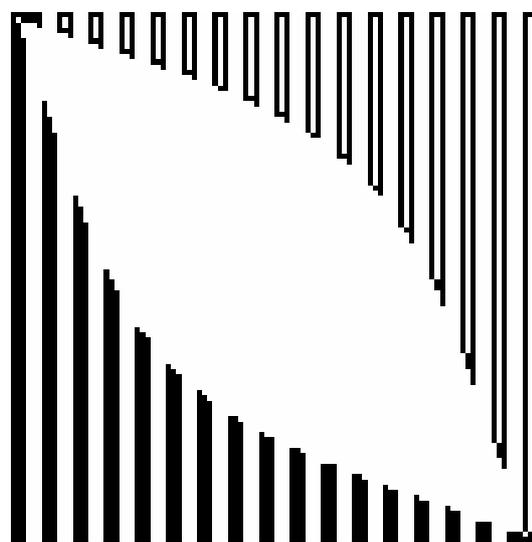


THEMATIC REVIEW ON ADULT LEARNING



UNITED KINGDOM (ENGLAND)

Background Report

June 2004

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OECD Thematic Review of Adult Learning in England (Second Round)

Background Report

June 2004

Prepared by the Department for Work and Pensions

DWP Department for
Work and Pensions

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INTRODUCTION

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is conducting a thematic review on adult learning in 17 countries. Nine countries participated in a first round (Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland). The main outcomes have been published in OECD (2003) *Beyond Rhetoric: Adult Learning Policies and Practices*. A second round of this activity was launched in 2002 with four countries conducting a full-scale review of their adult learning system (Austria, Hungary, Mexico and Poland) and five countries focusing on low-skilled/low-educated adults (England, Germany, Korea, the Netherlands and the United States).

The review involves visits by OECD multinational teams of experts to all participating countries. During their visits, teams collect evidence from a range of stakeholders – policy makers, employers, education professionals and learners. This paper provides background information about England for the review team.

The paper has been brought together by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) with contributions from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). It reflects the review's focus on low skills/low qualifications, recognises the high proportion of disadvantaged people on benefits, and describes current initiatives and programmes to raise the skills profile in England. The information below focuses on policies for poorly qualified adults, drawing attention to those in low-skilled jobs or claiming benefits along with their partners, and long-term unemployed people.

It also provides analyses of existing datasets. The Labour Force Survey is used to focus on the distribution of poorly qualified people across the working age population, broken down into those who work, the unemployed and people outside the labour market. Chapter 2 brings together data on participation in adult learning drawn from the latest National Adult Learning Survey.

CHAPTER 1

DEFINITIONS AND DISTRIBUTIONS OF SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS IN ENGLAND

1.1 Definitions of skill and the National Qualification Framework

Defining low skills/low qualifications poses considerable challenges. This is because skills are varied, multi-faceted and subject to constant renegotiation in the face of technological change and shifts in workplace relations. They incorporate a broad range of abilities, attributes and experiences – a spectrum inadequately captured by a reliance on qualifications as a measure of skill (Berthoud 2003).

Despite the complexities, British skills policy brings together skills, vocational and non-vocational learning, qualifications and occupations in a National Qualification Framework: a single framework responsive to the needs of employers and individuals. Government commitment to the Framework both guides the wider DWP contribution to the English Skills Strategy and steers the collation of material for this background paper.

The National Qualification Framework brings together three approaches to the definition of skill (see Figure 1):

- **Competences** – the demonstrable but not necessarily certified skills of the workforce classified into five levels broadly corresponding to professional/manager; technician; higher clerical and craft; semi-skilled; and less skilled occupations.
- **Qualifications** – the wide range of qualifications brigaded against competency levels, corresponding to six levels: level 5 (postgraduate level); level 4 (degree level); level 3 (Advanced or “A” level); level 2 (5 A–C GCSE grades); level 1 (lower or foundation qualifications); and entry level (low-level or basic qualifications).
- **Tests** – scores on literacy and numeracy tests set against levels, a method used by the Department for Education and Skills’ Skills for Life survey (a survey measuring the basic skills of the adult population) and adopted by Jobcentre Plus for certification of courses aimed at those claiming active jobseeker benefits (Jobseeker’s Allowance or JSA) for six months and longer.

Clearly the integration of the different approaches needs careful handling. As older workers tend to be less qualified than younger ones, the result is a higher proportion of individuals with lower qualifications in managerial and intermediate jobs.

Alternatively, people may score poorly on tests despite having level 2 or above English and maths qualifications. School exams involve a wider range of skills than those tested in computer-assisted surveys and use different assessment methods. Also, survey respondents may lose skills if they have little opportunity or need to practice them on a regular basis.

Nevertheless, there is empirical support for the framework. Older workers are less likely to be qualified and to score poorly on tests, reflecting a broader consistency between qualification level, test score and occupation.

Figure 1. England’s National Qualification Framework

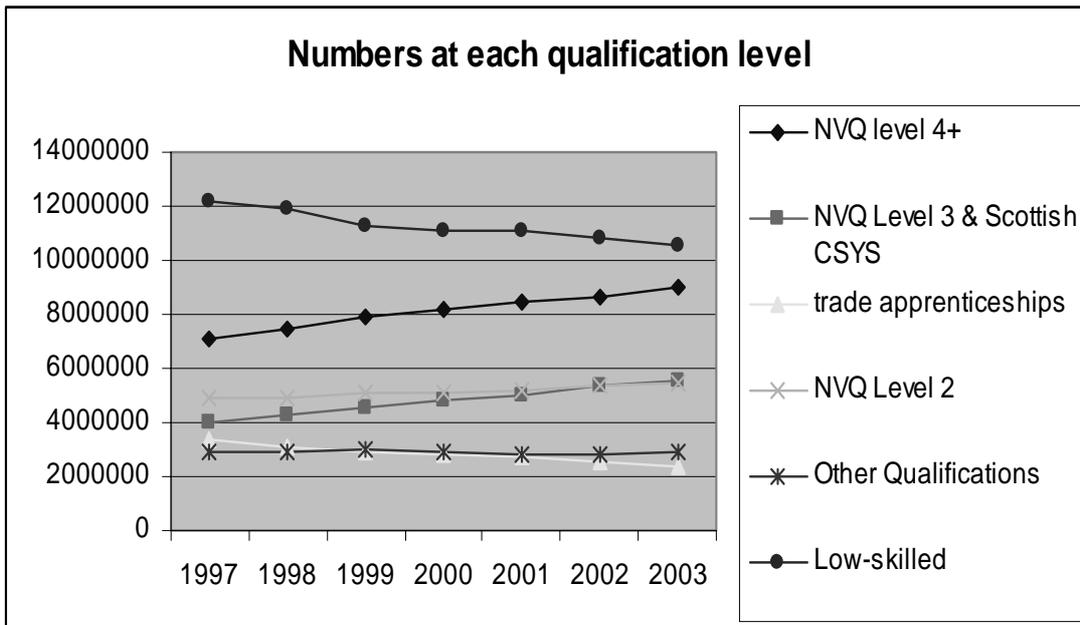
National Qualifications Framework Levels	General Academic	Vocationally Related	Occupational	Key Skills	Basic Skills	National Curriculum
5	Higher level qualifications: Post Graduate, Degrees, BTEC Higher Nationals		NVQ Level 5	Level 5		
4			NVQ Level 4	Level 4		
3 – Advanced Level	2 A levels	1 Vocational A Level (Advanced GNVQ)	NVQ level 3	Level 3		
2 – Intermediate Level	5 GCSEs Grades A-C	Intermediate GNVQ	NVQ level 2	Level 2	Level 2	
1 – Foundation Level	5 GCSEs Grades D-G	Foundation GNVQ	NVQ Level 1	Level 1	Level 1	National Curriculum Level 5
Entry Level	Entry Level Certificate				Entry 3	National Curriculum Level 4
					Entry 2	National Curriculum Level 3
					Entry 1	National Curriculum Level 2
						National Curriculum Level 1

Definitions and data presented here mostly combine qualifications recorded by the UK Labour Force Survey as “below National Vocational Qualification level 2” and “no qualifications” (see Figure 2). This is only a rough proxy for low skill, particularly considering that migrant populations are likely to have foreign qualifications that may be difficult to translate into UK classifications. This is the level at which UK policies for tackling low skill is targeted and it roughly conforms to the OECD ISCED level 2.

1.2 Low skill and employment

Figure 2 shows the number of low-skilled adults in the working age population. In 2003, there were about 10.5 million low-skilled individuals in the working age population.

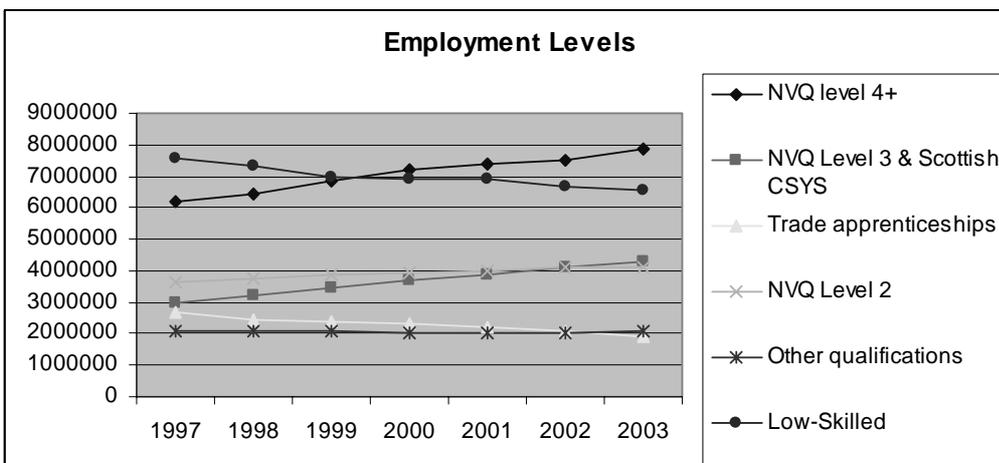
Figure 2. Numbers at each qualification level, 1997–2003, Great Britain



Note: "Low-skilled" refers to those people with below NVQ level 2 qualifications or no qualifications.
Source: Labour Force Survey

Figure 3 shows the numbers in employment by skill/qualification level. In 2003, about 6.5 million low-skilled people were in employment.

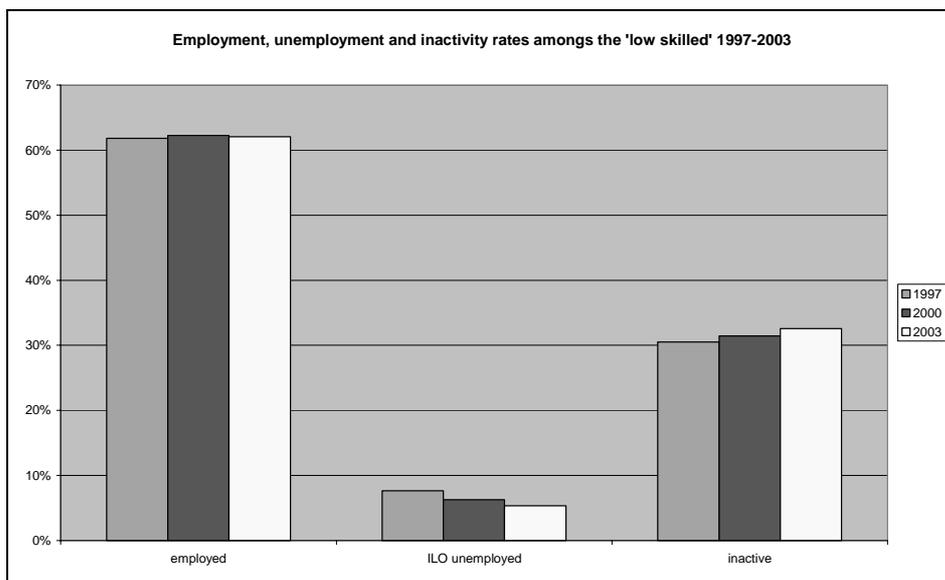
Figure 3. Numbers in employment by qualification level, 1997-2003, Great Britain



Source: Labour Force Survey.

Figure 4 confirms that over 60% of low-skilled adults were in employment in 2003. Inactivity among the low-skilled is, however, high and has increased over time. One recent contributing factor is an increase in the low-skilled migrant population. Low-skilled recent migrants account for about 8% of the low-skilled population. They are under-represented in employment and over-represented among the inactive. Figure 4, however, also indicates that while the unemployed are an important potential source of learners they are much less numerically important than those in employment or outside the labour market.

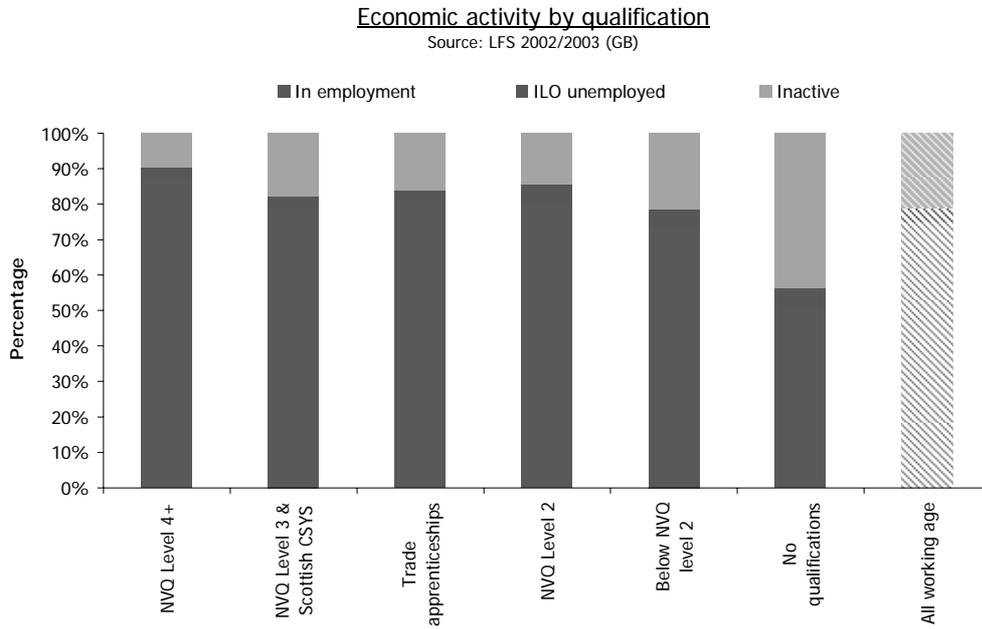
Figure 4. Employment, unemployment and inactivity among the “low skilled”, 1997, 2000 and 2003, Great Britain



Source: Labour Force Survey.

Reflecting the expansion of higher education since 1997, those qualified at Level 4 or above are now the largest proportion of those in employment, closely followed by the lowest qualified. The decline in the numbers of employed people below level 2 reflects an overall decline (of about 13%) in those qualified at the lowest levels (see Figure 5).

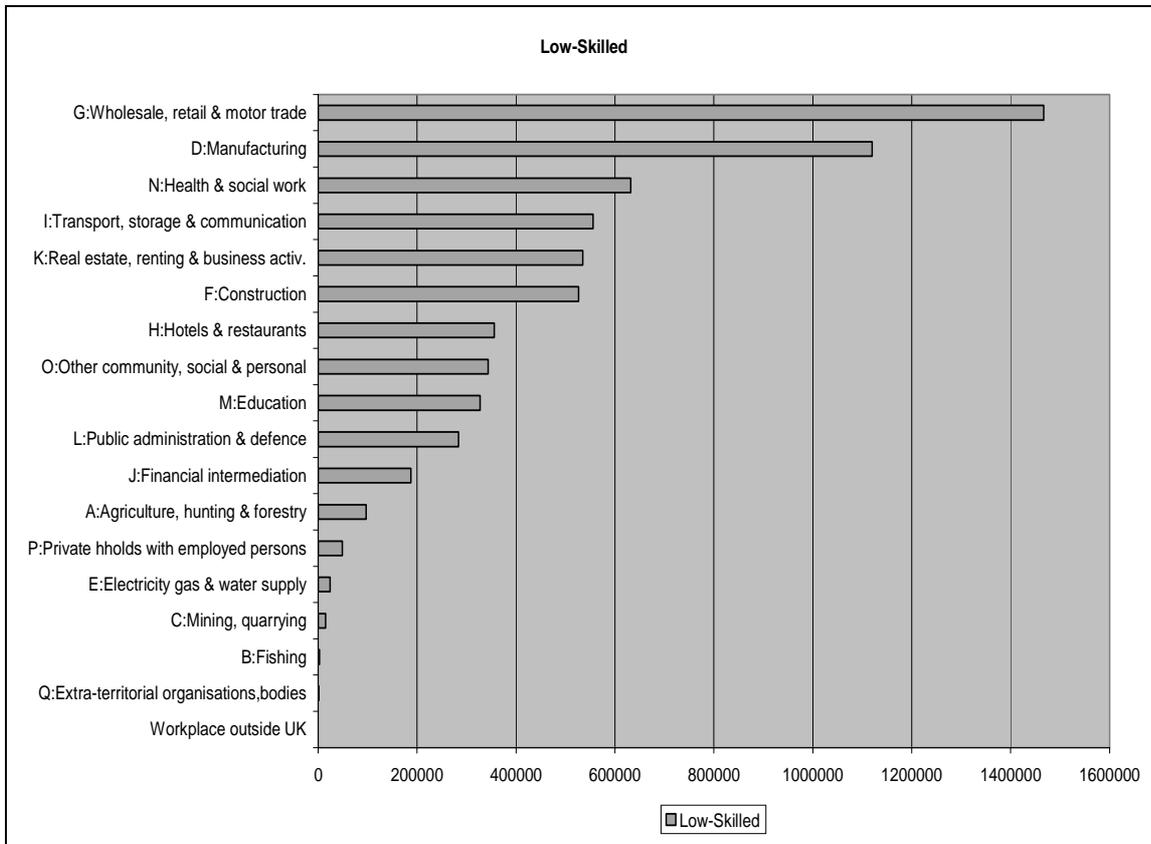
Figure 5. Employment, unemployment and inactivity rates by qualification level



Source: Labour Force Survey.

The low skilled are disproportionately employed in wholesale, retailing and motor trades; manufacturing; health and social work; and transport, storage and communication (see Figure 6). Further analysis reveals that low-skilled migrants are overrepresented in the agricultural, hotel and restaurant and private household sectors.

Figure 6. Distribution of low-skilled workers by sector

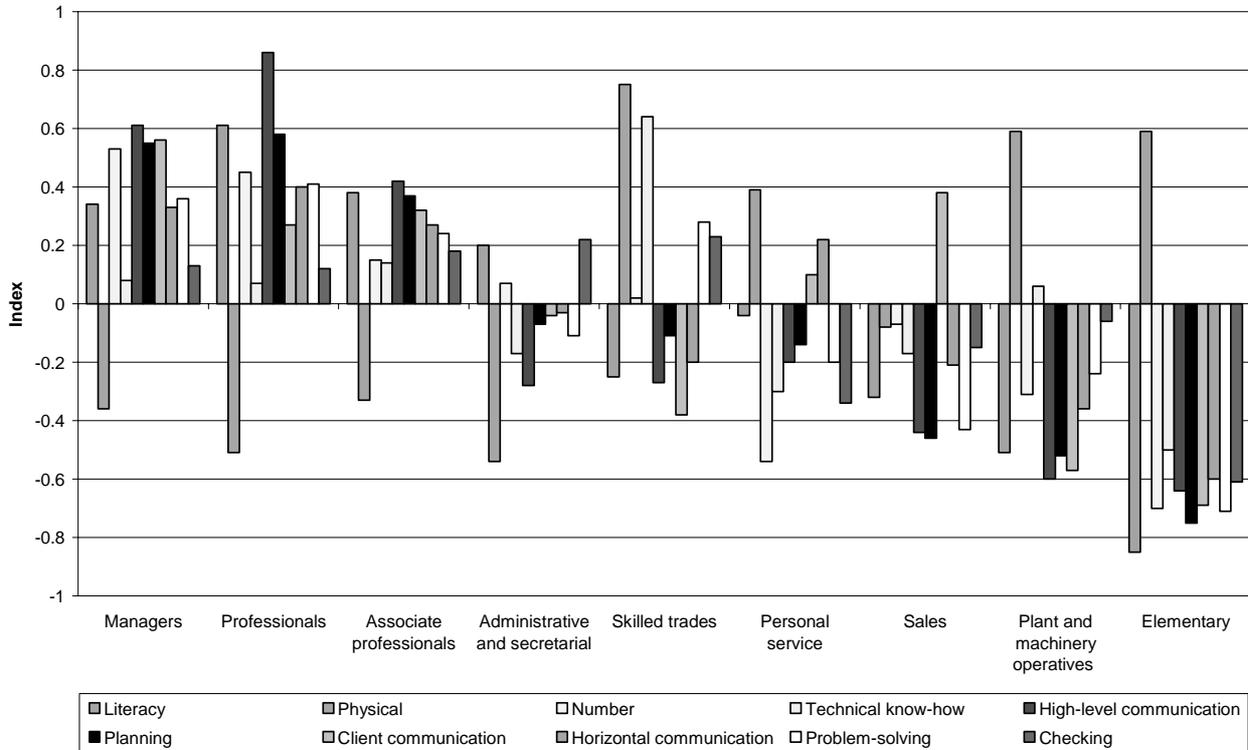


Source: Labour Force Survey.

The Labour Force Survey also provides a picture of the link between earnings and employment. Employees with no qualifications earn the lowest hourly wage (around £6 per hour) with those with an NVQ Level 4 qualification or higher (usually a university degree or higher) earning the most (around £15.50 per hour). Women earn considerably less than men at each qualification level. Data on the impact of skill level on income emerges clearly from panel data (National Child Development Study and British Cohort Study). Individuals with level 1 or better skills earn significantly more than workers with poorer skills. Even when education level on leaving school is taken into account, individuals with level 1 numeracy earn 12-13% more than people with poorer skills; better literacy attracts a 6-8% wage premium. Studies also show significant links between low qualifications, unemployment and poor lifetime earnings (Elias et al, 2002).

A relationship between occupation, skill and wages emerges whether skill is measured by qualifications or competences. Figure 7 uses ten generic skill measures drawn from the 2001 Work Skill survey (Felstead, 2002). An index score of zero is allocated as the average score for the use of the skill across all the data. A negative index score indicates the skill is being used less than average, a positive index score means the skill is used more than average. Management and professional workers use a broader range of skills (apart from physical skills) and use them frequently while workers in elementary occupations, plant and machinery operatives and sales people use a smaller range of skills in their jobs.

Figure 7. Distribution of generic skills across occupations, workers aged 20–60, 2001, Great Britain

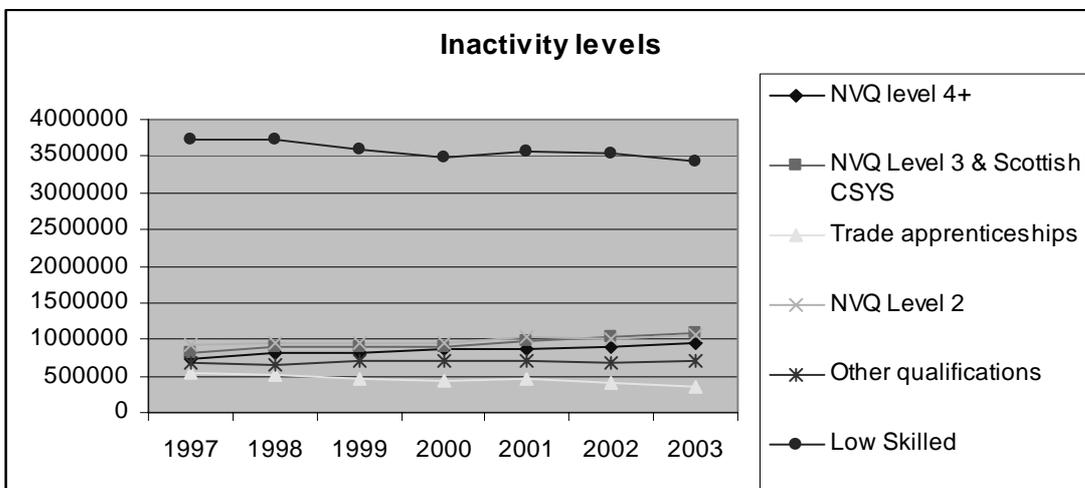


Source: Work Skills Survey, Felstead et al (2000), p.107, Table 3.8.

1.3 Low skills and the economically inactive

The number of inactive people with low skills fell slightly between 1997 and 2003 (see Figure 8). While this partly reflects the secular decline in the low-qualified population, an additional factor appears to be a recent increase in the employment rates of disabled people (from 25% to 36% among men and from 30% to 39% for women between 1997 and 2002).

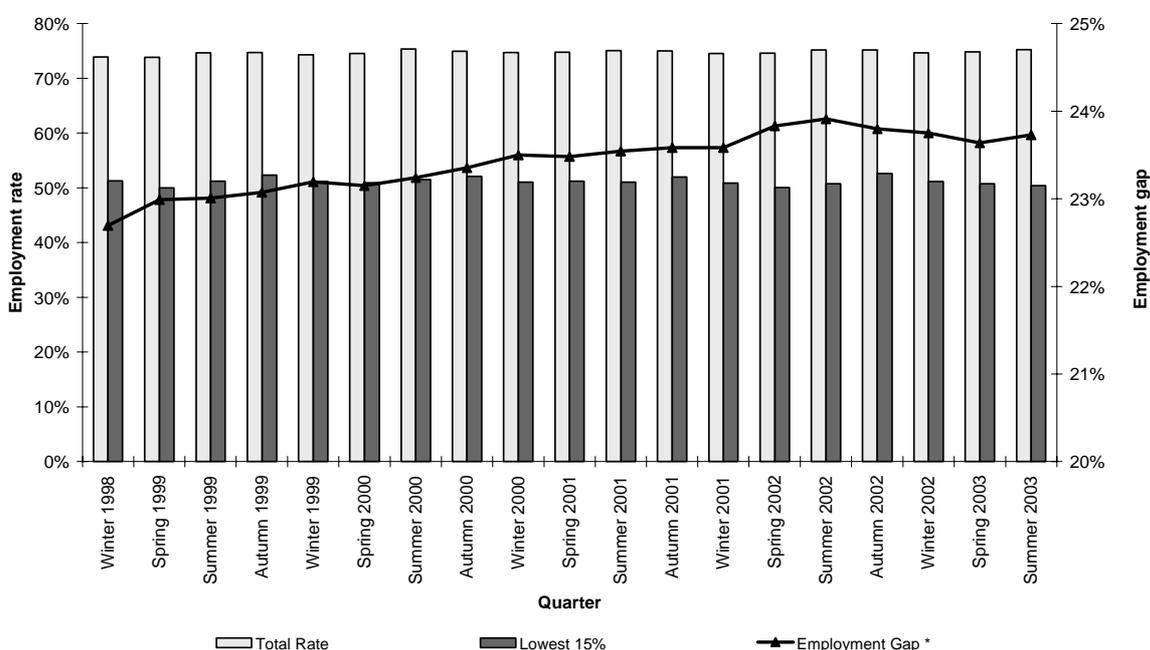
Figure 8. Numbers of economically inactive people by qualification level, 1997-2003, Great Britain



Source: Labour Force Survey.

The importance of male disability to labour market trends reflects a long build-up of disability and labour market withdrawal, particularly during the industrial restructuring of the 1980s and especially among the poorly qualified. The employment rate of low-qualified disabled men fell from 48% to 28% between 1982 and 1998 (the corresponding fall for those with university degrees was from 90% to 72%). For this reason and because of low qualifications among non-working women, poorly qualified remain the largest group among inactive people (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Employment rate of the lowest qualified 15% of working-age individuals, winter 1998-summer 2003, Great Britain



* Employment gap has been seasonally adjusted

Source: Labour Force Survey.

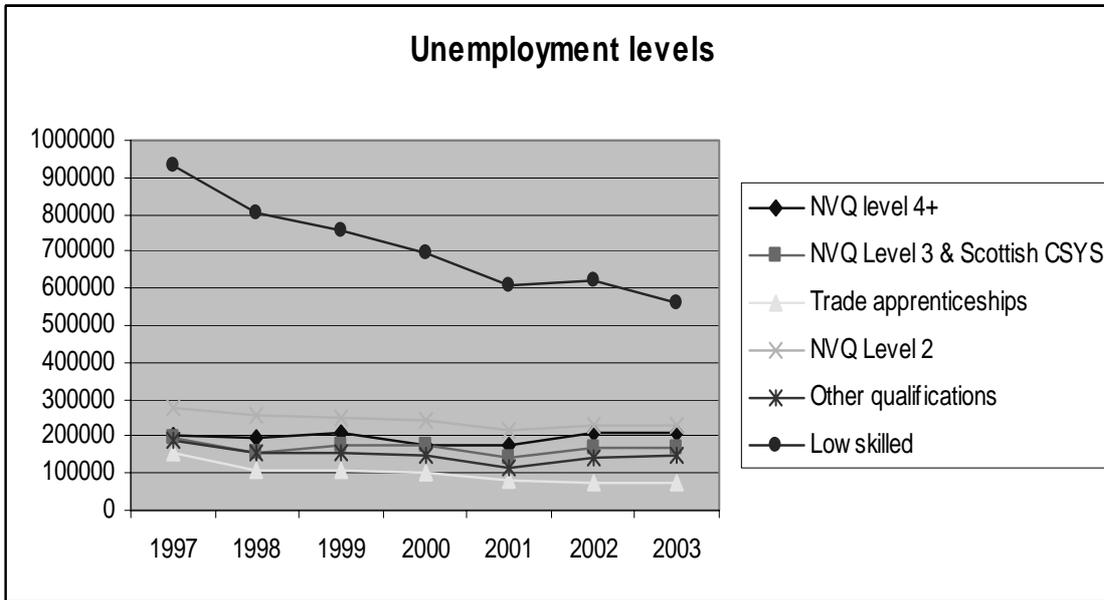
The Department for Work and Pensions is particularly concerned with individuals claiming “inactive benefits”; this includes roughly 5 million people on Income Support (IS) and Incapacity Benefit (IB). Some 60% of this client group are poorly qualified. Although the rise in the receipt of disability benefits levelled off in 1995, the long average duration of claims ensures that low-qualified individuals on inactive benefits remains a major pool from which adult learners could be drawn.

1.4 Low skills and the unemployed

The ILO unemployment rate among those with low skills fell substantially between 1997 and 2003, reflecting an increased demand for low-skilled labour and a small but significant impact of

a range of employment programmes targeted on long-term active unemployed claimants (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Numbers of ILO unemployed by qualification level, 1997-2003, Great Britain



Note: "Low-skilled" includes all individuals with below NVQ level 2 qualifications or no qualifications.

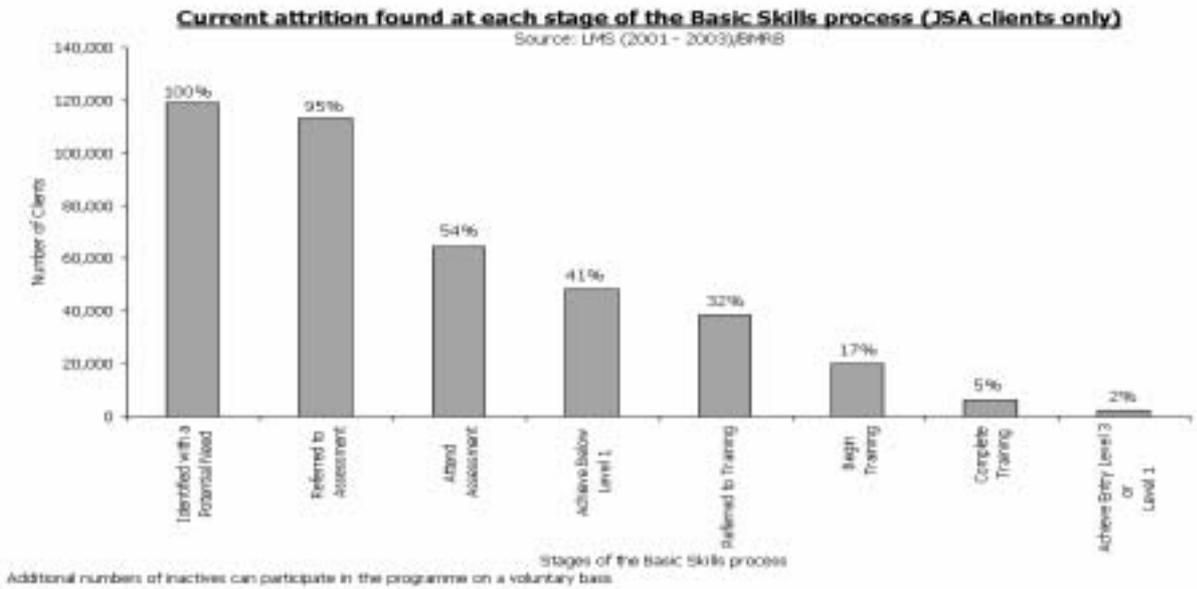
Source: Labour Force Survey.

Data on the qualifications and learning activities of long-term JSA claimants comes from a survey of those eligible for referral to New Deal or Employment Zones (Hales et al, 2003). Half had no educational qualifications. Of those who had qualifications, half had qualifications usually gained by minimum school leaving age. At the other extreme, about one in ten had a degree or equivalent. Slightly fewer than one in ten had some other qualification, including qualifications obtained outside Britain.

Only about 3% were attending training courses as their main activity or had been on a course as their main activity over the previous year. Three-fifths of those on a course were studying at a college. The remainder were studying under some other arrangement, although relatively few were being trained through an employer or a vocational training centre. Those studying had usually been very or fairly satisfied with their courses.

Although the proportion of learners appeared small, JSA claimants remain an important source of potential learners. They are likely to be closer to the labour market than most claimants of inactive benefits. However, rates of attrition among active jobseekers on basic skills courses are high (see Figure 11). Future policies aimed at increasing participation of JSA claimants in adult learning must invest effort in counteracting such attrition. A pilot of mandatory training is currently underway in England.

Figure 11.



Source: Basic Skills Evaluation Database, DWP.

In summary, between 1997 and 2003 the number of people in the UK with low skills (those below level 2 or with no qualifications) declined in contrast to the better qualified. However, the low skilled still represent the largest share of the working age population across employed, unemployed and inactive categories.

CHAPTER 2

PARTICIPANTS AND MOTIVATION

The aim of this section is to briefly outline participation in adult learning and the motivations for and barriers to learning. Data have been taken from the National Adult Learning Survey (NALS) commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills. Data refers to England and Wales and is largely from the most recent survey in 2002¹.

2.1 Participation in learning

Table 1 shows that participation in learning is strongly influenced by previous experience. People with no qualifications are poorly represented in adult learning. Adult learning is also stratified by age. Engagement in any type of learning appears to drop off substantially after age 50 (see Table 2). Older age groups are particularly poorly represented in vocational learning. This pattern of reduced participation among older people has persisted over time (see Table 3).

Table 1. Percentages of current qualification groups reporting participation in different types of learning

	All	NVQ level 5	NVQ level 4	NVQ level 3	NVQ level 2	NVQ level 1	No qualif's
Any learning	77	94	94	82	85	67	29
Taught learning	61	82	81	63	69	49	20
Self-directed learning	61	85	82	67	66	47	15
Vocational learning	69	90	88	75	78	57	20
Non-vocational learning	26	32	34	27	28	22	11
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5 633</i>	<i>344</i>	<i>1 391</i>	<i>891</i>	<i>769</i>	<i>1 727</i>	<i>531</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5 708</i>	<i>341</i>	<i>1 402</i>	<i>894</i>	<i>772</i>	<i>1 761</i>	<i>532</i>

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 who have been in CFT education.

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

¹ Data provided by DfES Analytical Services Division.

Table 2. Percentages of age groups reporting participation in different types of learning

	Age 16-19	Age 20-29	Age 30-39	Age 40-49	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70+
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	82	85	83	81	74	51	28
Taught learning	67	69	70	67	54	35	18
Self-directed learning	57	69	65	68	60	34	16
Vocational learning	76	81	79	76	65	30	6
Non-vocational learning	23	22	26	26	27	33	25
<i>Weighted base</i>	143	953	1 393	1 268	1 069	826	1 014
<i>Unweighted base</i>	112	780	1 371	1 365	1 169	928	943

Base: All respondents aged 16+.

Table 3. Percentages of age groups reporting some learning – NALS 1997–2002

	Age 16-19	Age 20-29	Age 30-39	Age 40-49	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70+	<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
NALS 1997	82	85	82	78	67	47	NA	5 245	5 386
NALS 2001	76	86	83	80	74	49	25	6 451	6 451
NALS 2002	82	85	83	81	74	51	28	6 668	6 668

Base All respondents aged 16+.

Table 4 shows participation in adult learning in England and Wales by ethnicity. Although sample sizes are small for many of the minority groups, it is clear that white groups are relatively highly represented in adult learning whereas British Asians are relatively poorly represented. People with a work-limiting disability are also particularly poorly represented in adult learning (see Table 5).

Table 4. Percentages of ethnic groups reporting participation in different types of learning

	All	White	Mixed ethnic origin	Asian (British)	Black (British)	Chinese and other
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	76	77	[66]	63	[80]	[69]
Taught learning	61	62	[46]	47	[66]	[57]
Self-directed learning	61	62	[49]	45	[61]	[48]
Vocational learning	69	69	[64]	57	[77]	[60]
Non-vocational learning	26	27	[13]	15	[12]	[19]
<i>Weighted base</i>	5 654	5 162	48	239	98	95
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5 725	5 306	41	198	84	85

Base: All respondents aged 16-69.

Table 5. Percentages of respondents with and without a disability reporting participation in different types of learning

	All	Work limiting disability	Other long term disability	No disability
	%	%	%	%
Any learning	76	56	72	81
Taught learning	61	39	57	66
Self-directed learning	61	40	55	65
Vocational learning	69	42	60	74
Non-vocational learning	26	26	29	26
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5 654</i>	<i>721</i>	<i>643</i>	<i>4 284</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5 725</i>	<i>765</i>	<i>695</i>	<i>4 259</i>

Base: all respondents aged 16-69.

Looking at SEGs (Social Economic Groups), the lowest learning participation rate (47%) was found among unskilled workers (see Table 6).

Table 6. Percentages of SEG groups reporting participation in different types of learning

	All	Professional/managerial	Other non-manual	Skilled manual	Semi-skilled manual	Unskilled manual	Other/unclassified
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	81	88	87	74	71	47	[77]
Taught learning	65	74	73	51	58	31	[77]
Self-directed learning	65	75	73	56	50	28	[69]
Vocational learning	74	83	81	65	64	36	[69]
Non-vocational learning	26	27	29	24	23	21	[31]
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5 088</i>	<i>1 362</i>	<i>1 740</i>	<i>1 022</i>	<i>784</i>	<i>153</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5 123</i>	<i>1 358</i>	<i>1 764</i>	<i>1 028</i>	<i>791</i>	<i>156</i>	<i>13</i>

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 currently employed or self-employed or who have been in paid employment in the past 10 years.

Analysis by SOC (Standard Occupational Classification, 1990) shows a very similar picture to the SEG analysis above.

Table 7. Percentages of SOC(90) groups reporting participation in different types of learning

	Manager & admin's	Profession- ional	Associate prof. technical	& Clerical & secretarial	& Craft & related	Personal & protective services	& Sales	Plant & machine operative	Other/un- classified
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	88	94	95	80	74	80	71	64	58
Taught	72	84	82	64	52	68	49	43	41
Self-directed	72	87	86	62	56	59	52	45	38
Vocational	81	91	91	72	66	74	63	55	48
Non-vocational	28	33	32	27	26	23	20	19	21
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>1 073</i>	<i>534</i>	<i>694</i>	<i>554</i>	<i>574</i>	<i>564</i>	<i>312</i>	<i>394</i>	<i>375</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1 080</i>	<i>543</i>	<i>689</i>	<i>561</i>	<i>578</i>	<i>579</i>	<i>321</i>	<i>389</i>	<i>370</i>

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

When exploring occupational classes (using NS-SEC, the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification), the lowest learning rate is found among those in semi-routine and routine occupations (see Table 8). The permanency and terms of the labour contract may explain the pattern of high rates of learning among managerial/professional workers and low levels among routine occupations. Learning is less likely to be required or expected among more transient working populations.

Table 8. Percentages of NS-SEC groups reporting participation in different types of learning

	All	Managerial / professional	Inter-mediate	Small employer / own account worker	Lower super / technical	Semi-routine / routine jobs
Any learning	81	92	86	77	76	65
Taught learning	65	80	71	48	58	49
Self-directed learning	65	81	66	64	58	44
Vocational learning	74	87	78	69	69	56
Non-vocational learning	26	30	27	27	21	23
<i>Weighted base</i>	5 082	2 033	670	398	676	1 305
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5 117	2 042	673	424	675	1 303

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 currently employed or self-employed or who have been in paid employment during the past 10 years.

Table 9. Percentages of SOC(2000) groups reporting participation in different types of learning

	Managers / senior officials	Professional occupations	Associate prof. / technical	Admin. / secretarial	Skilled trades	Personal service	Sales / customer service	Process / plant machine ops	Elementary
Any learning	89	95	93	85	74	86	73	65	58
Taught	75	83	79	69	50	72	53	45	42
Self-directed	75	87	85	64	59	63	54	43	40
Vocational	83	91	90	74	67	80	66	57	48
Non-vocational	28	33	29	31	24	25	22	18	21
<i>Weighted base</i>	691	627	668	743	539	447	375	400	588
<i>Unweighted base</i>	702	631	663	758	543	463	383	388	584

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 currently in paid employment or who have been in paid employment during the past 10 years

Analysis of the occupational classification system SOC(2000) and employment status shows (see Table 9):

- Those in elementary occupations were least likely to report learning (58%). This group includes occupations that require the knowledge and experience necessary to perform mostly routine tasks, often involving the use of simple hand-held tools and in some cases a degree of physical effort.
- People in manual occupations were least likely to have undertaken some learning.

Table 10. Percentages of household income groups reporting participation in different types of learning

	All	£10,399 or less	£10,400-£20,799	£20,800-£31,199	£31,200+
Any learning	76	55	71	85	92
Taught learning	61	43	54	69	77
Self-directed learning	61	35	53	69	82
Vocational learning	69	43	62	79	89
Non-vocational learning	26	22	22	28	30
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5 654</i>	<i>1 071</i>	<i>1 230</i>	<i>1 045</i>	<i>1 595</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5 725</i>	<i>1 115</i>	<i>1 279</i>	<i>1 078</i>	<i>1 566</i>

Base: All respondents aged 16-69.

Note: 687 respondents aged under 70 did not answer the question on household income.

The link between socio-economic/occupational status and learning is reflected in Table 10. Participation in learning is stratified by household income; the group with the lowest household income reported the lowest engagement in adult learning.

Table 11. Percentages of benefit dependency groups reporting participation in different types of learning

	All	Benefit dependent	Not benefit dependent
Any learning	76	60	81
Taught learning	61	46	65
Self-directed learning	61	41	66
Vocational learning	69	52	73
Non-vocational learning	26	20	28
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5 654</i>	<i>1 102</i>	<i>4 488</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5 725</i>	<i>1 129</i>	<i>4 528</i>

Note: 68 respondents did not answer the question on receipt of benefits.

Base: All respondents aged 16-69.

Table 11 shows a clear link between benefit dependency² and learning. Only 60% of those on benefits reported some learning, compared with 81% of the rest of the sample.

² Respondents were classified as being benefit dependent if they reported any of the following sources of household income: Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Invalid Care Allowance, Working Families Tax Credit and Severe Disablement Allowance. The results show a clear link between these financial circumstances and learning.

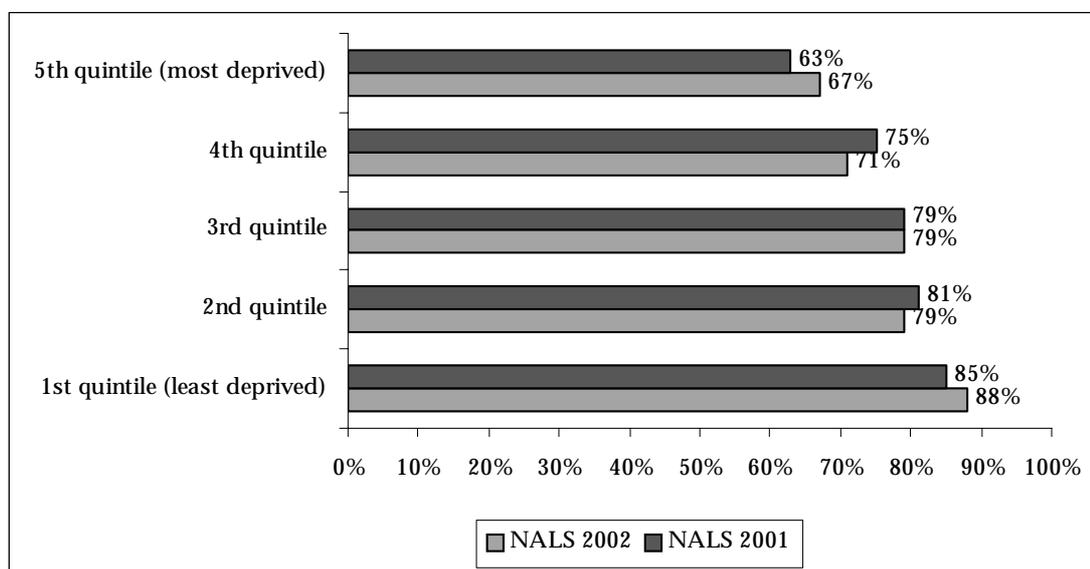
Table 12. Percentages of respondents in multiple deprivation index quintiles reporting participation in different types of learning

	All	1 st quintile (least deprived)	2 nd quintile	3 rd quintile	4 th quintile	5 th quintile (most deprived)
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	77	88	79	79	71	67
Taught learning	61	73	66	62	55	52
Self-directed learning	61	72	64	64	54	51
Vocational learning	69	79	72	71	63	60
Non-vocational learning	27	33	29	25	27	19
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>5 352</i>	<i>1 032</i>	<i>1 046</i>	<i>1 031</i>	<i>1 129</i>	<i>1 114</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5 297</i>	<i>1 037</i>	<i>1 066</i>	<i>1 045</i>	<i>1 080</i>	<i>1 069</i>

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 in England.

Table 12 and Figure 12 use multiple deprivation indices to examine the relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and learning. The results show a strong association between local deprivation and learning (see Figure 12). The learning rate in the fourth quintile is below average (71%) and drops even further in the most deprived areas (67%).

Figure 12. Percentages of respondents in multiple deprivation index quintiles reporting participation in different types of learning, NALS 2001–02



Base: All respondents aged 16-69 in England.

2.2 Attitudes, motivation and barriers to learning

The National Adult Learning Survey explores the motivation and attitudes of adult learners. The analysis below divides respondents by qualification level and clusters them according to their previous educational experience and their current attitude towards learning.

Table 13. Characteristics of adults according to their current qualification level using an achievement typology

4 Cluster Solution * NVQ level now (grouped) Cross-tabulation

% within NVQ level now (grouped)

NVQ level now (grouped)							
	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	No qualifications	Total
Achieved	55.7%	54.2%	38.2%	37.8%	19.6%	6.2%	34.5%
Unfulfilled	31.5%	30.8%	35.7%	36.3%	33.7%	20.8%	32.3%
Disinterested	9.0%	14.1%	21.6%	22.6%	41.9%	60.3%	28.9%
Rejecter	3.8%	.9%	4.5%	3.3%	4.9%	12.7%	4.3%
<i>Base</i>	343	1 386	888	733	1 693	519	5 562

Base: NALS 2002 dataset 16- to 69-year-olds.

Key:

Achieved = **Liked school, higher job status**, higher academic achievement, “ambitious”, positive about further learning.

Unfulfilled = **Prefer classroom**, young, male, low job status, school rather than tertiary education, positive about further learning.

Disinterested = **Non scientific, reject education**, older, female, manual worker, low academic achievement, low interest in further learning.

Rejecter = **Disliked school, reject education**, young, male, low educational attainment, poor school experience, little interest in further learning.

People with no qualifications and qualified to level 1 are most likely to belong to the “disinterested” cluster, compared with other clusters. They are more likely to belong to the “disinterested” or “rejecter” clusters (which are negative about learning) than any other qualification group.

Table 14. Obstacles to learning / reasons for not learning by current qualification*

	NVQ level 5	NVQ level 4	NVQ level 3	NVQ level 2	NVQ level 1	No qual's
Prefer to spend time doing other things	25	28	34	29	36	32
Not interested in learning	4	6	10	10	19	32
Do not need to learn for my work	4	7	11	11	17	14
Do not see any point in education	*	2	3	1	6	9
Lack of time due to work	33	27	34	29	30	17
Hard to get time off work to learn	22	20	23	22	18	7
Lack of time due to family	14	16	17	23	24	27
Lack of time due to children	8	11	11	17	17	15
Lack of time because care for an adult	1	3	4	2	6	11
Hard to pay course fees	20	23	24	27	28	24
Would only do learning if someone paid fees	7	12	13	12	14	15
Benefits would be cut if did course	1	2	3	3	6	12
Do not know about local learning opportunities	19	20	24	25	27	30
Cannot find local opportunities to learn	10	12	13	12	13	12
Do not know where to find out about courses	3	6	8	10	13	15
Nervous about going back to classroom	3	5	12	16	26	28
Do not have qual's to get onto course	2	3	8	11	25	30
Worried about keeping up with course	3	5	9	13	22	27
Difficulties reading and writing	1	2	4	3	9	18
Difficulties with English	2	2	2	2	7	13
Problems with numbers	1	2	2	3	6	10
Too old to learn	1	3	9	6	16	23
Problem arranging transport to course	1	5	6	8	10	20
Course difficult due to health/ disability	1	2	4	2	5	11
None of the above obstacles	22	20	12	14	9	4
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>344</i>	<i>1 391</i>	<i>891</i>	<i>769</i>	<i>1 727</i>	<i>531</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>341</i>	<i>1 402</i>	<i>894</i>	<i>772</i>	<i>1 770</i>	<i>545</i>

Base: All respondents aged 16-69.

*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could mention more than one factor. Note: Academic and vocational qualifications were categorised according to NVQ level, using the Labour Force Survey code frame.

Source: NALS 2002 report

Looking at qualification level and obstacles to learning (see Table 14):

- Those with no qualifications were most likely to mention lack of time due to their family (27%) or lack of qualifications (30%), difficulties with writing (18%), English (13%) and numbers (10%), and worries about keeping up with the course (27%) or being nervous about going back to the classroom (28%), along with transport problems (20%).
- Those with basic skills difficulties were more likely to say that they prefer to spend time doing other things (37%), do not know about local learning opportunities (28%), do not have the qualifications to get onto the course (25%), and are not interested in learning (24%), but would participate in learning if course fees were paid (16%).

- Only 7% of those with basic skills difficulties said there were no obstacles to learning, compared to 15% of the rest of the sample.

Table 15. What would encourage non-learners to learn by current qualification*

	NVQ level 5	NVQ level 4	NVQ level 3	NVQ level 2	NVQ level 1	No qual's
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Funding	[14]	[29]	25	28	20	17
Advice	[34]	[20]	21	24	23	15
Learning at right times	[8]	[12]	14	29	14	6
Learning in right place	[-]	[12]	10	18	14	6
If improved job chances	[19]	[15]	14	19	13	9
Childcare	[9]	[10]	8	14	10	9
Learning relevant to needs	[-]	[13]	15	8	11	5
Help with health/ disability	[4]	[9]	7	7	8	14
Time off to learn	[5]	[6]	10	16	7	3
Help with literacy/ English	[18]	[6]	8	1	7	12
Learning at work	[-]	[-]	6	6	6	2
Care for dependents	[-]	[2]	3	2	3	5
Other factors	[5]	[-]	1	1	1	*
None of these	[40]	[51]	44	39	47	55
<i>Weighted base</i>	22	86	163	115	565	380
<i>Unweighted base</i>	21	98	175	121	599	398

Base: All respondents aged 16+ who had done no learning in the past three years.

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

On questions of incentives to learn (see Table 15), 55% of those with no qualifications said none of the incentives discussed would encourage them to learn. However, non-learners with no qualifications were more likely to mention the following incentives: help with disability (14%), help with literacy (12%) and care for dependants (5%).

Table 16. Employment related reasons for starting a course by current qualification*

	NVQ level 5	NVQ level 4	NVQ level 3	NVQ level 2	NVQ level 1	No qual's
	%	%	%	%	%	%
To develop new job skills	62	70	59	57	59	[41]
To develop career	61	63	63	58	47	[23]
To get job satisfaction	39	48	43	36	36	[16]
To get a (new) job	14	19	21	28	24	[48]
To change type of work	22	21	21	22	24	[11]
To get a promotion	13	15	16	9	10	[3]
To get a pay rise	15	15	16	10	11	[5]
To help set up a business	8	10	10	9	8	[8]
To stay in job, that may have lost	3	5	5	3	3	[9]
To help with work-related health problems	3	2	1	1	3	[10]
Not for any job-related reasons above	9	6	6	7	9	[13]
<i>Weighted base</i>	176	678	320	299	440	55
<i>Unweighted base</i>	173	677	306	287	431	47

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 who had done (non-compulsory) taught learning in past three years that was related to their current or future job.

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

Table 16 shows some of the employment-related reasons for starting on a course. A relatively high proportion of people with low qualifications reported getting a new job as a motivator for training, whereas more highly qualified people were motivated by career development. On more general motivators for training (see Table 17), more than one-fifth of those with NVQ level 2 or below reported meeting people and finding something useful to do in the spare time, compared with 9-19% of those qualified at level 3 or above.

Table 17. Wider motivators for taught learning by current qualification*

	NVQ level 5	NVQ level 4	NVQ level 3	NVQ level 2	NVQ level 1	No qual's
To improve knowledge about subject	80	79	76	71	63	[52]
To do something interesting	45	44	38	44	43	45
To gain a qualification	30	38	43	46	36	[29]
Curious about subject	39	40	37	34	32	[25]
To meet new people	15	17	18	20	24	[22]
To have fun	18	21	20	19	21	[17]
To fill spare time	9	16	19	23	22	[19]
To keep body active	9	9	7	7	10	[17]
To start another course	4	5	8	4	5	[9]
To get involved in volunteering	4	5	3	5	5	[6]
To help child with school work	3	4	7	7	7	[8]
To help with disability	4	3	3	3	5	[6]
None of these	4	4	6	4	6	6
<i>Weighted base</i>	232	914	424	416	663	85
<i>Unweighted base</i>	229	925	419	410	667	78

Base: all respondents aged 16-69 who had done (non-compulsory) taught learning in past three years.

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

Table 18. Likelihood of respondents to do vocational learning in the future

	All	NVQ level 5	NVQ level 4	NVQ level 3	NVQ level 2	NVQ level 1	No qualif's
Very likely	44	68	60	45	46	31	16
Fairly likely	24	17	23	25	27	25	17
Not very likely	14	9	9	14	14	20	18
Not at all likely	18	6	8	16	14	24	49
<i>Weighted base</i>	4 885	325	1 252	797	713	1 449	349
<i>Unweighted base</i>	4 879	341	1 243	781	714	1 455	345

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 who were working or planning to work in the future.

Table 18 shows that people with higher qualifications consider themselves more likely to engage in vocational training in the future. A similar picture is presented for non-vocational training: about one-third of respondents with NQV level 5 qualifications considered themselves “very likely” to do non-vocational training in the future, compared with 10% of those with no qualifications.

To summarise:

- Participation in adult learning is closely linked to socio-economic background. People with more advantaged backgrounds in terms of education, employment, income and other indicators of social well-being are more involved in adult learning.
- Groups that are particularly underrepresented in adult learning are people with work-limiting disabilities, people who are benefit dependent, people aged 50 and over and some minority ethnic groups (particularly British Asians).
- Participation in adult learning is closely linked to earlier experiences of education. People with poor past experiences are more likely to reject adult learning.
- Incentivising people with poor qualifications is difficult.

CHAPTER 3

POLICIES AND PROVISION FOR LOW-SKILLED ADULTS IN ENGLAND

3.1 The Skills Strategy

In July 2003, the government launched its national skills strategy, *21st Century Skills: Realising our Potential*. The skills strategy aims to tackle the skills gap between the UK and its main economic competitors. It commits the government and its key partners to a radical strategy of demand-led provision of skills, recognised by reformed qualifications and steered by the needs of employers.

The strategy has led to the formation of a national Skills Alliance which brings together key government departments³ with employer and union representatives and key delivery partners led by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Two Secretaries of State (the Secretary of State for Education and Skills and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry) chair the Alliance and other Ministers attend; this is a key indication of the importance of delivering on the Skills Strategy across the government.

The government is currently considering how Jobcentre Plus and the LSC can work together more effectively to deliver job-related training to key customer groups. The National Employment Panel's *Welfare to Workforce Development* report recommends that each LSC Executive Director and JCP Manager agree upon an annual delivery plan that sets out the key employment and skills priorities for the two organisations.

The Skills Strategy includes a wide range of interlinked measures to remove barriers to learning and support participation by individuals, as well as re-focusing public investment in those areas of skills provision where it is most needed – a universal entitlement to a first level 2 qualification (see below) and in specific shortage areas above level 2.

There are five areas of focus to the Skills Strategy:

- Skills for individuals
- Skills for employers
- Qualifications reform

³ Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Education and Skills, Department of Trade and Industry and Department of Treasury.

- Reform of further education and training
- Evidence and evaluation

The Skills Strategy also looks beyond the economic benefits of moving UK individuals and employers up the skills ladder, and encompasses the social benefits accruing from increased skill levels, particularly basic skills acquisition and skills for employability.

Level 2 entitlement

One of the main mechanisms for achieving the goals of the Skills Strategy is the introduction of a level 2 entitlement. Figure 13 outlines what equates to level 2.

Figure 13. Summary of what counts as a level 2 qualification

The accepted standard for a full NVQ2 is: 5 GCSEs grade A-C

5 GCSEs are referred to as having 100% bandwidth, so 4 GCSEs has 80% bandwidth, 3 GCSEs has 60% bandwidth etc.

GCSEs are school qualifications and are not usually studied by adults. All the individual level 2 qualifications studied in further education have now been given a bandwidth by the LSC (and QCA).

All NVQ2 qualifications have a 100% bandwidth, but bandwidths for different subjects within some of the other generic qualifications may vary (although most are 100%) e.g.

City & Guilds - Cosmetic Makeup = 100%
 City & Guilds - Wig making = 29%

To summarise, qualifications equivalent to a full level 2 are:

- 5 GCSEs (or O levels): grade A-C
- NVQ level 2
- BTEC, SCOTVEC first or general diploma
- Edexcel first diploma
- GNVQ Intermediate
- City & Guilds Craft / part 2
- RSA Diploma
- 2 AS levels
- 1 A level
- SCE higher (1 or 2)
- Intermediate 2 higher qualification

The Skills Strategy sets out an initiative to guarantee free learning for adults to achieve their first full level 2 qualification, providing a platform of skills for employability. The entitlement to fee-free level 2 learning for adults was introduced in autumn 2004, starting in two regions (North East and South East).

Increasing the proportion of the workforce with employability skills and basic skills are two of the Government's PSA (Public Service Agreement) targets. The adult level 2 PSA target is:

- To reduce by at least 40% the number of adults in the workforce who lack NVQ2 or equivalent qualifications by 2010; and, working towards this, to raise 1 million adults already in the workforce to achieve level 2 between 2003 and 2006.

Figure 3 shows that the number of employed individuals without level 2 qualifications decreased between 2002 and 2003. The 40% reduction would mean that the 7 million low-qualified workers shown in Figure 3 would be reduced to about 4.2 million. DWP fully contributes to the level 2 target by supporting opportunities for adults within the benefit system to access the level 2 entitlements.

In addition to the level 2 entitlement, the government has committed to a package of measures that reflect the different needs of potential learners, and subsidises learning towards:

- Basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages).
- Increased support for NVQ level 3 qualifications in areas of sectoral or regional skill priority through the Regional Skills Partnerships.

Skills for Life

Skills for Life was the national strategy for addressing the literacy, language and numeracy needs of all post-age-16 learners, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. It is now subsumed within the national Skills Strategy launched in July 2003. There are four main themes to Skills for Life, which are being taken forward in the Skills Strategy:

- Boosting demand for learning through effective promotion and engaging government agencies and employers to identify and address the literacy, language and numeracy needs of their clients and employees
- Increasing the capacity to provide training by securing sufficient funding and co-ordinating planning and delivery to meet learners' needs.
- Improving the quality of teaching in literacy, numeracy and language provision through the national teaching, learning and assessment infrastructure.
- Increasing learner achievement and the number of adults succeeding in national qualifications, and reducing barriers to learning.

Skills for Life was launched in 2001 with the aim to reduce the number of adults in England with literacy, language and numeracy difficulties from one in five adults to one in ten or better. The target to help 1.5 million adults achieve level 2 national certificates by 2007 is progressing effectively: the government is on schedule to meet its interim target of helping 750 000 low-skilled adults achieve a national qualification by 2004.

3.2 New Deal for Skills

The New Deal for Skills was announced by the Chancellor in his Budget of 17 March 2004.

Currently the overall aim of the New Deal for Skills is to help people move from welfare into work and from low-skilled work into higher-skilled work. The New Deal does not seek to replace the Skills Strategy. Its aim is to complement the Strategy and to push policy in the same direction. It is also a concrete response to recommendations in the recent report by the National Employment Panel. The Budget report set out national aspirations on skills and outlined areas where the UK needs to make progress, in particular:

- new measures and pilots to improve the incentives and assistance available to out-of-work individuals seeking to gain new skills, move into work and get on at work
- better co-ordination between Jobcentre Plus offices and Information Advice and Guidance partnerships to offer a more integrated skills service in Jobcentre Plus offices.
- development of a “skills passport” to help individuals make the move from welfare into sustainable work, to build a record of skills and competences gained and to transfer skills between jobs.

The programme will be developed jointly by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Work and Pensions.

3.3 Access to learning – reform of adult Information Advice and Guidance

This reform effort aims to strengthen support for individual learners, with better information, advice and guidance (IAG) on skills training and qualifications, clearer targeting of funds and more help to return to learning. The national policy framework and action plan for Adult IAG were published in December 2003, setting out minimum levels of information and advice services to be made available for adults in all areas.

Delivery of un-biased IAG services is a core function of Jobcentre Plus, as staff:

- provide information, advice and guidance about work to jobless customers.
- provide information and advice about learning opportunities to jobless customers.
- refer New Deal customers to specialists (contracted) for career guidance.

The National Employment Panel *Welfare to Workforce Development* report recommends that Jobcentre Plus Personal Advisers should increase their links into the IAG networks by providing, as a minimum:

1. **Information** – general details which help customers make decisions about learning and work. For example, issuing booklets that help workers or job seekers obtain financial assistance, leaflets about Worktrain, or the **learn**direct telephone number and other contact information.

2. **Advice** – support which helps customers understand the available information. For example, a detailed discussion with a jobless customer about work benefits or specific details about a vacancy/training opportunity.
3. **Guidance** – a process which helps customers consider the learning, work and welfare, and support options available. For example, a Jobcentre Plus advisory interview in which job goals are identified and necessary steps to achieve them are agreed, or a discussion about benefit entitlement in relation to the specific individual.

A key reform is the integration of the **learndirect** national learning advice service with local IAG services. Two main user groups will be encouraged to access the integrated service:

- Adults qualified to level 2 and above, who will be encouraged to visit the website or speak to an adviser over the telephone for information and advice on courses.
- Adults qualified to below level 2 and/or from a social or economic priority area, who may need personalised advice to help them overcome their barriers to learning. There will be a strong focus on those who need the most help and who are least able to pay for it.

3.4 Employer Training Pilots

Employer Training Pilots (ETPs) were introduced in September 2002 to encourage employers to invest in skills and qualifications, particularly for low-skilled trainees. They are testing a package of financial support measures to improve access to training and enable employees to attain basic and NVQ level 2 skills. Figure 14 outlines what is included in the package of the pilot initiative.

ETPs are now fully operational in 12 LSC areas. The Chancellor's announcement of an extra £120 million in December extends these programmes for another year and allows six more to begin: over one-third of England will then be covered. At least 32 000 learners and 7 000 employers are now engaged. Over 70% of participating employers have fewer than 50 employees. The final evaluation is due in March 2005 and will inform the development of future national programmes to support skills training.

Figure 14. What the Employer Training Pilots offer

ETPs are testing a range of measures to encourage employers to invest in skills. The exact offer varies between pilots but key components are:

- Training designed to meet the skills needs of employers and employees — about 80% of ETP training is delivered on the employer's premises and during the working day.
- Free or heavily subsidised training leading to a first level 2 or basic skills qualification.
- Support of a specialist broker to help source and arrange the training. That training can be sourced from private providers as well as colleges, depending on what the employer wants.
- Training designed to meet identified skills gaps, with the employees' existing skills being assessed at the outset, so that the training can be designed to build the skills they need.
- Providing employees with paid time off for education and training.
- Depending upon the pilot and the size of the employer, compensation paid to the employer for releasing the employee to train.
- Information, advice and guidance for employers and learners, including help to identify their skills needs.

3.5 Financial support for adult learners

A new Adult Learning Grant provides weekly support to adults studying full time for first level 2 qualification and for young adults studying for first level 3 qualification. Adult Learning Grant pilots began in 10 pilot areas from 8 September 2003, with 86 colleges and further education providers involved. More than 2 700 applications have been received, and £500 000 in Adult Learning Grants has been paid to learners (February 2004 figures).

Adult Learning Grants reflect a broader commitment to learn lessons from the first Individual Learning Accounts (ILA) scheme. While that particular scheme closed as soon as the potential for serious fraud became clear, the principles underpinning it remain central to the skills strategy – giving learners a stronger sense of ownership over their funds and offering a wider choice of provision. Instead of a successor scheme, those ILA elements that proved successful have been integrated within the strategy, particularly through the new entitlements for those with few or no qualifications.

3.6 Fees, funding and qualification reform

Funding arrangements for adult learning and skills are being reformed to give providers stronger incentives to respond to employer needs.

The aim is to make the qualification structure more flexible and responsive to employers and learners. The Quality and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is currently preparing to report to DfES Ministers with plans for implementation of credit. The Learning and Skills Council is examining the application of credit to learning and qualifications outside the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the possible links to qualifications in the NQF.

The Quality and Curriculum Authority, the Learning and Skills Council and the Sector Skills Development Agency are also working on a wider reform of vocational qualifications including streamlining the accreditation process and revising regulatory criteria to ensure the best match between assessment and content.

3.7 Jobcentre Plus provision

The National Strategy for Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills (Skills for Life) represents the over-arching framework for DWP's contribution to the Skills Strategy and is aimed at:

- Unemployed people and benefit recipients.
- Young adults in the workforce and those in low skilled jobs.
- Parents.
- Prisoners and probationers.
- Groups at high risk of social exclusion.

At present Jobcentre Plus clients can improve their skills through three main routes:

- 1) Jobcentre Plus contracted training. This is generally tailored packages of occupational training at or below NVQ level 2, including work experience wherever possible.
- 2) Learning and Skills Council contracted training, mainly further education colleges, where individuals can undertake full- or part-time courses, whilst in receipt of benefit. This is dependant on the type of benefit received. Learning and Skills Council-funded learning involves about 4 million students studying for over 6 million qualifications each year, delivered through approximately 400 colleges in England (including further education colleges, sixth form colleges, tertiary colleges, specialist colleges and agricultural and horticultural colleges).

Learning and Skills Council-funded e-learning, delivered through the network of 2 000 **learnirect** centres, places great importance on delivering learning to Jobcentre Plus clients. **learnirect** offers "any time, any place, any pace" learning for individuals and businesses, with over 300 courses in three main portfolio areas: Skills for Life, ICT and Management. **learnirect** centres are based in a wide range of venues, including public libraries, the High Street, pubs and community centres. Over 1.2 million people have enrolled on 2.5 million **learnirect** courses since 2000. About 15% of these learners are

either unemployed or returning to work after time out of the workplace, and more than 82 000 recorded referrals to **learnirect** have come from Jobcentre Plus since June 2001.

For some client groups (single parents, disabled people, etc.), access to higher education is also permissible. For the majority of inactive benefit recipients there is no formal requirement to notify Jobcentre Plus of participation. Jobseeker's Allowance recipients are required to declare part-time participation and a decision is then made as to whether a course can be treated as being "part time" (less than 16 hours).

- 3) Privately funded training, paid by the individual, including use of government-supported bank loans, i.e. Career Development Loans (see Annex 4 for a summary of Career Development Loans).

Since the Skills for Life strategy was launched, Jobcentre Plus has put in place measures to identify skills needs amongst its client groups. Jobseeker's Allowance recipients reaching six months unemployment and inactive benefit claimants who participate in a work-focused interview or who join the voluntary New Deals are screened for possible basic skills needs. Those who are identified with a possible need are referred for an assessment of their skill levels and, where appropriate, to relevant training. Jobcentre Plus intervention is targeted at those below level 1, the required level for about three-quarters of non-technical jobs.

Employment programmes

Jobcentre Plus for Jobseeker's Allowance recipients is available via the mandatory New Deals and Work Based Learning for Adults (WBLA). Training is offered through:

- Basic Employability Training (BET) – Targeted at individuals with the lowest skills levels (at or below entry level – expectation of a 7-year-old). This training offers a mix of basic skills, wider soft skills and work experience. Basic Employability Training is offered in WBLA and is voluntary, full time and lasts for up to 26 weeks.
- Basic Employability Training in New Deal 25 plus (a mandatory programme) – Designed for clients who would normally be below entry level 3, but advisers can also refer a client with basic skills needs above that level if they have other serious employability needs. Training usually lasts for 13 weeks, but can continue for up to 26 weeks if considered necessary by the adviser.
- Full-Time Education and Training (FTET) – Available as a New Deal for Young People (mandatory programme) option; lasts approximately one year.
- ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) – Offered in BET (up to 26 weeks) and FTET (lasts up to one year).
- Short Intensive Basic Skills courses (SIBS) – Designed for those with better skills but still below level 1. SIBS allow customers to build on existing skills, focused on their immediate job goals. The training is full time and lasts up to 8 weeks.

Basic skills – Jobcentre screening and provision

To increase the proportion of customers screened, taking up training and gaining qualifications, a package of changes to the current model of screening and provision was introduced, effective April 2004:

- Use of an objective written screening tool (Fast Track) for customers on Jobseeker's Allowance reaching six months unemployed, at the initial interview for New Deal for Young People, for the New Deal 25 plus and when customers join the caseload of a voluntary New Deal.
- Extension of the basic skills screening offered to customers on inactive benefits.
- Greater use of existing powers contained in the Jobseekers Act to direct active benefit customers unwilling to attend an initial assessment. Failure to comply with this direction to attend assessment can result in a temporary loss of benefits for customers.
- Payment of financial incentives where those on basic skills provision will receive an additional £10 a week plus £100 for achieving a relevant qualification.

As well as the national changes, mandatory training pilots for jobseekers with basic skills needs are in operation in 12 Jobcentre Plus districts in England over the 12-month period from April 2004 to April 2005. The pilot is testing the impact of the threat of sanctions on the uptake of basic skills training and the achievement of qualifications over and above the national changes.

3.8 ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)

Early release (summer 2002) LFS data shows that about 43 000 people of working age: were (ILO) unemployed, spoke a language other than English at home and self-identified language difficulties in keeping/finding a job. DWP estimates that about 40 000 of these individuals may be claiming benefits. In the absence of more information on the specific movement of the "ESOL population" between benefits and work, it is estimated that these individuals have lower probabilities of leaving benefits and a higher-than-average chance of returning to them if they do find work.

DWP will streamline the hand over of these programmes from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) to JCP, which should ensure that fewer people fall through the welfare net. This should increase demand for services despite a projected fall in the inflow of new refugee claimants. DWP is working with organisations such as Ufi, which operates the **learndirect**/UK online network, to look at strategies which combine ESOL courses with job skills and sector-specific skills to increase learners' employability.

CONCLUSIONS – TOWARDS A CLOSER INTEGRATION OF LEARNERS, PROVIDERS AND POLICY

This background paper began by identifying the scale and distribution of low-skill individuals in England. It then outlined the motivations for and barriers to participation in adult learning. The policies identified are aimed at removing barriers to learning for adults; they emphasise the importance of a universal entitlement to a first level 2 qualification. The background report has also stressed the role played by the National Qualifications Framework in linking qualifications, skills and competences.

The analysis presented here provides a preliminary specification of the major sources from which adult learners must be drawn to meet the challenge of low skills in England. In numerical order of importance, these sources are firstly those working in low-skilled jobs across the manufacturing and service sectors, followed by claimants of inactive benefits. Long-term unemployed recipients of Jobseekers Allowance and partners of those in work or claiming different benefits must also be added to these two main pools. Reference has also been made to migrants with poor levels of English and the importance of ESOL provision for those in work, those cycling between low paid-jobs and benefits, and long-term benefit clients speaking a language other than English at home.

As well as identifying the various pools of potential learners, this paper concludes that the poorly qualified often suffer multiple disadvantages and experience serious difficulties in participating in adult learning. Tackling skills deficits without taking these other issues– such as debt, housing and health problems – into account is not in the best interests of either clients or providers. It is also likely to threaten the achievement of national targets for qualifications, employment rates or a mixture of both. Related to this view of adult learning as a multi-faceted policy, the paper indicates that people, including those with low skills, are rarely motivated by only a single factor but will often only fully participate when a range of factors come together.

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ANNEX 1

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BET	BASIC EMPLOYABILITY TRAINING
DFES	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS
DWP	DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS
ESOL	ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES
ETP	EMPLOYER TRAINING PILOT
FTET	FULL TIME EDUCATION AND TRAINING
GCSE	GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
GNVQ	GENERAL NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION
ICT	INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY
ILA	INDIVIDUAL LEARNING ACCOUNT
JSA	JOBSEEKER'S ALLOWANCE
LFS	LABOUR FORCE SURVEY
LOT	LONGER OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING
LSC	LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL
NALS	NATIONAL ADULT LEARNING SURVEY
NASS	NATIONAL ASYLUM SUPPORT SERVICE
NEP	NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PANEL
NQF	NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
NS-SEC	NATIONAL STATISTICS SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION

NVQ	NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION
OECD	ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
PSA	PUBLIC SECTOR AGREEMENT
QCA	QUALITY AND CURRICULUM AUTHORITY
SEG	SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP
SIBS	SHORT INTENSIVE BASIC SKILLS
S/NVQ	SCOTTISH NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION
SOC	STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION
UFI	UNIVERSITY FOR INDUSTRY
WBLA	WORK BASED LEARNING FOR ADULTS

ANNEX 2

ACTORS IN ADULT LEARNING AND SKILLS

Apart from DWP and DfES, other organisations with key responsibilities for policies on low skills/low qualifications are:

Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit <www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus>

The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit is based in the Department for Education and Skills and has been operational since 1 November 2000.

The Unit is responsible for driving forward implementation of the national basic skills strategy (“Skills for Life”) and ensuring that efforts to improve literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills at the national and local levels are consistent and well co-ordinated.

The Unit has drawn its members from partner organisations such as the Prison Service, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the Learning and Skills Development Agency, as well as from the voluntary sector and the civil service. Regional Co-ordinators have been recruited to support work in the regions to improve adult literacy, language and numeracy skills.

Learning and Skills Council <www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus>

Established by the government in April 2001, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is responsible for planning and funding education and training for individuals over 16 years of age in England. Its mission is to raise participation and attainment through high-quality education and training, which reflects the learning and skills needs of individuals and employers, from basic skills up to (but not including) higher education.

The work of the LSC covers:

- Further education.
- Work-based training for young people (including Modern Apprenticeships).
- Workforce development.
- Adult and Community Learning.
- Information, Advice and Guidance for adults.
- Education-business links.

The LSC has in place a network of 47 local Learning and Skills Councils in England.

Sector Skills Development Agency <www.ssda.org.uk>

The Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) develops, supports, monitors and regulates the Sector Skills Council (SSC) network. It also makes sure essential skills work is undertaken for sectors where SSCs are not established.

University for Industry (Ufi) and learndirect < www.ufi.com> <www.learndirect.co.uk>

Ufi Limited was created in 1998 to bring about the government's vision of a "university for industry". Its services are **learndirect** – the national learning advice service – and **learndirect/UK online**, a nationally supported e-learning and e-service network.

Ufi Limited's mission is to work with partners through the **learndirect/UK online** network to boost the employability of individuals and the productivity and competitiveness of organisations. It does so by:

- inspiring existing learners to develop their skills further.
- winning over new and excluded learners .
- transforming the accessibility of learning in everyday life and work.

Through its national network of over 2 000 **learndirect** centres and 6 000 **UK online** centres, Ufi provides access and support to a range of services from e-government services, taster and skills check activities to e-learning courses which are linked to qualifications. Centres can be found in the High Street, sports facilities, community centres and shopping centre locations, many in the most deprived wards in England, to help people fit learning into their family and working lives. Over 1 million people – 1 in 60 of the UK population and 1 in 30 of the workforce – have completed a **learndirect** course.

In addition, Ufi delivers a government-funded national advice line for learning that provides impartial information, advice and guidance to callers on more than 500 000 courses nationally. Since the service began in February 1998, the advice line has handled more than 5 million telephone enquiries and the web site over 11 million.

Ufi contributes to key governmental strategic economic, learning and skills objectives. In partnership with colleges, libraries, private training providers and voluntary and community sector organisations, it focuses its activity on four priority areas:

- People qualified below level 2.
- Small and medium-sized businesses and economic sectors.
- Skills for Life learners.
- The "self pay" market of individuals motivated and attracted by the benefits of e-learning.

learndirect provides courses in three main categories: skills for life (literacy, numeracy and ESOL), business and management, and IT skills.

Ufi's vision is for **learndirect/UK online** to be:

- A household name for e-learning and e-services for all citizens.
- A High Street brand recognised by consumers for e-learning and e-services, information and advice.
- An effective e-solution for the UK workforce and businesses.
- A UK export with global significance in which all partners can take pride and credit.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority <www.qca.org.uk>

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is a guardian of standards in education and training. The Authority works with other organisations to maintain and develop the school curriculum and associated assessments, and to accredit and monitor qualifications in schools and colleges and at work.

Regional Development Agencies <www.dti.gov.uk/regional_socialinclusion/rdapage.htm>

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were formally launched in eight English regions in 1999. The ninth, in London, was established in 2000 following the establishment of the Greater London Authority. RDAs were set up to co-ordinate regional economic development and improve regional competitiveness and skills, as well as reduce the imbalances that exist between regions.

Further Educational National Training Organisation <www.fento.org>

The Further Educational National Training Organisation (FENTO) is the national training organisation responsible for workforce development across the UK in the further education sector. As such it is responsible for the collation of skills foresight information and for workforce development planning in the sector and acts as the national lead body for the development, quality assurance and promotion of national standards within further education.

Basic Skills Agency <www.basic-skills.co.uk>

The Basic Skills Agency is the national development agency for literacy, numeracy and related basic skills in England and Wales.

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) <www.niace.org.uk>

NIACE's formal aim is: "to promote the study and general advancement of adult continuing education". NIACE commits itself to:

Support an increase in the total numbers of adults engaged in formal and informal learning in England and Wales; and at the same time to take positive action to improve opportunities and

widen access to learning opportunities for those communities under-represented in current provision.

NIACE is a registered charity with a large number of public and private sponsors. It works across sectoral boundaries of adult education and training. It works in all fields of UK education and training, including local authority-organised provision, the further education college sector, higher education (HE) in universities and colleges of HE, employment-led learning involving both employers and trade unions and learning in the voluntary sector and through the media, especially broadcasters.

Campaign for Learning

The Campaign for Learning's mission is: "to stimulate learning that will sustain people for life". It started in 1995 as an RSA (the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce) initiative and became an independent charity in November 1997. The Campaign for Learning was created with the purpose of championing the cause for lifelong learning. The Campaign operates as a partnership of public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

ANNEX 3

FINANCING PROVISION

DfES expenditure limit on Further Education, Adult Learning and Skills and Lifelong Learning 1998-99 to 2005-06 (£ million)

	1998-99 outturn	1999-00 outturn	2000-01 outturn	2001-02 outturn	2002-03 estimated outturn	2003-04 plans	2004-05 plans	2005-06 plans
Total DfES	12 713	13 796	16 359	18 874	22 996	25 092	27 219	29 758
Total FE, Adult Learning and Skills and Lifelong Learning	3 499	3 672	4 157	5 838	6 692	7 303	7 859	8 346
<i>– of which</i>								
Further Education ⁴	3 148	3 275	3 551					
FE student support ⁵	24	52	90					
Learning and Skills Council (except Sixth Form Funding)			45	5 289	6 181	6 688	7 170	7 655
Adult Education and Skills Initiative	93	70	147	353	207	168	174	182
Adult Learning Inspectorate/Training Inspectorate ⁶	5	7	10	33	25	24	24	24
Union Learning Fund	2	3	4	6	10	8	8	8
FE Collaboration Fund	27							
Learning Partnership Fund		5	10	10	10			
Training and Enterprise Council Strategy Budget ⁴	114	104	118					
Career Development Loans	13	15	15	16	17	17	17	17

⁴ From April 2001 funding became the responsibility of the Learning and Skills Council.

This total covers funding for FE access funds, FE childcare support, FE residential students, some HE students attending FE colleges and some pilot funding. Funding from 2001 became responsibility of the LSC.

⁶ This work and other smaller programmes was taken over by the Adult Learning Inspectorate from April 2001.

University for Industry	5	42	58	51	102	44	44	44
Prisoners' Learning and Skills				57	67	96	121	136
Other Miscellaneous Programmes	69	99	109	23	73	258	300	279

Source: DfES (2003) Departmental Report 2003, <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/2003deptreport/index.cfm>.

Costs of Jobcentre Plus employment programmes 2002–03

Employment Programme	Costs £ 1 000s
New Deal Total	499 500
New Deals for 18-24 and 25+	387 800
New Deal for 50+	81 600
New Deal for Lone Parents	16 900
New Deal for Disabled People	14 600
New Deal for Partners	180
Work Based Learning for Adults Total	123 000
WBLA SJFT	6 200
WBLA LOT	22 300
WBLA BET	21 200
Basic Skills Assessment	3 200
Basic Skills Intensive Provision	1 100

Source: DWP.

ANNEX 4

WHAT IS A CAREER DEVELOPMENT LOAN?

Quite simply, a Career Development Loan is a deferred repayment bank loan to help individuals pay for vocational learning or education.

Participants can borrow anything between £300 and £8 000 to help fund up to two years of learning plus (if relevant) up to one year's practical work experience where it forms part of the course.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) pays the interest on the loan while the borrower is learning and for up to one month afterwards. If the student finishes the course before the agreed date, the repayment holiday will end up to one month after the last day of training.

Borrowers then repay the loan to the bank over an agreed period at a fixed rate of interest.

Career Development Loans are available through three High Street banks: Barclays, The Co-operative and The Royal Bank of Scotland. Participants do not need to be an existing account holder but the bank may require students to open an account with them.

Source: <http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/cdl/index.htm>