

An evaluation of non-schedule 2 pilot projects

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Preface

The aim of the study, commissioned by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), was to provide an evaluation of the outcomes of non-schedule 2 pilot projects funded in 1999–2000. The evaluation was designed to illustrate strengths and good practice in the pilot projects, but also to indicate any scope for change in the current partnerships and ways in which new partnerships can benefit from the pilot exercise. The study began in February 2000 and was completed in July 2000.

The funding of the non-schedule 2 pilots sought to ensure that the projects operated in the wider context of widening participation, raising achievement, social inclusion and the issues highlighted in the Moser report on adult basic skills. FE Colleges have worked for some time at widening participation and many imaginative approaches have been developed by colleges to encourage learners into education. FE colleges have considerable experience of working with adult learners in the context of the schedule 2 curriculum. The non-schedule 2 projects sought to stimulate colleges to be responsive to the specific needs of groups of disadvantaged learners in the community by allowing them to offer a curriculum which did not require a qualification as an outcome.

Learning is key to the achievement of a number of government policy agendas – economic prosperity, social cohesion, community regeneration and sustainable development. The findings of this evaluation will have resonance in a number of other policy areas where adult and community learning has a part to play. There are some useful messages throughout this report for all these initiatives as well as for the agencies and organisations that are developing quality standards and frameworks for staffing and for provision in the new sector.

Maggie Greenwood

Executive summary

- When defining what was expected in non-schedule 2 pilot projects, it seems that FEFC had in mind particular kinds of learners, closely linked to, although not identical with, the under-represented groups identified by the Kennedy Report. FEFC envisaged a standard of provision with distinctive learner and learning support features, but did not specify any particular curriculum content or subject focus. The development of progression pathways that would enable learners to progress into schedule 2 programmes at level 2 was also expected.
- Project co-ordinators reported that over 22,000 learners were enrolled on non-schedule 2 programmes nationally. Two-thirds of projects claimed that they had met and, in some cases, exceeded their enrolment target.
- Learners spoke very highly of the programmes they had been involved in and the qualities of the tutors.
- FE colleges have developed considerable experience in widening participation within schedule 2. The non-schedule 2 project funding enabled the colleges to build on this experience and develop a new curriculum without qualifications for particular groups of disadvantaged adults.
- The major impact on learners' lives is reported to have been to enable them to gain confidence in themselves and get a foothold back into education.
- Further part-time study emerges as the most important destination for non-schedule 2 learners. Negligible numbers have progressed as yet into full-time study, employment or voluntary work. Data on actual progression should be available over the next twelve months. The aim of progression to level 2 of schedule 2, particularly in the short time-scale of the projects, may have been unrealistic and, in the light of the removal of the schedule 2 / non-schedule 2 divide, is now not relevant.
- Colleges considered new links into the community and an enhanced reputation with community organisations as a significant benefit of the pilot projects.
- Where senior management have been involved, non-schedule 2 has been an agent of change within the organisation. It has focused work in the community and for disadvantaged adults, and has led to a redefining of the college's mission.

- A strong recommendation from the project co-ordinators, managers and learners was that this type of provision should continue to be funded. The funding should also ensure sustainability of the projects to ensure that the work started through this funding will continue.
- Working in and through partnerships was intended to be a strong feature of this programme. There were, in practice, at least three layers of partnership around each project – strategic, operational and delivery. The quality of partnership practice in each of these layers differed from project to project.
- In areas where there had already been a history of strong and effective partnership work, the functions of a Lifelong Learning Partnership had been quickly subsumed within existing arrangements. For non-schedule 2 projects in these areas, Learning Partnership endorsement appears to have been both easier to obtain and more meaningful. However, among the projects visited, close and regular links with the local Learning Partnership were rare.
- Making early contact with other agencies, especially community groups, and wide consultation is essential. There is always a long lead-in time in developing the kinds of learning programmes envisaged in the specification for non-schedule 2 funding. Both colleges and the FEFC seriously underestimated this. As a result, many projects were still under target as late as May.
- Projects benefited from having a project co-ordinator who would receive and interpret information from FEFC, and call and service meetings. However, the expectations of the role and the degree of authority of the project co-ordinator were often unclear in a number of partnerships. A neutral project co-ordinator, not on the staff of any one college provider, has proved particularly beneficial in developing a more coherent project.
- Non-schedule 2 has been an opportunity for many colleges to create a completely different relationship with agencies in their communities. It has proved important to be able to allocate sufficient staff time of the right calibre to creating and cementing these relationships.
- Project co-ordinators reported that they had found it hard to find suitable staff – for both outreach work in the target communities and for teaching courses in off-site settings with restricted facilities – from within existing permanent college staffing.
- Most courses mounted by projects were shorter than had been anticipated. Short courses were frequently extended once the learners had become really involved with the learning.

- Some programmes were imaginative and responsive. Some programmes, however, lacked challenge and rigour. Many programmes were really little more than activities rather than carefully planned learning programmes. Expertise in the definition of intended learning outcomes in non-accredited programmes is generally under-developed. The challenge now is to design programmes which are attractive to new learners but which incorporate the foundation stones for successful learning longer term. These should offer opportunities to develop and practise key skills and to extend basic skills alongside the acquisition of other knowledge or skills.
- There was a lack of clear monitoring and evaluating of the achievement of learners. The most commonly applied definition of achievement in use was course completion.
- Projects which were led by, or had input from, those with experience in adult learning and/or community work had clearly benefited from this expertise.
- Very little time had yet been given to the development of alternative quality assurance procedures appropriate to monitoring and improving the quality of short introductory learning programmes in community settings.
- There was little evidence of learners being involved in evaluation at project level. Given the very positive attitudes of the learners to the programmes they had experienced and even the gratitude expressed by many of the learners, college providers seemed to be missing a real opportunity to access the knowledge held by the learners on how the projects, as well as the individual programmes, could be developed further.
- The funding has enabled a new look at widening participation from an FE college's perspective. However, it has raised issues relating to work that has already been carried out by adult and community education providers in the voluntary sector, in local authorities and also in the FE sector. There is a need for Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) to make best use of all the resources available for adult and community learning in response to the articulated needs of the local community.

Summary and main findings from the evaluation

1. The quality of non-schedule 2 provision

- There is always a long lead-in time in this kind of work. Both colleges and the FEFC greatly underestimated this. Some projects had also been very slow in getting started, making late appointments to the role of co-ordinator, passing responsibility for the project on within college structures or awaiting further guidance from the FEFC.
- Most time and effort seems to have gone on getting it all up and running. This has reduced the time available for curriculum development and monitoring quality.
- Projects reported that they had greatly underestimated how demanding the project would be on staff time, particularly that spent in outreach work.
- Making early contact with other agencies, especially community groups, and wide consultation is essential.
- Most courses mounted were shorter than had been anticipated. Ten- or twelve-hour courses were common. Shorter courses were frequently extended once the learners had become really involved with the learning. Extension frequently reflected FEFC load bands for funding.
- Some projects had over-estimated their likely unit achievement in their original application as they had thought more of the learners would be on extended programmes than actually turned out to be the case.
- The quality of provision seen was uneven. Some programmes were really imaginative and responsive; others had been extracted from the curriculum in use for accredited programmes in the same area, but were lacking some of the rigour. In some cases, too little thinking had gone into curriculum design and delivery and/or the tutor lacked depth of curriculum knowledge, experience and support.
- Most programmes were much liked by the learners met. However, some programmes lacked challenge and rigour. Many programmes were activities rather than planned learning programmes. As such, they really did not meet FEFC expectations for non-schedule 2 programmes as described in Circular 99/16. The challenge now is one of turning taster activities into challenging and progressive learning programmes. Further work needs to be done on developing provision which remains light touch and enjoyable but which consciously builds the transferable skills for further learning.
- Areas for improvement include: curriculum design for building good learning habits and for making progression more likely; embedding basic skills in other curriculum content; identifying and recording the achievement of learning outcomes; appropriate learner support in off-site settings; quality assurance and improvement strategies; staff development, management and support;

tracking and record-keeping generally; and monitoring and evaluation at all levels – programme, project and partnership.

- There was little evidence of the development of common quality standards across the partnerships, with one or two notable exceptions.
- Suitable staffing was hard to come by for both outreach work in the target communities and for teaching. Many projects reported that they have had to look outside their own full-time staff in order to find these skills. Appropriate, well-trained and suitable staff are essential if these programmes are to be effective.
- Projects which were led by, or had input from, those with experience in adult learning and/or community work had clearly benefited.
- Staff training and development is given insufficient priority. There have been some tutor workshops and conferences. One or two projects have developed tutor handbooks etc, but practice is inconsistent. There is a need for appropriate staff development, training and support to ensure the effectiveness of this kind of work.
- This programme was a steep learning curve for many colleges, particularly those that had little or no prior experience of this kind of work. More advice, information, support and possibly some facilitated networking would have helped projects get further in their first year.
- There has been a tendency for the audit system developed over the last few years to dominate thinking in the FE sector. This has had the effect of constraining creativity in curriculum design. There has also been a collective loss of skills in outreach work and informal learning.
- There was a lack of clear monitoring and evaluating of learner achievement. There needs to be a rigorous system in place so that tutors and learners can jointly assess that learning has occurred. Effort needs to be spent on developing a robust system of evaluating learner outcomes.
- There were some undeniable differences between the project practice proposed in the original bids and then reported in the questionnaire returns from the colleges, and the evidence gathered by the case study team. Colleges had clearly been over-ambitious in what they hoped to achieve within the first year, and some had expected to get further than it seemed they had in practice with, for example, innovative curriculum design and common quality assurance procedures.

2. The impact of the pilot projects on recruiting disadvantaged learners and enabling them to progress

Learners

- Based on responses from project co-ordinators, over 22,000 learners were enrolled on non-schedule 2 programmes.
- Two-thirds of projects had met and exceeded their enrolment targets.

- Projects have reached some new learners certainly and many from the socially disadvantaged groups proposed in the Circular. Women significantly outnumber men. There are also a number of 'recycled' learners particularly in geographic areas which are accessing a number of external funding streams concurrently.
- The perceptions of the providers were that the main barriers to participation were negative attitudes towards education, fear of the large provider and a lack of knowledge about availability of programmes. The success in recruiting learners onto the programmes shows that these barriers can be overcome by actively working in the community and improving the reputation of the college with the local communities.
- Learners met during the case studies endorsed most of this view. They were fearful of entering a large institution where their particular needs might not be taken into account. They were also concerned about the cost, travel and time involved in learning. Some had not known what different kinds of learning were available. Mostly, however, they lacked confidence in their own abilities in learning and were worried that they may not keep up. They did not, however, express negative attitudes to learning per se.
- Childcare was seen as a major need.
- A significant minority of providers said that the lack of transport was also a disincentive to getting involved. This was endorsed by learners on outlying estates in areas where the college was located in the city centre, and also in rural areas.
- When asked, learners described the features for which they most valued the programmes as :

- Local
- Free
- Convenient/easy to get to 'without needing us to have a car or to pay a bus fare we can't afford'
- Starts and finishes at times which fit in with the school day or other family responsibilities
- Offers childcare or respite cover for those who need it
- Not in a big and daunting college
- In a small group and with at least 'some other people we already know'
- A tutor who is approachable and understanding 'and does not make us feel stupid'
- Not too long to start off with so it doesn't seem like too much of a commitment
- A tutor who teaches in ways which take account of the learners' particular needs
- 'Doing the things you always wanted to know more about'

- The perception of the providers is that the non-schedule 2 learners share many of the characteristics of Programme Area 10 schedule 2 learners. However, the particular needs of learners on non-schedule 2 programmes are considered to be confidence building, raising self-esteem, and a high level of individual support and encouragement.
- Learners were particularly attracted to the programmes because they were free; many learners participating in learning perceive cost as a barrier. Even when programmes are offered free, there are sometimes hidden costs to the learner. This issue may need to be further explored when targeting recruitment at disadvantaged groups of learners.
- Evidence from case study visits shows that the learners have greatly enjoyed the non-schedule 2 programmes! The Northwest region conference on 'The Voice of the Learner' showed the impact that the non-schedule 2 funding has had on the lives of those individuals involved. Meeting and speaking with the learners offers powerful testimony to the value of delivering local, free, flexible, non-accredited programmes in the community.

Progression

- Part-time study emerges as the most frequent destination for non-schedule 2 learners; negligible numbers progress into full-time study, voluntary work or employment.
- Progression to level 2 of schedule 2, particularly in the short time of the projects, may have been unrealistic and the available data on this is inconclusive. There is, however, an impact on the viability of level 1 programmes in colleges if significant numbers of non-schedule 2 learners do progress into schedule 2 programmes.
- Only partial information is available – 38% of learners are not accounted for in the data provided for the end of the evaluation period in July 2000.
- Only a small minority of learners did not continue in learning following their non-schedule 2 programme.
- Arrangements for tracking progression are poorly established; in order to establish the impact of the non-schedule 2 projects, colleges need to develop better systems to track their learners over a period of time.
- It is extremely difficult and time-consuming to track learners who leave the project and move onto other colleges/projects.
- Concern was expressed that the same barriers to learning that have been reduced through the pilot projects would return when learners tried to access mainstream provision, i.e. fees, childcare, costs of travel to college. This concern will need to be addressed in future funding arrangements.
- The new LSCs need to take into account this type of programme where progression onto schedule 2 should not be the only measure of success.
- There needs to be a focus developed on learner progression to ensure that the programmes are also supporting the government's key aim of increased employability amongst socially disadvantaged adults.

3. The extent and quality of partnership

- An important ingredient of the projects was expected to be the development of a strong and active partnership.
- Apart from a few notable exceptions, projects were operating more as a number of parallel sub-projects than as a coherent and unified partnership.
- Links with the local Learning Partnership were not often evident or close.
- Established partnerships got off the ground fastest.
- The project co-ordinator's role has been vital as a conduit for information but too often the personnel involved were already overloaded with other work. Where a project co-ordinator has been independent of all the provider colleges, this has proved beneficial. The authority that project co-ordinators have over the project as a whole is unclear.
- The rules on LEA involvement in the pilot projects were initially unclear but the contributions and expertise of LEA adult and community education staff were much valued by those projects that did include the LEA as a partner. WEA involvement and expertise was also much valued where the WEA was included.
- Some new and potentially valuable relationships longer term have been established with voluntary sector partners in the community.
- Some projects have employed as tutors on the project people suggested to them by their community and voluntary sector partners. This presents colleges with an opportunity to begin to make changes to their staff profile overall not only so that it becomes more representative of the communities they seek to serve, but also so that it contains within it more staff who have the skills and understanding needed for this work.

4. Value added by the projects, compared to the previous range of options for learners

- The funding has enabled colleges to develop new kinds of provision – short, flexible, free, unaccredited, out in the community. It has also increased their responsiveness to local needs.
- The projects gave colleges the opportunity to build new alliances in disadvantaged areas of the community and encouraged collaboration with other agencies.
- Colleges saw the increased links with the community and an enhanced reputation there as a significant added value for them of the project. Celebrating the success of the projects, using the learners as their ambassadors in the community in order to encourage more people into the programmes could further enhance this.
- There was little evidence yet that the projects had had any impact upon whole college curriculum planning and delivery. If development projects of this kind are to have an impact upon the whole college, they do need to have a

champion at senior management team level within the college who can ensure that any lessons are heard and transferred.

- Other providers of non-schedule 2 adult education, particularly those in the local authority and voluntary sectors, had initially expressed doubts as to the equity of routing new funding for non-schedule 2 programmes only through colleges. In areas where the local authority's adult and community education service or the WEA were actively involved in the non-schedule 2 project operational partnership, initial suspicions had been addressed and dispersed by getting down to some sensible joint planning and collaborative work. In other areas where the non-schedule 2 projects happened separately from the local authority's community education service, there were differences of opinion locally as to whether the provision made had actually added something qualitatively new to the area or had really offered more of the same. There was, however, absolute agreement that it had increased the quantity of such provision.
- There is huge scope for developing more of this first rung provision provided that funding continues to be made available for it. The question of who does it should be answered by whoever does it best.
- In some areas of the country where there were multiple sources of government funding for similar work, it was sometimes difficult to identify what particular difference the injection of FEFC non-schedule 2 funding was making to provision in the area. FEFC development funds of this kind might therefore be better channelled more to areas which cannot access other funds for this kind of work such as SRB, ESF etc. This may be a question of whether the driving intention of FEFC in making this funding available was (a) to stimulate a change in the way in which many colleges approach recruitment and programme design and delivery or (b) to add something significant and different to the range of provision being made in a particular patch.
- The major value for learners has been that they have been able to access learning programmes which they felt manageable and which have enabled them to gain confidence and get a foothold back into education.
- The pilot projects have further highlighted the need for provision which is both coherent and diverse. Balancing these two aims – coherence and diversity – will be a particular challenge for the local Learning and Skills Councils.

5. Evidence of learner involvement in evaluation

- No special system for evaluation of these programmes by the learners seems to have been developed as yet. Emphasis in the projects had been around getting the programmes running.
- Evaluation has been focused on the courses rather than the projects and there has been a missed opportunity to use learner perceptions in this process.

- Whilst projects claimed learners were involved in overall project evaluation, there was little evidence of this.

6. Funding

- A strong recommendation from the project co-ordinators, programme managers and, most important, learners was that the government should continue to support and fund this type of provision.
- Current FEFC funding systems were not considered to be well suited to this kind of work.
- The current funding system allocates funding units against an individual learner and the progress of the learning programme. Non-schedule 2 programmes tend to assume a group model of learning with group support needs. An individualised funding system based on units creates an unnecessary layer of complexity in calculating the cost of a learning programme. With non-schedule 2 projects, the greatest bulk of expenditure falls prior to programme delivery. These costs are in partnership management, project co-ordination, community liaison, programme development, outreach work and childcare support. The entry element of the current funding methodology cannot adequately represent these costs. A model based more on core or block funding for infrastructure and outreach costs plus formula funding for programmes delivered would be more appropriate and also easier to administer and to explain to delivery partners.
- A funding system that is based only on actual learners recruited will ultimately operate as a disincentive to providers to invest time and resources in development work where the outcomes are not guaranteed. Given the intended beneficiaries of these programmes, a funding system needs to be able to tolerate a reasonable degree of variance between planned outcomes and actual without applying financial penalties
- Projects considered the 5% additional development costs, offered by FEFC in addition to the unit linked funding, to be insufficient particularly when divided up between the partners.
- Funding all non-schedule 2 learning programmes at Cost Weighting Factor C was greatly valued by projects. However, even this level of funding was still considered by many to provide insufficient funds to finance enough outreach work and childcare, for example.
- Some projects tended to allow the funding methodology to determine the length of their learning programmes. This ultimately reduced flexibility and responsiveness to the learners. In programmes of this nature, targeting the learners they do, the jump from a 22-hour course to a 60-hour course is a big increase in commitment for the learner. Any future funding system needs to reduce the incentive for providers to do this.
- Programmes had to be nine hours in length before they triggered funding – even nine hours was too long for some learners as a first contact. One-off taster sessions were not fundable.

- Colleges varied enormously in the proportion of the funding they received that they then invested in the programmes they ran. Some financed extensive outreach, materials, equipment, childcare, travel etc. and others only some outreach and the direct tuition costs, expecting partner organisations to provide the rest. This sometimes created unexplained inconsistencies within projects. It also, on occasions, caused friction with partner organisations in the community.
- There are hidden costs to organisations working in this way. Smaller community-based organisations often have little spare capacity for the extended development work that is sometimes necessary in setting up a project.
- The funding has enabled a new look at widening participation from an FE college's perspective. However, it has raised issues relating to work that has already been carried out by other sectors, such as adult and community education, LEAs etc. There is a need for LSCs to have an overview of funding initiatives and ensure that work is not unnecessarily duplicated.

Recommendations

We have directed our recommendations at projects, Learning Partnerships and the Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs).

Projects should:

- get started quickly
- establish links with the local authority and voluntary and community groups to ensure that the project is articulated into the full panoply of community development and outreach strategies locally
- secure commitment and leadership from the head of the lead institution in order to avoid the project becoming marginal to the main activity of its colleges
- identify a champion at senior level in each college, who will ensure that the project sits firmly within the college's overall strategies for widening participation
- appoint an impartial, influential, effective, senior level project co-ordinator
- engage in effective networking with other organisations and agencies in the community
- operate throughout with an open mind and a willingness to learn
- be imaginative and creative in curriculum design and delivery
- develop customised or individually negotiated learning programmes responsive to the needs and interests of the target group
- make explicit the intended learning outcomes of each programme
- establish a minimum level of common quality standards which will apply to all provision made within the project
- offer good impartial information, advice and guidance at the place where learners want it and in a manner which is appropriate to their current level of engagement
- make a commitment that community-based learners will have access to as wide a range of the support services as is feasible
- put together some fit for purpose tools for assessing basic skills support needs and strategies for responding to them
- develop a range of appropriate assessment methods for identifying learning gain
- build in and signpost progression pathways
- select tutors carefully – ensure they have the right combination of interpersonal skills, teaching expertise and curriculum knowledge
- provide opportunities for their continuing development, training and support
- involve learners in such a way that they are encouraged and able to express their views on more than course delivery
- ensure the project links with the other work of the college and has close articulation with other similar activities
- take every opportunity to recognise and celebrate of the success of learners
- develop fit for purpose quality assessment and improvement strategies.

Learning Partnerships should:

- ensure they are aware of the possible range of provision in adult and community learning
- develop an overview of the potential for adult learning in their own areas
- develop a strategic view of the wide range of adult learning needs in their area in order to inform the planning and funding decisions of their local LSC
- discuss and agree who might be best to provide for different learners and in what contexts
- ensure that the messages emerging from the various projects endorsed by the Learning Partnership are harvested and shared across the projects.

The Learning and Skills Councils should:

- continue to fund non-accredited adult and community learning
- develop an appropriate funding system which recognises the high development costs involved in setting up community-based learning and outreach programmes
- recognise that qualifications are not the only method for measuring achievement and pilot some alternative approaches
- operate a wider definition of progression suited to the needs of adults who do not see themselves as necessarily moving in a linear fashion through levels of provision
- maintain an overview of local provision in order to ensure that funding is well used and that work is not unnecessarily duplicated
- not allow the diversity of practice, that has been successful in attracting and engaging a wide range of disadvantaged learners, to be lost in the understandable drive to secure greater overall coherence in provision and greater value for money
- encourage providers from different sectors to work together in partnership so that their respective expertise is shared and used to the benefit of learners
- ensure equality of opportunity among providers to be considered to do this work, but also ensure that funding is then allocated to those best able to do it well and in the best interests of the learners.
- ensure sustainability of the work started under the non-schedule 2 funding.

1. Evaluation aims and context

1.1 Aims

The aim of the study, commissioned by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), was to provide an evaluation of the outcomes of non-schedule 2 pilot projects funded in 1999–2000, in order to inform the methodology for funding similar provision in future. The evaluation was designed to illustrate strengths and good practice in the pilot projects, but also to indicate any scope for change

in the current partnerships and ways in which new partnerships can benefit from the pilot exercise. The study began in February 2000 and was completed in July 2000.

The FEFC requested that five specific issues were addressed in the evaluation:

- the quality of non-schedule 2 provision
- the impact of the pilot projects on recruiting disadvantaged adult learners and enabling them to progress
- the extent and quality of partnership
- value added by the projects, compared with the previous range of options for learners (i.e. whether innovative programmes have been developed)
- the evidence of learner involvement in evaluation of the programmes on which they were enrolled.

1.2 Context

In May 1999, the FEFC invited applications for pilot project funding for non-schedule 2 provision. This provision covers education which does not fall within the duties of the Council (Circular 99/16).

A particularly important context for these projects was the role of partnerships and how to develop work with partners outside education, such as Probation Services, Health Authorities, Social Services and community agencies. All of these stakeholders contribute in different ways to the development of the individual and their capability. The funding for these projects was allocated when Lifelong Learning partnerships were at an early stage in their formation. It was intended that the projects should develop some models for working in partnership across providers and sectors to address the needs of particular groups of learners

The funding of the non-schedule 2 pilots sought to ensure that the projects operated in the wider context of widening participation, raising achievement, social inclusion and the issues highlighted in the Moser report on adult basic skills. FE colleges have worked for some time at widening participation, and many imaginative approaches have been developed by colleges to encourage learners into education. FEFC has made funding available to colleges to enable them to assist students through access funds, childcare units and additional learning support units. Many colleges have also been active partners in Education Action Zones, SRB funded work, City Challenge and a wealth of other initiatives aimed at encouraging and widening participation. FE colleges have considerable experience of working with adult learners in the context of the schedule 2 curriculum, particularly in Access and Return to Learn programmes. The non-schedule 2 projects, however, sought to stimulate colleges to be more responsive to the specific needs of groups of disadvantaged learners in the community by allowing them to offer a curriculum which did not require a qualification as an outcome

Learning is key to the achievement of a number of government policy agendas – economic prosperity, social cohesion, community regeneration and sustainable development. The findings of this evaluation will have resonance in a number of other policy areas where adult and community learning has a part to play. The Draft National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, for example, recommends the establishment of a local learning centre in each neighbourhood targeted. The report of the Policy Action team on the Skills for Neighbourhood Renewal recommends the training of community leaders. The national Basic Skills strategy is seeking a step change in the number of people involved in learning programmes, which will improve their basic skills. It also seeks an increase in the provision available. There are some useful messages throughout this report for all these initiatives as well as for the agencies and organisations that are developing quality standards and frameworks for staffing and for provision in the new sector. These messages are about:

- the kinds of programme that will entice new learners
- the kind of staff that will be needed to teach on these programmes
- the changes needed to existing organisational arrangements to ensure greater responsiveness to disadvantaged learners
- the challenges of partnership working across sectors

2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The evaluation of the non-schedule 2 pilot projects comprised six elements:

- 1) an introductory workshop for all non-schedule 2 pilot co-ordinators
- 2) a first postal questionnaire survey of all 40 pilots (Appendix 1)
- 3) case study visits to a sample of 20 partnerships and associated projects, including some visits to work in progress, group discussions with learners and discussions with members of the Lifelong Learning partnerships
- 4) a second workshop for pilot co-ordinators
- 5) a second postal questionnaire survey of all 40 pilots (Appendices 2 and 3)
- 6) an analysis of findings

An advisory group was also established. Its members were representatives from organisations with experience of delivering and monitoring adult education, such as the Women's Institute, local education authorities, the Basic Skills Agency; FEFC and OFSTED inspectors, and project co-ordinators (Appendix 4). The advisory group was chaired by Lindsay Harford (FEFC) and met three times during the course of the evaluation.

2.2 The introductory workshop

Non-schedule 2 pilot co-ordinators have played a key role in the evaluation of the initiative, both as a source of data and other evidence on the operation and outcomes of the pilots, and as a conduit to the projects which they co-ordinate. The minimum number of projects within any one pilot was two, but most were much larger. Most of the 40 pilots had a co-ordinator in place.

The objectives of the introductory workshop were to:

- brief the co-ordinators about the aims of the FEFC evaluation and to gain their support
- explain the evaluation process and how the co-ordinators were to be involved
- finalise a timetable for workshops, questionnaires and case studies, taking account of the stage the projects had reached and the dates of college terms
- familiarise co-ordinators with the scope of the first postal questionnaire and the type of evidence sought
- assist co-ordinators in planning how they were to obtain evidence from individual projects at various stages in the evaluation.

The workshop also provided input on approaches to the evaluation of adult achievement in a non-accredited curriculum. This workshop took place in February 2000 in Coventry and was jointly organised by FEDA and NIACE.

2.3 The first postal questionnaire survey

The purpose of the first questionnaire was to obtain essential data and other information to be used in evaluating the initiative as a whole, in selecting case study partnerships (see below), and to inform the case study discussion topics.

Questions covered included:

- which client groups were being targeted and the targets for each group
- the roles of the various organisations within the partnerships, in particular how responsibility was allocated for the different client groups
- the range of programmes offered and the extent to which these constituted new provision
- the adequacy of student support arrangements
- whether students were involved in evaluating the programmes
- the partnerships' knowledge about students' views of the benefits of the programmes (based on partnership quality procedures)

- arrangements for quality assurance
- project time-scales
- what administrative changes had been made.

The questionnaire was devised by FEDA in consultation with NIACE and administered by FEDA's Survey Research Unit. A small-scale trial was conducted before the main survey.

2.4 Case study visits

In order to evaluate the pilot projects in greater depth, case study visits were also made to a sample of 20 non-schedule 2 pilots (see Appendix 5). This represented 50% of the total funded projects. Case studies were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- size
- client group coverage
- location
- the nature of the partnership
- the potential for innovation.

Case study questions investigated in greater detail topics covered in the questionnaire and gathered further evidence to support the questionnaires (Appendix 6).

For each case study visit, the project co-ordinator was responsible for arranging the programme. NIACE and FEDA requested that the programme should include meetings with a wide range of people involved with the project, together with some opportunities to observe a sample of learning programmes and other activity.

Meetings were held with:

- learners (both individuals and groups)
- the project co-ordinator
- programme leaders or other key people
- tutors and other programme staff
- representatives of the various partners (operational and strategic)
- representatives of other providers of adult learning in the area.

The case study exercise was led by NIACE. Visits were carried out between May and July 2000 by members of a team drawn from NIACE and FEDA staff and external consultants. External recruitment made it possible to draw upon a network of consultants who work regularly with FEDA and NIACE. In this way the spread of expertise was broadened, and a good coverage of adult learning and under-represented groups achieved together with a familiarity of quality issues.

2.5 The second workshop for partnership co-ordinators

The purpose of this workshop, held in London in June 2000, was to present and validate the early findings emerging from the study and to familiarise co-ordinators with the scope of the second postal questionnaire survey (see below). It was also an opportunity for projects to share issues and six projects presented their work. The workshop was jointly organised by FEDA and NIACE.

2.6 The second postal questionnaire survey

This survey, like the first, was conducted by FEDA's Survey Research Unit. Two questionnaires were circulated, one to all non-schedule 2 project co-ordinators (Appendix 2) and one to individual programme managers (Appendix 3). The purpose was to obtain data and other evidence on the outcomes of the pilots. The questionnaire was again piloted by two projects and the final draft reached co-ordinators and managers in mid-June, for return by mid-July 2000. Key components of the questionnaire were:

- data on actual students recruited and completing (not just targets)
- how non-schedule 2 students compare with those on schedule 2 courses
- destinations of students (outcomes in terms of progression)
- wider benefits of the programmes in terms of impact on students' lives
- impacts of the projects on the work of the colleges
- recommendations for future projects.

Co-ordinators were asked to provide, for the data elements, both aggregate information at partnership level and information relating to the outcomes of specific projects or programmes.

3. Non-schedule 2

Non-schedule 2 is a classification of learning programmes used since 1993 to describe courses which do not lead to qualifications. Its origins lie in the Further and Higher Education Act (1992) which listed in Schedule 2 of the Act provision that it would be the duty of the new Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) to secure. The Council could also fund non-schedule 2 provision in designated institutions. The 1992 Act assigned local education authorities the duty to secure non-schedule 2 adult education.

In the context of the programme we have evaluated, the FEFC used the term 'non-schedule 2' to describe the provision it sought to fund within this pilot programme, but it set additional parameters around the provision that the council would consider eligible for funding. These parameters are embedded within Circular 99/16 paragraph 4 where it is described as *'that provision which covers education which does not fall within the duties of the council. It is mainly non-vocational and non-academic education including social, physical and*

recreational training and organised leisure-time occupation'. In paragraph 2 the Circular refers to provision which is *'something between basic skills and formalised qualifications-focused learning'*. In paragraph 14 the Circular identifies as likely candidates for the programmes *'adults experiencing disadvantage who may not previously have had access to council funding'*. Such adults would normally *'lack qualifications and/or successful educational experience and need non-schedule 2 provision as an essential precursor to progression to schedule 2 provision'*.

The Circular proposes a list of possible target groups (paragraph 14). It also describes the kind of provision that would be eligible for funding. Programmes *'should be innovative and be designed to enable progression to schedule 2 provision at level 2'* and they would be *'likely to include a substantial element of basic skills development'* (paragraph 15). The government has identified level 2 as the basic platform for employability.

Programmes should also, the Circular states:

- be individualised as regards the choice of curriculum area and the model of curriculum design
- include outreach
- incorporate initial assessment and continuing guidance and support
- be flexible and made up of small steps, where the learning outcomes are described and documented for the learner
- maintain records of learning
- be delivered by appropriately qualified and experienced staff
- include transition and progression planning
- involve the learners in programme evaluation.

It is clear that FEFC had in mind particular kinds of learners closely linked to, although not identical with, the under-represented groups identified by the Kennedy Report; a standard of provision with distinctive features but with no particular curriculum content specified; and progression pathways into schedule 2 at level 2.

As a result, the projects considered eligible for funding by the FEFC within this pilot scheme did not mirror typical non-schedule 2 work in LEAs. Instead the projects are more typical of a particular project-based widening participation strand of work within non-schedule 2 adult education. Conventional non-schedule 2 adult education provision made in local authority adult education services is a broader programme involving fee paying and a greater number of students who have some experience of extended education post-school. They also have usually had a more positive experience of education in the first place. FEFC-funded non-schedule 2 projects do not mirror the same spectrum of non-schedule 2 adult education provision, as delivered, for example, by a local authority adult education service

The term 'non-schedule 2' is derived originally from a legal classification whose original purpose was to draw boundaries between different parts of the adult curriculum. It has become imbued with a number of other everyday common-sense meanings, all of which hold some truth but none of which holds true all of the time, for example:

- not accredited
- free to those taking part
- delivered out in the community to groups of people which have been specifically targeted in some way
- offering more flexibility than mainstream provision
- reaching learners who would not easily access or settle in more conventional provision made on main college sites
- disadvantaged learners.

However, accreditation apart, all of these features are also technically possible, though possibly less likely, within schedule 2.

It is in the context of the Circular that the projects have developed a range of programmes to fit into the defined categories (see section 4.4.1, table 6: the target groups). They are building on work done in LEAs but also being enabled to re-activate community learning by being liberated to run programmes which are non-accredited. The overriding objective of the programme was to encourage and support people back into learning through a variety of community-based activities.

This evaluation has been carried out using the broadest interpretation of the term 'non-schedule 2'. Whatever the definition of 'non-schedule 2', this is provision which will continue to be fundable under the Learning and Skills Councils and under the new arrangements is likely to be categorised as Adult and Community Learning. The lessons learned from these pilot projects are highly relevant to the current discussion on future planning and funding arrangements for this work.

4. The evaluation – findings and analysis

The findings in the evaluation are based on four primary sources of evidence:

1. questionnaire 1
2. questionnaire 2 to co-ordinators
3. questionnaire 2 to programme managers
4. 20 case study visits out of 40 projects, i.e. 50% sampling of projects nationally.

	Despatched	Returns analysed (received within the time-scale)	Overall returns	Effective response rate (i.e. included in analysis)
Questionnaire 1 (to managers, via co-ordinators)	164	131	164	80%
Questionnaire 2 – co-ordinators	40	31	40	78%
Questionnaire 2 – managers	115	79	130	69%

The findings have been brought together under the following key headings, related to the FEFC guidelines for evaluation:

- Partnerships
- The Projects
- The Programmes
- The Learners
- Monitoring Learning and Achievement
- Progression
- Quality Assurance
- The Staff
- Staff Development
- Added Value
- FEFC Systems and Procedures

4.1 Partnerships

Working in and through partnerships was intended to be a strong feature of this programme. The partners were defined by the lead FE college. From the 20 case study visits it is evident that the term ‘partnership’ requires some analysis. We examined what format the partnerships took, how real and how effective they were, and how they could be developed or improved. The case studies found that there are, in practice, at least three layers of partnership around each project:

- a **formal or strategic** partnership under whose auspices it operates, e.g. learning partnership
- an **operational** partnership responsible for managing the project and making it work

- a number of **delivery** partnerships between a sector college and other organisations which result in the delivery of learning programmes on the ground.

The quality of partnership practice in each of these layers differs from project to project.

4.1.1 Strategic partnerships

At strategic level there are the local Learning Partnerships. In May 1999, when applications were sought, Local Lifelong Learning Partnerships (as they were then called) were not yet fully established in some areas of the country, particularly in those parts of London where the borders between some partnerships proposed by the Government Office had been contested. It was an FEFC expectation that the original applications for funding were endorsed by the local Lifelong Learning Partnership. This was not always easy – often there was time for little more than a signature of support against a project proposal rapidly put together by one or more of the local colleges. For many projects, therefore, there was only relatively distant local strategic support for the project at the start.

In other parts of the country, where there had already been strong and effective working partnerships, e.g. Bury, Durham, Kent & Medway, Rotherham, Wigan and Leigh, the functions of a Lifelong Learning Partnership were quickly subsumed within existing arrangements. In these projects, Learning Partnership endorsement appears to have been easier to obtain and has carried through into the project. However, among the projects visited, close and regular links with the local Learning Partnership were rare.

Many of the non-schedule 2 projects had grown out of development work previously funded by FEFC under the programme for strategic partnerships for widening participation.

- In Durham a non-schedule 2 Steering Group is convened and chaired by the Principal of New College, and meets regularly every four to six weeks. It is used as an opportunity to monitor progress against targets, share experiences and plan forward actions. Membership reflects the composition of the local Learning Partnership – the Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) is represented, for example. The NS2 Steering Group reports directly to the local Learning Partnership, which includes within its membership several key members of the NS2 Steering Group. The NS2 project is a standard item on this group's agenda.
- In Nottingham, a project was put forward by the Greater Nottingham Learning Partnership and is directed by a multi-agency Steering Group operating under the Partnership Board. The GNLP Partnership Officer, an independent consultant on a long-term, part-time contract, chairs the Steering Group. This independence has benefited the work of the Project.

- In Kent & Medway, the activities undertaken within the project came about as a result of the Kent Association of Further Education Corporation's (KAFEC) successful proposal in 1997 for FEFC Widening Participation project funding. The colleges established a partnership with local education authorities, higher education institutions, TECs and the Careers Service to develop a widening participation plan for Kent and Medway. The partnership had been successful in mapping existing post-16 provision across the county. The information gathered from this project demonstrated patterns of participation in education and learning at ward level. The data has been used effectively to identify gaps in provision. The non-schedule 2 project builds on this work and aims to meet some of the needs identified at the local level.

In some areas, members of the previously funded Widening Participation partnerships frequently became the members of the steering group or operational partnership for the new non-schedule 2 project.

Where a steering group had been formed specifically for the non-schedule 2 project, case study visits revealed that current membership did not always match with the partners listed on the original application, e.g. TECs, Careers and Guidance Services. LEAs had supported the original bid but were less involved in delivery of the projects.

In some projects, one or more of the partners originally intending to deliver provision had withdrawn during the year as a result of other reasons. This included inspection (e.g. Birmingham), difficulty in developing the approaches required for recruiting the learners, or the LEAs discovering they were not able to access the money (e.g. Bristol). Where this decision had been notified early on to the partnership, this was not a problem as there could be some redistribution of target units across the other partners. Questionnaire 2 asked programme co-ordinators and managers whether they had achieved their target and, if not, were numbers transferred to other partners in the project. In theory, a provider not meeting a target should offer another provider the option to recruit the missing number; in practice, only three of the 21 providers who did not meet their target transferred the shortfall in numbers to other providers. Case study reports showed that this was proving most problematic where a partner had lain dormant for some time with an allocation of units and had not kept other members of the partnership informed of their intentions. This placed the partnership as a whole at risk of underachievement against target.

As regards LEAs, there was some confusion nationally during the first year as to whether LEAs could be involved as partners in the non-schedule 2 projects. Interpretations have differed across the regions.

- In Kent & Medway, Cambridgeshire, and Bury, for example, the LEA had been an active and valued partner engaged in both planning and delivery of the project. In Portsmouth the LEA had played a useful role as honest broker in a changing partnership. In Birmingham and Bristol the view held was that it was not possible for the LEA to be a partner in actual delivery and therefore even when the LEA had been involved in the early stages of setting up the project, it had since reduced its contribution to the partnership. In other areas – Wigan and Leigh, and Wiltshire and Swindon, for example – where the LEA was not involved in direct delivery of any adult education, the LEA was involved in the non-schedule 2 programmes only in a distant role at Learning Partnership level.

4.1.2 Operational partnerships

In questionnaire 1 respondents were asked to list who they were in partnership with. The 131 respondents cited 341 different partner organisations:

Table 1: partners in the non-schedule 2 projects

Community groups	49 cases
Mental health support groups	32 cases
Schools and nurseries	26 cases
Family support units	25 cases
Homeless projects	23 cases
FE colleges	21 cases
Voluntary organisations	14 cases
Health authority / health visitors / doctors	13 cases
Housing groups	11 cases
Adult education college	11 cases
Drug/alcohol rehabilitation centres	10 cases
Ethnic minority support groups	10 cases
Churches	9 cases
Women's centres	9 cases
Travellers' liaison	8 cases
Residents' groups	7 cases
Careers guidance	7 cases
Disability support	7 cases
Lifelong Learning Partnership	7 cases
Others	43 cases

What was not clear in the questionnaire responses was the level at which these partners operated in the projects.

Case study evidence shows that most operational partnerships met at regular intervals monthly or bi-monthly to discuss and to co-ordinate the project. All meetings were minuted and recorded. First meetings had usually been spent on agreeing how the project would operate and in discussing how each partner named in the bid would deliver their own contribution. Subsequent meetings tended to focus on project delivery matters. Questionnaire 1 asked programme managers what was the expertise of the partners and their contribution to the work. The 131 respondents cited 320 different aspects:

Table 2: Contribution of partners to the non-schedule 2 projects

Provision of venue/accommodation	50 cases
Recruitment of learners	44 cases
Knowledge of community needs	39 cases
Expertise in working with mental illness	23 cases
Provision of tutors	19 cases
Provision of resources/transport	15 cases
Publicity	14 cases
Links with parents	12 cases
Links to other local networks	11 cases
Expertise in working with the homeless	11 cases
Links with the health service	10 cases
Administration	10 cases
Expertise in working with drug and alcohol abuse	9 cases
Expertise in working with carers	7 cases
Expertise in working with travellers	6 cases
Expertise in working with women in refuges	6 cases
Expertise in working with ex-offenders	4 cases
Others	13 cases

The case studies showed that partners usually included some element of sharing information on performance against target. There were some instances of planning and development of common procedures across the partnership. This was less common overall than anticipated, and case studies revealed that many colleges had decided to use their own standard enrolment forms and quality assurance systems rather than develop a new set of common procedures specifically for the project (see section 4.7.1)

Attendance at later meetings of the operational partnerships, rather than the Learning Partnerships, had often been reduced to the core partners and primarily consisted of the colleges holding funding from the project. Each application had identified a lead college for communication purposes and a key contact. The lead college, once notified of the success of the application, had usually then identified or appointed a project co-ordinator. This was sometimes the lead

college's widening participation manager. In Birmingham there has been good collaboration at operational partnership level. Project staff in partner colleges spoke highly of this. Colleges with more experience in this work have been generous in sharing their knowledge and their contacts with others less experienced. The City of Birmingham has several FE colleges and in recent years there have been a number of initiatives undertaken in partnership across the colleges. This has been part of an effort to demonstrate greater coherence in planning and making provision. The NS2 project is one such initiative. It has provided a valued and supportive network for staff doing similar work in the different partner colleges. As such it provides a focus for some relevant professional development and curriculum exchange between the colleges.

In some projects a new appointment was made, for example in Norfolk and South London. In one project this was an experienced community development worker. In another the role was given to the head of adult education in the college. In two other colleges, the project co-ordinator role was given to a member of staff not connected with this area of work, in both cases as a professional development opportunity

Although it was clear that projects benefited from having a project co-ordinator who would receive and interpret information from FEFC and call and service meetings, the role and authority of the project co-ordinator were often unclear. It was hard, for example, to see what levers the co-ordinator could use to ensure either coherence in arrangements or consistency in performance across the project.

Case study evidence reveals that the FEFC's decision to break down the total project funding allocation and to disperse it to each college partner directly in the ratios proposed to them by the project made it more difficult for the project co-ordinator. This was a particular problem in the larger more dispersed projects, where to monitor budgets and performance across the project relied heavily on trust. In many projects the member of staff with the role of project co-ordinator was also carrying a large workload from their substantive post whilst being directly responsible for managing the part of the total programme delivered by their own college. These people were often torn between ensuring that the programme of their own college was delivering to target, and ensuring the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the project as a whole. Those where the operational partnership was more of an effective reality were those where there was either a newly appointed co-ordinator specifically for the whole project, as in Durham, or a partnership manager for an existing partnership of colleges, as in Kent & Medway. Here the impact on the project of having a skilled and knowledgeable planning officer has meant that the project is well monitored and supported at senior level, and that information is disseminated to all partners involved. Issues and problems are picked up quickly and dealt with. The neutrality of these roles can be seen as a distinct advantage. However, appointments such as these are more likely to be made when funding can be

assured for longer than a year or where the work can be underpinned from a range of other resources held by the partners.

4.1.3 Delivery partnerships

Partners at delivery level were drawn from a wide range of other agencies and organisations (see table 2). All the organisations encountered during the case study visits valued the opportunity that the funding had brought to open up wider access to learning for their client group:

- One agency, a homelessness project in Southwark, South London, was already making some educational provision for its client group, but they felt it was always in isolation. The project funded under the non-schedule 2 programme brought a college tutor into the day centre for several weeks to deliver a course designed jointly with the centre. This included a number of sessions towards the end on the main college site, also with the now known and accepted tutor. The organisation believed this had really created a bridge for their clients to access main college programmes and to understand that learning can lead on to other benefits.
- A carers' project in Wigan was pleased to be able to work with the college to set up provision at times and in venues appropriate to their members' needs.
- An under-fives project in Portsmouth wanted a dressmaking class at the early years centre on an estate in the city, not too long a course, and at times to match the playgroup sessions.

Where the projects were working well, partner organisations felt they were genuinely consulted on the type of learning activities that would suit their client group and were involved in the decisions on how and when they should be run. In many arrangements the organisation provided the venue and helped to recruit the learners. In some arrangements appropriate tutors were recommended by the organisations themselves:

- A social worker from the Family Service Unit in Birmingham was very clear about the value of the project to her client group and to her own work. She had knowledge of the client group and held their confidence, but she was adamant that the local college was more experienced at setting up learning programmes. Together she felt they had established a series of courses which progressively hooked the clients into learning and stimulated a demand for learning which had not been there previously. The flexibility of the college and the way in which they responded so positively to the requests of the group had been key factors, she thought, in the success of the project. It had allowed her to concentrate her efforts in areas she knew to be her professional strengths, and know that the college was leading on other areas.
- An Asian women's centre in Bristol was able to have their own Asian tutor for keep fit taken on by the College as a college tutor.

Many of the partner organisations on the ground are small. Some do not have the resources to undertake the extensive development work and liaison work required. One programme almost failed for this reason. A small community-based arts organisation in Portsmouth wanted to be involved in the project and use it to extend its provision to targeted groups from within the FEFC criteria. The organisation had imaginative ideas on how it could organise relevant learning programmes but it did not have sufficient staff time to undertake the necessary outreach and liaison work with possible target groups to match the two. As a result the programmes did not take off. Being involved in the non-schedule 2 project became for a while more of a drain on the organisation's resources than a positive connection. A fortuitous contact later established a link with an association of adults with ME and paved the way for an imaginatively constructed and progressive art and design programme, run in ways which took due account of the learners' disability and their fluctuating health.

Many organisations cited the flexibility of the colleges and their responsiveness to the interests expressed by their clients as critical factors in the success of the projects they were involved in. Where this had not been the case, or where a college was deemed to have been too fixed in its mind about what was on offer, relationships were less positive.

Where there were also considerable differences between the partners in the way they were defining the target group and in the approaches they were adopting to set up learning programmes, it was hard to capture an identity for the project as a whole. Some of the attempts made to capture an identity were more cosmetic in nature than substantial. In such projects, non-schedule 2 seemed to be more about an individual organisation gaining access to a funding stream that all colleges had accessed at the same time rather than a shared project. In practice, many projects were running more in parallel than in partnership.

4.2 The projects

4.2.1 Setting up the projects

In questionnaire 2 managers were asked what they would do differently if they were starting the projects again. Over a quarter mentioned allocating more time for planning and development; investing more time in recruiting and training staff and embarking earlier on partnership development. The co-ordinators and programme managers were asked what main message they would wish to convey to a college or partnership. The results were as follows:

- Over a third of co-ordinators (11 out of 27 who commented) suggested 'making early contact with other agencies, especially community groups'. Programme managers voiced a similar message, with around a third emphasising the need to consult widely.

- The same proportion warned against under-estimating ‘the time and resources to set up community links’.
- Just under a third (8) advised ‘developing strong and active partnerships’.
- Just under a quarter of co-ordinators (6) emphasised the need to ‘pre-plan as much as possible’.

Case study evidence shows that almost all colleges involved in the pilot projects approached the work by making contact with and working through groups and organisations in the community. They chose this method above more conventional marketing and publicity targeted at individuals. They made contact with the organisations which they thought would be in contact with the target groups they had identified. Colleges, which already had strong links in the community and a good local reputation for responsiveness, found this easier and were able to move faster into making provision:

- In North Yorkshire the needs analysis of the partnership, which underlies the on-going ‘widening participation’ agenda, of which the non-schedule 2 pilots are a part, was informed by research undertaken by North Yorkshire TEC over the previous three years. The non-schedule 2 pilots were designed to complement provision developed through the earlier Widening Participation project. The projects aimed to attract people who would not have enrolled for an accredited course in the first instance onto short courses which would catch people’s interest and motivate them, and which could lead to progression onto schedule 2 courses. The North Yorkshire Learning Network Partnership built on this research to ensure a geographical spread of provision across the county. It was able to build on the diversity of the partners in order to engage a variety of new learners.

In the colleges which already had strong community links, college development workers used non-schedule 2 as another string to their bow – a more flexible funding option for the programmes they negotiated with particular community groups, as in South Birmingham, where other funding options, schedule 2, SRB were too restrictive. Those colleges where there had been no tradition of this work had to start from scratch. In some this starting up phase became very extended. In others it was made additionally difficult because of historical factors affecting the reputation of the colleges in a particular community.

What is clear from both the case studies and the questionnaire surveys is that projects under-estimated the time it would take to set up the new work. They had to prepare the ground in new areas, set up new community links and develop new systems in a very short time. The funding approval was quite late in coming through (August for September 1999 start) and many projects did not have the infrastructure or experience to get started quickly. As a result, the case study exercise revealed that a number of projects had not much to show or record until March, April, May 2000 and, in some cases, as late as June. This is one area where case study evidence did not support data from questionnaire 1.

This was a steep learning curve for many colleges, particularly those that had little or no prior experience of this kind of work. More advice, information, support and facilitated networking might have helped them get further in their first year.

4.2.2 Models of delivery

Adults learn in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons. The pattern of adult learning provision is characteristically not neat and tidy. However, from the case studies it was possible to draw out five distinct models from the wide range of provision made across the projects. These we have termed:

- menu-driven courses
- customised programmes
- project-based programmes
- learning clubs
- supported infill.

Most of the projects approached the work using one or more of these models.

4.2.2.1 Menu-driven courses Colleges had identified a list of possible short courses they could run (e.g. Telford & Wrekin, Portsmouth, NW London). Usually these courses had been proposed by section managers and were initially from the more traditional curriculum areas for non-schedule 2 adult education – arts and crafts, IT, keep fit, yoga, dressmaking etc. Some were based on conventional schedule 2 programmes but had been repackaged as tasters. This model was the most provider-driven model. Partner organisations consulted with their clients and made arrangements with the college to set up the courses in their venues. Many projects, however, found that even though this had been useful as a starting point, as they and the learners became more confident in the approach they began to move away from the menu to more customised and negotiated provision, as in Wigan and Leigh.

4.2.2.2 Customised programmes This was where the college worked more closely with an organisation, sometimes over a period of time, and developed a particular tailor-made learning programme based on the needs that emerged during the contact. Examples of this approach included:

- South London's work with probation and bail hostels in Lewisham and Deptford which resulted in fitness training, photography and basic Maths for a group of young offenders.
- A 'design and make a carnival float' course with a group of parents involved in an early years project on an estate in Portsmouth.
- A local and social history project with a group of young lone parents in Rotherham living on a housing estate which was gradually being demolished around them prior to rebuilding.

4.2.2.3 Project-based programmes Colleges provided a skilled tutor to work alongside groups actually involved in doing something else other than learning. The tutor's approach was to weave the learning of new skills into the activity. Examples of this approach included:

- a painting and decorating tutor working alongside a group of adults doing up a community room in a local primary school in Telford
- a tutor working with a group of parents setting up and running a local football club in Manchester.

4.2.2.4 Learning clubs This model owes a great deal to the approach used in many branches of the Workers Educational Association (WEA) and the University of the Third Age (U3A). It involved colleges either identifying an existing group or bringing together a group of like-minded people and discussing with them what they might learn together. For example, a group of people in a rural area interested in gardening requested a course on organic gardening. This model was well developed in both Northumberland and North Nottinghamshire, although with differences in approach on the ground. This model really gets directly to the learners and puts them, rather than those who speak for them, in the driving seat. In North Nottinghamshire, learning facilitators were employed to facilitate the discussion stages and to broker the access to the kinds of learning programmes the group wanted.

4.2.2.5 Supported infill This model was seen in two projects only, Wiltshire & Swindon, and Telford & Wrekin. It was unusual in that, rather than put on new provision, it sought to support the access of targeted adults into mainstream LEA non-schedule 2 provision. In Telford this method was used for a small number of learners who fitted the target group. It identified a learning need available in the existing programme. It was used as an aid to flexibility for individual learners where they did not belong to a group. These learners received additional support to enable them to access the mainstream programme. In Wiltshire & Swindon it involved the college heavily promoting a programme of existing non-schedule 2 provision to adults in its area from the project's agreed target groups. The college did recruit a number of new or first time learners from these groups, who were interviewed to assess their learning needs and to verify that they fitted the criteria for inclusion in the scheme. They were then able to enrol on the course of their choice from the mainstream non-schedule 2 programme free and they were included within an additional wrap-around package of learning and other support.

There were also some instances where colleges or other providers did not work at all with or through a partner organisation. They set up their own provision in other venues more accessible to the groups they were targeting. This approach was used in Wiltshire where a college serving a large rural area was able to set up a more locally accessible IT provision across the country.

4.3 The programmes

4.3.1 Curriculum range

Questionnaire 1 asked respondents to state what courses they were running (or were planning to run). An enormous range and variety of programmes were offered by the pilot projects. Of 131 responses to the first questionnaire, 790 different programmes were quoted, ranging from IT to complementary medicines, from cultural studies to welding, from dance and drama to brickwork. For ease of analysis, programmes of a similar type have been grouped together.

Table 3: Non-schedule 2 courses

Type of course	Incidence
Health and fitness related/complementary medicine	97 cases
Information technology	88 cases
Personal development/confidence building/assertiveness training	70 cases
Parenting / childcare	48 cases
Arts and crafts	41 cases
Literacy / numeracy / basic skills	39 cases
Languages (including heritage languages and ESOL)	38 cases
First aid / food hygiene / health and safety	39 cases
Cooking / catering / cake decorating	28 cases
DIY / Changing Rooms / home maintenance	25 cases
Family learning	23 cases
Beauty / hair / make-up	19 cases
Horticulture / gardening design / floristry	15 cases

Of the 790 courses reported, 97 related to health, fitness, aerobics, keep fit, complementary medicine, yoga, aromatherapy, reflexology, etc. Case study evidence stated these were particularly attractive to women returners and ethnic minority groups, and often took place in a local community centre close to where people lived.

The next most commonly delivered programmes were those relating to IT where 88 of the 131 respondents reported offering these and included introduction to the Internet and basic IT skills. Several projects stated that the enthusiasm had been such on these programmes that students had progressed into CLAIT and word-processing courses. Programmes were delivered in a variety of settings including using laptops taken out into the community. One particularly innovative project worked from a pub and was successful in attracting long-term unemployed men into the programme.

A significant number of programmes offered personal development/confidence building. 70 of the 115 respondents reported putting on programmes aimed at enhancing self-esteem, developing the individual and supporting their personal needs. Indeed 77% of programme managers cited that increase in confidence of the learners was a major objective of their programme:

- In Bristol a class took place in a women's centre. The students were single parents, several of whom were separated from violent partners. During the session, the students and teacher were highly articulate about the aims of the class and the benefits of the teaching/learning approaches used. The young women had fixed, and negative, ideas about what mainstream college classes are like (limited, based on portfolio building and box ticking). Students praised their teacher as a role model – supportive, inspirational, and empowering. The teacher described the way in which learning activities arose organically from the experiences of the individual members of the group. Around the walls of this classroom were more than 20 flip chart sheets which described the group's 'learning journey' as accurately as any scheme of work could have done. Each student had described the feelings she had as she started the class, what she had gained and what she still needed to work on. There were confessions, reminders and rites of passage literally pinned to the walls. There was evidence of a well-organised, highly structured and supported learning experience in the written and spoken words of the teacher and learners.

- In Nottingham a programme was mounted at a women's refuge, covering aromatherapy, reflexology, self defence and computing for beginners, but 'input from the college has opened doors for the residents who have been offered choices ... of particular value to women who are at a point in their lives with low self-esteem and no confidence.' The same college worked with residents/users of a care centre for elderly people by putting on a 'reminiscences' programme which 'has been an ice-breaker between students who live in the same old people's home but rarely talk to each other. The groups have helped people to find shared interests or hobbies from their past, like ballroom dancing, music or playing the piano.

Another key area was delivery of basic literacy, numeracy, and communication skills. Despite the reference to basic skills in Circular 99/16, there were few examples of contextualised basic skills, e.g. a project with homeless people was primarily to work with them to be able to cope with independent living but this included planning meals, shopping, and cooking meals. Through these activities all the basic skills of numeracy and communication could be demonstrated. An example of an environmental project working in the community inspired a member of the group to learn to read and write independently of the non-schedule 2 project so that they were able to communicate more effectively with the local council.

4.3.2 Course level and duration

Respondents were asked in questionnaire 1 what level the activities in their programmes were. The majority of programmes (73% of responses) were at the pre-entry or entry level. 58% of respondents were offering level 1 programmes, 28% followed a mixed level programme. Only 7 respondents recorded other levels.

Questionnaire 1 also asked respondents how long their programmes were by being asked to estimate the number of hours attended by learners over the year. 97% of programmes were delivered in less than 200 hours, and of these 35% were offering up to 60 hours. Case study evidence did not fully support these figures. Many project proposals had initially over-estimated the likely length of courses. Most courses were in reality ten to twelve hours long initially. Many learners seemed to find this length of course less daunting as a beginning, but many courses were extended later at the request of the learners in stages to 20, 30 or 60 hours.

In questionnaire 2, 33 of 115 projects cited flexibility of programmes as being a particular need of these learners when asked what would be the main recommendations for future projects. Many said shorter programmes and development of responsive programmes in the community were essential elements for the success of these projects.

4.3.3 The distinctive features of non-schedule 2 programmes

Programme managers were asked to identify the distinctive features of the delivery of their non-schedule 2 programme, compared to schedule 2 programmes, such as programme area 10. As a proxy for this we asked them to rate 16 possible distinctive features (using a scale of 1 to 5, from 'very important' to 'no distinction'). The 16 features are listed in table 4.

We noted (see section 4.4.5) the view of some programme managers that, based on a number of indicators, non-schedule 2 learners did not differ from programme area 10 learners. Views on programme delivery contrast with this. On almost all indicators listed in table 4, those who see no distinction between non-schedule 2 programme delivery and schedule 2 are a small minority. On just two aspects, one in ten managers say that there is no distinction between non-schedule 2 and schedule 2 work with part-time adult learners, namely:

- learners need more help with personal problems
- a higher proportion of learning is delivered off site.

Table 4 ranks the distinctive features of non-schedule 2 programme delivery, based on the percentage of managers citing each feature as 'very important'.

Table 4: Managers views about the distinctive features of non-schedule 2 programme delivery compared with schedule 2 programmes such as programme area 10

Distinctive feature	% of providers rating this distinction as 'very important' (n = 79)
A higher proportion of learning is delivered off site	62
Curriculum content is more flexible / less prescribed	62
The management of outreach work is more demanding	60
Recruitment of learners is more time-consuming / demands specialist skills	57
Teaching style must be more flexible	53
Time-tables are more flexible	44
New methods needed to assess achievement	43
Programmes are of shorter duration	43
Harder to assess learning outcomes	43
More important for tutor to be known to learners	41
Curriculum plan needs to be regularly amended according to learner's needs	39
Additional staff training required	37
Higher staff : student ratio	34
Learners need more help with personal problems	34
Greater need for specialist staff	28
Learners need more learning support	25
Other	9

The case study visits record a number of examples of how the non-schedule 2 programmes have been attractive to learners.

- In Bristol, several learners said they would not have gone to a college under any circumstances. At CEED and Black Orchid particular focus is given to black students. The programmes (digital radio and writing respectively) support people with mental health difficulties and others who are unlikely to attend college. Both projects are located where minority ethnic communities live, both were established through the work of a black outreach worker and learners themselves said this was their first experience of learning since school. At Awaz Utoah ('Helping the Asian Community Fight Against Crime'), Asian women learned self defence, assertiveness, motor vehicle maintenance, ESOL, keep fit, skills for employment, drug awareness and aromatherapy. The women would not have been allowed to attend college initially.

- In NE London/City a minority of programmes was offered on main college sites. The majority of the programmes took place in community venues, for example the Hackney Muslim Women's Centre hosted an Introduction to IT course. The Stepney Housing & Development Agency hosted an Introduction to Soft Furnishings course, which was designed to enable the residents of the local estates to learn skills which could be used to set up a co-operative to sell soft furnishings and other related services.

- In North Yorkshire one college has developed a 'New Direction' programme, which has a core of basic education and confidence building, with a range of options offered. In practice IT has proved popular and variations have been developed, e.g. Introduction to the Internet. The 'New Direction' programme has met a previously identified need for a course to prepare learners for the college's Schedule 2(d) 'Gateway' return to learn / access to FE / pre-access to HE courses. Such a programme could not be funded as S2. They have also offered literacy and IT on a one-to-one basis to a small group of Travellers, on the Travellers' site, and have developed a course for people who use the Drug and Alcohol Centre in Goole, which includes Basic Skills, IT and Interior Design/Art. Originally the college identified 'threatened occupations' as a target group but have in practice avoided competing with other initiatives for this group. The college has worked with local primary schools, with the Travellers Education Officer, and with the voluntary organisation that runs the Drug and Alcohol centre

- In Nottingham, community development workers had contacted possible client groups / established agencies, undertaken a needs analysis with them and offered a negotiated learning programme. A wide variety of short courses have as a consequence been offered via the project, ranging from Cooking on a Budget, Introduction to Creative Crafts / Drawing Skills, Know Your Rights, First Aid for Parents, and Health and Beauty, to Management_Skills for the Chinese Welfare Association and Stress Management.

4.3.4 Learner support

The vast majority of providers (80%) have introduced new or enhanced learner support arrangements to meet demand. Links with specialist support agencies are the most frequently mentioned improvement in learner support, followed by childcare. Table 5 below ranks learner support arrangements in order of importance.

Table 5: Providers with new or enhanced learner support arrangements

Type of learner support	% of providers
Links with specialist support agencies	61
Childcare	60
Educational and careers guidance	48
Initial assessment	32
Tutorial arrangements	29
Language support	27
Other	24

Base: 62 providers with new or enhanced learner support arrangements

Just under a third of these providers (19) refer to other types of learner support. Individual personal support emerges as the most important (mentioned by eight providers), followed by transport (mentioned by five).

4.3.4.1 Physical resources

In response to a question in the first questionnaire on learner support, 499 examples were given, the most frequently cited being provision of materials (85%). These included lap-tops, arts and crafts materials and home decorating materials. From the case study visits it was encouraging to see the investment that had been made by several projects in resources and materials for the off-site learning programmes. However, in a few instances the quality and quantity of some of these materials was inferior. It seemed that in some cases support had been insufficiently financed. It is important that high quality materials and resources are also provided in these settings in order to offer attractive provision and to ensure parity with other provision in the institution. In many cases projects worked hard to match materials with learner needs, but there were some examples seen in the case studies which revealed that cultural sensitivity in materials was low and in a significant number of minority groups visited the case study team reported that material was Eurocentric.

4.3.4.2 Additional learning support

The case study evidence showed that very few projects were able to offer off site anything like the level of learner support that they made available to learners on site.

- One college in the Northwest had set themselves the aim of equalising the level of support to both on-site and off-site learners and had invested highly in basic skills assessments and advice and guidance for the non-schedule 2 courses. Learning facilitators recruited from previous cohorts of learners are expected to check individuals' literacy/numeracy skills while negotiating an individual learning plan, but there is no formal application of a screening tool for this: 'to do so would be inappropriate, and may be regarded overly complex'. Instances where support needs have been identified are referred to the college Study Support Unit and, where necessary, the group is visited by a study support worker who may refer individuals onto discrete provision. Such referrals are not yet extensive; but the college is undertaking a major review of study support – informed by project experience – and is expected to implement a new outreach support strategy from 2000/01.

This was rare, however. Similarly, there was little evidence of additional basic skills or ESOL support. Whilst many programmes were actually delivering basic skills, there was no additional support offered or available such as would be provided for students following mainstream courses in a college. There was little evidence from case studies of learning support provision coming out from colleges.

4.3.4.3 Childcare and other support

The main form of support widely provided for the learner was childcare. The most frequently cited support need was childcare.

- In Reading the women stated that they would not have been able to attend the course if there had not been creche provision, as they found it impossible to locate appropriate childcare, had no family close by and partners who were out at work.

The provision of good quality childcare is crucial in reducing the barriers to the involvement of young parents with children under school age in courses. Yet the costs of making this provision are rarely adequately covered within current funding arrangements. Some colleges did, however, provide the level of childcare required and subsidised it from within their college budgets. Where this happened the college used funds from other sources, such as access funds, to ensure support was available.

For the short courses running in the non-schedule 2 programmes, the childcare needed was short-term sessional care off site, rather than a full day care nursery. This is the most demanding childcare to set up and sometimes the least cost efficient. It requires a college to work with great flexibility whilst also working to maintain the highest standards of childcare and ensuring that any provision made meets contemporary quality standards for registration. Setting up childcare

alongside course provision was unfamiliar territory to some project co-ordinators and created considerable challenges.

- In NE London/City finding appropriate childcare was a problem for all the organisations involved in the delivery of the programmes. One of the colleges solved this by linking up with a private provider of mobile childcare, which would go to whichever site was required. The use of a professional mobile creche is noteworthy. Classes have been organised, for example, for Turkish women close to home, where the women and children can arrive and meet socially then go into class while the creche workers look after the children with equipment they have brought with them in an adjacent room for two hours.

There is another care need which is not currently recognised within FEFC funding systems. This is respite care for those caring for a sick or disabled relative. Several projects targeted carers but felt unable to pay the costs of any respite cover needed from within their funding allocation.

- In one project an elderly man caring for his disabled wife at home had been delighted to be invited to join an IT course. Sadly after three weeks he had to leave the course as the cover arrangements he had made with a neighbour fell apart when the neighbour decided that she could not manage the level of care required on such a regular basis. The college was unable to cover the costs of paid respite care and could only refer him to a local trust fund for his support needs. The man was reported to be greatly saddened by the interruption to his new learning of IT skills and the loss of his break away from his daily duties.

With an ageing population more adults are likely to have responsibility for the care of elderly relatives. Involvement in learning can provide the mental stimulation and moments of freedom which enable them to carry on with their caring role. Future funding arrangements will need to be more flexible in the kinds of support needs that can be funded.

4.3.4.4 Advice and guidance

In the first questionnaire, 73 cases of 410 respondents stated they offered advice, guidance and counselling. This was also referred to in another question on the same questionnaire where respondents were asked to define what else they were delivering apart from formal courses. 30% of respondents cited that advice and guidance was one of the 'learning activities not described as a course'. Case study visits showed often there were sessions built in to the programmes as part of the activities offered.

4.3.4.5 Support by partners

25% projects reported crucial additional support from partners, particularly those dealing with mental health, working with ex-offenders, physically disabled, alcohol and drug abuse. The specialist knowledge held within the partner organisation was invaluable to colleges. It was particularly helpful in informing the design and delivery of the learning programmes.

4.3.4.6 Issues for learning support

There was often a marked gap between the original project bid and the live project. The project bids frequently described a level of learner support that was not matched in reality. It is unclear whether the limited availability of learning support was due to funding, location, or staffing issues but this needs to be considered when planning new programmes. It is also important for the project managers to be able to tap into other sources of funding for support that are available to the college. This is more likely to happen if projects are more closely connected with central college systems. This will ensure that the projects are not marginalised and that the knowledge of funding support is shared with the non-schedule 2 programme managers.

4.3.4.7 Innovation and flexibility

In Circular 99/16 (paragraph 15) the FEFC states that *'the programmes developed for the pilot projects should be innovative.'* It is interesting to identify how this has been interpreted by the projects and what this may mean in practice. The FEFC did not clarify what they expected as innovation. If the intention was that projects should operate differently from the mainstream college provision then this was certainly the case. The degree of difference and the originality of the practice, however, are open to debate.

In questionnaire 2, programme managers were asked to identify the most innovative feature of their programme. They said that what was different was:

- outreach and local or community provision (more than 40% [31] managers)
- identifying needs/responsiveness (almost a third [23] of managers)
- collaboration with other agencies (one fifth [15] managers)
- the adaptation of materials for specialist use (mentioned by four managers)
- the development of different teaching styles (mentioned by one manager)
- taster courses (mentioned by one in ten managers)
- flexibility (mentioned by fewer than one in five managers)

FE colleges have a wealth of experience of delivering flexible programmes to adult learners and much of their provision has been designed to take the needs of adults learners into account. There is a long history of access and return to learn programmes delivered in the sector. Where colleges were most effective at delivering the non-schedule 2 projects they have drawn on this experience. Case

study evidence suggests that whilst the programmes themselves were often not innovative in the sense that many are typical adult and community education activities, there was innovative practice for FE colleges in working in the community. Colleges were also able to offer programmes much more flexibly than they had been able to do under schedule 2. Projects adapted their programmes to suit learners' needs, often reducing the number of hours, changing the time of day or offering different days in order to encourage learners to participate

4.4 The learners

The projects have worked hard at targeting disadvantaged adults.

In Circular 99/16 paragraph 14 the proposals for funding programmes were stated as being for:

'adults experiencing disadvantage who may not previously have had access to Council-funded provision. Adults whose backgrounds have disadvantaged them will normally lack qualifications and/or successful educational experience and need Non-schedule 2 as an essential precursor to schedule 2 provision.'

4.4.1 The target groups

In questionnaire 1, the respondents were asked what the target group(s) of their programme(s) were and they were invited to tick as many groups as applied to them. The possible target groups were listed in Circular 99/16 paragraph 14. Responses were as shown in table 6.

Other groups included were:

- those with physical disabilities
- older adults
- those involved in community regeneration projects.

Table 6: The target groups

Target group	Number of responses
Single parents on low income / in poor housing	100
Long-term unemployed with no qualifications	93
Adults with mental health difficulties	76
Members of ethnic minority communities	66
Adults involved in family-centred provision	59
Adults recovering from drug or alcohol dependency	54
Homeless people	37
Ex-offenders	35
Carers at home	29
Adults with profound and multiple learning difficulties	28
Women in refuge accommodation	27
Residents of former coalfields taskforce areas	21
Travellers	16
Care leavers	11
Other	34
Total number of responses	686

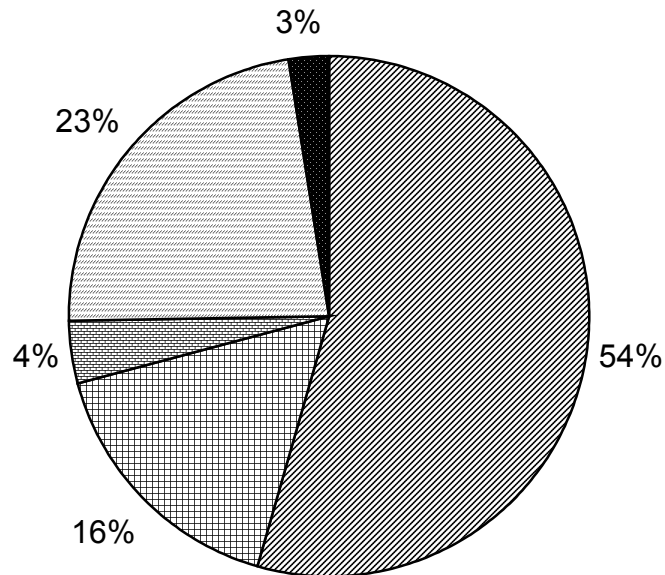
4.4.2 Learner enrolment

Questionnaire 2 was sent to both project co-ordinators and programme managers. According to the programme managers, 15,488 learners had been recruited by July 2000 (i.e. from the 75 programme managers who provided details). Enrolment patterns varied widely, from just 11 to 900 learners, with 14 programmes each enrolling fewer than 50 learners and 9 recruiting over 500.

Figure 1 shows that a large majority of programme managers (71%) had met their enrolment target. Over three-quarters of these (77%) had exceeded it. In theory, a provider not meeting a target should offer another provider the option to recruit the missing number. In practice, only three of the 21 providers who did not meet their target transferred the shortfall in numbers to other providers.

Figure 1: Achievement of enrolment targets

▨ Target exceeded ▩ Target met ▪ Places transferred ▫ Target not met ■ Not answered



Based on responses from 31 co-ordinators (out of a total of 40), over 22,000 learners (22,445) were enrolled on non-schedule 2 programmes. This figure greatly exceeds the total reported by the programme managers (15,488, based on data from 75 programme managers). The reason for this is that only the programme managers who had responded to the first questionnaire were asked to give details in order to match data across the two questionnaires. The co-ordinators were asked to report on their whole project. As the surveys of co-ordinators and programme managers were quite separate, there is no expectation of a numerical match between the two sets of data.

In common with the responses of programme managers, co-ordinators indicate a wide variation in enrolment levels, from just 24 learners in one project to 2000 and over in two cases. Just under half of the 31 projects enrolled under 500 learners; just under a quarter enrolled between 500 and 1,000, and the same proportion recruited over 1,000 learners.

Two thirds of projects (21 out of 31) met their enrolment targets. This is broadly in line with reports from programme managers, over 70% of whom had met their enrolment targets. Almost all the co-ordinators (19 out of 20 who answered the

question) had exceeded the target. Again, a large majority (77%) of programme managers reported exceeding their enrolment targets.

Ten co-ordinators had not met their targets. Only one (out of seven who answered the question) had transferred the potential enrolment number to other providers, to allow them to recruit the shortfall. This echoes the response of programme managers, only three of whom had passed on their shortfall in numbers (out of 21 who missed their targets).

The FEFC reporting date on enrolment of non-schedule 2 for 1999–2000 learners was May 15th 2000. Given that many of the projects recruited late in the year and that some were offering summer programmes, it is important to note that there may be some discrepancy in numbers when the final ISR is validated for this project. Any learners enrolled after May 15th will be counted in the returns for 2000/20001 and this will undoubtedly skew the figures. The numbers used for the purposes of this evaluation are those reported by the programme managers and project co-ordinators at July 7th 2000 and not those related to the FEFC census dates.

4.4.3 Are they new learners?

Most learners reached were disadvantaged within the definition provided by FEFC. The projects visited had clearly been successful at reaching disadvantaged adults, but participation tended to be from particular sections of the community. The majority of learners encountered during the case study visits were from poor, white, working-class backgrounds. It was also noticeable there has been limited participation by men in the projects generally, as low as 15% across the projects visited.

Case study visits reported a variety of findings in colleges. The following report from the Manchester colleges is typical:

'It was clear from those learners interviewed during visits that many of them were using the project as a first step back into learning since leaving school. While comprehensive data was not available, indications from some colleges seem likely to be indicative of the project as a whole:

- maybe as many as 80% of the 400 learners on project activity run by South Trafford were 'new' to post-school study: these included individuals in key target groups, including those with mental health problems and people with physical disabilities
- North Trafford College has been 'astounded' to find that 192 out of 251 Project participants (76%) had not previously engaged in any post-school learning

- Eccles College reported 82 students under NS2 project activity (with one course still to be reported), and a reasonably equal spread across the age range; the college is particularly targeting lone parents via school-based provision, and its NS2 clientele is almost exclusively female (only 4% male).

The colleges all seem 'shocked' at the level of demand the project has unearthed. The project experienced a relatively slow start but 'we've now had a big splurge, and it's a snowball effect: we're well over target, and we could have done loads more.' Some colleges have had to cap their activity as a result.'

Not all the learners were new to learning. Some were already involved in a college course elsewhere but had joined a non-schedule 2 course in a community setting because it was where they lived, where their friends were or they liked the course (e.g. young hostel dwellers in Birmingham; lone parents at an early years centre in Portsmouth).

- In NE London/City the project co-ordinator and representatives from the other colleges, and community groups, were adamant that many learners had been brought into learning through the project. The project was successful at reaching disadvantaged groups, but not all the learners the evaluators spoke to were new learners. Many had done courses before and had either completed or dropped out. All learners were adamant that one of the reasons they were participating in the programmes offered through the project was because the provision was local and in venues with which they were familiar.

Some were new to FEFC-funded programmes but were in effect 'recycled' learners, particularly in those areas that were in receipt of a number of sources of external funding for similar sort of work, such as SRB, ESF and the Adult and Community Learning Fund. It is also evident that many of these learners were either not ready to move on to other programmes or it was not yet appropriate for them to do so (e.g. some adults with mental health difficulties or recurring disabilities).

There were different definitions of new learners in use across the projects, with the most frequent being not engaged in learning within the last three years.

4.4.4 Particular needs of the learners

The questionnaires asked the programme managers to try to define the particular needs of the non-schedule 2 learners. In questionnaire 1, of 334 responses given, 90 defined their needs as being about confidence building, raising self-esteem, high level of individual support and encouragement. In terms of the programmes, 86 reported these learners need flexibility convenience of location, short courses and basic skills. 64 managers defined support in terms of childcare and specialist provision as important.

Table 7: Particular needs of non-schedule 2 learners

Need	Number of cases
Confidence building	54
Flexibility of programmes	33
Support at an appropriate level	26
Childcare support	23
Convenience of location / welcoming environment	21
Encouragement	18
One-to-one support	18
Low self-esteem	17
Basic skills	16
Ability to offer short courses	16
Specialist provision to match language and learning skills	15
Patience / trust	10

There was a wealth of examples in the case study visits including the following:

- In Bristol the single mothers in an assertiveness class described the many ways in which the sessions had helped them tackle long-standing problems in their close relationships. In the Cyrenians day centre, several participants said the banner painting 'took their mind off their troubles'.

- In Bury learners interviewed stated a variety of benefits gained from their learning experiences. These included gaining more confidence; more skills and knowledge; belief in their ability to learn and achieve; improved skills for volunteering and the confidence to go on to further learning.

- In NW London the women in the clothes-making and DIY courses were very positive about their learning experience. They felt they had learned new skills and reported that they were making use of these skills at home. This had helped them to save money but also to feel more independent. For many it was an opportunity to be in an environment where English was the language of communication and they felt they had become more confident in using the language in practical contexts. Many references were made by students and tutors to 'confidence'. One woman wrote in her evaluation, '*It has lifted my aspirations about myself instead of just sitting at home.*' The social aspect of the courses had also been important. The women spoke of meeting other people and of '*having fun*'. Their evaluations included many references to the opportunity to meet other women, to learn from each other and to work together. A number of students had stated in their evaluations that the courses had made them feel better, e.g. '*I feel happier*'.

4.4.5 Barriers to participation in learning

Given the expectation that non-schedule 2 programmes would be innovative, the study brief requested an analysis of the distinguishing characteristics of the programmes and the learners. We asked programme managers to highlight:

- the barriers to participation
- the distinctive features of non-schedule 2 learners.

Only three programme managers said that non-schedule 2 learners were not more likely to experience barriers to participation in learning than schedule 2 (S2) learners; the overwhelming majority (89%) said non-schedule 2 learners are more likely to face such problems.

Asked to identify the most significant factors hindering recruitment (up to a maximum of five), programme managers highlighted those listed in table 8, which indicates the rank order. The table shows that (based on programme managers' perceptions of what influences potential learners' decisions) attitudes towards education and provider are the most significant deterrents, followed by a lack of knowledge about the programmes on offer. Negative attitudes towards education were reported as being twice as significant as ethnicity barriers and three times as important as poor employment prospects

More than half of the respondents (37) cited a lack of adequate childcare support as a factor affecting recruitment. Interestingly, we reported earlier (see paragraph 4.3.4.3) that the same number of providers (60% of those with new or improved learner support arrangements) have improved their childcare facilities in response to the non-schedule 2 pilot programme.

Cost of courses was cited as a barrier by 49% of providers. Since the non-schedule 2 courses were provided free, this was a significant factor in the recruitment of students on to the programmes. Since it is the perception of providers that cost is an issue, it is hard to estimate the impact of hidden costs such as clothing or lunches for children on recruitment of disadvantaged adults.

- In NE London/City several younger adults who had previously been at FE colleges made reference to the social pressures which were difficult for those who could not afford fashionable clothes and mobile phones.

Table 8: Barriers to participation in learning as perceived by programme managers

Barriers to participation	% of providers highlighting this factor (n = 69)
Negative attitude towards education	68
Fear of provider	64
Lack of knowledge about availability of programmes	55
Lack of adequate childcare facilities	54
Cost	49
Lack of adequate transport facilities	41
Ethnic/cultural barriers	33
Homelessness	26
Lack of available facilities on offer to take up programmes	22
Poor employment opportunities in locality	19
English not first language	16
Violence/abuse within the family	7
Other	12

4.4.6 Distinctive features of non-schedule 2 learners

We attempted to explore whether there were any distinctive features of non – schedule 2 as opposed to any other learners. We invited programme managers to consider non-schedule 2 learners and used as a proxy comparison with those on Programme Area 10 courses. We were unable to find any satisfactory evidence and concluded that there is no significant difference between these groups of learners. A significant minority of providers suggested that there were no differences between the learners:

- they are no more likely to withdraw from courses than other learners
- they do not have fewer qualifications on entry
- they are no more likely to experience negative pressures from their peers or family
- they do not exhibit more health problems than others
- they are as likely to achieve their learning goals as others
- there is no distinction in terms of support needs for literacy, numeracy and study skills
- there is no distinction in terms of the level of learning support needed by non-schedule 2 learners compared with others.

It has proved difficult to establish whether there are distinctive features of non-schedule 2 learners since we are only looking at the issue from the providers' point of view. What can be concluded is that providers say that the learners who

are attending the non-schedule 2 programmes have lower confidence and have been out of the education system longer than those students who attend FE colleges for Programme Area 10 courses.

4.4.7 Use of information on learners' backgrounds

Reports from the FEFC Inspectorate (e.g. *Widening Participation and Raising Standards*, Report from the Inspectorate, Further Education Funding Council, 2000.) on widening participation have drawn attention to the importance of monitoring retention, achievement and progression rates in terms of learners' individual needs and previous educational background. Data should be correlated in order to illuminate potential problem areas and help identify remedies, perhaps involving modifications to arrangements for learning and/or learner support. The Inspectorate finds that too little progress has been made with this aspect of quality assurance.

It is a commonly held perception that retention, motivation and poor prior attainment will be more typical of disadvantaged adult learners. In order to challenge this perception, our questionnaire asked programme managers whether they correlated rates of attendance, retention, achievement and progression with information on learners' backgrounds. The majority of respondents (just under 57%) said that they do this to some extent or to a great extent. One in ten correlate this kind of data to a great extent. However, a substantial minority (39%) does not undertake this type of quality assurance at all.

4.4.8 What do learners think of the programmes?

Learners spoke very highly of the programmes they had been involved in. They valued that it was local and easily accessible; that it was in a familiar setting; that it was free; that the timing was right for them; that the course did not last too long; that childcare was provided; that they had been introduced to it by someone they knew and trusted, that they felt they had some say in what it was. They spoke very highly of the tutors as approachable, not at all judgmental and relaxed. They said they had been made to feel welcome and wanted. They were pleased to be doing new things. Without these things they said they would not have come. Very few said that they would have felt able to join a course on the main college site through the standard routes

The following quotes encapsulate the views of a number of learners:

'I have never been able to read or write. When I had a job, it involved me writing down the deliveries that arrived at the factory. I couldn't write, so I used to copy the ticket on the delivery into the deliveries book. I did this for years. Then one day, the big boss sent for me. I knew that he had discovered that I couldn't read and write and thought that was it, I would be sacked. He didn't sack me. He just

asked how I managed to keep the deliveries book so up to date and I told him. This prompted me to learn to read. Over the last two years, I have done everything to learn, had private lessons with a friend, gone to classes, but I couldn't do it, until now that is. This course teaches you by computer, using a CD that is relevant to what I do here at the tenants' association. In the last six months, I have learned to read by this method. I can now read the newspaper, street signs and letters that come to the tenants' association without having to ask someone to do it for me. This course has given me my independence.'

'I missed a lot of school and therefore did not get any qualifications. I left school feeling like a lost case. This course has helped me to see how good I am at learning. I want to go on after this to do a CLAIT course. I am hooked on learning now I wish I had done it a long time ago.'

'I was unable to help my children with computer games and stories. I used to have to wait until my partner came home before I could let the children use the computer. I can now load the CDs and can help the children to use the mouse and access the stories and games. It has brought us closer together.'

'It has lifted my aspirations about myself instead of just sitting at home.'

'I'm having fun.'

'We wouldn't have done anything [educational] if this wasn't here.'

'We didn't know each other before, even though we live locally – now we're keen to learn, and will do more together.'

'I tried going to the college but felt intimidated by all the young people – this is smaller, more friendly and relaxed and I feel OK here.'

'By doing this you're not blind to what's going on [in a hairdressing class].'

'We've got to know each other and we've got to the point where if there's two or more of us going on to another course, I won't feel intimidated.'

'It's a big leap [from the taster] to an NVQ, but we do want a qualification – it shows you can do it. It would be nice to have a certificate even from this.'

'The course is friendly and quite relaxed. You do learn more about how things should be written and how to do different topics relating to children.'

'You do things for the kids, things for yourself, have tea and biscuits and discuss things.' *'We would like it to be longer – it's not long enough.'*

'It has given us something for ourselves, makes you feel positive about yourself and is helping us move forward.'

'If you go to one course, it builds your confidence to do more.'

'All learning is good for you; it keeps you active in mind as well as body.'

4.5 Monitoring learning and achievement, and recording learning outcomes

4.5.1 Monitoring learning and achievement

Both questionnaires 1 and 2 sought to discover what monitoring procedures were in place to evaluate that learning had occurred.

In questionnaire 1, respondents were asked what methods they intended using to measure learner progress. There were a range of responses, with the most frequently mentioned being some form of portfolio, record of achievement or individual progress report. The responses were triangulated through visits, and although there were some examples of learning progress records in development, few colleges were content with the approach they had taken at that stage.

Table 10: Methods of measuring learner progress

Measurement	% of providers
Student portfolios & records of achievement	16%
Tutor reviews as 'normal' college arrangements	15%
Course progression	14%
Individual learning goals	8%
Questionnaires	8%
Assessments: informal and formal	7%

Base: 290 responses

What was unclear in the responses was what the 'normal' college arrangements were. In some cases the FEFC performance indicators of recruitment, retention and achievement were mentioned. These would be unfamiliar measures for voluntary and community groups. Some projects had devised specific learning records. For example:

- In Bristol the primary mechanism for recording progress and reporting achievement is a Passport to Learning record. This is a passport-sized document which, in its current format, records prior learning, learning goals, a student statement, a tutor statement, possible progression routes and a certificate of attendance.

- In Telford and Wrekin the WEA paperwork for student and tutor evaluation, which adopts a 'learning outcomes' approach and has evolved through WEA having been funded for some years for NS2 work by FEFC, has been adopted by the project partners. This invites the learner to identify a (medium-term) aim and (shorter-term) objectives and is also used summatively to allow the learner to record the key aspects of their learning. Completed forms tended to underplay the importance of affective development – growth in confidence, self-esteem leading to the making of choices, group working skills etc. The nature and the use of the forms is currently under review, since they appear not to be used formatively, and current arrangements do not result in students having a record of their individual progress.

Whilst case study visits picked up problems relating to monitoring progress and evaluation of learning, this was not picked up as a concern by programme managers. This suggests that attention needs to be given to the basic underpinning curriculum needs of a non-schedule 2 programme that identifies it as learning rather than simply an activity. We see this as a difference in understanding about what these programmes are intended to be – serious learning presented in a way to engage people but with rigorous curriculum underpinning.

Providers were asked to identify in questionnaire 1 the levels of activity being offered by their projects and what the programmes contained. 73% reported entry level activities and 58 % level 1.

In order to assess whether the final level of attainment achieved by the learners in questionnaire 2 matched the levels of activity supplied in questionnaire 1, the programme managers were asked to indicate the levels of achievement attained by learners on the programme at:

- pre-entry level
- entry level
- level 1
- level 2
- level 3

- mixed
- none of these.

Figure 2 illustrates the overall position, based on the 65 programmes for which we received a full response. Entry level and level 1 emerge as the predominant qualification levels reached, as indicated below.

- Level 3 was reached by learners on only three programmes (5%), with between 1% and 3% of learners attaining this level. Overall, the proportion completing at this level is negligible.
- Learners achieved level 2 on nine of the programmes (14%). In most cases (seven out of nine programmes), 10% or fewer learners reached this level. Overall, no more than 2% of learners completed at level 2.
- Overall, just under a third of learners (30%) completed at level 1.
- Over 40% of learners completed at entry level. On almost one in four of the programmes, all learners completed at this level.
- On six of the programmes (9%), all the learners completed at pre-entry level. Overall, 16% of learners completed at this level.

Success rates may be slightly understated as nine programmes indicated that some learners completed at a mixture of different levels.

- Three programme managers indicated that learners had reached none of these levels (the figures being 100%, 100%, and 87% of learners).

Figure 2: Learners completing at each qualification (or equivalent) level



Base: 65 programmes with 9,569 learners completing

It has been difficult for providers to indicate levels, primarily because the courses provided were not aiming for an end qualification. The levels relate to the National Qualifications framework and are not easily transferred to non-accredited provision, e.g. the case study team saw an aromatherapy class for young offenders which was highly sophisticated, involving spiritual discussions and counselling. It is very difficult to ascribe a level to this sort of programme. Research on the evaluation of learning outcomes is being carried out by a NIACE and FEDA team, and this issue will be considered as part of that project.

4.5.2 Objectives of programmes

It is debatable from the evidence obtained in the evaluation whether the programmes could equally well be funded through schedule 2. However, because of the nature of the learners and outreach activity, project managers had taken the opportunity of non-schedule 2 funding to be more innovative and were prepared to take risks since achievement of a qualification was not the reason for running the programmes. In questionnaire 1, when asked what the main objectives of the programmes were, 77% reported that increasing the confidence of the learner was a major objective whilst 86% reported that achieving an award was not a major objective. In questionnaire 2, when programme managers were asked what was the most innovative feature of their provision, 41% reported outreach provision, and 31% responsive programmes of short courses not leading to qualifications. Project co-ordinators recommended that future funding of the programme should not be dependent simply on progression to qualifications programmes, and that this should not be considered as the only measure of success.

It is apparent from the data that there is an over-riding need for provision at pre-entry, entry and level 1. The case studies have confirmed this is the level of the majority of programmes. Whilst the providers were not asked to define achievements in terms of qualifications, they were able to identify the level that their learners were operating at.

4.5.3 What is achievement?

There has been some discussion at the non-schedule 2 workshops over what constitutes achievement in the context of these programmes. The case study evidence suggests that many programme managers were defining achievement simply as completion of a programme. Some co-ordinators reported that since many learners are erratic attenders, the usual retention time limit of three weeks' absence was waived. Learners often returned to programmes after several weeks of non-attendance. There were particular groups of learners for whom satisfactory completion meant turning up on a regular basis, e.g. young

ex-offenders or those with mental health difficulties where organising their own lives was as crucial as completing a programme of study. What was unclear in their circumstances was how any learning gain beyond this was being measured. For many colleges this is the beginning of a process of evaluating learning outcomes in a non-accredited curriculum and it is early days for them. Colleges have become used to relying on schedule 2 qualifications for measuring achievement and are as yet inexperienced in measuring other forms of learner outcome. There has generally been insufficient attention to identifying and making explicit the intended learning outcomes or unanticipated outcomes. In general, providers are able to state the expected level of achievement of their programmes but not their learners.

Many of the projects have focused more on mounting activities than on designing progressive learning programmes. There is a delicate balance to be struck between making provision which is approachable, flexible, friendly but ultimately unchallenging and setting up programmes which are too demanding and as a result likely to frighten new learners away. Many projects have, possibly understandably, tended towards the former. The challenge now is to design programmes which are attractive to new learners but which incorporate the foundation stones for successful learning longer term, which offer opportunities to develop and practise key skills and which extend basic skills alongside the acquisition of other knowledge or skills.

It is important to challenge students in their programmes and raise aspirations. There is a danger in making an activity such that it is hard to recognise if learning is taking place. Whilst a number of recommendations were cited for taking projects forward, few of the co-ordinators or programme managers recognised the need for developing a system of validating learning outcomes in a non-accredited curriculum. The first workshop for co-ordinators had an input about validating achievement and the issue was discussed widely at both first and second workshops but this has not been identified as a key issue in the questionnaire responses. It raises an important question about how these learners demonstrate achievement within their programmes or activities. The NIACE and FEDA research project on 'Validating Learning outcomes in a non-accredited curriculum' will be proposing models which can be used in a variety of situations to assess learning gains. In general, our evaluation has shown that FE colleges and adult and community providers are at an early stage in their thinking on assessing learning outcomes.

4.6 Progression

Questionnaire 2 asked both programme managers and co-ordinators for information relating to learners' progression. They were asked to give the percentage of learners who had already progressed by the time they completed the questionnaire (July 2000) or were due to progress.

4.6.1 Learners' progression

To increase our understanding of the outcomes of the programmes, we requested information on the percentage of learners who had progressed, or were due to progress, to work or further study.

Responses suggest that this information was not readily available – perhaps because, even in the 66 programmes which supplied both enrolment and completion figures – it was too early for learners to have clear plans. Of the 79 programme managers who returned questionnaires, 39 did not supply any information on learners' progression. Twenty-five supplied only limited information (20 of the 25 being able to produce data for less than half of their learners), leaving only 15 programmes for which complete details were received (49%, 32%, and 19% respectively).

The following points are therefore based on the 40 partial or complete responses.

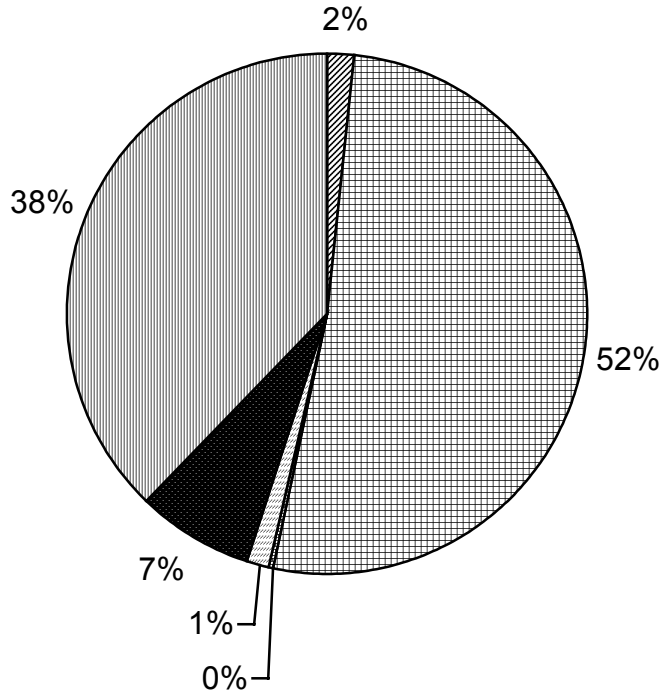
- Employment was achieved by learners on only a quarter of the programmes (10 out of 40), and on only one programme was this destination achieved by more than 5% of learners.
- Eight programmes produced learners who progressed to voluntary work, although in half of these cases the figure was less than 10%.
- Only one learner went in to self-employment.
- Part-time study was a destination for learners on almost all of the programmes (38). In nearly half of the programmes (18 of the 40), at least half of the learners moved on to part-time study or were due to do so.
- Twelve programmes indicated that learners were progressing to a full-time course, although in nine of the twelve the progression rate was less than 10%.

Figure 3 shows the overall picture on learner progression. We emphasise that this information can be no more than indicative, since it is based on only 40 replies from programme managers. Many programme managers failed to account for a substantial proportion of their learners. Key points are:

- Part-time study emerges as the most important destination for non-schedule 2 learners, with just over half of all learners (52%) progressing in this way.
- Few learners went on to full-time study or work (employment, self-employment or voluntary work).
- A small minority did not progress following their non-schedule 2 programme.
- Programme managers could not account for more than a third of all learners (38%).

Figure 3: Learner progression to work or further study

▨ F/T study ▩ P/T study ▣ Employment ▤ Voluntary ■ No progress ▦ Unaccounted



Base: 40 programmes with 6,586 learners completing

It is unfortunate that such a large number of learners were not identified in progression data. This could be either be down to difficulties in record keeping by the programme managers or be due to programmes not having been completed at the time. In questionnaire 1, programme managers were asked when the programme started. By the return date of April 2000, 63.3% of programmes had started between September and December 1999, 34.4% had started between January and March 2000, with the remaining 2.4% starting in the final term.

Many projects visited were still running in June 2000 as they had taken a long time to get going; in these cases progression data was incomplete at the time of the evaluation. This is not unusual in determining schedule 2 progression. It is only possible to state proposed destinations of students on schedule 2 programmes as it is impossible to know actual progression of learners until they start a new programme. The same applies to the non-schedule 2 learners.

Case study work suggests there is recycling of learners and some individuals are adept at enrolling afresh! However, there are many examples where this is not the case:

- At the NW regional conference – The Voice of the Learner – there were some excellent examples of progression into, for example, teaching qualifications or childcare programmes or CLAIT in some programmes.

- An assertiveness class for single mothers in Bristol initiated a desire by two of the learners to progress onto other learning opportunities and one had applied for a Return to Nursing course.

- In Portsmouth a group of seven women attending a hairdressing taster course at a community centre all commented positively on the impact course participation was having on their lives. They spoke of the course as offering an opportunity to experience learning, and to test out whether or not they were interested in pursuing the topic further. The women expressed some frustration that they would have to wait four months to take a college-based course (only traditional September starts were offered), and were keen to undertake other learning in the interim.

Once the barrier of lack of confidence and low self-esteem has been overcome, learners feel able to progress:

‘at first you need to develop confidence amongst people who share your experience, but later, when you get more confident, you don’t mind making a fool of yourself in front of the clever younger ones.’

There were some concerns expressed about continuing support for learners if they progressed. In Kent & Medway, for example, there were some issues with regards to progression onto other courses particularly for the IT group. These were around childcare, the cost of programmes and help with resources. Learners worried about whether or not childcare would be provided, whether it would be costly or free. Other issues included where the courses would be held and whether or not new tutors would be as supportive. 90% of learners questioned about whether or not they would attend courses if there were a charge said that they would not. They felt that they could not afford to pay for learning, travel to and from courses and for childcare.

4.6.2 Planning for progression

In bidding for non-schedule 2 pilot project funding, the FEFC asked providers to: *‘develop projects which would enable progression to Schedule 2 provision at level 2, which has been identified by the government as the basic platform for*

employability' (Circular 99/16). In addition, in paragraph 19 of the Circular, it is clear that the Council expected the programmes to include transition and progression planning and the identification of progression pathways for the learner.

In questionnaire 1, respondents were asked what were the main objectives of the programme and to what extent they had been achieved.

- 78% of providers said progression to part-time courses was a major objective.
- 24% of providers said progression to full-time courses was a major objective.
- 77% of providers said progression to employment was not a major objective.

When comparing this data to the progression reported there is a good match, with the majority recording part-time study as the outcome for most of the learners.

More than half of the providers said they offered personal counselling support through the college and their own tutors; 18% provided some form of advice and guidance. This was also identified as being offered to learners by the tutors as part of a programme of activities.

4.6.3 Progression to schedule 2

Circular 99/16 specified that the purpose of the projects was progression to level 2 schedule 2. There are differences of opinion as to whether, given the social groups targeted, this is a realistic goal at all, but for adults experiencing multiple disadvantage, case study evidence and evidence from questionnaires shows this has certainly proved to be over ambitious. Programme managers report that many of these adults have low self-esteem, and little confidence in their own ability to learn.

The outcomes of the evaluation exercise show that the initial expectation by the FEFC that learners would progress onto level 2 schedule 2 programmes was unrealistic. In fact, FEFC themselves recognised this early on in the programme and lowered their expectations accordingly. However, progression was still considered to be a key element of the programmes. Results indicate that half of all learners did progress into further part-time study. In Circular 99/16, paragraph 25 FEFC states:

'The key objective of the projects is to encourage adults from disadvantaged backgrounds to re-enter learning and to progress to further study.'

In this context, the co-ordinators of the projects report enrolling some 22,000 learners with around 75% completion rate.

Some projects had made efforts to promote the expectation of progression to learners within the project.

- In Portsmouth the College employs a full time community-based education manager who spends a large proportion of her time on the LEAP project. Her role is crucial in making contact with community organisations and groups, discussing possible options and seeking to set up provision in response. All programme requests, specifying particular needs, are passed on to the appropriate curriculum manager among the college staff, who then puts in place the arrangements for the course and fills in a form describing the offer they can make. A strong feature of the form is the space for identifying progression options. All programme offers have to be approved by the project management group, which meets fortnightly, before they can be implemented. The project management group operates as a quality and costings control as well as a filter ensuring that provision is in line with the project's original aims and objectives.

- In Telford and Wrekin some NS2 students have undertaken an 'escorted' visit to college main sites. It is also notable that project co-ordinators frequently visit classes to help students focus on 'next steps' and to identify any need for college marketing staff to visit a session. Discussion with students, however, identifies that the primary purpose for their visit is to enable students to gain access to information on what provision is available locally; this visit reinforces information provided at venues and enables the college to provide additional guidance.

- In Wigan a key component is the college's use of former students as 'learning facilitators'. These individuals follow up an initial visit by college co-ordinators to community agencies, and work with groups of potential learners to discuss what might be possible in the way of programmes. The learning facilitators act in part as 'champions', drawing on their own experience to encourage people to try learning: 'if I can do, so can you'. The facilitators report back to the college co-ordinator on what has been agreed, and tutors are then allocated to work with the group. The facilitator revisits the group at various stages to help individuals prepare an individual action plan, to look at outcomes achieved and to discuss next steps options. The facilitator will also, where relevant, act as a mentor to assist progression into college-based activity: 'we are their first arm of support, including being there at the point of transfer'. The learning facilitator approach is described by the project co-ordinator as 'the gel that makes it all happen'.

- In Bury there is a community qualification framework which maps progression routes and supports transfer from community provision to mainstream. This project also helps people to access Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) to finance their further study.

4.6.4 Tracking progression

Case study evidence showed that arrangements for monitoring and tracking progression were not generally well enough established within the projects to provide robust data at this stage. The data that was available tended to be anecdotal in nature rather than systematically collected. When co-ordinators were asked what they would do differently if starting again, a few cited development of tracking systems as an issue. Many projects have put in place arrangements within their internal MIS to flag new learners this year. In Manchester the lack of an individual student identifier made it difficult to ensure that individuals are 'new' learners. It also inhibited the tracking of individual progression: this was particularly problematic where there were a large number of providers active in a relatively small geographical area that has a well-developed transport infrastructure. Colleges have usually defined new learners as learners for whom there is no existing ISR. This is, however, only a technical description of new learners as they could well have been in informal learning in other parts of, or outside the 'state-funded' system. A more complete analysis should be possible later in the year with the November ISR return. It is important to remember that figures validated in the November ISR return may differ from those reported in this evaluation because of the nature of reporting on the numbers participating in the projects (see section 4.4.2).

Some colleges are also ensuring that non-schedule 2 learners from this year's 1999/2000 ISR will be flagged up if they re-appear in the 2000/01 ISR. The picture yielded from this approach will still be partial, however, as college MIS only contain information on participation within that institution. Learners may progress on to other programmes offered by other providers.

The key messages here are:

- That monitoring and progression are at an early stage of development
- This was seen as a priority by few colleges
- Some colleges are creating helpful systems for next year.

4.7 Quality assurance

4.7.1 Quality assurance systems

Case study evidence shows that quality assurance specific to this kind of work was generally underdeveloped across the projects. It seemed that most projects had concentrated most on just getting things up and running and, as a consequence, had allocated very little time during the first year to the development of quality systems. When asked, almost all project partners stated that they used their college's own internal quality assessment and review procedures.

Providers were asked by questionnaire what quality mechanisms were in place. The majority of respondents cited college self-assessment processes.

Table 11: What quality assurance mechanisms do you have in place?

Mechanism	% of providers
College self-assessment process	42%
Lesson observations	14%
Monitoring of attendance / registers	13%
Student evaluation	9%
Continuous quality review	4%

Base: 184 responses

The responses indicate that by April 2000, although colleges had made progress in some areas of quality assurance and had used their own systems, there had not been much focus on developing new quality assurance systems that specifically related to the non-schedule 2 projects.

- In South London approaches to quality assurance in the non-schedule 2 provision were still under development, although the partners were aware of the need to focus on this aspect of the work. Some pro-formas had been devised for the project, including:
 - a questionnaire which asked students about their course (questions asked about the course overall, the teaching methods/tutor and the impact)
 - a questionnaire which asked about the student's previous education and his/her goals
 - a pro-forma designed to be completed by the advice and guidance worker
 - a detailed stakeholder survey.

In most cases no specific quality assurance processes had been devised for the project; non-schedule 2 provision was subject to the normal quality assurance procedures for each college. However, for a variety of reasons, these standard college procedures were not always suitable. Non-schedule 2 programmes also tended to be shorter, set up more quickly and offered in off-site locations – all features which can easily allow programmes to slip through the 'mainstream' quality assurance net.

The case study team found it hard to see how college quality assurance systems could really have been workable in practice since most of these systems are more suited to longer or full year courses. Furthermore, the decision for each college to do this separately accentuated the impression of programmes running in parallel rather than in partnership.

Programme managers were asked whether they had found it necessary to modify the college's quality assurance arrangements to take account of the innovative nature of the non-schedule 2 programmes. Most providers have found it necessary to make some changes to existing quality assurance arrangements to take account of the characteristics of their non-schedule 2 programmes. Just under half (38 providers) have changed their existing arrangements, while a further quarter have made minor changes. A few providers (8) have found it necessary to introduce new quality assurance mechanisms. The responses are ranked in Table 12.

Table 12: Modifications to quality assurance arrangements

Level of change to existing arrangements	% of providers
Changed to some extent	38
Minor changes made	25
No changes made	15
Changed to a great extent	10
New arrangements introduced	10

Responses made in July 2000 indicate that there had been a shift in quality assurance activities by the end of the year. However, this was an area that only one project co-ordinator identified as needing attention.

4.7.2 Common quality standards across projects

There is a need for partnerships to develop their work on quality assurance, developing common standards and monitoring activities. Co-ordinators were asked if common quality standards had been implemented across the partnership. Well over half the co-ordinators (19 of the 31 who replied) said that common quality standards had been implemented across the partnership. In the majority of cases (11 out of 19), co-ordinators reported that these standards were devised specifically for the non-schedule 2 programme.

In the 12 partnerships where no common quality standards have been implemented, co-ordinators highlighted four types of approach to monitoring quality across the partnership (some adopted by more than one partnership). The four types of approach are:

Standard college system	7
Meetings on quality issues	5
Development of process for next year	3
Appointment of evaluator/verifier	1

Only a quarter of these partnerships were planning to develop a common quality monitoring process for next year; most were relying on the standard college system.

From the evidence collected by the case study team it appears that very few projects had developed a common approach to quality assurance across the partnership and there was little sense of shared minimum quality standards. There was little evidence in the minutes seen of steering group meetings of there having been much discussion on this as a project development issue. One exception to this was County Durham where the project was co-ordinated as a single entity. Here all providers had developed a complete quality assurance package for approval by the Learning Partnership prior to implementation.

The main quality assurance issue is lack of co-ordination across partnerships. Learning Partnerships nationally were at very different stages of development at the time of the evaluation. Whilst the projects were set up through and endorsed by the Learning Partnerships it was clear from the case studies that many did not operate in sufficiently a robust a way that common quality assurance mechanisms would have been developed. The evaluation has shown that in the majority of projects no common standards have been developed. It is of concern that this does not appear to have been identified as a key issue to be tackled at the next stage. In the FEFC report from the Inspectorate (*Widening Participation and Raising Standards: Contributions made by the FEFC-funded Strategic Partnerships 1999–2000*) one of the key lessons about agencies working effectively in partnership is:

'a strong emphasis on evaluation and improvement – there needs to be effective quality assurance and self-assessment procedures for the work of the partnership, including agreed criteria for success and appropriate performance indicators. Regular reports on the quality and impact of the partnership's work should be disseminated to other relevant bodies.'

4.7.3 Evaluation of programmes

Providers were asked in questionnaire 1 to what extent they were evaluating their programmes. The table below indicates the most frequent activities.

Table 14: What are you doing to evaluate your programme?

Activity	Number of cases
Final evaluation questionnaire	84
Formal review with managers	69
Student evaluations	42
Progression	22
Review with community partners	17

Base: 244 responses

Some partnerships reported they reviewed the programmes with their community partners. It was, however, unclear in what way this happened. From case study visits there was little evidence of any special evaluation process being developed for the non-schedule 2 programmes. The case study team reported that there was very little adaptation to standard college systems other than some simplified paper-based course evaluation forms, asking the standard questions frequently asked of learners by providers.

4.7.4 Evaluation by learners

The case study team also reported that there were very few examples of materials used for evaluation by students even though the FEFC Circular 99/16 had stated that *'opportunities should be given for the learner to contribute to the evaluation of the programme'*.

Co-ordinators were asked how they were involving learners in the evaluation; the responses were as follows:

Discussions with students	63 cases
Student questionnaire	47 cases
Student self-evaluation	46 cases
Final evaluation on exit	31 cases
Learner feedback	24 cases
Learners' comments recorded	13 cases

Respondents did not provide exemplars in the questionnaire and it was impossible to determine what these activities actually involved and to what extent evaluation by the learners themselves was seen as an integral part of quality assurance. The NW Regional conference – Voice of the Learner – provided anecdotal evidence that learners were being consulted about the content of their programmes, and the time, place and length of programme. If new programmes were needed the learners were also consulted in the best cases.

'We decided what we wanted to learn and we contributed our own skills.'

'It is important that you decide what you want to learn and how and where, nobody else can decide this for you.'

'We particularly enjoyed deciding ourselves what the content of the course should be.'

'We are a self-help group for the visually impaired. With the help of a tutor, who was also visually impaired, we learnt how to use the Internet together. Using special technology, we designed our own course so that it met the needs of visually impaired learners.'

What is less clear is to what extent the quality of the learning experience was discussed and what steps were taken to remedy any shortcomings. The case study team reported little, if any, analysis, in-course monitoring or evidence of formalised student evaluations. A good example, however, was seen in Cambridgeshire where a system of learner evaluation was under development. The system was based on each learner completing a postcard-sized plan stating what they wanted from the course and what they had achieved at the end.

Learner involvement in the evaluation of the programmes and projects did not appear to extend far beyond the completion of the course evaluation form, and the occasional informal conversation with the programme co-ordinator. Given the very positive attitudes of the learners to the programmes they had experienced, and even gratitude expressed by many of the learners, this was a real opportunity missed to access the knowledge held by the learners on how the projects, rather than the individual programmes, could be developed further.

4.7.5 Lesson observation

Case study visits showed there was little practice of formal lesson observation, and what was carried out was very much at course level rather than partnership level. When asked what quality assurance mechanisms were in place, 14% of providers reported that lesson observations were part of their quality mechanism. This data did not match the findings of the case study team. There was some evidence that some classes in the later stages of the non-schedule 2 programme had been included within college lesson observation schemes, but where it had happened it had invariably taken place very recently and just before the case study visit. There had not yet been time to implement any of the conclusions from the observation.

4.8 The staff

4.8.1 Teaching staff

The first questionnaire asked respondents about the particular challenges in getting the non-schedule 2 programmes running. 24 out of 319 cases in the projects reported staffing issues, either relating to recruitment of appropriate staff, finding appropriate staff within the current staffing of the college, or the ability of staff to operate with more flexibility in the community than they had been used to. This is at variance with reports from case study visits where it is clear that staff need to have a particular affinity with adult learners and an awareness of the issues this particular group face. Many projects used the expertise of partners both to recruit students and to provide tutors and support workers.

Some projects reported concern from their staff over working in isolation from a college; this was either a concern over lack of resources and support once away

from the main centre or a personal safety concern working in an isolated community setting.

When project co-ordinators were asked about what they would do differently next time, three responded that careful selection of teaching staff would be a high priority and 17 managers said the impact on staffing was one of the three most significant areas. This particularly applied to looking for staff with specific experience (12 managers) and employment of bilingual tutors (three managers).

Evidence from case studies highlights the importance that project co-ordinators attach to having well trained suitable staff. Projects were vociferous about the particular qualities they looked for in tutors to work on the project. Project co-ordinators frequently expressed the view that the skills they were seeking were actually in short supply among the full-time lecturing workforce and that they had often needed to look outside the college's own staff for these skills. There had been notable exceptions – a welding lecturer from one college, hair and beauty lecturers from another, a college administrator who was also a trained health and fitness tutor. There were examples where college managers were aware that often the conventional FE lecturer was not the most appropriate member of staff to deliver these types of programme. They did encourage co-ordinators to go out and recruit staff from the community with experience of working with disadvantaged groups of adult learners.

Students report that the tutor is crucial to their continuation on a programme – at the NW Region conference on 'The Voice of the Learner – a celebration of learning', students said:

'The tutor needs to be able to adjust to the group, not the group adjust to them.'

'The tutor should be professional with a human touch.'

Questionnaire 1 asked about the particular needs of learners on the non-schedule 2 programmes and special tutor support was cited by 14% of the respondents. One community group was delighted to be able to find their own Asian keep fit tutor who was then appointed by the college. This provided a real career opportunity for a young Asian woman just out of university and at the same time maintained the right ethos for the women in the centre. It also provided a chance for the college to increase its complement of Asian staff.

4.8.2 Project management

Case study evidence shows that projects clearly benefited when senior and experienced staff managed them with good access into all departments of the college. They also benefited when they had a champion in either the Principal or in a member of the senior management team.

The project co-ordinator role is vital. Project co-ordinators had either been appointed to work across the partnership as neutral managers of the project as whole or they held a relevant post in one of the colleges, taking a lead role in servicing the project as a whole whilst also managing their own college's part of the project. In the second questionnaire, when asked what they would do differently, only six programme managers reported the appointment of a project co-ordinator early in the development of the work as crucial.

Case study evidence shows that where a co-ordinator has a dedicated role relating to the project, the projects have worked more successfully. For example, the Durham co-ordinator is a former Assistant Principal of one college employed on contract for 40 days and in Kent & Medway the Association of FE Corporations (KAFEC) employs a project manager.

Skills in outreach and community work are essential. In some instances the project co-ordinator had these skills. Where this was not the case, then the employment of outreach workers or community liaison staff proved worth its weight in gold. Non-schedule 2 has been an opportunity for many colleges to create a completely different relationship with agencies in their communities. It has proved important to be able to allocate sufficient staff time of the right calibre to creating and cementing these relationships.

4.8.3 Recruitment of staff

From the case study visits it was made very clear that recruiting the right kind of staff to teach on the projects had been a major issue. Many colleges were very specific in their recruitment and had found it hard to find the right staff for their projects. Finding ethnic minority tutors has been extraordinarily difficult. In one project a black outreach development worker successfully found potential minority ethnic tutors from within community groups who were then accredited by the college and offered training.

There were some difficult issues to be dealt with in recruiting new staff to the college who were already experienced teachers elsewhere. In one project one of the partner colleges stipulated that new part-time tutors must attend an interview and give a short presentation. One potential teacher of a non-schedule 2 class had a long track record in the counselling field and had already run a number of training sessions for the local community organisation where the class was to be based. The potential tutor and the community group who recommended her expressed surprise and disappointment when she was asked to attend an interview and write her qualifications on an application form. The community organisation believed that their recommendation should have been sufficiently reliable to allow the college's standard procedures to be waived. The tutor had no formal qualifications and did not intend to get any – she believed that her long experience in training and written testimonials should have been a sufficient guarantee of quality.

Case study evidence showed that favoured places from which to recruit outside included local education authority adult education staff, youth and community workers, outstanding trainee tutors from the college's C&G 730 courses, and staff nominated by partner organisations. The skills and qualities sought were flexibility, resourcefulness, good interpersonal skills and an ability to relate well to the target group. Project co-ordinators sometimes tended to rate flexibility and personal qualities above teaching expertise or depth of curriculum knowledge. However, if non-schedule 2 programmes are to be rigorous and of high quality, tutors need more than good interpersonal skills. They need good technical subject expertise, experience confidence with a range of different teaching techniques, a good understanding of group dynamics and how a tutor can influence them, as well as an ability to be at ease with the client group. Where classes observed lacked challenge or shape it was most often due to inexperience on the part of the tutor, a misjudgement of the level at which the learners were capable of working, or a lack of variety in pace and activity.

Case study evidence reported that many staff teaching were part-time, sessional or agency tutors; they often were recruited at short notice. It is essential for the continuity of the projects for managers to be aware of the impact of running an important programme in the community with part-time and agency staff. Whilst many of these staff offer expertise which is vital to the delivery of the programmes, they will also, by definition, be less stable in their employment, and a high turnover of staff can lead to difficulties in managing and delivering these demanding programmes.

4.8.4 Non-teaching staff

Staffing issues were not confined to teaching staff. There has been additional work for support staff in institutions. Development of the MIS to accommodate the non-schedule 2 learners has been necessary with new FEFC coding and software. Three co-ordinators reported that development of tracking systems needs to be improved, as did eight programme managers. One co-ordinator recommended that FEFC should sort out software problems to ensure more efficient tracking and statistical monitoring of recruitment against target.

Some programme managers were particularly concerned over levels of paperwork and bureaucracy created in colleges by the administrative set-up. Simplifying paperwork was quoted in questionnaire 2 by three co-ordinators and seven programme managers as being essential for the smooth running of their projects.

Case study evidence shows that many projects had originally underestimated the level of administrative support that would be required and several had made additional administrative appointments during the year to ease the burden on the project co-ordinators. Such support is essential if co-ordinators and outreach

workers are not to become bogged down with paperwork when they should be out networking and setting up or supporting provision.

4.9 Staff development and support

Despite the unusual and often challenging nature of the work, the case study team found there were few examples of staff having been offered structured support, staff meetings or relevant professional development and training. This may have been a consequence of the priority given to getting the project off the ground or it may have been due to the short-term nature of the employment. Several colleges involved in the pilot projects only used agency staff and therefore did not consider themselves responsible for their professional development. Those colleges that employed staff directly selected tutors who they thought already had the skills required doing the work.

Respondents were asked what they had done to prepare and induct staff to work on the non-schedule 2 programme. There were 263 responses to this question – 29% reported internal training had been given. 20% reported that information had been provided on the programmes and learners. 8% of respondents reported that there was access to specialist training when it was required.

Table 15: Preparation and induction of staff for teaching non-schedule 2 learners and programmes

Type of training	Cases
Internal training	77
Information about programmes/learners	52
Specially selected staff	34
Access to specialist training when required	21
Development of curriculum packs	20
Tutor packs	16
Joint planning with partners	13
Briefing for the consortium	12
Training on MIS/funding	10
Team teaching	5
City & Guilds teaching programme	2
Received no induction	1

Base 263 responses

Some projects, however, had mounted some professional development activity. For example:

- South London had organised a half-day tutor conference.
- Cambridgeshire had allocated paid initial collaborative planning and administration time to a newly formed team of IT tutors to enable them to set up systems they all supported for an outreach IT project in a rural patch.
- Bristol organised training days around their 'Passport' concept.

In one or two regions, FEDA supported a network of pilot projects at which information was exchanged or emerging issues identified. In the Northwest region one of these resulted in a FEDA/NIACE 'Voice of the Learner' event, for an invited audience of decision-makers and attended by staff for all the projects in the region. The learners from some of the projects presented their own work and explained what the non-schedule 2 programmes had done for them.

In questionnaire 1, only a minority of cases reported any joint training with partners (5%) or briefing for the partnership (5%). A minority of respondents (4%) reported some training on MIS and funding.

Given the concern over the appropriateness of staff to deliver these programmes, it is surprising that when programme managers were asked in the second questionnaire about the wider impact of the non-schedule 2 programmes there was little identification of staff training as an issue (see table 15). In view of the emphasis given to outreach work and a more flexible teaching style, it is perhaps surprising that impact on teaching and learning practice does not appear higher in the rank order. It is perhaps less surprising that less than a fifth of providers highlight the impact on staff confidence in working with disadvantaged adults: as this is a new initiative, staff may need to gain more experience with new groups of learning in order to gain confidence.

Case study work and responses from learners give evidence that the appropriateness of the tutors is crucial in working with the disadvantaged, 'fragile' learners. There is a significant expertise and experience in the adult education field, both in adult education colleges, the WEA, LEAs, voluntary and community groups. Where projects have worked best there has been a strong partnership between the lead FE college and the other education providers, and the colleges have benefited from that experience. FE staff have not had the same background and experience in outreach and community learning and therefore have found it harder to adapt and develop appropriate programmes. However, many colleges were aware of this and did actively seek to address the issue by working in partnership with others who have developed the expertise.

When asked in questionnaire 2 what the main message would be for developing this provision further, just under a quarter (6) of co-ordinators drew attention to the need to ensure that the correct teaching staff are appointed. The need for

‘appropriate, well-trained and suitable staff’ was also highlighted by about a fifth of the programme managers.

In order to be effective in extending non-schedule 2 the evidence from the evaluation suggests clearly targeted staff development needs to be in place. It is important that colleges should take advantage of expertise which can be provided by their partners in the community, LEAs, adult education service etc. There is a great deal of good practice which can be shared and collaborative partnerships need to be built upon in order to maximise the impact of the non-schedule 2 projects in both colleges and the communities they serve.

4.10 The value added to existing options

4.10.1 Evidence from questionnaire 2 on the wider impact of the non-schedule 2 programme

We asked programme managers to select, from a list of eight possibilities, the three most significant ways in which their non-schedule 2 pilot programme had exerted an impact. Table 16 below ranks the eight types of impact, based on the percentage of managers selecting each item.

The table shows that the providers’ reputations and links with their communities have been most affected by the non-schedule 2 initiative, with 89% of managers citing this as one of the three most significant areas of impact. Next in order of importance is the impact on learners’ lives. Provider priorities and procedures are much less affected.

Table 16: The wider impact of the non-schedule 2 programme

Area of impact	% of providers citing this among the three most significant areas of impact (n = 79)
Links with the community / reputation in the community	89
Impact on learners’ lives	73
Impact on adult learning provision in the area served by the provider	32
Staff recruitment (e.g. an emphasis on staff with community expertise)	24
Teaching and learning practice	19
Staff confidence in working with disadvantaged adults	18
Provider procedures (e.g. remote registration)	18
Provider priorities (e.g. stronger emphasis on Basic Skills in the staffing profile)	13

For each of the eight categories listed in table 16, managers were invited to give an example of the type of impact they had in mind. For the top four categories in the list, the most frequently quoted examples are given below.

Links with the community / reputation in the community

- The majority of managers (49) referred to 'developing new partners in the community'
- Far fewer (12 managers) spoke of the college 'now seen as active in the community'
- Eight managers referred to collaborating in shared delivery or provision
- Only one mentioned recruiting staff from the community.

Impact on learners' lives

- The most frequently cited types of impact were 'growth in confidence and self-esteem' (mentioned by 28 managers) and 'getting a foothold back into education' (mentioned by 25)
- Only seven programme managers mentioned 'ability to gain employment'

Impact on adult learning provision in the area

- 24 managers highlighted this area of impact
- Around a quarter of these referred to increasing targeted outreach work
- A few (4) mentioned 'increase in local residents' participation' and 'better contact with a range of local provision'

Staff recruitment

- 17 managers highlighted this area of impact
- Among these, the most frequently mentioned impact was on the need to 'look for staff with specific experience' (12 managers)
- Only three managers mention 'employment of bilingual tutors'.

It is clear that the funding for non-schedule 2 provision has enabled institutions to develop programmes outside their normal provision in a different way. Some 45% of projects reported being able to offer provision not otherwise available to target new groups of learners. For FE colleges the funding has enabled them to add to existing provision and to reactivate networks, develop new partnerships, work in the community in a more focused way and work with smaller groups of learners than would otherwise have been possible. It enabled them 'to take risks' and package a curriculum free from the constraints perceived in schedule 2 funding.

4.10.2 Evidence from case studies on the wider impact of the non-schedule 2 programme

College staff said time and again that the value of the non-schedule 2 funding was that it had enabled them to make all kinds of short and flexible provision, without charge, out in the community and for groups of adults with whom the college had otherwise had little contact. Some examples of how the funding had helped are as follows:

- In Bury the funding supported new curriculum design and enabled the college to work with smaller group sizes and develop informal delivery methods. It also allowed renewal of partnerships and a return to delivery of learning in the community.

- In Nottingham the funding led to fewer constraints, more flexibility; a greater speed of response; it allowed greater freedom in the curriculum.

- In NE London the college was able to react quickly to requests: it could run with smaller group sizes; it could develop more flexible attendance; funding enabled extra child care support; there was more creativity in programme design – not constrained by accreditation. In many ways the funding restored practice that had been given up because funding systems did not allow; the college re-established relationships with community groups.

- In Telford the funding replaced lost LEA funding for non-schedule 2; it allowed delivery to smaller groups and development of flexible provision; allowed embedding of good practice.

For many colleges the funding had presented them with an opportunity to build new alliances in the more disadvantaged areas of the communities they served and to develop programmes which they believed were more appropriate to the needs of adults living in those communities. In more than one college the funding had provided a development budget to take the work of the widening participation project further into actual delivery of programmes. 'Manna from heaven' was how one programme co-ordinator, who was also the college's new Widening Participation manager, described the funding. Other examples include the following:

- In Hull the project has been able to reach new learners through working with those bodies or agencies who are in contact with or working with disadvantaged adults. Project funding has meant that the 'magic number' for viable class sizes is much reduced (now commonly six) and so some classes that would otherwise not have run are reported.

- In NE London/City the community partners also appreciated the way in which the project had enabled them to network with other community groups and wanted the colleges to continue to facilitate such partnerships. They also thought it would be useful in future partnership projects to build in the opportunity to exchange details of specific courses being mounted, in case there was an opportunity for client referral between courses.

Colleges involved in the non-schedule 2 projects had all started from a different base. Some colleges have many years experience of working out in the community; for others it has been a new experience and one which has taken them on a steep learning curve. The greatest challenges to those who were new to the approach have been the amount of time it has taken to set up the learning programmes in the first place and then handling the wide range of practical tasks that are necessary to staff, and run programmes for new, and sometimes challenging, learners in community settings.

Longer term they anticipated they would be able to build the kind of progression pathways envisaged in Circular 99/16 but this was not always the first priority. In many instances, given the client groups some colleges were working with, the aspiration of progression into schedule 2 level 2 may be unrealistic and has seemed impossible to achieve within one year. Released from having to operate within accreditation frameworks and from the need to raise fee income, programme managers felt liberated and more able to experiment in being responsive.

Local education authorities hold the statutory duty to secure non-schedule 2 adult education. A number of authorities fulfil this duty by negotiating contracts with education providers to run adult education on their behalf. The majority have their own adult or community education services within the authority, which they directly manage. Where colleges already held a contract from the local education authority to organise adult education provision, they clearly perceived the non-schedule 2 funding from FEFC to be for something different. In a few instances, in order to accentuate this difference in approach, colleges had located the management of the FEFC-funded non-schedule 2 project somewhere entirely separate from the LEA-funded non-schedule 2 adult education programme – in the Marketing department, for example, or the Access division or in Business Development. Whilst this did make the point about the programme being different, it also meant that the programmes did not have always the benefit of the involvement of someone with experience in the basics of organising community-based learning.

4.10.3 Schedule 2 or non-schedule 2?

Whether many of the programmes would have been delivered under schedule 2 funding is unclear. Certainly some of the Basic Skills and ESOL programmes could have been considered, but the ability to offer flexible programmes with low

student numbers and fewer hours has acted as an enabler and allowed colleges to take chances with non-accredited and taster courses.

Several of the projects were running a number of courses, which were really standard Basic Skills or ESOL, equally fundable under Programme Area 10. Where this was happening the justification offered by the colleges usually was that:

- (a) there was insufficient funding in the college's main budget to meet local demand for Basic Skills and ESOL, or
- (b) that running the provision through non-schedule 2 offered greater flexibility of approach, or
- (c) that it was what the community group had asked for and it would have been unhelpful to the college building its reputation in the community to have been unable to respond.

Similarly, many projects were offering courses in IT. Some of these courses were clearly different in design and intention to those eligible for schedule 2 funding, but many were not. The courses were usually offered off site, often using lap-top computers, and to a particular client group, but the course outlines were very little different to introductory provision in mainstream.

Some colleges have seen non-schedule 2 as an opportunity 'to grow' new students for particular departments, e.g. hair and beauty and care programmes where there was no qualification suitable less than level 2.

Where the colleges were using the funding to run provision for which they had already reached their targets within their main budget, for example, in Basic Skills, ESOL or IT, then non-schedule 2 funding was effectively being used as a form of targeted DLE. Non-schedule 2 funding in these instances was being used to enable the college to work with more learners, but the question then becomes with which learners, and did they need the additional support or different offer that funding at cost weighting factor C permits? In the case of IT provision, this will be particularly pertinent for the second year of non-schedule 2 funding, as other FEFC funding has now come on stream within schedule 2 to support growth in IT provision, particularly in very short course provision.

4.10.4 Value added to existing provision

It was not possible to assess whether the programmes in the non-schedule 2 projects were adding value to the colleges' existing provision. They were certainly increasing the quantity of provision overall. In some areas where non-accredited adult learning had been sparse, for example in rural areas, then more provision became available (Learning Clubs in Northumberland; Laptops in your Front Room in Cambridgeshire). In other areas where there had already been a range of standard provision, other providers felt that some of the new programmes were duplicating what they were already doing. In some areas,

though by no means in all, they were introducing a new approach to developing contact with client groups for whom access to learning has always been problematic (adults living with mental illness in Newbury; rough sleepers in Westminster).

The more challenging question is whether the programmes have added to the overall coherence of provision in an area, filling identified gaps in provision. This is difficult to answer given how recently the work has started. Clearly there is potential for this with the new Learning and Skills Councils but it has not yet been realised.

- In Northumberland, for example, there seems to be a great deal of community learning/activity around, offered by a range of providers. The local High Schools, for example, offer courses such as 'Computing for the Terrified' and some of the tutors for this NS2 project also teach on courses for other providers. NCH Action for Children have a 'Patchwork' scheme which also targets parents, and the Women's Health Advice Centre, funded as part of the Health Action Zone, offers courses such as Basic Psychology and Creative Writing in the same venues. WEA are active locally and have a strong emphasis on local history, a main theme of the NS2 project also. All the community centres and many local activists are keen to get as much purposeful activity going as possible, as the area suffers from very high unemployment and is still losing jobs. From the learners' point of view they are not interested in who the provider is but will access whatever they can and are interested in, as near home as possible. The area has been able to access European money for regeneration and community capacity building and the college is involved in many of the projects. There is now a mapping exercise taking place and the Learning Partnership's Basic Skills Task Group is seen as an engine to drive forward a more coherent approach at least for basic skills.

This funding has enabled a new look at widening participation from an FE college's perspective. The introduction of FEFC funding for non schedule 2 adult education into the college sector has enabled colleges to extend their work in the community and to build their capacity for making responsive first rung outreach provision in partnership with others. Furthermore, being funded at the level provided by FEFC has enabled colleges to make and to support this provision without the need to charge fees, usually a necessity in more conventional non-schedule 2 adult education. This means that colleges have been placed at an advantage in the market over their partner providers of non-schedule 2 adult education in the LEA and voluntary sectors, many of whom already had considerable expertise in this work, but whose own output has frequently been constrained by static or reducing core funding and the need to raise income from provision through fees.

There is an issue of equality of opportunity to be considered in order to be funded to do this work which will need to be explored further by the Learning and Skills Councils. They will need to develop an overview of current non-schedule 2 activity of all kinds in their areas to ensure that this provision is made by those who are best able to deliver it well. Decisions on future funding arrangements should always be made, as is intended, in the best interests of learners and not the providers.

4.10.5 Impact on the whole college

One area when one might have expected the programmes to have an impact was upon the colleges themselves. Evidence on this is sparse. Colleges are involved in a whole variety of programmes relating to widening participation and multiple projects. The potential for the messages emerging from the non-schedule 2 project to influence the main college frequently depended upon the seniority of the staff involved in managing the project or upon whether it had been included within the college's internal arrangements for monitoring and review. Often the non-schedule 2 project was only part of a range of activities engaged in by the college aimed at working with their local community. Where senior management has been involved, however, non-schedule 2 funding has been an agent of change within the organisation. It has focused work in the community and for disadvantaged adults and has led to a redefining of the college's mission.

A number of projects reported either work had enhanced the reputation of the college in the community and had demystified college by taking learners into the college environment. Certainly the evidence from the second questionnaire corroborates this (see 4.10.1).

In Portsmouth several project managers report an extension to the traditional curriculum offer, and also draw attention to provision being much more community-based:

- *'We have new provision for new clients and in new places.'*
- *'The target groups are outside our traditional clientele, not only for mainstream FE but also those who tend to come on our general AE programme.'*
- *'We are much more out there in the community.'*
- *'The project has helped us clarify that we need to do 'entry'-level work in the community, and point up progression elsewhere.'* *'We have got better at knowing how to set things up in community venues.'*

- In Manchester contact with community agencies is leading to colleges entering into new ways of co-working, usually on based on a 'win:win' deal whereby the agency gets its goals secured through the college, and the college gets its foot in the door for new learners/community venues etc. The chair of one community centre committee indicated that 'the college involvement has been essential. Past efforts to bring local people together foundered, but now we've got the right mix. It's the courses that are attracting people – and the fact that they're free, of course. The project is a testimony to breaking down the barriers. 'The Centre Committee – which is supported for a finite period by external (ESF/SRB) funding – is now engaged with the college in a process of capacity building, with volunteers working alongside college staff to mount activities and organise events. The college has also helped with the formal bits of our business: they have shared policies with us, and are helping us to put together an agreed plan and sustainability strategy.'

- In NE London/City the community partners also appreciated the way in which the project had enabled them to network with other community groups and wanted the colleges to continue to facilitate such partnerships. They also thought it would be useful in future partnership projects to build in the opportunity to exchange details of specific courses being mounted, in case there was an opportunity for client referral between courses. Most of the community organisations would have welcomed further clarification from the colleges on the source of the NS2 money and other funding which they would also be able to access. They pointed out that the funding they received did not take into account the 'legwork' they undertook to attract in new learners and the publicity, photocopying and other incidental costs to the organisation. They also felt that it the facility to fund the buying of materials for courses was important for the client groups concerned.

As far as impact on main college activity, most of this work appears to have been led through Basic Skills or Adult and Community Departments. On the whole, non-schedule 2 projects have not been incorporated into wider curriculum discussion in colleges. In some projects, the programmes have been managed and delivered as a separate unit of the college, deliberately distancing the work from mainstream college so as to encourage these learners for whom fear of college and negative attitudes to education are clearly barriers to participation. An example is found in Portsmouth where the LEAP project has created a separate identity for itself and has its own logo devised by one of the partner organisations. In many other colleges the project happened on the margins for different reasons, very important to those who were involved but having little impact upon the day-to-day running of the college.

4.11 FEFC systems and procedures

In questionnaire 1 co-ordinators were asked to describe what adjustments they had to make to their mainstream administrative procedures. The following responses were made:

- in 70% of cases there were adjustments to registration procedures
- in 56% of cases there were adjustments to MIS
- in 43% of cases there were changes to enrolment forms
- in 29% of cases there were changes to course registers.

When asked what had been major challenges in delivering the non-schedule 2 pilot programmes, a few colleges cited 'escaping from traditional methods/procedures/administration'.

Case study evidence shows that initially many colleges were greatly exercised by the challenges of including the work funded through non-schedule 2 projects within the college's standard procedures for administration and monitoring. However, over the year this seemed to become less of an issue. Whether this was because staff had become more accustomed to the problems and learned how to handle them or whether they had just been temporarily shelved for sorting out during the summer was hard to ascertain.

Most colleges were using their own college's standard enrolment forms, but were actually requiring learners to complete very little of the form themselves. Partially completed enrolment forms were then screened and completed by administrative staff prior to data entry into the colleges' MIS. There were some examples where new systems had been introduced, e.g. in Portsmouth the LEAP project has devised and put in place a complete set of parallel procedures, which are now standardised across the project. There are standard separate simplified enrolment forms and a standard format for course information leaflets and posters. Each student is given a LEAP enrolment pack, which contains a LEAP logbook in which his or her learning progress will be recorded. A project database for recording programmes, learners and enrolments has also been devised by the lead college's MIS unit.

Some project co-ordinators reported facing difficulties in trying to get approval for an alternative enrolment form. Colleges are wary of audit and as a result are unwilling to depart from systems that have already been tacitly approved by their external auditors.

What has emerged from the pilot projects is that the systems set up by the FEFC for the collection of data for schedule 2 programmes are not appropriate for non-schedule 2.

- In County Durham there is some scepticism within the Partnership that the FEFC funding methodology is an appropriate mechanism for allocating funding for the work involved. *'We all knew at the outset that FEFC mechanisms are not the best way of developing NS2. We have been trying to force a new type of work into an old funding model, and it doesn't work.'*

Many of the learners involved in these programmes do not start at specified times or work through a fixed number of weeks so that flexibility is a key issue in delivery. Where systems relate to fixed monitoring times, hours of programmes, load-bands, outcome measurement, etc. they do not lend themselves easily to much more flexible, short, unitised programmes. The impact of load-bands and funding has been clear, and colleges reported that they set up programmes that were far too long for the learners as they were used to working with load-bands and maximising funding opportunities. Circular 99/16 paragraph 23 defines claiming units related to load-bands. In questionnaire 1, 12% of respondents offered courses up to 20 hours, 23% up to 60 hours, 11% up to 200 hours. By using the load-bands for funding, providers were limited in the flexibility required to deliver short taster programmes to learners. They used the load-bands to maximise funding rather than deliver courses of the most appropriate length for the learners. At the time that the projects were set up (in the year 1999 – 2000) courses running less than nine hours could not be funded.

In questionnaire 2, co-ordinators were asked what main recommendation they would make to FEFC. Only one co-ordinator referred to sorting out software problems relating to ISR, and two requested giving clear audit guidelines in advance which do not change over the course of the project.

Case study visits found that some projects set up separate project databases, which they have run as parallel management information systems with the intention of exporting the data from these into the main college MIS during the summer break. Some of these systems were computerised, others paper-based. Other projects entered student records directly on to the main MIS – this was made easier once FEFC had issued classification codes. Project co-ordinators in many colleges described the value of getting their MIS manager on side!

Late provision of MIS codes for this project caused problems for some providers. This is of particular concern where the census date for the non-schedule 2 projects has been determined as May 15th 2000. All learners enrolled after this will be counted in the year 2000/2001 enrolments. This will not only impact on the enrolment numbers but will also affect data on progression and funding for next year if the colleges are deemed not to have recruited to target because of the date at which the numbers were counted. This was unclear to project co-ordinators at the outset and may lead to difficulties in funding and setting targets for the next round.

The programmes have proved expensive to run in terms of resources, time and provision of additional support in remote locations. Six co-ordinators requested more funding for additional support. Circular 99/16 paragraph 24 states that colleges can be able to claim funding units for childcare and additional support where appropriate. It is possible that some providers have not taken advantage of the ability to claim additional units; however, feedback from the evaluation is that the non-schedule 2 programmes are resource- and person-intensive and require additional mechanisms to secure appropriate levels of funding.

- County Durham refers to specific problems relating to the amount of time needed to consult with community-based agencies and develop an appropriate curriculum. Such work, it is thought, carries costs over and above the funding generated by the application of CWF C and boosted entry units.

- In Bury concern was expressed that FEFC funding systems have no way of recognising or funding the intensive work, time and effort it takes to try and enrol new learners. The costs of outreach and partnership work, it was claimed, are not adequately reflected in the funding system.

Learners themselves have been able to take advantage of the free, local courses which have enabled them to become more actively involved in their local community:

'keep it free, it works'

5. Value for money

Funding this work at cost factor C, as if it were Basic Skills provision, has delivered a level of funding to colleges which has given them greater flexibility in the way they set up provision. It has enabled them to offer shorter courses, to operate off site in community locations, to provide a level of childcare and to run courses with low numbers, all of which are essential in first rung provision.

Most colleges have also had to set up and fund some sort of infrastructure for the project – the depth, breadth and seniority of this infrastructure varies from college to college. Some projects have also used the funding to provide high quality equipment and materials (art and design materials, musical instruments, sewing machines, lap-top computers, DIY tools, video recorders, etc.) to double staff certain groups or to resource additional information, advice and guidance sessions or off-site basic skills assessment and follow-up support. Where this investment has been made, the quality shows.

- In South London an IT class took place in a well-resourced community centre. There were 10 students in the group, and each student had his/her own computer.

However, in some cases there had been lack of investment in resources.

Where colleges have struck agreements with other agencies to deliver programmes directly but under the auspices of the project, a range of rates of funding had been offered. In these projects the community groups had felt the benefit of working in partnership. For example:

- In Hull the director of one community project reported that because the college courses offered through the project were free, this was the factor which made her decide to use the college as a provider for the particular courses offered. If the courses had not been available through this project, she would have used lottery money to mount them or would have gone to a different provider.

- In Manchester the manager of the Salford Foyer worked closely with the local college which has helped design an induction programme and is also importing tutors to run ICT sessions on the Foyer's own equipment

- In Reading the churches reported that there was a real need for parenting skills and that the project had managed to attract women into provision who were normally reluctant to come forward. The fact that the courses were offered by the 'real' college had made the women feel valued. The links with the college were also an important step forward – one organisation commented that they would like to use the Arts & Design expertise of the college more and that the project had provided a means of having a dialogue with the college about further provision, which could be offered. The desire for better links with the college was echoed by the other organisations.

In some parts of the country there has been some resentment at the size of the differential between the rate received by the college and the rate then offered by them to community organisations and other partners. Colleges need to be able to explain this difference and demonstrate the added value they provide as result of the money they hold back. This added value could take many forms – help with organisational capacity building, assistance in the establishment of learning resource bases on site, sharing curriculum expertise, supported progression routes, staff development, access for tutors to qualifications, equal access for all learners to all college support services, Basic Skills or ESOL support, etc. Where relationships have been strained, however, voluntary and community organisations could become more vociferous in arguing their case for the option of direct funding from the Learning and Skills Council to become a reality as soon as possible.

6. The essential ingredients for an effective non-schedule 2 project

- Links with the local authority and voluntary and community groups to ensure that the project is articulated into the full panoply of community development and outreach strategies locally.
- Commitment and leadership from the head of the lead institution.
- A champion at senior level in each college.
- An impartial, influential, effective, senior-level project co-ordinator.
- Effective networking with other organisations and agencies in the community.
- Operating with an open mind and a willingness to learn.
- Imagination and creativity in curriculum design and delivery.
- Customised or individually developed learning programmes responsive to the needs and interests of the target group which make explicit the intended learning outcomes.
- Good impartial information, advice and guidance at the place where learners want it and in a manner which is appropriate to their current level of engagement.
- Fit-for-purpose tools for assessing Basic Skills support needs and for responding to them.
- A range of appropriate assessment methods for identifying learning gain.
- Progression pathways built in and signposted.
- Careful selection of tutors with the right combination of interpersonal skills, teaching expertise and curriculum knowledge.
- Opportunities for their continuing development, training and support.
- Learners involved in such a way that they are encouraged and able to express their views on more than course delivery.
- Links with the other work of the college and close articulation with other activities.
- Frequent opportunities to recognise and celebrate of the success of learners.
- Fit-for-purpose quality assessment and improvement strategies.

Appendix 1

NON-SCHEDULE 2 PILOT PROJECTS EVALUATION

Provider Survey Questionnaire 1

Please complete the questionnaire by filling in the boxes.

Please return the questionnaire by 5th April 2000 to:

Maggie Greenwood
FEDA
FREEPOST (BS6745)
London
SE11 5BR

Q1. Name of person completing questionnaire

Q2. Name and address of your organisation

Q3. List (or attach a list) of the courses within your non-schedule 2 pilot programme under the 3 headings:

a) Courses completed:

b) Courses running:

c) Courses planned:

Q4. In your non-schedule 2 pilot programme are there learning activities in your Programme which you would not describe as 'courses'?

Please list below (or attach list if easier)

Q5. Who are you in partnership with – both formal and informal – to deliver your activities? Please limit to 10

- a) List your partners
- b) Particular expertise of partner
- c) Particular contribution to this work

Q6. What have you done to prepare and induct your staff to work on this programme?

Q7. What methods do you intend using to measure learner progress? (Please list)

Q8. What do you consider to have been your major successes so far in providing for these groups of disadvantaged adults?

Q9. What do you consider to have been your major challenges so far in making the appropriate provision for these learners?

Q10. What have you discovered are the particular needs of the learners on these programmes?

Q11a. What are you doing to evaluate your programme?

Q11b. How are you involving learners in this?

Q12. What quality assurance mechanisms do you have in place?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU COMPLETE THE PART OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE WHICH IS HARD COPY.

INSERT APPENDIX 2

INSERT APPENDIX 3

Appendix 4

NON-SCHEDULE 2 ADVISORY GROUP

Lindsay Harford	NW Regional Education Manager and Education Policy Manager for Basic Skills, FEFC (Chair)
Jennifer Adshead	Head of Training, National Federation of Women's Institutes
Maureen Banbury	HMI, Ofsted
Elizabeth Bray	Development Manager, West Suffolk College
Sue Cara	Associate Director, NIACE
Nancy Cookson	Vice Principal, Bury College
Joyce Deere	FEFC Inspector Programme Area 10
Maggie Greenwood	Project Manager, FEDA
Annabel Hemstedt	Research and Evaluation, Basic Skills Agency
Mark Hill	Kent & Medway Lifelong Learning Partnership Non-Schedule 2 Co-ordinator
Ursula Howard	Director of Research and Development, FEDA
Annie Merton	Project Manager, NIACE
Jane Taylor	Bristol Community Education
Fran Walker	Assistant Principal Student Services and Student Development, Worksop College
Sue Yeomans	Education Policy Manager, FEFC

Appendix 5

NON-SCHEDULE 2 PILOT PROJECTS 1999 – 2000

Partnership	Lead College and Partners
<p>EAST SUSSEX LEARNING PARTNERSHIP</p>	<p>LEWES TERTIARY COLLEGE EASTBOURNE COLLEGE OF ARTS & TECHNOLOGY HASTINGS COLLEGE OF ARTS & TECHNOLOGY</p>
<p>KENT LLP/MEDWAY LLP</p>	<p>CANTERBURY COLLEGE SOUTH KENT COLLEGE THANET COLLEGE WEST KENT COLLEGE HADLOW COLLEGE NORTH WEST KENT COLLEGE MID KENT COLLEGE</p>
<p>WEST BERKSHIRE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP</p>	<p>NEWBURY COLLEGE</p>
<p>READING and WOKINGHAM LLP</p>	<p>READING COLLEGE (LB3) READING COLLEGE (LB2)</p>
<p>SURREY LLP</p>	<p>EAST SURREY COLLEGE GUILDFORD COLLEGE WOKING COLLEGE MERRIST WOOD GODALMINGS TRODE'S SPELTHORNE NORTH EAST SURREY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY BROOKLANDS</p>

LIFELONG EDUCATION FOR ADULTS IN PORTSMOUTH (LEAP)	HIGHBURY COLLEGE PORTSMOUTH COLLEGE
THE LLP FOR NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	NORTHAMPTON COLLEGE TRESHAM INSTITUTE MOULTON COLLEGE DAVENTRY COLLEGE
NORTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LLP	NORTH NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE NEWARK AND SHERWOOD COLLEGE WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE
GREATER NOTTINGHAM LLP	PEOPLE'S COLLEGE ARNOLD AND CARLTON COLLEGE BILBOROUGH COLLEGE BROXTOWE COLLEGE NEW COLLEGE, NOTTINGHAM SOUTH NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE
LONDON SOUTH CENTRAL STRATEGIC LLP	SOUTHWARK COLLEGE LAMBETH COLLEGE MORLEY COLLEGE LEWISHAM COLLEGE CHRIST THE KING VI FORM COLLEGE WOOLWICH & GREENWICH COLLEGE
NORTH LONDON LLP	BARNET COLLEGE CAPEL MANOR COLLEGE OF NORTH EAST LONDON ENFIELD COLLEGE HENDON COLLEGE SOUTHGATE COLLEGE
NORTH EAST CITY FRINGE LLP	HACKNEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE CITY AND ISLINGTON COLLEGE TOWER HAMLETS COLLEGE

CENTRAL LONDON STRATEGIC LEARNING PARTNERSHIP	CITY OF WESTMINSTER KINGSWAY MARYWARD CENTRE
NORTH WEST LONDON LLP	HARROW COLLEGE COLLEGE OF NORTH WEST LONDON STANMORE COLLEGE
CAMBRIDGESHIRE	CAMBRIDGE REGIONAL COLLEGE COLLEGE OF WEST ANGLIA
SUFFOLK STRATEGIC LLP	WEST SUFFOLK LOWESTOFT SUFFOLK
NORFOLK WP PARTNERSHIP	COLLEGE OF W ANGLIA EAST NORFOLK VI FORM GREAT YARMOUTH COLLEGE CITY COLLEGE NORWICH PASTON COLLEGE
NORTH ESSEX	HARLOW COLLEGE BRAINTREE COLLEGE CHELMSFORD COLLEGE COLCHESTER INSTITUTE COLCHESTER SIXTH FORM COLLEGE EPPING FOREST COLLEGE

<p>BIRMINGHAM LIFELONG LEARNING PARTNERSHIP</p>	<p>SUTTON COLDFIELD COLLEGE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN JOSIAH MASON BOURNVILLE BIRMINGHAM COLLEGE OF FOOD CITY COLLEGE NORTH BIRMINGHAM MATTHEW BOULTON COLLEGE SOUTH BIRMINGHAM CADBURY COLLEGE WEA (for 2000-01) BAES (for 2000-01)</p>
<p>SHROPSHIRE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP</p>	<p>SHREWSBURY SIXTH FORM COLLEGE LUDLOW COLLEGE NORTH SHROPSHIRE COLLEGE SHREWSBURY COLLEGE OF ART AND TECHNOLOGY WALFORD COLLEGE</p>
<p>TELFORD AND WREKIN LIFELONG LEARNING PARTNERSHIP</p>	<p>TELFORD COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TECH NEW COLLEGE Workers educational association</p>
<p>DORSET COLLEGES PARTNERSHIP</p>	<p>ARTS INSTITUTE AT BOURNEMOUTH KINGSTON MAURWARD COLLEGE BOURNEMOUTH AND POOLE COLLEGE OF FE WEYMOUTH COLLEGE</p>
<p>WILTSHIRE & SWINDON LEARNING PARTNERSHIP</p>	<p>TROWBRIDGE COLLEGE NEW COLLEGE SWINDON SALISBURY COLLEGE SWINDON COLLEGE CHIPPENHAM COLLEGE</p>

<p>GLOUCESTERSHIRE STRATEGIC LLP</p>	<p>STROUD COLLEGE CIRENCESTER COLLEGE GLOSCAT HARTPURY COLLEGE ROYAL FOREST OF DEAN COLLEGE</p>
<p>STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FOR LLP- BRISTOL & GLOUCESTERSHIRE</p> <p><i>CoB and CoC&EE merge in Aug</i></p>	<p>CITY OF BRISTOL COLLEGE FILTON COLLEGE SOUNDWELL COLLEGE COLLEGE OF CARE & EARLY EDUCATION</p>
<p>BURY LL PARTNERSHIPS</p>	<p>BURY COLLEGE HOLY CROSS COLLEGE WEA (new for 2000)</p>
<p>MERSEYSIDE PARTNERSHIP ON BEHALF OF 5 LLP ON MERSEYSIDE</p>	<p>HUGH BAIRD COLLEGE BIRKENHEAD SIXTH FORM COLLEGE CARMEL COLLEGE KING GEORGE V COLLEGE KNOWSLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE LIVERPOOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE ST HELENS COLLEGE SOUTHPORT COLLEGE WIRRAL METROPOLITAN COLLEGE</p>
<p>WIGAN LLP</p>	<p>WIGAN AND LEIGH COLLEGE ST JOHN RIGBY RC VI FORM COLLEGE WINSTANLEY COLLEGE</p>
<p>BOLTON LLP</p>	<p>BOLTON COLLEGE BOLTON VI FORM COLLEGE BOLTON INSTITUTE</p>
<p>WARRINGTON</p>	<p>PRIESTLEY COLLEGE WARRINGTON COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">HALTON LLP</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">HALTON COLLEGE WIDNES SIXTH FORM COLLEGE</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MANCHESTER, SALFORD, TAMESIDE AND TRAFFORD</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LORETO COLLEGE ASHTON UNDER LYNE VI FORM COLLEGE CITY COLLEGE, MANCHESTER ECCLES COLLEGE MANCAT NORTH TRAFFORD COLLEGE PENDLETON COLLEGE SALFORD COLLEGE SHENA SIMON COLLEGE SOUTH TRAFFORD COLLEGE TAMESIDE COLLEGE XAVERIAN COLLEGE MAES(for 2000-01)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">COUNTY DURHAM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NEW COLLEGE, DURHAM BISHOP AUCKLAND COLLEGE DERWENTSIDE COLLEGE EAST DURHAM AND HOUGHALL COMM. COLLEGE AND OTHERS</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">NORTHUMBERLAND</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NORTHUMBERLAND COLLEGE KIRKLEY HALL NEWCASTLE COLLEGE</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">TYNE AND WEAR FE CONSORTIUM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CITY OF SUNDERLAND GATESHEAD COLLEGE NEWCASTLE COLLEGE NORTH TYNESIDE COLLEGE SOUTH TYNESIDE COLLEGE TYNEMOUTH COLLEGE</p>

Appendix 6

CASE STUDY VISITS

These were made to:

Birmingham

Bristol

Bury

Cambridgeshire

County Durham

Greater Nottingham

Hull

Kent & Medway

Manchester

North East City Fringe (London)

North West London

North Yorkshire

Northumberland

Portsmouth

Reading

Rotherham

South Central London

Telford and Wrekin

Wigan and Leigh

Wiltshire and Swindon

Appendix 7

A – FORMAT FOR CASE STUDY REPORT

Four sides of A4, written as a descriptive and reflective case study, to include:

1. A brief introductory description of the project
2. The original needs analysis informing the project, and the subsequent project (and programme) development and promotion.
3. Programmes: content, location, styles of teaching and learning, learner support etc.
4. The project's effectiveness at reaching and engaging new and disadvantaged learners.
5. The learners, their experience of the programme and the impact their participation has had on their lives.
6. How quality within the programmes has been monitored and assessed, and the extent to which learners have been involved in this.
7. Achievement(s) on the programmes and the approaches used to identify, track and record these.
8. The value the project has added to existing provision in the area.
9. The benefits and challenges of working in partnership.
10. Any further challenges experienced by the project and how they have responded to these.
11. Particular achievements and successes of the project.
12. Changes to standard (primarily S2 focused) practices and procedures, both administrative and curricular, prompted by the project.
13. Innovative characteristics and features of this project worth highlighting.

As annexes to the case study please include:

- a brief description of any particular good or innovative practice within the project
- a summary of key bullet points arising for you from this visit which you would want to have reported back to FEFC as part of the overall Evaluation report
- any examples of case studies or profiles of individual learners

Please also **attach any documents or materials** you pick up from the project visit that support or add depth to the points in the report.

B – THEMES FOR DISCUSSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CASE STUDY VISITS

Strand A questions are the strategic management and partnership issues; Strand B, the learning and the learners experience. (These prompts are provided as a guide.)

Primarily Strand A (but not exclusively)

The value the new programmes have added to the existing provision in the area

- *How is the programme new or different from what existed in the area already?*
- *How has it connected with other provision in the area, S2 and NS2?*
- *How do other providers in the area perceive the programme; how do you know?*

The nature of partnership work, and the added value it has brought

- *Who is involved in the partnership at both strategic and delivery levels; who is missing?*
- *What form does partnership activity take and what level of involvement do all the various partners have?*
- *Who co-ordinates the project?*
- *How has this co-ordination been funded?*
- *How have they planned the programmes and managed and monitored funding and units across the partners?*
- *What connection does the programme have with the Local Learning Partnership?*
- *What has worked well and less well at partnership level?*
- *How successful do the partners think the project has been overall?*
- *What views do the partners have as to how the project should progress?*
- *What benefits, or otherwise, do they identify from working together in this way?*

The contribution of the programmes overall to widening participation

- *How successful have they been in reaching their intended target groups?*
- *Who is or has been taking part in the programmes?*
- *What strategies have they used to reach the learners?*
- *Have they managed to retain these learners; what has helped with this?*
- *What learning gains have been achieved; how do they know?*

Primarily Strand B (but not exclusively)

The quality of practice overall and in particular examples of any innovative practice that has been developed

- *What programmes are being/have been offered?*
- *How have they differed in intention, content, location, delivery or ethos to the more mainstream S2 programmes?*
- *What good or different practice is there and/or do you observe?*
- *How have learners' basic skills needs been addressed?*

The experience of the learners and in particular how they are involved in the planning and evaluation of their learning

- *What do the learners think of the programmes they have been engaged in?*
- *What attracted them to the programmes initially, when they have not been attracted to others?*
- *How did they get started?*
- *What have they found most useful and/or enjoyed most?*
- *What difference has it made to them?*
- *Have they been involved in planning, developing or evaluating the programmes; if so, how?*
- *What do they plan to do next?*

Approaches to recording & measuring learning outcomes & progression

- *How has the project tackled this; what examples can they show you/let you take away?*
- *How has this differed to what they would do on other programmes?*
- *How does achievement on these programmes match with the standards of achievement in mainstream programmes?*

To include in both Strands

The ways in which quality assurance has been approached

- *How have they handled the quality assurance arrangements for these programmes?*
- *What adaptations have they made to their mainstream systems?*
- *Where have they felt they were 'taking risks' or departing from main college standards?*
- *Have they undertaken any self-assessment exercises?*

The implications of this work for other procedures and practices in the FEFC sector colleges involved, for example the management of the funding allocations, MIS, enrolment etc.

- *What challenges has the project presented for main college systems and procedures?*
- *How have they responded to these challenges?*
- *What advice would they want to give the FEFC or the new Learning and Skills Councils for planning, funding and monitoring this kind of work in the future?*

April 2000

North Yorkshire Partnership

Askham Bryan College

Craven College

Harrogate College

Darlington College

Scarborough 6th Form College

Selby College

WEA North Yorkshire

Yorkshire Coast College

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