

WORKFORCE CAPABILITY TO DELIVER THE DIGITAL ENTITLEMENT

An independent report based on a telephone survey and qualitative case studies into the training needs and skills of the workforce who deliver basic digital skills training in post-18 education and training organisations in England, ahead of the introduction of the new standards and Government entitlement in 2020

BMG Research

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KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The following chapter outlines the key findings and conclusions from research conducted by BMG Research on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) to explore the qualifications, capability and confidence of teachers and trainers of basic digital skills across all further education and training settings, and to identify any training needs gaps.

These findings are based on analysis of secondary data, a survey of 76 provider organisations, and in-depth interviews with staff at 7 Education Services within Local Authorities, 2 FE Colleges, and 2 independent private training providers. All organisations engaged were invited to take part as case studies (including interviews with leads and delivery staff). However, due to availability of staff within the fieldwork period, only Education Services within Local Authorities took part in this way.

Current delivery

Research found that Education Services within Local Authorities have more learners in basic digital skills courses than other provider-types. This was typically because the provider had consciously chosen to develop these courses in order to meet the needs of the local area and address local priorities including reducing isolation, increasing access to services, improving employability skills, and providing support for those receiving Universal Credit.

Providers from local authorities were delivering basic digital skills training across a variety of sites in order to better support community needs and outreach. Courses were mixed regarding whether they were attached to a specific qualification or not – often choosing to focus on specific requirements and needs of the learners while trying to give them a good grounding in digital skills. It was reported by local authorities that most of this was offered at the entry level, particularly for those on ESOL courses.

Staffing in the sector

The research has found that staffing of the delivery of basic digital skills varied, with basic digital skills courses and elements being taught by staff from across a range of subject areas including ICT, preparation for work and life, English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL), and Functional Skills where appropriate.

No concerns were raised regarding the number of staff available or their qualifications to teach against the new standards, and analysis of Staff Individualised Records (SIR) data found that around 5% of FE sector staff within these records were within the preparation for work and life and ICT areas. In the survey for this research more than one-half of respondents say that there are between 1 and 5 employees at their organisation who deliver basic digital skills as their main function, with a further 44% saying that a similar proportion do so as part of their role.

Nearly all providers require their basic digital skills staff to hold a qualification either in subject relevance or teaching. 29% of providers require their basic digital skills workforce to hold an IT/ICT qualification to teach at entry level, with 37% asking for this to deliver lessons at essential level. Around a quarter of respondents say that their organisations

require teaching staff to hold a teaching qualification to deliver basic digital skills at entry level (24%) and level 1 (25%).

Most providers report that they have a strong basis of staff skills to deliver the standards and that the basic requirement will be for refinement of current practice rather than wholesale revision. They also report a strong commitment and extensive existing practice in respect of maintaining and developing the skills of their teaching staff,

Where concerns were raised about the workforce's capability to deliver the new basic digital skills standards, these more frequently related to specific skill areas for development and wider concerns about delivering the entitlement. These are discussed later in this chapter.

Awareness and planning for the new standards

Awareness of the new national standards for essential digital skills (which at the time of survey had been published in draft form for consultation) was mixed, and as such responses and planning for this were also mixed.

Around three-fifths of providers (62%) are aware of the new draft national standards for basic digital skills. General FE Colleges are significantly less likely to be aware of the new standards (39%); whilst 87% of local authorities were.

Local authority providers interviewed in-depth that were aware of the new standards had in several cases started making plans as to how they would respond to these. Most believed that the introduction of the entitlement would lead to an increased number of learners and support required. As such, they were considering, and in some cases had already: restructured their course offers to address this, for example by further examining their community outreach and availability of courses; purchased equipment needed to support delivery; and reviewed and updated their curriculum content to ensure this matched the standards.

Where local authority providers were not aware or less aware of the new standards, they remained generally confident that they would be able to respond accordingly due to the quality of their staff and their existing qualifications and experience. This is discussed further in the following section.

Core staff confidence in ability to deliver against the new standards

Broadly, both managerial and delivery staff who specialised in ICT or preparation for work and life were confident in their ability to either deliver against the new standards, or be in a position to by the time qualifications based on the new standards were introduced. Those interviewed in-depth reported that this was mostly due to their experience delivering such courses, their qualifications and skills levels, and their flexibility in responding to learner need.

Delivery and managerial staff reported a small number of areas in the new standards where they felt they may particularly want training and development support; specifically:

- Identifying and solving technical problems: some staff reported that they often doubted their own skills in this area, and as such were not confident at present that they could teach these.

- Creating and editing digital media: in particular some staff felt less confident in editing videos.
- Being safe and responsible online: while broadly staff felt they could teach this, they did feel it was important to receive frequent CPD and updates to their knowledge so they remained up to date on likely concerns and threats.

Specific areas where training would be desired were noted as use of cloud-based applications, editing digital media, video downloading, and video-conferencing. However, it was observed by some that the frequency of changes to technology and the wider digital context could mean training becomes outdated relatively quickly, so regular updates and refreshers would be beneficial.

In addition, staff and delivery leads raised concerns about their ability to deliver some elements of transacting and communicating; however, this related more to the tools available to them to teach this, as ‘real life’ transactional and communication situations could not always be replicated. As such, they felt further materials and simulation tools needed to be developed to help teach this effectively.

Wider staff confidence in ability to deliver against the new standards

It is important to note that there was some variance in delivery staff confidence where basic digital skills were not their main subject; which was not always shared or reflected by delivery leads. This was particularly the case for those who taught basic digital skills as part of ESOL courses. In this instance, delivery staff often felt it would be beneficial for them to undertake more detailed training to be able to deliver the new standards. They particularly felt this would be beneficial in the more technical elements so they could be confident in the support they provide, recognising this was not their primary specialism, and the speed with which things can change.

Training and development support

In terms of training and development, most providers offered this primarily in-house through staff meetings, events, and specific training. For the most part, staff were positive about these opportunities, and many noted they saw keeping their knowledge up to date as key to their role.

In addition, a high proportion of providers (over 70%) said that they would also provide support for staff who need it through external training and relevant qualifications, where this was more appropriate.

However, in-depth interviews found that delivery leads were keen to understand more about the qualifications that may be available for the standards so that they could ensure their curricula and training plans were appropriate for these, before making firm decisions about training and staffing levels needed.

In-depth interviews also identified a preference for a combination approach to training, with resources and information being available online which staff could draw on for designing support, but that could be adapted and used for face-to-face training with staff. Some also expressed a preference for more face-to-face training and events to be held.

Wider concerns and support for delivering the standards

Throughout the research, providers (including managerial and delivery staff) often raised

concerns they held about delivering the new digital entitlement, which, while not directly related to staff skills to teach the standards, they felt also impacted on their ability to deliver this. In particular the following key issues were raised:

- Clarification about curriculum and qualification content: providers wanted to better understand what qualifications might be offered to support the entitlement so they could better determine what their curricula would include, and what training requirements their staff may have.
- Developing consistent approaches to assessment: both delivery and managerial staff raised concerns about ensuring there was a standardised approach to assessing learners on entry, to ensure they received the support they need.
- Wider resources and troubleshooting: where staff were delivering in a range of locations they wanted to be confident they had the skills to address any technical issues that arose such as issues with laptops or WiFi.
- Ensuring development and access to appropriate teaching tools: as noted previously, in some contexts delivery content may be difficult to teach practically (in particular transactional and communication modules); as such tools need to be developed to help tutors simulate this.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This report provides the findings from research conducted by BMG Research on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) to explore the qualifications, capability and confidence of teachers and trainers of basic digital skills across all further education and training settings, and to identify any training needs gaps.

Policy background

To help tackle digital exclusion through skills, in January 2018 the Government announced the introduction of full funding for adults with no or low digital skills to take new improved digital qualifications from 2020, similar to the legal entitlements that are currently in place for English and Maths. The entitlement will be funded through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) and will give adults the opportunity to undertake improved digital courses based on new national standards setting out the digital skills people need to get on in life and work.

The Department for Education published new draft basic digital skills standards in October 2018 to reflect advancements in digital technology and its application in life and work. Following consultation, the Department for Education published the new national standards for essential digital skills in April 2019.¹

The new standards include new topics such as being safe and responsible online and transacting online, and reflect changes in how society communicates online and cloud computing.

The draft standards set out the digital skills needed for work and life across two skills levels:

- *entry* – for adults with no or little prior experience of using digital devices or the internet.
- *level 1* – for adults with some experience of using digital devices and the internet but who lack confidence.

There are five skills areas that make up the new standards. These are:

1) Using devices and handling information

This includes: knowing what is meant by hardware, software, operating systems and applications, applying system settings, navigating online content using hyperlinks, menus and other navigation elements to locate required information; organising information using folders, files and remote storage, and identifying and solving technical problems using tutorials and FAQs.

2) Creating and editing

This includes using a range of applications to enter, edit, format, layout and save information (including text, tables, graphics, charts or other digital content): saving and editing images, sound and video; and processing and charting numeric data.

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-essential-digital-skills

3) Communicating

This refers to skills such as using contacts, sending and receiving information, participating in video calls; as well as managing and understanding personal digital footprints.

4) Transacting

This includes completing and submitting online forms, using online services and buying items or services securely online.

5) Being safe and responsible online

This includes being aware of online threats and risks, protecting personal information and privacy, reporting concerns with online content, and learning about physical and psychological health risks when using devices and the internet.

Purpose of the study

The ETF commissioned BMG Research to undertake a programme of research to determine the capability of the Further Education (FE) workforce in England to deliver essential digital skills training to adults, based on the new national standards, as part of the upcoming entitlement.

This research aims to benchmark the skills of tutors against the new standards and understand the barriers they anticipate to delivering against these. It also considers institutions' plans to deliver against the new standards before moving on to analyse the training and support needs of staff ahead of the introduction of the new entitlement.

This research will be used to help the ETF to inform decisions around planning of training and development for staff to support the teaching of the new essential digital skills courses. It will ensure that:

- DfE and ETF have a clear understanding of the current subject knowledge, confidence and CPD needs of teachers and trainers of basic digital skills courses.
- DfE and ETF have insight on the skills and knowledge in the new standards that practitioners may be less confident in or have less subject knowledge in.
- DfE and ETF are able to plan a programme of activity that will support the development of skills and knowledge for teachers and trainers of basic digital skills courses.

Scope of the research

It is important to note that for this research, the following are out of scope:

- Establishing whether teachers or tutors of all subjects are able to use education technology.
- The delivery of technical/professional ICT skills is also out of scope. The study concentrates on basic digital skills for adults.

In addition, it should be noted that the focus is teachers/tutors who teach 19+ year olds (particularly 25+) rather than those aged 16-18.

Methodology

The method comprises the following elements:

A review of the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and the Staff Individualised Records (SIR) datasets

BMG undertook a review of existing datasets relating to the skills levels and training requirements of staff in the FE sector.

The TNA was carried out by BMG Research in 2018 and provides a comprehensive and systematic picture of gaps in the skills of that workforce, and of the training needs that such gaps implied.

The SIR staff workforce data collection is a voluntary submission dataset which collects data about all staff working in publicly funded FE provision, including FE Colleges, Sixth Form Colleges, independent training providers, local authorities, third sector, providers, and others.

Whilst the TNA and SIR datasets do not focus on ICT skills specifically, these are contemplated in terms of training needs in the TNA and in terms of staff prevalence, CPD, and qualifications in the SIR. The 'digital skills' theme was examined in both sets of data in order to identify the qualifications held by basic digital skills staff and their training needs.

A quantitative telephone survey of 76 FE institutions

In order to understand the likely scale of skills gaps and training required, a telephone survey was undertaken with providers.

Respondents were drawn from lists of FE Colleges, ITPs, and local authorities/third sector providers to ensure analysis could be undertaken based on provider type, but should not be considered a representative sample of the sector. Interviews lasted 20-25 minutes and a total of 76 interviews were completed.

We talked to individuals with overall responsibility for determining the resources needed for delivering basic digital skills for learners. The survey explored awareness of the new standards, staff numbers and qualification levels, skills gaps and training needs against the draft standards, and plans and preferences for training.

Deep-dive case studies and interviews with FE institutions

The quantitative survey was used to select organisations to take part in in-depth case studies to further explore emerging issues and skills needs. Survey respondents were grouped by level of skills gaps for teaching against the standards reported: those who reported no skills gaps in the telephone survey, those who reported 1-2 skills gaps and those who reported 3 or more gaps in their workforce.

Case studies involved face-to-face visits to the selected organisations to talk to approximately five individuals within each. The case studies consisted of a one-to-one interview or paired discussion with managers in charge of planning the delivery of basic digital skills courses, as well as a group discussion or one-to-one in-depth interviews with teaching staff. However, to maximise participation and account for the fact that staff at some organisations are geographically spread, some of the case studies were completed over the phone via in-depth interviews or group discussions with one or more respondents. Conference calling was used to gather the views of groups of respondents.

A total of 7 local authority adult learning services, were engaged in this way. Delivery

leads were also interviewed in 2 independent training providers, and 2 FE colleges.

This report

Following this introduction, the report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides a review of the existing SIR and TNA data;
- Chapter 3 details the findings from the telephone survey and in-depth interviews with providers; and
- Chapter 4 provides the provider case studies developed following organisational visits.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF EXISTING DATA

As context this chapter provides a summary of findings from a review of two existing secondary data sets, the Staff Individualised Record (SIR) and a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) of the FE sector workforce.

Staff Individualised Record

The SIR is an annual workforce dataset covering learning providers across the FE and Training sector. All providers funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agency are requested to submit data. However, this is not mandatory so take-up and completion is mixed, with 198 providers supplying data for SIR 25 (the 2016-17 period), these providers accounting for 72,104 staff in the sector. Responses were received from 91 General FE colleges, 47 independent training providers, 25 local authority training providers, and 35 'other' types of organisation.

Data from SIR 25 for those staff identified as working in the ICT and preparation for work and life areas was made available to BMG by the ETF for analysis.

SIR questions are not, of course, primarily or particularly focussed on digital skills issues, there is a high level of non-response in some question areas, and the balance of responses is heavily weighted to FE colleges. Thus, analysis of SIR data has limited capacity to inform this study. However, some findings have a contextual relevance:

- A total of 3,256 of the members of staff in the SIR worked in the areas of ICT and preparation for work and life as their main subject (5% of the total of SIR records). Of these people, 2,442 (75%) were lecturers and tutors and 80 (3%) were departmental or curriculum managers.
- Around a third (31% or 799 people) of these 2,442 delivery staff worked in ICT and two-thirds (69% or 1,743 people) worked in preparation for work and life as their main subject.
- Where CPD time was available (34% or 838 cases) delivery staff reported an average of 34 hours CPD per year.
- In terms of qualifications of relevance to the main subject taught, the highest qualifications held by the 2,422 delivery staff were: 2% QCF Level 2; 5% QCF Level 3; 4% QCF Level 4; 6% QCF Level 5; 16% QCF Level 6; and 7% QCF Level 7+ (42% did not provide a response to this question).

Training Needs Analysis

A further set of data for analysis derives from the TNA undertaken by ETF in 2018. The study consisted of three elements: (1) a telephone survey of 481 learning providers, including FE and Sixth Form Colleges, Local Authorities, Independent Training Providers, and charitable or voluntary organisations; (2) an online survey of 2,366 governors, senior managers, teaching, and teaching-related staff in the FE sector; and (3) 50 in-depth telephone discussions with senior representatives of FE sector organisations.

The analysis provided baseline data which allowed identification of the future training which is needed to raise teachers' and trainers' skills in particular areas and to particular levels. Although the TNA did not focus on the teaching of basic digital skills, some

insights on this can be gleaned from the perspectives of individuals and institutions.

The TNA showed that 60% of **FE sector organisations** had sought to enhance staff digital skills through training and development (although it was not specified what element of digital skills this sought to develop – either their own, or their teaching of such skills). This proportion was higher for FE Colleges (76%) than for Local Authority training units (58%) and for Independent Training Providers (38%), in a context in which these private providers were generally less likely to train staff.

Amongst providers which facilitated training and development to improve the subject/sector knowledge of their staff, 22% said that they would like to improve knowledge of ICT. This proportion was again higher for Local Authorities (34%) and FE Colleges (32%) than for ITPs (13%). Smaller providers (much more likely to be ITPs) with 49 employees or fewer were less likely than larger organisations to report that they would like to improve knowledge of digital skills (13%).

Where providers had offered staff training and development in areas other than those required by Government regulation, ICT was the second most frequent subject (8%) after data protection (10%), although again it should be noted it was not specified what element of ICT skills this sought to develop (own skills or teaching skills).

However, these levels of training do not seem to be sufficient to meet demand. Over half (52%) of providers that have provided training to staff said that ICT training and development will be required in the future (73% of FE Colleges, 58% of LAs, and 26% of ITPs).

Further, first, when providers were asked what type of *training and development they would like to see more of*, ICT was the second most mentioned subject (14%) after leadership training (which topped the list at 17%). Second, 79% of learning providers that recognised a need to improve *teaching skills* identified skills in the use of digital and other new technologies as an area for improvement (88% of FE Colleges, 81% of LAs, and 70% of ITPs). Third, of providers which identified a need to improve the *sector/subject knowledge* of their staff, ICT was one of the most commonly mentioned areas, with 19% of these providers reporting this need (24% of FE colleges, 31% of LAs, and 14% of ITPs).

Looking at the perspectives of **individuals in the FE sector workforce** (excluding those in support functions, such as catering or administrative jobs, which were not addressed by the TNA), as context, 11% of individuals specialised in ICT (11%) and 12% in preparation for life and work.

Around one in four of all individuals (27%) in the FE workforce (as specified above) have undertaken training aimed at enhancing their ability to use digital and other new technologies in a teaching setting in the past year.

However, one in four individuals also think that training to enhance their ability to use digital and other new technologies in a teaching setting would be beneficial (26%), with teachers and tutors significantly more likely (than managerial staff) to say so (36%).

Further, identified by 12% of respondents from a substantial list of possible priorities, new training in digital skills was identified as the second most frequent priority (12%).

Teachers and those in other learner facing roles were more likely to select this priority (17% and 16% respectively). Older individuals were also more likely to consider ICT to be a priority for new training (15% for 55-64 year olds compared with 8% of 25-34 year olds).

Summary points

The SIR suggests that only a small proportion, 5%, of the total FE sector workforce works principally in the ICT or the preparation for work and life areas. This particular statistic underplays the significance of digital skills which, in teaching and training generally as in most other aspects of social and economic life, are ever more widely necessary.

Thus, analysis of the TNA findings is more instructive. These findings show that *training providers*:

- Are acting widely to improve the digital skills in their workforce (60% had done so in the past year)
- But recognise the need to do more – the great majority of providers recognise the need to increase the teaching skills of their staff and, of these, eight out of ten identify the need to increase digital skills

These points are reinforced by the TNA's survey of *individuals* working in the sector which also show a significant level of training activity in respect of digital skills (undertaken by over a quarter of staff, 27%, in the last year alone) but also a significant level of demand for further or wider digital skill training (for example, over a third, 36%, of FE staff in teaching or training roles would welcome this).

CHAPTER 3: PRIMARY RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following chapter provides analysis of the findings from the telephone survey of providers as well as findings from the in-depth interviews with case study organisations. It explores current provision of basic digital skills, current provision of training and development for staff, awareness and plans to deliver against the new standards and barriers to doing so.

Survey sample profile

Telephone survey respondents were spread across England's regions. The table below shows that the North West and London are overrepresented, with 16 respondents in each region.

In terms of type of provider, 31 General FE Colleges and 30 Education Services within Local Authorities took part in the survey. From a statistical perspective, this means that significance testing can be applied to these two types of providers, but not others, because the base sizes for other types of provider are too low.

| | BASE SIZE | % |
|--------------------|-----------|------|
| Region | | |
| North West | 16 | 21% |
| North East | 9 | 12% |
| London | 16 | 21% |
| East of England | 5 | 7% |
| South East | 6 | 8% |
| East Midlands | 5 | 7% |
| Yorkshire & Humber | 3 | 4% |
| West Midlands | 9 | 12% |
| South West | 7 | 9% |
| TOTAL | 76 | 100% |

| | BASE SIZE | % |
|--|-----------|------|
| Region | | |
| General FE college | 31 | 41% |
| Specialist FE college | 3 | 4% |
| Independent private training company | 8 | 11% |
| Education service within a local authority | 30 | 40% |
| Charitable or voluntary training provider | 4 | 5% |
| TOTAL | 76 | 100% |

The majority of respondents receive prime contractor ESFA funding (90%) and around half (53%) expect to receive devolved AEB funding from 2019.

| | BASE SIZE | % |
|--|-----------|-----|
| Type of funding received | | |
| Receive prime contractor with ESFA funding | 68 | 90% |
| Receive sub-contractor with ESFA funding | 16 | 21% |
| Receive funding from another government department | 12 | 16% |
| Expect to receive devolved AEB funding from 2019 | 40 | 53% |
| Receive other public funding | 7 | 9% |
| Do not receive any public funding | 0 | 0% |
| Don't know | 6 | 8% |

Notation

It should be noted that these findings should be considered as indicative for a number of reasons, specifically:

- The survey was relatively small in scale, seeking to ascertain the broad awareness and response to the introduction of the entitlement and standards, the prevalence of anticipated staff skills gaps to deliver the standards and how these might be addressed, and preferences for training activities. The survey also served as an approach to identify and recruit potential case study organisations.
- Engagement from different provider types was mixed, with significantly higher proportions of respondents from colleges (31) and local authorities (30) than ITPs (8). Small numbers of responses were also received from charitable or voluntary sector training providers (4), and other types of provider (3).

- Interviews were conducted with delivery leads, as such they were asked to reflect on the skills of their delivery staff and respond based on their perceptions of these. Further insight and consideration of delivery staff's perception of their own skills to deliver the standards are discussed later in this report.
- Interviews took place between November 2018 and February 2019 following the publication of the draft standards in October 2018.

Results are discussed as representing a difference compared to the total and against sub-groups. A result is considered statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. An upward arrow (↑) indicates that a figure is significant higher versus other groups. A figure coloured in red indicates that a result is significantly lower than average.

The data presented in this section is unweighted.

Qualitative sample profile

For this segment of the qualitative research, 27 individuals from 10 ACL providers took part in discussions as well as 2 from independent private training providers and 2 from FE colleges. The organisations were located in different regions of England while the individual respondents ranged from leaders of divisions with overall responsibility for the digital skills training of learners, through curriculum designers, to tutors involved in day-to-day instruction. As with the quantitative survey, participation from different provider types varied, with ACL providers more likely to engage than other provider types, potentially due to differing levels of awareness and engagement with the draft standards.

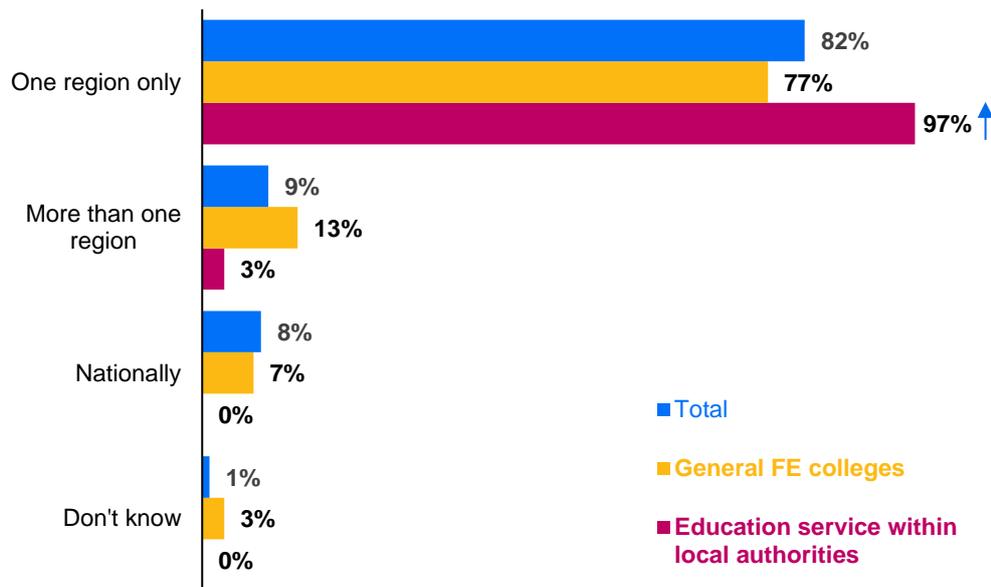
This chapter draws out and summarises some of the main themes which either link or differentiate those organisations in respect of their approach to basic digital skills training and in their corresponding behaviours and attitudes to the development of the skills of their own staff. Responses from these individuals have been used to generate case studies focussed on particular organisations. These are set out in a following chapter.

Findings

Geographical spread of providers

The majority of providers that took part in the telephone survey operate from one region only (82%), with most Education Services within Local Authorities doing so (97%), compared to 77% of FE Colleges. Less than one in ten operate in more than one region (9%) or nationally (8%).

Figure 1: Regions organisations operate from



Q3. Does your organisation operate in one region only, in more than one region, or nationally?

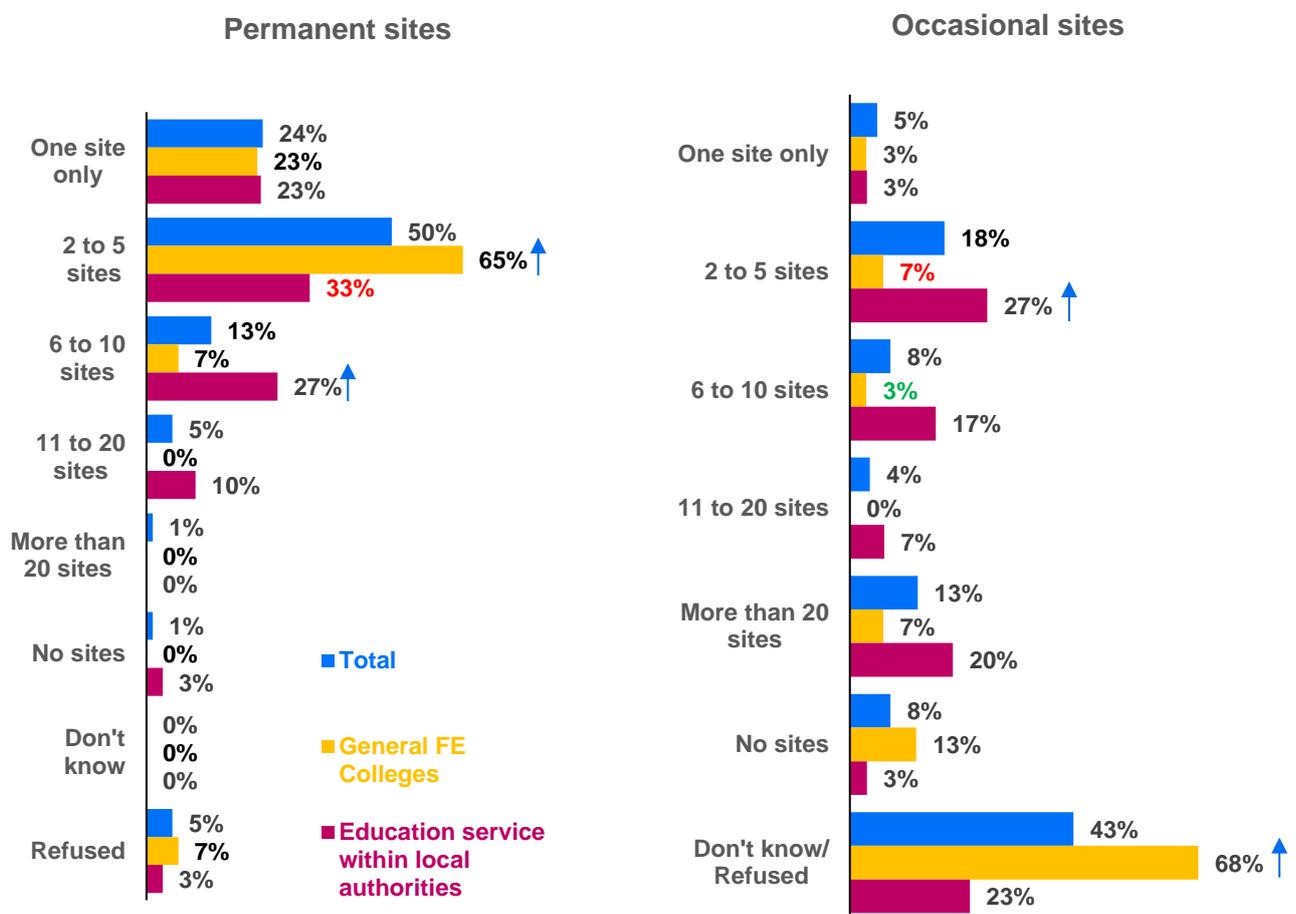
Base: All respondents (76), General FE Colleges (31), Education Services within Local Authorities (30)

*The base sizes for other types of providers are too low to report

Approaching a quarter of providers deliver basic digital skills from one permanent site only (24%) and half do so from between 2 and 5 permanent sites (50%). FE colleges are more likely to deliver from 2 to 5 permanent sites than Education Services within Local Authorities (65% cf. 33%). However, Education Services within Local Authorities are more likely to have between 6 and 10 permanent sites from which they deliver this subject (27% cf. 7% for General FE Colleges).

When it comes to occasional sites, Education Services within Local Authorities are more likely to deliver basic digital skills from between 2 to 5 of these sites (27%), which suggests that this group of providers reaches more geographically spread learners than colleges.

Figure 2: Number of delivery sites by type of organisation



Q6. How many sites does your organisation deliver basic digital skills training from?

Base: All respondents (76), General FE Colleges (31), Education Services within Local Authorities (30)

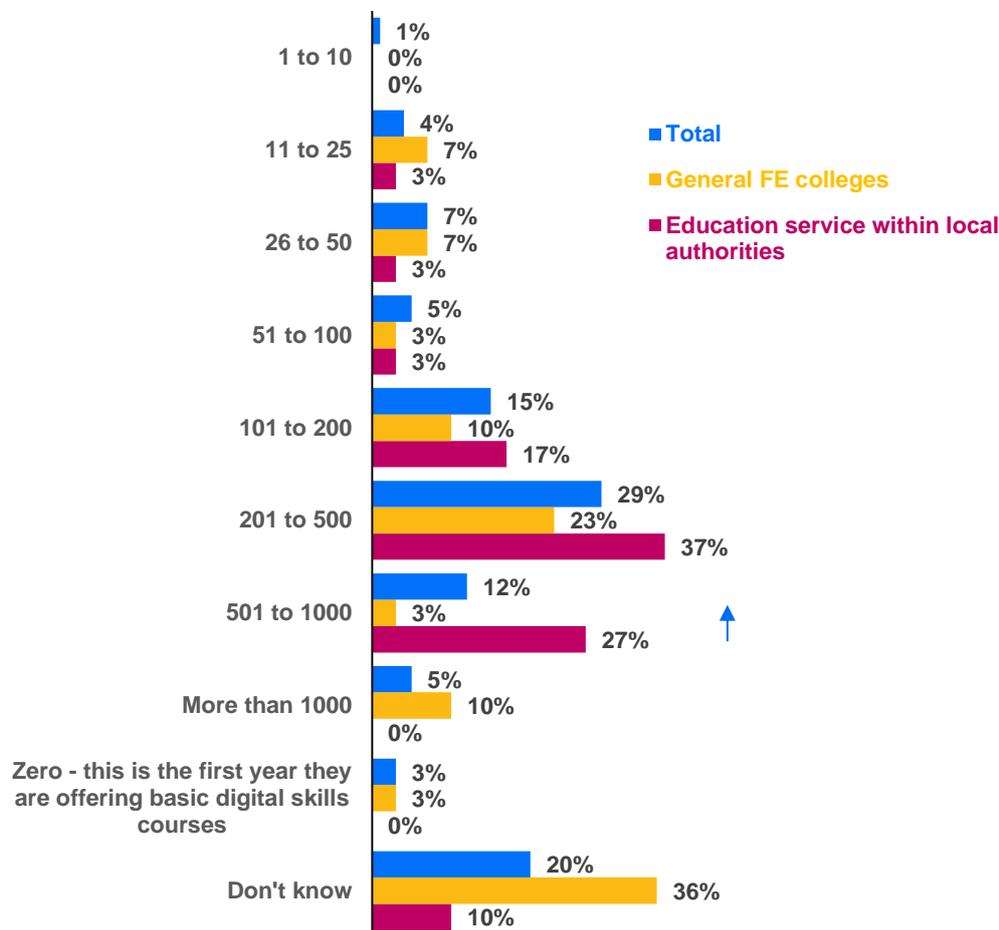
*The base sizes for other types of providers are too low to report

Current provision of basic digital skills

In terms of the number of basic digital skills learners that providers were responsible for in the past year, Figure 3 shows that Education Services within Local Authorities had more learners in this area than other providers. 37% had between 201 and 500 learners, compared to 29% overall. In addition, they are significantly more likely than General FE Colleges to have had between 501 and 1000 learners last year (27% cf. 3% for General FE Colleges).

It should be noted, however, that over a third of respondents who worked at General FE colleges did not know the number of basic digital skills learners that they had in the previous year (36%), which might explain these differences to some extent.

Figure 3: Number of basic digital skills learners that organisations were responsible for in the last academic year



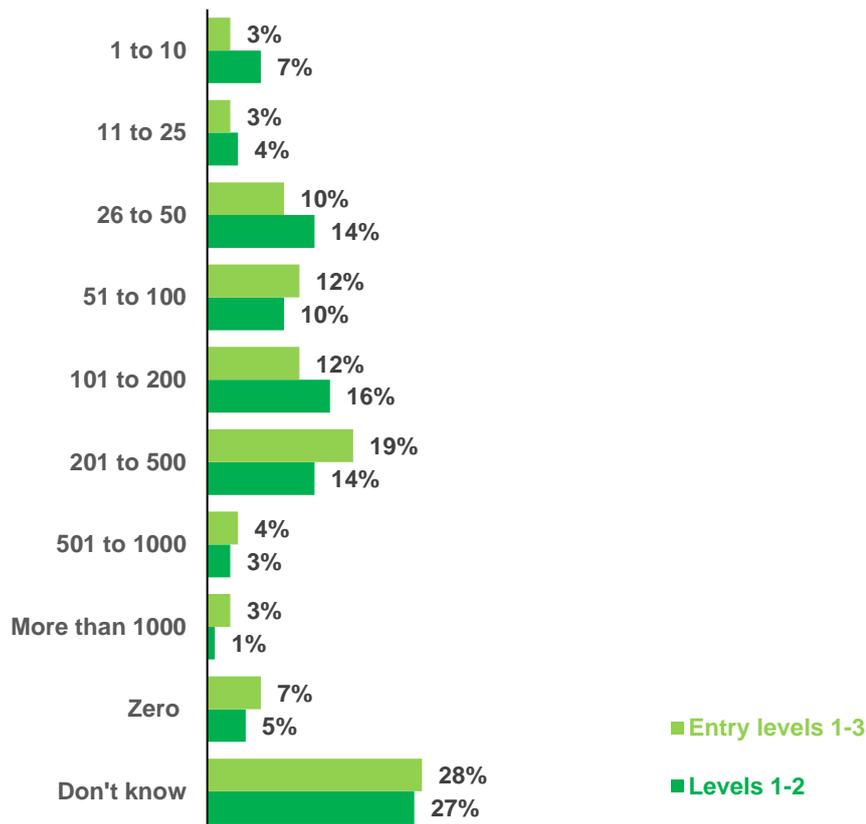
Q4. For how many basic digital skills learners was your organisation responsible in the last academic year?

Base: All respondents (76), General FE Colleges (31), Education Services within Local Authorities (30)

*The base sizes for other types of providers are too low to report

Figure 4 shows that the numbers of learners studying at entry levels 1 to 3 and levels 1-2 in the past academic year were evenly spread, which suggests that none of the levels is more popular than the others among learners. For example, 19% of respondents said that they had between 201 and 500 basic digital skills learners studying entry levels 1-3 qualifications, whereas a similar proportion (14%) said that they had the same number of learners studying at levels 1-2.

Figure 4: Number of basic digital skills learners by level

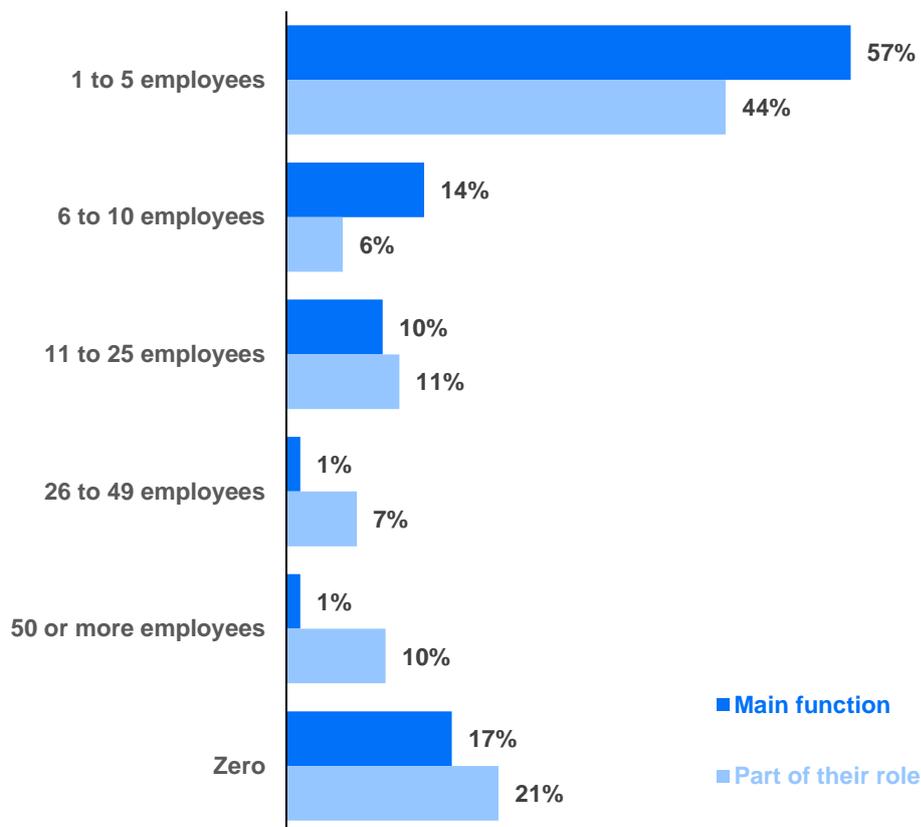


Q5. In total, how many of your basic digital skills learners were studying at the following levels?
Base: All respondents (74)

Figure 5 shows the proportions of employees who deliver basic digital skills as their main function or as part of their role. 57% of respondents say that there are between 1 and 5 employees at their organisation who deliver basic digital skills as their main function, with a further 44% saying that a similar proportion do so as part of their role. In addition:

- Only 14% say that between 6 and 10 staff deliver basic digital skills as their main function.
- Around one in ten have between 11 and 25 staff delivering basic digital skills as their main function (10%) or as part of their role (11%).
- Just 10% organisations have 50 or more employees delivering this subject as part of their role.

Figure 5: Number of employees who deliver basic digital skills training



Q7a. In total, how many staff does your organisation directly employ who deliver basic digital skills training, including yourself, who deliver this as the main function of their role?

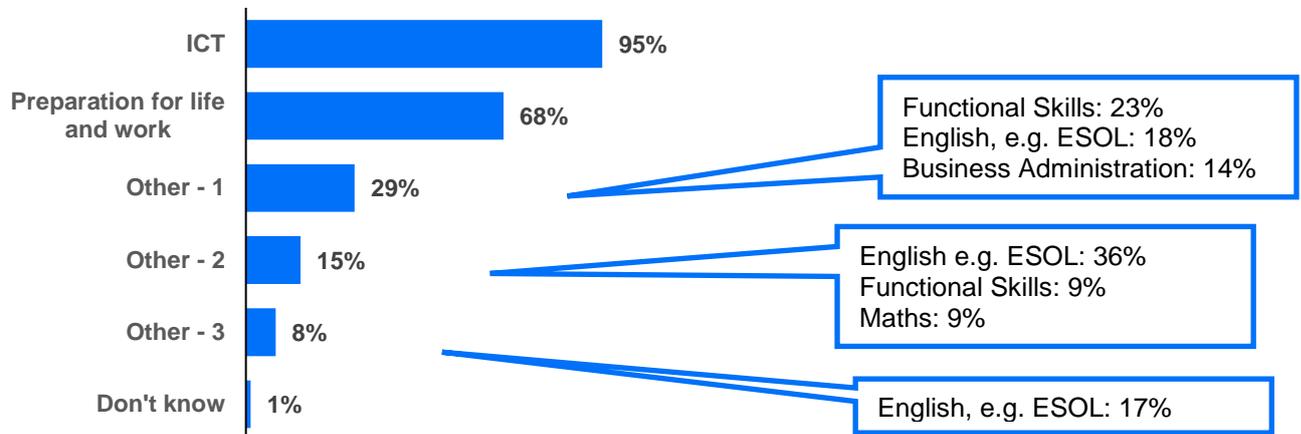
Base: Valid responses (72)

Q7b. In total, how many staff does your organisation directly employ who deliver basic digital skills training, including yourself, who deliver this as part of their role?

Base: Valid responses (70)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most common subject that staff who deliver basic digital skills teach is ICT (95%). Figure 6 also shows that 68% of them also deliver preparation for life and work courses, as well as a number of other subjects including Functional Skills, English and ESOL, Business Administration and Maths.

Figure 6: Subject areas of staff who deliver basic digital skills



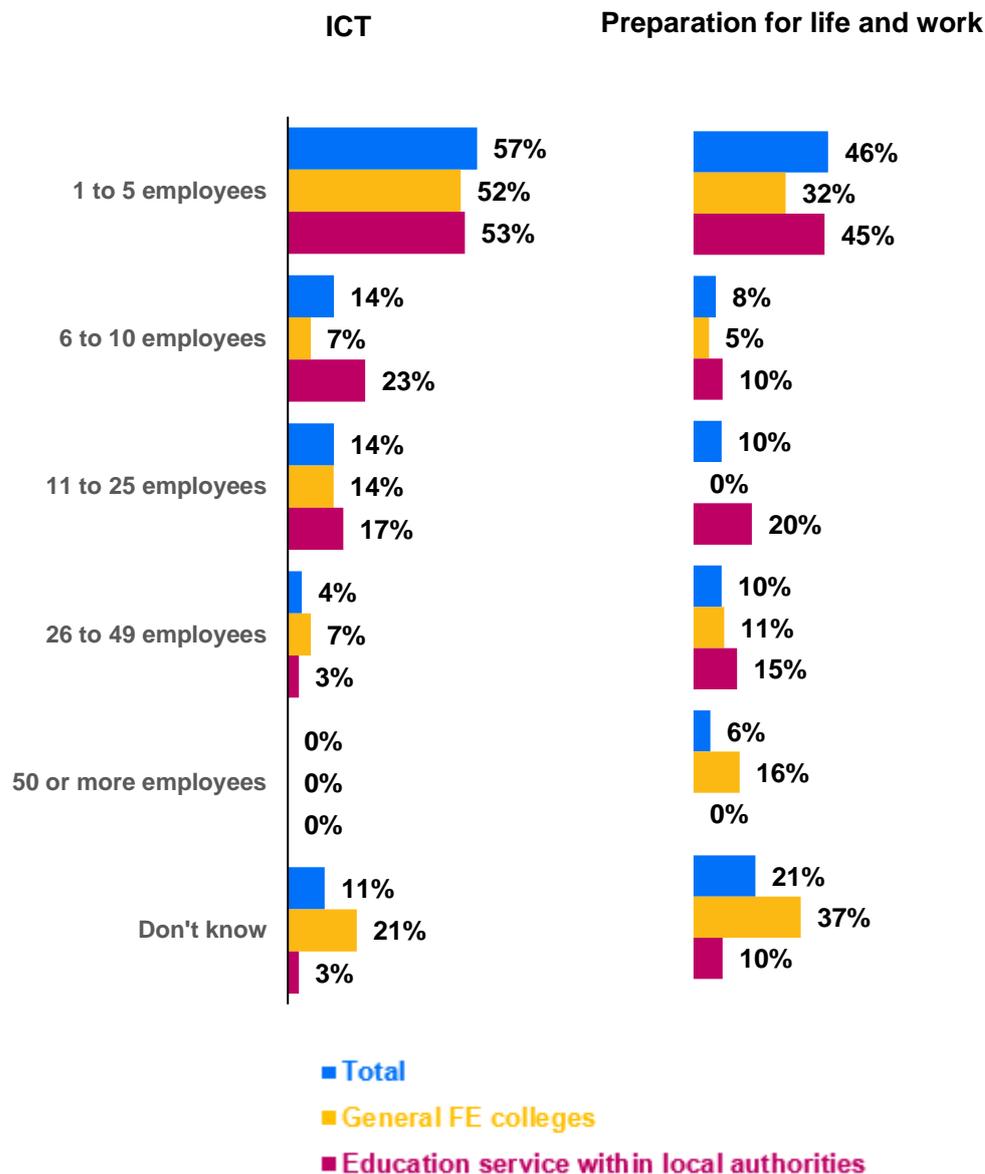
Q8a. In what subject areas do staff who deliver basic digital skills training teach?

Base: All respondents (76)

Figure 7 shows the proportion of staff who teach ICT and preparation for life and work as the main function of their role. Approaching six in ten (57%) respondents state that there are between 1 and 5 employees who mainly teach in ICT, with 46% having a similar number of staff who teach preparation for life and work courses. Only a minority report having six or more employees in their organisation who mainly teach in these areas: 14% say there are between 6 to 10 tutors who deliver mainly ICT and 8% have a similar number of teaching staff for preparation for life and work.

Differences by type of provider are not statistically significant.

Figure 7: Number of basic digital skills staff who mainly teach in ICT & preparation for life and work

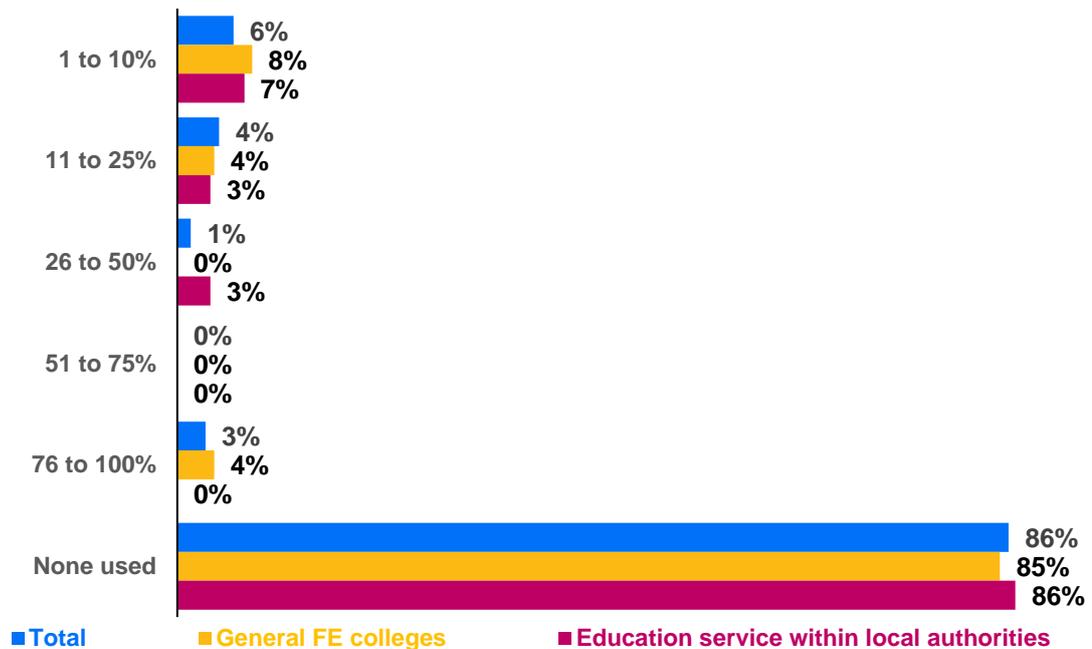


Q8b. Number of basic digital skills staff who mainly teach in ICT or Preparation for life and work
 Base: Providers that have staff who deliver basic digital skills training and teach in ICT (72) and providers that have staff who deliver basic digital skills training and teach in preparation for life and work (52)

The majority of providers who took part in the telephone survey do not contract self-employed individuals or sub-contractors to deliver basic digital skills training (86%).

Just 6% employ 1 to 10 per cent of their basic digital skills tutors in this basis, and only a very small minority (3%) say that 76 to 100% of their teaching staff in this subject is contracted this way.

Figure 8: Percentage of basic digital skills provision delivered by self-employed or sub-contractors



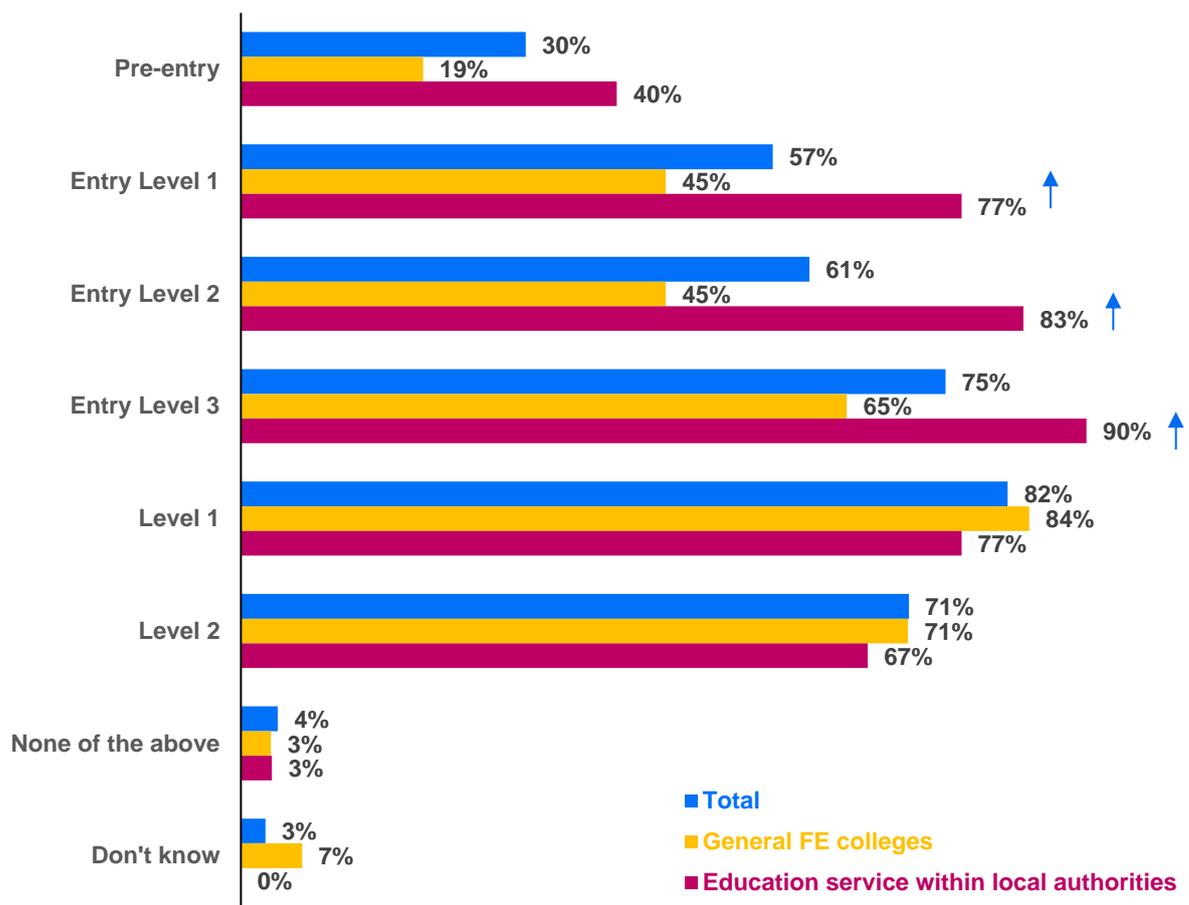
QX. Does your organisation contract any self-employed individuals or sub-contractors who deliver basic digital skills training? What % of your basic digital skills provision is offered in this way?

Base: Valid responses (69)

Figure 9 shows the levels of digital skills courses and qualifications that organisations offer. Although most organisations offer entry level courses – with 57% offering entry level 1, 61% offering entry level 2 and 75% offering entry level –, it seems that Education Services within Local Authorities are significantly more likely than General FE Colleges to offer courses and qualifications at entry levels. In addition, even though less than a third offer pre-entry courses (30%), Education Services within Local Authorities are also more likely to offer this level (40%), compared to colleges (19%). This might be due to the fact that Local Authorities frequently discuss specifically offering digital skill courses to those who have been out of work for extended periods of time or those making applications for Universal Credit for the first time (using the online system), and older generations who have no prior experience of using computers or tablets, and hence the need to offer more introductory courses.

Most providers also offer level 1 (82%) and level 2 (71%) lessons. However, there are no significant differences by type of providers for these levels.

Figure 9: Levels of digital skills courses and qualifications offered by type of organisation



QXX. Which of the following levels of digital skills courses and qualifications does your organisation offer?

Base: All respondents (76)

*The base sizes for other types of providers are too low to report

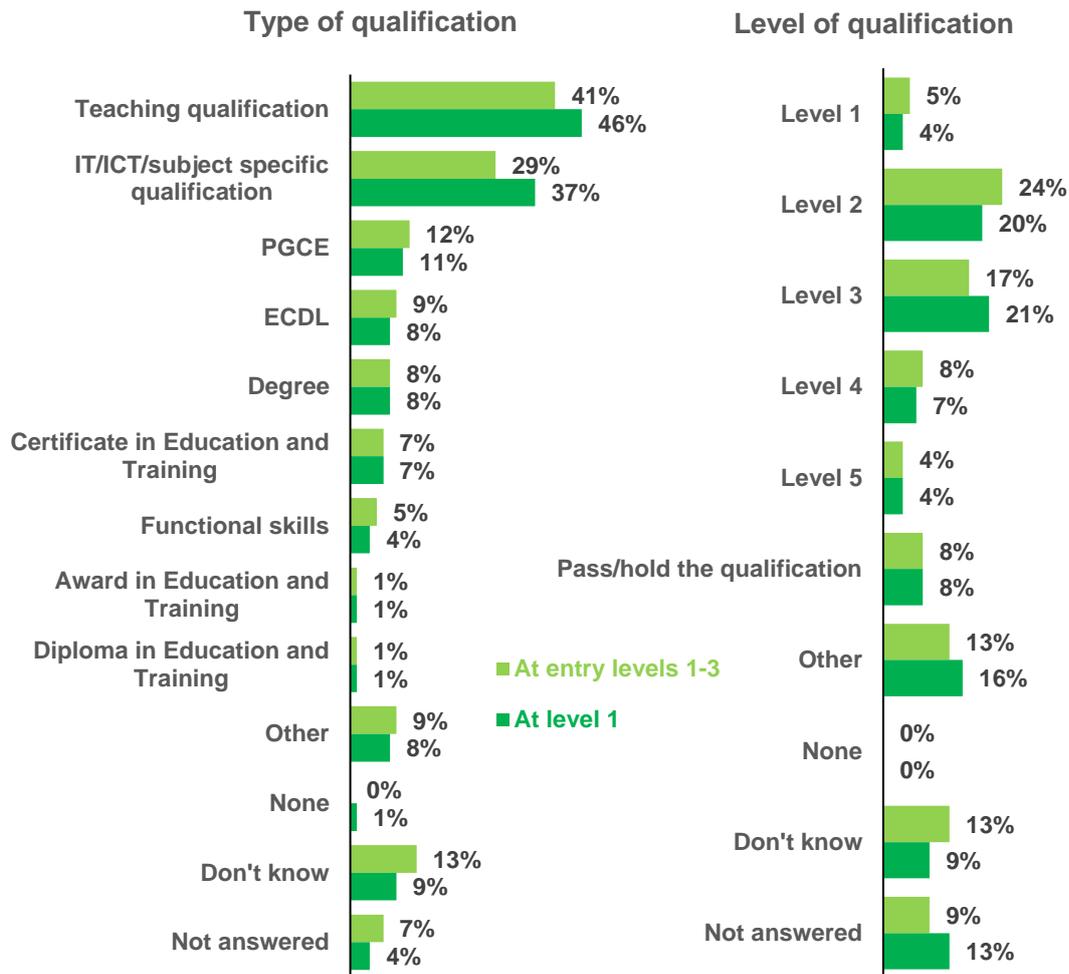
Two further analyses (Figures 10 and 11), consider, respectively, the minimum qualification of subject relevance and teaching/learning qualification that FE institutions require for staff who deliver basic digital skills. The charts show the types of qualifications and the levels needed for teaching at entry levels 1-3 and level 1.

When it comes to subject relevance, 29% of providers require their basic digital skills workforce to hold an IT/ICT qualification to teach at entry level, with 37% asking for this to deliver lessons at level 1. Only 8% of providers require staff to have a degree in a relevant subject. In terms of levels, the most common requirement is level 2, with 24% asking for this to deliver at entry levels 1-3 and 20% doing so for level 1. Level 3 is the second most common requirement for subject relevant qualifications, with 17% saying that they ask for this to deliver at entry levels 1-3 and 21% saying so for level 1.

When asked about teaching and/or learning support qualifications, around a quarter of respondents say that their organisations require teaching staff to hold a teaching qualification to deliver basic digital skills at entry level (24%) and level 1 and 2 (25%). However, it should be noted that around four in ten mention teaching qualifications at the question regarding subject relevant qualifications (41% for teaching at entry level and 46% for teaching at level 1).

Apart from this unspecified requirement to hold a teaching qualification (which may include the CertEd for some respondents), three specific teaching qualifications topped the list for this category. These are: the Award in Education and Training (previously PTLLS) qualification (with 21% saying that this is needed to teach at entry levels 1-3 and 16% saying so for level 1), PGCE or Postgraduate Certificate in Education (with approaching two in ten institutions, 17%, requiring this to teach at entry level and levels 1 and 2), and the Certificate in Education and Training (17% say it is a requirement for delivering courses at entry levels 1-3 and 18% say so for level 1).

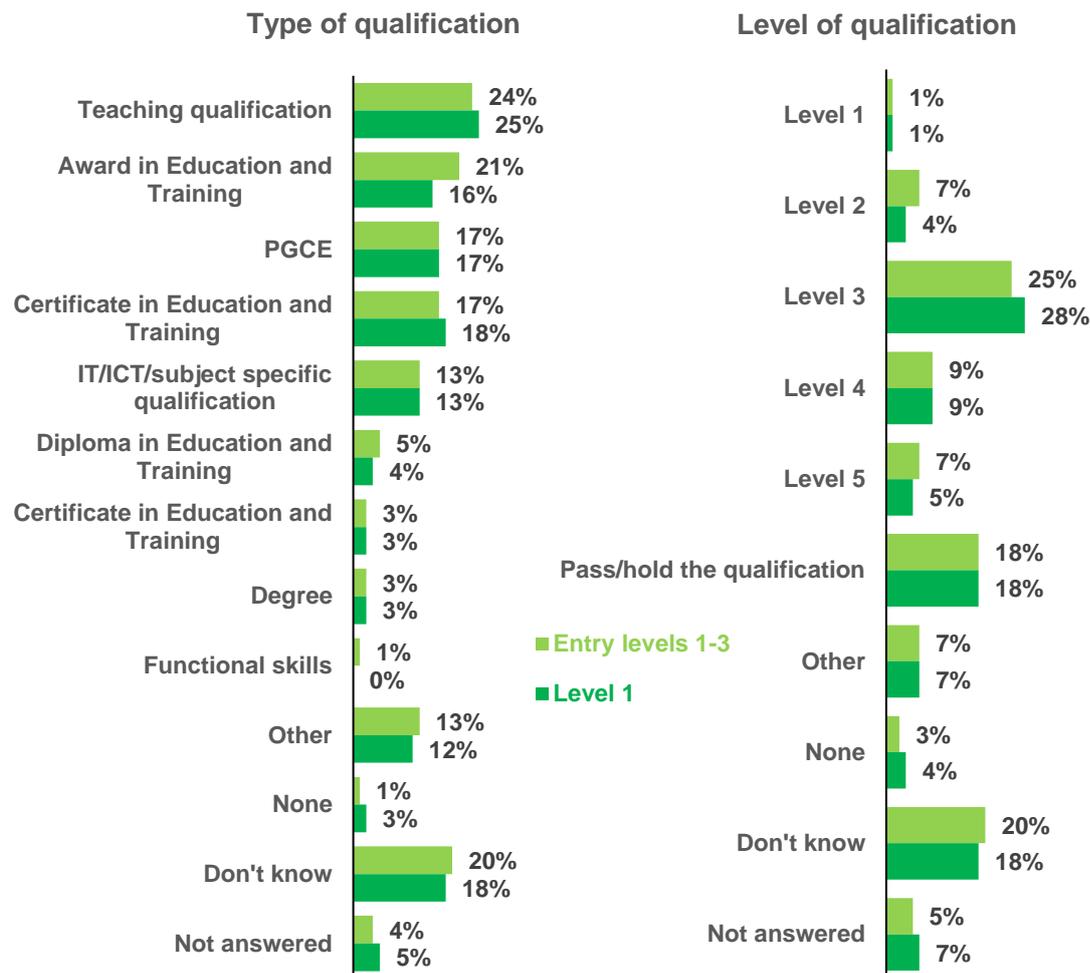
Figure 10: Minimum qualification of subject relevance required for staff delivering basic digital skills



Q9a. What is the minimum qualification of subject relevance you require staff delivering basic digital skills training to hold for teaching entry Levels 1-3?

Q9b. What is the minimum qualification of subject relevance you require staff delivering basic digital skills training to hold for teaching Level 1? Base: All respondents (76)

Figure 11: Minimum teaching and/or learning support qualification required for staff delivering basic digital skills



Q10a. What is the minimum teaching and/or learning support qualification you require staff delivering basic digital skills training to hold for teaching entry Levels 1-3?

Q10b. What is the minimum teaching and/or learning support qualification you require staff delivering basic digital skills training to hold for teaching Level 1?

Base: All respondents (76)

Current approaches to delivering digital skills training to learners

In-depth interviews further explored and identified differences in emphasis and some variety in what providers offered. However, some clear common factors which impact in various ways on the providers' demand for teachers and teaching skills sets, were apparent.

Most providers identified at least stable and, more frequently, increasing demand from learners for their provision of digital skills training. This increases the need to raise capacity both in the recruitment of teachers, for sessional teachers to increase their hours, and for sub-contracting of delivery.

There were various drivers of demand, for example, marketing by the organisation and

the increasing prevalence of use of social media, online banking, and online shopping. Further demand was created by the expansion of Universal Credit (which is facilitated by recipients' ability to access the system online) and the related pressure on unemployed people, particularly the long-term unemployed, to find work – which is frequently dependent on the possession of at least basic digital skills.

These drivers influenced the characteristics of learners seeking digital skills training. Thus, many new learners were older people, including pensioners, seeking the skills to bank or shop online or to communicate digitally with friends or relatives; people with varied learning, mental, or physical disabilities; or jobseekers who had been out of the labour market for considerable periods. Providers generally stressed their need to be clearly aware of, and responsive to, these varied community and economic needs and to assess their provision in the light of these needs.

What I've discovered is largely a lot of my learners come in and they're retirees, grandparent[s], and their kids have come and they've given them a shiny new mobile phone and said, 'there you go, keep in touch with this' and then walked off. Practitioner, Education Service within a Local Authority

A lot more learners now are focused on getting jobs at the end of it, so they want their IT skills. We used to have lots of retired people, whereas now you find a lot of people who really are there because they need the qualifications. Practitioner, Education Service within a Local Authority

The characteristics of these learners helped to shape the nature of provision. Some key features, common across providers, included:

- The need to provide learning support to learners with particular disadvantages (such as being uncomfortable with traditional classroom settings and teaching styles) or disabilities
- The need to operate from 'outreach' facilities positioned in particular communities in order to engage 'hard to reach' groups and individuals
- The need to provide a combination of: careful initial assessment to judge each individual's prior knowledge and starting capabilities; information, advice, and guidance based on those assessments; and provision tailored wherever possible to individual needs and capabilities
- The need in all cases to offer courses at pre-entry and entry levels, with higher level courses being provided as frequently to those who progressed from those basic levels as to learners who already possessed significant digital skills and could go directly to level 3 or higher-level courses

As demand shaped the nature of required provision, so the required provision shaped the skills needed by teaching staff. Some particular aspects of this were:

- The requirement to engage learners who were not accustomed to conventional pedagogy required skills to design and deliver course material which both had very clear 'real life' relevance and was supported by engaging materials and teaching styles, and required practitioners able to adjust to such styles

- The frequency of the need for learning support required empathetic teachers who could blend their own digital skills expertise with ‘people’ skills to engage with learners’ disadvantages and disabilities
- The need for individually-tailored provision required good assessment capabilities and the skills to design internal course materials (albeit consistent with awarding bodies’ demands) rather than depend solely on the use of off-the-shelf packages
- The need for a spread of skills and knowledge in order to deliver courses with varied content and at varied levels, from formal ‘business’ courses covering Excel, Windows, and financial spreadsheets, to courses for beginners covering online shopping or banking (with some emphasis on online security) and use of Facebook, Instagram, or creative media packages

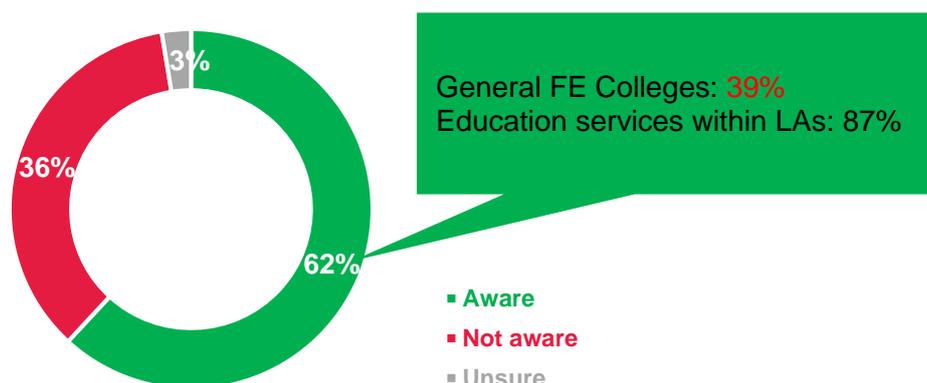
Awareness and plans to deliver against the new essential digital skills standards

As outlined previously, in line with the Government’s commitment to fully fund adults with no or low digital skills to take new improved digital qualifications from 2020, the Department for Education has published new national standards for essential digital skills. The draft standards were in the public domain from October 2018 prior to the final national standards for essential digital skills being published in April 2019.

Respondents were asked whether they are aware of the new draft national standards. Around three-fifths (62%) said that they were aware of the new draft national standards for essential digital skills. Compared to the total, General FE Colleges were significantly less likely to be aware of the new standards (39%).

It should also be noted that, overall, around one in three (36%) said that they were not aware of these.

Figure 12: Awareness of draft national basic digital skills standards published in October 2018 at time of survey (conducted between November 2018 and February 2019)



Q11a. In consultation with the key stakeholders, the Department for Education has developed new national standards for the digital skills needed for work and life. These were published for consultation in October 2018. Are you aware of these Standards?

Base: All respondents (76)

A further question was asked to those who were aware of the draft standards to ascertain how they planned to deliver against them.

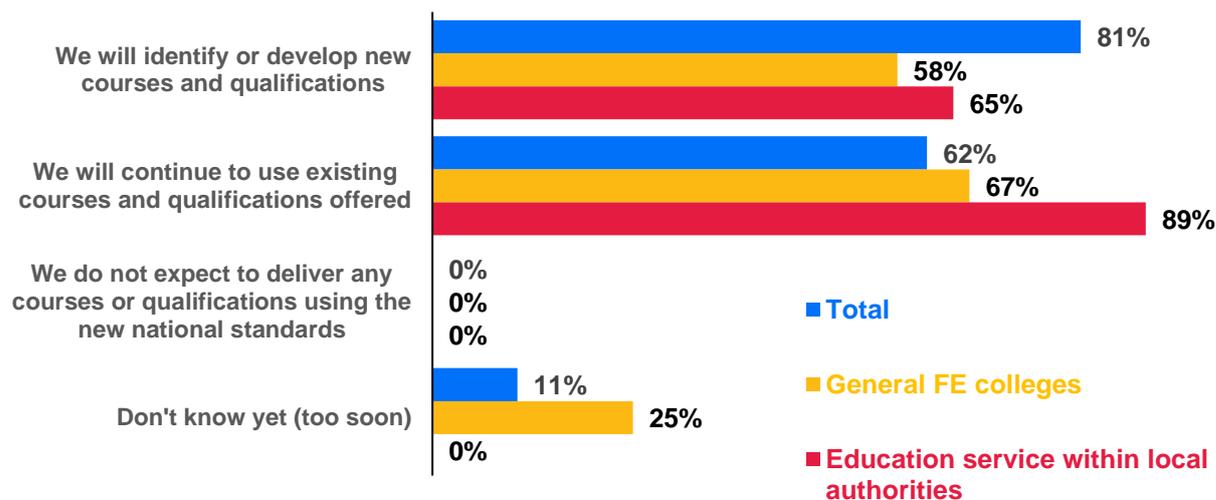
Around four-fifths (81%) said that they would identify and develop new courses and qualifications, whilst 62% also planned to continue using existing courses and qualifications offered (62%).

Nonetheless, around one in ten respondents (11%) said that they did not know yet how they would deliver against the new standards.

Differences by type of provider are not significant. However, it is notable that Education services within Local Authorities were more inclined to say that they would continue to use existing courses and qualifications (89% cf. 67% for General FE Colleges).

Interestingly, although a quarter of General FE Colleges did not know yet how they planned to deliver against the new standards (25%), none of the Education services within Local Authorities said don't know (0%), suggesting that this type of provider had planned to deliver against the new standards in greater detail.

Figure 13: Plans to deliver against the new standards for basic digital skills



Q11b. In what ways do you intend to deliver against these new national standards?

Base: All aware of new standards (47), General FE Colleges (12), Education services within Local Authorities (26)

Providers interviewed in-depth strongly welcomed the new entitlement and standards. Their introduction was variously described: ‘exciting’, ‘useful’, ‘fun’, ‘will freshen things up’, ‘will get away from current monotonous and outdated content’.

There was a general expectation that learners will benefit from the change and will be working to a more relevant modern curriculum.

Further factors working to generate provider enthusiasm were, first, that learner numbers

would increase. Second, there was a general perspective that many of the requirements of the new standards were already met by the organisation and that the adjustments required would be of ‘tweaking’, re-focussing’ or ‘refining’ existing teaching and delivery rather than requiring a complete re-build of provision.

The majority of the resources that we use we create ourselves, so based on the standards, and we have a look at what evidence maps to those standards, but we always avoid teaching to a qualification, because if a person doesn’t understand why they’re doing it, it’s just like rote learning... Seeing how it fits in and creating scenarios and real life situations, and there’s not really much out there that supports that. Manager, Education Service within a Local Authority

It would be good if there were some, sort of, sector-wide digital skills materials that were available from the government, for example, so everyone was teaching the same sort of thing. That would be quite helpful or could be adapted. So, just, sort of, guidance on basic digital skills that tutors can learn, but also could be given to our learners. Delivery lead, ITP

It would be a case of refreshing the, sort of, courses, delivery models that we’ve run previously really, and just changing the focus onto those aspects. Delivery lead, FE College

A third supporting factor was that the new provision would be ‘fundable’ by government. In this respect, reform of existing basic digital skills qualifications (believed also to be of benefit to, and likely to motivate, learners) was also widely welcomed – though one provider remarked that teaching of reformed qualifications lead to some increase in the formality and length of courses, this being contrasted with a present position in which some provision was ‘*more of a social activity for some learners*’.

Implications of the new environment for workforce skills

Corresponding to the generally positive views on the new entitlement and standards, most providers were, on the whole, confident that these were deliverable. This confidence was based, variously, on:

- A perception that skill ‘top-ups’ rather than extensive retraining would be required
- Recognition of the possession already of a wide range of skills, often based on a stable and experienced teaching workforce, and of the adaptability of their staff
- The presence and use already of an extensive range of training approaches and resources, including:
 - Regular in-house one-to-one and group sessions for training and exchange of best practice
 - The use of specialist external training consultants
 - The attendance of teachers at external courses and seminars
 - The use of online and other resources available from Holec, ETF, and others
 - The purchase of various commercial digital products which embody

training support in the product

However, within a generally positive picture (which one provider described as '*completely do-able*'), providers and individual tutors expressed a number of caveats, which are discussed alongside 'skills gaps' in the following section.

Skills gaps to deliver against the new basic digital skills standards

Respondents were then asked the extent to which they think their current basic digital skills workforce has the skills required to deliver training against the five overarching skills areas outlined in the new standards: handling information, creating and editing digital content, communicating, transacting, and being safe and responsible online². Respondents had the option of selecting "fully", "partially" or "not at all" for each of these categories. Those who selected 'fully' consider that they are able to deliver the relevant skill without any training required, while the opposite is true for those who said 'not at all'. For those who said 'partially', some additional training might be required either for all or part of the delivery workforce.

Figure 14 shows that being safe and responsible online is the skill that FE institutions are most confident they will be able to deliver: 81% think that their current ICT workforce *fully* has the skills required to deliver against this skill category, with a further 17% thinking that their current staff *partially* have the skills to do so.

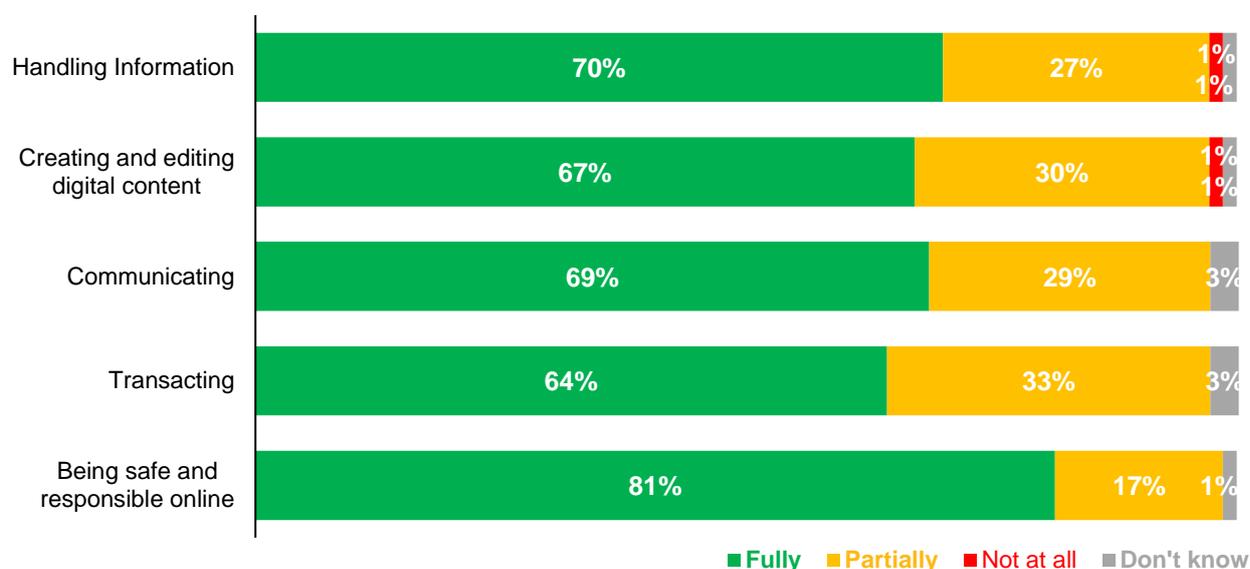
Around 7 in 10 FE institutions consider that their ICT employees *fully* have the skills needed to deliver communicating (69%) and handling information skills (70%).

Similarly, 67% say their workforce is *fully* prepared to deliver creating and editing digital content skills, with a further 30% saying that their staff are *partially* ready.

Only a very small minority said that their workforce is *not at all* ready to deliver training against two of these skills: 1% said so for handling information and for creating and editing digital content, respectively.

² The titles of two of the skills areas in the final standards published in April were different to those consulted on. Handling information changed to 'using devices and handling information' with additional skills statements on using devices, and creating and editing digital content was shortened to 'creating and editing' however the associated skills statements remained the same.

Figure 14: Workforce capability to deliver against the new standards for basic digital skills



Q12/Q16. To what extent do you think your current basic digital skills workforce has the skills required to deliver training against the following skills categories at entry level 1-3 and level 1?

Base: All providers who offer courses or qualifications ranging from entry level 1 to level 1 (70)

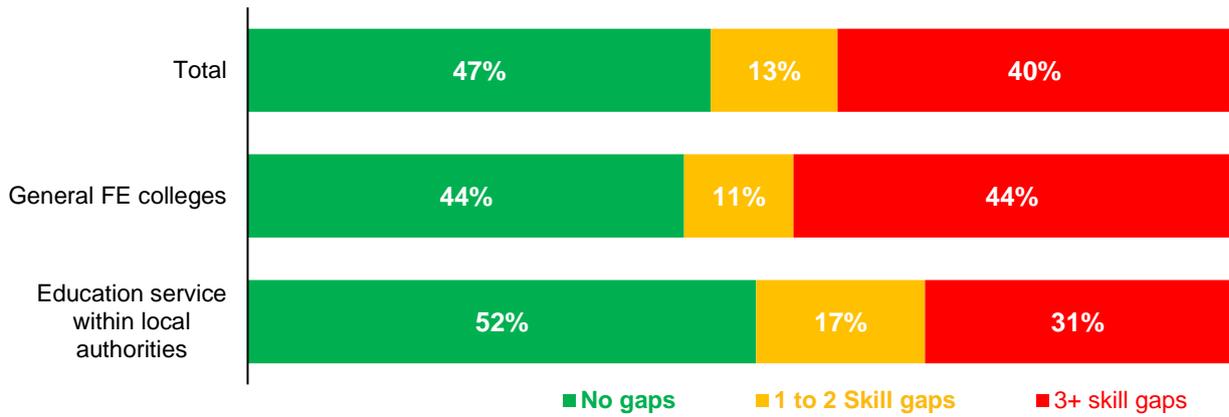
*Percentages below 3% are not shown

Further analysis was undertaken of respondents according to their organisation's levels of skills gaps for delivering against the new standards (see Figure 15). An institution is considered to have a skill gap in a certain skill category if they selected *partially* or *not at all* when asked about the extent to which they think their current basic digital skills workforce has the skills required to deliver training against the new standards (see Figure 14).

As Figure 15 shows, opinions are evenly split between those who report no skill gaps and those who do. Overall, 47% of institutions that took part in the telephone survey report no skill gaps in their workforce and around one in ten (13%) report between one and two skills gaps. Two-fifths (40%) say that their workforce does not currently have the skills to deliver against three or more of the five skills categories outlined in the new standards.

While there are no *significant* differences in skills gaps by type of provider, Figure 15 does show Education Services within Local Authorities having fewer skills gaps than General FE Colleges: 52% of Local Authorities report no gaps, compared to 44% of FE Colleges. The same proportion of FE Colleges report gaps in three or more areas (44%), compared to fewer than a third of Local Authorities identifying this level of gaps (31%).

Figure 15: Levels of skills gaps to deliver against the new standards by type of provider



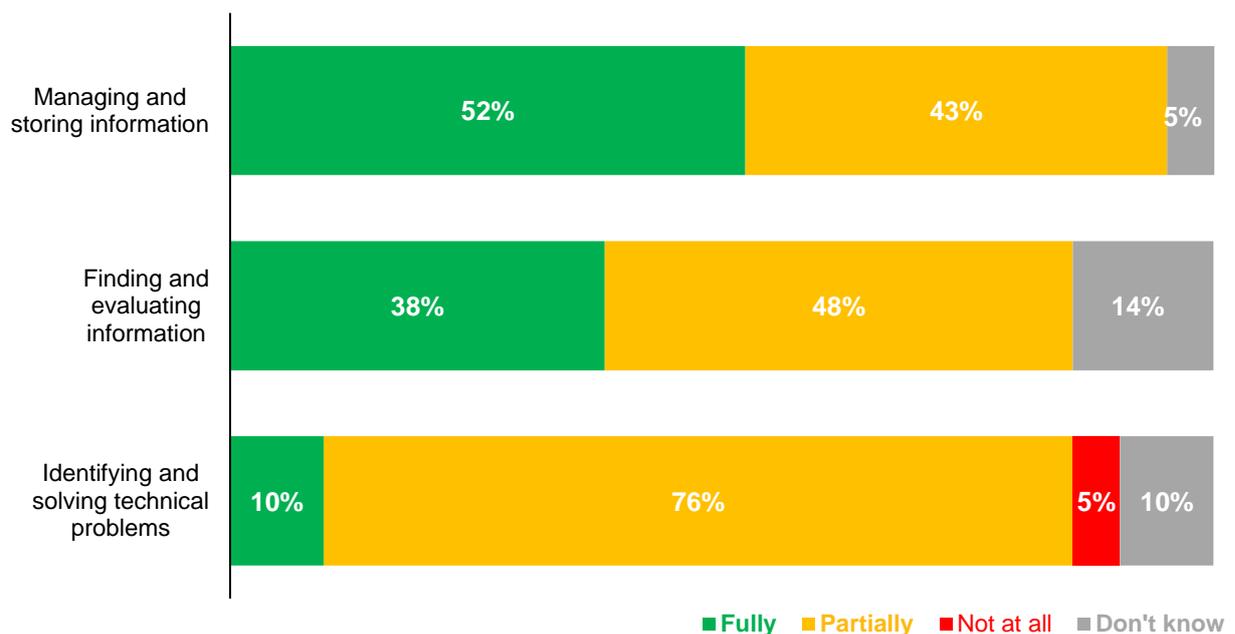
Q12/Q16. To what extent do you think your current basic digital skills workforce has the skills required to deliver training against the following skills categories at entry level 1-3 and level 1?

Base: All providers who offer courses or qualifications ranging from entry level 1 to level 1 (70)

Handling information

Over one-quarter (28%) of respondents reported gaps in workforce skills levels in delivering the 'Handling Information' standards. Figure 16 shows the specific areas of these standards where providers felt there were potentially gaps. Of these the main area for concern was seen as teaching 'identifying and solving technical problems', over three-quarters (76%) of these providers felt their workforce only partially had these skills, followed by 'Finding and evaluating information' (48%), and 'Managing and storing information' (43%).

Figure 16: Levels of skills gaps in the 'Handling information' standard



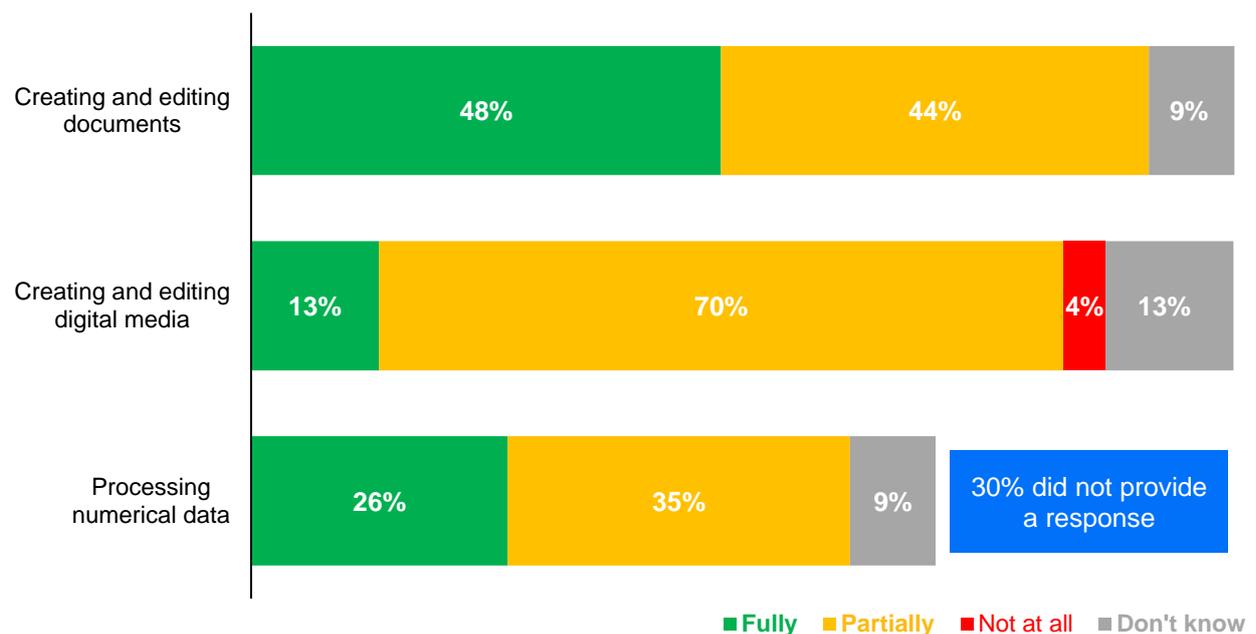
Q12/Q16. To what extent do you think your current basic digital skills workforce has the skills required to deliver training against the following skills categories at entry level 1-3 and level 1?

Base: All providers who identify skills gaps in 'Handling Information' (21). Base too low to explore differences between provider types

Creating and editing digital content

Nearly one-third (31%) of respondents reported gaps in workforce skills levels in delivering the 'Creating and editing digital content' standards. Figure 17 shows the specific areas of these standards where providers felt there were potentially gaps. Of these the main area for concern was seen as teaching 'Creating and editing digital media', nearly three-quarters (70%) of these providers felt their workforce only partially had these skills, followed by 'Creating and editing documents' (44%), and 'Processing numerical data' (35%).

Figure 17: Levels of skills gaps in the 'Creating and editing digital content' standard



Q12/Q16. To what extent do you think your current basic digital skills workforce has the skills required to deliver training against the following skills categories at entry level 1-3 and level 1?

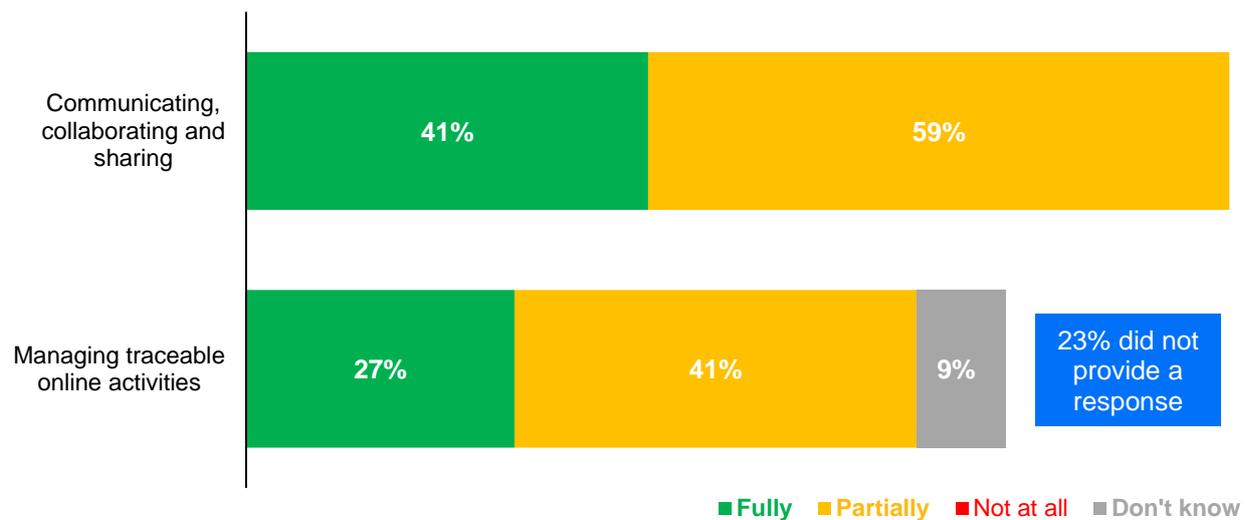
Base: All providers who identify skills gaps in 'Creating and editing digital content' (23). Base too low to explore differences between provider types

Non-response relates to changes made 'in-field' following initial survey testing

Communicating

Over one-quarter (29%) of respondents reported gaps in workforce skills levels in delivering the 'Communicating' standards. Figure 18 shows the specific areas of these standards where providers felt there were potentially gaps. The main area for concern was teaching 'Communicating, collaborating, and sharing', 59% of these providers felt their workforce only partially had these skills, followed by 'Managing traceable online activities' (41%).

Figure 18: Levels of skills gaps in the 'Communicating' standard



Q12/Q16. To what extent do you think your current basic digital skills workforce has the skills required to deliver training against the following skills categories at the entry level 1-3 and level 1?

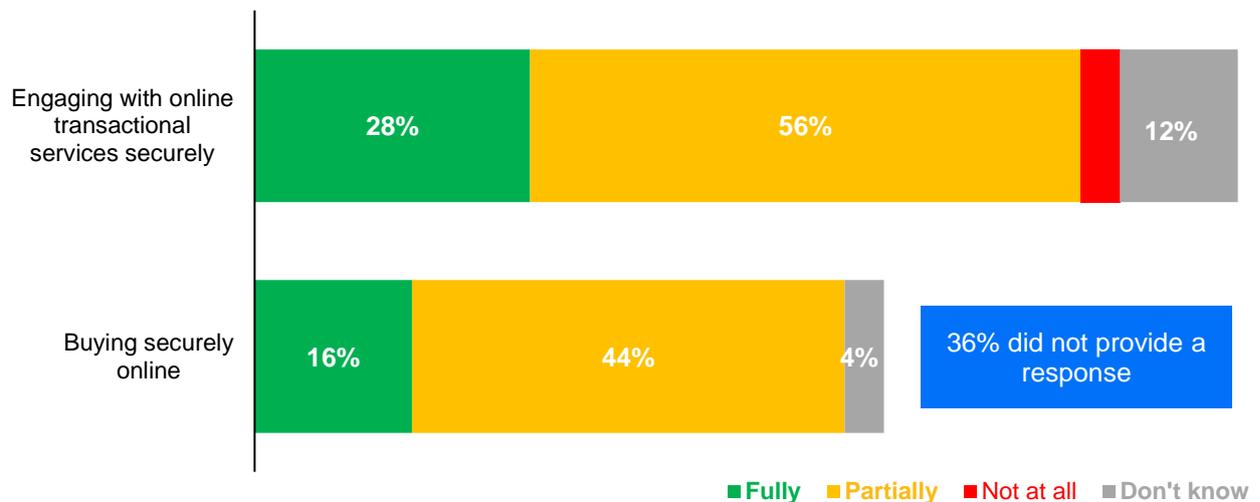
Base: All providers who identify skills gaps in 'Communicating' (22). Base too low to explore differences between provider types

Non-response relates to changes made 'in-field' following initial survey testing

Transacting

One-third (33%) of respondents reported gaps in workforce skills levels in delivering the 'Transacting' standards. Figure 19 shows the specific areas of these standards where providers felt there were potentially gaps. The main area for concern was teaching 'Engaging with online transactional services securely', 56% of these providers felt their workforce only partially had these skills, followed by 'Buying securely online' (44%).

Figure 19: Levels of skills gaps in the 'Transacting' standard



Q12/Q16. To what extent do you think your current basic digital skills workforce has the skills required to deliver training against the following skills categories at entry level 1-3 and level 1?

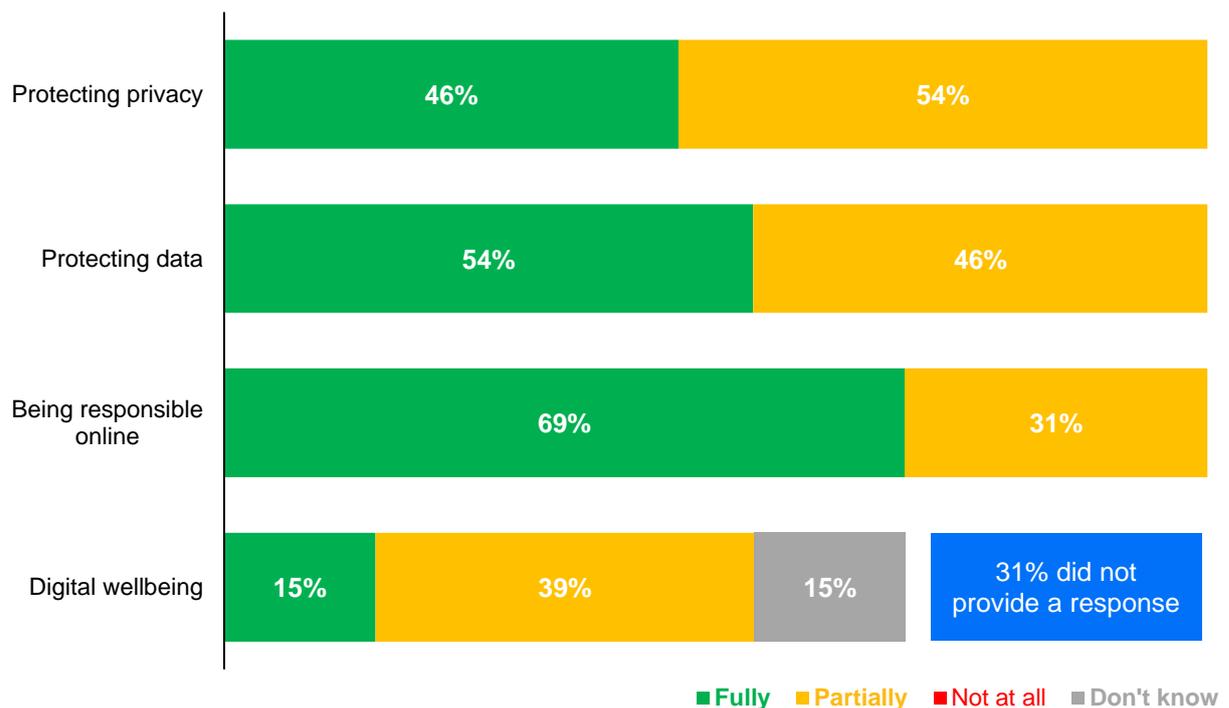
Base: All providers who identify skills gaps in 'Transacting' (25). Base too low to explore differences between provider types

Non-response relates to changes made 'in-field' following initial survey testing

Being safe and responsible online

Less than one in five (17%) respondents reported gaps in workforce skills levels in delivering the 'Being safe and responsible online' standards. Figure 20 shows the specific areas of these standards where providers felt there were potentially gaps. The main area for concern was teaching 'Protecting privacy', 54% of these providers felt their workforce only partially had these skills, followed by 'Protecting data' (46%), 'Digital wellbeing' (39%), and 'Being responsible online' (31%).

Figure 20: Levels of skills gaps in the 'Being safe and responsible online' standard



Q12/Q16. To what extent do you think your current basic digital skills workforce has the skills required to deliver training against the following skills categories at entry level 1-3 and level 1?

Base: All providers who identify skills gaps in 'Being safe and responsible online' (13). Base too low to explore differences between provider types

Non-response relates to changes made 'in-field' following initial survey testing

Specific challenges faced

Overall, those interviewed in depth were positive that they had the skills to deliver the standards, or would be able to develop these through their own learning and training (often internal training).

Looking at all of this [new standards], it's nothing that we can't teach or nothing that we don't have the knowledge to teach. Practitioner, Education Service within a Local Authority

Our staff keep up to date with new technology, really. So, that's what we're regularly doing, and we're regularly reviewing our training. So, that's what we do.

As I mentioned, we regularly have standardisation meetings for the delivery we're doing. So, that's where we can update each other on any changes, as well. So, I'm pretty confident that we'll be able to keep up to date with the new standards, and sort of, amend our courses, and update our courses, as necessary. Delivery lead, ITP

During the in-depth interviews, when respondents were probed further on the elements of the standards they had concerns about, they addressed some specific digital processes which were outside the experience of the organisation and would require up-skilling. This included specific mentions of using cloud-based applications, editing digital media, video downloading, and video-conferencing.

There are colleagues that I work with, who would not feel so good about responding and reacting to those kind of areas, and then there are people who, if somebody said to you, 'you know, right, I want to do video editing, or I want to do imaging editing', we'd be able to pull an App off the phone or be able to pull an App off the internet, and probably within two or three minutes, be able to adapt flexibly to be able to deliver. Practitioner, Education Service within a Local Authority

In-depth interviews also identified a number of related and wider concerns held by provider leads and practitioners; however, most importantly they caveated their awareness and ability to respond to the new standards with the observation that the need for training and new skills was not yet fully apparent and would only become so when the organisation set about writing new resources and course materials, and/or when awarding bodies finalised the criteria for award of their qualifications.

Because at the minute there aren't lots of resources. I think that's what the tutors are going to be looking for, they're going to be looking for resources that help them teach the new standards... I think that lots of training organisations are going to want to start doing that. It's not something that we could put together ourselves, so I would hope that the awarding bodies create these resources. Manager, Education Service within a Local Authority

Respondents also observed that staff ability was variable and not all staff had the skills and confidence to deliver the standards or the flexibility to adapt their skills to the new regime.

I think what we have to get people who are teaching adults to, regardless of the area of learning, be able to teach digital skills... It's got to get more integrated with the mainstream, with the other areas of learning... I think across the service, the staff, some of them are thinking, 'Well, I'm not an IT tutor, therefore I don't teach it,' but I say, 'But you use IT all the time.'... I think people have got to be encouraged to have that broader base of skills really. Delivery Lead, Education Service within a Local Authority

A particular difficulty was noted in respect of the delivery of ICT within ESOL courses where some staff were less confident of their own skills and noted the particular challenges of delivering an ICT curriculum to learners with very limited English language skills.

In addition, it was noted that, while staff skill shortages might not apply, the organisation might have shortfalls in the volume or modernity of the technology or software needed to deliver the standards, and they would welcome additional support in the development of this. Related to this, some respondents from Local Authorities noted that some challenges arose in delivering course elements and developing content concerned with online transactions where barriers existed due to Local Authority regulations or wider caution about data security (on the part both of trainers and learners, particularly older ones).

Wider challenges

Discussions with the respondents also focussed on other challenges which the new standards might raise. A substantial number of these were identified, including:

- Dealing with a higher number of learners with highly variable initial levels of knowledge and ability
- The costs of acquiring new technology to deliver to standards (with items such as tablets, monitors with cameras and animation software being mentioned as examples in this respect) and of the training needs generated by such acquisitions
- The short 'shelf life' of technology and the cost of responding to its early obsolescence
- Recruitment of teaching staff – with competition from higher wages for ICT staff from private businesses
- Possible learner resistance to full accredited courses when some learners do not want all the elements – particularly resistance to online transaction elements which older people may not want to undertake because they prefer to stick to their traditional practices or because of security fears.
- Concern that the standards may not be suitable for learners with 'very, very low initial digital knowledge and skills' (perhaps necessitating a Foundation Level qualification) and that criteria for transition from one level to the next under the standards are less clear cut than hitherto.
- Longer accredited courses leading to low attendance and/or non-completion
- Time and resource for busy staff (particularly sessional staff) to undertake training

Plans to address gaps in workforce to deliver against the new standards

Respondents who reported skills gaps were then asked about their plans to address those in their current workforce. Around seven in ten state that they will provide in-house training for this (76%), with a similar proportion considering external training (73%) and supporting staff to achieve relevant qualifications (70%). A sizable proportion (40%) say that their organisations will recruit new staff.

Figure 21: Plans to address gaps in workforce to deliver against the new standards for basic digital skills



Q13/Q17. How do you plan to address any gaps in your current workforce for delivering training against the skills categories and underpinning competencies at entry level 1-3 and level 1?

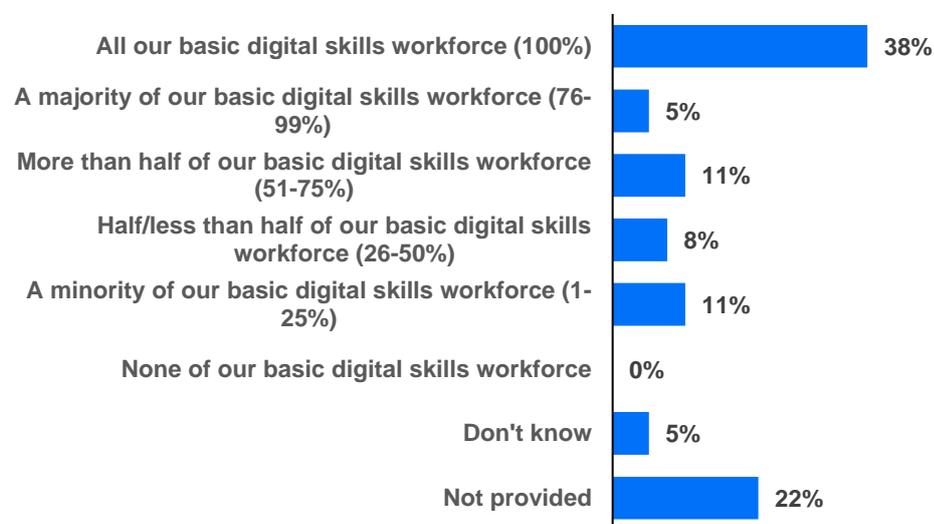
Base: All who reported skill gaps (37)

A further follow-up question was asked to those who reported skill gaps, enquiring about the proportion of the workforce who will be developed to deliver training against the new standards. Approaching two-fifths (38%) affirm that all of their basic digital skills workforce will be supported to deliver training both at entry and level 1.

5% say that the majority of their workforce will receive the relevant CPD, with a further 11% saying that this will apply to more than half of their basic digital skills staff.

Encouragingly, none of the respondents say that none of their employees will receive training for this.

Figure 22: Proportion of the workforce to be developed to deliver basic digital skills training against the new standards



Q14/Q18. What proportion of your workforce for basic digital skills training do you plan to develop in this way for delivering training at entry level 1-3 and level 1?

Base: All who reported skill gaps (37)

The types of training that providers are most likely to consider to fill in their workforce's skill gaps are *conferences, workshops, seminars, meetings or webinars*, with 97% selecting this option. Similar proportions would also consider *coaching and mentoring* (96%) and *training seminars or short courses* (95%).

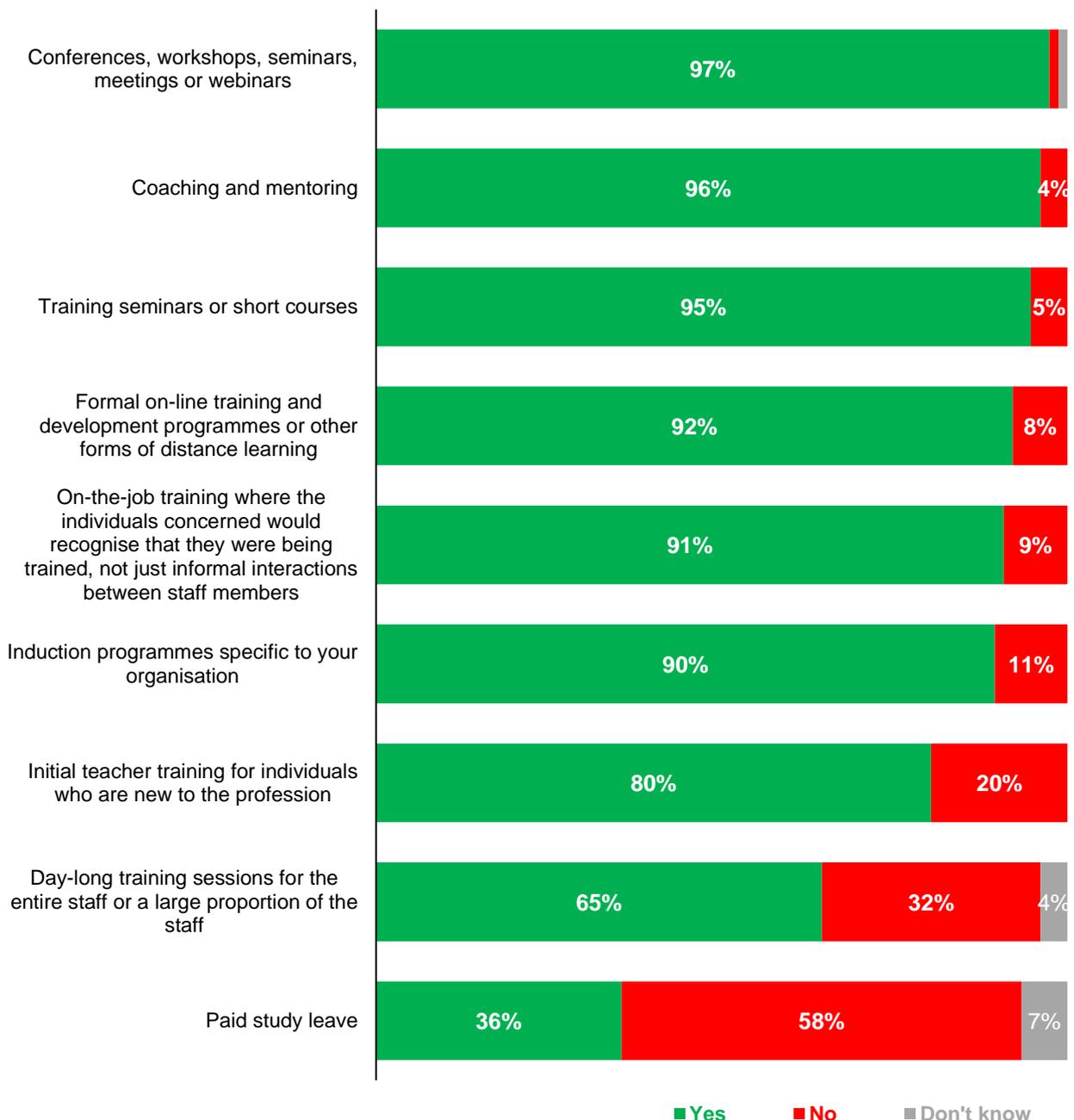
Around nine in ten are also likely to use the following to train and support their staff: distance learning (92%), on-the-job training (91%) and induction programmes specific to each organisation (90%).

In addition, four in five (80%) would consider initial teacher training for individuals who are new to the profession. General FE Colleges are significantly more likely than Education Services within Local Authorities to consider this as a training option (94% cf. 73%).

In terms of the least popular types of training, around a third (32%) would not consider day-long training sessions for the entire or a large proportion of the staff, probably due to time and budget constraints.

However, the least popular option is paid study leave: nearly three in five (58%) would not consider this as a training option.

Figure 23: Training that providers would consider to develop their staff to deliver the new standards



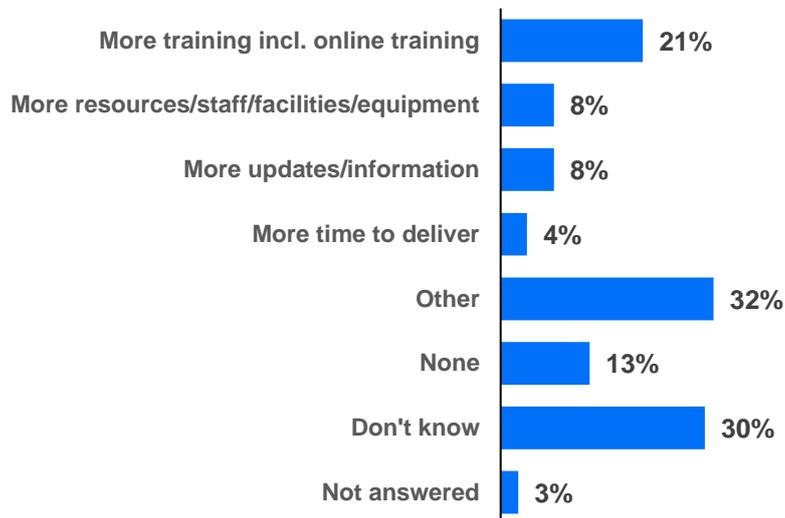
Q23. Now I'd like to read out some means by which education and training providers can train and develop their staff. Can you say which of these you would consider using for your workforce to deliver the new national standards?

Base: All respondents (76)

*Percentages below 2% are not shown

Regarding other types of support that providers would offer to help their basic digital skills workforce to deliver against the new standards, around one in five (21%) cite more training including online training. Less than one in ten cite more resources including staff, facilities and equipment (8%) or more updates/information (8%).

Figure 24: Other support that the workforce will need to deliver the new standards



Q15/Q19. What other support do you think your basic digital skills workforce will need to deliver the new standards at entry level 1-3 and level 1?

Base: All respondents (76)

Current provision of training for basic digital skills staff in FE institutions

Figure 25 shows the ways in which the training and development needs amongst basic digital skills staff are identified. The vast majority of respondents say they do so during regular staff appraisals or performance development reviews (97%).

Around nine in ten (91%) also say that they identify training needs by requests from individuals who want training and development.

Other frequently cited ways of identifying training and development needs are: by observation of individuals' performance (86%), by formal training needs assessment across the organisation or quality improvement plan (83%), and by the judgement of senior staff or managers (80%).

Around a third (32%) also mentioned by a human resources department or specialist (32%).

Figure 25: Ways of identifying training and development needs amongst basic digital skills workforce



Q22. How are training and development needs identified amongst your basic digital skills workforce?

Base: All respondents (76)

Moving on to the training delivered to support basic digital skills courses in the past year, a variety was delivered focusing on different topics. Microsoft packages comes at the top, with 7% of respondents having delivered training about this, followed by Universal Credit (5%) and Virtual Learning Environments (5%).

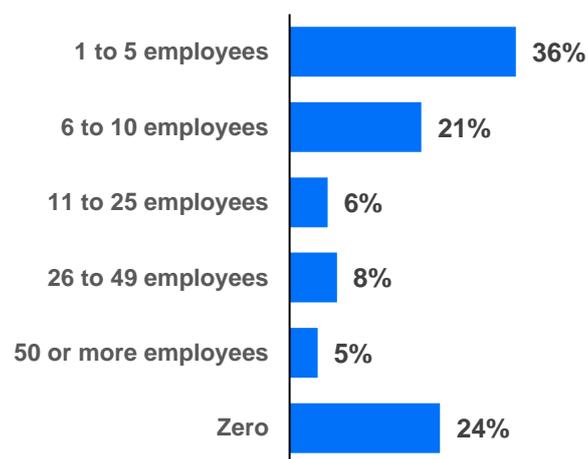
Small proportions also mention training on creating and editing documents and creating and editing digital media (4% respectively). Protecting privacy and data, being responsible online and digital wellbeing were also mentioned, although just by 3% of respondents.

It should be noted that some of these skills are outlined in the new standards, however, only a minority of institutions have delivered training for staff about them, which suggests some respondents may have already put plans in place to respond to and teach the new standards.

Around a third (36%) say that between 1 and 5 employees received formal training to support the delivery of basic digital skills over the past year, with a further 21% saying that between 6 to 10 employees received training for this purpose.

Around a quarter (24%), however, said that none of the employees received training to support their delivery of basic digital skills. This contrasts with the previous points regarding plans to address skills gaps in the workforce to deliver against the new standards, where none of the respondents say that none of their employees will receive training for this (see Figure 22), suggesting that not all delivery staff will need additional training to deliver against the new standards.

Figure 26: Number of employees who have received formal training and development to support the delivery of basic digital skills over the past year



Q25. How many of your basic digital skills workforce have received formal training and development in these areas over the past year?

Base: Valid responses (66)

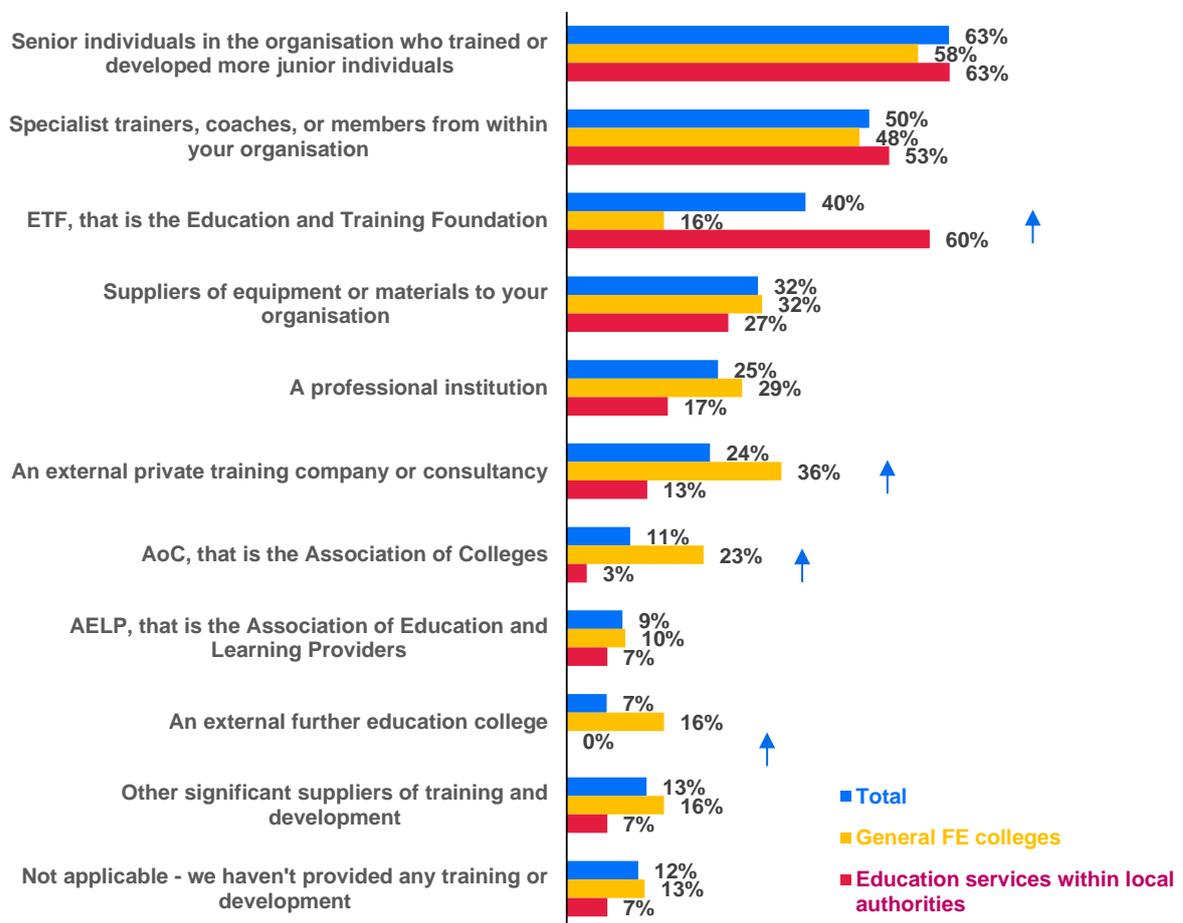
Employees received training to support the delivery of basic digital skills from a variety of providers in the past year. Senior individuals in the organisation top the list of training providers (63%), followed by specialist trainers, coaches, or members from within the organisations who were used by 50% of the organisations that took part in the survey.

A sizable proportion have also received training from suppliers of equipment or materials to their organisation (32%).

Two-fifths (40%) mentioned ETF as one of the providers they have used in the past year, with Education Services within Local Authorities being significantly more likely than FE Colleges to have used them as a provider (60% cf. 16%).

Compared to Local Authorities, General FE Colleges are more likely to have received training from external private training companies or consultancies (36% cf. 13%), the Association of Colleges (23% cf. 3%) and external FE Colleges (16% cf. 0%).

Figure 27: Training providers in the past year



Q26. Have any of the following supplied training and development to your basic digital skills workforce in these areas in the past year?

Base: All respondents (76)

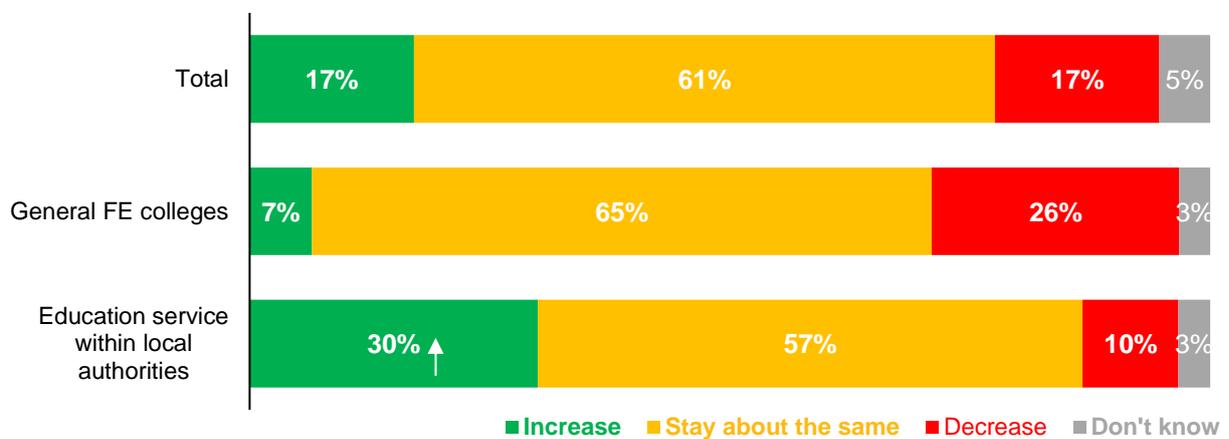
*The base sizes for other types of providers are too low to report

Further analysis shows basic digital skills training and development budget forecasts for the next year.

A majority expect their budget for this to stay about the same (61%), whilst equal proportions say that it will increase (17%) and decrease (17%). The remaining 5% are unsure.

Education Services within Local Authorities are significantly more likely -compared to FE Colleges- to say that their budget will increase (30% cf. 7%). This might be related to a combination of factors, including the fact that Local Authorities are more aware of the new standards (87% cf. 39% for FE Colleges), the devolution of the adult skills budget, and the likelihood of the upcoming Government entitlement for basic digital skills resulting in extra funding (see Figure 12).

Figure 28: Training and development budget forecast for next year



Q29. Do you expect your budget for training and development in this area to increase, decrease, or stay about the same next year?

Base: All respondents (76), General FE Colleges (31), Education Services within Local Authorities (30)

*The base sizes for other types of providers are too low to report

Barriers for delivering basic digital skills against the new standards

The main barrier for providing training and development for basic digital skills staff is a perception that external training and development fees are too expensive or over-priced, with 63% of respondents citing this as a difficulty.

Further to this, around three in five (61%) state that insufficient funding or income to the organisation is a barrier, followed by a difficulty to allow staff to have time off-the-job for training (59%), which might, at least partly, explain the reluctance of most organisations to consider paid study leave as a method of training to fill in the skills gaps in their basic digital skills workforce (see Figure 23).

Interestingly, General FE Colleges are significantly more likely than Local Authorities to say that it is difficult to allow staff to have time off-the-job for training (74% cf. 47%). However, this may be related to differences in the way staff are contracted and

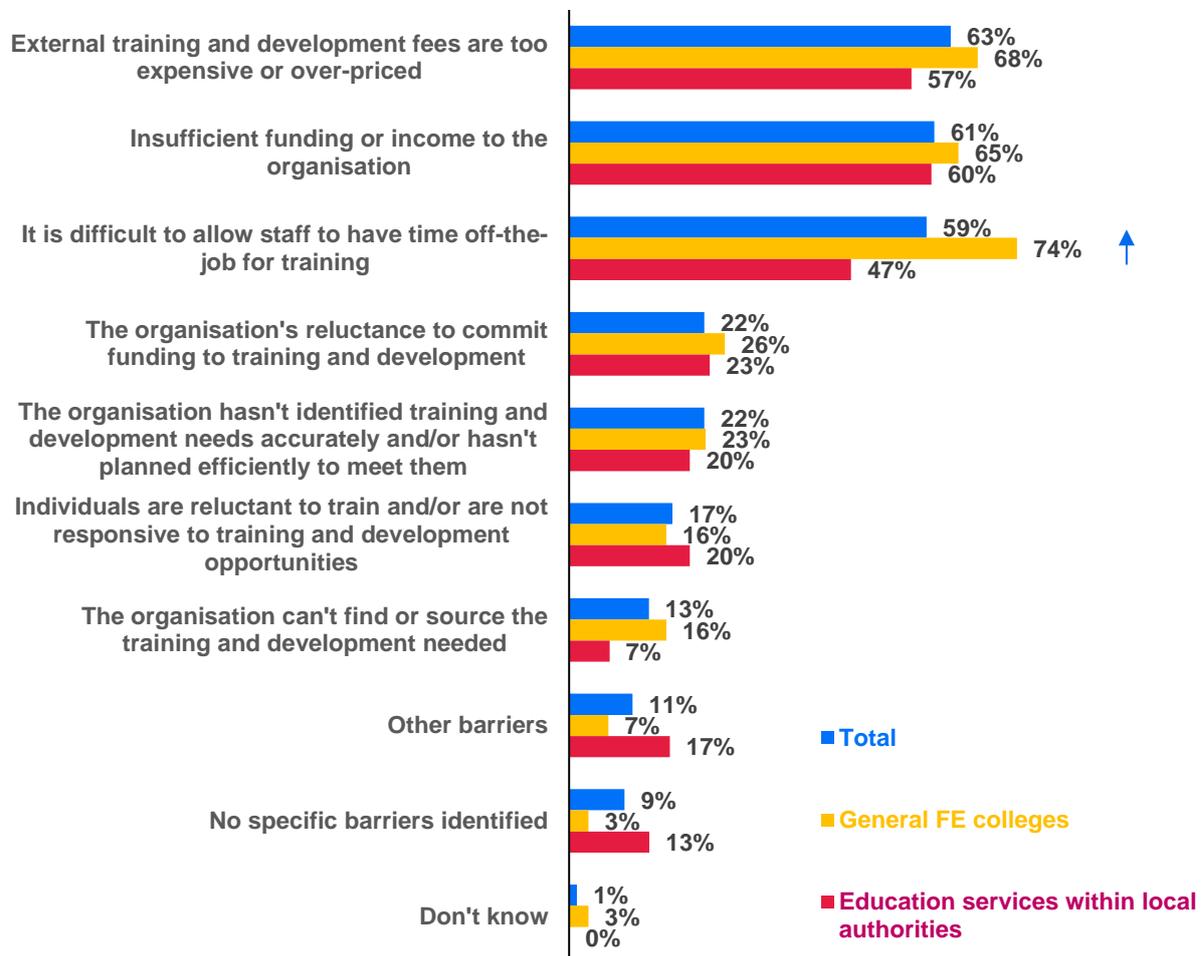
structured between provider-types, and the extent to which there may be expectations for staff to undertake CPD activities in their own time.

Other obstacles mentioned by around a quarter of respondents are: organisations' reluctance to commit funding to training and development (22%), and organisations' failure to identify training and development needs accurately and/or to plan efficiently to meet these (22%).

17% refer to individuals' responsiveness to training and 13% say that their organisations can't find or source the training and development that they need.

Encouragingly, around one in ten (11%) did not identify any specific obstacles.

Figure 29: Barriers to providing training and development for basic digital skills workforce to deliver against the new standards



Q27. Do you anticipate experiencing any of the following barriers to providing all the training and development which is needed for your basic digital skills workforce to deliver against the new standards?

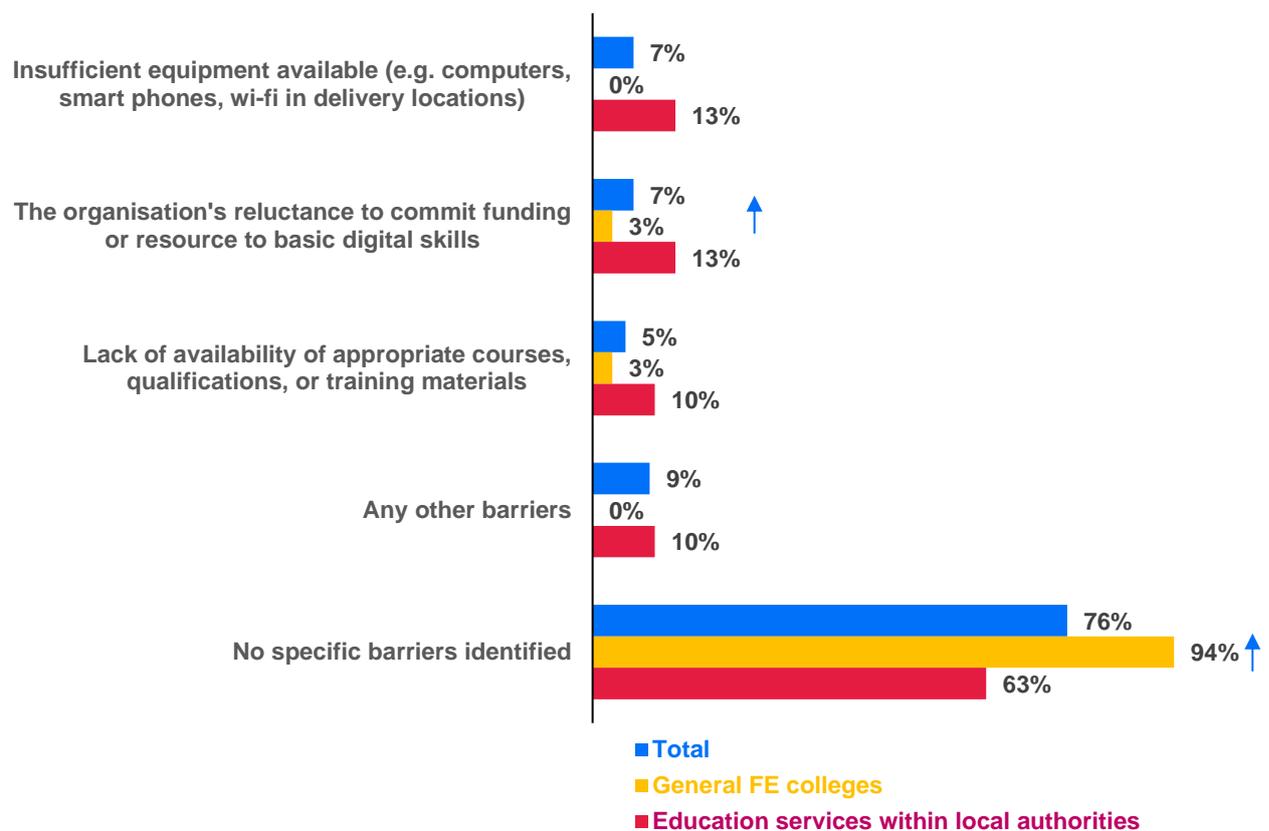
Base: All respondents (76)

*The base sizes for other types of providers are too low to report

Respondents were then asked about further barriers for delivering basic digital skills against the new standards. Positively, a majority did not identify any further difficulties (76%), with General FE colleges more likely to say so (94%) compared to Local Authorities (63%).

7% say that insufficient equipment available will be another difficulty, with an equal proportion referring to their organisation's reluctance to commit funding or resource to basic digital skills (7%). Education Services within Local Authorities are more likely than FE Colleges to mention the latter as a further obstacle (13% cf. 3%).

Figure 30: Further barriers for delivering basic digital skills against the new standards



Q30. Do you anticipate experiencing any further barriers to your organisation delivering basic digital skills against the new standards?

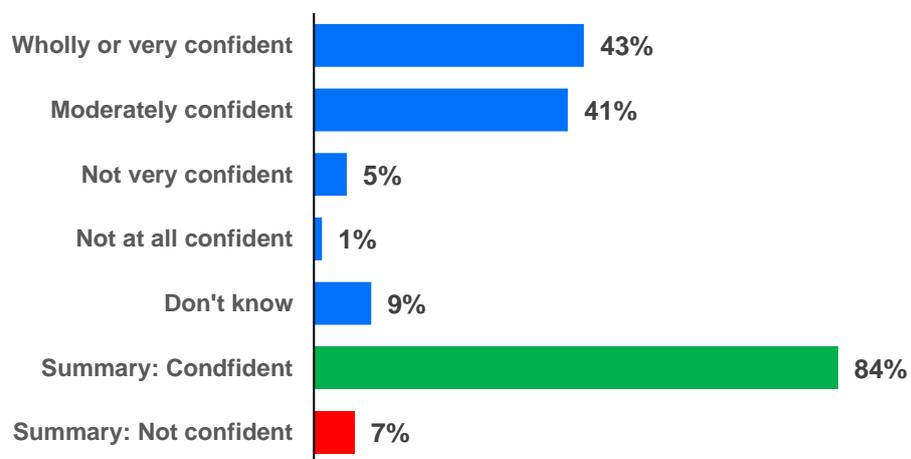
Base: All respondents (76), General FE Colleges (31), Education Services within Local Authorities (30)

*The base sizes for other types of providers are too low to report

After considering basic digital skills staff's skills against the new standards and barriers to delivering against these, respondents were asked how confident they are that the training and development needs of their workforce will be met.

Positively, more than four in five are confident that this will be the case (84%), with 43% of these saying that they are *wholly or very confident*. Just 7% say that they are not confident that their staff's training needs to deliver against the new standards will be met. As might be expected those who had reported no skills gap areas were the most likely to report that they were confident (97%), however, 89% of those with 1 to 2 skills gap areas were also confident, and 75% of those with 3+ skills gap areas.

Figure 31: Confidence that the training and development needs of basic digital skills workforce to deliver against the new standards will be met



Q28. Generally, how confident are you that the training and development needs of your basic digital skills workforce to deliver against the new standards will be met?

Base: All respondents (76)

Support that organisations would welcome

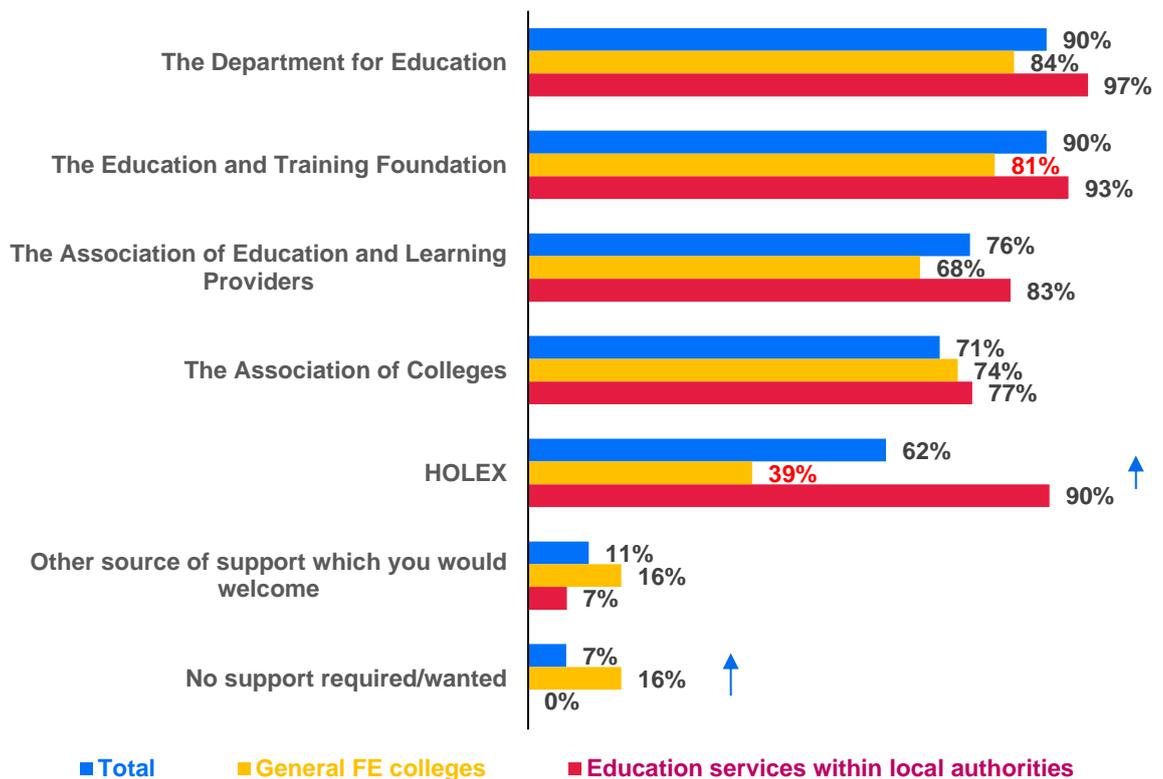
Finally, respondents were asked whether they would welcome support in the form of information, guidance, or the provision of training and development regarding ICT skills and the new standards from a number of bodies and providers. Nine in ten would welcome support from the Department for Education (90%) and the ETF (90%). Nearly three-quarters (72%) would like their details to be passed on to the Education and Training Foundation so that they can provide more information.

General FE Colleges are less likely than average to welcome support from the ETF. This might be because they are less likely to have used them for training their basic digital skills workforce in the past year (see Figure 28).

Around seven in ten would also welcome support from the Association of Education and Learning Providers (76%) and the Association of Colleges (71%).

Around three-fifths would welcome support from HOLEX (62%), with Education Services within Local Authorities being more likely to say so (90%) compared to FE Colleges (39%).

Figure 32: Organisations from which providers would welcome support in the form of information, guidance or the provision of training and development



Q31. Would you welcome support in the form of information, guidance, or the provision of training or development in this area from any of the following organisations?

Base: All respondents (76), General FE Colleges (31), Education Services within Local Authorities (30)

*The base sizes for other types of providers are too low to report

Support in dealing with workforce development and other issues

Finally, in-depth discussions with providers identified a number of areas in which providers would welcome support of varied kinds. These included:

- The provision of an *on-line resource bank or standardised set of materials or a comprehensive manual* which could form a consistent starting point for development of course materials relevant to local learner types
- Guidance and support in integrating digital skills training into ESOL courses with their specific, language-related challenges
- A range of suggestions specific to *ETF provision*:
 - Simplification of the ETF training website
 - Support from ETF in trouble shooting technological and delivery problems
 - Delivery of ETF training in face-to-face rather than online mode
- *More information*, including:
 - Greater clarity from awarding bodies on standards requirement and qualifications criteria
 - More information about external support to learners and about proof of entitlement
 - More publicity on the entitlement and standards to spread awareness of them beyond digital skills specialists into organisations and institutions more widely
 - A national campaign to increase awareness in the general population of the entitlement and standards
 - More DfE/ETF//HOLEX/AoC events to enable providers to share experiences and good practice
- Support to *assessment of learners' digital skills* including:
 - A reliable 'physical' rather than paper assessment tool for providers to assess learners' initial digital skills
 - An online tool for learners to assess their own digital skill levels
- Creation of 'dummy accounts' so learners could undertake *risk-free learning* in respect of financial transactions

CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDIES

Chapter 4 provides more detailed organisational case studies exploring the views of basic digital skills managers and practitioners in relation to the new standards and their ability to deliver these. The case studies also explore organisational response to the standards and any wider concerns they have with regard to delivering these.

All organisations engaged qualitatively were invited to take part as case studies (including interviews with leads and delivery staff). However, due to availability of staff within the fieldwork period, only Education Services within Local Authorities took part in this way.

CASE STUDY 1:

Adult Learning Service, London

Current approach to delivering basic digital skills

Key aspects of delivery include:

- The provider's curriculum is developed in conjunction with the local community and the Economic Development team of the local authority which is keen to up-skill their residents, many of whom have a low level of functional skills and qualifications (including digital). In response to learner demand, the provider has recently started to offer digital skills required for applying and managing Universal Credit by introducing new modules such as creating tables in Excel, coding, budgeting skills, skills for business, and creative suite courses including web design, video editing, etc.
- Staff are very satisfied with and committed to their work, in part because this flexibility to develop new courses makes them feel 'empowered' to help learners.

We listen to our clients and our managers listen to us. Practitioner

- Demand for courses is increasing and most courses are now running at or above capacity.
- Staff have noticed a particular requirement for digital skills for social media. There is a strong belief that the more 'real-life' the content of courses, the more 'buzz words' (e.g. 'online banking') are contained in the titles, the more they appeal to learners.
- Learners also use the Open Learning Centre out of course hours where they can access Learn My Way for individual modules.

Changes in response to basic digital skills entitlement and standards

It is anticipated that the number of learners will increase significantly as those not in the Universal Credit Work-Related Activity Group, who are currently required to pay some or all of their course fees, will soon be able to access these courses at no cost to themselves. A significant increase in the number of pensioners studying on these courses, as well as amongst those who are referred by Jobcentre Plus but are not work-ready, is anticipated. Mental health difficulties, disabilities, and specific learning difficulties are particularly prevalent amongst this latter group.

They normally tend to enrol for the community courses, not ICT because they are cheaper... but with these new digital skills it's going to be much better. It's going to be like maths and English. Manager

Having worked through the new standards, staff believe that they are already delivering most of the new content through a range of existing modules. They express considerable satisfaction with the new standards, which are described as 'amazing', 'very good' and 'will freshen things up'. They also believe that having its designated qualification confirming adults have secure basic digital skills will be a huge boost because this is something that learners have been 'crying out for' – for their own self-esteem and for employability reasons.

I've found in the past, that when I've said to them, 'There's a qualification attached,' I'm flooded with people. And then when I said [no qualification], there's no one. Practitioner

Staff skills to deliver the standards

All staff have degrees, including further degrees in ICT and consider themselves to be fully capable of delivering the new standards. Indeed, they believe that they

are already teaching most of the content and that existing materials/modules will just need some 'tweaking'.

At most, therefore, they believe that they require occasional 'top ups' in areas where it is essential to be absolutely up-to-date, e.g. online security.

The provider accesses most of its training from ETF and has the budget to send staff on any required training. However, one problem is finding staff time to attend the training.

If someone's full time or 0.8, like, permanent members of staff, then we are quite happy to invest. Manager

Areas for workforce skills development

Staff have regular one-to-one and group meetings at which CPD and any potential skills gaps are discussed. Where gaps in knowledge are identified, managers seek out specialist providers to come in and deliver training – most recently a cyber security expert to make sure that staff are completely up-to-date on online security issues. Other training, e.g. from Horex or the Bett show, is attended by individual staff members and then cascaded down. As some staff are SET members, this provider makes extensive use of SET and ETF online resources including QTLS, ATS, modules on Facebook and, recently, on Prevent. They also use materials from Futurelearn and attend training provided by other local authorities to help with the delivery of new courses in coding, Photoshop, InDesign and Illustrator. All have received recent training in the use of Learner Track and the Edmodo app, which has been very popular with learners and staff.

Other expected challenges delivering against the standards

The main challenge that interviewees anticipate is that the large numbers of new learners will present with multiple

challenges (e.g. physical and mental problems) that will necessitate more one-to-one support. This will also exacerbate the potential for some learners on a course to lag behind those who are finding the material easier.

It is hoped that the existing established group of volunteers will be able to help with these potential problems.

Staff also highlight the need for more and better equipment: laptops to take out into the community and upgraded computers to cope with sound and image.

In terms of specific course content, interviewees anticipate that there will be particular challenges in teaching learners to upload to the Cloud and to trust the internet enough to undertake online shopping and banking.

Preferences for workforce development opportunities

Staff are content that their current training provision (which consists largely of 'bite-size CPD', usually an hour's session delivered to staff in a lunch-hour or at the end of the day) works well in keeping their knowledge and skills up to date. They are happy with their current ETF materials but would like to see a large 'online resources bank' to assist them in delivering the new standards.

Other areas of support

Practitioners feel strongly that there is a demand for Level 3 courses (e.g. more advanced modules in Excel) amongst their learners, particularly for those who are in work and want to progress further through evening learning.

There is also a concern that much of the Level 2 content is still quite basic, providing only the baseline skills that learners would need e.g. to attend college.

CASE STUDY 2:

Adult Learning Service, North West

Current approach to delivering basic digital skills

Key aspects of delivery include:

- In devising digital modules and selecting course content, interviewees stress the importance of focusing on local labour market needs.
- All learners undergo a skills check to ensure that they are embarking on the right course for their requirements.
- Careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) is very closely and carefully tied into this process.
- Many learners require additional support, particularly the growing number of learners with 'learning, physical or mental health difficulties and disabilities'.
- The number of learners is increasing.
- The roll out of Universal Credit has increased the number of learners wanting to obtain digital skills.
- The provider has a strong preference for unitised courses.
- This organisation creates all of its own materials, constantly 'tailoring' and 'tweaking' them for particular modules and cohorts of learners. The importance of teaching digital skills that can be applied to real-life situations is emphasised.

Changes in response to basic digital skills entitlement and standards

All staff are excited and pleased to see the arrival of the new standards. They believe that learners will enjoy working to the new standards as well as finding it practically valuable. Staff anticipate that there will be

more learners, but sessional staff will be taken on to cover the greater teaching load.

Staff skills to deliver the standards

The staff at this provider have been delivering basic digital skills for a least a decade. They believe that they are already teaching almost everything within the new standards and that their knowledge and materials will just need to be fine-tuned or adjusted in places.

Areas for workforce skills development

Staff have worked through the new standards to identify any areas of potential weakness.

Whilst they currently 'touch on' issues concerning technical problems, interviewees felt that the new standards will require them to address this in more detail. All feel that this is 'completely do-able', but will require the creation of additional materials.

Staff feel that they will only definitively be able to say whether or not they require skills updates when they see more detail about 'the criteria that the awarding body will want.

We will only really know if we've got skills gaps once we see how the awarding bodies translate this, and what that looks like when it comes out the other end...And so far none of them have been in touch or consulted on new standards.

Manager

Other expected challenges delivering against the standards

One of the challenges is the costs of additional equipment (tablets, cameras, etc) to support the range of digital skills as local authorities have limited budgets due to national cuts in funding. In terms of security, local authority computers have rigid fire walls and 'mock' scenarios may need to be created so that learners can

carry out online payments and transfer this skill out of the classroom.

Concerns were also raised about how security barriers might be addressed. Specifically, that learners will not be permitted to back up data on the local authority's computers, those who have their own tablets are not allowed to plug them in unless they have been checked, and the provider's regulations prevent learners from going all the way through online payments. Even were this possible, it may not be something the learners are comfortable with or in a position to do.

There are also concerns that much of the content which is currently at Level 1 appears to be moving into the entry level, and similarly, Level 2 content is not being taught in Level 1. Staff feel that some beginners will struggle with some of this material, particularly the type of learners who are increasingly presenting themselves to this organisation, 'We've noticed that a lot of our learners now, their skills aren't as good as they used to be, but we're getting them through the door'. It is suggested that this might impact particularly on those for whom English is a second language and older learners who lack basic IT vocabulary. For these reasons, respondents suggested that it might be necessary to introduce a lower, Foundation Level, qualification.

Preferences for workforce development opportunities

Staff stress that they work together as a team to increase and improve their knowledge and skills. They emphasise that they enjoy self-teaching, and are willing to keep themselves up to date in their own time. Moreover, this is often the best way to tailor resources to their particular learners.

I like to play around with it on internet, keep up to date... When you do it that way, you actually get the problems that the learners can get.
Practitioner

There is a culture of sharing information and skills within the team as well as sharing information at the quarterly formal curriculum meetings. Previously, they would send a member of staff to a provider for training, as this would then be cascaded through the rest of the team, which proves cheaper than buying a provider to train on site. However, over the last three years of authority cutbacks, this has diminished. They also access training from staff with expertise within the wider local authority.

This organisation uses NCFE and OCR as its awarding bodies for digital and meet up with their representatives to 'discuss qualifications that learners need and what they have in the pipe line'.

Other areas of support

Interviewees are anxious to see 'what qualifications awarding bodies are aiming to put out to support the delivery of this so that funding can be drawn down' They want to be sure that awarding bodies are 'checking that these standards are covered off in their qualifications'.

Given the number of their learners who require support and technology, they would also like more information about the amount of help that learners will be able to access, and the proof of entitlement that will be required.

Staff would like to see a higher profile publicity campaign for the new standards, rather than managers having to 'ferret away to find out about it'. They feel that 'this is huge' and should be publicised to, for example, the wider local authority as well as the FE and HE institutions that will be required to train the new teachers of these new standards.

CASE STUDY 3:

Adult Learning Service, North East

Current approach to delivering basic digital skills

Key aspects of delivery include:

- Most of this body's digital provision is for entry level learners.
- Most learners are in receipt of benefits and therefore do not pay for their courses.
- The organisation sees significant progression of learners to further digital courses.
- All new learners' skills are assessed through an online assessment.
- Information, advice and guidance is considered crucial to a learner's success, in terms of exploring their learning goals but also, where possible, in tailoring provision within the classes.
- Learning support assistants are used in classes where learners have severe learning difficulties and need intense support.
- Management and tutors concur that the courses currently on offer are not as up-to-date, useful or interesting for learners as they could be.

Changes in response to basic digital skills entitlement and standards

Interviewees agree that the new standards are 'exciting' and that the content is more 'fun' and 'useful' for learners as well as less 'monotonous and repetitive' for tutors to deliver. Everyone welcomes the inclusion of more content covering social media and the cloud as their current courses feel 'a bit outdated' with their emphasis on MSOffice 'when many of their learners do not own a PC and would not be able to afford this software to use at home'. Thus 'they want

to know less about PowerPoint and more about social media'.

Using an Excel spreadsheet is not useful to the majority of the population, but being able to make an online payment is useful to the majority of people... This is about creating digital citizens who can manage their Universal Credit account, who can manage email, can pay their bills online, all of those kind of things. So we very much want the standards to be about the things that they actually need to be able to do.
Manager

Staff skills to deliver the standards

Practitioners' express differing views on the extent to which they feel confident that they will be able to teach the new standards. The more confident feel that they will be fully capable of teaching the new material and will be required only to 'modify' or 'adapt' their existing content and 'add in more' on the cloud, social media, digital footprint, etc. Others are less confident and feel that more extensive training will be required.

There is agreement that much of the new content has been covered before, albeit in less detail. However, staff acknowledge that it will not be until they set about writing the new course materials that they really know whether or not there are gaps in their existing skills.

Areas for workforce skills development

Some areas in which additional training may be required (and new materials will definitely be needed) are: digital footprint and cookies, VPNs, keeping devices up-to-date and fully patched, video calling, shopping on line, and making financial transactions.

Whilst they currently create most of their own materials, both practitioners and

management highlight the fact that they would like to see the production of a set of standardised materials for the new standards, which they could then adapt.

If somebody created a learning app, or video talk through with, you know, questions, what would you select next, with questions in it like what would you need to be careful about and that sort of thing. Practitioner

Other expected challenges delivering against the standards

Management and practitioners agree that a key challenge will be the creation of interactive materials which will assist them to teach the new standards.

They also focus on the need for flexible resources to match the very varied needs of their learners, some of whom have mental and physical disabilities and require a slower pace than others who pick up these skills very quickly

This challenge is exacerbated by the fact that many of their learners do not have their own credit cards and older learners in particular are fearful that undertaking financial transactions online could result in their personal information or money being stolen. For those for whom Universal Credit has been their first experience of using the internet, this has exacerbated their 'distrust of the whole environment'.

Interviewees also highlight the 'linguistic and comprehension' issues of some of their ESOL students who will find it difficult to read and interpret instructions like 'click and drag' or 'formatting'.

Another key challenge for this provider lies in the limitations on the use of hardware and software within a local authority environment (which generates particular data security limitations).

The organisation will also need to purchase more tablets, headphones and microphones in order to teach.

Finally, were more tutors to be required, management express concern that they are difficult to recruit because wages are lower in the FE than IT sector.

Preferences for workforce development opportunities

Currently, staff participate in six team meetings of 1.5 hours per year, in which they share ideas and resources, consider what works well and less well, and identify elements that need to be simplified or improved.

Staff use websites to update themselves, with GCFLearnFree and BBC Skillswise highlighted as being of particular value, for both tutors and learners.

All accept that in such a rapidly evolving discipline, staff need 'always to be investigating and researching to improve how you deliver'.

Whilst management and practitioners would very much like to see ETF materials that may be produced to support the new standards, some say that they have not been impressed by the ETF online learning modules they have already undertaken, feeling they were more aimed at non-ICT tutors.

Other areas of support

Managers would like to see more DfE information events, provided perhaps by ETF or the Association of Colleges, at which providers could get together to share what they are planning and what resources they are going to use. They would also like to see ETF to deliver training face-to-face rather than online.

CASE STUDY 4:

Adult Learning Service, North West

Current approach to delivering basic digital skills

Key aspects of delivery include:

- The team delivers basic digital skills in various sites across the city. Classes for approximately 700 digital skills learners are provided.
- In response to falling rates of recruitment and enrolment, the provider offers weekly digital drop-in sessions with the aim of encouraging them to sign up for a course.
- Beginners' courses are said to be particularly popular at the current time.
- The profile of learners has changed, with a greater focus on the acquisition of digital skills to obtain a job.
- This provider is currently reviewing the accreditation offered for all of its digital qualifications. Staff are in agreement that their current accreditation is not as relevant to learners' needs as it could be and the organisation is in the process of changing it.
- Staff design all of their own resources rather than buying them in. They stress the importance of making learning highly relevant to real-life situations.

Changes in response to basic digital skills entitlement and standards

From the start of this academic year, staff have been asked to add new content to their courses. This has mainly involved 'tweaks' to existing materials (e.g. on cloud-based technologies) rather than any wholesale adaptation.

Both managers and practitioners believe that the new standards will be a highly 'positive' step which will cause institutions

and individual tutors to take stock of their current provision, as well as providing learners with the skills they require.

Staff skills to deliver the standards

To develop staff skills:

- The organisation makes use of the local authority's About You process according to which staff undergo one-to-one sessions to identify skills and training needs.
- Senior staff undertake observations of practice and undertake internal verification of assessments.
- The staff meet as a team every term in order to embed items of training and development, as well taking part in regular sessions when they come together on an informal basis to share ideas and good practice.
- Formal training sessions are also provided as well as biannual whole staff training days.

Management suggest that the tutors have been working as a team to ensure that they are meeting the amended standards. However, there are some areas where additional resources will be needed and tutors emphasize the need for a set of 'really good quality, standardised resources' or a 'formal', 'comprehensive' manual on new content and how to teach it. The least confident would like to attend a course to go through new materials and more generally 'learn how to teach digital to others'.

*It's just like stuff on top of stuff on top of stuff, and then everybody starts panicking...
...We don't know what's going on...
...We need to be confident before we pass it on. Practitioners*

Areas for workforce skills development

Some practitioners focus on the difficulties of teaching digital skills to learners with

ESOL requirements.

The learners have to be Entry three ESOL or English to do the courses, and I think really anything less than that and it's very difficult to teach them... I did do Digital Skills ESOL and that was quite difficult really... because I teach IT, I'm not an ESOL tutor, so it's quite difficult in some ways. I learnt an awful lot about it, but that was quite difficult. Practitioner

Practitioners also want more training on a range of items in the new standards, particularly conference calling, work-based applications and solving problems. Some staff feel less comfortable and confident that they have all of the required skills and competencies.

Other expected challenges delivering against the standards

Management want to be reassured that the accreditation bodies are going to bring out relevant qualifications, ones that 'replicate life as it is now' and are more 'interesting' than some of the current qualifications.

The organisation is experiencing problems with its desktop computers which, now that they are running Microsoft 2016, are sometimes very slow. Some practitioners also suggest that the organisation needs more desktop computers so that 'two or three learners are not huddled around one'. They would like to see more equipment (computers, smartboard) in community venues to improve the teaching and learning experience.

The provider has experienced difficulties recruiting staff to teach basic digital skills. Potential recruits with high level digital skills find it difficult to teach 'at a very, very basic level'. Managers believe that digital teaching needs to be better embedded within adult learning and that other types of tutors (e.g. ESOL) should also be trained to deliver digital content within their curricula.

ESOL practitioners focus heavily on the

significant barriers that their learners experience in acquiring digital skills and the difficulties they, as tutors, face in trying to address these. Some learners who have difficulty forming English letters find it very difficult to use a keyboard, others struggle to use a mouse; learning speeds and needs can vary enormously across a class, and class sizes are sometimes so large that tutors feel they require additional support. These tutors stress that above all, accreditation bodies 'need to be realistic' and not 'overwhelm' these learners.

Preferences for workforce development opportunities

The organisation's Learning Technologies manager brought in a training company to deliver Google education and classroom training, but most training is undertaken in-house. It is hoped that staff will make extensive use of the online, flexible learning resources from Google and Future Learn, which they can then roll out to learners. Management stresses that where possible, 'team teach' training which is peer-to-peer and highly practical is preferred.

Management describe their staff as a highly motivated team who are committed to their learners and to their own skills development. Whilst they suggest that there has been some 'resistance' from some tutors to moving away from Office to more cloud-based provision, this is said to be gradually dissipating.

However, as above, ESOL tutors who teach digital would like to see the provision of more formal training sessions, more allocated time to up-skill, as well as standardised, comprehensive teaching resources.

Other areas of support

The delivery lead has recently been speaking to an accreditation body about the possibility of developing an online tool for learners to obtain a baseline measurement of their digital skills.

CASE STUDY 5:

ADULT LEARNING SERVICE, SOUTH EAST

Current approach to delivering basic digital skills

Key aspects of delivery include:

- The organisation is in the process of reorganisation and is currently developing a digital skills strategy.
- Courses for 2020 are currently being planned based on local demand across the whole of the county, taking into account local as well as central government priorities through the local skills unit and liaising with employer organisations.
- The numbers of learners is about same as last year.
- Personalised objectives, and personalised learning outcomes ensure that potential learners are assigned to the correct courses.
- There is difficulty in engaging learners who require basic digital skills training, such as those who have had negative school experiences and are reluctant to re-engage with education.
- To deal with this, the provider offers many of its courses at outreach locations including libraries, community centres and subcontractor premises.
- Management are glad to be moving towards more accredited courses because this will enable them to draw down funding for learners, many of whom are currently unable to afford them.
- With the implementation of the new standards, this organisation is hoping to move towards a totally digital classroom with interactive materials and to become paper-free wherever possible.

Changes in response to basic digital skills entitlement and standards

Management expect there to be an increase in the number of learners with implementation of the new standards. They hope that the content and qualifications will be better suited to learners' needs than current provision and in a carefully standardised format. They feel that the success of the new standards will depend on whether they succeed in attracting new learners and provide them with the skills they want and need. As yet, they are unsure whether or not this will be the case.

Staff believe that they are already teaching most of the content in the new standards and that current content will simply need 'tweaking as we go' in order to comply and draw down funding.

We have been teaching to the digital skill strategy that we had for the last year, so, I think we're a big part of the way there already. Practitioner

Technologically, the organisation is well prepared, being already well advanced in placing interactive learning materials online. For example, they are already using BigBlueButton for webinar-type sessions and are currently building a new section of the VLE to run screencasting. Saving data to the cloud (allowing the uploading and downloading of information onto the provider's internal servers) has also been fully integrated into classes. Online shopping is covered by using sites which do not require an account to be set up before they can fill a basket. Current course content includes the use of Facetime and Skype.

Staff skills to deliver the standards

A variety of factors keep staff skills up-to-date:

- Many staff have been with the organisation for a long time and CPD, particularly in the form of self-learning, is actively encouraged. Tutors have to

- keep their ECDL levels up to date.
- Curriculum leads challenge tutors on the new standards and check whether they need further training to deliver additional material.
- A Quality Manager observes tutors' sessions, and decides where they require more training.
- Tutors are being trained to make the maximum use of the VLE and have the support of the instructional designer.

Overall, it appears that the key challenge this organisation faces lies not in the staff skills to teach the new standards but in adopting the technology to deliver them.

Areas for workforce skills development

Staff are already working with curriculum, quality managers, and the information designer to fill any gaps and improve their skills in readiness for the new curriculum.

Other expected challenges delivering against the standards

The key challenges in delivering the new standards arise not from gaps in staff skills but accessing the funding to buy and then run the required technology. Whilst much has already been done to upgrade equipment, more is needed.

We need new equipment. We need upgrades everywhere really. We need things to be faster. Manager

Practitioners are also concerned that it will be difficult to teach many elements of the new standards without the development of platforms or dummy accounts which simulate, for example, opening a bank or PayPal account.

Some practitioners worry that the relative ease and simplicity of the VLE environment in some ways fails to tackle learners' 'basic day-to-day digital literacy'.

Challenges are also reported when recruiting tutors, particularly to teach higher

level courses.

Preferences for workforce development opportunities

Training needs are carefully analysed and addressed through online and internal provision where possible.

External provision is limited and management believe that staff should, in future, be making use of more external provision. A current external resource is their membership of HOLEX through which staff interact with other organisations

Their instructional designer is using ETF enhanced modules for training in the classroom but has reservations about the ETF site because although 'the modules they've got on there are great', it is 'vast' and 'it's quite easy to get lost in there'.

Other areas of support

Staff believe that those who require help with basic digital skills often 'don't understand what digital is', which means those who are most in need of help are not currently being reached. For this reason, it is suggested that a national campaign could be helpful to raise basic awareness.

There are also concerns that new content may overwhelm beginners and that much of the content outlined in the new standards may not address the types of skills that new learners are asking for.

Staff would also like to see more clarity about the detail of the standards, particularly from awarding organisations, and are concerned about how all of the necessary new technology will be funded in this period of local government funding cuts.

Finally, tutors would like to talk directly with practitioners at other providers (rather than institutions liaising at managerial level) about how they are going to teach elements of the new standards and what materials they are going to use.

CASE STUDY 6:

ADULT LEARNING SERVICE, NORTH EAST

Current approach to delivering basic digital skills

Key aspects of delivery include:

- The team hold a £1.8 million contract for adult education delivery across the county, which includes basic digital skills training.
- The service delivers a four weeks digital skills programme and, upon completion of this, they then offer a six-week progression programme.
- Staff stress the importance of taking into account the needs of the local community when designing and delivering their curriculum.
- They try to create a 'natural environment' for learners so that they 'feel safe' and 'comfortable' to develop digital skills.
- The team deliver courses around the county in village halls and community centres.
- They have started delivering entry level 1 to entry level 3 courses against the new draft national standards for basic digital skills because they believe that these are more focused on user skills which their learners need.
- They have also embedded digital skills in other vocational courses, such as childcare.
- The shift to the new standards has resulted in a higher demand for courses.
- To cope with the increase in demand, the service have been taking a 'train the trainer' approach so that the

programme eventually becomes self-sustaining.

Changes in response to basic digital skills entitlement and standards

When the draft national standards first came out, the service's manager became aware of them via the ETF website

Their motivation to adopt the standards stems from the fact that digital skills will become 'fundable through the Government', so they 'obviously want to get on board with this'.

When the draft standards were published, the team realised that some tutors were already delivering some of those skills. As such, it has been mostly a case of 'refining' the courses the service was already delivering rather than creating new courses. Therefore, the team feel very positive about the new standards. They feel it is 'really beneficial'.

Given the profile of the area where the service is based, the team also welcomes particularly the recognition that digital skills can be a means to reduce the 'risk of exclusion from social interaction'.

Staff skills to deliver the standards

However, for a number of teaching staff, delivering lessons against the new standards implies getting 'out of their comfort zone' because learners lead the sessions according to what they want to learn in a particular lesson and, as a result, there is no specific syllabus for tutors to follow.

A lot of our staff are very used to delivering to a qualification, and it's quite different then when you say, take them out of their comfort zone and say no, these learners are going to be coming in and going to be telling you what they want to learn, you're not going to have a syllabus. They might come in with, 'I need to know how to use my mobile phone', 'I need to know how to use my iPad'. Manager

shortage of staff to deliver the new standards, but there is a 'transition from accredited delivery, word processing, spreadsheets, into something a little bit more bespoke'.

The need for flexibility as a key attribute for successful delivery of the standards is stressed.

Areas for workforce skills development

Work to develop tutors' skills includes:

- A number of training sessions are being delivered to staff to make sure they are capable of doing their job.
- They have regular staff conferences, which they join either in person or if they are in centres around the area, via Google Hangouts. These are held over one day and staff get paid to attend them.
- A mix of internal and external staff delivers training at staff conferences.
- The service also takes advantage of the digital skills champions scheme, through ETF, to bring in external talent to train staff.
- In addition, they have applied for and been successful in securing funding to train staff to become teachers. Thanks to this, staff have the possibility of achieving a PGCE.

Key challenges in delivering against the standards

These include:

- Limitations in staff's 'basic troubleshooting' techniques.
- Equipment problems which can prevent lessons from going ahead.
- Poor connectivity in rural areas.
- Costs of renewing equipment to keep up-to-date.

- Overcoming learners' fears and traditional attitudes.

Biggest issue's connectivity for us, biggest issue. I've tried a thousand different methods of getting connectivity, but you're limited to a community centre where they've got Wi-Fi and broadband rolled into the place. I've experimented with the likes of the mobile broadband dongles for things, and realistically it's flaky, and that's the last thing that you want when you're trying to show the benefits of technology. Practitioner

Preferences for workforce development opportunities and needs for support

The provider and its staff would welcome:

- Support from ETF or DfE with the financial cost of provision in the form of free software.
- Development of internal full day training conferences 'share best practice.'
- More training in the use of new equipment.
- Support on 'how [...] to screen people for IT' so as to establish the right course and level that corresponds to each learner's abilities. Essentially, they would welcome support with initial assessment tests, perhaps by having freely available and reliable ones that they could use to test learners' abilities against the five skills outlined in the new standards.

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) Workforce capability to deliver basic digital skills entitlement

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon, my name is XXX and I am calling from BMG Research, an independent research organisation. We are conducting a survey on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation (ETF).

Explain if necessary: ETF is a sector-led, government-backed national support body for the further education and training sector. ETF is supported by the Association of Colleges (AoC), the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) and by the Holes network of adult education and training organisations.

The survey aims to help ETF and the further education and training sector to understand the extent to which the FE workforce has the skills needed to deliver the Government's basic digital skill entitlement, and what workforce development is needed to create it.

Can I speak to the person with overall responsibility for determining the resources needed for delivering basic digital skills for learners? This may be someone with responsibility for preparation for life and work courses, or ICT.

When we refer to basic digital skills training we refer to courses designed for adults needing to improve their skills in using computers and other digital devices such as smart phones and laptops, so at the 'beginner' (entry levels 1-3) and 'essential' (level 1) levels.

Further clarification if necessary: We want to speak with them to determine the skills and training staff need to be able to deliver the basic digital skills entitlement NOT to understand staff digital skills more generally.

ASK ALL

S1 Do you have overall responsibility for determining the training and development needs of staff who deliver basic digital skills within your organisation?

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Yes – continue | 1 |
| No – ask for referral | 2 |

ONCE SPEAKING TO THE RIGHT PERSON REPEAT INTRODUCTION IF NECESSARY

S2 The interview will take around 20 minutes ... depending on the answers given. Would it be convenient to conduct the interview now?

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Yes – continue | 1 | |
| | | CONTINUE |
| Definite appointment | 2 | <i>Make definite appointment and send email with standards link / soft call back</i> |
| Soft appointment | 3 | |
| Refusal – no reason given | 4 | <i>Close</i> |
| Refusal – company policy | 5 | |
| Refusal – taken part in other survey recently | 6 | |
| Not available in deadline | 7 | |

Reassurances:

- Please note that all the data will be reported in aggregate form and your answers will not be reported to ETF in any way that will allow you or your organisation to be identified
- BMG Research abides by the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and data protection laws at all times.
- (MRS ref no 050039 69 69 – call 0800 975 9596)
- You can find out more information about our surveys and what we do with the information we collect in our Privacy Notice which is on our website www.bmgresearch.co.uk/privacy
- IF NECESSARY If you'd like a copy of our Privacy Notice emailed to you I can do that now if you provide me with your email details. RECORD EMAIL SENT YES/NO
- BMG Research contact : Sara Suarez on 0121 333 6006
- ETF contact: Charlyne Pullen on 020 3740 8280

ASK ALL

S3 Could I just confirm your name and your job title?

Name (**WRITE IN**): _____

Job title/role (**WRITE IN**): _____

READ OUT TO ALL: In this interview I am going to ask you about issues concerning the skills, training, and development of the staff employed by your organisation who deliver basic digital skills training to your learners (across all your sites).

READ OUT (USE AS PROMPT THROUGHOUT WHERE NEEDED): In this survey when we refer to basic digital skills training we refer to courses designed for adults needing to improve their skills in using computers and other digital devices such as smart phones and laptops, so at the 'beginner' (entry levels 1-3) and 'essential' (level 1) levels.

IF NEEDED: To help tackle digital exclusion through skills, in January 2018 the government announced the introduction of full funding for adults who need them to take basic digital skills courses from 2020. Adults will have the opportunity to undertake improved digital courses based on new national standards setting out the digital skills people need to get on in life and work.

About the organisation and current delivery of basic digital skills

I am now going to ask you some questions about your organisation and the staff who currently deliver basic digital skills training.

ASK ALL

Q1 Is your organisation **CODE ONE**

IF NECESSARY: Specialist further education colleges include agricultural and horticultural colleges, art and design colleges, specialist designated colleges and national/independent specialist colleges

- 1 A general further education college
- 2 A specialist further education college
- 3 A 6th form college **SCREEN OUT**
- 4 An independent private training company
- 5 The education service within a local authority
- 6 A charitable or voluntary training provider
- 7 A training division or unit of an employer, not a local authority **SCREEN OUT**
- 8 Other **WRITE IN**

ASK ALL

Q2 Which of the following apply to your organisation? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 Receive prime contractor with ESFA funding
- 2 Receive sub-contractor with ESFA funding
- 3 Receive funding from another government department
- 4 Expect to receive devolved AEB funding from 2019
- 5 Receive other public funding **WRITE IN**
- 6 SINGLE RESPONSE Do not receive any public funding **SCREEN OUT**
- 7 SINGLE RESPONSE Don't know

ASK ALL

Q3 Does your organisation operate in one region only, in more than one region, or nationally? **CODE ONE**

- 1 One region only
- 2 More than one region
- 3 Nationally
- 4 Don't know
- 5 Refused

ASK ALL

Q4 For how many **basic digital skills learners** was your organisation responsible in the last academic year?

This includes any learner or student who was enrolled with you at any point within the year across all sites who undertook basic digital skills training. If you are involved in contractual arrangements with other providers, please include both learners and students whose education or training was contracted to you and learners and students whose education and training was contracted out by you to other providers. Please include all basic digital skills learners, whether you receive funding for them or not.

WRITE IN NUMBER; PROMPT FOR ESTIMATE IF DOESN'T KNOW EXACTLY. IF CAN'T ESTIMATE A SINGLE FIGURE, PROMPT FOR A BANDED ESTIMATE

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

- 1 1-10
- 2 11-25
- 3 26-50
- 4 51-100
- 5 101-200
- 6 201-500
- 7 501-1000
- 8 More than 1000
- 9 Zero – this is the first year they are offering basic digital skills courses
- 10 Don't know

ASK IF Q4=1-8/10 (NOT 9)

Q5 In total, how many of your basic digital skills learners were studying at the following levels?

WRITE IN NUMBER OR IF NOT KNOWN EXACTLY, PROMPT FOR BEST ESTIMATE. IF CAN'T ESTIMATE A SINGLE FIGURE, PROMPT FOR A BANDED ESTIMATE

CHECK TO BE BUILT IN TO ENSURE NUMBER OF LEARNERS ENTERED IN Q4 MATCHES

| | A. Entry levels 1-3 | B. Levels 1 and 2 |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| WRITE IN NUMBER | | |
| 1-10 | 1 | 1 |
| 11-25 | 2 | 2 |
| 26-50 | 3 | 3 |
| 51-100 | 4 | 4 |
| 101-200 | 5 | 5 |
| 201-500 | 6 | 6 |
| 502-1000 | 7 | 7 |
| More than 1000 | 8 | 8 |
| Don't know | 9 | 9 |

ASK ALL

Q6 How many sites does your organisation deliver basic digital skills training from? Please include both permanent and occasional sites (such as those where you are not the primary user)? **CODE ONE**

| | A. Permanent sites | B. Occasional sites |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|
| One site only | 1 | 1 |
| 2-5 sites | 2 | 2 |
| 6-10 sites | 3 | 3 |
| 11-20 sites | 4 | 4 |
| More than 20 sites WRITE IN NUMBER (inc DK) | 5 | 5 |
| No sites | 6 | 6 |
| Don't know | 7 | 7 |
| Refused | 8 | 8 |

ASK ALL

Q7 In total, how many staff does your organisation directly employ who deliver basic digital skills training, including yourself, who A) deliver this as the main function of their role, or B) deliver this as part of their role?

Please include full time, part time and sessional employees on your payroll, as well as any working proprietors or owners, but excluding the self employed and outside contractor or external agency staff (we will ask about these in a moment).

WRITE IN NUMBER OR IF NOT KNOWN EXACTLY, PROMPT FOR BEST ESTIMATE. IF CAN'T ESTIMATE A SINGLE FIGURE, PROMPT FOR A BANDED ESTIMATE

| | A. Number of staff employed who deliver basic digital skills training as the main function of their role | B. Number of staff employed who deliver basic digital skills training as part of their role |
|------------------------|--|---|
| WRITE IN NUMBER | | |
| 1-5 employees | 1 | 1 |
| 6-10 employees | 2 | 2 |
| 11-25 employees | 3 | 3 |
| 26-49 employees | 4 | 4 |
| 50 or more employees | 5 | 5 |
| Don't know | 6 | 6 |

ASK ALL, CODE ALL THAT APPLY AT A. NUMERIC RESPONSE AT B

Q8 In what subject areas do staff who deliver basic digital skills training teach? How many of the INSERT RESPONSE FROM Q7A/B staff you mentioned previously *mainly* teach in these areas?

CHECK TO BE BUILT IN TO B ENSURE NUMBER OF STAFF ENTERED IN Q7A/B MATCHES

| | A. Subject area | B. Number of basic digital skills staff who <i>mainly</i> teach in this area |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| ICT | 1 | |
| Preparation for life and work | 2 | |
| Other (please specify) | 3 | |
| Other (please specify) | 4 | |
| Other (please specify) | 5 | |
| Don't know | 6 | |

ASK ALL

QX Does your organisation contract any self-employed individuals or sub-contractors who deliver basic digital skills training? What % of your basic digital skills provision is offered in this way?

WRITE IN % (UP TO 100) OR IF NOT KNOWN EXACTLY, PROMPT FOR BEST ESTIMATE. IF CAN'T ESTIMATE A SINGLE FIGURE, PROMPT FOR A BANDED ESTIMATE

| WRITE IN % | % of basic digital skills provision offered by self-employed or sub-contractors |
|------------|---|
| 1-10% | 1 |
| 11-25% | 2 |
| 26-50% | 3 |
| 51-75% | 4 |
| 76-100% | 5 |
| None used | 6 |
| Don't know | 7 |

ASK ALL

QXX Which of the following levels of digital skills courses and qualifications does your organisation offer? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 Pre-entry
- 2 Entry Level 1
- 3 Entry Level 2
- 4 Entry Level 3
- 5 Level 1
- 6 Level 2
- 7 SINGLE RESPONSE None of the above
- 8 SINGLE RESPONSE Don't know

ASK ALL

Q9 What is the minimum qualification of subject relevance you require staff delivering basic digital skills training to hold for teaching A) Entry Levels 1-3, and B) Level 1? **OPEN**

RESPONSE TO BE CODED

INSERT LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION

INSERT TYPE OF QUALIFICATION

Don't know

ASK ALL

Q10 What is the minimum teaching and/or learning support qualification you require staff delivering basic digital skills training to hold for teaching, A) Entry Levels 1-3, and B) Level 1? **OPEN RESPONSE TO BE CODED**

INSERT LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION

INSERT TYPE OF QUALIFICATION

Don't know

New national standards for basic digital skills

READ OUT: I now would like to ask you some questions about the basic digital skills entitlement and the new national standards for basic digital skills.

Remember, in this survey when we refer to basic digital skills training we refer to courses designed for adults needing to improve their skills in using computers and other digital devices such as smart phones and laptops, so at the 'beginner' (entry levels 1-3) and 'essential' (level 1) levels.

ASK ALL

Q11A In consultation with the key stakeholders, the Department for Education has developed new national standards for the digital skills needed for work and life. These were published for consultation in October 2018. Are you aware of these Standards?

CODE ONE

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Unsure

ASK IF Q11A=1

Q11B In what ways do you intend to deliver against these new national standards? **READ OUT, CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 We will continue to use existing courses and qualifications offered
- 2 We will identify or develop new courses and qualifications
- 3 SINGLE RESPONSE We do not expect to deliver any courses or qualifications using the new national standards
- 4 SINGLE RESPONSE Don't know yet (too soon)

READ OUT: If you want to review and provide your views on the standards you can find these at Gov.UK. **READ OUT FOLLOWING LINK IF REQUESTED:**

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/post-16-basic-skills-team/improving-adult-basic-digital-skills/>. Or I can send you a copy via email now.

This questionnaire will now ask you some questions about the extent to which you think your current basic digital skills workforce will be able to deliver training against these standards.

Interviewer to email copy of standards document to respondent if needed at this stage (recommended). Copy provided for interviewer to read out amplifications and knowledge and understanding as appropriate if respondent does not want the document.

We appreciate that you may not have had much time to read and consider the new standards, at this time we are just trying to understand your early responses and thoughts regarding these.

Skill levels

ASK IF QXX=2/3/4/5, ASK HEADING OPTIONS (IN BOLD) AND THEN ASK SUBSEQUENT OPTIONS FOR EACH IF RESPONDENTS SELECTS 2/3/4

Q12A To what extent do you think your current basic digital skills workforce has the skills required to deliver training against the following skills categories and underpinning competencies *at the beginner level (entry level 1-3) and essential level (level 1)*? **CODE ONE FOR EACH**

| | Fully | Partially | Not at all | Don't know |
|---|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Handling Information (including: READ OUT SUBHEADINGS) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Finding and evaluating information | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Managing and storing information | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Identifying and solving technical problems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Creating and editing digital content (including: READ OUT SUBHEADINGS) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Creating and editing documents | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Creating and editing digital media | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Processing numerical data | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Communicating (including: READ OUT SUBHEADINGS) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Communicating, collaborating and sharing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Managing traceable online activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Transacting (including: READ OUT SUBHEADINGS) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Engaging with online transactional services securely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Buying securely online | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Being safe and responsible online (including: READ OUT SUBHEADINGS) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Protecting privacy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Protecting data | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Being responsible online | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Digital wellbeing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

ASK IF FOR EACH OPTION SELECTED AS 2 OR 3 AT Q12A

Q12B Does the gap in the skills required to deliver training against INSERT SKILL AREA relate to *the beginner level (entry level 1-3) courses, essential level (level 1) courses, or both?* **CODE ONE FOR EACH**

| | Beginner | Essential | Both | Don't know |
|---|-----------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Handling Information (including: READ OUT SUBHEADINGS) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Finding and evaluating information | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Managing and storing information | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Identifying and solving technical problems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Creating and editing digital content (including: READ OUT SUBHEADINGS) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Creating and editing documents | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Creating and editing digital media | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Processing numerical data | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Communicating (including: READ OUT SUBHEADINGS) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Communicating, collaborating and sharing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Managing traceable online activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Transacting (including: READ OUT SUBHEADINGS) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Engaging with online transactional services securely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Buying securely online | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Being safe and responsible online (including: READ OUT SUBHEADINGS) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Protecting privacy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Protecting data | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Being responsible online | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Digital wellbeing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

ASK IF Q12 =2/3 FOR ANY SKILL CATEGORY (ASKED ONCE)Q13How do you plan to address any gaps in your current workforce for delivering training against the skills categories and underpinning competencies *at the beginner level (entry level 1-3) and essential level (level 1)*? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 We will support staff to achieve relevant qualifications
- 2 We will provide in-house training for this
- 3 We will support staff to attend external training for this
- 4 We will recruit new staff to deliver this
- 5 Something else *Please specify*
- 6 SINGLE RESPONSE We do not plan to address this
- 7 SINGLE RESPONSE Don't know

ASK IF Q12 =2/3 FOR ANY SKILL CATEGORY (ASKED ONCE)SHOW TOTAL WORKFORCE NUMBER FROM Q7 TO PROMPT IF NEEDED

Q14And what proportion of your workforce for basic digital skills training do you plan to develop in this way for delivering training *at the beginner level (entry level 1-3) and essential level (level 1)*? **CODE ONE**

- 1 All our basic digital skills workforce (100%)
- 2 A majority of our basic digital skills workforce (76-99%)
- 3 More than half of our basic digital skills workforce (51-75%)
- 4 Half/less than half of our basic digital skills workforce (26-50%)
- 5 A minority of our basic digital skills workforce (1-25%)
- 6 None of our basic digital skills workforce
- 7 Don't know

ASK ALL, OPEN RESPONSE

Q15What other support do you think your basic digital skills workforce will need to deliver the new standards *at the beginner level (entry level 1-3) and essential level (level 1)*)?

Planning and delivering training

I would now like to ask you some questions about your preferences for training your basic digital skills workforce.

ASK ALL

Q22 How are training and development needs identified amongst your basic digital skills workforce? **READ OUT; CODE ALL THAT APPLY; RANDOMISE**

- 1 By regular staff appraisals or performance development reviews
- 2 By observations of individuals' performance
- 3 By a human resources department or specialist
- 4 By formal training needs assessment across the organisation or quality improvement plan
- 5 By the judgements of senior staff or managers
- 6 By requests from individuals who want training or development
- 7 By other means *Please specify*
- 8 SINGLE RESPONSE Don't know

ASK ALL

Q23 Now I'd like to read out some means by which education and training providers can train and develop their staff. Can you say which of these you would consider using for your workforce to deliver the new national standards? **CODE ONE FOR EACH**

| | YES | NO | DK |
|--|-----|----|----|
| Day-long training sessions for the entire staff or a large proportion of the staff | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Training seminars or short courses | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Formal online training and development programmes or other forms of distance learning | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Paid study leave | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Coaching and mentoring | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| On-the-job training where the individuals concerned would recognise that they were being trained, not just informal interactions between staff members | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Induction programmes specific to your organisation | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Initial teacher training for individuals who are new to the profession | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Conferences, workshops, seminars, meetings or webinars | 1 | 2 | 3 |

ASK ALL

Q24 Have you delivered any training to support delivery of basic digital skills courses in the past year? **What did this relate to? DO NOT READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

| | |
|--|----|
| Finding and evaluating information | 1 |
| Managing and storing information | 2 |
| Identifying and solving technical problems | 3 |
| Creating and editing documents | 4 |
| Creating and editing digital media | 5 |
| Processing numerical data | 6 |
| Communicating, collaborating and sharing | 7 |
| Managing traceable online activities | 8 |
| Engaging with online transactional services securely | 9 |
| Buying securely online | 10 |
| Protecting privacy | 11 |
| Protecting data | 12 |
| Being responsible online | 13 |
| Digital wellbeing | 14 |
| Something else relating to the delivery of basic digital skills training <i>Please specify</i> | 15 |
| SINGLE RESPONSE None of the above | 16 |
| SINGLE RESPONSE Don't know | 17 |

ASK ALL

Q25 How many of your basic digital skills workforce have received formal training and development in these areas over the past year? Please only include leaders, managers and teaching and related staff, including any who have since left? **IF SAYS "All staff", CODE APPROPRIATE NUMBER WRITE IN NUMBER BELOW. IF SAYS 'Don't know' PROMPT FOR RANGE AND CODE. SHOW NUMBER ENTERED AT Q7.**

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| WRITE IN NUMBER | |
| 1-5 employees | 1 |
| 6-10 employees | 2 |
| 11-25 employees | 3 |
| 26-49 employees | 4 |
| 50 or more employees | 5 |
| Don't know | 6 |

ASK ALL

Q26 Have any of the following supplied training and development to your basic digital skills workforce in these areas in the past year? **READ OUT ALL; CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 Specialist trainers, coaches, or members from within your organisation
- 2 Senior individuals in the organisation who trained or developed more junior individuals
- 3 An external private training company or consultancy
- 4 A professional institution
- 5 An external further education college
- 6 ETF, that is the Education and Training Foundation
- 7 AoC, that is the Association of Colleges
- 8 AELP, that is the Association of Education and Learning Providers
- 9 Suppliers of equipment or materials to your organisation
- 10 Were there any other significant suppliers of training and development to your organisation? *Please specify*
- 11 SINGLE RESPONSE Not applicable – we haven't provided any training or development **DO NOT READ OUT**

ASK ALL

Q27 Do you anticipate experiencing any of the following barriers to providing all the training and development which is needed for your basic digital skills workforce to deliver against the new standards? **READ OUT ALL. CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 Insufficient funding or income to the organisation
- 2 The organisation's reluctance to commit funding to training and development
- 3 The organisation hasn't identified training and development needs accurately and/or hasn't planned efficiently to meet them
- 4 The organisation can't find or source the training and development needed
- 5 External training and development fees are too expensive or over-priced
- 6 It is difficult to allow staff to have time off-the-job for training
- 7 Individuals are reluctant to train and/or are not responsive to training and development opportunities
- 8 Are there any other barriers? *Please specify*
- 9 SINGLE RESPONSE No specific barriers identified
- 10 SINGLE RESPONSE Don't know

ASK ALL

Q28 Generally, how confident are you that the training and development needs of your basic digital skills workforce to deliver against the new standards will be met? **PROMPT AS NECESSARY. CODE ONE**

- 1 Wholly or very confident
- 2 Moderately confident
- 3 Not very confident
- 4 Not at all confident
- 5 Don't know

ASK ALL

Q29 Do you expect your budget for training and development in this area to increase, decrease, or stay about the same next year? **PROMPT AS NECESSARY. CODE ONE**

- 1 Increase
- 2 Decrease
- 3 Stay about the same
- 4 Don't know

ASK ALL

Q30 Do you anticipate experiencing any further barriers to your organisation delivering basic digital skills against the new standards? **UNPROMPTED, CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 Insufficient equipment available (e.g. computers, smart phones, wi-fi in delivery locations)
- 2 The organisation's reluctance to commit funding or resource to basic digital skills
- 3 Lack of availability of appropriate courses, qualifications, or training materials
- 4 Any other barriers? *Please specify*
- 5 SINGLE RESPONSE No specific barriers identified
- 6 SINGLE RESPONSE Don't know

ASK ALL

Q31 Would you welcome support in the form of information, guidance, or the provision of training or development in this area from any of the following organisations? **READ OUT ALL. CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 The Department for Education
- 2 The Education and Training Foundation
- 3 The Association of Colleges
- 4 The Association of Education and Learning Providers
- 5 HOLEX
- 6 Is there any other source of support which you would welcome? *Please specify*
- 7 SINGLE RESPONSE No support required/wanted
- 8 SINGLE RESPONSE Don't know

ASK ALL WITH CODES 2-5 AT Q31

Q32 You said you'd welcome support from [INSERT ANSWERS FROM Q30, CODES 2-5 ONLY]. Would you like us to pass on your details to the Education and Training Foundation so that they can provide you with more information? **CODE ONE**

- 1 Yes **COLLECT NAME / EMAIL ADDRESS / PHONE NUMBER**
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know

ASK ALL

Q33 We may wish to follow up on specific issues at a later date by exploring these through case studies. This would involve researchers undertaking further in-depth interviews with you and potentially other members of staff at your organisations. Would you be willing to be contacted to discuss this possibility in more detail?

- 1 Yes **COLLECT NAME / EMAIL ADDRESS / PHONE NUMBER IF NOT PROVIDED IN Q32**
- 2 No

ASK ALL

Q34 And finally, would you like to be emailed a summary of the findings from this research? **CODE ONE**

- 1 Yes **COLLECT NAME / EMAIL ADDRESS IF NOT PROVIDED IN Q32/33**
- 2 No

THANK AND CLOSE

APPENDIX 2: TOPIC GUIDE FOR DELIVERY LEADS

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) Workforce capability to deliver basic digital skills entitlement

Interviewer instructions

This topic guide is intended to be used in a flexible way. It is not meant to be read out word by word. You should follow up on any emerging theme that would be of value to the research objectives. In addition, please note that you might need to use this guide differently depending on the type of qualitative research that you will be carrying out. For focus groups, only questions in bold should be used as a guide so that all respondents can give their views and have enough time to do so. For depth interviews, all questions can be used as a guide so that we can gain as many insights as possible on the different themes.

In any case, the answers provided by organisational respondents in the CATI stage of the research should be reviewed ahead of the qualitative stage and some responses may be used as prompts where appropriate.

Introduction and briefing (3 minutes)

- Thanks for agreeing to take part
- Researcher to introduce themselves & BMG, independent social research agency.
- Explain interviews/focus groups form part of ETF's assessment of workforce capability to deliver basic digital skills entitlement from 2020.
- ETF will use the information we collect to enable the short-term understanding and planning for the training and development of the workforce, and to benchmark and highlight best practice amongst providers in how they train their staff and how this leads to improved delivery of support.
- The information you provide will be anonymised so that your responses will not be linked to you/your organisation; however, if you have concerns about any specific comments you make being 'identifiable' or would like to waive your organisational anonymity, please let me know and we can discuss this further.
- Interviewer to be aware of organisation anonymity. We will not identify any individuals or disclose the personal details of those who take part. Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence as observed by standards determined by the Market Research Society. Your details will only be provided to third parties if we are required to do so by law.
- You do not have to take part in this research. Participation is voluntary and you can withdraw your consent to take part at any time.
- Views stated are not attributable to individuals, everything you say will be anonymised unless otherwise agreed, and the more open and honest you can be the better.
- Quotes from the discussions may be used in the research report as a way of bringing the findings to life. However, these quotes would not identify any individual. This is in line with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.
- There are no right or wrong answers: it's just your views or opinions that count. What you don't know is as important as what you do know.
- We would like to audio-record the discussion for the purposes of accurately capturing all the information you share with us. The audio will be used for analysis purposes only and

will not be shared with anyone outside of BMG Research. All recordings will be securely destroyed on completion of this study.

Provide opportunity for respondent to ask any questions.

Seek permission to audio-record. Switch microphone on. Once switched on, confirm that the audio-recorder is on for the benefit of the tape.

Introductions (3 minutes)

- **Can I start by finding out a bit of background information about you...**
 - Name
 - Role (and responsibilities)
 - Department/team they work within

Current set up of workforce/ strategic planning and delivery of basic digital skills (15 minutes)

- **How does your organisation currently plan/deliver basic digital skills?**
 - *Prompt:* Has your organisation employed new staff to teach basic digital skills in the last 12 months? *Probe fully - they can be within ICT or preparation for life and work*
 - *If yes:* why were they employed? (more demand? New courses?)
 - *Prompt:* How are the training and development needs of staff who deliver basic digital skills identified?
- **How are staff trained/resources kept up to date? What works well when...**
 - Planning this?
 - Delivering this?
 - *Prompt: What type of training has your basic digital skills workforce taken part in to be able to deliver basic digital skills in the past 12 months?*
 - Day-long training sessions for the entire staff or a large proportion of the staff
 - Training seminars or short courses
 - Formal online training and development programmes or other forms of distance learning
 - Paid study leave
 - Coaching and mentoring
 - On-the-job training where the individuals concerned would recognise that they were being trained, not just informal interactions between staff members
 - Induction programmes specific to your organisation
 - Initial teacher training for individuals who are new to the profession
 - Conferences, workshops, seminars, meetings or webinars
- **Does training from any specific supplier work particularly well? Why? Probe fully and if not mentioned prompt for.**
 - Specialist trainers, coaches, or members from within your organisation

- Senior individuals in the organisation who trained or developed more junior individuals
 - An external private training company or consultancy
 - A professional institution
 - An external further education college
 - ETF, that is the Education and Training Foundation
 - AoC, that is the Association of Colleges
 - AELP, that is the Association of Education and Learning Providers
- **What do you think could be better when planning for training for your basic digital skills staff? Probe fully and then if not covered, prompt for:**
 - Funding
 - Staff willingness to take part
 - Staff's availability
 - Availability or cost of training
 - Organisation's reluctance to commit resources
 - Organisation's failure to identify training and development needs

Plans to deliver basic digital skills entitlement from 2020 (20 minutes)

- To help tackle digital exclusion through skills, in January 2018 the government announced the introduction of full funding for adults who need them to take basic digital skills courses from 2020. Adults will have the opportunity to undertake improved digital courses based on new national standards setting out the digital skills people need to get on in life and work. **Have you read the new standards developed by the DfE in consultation with key stakeholders? What do you know about them?**
 - *If not: Are you aware of these standards? What do you know about them?*

Handout copy of standards to respondents

- **How is your organisation planning to engage and deliver against the new basic digital skills entitlement and standards?**
 - *Probe: is this at beginner (entry level 1-3) or at essential level (level 1) or both?*
- **Are you already teaching any of the skills outlined in the new standards as part of current basic digital skill courses/qualifications? Probe fully and prompt for each skill as necessary. Read out amplifications if required:**
 - Handling information
 - Creating and editing digital content
 - Communicating
 - Transacting
 - Being safe and responsible online

- *If yes: how do you deliver those?*
- *Are they being taught at beginner (entry levels 1-3) or essential level (level 1) or both? Probe for each skill mentioned*
- **Has your organisation independently developed curricula to update basic digital skills courses/qualifications in the past 12 months? What elements of the courses/qualifications have been updated? Why?**
- **Overall, how confident are you that your staff have or will have the skills needed to deliver against the new digital skills standards? Why is this?**
Prompt for skills:
 - Handling information
 - Creating and editing digital content
 - Communicating
 - Transacting
 - Being safe and responsible online
- **What does the organisation see as the key considerations/challenges for delivering the standards? Probe fully**
 - *Prompt: Are you making arrangements to be able to deliver any of the skills in the new standards in particular? Prompt for skills and read out amplifications if necessary*
 - Handling information
 - Creating and editing digital content
 - Communicating
 - Transacting
 - Being safe and responsible online
 - *Probe: what other resources will you need? Would this be for beginner or essential level or both?*
- **How will your plan to deliver the entitlement and standards address the considerations/ challenges previously cited? Probe fully**
 - *Probe: What resources will be committed to this?*
- **What support would you need to do this and who/where from? Probe fully**
 - Will you need support from the Department for Education (DfE)? *If so: What type of support?*
 - Will you need support from the Education and Training Foundation (ETF)? *If so: What type of support?*
 - From any other source?

Concerns/barriers to deliver basic digital skills entitlement and standards (10 minutes)

- **Are there any other challenges or barriers you are facing when planning to deliver the basic digital skills entitlement? Probe fully and if not mentioned prompt:**
 - Staffing problems

- Staff training
 - Learner-related issues
 - Purchasing new equipment? (tablets, phones, laptops)
 - Organisation's willingness to commit resources
 - Organisation's ability to identify training and development needs
 - Any other?
 - *Probe:* are these barriers related to delivering basic digital skills at beginner (entry level 1-3) or essential level (level 1) or both? Are these barriers related to any of the skills in the new standards?
- **What level of support would your organisation need to be able to overcome these challenges and be in a position to successfully deliver basic digital skills to adults who want it from 2020? Probe fully and if not mentioned prompt for:**
 - Funding
 - Staff willingness to take part in training
 - Staff availability to take part in training
 - Availability of training
 - **Where or from what bodies are you planning to get support?**
 - Are you planning to get support from the Department for Education (DfE)?
 - Are you planning to get support from the Education and Training Foundation (ETF)?
 - Any other?
 - Do you have any other suggestions on how to overcome these challenges? *Probe fully*

Overall impact of standards and best practice (6 minutes)

- **Are there any particular aspects of your provision and how you support and train staff to deliver basic digital skills which you would consider to show particularly effective practice and plan to continue in the future? Why is this?**
- **Overall, what impact (negative or positive) do you think the new standards will have on teachers at your organisation?**
 - Will it help, benefit or improve delivery and assessments
 - Make no difference or worse off?

Wrap Up (3 minutes)

- Moderator to check for any final closing comments
- Repeat assurances regarding confidentiality
- Thank and close

APPENDIX 3: TOPIC GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) Workforce capability to deliver basic digital skills entitlement

Interviewer instructions

This topic guide is intended to be used in a flexible way. It is not meant to be read out word by word. You should follow up on any emerging theme that would be of value to the research objectives. In addition, please note that you might need to use this guide differently depending on the type of qualitative research that you will be carrying out. For focus groups, only questions in bold should be used as a guide so that all respondents can give their views and have enough time to do so. For depth interviews, all questions can be used as a guide so that we can gain as many insights as possible on the different themes.

Introduction and briefing (3 minutes)

- Thanks for agreeing to take part
- Researcher to introduce themselves & BMG, independent social research agency.
- Explain interviews/focus groups form part of ETF's assessment of workforce capability to deliver basic digital skills entitlement from 2020.
- ETF will use the information we collect to enable the short-term understanding and planning for the training and development of the workforce, and to benchmark and highlight best practice amongst providers in how they train their staff and how this leads to improved delivery of support.
- The information you provide will be anonymised so that your responses will not be linked to you/your organisation; however, if you have concerns about any specific comments you make being 'identifiable' or would like to waive your organisational anonymity, please let me know and we can discuss this further.
- Interviewer to be aware of organisation anonymity. We will not identify any individuals or disclose the personal details of those who take part. Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence as observed by standards determined by the Market Research Society. Your details will only be provided to third parties if we are required to do so by law.
- You do not have to take part in this research. Participation is voluntary and you can withdraw your consent to take part at any time.
- Views stated are not attributable to individuals, everything you say will be anonymised unless otherwise agreed, and the more open and honest you can be the better.
- Quotes from the discussions may be used in the research report as a way of bringing the findings to life. However, these quotes would not identify any individual. This is in line with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.
- There are no right or wrong answers: it's just your views or opinions that count. What you don't know is as important as what you do know.
- We would like to audio-record the discussion for the purposes of accurately capturing all the information you share with us. The audio will be used for analysis purposes only and will not be shared with anyone outside of BMG Research. All recordings will be securely destroyed on completion of this study.

Provide opportunity for respondent to ask any questions.

Seek permission to audio-record. Switch microphone on. Once switched on, confirm that the audio-recorder is on for the benefit of the tape.

Warm Up (2 minutes)

- **Ask respondent to introduce themselves:**
 - First name and role
 - Department worked for?
 - Length worked for?
 - Levels taught

Current delivery of basic digital skills (10 minutes)

- **Do you think the number of basic digital skill learners has increased, remained about the same or decreased in the last 12 months? Are any levels more or less popular than others among learners? *Prompt for levels if necessary***
 - Pre-entry
 - Entry level 1
 - Entry level 2
 - Entry level 3
 - Level 1
 - Level 2
- **Overall, how satisfied are you with the basic digital skills courses/qualifications you currently deliver?**
 - Do they meet learners' needs in terms of the skills they need to get on in work and life? How?
- **What aspects of the basic digital skills qualifications/courses that you teach work well with learners? *Probe***
- **What would you change about how you deliver the current basic digital skills curriculum to better meet learners' needs or improve it based on your experience?**
 - Training received
 - Skills taught/curriculum
 - Mode of delivery
 - Assessment process
 - Equipment used
 - Support provided
 - Relevance to modern world/workplace

Plans to deliver basic digital skills entitlement from 2020 (20 minutes)

- To help tackle digital exclusion through skills, in January 2018 the government announced the introduction of full funding for adults who need them to take basic digital skills courses from 2020. Adults will have the opportunity to undertake improved digital

courses based on new national standards setting out the digital skills people need to get on in life and work. **Have you read the new standards developed by the DfE in consultation with key stakeholders? What do you know about them?**

- *If not:* Are you aware of these standards? What do you know about them?

Handout copy of standards to respondents

- **How are you planning to deliver against the new standards?**
 - Developing new courses
 - Integrating them with existing courses
- **Have you or your organisation developed lessons or additional materials to make your current courses/qualifications involving ICT skills more relevant to your learners' needs? *Probe fully***
 - Are there any basic ICT skills in particular learners have mentioned that they would like to learn in the past 12 months? *If so:* Which ones? Have you developed lessons to deliver against these?
- **Are you already teaching any of the skills outlined in the new standards as part of current basic digital skill courses/qualifications? *Probe fully and prompt for each skill as necessary. Read out amplifications if required:***
 - Handling information
 - Creating and editing digital content
 - Communicating
 - Transacting
 - Being safe and responsible online
 - *If yes:* how do you deliver those?
 - Are they being taught at beginner (entry levels 1-3) or essential level (level 1) or both? *Probe for each skill mentioned*
- **Overall, how confident are you that you have or that you will have the skills needed to deliver against the new digital skills standards? *Prompt for skills:***
 - Handling information
 - Creating and editing digital content
 - Communicating
 - Transacting
 - Being safe and responsible online
- **Will you need support or certifications to be able to deliver against the new standards? What support? What qualifications?**
 - Do these certifications exist?
- **Will these support or certifications be targeted to any of the skills in the new standards in particular? *Prompt for skills and read out amplifications if necessary***
 - Handling information
 - Creating and editing digital content
 - Communicating

- Transacting
- Being safe and responsible online
- **What other support will you need?**
- **Would this be for teaching at beginner or essential level or both?**
- **Where are you planning to get support from?**

Views on training received (8 minutes)

- **What type of training have you taken part in to be able to deliver basic digital skills in the past 12 months? Probe fully and if not covered prompt for:**
 - Day-long training sessions for the entire staff or a large proportion of the staff
 - Training seminars or short courses
 - Formal online training and development programmes or other forms of distance learning
 - Paid study leave
 - Coaching and mentoring
 - On-the-job training where the individuals concerned would recognise that they were being trained, not just informal interactions between staff members
 - Induction programmes specific to your organisation
 - Initial teacher training for individuals who are new to the profession
 - Conferences, workshops, seminars, meetings or webinars
- **Do you think this is sufficient for you to be able to teach basic digital skills based on the new standards?**
 - *If yes: Why? What in particular was helpful?*
 - *If not: What would you change? What else would you need?*
- **What do you think could be improved in terms of the training that you have received? Probe fully**
 - That would benefit yourself?
 - That would benefit your learners?

Concerns/barriers to deliver basic digital skills entitlement (8 minutes)

- **What will be the biggest challenges or barriers for you to deliver against the basic digital skills entitlement? Probe fully and if not mentioned prompt for:**
 - Capacity
 - Training/qualifications needed
 - Learner-related issues
 - Purchasing new equipment? (tablets, phones, laptops)
 - Organisation's willingness to commit resources
 - Organisation's ability to identify training and development needs
 - Any other?
 - *Probe: are these barriers related to delivering basic digital skills at beginner (entry level 1-3) or essential level (level 1) or both? Are these barriers related to specific skills in the new standards? Which ones?*

- **What will be the biggest challenges for learners?** *Probe fully*
- **Do you have any suggestions on how to overcome these challenges?** *Probe fully*
 - That apply to yourself
 - That apply to your learners

Overall impact of standards (5 minutes)

- **Overall, what impact (negative or positive) do you think the new standards will have a) on your role and b) on prospective learners?**
 - Will it help, benefit or improve teaching, learning and assessments
 - Make no difference or worse off?

Wrap Up (2 minutes)

- Moderator to check for any final closing comments
- Repeat assurances regarding confidentiality
- Thank and close