



# **Review of Informal Adult and Community Learning**

National consultation for citizens: final report

---

**JANUARY 2012**

---

## Acknowledgements

NIACE would like to thank the following people who have supported this consultation.

- All the people who took the time to contribute their views to make sure that people's voices are heard in this consultation;
- All the organisations, staff and volunteers who put their time and energy into promoting this consultation and supporting people to take part;
- Liz Lawson and Carol Cox at BIS; and
- Members of the reference group who offered valuable advice and guidance:

Martin Sundram	WEA
Tony Baker	WEA
Judith Swift	Unionlearn
Sharon Burke	Unionlearn
Gemma Painter	NUS
Helen Goldsbrough	Nottinghamshire County Council
Lucy Hogg	Community Learning Champion (Norwich)
Angela Jefford	Community Learning Champion (Norwich)
Steven Thomas	Sheffield City Council
Shabaz Abbas	Sheffield City Council
Nick Brewster	Bishop Auckland College
Maggi Butterworth	Swarthmore Centre
Christel Pobgee	Kent Libraries and Archives

### NIACE Project Team

Jane Ward, Emily Jones, Jan Novitzky, Helen Plant.

## Table of contents

Acknowledgements .....	2
1. Introduction.....	10
2. Methodology.....	11
3. Respondents .....	13
3.1 About individual respondents.....	13
3.2 About group respondents .....	16
3.3 Respondents' learning .....	17
4. Learning opportunities .....	19
4.1 What people want to learn .....	19
4.2 How people want to learn .....	22
4.3 Where people want to learn.....	23
4.4 How people want to hear about learning opportunities .....	24
5. Paying for learning.....	26
6. Getting involved in organising learning.....	27
6.1 How respondents would like to be involved.....	28
6.2 Help or support needed .....	28
7. Getting involved in decision-making .....	30
7.1 Partnership approach .....	32
7.2 Local providers .....	32
7.3 Learners and local communities .....	33
7.4 Local government .....	33
7.5 Employers and trade unions .....	34
7.6 How local people should be involved.....	34
7.7 Encouraging local people to get involved .....	36
8. How learning should be funded .....	37
8.1 Government funding .....	37
8.2 What should be funded.....	46
8.3 Fees.....	47
9. Conclusion.....	53
Appendix 1: On-line questionnaire.....	56
Appendix 2: Data tables .....	68
Appendix 3: Map of individual respondents .....	102

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

This report sets out the results of a citizens' survey designed to contribute to the government's consultation on the future of informal adult and community learning. The government published a consultation on how best to develop the new framework for the Further Education (FE) landscape in August 2011. The consultation included detailed questions on informal adult and community learning (see *New Challenges, New Chances: Next Steps in Implementing the Further Education Reform Programme – Review of Informal Adult and Community Learning*). The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) commissioned NIACE to organise a separate consultation accessible to all. This citizens' consultation ran from 1 August 2011 to 31 October 2011.

A total of 6,306 individuals and 227 groups from all areas of England submitted their views. Public consultations are open to anyone to respond rather than limited to a particular sample. This means that eliciting sufficient responses from a cross section of groups is challenging. For example, people with lower level skills or English language and literacy levels are known to be the least likely to take part in consultations of this nature. In the light of this, the scale and diversity of responses is remarkable and provides BIS with an extensive picture of the views of people from different backgrounds.

Adults from across the age spectrum with a range of income levels, employment circumstances and qualification levels responded. Approximately 1,720 people responded who had qualifications at Level 2 or below and just under half of respondents had annual incomes below £20K. In addition, we were pleased to receive 227 group responses which were primarily from groups with lower skills and more challenging social and economic circumstances. It is also noteworthy that differences of opinion were, in general, not strictly aligned to any particular respondent characteristics or economic and social circumstances.

## **Methodology**

NIACE designed the consultation to provide an accessible opportunity for a diverse range of adults to take part in the government consultation. BIS expressed an interest in the views of citizens on particular issues in the *New Challenges, New Chances* consultation. On-line individual and group surveys were used to consult on these questions. We produced an easy read version to support adults with learning difficulties to take part. NIACE promoted the consultation through providers and other organisations based in communities and workplaces who worked with intermediaries such as learning champions, union learning representatives and teachers to encourage and support people to contribute. We developed resources for intermediaries to support people to take part in the survey. Group responses enabled a more diverse range of people to respond.

We gathered quantitative and qualitative information which was analysed thematically. We conducted further analysis of qualification level, household income and gender in order to consider whether these factors appeared to influence responses and have noted issues of potential interest in the report. We stress however that whilst these are potential indicators, we are very cautious of drawing any definitive conclusions or simple causal relationships due to the number of potential variables involved.

## **Learning opportunities**

The consultation asked what informal adult learning people were interested in and how and where they wanted to learn. The responses illustrated why adults take up informal adult learning as well as the breadth of areas they want to learn about. Responses related to learning for interest, independence, enjoyment, mental stimulation, health improvement, personal development and journeys towards further training and work. These can be broadly categorised as family learning, health, wellbeing and fitness, environment and sustainable lifestyles, independent living, history and heritage, social sciences, and natural sciences. Learning about digital technology (ICT, digital photography, etc) was most popular with more than half of respondents indicating that they would be interested in this, especially people with Level 1 or no qualifications. The majority of respondents stated a clear preference for conventional modes of learning, preferring to learn in classes in a college, adult education centre or community centre,

perhaps reflecting a preference for what they are already familiar with.

Respondents would most like to hear about learning opportunities through a college or adult learning service (69 per cent of individual respondents and 47 per cent of groups), followed by leaflets, brochures and fliers (66 per cent of individuals and 46 per cent of groups). Receiving information about learning through an adviser on learning and work was by far the least popular option (14 per cent of individuals and four per cent of groups), possibly because respondents who were already in learning wanted advice from organisations and people they already know and trust. People who are willing to pay fees said that they could afford between up to £1 and £5 an hour, and this was related to their annual household income.

### **Getting involved in organising learning**

Respondents were asked whether they would like to help organise learning activities in their local area or workplace. Over a quarter were keen to get involved (29 per cent of individuals and 28 per cent of groups) and some were already volunteering in different capacities. Most wanted to volunteer locally or in their workplace and their preferred activities were organising or leading learning activity or taking on a learning champion role. The majority would like support such as information on how to get started, expenses, mentoring or training. Twenty-nine per cent of individuals and 24 per cent of groups were not sure whether they would like to volunteer, a reflection perhaps of lack of confidence or awareness of opportunities.

### **Getting involved in decision-making**

Respondents were asked to consider who should decide how public funding for informal adult and community learning should be spent. Most people said that decisions should be made locally by the people who are directly affected: learning providers, learners, local people and local government or partnerships of these stakeholders. Only a minority of respondents indicated that employers, national government or trade unions should be involved in decision-making about adult and community learning.

Respondents sent a strong message that decisions should be made to support the interests of a wide section of the community and not the vested interests of providers or particular interest groups. Respondents said that local people should be involved in

different ways, including surveys, through local organisations, learner forums, public meetings and on-line. There were concerns about 'tokenism'; if people get involved they expect to have a voice in decision-making and genuine capacity to influence decisions made about the learning offer in their area.

### **How learning should be funded**

Respondents were asked whether or not they agree that government funding should be spent on making sure that adults who can't afford to pay can access learning. They were also asked whether people who can afford to pay should contribute more to the cost of classes through fees. People agreed that learning should be available for all although their views on funding and fees differ. All stressed the need for fairness although their views of what counted as 'fair' varied. Many believed that learning should be free to all regardless of income. Fifteen per cent of individuals answered that they didn't know, saying their answer would depend on factors such as the definition of affordability.

Around half the responses (55 per cent) said that government funding should be used to bring about more societal equity, and agreed that government funding should be focused on adults who can't afford learning. People with the lowest income (under £10K) are more likely to think that government funding should be directed to people who can't afford to pay for adult learning (60 per cent) and those with an income of £20 -30K are the least likely to support subsidising people who can't pay (51per cent). Nearly one third of respondents said they thought it unfair to be asked to pay for learning through their taxes then again through fees.

Both those who agree with targeting funding and those who are opposed, point to the complexity of the concept of affordability. They argue that the large numbers of people who have low disposable incomes should also have their fees subsidised, often suggesting a sliding scale. They also expressed concern that higher fees will deter so many people that provision will become non-viable.

### **Fees**

Respondents were asked whether they agreed that 'fees could also be used to help subsidise learning for people who can't afford to pay full fees and those who haven't had

the chance to take up learning in the past'. All the responses stressed that approaches to using fees to cross subsidise learning should be based on the principles of fairness and equity. As with responses to the questions about government funding priorities, views of what is fair and equitable differed, ranging from those who agreed with the principle of wealthy people supporting poorer people to those with the opposing view. A clear majority agreed with using fees to cross subsidise learning (64 per cent of individuals and 53 per cent of groups). There were some noteworthy differences in views related to household income levels. Perhaps unsurprisingly those with lower incomes were more likely to support fee subsidy; 72 per cent with a household income under £10K and 67 per cent with a household income of £10 – 20K agree. This dropped to 61 per cent of households with a household income of £20 – 30K. Only 12 per cent of those with a household income under £10K disagreed, but this almost doubled to 25 per cent of household with incomes over £20K. The concern about the definition of affordability that was expressed in views on government priorities was echoed here, with consensus across the range of opinion that there is a need for nuanced fees structures that open up access to people with low disposable incomes. Some commentators also commented that they did not want these to be introduced in ways that increased bureaucracy.

## **Conclusion**

The volume and considered content of responses to this consultation illustrate public passion for adult learning as well as interest in contributing to public policy. People hold strong, sometimes conflicting opinions, about informal adult and community learning, how they want to contribute and how it should be funded. Together, these responses offer a wealth of detail and ideas that can assist the government and learning providers to determine how informal and adult and community learning is planned and organised. The materials produced and lessons learned from this consultation have potential to inform future public consultations.

The responses demonstrate the importance of informal adult and community learning to people's lives. They illustrate a genuine public appetite to contribute by offering sessions or recruiting others to learning. Training, support and expenses are necessary to enable volunteers to contribute and there is scope to develop innovative approaches to recruiting and supporting more people to volunteer in informal adult and community

learning. People want planning and decision-making to be carried out by local people, local authorities and learning providers. Many are keen to take part in these processes in different ways, but stress they must have a genuine role and influence. This indicates the importance of an inclusive local planning process as part of the adult and community learning infrastructure.

Respondents stressed the importance of the concept of fairness in distributing government funding and setting fees for adult and community learning and this sends a powerful message to those forming and implementing policy at national and local levels. A majority of respondents thought that learner fees should cross subsidise other learners. However, lack of total consensus means there is no conclusive answer to the questions about whether the government should prioritise people who cannot afford to pay. Respondents who agreed with the government prioritising support for people who can't afford to pay, also tended to agree with cross-subsidy from fees. The same reasons were given to support both answers whether people agree or disagree.

Almost all respondents emphasised that the concept of affordability is not straightforward. They cited the difficulties that many people with low disposable incomes face in paying for learning and were concerned that fees do not drive adult and community learning into a resource only accessible to the very poor and the very rich. They proposed graduated fee structures that take account of disposable incomes in order to support fair access for all and the development of non-bureaucratic processes to identify eligibility. Respondents also suggested that a thriving adult and community learning offer depends on setting fees at a level that enables sufficient people to take part.

Responses to the fee questions illustrate the different levels of knowledge about the contribution that taxes make to adult learning as well as a spectrum of views on what fairness and affordability mean in relation to access to learning. This signals, perhaps, the need for a more overt debate about the aims and costs of adult and community learning.

# 1. Introduction

The government recognises the benefits of informal adult and community learning for society as well as for individuals and their families. The 2010 spending review protected the £210 million invested each year in informal adult and community learning but challenged the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to make sure that this funding secures value for money: by focusing on people who would not otherwise have access to learning, maximising fee income, supporting a range of adult learning to thrive and contributing to other policy areas such as health and local government. In August 2011 the government published *New Challenges, New Chances: Next Steps in Implementing the Further Education Reform Programme Review of Informal Adult and Community Learning (IACL)*, a consultation on the future of informal adult and community learning. This consultation was part of a wider government consultation on implementing reform in the further education sector. Its questions were designed to gather the views of learning providers and other key stakeholder organisations.

The government was also keen to ensure that it heard the views of citizens and asked NIACE to organise a separate citizens' consultation that was accessible to all members of the public. This consultation offered a unique opportunity for members of the public to inform public policy. NIACE designed an on-line survey for individuals and groups. Questions were based on consultation themes most relevant and of interest to learners and other members of the public. Language was simplified in order to make the survey accessible. The survey ran from 1 August 2011 to 31 October 2011.

Public consultations are increasingly conducted on-line and this is a convenient way for some people to give their views. We recognised that they are not easily accessible to some adults and addressed this by encouraging organisations working in communities and workplaces to support people to respond. The consultation was designed so that intermediaries such as community learning champions, union learning representatives, tutors, librarians, community workers and others could support individuals or groups to respond, and the group survey could be completed and submitted by a group member or intermediary on behalf of the group.

As a result, the consultation reached a high number of members of the public, both current learners and adults not involved in organised learning activity; 6,306 individuals and 227 groups submitted responses. This is a much higher number of responses than usually achieved through consultation approaches such as events or focus groups. These responses are summarised in tables in Appendix 2.

## **2. Methodology**

NIACE designed the citizens' survey to provide an opportunity for a diverse range of adults to contribute to the government's *New Challenges, New Chances* consultation. This was especially important as decisions made on informal adult and community learning will affect a large number of citizens. The *New Challenges, New Chances* consultation, although technically open for anyone to respond, was designed to gather the views of learning providers and other key stakeholder organisations. Some of the consultation questions were therefore less relevant to the majority of citizens and for some the technical language was inaccessible.

NIACE developed an innovative approach to engaging and consulting with adults, guided by a reference group of organisations experienced in working through intermediaries. The individual and group survey aimed to elicit the views of both learners and people not currently involved in learning, working in communities and workplaces through established consultation structures. An on-line survey enabled accurate and cost-effective analysis of a large number of responses as well as a very wide reach.

NIACE recognised that not all citizens are on-line or comfortable using technology and therefore developed an approach to enhance access by offering two alternative versions of the survey: an individual response and an intermediary-facilitated group response. We also wanted to make this a positive learning experience that would help people feel more confident about responding to future public surveys. NIACE made other resources – including guidance on facilitating a group discussion and an easy read version of the survey to support adults with learning difficulties - available on the NIACE website.

NIACE publicised the consultation through our extensive contacts and established dissemination channels. We promoted the consultation to providers and organisations working in communities and workplaces who are in a position to encourage and support learners, and people not currently engaged in learning, to contribute. The documents were designed so that intermediaries such as community learning champions, union learning representatives, tutors, librarians, community workers and others could support individuals or groups to respond. Working with these intermediaries offered the advantage of increasing the survey's reach into grass roots communities through people who had a wide range of existing contacts, as well as credibility in their communities and workplaces. We produced support materials, including background information on informal adult and community learning, the reason for the consultation, strategies for working with groups and supporting on-line responses. We monitored responses weekly and sent out additional publicity to encourage organisations to seek responses from under-represented groups.

Feedback from the reference group indicates that promoting the survey via community learning champions was effective in engaging people in the survey who would never otherwise have taken part. For example, champions in Norwich specifically targeted homeless people and in Leeds champions promoted the survey to people who were not currently in learning. Feedback indicates that where people were put off initially by the requirement to feedback on-line, champions supported them to complete the survey and improved their confidence about completing future surveys of this kind.

The results were exported from the on-line survey data into SPSS (a software package), in order to carry out quantitative analysis. Qualitative data were analysed and categorised thematically. We conducted further analysis of qualification level, household income and gender in order to consider whether these factors appeared to influence responses, noting issues of potential interest. However these are only potential indicators. The number of potential variables, including interests, values, beliefs, demographic factors and family circumstances, means that definitive conclusions and/or robust causal relationships cannot be established.

### **3. Respondents**

A total of 6,306 individuals and 227 groups from all areas of England submitted their views (see map Appendix 3). This scale of response was remarkable and provides an in-depth picture of the views of people from diverse backgrounds. A majority of individual respondents were female and white with higher level qualifications. However, approximately 1,720 responses were from individuals with qualifications at Level 2 or below and just under half of respondents had annual incomes below £20K. Twelve per cent (more than 750 people) described themselves as disabled. The consultation therefore had a relatively wide reach and included responses from people who are less likely to take part in consultations and make their voices heard.

We know that adults with fewer, and lower, qualifications are less likely to respond to surveys, so we actively encouraged responses from groups made up of people from diverse backgrounds. We were pleased to receive 227 group responses, primarily from groups of people who had lower skills and were experiencing more challenging social and economic circumstances. These add another dimension to complement and enrich the individual responses. Respondents' characteristics are set out below.

#### **3.1 About individual respondents**

##### **Gender**

Approximately three quarters (74 per cent) of respondents identified themselves as female, 25 per cent identified themselves as male and one per cent preferred not to specify a gender.

##### **Age**

Figure 1 shows that the majority (91 per cent) of respondents were aged between 25 and 74 years; with 54 per cent aged between 50 and 74 years and 37 per cent aged between 25 and 49 years. Four per cent were aged 24 years or under and four per cent were 75 years or over.

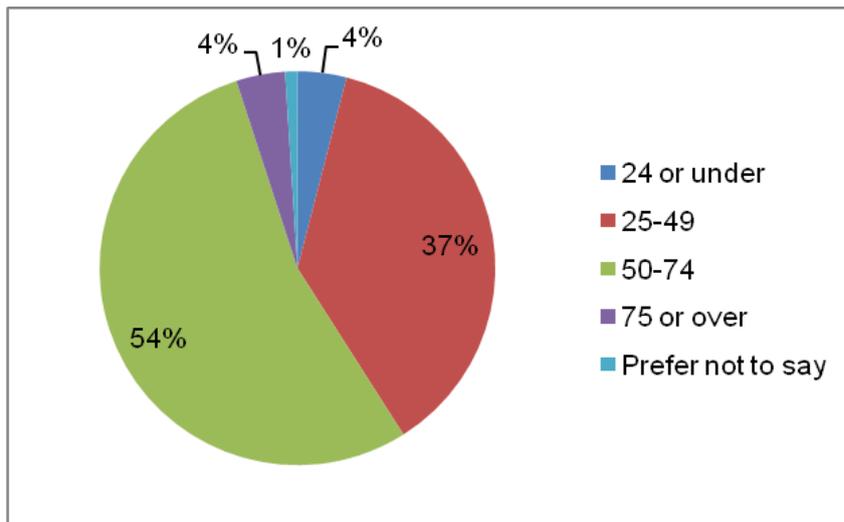


Figure 1: Age of individual respondents  
Source: Table 4, appendix 2

### **Ethnicity**

The majority (80 per cent) of respondents described their ethnicity as White – British. Only five per cent described themselves as Black or Asian, and four per cent indicated that they preferred not to specify their ethnic background.

### **Disability**

Some 12 per cent of respondents indicated that they consider themselves to have a disability, 85 per cent did not consider themselves to have a disability and four per cent preferred not to say.

### **Qualification level**

As Figure 2 shows, the majority (52 per cent) of respondents indicated that their highest level of qualification is equivalent to Level 4 or above. Eighteen per cent had a qualification equivalent to Level 3. Over a quarter of respondents (approximately 1,720 individuals) had Level 2 qualifications or below (15 per cent Level 2, five per cent Level 1 and eight per cent do not have any formal qualifications).

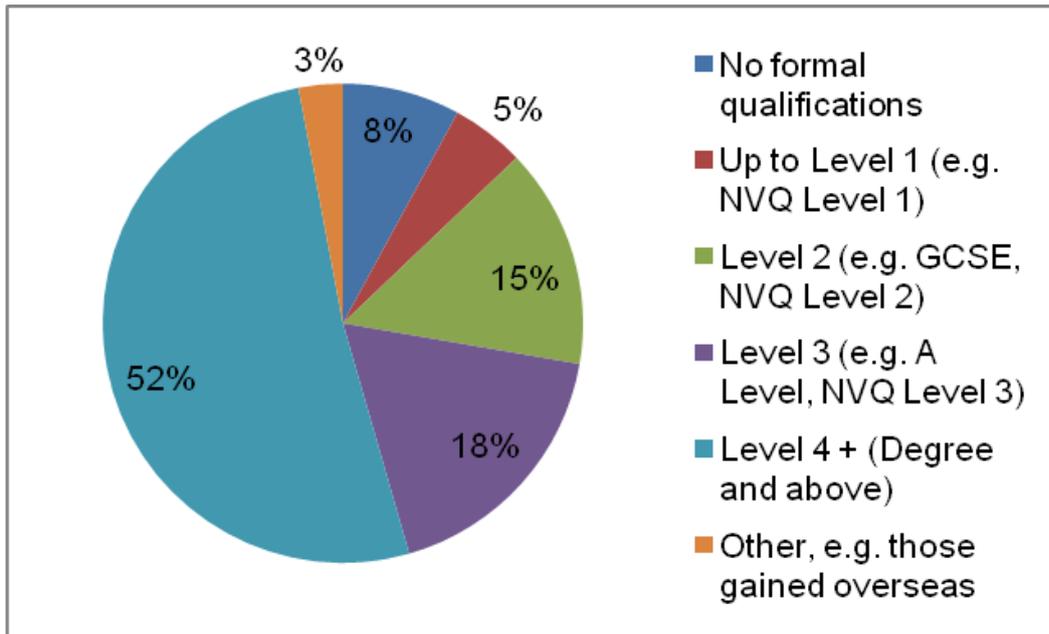


Figure 2: Individual respondents' highest level of qualification  
Source: Table 7, appendix 2

### Employment status

As Figure 3 shows, 48 per cent of respondents were in full or part time paid work. Six per cent of respondents were in education or training, either full time (one per cent) or part time (five per cent). Seventeen per cent were not in paid work: unemployed (10 per cent), sick/disabled (four per cent) or a carer (three per cent). Thirty two per cent of respondents were retired.

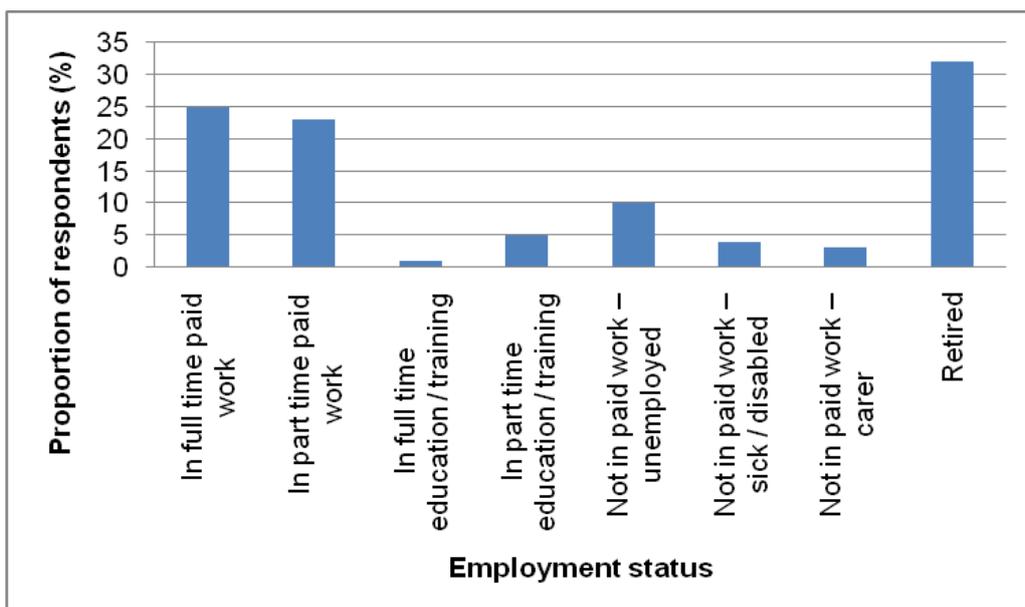


Figure 3: Individual respondents' employment status  
Source: Table 8, appendix 2

**Income**

Nearly half (48 per cent) of respondents indicated that they have an annual household income of 20K or below (22 per cent below £10K) (see Figure 4). Twenty-two per cent had an annual household income of £20 – 30K and 30 per cent above £30K

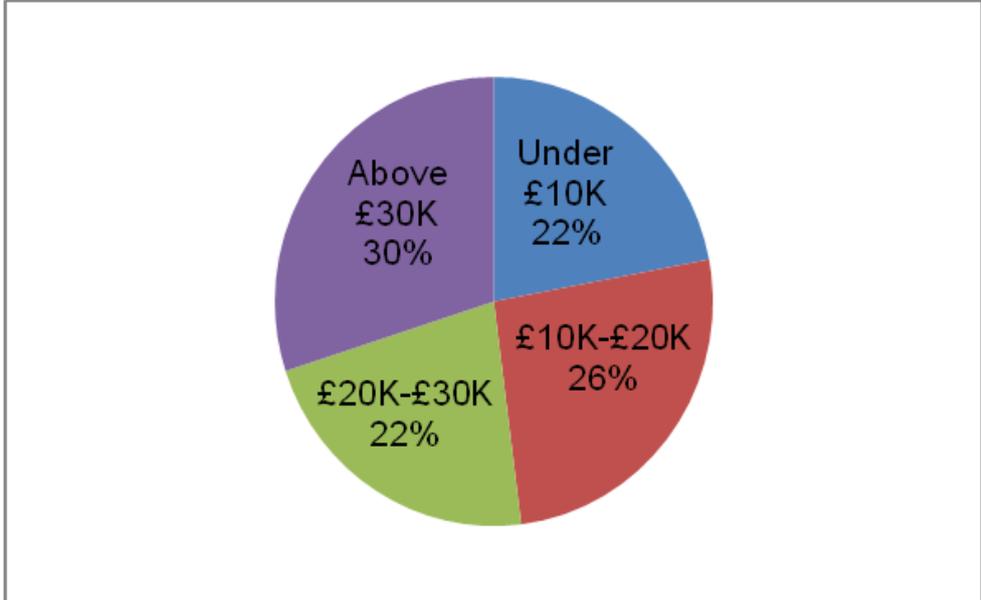


Figure 4: Individual respondents' annual household income  
Source: Table 9, appendix 2

**3.2 About group respondents**

There was a spread of respondents from all regions (see Figure 5 below). A high number of group responses from one local authority in the region explains the high percentage from Yorkshire and Humber.

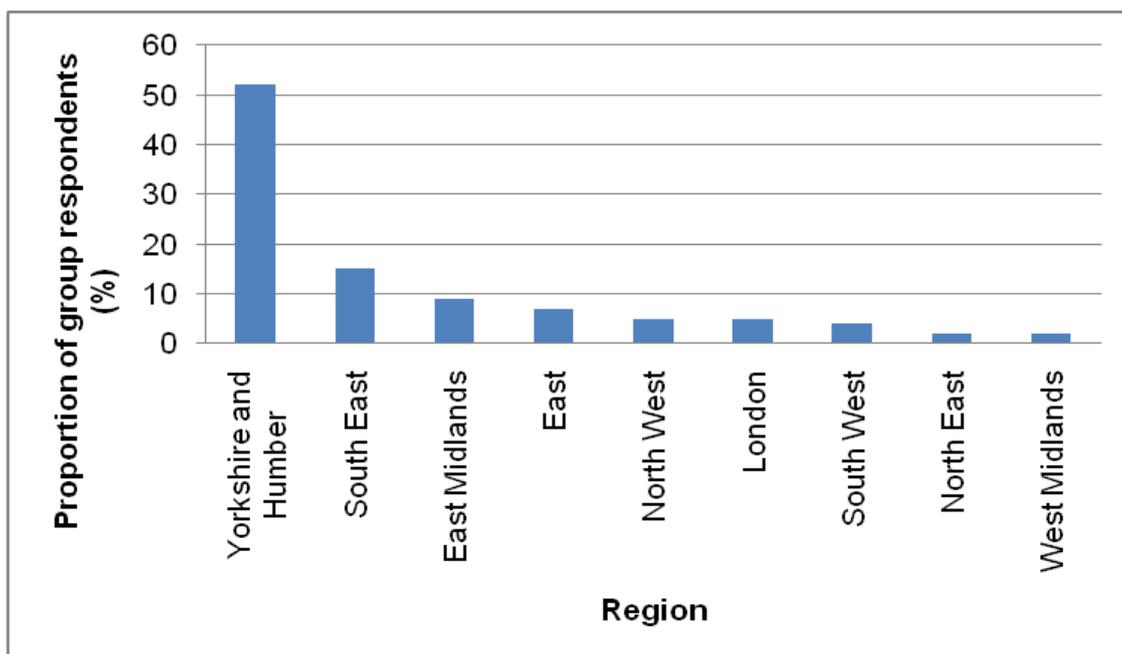


Figure 5: Region that groups are based in  
Source: Table 10, appendix 2

### Type of group

Groups were asked to describe themselves and their activity. Group sizes ranged from 7 – 20 but as not all supplied their group number the total represented by group responses is not available. The group descriptors indicate that the majority of these responses (just under three quarters) were from adults experiencing social and economic life challenges.

### 3.3 Respondents' learning

The majority of respondents were involved in some kind of learning. This is unsurprising as they are most likely to be interested in influencing adult and community learning policy. However, more than 1,000 respondents were not currently learning and some group responses also included adults not engaged in learning, indicating sizeable interest beyond learners.

#### Individual respondents

As Figure 6 shows, 63 per cent of individual respondents were currently doing, or had recently done, some informal adult and community learning. Nearly one third (30 per cent) of individuals were currently doing, or had recently done, some learning that leads to a qualification. Seventy per cent of individuals currently learning had paid

subscriptions, fees or other costs towards this learning and 30 per cent had not. Seventeen per cent of respondents were not currently taking part in any learning. While this may seem to be a relatively small proportion of the respondents, this accounts for 1,072 individuals.

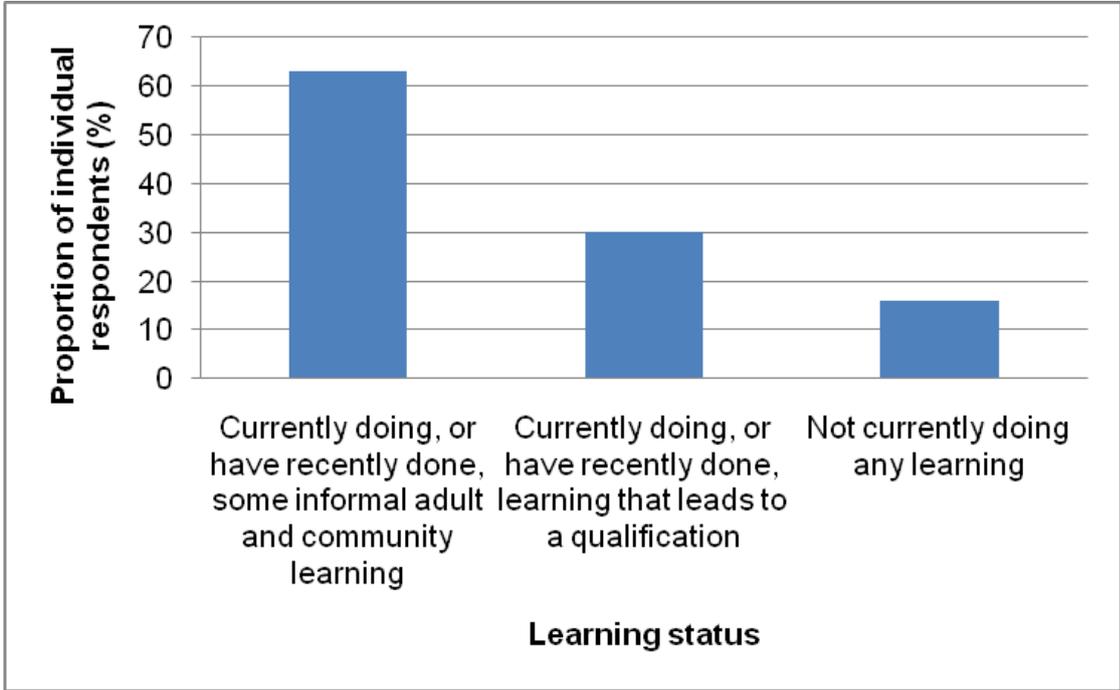


Figure 6: Whether individual respondents are learning  
 Source: Table 1, appendix 2

**Group respondents**

Most group responses were from adults currently undertaking some form of learning. As groups were most likely to have been supported by intermediaries, this is to be expected. As Figure 7 shows, 64 per cent of groups had members that were currently doing, or had recently done, some informal and community learning. Forty two per cent of groups had members who were currently doing, or had recently done, some learning that led to a qualification and six per cent of groups had members who were not currently taking part in any learning. Learners in 44 per cent of the groups did not pay any fees.

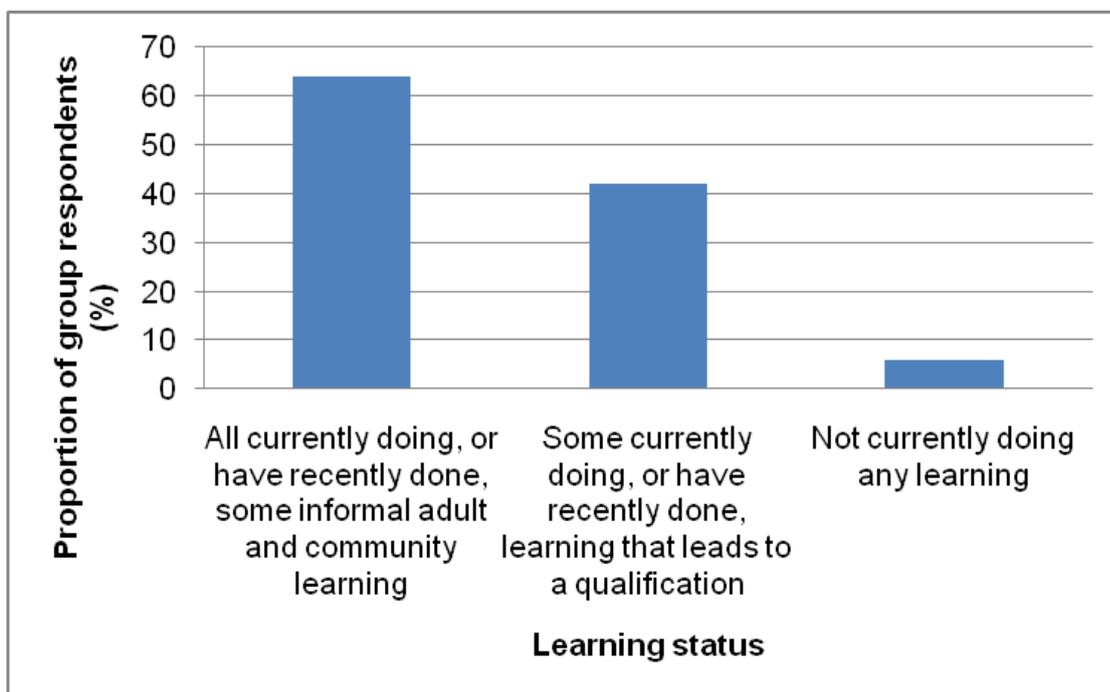


Figure 7: Whether group respondents are learning  
 Source: Table 2, appendix 2

## 4. Learning opportunities

The consultation asked what informal adult learning people were interested in and how and where they wanted to learn. Responses illustrated a wide range of perceived benefits of taking part in adult and community learning, as well as a breadth of learning interests. Adults wanted to learn across a diverse range of subjects. However, interests varied in relation to factors such as income, qualification level and gender. The majority of respondents stated a clear preference for conventional modes of learning, preferring to learn in college, adult education centre or community centre classes.

### 4.1 What people want to learn

Respondents were asked, from a list, what kinds of informal adult and community learning would interest them (see Figure 8 below).

On the whole, responses from individuals and groups did not differ greatly. Individuals and groups were equally interested to learn about subjects such as languages (42 per cent) and gardening/growing food (29 per cent) as each other. Groups indicated a greater interest in music, dance and drama and crafts/practical skills.

For both individuals and groups, learning about digital technology (ICT, digital photography, etc) was most popular with more than half of respondents (56 per cent of individuals and 70 per cent of groups) indicating that they would be interested in this.

Family learning was the area of greatest difference between individuals and groups. Group respondents were more than twice as likely to indicate they were interested in this (32 per cent of groups selected this option, compared to 15 per cent of individual respondents). This reflects the profile of group responses where family learning groups comprised almost a quarter of group respondents.

The suggestions in the 'other' category are varied and comments illustrated why adults take up informal adult learning as well as the wealth of interests and matters they want to learn about. Interests related to learning for interest, independence, enjoyment, mental stimulation, health improvement personal development and journeys towards further training and work. These can be broadly categorised as health, wellbeing and fitness, environment and sustainable lifestyles, independent living, history and heritage, social sciences, and natural sciences.

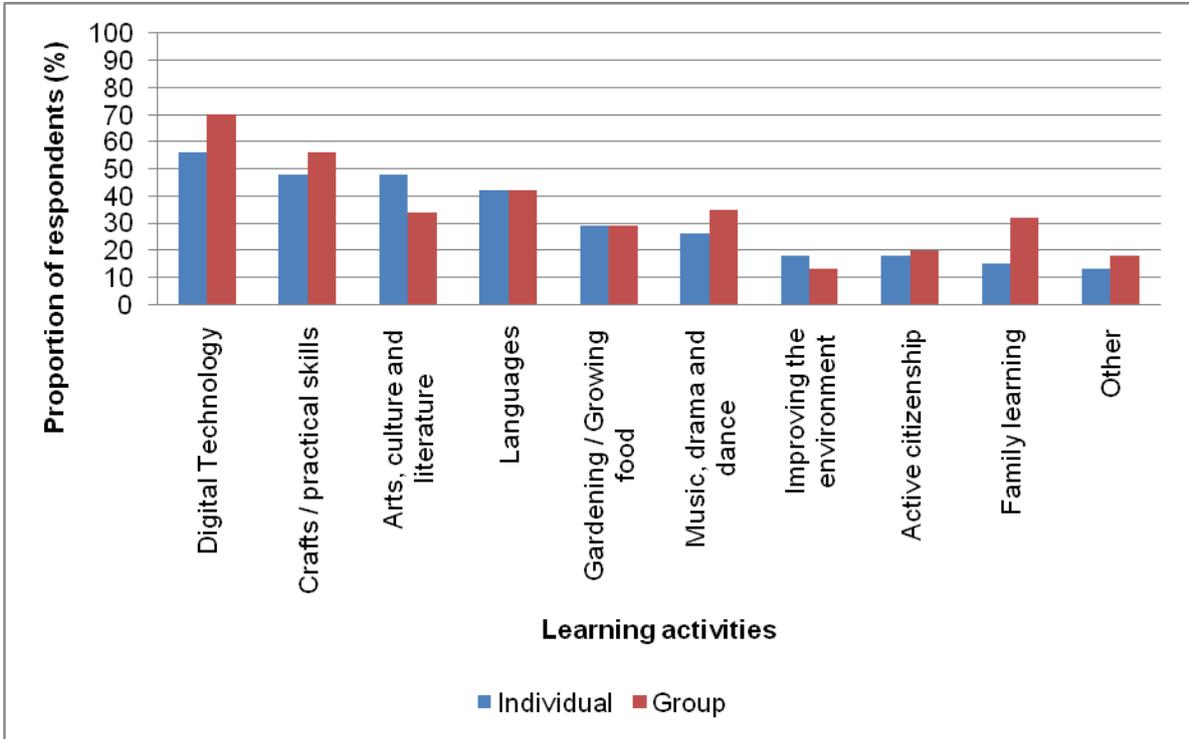


Figure 8: What respondents want to learn  
 Source: Tables 12 and 13, appendix 2

In general there was some relation to individual's interests in particular areas of learning and their qualification level, income and, to a lesser extent, gender. There are few noteworthy gender differences although there is some tendency to gender stereotyping in learning preferences, with women more interested in arts, culture and literature, crafts, gardening and growing food and family learning. More men were interested in active citizenship, improving the environment and computers and IT.

A higher percentage of men than women selected computers, IT and digital photography as their top choice (62 per cent of men and 54 per cent of women) although it is the top choice of each. People with the lowest incomes and qualification levels were most likely to cite digital learning as a top choice. Seventy-three per cent of those with no qualifications, 74 per cent of those with Level 1 and 66 per cent with Level 2 compared to 50 per cent of those with Level 4 qualification said they would like to learn digital technology. Sixty-nine per cent of people with a household income of under £10K falling to 47 per cent of those with household income over £30K would like to learn about digital technology. This indicates some correlation between income and qualification level in relation to thematic interest. However it should be noted that not all those with a low household income hold lower level qualifications as this group included highly qualified retired people living on a low income.

There was a similar pattern in relation to family learning where adults with qualifications up to level 2 were most interested in family learning. Adults with Level 1 qualifications were particularly interested in family learning (32 per cent) compared to other groups, especially those with Level 4 qualifications (11 per cent). Adults with the lowest incomes were most likely to state interest in family learning with 20 per cent of those with household incomes below £10K compared to 12 per cent of those with household incomes over 30K.

A quarter (25 per cent) of adults with no qualifications and 20 per cent with Level 2 qualifications were interested in learning related to arts, culture and literature, although adults with Level 4 qualifications were much more likely to be interested in these subjects (62 per cent), with a large gap even between them and those with Level 3 qualifications (44 per cent). Similarly interest in other subjects including active

citizenship, improving the environment, and languages rose in line with qualification level.

## **4.2 How people want to learn**

Both individual and group respondents strongly agreed that they would most like to learn in a class with a paid tutor (92 per cent of individuals and 94 per cent of groups) (see Figure 9). Whilst nearly one third (30 per cent) of individuals indicated that they would like to learn in a group without a paid tutor, only 14 per cent of groups said that they would like to learn this way. Individuals were also more in favour of learning on-line in comparison to groups (24 per cent in comparison to 14 per cent of groups). However, groups appeared keener to learn one-to-one (20 per cent in comparison to 15 per cent of individuals). Eight per cent of individuals and eight per cent of groups said they would like to learn with members of their family.

Respondents who suggested other ways of learning are interested in a blend of group and on-line learning, self-directed learning through books or on-line, the U3A model, learning through outdoor activities, tours and visits, and learning supported by mentoring, and one person preferred residential learning. Others emphasised that the quality of the teaching and the learning experience was more important to them than the method.

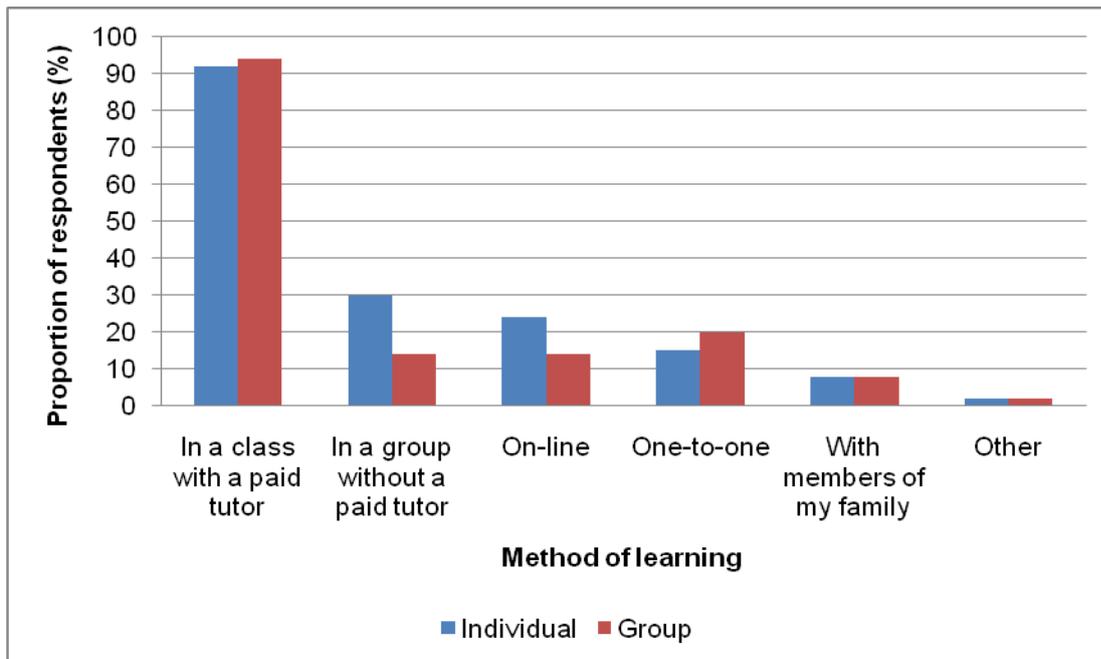


Figure 9: How people want to learn  
Source: Tables 14 and 15, appendix 2

On the whole, analysis of responses to this question found little correlation with respondents' income, gender or qualification levels. However, respondents with the most qualifications were most likely to state a preference for on-line learning (27 per cent of Level 4 compared to 17 per cent of people with no qualifications). People with the fewest qualifications were least likely to have skills to access on-line learning and, as noted in the previous section, this was the most popular learning topic for this group. Although there was an overwhelming preference among all respondents for learning in groups, people with the lowest qualifications are more likely to be interested in one-to-one tuition (21 per cent of people with no qualifications, 25 per cent of people with Level 1 qualifications, falling to 13 per cent of people with Level 4 qualifications).

### 4.3 Where people want to learn

As Figure 10 below shows, the majority of respondents had a clear preference for learning in a college or adult education centre (77 per cent of individuals and 59 per cent of groups) or in a community centre (72 per cent of both individual and group respondents). While the proportion of individual respondents that would like to learn in each of the places listed was greater, on the whole their order of preference was the same as that of the group respondents. Preferences did not appear to relate to income. However, people with lower qualification levels were keener to learn in local colleges,

adult education centres or community venues than other venues. People with higher level qualifications also prioritised these venues but in addition were more interested than those with lower level qualifications in learning in alternative spaces such as libraries, museums, local schools and at work.

Respondents suggested additional learning venues, including outdoors, places of interest, places of worship, universities, old people’s homes, commercial premises; one person suggested learning on the move in buses and trains. Many respondents considered issues such as accessibility via public transport and availability of high quality learning resources to be more important than the type of venue.

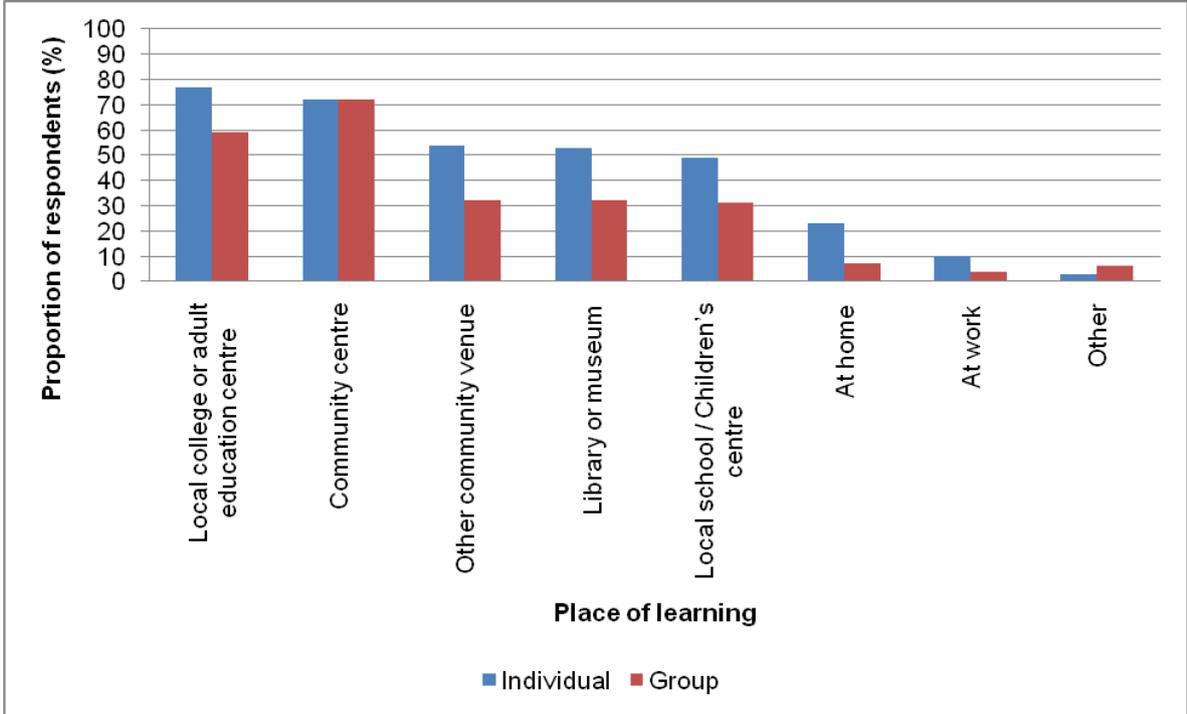


Figure 10: Where respondents want to learn  
 Source: Tables 16 and 17, appendix 2

**4.4 How people want to hear about learning opportunities**

Respondents indicated that they would most like to hear about learning opportunities through a college or adult learning service (69 per cent of individual respondents and 47 per cent of groups), followed by leaflets, brochures and fliers (66 per cent of individuals and 46 per cent of groups) (Figure 11). While individuals seemed happy to receive information from libraries (61 per cent) and websites (60 per cent), groups seemed to prefer taster days (33 per cent) or hearing about learning opportunities from family or

friends (30 per cent). Receiving information about learning through an adviser on learning and work was by far the least popular option (14 per cent of individuals and four per cent of groups), possibly because respondents who were already in learning wanted advice from organisations and people they already know and trust. Those who were unemployed were more likely to want to receive information about learning through an adviser on learning and work, with 25 per cent saying this.

Other suggested ways to hear about opportunities included advertising in the community – for example in libraries, shop windows, GP and dentists surgeries, through the media – newspapers, radio and TV, through a web page containing information about all provision in an area, social networks and social media and email, job centres, and voluntary sector providers including the WEA and U3A.

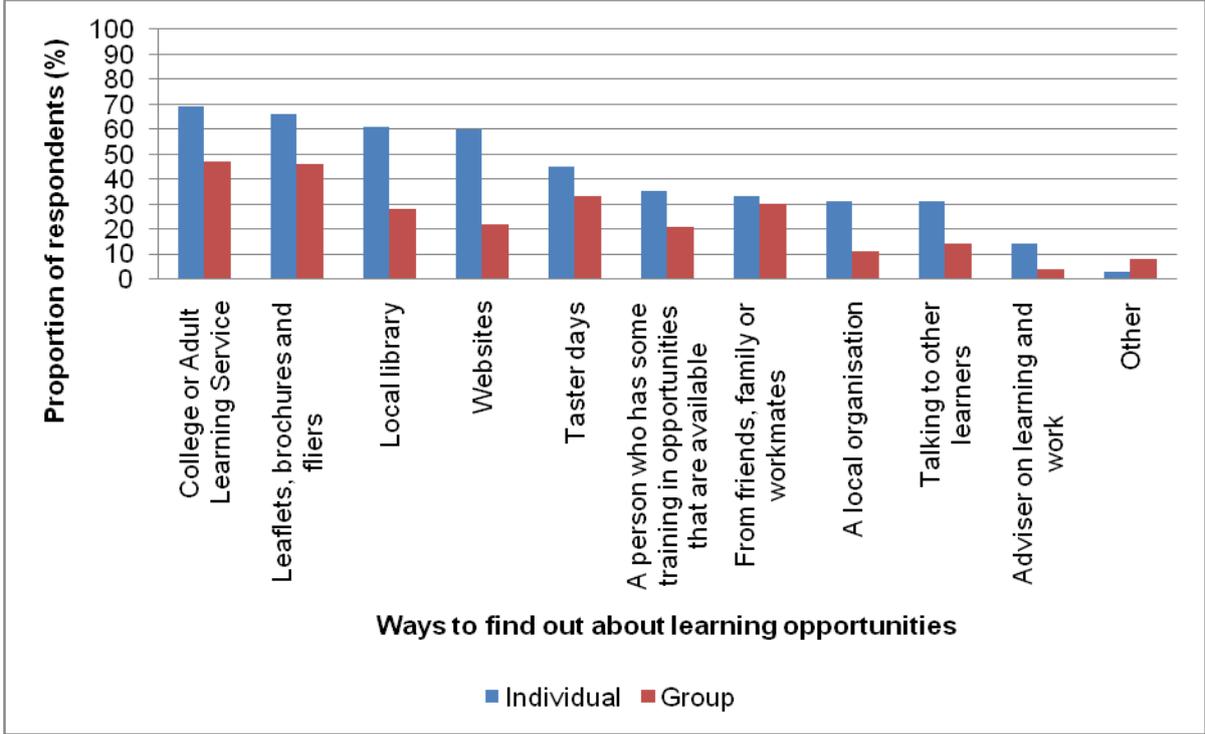


Figure 11: How people want to hear about learning opportunities  
 Source: Tables 18 and 19, appendix 2

## 5. Paying for learning

Respondents were asked what was the most they could pay for learning. Figure 12 below illustrates that nine per cent of individual respondents and nearly one quarter (23 per cent) of groups said that they could not afford to pay anything towards learning, perhaps reflecting the differences in profile of individual and group respondents. The proportions for paying up to £1 per hour were similar, with 13 per cent of individuals and 27 per cent of groups saying they could pay this. Just over one third (34 per cent) of groups said that they could pay up to £2.50 per hour and the same proportion of individual respondents said that they could pay up to £5 per hour for their learning. While 13 per cent of individual respondents and four per cent of groups indicated that they could pay up to £10 per hour for learning, only four per cent of individuals and no groups said that they could afford to pay up to £15 or more. The amount that individual respondents can pay towards learning broadly related to their annual household income.

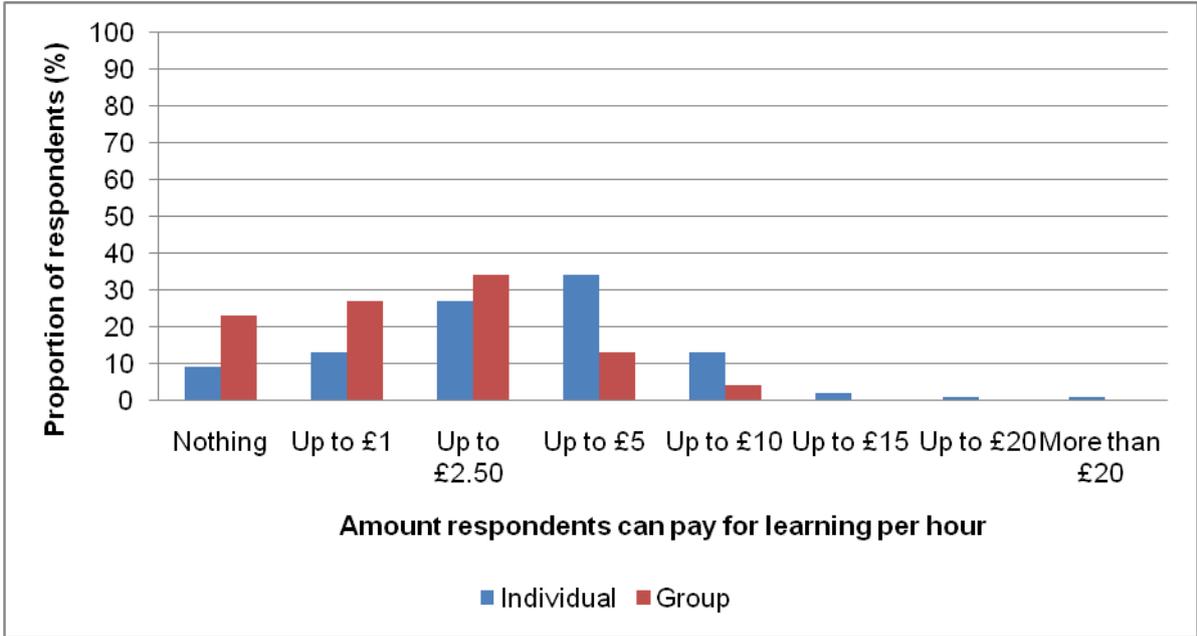


Figure 12: The most respondents could pay for learning, per hour  
 Source: Tables 20 and 21, appendix 2

## 6. Getting involved in organising learning

Respondents were asked whether they would like to help organise learning activities in their local area or workplace. More than a quarter were keen to get involved and some were already volunteering in different capacities. Most respondents wanted to volunteer locally or in their workplace, by organising or leading learning activity or by becoming learning champions. The majority wanted to be supported, for example by being paid their expenses, given information on how to get started or being offered training or mentoring.

Figures 13 and 14 show that 29 per cent of individuals and 28 per cent of groups would like to get involved in organising learning. In addition to this, 29 per cent of individuals and 24 per cent of groups were not sure whether they would like to do this, a reflection perhaps of lack of awareness or confidence to volunteer. People with lower incomes were a little more likely to want to volunteer (33 per cent of household income under £10K falling to 27 per cent with household income above £30K). The reasons for this are unclear but it might reflect that this group was more likely to include people who are not working so more likely to have time available.

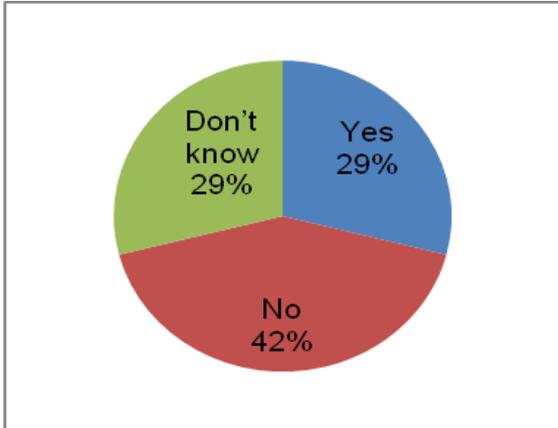


Figure 13: Whether individual respondents would like to help organise learning activities  
Source: Table 22, appendix 2

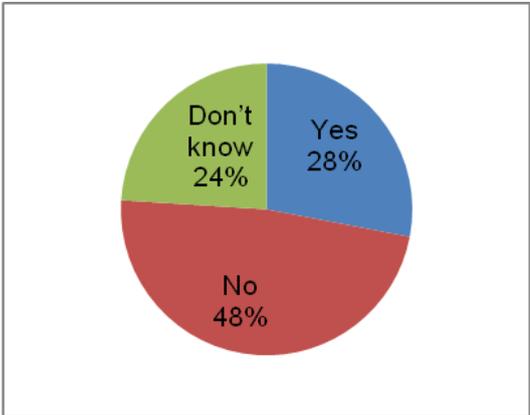


Figure 14: Whether group respondents would like to help organise learning activities  
Source: Table 23, appendix 2

## **6.1 How respondents would like to be involved**

People who indicated they would like to get involved were asked to indicate how they would like to do this and what help or support they would need to do so.

As Figure 15 shows, respondents were most keen to volunteer to help people in their local area or workplace (53 per cent). Forty-five per cent would like to organise an informal learning activity, 43 per cent would like to run an informal learning taster session, 41 per cent would like to take part in informal adult learning in a role such as a learning representative or champion and 40 per cent would like to run an informal learning group.

Other ways in which respondents would like to get involved in organising learning activities included promoting informal learning, organising provision, specifying locations such as farms and remote rural areas, and teaching courses or sessions in a variety of subjects. Others would like to launch new U3A groups, manage projects, fundraise from local businesses or assist with administration. Respondents in this category were often carrying out the type of activity they suggested.

## **6.2 Help or support needed**

The majority of respondents indicated that they would need all the kinds of support and help listed in Figure 16. Around three fifths would need information on how to get started (62 per cent), their expenses to be paid (60 per cent), help from someone who's done it before (59 per cent) or training (59 per cent).

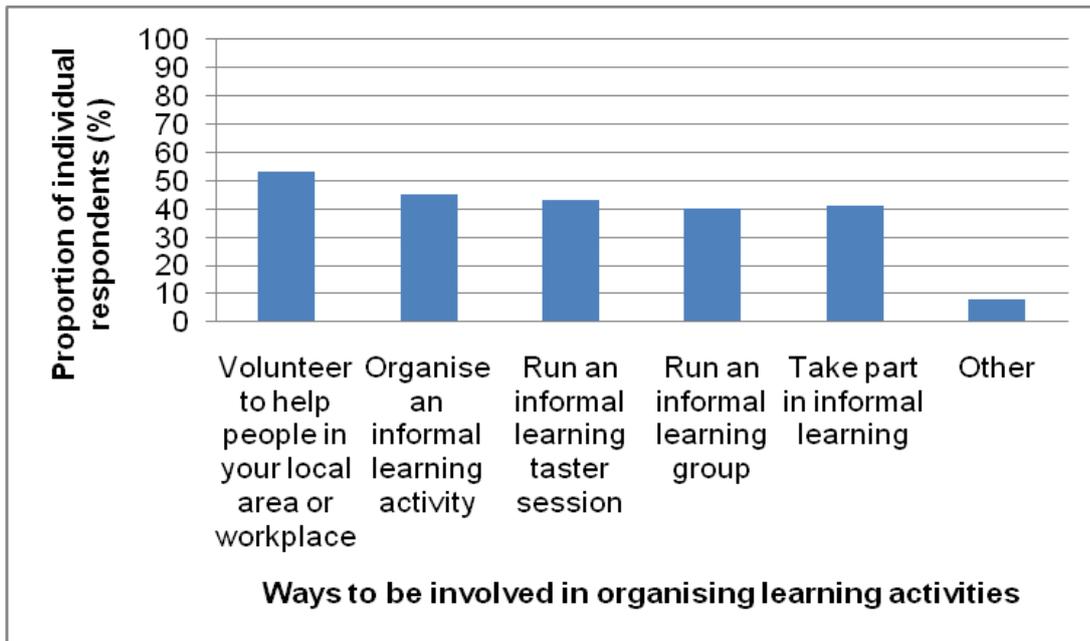


Figure 15: Ways in which respondents would like to get involved in organising learning activities  
 Source: Table 22.1, appendix 2



Figure 16: Help or support respondents would need in order to organise learning activities  
 Source: Table 22.2, appendix 2

## 7. Getting involved in decision-making

Respondents were asked to consider who should decide how public funding for informal adult and community learning should be spent. Most said that decisions should be made at local level by learning providers, local people, councils or a partnership of these stakeholders, with fewer identifying a role for employers and trade unions. Responses sent a strong message that decisions ought to be based on the needs of the whole community rather than the vested interests of particular interest groups or providers. Respondents suggested that local people could be involved in different ways, including through surveys, local representative organisations, learner forums, public meetings and on-line consultations. They wanted a real voice in decision-making and genuine opportunities to shape the learning offer in their area rather than token involvement.

As Figure 17 below shows, the predominant view is that decisions should be made locally by the people who are directly affected: learning providers, learners, local people and local government. Only a minority of respondents indicated that employers, national government or trade unions should be involved.

Nearly three quarters of respondents (74 per cent of groups and 72 per cent of individuals) thought that learning providers should be involved in deciding how public funding for informal adult and community learning should be spent. Sixty-one per cent of individuals and 69 per cent of groups agreed that learners should be involved and 59 per cent of individuals and 56 per cent of groups said that local people should take part in decision-making. There was some support for local government involvement (41 per cent of individuals and 30 per cent of groups) but little appetite for national government to make local decisions (15 per cent of individuals and six per cent of groups). There was least support for bringing in employers (20 per cent of individuals and nine per cent of groups) and trade unions (13 per cent of individuals and five per cent of groups).

People suggested that local community groups, front line workers in communities, faith leaders and mental and physical health providers should also be included in decision-making. Respondents used this section to suggest partnership approaches bringing together local authorities, local people and groups and providers. People emphasised

that decisions must relate to individual and/or community needs and not be based on organisational or funding priorities.

*“It should be a blended approach as none of the groups above is without a vested interest and all groups above can bring experience and commitment to the decisions required.”*

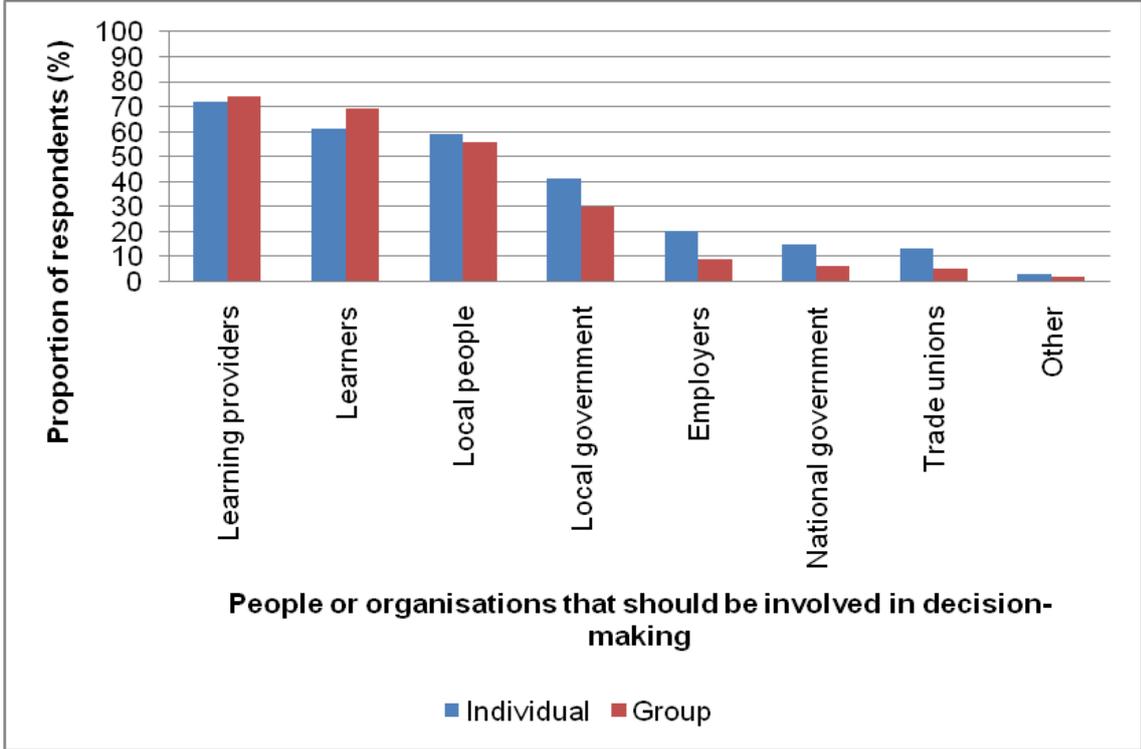


Figure 17: Who respondents think should be involved in making decisions about how public funding for informal adult and community learning should be spent  
 Source: Tables 26 and 27, appendix 2

Respondents emphasised that decisions should be made for the benefit of everyone in the community, not the vested interests of individuals or providers. However, views on the best way to achieve this were varied, and sometimes contradictory. There was broad consensus that decisions should be made at the local level rather than centrally, because national government does not have the knowledge to make local decisions.

## 7.1 Partnership approach

Respondents suggested that partnership approaches were most likely to develop provision that met the needs of all local people, proposing different combinations of local individuals and groups, learners, providers and councils.

*“It must be important to have a coordinated approach in an area to ensure the needs of local people are met by a raft of learning providers.”*

*“Each area has different needs and interests according to the people who live there and as such the local population and the local learning providers should decide on how the money is spent locally.”*

*“It should, to a certain extent, be a bottom up service, with Councils and learning providers taking notice of what local people want to learn and responding appropriately.”*

*“Council, local providers and local people know best what is needed in a particular community and are less swayed by the need for short-term outcomes at the expense of long-term changes in community behaviour and health.”*

## 7.2 Local providers

There was support for learning providers taking a primary role in funding decisions as they have knowledge and experience of local needs and what works.

*“Especially learning providers, because as the government has recently said 'Trust the Experts'.”*

Many responses favouring providers recommended they work collaboratively with learners, local people and /or the local council.

Other respondents were wary of learning providers leading the decision-making because they may have different priorities, such as young people or formal learning, or

vested interests which are not always to the advantage of adult and community learning.

*“Providers should consult with local area / communities to determine need and run courses accordingly.”*

*“My worry with learning providers becoming involved is self preservation and job retention.”*

### **7.3 Learners and local communities**

Respondents supported active local involvement in decision-making. Some wanted communities to manage learning budgets. The view was that local people know what they want to learn and what their communities need. However some stressed that a wide range of groups and interests should be represented as service users often seek to secure funding for things they want to do rather than all the different wants in a community.

*“You have to go back to grassroots. It is public money, so the public should have a say.”*

*“People who are involved in the grass roots community know what is needed and what courses their community will benefit from.”*

*“Course organised for the people by the people.”*

*“If the Government is serious about localism then people in communities should be enabled to manage budgets.”*

### **7.4 Local government**

People wanted local councils to lead, or have a role in decision-making because they are democratically elected to represent their communities.

*“There should be a democratic element - use our elected representatives.”*

*“It should be unbiased and not profit driven. So it makes sense for Councils to decide.”*

*“Local councils are aware of social problems in their areas and can address these needs.”*

## **7.5 Employers and trade unions**

A small proportion of respondents thought that employers and trade unions should take part in decisions relating to informal adult and community learning because they can make a positive contribution. Others thought that employer and union interest in learning should be confined to work-related training. Some respondents were concerned that employers’ and unions’ vested interests could have a negative influence if they take part in funding decisions.

*“Employers should be paying for informal adult learning for their employees out of their profits and to provide well-being initiatives.”*

*“Trade Unions are the only ones who have a broad overview of what learners (not employers) really want with regards to all learning. Union Learning Reps are vital to encouraging, supporting and facilitating the opportunity around informal (and formal) learning.”*

## **7.6 How local people should be involved**

Respondents were asked how local people should be involved in deciding what informal adult and community learning should be available in their local area and in feeding back what they think about it. As Figure 18 below shows, the majority of respondents agreed that surveys are the best way to involve local people (67 per cent of individuals and 64 per cent of groups). They also agreed that local people should be involved through community organisations (56 per cent of individuals and 46 per cent of groups) or learning events (53 per cent of individuals and 46 per cent of groups). While 47 per cent of individual respondents thought that local people should be encouraged to provide on-line feedback, only 24 per cent of groups agreed with this. Two fifths or more of all respondents indicated that local people should be involved through learner forums

(45 per cent of individuals and 43 per cent of groups) or through learning representatives (43 per cent of individuals and 40 per cent of groups). Fewer respondents agreed that people should be involved through public consultation meetings (31 per cent of individuals and 19 per cent of groups) or through their local councillor (20 per cent of individuals and 13 per cent of groups).

Additional approaches to involving people in decision-making included using learner forums, open community meetings, the media, local parish and district councils and health providers. There was also interest in developing local forums, community steering groups, co-operatives or trusts that include community members, providers and other relevant bodies such as councils and employers. Others wanted to make direct requests to providers. Respondents pointed to the difficulty of identifying all the interests in a community and emphasised that consultation must go beyond the ‘usual participants.’ They also wanted reassurance that they would have a real voice in decision-making and the opportunity to influence the learning offered in their area.

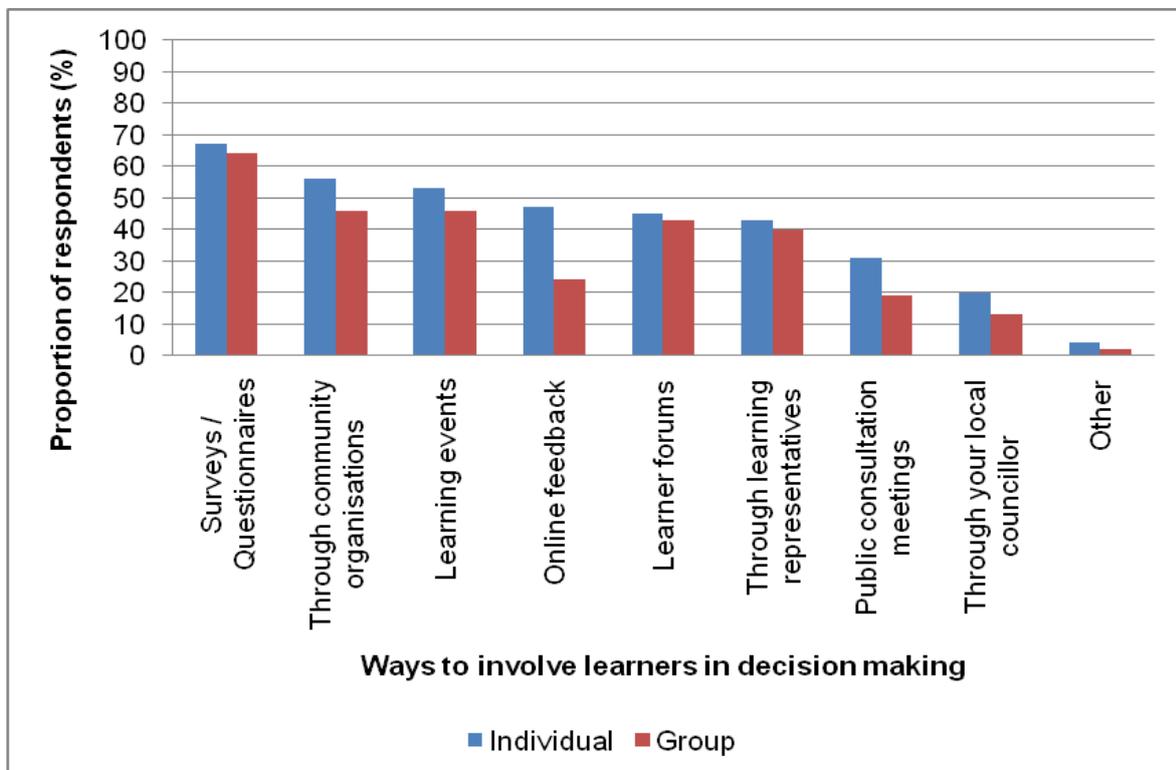


Figure 18: How respondents would like to be involved in decision-making  
 Source: Tables 28 and 29, appendix 2

## 7.7 Encouraging local people to get involved

Respondents were asked what would encourage them to get involved in local planning and decision-making about informal adult and community learning. As Figure 19 below shows, three quarters (75 per cent) of all respondents wanted information to help them understand more about informal adult and community learning. Around half of the respondents wanted training on representing their community (51 per cent of individual respondents and 48 per cent of groups). Nearly one third (32 per cent) of individuals said that they would like payment for their time and 39 per cent of groups agreed.

Some respondents were already involved in planning and decision-making; some indicated that they did not want to take part in decision-making for a number of reasons. Reasons included not being interested in this type of activity, negative past experiences of groups (for example because they were not listened to or because the group achieved little) or because their lives were already full and they had no time to spare.

Those who were interested wanted information about how to get involved and some wanted an invitation or encouragement to take the first step. Respondents emphasised that meetings should be in accessible places at convenient times and they should be paid expenses. Some suggested rewarding participants with credits towards informal adult and community learning course fees. Allocation of a specific role and training in process would attract some respondents. There were calls for short, meaningful, focused meetings not weighed down by paperwork and process. The strongest message was that people needed to know that they would be listened to and have real influence. A number said they would only be prepared to contribute to fair and transparent processes which have learner needs at the heart and where community voices are 'not drowned out by the professionals.' They wanted to be certain that their contribution and the overall process will make a difference.

*"Knowing I'd be listened to and not just ticking the box for some department."*

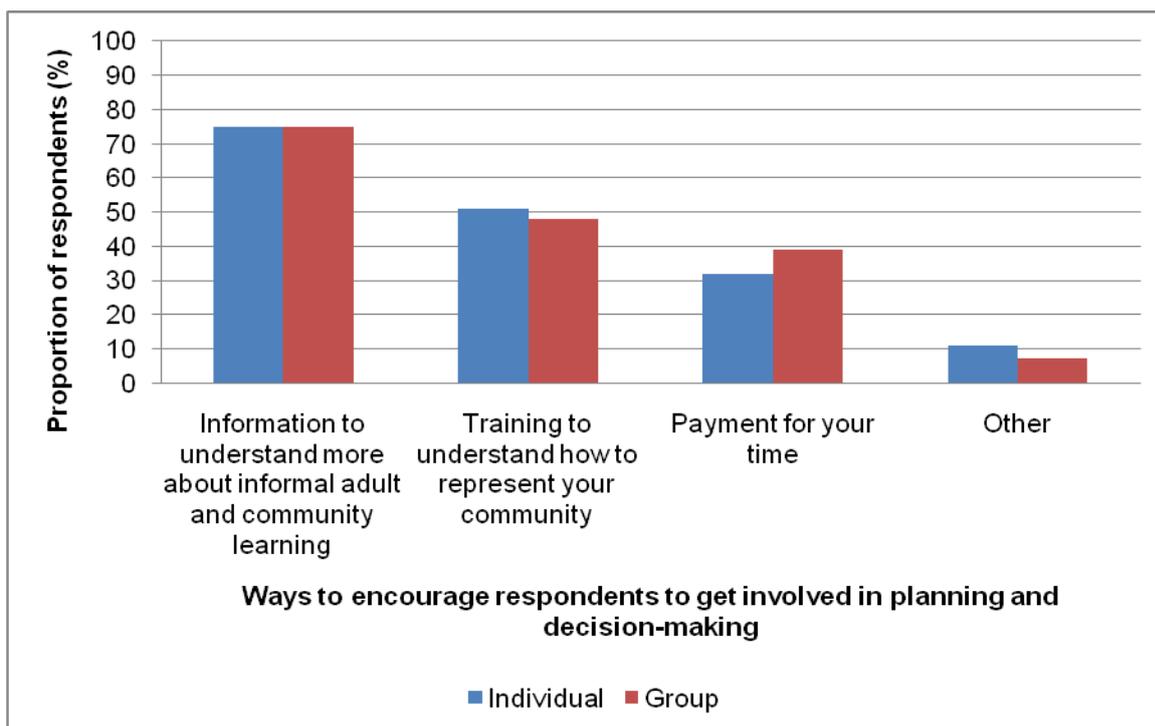


Figure 19: What would encourage respondents to get involved in planning and decision-making Source: Tables 30 and 31, appendix 2

## 8. How learning should be funded

### 8.1 Government funding

Respondents were asked whether or not they agree with the following statement:

*“Some of the funding for informal adult and community learning comes from our taxes. We want to know what is the fairest way to use this money so as many people as possible can learn.*

*The government is asking in the consultation whether informal learning funded by public money should be open to everyone. It argues that most of the funding should be spent on making sure that adults who can't afford to pay can access learning and that people that can afford to pay should contribute more to the cost through fees.”*

People agreed that learning should be available for all but there was no consensus on funding and fees. There was a stress on the need for fairness, although definitions of fairness differed. Many respondents said that learning should be free to all regardless

of income. Around half the respondents said that tax should be used to bring about equity and agreed that government funding should be focused on adults who can't afford learning. Others said it is unfair to be asked to pay for learning through tax then again through fees. Respondents did not refer to the subsidy through taxes on all provision, whether or not fees are charged. Respondents-both those who agreed with targeting funding and those who were opposed - acknowledged the complexity of the 'affordability' concept and agreed that the large numbers of people who have low disposable incomes should also have subsidised fees, often suggesting a sliding scale. They were also concerned that high fees could deter so many people that provision will become non viable.

### **Summary of responses**

The majority (55 per cent) of individuals and nearly half (46 per cent) of groups agreed that funding should be targeted to enable access for those who can't afford to pay (see Figures 20 and 21 below). Nearly one third of respondents (30 per cent of individuals and 32 per cent of groups) disagreed. Those who responded that they didn't know said their answer would depend on factors such as the definition of affordability. Responses suggested that those with the lowest income (under £10K pa) were slightly more likely to agree (60 per cent) and those with a middle income (£20 -30K pa) were least likely to agree (51per cent). There was also a parallel income differential among those who disagreed with the statement, rising from 21 per cent with household incomes of under £10K pa to 35 per cent of those with incomes of £20K - £30K. The qualification levels of respondents who agreed and disagreed were broadly similar, though adults with no or lower level qualifications were more likely to say they didn't know (21 per cent of those with no formal qualifications and 22 per cent of those with Level 1 qualifications, falling to only 12 per cent of those with Level 4 qualifications).

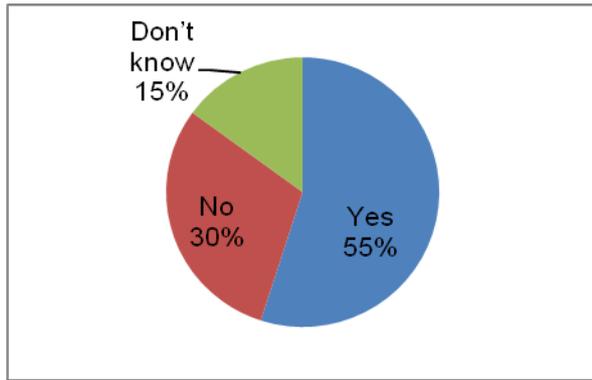


Figure 20: Whether individual respondents agree with the statement about public funding of IACL  
Base: all individuals=6,306

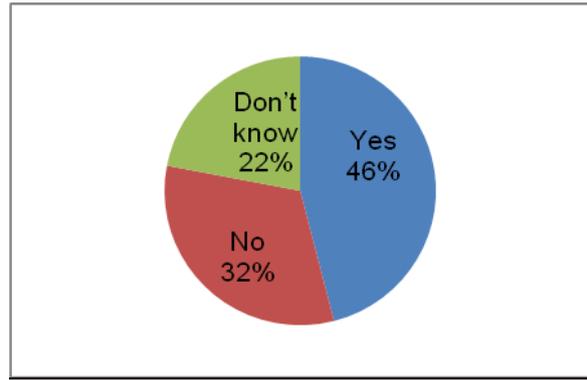


Figure 21: Whether group respondents agree with the statement about public funding of IACL  
Base: all groups=227  
Source: Table 33, appendix 2

People agreed there should be access to learning for all and there was a strong emphasis on fairness in all the responses. Although they wanted funding to be distributed on the basis of fairness, respondents' views differed on what constituted 'fair'. Some felt that charging according to need was just and fair, others that education should be free to all regardless of income, and others that as tax payers they already pay for learning and should not have to pay again. There was consensus that the concept of affordability is complex, and that to allocate free places on the basis of benefits is too simplistic. Respondents suggested that the threshold for different levels of payment should not be set too low and that the disposable income of adults not in receipt of benefit should be taken into account.

*"It seems fair for scarce resources to be directed to those most in need and those therefore who would benefit most."*

*"It is clearly fair that rich people should help the poorest."*

*"Education should be free to all."*

*"As I pay taxes I should be able to access education and not have to subsidise those that don't, therefore I have to pay twice for my education."*

### **Views agreeing with the statement**

Those who agreed with the statement strongly believed that learning should be

accessible to all in order to build a strong and equitable society. They were aware that they contribute through their taxes and view informal adult and community learning for all as a priority for use of their contributions.

*“Informal adult and community learning should be available to everyone, irrespective of means.”*

*“I believe in a civilised society there should be access to learning for its own sake for all in the community.”*

*“One of the best ways to spend our taxes.”*

People concurred with the principle that more affluent members of society should pay their way in order to focus government funds on less well-off people. Some qualified this by saying they are happy to pay, but only for high quality teaching that offers good value for money. The majority view was that provision should be free to support access to learning for adults with low incomes. A small number of respondents suggested that everyone should pay, even if only a nominal amount, to make participants value and commit to the provision. Others suggested that employers and the health service should provide some funding for adult learning.

*“I am happy to make a contribution whilst in work and able to pay and to support the idea that those who do not have sufficient income should be supported in being able to access the same resources I can afford.”*

*“Everyone should have opportunities to maximise their potential and to enjoy widening their horizons and participation, especially those who have been deprived of opportunities in the past.”*

*“Funding should ensure that courses are available to everyone. That means that courses should be free to people on low incomes or receiving benefits. This can help address inequalities in local communities.”*

*“I think education, training and sharing learning with others is the way to build a nation. It is fair that the government support it and people who can pay do.”*

Many articulated their responses in terms of community inclusion and enabling all community members to take part. They emphasised the value of different members of communities learning together.

*“It brings us all together and we meet others and become a group. This is important. We feel part of a community and a community has rich and poor people in it.”*

Nearly every respondent stressed the need to take into account the financial situation of people on low incomes. They pointed out that cost can be a huge barrier to learning, even for people in work, especially in the current situation where disposable income is diminishing because of increased pressure on household budgets. Some adults have additional outgoings, for example because of costs associated with disability.

Respondents made the case that unemployment alone should not be the criterion for a free place and that a fair methodology should be developed to take into account low pay, fixed pensions, disability benefits and the ‘nearly poor’ who have low incomes and are ineligible, or don’t claim, benefits. They suggested sliding fee scales to take account of different financial circumstances. There was a suggestion that the contribution that carers make to society should be recognised through fee remission.

*“I think if you receive a means tested benefit then courses should be free. A sliding scale of fees should be in place to ensure that those with low income pay less than those earning more or with high savings.”*

*“I am over 60 and on a tight budget and very grateful that I can do courses at a reduced fee, I would not have been able to attend the course without this facility.”*

*“Those on benefits/low incomes have always had help with learning, but those with income just above the limit do not really get the opportunity as for them it is a case of financial priorities - pay bills or pay for learning opportunities.”*

### **Views disagreeing with the statement**

Respondents who disagreed with the statement were concerned with fairness of access and funding, often relating their views to their status as taxpayers. Many argued that it is fairer for everyone to have access to free education, not just those in economic need. Older adults said they have worked and paid taxes all their lives and this should entitle them to free or affordable adult education in their retirement to keep them active and healthy. A smaller group suggested that only taxpayers should reap the benefits of their payments.

*“All learners should have free access to education. I believe it is a human right and would benefit society greatly. People would be happier, more skilled and more engaged with their communities. We never stop learning in life and the moment we do, are doomed.”*

*“Some of the people who pay the taxes should have access to the free classes they pay for.”*

*“Because everybody is paying taxes - it should come from that.”*

*“A question of fairness - everyone should have the same entitlement.”*

*“I will state the case for pensioners who have worked all their lives and are expected to pay for social courses and activities...”*

Some respondents felt strongly that everyone should pay for learning. Many in this category did not want to subsidise anyone else. Some felt excluded from the learning they wanted to do themselves because they struggle to afford fees. Other people thought it was not fair if they contributed by working and paying taxes then had to pay

fees while people who didn't contribute anything got free access to learning. Some said that they had never claimed benefits so should not have to subsidise others who do. People unwilling to subsidise people getting free provision explained they were less likely to appreciate it and more likely to drop out or underachieve.

*"It's not fair to make other people pay for those on a lower income. All should pay the same."*

*"People who pay taxes are already contributing a lot more than other people. I don't think they should also have the additional burden of paying more money to support the other learners."*

*"I do not qualify for any benefits, but I do have a limited income and some of the courses are too expensive to be accommodated by my budget, and I find that this can severely restrict courses I am able to attend, whilst other people I know who do claim benefits can attend several courses at once without having to pay, and I feel discriminated against for working hard and having a little money."*

*"Many who are given fee reductions abuse the offer and fail to turn up/attend classes. Everyone should be encouraged to pay a fair amount."*

Respondents expressed concern that people with low disposable incomes could be priced out of learning. Like those who agreed with the statement, they worried about affordability for people on low incomes. They suggested that the income threshold for setting fees should not be based simply on benefit status, but take account of expenditure as well as income. Some concluded that free education for all was the solution; others proposed a sliding fee scale but emphasised that it should be fair.

*"Lots of people round here have low paid jobs and have not got the money to pay fees. People with lots of money can afford to pay but lots of people only get just above income support money and have no spare money to do things like this."*

*“Really unfair that people who earn just above the threshold could be penalised.”*

*“Most people who work in this area are low income families. They seem to get penalised in many ways whereas those who do not work have access to free learning, outings and much more.”*

There was also concern about the practicalities of operating a differentiated fees system. Some said that learners would not feel comfortable knowing that group members paid different amounts, whereas others viewed means testing as difficult to operate fairly, intrusive and off putting. They also worried that it could create a disproportionate amount of bureaucracy, particularly if expenditure as well as income was to be taken into account.

*“If I joined a group that said, 'What is your income level?' before I started, frankly I wouldn't start.”*

*“Ability to pay is a very difficult thing to judge through means testing or any other method.”*

*“It would be difficult to find out who should pay and who should not and it would make the people feel uncomfortable.”*

Respondents were also concerned that unaffordable fees could make courses non viable; some gave examples of classes closing because high fees meant that they couldn't recruit enough people.

*“I feel that if the fees for informal learning are too high they will become economically unsustainable and not enough people will enrol to make them viable.”*

## **Views from respondents answering don't know**

People who answered 'don't know' said their response would depend on different factors, especially the criteria for deciding who could afford to pay.

Some respondents thought there should be free learning for adults claiming benefits. Others agreed but suggested that this free provision should be limited to specific areas of learning, offering examples such as literacy, language, numeracy, employment-focused learning or informal learning.

*"It's not a simple question - more of a debate - how can you decide who gets to go?"*

*"Difficult to say - it should be open to everyone, but it's not fair for people who can only just afford to pay the fees to have to subsidise others."*

*"There is no easy solution. A system as currently proposed is open to the above considerations. A flat fee system (everyone pays the same, regardless of circumstances) could exclude people who deserve to have the opportunity to learn, contributing to self development and benefits to society in general."*

The majority of 'don't know' responses considered the question of affordability. They stressed the complexity of defining affordability, citing the difference between household income and available income after essential outgoings, especially for families living on one wage. They said that very narrow eligibility criteria for subsidies would exclude many adults and some were concerned about having to subsidise others to attend classes they could not afford themselves. Most responses identified potential negative impacts of fees on access for adults, with some suggesting that if the fee level is not right then only claimants and rich people would be able to attend. They also pointed to the need to set fee policies at the right level because provision could disappear if people can't afford the fees.

*"Depends on the criteria set for 'being able to afford the fees'."*

*“How would this work in practice? Who would decide who could afford to pay and who couldn't? What other circumstances might be taken into account?”*

*“At the moment those on a modest income may not be able to afford the fees charged and if we are not careful only those who are rich or the unemployed will be able to access courses and this is socially divisive. How do you quantify who can pay?”*

*“Learning for everyone should be subsidised to some extent. High course fees will put people off, even those who could afford to pay. Better to have moderately priced classes that are well attended and include all sectors of the community, rather than classes that sparsely attended, and by elderly and/or unemployed only.”*

A number of respondents were concerned about subsidising people who then drop out of their course early.

## **8.2 What should be funded**

Respondents were asked, from a list, what sort of informal adult and community learning activities should be funded by government (see Figure 22 below).

The majority of people agreed that government funding for informal adult and community learning should be spent on classes and courses (87 of individuals and 91 per cent of groups). Around half of respondents also agreed that funding should be spent on training to help adults in their workplace and community take up learning (54 per cent of individuals and 50 per cent of groups) and short taster sessions (49 per cent of individual respondents and 51 per cent of groups). Nearly one third (32 per cent) of individuals and a quarter (25 per cent) of groups said that public funding could be spent on one-off activities and 30 per cent of individuals and 17 per cent of groups agreed that it could be spent on materials for on-line learning. Only one per cent of all respondents indicated that public money should not be spent on learning activities.

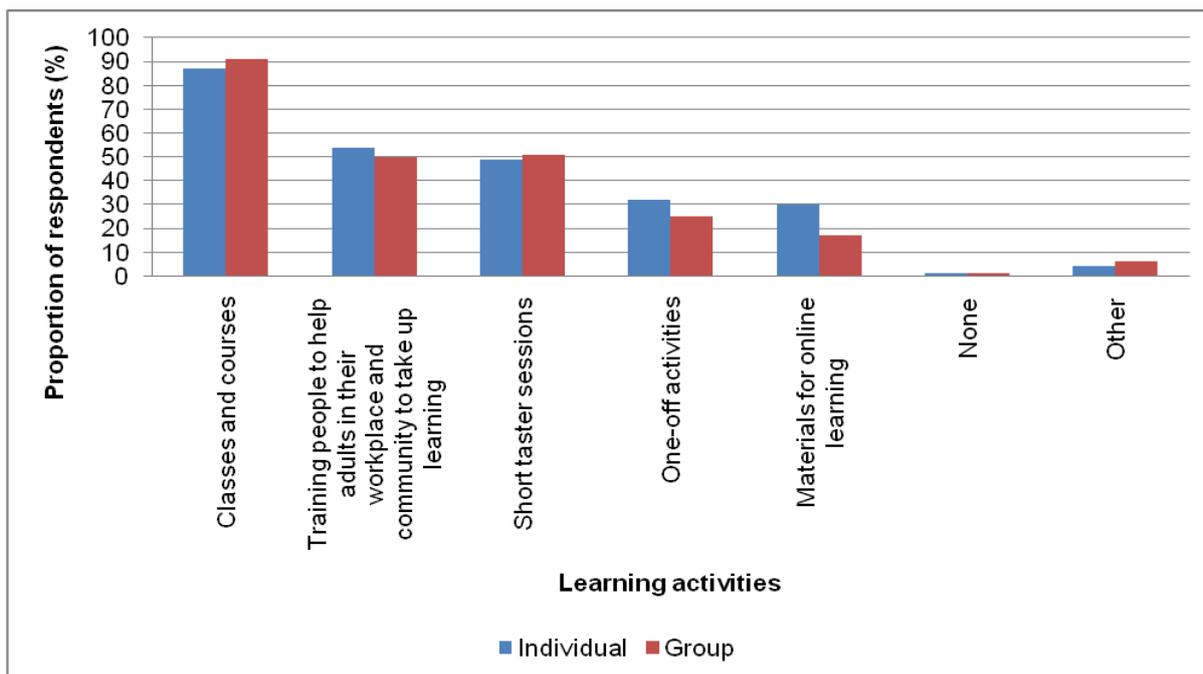


Figure 22: What learning activities respondents think should be funded with public money  
 Source: Tables 36 and 37, appendix 2

### 8.3 Fees

Respondents were asked whether they agreed that ‘fees could also be used to help subsidise learning for people who can’t afford to pay full fees and those who haven’t had the chance to take up learning in the past’. All the responses stressed that approaches to using fees to cross subsidise learning should be based on the principles of fairness and equity. As with responses to the questions about government funding priorities, views of what is fair and equitable differed, ranging from those who agreed with the principle of wealthy people supporting poorer people to those with opposing views. People with higher incomes were much less likely to support cross subsidy through individual fees. The concern about the definition of affordability expressed in responses to government priorities was echoed here, with consensus about the need for nuanced fees structures that open up access to people with low disposable incomes.

#### Summary of responses

A clear majority agreed with the statement (64 per cent of individuals and 53 per cent of groups) (see Figures 23 and 24). Twenty-one per cent of individual respondents and 28 per cent of groups disagreed while 15 per cent of individuals and 19 per cent of groups

answered didn't know. There were some noteworthy differences in views correlated to household income levels. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those with lower incomes were more likely to agree with the notion of subsidy; 72 per cent with a household income under £10,000, and 67 per cent with a annual household income of £10 – 20,000agree. This dropped to 61per cent of households with an annual income of £20 – 30,000. Only 12 per cent of those with an annual household income under £10,000 disagreed but this almost doubled to 25 per cent of household with annual incomes over £20,000.

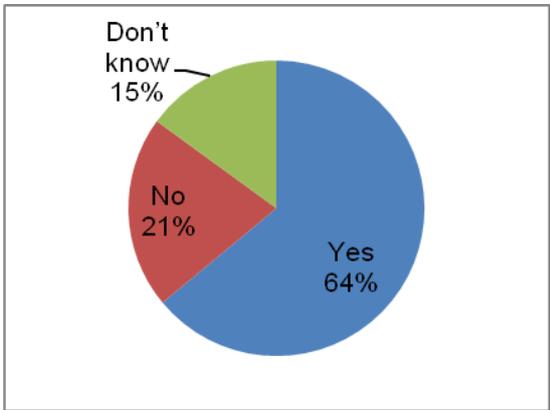


Figure 23: Whether individual respondents agree with the statement about fees subsidising other learners  
Source: Table 34, appendix 2

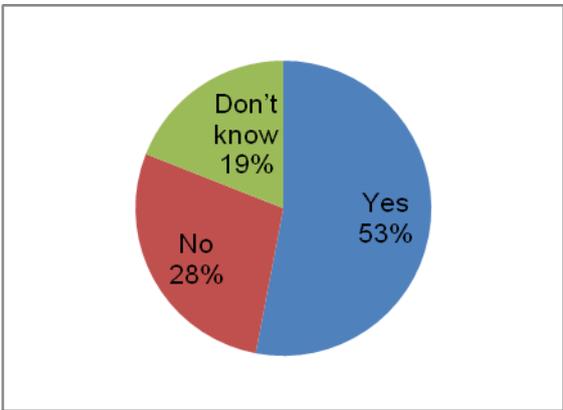


Figure 24: Whether individual respondents agree with the statement about fees subsidising other learners  
Source: Table 35, appendix 2

## **Views agreeing with the statement**

A large number of respondents expressed unequivocal agreement with this statement. People likely to be eligible for subsidies and those likely to be contributing to subsidies both expressed support for the proposal. They commented on the need for everyone to have opportunities to learn, the need for access to be fair and equitable and the value of adults from different backgrounds learning together. They recognised that subsidies can help make learning accessible to all, but some qualified their responses by specifying the groups they thought should benefit, for example disabled adults and older adults.

*“We believe in a fair society.”*

*“Fairer, to give those unable to afford fees a chance to improve their lives.”*

*“Yes, because it helps bring communities together, no matter what social background learners come from.”*

*“Education benefits society as a whole and so I am willing to subsidise those who cannot afford fees.”*

*“Happy to help others less well off.”*

*“Because we don't have any money of our own.”*

*“I wouldn't be able to do this course if I had to pay full fees, so it's giving me a valuable opportunity to further myself.”*

Some people were willing for their fees to enable others to access learning, but on condition that their money would be what they regarded as well spent. They wanted reassurance that subsidies would go to people who were genuinely committed to learning and would not squander the opportunity by failing to attend or dropping out. Some thought that all should pay a fee, even if a small amount, to encourage commitment to the course. Respondents were clear that they would only pay a higher fee if the income is used to cross subsidise learners

where they are based. They did not want to contribute to general running costs or a central government pot.

*“As long as the money goes to genuine learners.”*

*“I wouldn't want to subsidise someone who had no interest in the subject.”*

*“The more learners that can be engaged the more beneficial informal adult learning. However, I do not agree with 'free' courses for anybody - those not paying fees are more likely to drop out of classes.”*

*“I would only want to pay if I knew my contribution was going to other learners!”*

Some people were willing to contribute to a subsidy from an affordable fee, but were worried about being priced out of learning. Others warned about raising fees to a level that deters so many people the provision becomes unviable. This concern was also raised by people who are not willing to subsidise learning.

*“There is a problem with where the threshold is and how you make sure that those who need it are able to access it.”*

*“Yes - though as above the definition of 'can't afford to pay' should be realistic and not just based on benefits.”*

*“I'm on a low income but not low enough to get any fee concessions myself. Much as I'd like to support people who are on a lower income than myself, I struggle to pay course fees as it is.”*

*“Provided the scale for fees is correctly linked to income this could work. But if you make the fees too high people won't choose to join the courses.”*

## **Views disagreeing with the statement**

Some people disagreed with the principle of charges and thought that all adult learning should be free.

*“All education should be free, as a basic human right.”*

People who were not willing to pay fees did not want to subsidise others either because they can't afford to do so or because they regarded the notion of cross subsidy as unfair. They didn't think individuals should be asked to pay for others.

*“It's not fair to make other people pay for those on a lower income. All should pay the same.”*

*“No one should pay for another person's education.”*

There was a strong view that subsidies for provision for those who can't afford to pay should be provided at government level rather than individuals on specific courses. People argued that the burden of education funding should be spread across the tax system, not imposed on individual learners. They are already paying national and local taxes which they said should be used to fund subsidised learning. A few suggested getting big companies rather than individuals to subsidise adult learning.

*“I pay through my taxes to provide educational opportunities for people less fortunate than myself. I am happy to do that as my contribution towards sustaining a civilised society, but I don't think I should be asked to pay twice.”*

*“Unacceptable to cut public funding and then ask those who already pay tax to pay again.”*

*“I agree that learning should be for everyone, but when it comes to money government and money agencies should be looking at everyone and their*

*circumstances with a fairer system not the same ones paying the full whack and others getting money thrown at them all the time.”*

*“I agree that fees should be at a level that is affordable to everyone but the reality of charging a fee level at a rate that would provide subsidy to other people would be a disincentive to people to join courses - people would feel they are paying twice - once through their taxes and secondly through an inflated fee level.”*

Respondents raised the question of affordability. They made the same points about affordability for people with low incomes as those who were willing to pay more to subsidise others, but this group concluded that they were unable or unwilling to pay any extra.

As with people who supported cross subsidy, there were concerns that the funding would be used to subsidise adults who are not committed. Some respondents said they make choices about use of their own income and they did not wish to pay towards adults they see as having wasted opportunities in the past or who do not prioritise their own income for learning.

### **Views from respondents answering don't know**

Most people who said they didn't know echoed the views set out above, but said they couldn't make a blanket judgement as their view would depend on circumstances. They also worried that ability to pay is very difficult to judge. Some would agree if they could be sure the subsidy would go to those in genuine need.

*“If there was a way of ensuring the money is going to the people who actually need it then I don't have a problem but I know that this is often not the case.”*

## 9. Conclusion

The volume and considered, detailed content of responses to this consultation illustrates the public's passion for, and commitment to, adult learning and their interest in contributing to policy-making. People hold strong, sometimes conflicting, opinions about how they want to contribute to decision-making about informal adult and community learning and how it should be funded. Together, their responses offer a wealth of detail and ideas that can assist government and learning providers in determining the future of informal adult and community learning and shaping delivery at the local level. The materials produced to support this consultation, and the lessons learned from it, have the potential to positively inform future public consultations.

The consultation reflects the importance of informal adult and community learning to people's lives. The responses contained a rich diversity of learning interests and benefits. The particularly high level of interest in digital learning perhaps reflects people's need to learn in order to keep up; as more everyday business and community participation is being conducted on-line, demand for digital skills in employment and for community and civic involvement increases. Respondents indicated that it makes a difference in a wide variety of ways that include improved quality of life, stronger families, better health, greater independence and dynamic communities.

The responses illustrate a genuine public appetite to contribute to adult and community learning by offering sessions or recruiting others to learning. It should be noted that they expect training and support and payment of expenses to enable them to contribute, and in-kind rewards, such as contribution to fees for their own adult learning, would motivate others to take part. The numbers of people who are not sure whether they want to contribute is noteworthy (29 per cent of individuals and 24 per cent of groups) as it suggests there may be a lack of confidence to volunteer or awareness of the possibilities. There could be scope

to develop innovative approaches to recruiting and supporting more people to volunteer in informal adult and community learning.

Respondents give a clear steer that many people want to be included in planning and decision-making, which indicates the importance for an inclusive planning process as part of the adult and community learning infrastructure. People want different types and levels of involvement and need training, support and expenses to enable to take part. People are sending a strong message that fair and transparent processes for local participation must be put in place. They are willing to participate on condition that they are listened to and have genuine opportunities to influence decisions. They want local consultation processes to be learner centred, focused and accessible.

People's passion for the concept of fairness in distributing government funding and setting fees for adult and community learning sends a powerful message to those making and implementing policy at national and local levels. Lack of consensus of opinion means there is no conclusive answer to the questions about whether the government should prioritise people who cannot afford to pay and whether learner fees should cross subsidise other learners. People who agree with government prioritising support for people who can't afford to pay, also tend to agree with cross-subsidy from fees. The same reasons were given to support both answers whether people agree or disagree. This issue also illustrates polarised views on what fairness means in relation to access to learning.

People's strong, but different, views on what taxes should be used for are striking. Respondents did not acknowledge that public funding subsidises almost all classes to some extent, even full cost recovery classes, because the taxpayer contributes to items such as overheads and management. This is an indication, perhaps, that this 'hidden subsidy' is not explained very well to learners.

Even in the current economic context many want public spending to prioritise free adult and community learning for all. As this is not on offer, the majority want

their taxes to be used to increase access. This sends a powerful message that many people do want to contribute to building a more equitable society and identify a role for adult learning in this. It is also necessary, however, to note the views of the substantial minority of respondents who do not believe that people who can't afford to pay for adult and community learning should be subsidised either through taxes or the fees they pay for learning.

Almost all respondents emphasised that the concept of affordability is not straightforward. They cited the difficulties that many people with low disposable incomes face in paying for learning and were concerned that fees do not drive adult and community learning into a resource only accessible to the very poor and the very rich. They proposed graduated fee structures that take account of disposable incomes in order to support fair access for all and the development of non-bureaucratic processes to identify eligibility. Respondents also suggested that a thriving adult and community learning offer depends on setting fees at a level that enables sufficient people to take part.

Responses to the fee questions illustrate the different levels of knowledge about the contribution that taxes make to adult learning as well as a spectrum of views on what and fairness affordability mean in relation to access to learning. This signals, perhaps, the need for a more overt debate about the aims and costs of adult and community learning.

## Appendix 1: On-line questionnaire

### The National Consultation on the Future of Informal Adult Community Learning

#### Word Version of the Questions in the ON-LINE Survey

**Please note you need to submit your answers on-line**

#### Your learning

*You will need to answer questions marked with a \**

**\*1. Are you:**

- currently doing (or have you recently done) some informal adult and community learning? *(Go to question 2)*
- currently doing (or have you recently done) learning that leads to a qualification? *(Go to question 2)*
- not currently doing any learning? *(Go to question 3)*

*Select all that apply*

**\*2. Do/did you pay any fees, subs or other costs to do this learning?**

- Yes
- No

## Learning opportunities

### 3. What kinds of informal adult and community learning would interest you?

*Select all that apply*

- Computers/IT/digital photography
  - Gardening/growing food
  - Active citizenship, community development e.g. campaigning on an issue in your local area
  - Music, drama and dance
  - Arts, culture and literature
  - Crafts / practical skills (e.g. woodwork, making clothes, motor mechanics, jewellery making etc)
  - Family learning
  - Languages
  - Improving the environment
  - Other, please tell us what:
- 

### 4. How would you like to learn?

*Select all that apply*

- In a class with a paid tutor
- In a group without a paid tutor e.g. book group, gardening club
- One-to-one
- With members of my family
- On-line

( ) Other, please specify:

---

**5. Where would you like to learn?**

*Select all that apply*

- ( ) Community centre
  - ( ) Local school / children's centre
  - ( ) Library or museum
  - ( ) Other community venue
  - ( ) Local college or adult education centre
  - ( ) At home
  - ( ) At work
  - ( ) Other, please specify:
- 

**6. Would you like to help organise learning activities in your local area or workplace?**

- ( ) Yes (*If yes, please answer question number 6.1 and 6.2*)
- ( ) No
- ( ) Don't know

**6.1. How would you like to do this?**

*Select all that apply*

- Organise an informal learning activity (e.g. guided walk, museum visit, local campaign)
  - Run an informal learning taster session
  - Run an informal learning group (craft group, sports club)
  - Volunteer to help people in your local area or workplace
  - Take part in informal learning (e.g. as a learning champion or union learning representative)
  - Other, please tell us:
- 

## **6.2. What help or support would you need to organise learning activities?**

*Select all that apply*

- Training
  - Information on how to get started
  - Help from someone who's done it before
  - Expenses (e.g. travel, learning materials, childcare)
  - Other, please tell us:
- 

## **7. How would you like to find out about learning opportunities you can join?**

*Select all that apply*

- From friends, family or workmates
- A person who has some training in opportunities that are available (e.g. a local community learning champion or union learning rep)

- College or Adult Learning Service
  - Local library
  - Websites
  - Taster days
  - Talking to other learners
  - A local organisation
  - Leaflets, brochures and fliers
  - Adviser on learning and work (Connexions, Next Step)
  - Other, please tell us more:
- 

### **Funding and paying for learning**

Some of the funding for informal adult and community learning comes from our taxes. We want to know what is the fairest way to use this money, so as many people as possible can learn. The government is asking in the consultation whether informal learning funded by public money should be open to everyone. It argues that most of the funding should be spent on making sure that adults who can't afford to pay can access learning and that people that can afford to pay should contribute more to the cost through fees.

#### **\*8. Do you agree?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

#### **9. Please tell us why you think this**

---

---

**10. Some informal learning can only take place if learners pay fees. We understand that everyone wants to pay as little as possible. What is the most you could pay?**

- Nothing
- Up to £1 per hour
- Up to £2.50 per hour
- Up to £5 per hour
- Up to £10 per hour
- Up to £15 per hour
- Up to £20 per hour
- More than £20

**11. Fees could also be used to help subsidise learning for people who can't afford to pay full fees and those who haven't had the chance to take up learning in the past. Do you think some of the money raised through fees should be used in this way?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**12. Please tell us why you think this**

---

---

**13. Government funding is currently used to pay for informal adult and community classes and courses. Some of the money could be used to pay for different kinds of activities to help more people to get involved in learning. What kinds of informal learning activities do you think should be funded?**

*Select all that apply*

- Classes and courses
  - One-off activities, e.g. a guided walk, local history talk
  - Training people to help adults in their workplace and community to take up learning
  - Short taster sessions
  - Materials for on-line learning
  - None
  - Other, please tell us more:
- 

### **Planning informal adult and community learning in your local area**

**14. Who should decide how public funding for informal adult and community learning is spent?**

*Select all that apply*

- Learners
- Local people
- Learning providers (e.g. colleges, adult education service, voluntary organisation)
- Employers
- Trade unions
- Local government (Council)
- National government
- Other, please specify:

---

**15. Please tell us why you think this**

---

---

**16. How should local people be involved in deciding what informal adult and community learning is available in their area and in feeding back on what they think of it?**

*Select all that apply*

- Through learning representatives (e.g. community learning champions, union learning representatives)
  - Learner forums
  - Through community organisations
  - Through your local councillor
  - Surveys / questionnaires
  - On-line feedback
  - Public consultation meetings
  - Learning events
  - Other, please specify:
- 

**17. What would encourage you to get involved in local planning and decision-making about informal adult and community learning?**

*Select all that apply*

- Information to understand more about informal adult and community learning
  - Training to understand how to represent your community
  - Payment for your time
  - Other, please specify:
- 

## **About you**

We would like to know a bit more about you to help us to analyse the responses to this consultation. You will not be asked for your name or contact details and all responses are anonymous.

You do not have to answer all of these questions but if you do it would help us to get a better understanding of how different groups of people would like informal adult and community learning to develop.

### **18. What is your postcode?**

---

### **19. What is your highest level of formal education qualification?**

- No formal qualifications
- Up to Level 1 (e.g. NVQ Level 1)
- Level 2 (e.g. GCSE, NVQ Level 2)
- Level 3 (A Level, NVQ Level 3)
- Level 4 + (Degree and above)
- Other, e.g. those gained overseas

**20. Gender**

- ( ) Male
- ( ) Female
- ( ) Prefer not to say

**21. Age**

- ( ) 24 or under
- ( ) 25-49
- ( ) 50-74
- ( ) 75 or over
- ( ) Prefer not to say

**22. Ethnicity**

- Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British – Indian
- Asian or Asian British- Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
- Black or Black British – African
- Black or Black British – Caribbean
- Black or Black British – any other Black background
- Chinese
- Mixed – White and Asian
- Mixed – White and Black African
- Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed – any other Mixed background
- White – British
- White – Irish
- White – any other White background

Prefer not to say

Other:

---

**23. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**24. What is your current employment status?**

*Select all that apply*

- In full time paid work
- In part time paid work
- In full time education / training
- In part time education / training
- Not in paid work - unemployed
- Not in paid work – sick / disabled
- Not in paid work - carer
- Retired

**25. What is your annual household income?**

- Under £10K
- £10K-£20K
- £20K-30K
- Above £30K

Thank you for completing this survey.

The results will inform the government policy on Informal Adult Community Learning  
which is due to appear later this year.

## Appendix 2: Data tables

<b>Table 1: Learning status of individual respondents</b>	
	<b>%</b>
<b>Currently doing, or have recently done, some informal adult and community learning</b>	63
<b>Currently doing, or have recently done, learning that leads to a qualification</b>	30
<b>Not currently doing any learning</b>	16

Base: all respondents=6,306

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

Note: This question was compulsory

<b>Table 1.1: Whether current/recent learners paid fees towards their learning (individual responses)</b>	
	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	70
<b>No</b>	30

Base: all current or recent learners=5,293

Note: This question was compulsory

<b>Table 2: Learning status of group members</b>	
	<b>%</b>
<b>All currently doing, or have recently done, some informal adult and community learning</b>	64
<b>Some currently doing, or have recently done, learning that leads to a qualification</b>	42
<b>Not currently doing any learning</b>	6

Base: all respondents=227

Note: Total exceeds the base as respondents could select all that apply

Note: This is the only compulsory question

**Table 2.2: Whether any current/recent learners paid fees towards their learning (group responses)**

	%
All	26
Some	30
None	44

Base: all groups with current or recent learners=214

Note: This question was compulsory

**Table 3: Gender**

	%
<b>Male</b>	25
<b>Female</b>	74
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	1

Base: all respondents=6,179

**Table 4: Age group**

	%
24 or under	4
25-49	37
50-74	54
75 or over	4
Prefer not to say	1

Base: all respondents=6,195

<b>Table 5: Ethnicity</b>	
	<b>%</b>
White – British	80
White – any other White background	5
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1
Black or Black British – African	1
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1
White – Irish	1
Mixed – any other Mixed background	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0
Other	2
Prefer not to say	4

Base: all respondents=5,550

<b>Table 6: Disability</b>	
	<b>%</b>
Consider themselves to have a disability	12
Do not consider themselves to have a disability	85
Prefer not to say	4

Base: all respondents=6,141

**Table 7: Highest level of qualification**

	%
No formal qualifications	8
Up to Level 1 (e.g. NVQ Level 1)	5
Level 2 (e.g. GCSE, NVQ Level 2)	15
Level 3 (e.g. A Level, NVQ Level 3)	18
Level 4 + (Degree and above)	52
Other, e.g. those gained overseas	3

Base: all respondents=6,140

**Table 8: Employment status**

	%
In full time paid work	25
In part time paid work	23
In full time education / training	1
In part time education / training	5
Not in paid work – unemployed	10
Not in paid work – sick / disabled	4
Not in paid work – carer	3
Retired	32

Base: all respondents=6,118

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 9: Annual household income**

	%
Under £10K	22
£10K-£20K	26
£20K-£30K	22
Above £30K	30

Base: all respondents=5,418

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 10: Region**

	%
Yorkshire and Humber	52
South East	15
East Midlands	9
East	7
North West	5
London	5
South West	4
North East	2
West Midlands	2

Base: all respondents=221

<b>Table 11: Type of group</b>	
	<b>%</b>
Family Learning	23
People with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health difficulties	21
Literacy, Language, Numeracy	18
Social and economic deprivation	7
Work	4
Other	28

Base: all respondents=215

<b>Table 12: Informal adult and community learning of interest to individual respondents</b>	
	<b>%</b>
Computers / IT / Digital photography	56
Arts, culture and literature	48
Crafts / practical skills (e.g. woodwork, making clothes, motor mechanics, jewellery making, etc.)	48
Languages	42
Gardening / Growing food	29
Music, drama and dance	26
Active citizenship, community development e.g. campaigning on an issue in your local area	18
Improving the environment	18
Family learning	15
Other	13

Base: all respondents=6,028

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 13: Informal adult and community learning of interest to group members**

	%
Computers / IT / Digital photography	70
Crafts / practical skills (e.g. woodwork, making clothes, motor mechanics, jewellery making, etc.)	56
Languages	42
Music, drama and dance	35
Arts, culture and literature	34
Family learning	32
Gardening / Growing food	29
Active citizenship, community development e.g. campaigning on an issue in your local area	20
Improving the environment	13
Other	18

Base: all respondents=213

Note: Total exceeds the base as respondents could select up to 5 options

**Table 14: How individual respondents would like to learn**

	%
In a class with a paid tutor	92
In a group without a paid tutor, e.g. book group, gardening club	30
On-line	24
One-to-one	15
With members of my family	8
Other	2

Base: all respondents=6,208

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 15: How members of the group would like to learn**

	%
In a class with a paid tutor	94
One-to-one	20
On-line	14
In a group without a paid tutor, e.g. book group, gardening club	14
With members of my family	8
Other	2

Base: all respondents=222

Note: Total exceeds the base as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 16: Places individual respondents would like to learn**

	%
Local college or adult education centre	77
Community centre	72
Other community venue	54
Library or museum	53
Local school / Children's centre	49
At home	23
At work	10
Other	3

Base: all respondents=6,206

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

<b>Table 17: Places group respondents would like to learn</b>	
	<b>%</b>
Community centre	72
Local college or adult education centre	59
Library or museum	32
Other community venue	32
Local school / Children's centre	31
At home	7
At work	4
Other	6

Base: all respondents=216

Note: Total exceeds the base as respondents could select up to 3 options

<b>Table 18: Ways that individual respondents would like to find out about learning opportunities</b>	
	<b>%</b>
College or Adult Learning Service	69
Leaflets, brochures and fliers	66
Local library	61
Websites	60
Taster days	45
A person who has some training in opportunities that are available (e.g. a local community learning champion or union learning rep)	35
From friends, family or workmates	33
A local organisation	31
Talking to other learners	31
Adviser on learning and work (Connexions, Next Step)	14
Other	3

Base: all respondents=6,214

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 19: Ways that group respondents would like to find out about learning opportunities**

	%
College or Adult Learning Service	47
Leaflets, brochures and fliers	46
Taster days	33
From friends, family or workmates	30
Local library	28
Websites	22
A person who has some training in opportunities that are available (e.g. a local community learning champion or union learning rep)	21
Talking to other learners	14
A local organisation	11
Adviser on learning and work (Connexions, Next Step)	4
Other	8

Base: all respondents=219

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select up to 3 options

**Table 20: How much individual respondents could pay for learning**

	%
Nothing	9
Up to £1 per hour	13
Up to £2.50 per hour	27
Up to £5 per hour	34
Up to £10 per hour	13
Up to £15 per hour	2
Up to £20 per hour	1
More than £20 per hour	1

Base: all respondents=6,181

**Table 21: How much group respondents could pay for learning**

	%
Nothing	23
Up to £1 per hour	27
Up to £2.50 per hour	34
Up to £5 per hour	13
Up to £10 per hour	4
Up to £15 per hour	0
Up to £20 per hour	0
More than £20 per hour	0

Base: all respondents=216

<b>Table 22: Whether individual respondents would like to help organise learning activities</b>	
	<b>%</b>
Yes	29
No	43
Don't know	29

Base: all respondents=6,425

<b>Table 22.1: How individual respondents would like to organise learning activities</b>	
	<b>%</b>
Volunteer to help people in your local area or workplace	53
Organise an informal learning activity (e.g. guided walk, museum visit, local campaign)	45
Run an informal learning taster session	43
Take part in informal learning (e.g. as a learning champion or union learning representative)	41
Run an informal learning group (craft group, sports club)	40
Other	8

Base: all respondents who would like to organise learning activities=1,650

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 22.2: Help or support that individual respondents would need to organise learning activities**

	%
Information on how to get started	62
Expenses (e.g. travel, learning materials, childcare)	60
Help from someone who's done it before	59
Training	59
Other	9

Base: all respondents who would like to organise learning activities =1,650

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 23: Whether group respondents would like to help organise learning activities**

	%
Yes	28
No	48
Don't know	24

Base: all respondents=221

**Table 24: How group respondents would like to organise learning activities**

	N
Run an informal learning group (craft group, sports club)	23
Run an informal learning taster session	21
Take part in informal learning (e.g. as a learning champion or union learning representative)	21
Organise an informal learning activity (e.g. guided walk, museum visit, local campaign)	18
Volunteer to help people in your local area or workplace	16
Other	1

Base: all respondents that would like to organise a learning activity=44

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select up to three options

**Table 25: Help or support group respondents would need to organise learning activities**

	N
Information on how to get started	33
Expenses (e.g. travel, learning materials, childcare)	31
Training	31
Help from someone who's done it before	30
Other	1

Base: all respondents that would like to organise a learning activity = 42

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 26: Who individual respondents think should decide how public funding for IACL is spent**

	%
Learning providers (e.g. colleges, adult education service, voluntary organisation)	72
Learners	61
Local people	59
Local government (Council)	41
Employers	20
National government	15
Trade unions	13
Other	3

Base: all respondents=6,179

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 27: Who group respondents think should decide how public funding for IACL is spent**

	%
Learning providers (e.g. colleges, adult education service, voluntary organisation)	74
Learners	69
Local people	56
Local government (Council)	30
Employers	9
National government	6
Trade unions	5
Other	2

Base: all respondents=220

Note: Total exceeds the base as respondents could select up to three options

**Table 28: How individual respondents think local people should be involved in decisions and providing feedback**

	%
Surveys / Questionnaires	67
Through community organisations	56
Learning events	53
On-line feedback	47
Learner forums	45
Through learning representatives (e.g. community learning champions, union learning representatives)	43
Public consultation meetings	31
Through your local councillor	20
Other	4

Base: all respondents=6,063

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 29: How group respondents think local people should be involved in decisions and providing feedback**

	%
Surveys / Questionnaires	64
Through community organisations	46
Learning events	46
Learner forums	43
Through learning representatives (e.g. community learning champions, union learning representatives)	40
On-line feedback	24
Public consultation meetings	19
Through your local councillor	13
Other	2

Base: all respondents=219

Note: Total exceeds the base as respondents could select up to five options

**Table 30: What would encourage individual respondents to get involved**

	%
Information to understand more about informal adult and community learning	75
Training to understand how to represent your community	51
Payment for your time	32
Other	11

Base: all respondents=5,111

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

<b>Table 31: What would encourage group respondents to get involved</b>	
	<b>%</b>
Information to understand more about informal adult and community learning	75
Training to understand how to represent your community	48
Payment for your time	39
Other	7

Base: all respondents=206

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

<b>Table 32: Whether individual respondents agree with the statement about public funding of IACL</b>	
	<b>%</b>
Yes	55
No	30
Don't know	15

Base: all respondents=6,306

Note: This question was compulsory

<b>Table 33: Whether group respondents agree with the statement about public funding of IACL</b>	
	<b>%</b>
Yes	46
No	32
Don't know	22

Base: all respondents=227

Note: This question was compulsory

**Table 34: Whether individual respondents agree with the statement about fees subsidising other learners**

	%
Yes	64
No	21
Don't know	15

Base: all respondents=6,212

**Table 35: Whether group respondents agree with the statement about fees subsidising other learners**

	%
Yes	53
No	28
Don't know	19

Base: all respondents=221

**Table 36: Activities that individual respondents think should be funded by government**

	%
Classes and courses	87
Training people to help adults in their workplace and community to take up learning	54
Short taster sessions	49
One-off activities, e.g. a guided walk, local history talk	32
Materials for on-line learning	30
None	1
Other	4

Base: all respondents=6,152

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 37: Activities that group respondents think should be funded by government**

	%
Classes and courses	91
Short taster sessions	51
Training people to help adults in their workplace and community to take up learning	50
One-off activities, e.g. a guided walk, local history talk	25
Materials for on-line learning	17
None	1
Other	6

Base: all respondents=218

Note: Total exceeds the base as respondents could select up to 3 options

**Table 38: What individual respondents would like to learn by highest level of qualification**

	%						
	All	No formal qualifications	Up to Level 1	Up to Level 2	Up to Level 3	Up to Level 4	Other
Computers / IT / Digital photography	56	73	74	66	56	50	58
Arts, culture and literature	48	25	20	33	44	62	41
Crafts / practical skills	48	41	43	45	50	50	42
Languages	42	27	33	34	37	48	50
Gardening / Growing food	29	24	19	24	29	32	20
Music, drama and dance	26	17	20	22	24	31	26
Active citizenship / community development	18	12	15	13	19	20	15
Improving the environment	18	12	16	14	18	20	17
Family learning	15	17	32	21	14	11	17
Base	5,877	451	269	860	1,060	3,046	191

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 39: How individual respondents would like to learn by highest level of qualification**

	%						
	All	No formal qualifications	Up to Level 1	Up to Level 2	Up to Level 3	Up to Level 4	Other
In a class with a paid tutor	92	82	85	89	93	95	88
In a group without a paid tutor, e.g. book group, gardening club	30	23	28	26	29	33	30
On-line	24	17	20	22	26	27	19
One-to-one	15	21	25	16	16	13	20
With members of my family	8	7	11	10	6	7	7
Base	5,577	461	272	903	1,090	3,131	200

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 40: Where individual respondents would like to learn by highest level of qualification**

	%						
	All	No formal qualifications	Up to Level 1	Up to Level 2	Up to Level 3	Up to Level 4	Other
Local college or adult education centre	77	60	72	73	78	81	73
Community centre	72	58	57	66	69	78	67
Other community venue	54	28	25	44	54	66	37
Library or museum	53	32	32	42	53	63	40
Local school / Children's centre	49	33	40	47	50	53	46
At home	23	22	24	22	23	24	21
At work	10	3	5	10	13	12	8
Base	6,056	469	273	900	1,098	3,114	202

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 41: Whether individual respondents agree with the statement about government funding of IACL by highest level of qualification**

	%						
	All	No formal qualifications	Up to Level 1	Up to Level 2	Up to Level 3	Up to Level 4	Other
Yes	55	54	52	53	52	58	51
No	30	25	26	30	34	30	33
Don't know	15	21	22	18	14	12	17
Base	6,140	477	281	908	1,109	3,163	202

**Table 42: Whether individual respondents agree with the statement about fees subsidising other learners by highest level of qualification**

	%						
	All	No formal qualifications	Up to Level 1	Up to Level 2	Up to Level 3	Up to Level 4	Other
Yes	64	67	73	68	60	64	60
No	21	16	13	16	23	24	19
Don't know	15	17	15	16	17	12	21
Base	6,069	460	276	896	1,098	3,139	200

**Table 43: Whether individual respondents would like to help organise learning activities by highest level of qualification**

	%						
	All	No formal qualifications	Up to Level 1	Up to Level 2	Up to Level 3	Up to Level 4	Other
Yes	29	22	35	25	27	31	33
No	43	48	33	42	43	42	37
Don't know	29	30	32	34	30	27	31
Base	6,053	468	270	895	1,095	3,125	200

**Table 44: What individual respondents would like to learn by annual household income**

	%				
	All	Under £10K	£10K-20K	£20K-£30K	Above £30K
Computers / IT / Digital photography	56	69	57	53	47
Arts, culture and literature	49	35	49	54	55
Crafts / practical skills	48	45	45	49	51
Languages	42	37	39	44	48
Gardening / Growing food	29	25	27	33	31
Music, drama and dance	27	25	26	28	27
Active citizenship / community development	18	19	20	19	16
Improving the environment	18	19	18	20	17
Family learning	15	20	14	14	12
Base	5,210	1,139	1,383	1,122	1,566

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 45: How individual respondents would like to learn by annual household income**

	%				
	All	Under £10K	£10K-20K	£20K-£30K	Above £30K
In a class with a paid tutor	92	88	93	93	95
In a group without a paid tutor, e.g. book group, gardening club	31	29	32	31	31
On-line	25	24	23	27	26
One-to-one	15	21	16	14	12
With members of my family	8	8	6	7	9
Base	5,353	1,163	1,416	1,160	1,614

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 46: Where individual respondents would like to learn by annual household income**

	%				
	All	Under £10K	£10K-20K	£20K-£30K	Above £30K
Local college or adult education centre	77	71	74	80	83
Community centre	73	66	74	75	74
Other community venue	55	41	56	63	60
Library or museum	54	43	54	58	58
Local school / Children's centre	50	40	50	52	55
At home	24	25	22	25	24
At work	11	7	10	12	14
Base	5,346	1,166	1,415	1,157	1,608

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 47: Whether individual respondents agree with the statement about government funding of IACL by annual household income**

	%				
	All	Under £10K	£10K-20K	£20K-£30K	Above £30K
Yes	56	60	56	51	57
No	29	21	30	35	31
Don't know	15	19	14	14	13
Base	5,418	1,183	1,433	1,175	1,627

**Table 48: Whether individual respondents agree with the statement about fees subsidising other learners by annual household income**

	%				
	All	Under £10K	£10K-20K	£20K-£30K	Above £30K
Yes	65	72	67	61	63
No	21	12	20	25	25
Don't know	14	16	13	15	13
Base	5,363	1,158	1,418	1,168	1,619

**Table 49: Whether individual respondents would like to help organise learning activities by annual household income**

	%				
	All	Under £10K	£10K-20K	£20K-£30K	Above £30K
Yes	30	33	30	29	27
No	41	35	40	44	45
Don't know	29	32	31	28	28
Base	5,355	1,168	1,418	1,163	1,606

**Table 50: What individual respondents would like to learn by gender**

	%		
	All	Male	Female
Computers / IT / Digital photography	56	62	54
Arts, culture and literature	49	45	50
Crafts / practical skills	48	33	53
Languages	42	41	42
Gardening / Growing food	29	24	30
Music, drama and dance	26	26	26
Active citizenship / community development	18	21	17
Improving the environment	18	20	17
Family learning	15	10	16
Base	5,847	1,467	4,380

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 51: How individual respondents would like to learn by gender**

	%		
	All	Male	Female
In a class with a paid tutor	92	91	93
In a group without a paid tutor, e.g. book group, gardening club	30	27	31
On-line	24	30	23
One-to-one	15	19	14
With members of my family	7	7	8
Base	6,024	1,513	4,511

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 52: Where individual respondents would like to learn by gender**

	%		
	All	Male	Female
Local college or adult education centre	77	76	77
Community centre	72	70	72
Other community venue	55	51	56
Library or museum	53	54	53
Local school / Children's centre	49	44	51
At home	23	26	22
At work	10	12	10
Base	6,021	1,509	4,512

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents could select all that apply

**Table 53: Whether individual respondents agree with the statement about government funding of IACL by gender**

	%		
	All	Male	Female
Yes	56	61	54
No	30	29	30
Don't know	15	10	16
Base	6,108	1,535	4,573

**Table 54: Whether individual respondents agree with the statement about fees subsidising other learners by gender**

	%		
	All	Male	Female
Yes	64	65	64
No	21	25	20
Don't know	14	11	16
Base	6,032	1,518	4,514

**Table 55: Whether individual respondents would like to help organise learning activities by gender**

	%		
	All	Male	Female
Yes	29	32	27
No	42	42	43
Don't know	29	26	30
Base	6,022	1,517	4,505

### Appendix 3: Map of individual respondents

Individual respondents were asked to provide their postcode. These have been plotted onto a map of England:

Map Showing the Count of NIACE Consultation Respondents by Authority Area

