

Research carried out by the National Skills Forum into skills policies, levels and needs, revealing MPs' perceptions of the key issues in skills policy today.

AUTUMN 2005

SKILLS: A PARLIAMENTARY PERSPECTIVE



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NATIONAL SKILLS FORUM

Part A: Introduction

1. Foreword by Gordon Marsden MP



An essential element of the skills debate, and one that is necessary for strong, successful skills policies and practices, is one that for many years has been lacking. That element is the fundamental three-way conversation between parliamentarians, business and Government on skills, education and training. The voice of MPs is a critical factor, as we can draw on the experience of our constituents. As elected representatives, it is our job to use these experiences to inform policy.

We are still in the early stages of drawing together this conversation to ensure the skilled future that business and individuals require, but with the Associate Parliamentary Skills Group and National Skills Forum we have made a start.

This research paper gives us the starting point for a well-informed debate. It gives us the opportunity to see for the first time how MPs really view the skills policies and institutions that affect their constituencies, and what they make of the opportunities available to the individuals and employers within them.

The main conclusion that colleagues have made is that we need less legislation, fewer initiatives and more coherence in the skills sector. Beyond that, we need training tax breaks for small business, a greater focus on Apprenticeships, and redirection of funds to adult training (particularly given the demographic changes in the workforce and the debate about flexibility and continued work involvement up to and beyond the statutory retirement age). Essentially we need to use these findings to inform future policy, and ensure that this open dialogue and debate continues to flourish.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordon Marsden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gordon Marsden MP
Chair, Associate Parliamentary Skills Group

2. Introduction by Chris Humphries



The list of acronyms on page 8 is a graphic illustration of why people, including many MPs, recoil with horror when asked to engage in discussion and debate about the skills agenda. A similar list of new initiatives that we had some impact on skills development over the past 30 years would run to several pages. It is not a surprise to me to learn that many MPs are not aware of many of the most recent of these. A map that tried to show the relationship between all the government departments and agencies that have some remit for vocational education and workforce development is almost impossible to draw in any way that aids comprehension. How have we got into this position and what can we do to extricate ourselves from it?

I am, however, greatly heartened to read in this report that MPs believe more attention should be given to adults. Many is the time that I have drawn attention to the fact that we cannot rely solely on the next generation to fill the UK's skills needs over the next 20 years - the demographics show that there are simply not enough young people to provide what we need.

Encouraging immigration would not only be a sticking plaster - it would also have the more serious social consequence of condemning some of our own people to low-skill occupations that gave them little chance of improving their lot.

What we need to do is to ensure that those who are already part of our workforce get the opportunity to acquire new skills so that they can take on some of the jobs that will be needed. That means that we need more balance in our policies. Of course, 14-19 year olds must be nurtured and provided with varied learning opportunities, but we must also ensure that the adult population can access new skills so their talents may be developed in ways that will help this country to continue to prosper.

Finally, I am delighted to see that the majority of MPs in this survey appreciate the importance of objective information, advice and guidance. We must ensure that young people and adults have access to IAG that will enable them to explore all the options open to them so their talents are best employed.

This research is an important first step in gaining an understanding of the real skills issues in the constituencies. It is clear that our legislators would be ill-advised to ignore what they are hearing from employers, learners and parents, who are all such key stakeholders. City & Guilds is delighted to have played a part in the project and we look forward to continued collaboration with the National Skills Forum.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CH', written in a cursive style.

Chris Humphries CBE
Director-General
City & Guilds

3. Executive Summary

The debate in Government about skills development has been continuing without sufficient parliamentary input for too long. This research paper examines the skills needs and current skills provision in the constituencies of Members of Parliament. Based on constituency-specific data and current Government policies and initiatives, the project identifies major issues from individual MPs through a series of questionnaires and interviews.

- There is a great deal of frustration in Parliament about the Government's continued focus on 14-19 learners, which MPs believe has been to the detriment of adult provision. Adults are discriminated against in terms of work-based learning (age restrictions of Apprenticeships), funding (no access to the Education Maintenance Allowance), and advice (restricted access to Connexions services). MPs called for an immediate redirection of Government focus and funds to adult training, particularly in light of the changing demographic in the UK.
- MPs were clear that the quality of and access to information, advice and guidance (IAG) regarding careers must be improved for both the old and young.
 - a. *Careers advice should be provided to children at an earlier age, with many MPs calling for IAG services to begin in primary school.*
 - b. *Advice must not be attached to a particular institution; schools should persuade their pupils to study at a further education college if that is the most appropriate course of action.*
 - c. *MPs also called for a one-stop-shop to be established to provide IAG for adults.*
- Apprenticeships were seized upon by many MPs as having the potential to instigate a great improvement in vocational training but were seen as not realising this potential.
 - MPs called for:*
 - a. *More Apprenticeship placements to become available in more varied trades.*
 - b. *A guarantee of quality of placement.*
 - c. *More publicity of the benefits afforded to employers and learners by taking part in the Apprenticeship scheme.*
- MPs were agreed that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) hold the key to the future success of the English economy, and that they are not currently engaged with training providers in any meaningful way. MPs argued that it is the duty of Government to step in and remove some of the risks firms face in training their employees by making the training tax-advantageous.
- There are worrying gaps in MPs' understanding of the education and skills sector. They demonstrated limited awareness of various initiatives implemented in the past few years, particularly Regional Partnerships for Skills, Neighbourhood Learning Centres, the National Employer Training Programme, and Sector Skills Councils.
 - ☰ This suggests that the skills sector has a lot of work to do in terms of publicising its various component parts so that MPs attain a greater level of understanding of what affects the development of skills in their constituencies.

4. Table of Acronyms Used

ABSSU	Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit	LEA	Local Education Authority
ALG	Adult Learning Grant	LSC	Learning and Skills Council
BL	Business Link	LSDA	Learning and Skills Development Agency
BITC	Business in the Community	LTW	Learning through Work
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council	NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
CBI	Confederation of British Industry	NETP	National Employer Training Programme
CDL	Career Development Loan	NIACE	National Institute for Adult Continuing Education
CoVE	Centre of Vocational Excellence	NLC	Neighbourhood Learning Centre
DfES	Department for Education and Skills	NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
DTI	Department for Trade and Industry	OCR	Oxford Cambridge & RSA Examinations Board
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions	QCA	Qualifications & Curriculum Authority
EGAS	Educational Grants Advisory Service	RDA	Regional Development Agency
EMA	Education Maintenance Allowance	SBC	Small Business Council
ESOL	English as a Second or Other Language	SEMTA	Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies Alliance
ETP	Employer Training Pilot	SME	Small to Medium Sized Enterprise
FAB	Federation of Awarding Bodies	SSA	Sector Skills Agreement
FBLC	Federation of Business Link Consortia	SSC	Sector Skills Council
FE	Further Education	SSDA	Sector Skills Development Agency
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council	STEP	Shell Technology and Enterprise Programme
FLOP	Financial Literacy for Older People	TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
HE	Higher Education	TUC	Trades Union Congress
HEA	Higher Education Agencies	ULF	Union Learning Fund
HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury	ULR	Union Learning Representative
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance	WBLA	Work-Based Learning for Adults
IFP	Increased Flexibility Programme		
JCP	Jobcentre Plus		
JSA	Jobseekers' Allowance		

5. Major Findings

5.1 What MPs Know

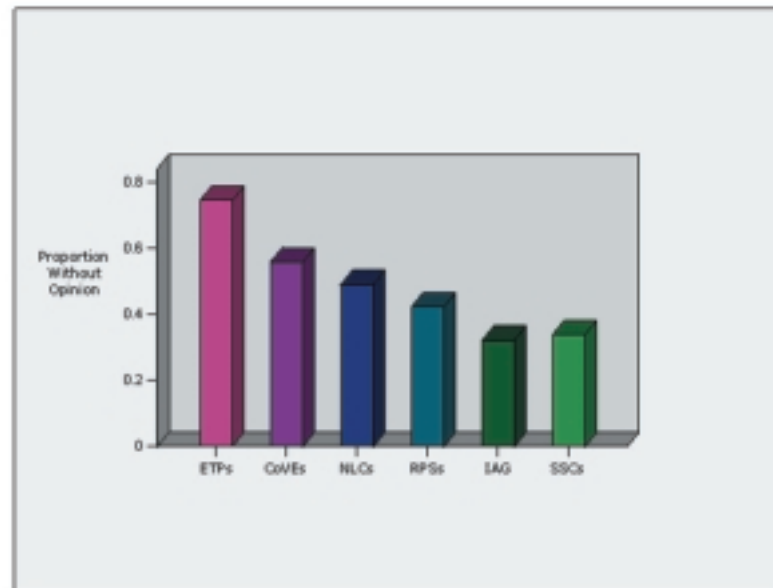
MPs were asked how they thought the skills levels in their constituency compared with those of the rest of the country.

There is no statistically significant difference between MPs' predicted levels of skills in their constituencies and the actual skills levels, so we can conclude that MPs are reasonably well informed about the relative performance of their constituencies.

Some substantial gaps were revealed, however, in MPs' understanding of the skills sector:

- 74.6** per cent of MPs who filled out the questionnaire said that they did not know about the success of the Employer Training Pilots (ETP) in their constituencies.
- 55.9** per cent of MPs were unable to rate the success of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE).
- 49.2** per cent of MPs who filled out the questionnaire could not comment on the success of Neighbourhood Learning Centres (NLC).
- 42.4** per cent of the surveyed MPs said that they did not know what impact the Regional Partnerships for Skills (RPS) had on skills development in their constituencies.
- 32.2** per cent of MPs felt unable to rate their constituency's information, advice and guidance (IAG) services.
- 30.5** per cent of MPs responded that they did not know about the success of the Sector Skills Councils (SSC).

'No Opinion' By Issue Area



There is such a morass of skills agencies, policies, institutions and initiatives that MPs have found it hard to keep up. The skills sector abounds with acronyms and the various councils, programmes, centres and partnerships have resulted in confusion in Parliament. Our findings show that under the current system MPs have limited awareness of how each policy relates to their constituency. They are sceptical about the added value provided by the various agencies and initiatives, and united in their opposition to more legislation concerning skills provision. This calls for a simplification of the skills apparatus.

5.2 Information Advice and Guidance

MPs expressed their concerns about information, advice and guidance provision in their constituencies, requesting more information about available

opportunities and more publicity about how skills can improve lifetime earnings. Many MPs contended that not enough effort was expended on making young people aware of the positive impact vocational training could have on their careers. They called for a one-stop-shop for careers advice which gives more focus to adult services than Connexions currently does. The ideal described by many of the MPs surveyed and interviewed involved continuous access to careers advisors from primary school age throughout full-time education, on through further and higher education, and still available for adults wishing to return to learning. MPs were united in maintaining that the information provided must be independent and impartial, not attached to any particular institution or sector.



5.3 Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships surfaced many times in both the questionnaire responses and the interviews.

MPs asserted that Apprenticeships were an excellent means of introducing young people to the world of work and teaching them about the benefits of vocational careers. They were referred to as an integral part of vocational training and an important link between the skills sector and employers. But MPs were critical of the take-up rate, arguing for more Apprenticeship places locally for a wider range of trades.

There should be more done by Government to market the benefits of Apprenticeships to both learners and employers. MPs were also critical of the age restrictions currently in place, calling for the end of the cut-off point at age 24.

5.4 Adult Training

The Government came in for much criticism in relation to adult skills. The MPs who completed the questionnaire and took part in the interviews were for the most part well aware of the demographic changes occurring in Britain and of the policy prescriptions entailed by these changes. Much reference was made to the ageing population and the need to focus on reskilling older workers.

MPs stressed the imperative of attracting into the labour market those currently most removed: women who have not worked in over 10 years, those who in their middle age hold no qualifications, and those whose skills are now redundant in the modern job market.

MPs criticised the Government's failure to recognise the demographic time bomb, demonstrated in the continued focus on 14-19 education

and training and refusal to inject funds into much-needed adult skills provision.

Adults are short not only of funding, but of access to information and advice. The provision and potential support that is currently on offer to older learners is not marketed effectively: MPs complained that their constituents simply were not aware of the opportunities available to them.



5.5 Small Business Engagement with Training

MPs were highly critical of the failure of small and medium-sized enterprises to engage with training.

Of the surveyed MPs, only 5 per cent viewed SME engagement with training as good, while 49.2 per cent viewed it as average and 32.2 per cent viewed it as bad.

In contrast, 33.9 per cent of the surveyed MPs described large business engagement with training as good. SMEs, recognised by MPs as integral to the British economy, appear unaware of the benefits of training. MPs noted that the cost involved in up-skilling staff was too much to bear for many small firms, and urged the Government to provide more in the way of financial incentives to encourage engagement with training. MPs also urged that employers must make more effort to co-operate with the education sector.

Employers should be keener to take on apprentices, should encourage work experience placements, and should become more adept at articulating their demands to the providers. MPs also argued that the education sector, in turn, should be more flexible to the needs of business, making more use of training pods and other forms of on-site training.

PART B: Major Policies Identified and Summarised

6.1 The Skills Alliance

The Skills Alliance was created by the Government to oversee the implementation of the 2003 Skills Strategy, forming a partnership between key partners with an interest in skills and productivity - the Treasury (HMT), the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the Small Business Council (SBC), and the key delivery organisations led by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Led by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Skills Alliance represents a new social partnership for skills. A current focus of its work is a CBI-led project which is looking at ways of using supply chains and employer cluster groups to facilitate skills development.

6.2 The Learning & Skills Council

The Learning and Skills Council operates both nationally and locally to facilitate improvements in further education, work-based

6 Partnerships for Delivery: Regional and Sectoral Collaboration in Skills Policy

The following section details all the major skills policies currently operating in England. This should provide a useful background summary for those who are confused by the vast numbers of acronyms and initiatives in the skills sector.

training, school sixth forms, workforce development, adult and community learning, information, advice and guidance for young adults, and education business links.

It was established in 2001, replacing the Training and Enterprise Councils (TEC) and the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), and exists to improve the skills of young people and adults in England to create a world-class workforce.

6.3 Skills for Business

The Skills for Business network is comprised of the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA), which funds and supports the network of employer-led Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). The Sector Skills Councils were set up to provide a new voice for employers in identifying skills priorities in their sector. They are independent organisations, licensed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills and led by employers, involving stakeholders in the sector, professional bodies and trade unions.

The role of the SSDA is to:

Fund, support and monitor the performance of SSCs across the UK;

Monitor standards, ensuring quality across the network;

Support the tailoring of skills provision to sector needs;

Ensure SSCs give due consideration to generic skills;

Promote the sharing of expertise and best practice between sectors;

Assist employers in sectors bidding to have an SSC;

Assist with essential functions in sectors without an SSC; and

Provide a website where public bodies and individuals can access high quality sectoral labour market intelligence.

The SSCs aim to:

Tackle skills shortages in their sector;

Improve the supply of training, including Apprenticeships, higher education and national occupational standards;

Increase productivity, lifting the performance both of public and private sector; and

create opportunities to raise the skills and productivity of everyone in the sector's workforce, including taking action on equal opportunities.

SSCs work with employers and with key partners including the LSC, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and Higher Education Agencies (HEAs). They are designed to be the primary means by which employers in each sector come together to identify their skills needs, and work with the training and education providers to ensure those needs are met. There are 24 SSCs currently licensed, covering approximately 85% of the workforce.

SSC	Sector	Status
ConstructionSkills	Construction Industry	Licensed
E-skills UK	Information Technology, Telecoms and Contact Centres	Licensed
SEMTA	Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	Licensed
SkillsActive UK	Active Leisure and Learning	Licensed
Automotive Skills	Retail Motor Industry	Licensed
Energy and Utility Skills	Electricity, Gas, Waste Management and Water Industries	Licensed
SummitSkills	Building Services Engineering Sector	Licensed
Skillset	Broadcasting, Film, Video, Interactive Media and Photo Imaging	Licensed
Skillfast-UK	Apparel, Footwear, Textiles and related businesses	Licensed
Skills for Logistics	Freight Logistics Industry	Licensed
Cogent	Chemicals, Nuclear, Oil and Gas Extraction, Petroleum and Polymer Industries	Licensed
Skills for Justice	Custodial Care, Community Justice and Police	Licensed
Skills for Health	NHS, Independent Voluntary and Health Organisations	Licensed
Lantra	Environmental and Land Based Industries	Licensed
People 1st	Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism	Licensed
Financial Services Skills Council	Financial Services Industry	Licensed
Improve	Food and Drink Manufacturing and Processing	Licensed
Skillsmart	Retail	Licensed
Asset Skills	Property, Housing, Cleaning and Facilities Management	Licensed
GoSkills	Passenger Transport	Licensed
Lifelong Learning UK	Lifelong Learning	Licensed
Skills for Care and Development	Social Care, Children, Young People and Families	Licensed
Creative and Cultural Skills	Creative and Cultural Industries	Licensed
Proskills UK	Process and Manufacturing Industry	Licensed
Unnamed as yet	Central Government	In development

SEMTA, Construction Skills, Skillset and E-skills UK are the first four SSCs taking forward Sector Skills Agreements (SSA), published with the Skills White Paper on 22 March 2005. The SSCs conducted in-depth analyses of their current and future skills needs, including assessing the current training and education provision, to identify the main gaps. Discussions were held with employers and key delivery partners to ascertain what support will be forthcoming in the implementation of the agreements.

Six areas were identified where SSCs particularly need Government support in the development of their agreements:

- ❑ 14 - 19 policy;
- ❑ Higher education (HE);
- ❑ Further education (FE);
- ❑ Support for small firms;
- ❑ Fees and funding for qualifications; and
- ❑ Information, advice and guidance systems.

The SSAs are a way for employers to articulate their training needs for the next few years, to set out the areas in which they are willing to invest, and to respond to those training needs. Government has in turn agreed to reengineer the money it spends on training to respond to those sectoral priorities outlined in the SSAs. The Government predicts that 20 SSAs will be published in the next 2 or 3 years.

6.4 Development of Regional Partnerships for Skills

The DfES Skills Strategy noted the regional dimension of skills issues, recognising that responses at regional and local levels would be required to deal with these. It proposed the establishment of Regional Skills Partnerships to integrate the work of the key partners in each region, including the Regional Development Agencies, Small Business Service, local Learning and Skills Councils, Jobcentre Plus and the Skills for Business network. Regional Skills Partnerships are being established in each region to bring together

workforce and business development with support for innovation and labour market services.

The Partnerships represent an integrated approach to the delivery of Regional Economic Strategies, which work to improve regional economic performance.

6.5 New Deal for Skills

Another partnership for delivery is that established through the New Deal for Skills between the Department for Education and Skills, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and the Treasury, involving closer local working between Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and LSCs through joint

delivery plans. The New Deal for Skills was set up to offer good skills training to adults who are not in work, or who have a succession of short-term, low-paid jobs where there is little training and development. It links welfare to work strategies with workforce development, to give benefit claimants better advice and support and help them to get the skills required for sustainable employment. Measures introduced include a new skills coaching service giving better advice and encouragement for individuals who want to update their skills, and a 'Skills Passport' which records skills gained to support the move from welfare to sustainable employment.

7. Demand-led Approach to Skills Policy

7.1 Business Support Network

The DfES has reformed the business support network to aid small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in skills, productivity, recruitment and business development. The Business Link website (www.businesslink.gov.uk) which was launched in May 2004 is aimed particularly at owners and managers of SMEs. The website

brings together government information, advice and support tools, including a training directory with over 500,000 courses, to assist the development of new and existing enterprises.

7.2 National Employer Training Programme

Employer Training Pilots (ETPs) were launched by the Treasury in September 2002 with 6 pilots in

different areas of England. ETPs are designed to encourage employers (via financial incentives) to give their staff the opportunity to undertake free or subsidised training during work time, and aim to give employers more choice and control over training programmes.

The Pilots cover literacy, numeracy and language training as well as training employees to NVQ Level 2.

A range of support facilities are provided, including:

Information and advice for learners and employers, including an assessment of overall skills shortages;

Efforts to ensure that training is provided in a way that suits the needs of both learners and employers;

Free or largely subsidised training programmes for employees to gain skills or qualifications up to Level 2; and

Help for employers to meet the costs of giving their staff paid time off to train.

ETPs appeal both to employers, who gain from the flexibly delivered training, and to learners, who value the opportunity to gain a qualification and improve their job-specific skills. ETPs allow training to be tailored to meet exactly the identifiable skills gaps. A further benefit of the pilots is that more colleges and training providers have begun to deliver training on employers' premises in ways and at times which suit shift patterns.

The DfES reported that progress during the first year of the pilots was promising, with over 10,000 employers and 60,000 learners participating. The DfES further states that a high proportion of participants were from small and medium-sized firms, which are traditionally less likely to engage in training. The National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) has, however, argued that the early evidence of the pilots suggests the large multi-nationals are the quickest to respond to the opportunities. It is therefore important for the Government to focus on persuading small firms to participate. A possible means of doing this is to offer higher subsidies for training to SMEs.

In September 2003 and 2004 the ETPs were expanded, taking the total number of pilots to 18. In the first quarter of 2004, guidance materials for employers, employees and intermediaries

were introduced, and mentoring schemes set up to provide support to learners and providers. In March 2005 the Skills White Paper announced the rolling out of ETPs nationally through the National Employer Training Programme (NETP). The NETP aims to put skills at the heart of employers' business development needs and to take training from the classroom to the workplace throughout England. Government will fund the NETP up to Level 2, and is looking at a model of co-financing Level 3 in two regions.

7.3 Unions

There is a new role for unions and their Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) in promoting learning and skills in the workplace. It is recognised that investing in training and qualifications offers benefits for employees and employers alike. Since 1998 unions have been provided with financial support under the Union Learning Fund (ULF). In April 2003 the Government introduced statutory rights to increase support to ULRs, of which there are currently around 7,000 active across the UK. The DfES, perhaps optimistically, predicts that there will be around 22,000 in place by 2010, helping 250,000 workers a year with their training and development needs.

7.4 Centres of Vocational Excellence

In July 2002 the DfES launched a programme of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE). These centres are FE colleges and other training providers which have close links to industry and which demonstrate excellence or expertise in a particular vocational area. There are over 200 Centres of Vocational Excellence in development, and the DfES predicts that this figure will double by 2006.

The three main objectives of the

Centres are:

To promote innovation in the methods employed by colleges and providers to meet the country's skills needs;

To encourage collaboration and promote the concept of excellence in economically-relevant specialisms; and

To enhance the standing of LSC-funded providers with employers.

An important part of the CoVE programme is the combined DfES/LSC effort to strengthen college engagement with employers. This effort has included trialling how far the range of services that colleges provide to employers can be extended, e.g. analysis of skills needs, business development and technology.

The Centres represent a means both of building capacity and encouraging joined-up action on workforce development.

Their introduction has been hailed by NIACE as 'a welcome attempt to raise the profile of vocational education and provide colleges with much-needed resources to strengthen and promote their specialist departments'. NIACE, however, argues that the Government-sponsored remit of these Centres of Vocational Excellence is too narrow: 'In addition to the provider-focused strategic objectives set by Government, the Centres should have a set of objectives related to the role they can play in organisational transformation'.

They could, for example, form partnerships with relevant departments in their local universities. It is anticipated that the Centres will lead many more colleges to aspire to be defined by their strengths in particular industrial sectors.

7.5 Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships, available to people aged 16 to 24, are administered by the Learning and Skills Council. The LSC is in the

process of developing funding arrangements for those aged over 25.) A partnership is set up between the learner, employer and a training provider, and a training plan for the apprentice is agreed. A portion of the working week is spent on workplace training, supplemented with non-workplace study. Unlike many training courses, Apprenticeships ensure that the learners have the practical skills to do the job. The apprentice signs up to a

period of time with the employer, and works towards achieving NVQs, key skills qualifications and a technical certificate (such as a BTEC or City & Guilds).

The LSC manages Apprenticeships nationally through its 47 local offices and its network of learning providers, giving them financial assistance towards the training of the apprentice. The learning provider supports and guides employers, working together to

recruit an apprentice, agree a training plan with the apprentice, manage the assessments, ensure national quality standards are met, and deliver integrated and coherent training. Over 1 million young people have taken part in the Apprenticeship programme since it was introduced in 1994, and the Labour Party was re-elected in May 2005 on a manifesto pledge to create 300,000 new Apprenticeships in its third term.

8. Basic Skills

8.1 English as a Second or Other Language

English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) training has expanded rapidly in recent years to meet the language and literacy needs of those who do not have English as their first language. Research carried out by the DWP's Ethnic Minority Employment Division shows that there is still a perception in many Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities that ESOL provision is scarce and inaccessible.

8.2 Free Tuition

The centrepiece of the Government's skills strategy is the entitlement to free tuition for everyone in basic skills. The DfES has a target of improving the basic skills of 1.5 million adults by 2007, and views Level 2 (equivalent to five good GCSEs) as 'the level that opens doors to good employment'. This is based on the contested concept of 'bottom-up' productivity, whereby more adult workers with Level 2 qualifications are seen as facilitating investment and innovation.

As such, the Department piloted an entitlement to free training for adults seeking their first full Level 2 qualification in the North East and South East regions of England. March 2005's Skills White Paper

confirmed that this entitlement is to be rolled out nationally, with Government funding all of basic skills and Level 2.

Government also pledged in the White Paper to support those, known as "jumpers", who can go straight to Level 3 from a starting point of basic skills.

The publicly funded learning programmes are offered by colleges and training providers as well as in the workplace. The proportion of adults in the workforce qualified to Level 2 now stands at 71%.

8.3 Learning Opportunities

These learning opportunities are to be delivered in ways to suit learners' circumstances, such as in the workplace, in mobile training centres, and in learndirect centres. The introduction of learndirect, which helps people find the courses they want by telephone or on the internet, has given the learner more power and responsibility over the shape and development of their learning. A further way of tailoring training to suit learners' circumstances has been a greater focus on family learning, with courses co-funded by the DfES and the LSC based in Children's Centres and Extended Schools. The Government intends to expand this scheme, integrating

basic skills into parenting and family-learning activities in an effort to aid parents in both their social and educational needs.

8.4 Adult Learning Grants

Adults on low incomes in priority areas who are seeking their first full Level 2 qualification can access Adult Learning Grants (ALG) of up to £30 per week to help them meet the costs of learning. These grants are further being offered to young adults studying for their first qualification at technician, skilled craft, or associate professional level (Level 3) in the North East and the South East as part of the Skills Strategy trials.

8.5 Neighbourhood Learning Centres

Neighbourhood Learning Centres (NLCs) are community-run and have a variety of learning programmes, most of which do not require any previous qualifications. NLCs have to fundraise, but can also sometimes access Government funds. They are intended to provide a focal point for the community with better facilities, and also to enable individuals to increase their skills, meet other local people and find out about local opportunities.

9. 14-19 Learning

The 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper released in February 2005 will be central to the Government's plans to achieving life-long employability.

9.1 Key Stage 3

An assessment of the Key Stage 3 (KS3) curriculum is being conducted in an attempt to improve its clarity and make it more flexible, allowing schools simultaneously to challenge gifted pupils and assist pupils who are falling behind.

An increased focus is to be given to English and maths, with schools to concentrate methodically on pupils arriving from primary schools without the requisite standards in these key subjects.

KS3 tests results in English, maths and science will continue to be published and a new online test in ICT will be introduced.

Teachers will be provided with professional development in order to support their assessment of pupils in the other subjects.

Teachers will produce a "Pupil Profile" for pupils and parents, creating a record of their achievement across the curriculum.

The introduction of vocational GCSEs in 2002 is representative of the Government's renewed focus on non-academic skills.

9.2 Functional Mathematics & English at the Core of 14-19 Learning

Key Stage 3 strategy will be extended by allowing the provision of teaching materials

and professional development throughout the 14-19 cycle.

A general (GCSE) Diploma will be introduced. The Diploma is obtained when a pupil achieves 5 A* - C grade GCSEs including English and maths. The current 5 A* - C measure of quality is likely to be phased out by 2008. Pupils must demonstrate a mastery of functional maths and English before a grade C or above can be awarded in either subject.

The functional core will be the same in the adult Skills for Life qualifications, other Key Skills qualifications and in GCSEs.

A greater number of opportunities and incentives will be provided for pupils who have not achieved Level 2 by the age 16 - support will be provided to allow them to achieve Level 1 or entry level qualifications as markers on the way.

A pilot programme for 14-16 year olds will be developed based on the post-16 Entry to Employment programme as part of a coherent framework of provision below Level 2.

9.3 The Introduction of Diplomas

Government is introducing wider choice regarding what and where to study, specifically making it easier to blend academic and vocational disciplines.

New specialised Diplomas are to be introduced which include vocational material, GCSEs and A levels. These Diplomas will be available at Levels 1 (foundation), 2 (GCSE) and 3 (advanced) and will cover each occupational sector of the

economy. Diplomas will be introduced in 14 areas and these will be made a national entitlement by 2015, with four lines available by 2008 and a further four by 2010.

For a pupil to obtain a Diploma he/she must first demonstrate the required standard in functional elements in English and maths, specialised content relevant to the Diploma line, relevant GCSEs and A levels and work experience.

Employers are to join with representatives from higher education and awarding bodies in the Sector Skills Councils to design specialised Diplomas, supported by QCA, which provide the right grounding for work and further study.

Employers are to play an active role in offering more opportunities to learn at work and outside school. Government has pledged an improvement in the quality and broadening of employment-based training through Apprenticeships.

Government aims to end the current situation where 16 is a fixed focal point in the system, by challenging and supporting schools to ensure that young people take qualifications when they are ready, encouraging accelerated learning and ensuring early achievement is recognised in Achievement and Attainment Tables.

Improved GCSEs and A levels are to remain as foundations of the new system.

9.4 GCSEs and A Levels - Foundations of the New System

GCSE:

An analysis will be undertaken of the level of coursework young people have to do; it is hoped that the overall assessment burden will be reduced.

Professor Adrian Smith's reform of maths teaching and learning is to continue.

Science will continue to be promoted, with new science GCSEs set to be introduced.

A level:

The brightest pupils will be

stretched further by introducing harder questions in a separate section at the end of A level papers.

An extended project will be piloted to assess higher-level abilities in all pupils.

Sixth form pupils are to be allowed to take higher education modules.

Universities are to have access to the marks applicants received as well as their grades, and will be able to obtain applicants' grades from individual modules as well as overall results.

The number of assessments A level pupils undergo will be reduced from 6 to 4, without a

corresponding loss of curriculum content.

9.5 Improved Delivery and Capacity of Vocational Training

Government plans to raise the profile of Centres of Vocational Excellence and that of other providers of vocational training.

New Skills Academies are to be developed as national centres of excellence in skills.

The capacity of schools to offer vocational education will be strengthened through specialising.

10. Higher Education

10.1 Expansion of Foundation Degrees

The Government is working towards its target of 50 per cent of those aged 18-30 participating in HE by expanding the provision of two-year work-focused foundation degrees. These degrees are set to become the primary work-focused higher education qualification, with Government funding additional foundation degree places rather than traditional three-year honours degrees.

To facilitate this expansion, the Government set up 'Foundation Degree Forward', a network of universities which are leading the development of foundation degrees. The network was established to exemplify good practice and further to validate the foundation degrees offered in further education.

Students are encouraged to take foundation degree courses through Government-funded financial incentives. Bursaries are offered,

to be used for extra-maintenance or to offset the course fees. £10 million is being provided for this purpose in 2004-5, a figure which is set to double in 2005-6.

10.2 Employer Engagement

Government has enlisted the support of employers to develop foundation degrees. In this way students can be sure that the degrees will offer the skills that employers really need, and Government can ensure employer buy-in.

Sector Skills Councils are a means of developing stronger alliances between businesses and the relevant departments in HE institutions. This allows employers a role in the development and marketing of the courses and further facilitates their involvement in the delivery of learning.

10.3 Links with Further Education

Links between further and higher education are being strengthened so as to ease progression between the two. Government is working on streamlining their funding regimes to make collaboration easier.

Foundation degrees are often delivered in FE colleges. This assists the progression from FE to HE, particularly for students pursuing vocational routes. It is also particularly helpful for part-time students who want to study locally.

The Government hopes that encouraging the delivery of HE in FE colleges will increase the flexibility in courses (improving support for part-time degrees, credit-transfer and e-learning) in order to meet the needs of a more diverse student body.

The Government is expanding its national AimHigher programme to build better links between schools, colleges and universities and raise young people's aspirations.

11. Awarding Bodies

11.1 Role of Awarding Bodies

Awarding bodies play an important role in determining what options are available to learners. Following consultation with experts in industry and academia, awarding bodies develop a range of qualifications to offer. They supply all relevant assessments and examinations, and then mark them through internal and external verifiers in approved delivery centres (such as schools, FE colleges, independent training providers, and employers). The leading vocational awarding body in the UK is City & Guilds, which

awards almost 50% of all National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and is the only awarding body solely dedicated to vocational learning. Altogether the City & Guilds Group awards over 1.5 million certificates per year. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) recognises and regulates awarding bodies and their qualifications so as to retain the reliability of the UK qualifications framework.

11.2 Federation of Awarding Bodies

Most vocational awarding bodies are members of the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB), a

membership organisation set up in 2000 by City & Guilds, Edexcel, the Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations Board (OCR) and the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Board (now EDI plc). In May 2001 FAB was launched as a wider network and currently has 76 members, ranging from organisations which offer qualifications for a particular industry to larger generic awarding bodies offering vocational qualifications across a wide range of sectors. FAB exists to facilitate dialogue between its constituent vocational awarding bodies, various stakeholder and regulatory organisations, and government agencies.

12. Information, Advice and Guidance

12.1 Career Guidance Options

Careers guidance refers to services to assist individuals to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers.

These services are found in schools, colleges, universities, training institutions, public employment services, in the workplace, voluntary sector, and in the private sector.

Learners in need of advice about what course to apply for and what career path to choose have several options available to them:

AimHigher is an entry point which enables prospective students to seek information about higher education institutions and courses. It offers information and guidance on financial support available to students entering HE and aims to widen participation among traditionally unrepresented groups.

The Work Experience Bank, set up by the DfES, provides advice on work experience and a bank of useful regional contacts.

The Shell Technology and Enterprise Programme (STEP) matches students with SMEs for work experience placements.

12.2 IAG for Adults

Adults without a Level 2 qualification are entitled to free, high quality advice as part of the Level 2 Learning Entitlement.

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services for adults are under review by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Regional Skills Partnerships:

The LSC is responsible nationally for securing IAG services for adults outside Higher Education, and is working on delivering an

integrated IAG service which brings together the work of the learndirect national advice service with the work of the local IAG partnerships. The LSC is also looking at drawing on good practice from the Employer Training Pilots in developing links between the integrated IAG service and employers.

Regional Skills Partnerships, which bring together Regional Development Agencies, Small Business Service, local LSCs, Jobcentre Plus, and the Sector Skills Development Agency, are reviewing whether their region is getting the IAG services it needs; while the minimum entitlement to core IAG services will be the same nationally, there will be regional variation beyond that to meet regional priorities.

12.3 Connexions: the Current Situation

Connexions services were rolled out across England between April 2001 and April 2003 to provide both universal and targeted services for young people aged 13 - 19, and to provide support for 20 - 24 year olds with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are yet to make the transition to adult services.

Connexions brings together the work of 6 Government departments and their agencies, together with youth and careers services and private and voluntary sector groups, to offer confidential advice, support, and information. This guidance can be accessed from their website, by phone, text, e-mail and webchat, or by visiting a local Connexions Personal Adviser. The Personal Advisers work in a range of schools, colleges, one-stop shops and community centres. Advice is offered on learning resources, education institutions and courses,

qualifications, and key skills, among other things. Connexions also offers 16 - 19 year olds a card which gives discounts and rewards for remaining in learning. It is delivered through local Partnerships which follow national guidelines and cover the same geographical areas as the LSCs.

A Government spokesperson recently praised the Connexions youth support service for achieving a 14% reduction nationwide in the number of young people not in education, training or employment, exceeding the 10% target set by Government 2 years ago. Less favourable reports have also emerged, however, and the Youth Green Paper Youth Matters suggests that Connexions will not continue in its current form.

12.4 Connexions: the Future

The Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby has highlighted three potential scenarios for the future direction of Connexions:

Connexions services will have further refinement built into their role and remit but will continue to be delivered and managed under existing arrangements;

The universal and targeted Connexions services will be split, and children's trusts, schools and colleges will be directly involved; and

An 'all-age service' will be designed, extending the best work of Connexions to all young people and adults.

The first option, to retain the existing Connexions services but refine their role and remit, involves a recognition that at least £450 million has been invested by Government and local services per annum for the last 4 years into establishing the Connexions brand. Retention of existing arrangements further recognises the key strengths demonstrated in Connexions' ability to cater for young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET), and in the support and development of 14-19 curriculum and guidance provision.

An over-emphasis on NEET targets has, however, been a cause for concern, with critics pointing to a lack of performance measures specifically related to the delivery of the universal service.

The second option, a segmentation of Connexions services and involvement of children's trusts and schools and colleges is logically appealing but involves a risk of services becoming more piecemeal. Delivery through children's trusts might allow greater clarity of

mission, with allocated resources focused upon targeted provision. It could, however, also lead to delays associated with the complexity and bureaucracy of partnership working. Delivery through schools and colleges would increase the direct control and accountability at the point of use, as well as achieving greater clarity of purpose, with allocated resources focused upon universal provision. But there is a risk that institutions would not volunteer to follow up and provide ongoing support to young people after their initial schooling, and a further risk that there would be a major weakening of the link between careers education and guidance and the labour market.

The third option, of an 'all-age service' designed to strengthen guidance provision and extend Connexions' best work to all young people and adults, recognises the existing infra-structure which would support local adult guidance partnerships, such as Next Steps providers (many of which are offshoots of Connexions Partnerships). Although primarily focused on supporting those aged 13-19, Connexions also has significant experience in working with adults aged 20-24 with learning difficulties which might make the transition to an all-age service relatively smooth.

There is, however, a perception that segregated provision is preferable for different client age groups, and concerns exist regarding the logistics of aligning overlapping agendas. One clear conclusion which must inform any changes in the provision of IAG is the need to tie improved youth support services to labour market intelligence.

12.5 Youth Matters

On 18 July 2005 the Government published the Youth Green Paper, Youth Matters, which dealt with issues affecting the young including IAG. The Government pledged to provide "good, impartial and accessible advice which is free from stereotyping ... taking full advantage of new technology." The proposals concerning IAG put forward in Youth Matters are:

An introduction at age 11-12 (year 7) from a variety of people, including other pupils, to what will be on offer in secondary school;

Support at age 13-14 (year 9) in considering post-14 choices and the possibility of a personal session with an adviser if desired;

More help in secondary school to think through post-16 options, personal social and health issues and career choices;

An innovative and independent ICT service through which young people can easily access national and local information through an easily navigable website, from online advisers and from a helpline.

The Government plans to devolve responsibility for commissioning IAG and the funding that goes with it, from the Connexions Service to Local Authorities, working through children's trusts, schools and colleges:

In devolving funding, we will aim to ensure that young people have a better service linked to the school curriculum and to pastoral care; that services are efficient and cost-effective; and that high-performing Connexions Services are preserved. In most cases, we would expect to see children's trusts, schools and colleges agreeing on new arrangements for commissioning IAG locally.

But where schools and colleges believe that local provision is poor, they should have the right to commission the service directly. Following a phased approach from 2006, we would expect these new arrangements to be in place by 2008.

The Green Paper proposes the integration of Connexions into a wider range of services at local level, but plans to encourage Local Authorities to retain the Connexions brand.

The consultation period for the proposals outlined in Youth Matters runs until 4 November 2005. The Government has requested feedback from all concerned - Local Authorities, schools and colleges, Connexions Partnerships, Youth Services, the private and voluntary and community sectors, the health sector, the wider community and particularly young people and parents.



PART C:

What Does this Mean for the Learner and the Employer?

LEARNERS 13 Options for Learners

13.1 Barriers and Incentives to Training

The barriers to training which potential learners face are wide-ranging and complex:

- ❑ The cost of the course and or qualification is often the main financial disincentive; the additional costs of childcare, resources, and transport are also key factors, as is the perceived impact of training or employment on benefits. There is sometimes a lack of suitable child care provision, and travel services are often inadequate in rural areas.
- ❑ Whilst information on training can be readily found at colleges and learning providers, there is a lack of accessible information in other places, such as Ethnic Community Centres.
- ❑ Learners further cite employers' refusal to make the necessary workplace adjustments as a significant barrier to training, as well as the failure of training providers to deliver training at times and in places which are compatible with learners' work commitments. Also learners feel that courses are not tailored to fill the job vacancies and

skills shortages in the area.

- ❑ Individuals are deterred from enrolling on courses because they do not possess the necessary basic skills, in reading, IT, language and communication more generally. A lack of confidence, self-esteem and motivation is another significant barrier, stemming from the culture of unemployment which exists in certain deprived groups and exacerbated by a lack of suitable role models.

Financial incentives like the Adult Learning Grant and City & Guilds educational grants can overcome some of these barriers for potential learners. Particularly successful in this respect is the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). Introduced to address the problem of too many young people who have the ability and the motivation to continue their education starting work at 16 in order to start earning, the weekly EMA payments of up to £30 are reducing the numbers of young people who leave education early and enter into a cycle of continuous low paid work or unemployment.

13.2 Work-related Learning

The Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) has created enhanced vocational and work-related learning opportunities for local 14-16 year olds, enabling many year 10 and 11 students to study off-site at a college or with a training provider for one or two days a week throughout Key Stage 4.

Apprenticeships offer relevant and recognised qualifications gained through a combination of on-the-job training with an employer and off-the-job training from a local

learning provider (usually on the basis of day release). In this way Apprenticeships teach learners about the whole job, not just individual skills.

An apprentice and employer can agree to work to one of two levels:

- ❑ An Apprenticeship which lasts at least a year and gives the apprentice a Level 2 NVQ; or
- ❑ An Advanced Apprenticeship which lasts at least two years and gives the apprentice a Level 3 NVQ.

Both levels also afford the apprentice key skills qualifications

and a technical certificate such as a BTEC national diploma or a City & Guilds Progression Award. 80 sectors of industry are covered by the Apprenticeship programme, from health and social care to business administration, and 160 different Apprenticeships are offered in these different sectors.

Most apprentices are paid a salary by their employer that reflects their skills, experience, age and ability. A few apprentices are on work placements with a business and get paid a training allowance by the Learning and Skills Council.

14 General Funding Possibilities

14.1 Free Learning

Free learning is available online at the BBC learning site, and learndirect also offer free taster courses online. Business websites often have an education section with learning materials. Another possibility for free learning is provided in voluntary work. Many FE courses are offered free or at a substantial discount to the unwaged, and many courses entitle learners to an NUS card which gives discounts on transport, eating out, clothes etc.

14.2 Career Development Loans

Career Development Loans (CDL) are deferred repayment bank loans of up to £8,000, available from Barclays, the Co-operative and the Royal Bank of Scotland, to assist with the costs of vocational learning. CDLs can be used to fund up to two years of learning plus up to one year's practical work experience where it forms part of the course. They can be used to cover not only course fees but other course costs such as childcare, travel, equipment, and living expenses. They are offered to those aged 18 or over who are

enrolled on any full-time, part-time or distance learning vocational courses (that is, one that leads to an occupation, trade or profession) such as NVQs, City & Guilds and vocational postgraduate courses. The DfES pays the interest on the loans while the learners are on their courses and for up to one month afterwards, following which the loan is repaid to the bank over an agreed period at a fixed rate of interest.

14.3 Educational Grants

City & Guilds offers a number of educational grants each year to people who want to study for one of its qualifications. The grants can be used to cover course fees, travel expenses, childcare, the costs of a break from work for re-training, or other costs preventing potential students from enrolling. Educational charities and trusts donate funds to individual learners, usually to assist with expenses such as books, travel, and childcare. For example, SKILL, the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, promotes opportunities for young people and adults with disabilities in post-16 education, training or

employment. Learners can gain information from the Educational Grants Advisory Service (EGAS) to check for which educational trusts they might qualify, and also to obtain advice and information on standard funding for post-16 education.

The General Federation of Trades Unions Educational Trust offers grants for full-time and Open University students of economic theory and history, industrial law, history, and industrial relations.

14.4 Guidance in Finance

Adult learners can access guidance in finance from www.moneymatterstome.co.uk, largely set up by The National Institute of Continuing Education (NIACE). NIACE also works with DfES on the Financial Literacy for Older People (FLOP) project to address the financial literacy needs of people aged 50+ and to develop learning materials for them. Adults can also access relevant information from learndirect, which recommends accreditation of prior or experiential learning and Learning Through Work (LTW).

15 Funding Information for Further Education Courses

Further education courses are typically Level 3 courses such as A Levels, NVQ Level 3, City & Guilds and BTEC Nationals.

15.1 Free Further Education Courses

Some FE courses are free. Full-time students aged 16 - 18 at publicly

funded schools and colleges are exempt from all tuition fees. Some part-time FE students who are on a low income can have course fees waived. Benefit claimants may have some or all of their fees paid. Life skills courses (i.e. in numeracy, literacy, ESOL) are usually free.

15.2 Learner Support Funds, Childcare and Hardship Funds

Students 16 to 19 who have children can qualify for up to £5,000 to pay for registered childcare; those over 19 and on low income are also eligible.

Learner support funds cover the costs of childcare, equipment, transport and accommodation costs, and are accessible to sixth formers through their Local Education Authority (LEA) and college students through the college Student Support Officer. Financial contingency, access, or hardship funds (usually one-off payments which do not have to be paid back) are offered by colleges to students facing financial difficulties. They are means-tested and can be up to a few thousand pounds.

15.3 Education Maintenance Allowance

The EMA is a means-tested grant, dependent on parental income, which aims to encourage more children aged 16-18 from poorer

families to stay in education beyond school leaving age. Young people on any FE course up to Level 3 can receive up to £30 a week plus bonuses of £100 for good progression through the course. From September 2004, following a successful pilot stage covering a third of the country, learners are now able to claim the EMA from LEAs across all of England as well as in certain areas in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Government expects just over half (around 353,000 of the total 666,000) of the 16 year old age group to be eligible for the EMA in 2005.

15.4 Adult Learning Grant

ALGs of £30 per week are offered to those aged at least 19 who want

to study a full-time course leading to a first Level 2 qualification (equivalent of 5 GCSEs graded A* - C or NVQ Level 2) and to those aged between 19 and 31 who want to study a full-time course leading to a first Level 3 qualification (equivalent to 3 A Levels or NVQ Level 3). The grant, intended to assist with the costs of books, equipment and travel, is currently being piloted in 19 local LSC areas.*

16 Funding Information for Higher Education Courses

HE courses are typically first degrees, BTEC Higher National Diplomas, Diplomas of Higher Education and foundation degrees.

16.1 Tuition Fees

Tuition fees vary according to the income of the learner and that of their parents or spouse. The maximum yearly contribution for full-time students is £1,150. This is set to rise to a maximum of £3,000 per year in 2006.

16.2 Student Loans

Three quarters of the maximum student loan (£4,095 for learners not living at home and not studying in London) is not means-

tested and one quarter is means-tested. Students must begin to pay the loan back after completing their course and after they earn more than £10,000 (soon to be raised to £15,000) per year. Those aged between 50 and 54 at the start of their course are only eligible for a loan if they are intending to return to work after finishing the course, and those aged over 54 are ineligible for student loans at all.

16.3 Higher Education Awards

Students entering higher education in 2005 can access a Higher Education Grant of up to £1,000 a year. The amount awarded is determined by the household

income of the applicant. Access to Learning Fund offer means-tested Standard Awards to help with the general costs of being a student, and Non Standard Awards for students who have to meet exceptional costs such as repairs to essential household equipment and emergency situations. There are also financial contingency, access, and hardship funds and loans for students who encounter severe financial difficulties whilst on a course which help towards additional costs such as travel, course and exam fees, childcare and books. Part-time students on low income or benefits can sometimes get their course fees paid by approaching their college or university.

* Bedfordshire and Luton, Black Country, County Durham, Devon and Cornwall, Humberside, Lancashire, Leicestershire, London West, Shropshire, South Yorkshire, Tees Valley, Tyne and Wear, Northumberland, Sussex, Surrey, Kent and Medway, Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, and Berkshire.

16.4 Childcare Assistance

A Childcare Grant Package is available from LEAs for full-time students with children under 15 and can cover up to 85% of (registered) childcare costs. There are also Parents Learning Allowances (up to £1,330) which can be claimed from LEAs to assist with course-related costs. Mature students over 26 who have dependants or are lone parents can qualify for additional funding,

and tuition fees for parents in education are usually paid in full.

16.5 Other Assistance

LEAs provide Adult Dependents Grants (for adult family members who are financially dependent on the learner). Care Leavers Grants of up to £100 per week are available for the long vacation for those who have left care to enter HE. Disabled HE students are eligible for the (non-means-tested) Disabled Students Allowances for

assistance with travel expenses and equipment costs.

Some assistance is available for travel expenses if part of the course is overseas and for medical, nursing or dental students who have to travel to a different college from their own. Students on health professional courses with NHS funding (such as nursing, physiotherapy, dental hygiene) can qualify for a bursary which covers day-to-day living and expenses, and social work students can access a non-means-tested bursary.

17 Studying on Benefits/Government-Funded Training

17.1 Benefits and Tax Credits

Part-time students, parents, refugees, ill people and retired people are eligible for means-tested benefits whilst studying, available through Jobcentre Plus. Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit can be accessed by students as long as they fulfil the usual criteria for the tax credits.

17.2 Work-Based Learning for Adults

Work-based Learning for Adults (WBLA) is on-the-job training for long-term unemployed adults, intended to give them the necessary occupational skills to help them back into work. It is available for those who have been out of work for at least 6 months aged 25 and over or aged 18-24 who have a disability and are receiving benefits other than Jobseekers Allowance (JSA). Lone parents and those with basic skills needs, those who have recently returned from caring for a child or

relative, and those with disabilities can join the scheme immediately (i.e. they don't have to be unemployed for 6 months first to qualify). Training programmes include literacy, numeracy and NVQs. The training is free and claimants also receive an extra £10 on top of a training allowance which is the same amount as their benefits. Some learners can also access assistance with childcare and travel costs.

17.3 New Deal

Benefit claimants can choose the 'education and training' option as part of the New Deal schemes which covers the cost of the course and further helps with related costs such as books, transport and childcare. The New Deal for 18-24 year olds guarantees claimants the equivalent of JSA, as does the New Deal 25 Plus, which also offers a possible additional weekly premium. The New Deal 50 Plus offers an in-work training grant of up to £750, while the New Deal

for Lone Parents gives extra help with travel and childcare costs. The training offered in the various New Deals is focused on achieving job outcomes. Skills are offered which will facilitate the learner's entrance to the labour market, such as specific vocational skills (e.g. fork-lift driving) and soft skills (e.g. time management).

17.4 Ambition Programme

The skills agenda is further supported by the DWP's Ambition Programme, which aims to increase participants' skills and help them access better-paid, higher-level jobs. Industry-specific requirements are used to define programme content and standards of job readiness; training opportunities are then provided with the aim of meeting these employer standards. Ambition only trains unemployed people in the areas where there are long-term, well paid jobs available, providing a real chance for a fresh start.

EMPLOYERS 18 Options for Employers

18.1

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are one of the best ways of making training genuinely demand-led. Sector Skills Councils (composed of business representatives from the relevant industry) decide on the course content within their own sector. In this way Apprenticeships are designed by business for business, guaranteeing that the training is relevant.

Taking on apprentices helps employers to stay competitive by developing the kind of people they will need for the future. Learning providers offer employers help with deciding which Apprenticeships are best for their business. Large businesses can access support from the LSC's National Contracts Service which can put them in touch with a suitable learning provider and help them customise their training programme. If employers agree to take on apprentices regularly, they can receive financial assistance towards salary and on-the-job costs.

18.2 Secondary School/College Links

The Government has a target that every secondary school should forge a close link with at least one business organisation.

Effective links between businesses/employers and secondary schools/colleges can be developed through:

Business Link (BL) which provides practical advice on all aspects of business activity;

Other business link organisations, like Education Business Partnerships, through the Federation of Business Link Consortia (FBLC);

Business link activities such as work experience, mentoring, teacher placements, curricular support for particular subjects;

Government-funded bodies (LSCs, the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA), SSCs, and local authorities); and

Independent bodies (chambers of commerce, training providers, educational charities (like businessdynamics and Trident Trust), rotary clubs and professional bodies/trade associations).

18.3 Influencing Skills Policy

SSCs will be instrumental in facilitating links between employers and skills policy. Groups of influential employers in industry or business sectors of economic importance are taking the lead in Sector Skills Councils to tackle the skills and productivity needs of their sector. Employers will have a new impact on policies affecting the skills and productivity of their sector, and increased influence with education and training partners and the main funding and delivery agencies. When the SSAs are published it will be clearer in what ways individual employers can collaborate with providers of education and training so that skills demand can directly shape the nature of supply. The focus of the SSAs will be on national sector issues, so the next step for employers will be to facilitate dialogue through their SSC on local sectoral issues. It is locally that employer commitment to skills will reap real benefits for businesses.

Participant employers hope that the SSAs will potentially result in:

Collaborative action by employers, such as licences to operate/licences to practise;

Collective training schemes (for example through the Apprenticeship scheme);

Voluntary training levies or new statutory training levies;

Skills passports;

Supply chain initiatives; and

Sector academies (through collaboration between sector employers and learning providers) to shape specific provision and qualifications relating to industry relevant learning.

18.4 Skills for Life

The Skills for Life strategy has a strong focus on helping employers to develop their lower skilled employees and encourage lifelong learning. The strategy offers employers workplace brokers, piloting of best practice approaches, and advice specifically developed for SMEs. It also offers an employer "toolkit", supported by a free training programme, to assist businesses to address skills shortages. The toolkit is designed to help employers find solutions to business problems arising from poor literacy and numeracy skills. The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (ABSSU) is working in partnership with many other organisations to drive forward the workplace basic skills agenda. For example, ABSSU is working with Business in the Community (BITC) to network 40 Skills for Life Employer Champions and engage large high-profile employers through work with KPMG's consultancy service. ABSSU is also collaborating with LSC to fund Workplace Basic Skills Advisers through LSC and workplace provider pilots.

19 Costs and Incentives for Employers Investing in Workforce Development

What costs do employers face in addressing their staff's skills gaps? Are they offered any incentives to retrain their workforce?

19.1 Basic Skills Training

Delivery of basic skills training (i.e. in literacy and numeracy) is free if it is organised through a provider funded by the local LSC.

19.2 In-house Training

If employers opt for in-house training, existing resources will have to be diverted away from the employers' core business activities and into providing training. Facilities may need to be set aside at the employers' premises for training, involving a loss of space and equipment for the duration of the training. Further, training will likely require resources and mean that employees are away from their posts while they learn. Employers must consider the internal staff costs of providing in-house training – training the trainer, the cost of an administrator etc.

19.3 External Training

External training is generally more expensive than in-house training, particularly for smaller businesses. It has the least effect on the employers' existing resources, but it does mean that employees are absent from work for the duration of the training. This means that the employer will incur either the expense of setting up cover for employees or a loss of productivity. Costs can be kept down by employers joining up with other businesses with similar skills needs.

Learning through networking with others should be facilitated through the SSAs.

19.4 National Employer Training Programme

Employers based in Employer Training Pilot areas have been able to access assistance with this cost. The ETP programme offers incentives to employers who choose to release their staff for training. The programme gives employers the chance to identify basic and vocational skills gaps which affect their productivity. Training is then chosen which is work-based and demand-led, thus improving business output. Employers are reimbursed for the cost of losing employees during normal working hours. Further, small businesses can access support over and above being reimbursed for costs associated with releasing staff. As these pilots are now being rolled out nationally through the NETP, employers around England will be able to access this assistance.

Other regionally-funded incentives schemes exist around England to encourage businesses to invest in workforce development. Plus there are 6 DTI workforce development pilots which provide compensation for employers who allow staff without basic skills or Level 2 qualifications time off to study. Employers can access free advice on the costs of and possible incentives for training in their area/sector from local LSCs and organisations such as Business Link Operators.

19.5 Tax Credits

Future policy on incentives for workforce development could see employers offered tax credits to increase the demand for training. The Government is, however, keen to avoid the problem of 'deadweight' (through paying employers to do what they would have done in any case). The TUC is calling for a statutory right to time off for training, but the CBI is opposed to a legal entitlement. Such a move may be under consideration by the present Government, but it appears that their underlying attitude is that public financial incentives to train people in work need to be matched by employer commitment to provide time off to train.

PART D: Results

20 Obtaining Results

20.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire⁸ was designed to be circulated among all Members of Parliament representing English constituencies. The questionnaire was based on major policy areas, which MPs ranked according to importance and prevalence in their constituency. The MPs were asked to assess the relative skills levels of their constituencies and about the skills issues which were most important for the employers and learners in their constituencies. The questionnaires also asked MPs more generally what could be done, nationally or locally, to improve the skills in their constituencies, and what areas they would be keen for the Associate Parliamentary Skills Group to focus on in the next parliamentary year. Please see Appendix 3 for a copy of the questionnaire. A total of 78 questionnaire responses were received from sitting MPs in England, from a total of 529 MPs representing English constituencies (response rate 14.7 per cent), of which 60 were analysable for our purposes. The questionnaire responses were analysed and used to inform the content of the interview.

20.2 Interviews

20 of the MPs who had filled out the questionnaire were chosen to take part in the interview, with representatives from each of the three main parties. The interview took the format of 5 general questions asked of all the MPs, followed by some more in-depth analysis of the particular MP's questionnaire responses. The 5 general questions were as follows:

1. *What legislation would you like to see passed through Parliament which would genuinely improve the skills provision in your constituency?*
2. *What changes would you like to see made to information, advice and guidance services that would assist your constituents' choices regarding training?*
3. *Do you believe the various skills agencies, learning providers etc support each other's work in your constituency?*
4. *How can skills provision be made truly demand-led?*
5. *What impact do you believe demographics will have on the skills needs in your constituency?*

Interviewed MPs:

- Charlotte Atkins, Labour MP for Staffordshire Moorlands
- Tim Boswell, Conservative MP for Daventry
- Vince Cable, Liberal Democrat MP for Twickenham
- Mary Creagh, Labour MP for Wakefield
- Claire Curtis-Thomas, Labour MP for Crosby
- David Drew, Labour MP for Stroud
- **Oliver Heald, Conservative MP for Hertfordshire North East**
- **Kelvin Hopkins, Labour MP for Luton North**
- **Simon Hughes, Liberal Democrat MP for North Southwark & Bermondsey**

⁸ see Appendix 3

Interviewed MPs continued:

- Tim Loughton, Conservative MP for East Worthing & Shoreham
- Gordon Marsden, Labour MP for Blackpool South
- Bob Russell, Liberal Democrat MP for Colchester
- Adrian Sanders, Liberal Democrat MP for Torbay
- Jonathan Shaw, Labour MP for Chatham & Ayelsford
- Barry Sheerman, Labour MP for Huddersfield
- Anne Snelgrove, Labour MP for South Swindon
- Bob Spink, Conservative MP for Castle Point
- Phyllis Starkey, Labour MP for Milton Keynes South West
- Joan Walley, Labour MP for Stoke-on-Trent North
- Derek Wyatt, Labour MP for Sittingbourne & Sheppey

21 Legislation to Improve Skills

21.1 No Legislation

The MPs interviewed were asked what legislation they would like to see passed through Parliament which would genuinely improve the skills provision in their constituencies. Adrian Sanders expressed the sentiments of the majority in his succinct response: "None."⁹ A conclusive 75 per cent of MPs interviewed stated that it was not a matter of legislation, that the skills in their constituency would not be improved by more bills going through Parliament. Rather than creating more legislation, Barry Sheerman contested that what was required was stability. Tim Loughton and Charlotte Atkins said that the issue at stake was better local provision, with Atkins commenting:

I'm not sure it's an issue of legislation, it's more an issue of making sure that people like the Learning and Skills Council actually recognise what the issues are on the ground; and as far as my Learning and Skills Council is

concerned I don't think they do.¹⁰

Instead of legislation, Simon Hughes argued that it was a matter of "administration, application and experience".¹¹ Gordon Marsden stressed the importance of thorough pilots and comprehensive reviews of policies: "the key is monitoring effectiveness and implementation."¹² Giving the example of the Individual Learning Accounts, Marsden argued that good initiatives can fall apart without proper pilots to anticipate the potential pitfalls.

21.2 Funding

Tim Boswell stressed the importance of funding over legislation, stating: "I'm not sure legislation is what we need. The two things I want to see are a slightly more generous and coherent funding stream or set of streams, and a better understanding of the qualifications framework to represent the interests of business and of learners".¹³ Many MPs placed a

great emphasis on funding, with suggestions varying from instituting a compulsory training levy, to priority funding for areas of skills shortage, to Joan Walley's insistence that Neighbourhood Renewal funding ought to be mainstreamed. The gap between FE and sixth form funding was flagged up by several MPs as an area of priority for the Government to address.

21.3 Cultural Change

Rather than introducing new legislation, Jonathan Shaw maintained that "Government working with the various agencies, schools, colleges can do more to foster the right climate to move skills up the agenda."¹⁴ Other MPs like Dr Phyllis Starkey and Bob Spink agreed that what was really needed to improve skills was a change in culture, with Spink contending that only when there was public recognition of the true value of vocational skills would the situation ever really be improved.

⁹ Adrian Sanders MP, Torbay (Liberal Democrat)

¹⁰ Charlotte Atkins MP, Staffordshire Moorlands (Labour)

¹¹ Simon Hughes MP, North Southwark and Bermondsey (Liberal Democrat)

¹² Gordon Marsden MP, Blackpool South (Labour)

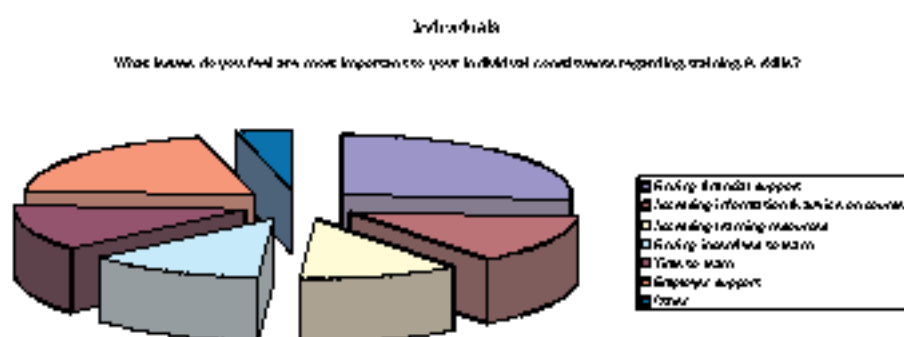
¹³ Tim Boswell MP, Daventry (Conservative)

¹⁴ Jonathan Shaw MP, Chatham and Ayelsford (Labour)

22 Learning Provision

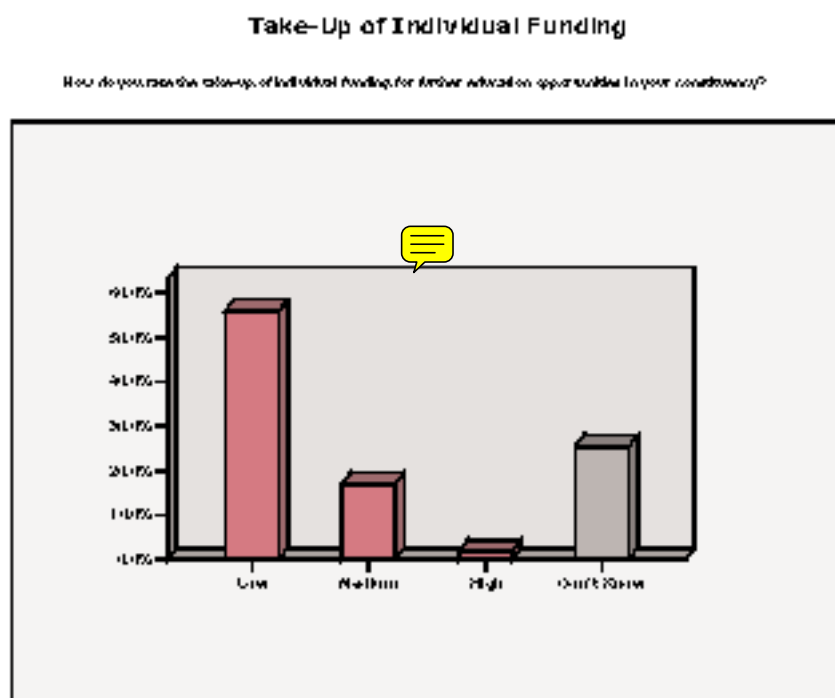
22.1 Financial Support for Learners

26.5 per cent of MPs surveyed asserted that the skills issue most important to their individual constituents was that of finding financial support. Employers' willingness to assist with training was also highlighted as pertinent to learners, with 19.9 per cent of MPs describing it as the most pressing skills issue for their individual constituents. This was supported by the results of the MP interviews, with 35 per cent rating finding financial support for



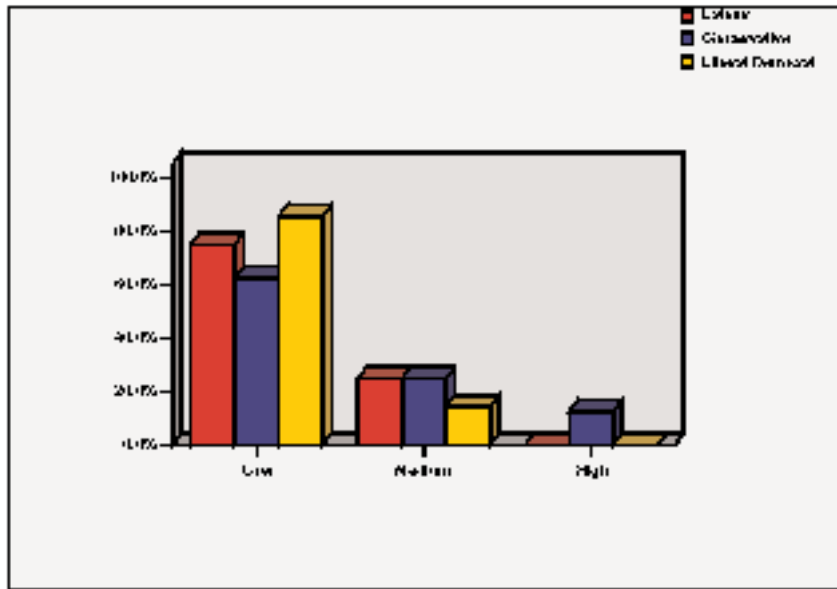
training as the chief concern of their constituents. Tim Loughton asserted that people in his constituency were simply not aware of what was available. Jonathan Shaw attributed this to the fact that there is a lot of information out there, so that one clear message does not come through. Derek Wyatt concurred, arguing that there are too many ways to access potential financial support and suggesting that there should be one portal such as www.fundingforyou.com. Tim Boswell and Adrian Sanders both argued that the lack of adequate financial support was most apparent in the case of adults, with Sanders asserting that the restriction of housing benefit to under-24s must be scrapped.

When asked in the questionnaire how they rated the take-up of individual funding for FE opportunities in their constituency, only 1.7 per cent of MPs described it as high, 16.9 per cent as medium and 55.9 per cent as low. 25.4 per cent of MPs said that they did not know.



When the MPs' responses are analysed by party, it becomes clear that the Liberal Democrats who completed the questionnaire are the most critical of the take-up of individual funding for FE opportunities, with none rating it as high, 14.3 per cent as medium and 85.7 per cent rating it as low. Labour MPs too were highly critical, again with none describing take-up of individual FE funding as high.

Take-Up Rate of Individual Funding for Further Education Opportunities: Opinion by Party

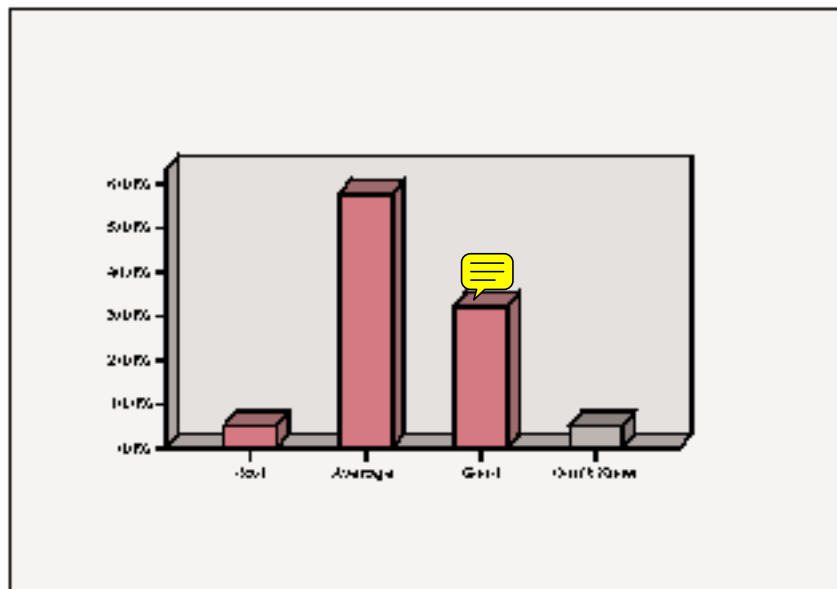


22.2 14-19 Provision

MPs were generally positive about 14-19 learning provision. When asked how they rated 14-19 learning opportunities in their constituencies, 32.2 per cent of respondents described 14-19 as good, 57.6 per cent as average and only 5 per cent rated it as bad. 5 per cent of MPs said that they did not know about 14-19 learning opportunities in their constituencies.

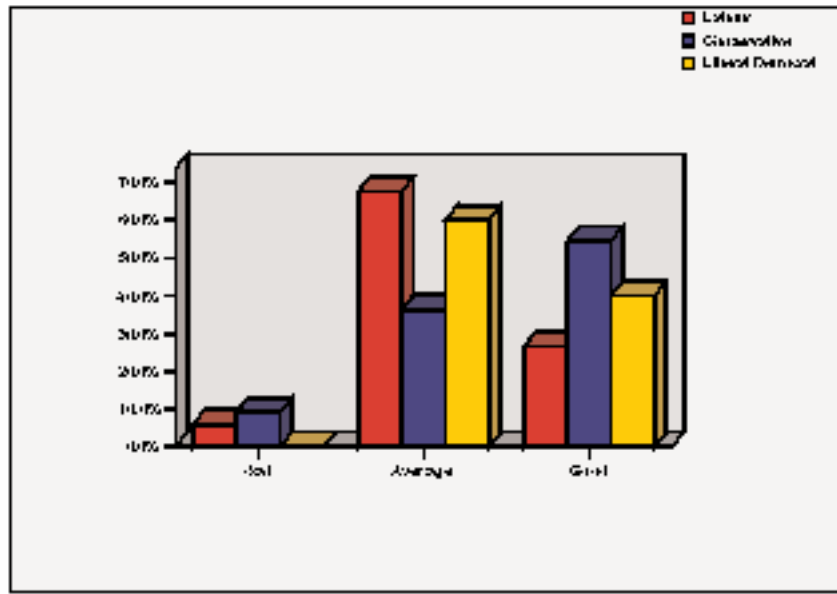
14-19 Learning Opportunities

How do you rate 14-19 learning opportunities in your constituency?



67.6 per cent of Labour MPs rated 14-19 as average, with 5.9 per cent describing it as bad, and 26.5 per cent viewing it as good. The Liberal Democrats were surprisingly positive about 14-19: none saw it as bad, 60 per cent thought it was average, and 40 per cent rated it as good. The Conservatives, too, were more positive than might be anticipated: 9.1 per cent viewed 14-19 learning opportunities as bad, 36.4 per cent as average and 54.5 per cent as good (over twice as many as Labour MPs who thought it good).

14-19 Learning Opportunities: Opinion by Party

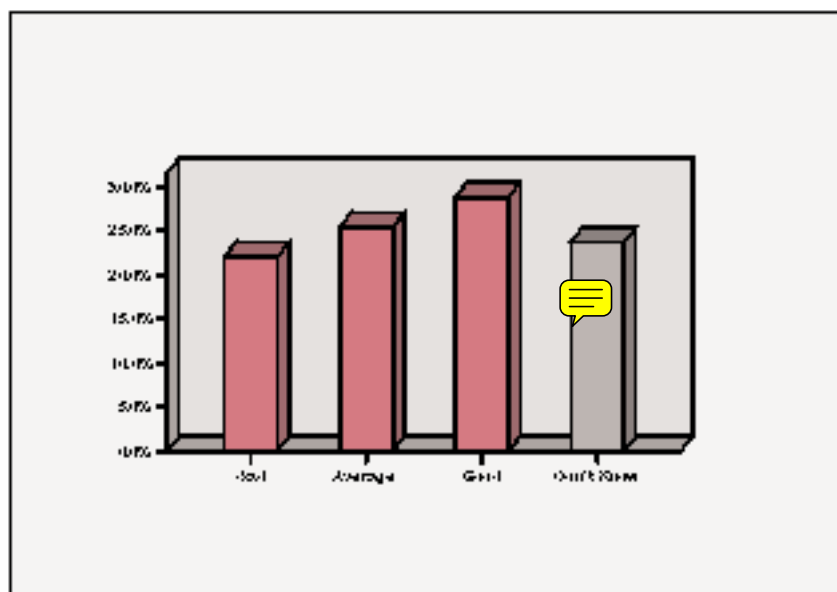


22.3 Higher Education

Opinion on higher education among the surveyed MPs was split quite evenly: 28.8 per cent of MPs saw it as good, 25.4 per cent saw it as average, and 22 per cent as bad. 23.7 per cent of MPs did not know about HE provision in their constituencies.

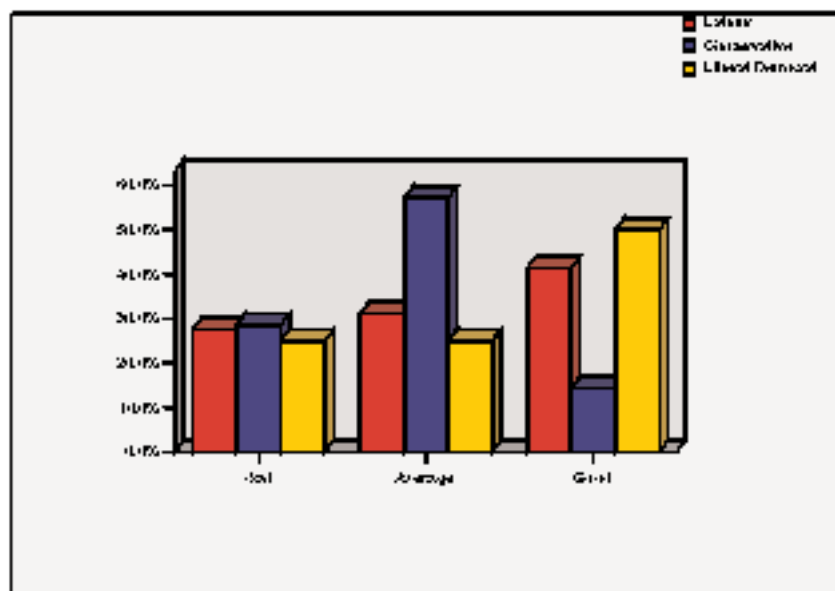
Higher Education Provision

How do you rate higher education provision in your constituency?



The Liberal Democrats were the most positive about higher education, with 50 per cent describing it as good, while the Conservatives were the most negative, with only 14.3 cent seeing it as good.

Higher Education Provision: Opinion by Party



There is a definite correlation between whether the MPs surveyed have a university in their constituency and their rating of HE provision. None of the MPs who rated HE as bad have a university in their constituency. This may explain the Conservative MPs' markedly more negative appraisal of HE, as only 9 per cent of the Conservative MPs interviewed have a university in their constituency compared to 22 per cent of Labour MPs and 40 per cent of Liberal Democrat MPs. It is, however, worth noting that no Conservatives rated higher education as good if there is not a university in their constituency, whereas 17 per cent of Labour MPs who do not have a university in their constituency still described higher education as good.

University in constituency?	Bad	Average	Good
All MPs:			
No	27%	31%	13%
Yes	0	2%	27%
Conservatives:			
No	29%	57%	0
Yes	0	0	14%
Labour:			
No	28%	28%	17%
Yes	0	3%	24%
Lib Dems:			
No	22%	22%	11%
Yes	0	0	45%

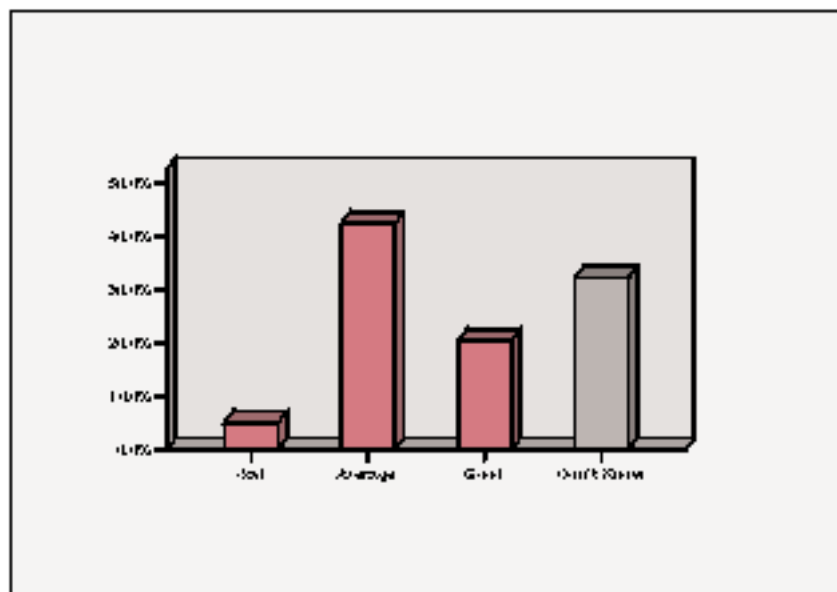
23 Information, Advice and Guidance

23.1 IAG Rated

Information, Advice and Guidance services were revealed to be an area of skills policy about which MPs were not well informed. 20.3 per cent of the MPs who filled out the questionnaire rated current IAG provision as good, 42.4 per cent as average and 5.1 per cent as bad. 32.2 per cent of MPs replied that they could not offer their opinion of the success of IAG services in their constituency.

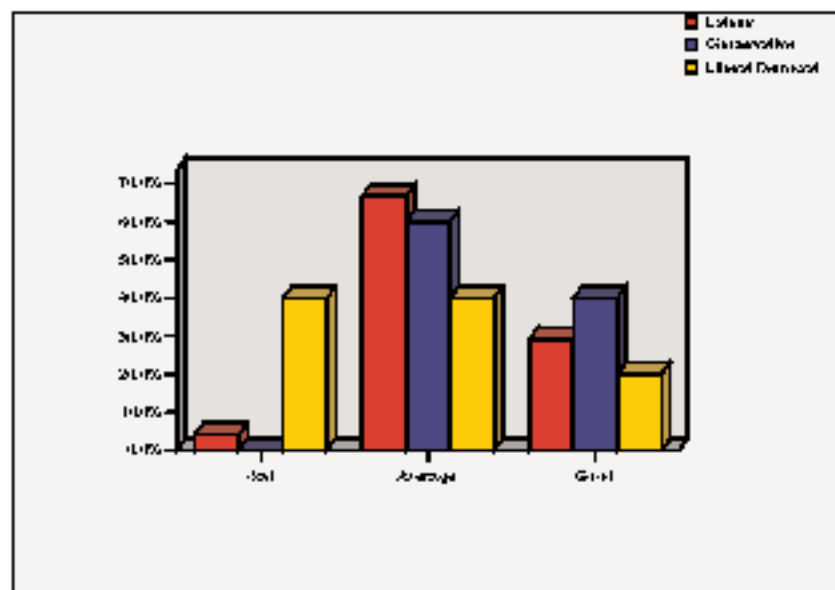
Advice & Guidance Services

Could you offer an opinion on the success of advice and guidance services in your constituency?



The Conservatives were the most positive about IAG, with 40 per cent rating it as good, 60 per cent as average, and none as bad. Labour MPs were marginally less positive, with 29.2 per cent describing IAG as good, 66.7 per cent as average, and 4.2 per cent as bad. The Liberal Democrats were the most critical, with 20 per cent rating IAG as good, 40 per cent as average, and 40 per cent as bad.

Success of Advice & Guidance Services: Opinion by Party



23.2 One-Stop Shop

Whilst the levels of awareness about IAG demonstrated in the questionnaire responses were low, many MPs called for improvements in the provision of advice. Several themes emerged from the 20 interviews about the best direction for IAG policy to take. 30 per cent of MPs made the point that a reduction in the sources of information available would assist their constituents by reducing confusion. Claire Curtis-Thomas responded:

I think less of the same would be useful, because there's a plethora of information services at the moment, and I think going to any one place for information is very difficult when you've got a thousand on offer.¹⁵

As Marsden noted, **"the problem at the moment is that the information sources are very diffuse."¹⁶** Joan Walley argued for **"a single, co-ordinated port of call"¹⁷** and Sanders agreed, calling for **"one point of entry rather than a plethora."¹⁸** Bob Spink proposed that there should be one simple information sheet for each sector showing which skills or trades were taught where, giving contact numbers and comprehensive information on funding. Curtis-Thomas also argued for more accessible funding information, particularly emphasising the need for "clearer delineation about what is free and what is not."¹⁹

23.3 IAG for Adults

The need to harmonise the information that is on offer is most pronounced for adults. This issue was picked up by Marsden and Hughes, who both called for a

one-stop shop for adults wishing to access IAG. Dr Starkey agreed, calling for information to be tailored more specifically to different groups:

Young people are fairly well catered for through the Connexions service, but adults who may wish to improve their skills are less able to access information. And there are different groups of adults that would need the information to be provided in different ways. So people who are in work may be able to get the information best through their employers or through the Chambers of Commerce. People who have been out of work for some time for whatever reason, particularly people with caring responsibilities, need to have information which is directed specifically at their needs rather than having to navigate their way around generalised information, and it would be best targeted through the sort of groups that most of them would go to anyway rather than through job centres.²⁰

Charlotte Atkins argued that the Government's focus on the 16-19 age group was detrimental to adults and called for more funding for older people so that life-enhancing courses could be offered at a reasonable cost. David Drew too questioned the Government's 14-19 focus and called for more assistance with adult IAG: **"Adult provision has got to be very local, it's got to start at a fairly basic level, it's got to be individualised, and it's got to link in with childcare, transport access and the local job market."²¹** Tim Boswell stated that after school, people should still be able to access a skills adviser, and that

there should be easily accessible electronic IAG also. Derek Wyatt agreed, calling for information to be available not only online but also by text messages and on a BBC TV channel such as BBC3.

23.4 Information Earlier

20 per cent of MPs interviewed felt that the key to improving IAG was to provide careers advice earlier on in the school system. Simon Hughes commented:

Young people need mentors before they leave primary school to start talking to them about career options, ideally mentors who will see them through into secondary school and who share a particular interest with the child in question and will be able to enthuse the child, then continued mentoring throughout secondary school with a view specifically towards careers advice.²²

Bob Spink and Kelvin Hopkins agreed, recommending an early introduction to the value of vocational skills: at a young age people should be made aware of the future financial and social gains afforded by gaining a certain skill which the market demands. Tim Boswell also emphasised the benefits of providing information earlier, painting a detailed picture of how he would like to see IAG operating:

We have to start the process of getting people interested in the world of work earlier and we have also got to put more emphasis on schools. There has been a certain amount of focus on careers information and guidance on exit of compulsory education. There hasn't been enough emphasis on gradually introducing people to

¹⁵ Claire Curtis-Thomas MP, Crosby (Labour)

¹⁶ Gordon Marsden MP, Blackpool South (Labour)

¹⁷ Joan Walley MP, Stoke-on-Trent North (Labour)

¹⁸ Adrian Sanders MP, Torbay (Liberal Democrat)

¹⁹ Claire Curtis-Thomas MP, Crosby (Labour)

²⁰ Dr Phyllis Starkey MP, Milton Keynes South West (Labour)

²¹ David Drew MP, Stroud (Labour)

²² Simon Hughes MP, North Southwark and Bermondsey (Liberal Democrat)

the kinds of changes they may want to make decisions about 2 or 3 years forward. I would like to see us move towards a well-structured, monitored and accredited programme of work experience starting in key stage 2, going through further more structured spells which would include actual work experience rather than just visits in key stage 3, summed up by advisory interviews in terms of people's options in key stage 4 (further training or Apprenticeships)... This is actually a matter of taking the whole business of skills information and guidance seriously and over a long period, not just making a fetish of focusing on the one-off interview as if it's the only one you'll ever had.²³

23.5 Impartial Advice

Another issue which received attention from a number of MPs was the need for impartial advice. Simon Hughes stressed that the providers of careers information must be independent, criticising the tendency for young people to be pressured to go into education after 16 as opposed to training, Apprenticeships or work. Through making information impartial, Hughes suggests that skills provision can become more relevant to market demand:

The best information needs to be given to young people as they leave school as to what Britain needs, so they can temper their choices by what the prospects are within the country and the

prospects of re-numeration and that ought to be done very objectively so that people can see the same information that's available to anyone in the country, but also with a regional and local variant.²⁴

Charlotte Atkins too called for impartial guidance at every stage so that, where appropriate, schools will encourage students to go to FE colleges. Jonathan Shaw agreed, saying:

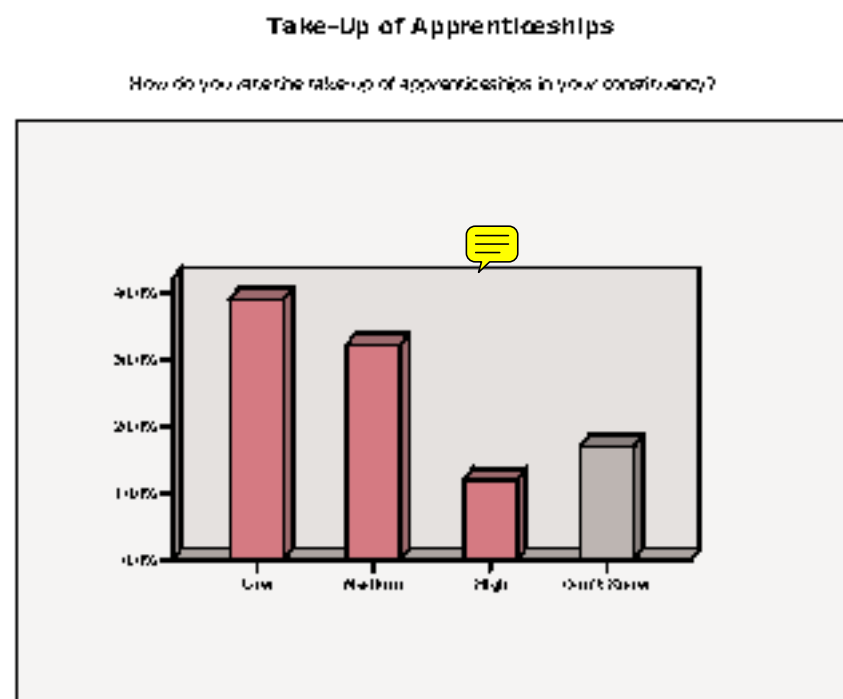
'It's vital that IAG is independent so young people can choose which institution to attend. The advice needs to be focused on the learner rather than the establishment. And providers of advice need to have better dialogue with employers especially SMEs.'²⁵

24 Apprenticeships

24.1 Take-Up

Apprenticeships were a key area for concern in both the questionnaire responses and the interviews. Only 11.9 per cent of the surveyed MPs rated the take-up of Apprenticeships as high. 32.2 per cent of MPs rated it as medium, and 39 per cent as low. 16.9 per cent of MPs were not sufficiently informed to comment on the take-up of Apprenticeships in their constituencies.

The Conservatives were the most positive about the take-up rate of Apprenticeships, with 25 per cent rating it high, 50 per cent medium, and 25 per cent low. The Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs who filled out the



questionnaire gave the same response: 12.5 per cent described the take-up rate of

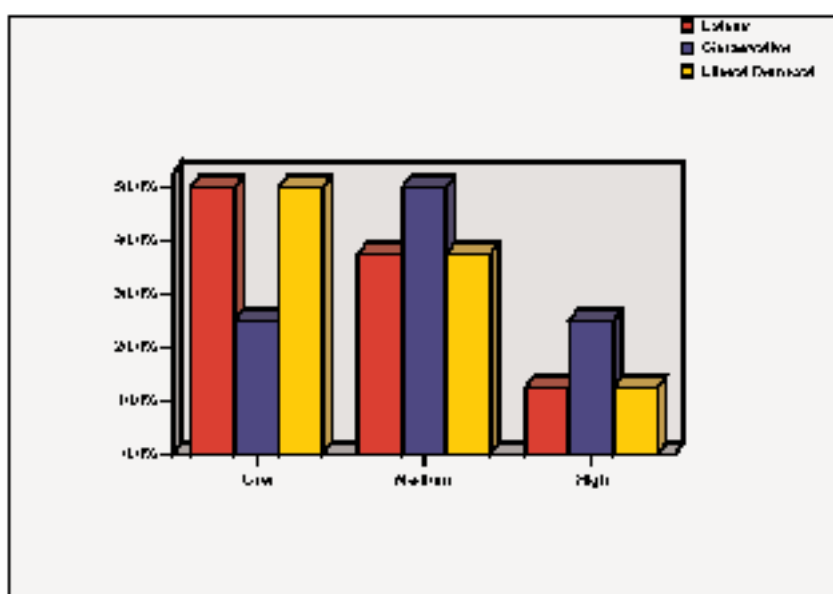
Apprenticeships as high, 37.5 per cent as medium, and 50 per cent as low.

²³ Tim Boswell MP, Daventry (Conservative)

²⁴ Simon Hughes MP, North Southwark and Bermondsey (Liberal Democrat)

²⁵ Jonathan Shaw MP, Chatham and Aylesford (Labour)

Take-Up Rate of Apprenticeships: Opinion by Party



24.2 Expansion of Apprenticeships

40 per cent of MPs interviewed focused on the issue of Apprenticeships as a means of improving the skills levels in their constituencies and as something they would be keen for the Associate Parliamentary Skills Group to look at over the next parliamentary year. One point mentioned by several MPs related to the expansion of Apprenticeships, with Bob Spink calling for more Apprenticeship places locally for a wider range of trades. Simon Hughes stated that we must build an Apprenticeship

opportunity for anyone who wants one, and Claire Curtis-Thomas agreed, arguing that older people should have access to these opportunities. Bob Russell deplored the lack of in-job training and Apprenticeships available. He argued that society should collectively fund the expansion of Apprenticeships "to recruit, train and bring into the workforce a generation that seems to have missed out on getting people to come into craft industries."²⁶ Jonathan Shaw applauded the success of the Apprenticeship programme but contended that there needs to be more consistent quality of placements. Kelvin

Hopkins called for active public sector Apprenticeships, using British Rail as an example of how the public sector can provide a base for skills training for good quality craftsmen. Phyllis Starkey suggested that Apprenticeships need to be marketed more effectively, that there needs to be more publicity on how skills improve your life and your earnings and on how skills are a commodity. "AimHigher explains to families with no experience of higher education what university is and what it does for them. We need to do the same thing with Apprenticeships and life long learning."²⁷

25 Adult Training

25.1 Adult FE Provision

The issue of adult training was one which MPs returned to again and again in their questionnaire and interview responses. Adult FE received a more positive response than might be expected in the questionnaires, with 39 per cent of MPs describing it as good, 9 per cent seeing as average, and only 15.3 per cent viewing it as bad. 6.8 per cent of MPs responded that they did not know about the adult FE provision in their constituency.

When these results are broken down by party they

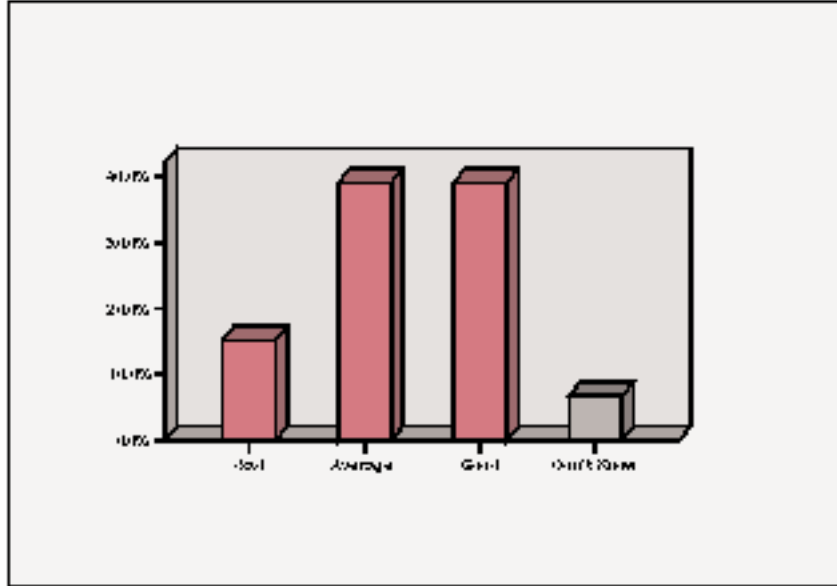
become even more surprising, with Labour being most critical of adult FE provision and the Conservatives most positive. Of the Labour MPs interviewed, 30.3 per cent rated adult FE as good, 48.5 per cent as average, and 21.2 per cent as bad. Of the Liberal Democrats interviewed, 40 per cent rated it as good, 50 per cent as average, and 10 per cent as bad. The Conservatives were overwhelmingly positive, with 72.7 per cent rating adult FE as good, 18.2 per cent as average, and only 9.1 percent describing it as bad.

²⁶ Bob Russell MP, Colchester (Liberal Democrat)

²⁷ Dr Phyllis Starkey MP, Milton Keynes South West (Labour)

Adult Further Education Provision

How do you rate adult further education provision in your constituency?

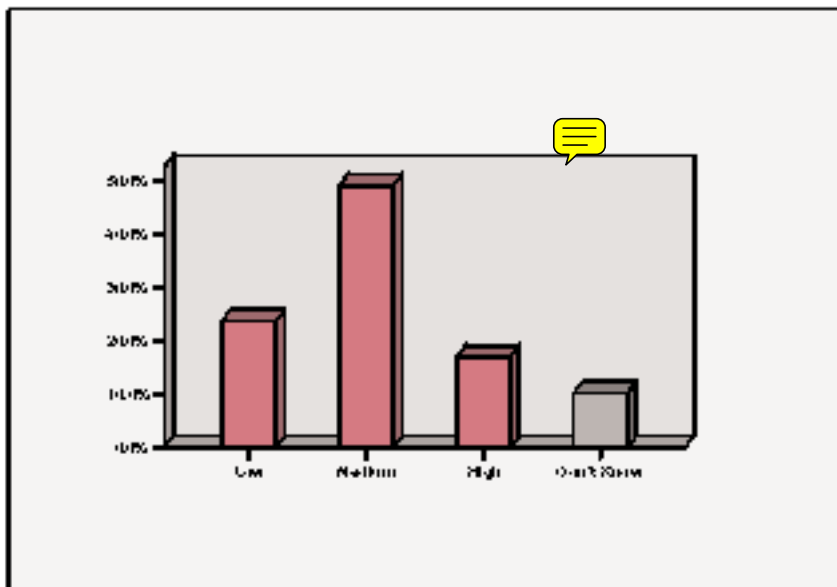


25.2 Adult FE Take-Up

When asked about the take-up of other further and adult learning courses, the surveyed MPs were less positive. 16.9 per cent of MPs described the take-up as high, 49.1 per cent as medium, and 23.7 per cent as low. 10.2 per cent of MPs did not know about the take-up of other further and adult learning courses. MPs believe the main problem to be in the take-up rather than the provision of adult further education, which suggests that there needs to be more publicity of the courses and funding available for adults who want to up-skill.

Take-Up of Other Further and Adult Learning Courses

How do you rate the take-up of other further and adult learning courses in your constituency?

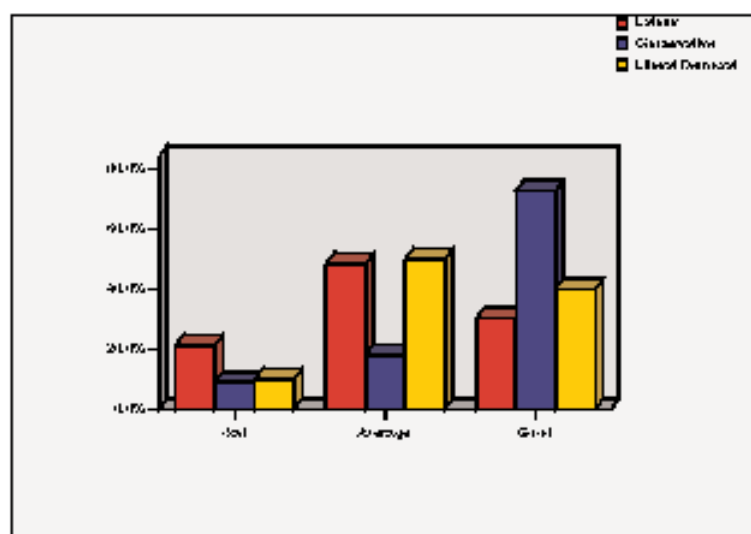


Labour was the most negative about the take-up rate of other further and adult learning courses, with only 9.4 per cent seeing it as high, 59.4 per cent as medium, and 31.2 per cent

as low. The Liberal Democrats were more positive, with 33.3 per cent of respondents describing the take up rate as high, 44.4 per cent as medium, and 22.3 per cent as low.

The Conservatives were marginally more positive still, with 36.3 per cent rating take-up as high, 45.5 per cent as medium, and 18.2 per cent as low.

Adult Further Education Provision: Opinion by Party



25.3 Shift of Government Focus

Most of the MPs interviewed highlighted adult training as important. Many expressed the view that the Government focus on 14-19 was excessive, with Vincent Cable describing the Government emphasis on Level 2 as inappropriate for his constituency. He stressed that adult education needs to be improved, through changing LSC priorities and redirection of Government funding: "The issue is how to provide new skills or training capabilities for the post-45s and post-50s... The focus of Government policy is almost entirely on 16-19, which is completely wrong."²⁸ Tim Boswell centred on the lack of transport and of funding for adults, suggesting that both act as disincentives to learn. He argued that adults fail to get enough financial support and that there is not adequate funding through the LSC to provide incentives for adult learning for

those who are not self-motivated and do not have employer assistance. One suggested means of remedying this is to extend the Education Maintenance Allowance to older people.

25.4 The Changing Demographic: Impact

Many MPs linked the two issues of adult training and the changing demographic in their questionnaire and interview responses. Adrian Sanders noted that the impact of demographic changes on skills would be "immense and catastrophic."²⁹ Phyllis Starkey agreed, emphasising that the impact would be huge and would involve an "acute shortage of labour and of skilled labour at all levels."³⁰ David Drew commented that already there is a shortage of young people in his constituency and that consequently employers are looking to recruit older people. Mary Creagh noted the national problem

of an ageing and a shrinking workforce and made the observation that as a result middle-sized cities like Wakefield are in danger of becoming atrophied as workers move to London. Bob Russell looked at the potential impact of the demographic changes in specific sectors and predicted shortages, noting that the average age of lorry drivers is now 45.

25.5 The Changing Demographic: Re-Skilling

The MPs interviewed almost unanimously called for a focus on re-training and re-skilling older workers to counter the effect of the changing demographic. Adrian Sanders and Simon Hughes emphasised the significance of adult education to the demographic issue, urging the Government to reconsider its focus. Claire Curtis-Thomas and Oliver Heald agreed, calling for

²⁸ Vincent Cable MP, Twickenham (Liberal Democrat)

²⁹ Adrian Sanders MP, Torbay (Liberal Democrat)

³⁰ Dr Phyllis Starkey MP, Milton Keynes South West (Labour)

more help for older people to learn trades such as electricians and plumbers. Joan Walley argued that to combat the problem of an ageing population with low skills "we need to be linking in the whole skills agenda to the regeneration process that we're trying to get underway in Stoke-on-Trent."³¹ Tim Loughton expressed the need for incentives for highly skilled people either to be trained locally or to be brought

in to counter effects of changing demographic, while Oliver Heald urged that we train the economically inactive rather than bringing in migrant workers to fill the skills shortages. Creagh asserted that people will have to work for longer and that consequently "we will need to retrain in our 50s and 60s, every 10 years until we retire at 70."³² Gordon Marsden agreed, noting that the demographic issue tied

into a broader debate about retirement age and using older people effectively in the workforce. He contended that "it is crucial that we don't just talk about acquiring skills but we talk about re-skilling and re-acquiring skills" and that it was "an economic and social necessity" that Government does not focus all its energy on young people.³³

26 Skills Agencies and Learning Providers

26.1 Too Many Agencies

60 per cent of MPs interviewed felt that the various skills agencies and learning providers in their constituencies did not support each other's work, 20 per cent believed that they did, with a further 20 per cent undecided. Some MPs mentioned that the agencies within their constituencies were in competition with each other and others commented that the various organisations were all on different trajectories. Derek Wyatt maintained that there were too many agencies and that a one-stop shop was needed. Simon Hughes concurred: "People shouldn't keep on being given different bits of information about different agencies which are actually falling over each other to do more or less the same job."³⁴ Kelvin Hopkins called for "a public sector single organisation with various arms rather than the plethora of private providers of skills training and advice."³⁵ He suggested that Connexions could fulfil the advice role, and questioned the wisdom behind breaking up the Careers Service to replace it with something new, only to destroy it a

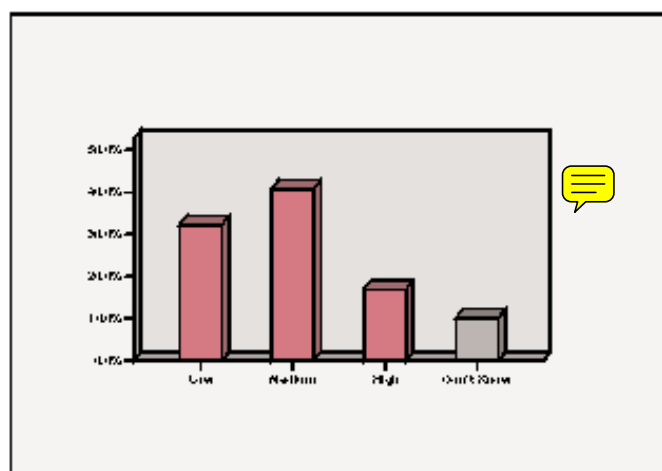
few years later. Barry Sheerman agreed that there were currently too many agencies, noting that this was very confusing to SMEs, but went on to state that this situation was likely to be alleviated by the Sector Skills Councils and the regional focus of the Learning and Skills Councils. To remedy this confusion about the roles of the various agencies and providers, Gordon Marsden suggested that Government "take a lead in providing a central mechanism where you can actually judge what all the various agencies are doing, making sure they don't duplicate each other's services."³⁶

26.2 The Learning and Skills Council

The MPs who returned the questionnaire were not very positive about the impact of the LSC on skills development in their constituencies. 16.9 per cent of MPs interviewed described the LSC as having a high impact on skills development in their constituencies, 40.7 per cent as having a medium impact, and 32.2 per cent as having a low impact. 10.2 per cent of MPs were not well informed enough to comment on the LSC's impact on skills development in their constituencies.

Learning & Skills Council

What impact do you think the Learning & Skills Council has on skills development in your constituency?



³¹ Joan Walley MP, Stoke-on-Trent North (Labour)

³² Mary Creagh MP, Wakefield (Labour)

^{33,36} Gordon Marsden MP, Blackpool South (Labour)

³⁴ Simon Hughes MP, North Southwark and Bermondsey (Liberal Democrat)

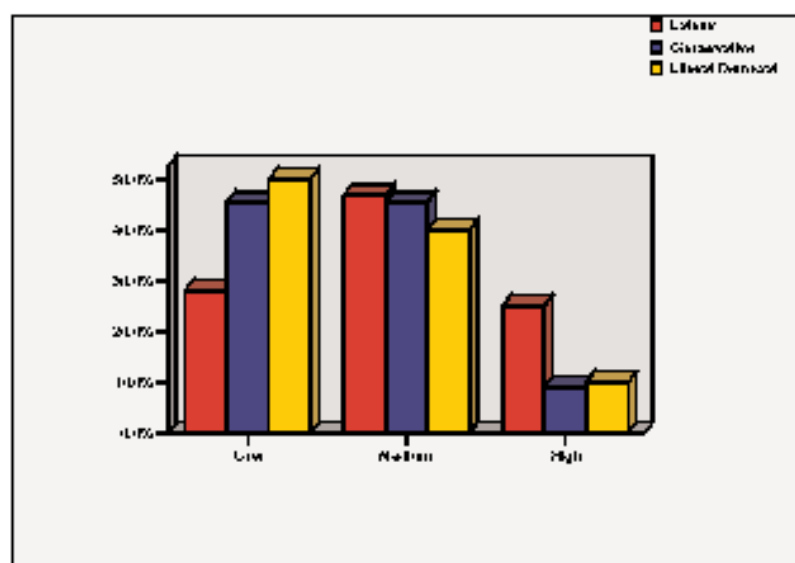
³⁵ Kelvin Hopkins MP, Luton North (Labour)

The Liberal Democrat MPs gave a very negative assessment of the LSC: 10 per cent said its impact on skills development was high, 40 per cent medium and 50 per cent low. The

Conservatives too were negative in their appraisal: only 9 per cent said the LSC had a high impact, 45.5 per cent said it had a medium impact and 45.5 per cent said it had a low impact.

Labour was the most positive, with 25 per cent responding high, 46.9 per cent medium and 28.1 per cent low.

Learning & Skills Council's Impact Opinion by Party



In the MP interviews divergent views were expressed about the performance of the LSC, some describing it as better than its predecessors. The majority of MPs gave negative assessments, however, with criticisms including the charge that LSC workers had inflated salaries which did not translate to action on the ground. Others suggested that the Learning and Skills Council had misplaced priorities, including an excessive focus on 16-19 learning which meant that it did not cater for the needs of adults. One Labour MP described their local LSC as "not useful, supportive or accessible," while Vincent Cable accused the LSC of lacking a physical presence. He argued that *"the local providers ... should be allowed to set their own priorities and not have them dictated by the LSC."*³⁷ Gordon Marsden made the interesting observation:

*There is a question mark about the role of the Learning and Skills Council because the Learning and Skills Councils operate regionally but effectively it seems to me that they don't have much regional autonomy and I think this is a particular problem for MPs when they are trying to decipher what's happening in their constituency.*³⁸

26.3 Provider Co-operation

Many MPs in their questionnaire and interview responses maintained that the skills provision in their constituencies could be improved by greater co-operation between the various skills agencies and learning providers. MPs were agreed that the organisations must operate in harmony rather than pulling in divergent directions. Anne Snelgrove asserted that 14-19 provision would only be improved when the providers work

together better. Charlotte Atkins noted that some schools and colleges co-operate well with each other, for example ensuring that they had compatible timetables, but that others were lagging in this respect. She called for the best practice demonstrated by some institutions co-operation to be spread, and also for linkage between colleges and universities to persuade those from less privileged backgrounds that university could be appropriate. Atkins commented: "There should be an easy, flexible, combined vocational and academic route."³⁹ The need for clearer pathways between school, further and higher education was mentioned by several MPs, including Tim Boswell who called for "easy progression routes between FE and HE, for example from Apprenticeship to graduation or from a manual job to management."⁴⁰

³⁷ Vincent Cable MP, Twickenham (Liberal Democrat)

³⁸ Gordon Marsden MP, Blackpool South (Labour)

³⁹ Charlotte Atkins MP, Staffordshire Moorlands (Labour)

27 Making Skills Provision Demand-Led

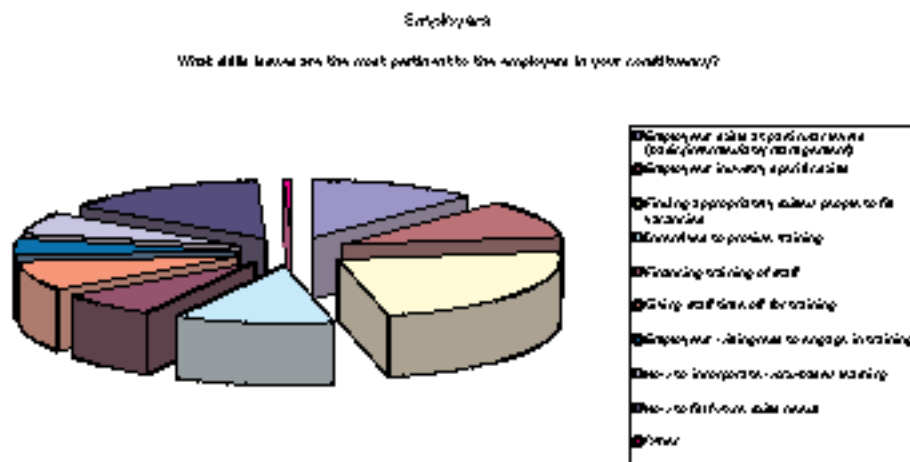
27.1 Too Difficult?

30 per cent of MPs interviewed asserted that skills provision simply couldn't be made truly demand-led. Claire Curtis-Thomas stated that it was too difficult to predict demand. Charlotte Atkins agreed, noting that those who most need skills are the least able to define their own demand. Others argued that skills provision should not be made truly demand led, with David Drew arguing that a balance was necessary between what the individual wants to study and what job opportunities there are. Barry Sheerman agreed, pointing out that what was needed was a balance between the supply of and the demand for labour. Tim Boswell noted that there shouldn't be too much central planning as this can distort the real demand which comes from the learner. Gordon Marsden suggested that rather than simply responding to demand, we should also be trying to build up capacity in particular areas and this could involve active government intervention



27.2 Employer Concerns

One of the main difficulties with making skills provision demand-led is that often the providers do not know what employers want, nor perhaps do many of the employers themselves. The surveyed MPs were asked which skills issues were most pertinent to the employers in their constituencies. Finding appropriately skilled people to fill vacancies was described as the most pertinent skills issue to employers by more MPs than any other issue (23.8 per cent of MPs). Three other issues which were flagged up as pertinent to employers were incentives to provide training, how to fill future skills needs, and employees' skills at particular levels.



These findings were supported by the interviews. 60 per cent of MPs interviewed responded that finding appropriately skilled people to fill vacancies was one of the most pressing issues for the employers in their constituencies. Many felt that the skills young people are taught are not appropriate to assisting them in finding employment. Tim Boswell made the comment that "the whole vocational, educational

area is still under-celebrated and under-managed and to some extent therefore underachieves."⁴¹ Claire Curtis-Thomas argued that the sectors which have the greatest demand for labour are not being marketed effectively to young people. Jonathan Shaw agreed, maintaining that the reason learning is not enthusing young people is that it is too focused on an academic curriculum and that

this needs to be aligned with practical opportunities. Bob Spink too argued that young people were not being pointed in the right direction, maintaining that if Britain is to have sufficient and sufficiently skilled car mechanics and plumbers then schools must take it upon themselves to make children aware of the opportunities earlier. Tim Loughton and Derek Wyatt both stressed that more

⁴⁰ Tim Boswell MP, Daventry (Conservative)

⁴¹ Tim Boswell MP, Daventry (Conservative)

technically-minded schools and colleges were required, with Wyatt calling for a procedure for training skilled artisans such as a specialist school for plumbing. David Drew and Claire Curtis-Thomas made the point that employers are not just concerned about young people's education and training, but that vacancies should be filled

by older workers, with Curtis-Thomas arguing that adults must be allowed access to Apprenticeships.

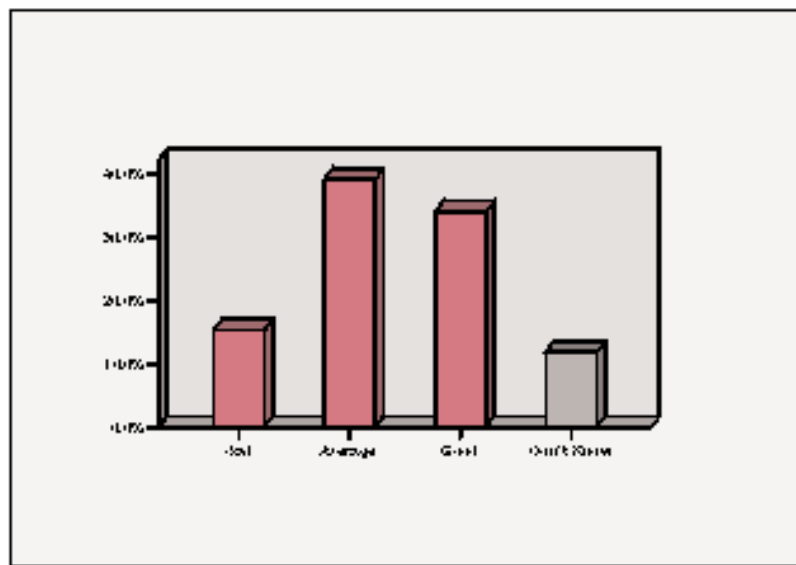
27.3 Large Business Engagement with Training

MPs did not identify a major problem with large business engagement with training

provision. 33.9 per cent of the surveyed MPs described large business engagement with training as good, 39 per cent as average and 15.3 per cent as bad. 11.9 per cent of MPs who filled out the questionnaire responded that they did not know about large business engagement with training provision in their constituency.

Large Business Engagement with Training Provision

How do you rate large business engagement with training provision in your constituency?

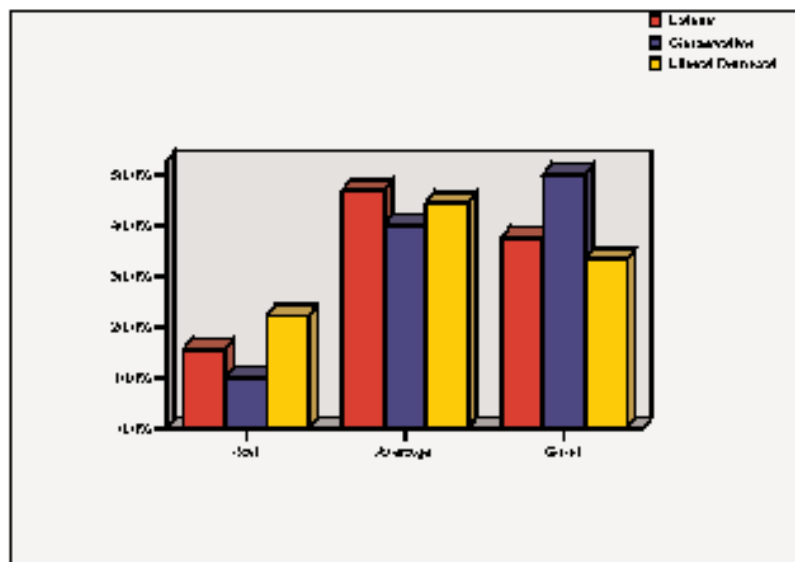


The Liberal Democrats were the most critical, with 33.3 per cent describing large business engagement with training as good, 44.4 as average, and 22.3 as bad.

37.5 per cent of Labour MPs saw it as good, alongside 46.9 per cent who saw it as average, and 15.6 per cent who saw it as bad. The Conservatives were the most

positive, with 50 per cent describing large business engagement with training as good, 40 per cent as average and 10 per cent as bad.

Large Business Engagement with Training Provision: Opinion by Party

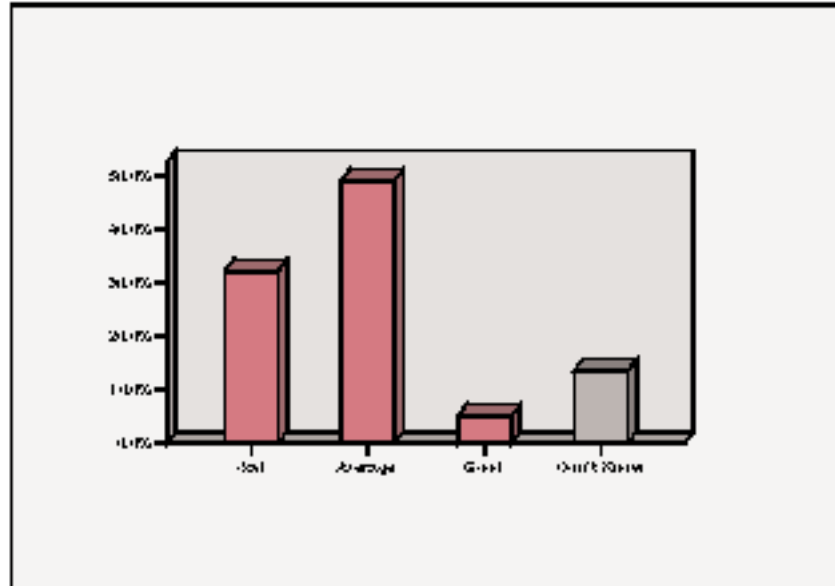


27.4 SME Engagement with Training

The surveyed MPs painted a much more negative picture of SME engagement with training provision. Only 5 per cent of respondents viewed SME engagement with training as good, while 49.2 per cent viewed it as average and 32.2 per cent viewed it as bad. 13.6 per cent of MPs were not able to rate SME engagement with training.

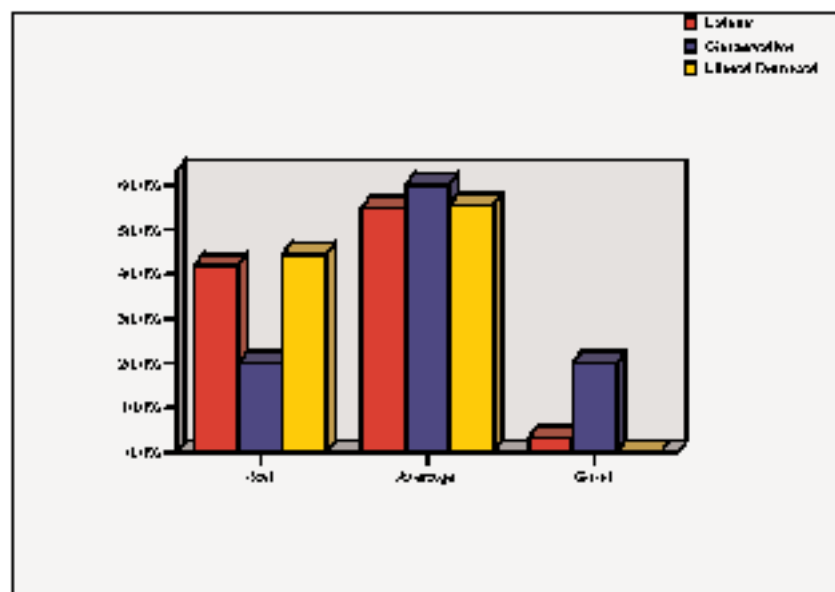
SME Engagement with Training Provision

How do you rate SME engagement with training provision in your constituency?



The division of opinion between the various parties about SME engagement with training provision was the same as with large business engagement: once again the Conservatives were noticeably more positive. No Liberal Democrat MPs rated SME engagement as good, 55.6 per cent rated it as average, and 44.4 per cent rated it as bad. Only 3.2 per cent of Labour MPs rated it as good, 54.8 per cent rated it as average, and 42 per cent as bad. 20 per cent of Conservatives rated SME engagement with training provision as good, 60 per cent as average, and 20 per cent as bad.

SME Engagement with Training Provision: Opinion by Party



The MP interviews supported these findings, with most MPs focusing on the role of SMEs in their suggestions for matching up the demands of the market and the demands of the learner. Joan Walley maintained that SMEs do not sign up to skills agenda because they are unaware of the benefits of training. To remedy this situation, she argued, there needs to be an informed debate at the local level involving the LSC, local authorities and employers. Barry Sheerman urged that we take note of the current UK economy and adjust our methods accordingly, which, he argued, involves realising that a high percentage of employers are now SMEs and that companies are mostly operating in service industries like retail and distribution rather than more traditional industries like manufacturing. Kelvin Hopkins and Oliver Heald emphasised the importance of listening to SMEs and helping them articulate their needs. Tim Loughton suggested that direct input from senior business representatives would help match up the skill requirements of SMEs with the training available locally. Phyllis Starkey contended that the LSC needs to be more localised, and much more sensitive and accountable to the business community, while Mary Creagh called for a partnership between Government, employers and trade unions.

27.5 SME Co-operation

Many MPs argued that the reason SMEs were not engaging with training provision was that they were worried about their ability to retain workers they have trained. Anne Snelgrove for one contended that SMEs' concerns about

retention of workers they have invested in is the central issue of the small business and skills agenda. Phyllis Starkey described the problem:

At the moment some employers support training very well and they are then exploited by other employers who let those firms finance training and then poach the trained workers. We have to find a way of encouraging firms to work together so they don't poach off each other or sponge off each other which is essentially what some firms are doing.⁴²

David Drew suggested that SMEs would engage with training if Business Link provided common training facilities on industrial estates. Hughes urged that chambers of commerce and the CBI share information and best practice among SMEs. He further argued that the problem of poaching could be overcome by SMEs forming local and sectoral partnerships, in work experience and training, to share overheads and avoid duplication of resources.

27.6 Incentives and the National Employer Training Programme

Many MPs in both the questionnaires and the interviews flagged up the use of incentives as an effective means of making business more engaged with training provision. Adrian Sanders argued that employers need incentives to allow their staff access to training. Charlotte Atkins made the point that incentives are important not only in starting employers' interest in training but

also in keeping skills initiatives running. David Drew noted that the levy for the training boards was never popular with the employers who paid it, concluding that it must be the responsibility of Government to provide the incentives. Dr Starkey too saw a role for Government, arguing that it should provide both positive and negative financial incentives to encourage training. Simon Hughes called for financial incentives for SMEs, while Derek Wyatt asserted the need for different procedures in the case of SMEs which make up 80 per cent of our economy: "We need to make training tax advantageous for SMEs."⁴³ Jonathan Shaw asserted that if there was ever an incentive to provide free training it is the National Employer Training Programme, contending that it would "show SMEs the benefits of training and give them the impetus to engage seriously with the provider sector in shaping what their businesses need to grow and succeed."⁴⁴ When asked to offer their opinion on the success of the Employer Training Pilots in their constituencies,⁴⁵ MPs showed a startling degree of ignorance about the programme, with 74.6 per cent of those who filled out the questionnaire responding that they did not know. This can perhaps be attributed to the fact that the pilots were only operating in 12 local LSC areas. Of those MPs that felt able to comment, 5.1 per cent described the success rate as good, 10.2 as average and 10.2 as bad.

⁴² Dr Phyllis Starkey MP, Milton Keynes South West (Labour)

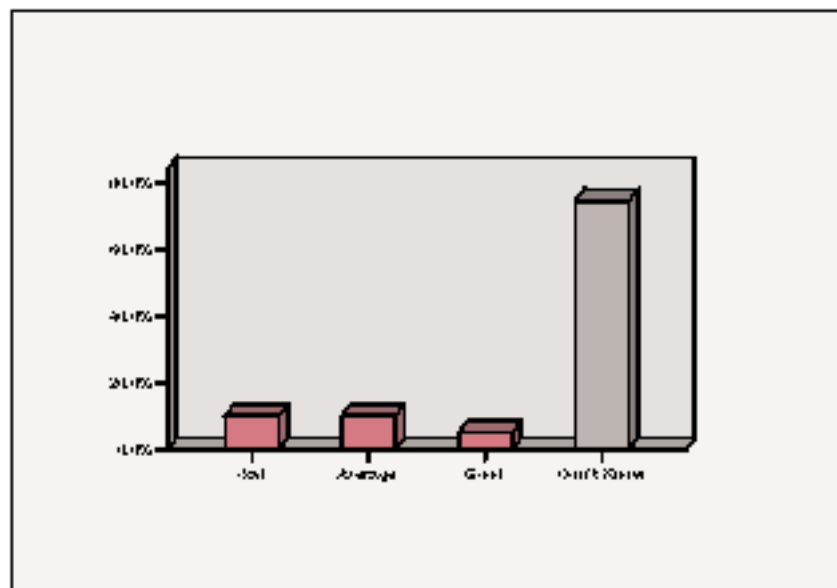
⁴³ Derek Wyatt MP, Sittingbourne and Sheppey (Labour)

⁴⁴ Jonathan Shaw MP, Chatham and Aylesford (Labour)

⁴⁵ The NETP was in pilot stage at the time the questionnaires were sent to MPs.

Employer Training Pilots

Could you offer your opinion on the success of Employer Training Pilots in your constituency?



27.7 Flexibility

A number of MPs asserted in their interviews that flexibility of training courses was the best way to ensure that skills provision was demand-led. Vincent Cable commented that "short, flexible courses are needed rather than rigidly defined, long, qualification-based courses, especially for women returning to the workplace."⁴⁶ Oliver Heald made a similar point:

There's a slight dichotomy that on the one hand you want to be able to have qualifications that everyone recognises but at the same time you want to have the skills provided that are needed for the local economy. There needs to be enough flexibility in the NVQ system and the courses that are offered to tailor it to the needs of local businesses.⁴⁷

MPs offered different courses of action for ensuring that skills provision was both flexible and responsive to business needs. For example, Gordon Marsden saw Regional Development Agencies playing an important role as a kind of clearing house for market demands:

In the past there has been too much emphasis on "5-year plan" approach. We need to make sure that where there are demands in the system, they are fed through much more quickly - through a clearing house rather than the demands being mediated through half a dozen different agencies.⁴⁸

27.8 Sector Skills Councils

The Sector Skills Councils were designed to play a central role in ensuring that skills provision is demand-led. The surveyed MPs were largely uninformed about the success rate of SSCs, however, with 30.5 per cent saying they did not know what impact the SSCs had on the skills development in their constituencies. Those who were able to rate SSCs were largely negative: only 3.4 per cent of MPs described the SSCs as having a high impact on skills development in their constituencies, with 18.6 per cent rating the impact medium and 47.5 per cent low.

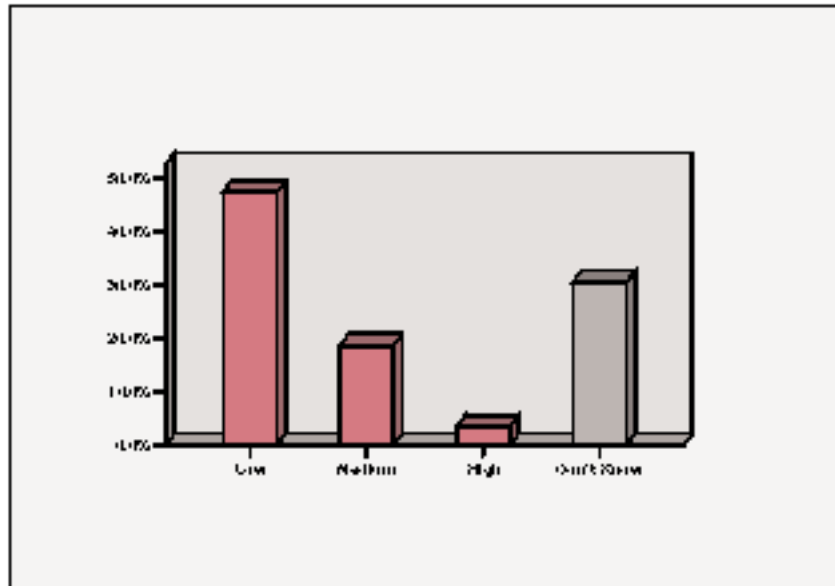
⁴⁶ Vincent Cable MP, Twickenham (Liberal Democrat)

⁴⁷ Oliver Heald MP, Hertfordshire North East (Conservative)

⁴⁸ Gordon Marsden MP, Blackpool South (Labour)

Sector Skills Councils

What impact do you think the Sector Skills Councils have on skills development in your constituency?

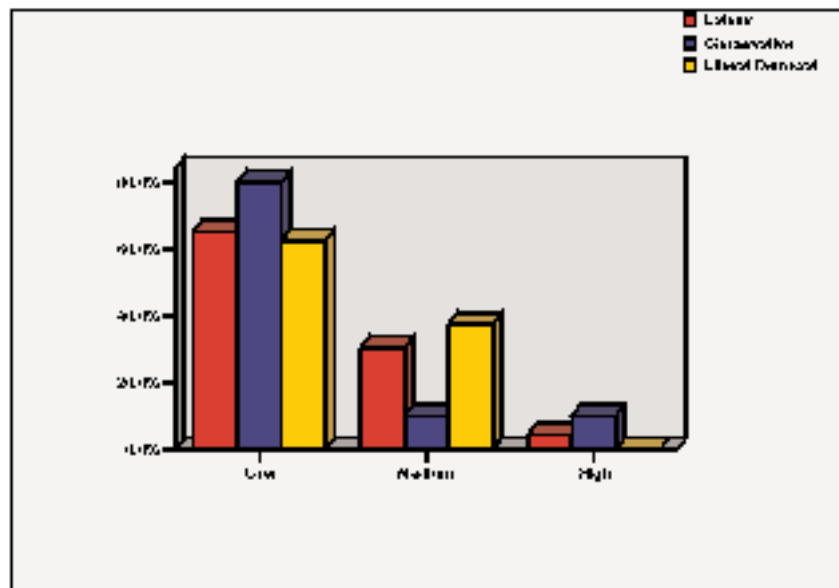


The Liberal Democrats were damning in their appraisal of SSCs, rating their impact as either medium (37.5 per cent) or low (62.5 per cent). Labour were

hardly more optimistic, with 4.3 per cent rating the impact as high, 30.4 per cent as medium, and 65.3 per cent as low. The Conservative reaction to

SSCs was also negative, with 10 per cent describing their impact as high, 10 per cent as medium, and a massive 80 per cent as low.

Sector Skills Councils' Impact: Opinion by Party



It is worth noting, however, that it is rather early to judge the impact of the SSCs, a point made by MPs in both the questionnaire responses and the interviews. The interviews facilitated a more detailed appraisal of Sector Skills

Councils, with several MPs expressing their hopes that SSCs would in time assist in making skills provision more responsive to business needs. Tim Boswell saw the SSCs as playing an important role in articulating

demand to private and public sector skills provision, while Gordon Marsden suggested that they could instigate capacity-building for future skills such as in the leisure and tourism industries.

PART E:

Conclusions

28 Conclusions and Next Steps

28.1 Knowledge Gaps

Through this study of MP perceptions of skills policies, levels and needs it has become clear that there are certain gaps in MPs' understanding of the education and skills sector. MPs demonstrated limited awareness of various initiatives implemented in the past few years, particularly Regional Partnerships for Skills, Neighbourhood Learning Centres, the National Employer Training Programme, and Sector Skills Councils. This suggests that the skills sector has a lot of work to do in terms of publicising its various component parts so that MPs attain a greater level of understanding of what affects the development of skills in their constituencies. The limited knowledge demonstrated by some MPs in this sector is a salutary lesson as it raises questions about the extent of the general public's awareness. If MPs are not aware of Neighbourhood Learning Centres and the Education Maintenance Allowance, is it likely that potential learners and employers know what opportunities and initiatives are available to help them improve their skill levels?

Next steps:

Publication of a skills information pamphlet which details the major skills agencies and organisations and explains their functions in simple terms. This will benefit both Parliament and the general public.

Campaign to ensure that funding and learning opportunities are well publicised in the constituencies, among both learners and employers.

Perhaps the problem lies not in public relations but in the inherently complex nature of the skills apparatus. Should there be an attempt to simplify or streamline in some way the skills organisations and initiatives themselves?

The questionnaires and interview responses demonstrated that there were areas that MPs were particularly informed and passionate about, and some clear themes emerged about how they believed skills in England could be improved.

28.2 IAG: Next Steps

MPs were clear that the quality of and access to information, advice and guidance regarding careers must be improved for both the old and young.

Recommendations:

To make skills provision genuinely responsive to the demands of the market, information must be provided to young people as early as primary school age about what job opportunities exist.

People should be given clear, impartial, and accurate information about how training in different sectors can improve their career and lifestyle choices.

Vocational careers of the traditional kinds - in construction, plumbing and other crafts - should be marketed more effectively to young people. In this way the true status of vocational education will eventually be realised.

28.3 Apprenticeships: Next Steps

Apprenticeships were seen as an under-utilised tool. MPs argued that Apprenticeships should be instrumental to improving vocational training provision and take-up but that currently they were not realising their full potential.

Recommendations:

Apprenticeships should be available at an earlier age at school.

Apprenticeships should be available in more varied sectors.

There should be a guaranteed quality of Apprenticeship placements.

The possibility of becoming an apprentice or taking on an apprentice should be advertised more widely, with the benefits to both the learner and the employer demonstrated.

The restriction of Apprenticeships to those aged 24 and under must be scrapped.

28.4 Adult Training: Next Steps

Adult education and training was the issue most MPs appeared to feel strongest about. There is a great deal of frustration in Parliament about what MPs see as the Government's continued focus on 14-19 learners to the detriment of adult provision. Adults are not given the same access to information, advice and guidance as young people are through the Connexions service. Adults are not entitled to the Education Maintenance Allowance to encourage them to return to education, neither are they able to become apprentices. The Government's emphasis on young people was seen by MPs as even more questionable in light of well-documented demographic changes currently taking place in the UK. Fewer and fewer young people are coming through the education system which Government is pumping so much money into. The economy is becoming more and more reliant on older workers. People are being expected to work until they are older and older. And yet the funding is not there to help adults to re-skill and to promote the necessity of this re-training.

Recommendations:

An immediate redirection of funds towards the training of older workers.

An overhaul of the current system of IAG for adults, improving provision and access.

Extending to the EMA to older learners.

Extending the Apprenticeship scheme to people of all ages.

28.5 SMEs: Next Steps

MPs were clear about the fact that small and medium-sized enterprises hold the key to the future success of the English economy. MPs noted that these SMEs, which make up 80 per cent of our economy, are not engaging with training providers in any meaningful way. SMEs seem unaware of the benefits of training and unwilling to risk investing in employees who are not guaranteed to remain at their firm. And so MPs suggest that it is the duty of Government to step in and remove some of the risk by making training tax-advantageous. Financial incentives for SMEs to up-skill their staff surfaced again and again as an issue MPs felt strongly about.

Recommendations:

More support and publicity of the National Employer Training Programme.

Assistance with establishing local and sectoral partnerships between SMEs to enable shared overheads.

More use of training pods to make it easier for SMEs to release employees to train.

Appendix 1:

Constituency Data Showing Skills Levels

The following tables are supported by data from the 2001 Census. The overall skills level was calculated by an average of the constituency rankings at each of the levels below (1 and above; 2 and above; 3 and above; 4 and above).

Constituency Skills Levels: England & Wales

Position	Constituency	Skills	Skilled at L1 ⁴⁹ & above	Skilled at L2 ⁵⁰ & above	Skilled at L3 ⁵¹ & above	Skilled at L4 ⁵² & above
539	Aberavon	Very Low	50%	34%	16%	11%
192	Aldershot	High	71%	50%	27%	19%
464	Aldridge-Brownhills	Very Low	55%	37%	19%	14%
59	Altrincham and Sale West	Very High	74%	59%	38%	30%
358	Alyn and Deeside	Low	64%	44%	21%	15%
485	Amber Valley	Very Low	55%	36%	19%	13%
118	Arundel and South Downs	High	71%	55%	31%	23%
551	Ashfield	Very Low	51%	32%	14%	9%
285	Ashford	Average	65%	46%	25%	17%
537	Ashton under Lyne	Very Low	54%	34%	16%	10%
150	Aylesbury	High	71%	52%	30%	22%
195	Banbury	High	69%	49%	28%	20%
494	Barking	Very Low	55%	36%	19%	12%
546	Barnsley Central	Very Low	50%	32%	15%	10%
561	Barnsley East and Mexborough	Very Low	49%	30%	13%	9%
443	Barnsley West and Penistone	Low	56%	38%	21%	15%
388	Barrow and Furness	Low	61%	42%	21%	15%
530	Basildon	Very Low	56%	35%	15%	9%
180	Basingstoke	High	70%	51%	28%	20%
489	Bassetlaw	Very Low	55%	37%	18%	13%
30	Bath	Very High	76%	64%	46%	32%
477	Batley and Spen	Very Low	55%	37%	19%	13%
6	Battersea	Very High	80%	73%	60%	49%
67	Beaconsfield	Very High	73%	59%	37%	28%
64	Beckenham	Very High	75%	59%	37%	27%
217	Bedford	High	66%	48%	29%	20%
351	Berwick-upon-Tweed	Low	60%	44%	23%	17%
159	Bethnal Green and Bow	High	61%	51%	39%	29%
273	Beverley and Holderness	Average	63%	46%	26%	19%
261	Bexhill and Battle	Average	64%	47%	26%	18%
425	Bexleyheath and Crayford	Low	62%	41%	18%	12%
378	Billericay	Low	64%	42%	20%	13%
446	Birkenhead	Low	56%	39%	20%	13%
107	Birmingham; Edgbaston	Very High	66%	54%	39%	26%
512	Birmingham; Erdington	Very Low	51%	35%	19%	11%
387	Birmingham; Hall Green	Low	57%	41%	23%	16%
567	Birmingham; Hodge Hill	Very Low	45%	28%	13%	8%

⁴⁹Level 1 skills: 1+ 'O' level passes; 1+ CSE/GCSE any grades; NVQ level 1; Foundation GNVQ.

⁵⁰Level 2 skills: 5+ 'O' level passes; 5+ CSEs (grade 1's); 5+ GCSEs (grades A-C); School Certificate; 1+ 'A' levels/'AS' levels; NVQ level 2; Intermediate GNVQ.

⁵¹Level 3 skills: 2+ 'A' levels; 4+ AS levels; Higher School Certificate; NVQ level 3; Advanced GNVQ.

⁵²Level 4&5 skills: First degree; Higher degree; NVQ levels 4 and 5; HNC; HND; Qualified Teacher Status; Qualified Medical Doctor; Qualified Dentist; Qualified Nurse; Midwife; Health Visitor.

Appendix 1: Constituency Data Showing Skills Levels

Position	Constituency	Skills	Skilled at L1 ⁴⁹ & above	Skilled at L2 ⁵⁰ & above	Skilled at L3 ⁵¹ & above	Skilled at L4 ⁵² & above
431	Birmingham; Ladywood	Low	52%	39%	24%	14%
467	Birmingham; Northfield	Very Low	55%	38%	20%	12%
419	Birmingham; Perry Barr	Low	56%	40%	23%	14%
86	Birmingham; Selly Oak	Very High	68%	56%	42%	27%
495	Birmingham; Sparkbrook and Small Heath	Very Low	48%	34%	20%	13%
525	Birmingham; Yardley	Very Low	53%	35%	17%	11%
475	Bishop Auckland	Very Low	55%	37%	19%	13%
272	Blaby	Average	66%	46%	25%	18%
488	Blackburn	Very Low	53%	36%	19%	13%
501	Blackpool North and Fleetwood	Very Low	56%	37%	17%	11%
538	Blackpool South	Very Low	53%	35%	16%	10%
556	Blaenau Gwent	Very Low	48%	31%	13%	9%
406	Blaydon	Low	58%	41%	21%	15%
457	Blyth Valley	Very Low	59%	40%	18%	11%
389	Bognor Regis and Littlehampton	Low	61%	42%	21%	14%
544	Bolsover	Very Low	51%	33%	15%	10%
374	Bolton North East	Low	59%	42%	23%	16%
526	Bolton South East	Very Low	53%	36%	17%	11%
197	Bolton West	High	66%	49%	29%	21%
550	Bootle	Very Low	51%	33%	14%	8%
547	Boston and Skegness	Very Low	51%	32%	14%	9%
375	Bosworth	Low	61%	41%	22%	15%
199	Bournemouth East	High	69%	51%	28%	18%
226	Bournemouth West	High	67%	50%	30%	17%
92	Bracknell	Very High	74%	55%	33%	24%
532	Bradford North	Very Low	52%	34%	17%	11%
519	Bradford South	Very Low	54%	35%	17%	11%
407	Bradford West	Low	54%	40%	25%	15%
356	Braintree	Low	64%	44%	22%	14%
270	Brecon and Radnorshire	Average	61%	47%	26%	20%
43	Brent East	Very High	72%	61%	46%	35%
53	Brent North	Very High	72%	60%	42%	31%
157	Brent South	High	65%	51%	35%	25%
23	Brentford and Isleworth	Very High	76%	64%	48%	37%
179	Brentwood and Ongar	High	68%	51%	29%	21%
274	Bridgend	Average	61%	46%	26%	20%
404	Bridgwater	Low	60%	42%	20%	14%
428	Brigg and Goole	Low	60%	40%	20%	14%
206	Brighton; Kemptown	High	64%	49%	31%	21%
20	Brighton; Pavilion	Very High	77%	66%	49%	34%
282	Bristol East	Average	65%	46%	26%	17%
289	Bristol North West	Average	65%	46%	25%	17%
434	Bristol South	Low	57%	39%	20%	14%
4	Bristol West	Very High	88%	81%	66%	45%
83	Bromley and Chislehurst	Very High	73%	57%	35%	25%
194	Bromsgrove	High	66%	49%	29%	22%
396	Broxbourne	Low	63%	43%	21%	13%
207	Broxtowe	High	65%	48%	30%	23%
78	Buckingham	Very High	74%	57%	35%	26%

Appendix 1: Constituency Data Showing Skills Levels

Position	Constituency	Skills	Skilled at L1 ⁴⁹ & above	Skilled at L2 ⁵⁰ & above	Skilled at L3 ⁵¹ & above	Skilled at L4 ⁵² & above
465	Burnley	Very Low	56%	38%	19%	13%
379	Burton	Low	60%	42%	22%	16%
265	Bury North	Average	63%	47%	26%	18%
292	Bury South	Average	63%	46%	25%	18%
259	Bury St. Edmunds	Average	65%	47%	26%	18%
278	Caernarfon	Average	62%	47%	25%	19%
461	Caerphilly	Very Low	55%	39%	19%	14%
237	Calder Valley	Average	65%	47%	28%	21%
126	Camberwell and Peckham	High	65%	53%	37%	28%
14	Cambridge	Very High	80%	71%	59%	40%
498	Cannock Chase	Very Low	57%	36%	17%	11%
105	Canterbury	Very High	69%	55%	37%	23%
27	Cardiff Central	Very High	77%	67%	52%	29%
58	Cardiff North	Very High	73%	60%	40%	29%
317	Cardiff South and Penarth	Average	59%	44%	26%	19%
228	Cardiff West	High	61%	48%	30%	24%
424	Carlisle	Low	59%	40%	20%	13%
325	Carmarthen East and Dinefwr	Average	59%	45%	24%	18%
296	Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire	Average	62%	46%	25%	18%
225	Carshalton and Wallington	High	68%	49%	27%	19%
507	Castle Point	Very Low	58%	37%	16%	9%
279	Central Suffolk and North Ipswich	Average	63%	46%	25%	18%
115	Ceredigion	High	69%	56%	37%	22%
304	Charnwood	Average	63%	44%	25%	18%
456	Chatham and Aylesford	Low	61%	39%	17%	11%
66	Cheadle	Very High	74%	58%	37%	28%
72	Cheltenham	Very High	73%	58%	38%	27%
38	Chesham and Amersham	Very High	76%	62%	40%	31%
416	Chesterfield	Low	58%	39%	21%	15%
122	Chichester	High	69%	54%	32%	23%
211	Chingford and Woodford Green	High	66%	49%	29%	20%
46	Chipping Barnet	Very High	74%	61%	41%	31%
251	Chorley	Average	64%	47%	26%	19%
312	Christchurch	Average	63%	46%	24%	17%
3	Cities of London and Westminster	Very High	83%	77%	64%	51%
93	City of Chester	Very High	69%	55%	37%	27%
141	City of Durham	High	67%	53%	37%	22%
129	City of York	High	67%	53%	35%	24%
481	Cleethorpes	Very Low	57%	38%	17%	12%
394	Clwyd South	Low	59%	42%	21%	15%
302	Clwyd West	Average	61%	46%	25%	18%
220	Colchester	High	68%	49%	28%	18%
231	Colne Valley	Average	64%	47%	29%	21%
134	Congleton	High	69%	53%	32%	23%
191	Conwy	High	65%	51%	31%	21%
412	Copeland	Low	58%	40%	21%	15%
421	Corby	Low	59%	40%	20%	14%

Appendix 1: Constituency Data Showing Skills Levels

Position	Constituency	Skills	Skilled at L1 ⁴⁹ & above	Skilled at L2 ⁵⁰ & above	Skilled at L3 ⁵¹ & above	Skilled at L4 ⁵² & above
101	Cotswold	Very High	71%	55%	33%	24%
453	Coventry North East	Low	56%	38%	21%	13%
326	Coventry North West	Average	62%	44%	25%	16%
160	Coventry South	High	67%	52%	35%	21%
303	Crawley	Average	68%	46%	23%	15%
324	Crewe and Nantwich	Average	62%	45%	25%	17%
131	Crosby	High	69%	53%	31%	23%
153	Croydon Central	High	69%	52%	31%	22%
112	Croydon North	Very High	70%	53%	33%	24%
76	Croydon South	Very High	74%	58%	35%	25%
524	Cynon Valley	Very Low	50%	35%	17%	12%
552	Dagenham	Very Low	52%	32%	13%	8%
391	Darlington	Low	59%	42%	22%	15%
366	Dartford	Low	64%	43%	21%	14%
178	Daventry	High	69%	51%	29%	21%
332	Delyn	Average	63%	45%	23%	17%
505	Denton and Reddish	Very Low	57%	37%	16%	10%
276	Derby North	Average	62%	45%	28%	18%
337	Derby South	Average	59%	43%	26%	18%
205	Devizes	High	69%	50%	27%	19%
490	Dewsbury	Very Low	53%	36%	19%	13%
449	Don Valley	Low	56%	39%	20%	14%
471	Doncaster Central	Very Low	56%	38%	19%	13%
559	Doncaster North	Very Low	50%	31%	13%	9%
410	Dover	Low	60%	41%	20%	13%
541	Dudley North	Very Low	50%	34%	17%	11%
531	Dudley South	Very Low	53%	35%	17%	11%
17	Dulwich and West Norwood	Very High	76%	66%	52%	42%
74	Ealing North	Very High	70%	56%	39%	29%
18	Ealing; Acton and Shepherd's Bush	Very High	76%	67%	53%	41%
47	Ealing; Southall	Very High	72%	60%	44%	34%
555	Easington	Very Low	49%	31%	14%	9%
232	East Devon	Average	66%	49%	27%	19%
255	East Ham	Average	61%	46%	29%	20%
119	East Hampshire	High	71%	54%	31%	23%
114	East Surrey	Very High	73%	55%	31%	22%
354	East Worthing and Shoreham	Low	63%	43%	22%	15%
398	East Yorkshire	Low	58%	41%	22%	16%
284	Eastbourne	Average	64%	47%	26%	17%
246	Eastleigh	Average	69%	48%	25%	17%
482	Eccles	Very Low	56%	38%	19%	12%
172	Eddisbury	High	67%	51%	30%	23%
291	Edmonton	Average	61%	45%	26%	18%
314	Ellesmere Port and Neston	Average	63%	45%	24%	17%
306	Elmet	Average	62%	45%	24%	18%
269	Eltham	Average	63%	46%	27%	18%
300	Enfield North	Average	62%	45%	25%	17%
45	Enfield; Southgate	Very High	73%	61%	42%	32%
277	Epping Forest	Average	65%	46%	25%	17%
73	Epsom and Ewell	Very High	73%	58%	36%	27%

Appendix 1: Constituency Data Showing Skills Levels

Position	Constituency	Skills	Skilled at L1 ⁴⁹ & above	Skilled at L2 ⁵⁰ & above	Skilled at L3 ⁵¹ & above	Skilled at L4 ⁵² & above
454	Erewash	Low	58%	38%	19%	13%
360	Erith and Thamesmead	Low	62%	43%	23%	16%
29	Esher and Walton	Very High	77%	64%	43%	33%
137	Exeter	High	69%	54%	35%	20%
357	Falmouth and Camborne	Low	61%	44%	23%	15%
182	Fareham	High	70%	50%	28%	20%
295	Faversham and Mid Kent	Average	64%	46%	25%	17%
257	Feltham and Heston	Average	64%	46%	27%	18%
11	Finchley and Golders Green	Very High	80%	71%	55%	44%
384	Folkestone and Hythe	Low	61%	42%	21%	14%
309	Forest of Dean	Average	64%	45%	24%	17%
174	Fylde	High	67%	51%	30%	22%
346	Gainsborough	Low	62%	43%	23%	17%
468	Gateshead East and Washington West	Very Low	56%	38%	19%	13%
339	Gedling	Average	62%	44%	24%	17%
403	Gillingham	Low	64%	42%	20%	12%
330	Gloucester	Average	65%	44%	23%	15%
315	Gosport	Average	67%	45%	23%	15%
167	Gower	High	67%	52%	30%	23%
328	Grantham and Stamford	Average	64%	45%	23%	16%
438	Gravesham	Low	60%	40%	19%	13%
542	Great Grimsby	Very Low	53%	34%	15%	10%
545	Great Yarmouth	Very Low	53%	33%	15%	9%
90	Greenwich and Woolwich	Very High	68%	55%	40%	31%
26	Guildford	Very High	77%	64%	45%	32%
77	Hackney North and Stoke Newington	Very High	67%	57%	43%	35%
109	Hackney South and Shoreditch	Very High	65%	54%	40%	31%
502	Halesowen and Rowley Regis	Very Low	53%	36%	18%	12%
445	Halifax	Low	57%	39%	20%	14%
171	Haltemprice and Howden	High	68%	51%	31%	22%
476	Halton	Very Low	57%	39%	18%	11%
8	Hammersmith and Fulham	Very High	80%	73%	60%	48%
2	Hampstead and Highgate	Very High	83%	77%	65%	54%
223	Harborough	High	66%	48%	28%	19%
442	Harlow	Low	61%	39%	19%	12%
89	Harrogate and Knaresborough	Very High	72%	56%	34%	26%
75	Harrow East	Very High	71%	58%	38%	27%
33	Harrow West	Very High	76%	63%	43%	32%
513	Hartlepool	Very Low	52%	36%	17%	11%
549	Harwich	Very Low	50%	32%	15%	9%
399	Hastings and Rye	Low	60%	41%	21%	14%
401	Havant	Low	59%	41%	21%	15%
321	Hayes and Harlington	Average	64%	45%	24%	16%
222	Hazel Grove	High	66%	49%	27%	20%
233	Hemel Hempstead	Average	67%	48%	26%	19%
506	Hemsworth	Very Low	51%	34%	18%	13%
52	Hendon	Very High	72%	60%	42%	30%

Appendix 1: Constituency Data Showing Skills Levels

Position	Constituency	Skills	Skilled at L1 ⁴⁹ & above	Skilled at L2 ⁵⁰ & above	Skilled at L3 ⁵¹ & above	Skilled at L4 ⁵² & above
49	Henley	Very High	75%	60%	39%	30%
297	Hereford	Average	63%	46%	25%	17%
82	Hertford and Stortford	Very High	73%	57%	34%	25%
128	Hertsmere	High	70%	53%	31%	23%
103	Hexham	Very High	69%	54%	34%	27%
451	Heywood and Middleton	Low	57%	39%	20%	13%
186	High Peak	High	66%	49%	29%	22%
36	Hitchin and Harpenden	Very High	76%	62%	41%	33%
22	Holborn and St. Pancras	Very High	74%	66%	54%	40%
497	Hornchurch	Very Low	58%	37%	16%	10%
10	Hornsey and Wood Green	Very High	79%	71%	58%	48%
85	Horsham	Very High	75%	58%	33%	23%
517	Houghton and Washington East	Very Low	55%	36%	17%	11%
71	Hove	Very High	72%	57%	38%	27%
336	Huddersfield	Average	59%	43%	27%	17%
162	Huntingdon	High	70%	52%	29%	21%
458	Hyndburn	Very Low	57%	38%	19%	13%
230	Ilford North	Average	66%	48%	28%	19%
130	Ilford South	High	68%	53%	33%	24%
368	Ipswich	Low	60%	42%	23%	16%
370	Isle of Wight	Low	61%	42%	22%	15%
37	Islington North	Very High	72%	63%	50%	41%
56	Islington South and Finsbury	Very High	69%	60%	48%	38%
523	Islwyn	Very Low	53%	35%	16%	11%
459	Jarrow	Very Low	57%	39%	19%	13%
280	Keighley	Average	62%	45%	27%	20%
1	Kensington and Chelsea	Very High	88%	83%	71%	56%
286	Kettering	Average	64%	46%	25%	18%
34	Kingston and Surbiton	Very High	76%	63%	44%	32%
565	Kingston upon Hull East	Very Low	49%	30%	13%	7%
423	Kingston upon Hull North	Low	56%	40%	24%	13%
535	Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle	Very Low	52%	34%	17%	11%
307	Kingswood	Average	65%	45%	23%	15%
514	Knowsley North and Sefton East	Very Low	53%	36%	17%	11%
510	Knowsley South	Very Low	53%	36%	17%	11%
100	Lancaster and Wyre	Very High	70%	56%	37%	23%
433	Leeds Central	Low	53%	38%	25%	13%
528	Leeds East	Very Low	51%	34%	17%	12%
61	Leeds North East	Very High	71%	58%	41%	33%
25	Leeds North West	Very High	78%	68%	54%	29%
369	Leeds West	Low	58%	41%	25%	16%
493	Leicester East	Very Low	50%	35%	19%	13%
214	Leicester South	High	61%	49%	35%	21%
411	Leicester West	Low	55%	39%	24%	15%

Appendix 1: Constituency Data Showing Skills Levels

Position	Constituency	Skills	Skilled at L1 ⁴⁹ & above	Skilled at L2 ⁵⁰ & above	Skilled at L3 ⁵¹ & above	Skilled at L4 ⁵² & above
487	Leigh	Very Low	56%	37%	18%	12%
202	Leominster	High	65%	50%	29%	21%
173	Lewes	High	67%	51%	30%	22%
116	Lewisham East	High	68%	53%	35%	27%
84	Lewisham West	Very High	71%	55%	37%	28%
48	Lewisham; Deptford	Very High	72%	59%	43%	33%
79	Leyton and Wanstead	Very High	69%	56%	39%	30%
249	Lichfield	Average	64%	47%	26%	20%
311	Lincoln	Average	64%	45%	25%	15%
365	Liverpool; Garston	Low	57%	42%	24%	17%
170	Liverpool; Riverside	High	63%	53%	41%	21%
554	Liverpool; Walton	Very Low	49%	32%	14%	8%
254	Liverpool; Wavertree	Average	61%	47%	30%	18%
536	Liverpool; West Derby	Very Low	51%	35%	17%	10%
429	Llanelli	Low	56%	40%	20%	15%
127	Loughborough	High	69%	54%	38%	21%
460	Louth and Horncastle	Very Low	55%	38%	19%	13%
244	Ludlow	Average	63%	47%	27%	20%
386	Luton North	Low	61%	41%	22%	14%
333	Luton South	Average	62%	44%	25%	16%
94	Macclesfield	Very High	71%	56%	34%	26%
40	Maidenhead	Very High	75%	61%	40%	31%
193	Maidstone and The Weald	High	69%	51%	28%	19%
469	Makerfield	Very Low	57%	38%	18%	12%
256	Maldon and East Chelmsford	Average	66%	47%	25%	18%
229	Manchester Central	Average	60%	48%	35%	21%
508	Manchester; Blackley	Very Low	50%	35%	19%	12%
176	Manchester; Gorton	High	64%	53%	39%	19%
21	Manchester; Withington	Very High	75%	66%	54%	38%
518	Mansfield	Very Low	55%	36%	17%	10%
420	Medway	Low	61%	40%	20%	13%
334	Meirionnydd Nant Conwy	Average	61%	45%	23%	17%
331	Meriden	Average	61%	44%	24%	17%
548	Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney	Very Low	47%	32%	15%	11%
135	Mid Bedfordshire	High	71%	53%	31%	23%
287	Mid Dorset and North Poole	Average	66%	46%	24%	16%
362	Mid Norfolk	Low	62%	43%	22%	15%
91	Mid Sussex	Very High	75%	58%	33%	23%
243	Mid Worcestershire	Average	65%	47%	27%	19%
484	Middlesbrough	Very Low	54%	38%	20%	11%
367	Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland	Low	60%	43%	23%	16%
293	Milton Keynes South West	Average	66%	46%	24%	17%
164	Mitcham and Morden	High	67%	50%	32%	23%
51	Mole Valley	Very High	75%	61%	39%	29%
151	Monmouth	High	66%	52%	32%	25%
348	Montgomeryshire	Low	61%	44%	23%	17%
344	Morecambe and Lunesdale	Low	62%	44%	23%	17%
472	Morley and Rothwell	Very Low	57%	37%	19%	13%
447	Neath	Low	55%	39%	20%	14%
258	New Forest East	Average	67%	48%	25%	17%

Appendix 1: Constituency Data Showing Skills Levels

Position	Constituency	Skills	Skilled at L1 ⁴⁹ & above	Skilled at L2 ⁵⁰ & above	Skilled at L3 ⁵¹ & above	Skilled at L4 ⁵² & above
204	New Forest West	High	66%	50%	28%	20%
340	Newark	Average	62%	44%	24%	17%
110	Newbury	Very High	71%	54%	32%	23%
55	Newcastle upon Tyne Central	Very High	71%	61%	47%	29%
355	Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend	Low	58%	42%	26%	16%
393	Newcastle upon Tyne North	Low	58%	41%	22%	16%
349	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Low	59%	44%	26%	16%
427	Newport East	Low	58%	40%	20%	14%
271	Newport West	Average	62%	46%	26%	19%
432	Normanton	Low	58%	39%	20%	14%
395	North Cornwall	Low	61%	43%	21%	14%
361	North Devon	Low	62%	44%	22%	15%
200	North Dorset	High	68%	50%	27%	19%
455	North Durham	Low	57%	39%	19%	13%
189	North East Bedfordshire	High	69%	50%	28%	21%
529	North East Cambridgeshire	Very Low	55%	35%	16%	10%
408	North East Derbyshire	Low	59%	40%	21%	15%
60	North East Hampshire	Very High	76%	60%	37%	27%
155	North East Hertfordshire	High	69%	52%	30%	23%
142	North East Milton Keynes	High	72%	53%	30%	21%
236	North Essex	Average	65%	48%	28%	19%
415	North Norfolk	Low	58%	40%	21%	14%
329	North Shropshire	Average	63%	45%	23%	17%
54	North Southwark and Bermondsey	Very High	70%	59%	45%	34%
371	North Swindon	Low	64%	42%	21%	14%
470	North Thanet	Very Low	57%	38%	19%	12%
480	North Tyneside	Very Low	56%	38%	19%	12%
478	North Warwickshire	Very Low	57%	37%	19%	13%
268	North West Cambridgeshire	Average	67%	47%	24%	17%
400	North West Durham	Low	58%	40%	22%	16%
175	North West Hampshire	High	70%	51%	29%	20%
376	North West Leicestershire	Low	59%	41%	23%	16%
466	North West Norfolk	Very Low	56%	38%	19%	13%
102	North Wiltshire	Very High	73%	54%	32%	23%
381	Northampton North	Low	60%	42%	23%	14%
218	Northampton South	High	67%	49%	27%	19%
148	Northavon	High	71%	52%	30%	22%
409	Norwich North	Low	61%	41%	20%	13%
120	Norwich South	High	67%	53%	37%	24%
183	Nottingham East	High	63%	50%	35%	23%
563	Nottingham North	Very Low	48%	30%	14%	8%
117	Nottingham South	High	68%	56%	43%	21%
422	Nuneaton	Low	58%	39%	20%	14%
540	Ogmore	Very Low	49%	33%	16%	11%
341	Old Bexley and Sidcup	Average	65%	45%	22%	15%
373	Oldham East and Saddleworth	Low	59%	41%	23%	16%
527	Oldham West and Royton	Very Low	52%	35%	17%	11%
239	Orpington	Average	67%	49%	26%	18%
44	Oxford East	Very High	72%	61%	47%	32%
19	Oxford West and Abingdon	Very High	78%	66%	50%	34%
450	Pendle	Low	56%	39%	20%	14%

Appendix 1: Constituency Data Showing Skills Levels

Position	Constituency	Skills	Skilled at L1 ⁴⁹ & above	Skilled at L2 ⁵⁰ & above	Skilled at L3 ⁵¹ & above	Skilled at L4 ⁵² & above
253	Penrith and The Border	Average	64%	47%	26%	19%
397	Peterborough	Low	61%	42%	21%	14%
515	Plymouth; Devonport	Very Low	56%	37%	16%	9%
184	Plymouth; Sutton	High	68%	52%	32%	17%
560	Pontefract and Castleford	Very Low	48%	29%	14%	9%
288	Pontypridd	Average	60%	46%	27%	18%
260	Poole	Average	65%	47%	26%	17%
190	Poplar and Canning Town	High	60%	49%	36%	27%
405	Portsmouth North	Low	61%	41%	21%	13%
139	Portsmouth South	High	69%	53%	36%	21%
305	Preseli Pembrokeshire	Average	62%	46%	23%	17%
363	Preston	Low	59%	43%	25%	15%
215	Pudsey	High	66%	48%	29%	21%
9	Putney	Very High	80%	72%	59%	47%
345	Rayleigh	Low	66%	45%	21%	14%
32	Reading East	Very High	76%	62%	45%	32%
209	Reading West	High	67%	48%	28%	20%
522	Redcar	Very Low	54%	36%	17%	11%
382	Redditch	Low	62%	42%	21%	14%
24	Regent's Park and North Kensington	Very High	74%	65%	52%	41%
68	Reigate	Very High	74%	59%	36%	27%
564	Rhondda	Very Low	45%	29%	13%	9%
108	Ribble Valley	Very High	70%	53%	33%	25%
181	Richmond (Yorks)	High	67%	50%	29%	22%
5	Richmond Park	Very High	84%	76%	61%	48%
452	Rochdale	Low	55%	39%	20%	14%
440	Rochford and Southend East	Low	60%	41%	19%	12%
418	Romford	Low	61%	41%	20%	12%
70	Romsey	Very High	73%	58%	37%	27%
359	Rossendale and Darwen	Low	61%	43%	23%	16%
479	Rother Valley	Very Low	57%	37%	18%	12%
534	Rotherham	Very Low	53%	35%	16%	11%
132	Rugby and Kenilworth	High	69%	52%	32%	24%
95	Ruislip-Northwood	Very High	73%	55%	33%	24%
65	Runnymede and Weybridge	Very High	74%	59%	39%	26%
57	Rushcliffe	Very High	73%	59%	40%	30%
187	Rutland and Melton	High	68%	51%	29%	21%
313	Ryedale	Average	61%	44%	25%	18%
168	Saffron Walden	High	69%	52%	29%	21%
347	Salford	Low	57%	44%	27%	16%
154	Salisbury	High	70%	52%	31%	21%
364	Scarborough and Whitby	Low	59%	42%	23%	16%
499	Scunthorpe	Very Low	57%	36%	16%	11%
439	Sedgefield	Low	56%	39%	20%	14%
198	Selby	High	67%	50%	30%	20%
123	Sevenoaks	High	70%	54%	31%	23%
111	Sheffield Central	Very High	66%	55%	43%	24%
533	Sheffield; Attercliffe	Very Low	54%	34%	16%	11%
566	Sheffield; Brightside	Very Low	47%	28%	12%	8%

Appendix 1: Constituency Data Showing Skills Levels

Position	Constituency	Skills	Skilled at L1 ⁴⁹ & above	Skilled at L2 ⁵⁰ & above	Skilled at L3 ⁵¹ & above	Skilled at L4 ⁵² & above
13	Sheffield; Hallam	Very High	82%	72%	56%	38%
426	Sheffield; Heeley	Low	56%	39%	22%	15%
320	Sheffield; Hillsborough	Average	61%	43%	25%	18%
436	Sherwood	Low	58%	39%	20%	14%
169	Shipley	High	67%	50%	31%	23%
203	Shrewsbury and Atcham	High	67%	50%	28%	21%
520	Sittingbourne and Sheppey	Very Low	56%	36%	16%	10%
145	Skipton and Ripon	High	69%	52%	31%	23%
290	Sleaford and North Hykeham	Average	65%	46%	25%	17%
227	Slough	High	66%	48%	28%	20%
163	Solihull	High	68%	52%	30%	22%
210	Somerton and Frome	High	67%	50%	27%	20%
39	South Cambridgeshire	Very High	75%	60%	41%	33%
352	South Derbyshire	Low	61%	42%	24%	17%
308	South Dorset	Average	64%	45%	24%	17%
113	South East Cambridgeshire	Very High	69%	53%	33%	26%
281	South East Cornwall	Average	65%	47%	25%	17%
486	South Holland and The Deepings	Very Low	57%	38%	17%	12%
294	South Norfolk	Average	63%	45%	24%	18%
267	South Ribble	Average	65%	47%	25%	18%
509	South Shields	Very Low	54%	36%	17%	11%
353	South Staffordshire	Low	62%	43%	23%	16%
247	South Suffolk	Average	65%	48%	26%	19%
224	South Swindon	High	69%	48%	26%	19%
390	South Thanet	Low	59%	41%	22%	15%
316	South West Bedfordshire	Average	66%	45%	23%	16%
185	South West Devon	High	70%	51%	27%	19%
62	South West Hertfordshire	Very High	74%	59%	38%	29%
473	South West Norfolk	Very Low	56%	38%	19%	12%
41	South West Surrey	Very High	76%	62%	41%	30%
298	Southampton; Itchen	Average	64%	46%	27%	14%
104	Southampton; Test	Very High	70%	55%	38%	22%
327	Southend West	Average	64%	45%	23%	15%
235	Southport	Average	65%	48%	27%	19%
219	Spelthorne	High	68%	49%	27%	19%
28	St. Albans	Very High	76%	63%	44%	35%
417	St. Helens North	Low	58%	41%	21%	14%
448	St. Helens South	Low	56%	39%	20%	14%
319	St. Ives	Average	63%	46%	23%	16%
221	Stafford	High	66%	48%	28%	20%
444	Staffordshire Moorlands	Low	56%	39%	20%	14%
441	Stalybridge and Hyde	Low	59%	40%	20%	13%
283	Stevenage	Average	67%	46%	24%	17%
201	Stockport	High	66%	48%	29%	22%
491	Stockton North	Very Low	56%	37%	18%	12%
248	Stockton South	Average	65%	48%	26%	18%
463	Stoke-on-Trent Central	Very Low	53%	38%	22%	12%
562	Stoke-on-Trent North	Very Low	47%	31%	14%	9%
543	Stoke-on-Trent South	Very Low	51%	34%	16%	10%
238	Stone	Average	64%	48%	28%	21%
372	Stourbridge	Low	59%	42%	22%	16%

Appendix 1: Constituency Data Showing Skills Levels

Position	Constituency	Skills	Skilled at L1 ⁴⁹ & above	Skilled at L2 ⁵⁰ & above	Skilled at L3 ⁵¹ & above	Skilled at L4 ⁵² & above
125	Stratford-on-Avon	High	69%	53%	32%	24%
16	Streatham	Very High	77%	67%	53%	42%
310	Stretford and Urmston	Average	63%	45%	24%	17%
146	Stroud	High	70%	52%	30%	23%
262	Suffolk Coastal	Average	64%	46%	26%	19%
492	Sunderland North	Very Low	55%	37%	19%	11%
474	Sunderland South	Very Low	54%	37%	20%	13%
80	Surrey Heath	Very High	74%	57%	35%	26%
96	Sutton and Cheam	Very High	72%	55%	33%	24%
98	Sutton Coldfield	Very High	70%	55%	34%	26%
504	Swansea East	Very Low	54%	37%	17%	12%
140	Swansea West	High	66%	54%	36%	22%
430	Tamworth	Low	60%	40%	20%	13%
69	Tatton	Very High	72%	58%	37%	29%
212	Taunton	High	67%	50%	27%	19%
250	Teignbridge	Average	65%	48%	26%	18%
462	Telford	Very Low	58%	39%	18%	12%
158	Tewkesbury	High	70%	52%	29%	22%
252	The Wrekin	Average	66%	48%	26%	17%
500	Thurrock	Very Low	58%	36%	16%	10%
266	Tiverton and Honiton	Average	65%	47%	25%	18%
166	Tonbridge and Malling	High	69%	52%	30%	21%
12	Tooting	Very High	79%	70%	56%	46%
385	Torbay	Low	62%	42%	21%	14%
483	Torfaen	Very Low	55%	38%	18%	13%
342	Torridge and West Devon	Average	62%	44%	23%	17%
241	Totnes	Average	65%	48%	27%	19%
138	Tottenham	High	64%	53%	38%	28%
299	Truro and St. Austell	Average	63%	46%	24%	17%
88	Tunbridge Wells	Very High	72%	57%	34%	25%
15	Twickenham	Very High	81%	70%	52%	41%
521	Tyne Bridge	Very Low	50%	35%	18%	12%
196	Tynemouth	High	65%	50%	29%	22%
435	Upminster	Low	60%	41%	20%	13%
161	Uxbridge	High	69%	52%	32%	20%
380	Vale of Clwyd	Low	60%	42%	21%	15%
242	Vale of Glamorgan	Average	65%	49%	26%	19%
144	Vale of York	High	69%	52%	31%	23%
31	Vauxhall	Very High	73%	63%	50%	40%
335	Wakefield	Average	60%	43%	26%	17%
414	Wallasey	Low	61%	42%	20%	13%
569	Walsall North	Very Low	44%	27%	12%	7%
511	Walsall South	Very Low	50%	34%	18%	13%
147	Walthamstow	High	66%	51%	35%	26%
392	Wansbeck	Low	58%	42%	22%	16%
240	Wansdyke	Average	67%	48%	26%	18%
81	Wantage	Very High	72%	56%	36%	27%
496	Warley	Very Low	51%	35%	19%	13%
322	Warrington North	Average	63%	45%	24%	17%
149	Warrington South	High	69%	52%	31%	23%

Appendix 1: Constituency Data Showing Skills Levels

Position	Constituency	Skills	Skilled at L1 ⁴⁹ & above	Skilled at L2 ⁵⁰ & above	Skilled at L3 ⁵¹ & above	Skilled at L4 ⁵² & above
87	Warwick and Leamington	Very High	70%	55%	37%	27%
136	Watford	High	70%	53%	31%	23%
503	Waveney	Very Low	55%	36%	18%	11%
156	Wealden	High	71%	53%	29%	20%
264	Weaver Vale	Average	64%	47%	25%	18%
437	Wellingborough	Low	60%	40%	19%	13%
245	Wells	Average	65%	48%	26%	19%
121	Welwyn Hatfield	High	70%	53%	33%	22%
516	Wentworth	Very Low	55%	35%	17%	11%
553	West Bromwich East	Very Low	47%	30%	15%	10%
568	West Bromwich West	Very Low	45%	28%	12%	7%
143	West Chelmsford	High	71%	53%	30%	21%
177	West Derbyshire	High	66%	49%	31%	24%
188	West Dorset	High	67%	50%	29%	21%
213	West Ham	High	61%	48%	32%	23%
275	West Lancashire	Average	63%	46%	26%	18%
343	West Suffolk	Low	62%	44%	24%	15%
124	West Worcestershire	High	68%	53%	33%	25%
216	Westbury	High	68%	49%	27%	19%
133	Westmorland and Lonsdale	High	69%	53%	32%	24%
301	Weston-Super-Mare	Average	66%	46%	23%	16%
413	Wigan	Low	58%	40%	21%	15%
7	Wimbledon	Very High	82%	74%	59%	48%
42	Winchester	Very High	75%	62%	41%	30%
50	Windsor	Very High	75%	60%	38%	29%
165	Wirral South	High	68%	52%	30%	22%
152	Wirral West	High	68%	53%	31%	23%
106	Witney	Very High	72%	54%	31%	23%
63	Woking	Very High	75%	59%	38%	28%
35	Wokingham	Very High	79%	63%	41%	31%
557	Wolverhampton North East	Very Low	48%	30%	14%	9%
558	Wolverhampton South East	Very Low	45%	29%	14%	9%
234	Wolverhampton South West	Average	63%	48%	30%	21%
99	Woodspring	Very High	73%	56%	32%	23%
208	Worcester	High	66%	49%	29%	20%
377	Workington	Low	59%	42%	22%	16%
383	Worsley	Low	60%	42%	22%	15%
263	Worthing West	Average	66%	47%	25%	17%
323	Wrexham	Average	61%	45%	24%	17%
97	Wycombe	Very High	71%	55%	35%	24%
402	Wyre Forest	Low	59%	41%	21%	15%
350	Wythenshawe and Sale East	Low	59%	43%	24%	17%
338	Yeovil	Average	64%	45%	23%	16%
318	Ynys Mon	Average	61%	45%	24%	18%

Constituency Skills Levels: Scotland

Position	Constituency	Skills	Skilled at L1 ⁵³ & above	Skilled at L2 ⁵⁴ & above	Skilled at L3 ⁵⁵ & above	Skilled at L4 ⁵⁶ & above
19	Aberdeen North	High	70%	44%	26%	19%
4	Aberdeen South	Very High	78%	56%	39%	31%
56	Airdrie and Shotts	Very Low	57%	31%	17%	11%
41	Angus	Low	65%	37%	23%	16%
13	Argyll and Bute	High	70%	46%	29%	23%
44	Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock	Low	61%	37%	23%	17%
49	Banff and Buchan	Very Low	62%	33%	20%	14%
32	Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk	Average	65%	39%	25%	19%
45	Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross	Low	63%	37%	22%	16%
35	Central Ayrshire	Average	65%	40%	24%	16%
55	Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill	Very Low	59%	33%	18%	11%
36	Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East	Low	67%	40%	23%	15%
47	Dumfries and Galloway	Low	61%	36%	22%	17%
37	Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale	Low	63%	38%	24%	19%
22	Dundee East	High	69%	42%	27%	19%
29	Dundee West	Average	66%	43%	25%	18%
24	Dunfermline and West Fife	Average	69%	42%	26%	17%
3	East Dunbartonshire	Very High	79%	58%	40%	32%
25	East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow	Average	70%	43%	26%	17%
26	East Lothian	Average	68%	41%	26%	20%
6	East Renfrewshire	Very High	77%	56%	37%	29%
11	Edinburgh East	Very High	74%	54%	32%	27%
2	Edinburgh North and Leith	Very High	79%	62%	46%	40%
1	Edinburgh South	Very High	81%	65%	45%	40%
7	Edinburgh South West	Very High	76%	54%	35%	29%
9	Edinburgh West	Very High	75%	51%	34%	28%
40	Falkirk	Low	67%	38%	23%	15%
20	Glasgow Central	High	63%	47%	29%	22%
59	Glasgow East	Very Low	50%	24%	13%	8%
5	Glasgow North	Very High	74%	60%	39%	33%
58	Glasgow North East	Very Low	48%	25%	14%	9%
27	Glasgow North West	Average	62%	41%	28%	21%
16	Glasgow South	High	67%	46%	31%	24%
57	Glasgow South West	Very Low	53%	28%	16%	10%
54	Glenrothes	Very Low	62%	33%	19%	11%
14	Gordon	High	74%	45%	29%	21%
48	Inverclyde	Very Low	61%	37%	23%	14%

⁵³Group 1: 'O' Grade, Standard Grade, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, City and Guilds Craft, SVQ level 1 or 2, or equivalent.

⁵⁴Group 2: Higher Grade, CSYS, ONC, OND, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, RSA Advanced Diploma, SVQ level 3 or equivalent.

⁵⁵Group 3: HND, HNC, RSA Higher Diploma, SVQ level 4 or 5, or equivalent.

⁵⁶Group 4: First degree, Higher Degree, Professional Qualification.

Appendix 1: Constituency Data Showing Skills Levels

Position	Constituency	Skills	Skilled at L1 ⁵³ & above	Skilled at L2 ⁵⁴ & above	Skilled at L3 ⁵⁵ & above	Skilled at L4 ⁵⁶ & above
17	Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey	High	70%	43%	28%	21%
50	Kilmarnock and Loudoun	Very Low	60%	35%	20%	14%
38	Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath	Low	65%	38%	25%	16%
31	Lanark and Hamilton East	Average	64%	41%	26%	18%
43	Linlithgow and East Falkirk	Low	65%	37%	22%	15%
42	Livingston	Low	68%	37%	22%	15%
46	Midlothian	Low	65%	36%	21%	15%
28	Moray	Average	69%	40%	25%	18%
53	Motherwell and Wishaw	Very Low	59%	34%	20%	12%
34	Na h-Eileanan an Iar	Average	62%	39%	25%	19%
39	North Ayrshire and Arran	Low	64%	39%	24%	16%
8	North East Fife	Very High	76%	55%	34%	27%
18	Ochil and South Perthshire	High	69%	43%	28%	21%
30	Orkney and Shetland	Average	67%	40%	25%	20%
23	Paisley and Renfrewshire North	High	68%	43%	26%	18%
33	Paisley and Renfrewshire South	Average	64%	40%	25%	17%
15	Perth and North Perthshire	High	69%	44%	29%	22%
21	Ross, Skye and Lochaber	High	68%	43%	27%	21%
51	Rutherglen and Hamilton West	Very Low	61%	34%	20%	13%
12	Stirling	High	73%	51%	33%	27%
10	West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine	Very High	77%	50%	34%	26%
52	West Dunbartonshire	Very Low	61%	35%	20%	12%

Appendix 2: National Qualifications Framework Levels and Key Stages in Education

Explanation of NQF levels

A National Qualifications Framework (NQF) sorts general qualifications, vocational qualifications and occupational qualifications into different levels.

There are 6 levels (entry level and levels 1 to 5). Under normal circumstances progress is made upwards through the levels as more complicated material is covered

during studies. Entry level qualifications in both academic and work based subjects can prepare pupils for GCSEs or National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

Qualification:	Includes:
Level 1	1+ GCSEs at any grades; NVQ Level 1; Foundation GNVQ
Level 2	5+ GCSEs at grades A* - C; NVQ Level 2; Intermediate GNVQ
Level 3	A, AS and A2 levels; NVQ Level 3; Advanced GNVQ
Level 4	Higher education study; NVQ Level 4
Level 5	BTEC Advanced Professional Diplomas; NVQ Level 5

Key Stages in Education

Level of learning	Development Stage
Key Stage 1	Infant School (3-7 years)
Key Stage 2	Junior School (7-11 years)
Key Stage 3	Secondary School (12-13 years)
Key Stage 4	Upper Secondary School (14-16 years)

Appendix 3: Questionnaire

NAME: _____

CONSTITUENCY: _____

How do you think the skills levels in your constituency compare to those of the rest of the country?

High Medium Low Don't Know

What skills issues are most pertinent to the employers in your constituency? (please tick the 3 most important)

Employees' skills at particular levels (basic / intermediate / management - please specify the main need)
 Employees' industry specific skills Finding appropriately skilled people to fill vacancies
 Incentives to provide training Financing training of staff Giving staff time off for training
 Employees' willingness to engage in training How to incorporate work-based learning
 How to fill future skills needs Other (please specify)

What issues do you feel are most important to your individual constituents regarding training and skills?
 (please tick 3)

Finding financial support Accessing information and advice on courses Accessing learning resources
 Finding incentives to learn Time to learn Employers' willingness to assist with training
 Other (please specify)

How do you rate the following in your constituency?

Adult further education provision

Good Average Bad Don't Know

14-19 learning opportunities

Good Average Bad Don't Know

SME engagement with training provision

Good Average Bad Don't Know

Large business engagement with training provision

Good Average Bad Don't Know

How do you rate the take-up of the following in your constituency?

Apprenticeships

High Medium Low Don't Know

Other further and adult learning courses

High Medium Low Don't Know

Individual funding for further education opportunities

e.g. Adult Learning Grants or Career Development Loans

High Medium Low Don't Know

What improvements do you think could be made (nationally or locally) to improve the skills levels in your constituency?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What areas would you be keen for the Associate Parliamentary Skills Group to look at over the next parliamentary year?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What impact do you think the following have on skills development in your constituency?

Learning & Skills Council

High Medium Low Don't Know

Sector Skills Councils

High Medium Low Don't Know

Regional Partnerships for Skills

High Medium Low Don't Know

Could you offer your opinion on the success of the following services in your constituency?

Employer Training Pilots

Good Average Bad Don't Know

Advice & Guidance Services

Good Average Bad Don't Know

Neighbourhood Learning Centres

Good Average Bad Don't Know

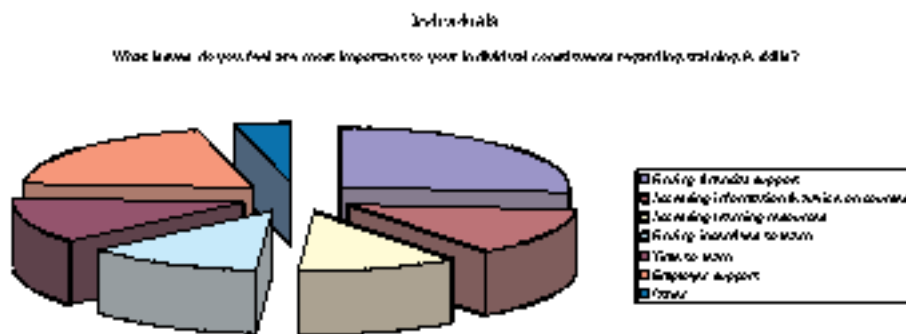
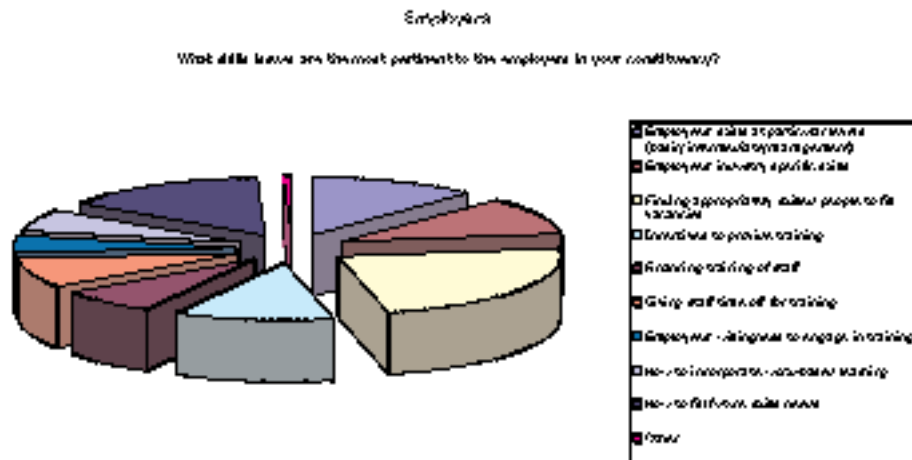
New Deal

Good Average Bad Don't Know

Centres of Vocational Excellence

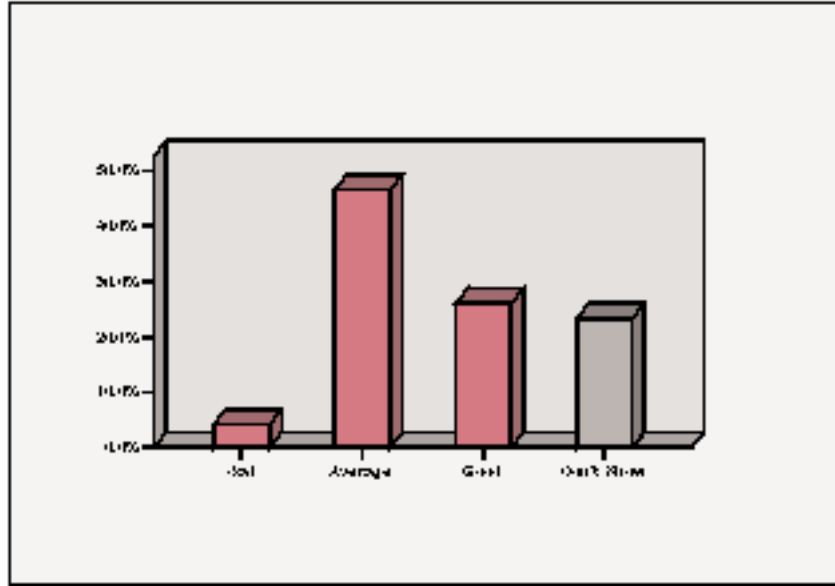
Good Average Bad Don't Know

Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results



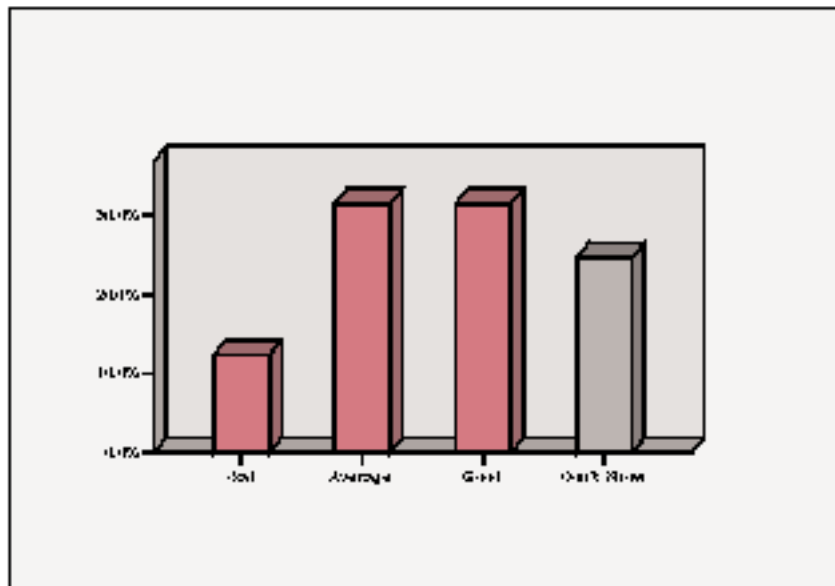
14-19 Learning Opportunities

How do you rate 14-19 learning opportunities in your constituency?



Adult Further Education Provision

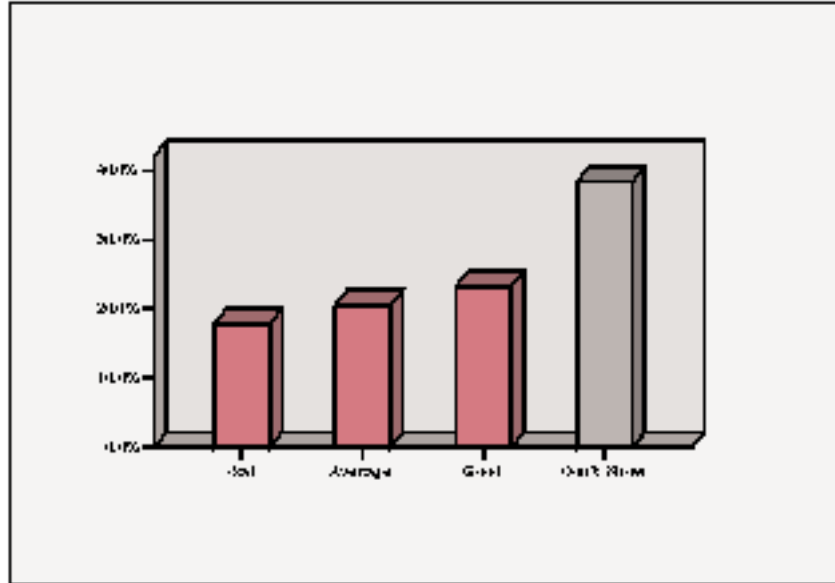
How do you rate adult further education provision in your constituency?



Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

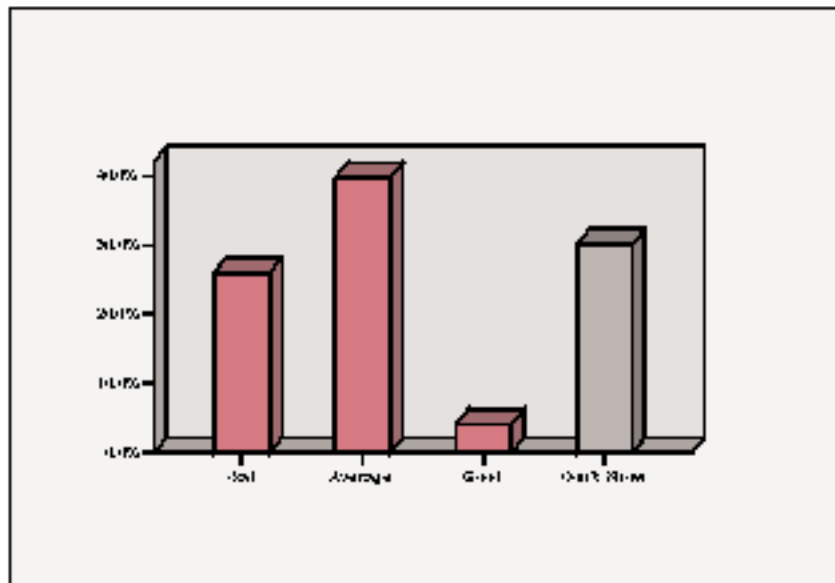
Higher Education Provision

How do you rate higher education provision in your constituency?



SME Engagement with Training Provision

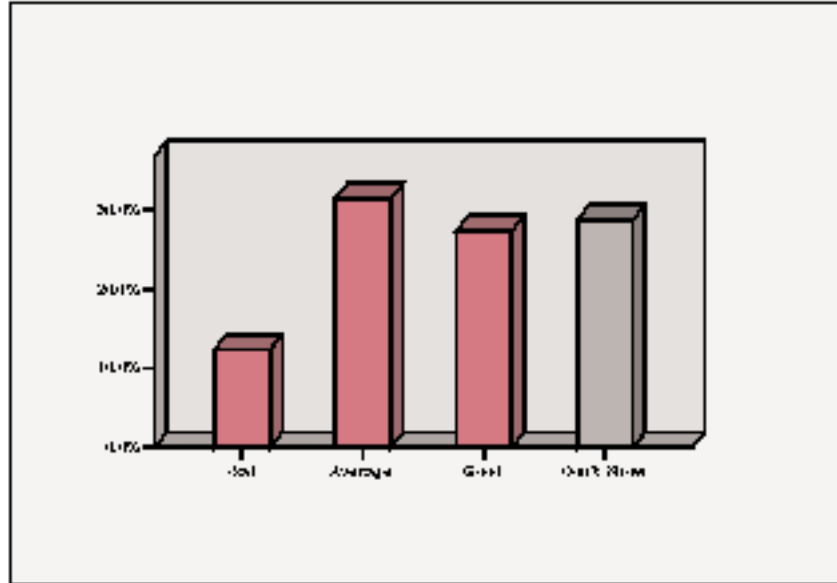
How do you rate SME engagement with training provision in your constituency?



Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

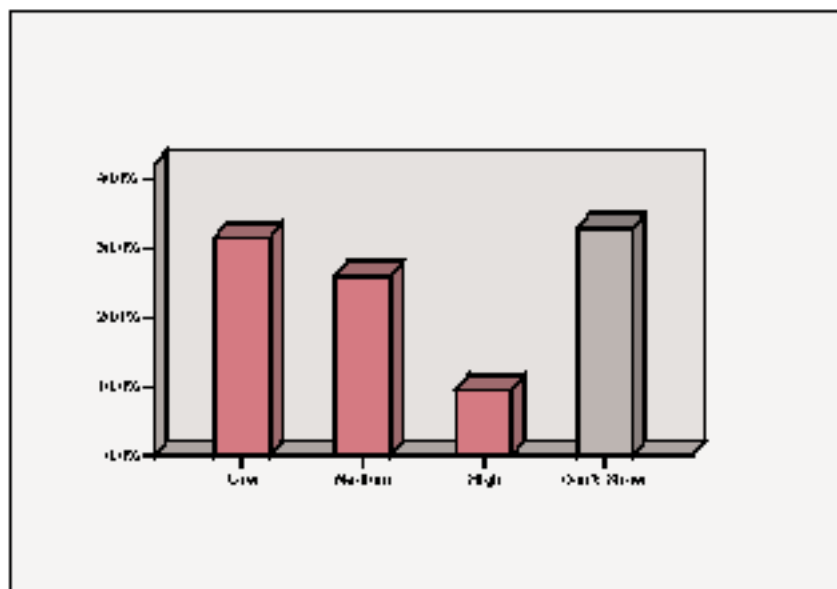
Large Business Engagement with Training Provision

How do you rate large business engagement with training provision in your constituency?



Take-Up of Apprenticeships

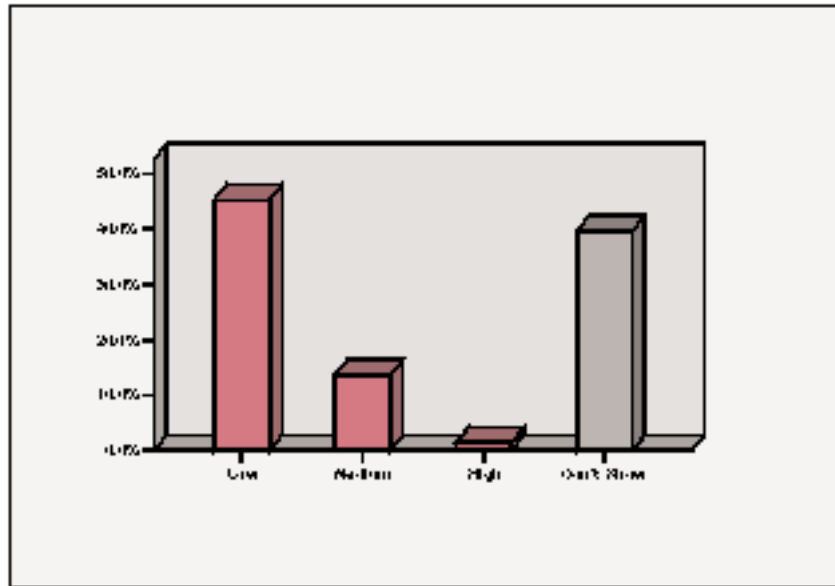
How do you rate the take-up of apprenticeships in your constituency?



Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

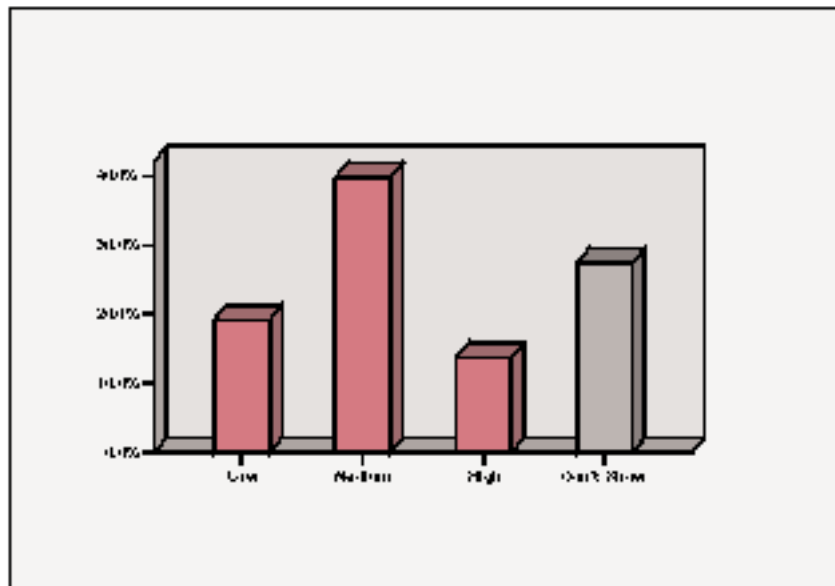
Take-Up of Individual Funding

How do you rate the take-up of individual funding for further education opportunities in your constituency?



Take-Up of Further and Adult Learning Courses

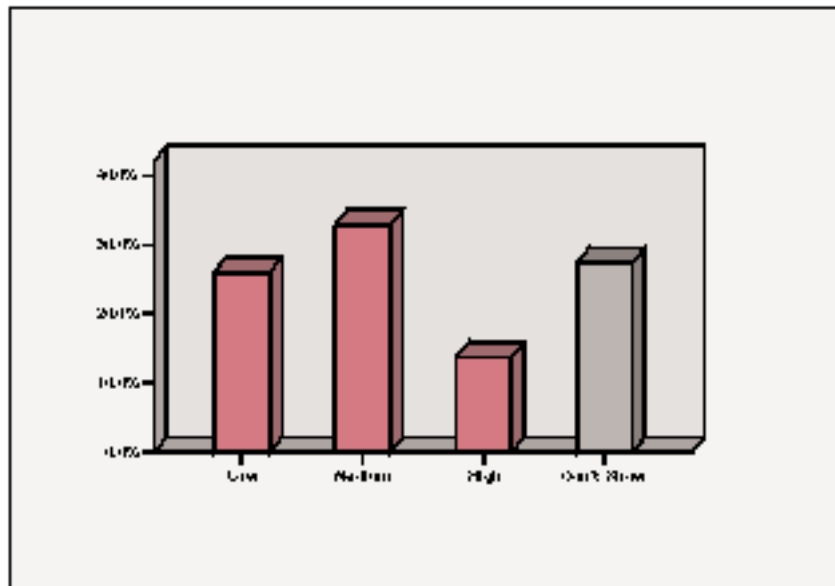
How do you rate the take-up of other further and adult learning courses in your constituency?



Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

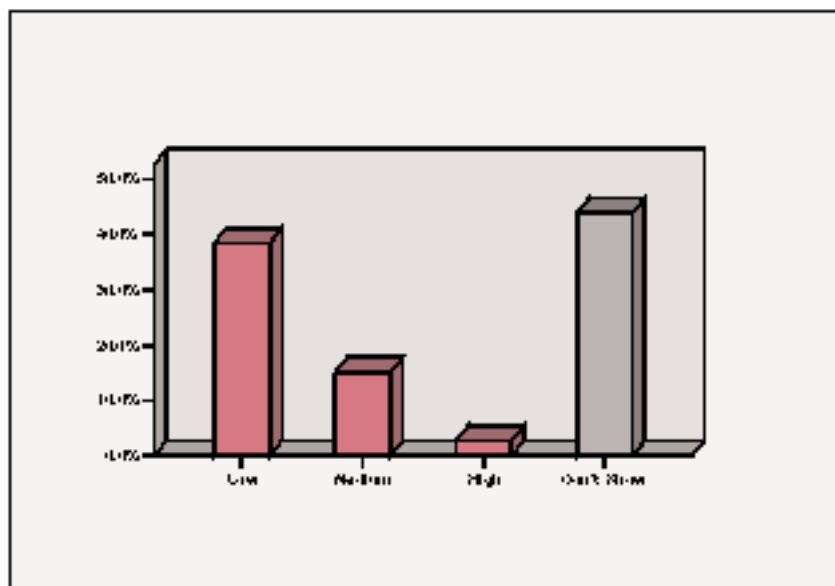
Learning & Skills Council

What impact do you think the Learning & Skills Council has on skills development in your constituency?



Sector Skills Councils

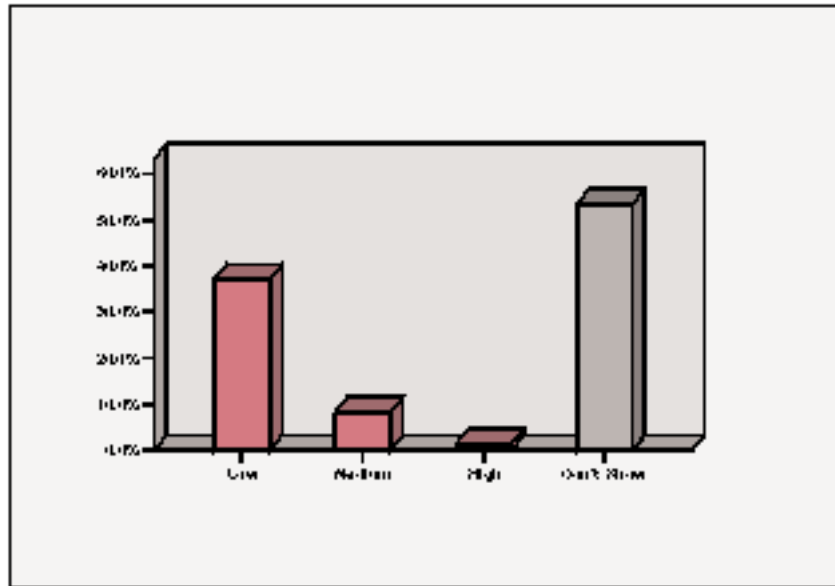
What impact do you think the Sector Skills Councils have on skills development in your constituency?



Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

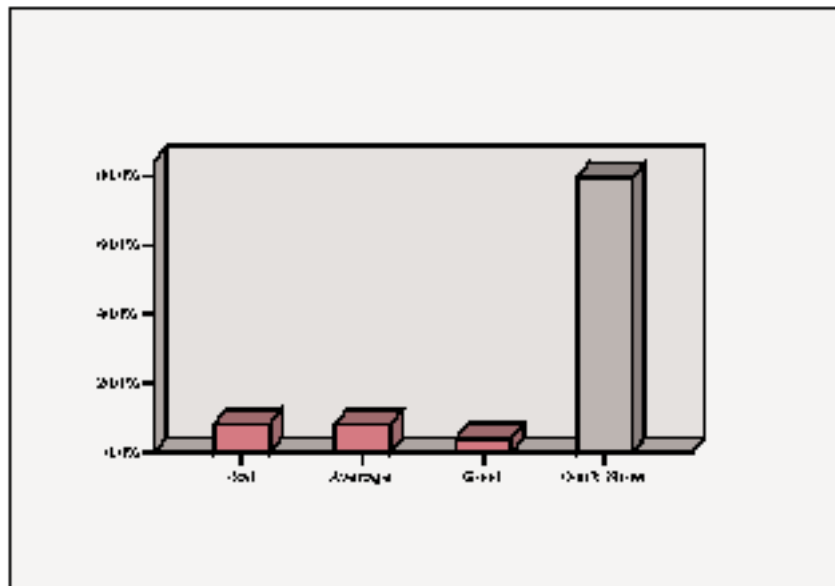
Regional Partnerships for Skills

What response do you think Regional Partnerships for Skills have on skills development in your constituency?



Employer Training Pilots

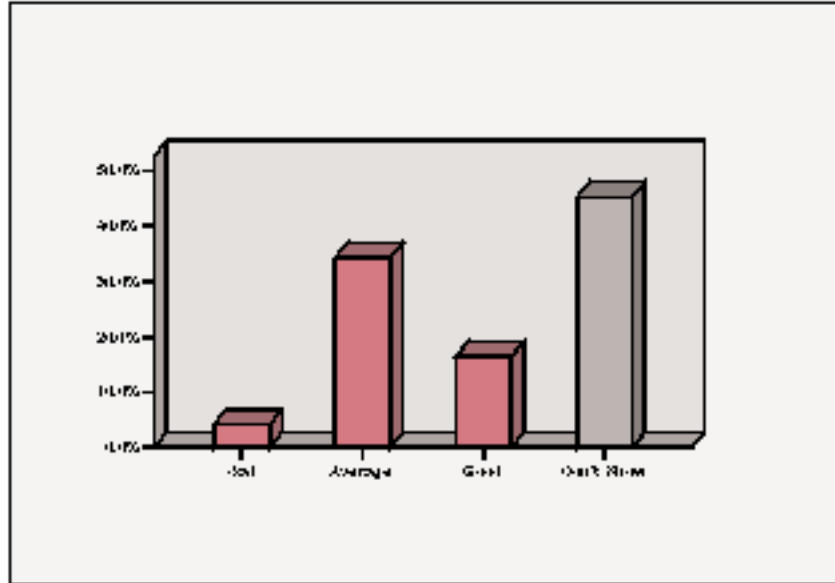
Could you offer your opinion on the success of Employer Training Pilots in your constituency?



Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

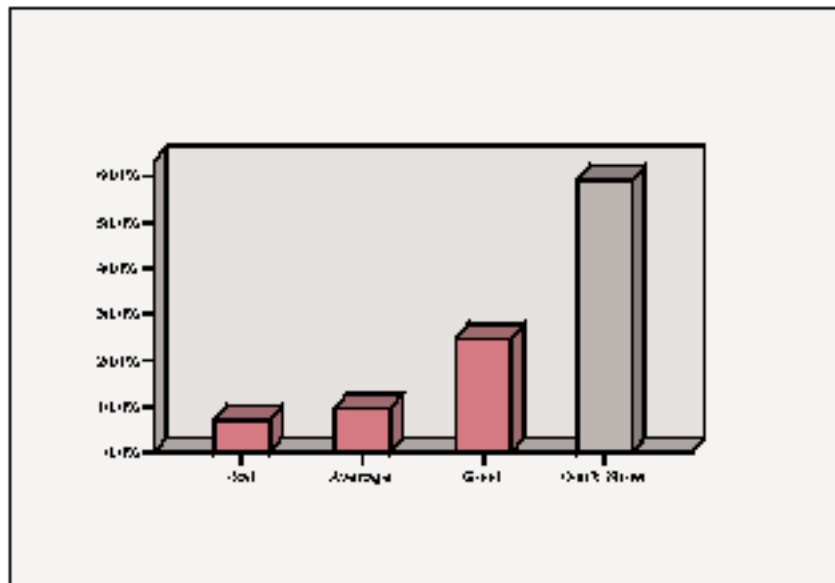
Advice & Guidance Services

Could you offer your opinion on the success of advice and guidance services in your constituency?



Neighbourhood Learning Centres

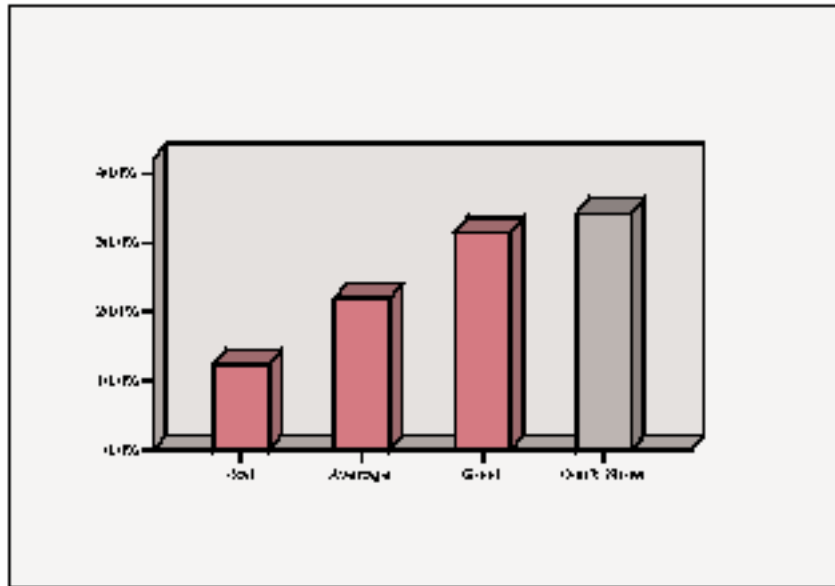
Could you offer your opinion on the success of Neighbourhood Learning Centres in your constituency?



Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

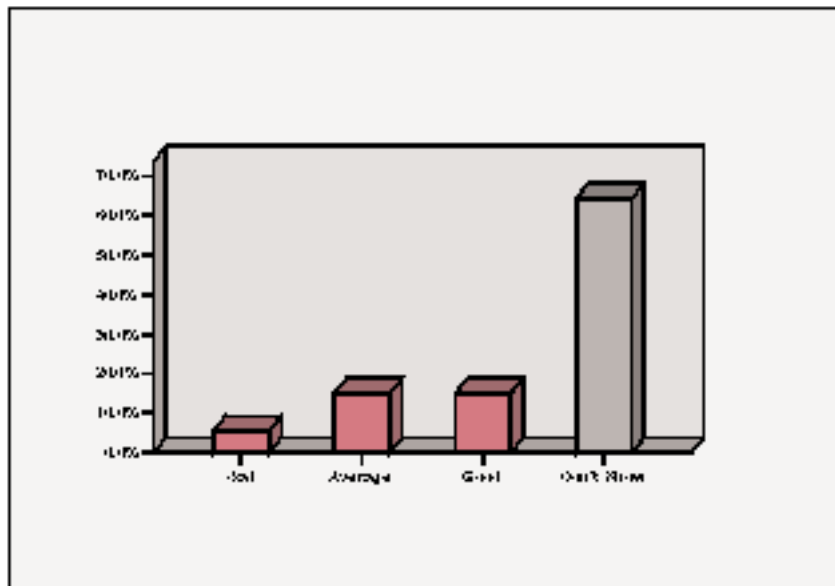
The New Deal

Could you offer your opinion on the success of the New Deal in your constituency?



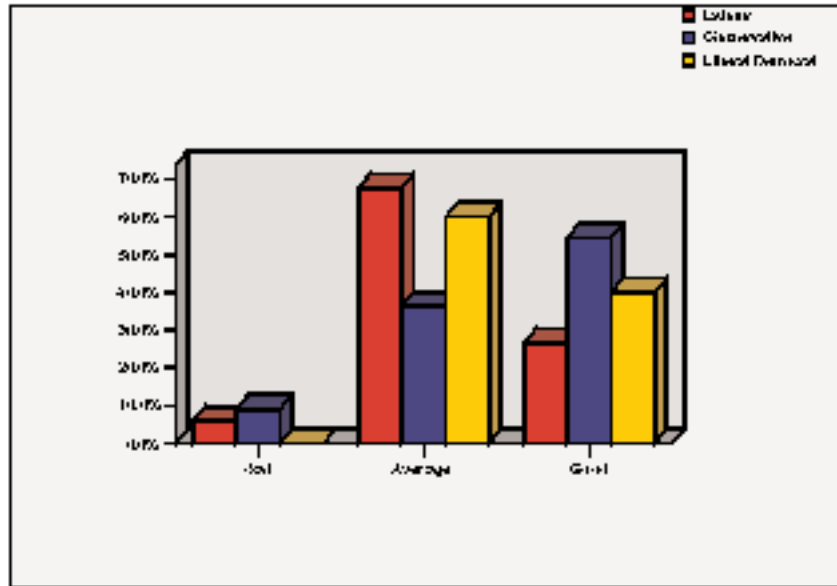
Centres of Vocational Excellence

Could you offer your opinion on the success of Centres of Vocational Excellence in your constituency?

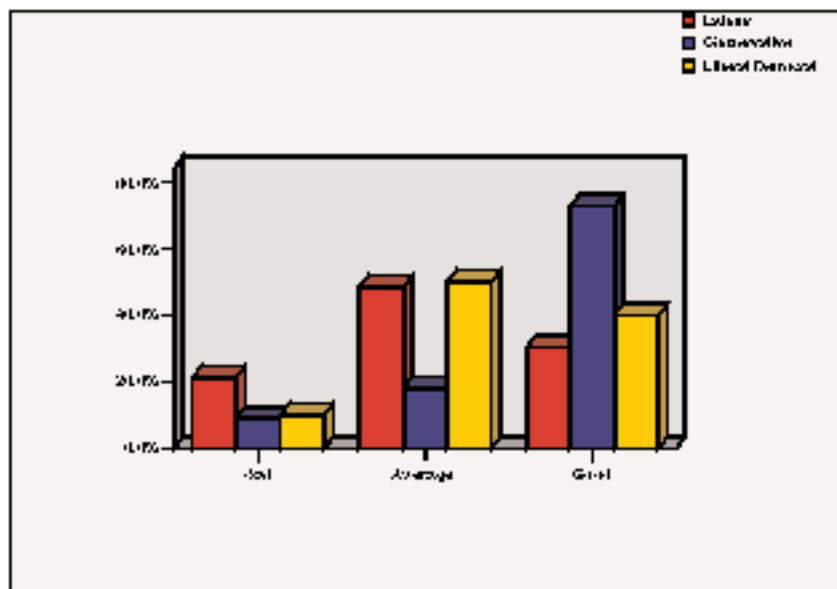


Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

14-19 Learning Opportunities: Opinion by Party

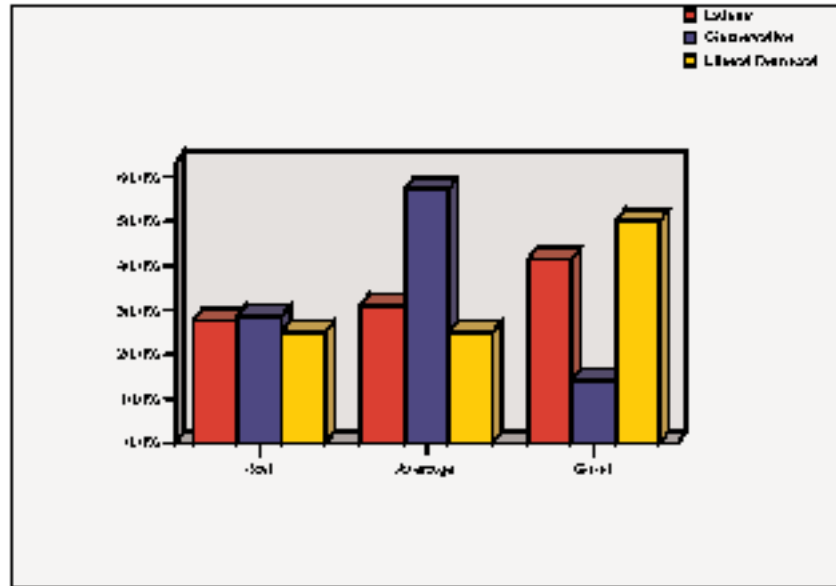


Adult Further Education Provision: Opinion by Party

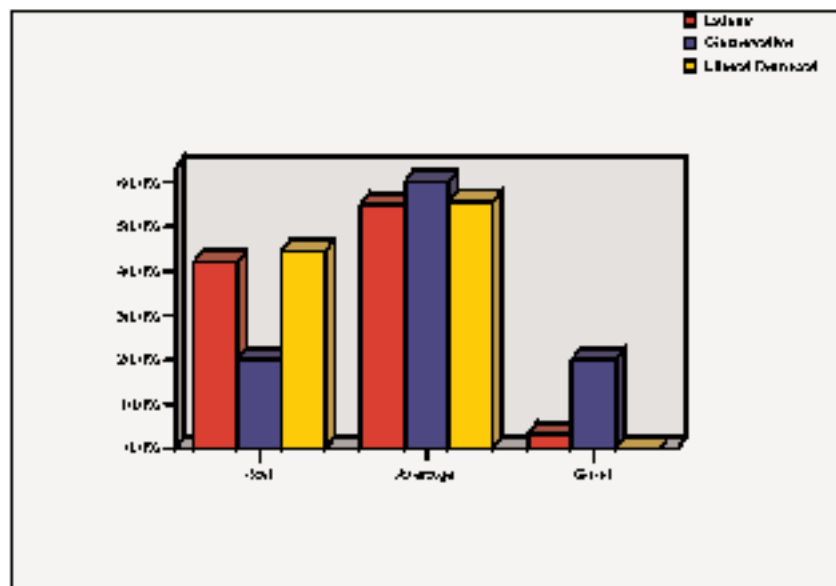


Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

Higher Education Provision: Opinion by Party

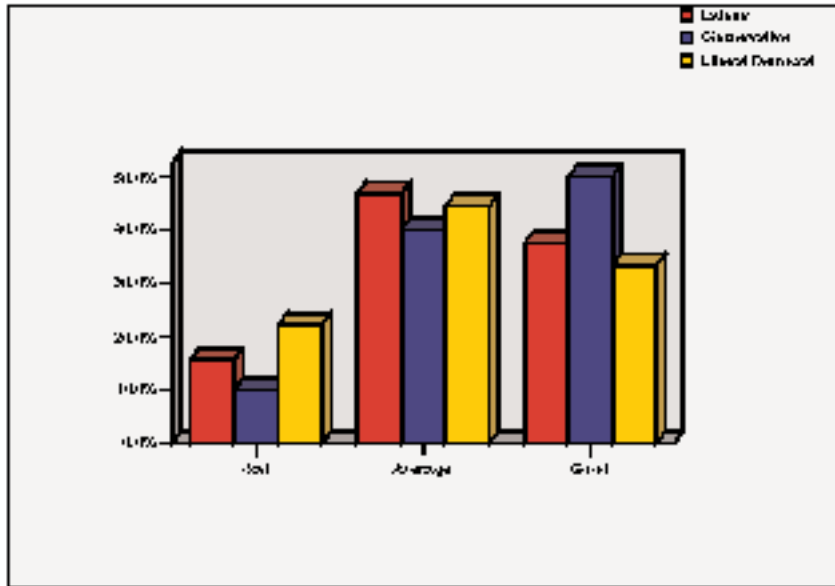


SME Engagement with Training Provision: Opinion by Party

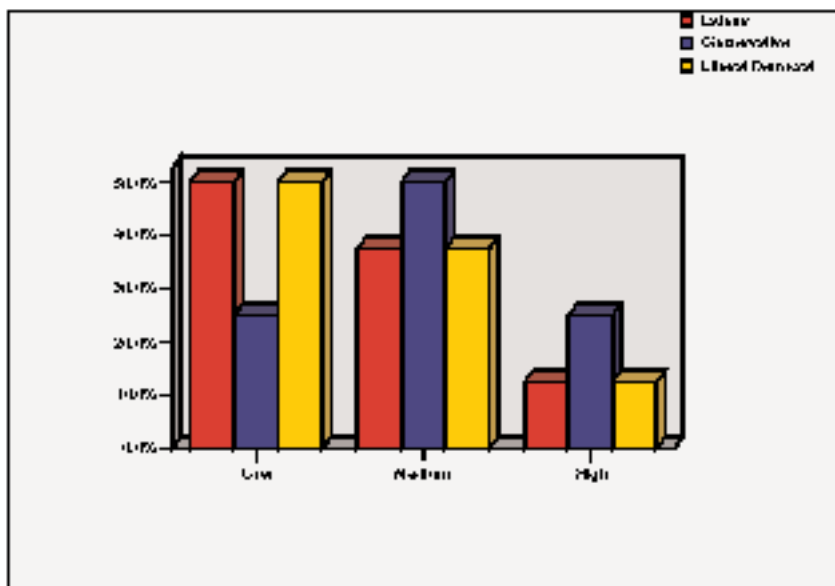


Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

Large Business Engagement with Training Provision:
Opinion by Party

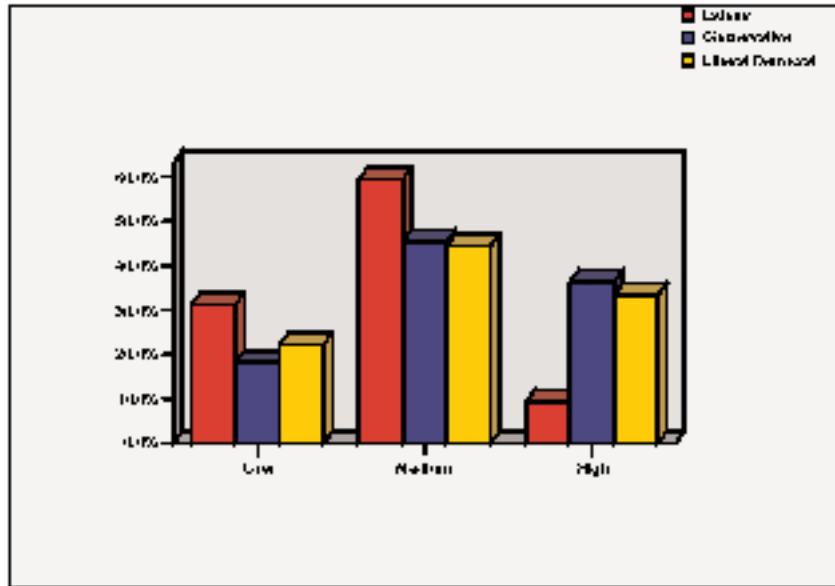


Take-Up Rate of Apprenticeships: Opinion by Party

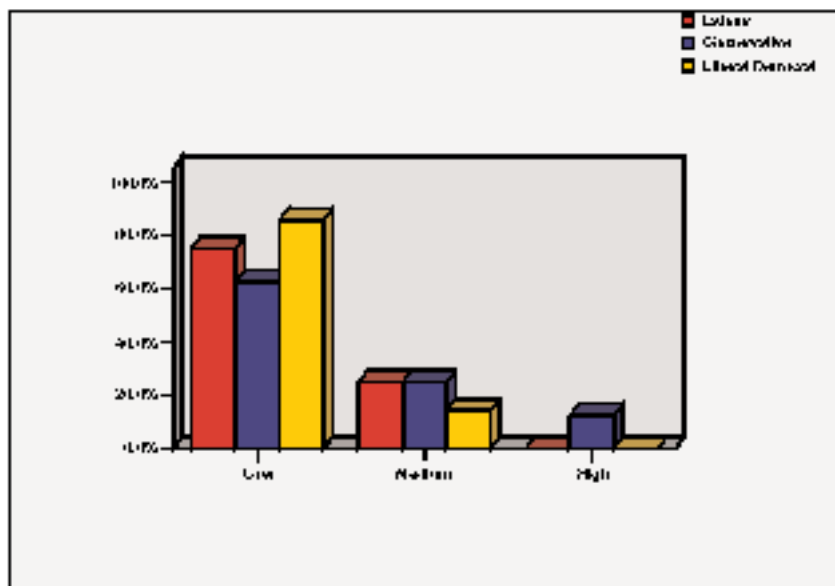


Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

Take-Up Rate of Other Further and Adult Learning Courses: Opinion by Party

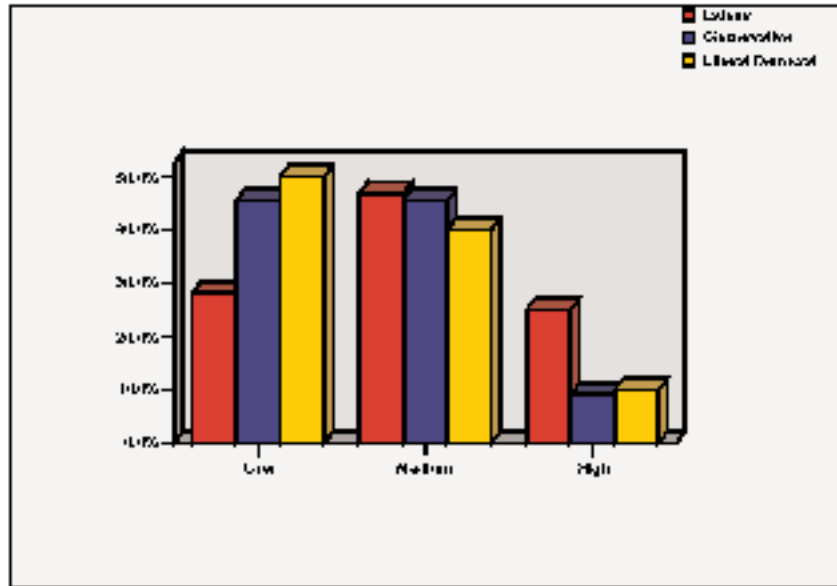


Take-Up Rate of Individual Funding for Further Education Opportunities: Opinion by Party

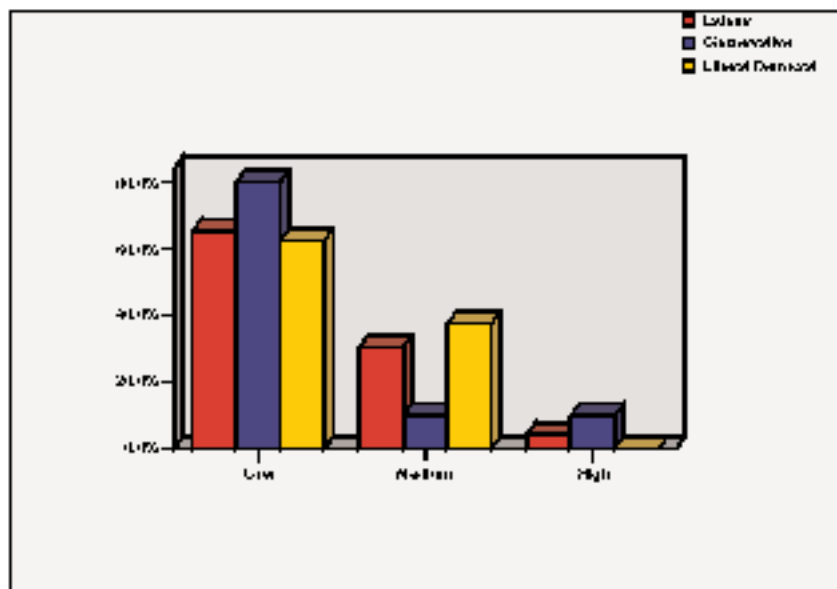


Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

Learning & Skills Council's Impact: Opinion by Party

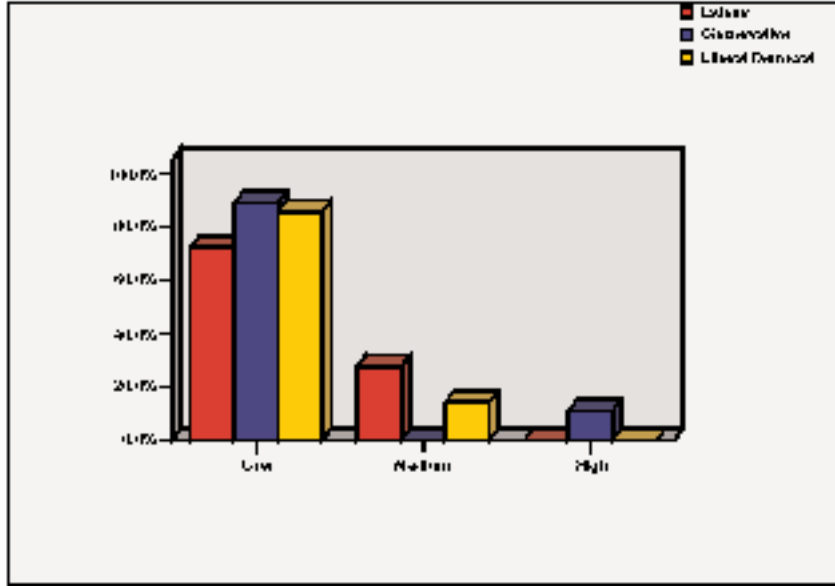


Sector Skills Councils' Impact: Opinion by Party

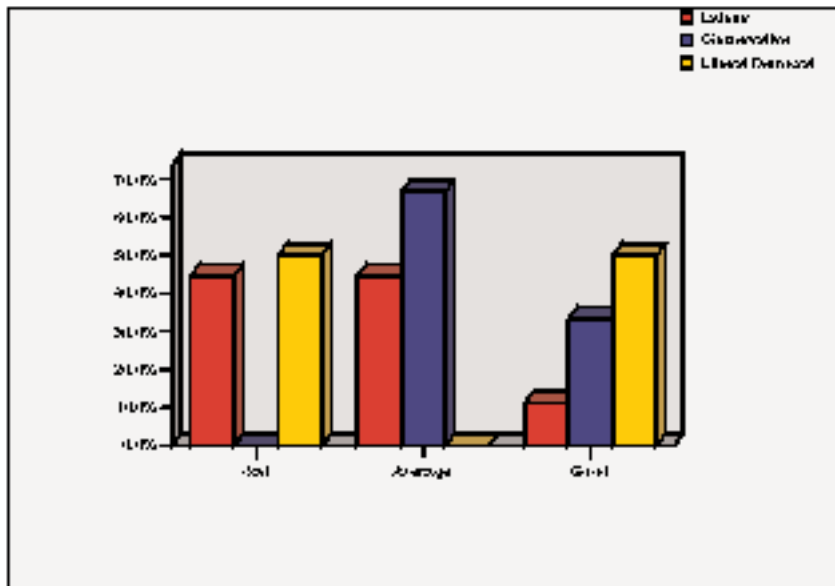


Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

Regional Partnerships for Skills' Impact: Opinion by Party

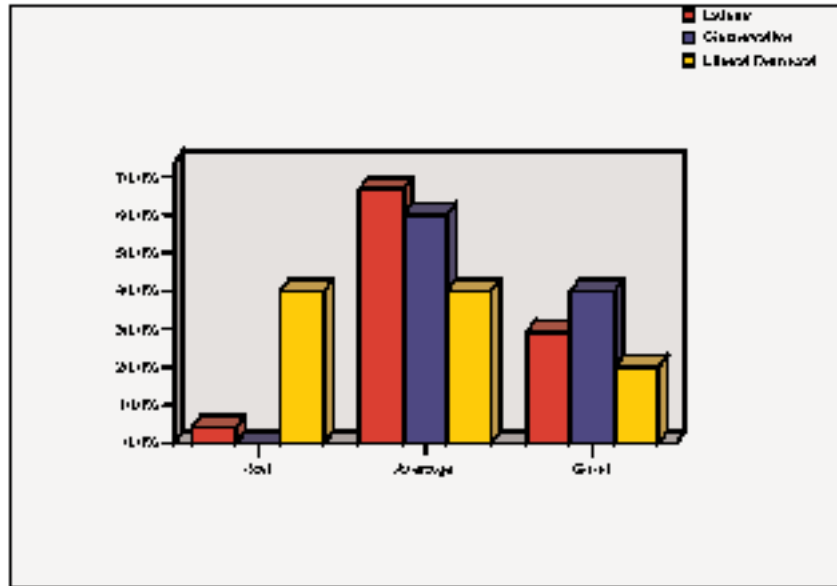


Success of Employer Training Pilots: Opinion by Party

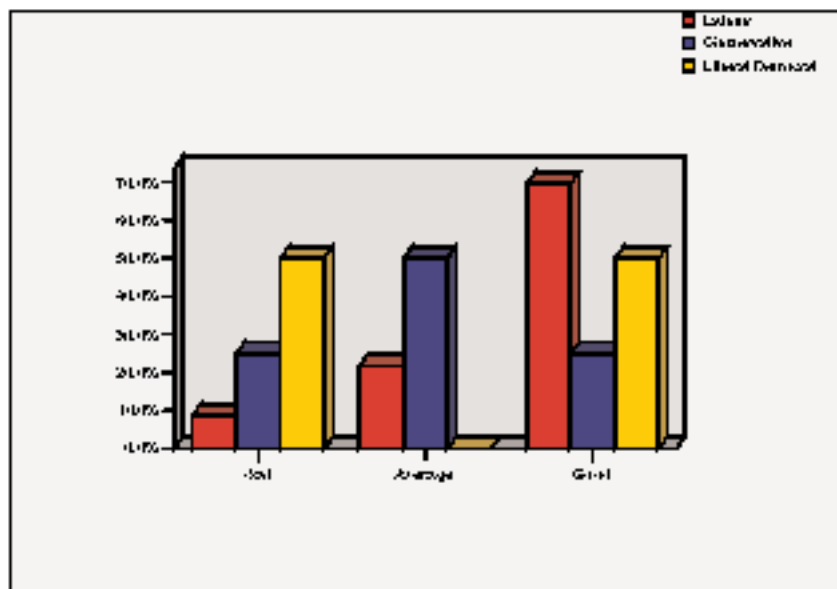


Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

Success of Advice & Guidance Services: Opinion by Party

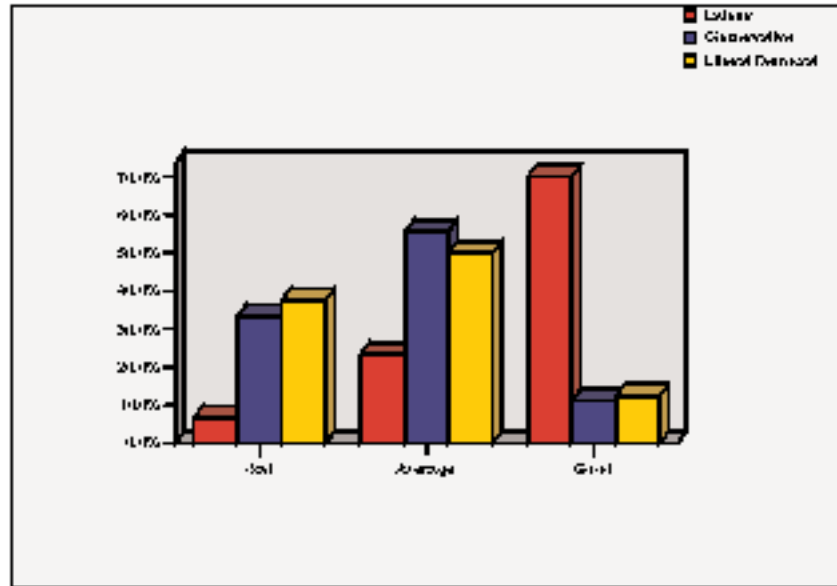


Success of Neighbourhood Learning Centres: Opinion by Party

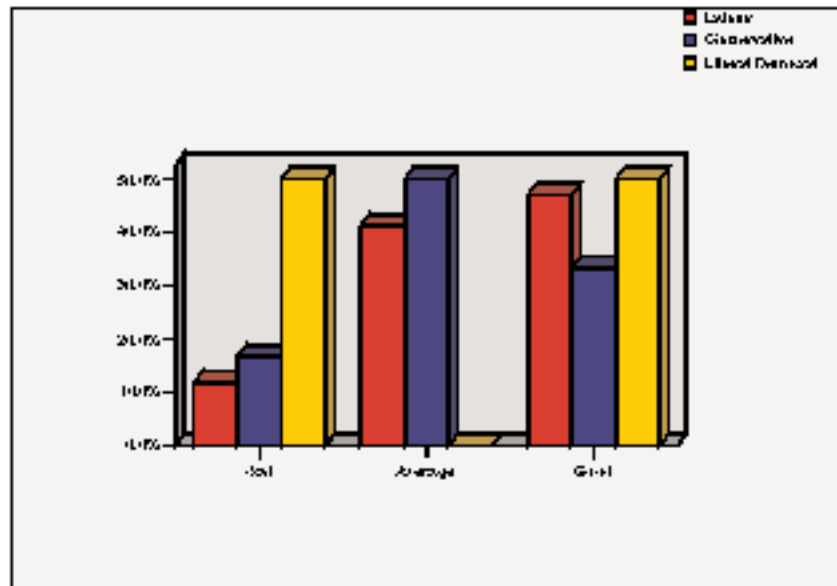


Appendix 4: Charts Showing Questionnaire Results

Success of the New Deal: Opinion by Party



Success of Centres of Vocational Excellence: Opinion by Party





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