cent said they were doing self-directed learning in order to get involved in voluntary work.

¹ In the analysis of job motivators and benefits (below) the skilled and semi-skilled manual groups included less than 100 cases, while the unskilled manual group included too few cases to draw even tentative conclusions.

Table 6.7 Wider motivators of for self-directed learning*

	%
To improve skills/ knowledge	82
Curious about subject	47
To do something interesting	46
To have fun	18
To fill spare time	15
To help child with school work	9
To meet new people	8
To keep body active	7
To get involved in volunteering	5
To start a course	4
To help with disability	4
None of these	4
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1579</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1560</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who reported 'other' self directed learning in the past three years

* Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply

The main wider motivators of self-directed learning reported in 2001 were very similar to those mentioned by respondents in 1997, when skills and knowledge improvement, curiosity about the subject and the desire to do something interesting came at the top of the list.

The main differences in terms of wider outcomes of learning were found between those in employment and those who were not in paid work, with the latter being more likely to report wanting to do something useful with their spare time (33 per cent), meet new people (14 per cent) and have fun (23 per cent).

Wanting to help their children with their schoolwork was obviously a motivator that applied just to parents, a fifth mentioned this as one of the reasons for doing the learning, with mothers being more likely than fathers to report this (28 and 13 per cent respectively).

Doing self-directed learning to overcome difficulties associated with a disability is again something that applies only to disabled people, a minority of these (12 per cent) said this was one of the reasons for doing the learning.

Job related outcomes of self-directed learning were relevant to very few people in the 70+ age group, however, older respondents were more likely than others to mention wider motivators. For example:

- 57 per cent said they wanted to do something interesting
- 21 per cent wanted to do something useful with their spare time and a similar proportion (20 per cent) did the learning to meet new people
- 12 per cent of older people started the learning to keep their body active.

6.6 Benefits of self-directed learning

The outcomes of learning were again investigated by looking at the work related, as well as the wider benefits of self-directed learning. Questions about the former were only asked if the learning episode was work related and had been completed.

Overall 66 per cent of respondents mentioned one or more of the benefits shown in the Table 6.8:

- the ability to do one's job better was the work related outcome mentioned by the largest proportion (48 per cent)
- other benefits mentioned by relatively large groups included the acquisition of new job skills (39 per cent) and increased job satisfaction (31 per cent)
- the same proportion of people (eight per cent) said they got a pay rise and changed type of work, while seven per cent said the learning had helped them to secure a new job.

Table 6.8 Employment benefits of self-directed learning*

	%
Able to do job better	48
Learned new job skills	39
Got more job satisfaction	31
Changed type of work	8
Pay rise in existing job	8
Got a new job	7
Got a promotion	4
Set up own business	4
Stayed in job	2
Helped with disability	2
Other job related outcome	4
None of the above	34
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>283</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>263</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who reported 'other' self directed learning in the past three years, whose learning was completed and connected to current or future paid employment

* Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply

Again little seems to have changed in the past four years in terms of the reported work related outcomes of self-directed learning. The main benefits reported by 1997 respondents were, as in 2001, the ability to do one's job better, skills acquisition and increased job satisfaction. However, the proportion of those who said that none of the job related outcomes listed in Table 6.8 applied to them has increased from 27 per cent in 1997 to 34 per cent in 2001.

Variations among groups in relation to the job related reasons for learning reflect largely the earlier findings on the motivators:

- those most likely to mention one or more of the outcomes listed above were managers and professionals (77 per cent), while between 56-67 per cent of people in other occupations and less than a third of those not in work reported these benefits

- professionals and managers were more likely than others to mention being able to do their job better (61 per cent), having learnt new skills for their job (51 per cent) and increased job satisfaction (38 per cent)
- 12 per cent of those in skilled manual occupations said the self-directed learning had helped them to set up a business.

Turning to the wider benefits, we find that almost all respondents (98 per cent) who had done self-directed learning mentioned one or more of the outcomes listed in Table 6.9:

- three quarters of respondents had improved their knowledge and skills, 69 per cent found the learning interesting, a similar proportion (67 per cent) learned new skills and 63 per cent enjoyed it
- personal development outcomes were also mentioned by relatively large groups: a third of people said the learning had boosted their confidence, 31 per cent found something useful to do with their time, a quarter said had been encouraged to do more learning and 22 per cent said the learning had increased their self-esteem
- physical and mental health benefits were also reported, including: the opportunity to meet new people (13 per cent) and keep the body active (seven per cent), while four per cent said the learning had helped them with their disability
- finally, eight per cent of respondents said the learning had enabled them to help their children with their schoolwork.

Table 6.9 Wider benefits of self-directed learning*

	%
Improved knowledge and skills	75
Found learning interesting	69
Learned new skills	67
Enjoyed it	63
Boosted confidence	33
Did something useful with spare time	31
Encouraged more learning	25
Increased self esteem	22
Met new people	13
Able to help child with schoolwork	8
Kept body active	7
Encouraged voluntary activity	5
Helped with health/ disability	4
Other benefit	3
None of the above	2
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1579</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1560</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who reported 'other' self directed learning in the past three years

* Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply

Again the proportions of 2001 respondents mentioning the wider benefits of learning reported above were similar to those found in 1997, although the 2001 survey explored a larger range of benefits to reflect growing policy interest in this area.

Some differences were found again between those in work and people not in paid employment in relation to the wider benefits of learning. For example, the latter were more likely to say the learning had given them the opportunity to do something useful in their spare time (38 per cent) and keep their body active (14 per cent).

Just under a fifth of parents (24 per cent of mothers and 15 per cent of fathers) said the learning had enabled them to help their children with their schoolwork.

Thirteen per cent of disabled people said the learning had helped them to overcome problems associated with their disability.

Like younger people, almost all in the 70+ group mentioned one or more of the wider benefits discussed above. Some of these outcomes were more likely to be reported by this group than by younger respondents:

- 79 per cent found the self-directed learning interesting
- 72 per cent enjoyed it
- 37 per cent said it enabled them to do something useful in their spare time
- 29 per cent had the opportunity to meet new people
- 14 per cent thought it had helped them to keep their body active.

Some outcomes were less likely to be mentioned by older people, that is:

- development of skills and knowledge (65 per cent)
- acquisition of new skills (42 per cent)
- confidence boosting (25 per cent).

6.7 Conclusion

As was found with taught courses, ICT featured highly in experiences of self-directed learning, with a considerable increase, since 1997, in those who were learning IT skills, and with a majority of 2001 respondents using a computer for their learning. However, this was not true for all, older respondents were far less likely than others to have learned about IT and to have used a computer for their learning. Differences between older and younger people in terms of use of ICT will be explored further in the next chapter.

Nearly half of respondents reported some difficulties while engaging in self-directed learning, with some groups being particularly likely to mention some types of problems. For example, a substantial minority of mothers mentioned lack of time because of family commitments as one of the difficulties they had experienced.

As was found in relation to taught courses, work remains a strong motivator for undertaking self-directed learning, with factors associated with the need to maintain and enhance one's employability coming very high on the list of reasons for doing this type of learning. And learning experiences seem to meet people's expectations: most respondents who had undertaken self-directed learning believed that their work life had benefited from it in many different ways, from skill acquisition and increased job satisfaction to a career change.

While work features highly in relation to different aspects of self-directed learning, most people also engaged in learning for a variety of non-work related reasons and the learning had a positive impact on many aspects of their lives, for example, by improving their social life, confidence and health. The wider motivators and benefits of learning seemed particularly important for some groups, such as older people and those not in paid employment. Worth

noting also, given the growing interest in family learning, is that a substantial minority of parents, and mothers in particular, were learning so they could help their children to learn.

As with taught courses, self-directed learning experiences were very diverse, different groups learned different things for a variety of reasons, and these experiences had an impact on many different aspects of their (and to some extent their families') lives. The survey results seem to suggest that this diversity needs to underpin adult learning policies and initiatives, if they are to succeed in their intended aim of encouraging learning among all groups in society, and in particular among those who are currently less likely to engage in learning.

7. USE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS ICT

As the use of ICT for a variety of different purposes is increasing, it was important for a survey like NALS to explore access to and use of ICT among adults. Computers can play an important part in the learning process, from facilitating access to information about learning opportunities to delivering learning. Potentially ICT could also increase learning opportunities for different groups and play an important part in increasing participation in adult learning.

The previous chapters have explored the use of ICT for learning and have shown that the majority of learners had used a computer in a variety of ways for their learning. This chapter has a broader focus and discusses use of ICT in general, not just for learning. In the first part of the chapter we present the results on how widespread the use of ICT is among the adult population, how frequently computers and the Internet are used, and what the latter is used for. We then look at how many adults have access to a computer and the Internet at home and where people normally use these. In Section 7.3 we look at variations between groups in terms of computer use, while in the last section the findings on the obstacles to ICT use are presented.

The results in this chapter include all 2001 respondents. Since ICT was covered for the first time in 2001, it was not necessary, as it was for previous chapters, to exclude the 70+ age group to make the data comparable with previous NALS.

7.1 ICT use

The survey asked a series of questions to establish: first, if respondents had ever used either a computer or the Internet; and second, if people were current computer and/or Internet users. As shown in Table 7.1:

- 67 per cent of adults had used a computer and/or the Internet at some point in their life
- over half (55 per cent) of respondents were current computer users, while 44 per cent were current Internet users
- 43 per cent were currently using both a computer and the Internet, 12 per cent were computer users only, two per cent were Internet users only and 43 per cent were currently using neither of these.

Table 7.1 Use of computers and Internet

	All
	%
Used computer/Internet	67
Never used computer/Internet	33
Current computer user*	55
Current Internet user*	44
Current computer user only	12
Current Internet user only	2
Current computer and Internet user	43
Not current Internet/computer user	43
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>

Base: all respondents

*These two categories are not mutually exclusive

People who had used a computer and the Internet at some point were asked how often they used each of these. As shown in Table 7.2, those who use a computer tend to do it frequently:

- just under half (48 per cent) used a computer almost every day
- nearly a quarter (22 per cent) used it at least once a week
- only a small minority (eight per cent) used a computer a few times a month, but not every week
- an even smaller group (six per cent) used a computer less often
- 16 per cent of respondents had used a computer in the past, but they were not current users.

Table 7.2 Frequency of computer and Internet use

	Computer	Internet
	%	%
5 or more days a week	48	33
3-4 days a week	10	14
1-2 days a week	12	19
Few times a month, but not every week	8	16
Less often	6	11
Not current user	16	8
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>4247</i>	<i>3105</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>4259</i>	<i>3067</i>

Base: all respondents who had ever used a computer for the computer column, all respondents who had ever used the Internet for the Internet column

The Internet seems to be less likely to be used on a daily basis (Table 7.2):

- a third of people who had used the Internet at some point said they used it five or more days a week
- 14 per cent used it 3-4 days a week and 19 per cent 1-2 days a week
- 16 per cent mentioned using the Internet a few times a month, but not every week
- 11 per cent used it less frequently
- eight per cent no longer used the Internet.

Different uses of the Internet were explored among past and current users (Table 7.3):

- predictably, the most commonly reported use of the Internet was for Email (79 per cent), while a much smaller proportion (12 per cent) mentioned chat lines
- the use of the Internet for employment related reasons was reported by a large proportion of people, over half (52 per cent) said they got information for work and 29 per cent looked for job vacancies
- a large number of people had also used the Internet for learning, including 44 per cent who got information about learning and over a quarter (26 per cent) who used it to help their children with their learning; among parents the proportion who had used the Internet to help with their children's learning was 55 per cent
- the Internet was also used to get information on a wide range of other issues, including goods and services (67 per cent), leisure and hobbies (53 per cent), weather and travel (38 per cent), news (32 per cent) and health (29 per cent)
- the Internet was also commonly used to order goods and services (44 per cent) and book tickets (29 per cent).

Table 7.3 Different Internet uses*

	%
Email	79
Get information about goods/services	67
Get information about leisure/hobbies	53
Get information for work	52
Get information about learning	44
Order goods/services	44
Get weather/travel information	38
Read the news	32
Book tickets for events/performances	29
Get health information	29
Get information about job vacancies	29
Help children with their learning	26
Use chat lines	12
Internet used for other purposes	6
<hr/>	
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>3105</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3067</i>

Base: all respondents who had used the Internet

* Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply

7.2 Access to ICT

All respondents, regardless of whether they had ever used ICT or not, were asked if they had access to a computer and the Internet at home: 55 per cent said they had a computer at home, while 45 per cent could access the Internet from home.

Interestingly, among respondents who had never used ICT, 19 per cent said they had a computer at home and 12 per cent could access the Internet from home.

Current ICT users were asked where they normally used a computer and the Internet. Predictably, the results in Table 7.4 show that there is a large overlap between the places where people used a computer and the Internet:

- over two thirds of respondents normally used a computer and the Internet at home (with the respective figures being 77 and 76 per cent)
- the workplace was the second most commonly mentioned place, with a computer being more likely to be used at work than the Internet (60 and 42 per cent respectively)
- the third most common place cited was a friend's or relative's home, although this was mentioned by a small proportion of people (10 per cent for a computer and 12 per cent for the Internet)
- Educational institutions and libraries were next on the list, but again these were used by a very small number of ICT users (between 3 and 6 per cent)
- other places shown in Table 7.4 were mentioned by very few people (i.e. three per cent or less).

Table 7.4 Place where a computer and the Internet are normally used*

	Computer	Internet
	%	%
Own home	77	76
Place of work	60	42
Friend's house	10	12
Educational institution	6	4
Public library	5	3
Training centre	2	1
Internet café/ shop	2	3
Learning Resource Centre	1	1
Uses lap/palmtop while travelling	1	1
Job centre/club	*	*
Community centre	*	*
Other place	*	*
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>3557</i>	<i>2849</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3559</i>	<i>2818</i>

Base: current computer users for the computer column and current Internet users for the Internet column

* Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply

7.3 Profile of ICT users and non users

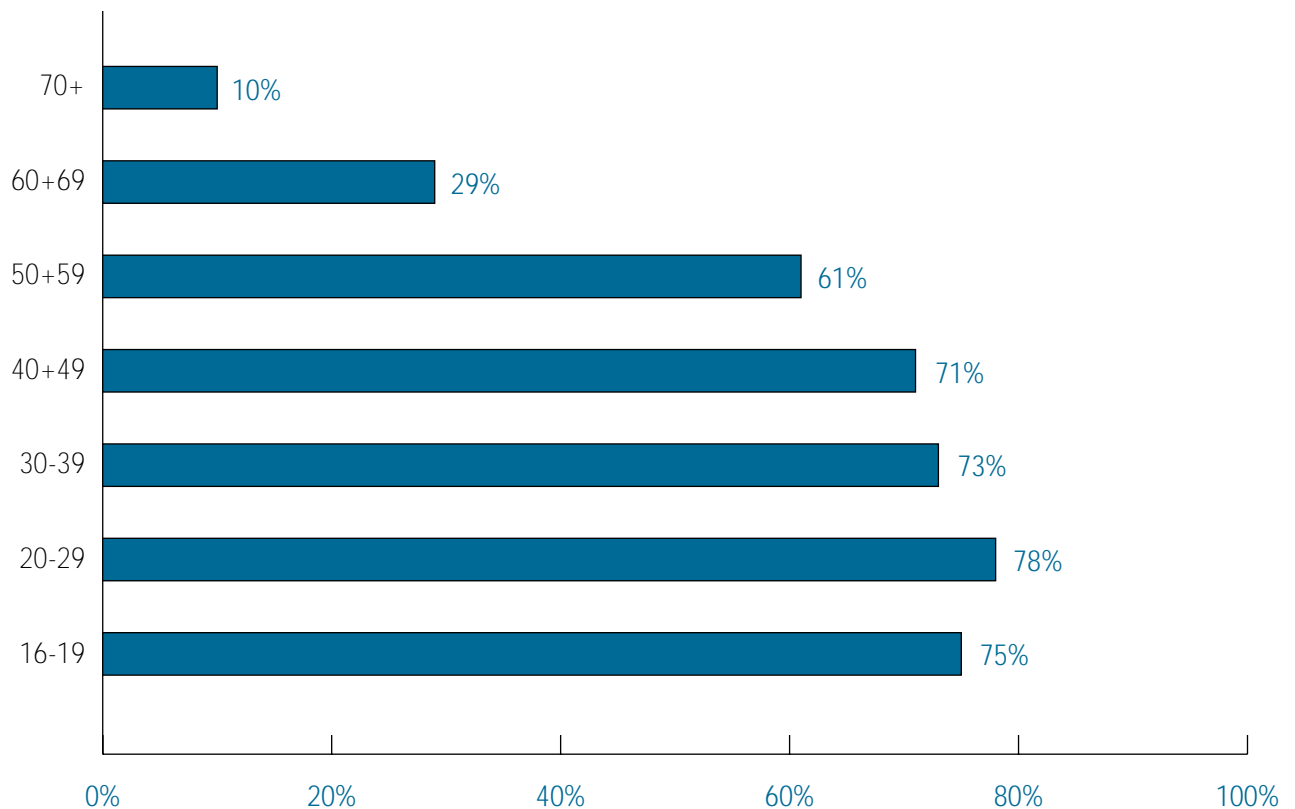
This section compares the profile of ICT users and non users. As mentioned earlier, ICT users included those who were using a computer and/or the Internet at the time of the survey and they included 57 per cent of respondents.

The strong link between ICT and learning discussed in previous chapters, was confirmed by the results on ICT use: 74 per cent of learners were classified as current ICT users, compared with less than a fifth (18 per cent) of non-learners. This difference is not surprising given that, as discussed below, many of the variables associated with learning are also associated with ICT use.

Looking first at the main variations between groups with different demographic characteristics:

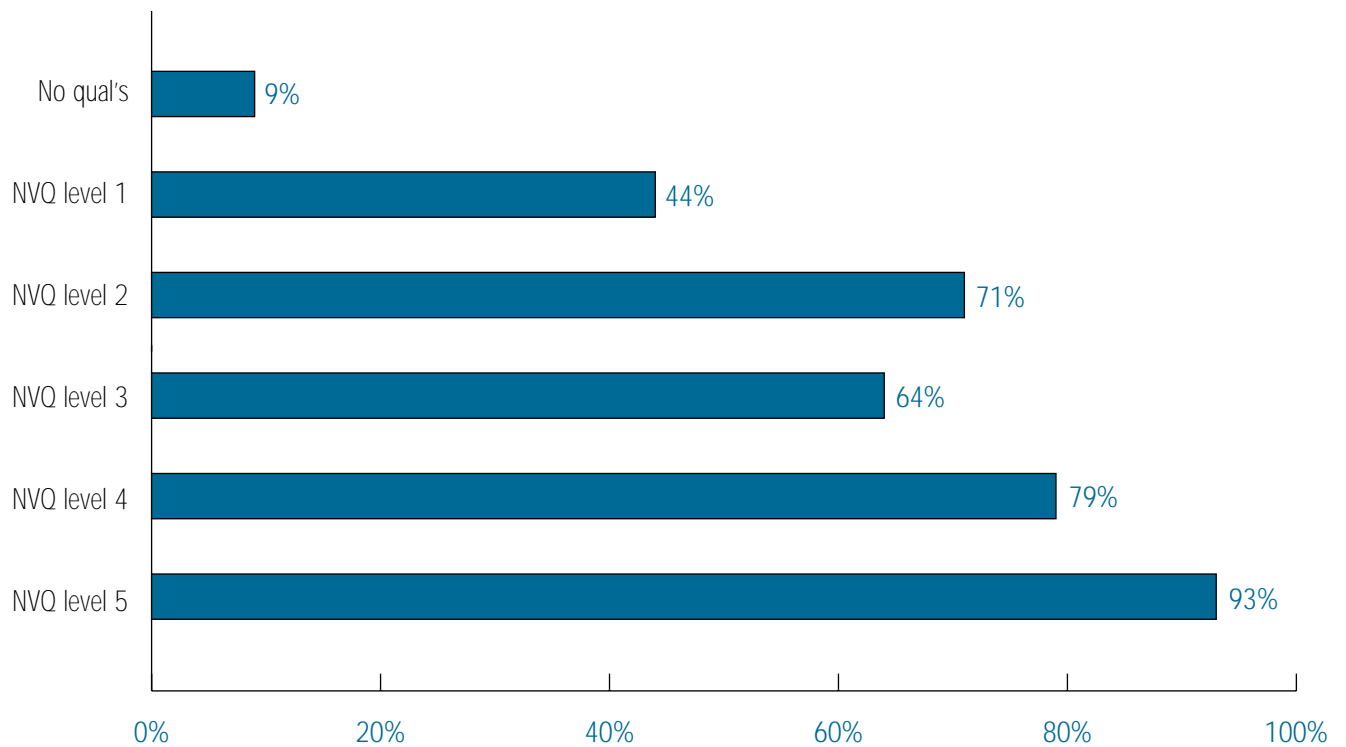
- there seems to be a clear association between ICT use and age: between 71 and 78 per cent of under 50's were ICT users, compared with 29 per cent of those aged 60-69 and 10 per cent of older people (Figure 7.1)
- women were less likely than men to be ICT users (52 and 62 per cent respectively)
- just over a third (35 per cent) of disabled people were ICT users.

Figure 7.1 Percentage of respondents in different age groups classified as current ICT users



Base: all respondents

Predictably, there was a strong link between qualification level and ICT use (Figure 7.2). For example, 93 per cent of those with an NVQ level five qualification were ICT users, compared with 44 per cent of those with a level one qualification and nine per cent of people with no qualifications. However, it is interesting to note that those qualified at level two were more likely to be ICT users than those with a level three qualification (71 and 64 per cent respectively).

Figure 7.2 Percentage of respondents with different qualification levels* classified as current ICT users

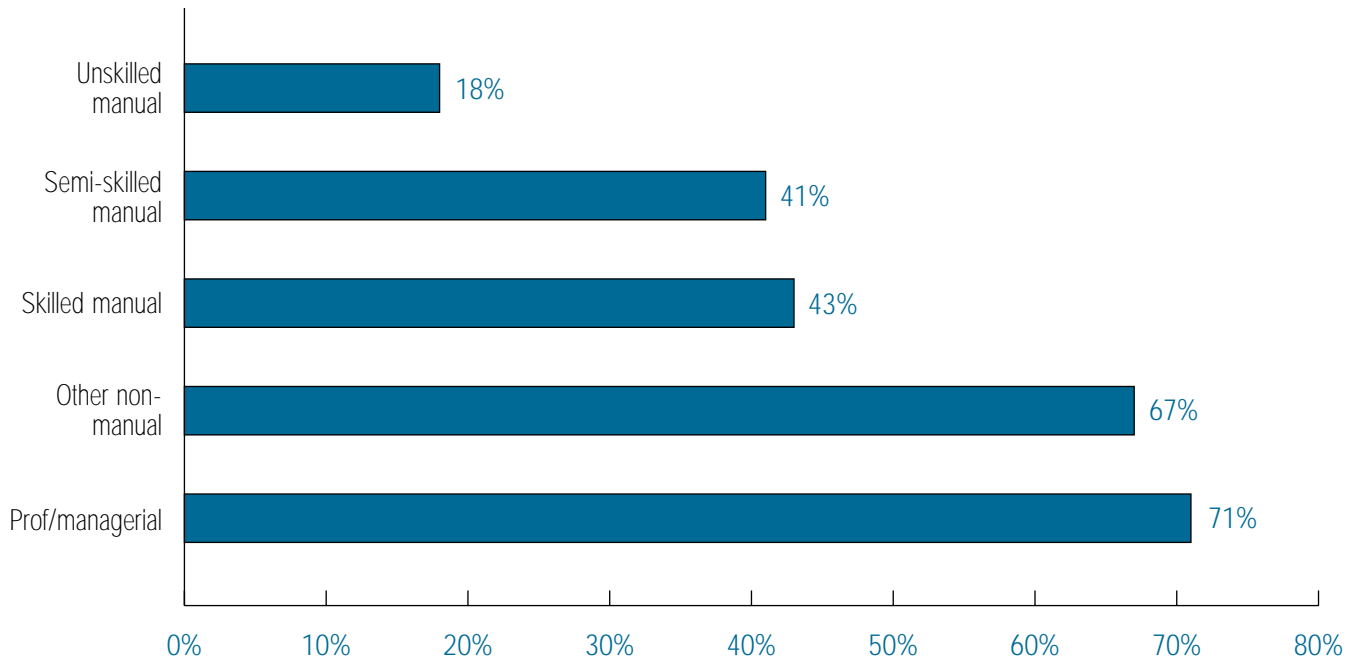
Base: all respondents

*Academic and vocational qualifications were categorised according to NVQ level, using the Labour Force Survey code frame

ICT use also appears to be clearly associated with employment and financial circumstances:

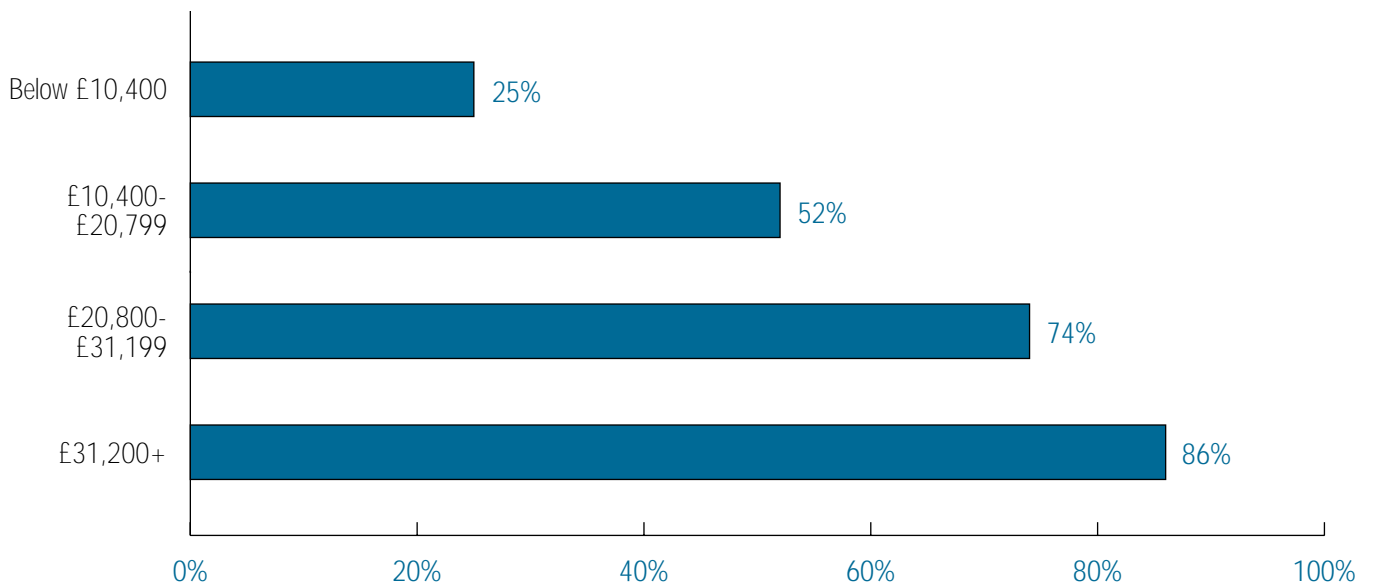
- only 27 per cent of people not in paid work were ICT users, compared with 78 per cent of employees and 67 per cent of self-employed
- as shown in Figure 7.3, professionals and managers were the most likely to be ICT users (71 per cent), while those in unskilled manual occupations were the least likely to be using ICT (18 per cent)
- only a quarter of people in the lowest income group were ICT users, compared with 86 per cent of those in the highest income bracket (Figure 7.4)
- predictably, given the above result, ICT use was considerably less likely to be reported by those dependent on means tested benefits (34 per cent).

Figure 7.3 Percentage of respondents in different SEG groups classified as current ICT users

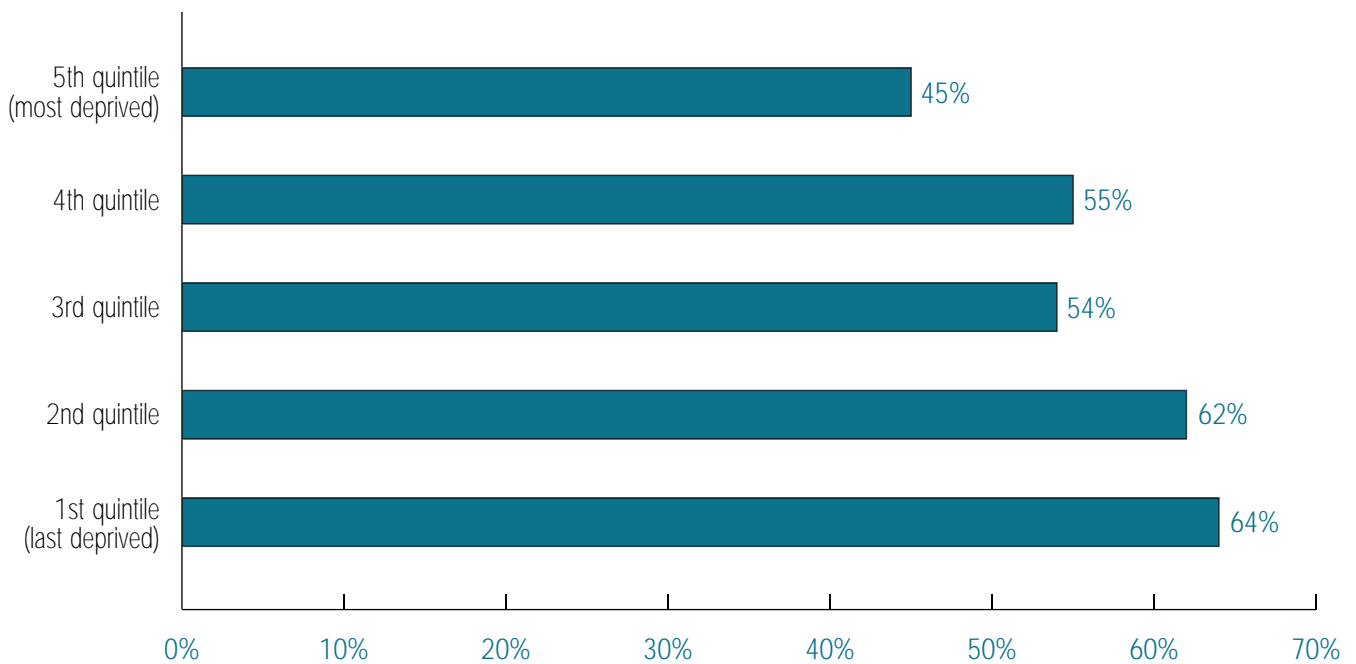


Base: all respondents who were in employment or had been in employment in the past
NB Those in the 'other/ unclassified' SEG are not included in the figure

Figure 7.4 Percentage of respondents in different household income groups classified as current ICT users



Base: all respondents
NB 894 respondents did not answer the question on household income.

Figure 7.5 Percentage of respondents in multiple deprivation index quintiles classified as current ICT users

Base: all respondents in England

Using the DETR multiple deprivation index¹, we explored the association between local deprivation and ICT use, as shown in Figure 7.5:

- between 62 and 64 per cent of respondents in the least deprived areas (first and second quintile) were current ICT users
- the equivalent figure is 54-55 per cent in the third and fourth quintiles
- while it drops to 45 per cent in the most deprived areas.

7.4 Obstacles to ICT use

All respondents, regardless of whether they had used ICT or not, were asked if any of the problems listed in Table 7.5 had prevented them from using ICT or using it as often as they would have liked. Predictably, considerable differences were found between current ICT users and non-users: nearly half (47 per cent) of the former had not experienced any of the problems shown in Table 7.5, while a third of non-users said they were not interested or had no need to use a computer. Common difficulties reported, mainly by non-users, included:

- knowing nothing about computers, reported by 68 per cent of non-users and 11 per cent of users
- just over a third (34 per cent) of non-users mentioned not having a computer at home as a difficulty, while this was reported by 13 per cent of users
- 28 per cent of non-users said they were not very good with computers, a problem also reported by a 18 per cent of users
- 22 per cent of non-users said they did not know where to start with computers, predictably very few users mentioned this (two per cent)

¹ For a further explanation of analysis using the multiple deprivation index see Chapter 3.

- cost was a problem for both groups, but the cost of buying a computer/equipment was more likely to be mentioned by non-users (27 per cent) than users (15 per cent), while very similar proportions (14-15 per cent) reported the cost of Internet use
- various problems explored in relation to the use of computer in public places (e.g. libraries, colleges, Internet shops) were mentioned by very few people; the most likely to be mentioned among these was being anxious about using a computer in a public place, this was reported by 6 per cent of users and 10 per cent of non-users.

Table 7.5 Difficulties in using a computer or the Internet*

	All	Current ICT users	Current ICT non-users
	%	%	%
Know nothing about computers	36	11	68
Not very good with computers	22	18	28
Do not have a computer at home	22	13	34
Cost of computers/equipment	20	15	27
Cost of Internet use	15	14	15
Do not know where to start	11	2	22
Lack of adequate equipment at home	8	7	8
Anxious about using computers in public places	8	6	10
Have to share a computer at home	4	6	1
Computers in public places not available when needed	4	4	3
Difficult to find a quiet place at home	3	3	3
Computers in public places difficult to get to	2	2	2
Computers in public places lack equipment/software needed	1	1	1
Computers in public places not accessible to disabled	*	*	1
Other problem	1	1	1
Not interested in/do not need to use computers	16	4	33
None of the above	28	47	4
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>3660</i>	<i>2791</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>3658</i>	<i>2793</i>

Base: all respondents

* Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply

Some groups were more likely than others to report some of the issues mentioned above, for example:

- older people were more likely to report lack of interest: 30 per cent of the 60-69 age group and 40 per cent of the 70+ group said they did not use ICT because they were not interested in it and/or did not need to use it
- respondents not in paid work were more likely than others to report not having a computer at home as a problem (27 per cent), and also not being interested or needing to use ICT (27 per cent)
- lack of interest in ICT or not needing to use ICT was more likely to be reported by manual workers, with 20-26 per cent mentioning this, compared with 12-13 per cent of those in non manual occupations

- people with a household income below £10,400 were more likely than others to report cost related problems: 32 per cent mentioned the cost of buying a computer and 20 per cent of cost of using the Internet.

7.5 Conclusion

As the results in this chapter have shown, the use of ICT is widespread among the adult population with a majority of people having used a computer and/or the Internet at some point in their life, and with a large proportion being regular ICT users. The Internet was used for a wide range of purposes, but work and learning were very high on the list, a majority of parents also used it to support their children's learning.

Home and work are the main places where ICT was used, with around half of all adults saying they had access to a computer and the Internet at home.

The strong link found in earlier chapters between ICT and learning was confirmed here. We also found that many of the characteristics associated with participation in learning are also associated with ICT use. These results raise some questions about how effective ICT has been so far in increasing learning opportunities for a wider range of people and for helping to reach those who are least likely to engage in learning. Further research on the link between ICT and learning would therefore be extremely helpful.

The issues associated with difficulties in using ICT are largely related to lack of knowledge and skills, although lack of interest and lack of access also feature highly among some groups, including older people, those not in paid work and manual workers.

8. SOCIAL CAPITAL AND LEARNING

For the first time in 2001, NALS collected information about respondents' leisure activities and the extent to which they were involved in a variety of voluntary and community activities. The purpose of this is to look at whether learning is a substitute for these range of activities or whether involvement in learning is positively associated with involvement in these.

There is a body of literature which suggests that involvement in activities in the local and wider community increases "social capital". Social capital "refers to lasting networks of interaction among equals, both organised and informal, that exist between individuals outside the family or the state" (Johnston and Jowell, 1999). Social capital is seen as having private and public aspects (Putnam, 2000) and benefits both the individual and the community as a whole. It can strengthen social networks and build trust within and between communities.

It is hypothesised that those with greater involvement in the community are likely to be more involved in learning as well. Putnam (2000) argues that for almost all activities, the more people do of one, the more they will do of others, described by Meyersohn as "the more, the more" (Meyersohn, 1968, in Putnam, 2000). Thus, we would expect that those involved in voluntary and community activities would be more likely to participate in learning. The direction of causality cannot be predicted, nor measured from the data collected in NALS. While education is generally seen as a way of developing human capital, the data presented elsewhere in this report suggest that there are a wide range of social benefits as well, particularly for non-vocational learning.

The exception to Putnam's theory, that the more people engage in a range of activities the more other activities they will be involved in, is television watching. He argues that as well as simply competing for scarce time, television watching inhibits social participation and undermines civic motivations. This suggests that we would find a negative correlation between volume of television watching and involvement, not only in voluntary and other community activities, but also participating in learning.

This chapter investigates the links between these various leisure activities (television watching, newspaper reading and involvement in voluntary and community activities) and other characteristics, demographic, educational and socio-economic, before looking at their relationship with participation in learning. This chapter looks at all respondents, including those aged 70 or over.

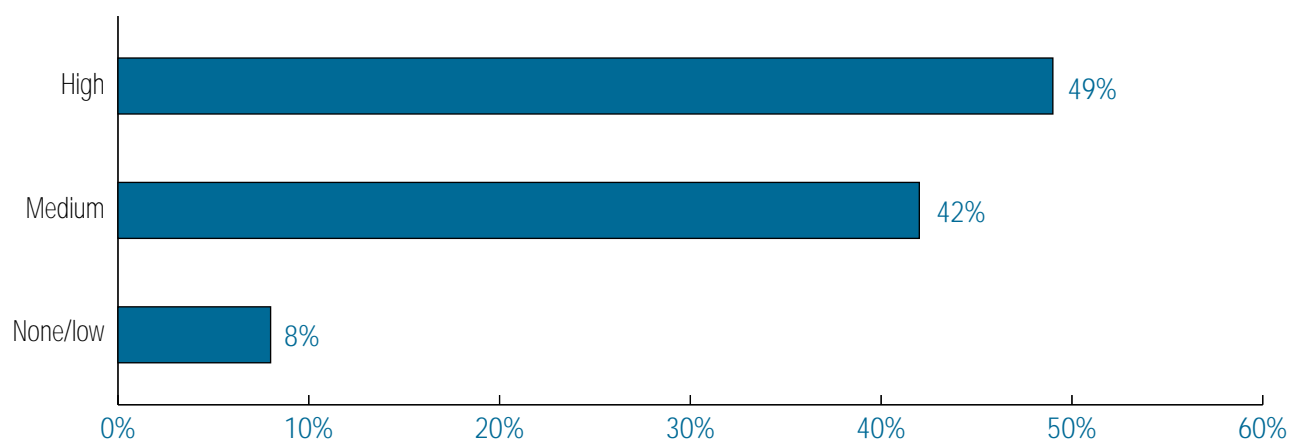
8.1 Leisure activities

This section focuses on the amount of television watching reported by respondents and the extent of and type of their newspaper reading.

8.1.1 Television watching and learning participation

Television watching and respondent characteristics

Respondents were asked how much television they watched per day during the week and at weekends. These variables were then combined to create an index of whether their television viewing was none or low, medium or high. Figure 8.1 shows that half of respondents (49 per cent) were classified as having a high level of television watching, meaning they watched it for at least two hours a day during the week and at weekends.

Figure 8.1 Level of television watching*

Base: all respondents

* None/ low means respondent watched TV less than once a day. Medium means the respondent watched up to two hours a day. High means the respondent watched more than two hours a day during the week or weekend.

Before looking at the relationship between learning and television watching we examine the level of television watching reported by different groups. This is because we need to be sure that any relationship between television watching and learning that is found, cannot merely be attributed to the other characteristics of those who watch different amounts of television.

Looking at other respondent characteristics it was found that:

- television watching was highest among those aged 60 and over (65-70 per cent watched a high level compared with 40-41 per cent of 20-49 year olds), which is likely to be related to the fact that many in the older age group are likely to be retired and so have more leisure time
- women were slightly more likely than men to watch high levels of television (51 per cent compared with 47 per cent), this may possibly be related to their age distribution since women are more likely than men to be in the older age groups which watch more television
- those with health problems or disabilities were also more likely than others to watch a high level television (64 per cent) compared with 43 per cent of those without
- parents with or without a partner were less likely to watch high levels of television (42-43 per cent) than those without children (52 per cent)
- those with higher levels of qualifications were less likely to watch high levels of television than those with fewer or no qualifications; 27 per cent of those with NVQ level five and 34 per cent of those with level four qualifications watched high levels of television, compared with 57 per cent of those with level one qualifications and 67 per cent of those with no qualifications
- similar patterns were found for occupation, with 40 per cent of those in professional or managerial positions watching high levels of television, compared with 65 per cent of those in unskilled manual occupations, the other occupations lay between these two extremes
- when looking at income, respondents in households with higher income were less likely to watch high levels of television than those in lower income groups (35 per cent of those with a household income £31,200 or more and 62 per cent of those with an income of less than £10,400)
- those households dependent on means tested benefits were more likely than others to watch high levels of television (58 per cent and 47 per cent respectively)

- those who were retired or incapable of work were most likely to watch high levels of television (69 per cent and 66 per cent respectively), while those who were self-employed or worked full-time were least likely to (31 per cent and 38 per cent respectively).

Television watching and participation in learning

As hypothesised, those who watched high levels of television were least likely to do any learning (58 per cent) (Table 8.1). Interestingly, those who watched medium levels of television were slightly more likely to participate in learning than those with none or low levels (79 per cent and 76 per cent respectively).

Table 8.1 also shows that levels of participation in both taught and self-directed learning were lowest for those who watched high levels of television (42-44 per cent, compared with 60-64 per cent of those who watched none or medium levels). The same pattern was found for participation in vocational and non-vocational learning.

Table 8.1 Different types of learning by level of television watching

	All	None/Low	Medium	High
	%	%	%	%
Any learning	68	76	79	58
Taught learning	52	60	61	44
Self-directed learning	53	62	64	42
Vocational learning	59	66	71	47
Non-vocational learning	24	29	26	22
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>538</i>	<i>2730</i>	<i>3178</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>542</i>	<i>2705</i>	<i>3200</i>

Base: all respondents

Since many of the characteristics associated with higher levels of television watching are also associated with lower levels of participation in learning, caution must be exercised in drawing conclusions about the relationships between television watching and learning since any relationship may in part be owing to other characteristics of learners and non-learners. However, multivariate analyses which controlled for the factors discussed above, showed that although the strength of the relationship between participation in learning and television watching was weakened, even after controlling for these factors there was still a strong and statistically significant relationship. Looking at television watching on its own, those who watched none to medium levels were 2.5 times as likely as those who watched high levels to have done any learning in the last three years. When controlling for age, activity status, household income, benefit dependency and educational level, those who watched none to medium levels were 1.3 times as likely to have done any learning. Thus, it does seem that learning and television watching are to some extent substitute activities and doing more of one is generally associated with doing less of the other. (Further details on the multivariate analysis are included in the Technical Report.)

8.1.2 Newspaper reading

Newspaper reading and respondent characteristics

Putnam (2000) argues that those who read newspapers are likely to be more engaged and knowledgeable about the world and so more involved in community activities. He points out that this is partly because newspaper readers are older and better educated than the average, but even taking account of this, there is an effect. In this section, we first look at the characteristics of those who read newspapers and then look at the relationship between learning and newspaper readership.

- As Putnam found in the USA, NALS shows that older people are more likely to read newspapers. Forty-two per cent of 16-19 year olds and 52 per cent of 20-29 year olds read a newspaper at least three times a week,

compared with 64-67 per cent of those aged 60 or over. In terms of types of paper read older people were much more likely to read broadsheets (16-17 per cent of 70 plus age group compared with two per cent of 16-19 year olds and 11 per cent of 20-29 year olds).

- Men were more likely than women to read a newspaper (61 per cent and 50 per cent respectively).
- Lone parents were less likely than the other groups to read a daily paper (42 per cent compared with 58 per cent of those with no children).

Newspaper readership and participation in learning

There was no clear relationship between whether someone read a daily newspaper and their learning status. However, there was a relationship between the types of newspaper read and learning status (Table 8.2):

- broadsheet readers were more likely than any other group to have done any learning (85 per cent), while local daily readers were least likely (55 per cent), 62 per cent of tabloid readers and 70 per cent of those who were not regular readers had done any learning
- similar patterns were found for each type of learning; broadsheet readers were most likely to have done any taught, self-directed, vocational and non-vocational learning, while local daily and tabloid readers were least likely to have done so, with non-newspaper readers somewhere in between.

Table 8.2 Different types of learning by newspaper readership

	All	Tabloid	Broadsheet	Local daily	Other	Not a regular reader
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	68	62	85	55	72	70
Taught learning	52	46	66	39	60	54
Self-directed learning	53	47	69	44	57	54
Vocational learning	59	53	69	46	65	61
Non-vocational learning	24	19	40	15	24	24
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>2340</i>	<i>887</i>	<i>234</i>	<i>118</i>	<i>2868</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>2307</i>	<i>879</i>	<i>237</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>2917</i>

Base: all respondents

Multivariate analysis was carried out which confirmed that there was no relationship between whether someone read a daily paper and participation in learning. However, a relationship was found between whether someone read a broadsheet and their learning status, even when controlling for the other factors associated with reading a newspaper. Those who did not read broadsheets were a third as likely to have done any learning. However, newspaper reading was closely related to a range of socio-economic characteristics. When controlling for age, activity status, household income, benefit dependency and educational level, they were 0.4 times as likely to have done any learning. When controlling for age and income only, the relationship was actually slightly strengthened (non-broadsheet readers were 0.3 times as likely as broadsheet readers to have done any learning). When controlling for educational level only the relationship was weakened, but still significant (non-broadsheet readers were 0.7 times as likely as broadsheet readers to have done any learning). (See the Technical Report for details of the multivariate analysis.) Thus it seems that in England and Wales, Putnam's thesis about newspaper reading applies only to reading broadsheets; it is not reading a newspaper which is related to learning, but reading a particular type of newspaper (which may reflect the different types of newspapers available in the USA and Britain).

8.2 Voluntary work

8.2.1 Measuring involvement in voluntary activities

Respondents were asked how often they engaged in the following activities during the last year:

- helping out their neighbours (not including helping their family), by doing things such as their shopping, giving them lifts, looking after their home while they are away
- going to a group, social club or place of worship
- helping out at an organisation such as a school, hospital, prison, charity or voluntary organisation
- attending public meetings or consultation groups, contacting a local councillor or MP
- getting involved with other people from area to tackle local issues or solve local problems.

The idea is that these can together be used as an indication of social capital because these activities build social networks and trust.

Table 8.3 shows the percentage of respondents getting involved in each of these activities. It shows that:

- the most common activities were helping neighbours (47 per cent mentioned this) and going to a social club or group (45 per cent)
- among those who helped their neighbours, most had done so one to four times a year (19 per cent), whereas those who went to groups were most likely to do so once or more times a week (24 per cent)
- volunteering was the next most common activity, although over two-thirds (69 per cent) had not done it at all in the last twelve months and 17 per cent had only done so once a month or less
- only a small minority had attended public meetings or consultations (17 per cent) or had been involved in tackling local issues (14 per cent) in the last twelve months, of those who had done such activities almost all had done so only one to four times in the last year.

Table 8.3 Involvement in local and community activities

	Helped neighbours	Group or club	Volunteered	Public meeting	Local issues
	%	%	%	%	%
Any involvement	47	45	31	17	14
Not in last 12 months	53	55	69	83	86
1-4 times a year	19	8	10	13	10
Every other month	4	3	3	1	1
Once a month	5	5	4	1	2
Few times a month	6	5	3	1	1
Once a week	6	13	6	*	*
Few times a week	5	10	4	*	*
Every day	2	1	1	*	*
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>6451</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>6451</i>

Base: all respondents

This table shows the results for five separate variables, one in each column, they are shown in one table for convenience

Analysis of participation in these activities among different groups showed that although some were more common than others, the patterns of participation were similar. Those groups most likely to help their neighbours were also most likely to attend groups or to volunteer and so on. Because of this, it is sensible to construct a derived variable which shows an overall result for involvement in any activity, since the conclusions which would be drawn from such a variable are similar to those which would be drawn from looking at each of the variables individually.

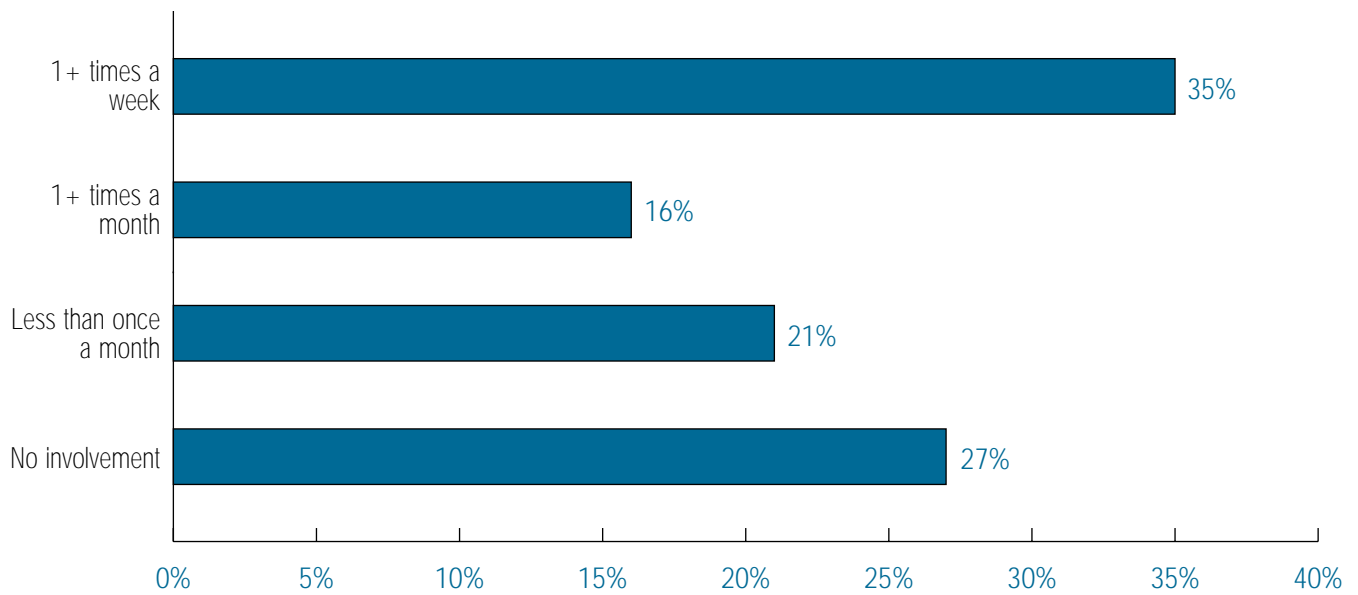
Therefore the rest of the analysis in this section will be based on the variables described below, which measure overall involvement across the five types of activity.

- A variable based on a respondent's most frequent involvement in any of the activities. For example, someone who helped their neighbours three or four times a year and went to a local group once a week would be coded as being involved one or more times a week. This variable cannot distinguish between people who are involved in only one activity once a week and those who are involved in several of the five activities asked about.
- A variable showing the number of different types of activities engaged in. It should be noted that it does not measure the number of actual activities a respondent was involved in. If someone was involved in two social groups or clubs that would count as one.

Figure 8.2 shows that over a quarter of respondents (27 per cent) had not been involved in any voluntary activities. However, the largest group (35 per cent) had been involved in at least one activity one or more times a week.

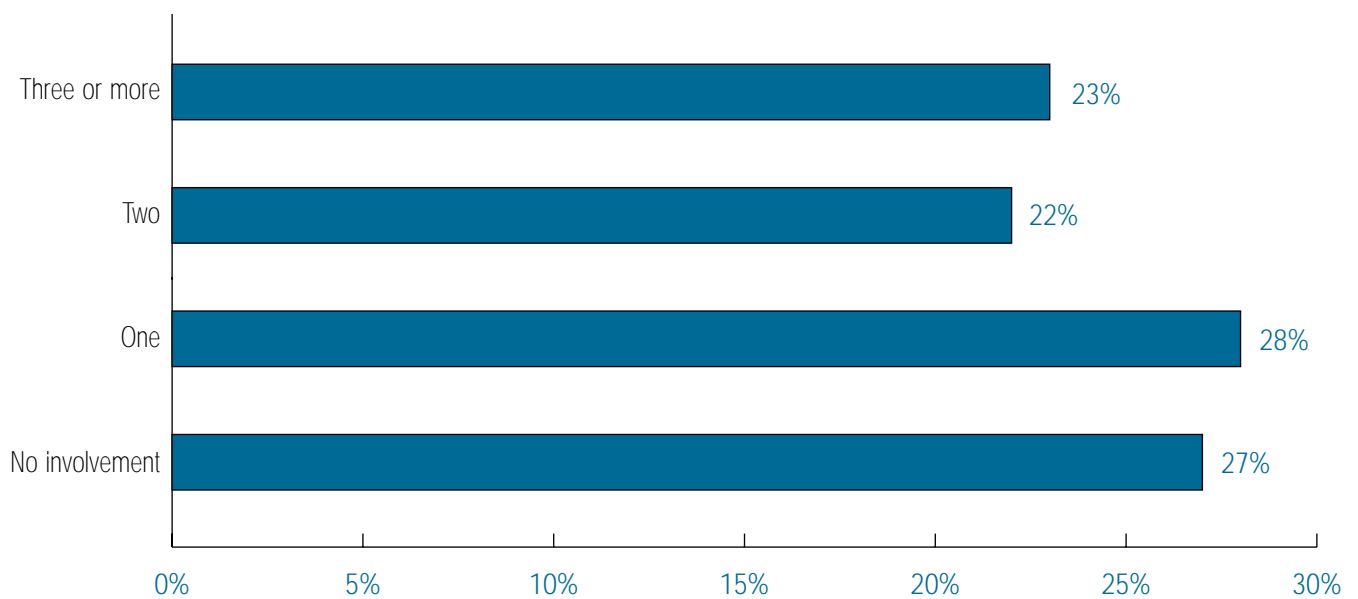
Figure 8.3 shows that while the largest groups (28 per cent) had been involved in only one type of activity, 23 per cent had been involved in at least three different activities at some point in the previous year. Thus, while there is a strong overlap between involvement in different activities, looking across the five different types of activities investigated, the majority of respondents had been involved in something.

Figure 8.2 Frequency of involvement in local and community activities



Base: all respondents

Figure 8.3 Number of different local and community activities involved in



Base: all respondents

Table 8.4 shows the number of activities the respondent was involved in (among the five asked about) by their overall frequency of involvement. It shows that there is a positive association between number of activities involved in and frequency. For example, among those who were involved less than once a month, 58 per cent were only involved in one type of activity, compared with 28 per cent of those who were involved one or more times a week. Among those who had been involved less than once a month, 13 per cent were involved in three or more activities, compared with 43 per cent of those who were involved in something at least once a week.

Table 8.4 Number of different local and community activities involved in by frequency

	All	No involvement	Less than once a month	1+ times a month	1+ times a week
	%	%	%	%	%
No involvement	27	100	-	-	-
One	28	-	58	35	28
Two	22	-	29	33	30
Three or more	23	-	13	32	43
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>1767</i>	<i>1381</i>	<i>1043</i>	<i>2260</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>1734</i>	<i>1367</i>	<i>1059</i>	<i>2291</i>

Base: all respondents

8.2.2 Involvement in voluntary activities by respondent characteristics

The patterns of overall involvement in voluntary activities by respondent characteristics were examined.

There was a positive association between age and frequency of involvement in any activities: 46 per cent of 16-19 year olds had been involved in no activities, compared with 22 per cent of 60-69 year olds. The 20-29 year old group were the least likely to be involved one or more times a week (24 per cent), compared with 45 per cent of 60-69 year olds.

There were no clear gender differences although women were slightly more likely than men to be involved in three or more activities and do one of them at least once a week.

Looking at respondents with disabilities and health problems, they were no more or less likely than others to be involved in any voluntary activities, however, they were more likely to be involved at least once a week (40 per cent), compared with 33 per cent of those who reported no disability or health problems.

A positive correlation can be seen between level of educational qualifications and involvement in voluntary activities. Among those with level five qualifications 16 per cent had no involvement and 37 per cent were involved in three or more activities, compared with 28 per cent and 19 per cent respectively for those with level one qualifications. This pattern was even more marked when looking at those with no qualifications (44 per cent and nine per cent respectively). However, when looking at frequency of involvement, those with level five qualifications were no more likely than those with level one qualifications to report being involved at least once a week. Thus it appears that those with higher educational qualifications are involved in a wider range of activities, but these are not necessarily very frequent commitments.

A similar pattern was found when looking at socio-economic group. Professionals and managers were the group most likely to engage in any voluntary activity (78 per cent). They were also the group most likely to be involved in three or more activities, but they were no more likely than the other groups to be involved at least once a week (37 per cent, compared with 34 per cent of unskilled workers).

Those who were unemployed were most likely not to be involved in any activities (44 per cent compared with 21 per cent of part time employees and 22 per cent of self-employed). Those who were retired were most likely to be involved frequently: 46 per cent were involved in something at least once a week, compared with 27 per cent of full-time employees.

Those with higher levels of household income were found to be more likely than those with lower income to engage in any voluntary activities, to engage in three or more activities and to be involved at least once a week. A third of those with household income of less than £10,400 had no involvement, compared with 22 per cent of those with a household income of £31,200 or more.

8.2.3 Involvement in voluntary activities and participation in learning

Table 8.5 shows participation in different types of learning by frequency of involvement in voluntary activities. There was no clear relationship between frequency of voluntary involvement and participation in learning, probably because some of the groups more involved in voluntary activities (e.g. older people) are less likely to have participated in learning, while other groups who are more involved in voluntary activities (e.g. those with higher levels of education) are more likely to have participated in learning.

Table 8.5 shows that:

- those with no involvement in any voluntary activities were least likely to have done any learning in the last three years (57 per cent)
- however, among those who had done any voluntary activities, those who participated less than once a month were most likely to have done any learning (78 per cent)
- looking at self-directed learning, a similar pattern was found with only 42 per cent of those who did no voluntary activities being involved in self-directed learning and 63 per cent of those who were involved once a month or less
- looking at taught and vocational learning, those with no involvement in voluntary activities were least likely to have done these types of learning (58 per cent and 50 per cent respectively).

Table 8.5 Different types of learning by frequency of involvement in voluntary activities

	All	No involvement	Less than once a month	1 + times a month	1 + times a week
	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	68	57	78	76	68
Taught learning	52	58	59	60	53
Self-directed learning	53	42	63	61	52
Vocational learning	59	50	71	66	55
Non-vocational learning	24	16	24	35	28
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>1767</i>	<i>1381</i>	<i>1043</i>	<i>2260</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>1732</i>	<i>1792</i>	<i>1400</i>	<i>1523</i>

Base: all respondents

Table 8.6 shows a clear link between participation in learning and the number of voluntary activities the respondent was involved in. Those involved in three or more activities were most likely to have done any learning (81 per cent), taught learning (65 per cent), self-directed learning (67 per cent), vocational learning (68 per cent) and non-vocational learning (36 per cent).

Multivariate analysis showed that looking at the number of voluntary activities reported, those who participated in none were a third as likely (0.3) as those who reported three or more different activities to have done any learning. Even when controlling for age, activity status, household income, benefit dependency and educational level, those who had not participated in any activities were still a third as likely (0.3) as those who had done three or more activities to have done any learning. This is because the socio-economic effects have varying and conflicting effects on the model so they have no net effect. (See the Technical Report for further details on the multivariate analysis).

Table 8.6 Different types of learning by number of voluntary activities involved in

	All	None	One	Two	Three or more
	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	68	57	67	72	81
Taught learning	52	42	49	56	65
Self-directed learning	53	42	51	55	67
Vocational learning	59	50	58	62	68
Non-vocational learning	24	16	22	25	36
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>1765</i>	<i>1803</i>	<i>1406</i>	<i>1472</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>6451</i>	<i>1734</i>	<i>1367</i>	<i>1059</i>	<i>2291</i>

Base: all respondents

Thus it seems that while people who are not involved in any voluntary activities are also least likely to participate in any learning, among those who engage in these activities there is a difference between those who engage in a few activities very regularly and those who are involved in a wide range of voluntary activities, but none of them very frequently. The latter group were found to be more likely to be involved in learning of all types, while those who engage in few activities but do them at least once a week were no more likely than others to have undertaken any taught or vocational learning. However, they were more likely to have done self-directed or non-vocational learning than those not involved in voluntary activities.

8.3 Conclusion

The hypothesis that an individual's level of social capital may relate to their participation in learning, independent of their other characteristics such as demographics, education and employment, has been supported by the NALS 2001 data. However, the ways in which our indicators of social capital are related to other socio-demographic characteristics are complex and do not conform to the simple patterns predicted by some of the literature on social capital.

Those who watch high levels of television are less involved in learning, but those who watch medium levels are as likely to have done learning as those who watch none or low levels. Looking at newspaper readership, there was no relationship between reading any paper and learning, but it was found that broadsheet readers were much more involved in learning than readers of any other types of paper. While involvement in any voluntary activities was associated with higher levels of participation in learning, more frequent involvement was not associated with greater learning participation, whereas involvement in a greater number of activities was.

It is also important to note that while relationships have been identified, it is impossible to ascertain the direction of causality. It cannot be assumed, for example, that if people do more learning, they will become more involved in voluntary activities, or that if people read more broadsheet newspapers, they would be more likely to participate in learning.

9. INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES ABOUT LEARNING

This chapter investigates respondents' access to advice and information about learning and their awareness and use of various campaigns and funding initiatives to encourage learning. Only those aged under 70 are included in analyses in this chapter. The groups analysed in each sub-section vary. Only learners were asked about the advice and information they received about learning, while all respondents were asked about their awareness of various learning campaigns and sources of funding.

Although advice and information were covered in previous NALS, the questions differed slightly and so the results are not comparable and are not presented for NALS 1997. Awareness of learning campaigns and government learning initiatives were also not included in the 1997 survey, so no comparable results are available.

9.1 Advice and information about learning

9.1.1 Whether any advice received

Those who had participated in either taught or self-directed learning in the past three years were asked whether they had received any information or advice about learning and if so, from which sources. There was no attempt made in the survey to differentiate between 'information', 'advice' and 'guidance'. The terms 'advice' and 'advice and information' are used in the report to cover all three concepts and this should be borne in mind when interpreting the results in this chapter.

Two-thirds of learners (68 per cent) had received some advice or information about learning. Table 9.1 shows that among those who had done only one type of learning (taught or self-directed), over a half had received some information or advice (56 per cent of taught learners and 53 per cent of self-directed learners). However, the percentage who had received advice was highest among those who had done both taught and self-directed learning (79 per cent).

Table 9.1 Whether received advice about learning by learning status

	All learners	Both taught and self directed	Taught learning only	Self-directed only
	%	%	%	%
Advice received	68	79	56	53
No advice	32	21	44	47
<i>Weighted base</i>	4174	2338	888	948
<i>Unweighted base</i>	4182	2322	908	952

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done any learning in past three years

Table 9.2 shows that those who had done vocational learning only were more likely to have received advice than those who had done only non-vocational learning (68 and 51 per cent respectively), but the group most likely to have received advice were those who had done both vocational and non-vocational learning (77 per cent).

Table 9.2 Whether received advice about learning by vocational learning status

	All learners	Both vocational and non-vocational	Vocational only	Non-vocational only
	%	%	%	%
Advice received	68	77	68	51
No advice	32	23	32	49
<i>Weighted base</i>	4174	923	2821	430
<i>Unweighted base</i>	4182	936	2794	452

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done any learning in past three years

Looking at the other characteristics of respondents some differences were also found.

- Those with higher levels of qualifications were more likely to have received advice: 78 per cent of those with level five qualifications, compared with 58 per cent of those with level one qualifications and 45 per cent of those with no qualifications. Thus, not only are those with lower qualifications less likely to have done any learning, but those who have are less likely to have received advice than people with higher qualifications.
- There was also an occupational pattern with 73 per cent of professionals and managers having received advice, compared with 48 per cent of unskilled manual workers.

Half (49 per cent) of those who had received any advice used one source, 28 per cent used two sources, with 23 per cent reporting three or more sources (Table 9.3). The table also shows that those who had done both taught and self-directed learning had used more advice sources, than those who had done only one type (60 per cent had used two or more compared, with only 32 per cent of those who had done taught learning only and 40 per cent of self-directed learners).

Table 9.3 Number of advice sources used by learning status

Advice about	All	Both taught and self directed	Taught learning only	Self directed learning only
	%	%	%	%
One	49	41	68	61
Two	28	31	20	25
Three	14	17	9	9
Four or more	9	12	3	6
<i>Weighted base</i>	2834	1842	493	499
<i>Unweighted base</i>	2841	1836	506	499

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done any learning in past three years and used any advice source

9.1.2 Sources of advice

The most commonly mentioned source of advice was an employer (31 per cent), with educational institutions (28 per cent) being almost as common (Table 9.4). Friends and family and work colleagues were mentioned by 19 per cent and 17 per cent respectively. Although many other sources of advice were mentioned, none were reported by more than eight per cent of respondents.

The sources of advice mentioned varied according to the type of learning the respondent had done. Employer was mentioned by 43 per cent of those who had done both taught and self-directed learning, but by only 16 per cent of those who had done one of these types of learning. Educational institutions were mentioned by over a third of those who had done both types of learning (35 per cent), by 24 per cent of those who had done only taught learning and 16 per cent of those who had done only self-directed learning. Work colleagues and friends and family were both mentioned most often by those who had done both types of learning. These differences are mainly due to the fact that those who had done only one type of learning were much less likely to have used any source of advice.

Table 9.4 Sources of advice about learning by learning status*

	All learners	Both taught and self directed	Taught learning only	Self-directed only
	%	%	%	%
Employer	31	43	16	16
Educational institution	28	35	24	16
Friends and family	19	21	15	17
Work colleagues	17	24	4	11
Public library	8	9	6	8
Training centre	5	7	3	2
Business link/ TEC/LEC	3	4	1	2
Careers service	3	3	3	3
Community organisation	3	3	2	2
New deal/ Job Centre	2	2	3	2
Other learning advice centre	1	1	2	1
learndirect	1	2	1	1
Learning Resource Centre	1	2	1	*
Citizen's Advice Bureau	1	1	*	1
Social worker	1	1	*	1
Professional org/ TU	1	1	*	1
Media/ yellow pages	1	1	1	1
Commercial organisation	*	*	*	*
Other	1	2	1	1
No advice received	32	21	44	47
<i>Weighted base</i>	4174	2338	888	948
<i>Unweighted base</i>	4182	2322	908	952

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done any learning in past three years

*Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could give more than one reply

Table 9.5 shows that, as would be expected, those who had done vocational learning (whether on its own or combined with non-vocational learning) were much more likely than non-vocational learners to have had advice from their employer (34-35 per cent) or work colleagues (18-20 per cent). Those who had done both types of learning were more likely than others to have received advice from an educational institution and from friends and family.

Table 9.5 Sources of advice about learning by vocational learning status*

	All learners	Vocational and non-vocational	Vocational only	Non-vocational only
	%	%	%	%
Employer	31	34	35	2
Educational institution	28	35	26	25
Friends and family	19	24	17	19
Work colleagues	17	20	18	1
Public library	8	13	6	12
Training centre	5	5	6	2
Business link/ TEC/LEC	3	5	3	1
Careers service	3	4	3	2
Community organisation	3	2	3	3
New deal/ Job Centre	2	2	3	1
Other learning advice centre	1	2	1	2
learndirect	1	2	1	*
Learning Resource Centre	1	2	1	1
Citizen's Advice Bureau	1	1	1	1
Social worker	1	1	1	*
Professional org/ TU	1	2	1	*
Media/ yellow pages	1	*	1	1
Other	1	3	1	1
Commercial organisation	*	*	*	*
No advice received	32	23	32	49
<i>Weighted base</i>	4174	923	2821	430
<i>Unweighted base</i>	4182	936	2794	452

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done any learning in past three years

*Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could give more than one reply

9.1.3 Types of advice

Respondents were also asked about the type of advice they received (Table 9.6). The most common advice reported was about the types of courses available (54 per cent mentioned this). Almost as many received advice about places to do learning (50 per cent). Forty per cent were given advice about learning for particular jobs and 29 per cent about paying for a course. Twelve per cent said they had had none of the types of advice listed in Table 9.6.

Table 9.6 shows that those who had done taught learning, with or without self-directed learning, were the group most likely to mention being given advice about types of courses (55-57 per cent) and places to do learning (51-52 per

cent). Those who had done self-directed learning, with or without taught learning, were the most likely to have mentioned being advised about different ways of learning (24-26 per cent). Those who had done both types of learning were the group most likely to have been advised about courses for particular jobs (45 per cent) and where to get more guidance (25 per cent).

Table 9.6 Types of advice about learning by learning status*

Advice about	Learning status			
	All	Both taught and self directed	Taught learning only	Self directed learning only
	%	%	%	%
Type of courses available	54	57	55	43
Places to do learning	50	51	52	41
Courses for particular jobs	40	45	28	31
Paying for a course	29	31	25	23
Different ways of learning	24	26	18	24
Learning suited to skills	23	25	17	19
Where to get more guidance	22	25	14	18
Facilities available on course	12	12	12	11
Success rates of courses	9	10	6	7
Other information or advice	14	15	8	16
None of these	12	10	11	20
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>2834</i>	<i>1842</i>	<i>493</i>	<i>499</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2841</i>	<i>1836</i>	<i>506</i>	<i>499</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done any learning in past three years and used any advice source

*Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could give more than one reply

Table 9.7 shows that those who had done non-vocational learning were the group most likely to have been advised about types of courses (57-59 per cent) and places to do learning (54-55 per cent). Those who had done vocational learning, with or without non-vocational, were the most likely to mention courses for particular jobs (41-42 per cent), different ways of learning (25 per cent), and learning suited to skills (23-24 per cent).

Table 9.7 Types of advice about learning by vocational learning status*

	All learners	Vocational and non-vocational	Vocational only	Non-vocational only
	%	%	%	%
Type of courses available	54	57	53	59
Places to do learning	50	55	47	54
Courses for particular jobs	40	41	42	17
Paying for a course	29	31	28	27
Different ways of learning	24	25	25	18
Learning suited to skills	23	23	24	13
Where to get more guidance	22	24	21	17
Facilities available on course	12	12	12	13
Success rates of courses	9	7	9	7
Other information or advice	14	17	13	11
None of these	12	10	12	18
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>2834</i>	<i>708</i>	<i>1907</i>	<i>219</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2481</i>	<i>717</i>	<i>1895</i>	<i>229</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done any learning in past three years and used any advice source

*Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could give more than one reply

Those who had received advice were asked whether they had received written information, this might include a leaflet, a prospectus or an outline of the content of the course. Table 9.8 shows that 70 per cent had received some written advice and that this was more common among those who had done both taught and self-directed learning (75 per cent, compared with 58-65 per cent of those who had done only one type).

Table 9.8 Whether received written advice by learning status

Advice about	All	Both taught and self directed	Taught learning only	Self directed learning only
	%	%	%	%
Received written advice	70	75	65	58
No written advice	30	25	35	42
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>2834</i>	<i>1842</i>	<i>493</i>	<i>499</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2841</i>	<i>1836</i>	<i>506</i>	<i>499</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done any learning in past three years and used any advice source

Table 9.9 shows that written advice was most commonly received by those who had done both vocational and non-vocational learning (75 per cent).

Table 9.9 Whether received written advice by vocational learning status

	All learners	Vocational and non-vocational	Vocational only	Non-vocational only
	%	%	%	%
Received written advice	70	75	70	63
No written advice	30	25	30	37
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>2834</i>	<i>708</i>	<i>1907</i>	<i>219</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2481</i>	<i>717</i>	<i>1895</i>	<i>229</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done any learning in past three years and used any advice source

Only two per cent of those who were asked¹ had paid for their advice and this did not vary noticeably by type of learning.

9.2 Learning campaigns

All respondents were asked about their awareness of various learning campaigns. Table 9.10 shows the percentage who said they had heard of each of the three campaigns listed. Most striking is the fact that 82 per cent of respondents had not heard of any of the campaigns. The campaign most heard about was the "Adult learners week", but only 14 per cent had heard of this. Five per cent had heard of "Learning at work day" and 3 per cent of "Family learning weekend".

Table 9.10 shows that awareness of these campaigns was not much higher among learners than among non-learners; 18 per cent of learners had heard of at least one campaign, compared with 16 per cent of non-learners. The group most likely to have heard about any of the campaigns were those who had done both taught and self-directed learning (20 per cent).

Table 9.10 Awareness of learning campaigns by learning status*

Learning campaign	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
Adult learners week	14	15	14
Learning at work day	5	5	4
Family learning weekend	3	3	2
Not aware of any of the above	82	81	84
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>4174</i>	<i>1331</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>4182</i>	<i>1350</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

* Percentages sum to more than 100 since respondents could report awareness of more than one campaign

¹ Only those who had used the following advice sources were asked whether they had paid for their advice: educational institutions, training centres, Business Link/ TEC/ LEC, Job Centre, Careers Service, other learning advice or adult guidance centre, CAB or a community, voluntary or religious organisation.

Table 9.11 Awareness of learning campaigns by learning status*

Learning campaign	All	Both taught and self directed	Taught learning only	Self directed learning only
	%	%	%	%
Adult learners week	15	15	13	15
Learning at work day	5	6	3	4
Family learning weekend	3	3	3	2
Not aware of any of the above	82	80	84	83
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>4174</i>	<i>2338</i>	<i>888</i>	<i>948</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>4182</i>	<i>2322</i>	<i>908</i>	<i>952</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done any learning in last three years

* Percentages sum to more than 100 since respondents could report awareness of more than one campaign

Those who had done vocational learning were not significantly more likely to have heard of "Learning at work day" (five per cent) than those who had done no vocational learning (four per cent).

Looking at respondents' other characteristics it can be observed that:

- 16-19 year olds were the least well-informed about learning campaigns; 93 per cent had heard of none of them and only 4 per cent had heard of "Adult learners week"
- overall those in full or part-time work were no better informed about the campaigns than others, though they were slightly more likely than the unemployed to have heard of learning at work day (5-6 per cent, compared with 3 per cent of unemployed), but no more likely than those who were incapable of work (6 per cent)
- there were no clear occupational differences in awareness of campaigns
- those with level five qualifications were more likely than other groups to have heard of the campaigns (23 per cent had heard of at least one), but there were few differences between the other educational groups
- women were more likely than men to have heard of at least one campaign (21 per cent compared with 15 per cent of men).

9.3 Government learning initiatives

9.3.1 learndirect

At the time of the survey **learndirect** was a telephone helpline Internet based resource to help people find out about learning and courses in their area and to provide advice about paying for learning. All respondents were asked whether they had heard of **learndirect** and whether they had used it. (Interviewees were asked only about their awareness of the **learndirect** helpline and website, and not about the full range of **learndirect** learning services developed by Ufi Ltd. These comprise a network of learning centres, the free 0800 100 900 learning information helpline, the **learndirect** website and a range of **learndirect** branded learning materials). A third of respondents (33 per cent) had heard of **learndirect** (Table 9.12), but only four per cent had used it.

Those who had done any learning were more likely than non-learners to have heard of **learndirect** (35 per cent compared with 24 per cent of non-learners). Learners were also slightly more likely than non-learners to have used **learndirect** (four per cent and two per cent respectively).

Table 9.12 Awareness and use of learndirect

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
Heard of learndirect and used	4	4	2
Heard of learndirect but not used	29	31	22
Never heard of learndirect	67	64	76
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	4174	1331
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	4182	1350

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Other findings were that:

- those who had done both self-directed and taught learning were the group most likely to have heard of and used **learndirect** (five per cent had used it and 33 per cent had heard of it but not used it)
- among learners, those who had done self-directed learning only were least likely to have heard of or used **learndirect** (three per cent had used it and 28 per cent had heard of it but not used it)
- vocational learners were more likely than those who had done non-vocational learning only to have heard of **learndirect** (36 per cent and 27 per cent respectively), but were no more likely to have used it
- although use of **learndirect** did not vary much by age, awareness was much higher among younger respondents: 64 per cent of 16-19 year olds had heard of **learndirect**, compared with 39 per cent of 30-39 year olds and 16 per cent of 60-69 year olds
- awareness of **learndirect** was highest among the unemployed (50 per cent) and lowest among the self-employed (28 per cent)
- those with no qualifications were least likely to have heard of **learndirect** (22 per cent) and those with level two qualifications most likely (31 per cent); those with level five and level one qualifications were equally likely to have heard of **learndirect**
- women were more likely than men to have heard of **learndirect** (37 per cent and 29 per cent respectively).

9.3.2 Individual Learning Accounts

Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) have been set up as a means for people to save money for learning while at the same time getting discounts on the cost of learning. Awareness and take-up of ILAs among respondents was low, but they were introduced less than a year before the survey took place. Only 15 per cent of respondents had heard of ILAs and only four per cent had one. This varied from 17 per cent having heard of them and four per cent having one among learners, to six per cent having heard and one per cent having an ILA among non-learners. The figure for use of ILAs is in line with figures which show take-up of ILAs in England was more than 1.2 million by July 2001 (DfES, 2001).

Table 9.13 Awareness and use of Individual Learning Accounts by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
Heard of ILA and have one	4	4	1
Heard of ILA but don't have	11	13	5
Never heard of ILA	85	82	94
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>4174</i>	<i>1331</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>4182</i>	<i>1350</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Among those who had done only non-vocational learning, eight per cent had heard of ILAs (almost the same as among non-learners), whereas among vocational learners, 18 per cent had heard of ILAs.

Looking at self-directed and taught learning, those who had done both types of learning were most likely to have heard of ILAs (21 per cent had heard of them) and those who had done self-directed learning only were least likely to (11 per cent had heard of them).

There were no clear differences among learners of different types in terms of whether they had actually got an ILA, the main differences were seen in the percentage who had heard of ILAs.

Looking at other respondent characteristics the following differences were observed:

- full-time employees were most likely to have heard of ILAs (18 per cent), while those who were retired or incapable of work were least likely to (eight per cent and six per cent respectively)
- non-manual workers were most likely to have heard of ILAs (18 per cent) compared with only seven per cent of unskilled manual workers
- there were no gender differences in the awareness or use of ILAs.

9.3.3 Career Development Loans

Respondents were also asked whether they had heard of Career Development Loans (CDLs); only a quarter had done so (Table 9.14). Learners were much more likely to have heard of CDLs than non-learners (27 per cent and 14 per cent respectively).

Table 9.14 Awareness of Career Development Loans

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
Heard of Career Development loans	24	27	14
Not heard of them	76	73	86
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>4174</i>	<i>1331</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>4182</i>	<i>1350</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Those who had heard of CDLs were asked whether they had applied for one and what the outcome was. Only four per cent had applied for one and two per cent had actually received one. The figures were almost the same for learners and non-learners.

Table 9.15 Awareness of Career Development Loans

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
Applied and given loan	2	2	1
Applied, outcome unknown	1	1	-
Applied and not given	2	2	2
Never applied	96	95	97
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1301</i>	<i>1120</i>	<i>181</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1279</i>	<i>1099</i>	<i>180</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had heard of Career Development Loans

Other differences were that:

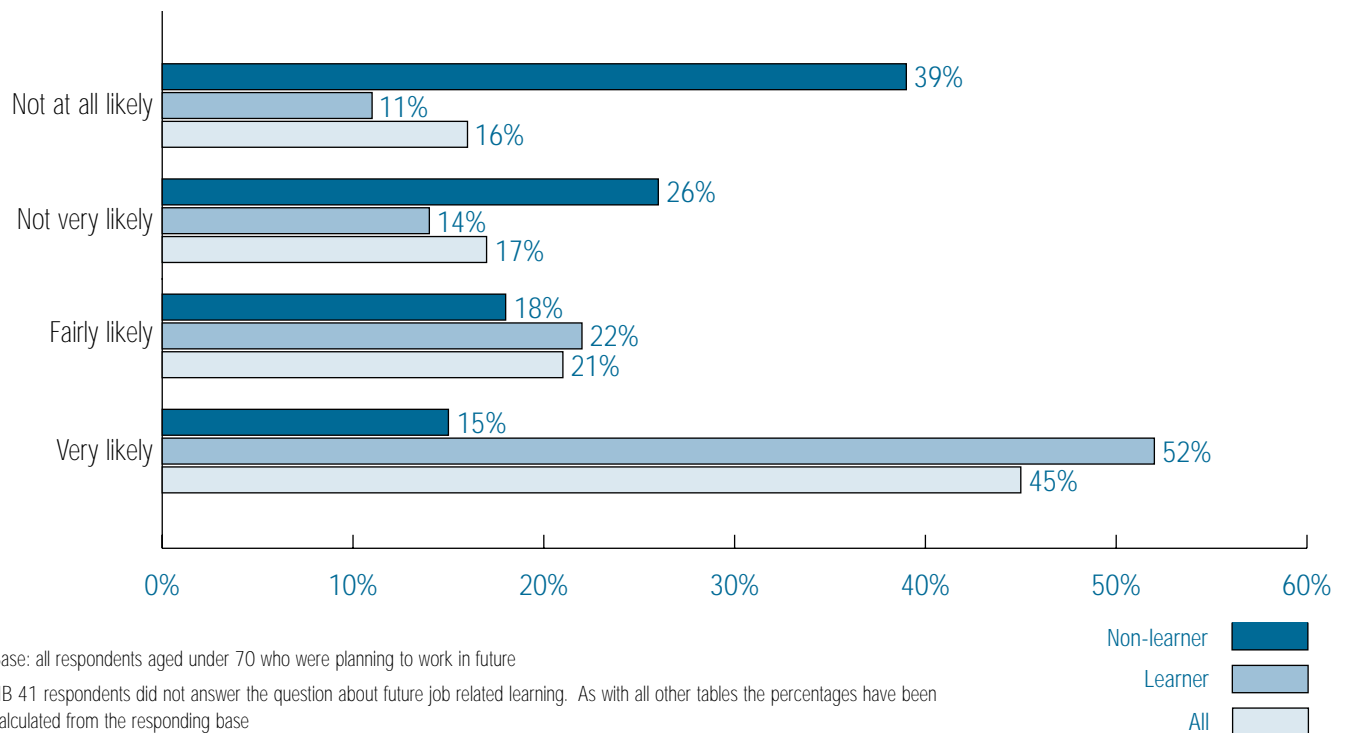
- those in the 20-39 age groups were most likely to have heard of CDLs (71-72 per cent)
- interestingly, unemployed respondents were most likely to have heard of CDLs (28 per cent), while those who were looking after the family were least likely to have done so (17 per cent)
- those in non-manual groups were most likely to have heard of CDLs (27 per cent) compared with only 12 per cent of those in unskilled manual occupations
- those with level five qualifications were more likely than any other group to have heard of CDLs (46 per cent compared with only 17 per cent of those with level one qualifications and 11 per cent of those with no qualifications)
- lone parents were least likely to have heard of CDLs (17 per cent compared with 25 per cent of those with no children).

9.4 Future learning

9.4.1 Job related learning

All respondents who were likely to work in future were asked about their likelihood of doing job related learning in the next three years. Figure 9.1 shows that 45 per cent said they were very likely to and 21 per cent said they were fairly likely to, so only 33 per cent said they were unlikely to. The proportion of respondents who planned to do some vocational learning (66 per cent) is in line with the figure reported in Chapter 2, which showed that 68 per cent had done this type of learning in the previous three years.

Learners were much more likely than non-learners to say they were very likely to do job related learning in the future (52 per cent, compared with 15 per cent) and much less likely to say they were very unlikely to. There was little difference in the percentage saying they were fairly likely to.

Figure 9.1 Whether likely to do job related learning in next three years by learning status

Those who had done vocational learning were more likely to say they were likely to do job related learning in the future (76-77 per cent, compared with 35 per cent of only non-vocational learners) (Table 9.12).

Table 9.12 Whether likely to do job related learning in next three years by whether done vocational learning

	Both vocational and non-vocational			
	All	Vocational learning only	Non-vocational learning only	
	%	%	%	%
Very likely	52	55	53	20
Fairly likely	22	22	23	15
Not very likely	14	14	14	24
Not at all likely	11	8	9	40
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>3825</i>	<i>866</i>	<i>2728</i>	<i>231</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3817</i>	<i>872</i>	<i>2698</i>	<i>247</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who were planning to work in future and had done any job related learning in past three years

NB 41 respondents did not answer the question about future job related learning. As with all other tables the percentages have been calculated from the responding base

Looking at the likelihood of doing future job related learning by respondents' other characteristics, it was found that:

- younger people were more likely to report planning job related learning in the future (74-79 per cent of 16-39 year olds said they were very or fairly likely to, compared with 15-19 per cent of those aged 60 and over)
- those with higher qualifications were more likely to say they will do such learning in the future (84 per cent of those with level five qualifications, 54 per cent of those with level one qualifications and 33 per cent of those with none)

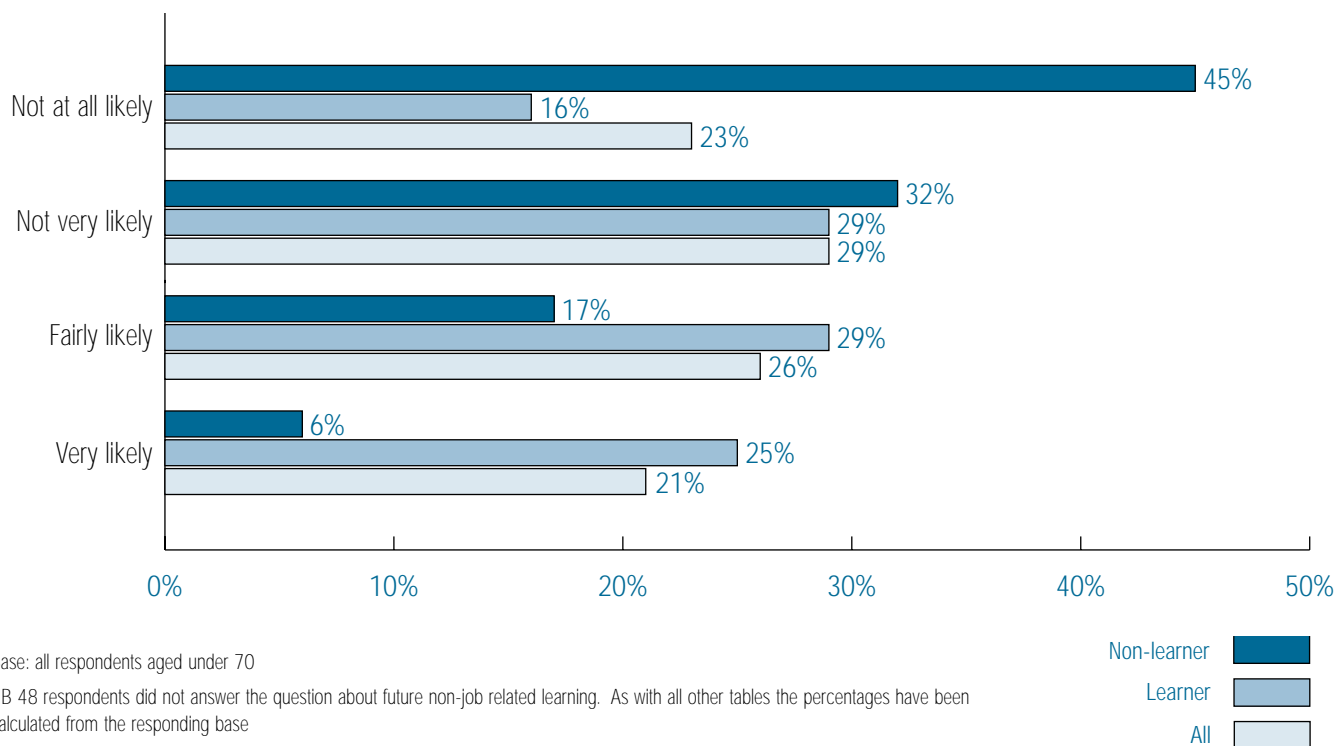
- those who were unemployed were almost as likely as those in full-time employment to plan job related learning in the future (71 per cent of unemployed and 75 per cent of full-time employees)
- those with higher household incomes were most likely to say they will do job related learning (73-78 per cent in the highest two income groups and 57 per cent of those in the lower two groups)
- professionals and managers were the most likely to think they will do job-related learning in the future (76 per cent, compared with 52 per cent of unskilled manual workers).

9.4.2 Non-vocational learning

All respondents were asked about their likelihood of doing non-job related learning in the next three years (Figure 9.2). Twenty-one per cent said they were very likely to and 26 per cent fairly likely to, while 52 per cent said they were unlikely to do non-vocational learning. Thus more people were planning vocational (52 per cent) than non-vocational learning (47 per cent).¹ However, the proportion planning non-vocational learning was considerably higher than the percentage of people who had engaged in this type of learning in the previous three years.

As was found for job related learning, those who had done learning in the past three years were much more likely than non-learners to say that they were very or fairly likely to do any non job related learning in the future (54 per cent, compared with 25 per cent among non-learners).

Figure 9.2 Whether likely to do non-job related learning in next three years by learning status



Those who had done any non-vocational learning were more likely than those who had done only vocational learning to be likely to say they will do some non-job related learning (Table 9.13). The group most likely to report future non-vocational learning were those who had done both vocational and non-vocational learning in the past (40 per cent very likely and 36 per cent fairly likely).

¹ It must be noted that the bases for these two questions were slightly different.

Table 9.13 Whether likely to do non-job related learning in next three years by whether done vocational learning

	All	Both vocational and non-vocational	Vocational learning only	Non-vocational learning only
	%	%	%	%
Very likely	25	40	20	28
Fairly likely	29	36	27	30
Not very likely	29	17	33	24
Not at all likely	16	6	20	18
<i>Weighted base</i>	4174	923	2821	430
<i>Unweighted base</i>	4182	936	2794	452

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who had done any learning in past three years

NB 48 respondents did not answer the question about future non-job related learning. As with all other tables the percentages have been calculated from the responding base

Looking at the other characteristics of respondents it was found that:

- younger people were most likely to say they will do non-job related learning: 51 per cent of 16-29 year olds, 35 per cent of 60-69 year olds and 16 per cent of those aged 70 and over said they were very or fairly likely to
- those with higher qualifications were more likely to plan to do such learning in the future (62 per cent those with level five qualifications, 39 per cent of those with level one qualifications and 20 per cent of those with none)
- those who were incapable of work or retired were least likely to plan non-job related learning in the future (30 per cent and 35 per cent respectively)
- those with higher household incomes were more likely to plan such learning in the future (55 per cent of those with incomes of £31,200 or more, compared with 40 per cent of those with incomes of less than £10,400).

9.4.3 Saving and paying for learning

All those who said that they were very or fairly likely to do either job or non-job related learning in the next three years were asked about their willingness to save into a special account for learning (Table 9.14). A third said that they were willing to save in such an account and the figure for learners was only slightly higher than for non-learners (32 per cent and 27 per cent respectively). Non-learners were twice as likely as learners to say that they were unable to save (10 per cent and 5 per cent).

Table 9.14 Willingness to save for learning in a special account by learning status

	All	Learner	Non-learner
	%	%	%
Yes	32	32	27
No	62	62	62
Unable to save	6	5	10
<i>Weighted base</i>	3952	3484	468
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3953	3483	470

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who were fairly or very likely to do learning in future (job related or non-job related)

Other differences between respondents were that:

- younger respondents were more willing to save in an account (49 per cent of 16-19 year olds, 33 per cent of 30-39 year olds and nine per cent of those aged 70 or over)
- the unemployed were most willing to save into an account for learning (43 per cent, compared with 34 per cent of full-time employees and 21 per cent of retired people)
- unskilled manual workers were most likely to be willing to save into an account for learning (37 per cent, compared with 30 per cent of professional and managerial workers)
- there were no clear differences in the willingness to save by household incomes although those on the lowest incomes (less than £10,400) were most likely to say they were unable to save (15 per cent).

9.4.4 Saving and paying for advice

Those who were likely to do any learning in the next three years were also asked about their willingness to pay for advice about learning (Table 9.15). Seventeen per cent said they were willing and 13 per cent said they might be willing. Those who had done learning in the past were more likely to say they were willing (20 per cent) and that they might be willing (15 per cent) than were non-learners.

Table 9.15 Willingness to pay for advice about learning by learning status

	All	Learner	Non-learner
	%	%	%
Yes	17	20	8
No	70	65	84
Maybe	13	15	8
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	4174	1331
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	4182	1350

Base: all respondents aged under 70

The main differences that were found in willingness to pay for advice about learning were:

- older respondents were least willing to pay for advice about learning (16 of those aged 50-59, 25 per cent of those aged 60-69 and six per cent of those aged 70 and over said yes or maybe to the question)
- self-employed respondents were most likely to be willing to pay for advice about learning (24 per cent said yes or maybe)
- professional and managerial workers were most likely to be willing to pay (21 per cent said yes or maybe compared with 10 per cent of unskilled manual)
- those with the highest household incomes were most likely to be willing to pay for advice (24 per cent of those with incomes over £31,200 and 11 per cent of those with incomes below £10,400 said yes or maybe).

In interpreting these figures it should be borne in mind that not all those who said they were willing to save hypothetically would actually be willing or able to do so in practice.

9.5 Conclusion

Two thirds of respondents who had done any learning had received advice about learning, but this varied greatly from group to group. Those who had done both taught and self-directed learning and those who had done both vocational and non-vocational learning were most likely to have received any advice. It is likely that this is partly because the more learning people do, the more likely they are to have sought advice and partly because, even when the amount of learning done is the same, those who do both taught and self-directed learning are somehow different from those who only do one type.

The sources of advice used varied, but employers were the most common source of advice; this has implications for those who are not employed since an important source of advice is not available to them. The main types of advice received were about courses available and places to do learning.

Respondents were not well-informed about any of the learning campaigns and initiatives and those who had done learning were not much better informed than non-learners. Even fewer people had used the funding available as part of the initiatives, which seems to indicate that there is scope for improving information about campaigns and initiatives designed to encourage learning. However, some of these initiatives have been introduced relatively recently and so their uptake is likely to increase in the future.

The results showed that those who had done learning in the past three years were much more likely to say they were likely to learn in the future. However, it is not clear whether taking part in learning encourages future learning or whether those who have managed to overcome barriers to learning in the past are more likely to be able to do so in the future.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE PROFILE

This Appendix includes an analysis of the sample profile in terms of the demographic characteristics, educational background, employment and financial circumstances explored throughout the report. These variables are also analysed by learning status.

All the tables in this Appendix include only respondents under the age of 70 to make them comparable with previous NALS, except for Table A.1, where respondents aged 70 and over are presented as a separate category.

A.1 Demographics

Table A.1 Age by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
16-19	2	3	2
20-29	14	17	6
30-39	22	26	12
40-49	18	22	12
50-59	16	17	13
60-69	13	9	21
70+	15	5	35
<i>Weighted base</i>	6451	4411	2040
<i>Unweighted base</i>	6451	4420	2031

Base: all respondents

Table A.2 Gender by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
Men	49	51	43
Women	51	49	57
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	4174	1331
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	4182	1350

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Table A.3 Ethnicity by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
White	92	93	90
Mixed ethnic origin	1	1	1
Asian (British)	4	3	7
Black (British)	2	2	1
Chinese and other	1	1	*
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>4174</i>	<i>1331</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>4182</i>	<i>1350</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Table A.4 Disability by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
Work limiting disability	12	9	21
Other long term disability	12	11	14
No disability	77	80	65
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>4174</i>	<i>1331</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>4182</i>	<i>1350</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Table A.5 Caring responsibilities by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
Parent with partner	28	30	22
Lone parent	7	7	9
No dependent children	65	63	69
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>4174</i>	<i>1331</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>4182</i>	<i>1350</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Table A.6 Responsibilities for caring for sick/disabled by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
Carer for sick/disabled	6	5	9
Not carer for sick/disabled	94	95	91
<i>Weighted base</i>	4692	3618	1074
<i>Unweighted base</i>	4697	3614	1083

Base: all respondents aged under 70 and living with someone else

A.2 Educational background

Table A.7 Age left CFT education by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
16 or younger	55	47	79
17-18	21	24	13
19-20	6	7	3
21 or older	18	22	5
<i>Weighted base</i>	5490	4170	1320
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5519	4178	1341

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who have been in CFT education

Table A.8 Highest qualification* on leaving CFT education by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
NVQ level 5	3	3	1
NVQ level 4	17	21	4
NVQ level 3	8	9	5
NVQ level 2	14	16	9
NVQ level 1	29	29	27
No qualifications	29	21	54
<i>Weighted base</i>	5490	4170	1320
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5519	4178	1341

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who have been in CFT education

*Academic and vocational qualifications were categorised according NVQ level, using the Labour Force Survey code frame

Table A.9 Highest current qualification* by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
NVQ level 5	5	7	1
NVQ level 4	26	32	8
NVQ level 3	16	17	12
NVQ level 2	13	14	11
NVQ level 1	31	27	43
No qualifications	9	4	25
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>4174</i>	<i>1331</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>4182</i>	<i>1350</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

*Academic and vocational qualifications were categorised according NVQ level, using the Labour Force Survey code frame

A3 Employment and financial circumstances

Table A.10 Main current activity by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
FT employee	48	56	22
PT employee	13	14	10
Self-employed	7	8	6
Unemployed	4	3	5
Looking after the family	10	7	21
Retired	11	7	23
Incapable of work	5	3	12
Other*	2	2	1
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>4174</i>	<i>1331</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>4182</i>	<i>1350</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

*This category includes: doing voluntary work (43 cases), in FT education (32 cases), on Government Supported Training (11 cases) and other activity (20 cases)

Table A.11 SEG by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
Professional/managerial	34	37	21
Other non-manual	31	33	23
Skilled manual	14	12	20
Semi-skilled manual	17	15	25
Unskilled manual	4	3	10
Other/unclassified	[1]	[1]	[*]
<i>Weighted base</i>	4953	3976	977
<i>Unweighted base</i>	4962	3973	989

Base: all respondents aged under 70 currently employed or self-employed or who have been in paid employment in the past 10 years

Table A.12 SOC by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
Manager & admin's	15	16	10
Professional	11	13	2
Associate prof. & technical	10	12	3
Clerical & secretarial	16	17	13
Craft & related	11	10	15
Personal & protective services	13	12	14
Sales	8	7	10
Plant and machine operatives	9	7	16
Other/unclassified	7	5	16
<i>Weighted base</i>	4953	3976	977
<i>Unweighted base</i>	4962	3973	989

Base: all respondents aged under 70 currently employed or self-employed or who have been in paid employment in the past 10 years

Table A.13 Employment status by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
Employee	90	90	88
Self-employed	10	10	12
<i>Weighted base</i>	4953	3976	977
<i>Unweighted base</i>	4962	3973	989

Base: all respondents aged under 70 currently employed or self-employed or who have been in paid employment in the past 10 years

Table A.14 Supervisory/managerial responsibilities by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
Supervision/management	42	45	26
No supervision/management	58	55	74
<i>Weighted base</i>	4435	3573	862
<i>Unweighted base</i>	4446	3570	876

Base: all respondents aged under 70 currently employed or self-employed or who have been in paid employment in the past 10 years

Table A.15 Household income by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
£10,399 or less	18	13	35
£10,400-20,799	23	22	26
£20,800-31,199	18	20	11
£31,200+	27	33	10
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	4174	1331
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	4182	1350

Base: all respondents aged under 70

NB 713 respondents did not answer the question on household income

Table A.16 Benefit dependency* by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
Benefit dependent	19	14	34
Not benefit dependent	80	85	64
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	4174	1331
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	4182	1350

Base: all respondents aged under 70

* Respondents were classified as being benefit dependent if they reported any of the following sources of household income: job seekers allowance, income support, invalid care allowance, working families tax credit, severe disablement allowance.

NB 65 respondents did not answer the question on sources of household income

APPENDIX B

RESPONDENTS WITH NO QUALIFICATIONS

The tables in this appendix compare the profile of respondents without and with qualifications in terms of:

- demographic characteristics
- educational background
- employment and financial circumstances.

The tables in this Appendix include only respondents under 70, except for the analysis of age where the 70+ age group is presented as a separate category.

B.1 Demographics

Table B.1 Qualifications by age

	All	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Qualifications	87	85	96	96	93	89	79	65
No qualifications	13	15	4	4	6	11	20	35
<i>Weighted base</i>	6451	149	892	1401	1192	1029	842	946
<i>Unweighted base</i>	6451	121	807	1435	1233	1059	877	919

Base: all respondents

Table B.2 Qualifications by gender

	All	Male	Female
	%	%	%
Qualifications	91	95	88
No qualifications	9	5	12
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	2713	2792
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	2431	3101

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Table B.3 Qualifications by disability

	All	Disability	No disability
	%	%	%
Qualifications	91	83	94
No qualifications	9	17	6
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	1284	4220
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	1308	4223

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Table B.4 Qualifications by parental status

	All	Parent with partner	Lone parent	No children
	%	%	%	%
Qualifications	91	96	84	90
No qualifications	9	4	15	10
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	1535	410	3559
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	1583	459	3490

Base: all respondents aged under 70

B.2 Educational background

Table B.5 Qualifications by age left CFT education

	All	16 or younger	17-18	19-20	21 or older
	%	%	%	%	%
Qualifications	91	85	98	99	100
No qualifications	9	15	2	1	-
<i>Weighted base</i>	5490	2999	1164	337	990
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5519	3041	1180	333	965

Base: all respondents aged under 70 who have been in CFT education

B.3 Employment and financial circumstances

Table B.6 Qualifications by main current activity

	All	FT employee	PT employees	Self-employed	Un-employed	Looking after the family	Retired	In-capable of work	Other*
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Qualifications	91	98	91	97	88	80	79	73	92
No qualifications	9	2	8	3	12	19	21	26	7
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>2622</i>	<i>707</i>	<i>413</i>	<i>212</i>	<i>575</i>	<i>594</i>	<i>279</i>	<i>103</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>2497</i>	<i>796</i>	<i>409</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>632</i>	<i>620</i>	<i>274</i>	<i>106</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

*This category includes: doing voluntary work (43 cases), in FT education (32 cases), on Government Supported Training (11 cases) and other activity (20 cases).

Table B.7 Qualifications by SEG

	All	Professional/managerial	Other non-manual	Skilled manual	Semi-skilled manual	Unskilled manual	Other/unclassified
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Qualifications	94	99	97	94	88	66	100
No qualifications	6	1	3	6	11	33	-
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>4953</i>	<i>1682</i>	<i>1534</i>	<i>670</i>	<i>820</i>	<i>209</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>4962</i>	<i>1654</i>	<i>1584</i>	<i>637</i>	<i>837</i>	<i>212</i>	<i>38</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70 currently employed or self-employed or who have been in employment in the past 10 years

Table B.8 Qualifications by household income

	All	Up to £10,399	£10,400 - £20,799	£20,800 - £31,199	£31,200+
	%	%	%	%	%
Qualifications	91	75	93	97	98
No qualifications	9	24	7	3	1
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>994</i>	<i>1291</i>	<i>976</i>	<i>1513</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>1035</i>	<i>1306</i>	<i>1000</i>	<i>1478</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

NB 713 respondents did not answer the question on household income

Table B.9 Qualifications by benefit dependency*

	All	Benefit dependent	Not benefit dependent
	%	%	%
Qualifications	91	79	94
No qualifications	9	21	6
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	1024	4415
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	1049	4418

Base: all respondents aged under 70

*Respondents were classified as being benefit dependent if they reported any of the following sources of household income: Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Invalid Care Allowance, Working Families Tax Credit, Severe Disablement Allowance.

NB 65 respondents did not answer the question on sources of household income

APPENDIX C NVQs

527 respondents under 70 had a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). The tables in this appendix compare the profile of respondents with an NVQ and those without in terms of:

- learning status and types of learning
- demographic characteristics
- educational background
- socio-economic group and income.

The tables in this Appendix include only respondents under 70, except for the analysis of age, where the 70+ group is presented as a separate category.

It should be noted that the 'NVQ holders' group included in this Appendix is slightly different from the group used for the NVQ analysis in previous NALS reports. In 1997 and 2000 this analysis included those who were working towards an NVQ, as well as those who already had achieved one at the time of the survey. In NALS 2001 no information was collected on the qualifications respondents were working on, therefore this analysis could not be replicated.

C.1 Learning status and type of learning

Table C.1 NVQ holder by learning status

	All	Learners	Non-learners
	%	%	%
NVQ holder	10	11	5
Not NVQ holder	90	89	95
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	4174	1331
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	4182	1350

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Table C.2 NVQ holder by taught learning

	All	Taught learning	No taught learning
	%	%	%
NVQ holder	10	13	5
Not NVQ holder	90	87	95
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	3226	2279
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	3230	2302

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Table C.3 NVQ holder by self-directed learning

	All	Self-directed learning	No self-directed learning
	%	%	%
NVQ holder	10	11	7
Not NVQ holder	90	89	93
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	3285	2219
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	3274	2258

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Table C.4 NVQ holder by vocational learning

	All	Some vocational learning	No vocational learning
	%	%	%
NVQ holder	10	12	5
Not NVQ holder	90	88	95
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	3744	1761
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	3730	1802

Base: all respondents aged under 70

C.2 Demographic characteristics

Table C.5 NVQ holder by age

	All	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 & over
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
NVQ holder	8	22	19	10	8	6	2	*
Not NVQ holder	92	78	81	90	92	94	98	100
<i>Weighted base</i>	6451	149	892	1401	1192	1029	842	946
<i>Unweighted base</i>	6451	121	807	1435	1233	1059	877	919

Base: all respondents

Table C.6 NVQ holder by gender

	All	Male	Female
	%	%	%
NVQ holder	10	10	9
Not NVQ holder	90	90	91
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>2713</i>	<i>2792</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>2431</i>	<i>3101</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

Table C.7 NVQ holder by disability

	All	Disability	No disability
	%	%	%
NVQ holder	10	8	10
Not NVQ holder	90	92	90
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>1284</i>	<i>4220</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>1308</i>	<i>4223</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

C.3 Educational background

Table C.8 NVQ holder by highest current qualification level*

	All	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	No qualif's
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
NVQ holder	10	8	9	19	20	4	-
Not NVQ holder	90	92	91	81	80	96	100
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5505</i>	<i>289</i>	<i>1453</i>	<i>858</i>	<i>721</i>	<i>1698</i>	<i>480</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5532</i>	<i>293</i>	<i>1460</i>	<i>835</i>	<i>724</i>	<i>1720</i>	<i>494</i>

Base: all respondents aged under 70

*Academic and vocational qualifications were categorised according to NVQ level, using the Labour Force Survey code frame

C.4 Socio-economic group and income

Table C.9 NVQ holder by SEG

	All	Profess- ional/ managerial	Other non- manual	Skilled manual	Semi- skilled manual	Unskilled manual	Other/ unclassified
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
NVQ holder	10	9	10	11	13	8	[10]
Not NVQ holder	90	91	90	89	87	92	[90]
<i>Weighted base</i>	4953	1682	1534	670	820	209	39
<i>Unweighted base</i>	4962	1654	1584	637	837	212	38

Base: all respondents aged under 70 currently employed or self-employed or who have been in paid employment in the past 10 years

Table C.10 NVQ holder by household income

	All	Up to £10,399	£10,400 - £20,799	£20,800 - £31,199	£31,200+
	%	%	%	%	%
NVQ holder	10	9	11	11	8
Not NVQ holder	90	91	89	89	92
<i>Weighted base</i>	5505	994	1291	976	1513
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5532	1035	1306	1000	1478

Base: all respondents aged under 70

NB: 713 respondents did not answer the question on household income

APPENDIX D

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APPENDIX E

TECHNICAL REPORT

The Technical Report provides detailed information about the survey methodology, including:

- sample design
- fieldwork procedures
- weighting
- multivariate analysis
- confidence intervals.

A list of topics covered in the interview and the advance letter sent to sample members are also included at the end of this Appendix.

1.1 Sample design

The sampling for NALS 2001 involved a four stage design, namely:

- selection of postcode sectors (PSUs) with probability proportionate to the number of delivery points (PPS)
- followed by systematic (random) selection of addresses within sampled PSUs
- random selection of one dwelling unit (DU) within each sampled address
- random selection of two adults within each address/DU.

These stages are discussed in turn below.

1.1.1 Stratification

The list of postal sectors in England and Wales (based on Royal Mail update 30) was generated and any with fewer than 1000 delivery points (DPs) were grouped with an adjacent sector. Grouped sectors were then treated as one sector (PSU).

Prior to selection, the list of (grouped) sectors was stratified, on the basis of region, age, head of household's SEG and male unemployment according to the 1991 Census of the population. The stratification should have the effect of slightly increasing the precision of the survey estimates (relative to a sample selected without stratification). Specifically, the list of postal sectors was sorted into the 11 standard regions. Within each region, sectors were listed in order of percentage of households with residents above retirement age. Cut-off points were then drawn approximately one third and two thirds (in terms of DPs) down the ordered list, to create three roughly equal-sized bands. This was done separately for each region. Within each of the 33 bands thus created (11 x 3), sectors were listed in order of percentage of households in non-manual SEG (SEG 1-6 and 13). Cut-off points were then drawn approximately one third and two thirds (in terms of DPs) down the ordered list, to create three roughly equal-sized bands. This was done separately for each of the 33 initial bands. Within each of the 99 bands thus created (33 x 3), sectors were listed in order of percentage of males of working age who were unemployed.

1.1.2 Selection of PSUs

The DP count was cumulated down the complete ordered list of (grouped) sectors (PSUs) in England and Wales. The sampling interval, I , was calculated as $I = (\text{total DP count}) / 395$. A random start, R , between 1 and I was generated, and 395 PSUs were selected by taking those containing the R th, $(R+I)$ th, $(R+2I)$ th, DPs, working down the cumulative total.

1.1.3 Selection of addresses

Twenty-three DPs were selected systematically from each sampled PSU. This was done by using an interval of $M/23$, and a random start between 1 and $M/23$, where M was the DP count for the sector. This resulted in 9,085 DPs.

The ordered list of selected addresses in each sample PSU (in the order selected) were allocated to two groups: main sample and reserve sample. The 3rd, 9th, 15th and 21st selected addresses in each PSU were assigned to the reserve sample, the remaining addresses were assigned to the main sample. Therefore 7,505 addresses were in the main sample and 1,580 in the reserve.

After the fieldwork for the main sample had started, it was decided to issue part of the reserve sample addresses as well, as it became apparent that the main issued sample would have not be sufficient to reach our target for the achieved sample. This was due to a combination of two factors, namely: a lower than expected response rate and a lower number of eligible adults per household than originally estimated. In each of the 395 sampled PSUs, 3 out of the 4 addresses in the reserve sample were selected systematically. This resulted in 1,185 extra addresses from the reserve sample. In sum, 8,690 addresses were issued in total, 7,505 from the main sample and 1,185 from the reserve sample.

1.1.4 Selection of dwelling units (DUs)

When an interviewer called at an address, his/her initial task was to establish whether or not the address was traceable, residential and occupied. If not, the address was treated as 'out of scope'. If it was within scope, the next task was to establish the number of occupied DUs covered by that address. A DU was defined as: 'a self-contained accommodation unit behind its own front door' (including flats which were not self-contained, but were rented independently of other flats). If there was more than one DU at an address, the interviewer selected one by listing each in a systematic way (i.e. by flat/room number) and then referring to the selection label on the front page of the Address Record Form (ARF) for that address. The selection labels were generated in the office for each address in advance of fieldwork, and consisted of a look-up table which showed a random number between 1 and 'n' ('n' being the number of DUs). Thus, if there were 3 DUs at an address, and the selection label showed '1', the interviewer selected the first DU on the list.

1.1.5 Selection of individual respondents

At each selected address/DU the interviewer had to randomly select up to two *eligible* adults. To do this, contact was sought with a responsible adult who was able to provide information about the people living there. The first step was to establish the number of eligible adults living at the address/DU. To be eligible, a person had to be aged 16 and above, *not* in continuous full-time (CFT) education, and normally resident at that address. Respondents in CFT education were included in previous NALS, but since they were excluded from all the analysis of adult learning, in 2001 it was decided to exclude them from the survey.

If there were up to two eligible adults at an address, no selection was necessary. However, if there were more than two, the interviewer had to select two by listing each one in alphabetical order and referring to the selection label for that address in the same way as for selection of DUs.

1.2 Fieldwork procedures

1.2.1 Questionnaire development and piloting

NALS 2001 was a repeat of similar surveys carried out in 1997 and 2000 and so it was important that the questionnaire was comparable with previous years. Thus, the core of the questionnaire remained the same as that used in 1997 and 2000, though with some sections (such as that on payment for learning) removed. It was agreed with DfES that certain sections of the questionnaire should only be included every three years and that a shorter version should be used in between. NALS 2001 used the shorter version of the questionnaire.

Another change was that instead of asking detailed questions about the three most recent courses, only one of these three would be randomly selected for these questions. This change was made to shorten the questionnaire in order to improve response rates and the quality of data collected.

Some new questions were added in NALS 2001 to reflect changes in technology and policy interests. New questions were added about the use of ICT, and a new section on leisure activities and social capital was also added. Because these questions were new they needed development. An expert panel was held to obtain feedback from other researchers at the *National Centre* and to refine the proposed questions before a cognitive pilot.

The purpose of the cognitive pilot was to find out whether the questions were capturing what was intended and whether the respondents understood the concepts and expressions. Cognitive interviews were carried out with 12 respondents in three different geographical areas. The interviews focused on the new questions about ICT and leisure activities and used the "think aloud" method and probing. As a result of the cognitive pilot, the questions were further developed in advance of the main pilot.

The main pilot was carried out using CAPI and the purpose was to check that the interview length was within the limit agreed (i.e. an average of 40 minutes), the interview flowed well and the documentation for interviewers was clear. There was also a particular focus on older respondents (aged 70 or over) who were being included in the survey for the first time. Thirty-six interviews were conducted in five different areas of England. In addition to the CAPI questionnaire, respondents were asked to complete a feedback form, as were interviewers, and basic information was collected about non-respondents to the pilot. Following the pilot, improvements and amendments were made to the advance letter, questionnaire and documentation in advance of the main field work.

1.2.2 Briefings

Two hundred and twenty-three interviewers worked on the project. They were briefed face-to-face at 17 briefings carried out across the country. The briefing covered the survey aims and background, selection procedures, tips on making contact and on maximising response.

The experience of previous NALS had shown that there might be some groups who are less willing than others to participate in the survey and may regard it as less relevant. It was felt that this might be a particular problem in NALS 2001 with the inclusion of those aged 70 and over for the first time. The instructions to interviewers contained a section on making contact and an additional document was provided with guidance on contacting and interviewing older people.

Interviewers were also briefed on sending out advance letters to their selected addresses a few days before starting their interviewing. A copy of this letter is included after the CAPI documentation.

During the briefings, the majority of the time was spent on the questionnaire content and going through a practice example together. The interviews were carried out using CAPI, in which the interviewers had previous training and experience.

1.2.3 Response rates

The fieldwork for NALS 2001 was carried out between 16th January and 16th May 2001. The table below shows the response rates at both address and individual level. Of the 8,690 issued addresses, 7,711 were identified as eligible; 11 per cent of addresses were ineligible because, for example, they could not be traced, were non-residential, or contained no eligible respondents in the correct age range and no longer in continuous full-time education. At 82 per cent of these eligible addresses, information about the residents was obtained and 10,302 people were selected for interview. As explained in the previous section about sample design, up to two adults could be selected in each dwelling unit.

In total, 6,459 interviews were carried out at 4,428 dwelling units, representing 63 per cent of potential selected respondents. The figures below show that the response rate for the second person in the dwelling unit was lower than for the first. Interviewer feedback during the survey suggested that attempting to interview two people in one household for this type of personal interview led to lower response than might otherwise have been achieved. It may also have affected interviewer morale since they had to make repeated visits to some households even after conducting a productive interview.

Response was monitored throughout the fieldwork period and as a result of this it was decided to issue the reserve sample, as discussed earlier. The characteristics of respondents in terms of age and learning status were also monitored.

E.1 Final field work progress report

	Number	% of issued addresses	% of addresses where interview possible	% of addresses where information established		
Addresses issued	8690	100				
Address problems	776	9				
Office Refusal	105	1				
Ineligible	66	1				
No person aged 16+ in DU	-	-				
All persons in Cont. FT educ.	66	1				
Inaccessible due to Foot and Mouth	32	*				
Interview possible	7711	89	100			
No information obtained	1376	16	18			
Information established	6335	73	82	100		
One eligible – interviewed	1517	17	20	24		
One eligible – not interviewed	851	10	11	13		
Two eligible – both interviewed	2031	23	26	32		
Two eligible – one interviewed	880	10	11	14		
Two eligible – neither interviewed	1056	12	14	17		
No. of potential respondents identified	10302					
		Total	First respondent	Second respondent		
		No. %	No. %	No. %		
No. of potential respondents identified	10302	100	6335	100	3967	100
Refusal	2676	26	1457	23	1219	31
Proxy refusal	869	8	178	3	691	17
Personal refusal	1807	18	1279	20	528	13
Other unproductive	1167	11	672	11	495	12
Interview achieved	6459	63	4206	66	2253	57

1.2.4 Quality control

The work of 51 interviewers, selected at random, was back-checked by a telephone call from the National Centre's Quality Control Unit to ensure that the interview was carried out as it should have been and 10 per cent of all interviews were successfully checked in this way. In addition, early work checks were carried out on the first two completed interviews returned by each interviewer in order to identify any problems at an early stage. Some interviewers, both new and experienced were supervised on at least one interview carried out for NALS 2001 as part of the National Centre's standard quality control procedures.

1.2.5 Coding and editing

All interviews were edited and coded at the National Centre's Operations Department. "Other" answers which had been recorded verbatim were back-coded or given new codes on the basis of listing of the first 200 cases. After the operations team had used the initial edit and coding programme and instructions, a de-brief was held to obtain feedback from the coders. As a result improvements and clarifications were made to the edit program and associated documentation and the categories for coding were amended.

1.3 Weighting

The weights applied to the NALS 2001 data for analyses are described in this section.

1.3.1 Weight to correct for different household selection probabilities (wt1)

As explained earlier, when more than one household was found at an address, one of the households was sampled at random for the survey. Therefore households at addresses with multiple households were under-represented in the final sample. This was corrected by applying a weight equal to the number of households at each address¹. For example:

- 1 household address, wt1 = 1
- 2 household address, wt1 = 2
- 3 household address, wt1 = 3

1.3.2 Weight to correct for different selection probabilities within the household (wt2)

As discussed earlier, at households with more than two eligible adults, two respondents were sampled at random. Therefore, people living in households with three or more eligible people were under-represented in the final sample. This was corrected by applying a weight equal to the number of eligible adults in the household divided by the number selected². For example:

- 1 eligible adult household, wt2 = $1/1 = 1$
- 2 eligible adult household, wt2 = $2/2 = 1$
- 3 eligible adult household, wt2 = $3/2 = 1.5$

1.3.3 Weight to correct for non-response (wt3)

Table E.2 shows the age and sex distribution of the survey respondents against the corresponding mid-1999 ONS population figures. Some groups were under-represented in NALS 2001 (e.g. men in the 25-34 age group), while others were over-represented (e.g. women in the 55-64 age group). If the difference between the distribution of the survey sample and the true population were left uncorrected, it would lead to bias in the survey estimates.

¹ For 10 sampled addresses, the number of households was missing. For 99% (4,378 from 4,422) of addresses where the number of households had been recorded, only one household was found at the address. Therefore, if not recorded, the number of households at an address was assumed to be one (wt1 = 1).

² For 253 households the number of adults at the household was missing, but for these cases it was known that the number of eligible adults was two or more, as two interviews were conducted at the address. An imputed value for the weight was calculated based on the expected number of adults at the household (2.1918) divided by the number selected (2). This gave an imputed value of the weight, wt2 = 1.096.

Table E.2 Comparison of the age and sex distribution in the survey population within England and Wales

	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Men: NALS 2001	6.31	16.91	20.59	19.43	14.73	22.03
Men: ONS estimates	9.07	21.32	20.29	17.92	13.61	17.79
Women: NALS 2001	6.89	19.61	22.89	16.50	14.50	19.61
Women: ONS estimates	7.71	19.27	18.78	17.09	13.27	23.88

Therefore, the age and sex distribution within each Government Office Region (GOR) of the survey data (weighted for the different selection probabilities) was corrected to match the ONS mid-1999 estimates (see Table E.3). Note that the non-response weights applied to the NALS data in 1997 were only calculated within age and sex groups – not by GOR. In NALS 2001, allowing the weights to vary by GOR has corrected for any disproportionate non-response across the GORs. Although not completely consistent with the non-response weighting for NALS 1997, the non-response weights for NALS 2001 (and subsequent waves) should reduce the bias due to non-response.

Table E.3 Non-response weights

	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
(a) Men						
North East	3.16	1.15	1.13	0.76	1.57	0.86
North West	1.49	1.41	1.39	1.00	1.04	1.09
Yorks & Humberside	0.81	1.50	1.18	0.85	1.21	1.10
East Midlands	0.68	1.40	0.87	0.84	1.14	1.02
West Midlands	2.17	1.75	1.80	1.34	1.22	1.17
South West	0.92	1.07	0.93	0.85	0.80	0.74
Eastern	1.50	1.26	1.01	1.22	1.01	1.08
Greater London	1.76	1.95	1.23	1.30	0.98	0.93
South East	1.30	1.35	0.96	1.05	0.90	0.78
Wales	1.12	0.82	0.88	0.86	0.76	0.72
(b) Women						
North East	0.61	0.81	0.60	0.82	0.76	1.10
North West	0.75	1.04	0.81	1.00	1.12	1.37
Yorks & Humberside	0.89	0.94	0.70	0.75	1.13	1.19
East Midlands	0.71	0.88	0.74	0.81	0.67	1.35
West Midlands	1.80	1.07	1.05	1.09	1.32	1.43
South West	1.16	0.89	0.65	0.72	0.63	1.03
Eastern	1.02	0.96	0.82	0.98	0.82	1.33
Greater London	0.90	1.09	1.03	1.28	0.80	1.20
South East	1.18	0.85	0.65	0.87	0.78	1.03
Wales	0.52	0.66	0.79	0.91	0.82	0.86

Note that the population estimates have been corrected for the number of adults in CFT education who were not eligible for NALS 2001. Using NALS 1997, it was estimated that 60 per cent of men and 57 per cent of women aged between 16 and 24 (inclusive) were not in CFT education, therefore the population totals of men and women aged between 16 and 24 have been reduced accordingly. This implies that estimates from the survey are generalisable to the adult population in England and Wales who are not in CFT education.

1.3.4 Weight to correct for the number of courses (wt4)

For each respondent who reported taught learning, most information was collected for only one of the courses (randomly selected from among the most recent three). Therefore, for analyses of the courses attended, an additional weight was required to correct for the actual number of courses reported by each respondent. The weight was equal to the number of courses attended by a respondent – although a maximum of three was allowed so that the 2001 results would be consistent with those of previous NALS. For example:

0 courses attended, wt3 = 0

1 course attended, wt3 = 1

2 courses attended, wt3 = 2

3 or more courses attended, wt3 = 3

1.3.5 Combined weights

The weights to correct for different household selection probabilities (wt1), different selection probabilities within the household (wt2) and non-response (wt3) were combined to generate a composite weight to be used for analyses at the level of the individual:

weight = wt1 x wt2 x wt3

The above weight was trimmed at the 5th and 95th percentiles in order to reduce the influence of extreme weights and also to improve the efficiency of the estimates. The weight was then re-scaled so that the weighted total equalled the number of respondents.

The weights were also combined to generate a composite weight to be used for analyses of variables which collected information only on the selected course:

cour_wt = weight x wt4

The course weight was re-scaled so that the weighted total equalled the number of respondents that had attended one or more course.

1.4 Multivariate analysis

Logistic regression models were run to investigate the links between participation in learning and involvement in different types of leisure activities. The odds and significance levels are shown for the eight models described in Chapter 8. The last category of each variable is the reference category.

Model 1: Odds of having done any learning in the reference period by level of TV watching

Variable	Category	Odds	Significance
Level of TV watching	None, low, medium	2.530	.000
	High	-	-
Constant		1.404	.000

Model 2: Odds of having done any learning in the reference period by level of TV watching, age group, main activity, household income, NVQ level, benefit dependency

Variable	Category	Odds	Significance
Age group			.000
	16-19	7.810	.000
	20-29	6.880	.000
	30-39	5.180	.000
	40-49	4.083	.000
	50-59	3.656	.000
	60-69	2.146	.000
	70 and over	-	-
Main activity status			.000
	FT employees	.431	.013
	PT employees	.412	.010
	Self-employed	.332	.002
	Unemployed	.282	.001
	Looking after the family	.144	.000
	Retired	.176	.000
	Incapable of work	.136	.000
Household income			.000
	Up to £10,399	.421	.000
	£10,400 to £20,799	.525	.000
	£20,800 to £31,199	.820	.134
	£31,200 or more	-	-
NVQ level now			.000
	Level Five	12.498	.000
	Level Four	11.475	.000
	Level Three	4.548	.000
	Level Two	4.326	.000
	Level One	2.904	.000
	No qualifications	-	-
Benefit dependency	Yes	.707	.001
	No	-	-
Level of TV watching	None, low, medium	1.334	.000
	High	-	-
Constant		1.046	.904

Model 3: Odds of having done any learning in the reference period by broadsheet reading

Variable	Category	Odds	Significance
Broadsheet reading	Does not read broadsheet	.342	.000
	Read broadsheet	-	-
Constant		5.611	.000

Model 4: Odds of having done any learning in the reference period by broadsheet reading, age group, main activity, household income, NVQ level, benefit dependency

Variable	Category	Odds	Significance
Age group			.000
	16-19	9.272	.000
	20-29	8.376	.000
	30-39	6.257	.000
	40-49	4.823	.000
	50-59	4.100	.000
	60-69	2.312	.000
	70 and over	-	-
Main activity status			.000
	FT employees	.481	.033
	PT employees	.452	.023
	Self-employed	.364	.006
	Unemployed	.294	.001
	Looking after the family	.151	.000
	Retired	.187	.000
	Incapable of work	.145	.000
	Other	-	-
Household income			.000
	Up to £10,399	.453	.000
	£10,400 to £20,799	.548	.000
	£20,800 to £31,199	.837	.179
	£31,200 or more	-	-
NVQ level now			.000
	Level Five	10.345	.000
	Level Four	10.358	.000
	Level Three	4.320	.000
	Level Two	4.032	.000
	Level One	2.832	.000
	No qualifications	-	-
Benefit dependency	Yes	.715	.002
	No	-	-
Broadsheet reading	Does not read broadsheet	.432	.000
	Read broadsheet	-	-
Constant		2.077	.061

Model 5: Odds of having done any learning in the reference period by broadsheet reading, age group, household income

Variable	Category	Odds	Significance
Age group			.000
	16-19	13.489	.000
	20-29	15.607	.000
	30-39	10.297	.000
	40-49	8.213	.000
	50-59	5.870	.000
	60-69	2.702	.000
	70 and over	-	-
Household income			
	Up to £10,399	.157	.000
	£10,400 to £20,799	.352	.000
	£20,800 to £31,199	.708	.006
	£31,200 or more	-	-
Broadsheet reading	Does not read broadsheet	.271	.000
	Read broadsheet	-	-
Constant		3.638	.000

Model 6: Odds of having done any learning in the reference period by broadsheet reading, NVQ level

Variable	Category	Odds	Significance
NVQ level now			.000
	Level Five	40.806	.000
	Level Four	30.867	.000
	Level Three	13.139	.000
	Level Two	14.974	.000
	Level One	5.971	.000
	No qualifications	-	-
Broadsheet reading	Does not read broadsheet	.707	.001
	Read broadsheet	-	-
Constant		.347	.000

Model 7: Odds of having done any learning in the reference period by number of voluntary activities involved in

Variable	Category	Odds	Significance
Number of voluntary activities involved in			.000
	None	.314	.000
	One	.475	.000
	Two	.621	.000
	Three or more	-	.000
Constant		4.189	.000

Model 8: Odds of having done any learning in the reference period by number of voluntary activities involved in, age group, main activity, household income, NVQ level, benefit dependency

Variable	Category	Odds	Significance
Age group			.000
	16-19	9.879	.000
	20-29	8.773	.000
	30-39	5.816	.000
	40-49	4.523	.000
	50-59	3.703	.000
	60-69	2.110	.000
	70 and over	-	.000
Main activity status			.000
	FT employees	.612	.142
	PT employees	.513	.050
	Self-employed	.438	.022
	Unemployed	.422	.019
	Looking after the family	.174	.000
	Retired	.208	.000
	Incapable of work	.180	.000
	Other	-	-
Household income			.000
	Up to £10,399	.442	.000
	£10,400 to £20,799	.525	.000
	£20,800 to £31,199	.791	.081
	£31,200 or more	-	-
NVQ level now			.000
	Level Five	9.857	.000
	Level Four	9.176	.000
	Level Three	3.880	.000
	Level Two	3.576	.000
	Level One	2.508	.000
	No qualifications	-	-
Benefit dependency	Yes	6.85	.000
	No	-	-
Number of voluntary activities involved in			.000
	None	.295	.000
	One	.487	.000
	Two	.584	.000
	Three or more	-	-
Constant		1.958	.073

1.5 Confidence intervals

Table E.4 gives an indication of the confidence intervals to apply to different sizes of percentage results for different sample sizes within this report. These 95 per cent confidence levels are the levels within which we can be 95 per cent confident that the true answer will lie, in other words, there is only a one in 20 chance that the true answer will lie outside this range.

To take an example from the table, for a percentage result of 50 per cent on a sample of 2,000, there is a 95 per cent chance that the true result will lie within + two per cent, that is between 48 per cent and 52 per cent. These confidence limits assume a simple random sample and no adjustment has been made for the effects of clustering. Although such an adjustment would increase the confidence limits slightly, they would not differ notably from those shown on the table and would in most cases still round to the same number of percentage points.

Table E.4 Confidence Intervals

Sample size	Approximate 95% confidence limits for a percentage result of:		
	10% or 90% + / -	30% or 70% + / -	50% + / -
50	8	13	14
100	6	9	10
250	4	6	6
500	3	4	4
1,000	2	3	3
2,000	1	2	2
3,000	1	2	2
4,000	1	2	2
5,000	1	1	1

1.6 Topics covered by the survey

Block	Topic
AA	Introduction and demographics – ALL
A	Experience of full time continuous education and qualifications achieved – ALL
B	Screening for taught learning – ALL
C	Summary of all courses – ALL WITH TAUGHT LEARNING NB Blocks D-F ask about one randomly selected course
D	Mode of learning and use of computers for learning – ALL WITH TAUGHT LEARNING
E	Motivation for doing learning and advice/info received – ALL WITH TAUGHT LEARNING
F	Problems and outcomes – ALL WITH TAUGHT LEARNING
G	Screening for self-directed learning – ALL
H	Details of 'other' self-directed learning – ALL WITH 'OTHER' SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING
I	Information and advice about learning – ALL WITH SOME LEARNING
J	Future learning and knowledge about learning initiatives– ALL
K	Use of computer and Internet – ALL
L	Life style – ALL
M	Further demographics and re-contact –ALL

1.7 Advance letter

March 2001

Dear Sir/Madam,

We need your help with the National Adult Learning Survey 2001.

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) is carrying out a survey of people's views and experiences of all forms of learning. The survey covers a wide number of activities including: training courses at work, evening classes, studying for qualifications, and learning for fun.

In the next few days an interviewer from the National Centre for Social Research,

will call to ask one or two members of your household to take part in the survey. Please show this letter to other members of your household as it may also be relevant to them. The interviewer will carry an identity card with a photograph.

We are interested in why some people decide to learn new things and why others do not. Therefore your views are very important even if you have not done any courses or formal learning. The interview will also cover a range of activities people do in their leisure time.

We hope that you will be able to help us with this important study. We rely on the goodwill and voluntary cooperation of those invited to take part to make the study a success. Those who have taken part in the past have felt it to be an enjoyable and interesting experience.

More information about the survey and answers to some common queries can be found on the back of this letter. If you have any other queries about the survey please contact Sue Roche at the National Centre for Social Research on 01277 200600.

Many thanks in anticipation of your help.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Vallely
Higher Scientific Officer.

left school years ago; do you need to interview me?

In this survey the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) is mainly interested in learning that people do after leaving school. We are interested in the views of adults of all ages from the youngest to the oldest, including those who haven't done any learning recently.

I am not doing any learning at present; do you need to interview me?

We are very interested in the views and experiences of those who have done no learning recently as well as those who have. It is important for the DfEE to find out about all groups of people.

What kinds of learning are covered by the survey?

The survey covers a wide range of learning from driving lessons, tennis coaching, cookery classes, and training at work to correspondence courses for qualifications. Teaching yourself things without following a taught course is also covered.

How was I chosen?

To ensure that the results of the survey are representative, we have selected your address at random from a list kept by the Post Office of all addresses in England and Wales. This list is available to the public.

What will happen to the information I give?

Any information that you provide will be treated as strictly confidential. No-one outside the National Centre for Social Research will know which people gave which answers and no individual will be identifiable in the results. The DfEE will use the results of the survey to improve education and training by providing good information and advice and generally making it easier for people to continue learning throughout their life.

Who is carrying out the survey?

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) has commissioned the National Centre for Social Research, an independent research organisation, to conduct the survey.

How can I find out more about the research?

If you have any queries about the survey please contact Sue Roche at the National Centre for Social Research on 01277 200600.

Copies of this publication can be obtained from:

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ISBN: 184185 652 5