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Leading learning and skills

## Delivering Learning and Skills in the North West

Update on Learning and Skills Performance 2007

January 2008



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North West

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## Delivering Learning and Skills – Performance Update Summary

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# Foreword

I am delighted to introduce this Performance Update Summary 2007, which presents an overview of the education, training and skills provision funded through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in the North West. Here you will find an assessment of the impact of LSC investment in learning and skills, together with evidence on the region's skills base and needs to provide context.

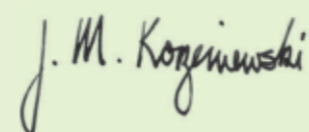
The LSC has a vital role to play in making the North West better skilled and more competitive. Our contribution is twofold: guaranteeing high quality education and training for young people aged 16-18 in every district, and ensuring education and training responds to the needs of employers and adults.

In delivering this contribution, the LSC works with partners across the region: with the North West Development Agency through the Regional Skills Partnership to identify and tackle skills needs; with Children's Trusts, employers, schools, Connexions, colleges and providers to meet the learning needs of young people; with local authorities, Jobcentre Plus and others to support economic development and tackle worklessness.

This report provides a flavour of the activities we and our partners in the learning and skills sector have delivered. You will find some noteworthy successes here, but also see that major challenges remain. Each section of the update concludes with a summary of issues to be addressed in our Regional Commissioning Plan published on the website in December 2007.

I hope you find the update informative and that it raises awareness of the sheer scale and scope of the work we do. I also hope reading it will prompt you to take a continuing interest and pride in the work of the Learning and Skills Council.

Together with our delivery and strategic partners, we believe we make a real difference in the North West – I hope, after reading this, you will agree.



John Korzeniewski  
Regional Director

## Making a Difference in the North West

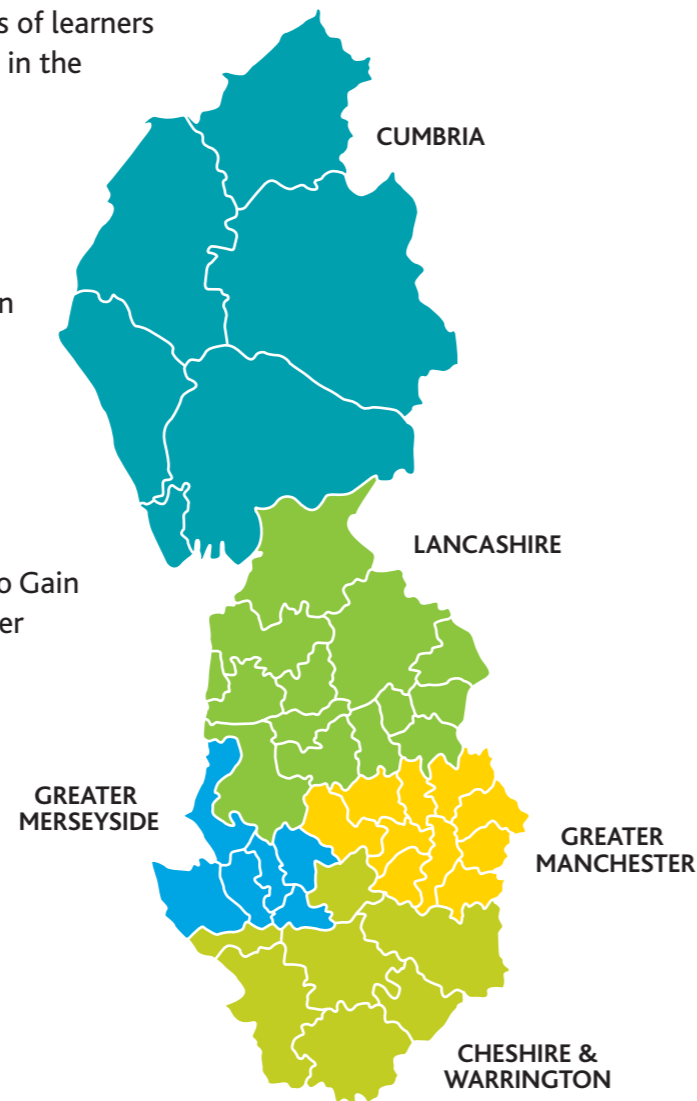
The Learning and Skills Council is a national organisation, with a national office in Coventry and a close working relationship with the Departments for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS).

There are nine regional offices and, in the North West region, five local offices – Cheshire and Warrington, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Greater Merseyside and Lancashire.

The scale of our investments and the numbers of learners and employers engaged is significant. The LSC in the North West spends over **one billion pounds** each year on funding learning provision.

In the North West, the LSC has delivered:

- A rise of 2.5 per cent in overall participation in learning of young people aged 16-18 between 2004/05 and 2005/06, when the cohort of young people increased by around 0.4 per cent.
- Over **57,000 adults** taking a full Level 2 course in 2005/06.
- Over **34,000 employees** starting on Train to Gain in the North West in its first year – with over 7,000 employers involved.



## Performance against National Targets

- 1 Our main targets are set by government – these Public Sector Agreement (PSA) targets are national and each of the nine regional LSCs must ensure it delivers its contribution.

Figure 1 – North West region: progress on key targets

Target area	National PSA Target	The North West's contribution
Level 2 at 19 years	Increase the number of 19 year olds who achieve at least Level 2 by 3 percentage points between 2004 and 2006 (to 69.8 per cent), and a further 2 percentage points by 2008 (to 71.8 per cent).	Autumn 2004: 66.3 per cent Autumn 2006: 70.2 per cent
Adults achieving Level 2	Reduce by at least 40 per cent the number of adults in the workforce who lack Level 2 by 2010. Working towards this, one million adults in the workforce to achieve Level 2 between 2003 and 2006.	2004/05: 11,500 adult Level 2 2005/06: 13,300 adult Level 2
Adults achieving Level 3	By 2011 there should be 56 per cent of adults qualified to at least Full Level 3.	2004/05: 8,600 adult Level 3 2005/06: 11,900 adult Level 3
Skills for Life	Improve the basic skills of 2.25 million adults between 2001 and 2010, with targets of 750,000 by 2004 and 1.5 million by 2007.	2005/06: 17,000 approved Skills for Life qualifications
Apprenticeship Completions	130,000 apprentices to complete the full apprenticeship.	In 2005/06 almost 14,800 learners completed on Apprenticeships in the North West. In 2006/07 we expect to exceed 17,300
NEET	Reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) by 2 percentage points by 2010 (down to 8 per cent). (Target shared with Connexions.)	January 2006: 8.5 per cent NEET January 2007: 9.1 per cent NEET <sup>1</sup>

Sources: Level 2 @19/Adult Level 2/Skills for Life – LSC data. NEET – Connexions data

- 2 Unless stated otherwise, data used in this report has been sourced from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) database. The ILR is used by colleges and providers to record individual learner participation and achievement, and the LSC aggregates this data and uses it to monitor activity and report on performance.

<sup>1</sup> "Unadjusted" NEET data includes all young people who are not in education, employment or training plus all young people whose status is unknown. "Adjusted" NEET excludes the latter.

# Meeting the Learning and Skills Challenge in the North West

## Key Achievements – Young People

- 3 While **Level 2 attainment at age sixteen** (measured as five or more GCSE A\*-C grades in any subject) is lower than the national average:<sup>2</sup>
  - Attainment is improving more quickly than it is nationally.
  - The performance gap is closing – it was 4.9 per cent in 2003/04, and is now 3.4 per cent in 2005/06.
- 4 **Level 2 attainment including English and Maths** is now agreed to be a better measure, as without a good foundation in these two subjects, young people are less able to progress to Level 3. In the North West:
  - 42.1 per cent of 16 year olds achieve the benchmark, compared with 45.3 per cent for England.
  - Attainment increased by 1.5 percentage points between 2004/05 and 2005/06. The increase in England was 1 percentage point, so the North West has made progress on closing the performance gap.
- 5 Once young people reach sixteen, their next education or training destination is supported by the LSC. The fact that so many young people complete the compulsory phase of education without a Level 2 creates a major challenge for the LSC funded school sixth forms, colleges and providers in the North West. Despite this:
  - **Level 2 achievement between the ages of sixteen and nineteen is above the national average** – 20.2 per cent of young people achieve the benchmark in the region, compared with 19.2 per cent nationally in 2005/06.
  - **Level 2 achievement at age nineteen is closing the gap with national performance** – our providers are bringing young people ever closer to the national norm – 70.2 per cent of young people aged 19 achieved the benchmark in the North West in 2005/06, compared with 71.4 per cent nationally.
- 6 However, **achievement of Level 3 at age nineteen** is below national rates and improving more slowly:
  - **43.1 per cent of nineteen year olds achieved a Level 3 by age nineteen** in the region; in England it is 46.8 per cent.<sup>3</sup>
  - **A major barrier to Level 3 participation and success** is the lack of good GCSEs in English and Maths.

<sup>2</sup> 55.8 per cent in 2005/06 compared with 59.2 per cent.

<sup>3</sup> 2005/06 data.

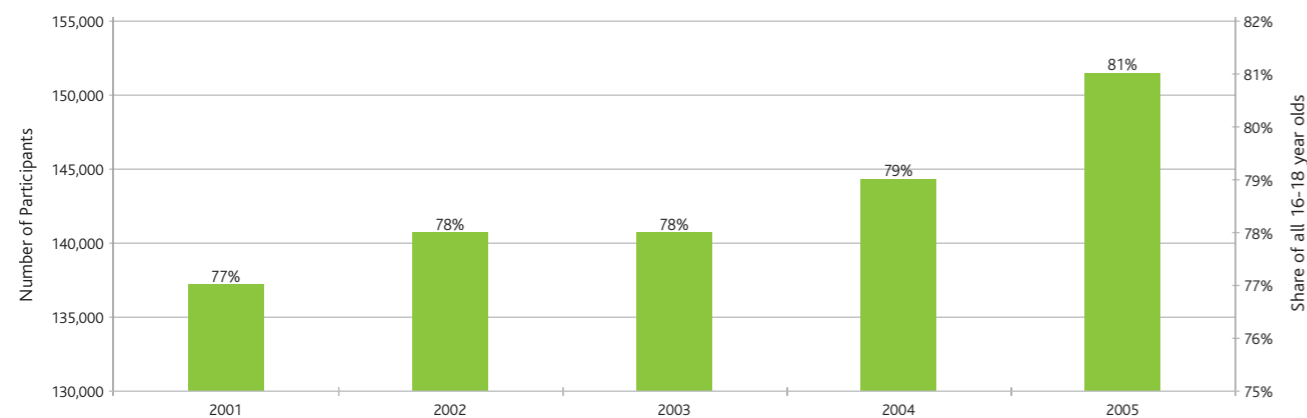
## Key Achievements – Adults

- 7 The North West region, in common with the rest of the country, is going through a major shift in the balance of skills required by the economy. There is increasing demand for skills at Level 3 and above, and lower demand for people with low level or no qualifications.
  - **The North West has reduced the gap with England** from 2.9 per cent to 2.2 per cent on the proportion of working age people with no qualifications. The region also made faster progress – reducing the proportion by 1.2 percentage points, compared with England's 0.5 percentage points.
  - **The North West is making faster progress on adult Level 3 qualifications than England.** Between 2005 and 2006, the percentage of the working age population with Level 3 increased by 0.8 percentage points to 15.9 per cent. In contrast, the England rate increased by only 0.2 percentage points and is now 0.7 percentage points lower than the region's rate at 15.2 per cent.
  - **However at Level 4, the North West is trailing behind England.** Between 2005 and 2006, the proportion of working age people with Level 4 or higher increased by 0.6 percentage points in the North West, but by 0.9 percentage points in England. This means that the gap between the region and England has widened from 2 per cent in 2005 to 2.3 per cent in 2006.
  - **On Skills for Life**, including literacy and numeracy, levels of literacy are in line with national rates, but numeracy is significantly below national norms. 83 per cent of adults have numeracy skills below Level 2 in the North West, compared to 75 per cent for England.

## Participation in LSC Funded Education and Training – Young People (aged 16 to 18)

- 8 Continuing in education or training has benefits for individuals, increasing their skill levels and preparing them to find – and succeed in – employment. It is also important for the economy, which increasingly demands more highly skilled employees and benefits from individuals' increased earnings.

Figure 2 – North West 16 and 17 year old participation rates 2001-2005<sup>4</sup>



- 9 In most of England, a third of young people go on to attend School Sixth Forms when their compulsory education ends at age 16.
- 10 **The North West is different** – only 23 per cent attend School Sixth Forms in the region. More young people take the Further Education (FE) route, either in General FE Colleges or in Sixth Form Colleges.<sup>5</sup> **Apprenticeships** are chosen by 10 per cent of young people in the North West compared with 7 per cent nationally.
- 11 We have annual targets for increasing post-16 participation, by growing overall numbers and increasing participation at Levels 2 and 3. Some notable points:
- **4.2 per cent growth in FE participation in 2005/06** – exceeding the growth in the cohort of young people. The 2.4 per cent planned growth in FE numbers for 2006/07 will be exceeded.
  - While the increase in **FE full Level 2** participation for 2005/06 was below the national rate, the planned increase for 2006/07 of 7.4 per cent will be exceeded.
  - In the North West **participation in School Sixth Forms increased by only 0.4 per cent in 2005/06**, with a predicted decrease of 0.1 per cent in 2006/07. Nationally, there was a 1.1 per cent increase in 2005-06, with numbers predicted to remain static in 2006-07.
  - **2005/06 saw a decline of 10 per cent in Apprenticeship starts<sup>6</sup>** in the North West – slightly higher than the national rate of decline at 7.5 per cent. In 2006/07 we have seen an above average increase in starts.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Data from <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000734/newwebsites-rates2007.xls>

<sup>5</sup> 43 per cent in the NW, 37 per cent nationally.

<sup>6</sup> Apprenticeships at Level 2 and Advanced Apprenticeships at Level 3.

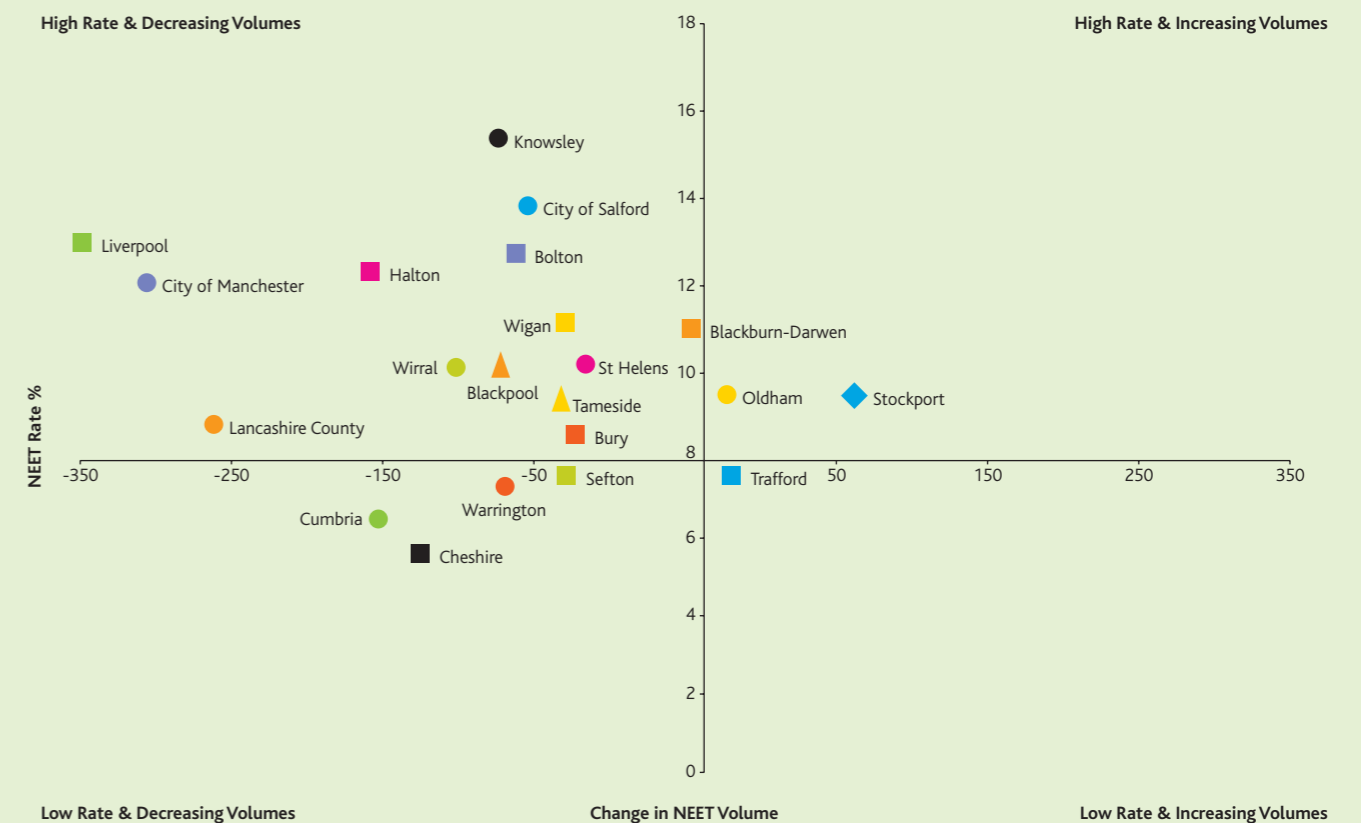
<sup>7</sup> 2.7 per cent at period 9; nationally 0.3 per cent at the same period.

- **Entry to Employment (EZE)** – pre-employment provision to cater for those who are not yet ready to enter Apprenticeship or other employment – **numbers declined by 3.3 per cent** in 2005/06. The region has better than average outcomes – over half of participants progress to positive outcomes (50.2 per cent) compared with 46.6 per cent for England.

### NEET – Young people aged 16-18 Not in Education, Employment or Training

- 12 The NEET rate has remained stubbornly high for several years, both regionally and nationally. National research shows that young people who are NEET between the ages of 16-18 are much more likely to experience unemployment, low income, teenage motherhood, depression, and poor physical health later in life. This is a major challenge for the learning and skills sector.
- 13 The region's NEET rate is similar to England's; in the first quarter of 2007 the total NEET rate for England was 13 per cent, made up of 8 per cent known to be NEET and 5 per cent whose status was unknown and assumed NEET. In the North West the figures were 9.5 per cent NEET and 3.5 per cent unknown, giving us 13 per cent.
- 14 Figure 3 shows, by local authority area, the NEET rate for June 2007 and the percentage change over June 2006. The predominant picture is of high but improving NEET rates. The national target is for NEET to fall to 8% by 2010.

Figure 3 – North West NEET data 2006-2007, by local authority district and trend



Source: Data from the Connexions service

## Participation in LSC Funded Education and Training – Adults (aged 19 and above)

- 15 The priorities for adult learning have changed in recent years – there is now a greater emphasis on priority areas of learning:
- **First full Level 2 qualifications** for adults who have not previously attained this level. Having a Level 2 can both improve employability and provide a platform for further progression. This provision is fully funded.
  - **First full Level 3 qualifications** are increasingly demanded by employers, are crucial to the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy and needed to support growth in higher level skills. This provision is subsidised with individuals or their employers making a contribution.
  - **Basic skills qualifications (Skills for Life)** are freely available to all who need them.
- 16 The emphasis on these priorities has meant that total adult learner numbers have been falling as learners increasingly follow substantial programmes which result in qualifications which will support employment.
- 17 Key points on adult participation:
- **Further Education**
    - Numbers taking **full Level 2** grew by 3 per cent in 2006-07 but this was significantly below the planned growth of 15 per cent.
    - Numbers taking **Level 3** grew in 2005/06, less than the national rate and there has been a slight decline in 2006/07.
  - **Apprenticeships** – in 2006/07 numbers have declined by 12 per cent for Level 2 and 7 per cent for Level 3.
- 18 While there is a mixed picture on Further Education and Apprenticeships, the **Train to Gain** position is more encouraging:
- Between April 2006 and July 2007, **over 7,000 employers** in the region started workers on learning programmes.
  - There were over 34,000 learner “starts” – **the highest number of any region.**
- 19 Our region has a substantial need for improved literacy and – especially – numeracy skills. We have a good record of delivery on basic skills (Skills for Life), although we need to increase the proportion of achievements from adults aged 19 and older.
- Currently, less than half<sup>8</sup> of the 122,334 qualifications achieved in 2006 were from adults – but this is still an additional 59,000 basic skills qualifications.

<sup>8</sup> 48 per cent.

## Success Rates – Young People

- 20 Increasing participation in learning is not enough – the greatest benefit comes from giving people a qualification that validates their learning and enables them to use it to build a better life. So reviewing – and celebrating – success rates is vital to understanding the real contribution made by the LSC and its delivery partners in learning and skills.
- 21 There is a real success story to be told on young people’s achievements:
- **In Further Education, young people have achieved the highest success rates in England over the last two years** – 74 per cent in 2004/05 and 78 per cent in 2005/06.
    - **This is also true for full Level 2 success rates**, and
    - in 2005/06 the North West was one of four<sup>9</sup> regions to achieve the highest full Level 3 success rate of 66 per cent.
  - **In Apprenticeships**, the picture is more mixed:
    - On **Apprenticeships (Level 2)** North West success rates have reflected national rates at 40 per cent in 2004/05, 53 per cent in 2005/06 and 58 per cent in 2006/07. The steady rise in the rate is an indication of how seriously the LSC has taken quality over the last few years.
    - On **Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3)** the **North West has out-performed England** in each of those same years.

### Advanced Apprenticeship Success Rates

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
England	41 per cent	56 per cent	59 per cent
North West	42 per cent	59 per cent	62 per cent

- On **E2E**, success is measured by the proportion of trainees who progress to positive destinations.<sup>10</sup> **The North West region has consistently been the best performer nationally**, with more than half of all young people on E2E moving into a positive destination, compared with less than half nationally.

<sup>9</sup> The other regions were the East of England, the South East and the South West.

<sup>10</sup> These include: qualifications at Entry Level or Level 1, and progression to structured learning, Apprenticeship or employment.

## Success Rates – Adults

22 The North West adult population is less well qualified than the national average and there are more people with multiple disadvantages and barriers to entering the labour market. In view of this, the success of adults on LSC funded learning is noteworthy:

- In **Further Education**, adult success rates were 75 and 76 per cent in 2004/05 and 2005/06, compared to national rates of 75 and 77 per cent.
- In **Apprenticeships**, there has been a surge in achievements in the last two years. Starting at 33 per cent in 2004/05, there was a rise to 47 per cent in 2005/06 and a jump to 61 per cent in 2006/07.
- On **Skills for Life**, over 45,000 approved qualifications were achieved in 2004/05 and almost 60,000 in 2005/06 – more than in Greater London or the South East. **The North West has achieved 117 per cent of its target to date.**
- On **Train to Gain**, the North West is the best performing region on Level 2 starts and achievements. Between April 2006 and July 2007, over 32,000 learners started a Level 2 and almost 8,500 achieved their chosen qualification!<sup>11</sup> Level 3 starts exceeded 2,000 and there were 160 achievements.

<sup>11</sup> Qualifications achieved include a Level 2, a Level 3 or an approved Skills for Life qualification.

## Equality and Diversity – Gender, Ethnicity, Disadvantage and Disability

23 The headline numbers are positive, but aggregated numbers can conceal real issues, so it's useful to spotlight some of the details to check that everyone has an equal chance of participating and succeeding on LSC learning and skills programmes.

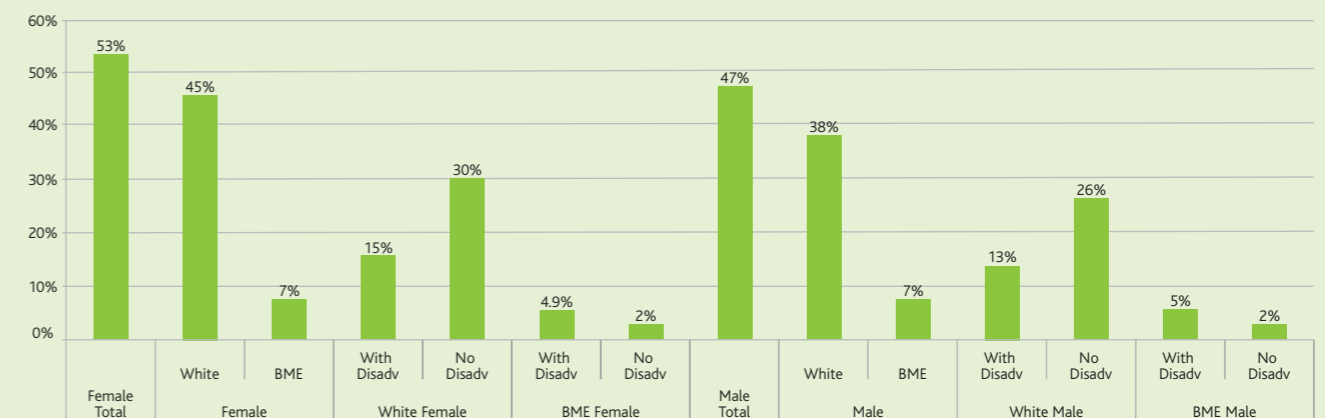
24 Below are the results of a detailed analysis of Further Education and Apprenticeships on:

- 16-18 year olds in Further Education taking long courses<sup>12</sup> at Level 1, 2 and 3.
- Adults aged 19+ taking long Level 2 and Level 3 courses.
- 16-18 year olds and adults on Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships.
- Gender, ethnicity, residency in a disadvantaged area<sup>13</sup> and disability.

25 The results are set out in charts, accompanied by a list of notable points.

### Young people aged 16-18

Figure 4 – Analysis of FE 16-18 year old learners taking Levels 1 to 3 in 2005/06



26 Firstly, on FE participation by young people:

- More than 246,000 young people participated in FE long courses at Level 1, 2 or 3, with marginally more females than males (53%/47%).
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups were more likely to participate in FE – learners were 14 per cent of the total, compared to the 8.2 per cent<sup>14</sup> expected.
  - Male BME participation is slightly higher than female<sup>15</sup> – BME males are more likely to participate in learning than white males.
  - 73 per cent of BME learners were residents of disadvantaged areas in comparison to 33 per cent of white learners. This is true for both genders.

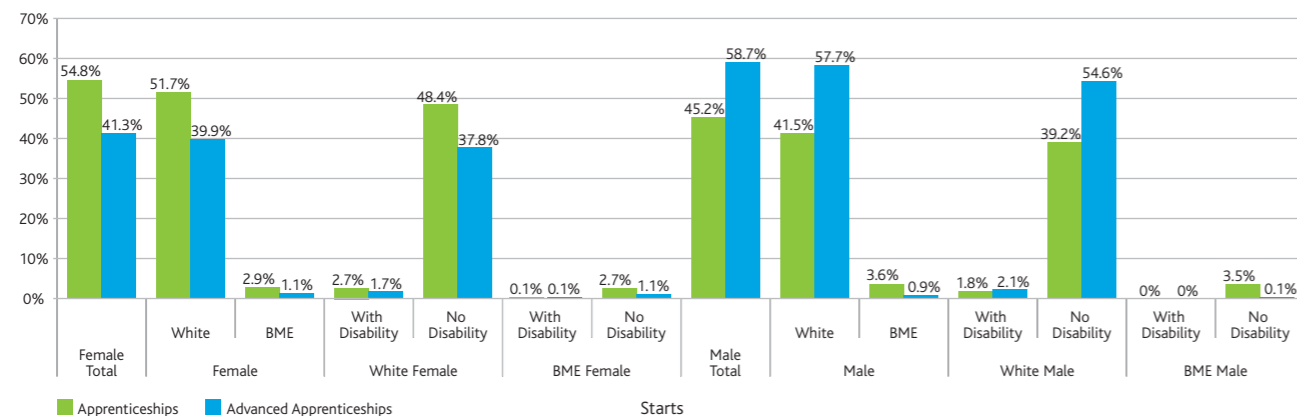
<sup>12</sup> Long courses are more substantial courses which usually have a qualification attached.

<sup>13</sup> Learners identified as disadvantaged receive a "disadvantage uplift" to funding. This is applied to a range of learners including those resident in a deprived ward as identified by the 2004 Indices of Deprivation.

<sup>14</sup> 2001 Census.

<sup>15</sup> 7.2 per cent in comparison to 6.7 per cent.

Figure 5 – Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeships starts by 16-18 year olds 2006/07



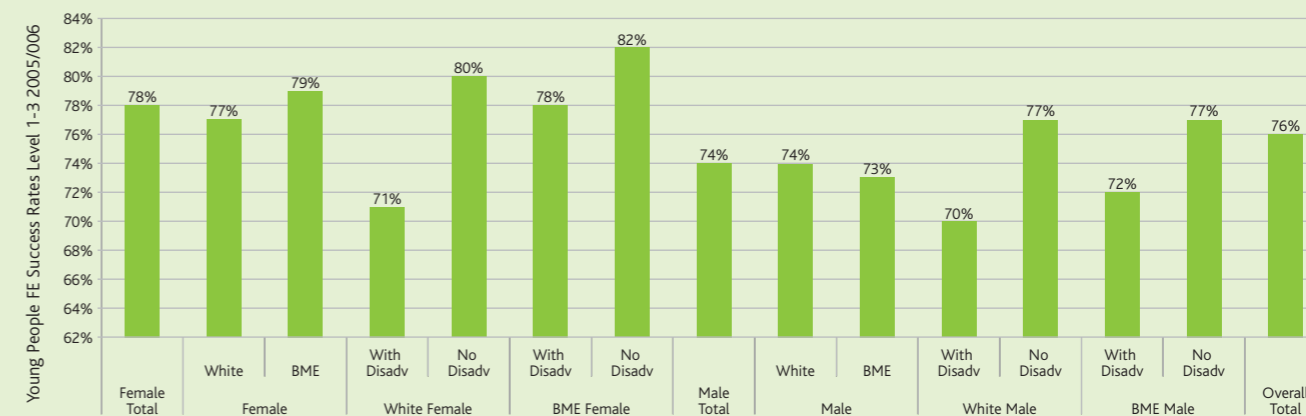
27 Secondly, key points on young people's participation in Apprenticeships (Level 2) and Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3):

- There were 16,672 starts in 2006/07.<sup>16</sup>
- Females outnumber males on Apprenticeships, but in Advanced Apprenticeship this is reversed. There are however some variations, see below.
- Total Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) participation was 4.5 per cent, almost half of what might be expected;
  - BME participation in Apprenticeship was over 5 per cent, but only 2.2 per cent in Advanced Apprenticeship.
  - In Apprenticeship BME males were more likely to participate than females, whereas in Advanced Apprenticeship females were more likely to participate than males.
  - Young people with disabilities are more likely to start an Apprenticeship than an Advanced Apprenticeship, and females with disabilities are more likely to do so than males.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> 12,932 Apprenticeship starts and 3,740 Advanced Apprenticeship starts.

<sup>17</sup> There were 743 disabled starts on Apprenticeship, 5.7 per cent of total starts and 145 disabled starts on Advanced Apprenticeship or 3.9 per cent of the total. Disabled females made up 3.6 per cent of Apprenticeship starts and 1.8 per cent of Advanced Apprenticeship starts. Disabled males made up 2.1 per cent of starts on both programmes.

Figure 6 – Further Education Success Rates in 2005/06 for 16-18 year olds: Levels 1 to 3

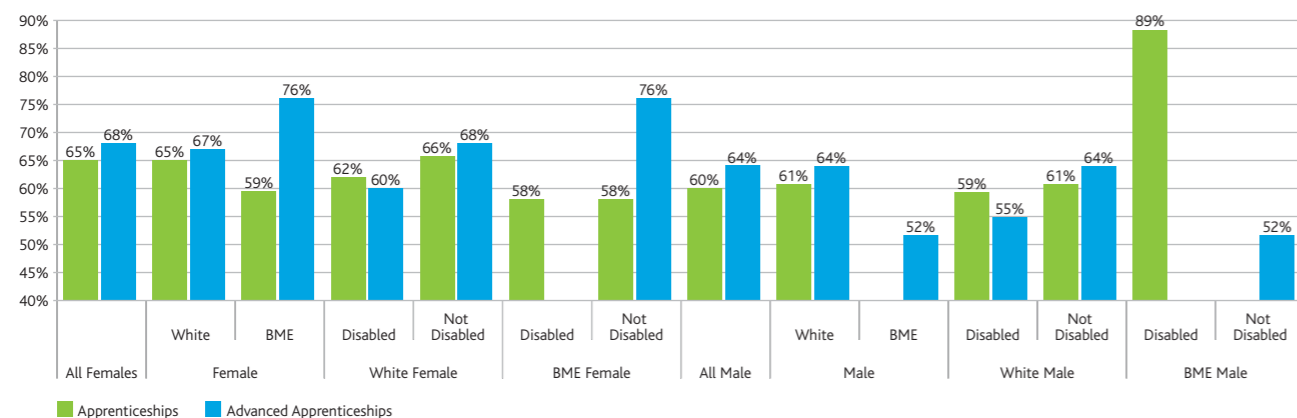


28 Overall FE Success rates for 16-18 year olds at Levels 1-3 are 76 per cent.

- Being male depresses success in FE – males have a success rate 4 percentage points lower than females.
- Being male and BME increases the gap to 6 points; 79 per cent of BME females succeed compared to 73 per cent of males.
- Residency in a disadvantaged area depresses success rates by almost 9 percentage points overall but appears to have a worse effect on males than females and on white groups rather than BME;
  - Disadvantaged females outperform males.<sup>18</sup>
  - White males have the lowest success rates for disadvantaged residents at 70 per cent, with females doing only slightly better.
  - BME females outperform their white peers, regardless of disadvantage.
  - BME disadvantaged males outperform white disadvantaged males.

<sup>18</sup> The overall disadvantaged success rate was 72.1 per cent (females 72.8 per cent, males 71.5 per cent). For those not disadvantaged the comparable rates were 81 per cent, 83 per cent and 79.2 per cent.

**Figure 7 16-18 Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeship Success Rates 2005/06**



29 Success rates<sup>19</sup> for young people in Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeship are generally lower than comparable rates in FE:<sup>20</sup>

- Over 12,800 young people left Apprenticeship and almost 3,400 left Advanced Apprenticeships in 2006/07, slightly more males than females.
- Male success rates were generally slightly below females', regardless of ethnicity.
- No BME young people with disabilities left Advanced Apprenticeships in 2006/07.
  - In Apprenticeships, the numbers were very small, 12 females and 9 males.
- The highest individual success rates are for BME learners, but the numbers involved are very low.
- Learners with disabilities are poorly represented in Advanced Apprenticeships<sup>21</sup> leavers, with more leavers from Apprenticeships<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeship frameworks comprise a relevant NVQ, key skills and a technical certificate.

In order to count towards success rates, learners must achieve all elements.

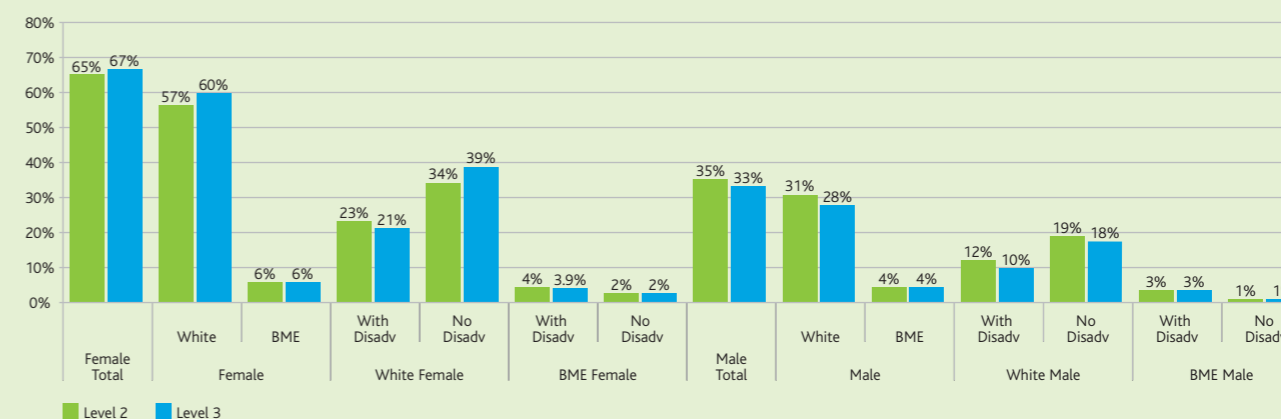
<sup>20</sup> Note that this data is for 2006/07; the FE success rates data is for 2005/06.

<sup>21</sup> 128 leavers.

<sup>22</sup> 757 leavers.

## Adults aged 19+

**Figure 8 FE Adult Learners taking Levels 2 and 3 2005/06**



30 For adults taking Level 2 and 3 courses in Further Education in 2005/06:

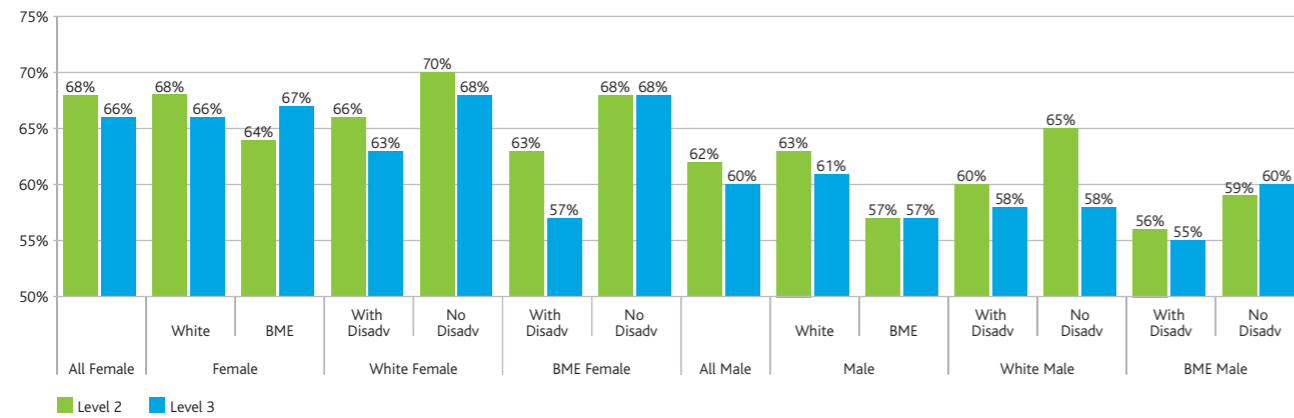
- There were about 66,000 adult learners on Level 2 courses and 42,000 on Level 3.
- Female learners outnumbered males by about 2 to 1<sup>23</sup> despite no significant difference in the proportions of males and females in the workforce who do not hold a level 2 qualification.
- BME people were over-represented;<sup>24</sup> accounting for 9 per cent of all Level 2 learners and almost 10 per cent of Level 3.
  - BME learners were almost twice as likely to be disadvantaged as white learners.<sup>25</sup>
  - Disadvantaged BME females are more likely to participate in learning than males.

<sup>23</sup> At Level 2 male learners were 35 per cent of the total and at Level 3 they were 33 per cent.

<sup>24</sup> Compared with a working age population of about 7.2 per cent from black and minority ethnic groups.

<sup>25</sup> 76 per cent of all BME males and 72 per cent of females were disadvantaged. 39 per cent of white males were disadvantaged and 41 per cent of females.

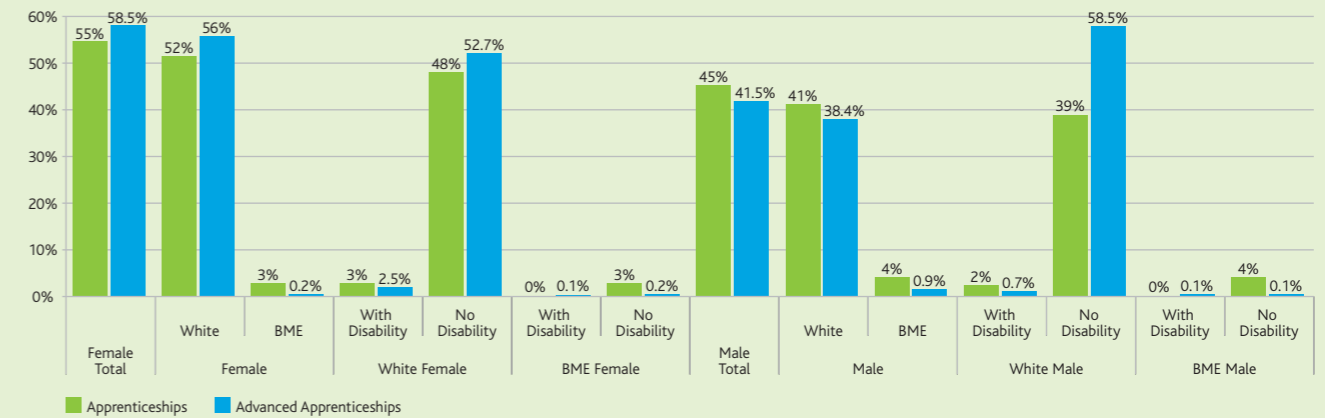
Figure 9 – FE Adult Success Rates, Levels 2 and 3 2005/06



31 Overall, adult success rates in FE are lower than those of young people, with a wider spread of results – 15 percentage points compared to young people’s 12 points:

- The overall adult Level 2 success rate was 66 per cent, made up of a female success rate of 68 per cent and 62 per cent for males.
- For Level 3 the overall rate was 64 per cent, made up of a male rate of 60 per cent and a female rate of 66 per cent.
- Analysis by ethnicity and gender highlights that BME groups performed less well, although the performance gap was wider at Level 2 than Level 3:
  - At Level 2 the BME success rate was 60.4 per cent compared to 65.8 per cent.
  - At Level 3 it was 61.6 per cent compared to 63.4 per cent.
- Being a resident of a disadvantaged area seems to affect female success rates more than male:
  - The gap between disadvantaged/non-disadvantaged female success rates ranges from 4 to 11 per cent.
  - For males the gap is from 0 to 4.7 per cent.
- The highest Level 2 success rate was 70 per cent, achieved by white non-disadvantaged females.
- The highest success rate at Level 3 was 68.4 per cent, achieved by non-disadvantaged BME females.

Figure 10 – Adults aged 19+ Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeship Starts 2005/06

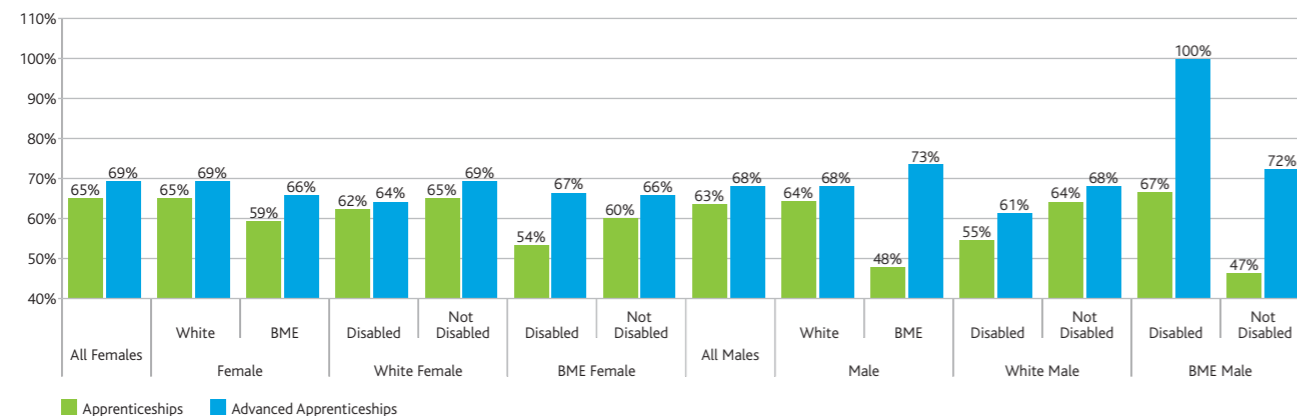


32 On the participation of adults aged 19+ in Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships:

- There were 6,935 Apprenticeship starts and 5,425 Advanced Apprenticeship starts in 2005/06 by adults aged 19+.
- Females outnumber males in both programmes – by slightly more in Advanced Apprenticeships.
- Participation by BME groups is low, with BME males more likely to participate than females:
  - BME adults are slightly more likely to participate in work based learning than young people.
  - BME people appear more likely to do an Apprenticeship, rather than an Advanced Apprenticeship.
- Participation by people with disabilities overall is very low compared to the 20 per cent of people in the region who say they have a limiting long term illness:<sup>26</sup>
  - Females with disabilities are more likely to participate than males – regardless of ethnicity.

<sup>26</sup> Census 2001.

**Figure 11 – Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeship Success Rates 2005/06**



**33 Finally, on adult success rates for Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeship:**

- Adults achieve a higher overall success rate than young people on Apprenticeship, but a lower rate on Advanced Apprenticeship.
- Overall, females' success rates are slightly higher than males.'
- White success rates are slightly higher than BME:<sup>27</sup>
  - The performance gap is wider for males.
  - It is more marked in Advanced Apprenticeship.
- Learners without disabilities have higher success rates:<sup>28</sup>
  - BME learners with disabilities do better than white disabled learners.
  - Learners with disabilities do better on Advanced Apprenticeship than Apprenticeship.

<sup>27</sup> Please note that, as these success rates are based on small numbers of BME leavers (481 on Apprenticeships, 141 on Advanced Apprenticeship), these findings are not conclusive.

<sup>28</sup> Disabled leaver numbers are also low – 489 for Apprenticeship and 175 for Advanced Apprenticeship.

## Conclusion

- 34 This summary of performance highlights the strengths and weaknesses of learning and skills provision across the region. It has brought to light areas where we and our partners need to do more, but it has also revealed real progress on longstanding issues.
- 35 These findings, together with the results in the Regional Strategic Analysis to be found on the LSC website;<sup>29</sup> will be important drivers in our Regional Commissioning Plan, published on the website in December 2007.

<sup>29</sup> <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/NorthWest/NWRegionalStrategicAnalysis2007UpdateV1.pdf>

