

# Learner Impact Survey

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## Section 1 - Purpose and methods of survey

This survey is a follow up to a smaller progression survey (of 1,000 past learners) undertaken in 2008. This survey was of a 10,000 sample of the past learners who were enrolled on WEA targeted courses three years previously. The aim of both surveys was to:

- identify the range of motivations for doing courses
- identify the range of progression routes that learners take, for example into further learning, work, voluntary activity, and vertical/ horizontal progression routes

The WEA 2008 Progression survey, with 137 responses provided useful findings, but when these were segmented the numbers were too small to be reliable. The 2008 survey indicated possible differences for some priority groups such as Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. We wanted to further investigate these tentative indications in the 2009 survey. The larger 2009 survey was planned to generate reliable data when broken down by priority groups<sup>1</sup>, Region, and curriculum area.

### Survey Methods

The progression survey sample was drawn from learners in all WEA regions who were enrolled on community or workplace programmes in 2005-2006, and who had agreed to being contacted by the WEA (53,987 in total). A random sample of 10,000 individuals in proportion to the numbers of students in each WEA region was drawn from the contact details from WEAMIS (see Fig 1). The required number of individuals from each region was drawn by random selection using computer-generated random numbers.

In some cases students had attended more than one course during this year. Duplicate entries for any one student were excluded by only sending one questionnaire for the latest courses they had attended in 2005-06. Of the 10,000 questionnaires sent out, 1,089 learners responded, giving a response rate of 11%.

Mail merge was used to include the name and venue of course on the scannable questionnaire, and a learner reference number for linking with WEAMIS data. The questionnaire was posted in early June to 10,000 previous learners, to be returned by 22 June. The returned questionnaires were scanned using Remark software, and merged with enrolment data from WEAMIS (such as educational qualifications and employment status at enrolment). The data was analysed using SPSS<sup>2</sup> so that any variable could be analysed against other variables.

Based on the total number of learners from whom the sample was drawn<sup>3</sup> (the population) and the number of respondents, there is a 95% confidence level that findings for the sample would be applicable in the population as a whole (+/-4%). This is an indication of reliability of the findings.

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<sup>1</sup> Black and minority ethnic group (BME), below level 2 on entry, unwaged and in receipt of benefit, and physical disability,

<sup>2</sup> SPSS is a statistical and data management software package with academic and business credibility

<sup>3</sup> The 53,987 past learners from all WEA regions who were enrolled on community or workplace programmes in 2005-2006 and who had agreed to being contacted by the WEA

## Section 2 - Summary of key findings and recommendations

### Progression

Since completing their WEA course in 2006:-

- 617 learners (57% of the respondents) have gone on to do a further course/s
- 231 respondents (21%) went on to do a course with a qualification (Fig 6), and this was much higher (39% ) for Schools and Parenting (Fig 24)
- 143 learners (13% of respondents) have gained 198 qualifications (Fig 7)
- 24% have gone on to do a course without a qualification (Fig 6)
- 32% of all respondents went onto do a course in a different subject area (Fig 6)
- 26% went to do a course in the same subject area (Fig 6)
- 423 learners (39% of respondents) have gone on to do voluntary or community activity (Fig 6)
- 9% of all respondents were working in a better job (Fig 8), and this was much higher for the Schools and Parenting (23%), and Trade Union Learning (20%) (Fig 23)
- 13% of BME respondents were in a better job (Fig 8)
- At enrolment, 20% of respondents were unwaged and in receipt of benefit, and at the time of the survey 5% were unemployed and seeking work<sup>4</sup> (Fig 9)
- There was a 3% reduction in those employed or self-employed, 9% increase in part-time employment, and 6% increase in those retired compared to at enrolment (Fig 9)

There were variations for priority groups

- BME respondents were slightly more likely to go on to do a course with a qualification (25%), than respondents overall (21%). This confirmed the tentative finding in the 2008 survey that BME groups attach strong importance to qualifications (Fig 6)
- Those unwaged and in receipt of benefits at enrolment were less likely to go on to do a course with a qualification (12%) than respondents overall (21%) (Fig 6). However, 61% had identified this as a very important or quite important reason for starting their course, indicating the need for enhanced opportunity and support for progression to qualifications

### Learners' motivations for starting courses

Learners motivations in starting courses are varied (Page 6), with the most important being to improve skills (64% very important) closely followed by increase confidence (50%), and enjoyment in learning (49%) (Fig 4). These findings were similar to the 2008 survey. There were some significant variations in the level of importance that priority groups and learners in different curriculum areas placed on reasons for starting their WEA course.

- BME respondents were almost 3 times more likely to rate 'to get a qualification' as a very important motivation for starting their course (55%) compared to respondents overall (21%) (Fig 5)
- 99% of BME respondents rated 'to improve my skills' as a very or quite important reason for starting their course (Fig 5), compared to 83% of all respondents (Fig 4).
- Respondents with a below level 2 qualification at entry and those unwaged and in receipt of benefits at enrolment also rated 'to get a qualification' much more highly than respondents overall (63% and 61% respectively rating as a very or quite important compared to 37% of all respondents)
- 'Increase my confidence, was a significantly more important motivation for Foundation and Access Studies (Fig 21), than for respondents overall
- 'To improve skills' was most important for Schools and Parenting, ICT and Foundation and Access Studies (Fig 21)
- 'To get a qualification' and 'help me get a job' were most important for Schools and Parenting and Foundation and Access Studies (Fig 21)
- 'Find out about future work & education options ' was most important for Foundation and Access Studies and Schools and Parenting (Fig 21)

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<sup>4</sup> As this is not a direct comparison, it is difficult to make judgements about significance

## **Achievement of aims**

On the whole respondents achieved the aims that they had identified as very or quite important to them (page 11, Fig 10- 14). Of aims that were rated as very important:-

- Enjoyment in learning was 86% fully 13% partially achieved
- Improvement of skills was 81% fully and 17% partially achieved
- Increasing confidence was 79% fully and 19% partially achieved
- Helping children with their education was 78% fully and 16% partially achieved
- Gaining a qualification was 75% fully and 13% partially achieved

In addition, many respondents achieved aims that they viewed as not important at the start of the course, for example, of those respondents that felt 'to improve skills' was not important as a reason for starting their course, 33% felt they had fully achieved this aim (Fig 10).

Achievement of job related aims was significantly lower than for other aims:-

- Non-achievement of 'to help me get a job', was 22% for respondents who had rated this as very important, and 49% for those who had rated quite important (Fig13)
- Non-achievement of 'to help me get a better job' was 28% for respondents who had rated this as very important, and 52% for those who had rated quite important (Fig 14)

For priority groups the achievement of some aims was considerably lower than for respondents overall, for example (Page 11- 14):-

- Of BME respondents who rated 'to get a qualification' as very important only 56% felt that they had fully achieved this, compared to 75% of respondents overall (Fig12)
- Of BME respondents who rated 'help me get a job' as very important only 53% felt that they had fully achieved this (10% less than respondents overall), and 33% felt that they did not achieve this (10% higher than respondents overall) (Fig 14)
- Of respondents below level 2 or unwaged in receipt of benefits at entry who rated 'to get a qualification' as very important, 65% and 68% respectively felt that they had fully achieved this, compared to 75% of respondents overall (Fig 12)
- Of the physically disabled respondents who rated 'help me get a job' as very important, only 46% felt that they had fully achieved this (17% less than respondents overall), and 36% felt that they did not achieve this (14% higher than respondents overall) (Fig13)

There were also variations across curriculum areas in the achievement of aims that were rated as very or quite important motivation for starting courses (Page 31, Fig 25), for example:-

- In Schools and parenting there was higher achievement of 'to increase skills' and 'to get a qualification' in comparison to other curriculum areas and respondents overall
- In Visual, Performing Arts and Media, there was the lowest achievement of 'getting a qualification'

## **Key Recommendations**

- Enhance support and opportunities for learners who wish to find work or better jobs, including through curriculum offer and course content, clear progression routes, IAG and links with other providers
- Review achievement of priority groups and take action to address any under achievement
- When targeting BME and other priority groups, review the curriculum offer to ensure there are opportunities to gain qualifications and clear progression routes to further study and employment
- Regions and curriculum management area teams to review Regional and curriculum analyses and take action to address any weaknesses identified

## Section 3 - % Response compared to sample

Respondents compared to the sample, are on the whole proportional by region, characteristic and curriculum area. However

- BME respondents were 11% under represented
- Retired respondents were 10% over represented
- Foundation and Access curriculum area was 11% under represented

**Fig 1- Proportionality of response rate by region**

Region	% (N) of sample	% (N) of respondents	% (N) of sample	Proportionality
East Midlands	10%(1020)	13 % (144)	10%(1020)	+ 3%
Eastern	8% (748)	9% (95)	8% (748)	- 1%
London	10% (996)	6% (70)	10% (996)	- 4%
North East	7% (735)	7%(73)	7% (735)	=
North West	15%(1489)	14%(153)	15%(1489)	- 1%
South West	10% (1022)	8%(84)	10% (1022)	- 2%
Southern	10%(1026)	9%(94)	10%(1026)	- 1%
West Midlands	6%(606)	6%(69)	6%(606)	=
Yorkshire and Humber	23%(2337)	28%(307)	23%(2337)	+ 5%

**Fig 2- Proportionality of respondents by characteristics**

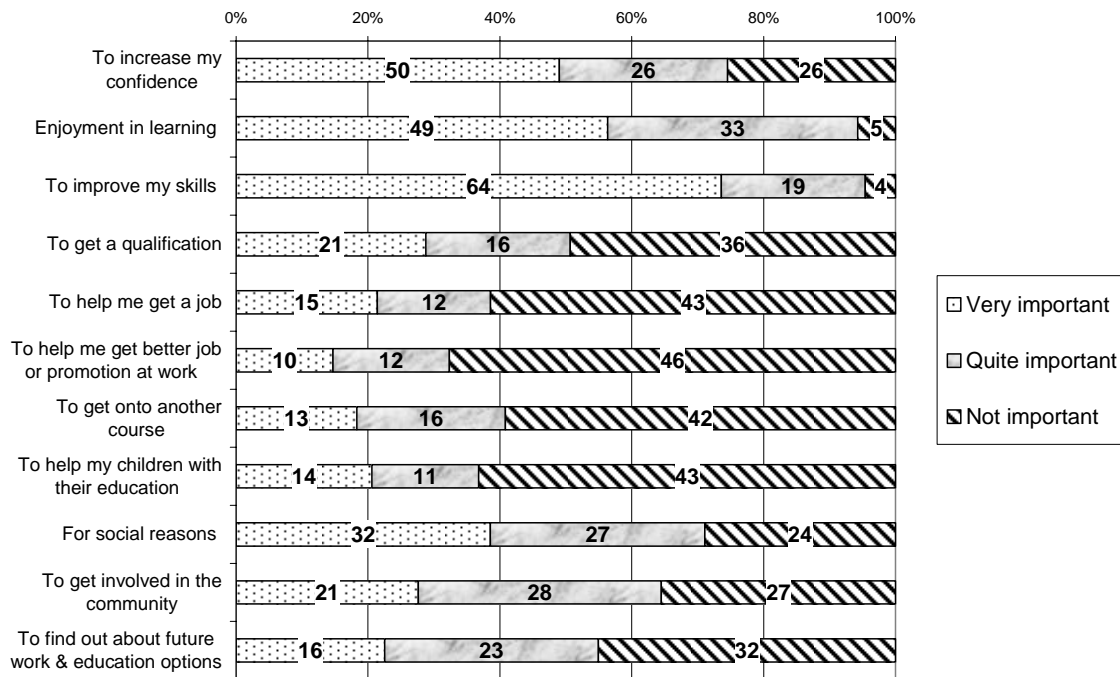
Characteristic (at enrolment)	% (N) of sample	% (N) of respondents	Proportionality
Physical	14% (1385)	18% (196)	+ 4%
Learning disability	8% (798)	6% (69)	- 2%
On an accredited course	20% (1977)	22% (241)	+ 2%
Employed or Self employed	25% (2529)	20% (222)	- 5%
Employed part time (- 16 hours)	7% (670)	9% (99)	+ 2%
Unwaged and in receipt of benefits	27% (2726)	20% (219)	- 7%
Unwaged not in receipt of benefits	11% (1090)	9% (102)	- 2%
Retired	14% (1430)	27 % (295)	+ 13 %
Female	75% (7487)	80% (866)	+ 5%
Male	25% (2528)	21% (223)	- 4%
Black or minority ethnic group (BME)	20 % (2003)	9% (99)	- 11%
Below level 2	35% (3451)	29% (318)	- 6%

**Fig 3 – Proportionality of respondents by curriculum area (with more than 5% of sample)**

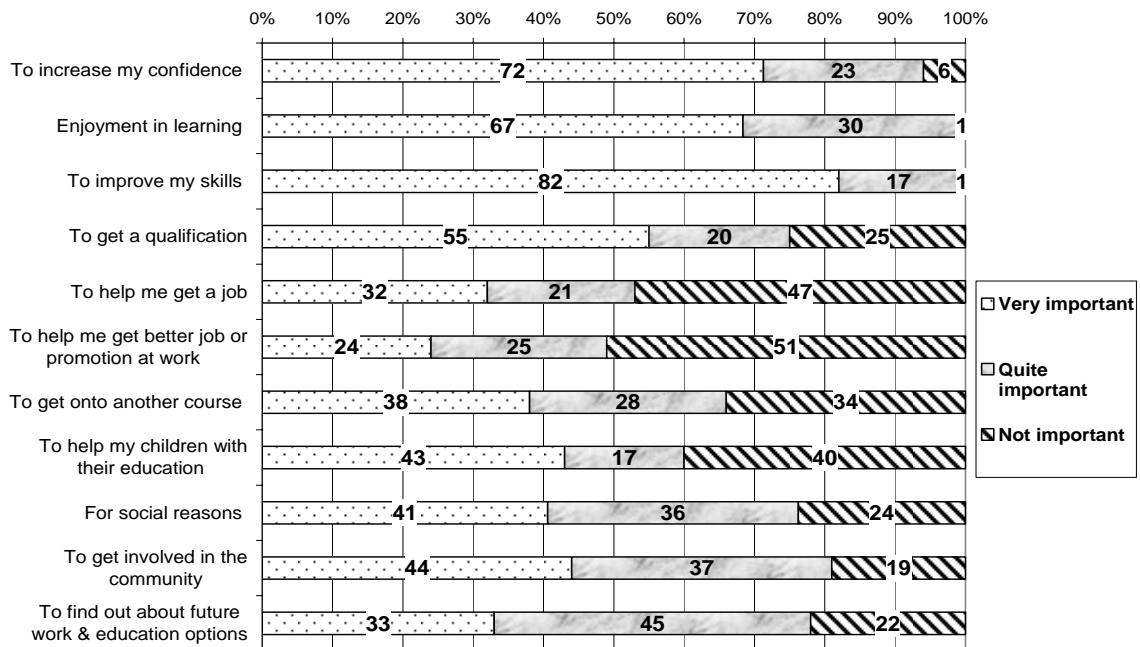
Curriculum area	Sample N (%)	Respondents N (%)	Proportionality
Foundation and Access Studies	22% (2215)	11% (124)	- 11%
Health, Fitness and Personal Dev	20% (2026)	19% (210)	- 1%
Humanities, Languages, Literature and Social Studies	6% (581)	11% (114)	+ 5%
ICT	15% (1499)	21% (229)	+ 6%
Schools and Parenting	7% (721)	9% (94)	+ 2%
Trade Union Learning	8% (767)	6% (64)	- 2%
Visual, Performing Arts and Media	15% (1495)	15% (164)	=

## Section 4 - Learners' motivations for starting their course

**Fig 4 - Importance of reasons for starting course for all respondents (Q2)<sup>5</sup>**



**Fig 5- Importance of reasons for starting course for BME respondents**



<sup>5</sup> Q2. Thinking back, can you remember how important the following were to you as possible reasons for starting this course/s?

### There are also differences in motivations for other priority groups

Respondents below level 2 at enrolment were more likely than overall respondents to rate qualification and work related motivations for starting their course as very important

- 29% rated 'to help me to get a job' as a very important reason for starting their course compared with 15% of overall respondents.
- 37% for 'getting a qualification' compared with 21% overall respondents.
- 27% 'to find out about future work & education options' compared with 16% overall respondents.

Respondents unwaged and in receipt of benefits

- 71% rated 'to increase my confidence' as a very important reason for starting their course compared with 50% of overall respondents.
- 61% rated to 'get a qualification as very or quite important compared with 37% of respondents overall.
- 95% rated 'improvement of skills' as very or quite important compared with 83% of all respondents.
- 52% rated to 'get a job' as very or quite important compared with 27% of respondents overall.

Respondents with physical disabilities

- 65% of those who were physically disabled viewed 'to increase my confidence' as very important, compared to 50% for respondents overall.
- 75% viewed 'to improve my skills' as very important, compared to 64% for respondents overall.
- 19% less physically disabled respondents rated 'to help me get a job' as 'very or quite important' than respondents overall.

In addition to the options on the questionnaire, 167 respondents identified another reason for starting the course. Other reasons for starting the course included:-

A break from caring

Better understanding of politics

Enjoy the fresh air grow my own vegetables

For health reasons, to increase my mobility

Found out about publishing and how to get my work published.

Good to have a refresher course, as its been a long time since school

Finding out about me

I was suffering with depression and it helped me get over it

No qualification at school

Preparation for retirement

To achieve something for myself

To be able to do the job I did better

To aid recovery from long-term illness

To put something back into society

To see where my voluntary work goes

To find out if I could do it

To be more able to communicate with deaf people

To control my anger

To continue with my application to be a childminder

To find out how to help prevent home accidents

To gain a perspective on child behaviours from the child's point of view

To help my anxiety by learning meditation and relaxation skills

To help me cope with my deafness in a hearing society

To interact with others

To learn how to switch on a computer

To prove to myself and others that I wasn't useless

To shape up a skill already have, to keep it exercised

## Section 5 - Progression since completing WEA course (Q3)<sup>6</sup>

**Fig 6- Progression of learners**

	All respondents	BME	With physical disability	Below level 2 at entry	Unwaged, in receipt of benefits
Vol./comm. activity	39%	38%	37%	36%	44%
Course in <u>same</u> subject area	26%	16%	32%	22%	27%
Course in <u>different</u> subject area	32%	27%	35%	33%	48%
Course <u>without</u> qualification	24%	15%	27%	19%	27%
Course <u>with</u> qualification	21%	25%	15%	20%	12%

### Volunteer work undertaken by respondents included:-

Chairman of surgery support group  
 Working at charity shop  
 Chairperson of epilepsy group  
 Community radio station  
 Editor of local memories community website  
 Assist Carers UK as events volunteer  
 Meals on wheels (WRVS)  
 St John Ambulance  
 Police volunteer at core centre,  
 School governor and literacy volunteer  
 Working with people with mental health issues  
 Running a self help group  
 Trade union representative  
 Running a Bengali language school  
 giving support to stroke recoveries and carers  
 Volunteer for Alzheimer's society  
 Voluntary work at drop in centre for the homeless  
 For victim support team  
 Women's centre volunteer  
 Secretary of local health walking group  
 Gardening on community pathways  
 Chairman of county Chinese school parent association  
 A generalist advisor with CAB  
 Estate interpreter  
 Working with Bournemouth University on 'streets of Bournemouth' project,  
 Working for Scope as a face to face befriender and running a parents support group  
 Outreach volunteer for hearing concern link  
 Mentoring youth offender child protection  
 Online support to women who have been abused  
 Helping elderly people stay in own homes  
 Sure Start best buddies  
 Running Asian ladies group  
 Treasurer for senior citizens computer club.  
 Governor at hospital, and magistrate.  
 Age well keep fit group  
 Social enterprise for people with learning difficulties  
 MIND volunteer admin worker  
 Parish councillor and write village news letter  
 Helping with credit union  
 Chair of neighbourhood group and tenants forum.  
 Men cap volunteer for people with learning disabilities  
 Leading mediation in local community  
 Database management for national charity  
 Working for the WEA 4 hours per week  
 Church warden and working on church community projects  
 Home start parent support

<sup>6</sup>Q3 Since 2006 when you completed the WEA course above, have you done any of the following?  
 respondents were allowed to choose multiple options from a list of options

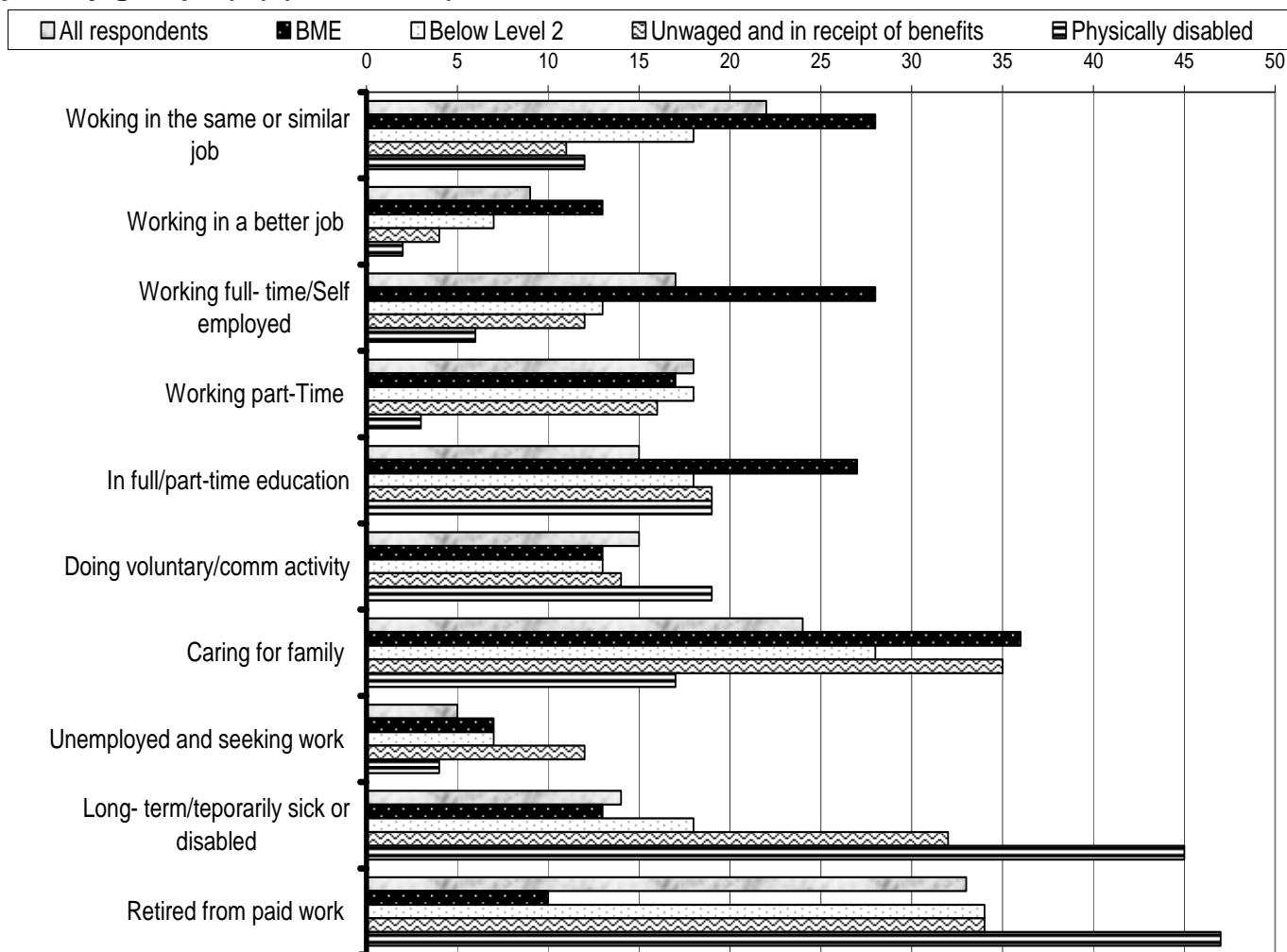
**Qualification levels at entry and level of further study of those who go onto to do a qualification**

**Fig 7 – A comparison of learners who have got or are done/doing a course with a qualification compared with highest level qualification held at enrolment (Q4) <sup>7</sup>**

Educational level at enrolment	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3	
	%(N) of learners done or doing	% (N)of learners got the qualification	% (N)of learners done or doing	% (N)of learners got the qualification	%(N) of learners done or doing	%(N) of learners got the qualification
No qualifications	34 %(11)	22% (7)	9%(3)	31%(10)	19%(6)	6%(2)
Level 1	19% (5)	31% (8)	31% (8)	31% (8)	15% (4)	23%(6)
Level 2	15%(5)	21% (7)	21% (7)	52% (17)	18%(6)	27% (9)

<sup>7</sup> ie 34% of the 32 respondents with no quals at entry who went on to do a course with a qualification

**Fig 8- Status of respondents after completing their course, for all respondents and priority groups (%) (Question 5)**



- 13% of BME respondents were in a ‘better job’ after completing their course, this was 4% higher than respondents overall
- 28% of BME respondents were ‘working full time or were self employed’ after completing their course, compared to 17% of overall respondents

**Fig 9- Employment status at survey compared with at enrolment**

Status at enrolment	Status at time of survey
20% Employed or self- employed	17% Employed or self- employed
9% Part-time employed	18% Part-time employed
27% Retired	33% Retired
20% Unwaged and in receipt of benefit	5% Unemployed and seeking work
9% Unwaged and not receipt of benefit	24% Caring for family

## Section 6 – The extent to which respondents achieved the aims they had identified as important in starting their course (Q 2 and 6)<sup>8</sup>

**Fig 10- Achievement of 'improve my skills' by importance at start of course**

<b>All Respondents (%)</b>			
	Achieved		Did not achieve
	Fully	Partially	
Very important	81	17	2
Quite important	50	47	4
Not important	33	47	20
<b>BME Respondents (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	79	15	6
Quite important	25	75	0
Not important	0	100 <sup>9</sup>	0
<b>Below Level 2 Respondents (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	76	18	6
Quite important	39	52	10
Not important	33	50	17
<b>Unwaged &amp; In Receipt Of Benefits (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	81	16	3
Quite important	54	46	0
Not important	17	33	50
<b>With Physical Disability (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	73	26	1
Quite important	59	37	4
Not important	0	33	67

<sup>8</sup> Q2. Thinking back, can you remember how important the following were to you as possible reasons for starting this course/s?

Q6. Looking back, do you think the WEA course helped you to achieve your aims? Only fill in for aims that were important to you

<sup>9</sup> 1 respondent.

**Fig 11- Achievement of 'increase my confidence' by importance at start of course**

<b>All Respondents (%)</b>			
	Achieved		Did not achieve
	Fully	Partially	
Very important	79	19	2
Quite important	59	36	5
Not important	53	33	13
<b>BME Respondents (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	80	14	6
Quite important	60	40	0
Not important	100*	0	0
<b>Below Level 2 Respondents (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	71	26	4
Quite important	57	35	81
Not important	50*	50*	
<b>Unwaged &amp; In Receipt Of Benefits (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	73	23	5
Quite important	51	39	10
Not important	71	29	0
<b>With Physical Disability (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	77	22	1
Quite important	48	48	5
Not important	43	29	29

**Fig 12- Achievement of 'to get a qualification' by importance at start of course**

<b>All Respondents (%)</b>			
	Achieved		Did not achieve
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	75	13	13
Quite important	50	27	23
Not important	19	14	67
<b>BME Respondents (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	56	24	20
Quite important	29	29	43
Not important	11	11	78
<b>Below Level 2 (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	65	18	17
Quite important	33	25	43
Not important	21	3	76
<b>Unwaged and in Receipt Of Benefits (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	68	11	20
Quite important	48	16	36
Not important	29	11	61
<b>With Physical Disability (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	65	25	10
Quite important	39	23	39
Not important	11	16	74

**Fig 13- Achievement of 'help me get a job' by importance at start of course**

<b>All Respondents (%)</b>			
	Achieved		Did not achieve
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	63	15	22
Quite important	26	26	49
Not important	8	8	85
<b>BME Respondents (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	53	13	33
Quite important	13	63	25
Not important	8	8	83
<b>Below Level 2 Respondents (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	57	15	28
Quite important	19	15	67
Not important	3	5	93
<b>Unwaged &amp; In Receipt Of Benefits (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	63	7	30
Quite important	60	10	30
Not important	9	0	91
<b>With Physical Disability (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	46	18	36
Quite important	33	17	50
Not important	4	11	86

**Fig 14- Achievement of ‘help me get a better job or promotion at work’ by importance at start of course**

<b>All Respondents (%)</b>			
	Achieved		Did not achieve
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	58	14	28
Quite important	21	28	52
Not important	4	7	89
<b>BME Respondents (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	44	22	33
Quite important	18	27	55
Not important	0	9	91
<b>Below Level 2 Respondents (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	48	10	43
Quite important	15	26	59
Not important	0	4	96
<b>Unwaged &amp; In Receipt Of Benefits (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	44	13	44
Quite important	8	46	46
Not important	2	2	95
<b>With Physical Disability (%)</b>			
	Fully	Partially	Did not achieve
Very important	37	25	38
Quite important	0	100 <sup>10</sup>	0
Not important	0	7	93

88 respondents identified another reason for starting their course and rated their level of achievement, 43 fully achieved this, 14 partially achieved this, and 27 felt they did not achieve this and 4 wrote in the text box but did not give a rating.

Other reasons for starting the course included:-

Complete family tree

To improve fitness

Aid recovery and progress

To be a calmer more controlled person

To gain a perspective on child behaviour from the child's point of view

To take the course alongside young parents I was working with

To prepare for retirement

Becoming unison steward

Increase my physical and mental health

<sup>10</sup> 3 Respondents

## Section 7 – Impact on learners’ lives, in their own words<sup>11</sup> (Q 9)

727 (67%) respondents out of the 1,089 answered this question. Of these, 651 respondents (70%) made positive comments, and 42 respondents (5%) made negative comments. Here are some of the comments made grouped in key themes.

### Differences in learning and progression

By joining this course, it was like the gateway to my next course (diploma). It gave me confidence and put things into perspective for me. I had hidden away from society for a few years for various reasons so yes, it helped, a lot!

Yes this helped me to get to university

It was first step in getting me back into learning and out of the house after a long illness so was very important and helped considerably. It gave me confidence to more on

It gave me the confidence to attempt a maths GCSE course. When I was at school I was told I was not at the required standard. I did the course and attained a Level "A"

Yes because it made me think about becoming a qualified teacher and helped me realise I was capable. As a result I have just completed 3 years of a 5 year degree

The course got me back into learning and inspired me to continue. I achieved and learned a lot in a very short space of time. It was hard work, but rewarding

I can now read ...I have joined the library and regularly take out books. It has also helped me with things like shopping and being able to read lines and packets

The course made a massive difference not only did I gain quite a good mark but it gave me a better understanding with various levels of depression... I feel I've found my vocation

Feel I know more about my future options and can plan with confidence

### Differences in awareness and tolerance

Opened my eyes to the difficulties other cultures face in food production

Has enabled me to articulate with confidence and knowledge the difficulties faced by these with hearing disabilities I challenge ignorance and raise awareness

A project that brought together a strange age range and types of people from within a village. A very handy way to discuss different points of view

Very much made a difference, I now follows politics (labour) avidly via television and the net, has led to greater understanding

Yes, it made a great difference to my life, I met a lot of people, I felt welcomed and accepted into a community

It helped me refine my views on judgemental. It gave me techniques for coming out of my rut, and getting me back into it. It made me think to some purpose and then carry out the purpose in an environment that could assess without condemning

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<sup>11</sup> Q9. Did participating in the WEA course make a difference to your life? If it did, please describe this

### **Difference in confidence and skills**

The course gave me great confidence that I was able to achieve anything I put my mind to! Thank you all!

The WEA creative writing course made a huge difference to my life. Not only did it give me confidence...it bought out a skill

It was for all of us, we gained a great sense of achievement. It still is memorable to all of us

I am very proud of our completed project hanging up in our family centre

Gave me more confidence to make changes to my life. New life, change of career, going to college

Made me more confident and assertive, be able to express myself and put my points across without anger, in a positive manner

I have a little more confidence now, enough to be able to shop for myself in a big supermarket

It made me want more out of life; it gave me the confidence to speak up. It made me see that other people have problems and am not alone

Yes it did, after my lip reading course I was able to socialise more. It helped me to move on from the negative experience of secondary education

My poetry was included in 4 books; I had a short story accepted

Yes. It helped me to learn a lot of vocabulary, to see my doctor and dentist, to do my shopping, to speak to staff in the nursery

As I am in my eighties and retired, it was good to have an opportunity not only to improve my communication with others, but also to make new friends and enjoy their company

When I started I didn't even know how to switch a computer on, now I have learned the following, word processing, desk top publishing 1 and 2, Paint Shop Pro 1, and am learning digital imaging

Yes, I am better with numbers and money

### **Supporting children's learning**

Helped in knowing how to work with children who may have special needs and how to help other children cope with them also

Yes, made being a parent easier

Helped me to help children at school with computer work

Deepened relationship with my daughter it gave us special time together

Understanding of statement process and my rights as a parent, gave me confidence to approach school on behalf of my child

Yes it did, in that I have a better understanding of children, particularly the way each child learns

Yes I can now feel more confident when using the computer and can help my children with homework

## **Work related differences**

I gained employment as a direct result. I have been a house wife for 18 years and single mum for four. I can now support my daughters. Thank you for the courses

I never got a call for any interviews. As soon as I finished the course not only did I get an interview, but I also got the job I wanted

I was able to get the job I wanted so returning from being a full time carer to the work force I was persuaded to apply for a T.A job after doing the course got the job and now I am T.A at the same school. Thank you so much

I have used the skills I gained to improve my work...It has given me some skills other people in my dept appreciated

It also helped when I was made redundant by giving me confidence when applying for a new job and going to the interview

The course helped to improve my skills and confidence. I find it less stressful putting pen to paper than I did before in both a work and personal situation

I was able to get the job I wanted so returning from being a full time carer to the work force It made a difference to my life by giving me qualification as to get a better job which I enjoy

Participating in the WEA course started a ball rolling. I was offered a job at a pre-school and I felt I was confident to accept it. I have gone from strength to strength

Gave me an opportunity to seek further education (e.g. access course - Occupational health and safety) and to become well equipped in my role as health and safety representative

The knowledge I gained in health advocacy is useful in my role as a support worker for adults with learning disability

By doing a placement with the course it put me in the right place at the right time as I was offered a job from it

Life changing from 12 hours cold calling to 27.5 hours in a TA role at a local high school

### **Differences in well being**

A big yes! Following illness and retirement the family history class was a life saver. Researching on the computer was so interesting as were the visits to the family records office and other venues for research. The course sharpened up my memory

It took away isolation and made life interesting

Attending WEA imposed structure to the week. Reason and purpose to get out there

Brought together young and old to learn to achieve a positive outlook on health and wellbeing

It enriched my life and encouraged my exercise for a healthier life style

Encouraged me to grow vegetables at home, and then enjoyed the meal, using the fresh vegetables It had a positive effect on, my life and health

I was caring for my elderly parents who had continually and unpredictable health problems and yoga helped me cope with the stress

Really helped me as I was practically a recluse I only ever went out to hospital or doctors appointments. I made friends and felt relaxed and really enjoyed learning. I since went on to buy my own computer which I use everyday

### **Voluntary and community activity**

The WEA course gave me confidence and experience to get involved in voluntary work within my community which helps with my disability

Helping in my role as allotment secretary/treasurer

Some of the students and myself have now started our own readers group. We feel the WEA fees are too high and we cannot afford them

To help others, also by volunteering, my IT skills have improved all off these would never have happened without attending course at the women's centre

I am now very involved in union work ... as a convenor

Writing the constitution also developed the (voluntary organisation) committee...were relatively new at the time and it was a steep learning curve for all

Gave me confidence to join a community centre and pass skills on that I have learnt I was in a position to help others on a voluntary basis because of the venue; the class I attended was a women only venue, which I liked

### **Other impacts:**

I have got easily my citizenship in UK and now I am a British citizen. Citizenship course from WEA is very helpful for me because that time my need is citizenship course. Thank you

It helped me to learn a new language and also I gained my indefinite leave thanks to this course

I undertook this course to learn about the complexities of producing CD's, record etc. Subsequently with friend I have produced a CD... made up of climbing songs

I am in a higher bracket salary - which in turn helped me to buy my home of 20 years from the local council

## **Negative comments**

5% (42) respondents made negative comments. These comments included issues of courses being ended by the WEA or a change of tutors. Where there were negative comments about courses, details of the courses have been given to Regions so they can follow up and check the problems have been dealt with.

The funding was cut off for the course before I finished it

I was very disappointed as there was no qualification with this course and I did not receive a certificate

No. I went for 5 weeks and learnt virtually nothing. It started a full group and divided when I stopped to about 5 or 6. The young man sat at a computer and talked and typed (to the group) one week there was only a few minutes left for us to go on the computer

Have called many times and would love to be offered other courses. Not been told of any courses and quite frankly feel let down

At the time but it has now worn off

I am disappointed in the course in so far as there was no follow up, no specific advice on how to gain freelance employment in community services interpreting

## Appendix A: WEA Learner Follow up Survey

The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) is following up learners who did courses with us in the academic year 2005-06. We want to find out what learners have gone on to do after their course, for example further study, employment, or community activity. The information you give us will be used only for reporting on how our learners progress. In the report, any information about learners will be anonymous. I hope you will take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it in the FREEPOST envelope provided by 22 June 2009.



**NB please fill in the O with black or blue biro, or pencil (do not tick or cross)**

1. In 2005-06 you took the following course with the WEA

Name of course:	Survey number:
Venue of course:	

2. Thinking back, can you remember how important the following were to you as possible reasons for starting this course/s?

	Very important	Quite important	Not important
To increase my confidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enjoyment in learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To improve my skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get a qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To help me get a job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To help me get better job, or promotion at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get onto another course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To help my children with their education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For social reasons, eg get out of the house, make new friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get more involved in the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To find out about future education and work options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Since 2006 when you completed the WEA course above, have you done any of the following? Please choose all that apply

Voluntary or community activity	<input type="radio"/>
A course in the same subject area as above	<input type="radio"/>
A course in a different subject area	<input type="radio"/>
A course without a qualification	<input type="radio"/>
A course with a qualification (if so, please answer question 4)	<input type="radio"/>

4. If since your 2005-06 WEA course, you have done or are doing a course/s with a qualification, please tick all that apply. Also, please let us know if you have now got the qualification

	Done or doing	Got the qualification
Level 1, eg NVQ, literacy, numeracy, ESOL, fewer than 5 GCSE's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Level 2, eg NVQ, literacy, numeracy, ESOL, 5 or more GCSE's A-C	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Level 3, eg NVQ, or A levels (2 or more), Access to Higher Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
First Degree or equivalent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Higher Degree, eg PGCE, MA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Another course with a qualification, but don't know the level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. At the moment I am (please tick all that apply):

Working in the same or similar job	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working in a better job	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working full-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
In part-time education	<input type="checkbox"/>
In full-time education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doing voluntary/community activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caring for my family	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployed and seeking work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Temporarily sick or injured	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long-term sick or disabled	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retired from paid work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Looking back, do you think the WEA course helped you to achieve your aims? Only fill in for aims that were important to you

	Achieved this	Partially achieved this	Did not achieve this
To increase my confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enjoyment in learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To improve my skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To get a qualification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To help me get a job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To help me get better job, or promotion at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To get onto another course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To help my children with their education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For social reasons, eg get out of the house, make new friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To get more involved in the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To find out about future education and work options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Did participating in the WEA course make a difference to your life? If it did, please describe this.

10. May we include your comments as quotes in our survey report ? Yes

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your comments will be valuable to the WEA!**  
[mcurran@wea.org.uk](mailto:mcurran@wea.org.uk) 0161 277 5403

To enter into the draw for a £50 gift voucher or book token, please enter your contact details below

Name..... Phone or Address.....

## Appendix B- Analysis by Regions

**Fig 15- Characteristics of respondents (at enrolment) by Region**

	East Midlands	Eastern	London	North East	North West <sup>12</sup>	South West	Southern	West Midlands	Yorkshire and Humber	Overall
BME	6%	1%	31%	0%		1%	14%	16%	5%	9%
Below level 2	35%	22%	29%	36%		20%	18%	30%	33%	29%
Physically disabled	22%	28%	7%	12%		24%	3%	29%	17%	18%
Employed of self – employed	20%	16%	40%	26%		21%	46%	32%	14%	20%
Employed part-time	13%	14%	3%	8%		8%	10%	9%	12%	9%
Retired	38%	19%	16%	36%		19%	12%	35%	41%	27%
Unwaged and in receipt of benefits	20%	31%	26%	23%		35%	9%	13%	23%	20%
Unwaged and not in receipt of benefits	9%	16%	13%	7%		12%	16%	9%	9%	9%

<sup>12</sup>82% of employment data at enrolment was missing for respondents in the North West region, therefore it has been excluded from this table.

**Fig 16- Importance of reasons for learners starting their course**

	% Very / Quite important									
	EM	EA	LO	NE	NW	SW	SO	WM	YH	Overall
To increase my confidence	56/27	55/26	71/17	59/37	54/35	59/24	58/30	68/27	55/34	50/26
Enjoyment in learning	65/30	51/41	54/39	57/36	65/30	51/44	47/47	47/48	56/40	49/33
To Improve my skills	75/21	68/25	84/10	76/20	73/25	69/24	75/19	77/15	71/26	64/19
To get a qualification	28/13	22/30	54/26	33/15	30/18	22/22	32/27	35/13	26/21	21/16
To help me get a job	20/20	11/30	32/30	18/13	17/17	22/16	30/17	26/13	22/10	15/12
To help me get a better job /promotion at work	9/23	11/14	19/36	14/24	12/17	22/8	18/27	9/25	16/16	10/12
To get onto another course	13/12	17/20	39/25	26/24	20/21	19/16	22/28	10/26	15/22	13/16
To help my children with their education	19/21	19/20	38/19	11/18	18/16	14/17	30/16	23/17	20/14	14/11
For social reasons	44/31	32/42	31/25	54/26	40/39	25/20	17/30	36/36	45/31	32/27
To get involved in the community	30/28	25/42	31/33	43/26	33/41	32 / 45	21/34	17/33	24/40	21/28
To find out about future work & education options	19/26	19/28	33/40	26/33	26/33	26/34	10/26	15/36	27/31	16/23

**Fig 17- Progression of learners**

%										
Activity	EM	EA	LO	NE	NW	SW	SO	WM	YH	Overall
Voluntary/community	35	40	49	40	39	45	28	39	39	39
Course in same subject area	26	14	24	29	29	24	21	30	29	26
Course in different subject area	33	39	33	30	28	27	35	30	31	32
Course without a qualification	21	27	19	22	18	21	30	29	27	24
course with a qualification	21	23	29	15	24	20	18	25	20	21

**Fig 18-Status of respondents after completing their courses % (Number)**

	EM	EA	LO	NE	NW	SW	SO	WM	YH	Overall
Working in same or similar job	18(26)	18(17)	29(20)	16(12)	25(38)	26(22)	32(30)	33(23)	15(46)	22(234)
Working in better job	10(14)	13(12)	19(13)	6(4)	7(10)	10(8)	12(11)	6(4)	9(26)	9 (102)
Employed or self- employed	15(22)	10(10)	32(22)	10(14)	14(21)	18(15)	25(24)	29(20)	14(41)	17 (184)
Part time employed	19(28)	19(20)	16(11)	10(7)	16(25)	19(16)	22(21)	16(11)	20(60)	18 (198)
Retired	15(53)	7(25)	11(8)	40(29)	54(35)	30(25)	22(21)	32(22)	40(124)	33 (361)
Unemployed	5(7)	7(7)	7(5)	4(3)	4(6)	10(8)	5(5)	4(3)	4(11)	5 (55)
Caring for family	24(35)	25(24)	27(19)	23(17)	21(32)	21(18)	30(28)	28(19)	23(71)	24 (236)

**Fig 19- The % of respondents that went on to study a course with a qualification, and the level it was studied at**

Type/level of course being studied	EM	EA	LO	NE	NW	SW	SO	WM	YH	Overall
Course with a qualification	21	23	29	15	24	20	18	25	20	21
Level 1	10	7	10	8	7	11	9	7	9	9
Level 2	8	11	13	6	11	8	8	7	8	9
Level 3	5	6	13	8	9	4	7	6	4	6

**Fig 20- The extent to which respondents achieved the aims that they held as very or quite important for starting their course (Q 2 and 6)**

	% Achieved Fully/ Partially									
	EM	EA	LO	NE	NW	SW	SO	WM	YH	Overall
Improve my skills	66/21	68/19	60/23	81/12	61/18	71/21	57/23	63/23	63/30	70/22
Increase my confidence	64/20	62/10	43/33	65/12	71/ 17	71/21	63/17	68/23	64/23	70/25
Get a qualification	48/10	47/21	58/16	63/21	51/13	54/11	35/18	62/12	47/10	50/14

## Appendix C- Analysis by curriculum area<sup>13</sup>

**Fig 21 - Importance of reasons for learners starting their course by curriculum area**

	% Very/ Quite important %							
	Foundation and Access Studies	Health, Fitness and Personal Development	Humanities, LL & Social Studies	Information and Communications Technology	Schools and Parenting	Trade Union Learning	Visual, Performing Arts & Media	Total Respondents overall
To increase my confidence	71 / 20	63 / 28	46 / 32	46 / 32	60 / 31	48 / 31	51 / 35	50 / 26
Enjoyment in learning	56 / 37	56 / 33	60 / 37	55 / 41	55 / 43	35 / 54	67 / 30	49 / 33
To Improve my skills	83 / 15	62 / 29	67 / 28	82 / 16	83 / 16	76 / 23	64 / 30	64 / 19
To get a qualification	55 / 19	24 / 16	15 / 14	23 / 22	57 / 28	25 / 40	10 / 25	21 / 16
To help me get a job	33 / 26	19 / 17	12 / 5	16 / 16	59 / 18	6 / 18	6 / 12	15 / 12
To help me get a better job /promotion	28 / 43	14 / 13	7 / 8	10 / 18	32 / 25	2 / 32	6 / 8	10 / 12
To get onto another course	35 / 26	15 / 18	9 / 12	15 / 25	24 / 34	15 / 26	19 / 19	13 / 16
To help my children with their education	38 / 15	10 / 14	8 / 5	18 / 21	58 / 27	4 / 15	9 / 14	14 / 11
For social reasons	33 / 31	51 / 33	39 / 37	38 / 35	30 / 36	6 / 15	49 / 35	32 / 27
To get involved in the community	25 / 40	30 / 40	24 / 39	22 / 36	26 / 41	11 / 30	39 / 33	21 / 28
To find out about future work & education options	33 / 39	22 / 28	16 / 21	17 / 33	31 / 48	18 / 35	20 / 25	16 / 23

<sup>13</sup> For curriculum areas with 5% or more of respondents

**Fig 22- Progression of learners**

	%							
	Foundation and Access Studies	Health, Fitness and Personal Development	Humanities, Languages, Literature and Social Studies	ICT	Schools and Parenting	Trade Union Learning	Visual, Performing Arts and Media	Respondents Overall
Vol/ comm. activity	30	34	43	36	45	38	45	39
Course in same subject area	16	24	35	25	34	32	29	26
Course in different subject area	36	33	26	25	26	38	35	32
Course without a qualification	25	19	23	22	20	20	35	24
course with a qualification	25	19	16	15	39	31	14	21

**Fig 23-Status of respondents after completing their courses % (Number)**

	Foundati on and Access Studies	Health, Fitness and Personal Development	Humanities, Languages, Literature and Social Studies	Information and Communications Technology	Schools and Parenting	Trade Union Learning	Visual, Performing Arts and Media	Overall
Working in same or similar job	36 (45)	21 (44)	13 (15)	17 (38)	20 (19)	63 (40)	8 (13)	22 (234)
Working in better job	13(16)	5 (11)	4 (5)	7(16)	23 (22)	20 (13)	6 (9)	9 (102)
Employed or self-employed	24 (30)	15 (32)	14 (16)	11 (24)	20 (19)	56 (36)	7 (12)	17(184)
Part time employed	20 (25)	19 (40)	6 (7)	15 (35)	49 (46)	5 (3)	11(18)	18 (198)
Retired	5 (6)	36 (76)	62 (71)	44 (101)	5 (5)	5 (3)	49 (80)	33 (361)
Unemployed	4 (5)	9 (18)	1(1)	4 (10)	5 (5)	6 (4)	5(8)	5 (55)
Caring for family	30 (37)	24 (51)	19 (22)	23(53)	37(35)	9 (6)	24 (40)	24 (236)

**Fig 24 - The % of respondents that went on to study a course with a qualification, and of these the level it was studied at**

Type/level of course being studied	Foundation and Access Studies	Health, Fitness and Personal Development	Humanities, Languages, Literature and Social Studies	Information and Communications Technology	Schools and Parenting	Trade Union Learning	Visual, Performing Arts and Media	Overall
Course with a qualification	25	19	16	15	39	31	14	21
Level 1	24	18	8	14	12	3	9	9
Level 2	17	21	4	12	19	11	5	9
Level 3	18	16	6	3	24	18	9	6

**Fig 25 The extent to which respondents achieved the aims that they held as very or quite important for starting their course (Q 2 and 6)**

% Achieved Fully/ Partially								
	Foundation and Access Studies	Health, Fitness and Personal Development	Humanities, Languages, Literature and Social Studies	Information and Communications Technology	Schools and Parenting	Trade Union Learning	Visual, Performing Arts and Media	Overall
Improve my skills	69/25	69/23	74/25	74/19	80/19	69/29	71/24	70/22
Increase my confidence	73/22	68/24	69/27	70/24	74/23	69/29	76/25	70/25
Get a qualification	53/17	41/13	32/18	41/9	73/13	51/13	19/19	50/14

## Appendix D- Comparison with 2008 Survey

Overall the findings were similar to the overall findings of the 2008 survey. There are some differences, particularly the lower percentages in 2009 of respondents going on to do a further course and gain qualifications. However, it is not possible to identify if this is because of the larger sample size, rather than changes over time.

<b>2009 survey of 1,089 respondents</b>	<b>2008 Survey of 137 respondents</b>
57% of the respondents have gone on to do a further course/s	64% of respondents have gone on to do a further course/s
21% of respondents went on to do a course with a qualification	25% went on to do a course with a qualification
13% of respondents (143 learners) have gained 198 qualifications	23% of respondents (32 learners) had gained 59 qualifications)
24% have gone on to do a course without a qualification	24% have gone on to do a course without a qualification
32% of all respondents went onto do a course in a different subject area	34% of all respondents went onto do a course in a different subject area
26% went to do a course in the same subject area	22% went to do a course in the same subject area
39% of respondents have gone on to do voluntary or community activity	39% of respondents have gone on to do voluntary or community activity