



**Social Exclusion Project  
UK Report**

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## Contents

	Section	Page
Executive Summary		3
Project Overview		3
Methodology		5
Responses	1.1	5
Provider Sectors	1.2	6
Geographical Spread	1.3	7
Projected Provision	2.2	8
Marketing Methods	2.3	8
Increase in Workplace Basic Skills	2.4	9
Training	2.5	10
ESOL Barriers	3.2	11
ESOL Ways of Overcoming Barriers	3.3	13
Organisational Size Compared with Workplace Provision	4.1	14
Organisational Sectors	4.2	15
Mode of Delivery	4.3	16
ESOL Providers	5.1	19
ESOL Organisational Size	5.2	20
Curriculum Related to Organisational Size	5.3	21
Provider Type: Range of Group Sizes	6.1	22
Conclusions	7.1	23
Issues	8.1	28
Case Study A	9.1	30
Case Study B	9.2	33
Case Study C	9.3	37

## Executive Summary

This survey was designed and developed by the Workplace Basic Skills Network as part of a European project (SEP), aimed at combating social exclusion for migrant workers through the development of workplace language provision.

Members of the UK project team have been:

Sandra Pegum  
Chris Holland  
Sam Martindale

Sandra Pegum compiled this report on the results of the survey.



The Workplace Basic Skills Network is a national membership organisation based at Lancaster University, within CSET, the Centre for the Study of Education and Training in the Education Research Department. The Workplace Basic Skills Network was established in 1993 and is core funded by the DfES to increase professional capacity in workplace basic skills through:

- *Continuing professional development*
- *Seminars and workshops*
- *A regular Bulletin and email updates*
- *Consultancy and support for providers*
- *Research*
- *National and international links and partnership projects*
- *Support for regional networks*

Information about our services can be found on our Website. <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/wbsnet>

## The Project

Setting up Partnerships against Social Exclusion in the Workplace

This Socrates funded SEP project was conceived at an ECML (European Council of Modern Languages) workshop in Austria, where initial discussions on social exclusion and workplace language provision in 23 different countries highlighted the need for further research and development. The lead partner is Germany (led by Matilde Monetti), and other partners are Italy (led by Fernanda Minuz) and the U.K. (led by Sandra Pegum).

European project partners from Germany and Italy are interested in taking note of the UK experience of developing and embedding workplace basic skills partnerships.



## **The aim of project**

The project aims to develop a European model for stakeholder co-operation. This model will serve as a guideline for setting up partnerships among responsible agencies at local, regional, national and international level. The task is to develop and implement effective joint policies aiming at improving the communicative competence (i.e. second language, literacy and numeracy) at the workplace of individuals and groups particularly in danger of being excluded, such as migrant and mature workers, women and people with disabilities.

It is believed that internal partnerships will be more effective if supported by international partnerships at European level. The latter are expected to speed up on-going developments in the countries involved in the projects, as well as in other countries.

## **Outcomes**

- The development of a survey format on language, literacy and numeracy provision in the workplace
- A publication with information on language, literacy and numeracy provision at the workplace in countries involved in the project
- A model for setting up partnership/stakeholder co-operation including guidelines and examples of good practice, issues and recommendations
- A team of multipliers in each partner organisation who can support the development of the model in non-partner countries
- A national conference to present the results to relevant European stakeholders in government, employment and education, as well as to representatives of targeted organisations, and to offer support for the launching of similar projects
- Partnerships established in the countries involved with the project

## **Progress on the U.K. development of this survey:**

Questionnaires have been designed, developed and disseminated to provider organisations. This report has been produced. The raw data has been analysed in terms of impact on workplace basic skills provision as reported by providers and contrasted with other factors e.g. section 4.2 looks at the different organisational sectors and explores patterns of provider types who tend to work within them. National and International conferences have been held to disseminate information to date.

## **Reasons behind the survey**

The Workplace Basic Skills Network had some additional objectives in developing this survey:

- *To provide information to the DfES on workplace provision in the UK*
- *To inform an Alinea European ICT project on materials used in the UK*
- *To create information towards a provider list for employers*

## 1.1 Responses

A database of further education, adult education and private providers has been used to provide the cohort for this survey. The initial target was 1241, with a return rate of 370 - a 30% return rate. On average one would expect below 5% return rate.

Of the 370 returned questionnaires, 31% or 113 training providers were currently involved with delivery of basic skills. Workplace ESOL provision was represented by 11% of the returned forms.

113 training providers are currently providing workplace basic skills in 382 workplaces. One should also consider that a provider could be delivering more than one curriculum area at each workplace, (see section 4.5)

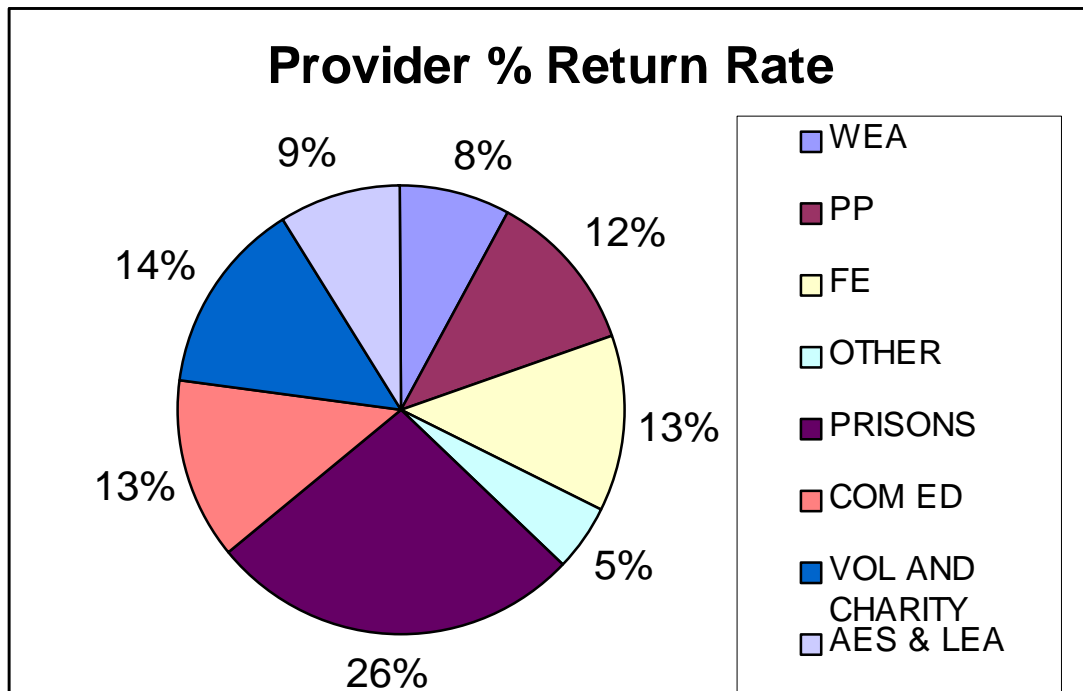
### 1.1

Total questionnaires sent out	<b>1241</b>
Total returned	<b>370</b>
Total training providers offering workplace basic skills	<b>113</b>
Total training providers offering workplace ESOL provision	<b>39</b>
Total number of workplaces where there is basic skills curriculum delivery (Literacy/Numeracy/ESOL/ ICT)	<b>382</b>

## Summary of Targeted Providers

<b>1.1</b>	Total Questionnaires by educational sector	Questionnaires returned	Percentage of overall sample questions returned by each provider sector
<b>FE College</b>	497	157	31%
<b>County Adult Education Service AES &amp; LEA</b>	74	17	22%
<b>Community Education Provider Com Ed</b>	137	44	32%
<b>Private Provider PP</b>	428	123	29%
<b>WEA</b>	20	4	20%
<b>Prisons</b>	3	2	66%
<b>Voluntary and Charities</b>	20	7	35%
<b>Other</b>	63	8	12%

**Fig 1** Providers who returned the questionnaire as a percentage of total sent to that provider sector.



\* Only 3 prisons were targeted

### 1.2 Provider Sectors

Question 1.2 asked for type of provider organisation.

The spread of questionnaire return from the different provider sectors are shown in table 1.2. Percentage rates worked out using the 'sent and returned' rate; show that the FE sector returned the most forms.

Table 1.2 Provider types and the extent to which they are providing basic skills in the workplace.

1.2	Returned forms	Of the returned The number delivering in the workplace	Numbers delivering ESOL in the workplace	Returned forms delivering workplace basic skills as a percentage of the total forms sent
<b>FE College</b>	99	71	25	72%
County Adult Education Service <b>AES &amp; LEA</b>	14	6	3	42%
Community Education Provider <b>Com Ed</b>	23	9	3	39%
Private Provider <b>PP</b>	25	15	3	60%
<b>WEA</b>	4	1	1	25%
Other <b>O</b>	16	9	4	56%

### 1.3 Geographical Spread

Question 1.3 asked for geographical location.

62% of all those who returned questionnaires are delivering workplace literacy, numeracy, ICT or ESOL, and of these, 42% are specifically delivering ESOL provision.

The largest return for the regions of England was from the North West. However, in the North West we see that ESOL workplace provision is the lowest of all geographical areas, perhaps reflecting the lower percentage of second or other language speakers in the area. One North West FE provider reported ESOL need only representing 0.6% of the local adult population.

Proportionally highest levels of ESOL provision were found in the North East, West Midlands and East Midlands, although Yorkshire/Humberside, East and London were all delivering around 50% of workplace basic skills in the context of ESOL. (See fig 1)

1.3 Geographical Area	Returned	Workplace provision	ESOL Provision
North Ireland NI	2	2	0
Scotland S	4	3	2
Wales W	4	4	1
Eastern E	12	10	5
East Midlands EM	13	3	2
West Midlands WM	18	13	9
London L	18	10	5
North East NE	6	0	3
North West NW	38	25	3
South East SE	21	12	7
South West SW	23	12	2
Yorkshire/Humber Y/M	12	7	1

Fig 1

Workplace as a percentage of returned questionnaires		ESOL as a percentage of workplace provision	
E	83%	NE	100% *
WM	72%	WM	69%
NW	66%	EM	66%
Y/H	58%	SE	58%
SE	57%	E	50%
L	56%	L	50%
SW	52%	SW	17%
EM	23%	Y/H	14%
NE	0%	NW	12%

\* There was a lower return rate for the North East

### 2.2 Projected Provision

Question 2.2 asked about projected increase in workplace basic skills provision.

Of the questionnaires returned, it was encouraging to note that 169 reported that, although not delivering workplace basic skills at the moment, they were intending to in the future.

### 2.3 Marketing Methods

Question 2.3 asked what marketing methods were used.

Providers reported the following methods of marketing to employers:

Direct contact

Posters

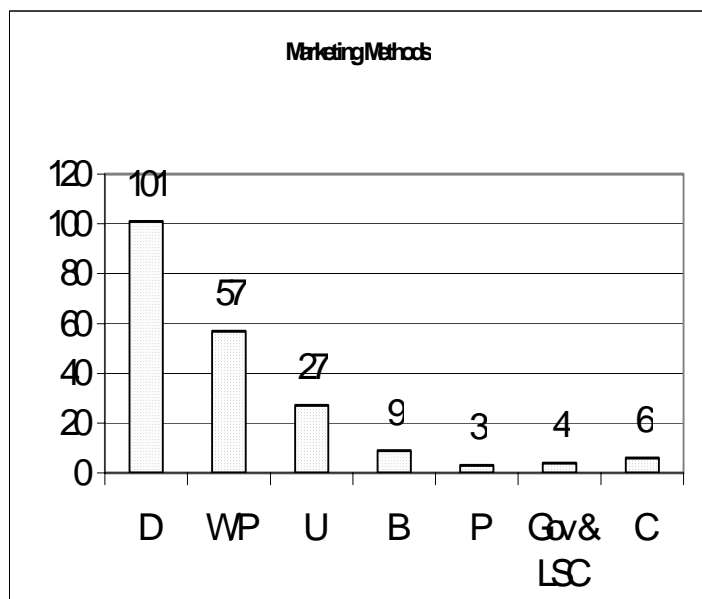
Awareness raising

Via an organisational contact

2. 3 Marketing Approach		
<b>D</b>	Direct marketing to workplace	92
<b>W/P</b>	Approached by workplace management	57
<b>U</b>	Approached by unions	27
<b>B</b>	Approached by broker	9
<b>O</b>	Other total	22
<b>PP</b>	Provider publicity	9
<b>P</b>	Projects	3
<b>LSC</b>	LSC and Gov. funded	4
<b>C</b>	Contacts	6

Direct marketing from providers and being contacted by the employer are reported as the most frequently used promotional techniques for launching workplace basic skills. Unions, with the introduction of Union Learning Representatives and the Union Learning Fund are playing an increasing role in promoting training. (See fig 2)

Fig 2



### 2.4 Increase in Workplace Basic Skills

Question 2.4 asked about increase in range or provision of workplace basic skills since January 2000.

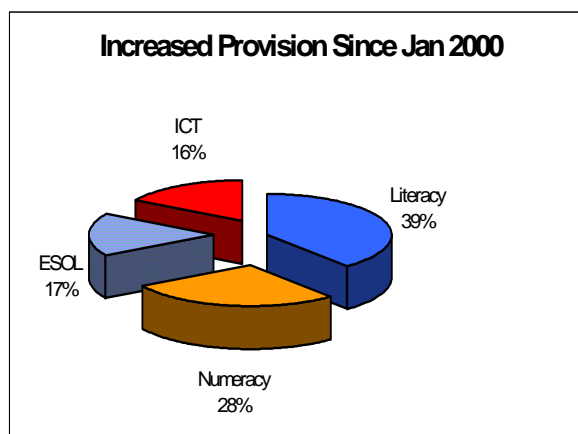
There has been a massive increase in workplace basic skills since January 2000. All sectors of providers (except those charity and voluntary sectors who returned their forms), reported an increase in one or more curriculum area. The increase in further education is the most marked. There were 99 returned questionnaires from the FE sector, of these, 55 reported an increase in basic skills workplace provision in. Of the 25 returned so far, there are increases in provision for 11 of them, covering 25 areas of workplace basic skills. Over 50% Prisons, LEA and AES who returned their questionnaires reported an increase in workplace basic skills delivery The lowest rate of return against increase in provision was in the community education sector. Only 34% of those returning their questionnaires reported an increase, but of these, each is delivering, on average, an increase in two curriculum areas.

#### 2.4 Greater Provision in Terms of Provider Organisations.

<b>2.4 Greater provision since .....January 2000</b>	Literacy Provision	Numeracy Provision	ESOL Provision	ICT Provision
<b>FE College</b>	43	26	20	10
<b>County Adult Education Service AES &amp; LEA</b>	4	4	1	3
<b>Community Education Provider Com Ed</b>	4	6	4	2
<b>Private Provider PP</b>	10	7	1	7
<b>WEA</b>	0	0	1	0
<b>Charity and Voluntary sector Other</b>	4	4	0	4
<b>Prisons</b>	2	2	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	67	49	27	26

Fig 3 shows that there has been significant increase in the amount of workplace provision since January 2000. The largest area of increase is workplace literacy at 39% of all new provision. Workplace numeracy is the next largest area with 28%, followed by ESOL at 17% and ICT at 16%.

**Fig3 Percentage of Increase by Curriculum Area**



## 2.5 Training

Question 2.5 asked about professional qualifications held by the provider organisation.

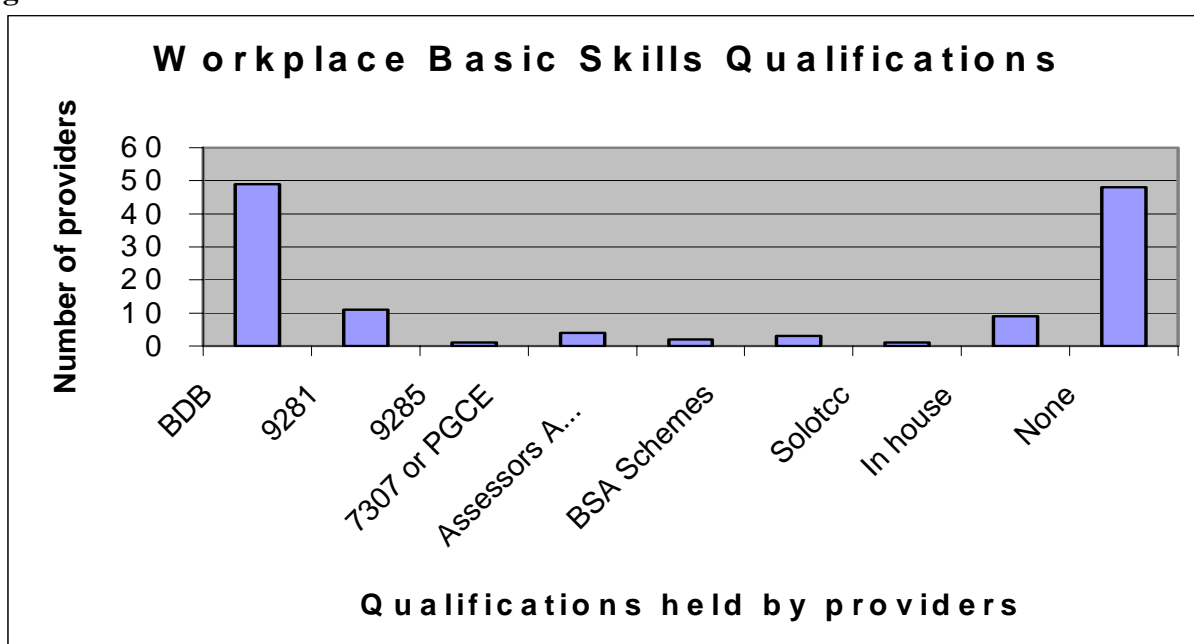
By far the largest reported workplace basic skills qualifications that providers currently own are the Workplace Basic Skills Network’s ‘Breaking Down Barriers’ (BDB) qualifications.

*NB. The figures below represent provider institutions, not individual tutors within the provider organisation. The demand is growing for the BDB qualification and a second level BDB2 has been introduced to meet the demand of those who have completed BDB1 and are keen to develop further. The Workplace Basic Skills Network also provides training at Post Graduate level.*

2.5 Professional development of those delivering in the WP	BDB	9281	9285	7307 or PGCE	Assessor Awards	BSA	Solotcc certificate in Workplace Basic Skills	In house	None
FE College	35	7	1	3	0	2	1	7	29
County Adult Education Service AES									
Community Education Provider Com Ed	6	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	5
Private Provider	7	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
WEA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Charity and Voluntary sector	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	9
Totals	49	11	1	4	2	3	1	9	48

Between 65% and 70% of those returning their questionnaire and providing workplace basic skills reported their staff had professional development in workplace basic skills. Fig 4 shows the number of provider organisations and the workplace basic skills qualifications they hold. It should be noted here that the figures relate to the provider organisation and not the individual teachers. Trained staff numbers are likely to be significantly higher as each provider organisation may have several members of trained workplace basic skills tutors as part of their team.

Fig 4



### 3.2 ESOL Barriers

Question 3.2 asked about the barriers experienced connected with ESOL provision and ways of overcoming these barriers.

The largest reported barriers to workplace ESOL provision were:

- Insufficient ongoing support in organisation,
- Non-user friendly communications systems and
- Insufficient time

<b>3.2 Barriers to WP ESOL provision</b>	
Inappropriate materials	<b>12</b>
Non-user friendly communications systems	<b>19</b>
Insufficient time	<b>16</b>
Cultural misunderstandings	<b>12</b>
Funding issues	<b>7</b>
Insufficiently qualified/experienced teachers	<b>13</b>
Motivation	<b>10</b>
Insufficient ongoing support in organisation	<b>20</b>
<p><b>Other comments on Barriers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of training manager onsite</li> <li>• Lack of workplaces to target</li> <li>• Overworked tired employers</li> <li>• People wish to continue in workplace training beyond 6 months we offer</li> <li>• Shortage of potential students</li> <li>• No time (the provider did not specify if this was; time of the employer; workers or provider)</li> <li>• Stigma attached to basic skills training</li> <li>• Need to address workplace core skill training.</li> <li>• Need workshops for management to raise awareness</li> </ul>	

However other issues were also presented as barriers, these fall into 3 main categories - those relating to Provider, Employer and Worker.

### **Provider Barriers to ESOL Workplace Basic Skills**

Shortage of qualified staff

Funding

A South East further education college reports “Insufficient numbers to fill courses. Funding needs qualifications aims and this has proved difficult...”

Time available to set up and maintain provision

Appropriate workplace ESOL materials

### **Employer Barriers to ESOL Workplace Basic Skills**

Lack of time, reluctance to allow workers time off to study

A West Midlands community education provider delivering discrete ESOL provision in a manufacturing organisation reported, “The biggest barrier has been the time it has taken to set it up. We have been very patient and very persuasive! It was meetings from their point of view.

Working conditions for delivery are not very satisfactory.”

Lack of awareness of the benefits to increased basic skills amongst its workforce

Lack of workplaces in the locality

### **Worker Barriers to ESOL Workplace Basic Skills**

Workers are too tired or overworked to want to study after their shift

A West Midland FE provider reported “ Difficulty of establishing a timetable that suits all parties concerned. In SMEs issues of taking more than one person off the production line at any one time  
Limitations of funding system to cope with issues of availability of trainees”

Low motivation, cannot see the benefits of improved basic skills

Lack of workers, low employment

A South East Adult Education Service provider reported barriers of “ Deportations, ‘lay offs’, workers having to pay £15 registration fee and employer threatening to withdraw overtime if learners do not attend in their own time after a double shift!”

### 3.3 Ways of overcoming the barriers. Again the reported solutions have been categorised under the 3 headings: Provider, Employer and worker.

#### Provider

- Develop a staff development programme to ensure that there are enough workplace ESOL tutors available
- House funding forums
- Funding issues need to be addressed nationally
- Tap into SRB bid and widening participation or other available project monies
- Allow provider staff extra time to organise and set up workplace ESOL courses
- Allow provider staff extra time to prepare specific workplace ESOL materials
- Offer purpose specific ESOL courses
- Make course times compatible to learner
- Ensure venue is appropriate i.e. at their workplace
- Check with line managers that release is possible
- Allow for peak times when arranging provision
- Work within the community with cultural bodies to build links

A West London Provider reports:

“There have been few barriers, employers have been willing to co-operate. The college is planning workplace basic skills strategically...”

#### Employer

- Promote the importance of improved workforce ESOL basic skills

A West Midlands private provider reports that there is a need for:

“Workshops for management to raise awareness”

- Flexible programmes to allow for deadlines and other time critical pressures
- Keep employer fully informed – workshop with findings, TNA or ONA
- Involve the employer as a stakeholder in the promotion and recruitment
- Ensure realistic outcomes, e.g. it is not possible to become fluent in English after only 20 hours of provision
- Check with managers that workers can leave their work at a given time, allow for rush work by providing a flexible service

#### Worker

- Provide courses at the workplace, time them carefully so to prevent workers becoming tired and de-motivated.

A South East provider states

“Past working conditions, having to work in a classroom situation with very limited funding. Seeking to investigate outside premises and more funding for a new project”

- Raise awareness of benefits to workers for increasing their basic skills
- Forge links with community and ethnic groups
- Make learning materials interesting and relevant
- Consider cultural needs of workers
- Involve the workers in the recruitment process

A London based FE College reports.

“Marketing can be problematic. We have worked closely with unions, managers and supervisors to win support for the course and to encourage ownership by the form of recruitment. This has worked well in some cases, although in others, class sizes have remained small.”

### 4.1 Organisational Size Compared with Workplace Provision

This section asked:

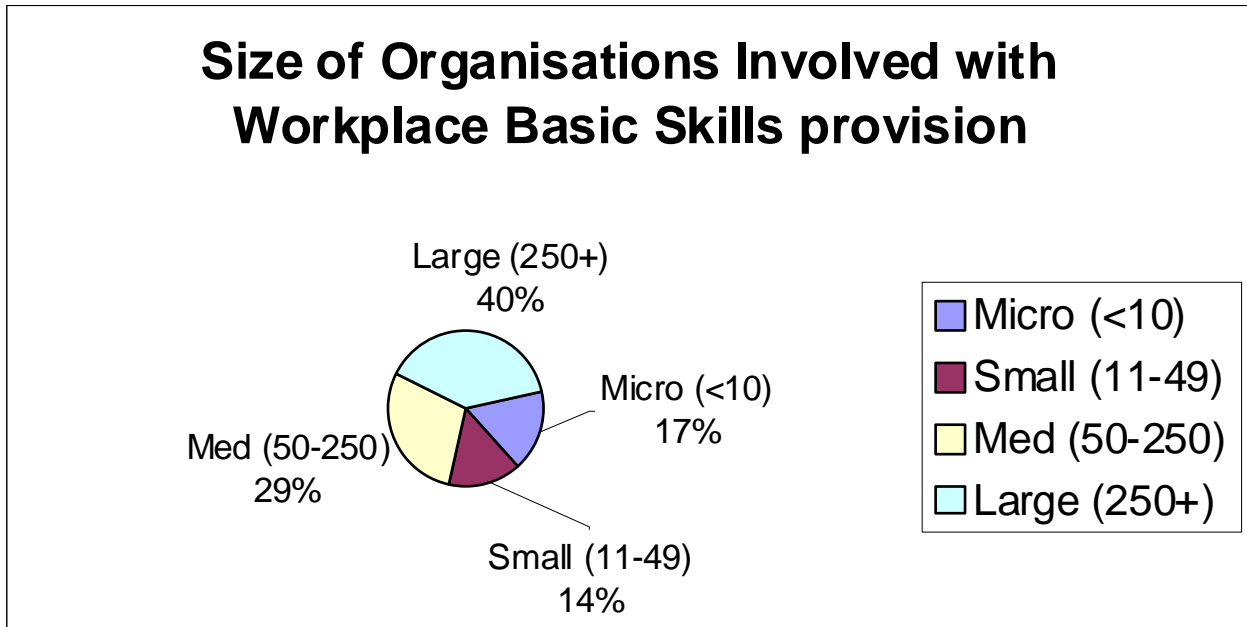
- *How many organisations were receiving workplace basic skills provision*
- *What size these organisations were - whether micro with less than 10 workers, small with between 11 and 49 workers, medium with between 50 and 249 workers, or large with more than 250 workers*
- *The spread of providers and how many employers each was working with*
- *The spread of workplace basic skills provision in the different organisational sectors  
Agr = Agriculture, C= privately owned organisations, Manuf = manufacturing, Service = Service industries, Vol sector = Voluntary organisations, the Varied column was added to capture data that was not covered by these sectors*
- *Which providers were delivering workplace basic skills in discrete isolation (D) and which providers were providing integrated (I) provision*

Table 4.1 shows the number of organisations providers are working with, e.g. seventeen further education colleges are each working with two different organisations. Again, this chart shows the largest provider in terms of number of employers is the FE sector, which is working with a minimum of 149 providers followed by private providers working with a minimum of 24 providers. These findings do not reflect the number of students/workers. Section 4.5 will seek to elaborate on this.

<b>4.1 Number of Organisations</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More	% of returned questionnaires working with one or more organisation
FE College	31	17	8	4	5	2	1	2	77%
County Adult Education Service	3	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	57%
Community Education Provider	5	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	39%
Private Provider	4	6	1	0	1	0	0	3	60%
WEA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	25%
Charity and Voluntary sector	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	12.5%
Prisons	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50%
Policy/Strategy Unit for N.I.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	100% ( *only one return from Northern Ireland)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	

Fig 5 demonstrates the percentage split of workplace basic skills provision related to company size. As you can see, the large and medium sized organisations represent the largest sectors which have provision.

Fig 5



#### 4.2 Organisational Sectors

This section was designed to find the spread of workplace basic skills provision in the different organisational sectors.

From these figures it can be seen, for example, that FE is the largest player with respect to total organisations, though this does not necessarily mean they have the largest amount of students (see chart 4.6). The prison service, which responded to the questionnaire, reported that they have 300 students in their workplace basic skills programme, in one Public Sector Organisation, whilst the average at FE provision in each organisation is between 8 and 15.

Chart 4.2 demonstrates the main organisational sectors in which different types of providers tend to work. It can be seen that Charity and Voluntary Sector cater solely for the service industry and voluntary sectors, i.e. they do not provide workplace basic skills for other areas. The WEA that responded to the questionnaire is only delivering in the public sector.

4.2 sector	Public	Private
FE College	39	39
County Adult Education Service	7	9
Community Education Provider	7	9
Private Provider	4	13
WEA	2	0
Charity and Voluntary sector	0	0
Prisons	1	0
Policy/Strategy Unit for N.I.	3	0
Totals	63	70

	Agr	Manuf	Service	Vol sector	Varied
	6	52	21	9	1
	1	5	1	1	0
	0	4	1	0	0
	2	6	7	3	0
	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	4	1	0
	0	0	0	0	0
	0	2	1	0	0
	9	69	35	14	1

### 4.3 Mode of Delivery

This question asked which providers were delivering discrete (D) provision and which were providing Integrated (I) programmes with other vocational provision.

Chart 4.3 demonstrates the relation between workplace basic skills provision and the size of company. One should remember that one provider might be delivering in more than one organisation. See table 4.1 for the breakdown of this point.

In large, medium and small organisations, the majority of courses are delivered in a discrete fashion, i.e. not connected with any other forms of accreditation other than basic skills qualifications or programmes. However in micro sized organisations there is a 50/50 split.

Large 250+ workers

Medium 50 – 249 workers

Small 11 – 49 workers

Micro 1- 10 workers

<b>4.3 Percentage Size of Organisation – Mode of Provision</b>								
<b>FE College</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>AES and LEA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>Com Ed</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>I</b>
Large	86%	14%	Large	67%	33%	Large	100%	0
Medium	85%	15%	Medium	100%	0	Medium	100%	0
Small	63%	37%	Small	80%	20%	Small	100%	0
Micro	50%	50%	Micro	0	0	Micro	100%	0
<b>Private Provider</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>WEA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>Charity and Voluntary sector</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>I</b>
Large	33%	67%	Large	100%	0	Large	20%	80%
Medium	33%	67%	Medium	0	0	Medium	0	0
Small	17%	83%	Small	0	0	Small	0	0
Micro	25%	75%	Micro	0	0	Micro	0	0
<b>Prisons</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>N.I.</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>I</b>
Large	50%	50%	Large	33%	67%	Large	73%	27%
Medium	0	0	Medium	0	0	Medium	81%	19%
Small	0	0	Small	0	0	Small	60%	40%
Micro	0	0	Micro	0	0	Micro	50%	50%
<b>All Totals</b>							71%	29%

A South West FE college reported, “Employer was prepared to release staff in work time initially (to help with mandatory training) but not as ongoing provision. A workshop is now established where students can continue in their own time.”

Chart 4.3 is designed to show which providers (by percentage) are delivering workplace basic skills in **D** discrete isolation and those who are providing an integrated **I** provision, for example to support an NVQ or health and safety course related to organisational size. From fig 6 we can see that the smaller the company, the more likely that provision is integrated rather than discrete. At micro level, the delivery mode is equally likely to be integrated or discrete provision.

Fig 6

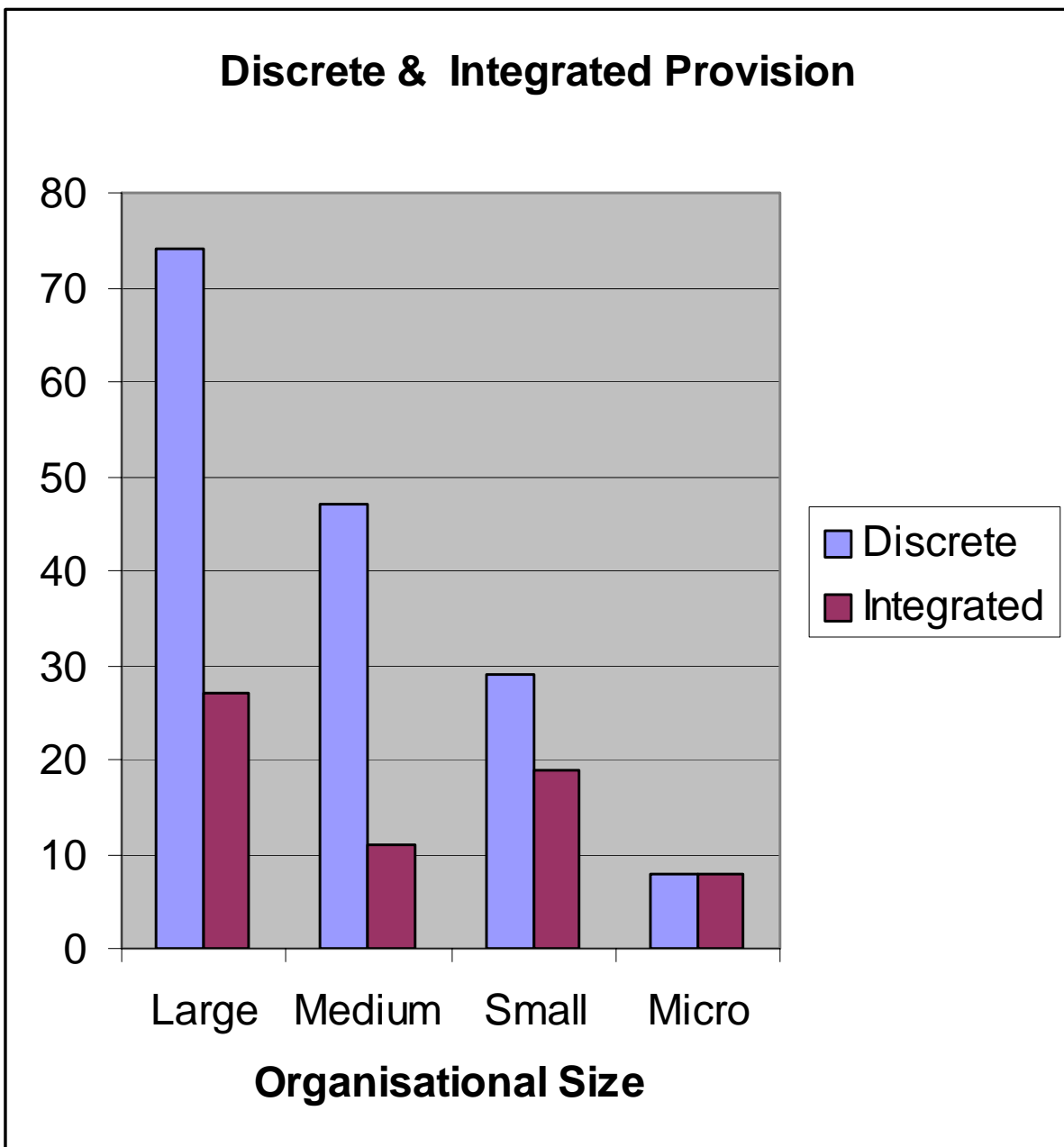
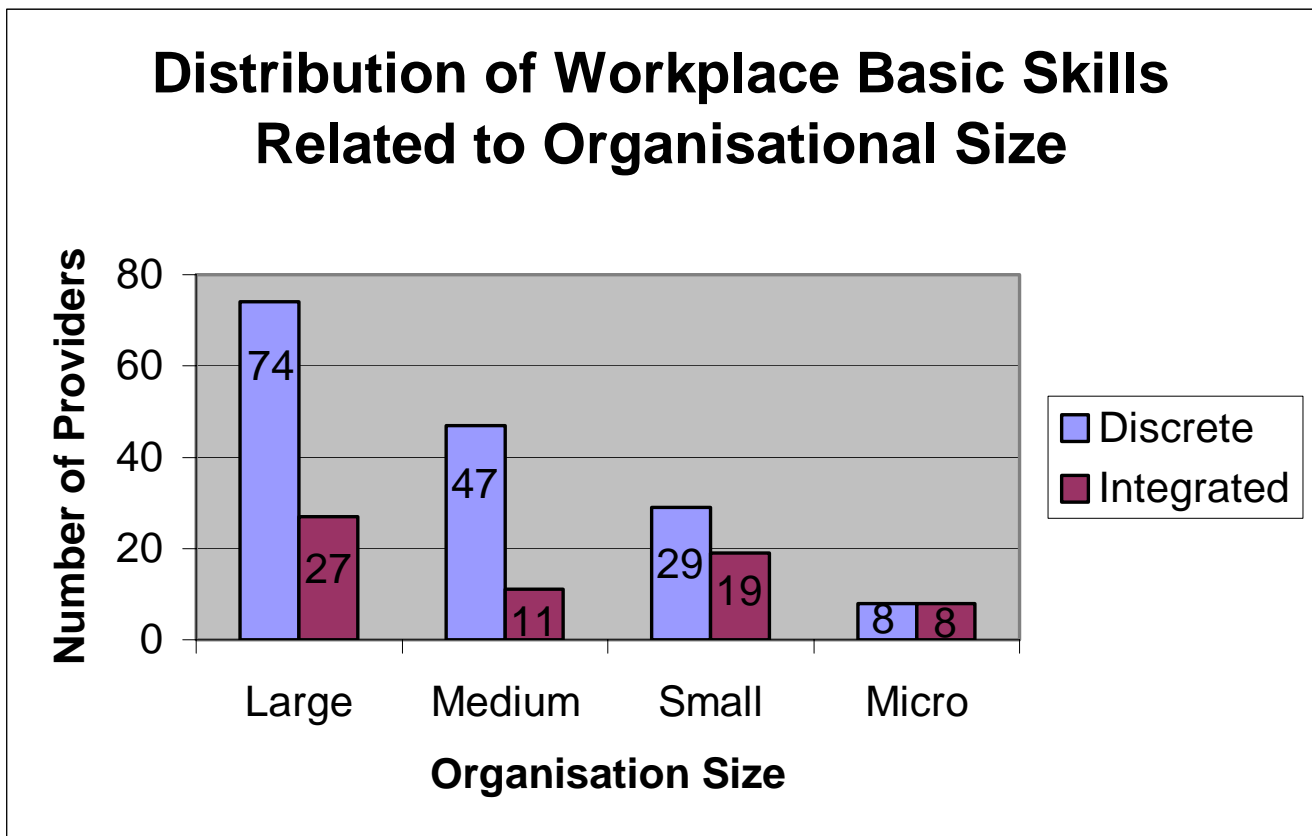


Figure 7 shows that the majority split for large organisations is discrete provision, although about a quarter of delivery is integrated with workplace programmes or other qualifications e.g. NVQs. As we move down in organisational size, the split becomes less noticeable until micro organisations, where equal numbers of programmes are being delivered in discrete and integrated mode.

Fig 7



## 5 ESOL

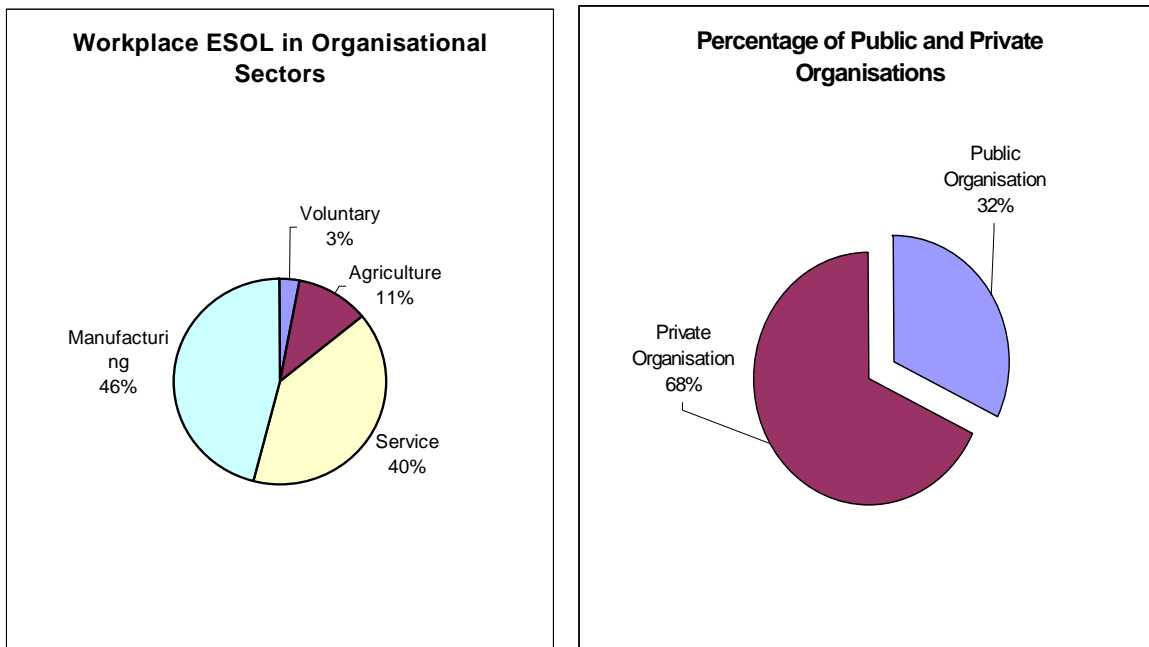
### 5.1 ESOL Provider types

From the table below we can see that the largest ESOL workplace organisational sector is currently reported as the manufacturing sector.

Type of Organisation ⇒	Public Sector	C Private Firm	Manufacturing	Service	Agriculture	Voluntary
Size of Organisation↓						
2 Micro	0	0	0	2	0	0
10 Small	1	2	0	7	0	0
19 Medium	0	3	8	3	2	0
12 Large	6	9	9	2	1	0
35 organisations	7	14	17	14	3	1

The pie charts below in fig 8 show that Manufacturing, Private Firms and the Service Industry have the largest workplace ESOL provision,

Fig 8



### 5.2 ESOL Organisation Size

Fig 9 shows the reported numbers of workplace ESOL provision related to company size. It can be seen that medium sized organisations are the largest provider of ESOL workplace basic skills training.

Fig 9

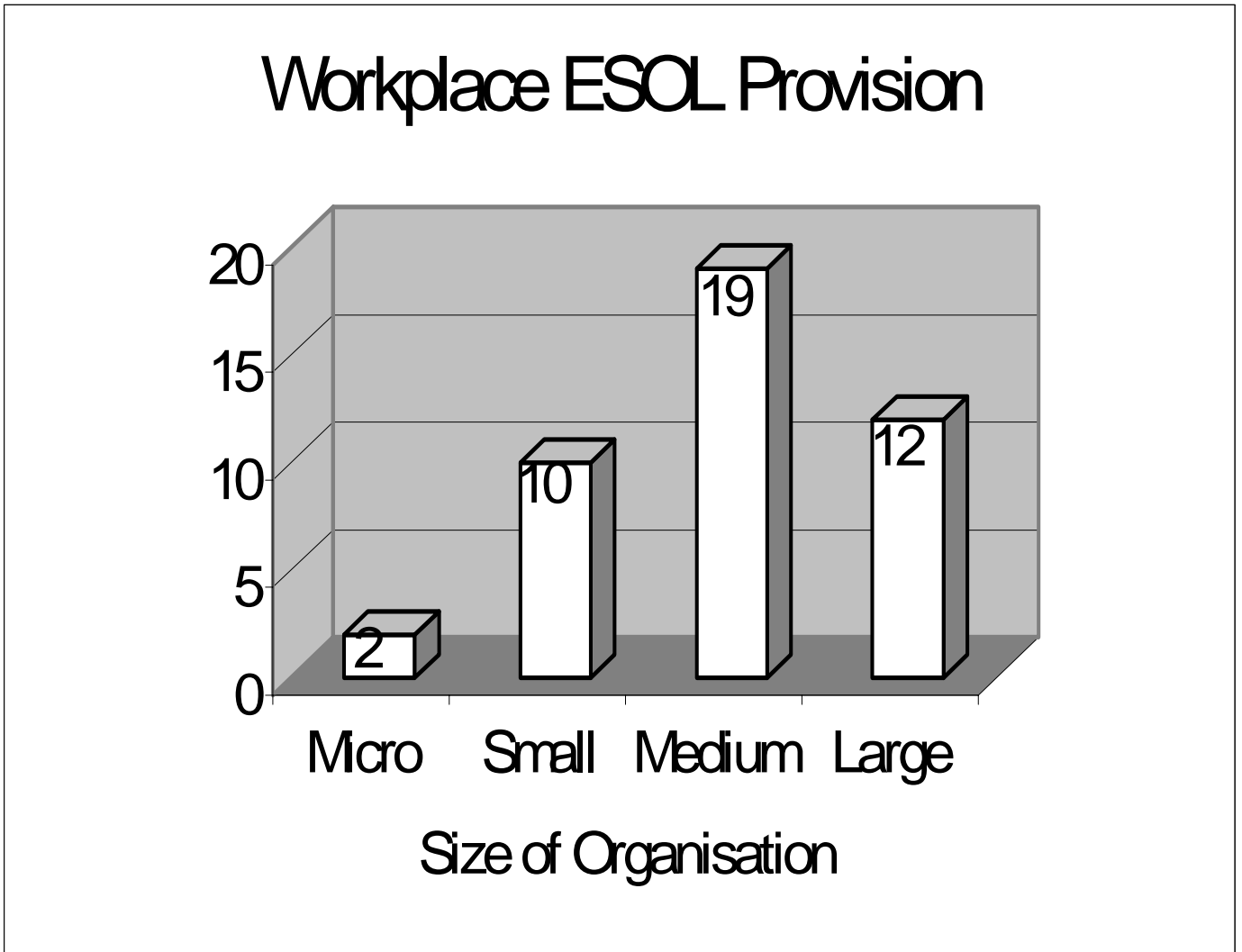


Fig 10 shows the amount of workplace ESOL, Literacy, Numeracy and ICT reported as currently being delivered within organisations. This is further broken down into the size of the organisation.

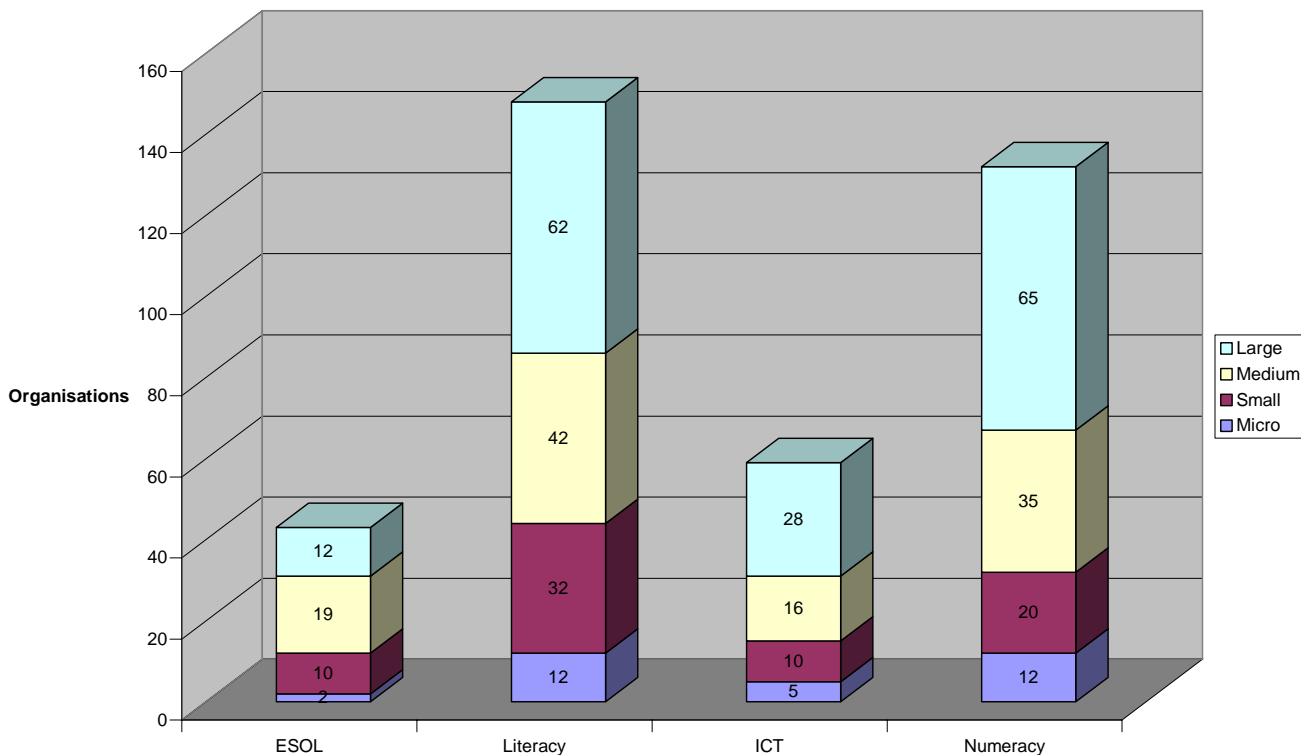
Micro sized organisations represent around 8% of all provision  
 Small sized organisations represent around 19% of all provision  
 Medium sized organisations represent around 27%  
 And large sized organisations represent around 46%  
 Workplace ESOL provision breaks this trend having 44% provision in medium sized organisations and 28% in large organisations.

### 5.3 Percentage of Curriculum Areas Provided in Different Size Organisations

	ESOL	Literacy	Numeracy	ICT
<b>Micro</b>	5%	8%	9%	8%
<b>Small</b>	23%	22%	15%	17%
<b>Medium</b>	44%	28%	27%	27%
<b>Large</b>	28%	42%	49%	48%

Fig. 10

Workplace Basic Skills Provision Related to the Organisational Size



### 6.1 Provider Type: Range of Group Sizes

Each workplace basic skills course reported in the questionnaires has differing numbers of students attending. 4.6 is compiled from the reported data showing...

- a. The range of numbers in groups
- b. The average number taken over all provision for each provider sector and
- c. At the cluster range (where most of the course numbers fell)

What this table cannot show is the tutor/student ratio. For example, WEA cluster 44 may well be made up of four courses within the same organisation.

### 4.6 Provider type range of students average numbers

4.6	Range	Average	Majority cluster range
<b>FE College</b>	<b>1 -150</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8 -15</b>
<b>County Adult Education Service</b>	<b>1-60</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6-15</b>
<b>Community Education Provider</b>	<b>3-80</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5-10</b>
<b>Private Provider</b>	<b>1-150</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1-10</b>
<b>WEA</b>	<b>43-44</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Charity and Voluntary sector</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Prisons</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Policy/Strategy Unit for N.I.</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>

## 7.1 Conclusions

1.1 The report is based on returned questionnaires and those who are engaged in workplace provision. The high rate of return was very pleasing. The expected rate of return to questionnaire surveys is a maximum of 5%. The reasons for the high rate of return to this survey could be due to the following factors.

- Pre-paid addressed envelope enclosed with questionnaire
- An element of accountability; all questionnaires were referenced to the providing organisation
- The Workplace Basic Skills Network has many provider members.

1.2 The further education sector and private providers were sent the most surveys. In order not to skew the figures we have represented the return in fig 1 in percentage terms. Further education has traditionally had the advantage of FEFC funding for its basic skills courses, which has resulted in an 'attractive' deal for employers. The private providers and others may benefit from the changing method of funding being proposed by the LSC in their draft corporate plan, where any accredited provider will be able to obtain funding. The prisons returned 66% of their questionnaire but the initial cohort target number was very low.

1.3 These increased levels in some areas, possibly, depict the highest concentration of ethnic minorities, migrant workers and asylum seekers. ESOL still is the smallest represented workplace basic skills curriculum area.

There was a good response from all areas with the possible exception of the North East. This might be a result of higher levels of unemployment in the area allowing for fewer workplace provision opportunities.

## 2.4 Marketing

The most frequently used method of marketing was direct marketing from the provider (40%) However the next largest group (25%) was approached directly by the workplace which required the provision. This would seem to indicate that more employers are being proactive in looking for workplace basic skills provision. This could be because of national initiatives, which have:

- Heightened awareness of the benefits of a better trained, more flexible workforce, which is better able to cope with organisational change
- Increased the activity of unions in workplace basic skills provision (e.g. Union Learning Representatives, which are to become statutory in unionised organisations)
- Increased national and regional support for employers. (e.g. The Network provides an Employer Provider Checklist to be used by employers when selecting providers)

The Unions are playing an increased role in instigating workplace basic skills provision. Their learning reps attend a 5-day FLAG course designed to provide skills for the Learner Reps in guidance, liaising between employer and provider and member, and to act between as mentor to the employee. They have access to the union-learning fund. The TUC, BSA and NTOs are providing sector specific learning materials.

## 2.4 Increase in Provision

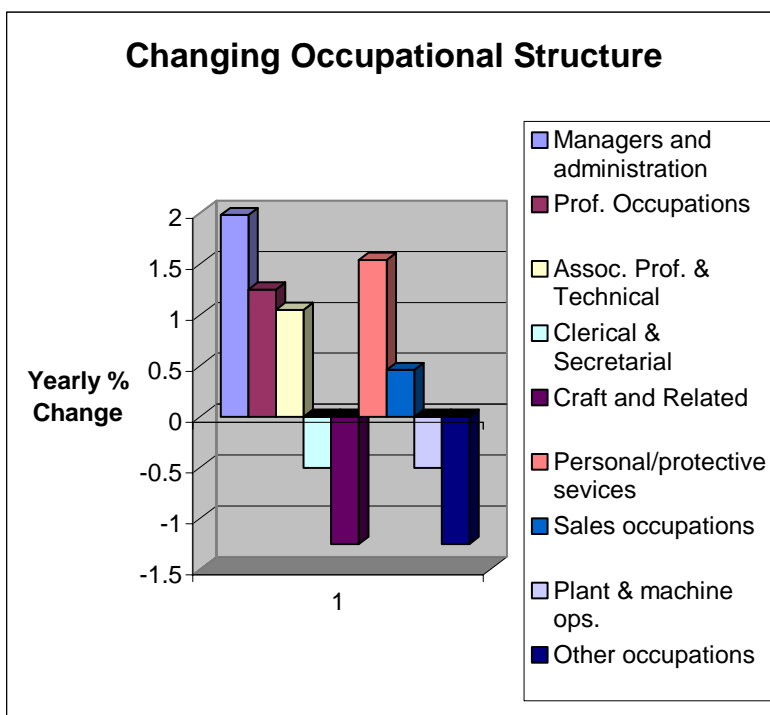
The increases in need for workplace basic skills provision could be due to...

- Greater national importance – reports such as the Moser and the strategy documents being major drivers.
- Changes in organisational practice – need a more flexible higher trained workforce.
- More qualified workplace basic skills practitioners. There has been a huge increase in specific workplace basic skills training such as the Workplace Basic Skills Network’s ‘Breaking Down Barriers’ introductory and advanced programmes.
- The increases in funding initiatives to support workplace provision.
- Projects to increase demand.
- Awareness raising within organisations, demonstrating the benefits.
- Comparisons with other countries and their workforce basic skills levels.
- Globalisation

Fig 3 demonstrates increases in all curriculum areas. The smallest, but growing, sector is basic ICT (Information Communication Technologies). This may be because ICT has relatively recently been recognised by funding bodies as a basic skill and might explain the reported increase. ICT is often used as a tool to support and develop literacy, numeracy and ESOL. ICT is seen as an attractive skill and can often be used as an incentive to learn.

169 providers said that, although they do not provide workplace basic skills now, they were hoping to in the future. This shows the trend for increased workplace basic skills provision is continuing. The current increase in provision is shown in table 2.4 and represents a massive leap in provision in 159 areas, with literacy and numeracy being the largest areas but followed closely by ESOL and ICT.

Margaret Murray, Head of Learning and Skills for the CBI (Confederation of British Industry) referred to this as the ‘more brain less brawn’



Employment Study 1999

CBI Members Survey of 2000 shows the increase in the type of growth envisaged by employers.

Type of skill growth (% employers citing)

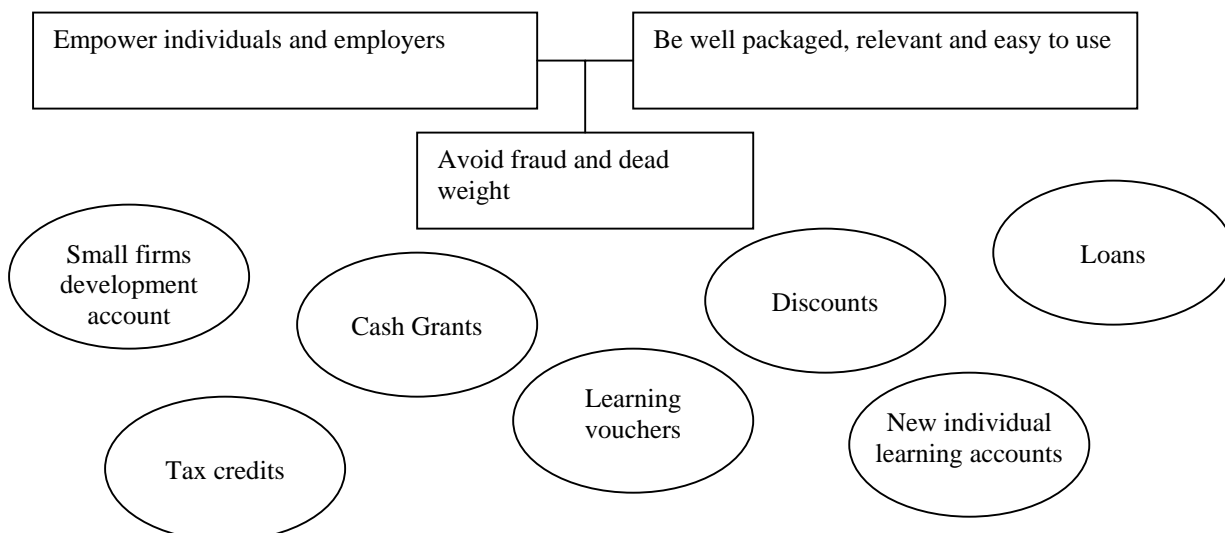
- 33% substantial increase in intellectual ability
- 38% substantial increase in specialist knowledge
- 49% substantial increase in transferable skills

Source: CBI Members Survey 2000

Sarah Fitzpatrick of the Cabinet Office’s Workforce Development Team (November 2001) stated that there is a skills gap at basic and intermediate level and shortages in key areas. By 2010 the U.K. will be a society in which Government, employers and individuals will actively engage in skills development.

Suggested methods of raising demand of training are.

**Raise demand by**



Sarah Fitzpatrick of the Workforce Development Team in the Cabinet Office during a recent conference ‘Delivering Effective Workplace Development’ November 26<sup>th</sup> 2001)

It is clear that the Workforce Development team have considered many new routes and incentives for funding workplace basic skills. The SEP survey found that funding was one of the biggest barriers, but care should be exercised and that these routes are sustainable and easy to access.

‘ We do not have a learning culture in employment nor in the U.K. emphasis on lifelong learning is to focus people into why we should all continue learning’  
 Professor Gus John JTN Consultancy

Making learning relevant to individuals’ is vital. Existing skills should be valued and built upon. Functionally illiterate does not mean socially inept. Government publicised statistics state that seven and a half million people have functional literacy skills of that of or less than an average 11-year-old and of these half are in employment. It is key to reaching potential learners to stress the positive benefits, relevance and to promote learning in a positive light if we are to avoid fears and barriers outlined in the report.

There are a number of triggers that could bring someone to actively seek out further learning opportunities, these have a direct or indirect benefit to their lives, for example, helping their children with their school work, reading to grandchildren, a desire to spend some time on themselves having brought up a family or some other time sacrifice. Or the trigger may be work related, maybe to get a job, or promotion or to better understand a new process at work and so relieve possible stress and fear of failure.

## **2.5 Professional Qualifications**

The largest reported professional qualification in this area of work was the Network's Breaking Down Barriers Level 1. This is a course designed for qualified basic skills practitioners who have experience of delivering basic skills training to small groups in the community, and who plan to deliver in workplace settings. It is also suitable for practitioners who have delivered a programme in the workplace and would like more confidence, knowledge and skills, and a qualification in this area. As providers need to conform to FENTO standards and the DfES framework these professional development figures are likely to rise. This might be a reflection of the national importance being placed upon global market competition and the realisation that in order to have a flexible, multi skilled workforce, basic skills issues need to be addressed.

## **3.2 ESOL Barriers**

A number of barriers were highlighted in table 3.2. The largest recurring barriers reported in this survey were

- Insufficient ongoing support in the organisation,
- Non-user friendly communications systems and
- Insufficient time

### 3.3 ESOL Ways of Overcoming Barriers

A good deal of good experiences and good practice are reported see section 3.3

#### 4.1 About workplace basic skills provision

#### 4.2 Organisational sectors

It was interesting to note that 47% of providers reported they were working with public sector organisations, whilst 53% were working with private sector organisations.

The largest sector was manufacturing with over half the provision (54%) followed by Service at (27%); Voluntary (11%); Agriculture (7%) and Others (1%). What could be the reasons for this? Could it be that manufacturing are more often associated with large organisations and as we have seen above, there are less barriers associated with provision in this scale of organisation.

**Fig 5 Reasons for the greater provision related to company size could be because larger organisations:**

- Can afford to be more flexible with their workforce, covering shifts when training takes place
- Have larger numbers of employees who would benefit from Workplace Basic Skills provision
- Have viable group sizes in terms of funding for providers
- Are more involved with company awards schemes such as IiP and ISO

External factors driving this may be as in the case of care homes, traditionally micro or small organisations, which are required to train all staff to NVQ level 2 by the year 2004. The care sector has recognised that many of their staff are struggling with the underpinning basic skills to complete the NVQ qualification even though their practical job specific knowledge and skills might be high.

#### 4.3 Mode of Delivery

In large, medium and small organisations the majority of courses are delivered in a discrete fashion, i.e. not connected with any other forms of accreditation other than basic skills qualifications or programmes. However the smaller the company the less marked this split becomes see fig 6. When we look at the responses from providers working in micro organisations we see a 50/50 split.

### 5. ESOL

The largest ESOL Workplace organisational sector is currently reported as the manufacturing that medium sized organisations.

## 8.1 The results of this survey raise a number of issues and questions

1.1 Does the cohort represent a true cross sample of workplace provision?

1.2 Does funding have an impact on the provider sectors; will the changes in funding benefit non-FE sectors to the same extent?

1.2 There is a need to respond quickly, professionally and deliver within the context of the workplace. There is also a need to deliver outside of the constraints of educational terms and office hours... Are some providers better able to respond to such demands?

1.3 ESOL is seen to be higher in some areas than others. Does this reflect high geographical concentrations of ethnic minorities, migrant workers and asylum seekers?

1.3 ESOL still is the smallest represented workplace basic skills curriculum area. Is this because the need is smaller, or is there other social or political factors which are acting as barriers to provision?

2.3 Marketing – the need for workplace basic skills exceeds current provision. The BSA brokerage scheme is designed to address this issue. Are there other effective ways of marketing? i.e. basic skills practitioners with marketing skills (consultant practitioners?)

2.5 Professional Qualifications – Can current funding support for professional development meet the need for effective practitioners who are both subject specialists and basic skills consultants to business?

3.2 ESOL Barriers, how can these negatives be changed into positives?

3.3 ESOL Benefits, what is the best way to share good practice and experiences?

4.2 The largest sector was manufacturing with over half the provision (54%) followed by Service at (27%); Voluntary (11%); Agriculture (7%) and Others (1%). How does this fit with current research into the move away from manufacturing and into information organisations? The indication is that lower skilled workers are employed in manufacturing.

4.3 Mode of delivery, why should it be that the larger the company the less likely it is to have integrated workplace basic skills provision? Indications may be that larger organisations can afford the staff time for training not directly related to another vocational outcome?

5.1 ESOL Provider Types. The pie charts in fig 9 shows that Manufacturing, Private Firms and the Service Industry have the largest workplace ESOL provision, does this mean that...

- a. This is where most ESOL students are employed?
- b. These are the main areas targeted by providers?
- c. Those organisations are willing to support their ESOL workers needs?

Again FE is the largest provider of ESOL. Fig 10 shows from the responses gathered that medium sized organisations i.e. those employing between 50 and 250 employees offer the most workplace ESOL.

**Social Exclusion Project  
UK Case Studies**

## 9.1 Case Study A

### Background

#### Employer

The subject of the case study was a privately owned canning factory, located in London. At the time of the workplace basic skills provision, the London site was closing down, although employees were working long hours in order to complete a contract prior to closure.

#### Basic Skills Provider

West Thames College is a further education college located in London and is a provider of literacy and numeracy basic skills and ESOL. The College is currently increasing basic skills provision in all three areas and recognises the importance of workplace basic skills provision within the College strategy. Staff have attended the Breaking Down the Barriers workplace basic skills certificate, which provided a sound basic training for basic skills tutors in the workplace.

### Basic Skills Needs

#### Initial contact between employer and training provider

Initial contact came about as a result of telephone calls made as part of a College workforce development project funded by a local regeneration programme. The aim of the telephone canvas was to identify companies which had an interest in basic supervisory training. In addition to the delivery of training for supervisors, the College recommended running a Basic Skills course, which could be funded through a European Social Fund Project supported by the West London Learning Partnership. The company was facing some considerable financial pressure and was open to suggestions for training that could be offered to support staff without the need for financial input themselves.

#### *Evidence of need*

Company management were in continuous negotiations with the Trade Union during the pre-closure phase. Discussion with the College and the Union identified a need for Basic Skills training to support employees facing redundancy and seeking future employment elsewhere. The Human Resource manager liaised directly with the College.

#### *Promotion*

Notices promoting the basic skills course were placed on notice boards around the company and internal memos were also sent to employees. The promotional material was discreet; the course was not advertised as being remedial, but rather to improve and enhance opportunities. Those interested could talk to the Human Resources Manager or sign up directly. Through the earlier supervisory courses the College had direct contact with many of the line managers who were supportive of, and in some instances participated in, the basic skills training too. The HR Manager was respected and trusted by employees working on the production line (in contrast with their relationship with many other members of the management team and office workers).

### **Aims of the workplace basic skills courses**

The company agenda was quite straightforward; the factory needed to close the London operation without too much personal upset for staff, aiming to work with the Trade Unions as best they could and at minimal cost levels. Offering a basic skills course that would support employees facing redundancy to find jobs would contribute towards meeting this agenda.

It was agreed that the aims of the basic skills course would meet the needs of the employees who were very nervous about all aspects of job seeking. The course would provide them with help and skills such that they were competent and confident to complete application forms in order to gain alternative employment.

### **Delivery of Basic Skills**

#### **Trainees**

Eighteen employees (mainly male, in their forties and fifties) enrolled on the basic skills course. The company had been a 'good employer'; people stayed with the company for life, thus most of the trainees had worked with the company since leaving school and were concerned about all the practical aspects of applying for jobs.

#### **Courses and Content**

The focus of the basic skills training was on Literacy; including writing, reading and oral communication.

#### **Delivery**

The course lasted for a period of eight weeks, with a three hour session each week. Three hours is longer than many basic skills course sessions, and breaks were built into the timetable. The group, led by an experienced basic skills tutor, was relatively small and fairly formal. A lot of tailored worksheets were used, along with sample application forms and job interview role-play.

#### **Constraints**

The main constraints were the timing of the courses to meet staff availability due to shift patterns and the fact that staff were very highly paid to take on extra shifts on the production line in return for high wages. Thus staff were working long hours and production line staff who opted to attend the basic skills course had to do so in their own time. Office workers were able to attend courses in company time.

In addition there was an issue about where the course should be located. Ideally the College wanted to deliver the course at the factory. However, the conditions were horrendous (as building hadn't been maintained due to closure). It was agreed that the course would be better located at the College, which was about fifteen minutes drive from the factory.

### **Outcomes**

#### **Evaluation**

The College issued questionnaires ("happy sheets") at the end of the course or when trainees left the course to start new employment. The feedback from this evaluation was very positive, with an emphasis on the fact that the course had been tailored to meet their needs, and the sessions and materials used were relevant to the needs of the individuals. The evaluation feedback also picked up on the fact that the College staff spent considerable time with individuals, boosting confidence,

providing additional information and talking about general and specific employment opportunities and approaches to job-hunting.

The College noted that one of frustrations is that there is a tendency not to receive a high level of critical feedback when the employer is not directly paying for a course.

#### Benefits to the employer

The general feedback was that the company was very happy with the basic skills course as it met a pressing need for the employees and helped with negotiations with the local and national Trade Unions.

#### Benefits to the trainees

Most of the employees who attended the basic skills course have found employment, indeed some left the course a couple of weeks before the completion as they has successfully completed application forms and attended interviews.

In addition the course participants gained from:

- Increased levels of self-esteem
- Team building
- Communication skills
- Assertiveness
- Ability to give a presentation
- The confidence to complete a job application form

#### *Overall impact*

Those employees who were seeking employment due to redundancy were able to complete application forms due to improved literacy skills and compete with others at interviews due to improved oral communication skills and increased self-confidence.

The company met their objective in making the redundancy process easier; with additional support from redundancy and careers counsellors.

#### *Good practice*

- The importance of finding the right learning vehicles that capture the interest of the learners.
- Relevant training materials to meet the needs of the individual needs.
- Curriculum area tailored to the needs and interests.
- Promoting the course so that individuals do not feel that they are 'stupid' if they express an interest in the course.
- Involving someone in the company at management level who has the respect and trust of the factory workers.
- Spending time with the company and potential learners to identify what the needs are and what constraints there are to learning.

## 9.2 Case Study B

### Background

#### Employer

Palethorpes is a food processing company in Market Drayton and it specialises in short shelf life chilled foods. It is part of Northern Foods, one of the UK's largest food manufacturing companies and a major supplier of own brand products to the major grocery retailers. Northern Foods is based in Northallerton, however Telford College has always dealt directly with Palethorpes.

Palethorpes is a successful private sector company serving two of the UK's largest retail grocery chains. It employs 850 people and has become one of the largest employers in Shropshire. There is a greater number of male than female employees and aged from 18 – 50 plus.

#### Basic Skills Provider

Telford College of Arts and Technology is a Further Education College situated in the West Midlands. The Basic Skills Unit of the College has a history of providing literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses, particularly in the workplace. Training for those delivering basic skills courses on behalf of the College has been traditionally carried out in-house.

### Basic Skills Needs

#### Initial contact between employer and training provider

Palethorpes had long-standing contact with Telford College's NVQ Team and therefore a relationship had been built up there. The NVQ Team had informed the Basic Skills Unit about the company and the Basic Skills Unit directly approached Palethorpes with information on their Basic Skills Training Programmes. Funding was originally secured through the Further Education Council then the Learning and Skills Council.

#### *Evidence of need*

Because of the nature of the work at Palethorpes, filling in of forms and check sheets is carried out on a daily basis; the company had identified employees who were having difficulties with these. The company was also working towards Investors in People and was carrying out a review of its overall training strategy.

#### *Promotion*

A good working relationship was built up between the Training Officer and the Human Resources Manager at Palethorpes and Telford College and they still meet on a regular basis to discuss progress. Once a suitable series of programmes were drawn up, promotional materials such as posters and flyers were produced and issued around the factory. The Training Officer also went onto the factory floor and approached employees personally to explain what was involved and what the benefits would be. Word of mouth then took over and basic skills training opportunities then became part of the induction material for all new employees.

Attendance at the courses was voluntary and management implemented a system whereby employees could take one hour out of their week to attend training during work time, provided they paid back that hour the following week. This was found to be a very successful approach as employees felt management were considering them, which gave them a sense of worth and belonging to the company. The company also provided a training room for all courses.

### **Aims of the workplace basic skills courses**

The main aim of the courses was to improve employees' ability to deal with the paperwork involved in their sector and generally to raise their levels of basic skills. However, it was always stressed that this should go beyond the workplace and employees were able to deal with themes and situations in the home and outside of work. As a potential Investor in People, Palethorpes also wanted to increase levels of confidence in its employees, which would have a positive knock on effect for the company as a whole. Trainees were consulted beforehand so they could have an input into their programme.

### **Delivery of Basic Skills**

#### Trainees

The training is on-going and at present there are nine trainees receiving basic skills training. Seven are men and two are women. They range in age from 18-50 plus. Up until 2001, BSA assessment was used, now an on-line Initial Screening Tool is used produced by Telford College in line with the current adult curriculum. Possible trainees were also identified at induction and also by taking to line managers and supervisors.

#### Courses and Content

Courses are delivered on a one-to-one basis and therefore are tailored to suit each individual employee. They take place throughout the year, and August is the only month where there is no activity. They have ranged from teaching someone from scratch who could neither read nor write to courses in health and safety issues.

An ESOL course has been developed and this will begin in October with 10 employees signed up already. Basic skills training is continuing for those who have taken part already and for any new trainees. A series of subject specific courses is also being developed which will be delivered in groups. These will deal with such areas as communication skills or even revision on the metric weighting system.

#### Delivery

Telford has developed its own series of resources and materials to facilitate delivery. These include worksheets on all training areas and they also use on-line facilities and CD-ROMs, which has also helped to improve employees' ICT skills.

#### Constraints

Initially it was found that employees were reluctant to sign up as they saw basic skills as meaning learning how to read and write and not just improving their literacy and numeracy skills. Some felt that they didn't need to start at such a low level and others felt that they would be stigmatised if it were seen that they were learning how to read and write again. It was then decided to change the term basic skills to "essential skills and skills enhancement" and it was marketed in such a way as to suggest that this training would build upon what they knew already, which would be of benefit to them both in and out of work.

Because it is a factory, shift work can have a bearing on the timetabling of programmes.

## Outcomes

### Evaluation

After each training programme, trainees filled in a questionnaire and every 10-12 weeks they have an individual learning review with the tutor. All information is kept in each trainee's file and all evaluation questionnaires are collated and put into regular reports.

### Benefits to the employer

- Has added to company's training ethos
- Increased levels of skills and confidence in employees has led to greater levels of productivity and company development

### Benefits to the trainees

- Increased levels of confidence
- Desire to take on more training and learning
- Accreditation and qualifications

### *Overall impact*

To date, there has been no negative feedback on any aspect of the basic skills training. All trainees have received some level of accreditation and they have all attained their personal goals. Most are continuing with their training and/or taking on other courses.

### *Good practice*

- Developing a friendly and approachable manner as trainees can feel ashamed of their low levels of literacy and numeracy and providers need to gain their trust
- Providers should gain an understanding of the nature of the work of the trainees so they can empathise if needs be with work related situations
- Providers should ensure that trainees do not feel that they are "at school"
- All training and contact with trainees should be dealt with in complete confidentiality and this should be emphasised to the trainees to gain their trust
- Develop resources particular to company and/or trainee
- Regular meetings with company stakeholders, e.g. Training Officer, Human Resource Manager
- Consulting trainees on their training programme
- Allowing trainees to take an hour out of their day to train, provided they paid it back the following week

### *Individual Learner*

In Palethorpes there is a male employee in his late 30s who works in the food production area. Prior to joining the company only a few years ago, the employee had worked all his life on a farm until he was made redundant. When he joined Palethorpes, he could neither read nor write. The Training Officer identified him at induction and approached him with the possibility of basic skills training.

The employee has been receiving basic skills training and is making tremendous progress. He is open about his training with fellow workers and keeps them informed of his progress. He has a young daughter currently learning to read so he does reading activities with her in his own home.

Since undertaking the training, there has been a marked improvement in his own levels of confidence and he appreciates the investment in him which the company is making. He is a competent and enthusiastic worker and is valued greatly by management.

Many thanks to Sue Trickett of the Basic Skills Unit of Telford College of Arts and Technology for her time and contribution to this case study.

## Case Study C

### Background

#### Employer

The Head Office of apetito is located in Trowbridge. apetito produces multi-portion ready-made meals for hospitals, individual meals for “meals on wheels”, and has a private sector franchise specialising in producing meals for residential homes, luncheon clubs, day clubs, and sheltered accommodation. In addition, apetito manufactures frozen uncooked pastry products for sale to wholesalers. The company, in the private sector, employs over 1000 people in total, with a greater number of female than male employees, from age 16 years to over 60.

#### Basic Skills Provider

Wiltshire College is a Further Education College situated in the South West of England in Trowbridge. The College has a history as a provider of basic literacy and numeracy and ESOL, and is currently increasing provision of all basic skills in the workplace. Staff have participated in professional development in the delivery of workplace basic skills, including Breaking Down the Barriers and Using the Internet.

The College has undertaken local research into Workplace Basic Skills provision and has identified that the most common barriers to seeking basic skills training are:

- Employers and individuals are unaware that workplace basic skills training is available
- Employers are aware of training but didn't know who to ask or how to go about enrolling
- Individuals would not come to a college (but would attend community groups)

The College concluded that personal marketing of basic skills provision is often the only way potential learners become actual learners.

### Basic Skills Needs

#### Initial contact between employer and training provider

The College had been successful in gaining funding from the Regional Development Agency through the Learning and Skills Council, to promote and deliver workplace basic skills. Using college databases and local knowledge, the basic skills team undertook a campaign contacting local employers by telephone to ask if there was an interest in workplace basic skills. A series of meetings and discussions with the Training Coordinator followed the initial telephone call. The development phase took several months; the time taken from the initial expression of interest to developing the right programme to meet the company needs should not be underestimated.

#### *Evidence of need*

The company was undergoing a review of its approach to staff training. The recently appointed Training Coordinator saw a need for basic skills training in the workplace and sold the advantages to the company. Basic skills needs were identified through discussion between the Training Coordinator and supervisors on the factory floor, and then through talking to staff for whom basic skills training would be of greatest benefit. Key issues were the need for improved communication and a better understanding of English for staff for whom English was their second language. Four key areas were identified:

- Food safety
- Health and safety
- Improved Communication
- ESOL needs

Staff from Wiltshire College also visited the factory on several occasions and gained a feel for the operation and the training needs on the factory floor. This also ensured that the materials used on the course were relevant and appropriate to the course participants.

### **Promotion**

The courses were promoted through talking with staff on an individual basis and posters on staff notice boards. Attendance at courses was voluntary, with individuals attending courses during work time. The approach taken was very much one of building on existing trust with the individual workers and promoting the long-term goals to the line supervisors.

### **Aims of the workplace basic skills courses**

The core aim of the courses was to improve the quality of the work in the company. Increasingly, the food industry needs more literate staff; paperwork systems have increased to ensure food safety and to meet health legislation requirements. The spin-off from the courses is that the training also helps the individual both in and out of the workplace. The intention was also to increase confidence, which as well as benefiting the individual will also provide the company with better workers.

### **Delivery of Basic Skills**

#### Trainees

The trainees included both men and women from a wide age range (people in their early twenties through to late fifties). Some had been through a bad educational experience whilst at school; others had problems reading and writing in their own (not English) language, which added to the challenge.

#### Courses

- Communication: 19 trainees for two hours a week over five weeks
- Communication and Information Technology: 17 trainees for two hours a week over five weeks
- ESOL: 5 trainees (all women) for trainees for two hours a week over ten weeks
- One-to-one training: 3 staff

#### Delivery

*The company requested that written work be kept to a minimum on the communication courses; so only a few Worksheets were used. Much of the course was around current practice on the factory floor, followed by discussion. Videos addressing communication skills and body language were used and well received.*

*All those attending the ESOL course passed their Food Hygiene certificate, which is now compulsory for all apetito staff.*

### **Constraints**

The only real difficulties were finding a suitable room and time for people to be released from work. The latter was initially an obstacle due to concerns that the training would be disruptive for production. The key to resolving this was to prove that the basic skills training would increase efficiency.

## Outcomes

### Evaluation

At the end of the courses all trainees completed short questionnaires. The feedback was generally positive and there was an interest in spending more time on communication skills. In addition to this, the Training Coordinator spent time on the shop floor talking to the trainees and the line supervisors both during and after the courses to gain feedback about how the courses were going and what people thought about the process and content.

### Benefits to the employer

- Supervisors felt communication had improved.
- ESOL group passed Food Hygiene certificate, obligatory for continued employment.
- Part of process was that awareness about issues around basic skills was raised among managerial staff
- Improved understanding of food safety, health safety and general day to day working

### Benefits to the trainees

- Improved communication skills, both within the workplace and at home
- Increased confidence
- For some there was the motivation to continue with further training and some staff enrolled at the College on new courses

### *Overall impact*

The company is developing a new training approach, and basic skills training is now recognised as an essential part of any future training strategy. In addition to improved communication on the factory floor, and the fact that staff attained their Food Hygiene certificate, a number of staff have chosen to enrol at College courses. One-to-one training is continuing for those who need continued support at this stage.

### *Good practice*

- Spending time on the initial development process, but very time consuming
- Using experienced basic skills tutors
- Selecting the right College staff to work in the factory
- Take more resources along to the courses than will practicably be used
- Knowledge of local area and industry
- Interactive sessions – not a reliance on worksheets
- Understanding and meeting the company's needs
- Tailored programme designed specifically for them
- One to one – “selling” on the factory floor using a personal approach
- Trust is very important for courses such as basic skills
- Delivering the course that was promised

## Individuals

At *apetito* there was a mother and daughter who both attended the course and supported each other. Both of them gained a lot from the course including self-confidence, their Food Hygiene certificate and the realisation that they could gain from and enjoy an educational experience.

One of the trainees who required one-to-one support at the start of the workplace basic skills training has gone on to enrol on a course at Wiltshire College. She is able to do this as her confidence has increased and she now wants to learn more in her own time.



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