

E-Readiness in the Social Care Sector

Building the capacity for e-learning

**Research study conducted for the
Social Care Institute for Excellence**

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institute for excellence



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Executive Summary

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) commissioned Ipsos MORI to carry out a research programme with the following objectives:

To establish whether the social care sector in England is ready to maximise the use of e-learning in terms of technical and organisational infrastructure and in terms of the availability of e-learning content for social care

To provide an assessment of the current capacity of the social care sector as a whole to use and produce e-learning, in particular in internet-based learning, and to exploit its full potential in pursuit of improved services for users and carers

SCIE defines e-learning as “the use of information and communication technologies to provide, support or enhance learning”.

To achieve these ends, Ipsos MORI carried out four main strands of a complex research programme:

A review of the literature surrounding e-readiness and e-learning in the social care sector;

A survey of 516 social care sector employers (mostly managers, with three in five operating in the private sector, a quarter in the voluntary sector and one in seven from local authorities);

A survey of 994 social care sector staff (largely women with two in five being frontline workers); and

A series of four case study focus groups among social care staff to assess the practical enablers of and barriers to e-learning.

This executive summary outlines the key findings from each of these strands.

The literature review

Technology should be a learning tool that can, at its best, respond flexibly to time and place limitations that learners may encounter. To be truly effective, e-learning requires an investment of resources so that e-channels can enhance the required learning, even when it comes to soft skills.

Attitudes to and experiences of learning and e-learning need to be assessed systematically so we can know how widespread resistance is in the social care sector. It should be noted, however, that while most surveyed social care staff are older women, they tend to have better PC and internet access than assumed for their socio-economic group and age and therefore may be more ready for e-learning than at first sight.

In terms of study routes, those engaging in work-based training are not as ready for e-learning as those taking formal training who tend to be younger and more used to using IT. Those taking a vocational training route are more e-learning ready if they are taking management-related courses or those related to childcare. Overall though, most vocational care-related courses are not e-enabled – but they may offer an opportunity for greater e-learning engagement as the learners taking this route want greater flexibility in course delivery.

Turning to organisational e-readiness, there are very few studies focused on e-readiness in social care organisations. However, drawing on studies from the business and education perspective, seven key components of e-learning readiness can be identified: social context, content delivery, technology access, learning style, collaboration capacity, organisational learning environment and personal motivation.

On the whole we have to conclude that social care employers are not ready for e-learning, the reasons being more cultural in nature rather than technological. The majority of social care is being delivered by small private care organisations, and if the outlook of these agencies is similar to that of other SMEs – with learning not embedded in organisational culture – they are the least likely to be ready to supply e-learning. The lack of any systematic studies on the e-readiness of these private care providers is a concern as these types of organisations employ a large proportion of care staff.

The employer survey

Overall, 2,000 social care organisations were contacted, drawn from a sample of over 21,000 care homes, domiciliary care providers and social services departments. Each organisation was invited to take part in a web-based survey and they were sent reminders which included a paper version of the questionnaire. At the conclusion of the fieldwork, a total of 516 employers completed the survey.

Three in five of these employers (60%) were from private care organisations. Around a quarter (23%) were in the voluntary sector and one in seven (14%) represented a local authority. A third of the non-council employers say that they run the organisation (35%), while three in five (60%) are managers. Among council employers, four in five (83%) are managers.

Most employers feel e-learning is effective in general (56% compared to 9% who feel that it is not an effective approach). However, they are less confident when it comes to e-learning's effectiveness for their organisation, where opinions are fairly split (with 41% saying it is effective compared with 31% who say e-learning is not effective).

Current usage of e-learning appears to be low. Three in four employers (75%) estimate that less than 10% of their organisational training makes use of e-learning, while two-thirds (68%) say that none of their induction training uses e-learning.

Only a quarter of employers say that their trainers make use of e-assisted training either very or fairly often (28%).¹ Moreover, only two in five employers (41%) are positive about the use of e-learning for training their staff, with only one in ten (11%) being very positive.

However, employers would like to see more use being made of e-learning. Only one in five (21%) say that they would like to see less than 10% of their organisational training make use of e-learning, and more than two in five (42%) say that they would like to see at least 40% of their training and learning to make use of e-learning.

Factors affecting current usage

The main reasons for citing effectiveness are that e-learning is flexible time-wise for employees (70% mention this), cost effective (68%) and time effective for the employer (66%).

For employers who feel e-learning is not effective, they believe this is largely due to their staff – with 42% saying their employees do not have the knowledge and confidence in ICT and 40% saying their employees will be intimidated by e-learning or simply not interested.

Projection of uptake

There is some evidence that employers felt that e-learning could be of use in the future: 47% believe it could be effective over the next couple of years, while only 23% believe that it will be ineffective. This represents a fall of 12 percentage points from the 35% who say that e-learning is currently ineffective for their organisation.

Indeed, over two-thirds (67%) would like to see their organisation make more use of e-learning. Three in four employers (72%) feel e-assisted training could be useful to them as trainers or to other trainers in their organisation, although only 21% believe it would be very useful.

Factor affecting potential uptake

For those who are more sceptical about e-learning's potential, employers say they are limited by resources (mentioned by 68%), half feel they don't have the budget while three in five (58%) believe that employees will just not be interested.

Knowledge is also a key factor. While nearly two-thirds (63%) of employers say they are confident about their own ability to help others use e-learning and four in five (81%) are personally involved in training their staff, half of employers (51%) say they do not know where to find e-learning resources on the web.

¹ 'E-assisted training' means training which is primarily face-to-face but which uses tools such as Powerpoint slides or a program taken from a CD-Rom or downloaded from the web as part of a blended delivery.

Employer resources

The key reason why some employers are sceptical about the potential of e-learning is that of technical resources. Despite nearly half of employers (48%) believing that at least three-quarters of their staff have access to a computer at work, a significant minority – one in four (25%) – say that less than a tenth of their workforce can access a work computer.

For those who do have access to a computer, half of organisations (52%) give all their computers online access with a further 18% of employers saying that most of their computers are online. Of these online computers, four in five (79%) have broadband.

According to employers, the largest part of e-learning funding is internal, with over a third (38%) having accessed an internal budget for e-learning in the last six months. But only one in ten say they have also accessed a council or other government grant (12% each). So available funding streams are not being communicated adequately to employers with over half (52%) saying that they're not aware of any funding or, when asked about possible funding streams, that they don't know.

The staff survey

Alongside the employer survey, Ipsos MORI carried out a survey of social care staff. Of the participating employers, 216 agreed for their employees to participate in this further survey and they were therefore sent paper questionnaires for completion. An additional 1,000 social care organisations were invited to participate and sent employee questionnaires. In total, 994 completed staff questionnaires were completed and returned.

While many employers believe that their staff do not have the necessary skills and motivation, employees themselves disagree. Two-thirds (66%) feel that they do have the skills to use IT, with only 15% disagreeing.

It also appears that employees are better resourced in terms of computer access than their employers believe. Four in five have access to a computer at home (81%) and two in three (68%) have access to one at work. Of those who do have access to a computer at work, half (51%) say they use it every day. However, there is a substantial minority of employees who are more ICT averse. One in four (24%) say that while they do use a computer, they would not like to do so.

Employees are also more likely than employers to see the advantages of using ICT. Over half (54%) say that computers speed up their work while only 22% say that computers can get in the way of their work.

Training

Employees are also keener than employers to see more e-enabled training. Only one per cent of those who have been trained by their current employer say that e-enabled training has been used but was not helpful, while 35% say that it has been used (either all the time or sometimes) and has always been helpful. A quarter, though, say that e-enabled training is not needed (23%).

The most likely form of training which people have received are external courses, some longer than others: 71% lasted more than a day while 68% lasted less than a day. Around a fifth had been trained using IT (either CD-Roms, the internet or an intranet), and a similar proportion see this use of IT as a preferred type of training.

To harness this potential, more employers will need to be persuaded of the merits of e-enabled training. While 85% of employees agree that their employer gives them enough support and encouragement to undertake training, only half (50%) feel that their employer gives them enough support and encouragement to learn using IT.

Untapped potential for e-learning

There is clearly untapped potential for the internet as an information source in social care. In their personal life, the internet is the third most mentioned information source (with only friends/family and colleagues being more utilised), with 56% citing the internet.

However, when it comes to information sources about how to work better, using the internet slips to sixth place and is only mentioned by 28%. And only one in six (18%) feel that the internet is the best source of information on improving workplace skills.

Despite this, two-thirds (67%) are fairly or very interested in receiving training and learning resources via a computer or through the internet, including over a third (35%) who are very interested. A similar proportion (61%) also think e-learning is a practical option.

The focus groups

To understand staff motivation in a bit more detail, Ipsos MORI also ran a series of four focus groups in the workplace. These involved managers, nurses, care assistants, domiciliary carers, housekeepers, maintenance staff and secretaries.

Overall, these groups tend to confirm many of the findings which emanate from the surveys. In general, staff seem to value the training they receive and trust their employer to choose appropriate training for them. They also find the idea of e-learning attractive, citing convenience, comfort and the ability to 'go at your own speed' as the key benefits.

There is a recognition that not all social care training can be delivered effectively using only an e-learning approach. On the other hand, there is also a clear preference for forms of 'blended' e-learning – where a significant proportion of content (between 30-80%) is delivered online (as with many distance learning courses) and where trainers make use of ICT during training sessions.

One of the main barriers to effective e-learning is the lack of accessible computers at the work place. At most, each organisation where we held the groups has one or two computers which staff can access, but because of their workloads, most of the staff we spoke to do not have the opportunity to make use of this resource. Home learning is therefore the most practical option at present.

Conclusions and recommendations

Social care employers are not yet e-ready and doubt their staff's readiness. Social care employees, however, are largely e-ready. Therefore, if e-learning is to occupy a key position within the sector's learning and training map, employers should be encouraged to increase access to ICT at work and be presented with the evidence of their staff's existing e-readiness and experiences of ICT.

This research programme has therefore developed a clear set of recommendations for SCIE:

Disseminate and promote the research findings so that the applicability of e-learning to the sector can be boosted, and the image of the e-resistant social carer can be challenged.

Encourage the provision to employers of clear information on available funding sources.

Encourage the provision to employers of clear information on where to find e-learning and e-training resources.

Encourage the promotion to employers of home-based, 'own time' e-learning as an enhancement to their staff's training, provided that staff are offered the support and time in which to do it.

What is E-Learning?

The next four chapters summarise the work of the literature review², and it is perhaps best to start with SCIE's own definition of e-learning:

the use of information and communication technologies to provide, support or enhance learning

E-learning can be delivered through any electronic media and draws on interactive technologies, exploiting them to enhance learning experiences. However, it is unlikely that e-learning will totally replace face-to-face interactions as not everyone responds to the teaching/learning environment in the same way. The potential is great, but in practice caution and good preparation are required.

Blended learning

Enhancements to learning through technology should not simply be viewed as 'add-ons' – or even replacements – to traditional methods. In order to take full advantage of the merits of e-learning, a reconceptualisation of teaching is required.

The best blend to choose depends upon learner needs and organisational goals, which need to be matched with the combination of media that deliver the most effective training. Typical blended courses have between 30-80% of the content delivered online (or through other e-channels) and enable active engagement between learner and the material.

According to the literature reviewed, adults tend to learn best in context when:

They know why they need to learn something;

They are able to experiment;

It is approached as problem solving;

They know it works in practice; and

The topic has immediate value or application.

People's ability to learn is not static but shifts in response to previous experiences and the use of different training approaches. It is the strength of e-learning that it presents a new learning opportunity to those put off by previous educational experiences, by providing a more student-centred learning environment.

² The full literature review is available separately from SCIE.

Is the Workforce Ready for E-Learning?

The training attitudes of the social care workforce are important to understand because they will identify potential opportunities for training that e-learning may be able to address.

Data from ‘The State of the Social Care Workforce 2004’ suggests that most of the social care workforce have some sort of qualification or education certificate.³ Social workers and occupational therapists require professional qualifications which usually involve a more formal training route, such as higher tertiary studies. On the other hand, care assistants and home carers are spread more evenly across the formal and vocational routes, but with a preference for taking intermediate vocational training after general qualifications such as GCSEs.

The SCIE consultation paper details the training pathways in social care.⁴ These have been summarised as the following three key routes:

- 1. Work-based learning:** Professional workers → Specialist training → Technical specialists
- 2. Vocational learning:** Practitioners → Managers → Mentors/training specialists
- 3. Formal learning:** Graduates → Specialised training → Social workers

The available data does not quite match this model, and so we have therefore split the vocational learning into two sub-groups, reflecting the distinct career choices of those who choose to train as managers and those who stay as practitioners.

The following sections explore e-learning readiness along these various learning pathways.

Work-based learning

Work-based learning is probably the broadest type of training as it includes anything received in the work place setting. Work-based learning ranges from induction meetings and topic-specific information to specialised training required for a formal degree or qualification. Therefore to narrow the focus of this category, it is assumed that training along this route may be statutory and that it will not lead to an externally examined qualification. This includes such training as:

³ Eborall, C. *The State of the Social Care Workforce 2004. The Second Skills Research and Intelligence Annual Report.* Skills For Care, 2005.

⁴ Dunn, S. *Creating an E-Learning Strategy for Social Care in England.* SCIE, 2004.

Learning ‘on the job’;	Basic IT skills;
Health & Safety/food hygiene laws;	Basic work requirement skills;
Induction courses;	Area specific care topics; and
Equal opportunities & diversity training	Legal issues.

Very little data on take up of work-based courses exists for care workers. One study found though that independent home carers aged between 29 and 50 feel there is a need for further training. However, in the survey carried out for the current study, those carers over 50 years old feel there is less need for training of any type and do not participate in as many training activities.

For older female paid carers it is likely that work- or home-based ICT training would be needed before they would be disposed to e-learning. Evidence from organisations specialising in training older people would suggest that laptop loans and being taught by their own peers would be key to effective training for carers, regardless as to whether they are paid or voluntary carers.

Ethnicity may also have an impact on people’s readiness to engage with technology. One study found that South Asian older women carers (both unpaid and paid) are the least disposed group to e-learning – whether or not their household has a PC or digital TV – because of family culture, lack of English language capabilities and lack of time.⁵

Vocational learning

Vocational training has the potential for an e-learning element, focusing on e-information, e-assessments or using the web as a research tool. In this section, we have sought to assess the training profiles of those engaging in vocational studies – either as practitioners or as managers – and then evaluate how e-ready those taking this particular study route may be.

Practitioners

This is the route that the majority of the social care workforce takes and the number of people registering for and then receiving vocational qualifications has increased.

Most care assistants and home carers are white women (90+%). On the whole, older women take the basic vocational course on care, and one study found that 27% of the learners taking care-related NVQs are over 45 years old. Those taking care qualifications related to young children (early years NVQs) are much younger, with only 6% being over 45 years old.

⁵ Owen, D. et al. *The Use of and Attitudes towards Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) by People from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups living in Deprived Areas*. Research Report No. 450. DfES, 2003.

Evidence indicates that independent home carers want more vocational training. One study found that 26% of these care workers want more NVQ training and 17% of those who have taken this type of training in the past found it most useful. However, the same study found that less than 1% felt that IT skills training was needed.⁶

There may, however, be a large gap between those registering for a vocational course and those completing one. One study found that over half (55%) of care assistants and home carers registering for intermediate vocational care training (NVQ2) are not gaining awards.⁷ This may indicate an area where e-learning can help make training more effective, as a recent study shows that many care workers want more flexible learning opportunities for vocational training.

As part-time care assistants and home carers tend to have a relatively low average weekly wage, they often fall into socio-economic group E – those at the lowest levels of subsistence, including state pensioners and people with no and low earnings. Care assistants, however, would be categorised as D, which includes semi- and unskilled manual workers.

Ipsos MORI's regular technology tracker study shows that 37% of people in the DE socio-economic groups use a computer (compared to 78% in the AB socio-economic groups), and that only 27% use a broadband internet connection at home (compared to 67% of ABs). More people in the DE grouping, though, have access to digital or multi-channel TV (62%) than to a computer. There may therefore be an opportunity to deliver e-enabled training through an alternative route to the PC-based internet.⁸

Managers

This group has some of the prerequisites that make people highly disposed to e-learning.

Managers not only oversee the training of care workers under their responsibility, they are also expected to acquire management-related vocational qualifications. The data comes from various sources but shows that a number of staff have management qualifications but are not registered managers while others are still working towards those qualifications.⁹

If management is perceived as being a more technical subject, then learners may be more disposed to engage with e-learning material. Middle managers and assistant managers fit into the B and C1 socio-economic groups. Therefore we would expect most to use a PC and have broadband home internet connections – according to the latest Ipsos MORI technology tracker, 72% and 60% of C1s use PCs and have broadband access at home).

⁶ McClimont, B. and Grove, K. *Who Cares Now? An Updated Profile of the Independent Sector Home Care Workforce in England*. Skills for Care, 2004.

⁷ Gill, I. *Results from Education/Training Provider Questionnaire*. Care Sector Alliance Cumbria, 2005.

⁸ Ipsos MORI Technology Tracker, November 2006.

⁹ See Bernard, S. *Adult Placement Counts. A Survey of Adult Placement Schemes in England*. TopssEngland, 2004.

Managers identify a need for IT training but this may be because they already have IT skills sufficient for study programmes (most managers have acquired these through other qualifications). Many managers also identify the need for more management skills training and tertiary vocational training in management (e.g. NVQ4), as well as a need to update care skills.

Formal learning

Formal learning refers to those employees in the social care workforce taking the Social Work Diploma, degree and other post-qualifying qualifications. In terms of accessing technology, most students in higher education establishments have access to free IT skills upgrade courses and free PC and internet access. Social workers with formal training are also found to have higher levels of internet use.

Once qualified, social workers and managers tend to fall within the B socio-economic group. Field social workers and possibly youth and community workers are either in group C1 or C2. As already stated, people in higher socio-economic groups are most likely to have a PC and have home internet access.

While 59% of people in the C2 socio-economic group have PCs, only 45% of them have home internet access. They are, however, the group most likely to own digital TVs (61%), and – as with DE socio-economic groups – they may therefore be more disposed to e-learning through their digital TV rather than via the internet.

Post-Qualifying Awards

Qualified social workers can study for six post-qualifying awards. These courses offer both practical and academic elements so that students can take these qualifications while still working.

Of the six post-qualifying awards, the first is a prerequisite for the other five courses and therefore has the highest number of awardees. Most social workers who register for this qualification gain the award. However, the other post-qualifying awards are more difficult to gain. For example, in 2004 it was found that 26% more social workers register for the practice teacher course than gain the award. This may show an area where e-learning can be effective in ensuring more of the social workers registered for the specialised course obtain awards.

What about unpaid carers and e-access?

Unpaid carers tend to use the internet more than the general population. A study conducted in 2003 of 3,014 unpaid carers found internet use to be higher than average. Approximately 50% used the internet and 31% used the internet frequently (more than once a week).¹⁰

These results confirm an earlier study on unpaid carers which found unpaid carers showing greater internet use than the general population: 35% of carers had access to the internet at home or work, while access was greater among female carers (47% compared to 35% of men).¹¹ This is significant because it is likely that, although women carers taken individually may likely fall into socio-economic group D, if they are married and have older children who study, their household will fall into a higher socio-economic group and be in the household most likely to own a PC.

The research shows, however, that there are unpaid carers who will have never used the internet and who are therefore the least likely to be e-learners. These people have the following profile:

- 55+ years old;
- Not in paid employment;
- Living in rented accommodation;
- Caring for some over 18 years old;
- Caring for 20+hours a week;
- Female; and
- Caring for two or more people.

We have shown thus far how different carer groups and sections of the social care workforce may need distinctive strategies if they are to engage in e-learning. The next chapter will look at more general patterns of e-learning readiness that are influenced by e-channel access, connection technology and cost factors.

¹⁰ Blackburn, C. *et al.* "Carers and the digital divide: factors affecting internet use among carers in the UK". *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 13(3), May 2005.

¹¹ Keeley, B. and Clarke, M. *Carers Speak Out Project: Report on Findings and Recommendations*. The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, 2002.

Increasing Demand for E-Learning

If e-learning is to be accepted more widely it is important to reflect on the benefits to the social care workforce and unpaid carers. One of the major criticisms of e-learning is that it is not appropriate for soft skills learning often required by social care workers and unpaid carers. However, there is substantial evidence to suggest the contrary.

For example, the Open University found advantages through the use of technologies that support individual reflection on emotive or difficult issues such as bereavement.¹² Just because e-learning does not always have a face-to-face element does not mean that it is dehumanised. According to one of the first researchers into electronic learning, “People in virtual communities do just about everything people do in real life, but we leave our bodies behind”.¹³

Below is a summary list of some of the areas where communication technology in particular has been shown to enhance learning within the social care workforce:

Building personal identification as a member of a particular care group or community – networking and sharing experiences;

Professional knowledge/expertise sharing – close to the realities of the workplace;

Working together as groups or communities to solve problems;

Social support through email/group contacts;

Getting questions answered and building awareness of practice outside immediate contacts; and

Having access to new information and new experience in forms that are engaging and also prompt reflection.

The online e-learning experience

As internet penetration increases, the digital divide shifts to ‘digital inequality’ – not so much a question of the haves and have-nots but more of ‘how much do people have?’. Some care workers have already identified these inequalities as affecting their online experiences.¹⁴ To improve learners’ online experience, strategies therefore need to be found that address the five areas of difficulty encountered by people which diminish the quality of their experience and may make people less inclined to e-learn. The five areas of difficulty are summarised below:

¹² Thorpe, M. *et al. Talk in Virtual Contexts: Reflecting on Participation and Online Learning Models. TLRP Thematic Seminar Series.* The Open University, 2005.

¹³ Rheingold, H. *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier.* Addison-Wesley, 1993.

¹⁴ Peters, L. and Smith, N. *Summary Report of a National Survey of Attitudes towards Online School Admissions.* The Research Partnership, 2005.

Technical means: Some web users are unable to access certain sites due to hardware and software age and incompatibility. Their experience is less satisfying so they are more likely to lose interest and not build the necessary skills.

Autonomy in web use: Where they use it, whether use is monitored, or they have to compete for use. The greater the home use the more satisfactory the experience and the more time spent on the web.

E-skills: People require basic internet competence. The research has found that older people are less able to complete basic tasks and slower at performing them. Those that use the internet for less than an hour a week are also found to be less internet competent.

Level of social support: This comes in three types, technical assistance from persons employed to provide it, assistance from friends and family members technically more competent with PCs and/or the internet (often children or young persons), and emotional reinforcement from family and friends to offer support when things go wrong and to share when things go right. The level of social support someone can access influences their motivation and perseverance.

Variation in purpose – motivation: How people use the internet determines the type of experience and the skills they can develop. There are some clear patterns of use emerging, with Black Britons and older women, for instance, being more likely than the general population to use the internet for educational purposes.

Studies also suggest that preferred learning styles affect how well learners respond to online learning experiences. Unsurprisingly, people who solve problems by analysing situations “report a more favourable attitude to computer-based learning” than those who solve problems intuitively.¹⁵ However, intuitive people spend more time using the internet.

In the case of social workers, the internet is seen as a means to enhance existing social networks and support new ones. For example, Virtual Communities for professionals have been suggested as an effective means of developing information resources and relational understanding between different professionals in many parts of the world, as a way to exchange information on “self care” and “coping strategies”.¹⁶

Reducing e-learner barriers

If the social care workforce is to follow the experience of other e-learners we may see similar patterns of uptake being rooted in a ‘good’ online experiences. The question becomes what makes a good online experience? Some studies with experienced e-learners have found cross-cutting components that influence how people perceive barriers to e-learning and therefore how ready they feel they are to participate in it.

¹⁵ Graff, M. *et al. Cognitive Style and Cross Cultural Differences in Internet Use and Computer Attitudes*. University of Glamorgan, 2004.

¹⁶ Geary, J. “Emerging frontiers for distance education and online support”. *ADETA*, 13(1), 2005.

Organisational culture

An organisation's ability to adapt to change, new challenges and opportunities are affected by its culture

It is important to look at the established norms and rules of accepted behaviour in an organisation to understand the effectiveness of e-channels to provide learning and training experiences in a particular organisation.

Self-belief

This influences task choice, persistence or perseverance when faced with obstacles, and behaviour, motivation and expectations

An employee's belief that they will be a successful e-learner is highly influential in their overall success. The higher the self-belief, the fewer barriers they perceive.

Computer competence

Even with highly educated and experienced workers, internet skills can still fall short.

The more time people are online the more confident they become and the easier their e-learning experience.

Computer training

Lack of skills must be addressed through training. This builds trust though learners must be willing to undertake further ICT training and organisations must be willing to provide IT support and training.

So far we have briefly looked at reducing e-learner barriers from a demand side point of view. However, we will need to look at supply strategies found to address these barriers.

Organisational E-Readiness

There are a limited number of studies that look directly at the social care sector's readiness to provide e-learning. However, there is a large body of literature on e-learning in the business and distance education sectors that is relevant to the social care sector.

With these factors in mind, this review draws key findings from the business sector with supplementary points from social care and distance learning literature to establish the components required of an organisation to deliver an advanced e-learning system for its staff.

We have adapted seven components of good e-learning delivery from a study of international e-learning experiences.¹⁷ The results suggest that without these components put in place by organisations, barriers will form and inhibit the e-learning experience.

1. Situational component

This component includes elements of basic 'know how', but goes beyond this in that it includes elements that influence how e-learning is facilitated within an organisation. The key factors here are how training is valued in practice, the time allocated for training and how staff are supported.

2. Content suitability component

This component considers the subject materials that are made available to e-learners by a social care employer. It covers issues such as the skill level of instructors to be effective e-educators, the availability and accessibility of specialised e-learning materials for social care, an assessment of learner competencies and the development of an effective learner management system.

3. Technological component

There are three distinct technological elements which organisations need to address if they are to be ready to deliver e-learning. These include the hardware available to staff, the internet connectivity and how flexible the system is to engage with all the web-based material.

4. Learning style component

This component looks at how well an organisation matches the learners it has to the types of training and learning resources it can offer. It also includes an element on the attitude of the trainer which can determine how well e-learning or training is delivered. This component is based upon an effective assessment of preferred learning styles and their compatibility with e-learning, as well as an open attitude on the part of the trainer to different combinations of e-learning and other techniques.

¹⁷ Mungania, P. *The Seven E-Learning Barriers Facing Employees*. The Masie Centre, 2003.

5. Instructional and network component

This component identifies the elements required for a collaborative e-learning approach, such as the technical systems required to connect learners together, the way online communities are established and maintained, the processes and procedures to share knowledge and experiences and the way all these work together so that all learners can access them.

6. Organisational component

This component looks at the general training characteristics of the organisation such as the organisational culture or attitude to e-learning, the learning environment it fosters, the applicability of training to the work of the organisation and the way in which it evaluates the impact of training.

7. Personal component

The final component is based upon an organisation's ability to influence staff motivation outside of all the other components mentioned above. This includes elements such as assessing staff learner motivation, determining how self-aware learners are and knowing what expectations they have of the e-learning experience.

As can be seen from the seven e-learning components above, e-readiness requires a team effort with all stakeholders working together, with the e-learner at the centre of the development and delivery processes. In order to mainstream e-learning as part of the training provided within the social care sector, it is therefore worth reflecting on the scale of organisational readiness that needs to be addressed as it can easily be underestimated.

Social care employers

The social care workforce is highly dispersed and involves various employer groups, such as NHS, local authorities, private and voluntary organisations with varying responsibilities in terms of numbers and type of staff employed to provide care. The organisations employing the majority of the social care workforce are either private care providers or run by voluntary care providing organisations, predominantly adult care homes (57%). The proportion of employees in care establishments run by local authorities account for only 27% of the wider social care sector, while only 16% of the social care workforce are employed through NHS-run care establishments.

There are approximately 21,000 adult care homes in England employing around 870,800 people. Of these registered adult care homes, nearly 14,000 homes are run by private businesses, and of these, approximately 60% are run by small or medium sized organisations.

The dominance of small businesses employing care workers creates serious challenges in terms of the compatibility and connectivity across organisations. Compatibility issues will also be key for training providers that want to supply more interactive e-learning resources which could be relevant to more than one type of care provider. Furthermore, there is no sector wide coordination or procurement of ICT platforms

and so technical compatibility problems will be likely if organisations are to build collaborative e-learning communities and networks.

Status of e-learning in Small to Medium Enterprises

Private sector businesses have been using e-learning as a work-based training strategy for longer than either the social care or education sectors, and this field offers the best practice guidelines for content and collaborative design.

The e-learning literature for SMEs finds that these organisations do not seem to experience e-learning difficulties relating to the situational context, technological infrastructure or personal motivation of its staff. This may be a limitation of the surveys or may reflect the type of small business studied – however, a strong theme of the literature is that technology is *not* found to be a constraint. By contrast, finding the time to learn *is* a constraint, as are the related issues of content and course suitability.

However, looking at the broader business use of e-learning – which includes much larger corporate organisations – studies have found that e-learners do have difficulties with the situational context, in particular the leadership of managers. Companies adopting e-learning strategies have encountered the following unexpected difficulties:

Leaders and managers do not engage with e-learning because they do not understand it

Work-based training is not well integrated with workforce or performance management

Cost versus value – high development and implementation costs

Difficulty in measuring the results

Quality of learning content was poor

Perceived difficulty of using such a system

Technology infrastructure – software was too old and not compatible with the e-learning packages

Internal resistance to using technology instead of face-to-face learning

Status of e-learning among Distance Learning educators

The key point to emerge from the distance e-learning literature is that organisations must screen potential e-learners for their suitability for independently-driven learning.

It does not suit everyone, but for those it does e-learning offers greater flexibility than traditional approaches used in distance learning. Learners who persist and experience success with the online mode are more likely to prefer this mode of delivery. It should also be remembered that e-learning has the potential to create a highly supportive and interactive environment for learning and should not be seen necessarily as an anti-social form of learning.

Bearing this in mind, it is perhaps worthwhile briefly exploring the difficulties encountered when trying to establish the NHS University as a virtual campus (the NHSU closed in 2004).¹⁸

There were four key areas of difficulty encountered by health and social care workers, including managerial barriers, the capacity for learning, communication challenges and a resistant NHS culture towards training.

Workers in allied health professions like social care saw those who were already highly qualified getting better training opportunities. Similarly, ancillary workers were willing to learn but many saw themselves as being left out of the NHSU's training opportunities. This perhaps confirms concerns raised by the social care workforce in SCIE's own literature, that too much emphasis has been placed on e-learning in academic degrees which is not where the training needs of staff are situated.

These human factors – both cultural and attitudinal – coupled with organisational culture present far bigger challenges to transforming social care sector employees into participants of e-learning than technological factors.

Conclusions of the review

Overall, what does the literature tell us about e-learning readiness among the organisations that are destined to deliver it in the social care sector?

Most organisations are still surprisingly inexperienced, with the exception of distance-learning providers. The collaborative potential of e-learning is barely grasped, and until it becomes an effective collaborative tool, it will have limited appeal to sectors such as social care employers. However, to get there it requires a critical mass of interest that may not be best developed by the private sector.

Bearing this in mind, it is now time to turn to the results of Ipsos MORI's new primary research.

¹⁸ MORI. *Learning for Everyone. Report on Consultation and Research Feedback for NHSU's Development Plan.* NHSU, 2003.

The Employer Survey

In order to place the findings from the literature review in some form of context, Ipsos MORI carried out two surveys – firstly, a survey of social care employers and secondly a survey of employees. Four work-based focus groups were also held to explore the issues identified through the surveys in more detail. This chapter covers the employer survey.

Overall, 2,000 social care organisations were written to – 400 social services departments, 600 domiciliary care providers and 1,000 care homes. Each organisation was invited to take part in a web-based survey and they were sent reminders which included a paper version of the questionnaire. At the conclusion of the fieldwork, 193 questionnaires had been completed online and 323 paper questionnaires were returned – a total of 516 employing organisations.¹⁹

Three in five respondents (60%) were from private care organisations. Around a quarter (23%) were in the voluntary sector and one in seven (14%) represented a local authority. Given the lack of a comprehensive, single database of social care employers it is difficult to assess how this sample compares to the entire sector.

However, data from the *State of the Social Care Workforce 2004* report indicate that the private sector accounts for 73% of all adult care and placement homes, with the voluntary sector making up 16% and the public sector 7% (a further 4% of homes were undefined). Given this, we believe that our sample is reasonably representative of the sector.

A third of the non-council respondents say that they run the organisation (35%), while three in five (60%) are managers. Among council respondents, four in five (83%) are managers.

As a first indication of the sector's e-readiness, it is worthwhile noting that 62% of the private sector respondents say that they would like to make more use of e-learning in their organisation. This compares to 68% of voluntary sector respondents and 86% of council respondents.

A fifth of replying organisations have less than 20 employees at the main place of work (22%), while two in five (39%) have between 20 and 50 staff members. Only one in seven (15%) have more than 100 employees. The sample is also well spread geographically, with around 8-9% being based in each of the Government Office regions. The exceptions are the South-East, which accounts for 23% of the sample, the South-West (19%) and the North-West (13%).

¹⁹ The figures given in the rest of this chapter exclude those who did not give an answer to a particular question.

Overall, more than half of respondents (52%) have been in their current job for over five years, with a quarter (25%) being in their post for two to five years. Given this, we believe that the sample is well-placed to report on their organisation's e-readiness.

Staff readiness

Respondents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the levels of work-related knowledge and skills of their employees. More than nine in ten (94%) say they are satisfied, including nearly three in ten (28%) who are 'very satisfied'. It should be noted that two in five of those who say that they would not like to make more use of e-learning in their organisation (40%) say that they are very satisfied with their staff's level of knowledge and skills. This compares to just 22% among those who say that they *would* like to make more use of e-learning.

Similar proportions of respondents (nine in ten or over) are also satisfied with the amount and quality of training their staff receive (90% and 96% respectively). Similar pictures emerge here as with knowledge and skills in terms of whether respondents would like their organisations to make more use of e-learning. Half of those who say they wouldn't want to make more use of e-learning (52%) say that they are very satisfied with the amount of training their staff receive or the quality of the training they receive (52% and 51% respectively). This compares to around a third of those who say that they would like to make more use of e-learning (33% and 37% respectively).

This would seem to indicate that a significant proportion of employers do not feel a need to extend their training portfolio, and that a desire to make greater use of e-learning is allied to a general desire to improve the quality of training.

The most effective learning route?

Reinforcing findings from the literature review, it is clear that employers are more comfortable with traditional face-to-face approaches to learning and training. This suggests that e-learning will have to be used as part of a mixed methodology approach if it is to gain a significant foothold in the sector.

Table 1: Access to, use and effectiveness of various learning sources

	QA	QB
	%	%
QA: Which of the following methods/resources for improving work-related knowledge and skills do your staff currently have access to? <i>(n=516)</i>		
QB: Which two or three methods do you feel are the most effective learning route that you would like them to use? <i>(n=496)</i>		
Face-to-face internal training	93	92
Books/magazines/leaflets/manuals at their place of work	86	28
Face-to-face external training	85	69
Internal training by a colleague	79	60
Internet at home	42	10
Internet at work	39	17
<i>Councils</i>	63	22
<i>Voluntary sector</i>	52	19
<i>Private sector</i>	29	16
Books/magazines/leaflets/manuals outside of their place of work	33	5
Intranet (i.e. internal website) at work	22	8
<i>Councils</i>	65	22
<i>Voluntary sector</i>	32	8
<i>Private sector</i>	9	5

Source: Ipsos MORI

Nine in ten respondents (93%) say that their staff have access to face-to-face internal training, and the same proportion (92%) feel that this is the most effective learning route. As for external training, 85% say that this is available to their staff but only two in three (69%) feel that this is effective.

While paper-based learning and training is currently used by nearly the same proportion (86%), it is only seen as an effective learning route by a quarter of respondents (28%). There is an even larger discrepancy for paper-based learning outside the place of work: although this is used by a third of employing organisations (33%), only one in 20 respondents feel that it is effective (5%).

By contrast, work-based internet is used as a learning resource by two in five responding organisations (39%). And while only one in six respondents (17%) say that the use of the internet at work is an effective way to train their staff, this rating is far more positive relatively speaking than that for paper-based learning.

It should also be noted, however, that both the intranet and the internet at home are seen to be no more relatively effective than paper-based resources.

Given that both councils and the voluntary sector are more amenable to e-learning, it is important to note that around two in three responding council employers say that their staff have access to the internet or an intranet at work (63% and 65% respectively). Councils are also the most likely to feel that an intranet is an effective learning route (22%).

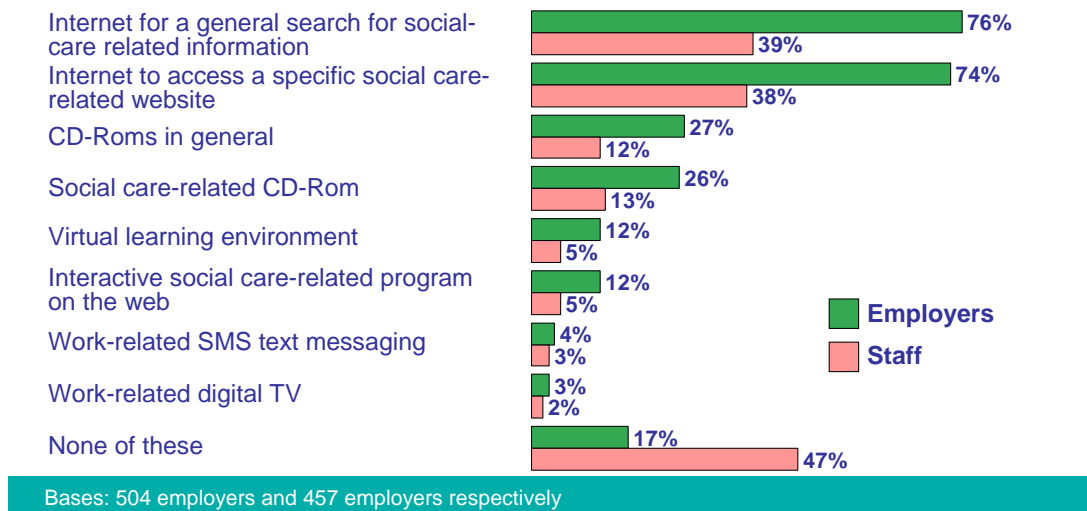
Half of responding voluntary sector employers say that their staff have access to the internet at work (52%) and a third (32%) an intranet. This compares to just 29% of responding private sector employers who say that their staff have access to the internet at work and just 9% who say that their staff have access to an intranet.

Current use of e-learning

As well as having a measure of whether e-learning is available to staff in the social care sector, it is also useful to have an indication of how much it is used.

Overall, just under half of respondents (47%) say that their organisation uses e-learning techniques. This ranged from 35% among private sector organisations, through 39% in the voluntary sector to 49% of council employers.

- Q Which of these e-learning methods, if any, have you personally used at work in the last three months?
 Q And which methods, if any, do you think your employees have used at work in the last three months?



As the above chart shows, looking at the respondents themselves, three in four say that they have used the internet to search for social care-related information in the last three months (76%). A similar proportion say that they have accessed social care websites (74%). In both cases, council and voluntary sector respondents are significantly more likely than their private sector counterparts to do so.

A quarter have used a social care CD-Rom (26%), and 12% say that they have either used an interactive social-care related program on the web or a social care-related virtual learning environment (VLE).²⁰

One in six, though, say that they have not used any e-learning methods in the last three months (17%) – rising to 22% among private sector respondents. This is, however, substantially lower than the half of employers (47%) who say that their staff have not used e-learning techniques in the last three months (a proportion which rises to 58% among private sector employers).

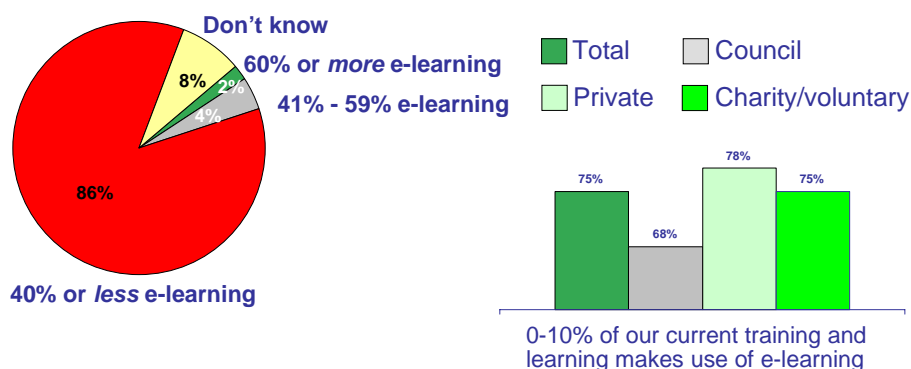
While staff usage of e-learning is estimated by employers to be at a lower level than their own use of it, the various options are proportionally similar. Two in five think that their staff have used the internet (39% to search for social care information and 38% to access a specific website), one in seven a social care CD-Rom (13%) and one in 20 a VLE or an interactive social care program (5% each).

In all these cases (with the exception of interactive programs), private sector respondents are significantly less likely to feel that their staff make use of these e-learning methods than their counterparts in the public or voluntary sectors.

Current use of e-training

Three in four respondents (75%) estimate that less than 10% of their organisational training makes use of e-learning.

Q What proportion of training and learning in your organisation currently makes use of e-learning methods/resources compared to traditional methods?

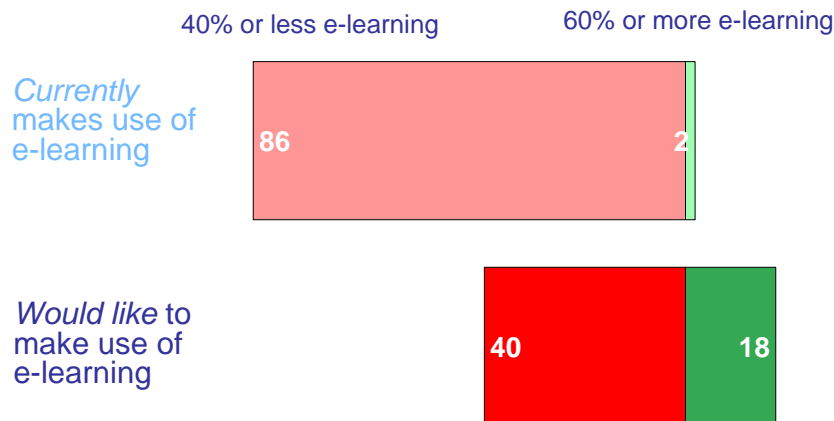


Base: 502 employers

²⁰ A 'virtual learning environment' is defined by SCIE as a set of teaching and learning tools designed to enhance the learning experience by including the internet in the learning process.

However, while current uptake appears low, more employers say they would like to make use of e-learning. Two in five responding employers (41%) are either very or fairly positive about the idea of using e-learning for training their staff, compared to one in four who (24%) are negative. Councils and organisations with more than 100 employees are the most positive (54% each), while the voluntary sector and organisations with 11-20 staff members are most negative (30% and 33% respectively).

Q *And what proportion of training and learning in your organisation would you like to see making use of e-learning methods/resources compared to traditional methods?*



Bases: 502 and 485 employers respectively

A similar picture emerges in terms of e-assisted training. Only one in four respondents (28%) say that their organisation often makes use of e-assisted training. This compares to a quarter who say that it is not used very often (24%) and a third (35%) who say it is not used at all. The larger organisations use this form of training most – 45% of responding organisations with over 100 staff members say that e-assisted training is used regularly, compared to 26% of those with fewer than 100 employees.

As for how useful e-assisted training *could* be, three in four respondents (72%) say that it could be useful, while only one in ten (9%) feel that it would not be useful. It should be noted that none of the surveyed council employers think that e-assisted training would not be useful. Again, the larger the organisation, the more likely it is that the employer will value this form of blended training – 86% of employers with more than 100 staff members think that this would be useful, compared to 69% of other employers.

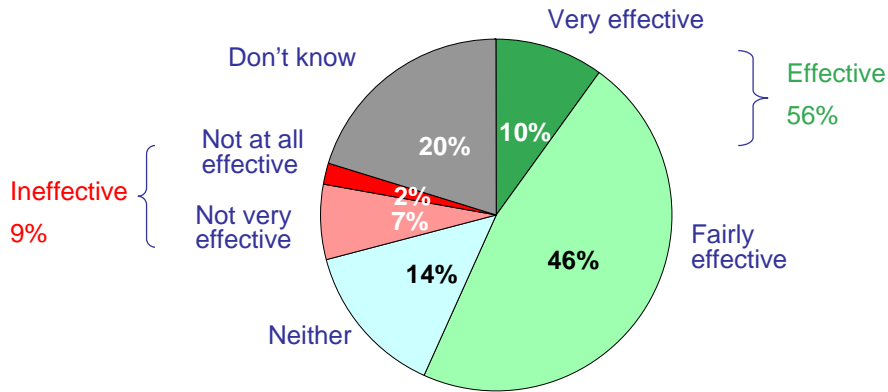
An open door?

When specifically asked if they felt that e-learning in itself was an effective approach to training, employing organisations are much more likely to rate e-learning. Over half of respondents (56%) feel it is effective, including one in ten who say it is very effective. By contrast, fewer than one in ten (9%) say e-learning is not very or not at all effective.

It should be noted that two-thirds of respondents from organisations with more than 100 staff members feel that e-learning is an effective approach (67%). This compares to just half (50%) among employers with fewer than 20 employees. This would seem to indicate that infrastructure is an important factor in the promotion of e-learning

initiatives, a finding borne out by the fact that two-thirds of respondents from organisations where staff have access to computers (65%) feel that e-learning is an effective approach. Again, around half of employers in organisations where staff do not have access to computers (48%) feel the same way.

Q In general, how effective, if at all, do you feel e-learning is as an approach to training and education?



Base: 500 employers

Just over a third of respondents (34%) do not have a view on the effectiveness of e-learning in general. This is a particular problem among small social care organisations with less than ten employees, where 41% of employers say that they ‘don’t know’ (compared with 20% overall).

That such a large proportion of employers have yet to take a position means that there is ‘all to play for’, as targeted communications and information could convince them of the merits of e-learning.

It should be noted, however, that while this appears to leave the door open to the uptake of e-learning within the sector, those employers who have actually made use of e-learning are not convinced as to its benefits. Among those who currently make use of e-learning, more say that it is effective than ineffective for their organisation (41% compared with 31%) – but this difference is much less pronounced than that among *all* respondents.

While responding council employers seem to be very keen to make use of e-learning, this would appear to be in spite of – rather than because of – their experiences. One in three council employers (34%) say that e-learning is currently effective in their own organisation, but nearly half (46%) say that it is currently ineffective – a net effectiveness of -12 percentage points. In contrast, both private and voluntary sector organisations experience a positive net effectiveness, of +13 and +15 percentage points respectively.

As for those respondents whose organisations have *not* made use of e-learning, nearly half of them (47%) feel that e-learning could be an effective option for their organisation in the near future, while one in four (23%) feel that it would be ineffective.

The possible reasons for these disparities are discussed in the next section.

What drives favourability?

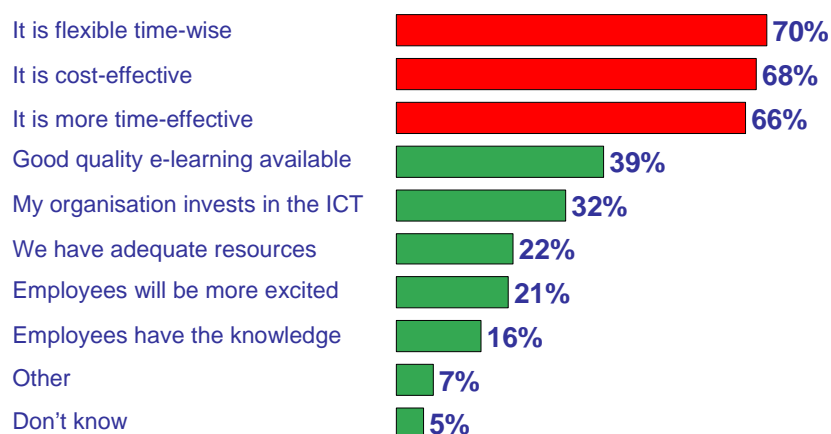
The three main positive drivers for those who use e-learning and feel it is effective are that e-learning is:

Flexible time-wise for employees;

Cost-effective for the employer; and

Time-effective for the employer.

Q *And why do you say you feel e-learning is an effective approach for you organisation?*



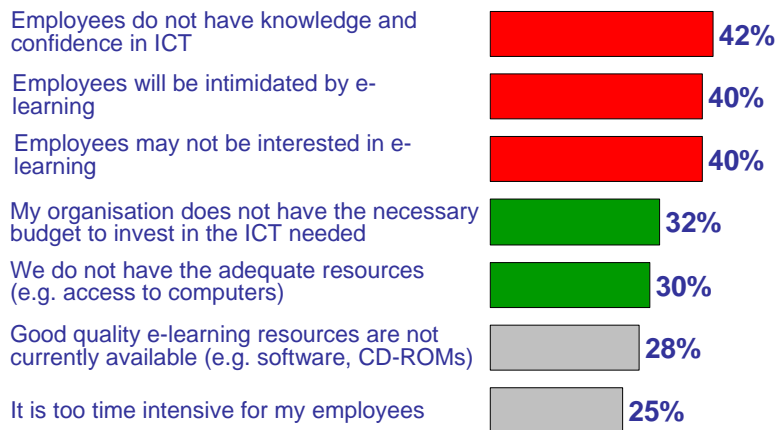
Base: 76 employers who currently use e-learning and who feel that it is effective

These three factors – cost, time and flexibility – are far and away the most significant drivers for a positive attitude towards e-learning. Knowing that there is good quality e-learning available and having the resources to utilise it are the next most cited factors, but cost, time and flexibility are e-learning’s major selling points.

A similar picture emerges among the 95 respondents who do *not* currently use e-learning but feel that it could be effective. Time-flexibility, time-effectiveness and cost-effectiveness all come through as the main reasons for thinking that such an approach could benefit their organisation (75%, 53% and 47% respectively).

Conversely, the inhibitors to effective e-learning are much more widely spread than the drivers of it. For those who use e-learning but feel it is *not* effective, concern around their staff and resources are foremost, but these concerns are spread across a number of factors, accounting for between a third and two-fifths of all those who feel that e-learning is ineffective in their organisation.

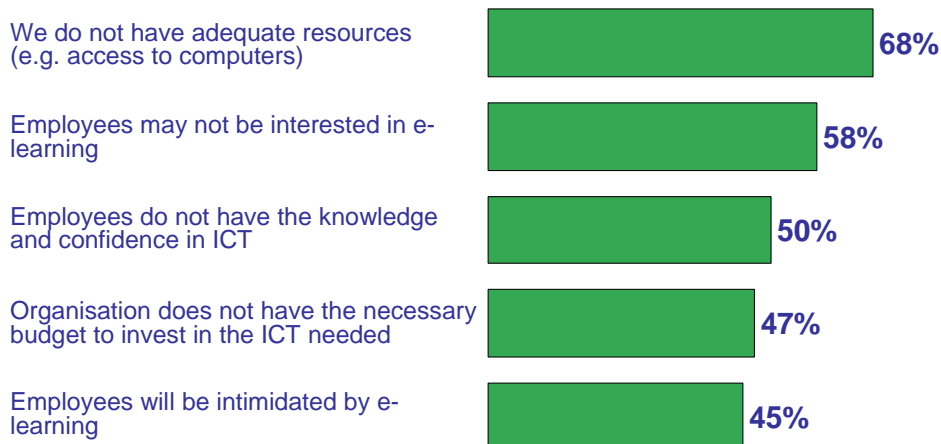
Q *And why do you say you feel e-learning is not an effective approach for your organisation?*



Base: 53 employers who currently use e-learning and who feel that it is ineffective

For those who don't currently use e-learning, again it is concern around employees and a lack of resources which are the main stated barriers to the uptake of e-learning. Two in three (68%) mention not having adequate resources and three in five (58%) state concern around employees not being interested.

Q *And why do you say you feel e-learning would be an ineffective approach for your organisation?*



Base: 38 employers who do not currently use e-learning and who feel that it would be ineffective

Just as time, money and flexibility are the main benefits of e-learning which need to be communicated to employers in the sector, so too do the concerns around employees and resourcing need to be addressed if e-learning is to be adopted across the sector.

Backing up the literature review, results from the employee survey suggest that staff may not be as significant a barrier as employers would like to think. Tackling the resourcing barrier, however, will require more work.

Current resources

One of the key capacity issues for employers relates to their available hardware. Four in five of surveyed employers (79%) say that they have between one and ten computers at their place of work. It is hardly surprising to find that this figure is the highest among private sector organisations (87%), with councils and the voluntary sector having more computers.

Two in five respondents say that their organisation has a laptop (42%), one in five (21%) say they have a computer projector and one in ten (10%), an interactive whiteboard. But the largest proportion (44%) say that they have none of these ICT facilities. Again, organisational size is key here, with only 18% of respondents from organisations with over 100 staff members saying that they have none of these facilities.

As for staff access to these resources, half of the surveyed employers say that their staff have access to a computer at work (50%). This proportion rises to around two in three among councils and voluntary sector organisations (70% and 63% respectively), but falls to two in five among private sector care organisations (42%).

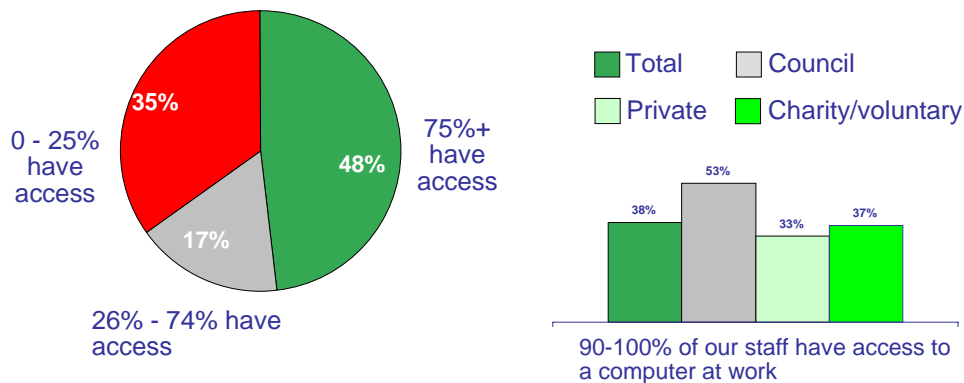
Crucially for the success or otherwise of e-learning, half of respondents with staff-accessible computers at work (52%) say that all of them provide internet access. In fact, nearly four in five respondents (78%) say that around half or more of their computers are internet-ready (standing at 98% among councils and at 73% among private or voluntary sector employers). Only 6% say that none of their computers have internet access, although this figure rises to one in ten (11%) among private employers.

It is also important to note that in the vast majority of cases (79%), these internet-ready computers are broadband.

While half of employers say that their staff have access to computers, this does not mean, of course, that *all* staff have access. Of those who say that their staff have access at work, nearly half (48%) say that this applies to at least three-quarters of their employees. However, a significant minority (25%) say that less than 10% of their staff have access to computers.

Given all that we know so far, it should not come as a surprise to find that councils are better equipped, with over half of council respondents who do have staff-accessible computers at work (53%) saying that nearly all of their staff have access to a computer (estimated at between 90 and 100% of their staff having access). At the other end of the scale, a third of private sector respondents who have staff-accessible computers at work (31%) say that less than 10% of their staff have access to computers.

Q What proportion of staff would you say have access to a computer at work?



Base: 246 employers whose staff have access to computers while at work

Future resources

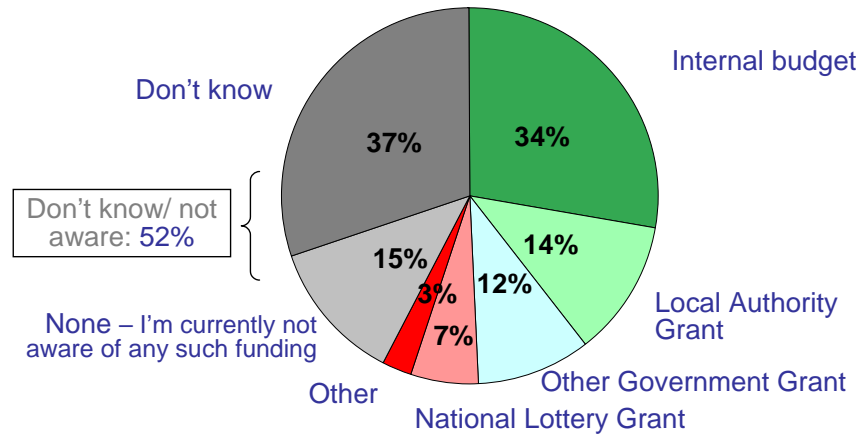
With half of social care employers saying that they do not have computers at work and a quarter of those who do saying that less than one in ten of their staff have access to them, future investment in technical resources is clearly vital if e-learning is to make a sector-wide impact.

The need for more hardware is seen as a key enabler by nearly three in five employers (57%). The question, however, is how can employers fund such an extra investment?

Nearly two in three (65%) say that they don't know of any funding streams which could help them with such ICT capital costs. Looking at any possible funding sources, it is clear that while one in five employers overall (21%) say that they would be able to draw on an internal budget, this is simply not seen as an option by the private sector, where only one sixth employers (18%) feel that infrastructural costs could be funded internally.

The picture is not quite as stark when we turn to the funding of e-learning itself. In this case, around half of employers (52%) say that they don't know of a relevant funding stream. (Again, lack of knowledge among council employers is significantly lower than among the other employers – only 36% of councils say that they don't know of any relevant funding.) A third of respondents, however, (34%) feel that such training resources could be funded through internal budgets, a figure which rises to over half (55%) among council employers.

Q And which of the following funding streams, if any, do you feel could be used to fund the provision of e-learning materials for your employees (such as CD-ROMs or online course)?



Base: 494 employers

A major issue, therefore, is how can employers learn more about accessing and funding e-learning resources. While hardware is clearly a factor here, so too is the availability of the software – 57% of respondents also say that clearer signposting as to how to access e-assisted training software would help their organisation make better use of e-learning. However, only one in ten respondents (10%) say that they know a great deal about where to find e-learning resources on the web, while half (51%) say that they either know very little or nothing at all.

In many ways, the case for e-learning in the social care sector has already be won. Employers understand its attractions in terms of time and money. The problems, as far as they are concerned, relate to resources and to staff resistance. The next chapter will shed some light on these areas from the employee perspective and suggest some ways forward.

The Staff Research

To complement the employer survey, Ipsos MORI also carried out a survey of social care employees as well as a series of workplace-based focus groups.

Again, given the lack of a single, comprehensive database of the workforce, finding employees to survey was likely to prove extremely challenging. In the end, the achieved sample of 994 employees was made up of staff members drawn from participating employers (41% of the surveyed employers agreed to their staff taking part in the survey) and from a random sample of 1,000 further employers.

The employee sample is, we believe, broadly representative of the social care workforce as defined in the literature review, although – due to the very nature of the survey process – it is likely that frontline workers are slightly under-represented. Two in five surveyed employees (38%) say that they carry out frontline work, with a quarter saying that they perform a managerial function (23%). One in six (18%) say that they support or maintain the organisation.

The sample is predominantly female (87%), with a small but significant proportion working part-time (30%). Nearly all of these part-time workers are women (94%). As for the sample's age, a quarter (26%) are under 35 years old, with over half (55%) being between 35 and 55 years old.

Overall, only one in ten of those surveyed (9%) is a qualified, registered social worker, while 14% are still studying. While fewer than one in 20 of surveyed employees say that they have no formal qualifications (6%), one in six (17%) say that their highest qualification is a GCSE and a further third (31%) say that it is an NVQ Level 1 or 2. It is worth noting that three in five support or frontline staff (59% and 57% respectively) fall into these last three categories.

Just over half of the sample work for a private care provider (54%), compared to a third in the public sector (30%) and one in seven in the voluntary sector (14%). It is noteworthy that over half of participating frontline workers (53%) are employed in the private sector, while two-fifths of surveyed managers (40%) work in the public sector. Frontline workers are also much more likely to work part-time (34%) and to work from more than one location (42%) than the overall sample (30% and 26% respectively).

Private sector organisations also appear to be more likely to operate from a single location, reinforcing the message from the literature review that they operate like SMEs. The employee survey demonstrates that four in five private sector staff (81%) tend to work in a fixed location, while only two in three public or voluntary sector employees do (65%).

Staff are most likely to have been working with their current employer for between two and five years (25%), between five and ten years (21%) or over ten years (20%). Finally, as with the employer survey, the employees are reasonably well spread geographically, with around one in ten being based in most Government Office regions. The exceptions here are the South-East, which accounts for 18% of the sample, and the South-West (16%).

This demographic profile very much mirrors the make up of the focus group discussions – of the 18 participants, only one was male and four were under the age of 35. Four were also support staff (a cook, a handyman, a housekeeper and a secretary) while the rest (with the exception of two managers) were frontline staff. The focus group findings are used throughout this chapter to contextualise the survey results.

Are they e-ready?

While many employers believe that their staff do not have the necessary skills and motivation to become e-learners, employees themselves disagree. Two-thirds of employees (66%) feel that they have the skills to use IT – and nearly a third (29%) strongly agree with this statement. By contrast, only one in seven (15%) feel that they do not have appropriate IT skills.

In fact, some focus group participants felt that their skills were undervalued, not only by their employers but also by the sector as a whole, describing a LearnDirect Topss course as “insulting” and “basic”.

A ten year old child could have done it ... You just think, what do they think we are?

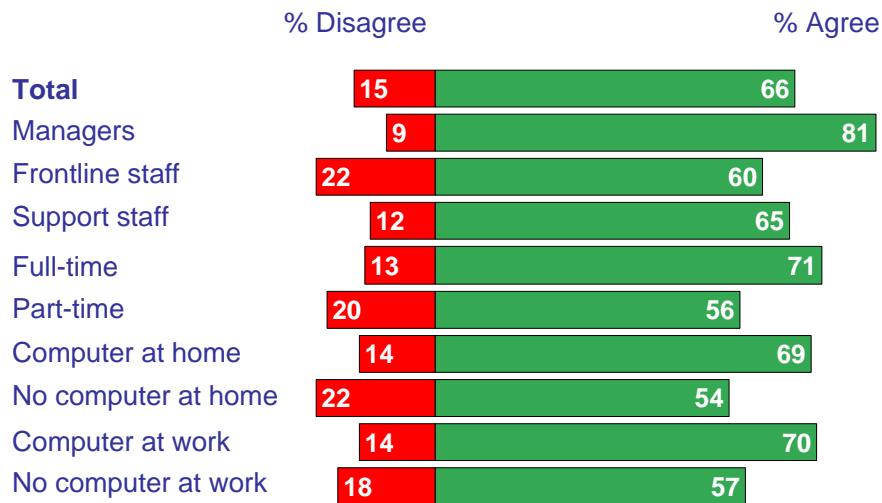
Nurse, 35-54 years old

Given the generally positive attitude on the part of public sector employers towards e-learning and the greater infrastructural commitment, it is instructive to find that staff in the private and voluntary sectors are significantly more likely than their counterparts in the public sector to say that they *strongly* agree that they have IT skills (32% and 34% respectively compared with 23% of public sector staff). Overall agreement, however, is similar across the three sectors.

Levels of education are also significant determining factors when it comes to people's e-readiness. Four in five of those who possess a BA or higher (80%) feel they have suitable IT skills as opposed to two-thirds of those whose highest qualification is an A-level (65%) and half of those who have no formal qualification (49%).

Alongside education, age and employment status are also key drivers of staff's confidence in their IT skills.

I feel I have the skills I need to use IT



Bases: 976 employees

Given the age range of the social care workforce – and of this particular sample – it is also important to note that the older people are, the less confident they are in their IT skills. One in four of over-55s (24%) feel that they do not have appropriate IT skills, compared to one in six 35-54 year olds (16%) and one in ten 25-34 year olds (10%).

I'm not into computers, but I think it probably would work ... if everybody knew how to use it. I mean, I'd have to be taught
Cook, over-55

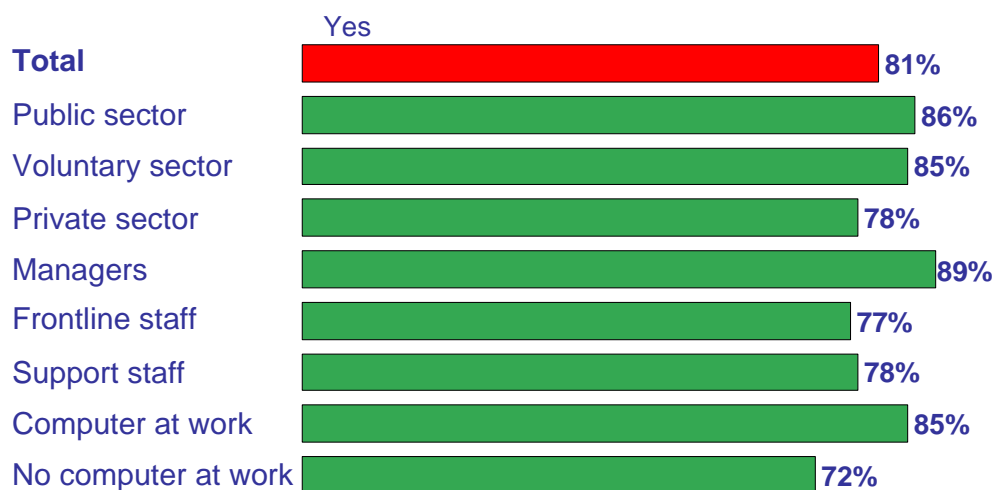
Compared to managers – and even support staff – frontline workers are much less likely to feel confident in their IT skills. One in five frontline staff (22%) feel that they do not have appropriate IT skills, while only 12% of support staff and 9% of managers feel the same.

Part-time staff are also much more likely to feel less confident in their IT skills. One in five (20%) say that they do not have the appropriate skills, compared to 13% of full-time workers.

Home access is key to e-readiness

It also appears that staff are better resourced in terms of computer access than their employers believe. Four in five have access to a computer at home (81%) and two in three (68%) have access to one at work.

Q Do you have access to a computer at home?



Base:989 employees

While access at work would appear to be the obvious key to staff's e-readiness, it seems that the familial, domestic use of a computer is a stronger driver of confidence in IT skills than access to a computer at work. Staff who do not have access to a computer at home are significantly more likely to feel that they do not have the appropriate IT skills than those who do (22% compared with 14%). This pattern is not repeated when we look at work-based access.

The level of home-based access is high even when compared to the general public. Ipsos MORI's monthly Technology Tracker – a survey of over 4,000 British adults – finds that around two-thirds of the public use computers.²¹

We believe that this difference is largely due to the make-up of the social care workforce – predominantly female, with a significant part-time element. It goes beyond the scope of this study to explore any further demographic characteristics of the workforce (such as whether many employees are adding a second, supplementary income to a household or whether they have school-aged children) but anecdotal evidence from the qualitative research would seem to indicate that the higher level of computer access among the social care workforce could largely be due to the presence of children in the employee's household. Certainly, the 35-54 year olds – those most likely to fit this scenario – are significantly more likely to have home access than both older and younger employees (85% compared to 73% of over-55s and 77% of under-35s).

²¹ It should be noted that the Technology Tracker examines 'use' and this survey looked at 'access'. When those employees who never use their home computer are removed from the figures, we still find, however, that 72% of social care staff *use* a computer at home.

It would benefit me because you can fit it in when you're at home

Manager, 35-54 years old

You can just pick it up and do a bit. When you've got to get your book out and get the pens and sit at the table and do it – but with a laptop, you can sit there, it's on your lap!

Carer, 35-54 years old

The levels of home access to IT are an important – and often overlooked – area, and we believe that if the social care workforce is to be made ready for e-learning, then the home is perhaps the best place to start. To put it starkly: just over one in five frontline workers do not have home access to a computer (23%). This rises to two in five (41%) when we look at access to a computer at work. Given the resourcing issues outlined in the previous chapter, if these employees are to benefit from e-learning, then home-based courses are an obvious starting point.

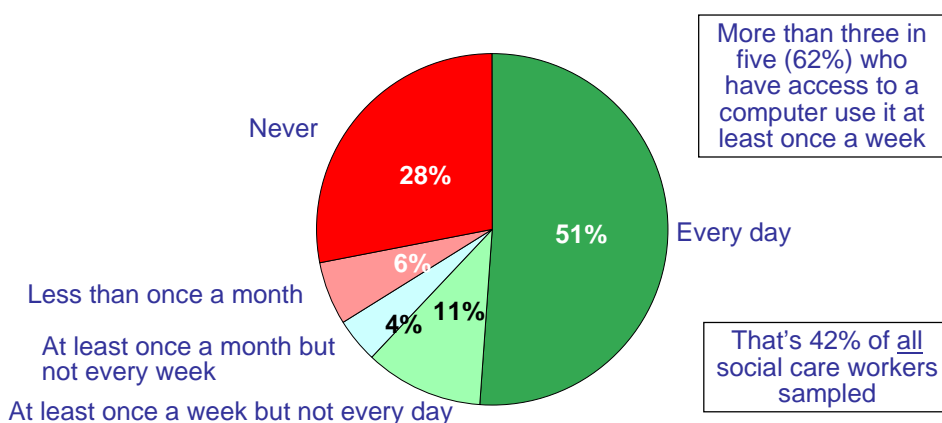
As will be seen from the next few sections, home-based, 'own time' learning would also appear to be a training route with a great deal of potential among employees.

Work access contextualises confidence

Despite a high availability at home, access to and the use of computers at work are also important drivers of e-readiness.

Employees use their computers at work much more regularly. A third of those who use a computer at home say that they use it every day (31%) compared to half of those who have a computer at work and use it every day (51%). However, over a quarter say that even though they have access to a computer at work they never use it (28%). It is likely that this is largely due to the fact that many in the sector do not need a deskbound PC to do their work.

Q How often do you use a computer at work?



Base: 667 employees who have access to a computer at work

Those who work for a public sector organisation are significantly more likely to use a computer at work every day (78%) than those who work in the voluntary or private sectors (40% and 33% respectively). In fact, two-fifths of private sector employees who have access to a computer at work say that they never use it (41%). This finding is reflected among the private sector focus group participants, who generally found it difficult to access a computer during work hours.

Just as access to work computers is limited for frontline workers (and for support staff, where access stands at 64%), so too is the opportunity to use the computer(s). Although just six out of over 200 managers with access say that they never use a work computer, a third of support or frontline staff who work in organisations where they have access to a computer say that they never use it (34% and 35% respectively).

From the focus group discussions with social care staff, it appears that this is a qualified 'never'. Rather than being an active refusal to engage with IT, the lack of use is more generally due to a lack of work computers in the first place.

I think the company should provide a computer, though, that we can use

Carer, under-35

I would see some of the girls staying behind and using them after work

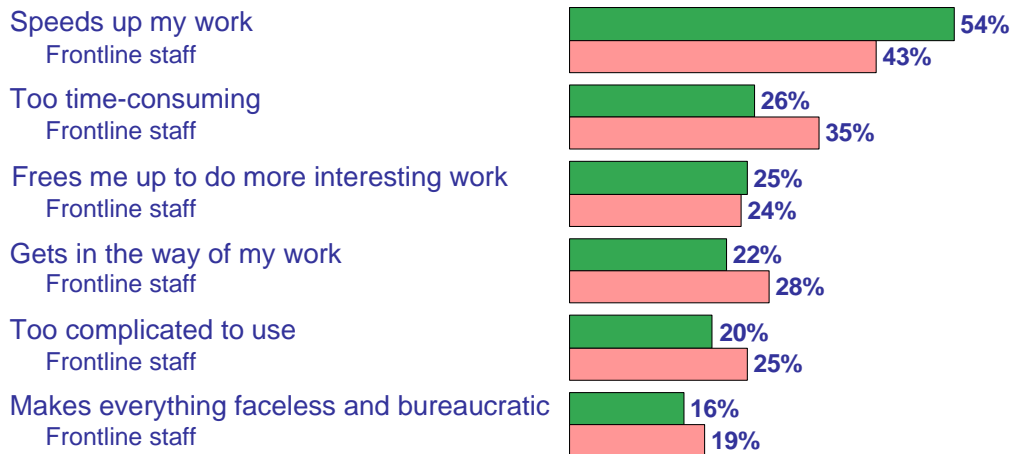
Handyman, 35-54 years old

In fact, the levels of distrust in IT are extremely low. Only 3% of staff say that they currently use computers at work and would prefer not to. Conversely, a quarter of staff (24%) say that they currently do not use a computer at work, but that they would like to in future.

Moreover, staff clearly see the advantages of using computers at work. Over half (54%) say that a computer could speed up their work while only around one in four say that it could be too time-consuming (26%) or that it could get in the way of their work (22%). A quarter also feel that a computer could free them up to do more interesting work (25%).

It is significant to note that frontline staff are the least positive in this regard, with a third (35%) saying that it could be too time-consuming and over a quarter (28%) saying that it could get in the way – again, perhaps reflecting a view that they do not need computers to carry out their work.

Q What do you think could be the advantages or disadvantages of using a computer at work?



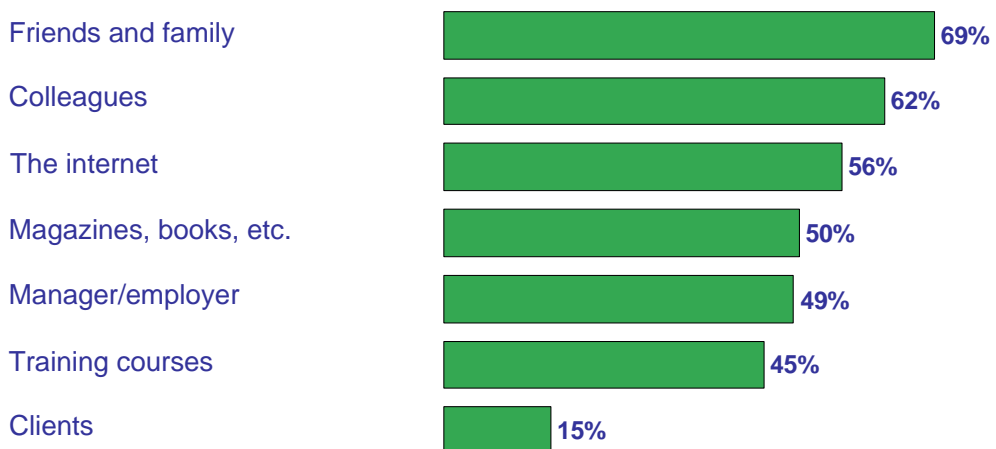
Base:929 employees

E-learning

It would be fair to say that, overall, the social care workforce is e-ready, although frontline staff in particular tend to have less access and familiarity with IT than other employees. The next question is whether they are ready for e-learning, and one of the key issues here is where people source information from.

There is a significant and as yet untapped potential for the internet as an information source in social care – when used outside the work environment. When asked about life outside work, the internet is the third most mentioned information source for employees, standing at 56% with only friends/family (69%) and colleagues (62%) being more utilised. This highlights that employees are able and willing to use IT as an important communication tool in their lives.

Q Thinking about your life outside work, when you need advice or information about any issue, where do you look for it?



Base:972 employees

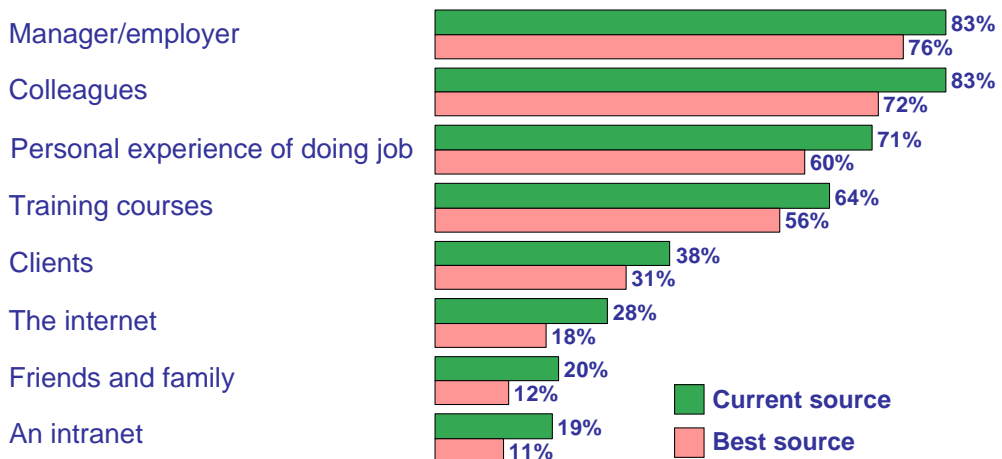
Those who are significantly more likely to use the internet as an information course include:

- Those with BAs or higher qualifications (77%);
- Managers (76%);
- Qualified, registered social workers (75%);
- Public sector employees (67%);
- Those with a computer at home (63%);
- Those with a computer at work (60%);
- Full-time staff (60%); and
- 35-54 year olds (60%).

When it comes to information sources which are used to find out how to *work* better, using the internet slips to sixth place and is mentioned by only three in ten employees (28%) while the intranet is only mentioned by one in five (19%).

Employees who are most likely to use the internet to pick up information about how to work better include managers (55%), those with a BA or higher (47%), social workers (46%), full-time workers (34%), those with access to a computer at work (33%) and those who work in the public sector (32%).

- Q Thinking about when doing your job, where do you pick up advice or information about how to work better?
- Q Which or the following do you think are the best sources of advice and information on how to work better?



Base:970 employees for each question

As for employees’ preferred sources of work-related information, these follow people’s current sources very closely, and only one in six (18%) feel that the internet is the best source of information on how to work better.

This may be partly due to the main implication of using the internet and other ICT resources for work-related learning – that it puts the onus on the worker to ‘train’ themselves.

You’ve got to be quite disciplined. If you’ve coming in an office then you’re going there for training – you’re going in the office, you’re doing the training. If you’re just given a CD-Rom, and you’re not motivated, you’re not going to go away and use it

Manager, 35-54 years old

The preferred training route?

Despite the low use of the internet or an intranet to find out about work-related issues, on the whole, employees are keen to see e-enabled training.

Training itself is a regular feature in their working lives (“Helps us along with what we need to do”). Most of the surveyed employees receive training at least four times a year (70%) and nearly everyone thinks that regular training is important (96%).

A quarter of people (26%) feel that while training is important, it isn’t always as relevant as it should be. These people are most likely to be social workers (43%), public sector employees (37%), those with degrees (35%), managers (34%) and staff who have been in their current job for over five years (30%).

Sometimes you can go on a course and one person may understand everything straight away and somebody else may not understand something, and the one who understands it all just starts getting bored

Nurse, 35-54 years old

A high proportion of training which employees currently receive is e-enabled with some element of ICT (61%). Only 11 people who have been trained by their current employer say that e-enabled training has been used but is not helpful, while a third (35%) say that it has been used (either all the time or sometimes) and has always been helpful. It should be pointed out, though, that one in four employees (23%) say that e-enabled training is not used and is not needed.

It should also be borne in mind that although staff from private care providers represent the majority of those surveyed, only half of these staff (48%) have received e-enabled training, compared with two-thirds of voluntary sector staff (67%) and four in five public sector staff (79%).

As for the types of training which people have received, the most likely form are external courses which last less than a day (71%), ‘on-the-job’ or ‘hands-on’ training (68%) or external courses which last more than a day (68%).

In order to gauge relative preferences, we are able to create a rating scheme, which we have termed the ‘preference shortfall’. This benchmarks people’s preferred form of training against their experiences of training, and as can be seen by Table 2, even though the proportions are relatively small, employees are significantly keener to explore e-enabled training and learning than the more ‘traditional’ training routes.

Table 2: Current and preferred forms of training

QA: What type of training have you received?	(n=914)		
QB: What would be your preferred type of training?	(n=966)		
	QA %	QB %	Preference shortfall (A-B/A x 100)
External course lasting less than a day	71	42	41%
External course lasting more than a day	68	37	46%
Internal training with a colleague	64	30	53%
One-to-one training	32	23	28%
‘On-the-job’ training	68	59	13%
Training which involves reading books/magazines in own time	52	29	44%
Training which involves using a manual in own time	50	24	52%
Training which involves using the internet in own time	25	23	8%
Training which involves using an intranet in own time	20	14	30%
Training which involves using a VLE in own time	9	13	-44%
Training which involves using CD-Rom-based materials on a computer	18	21	-17%

Source: Ipsos MORI

Internal training with a colleague and training which involves using a manual in the employee’s own time are least favoured, with a ‘preference shortfall’ of around 50%. Similarly, external courses and training which requires them to use books in their own time (while regularly undertaken) are comparatively ill-favoured, with a shortfall of around 40%. One of the factors here – which came through in the focus groups – is the lack of interactivity, especially when external courses are delivered by a trainer without any ICT support.

I do find them boring, I must admit. Obviously, you do sort of take it in, but after a while you just think – when you’re not involved it does get very boring

Carer, 35-54 years old

Reading is different from someone explaining

Care assistant, under-35

I find I put things off ... And then you’re panicking the night before!

Carer, 35-54 years old

On the other hand, training which allows the employee to go at their own pace, in their own time and through an electronic medium are strongly regarded, when relative experience is taken into account.

For me it would be a good idea – the convenience of it, being able to access it where it's comfortable for yourself

Nurse, 35-54 years old

In my own time at home, you're not having to travel anywhere – it would be good in that sense, do it in your own time at your own pace

Carer, 35-54 years old

I prefer to do it in my own time

Carer, 35-54 years old

There is only an 8% preference shortfall for the use of the internet, and a positive desire for more opportunities to use CD-Roms and VLEs (both with negative shortfalls of -17% and -44% respectively).

While one may suspect that the driving force behind such high relative ratings of 'own time' e-enabled learning comes from highly educated, full-time managers, this is not the case. The desire is across the board, with 'preference shortfalls' for CD-Roms, for instance, standing at -11% for support staff, -12% for managers and -36% among frontline staff. The desire is even stronger among part-time staff, where the shortfall is -50%.

A similar pattern can be found for the use of the internet (-11% for frontline staff and -13% for part-time staff) and for VLEs (-33% for frontline staff, -42% for support staff and -38% for part-timers).

This brings us to the final key question – are social care employees actually interested in e-learning and e-enabled training?

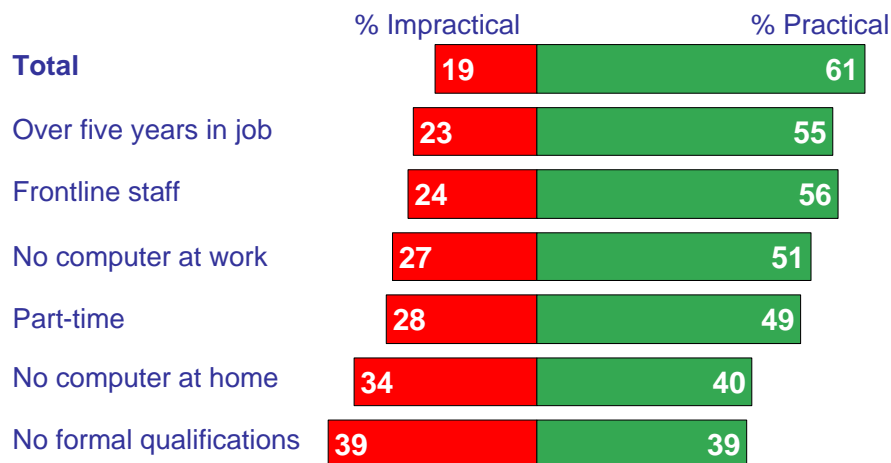
The desire for e-training

While 85% of employees agree (51% strongly agree) that their employer gives them enough support and encouragement to undertake training, only half feel that their employer gives them enough support and encouragement to undertake e-enabled training (49%).

Around a quarter of those who do not have access to a work computer as well as frontline and support staff do not feel that they receive enough support and encouragement from their employers to undergo e-training (27%, 25% and 20% respectively). In other words, some of the main target groups for e-learning.

However, despite this, three in five employees think e-learning is a practical option (61%) in their own organisation. This includes over a quarter of employees who think this is a highly practical option (27%). The lack of a home computer and of formal qualifications are the main barriers to this view.

Q How practical would it be for you to receive training and learning resources via a computer or through the internet?



Base:987 employees

Another issue relating to practicality is that of the type of training which could legitimately make use of e-learning techniques. Focus group participants tend to agree that some elements of mandatory training – such as food hygiene and health and safety – could be delivered in a ‘pure’ e-learning environment. But it was felt to be impractical to deliver other training (moving and handling and customer care in particular) without a ‘hands-on’ element.

You can't learn everything on the computer – say I decided right we're going to go off and do a dressing, we're going to do it aseptically. You couldn't learn that on a computer, it's impossible, you've got to be hands on

Nurse, 35-54 years old

Rather than acting as an insurmountable barrier to e-learning, however, there was also a recognition that this hands-on element could be delivered as part of a ‘blended’ learning package.

I reckon it's 50:50 where you've got a computer but at the same time, you reach that point where you need hands-on, there's someone there you can go to

Housekeeper, under-35

To see things actually is better than just reading about it – you take it in more

Manager, under-35

Equally importantly, two-thirds of all surveyed staff say that they would be interested in receiving training and learning resources via a computer or through the internet (66%), including over a third (35%) who are very interested.

Those who are least interested are the older employees (53% of over-55s say they would be interested), those with no home computer (50%) and those with no formal qualifications (40%). For pretty much every other grouping, however, three in five or more say that they would be interested in this level of e-learning – and often for highly practical and personal reasons.

The girls do 12 hour shifts and if you've done three 12 hour shifts and then you're coming in on your day off to do training – you've seen enough of the place, haven't you?

Carer, under-35

Given all that this survey has told us about the e-readiness of the vast majority of the social care workforce – often in the face of employer scepticism – we believe that this gives SCIE strong grounds for promoting the uptake of e-learning across the sector. The final chapter will set out our recommendations for future work.

The Way Ahead

This research programme set out to the social care sector is ready for e-learning. The conclusions from the literature review and the staff survey confirm that the workforce is largely ready. The review and the employer survey, however, would suggest that care providers are not yet ready.

Most social care is delivered by small private organisations, and if the outlook of these agencies is similar to that of other small businesses – with learning not embedded in organisational culture – then they are among the least likely to be ready to supply and promote e-learning. These organisations are, however, aware of the potential benefits of e-learning (in terms of saved staff time and resources) but seem culturally unwilling to translate this understanding into the capital investment required to make work-based e-learning initiatives viable.

Central to employers' unwillingness to commit to e-learning is the belief that their staff would not be able to 'cope'. However, there is substantial evidence that the social care workforce can benefit from e-learning and that the virtual communities it fosters can benefit a relational 'learning style' built around information exchange and the sharing of best practice.

Furthermore, the social care workforce exhibits a high level of IT literacy and may actually be more e-ready than much of the general population. It is certainly more e-ready than employers think.

We believe that the following actions would help SCIE to 'bed in' e-learning within the social care sector.

Signposting for employers

Without technical and training resources, employers will simply not be in a position to support work-based e-learning or e-enabled training.

SCIE can encourage the provision to employers of clear information on available funding sources, both for capital investment in hardware and for the purchasing of training and learning programmes.

SCIE can also encourage the provision to employers of clear information on where to find e-learning and e-training resources.

Dispelling myths

SCIE should disseminate the literature review findings so that the applicability of e-learning to the sector can be boosted.

SCIE can also promote the primary research findings to employers and within the sector, so that the image of the e-resistant social carer can be challenged.

Encouraging the option of home-based, 'own time' e-learning

While work-based e-enabled training may be the ultimate goal, it is not a short-term option in terms of employer resourcing.

It is also not a viable option for everyone in the social care sector, especially for outreach or peripatetic workers and those on long shifts.

The employees who were surveyed as part of this study strongly supported the use of ICT resources in their own time as an option for learning and training. We believe that home-based, 'own time' e-learning could be promoted to employers and staff as an enhancement to current training practices, provided that staff are offered the support and time in which to do it.

Appendices

Drivers of E-Learning

Rather than just present the external drivers identified in the literature as a list, we have categorised them under the components of e-learning readiness to see where the greatest external pressure is focused. We have also identified those factors driving e-learning up take within organisations, which we have termed ‘enablers’. We see drivers as being the external force (macro) driving trends in e-learning and enablers are organisational forces (micro) that “turn on” the e-learning light. (The organisational and personnel components of e-learning readiness are treated as enablers are so are not included separately.)

The literature identifies many of the external drivers pushing e-learning in social care, however the enabling factors that are driving e-learning within social care organisations were not as concrete. Possibly this is because e-learning implementation in social care is still relatively immature with many organisations still not overcoming key barriers and therefore not yet observing the factors that enable e-learning up take to increase.

Situational drivers

- Regulatory requirement for all care workers to be enrolled for intermediate vocational qualifications (NVQ 2) and to complete them in three years

- Topss Standards for induction and formation

- Introduction of pre-qualifying awards

- Funding provision for training in the independent sector

Situational enablers

- Limited time, resources and the opportunity cost of not implementing e-learning

- Positive employer attitude to e-learning

- An e-learning strategy in place, with implementation funding

- E-learning awards and incentives for achievement

Content suitability drivers

Top quality content development and learning management systems

Identification of best practice

Copyright and licensing costs – use of open source software

Content suitability enablers

Virtual learning environment as a main delivery platform

Integration of multimedia resource development unit, distance learning unit and staff development unit

Technological drivers

Better technology available at accessible prices

Learn Direct and UK online provide community based internet and PC access

Broadband availability and diminishing costs

Digital TV availability

National programme for IT that lays out the procurement approach for the NHS and individual NHS trusts

Pilots schemes that provide lap tops and mobile technology or mobile computer labs as part of an overall e-learning strategy

Technological enabler

Positive staff attitudes towards ICT

Learning styles driver

Customer demand driven care

Learning styles enablers

Ability to customise and up-date content

Growing preference for e-learning

Instructional and network drivers

Availability of computerised care record service or national care record service as part of a Europe wide e-Health strategy

E-government initiatives and partnerships

Local Authorities with lifelong learning specialities, partnerships with academic and vocational training providers

E-learning is embedded in further education colleges

Instructional and network enablers

Coordinated ICT purchasing policies

Peer support mechanisms and collaborative groups enabling social interaction electronically

Barriers to E-Learning

Barriers to e-learning are well documented in the literature. E-learning readiness is influenced from various perspectives – learner characteristics, training opportunities and distance-learning experiences, as well as the e-channel readiness of the employer. The barriers identified in these bodies of literature have been integrated and summarised again under the seven components of e-readiness. Many of the barriers cut across business, education and social care.

The barriers to e-learning are extensive. At worst they combine issues around technology access, attitudes and culture with in some cases the realities of fitting learning into a privately-run care organisation that has limited resources. Overcoming barriers to the internet and to e-learning may require innovative links to other interests held as well as strategies to bridge these key barriers.

Situational barriers

E-learning under-valued

Not enough championing of e-learning in social care

Managers undervalue training, it is not supported by organisational policy and adequate resources are therefore not allocated

The costs of developing and implementing e-learning is high

Lack of incentives for social care workers such as public recognition, credits towards a degree or certification, increased job security, additional salary or promotion

Lack of time allocated

Time management difficulties are experienced by learners and instructors

Special, uninterrupted time is not allocated by management for training

Limited learner support

Learners lack skills such as basic IT/internet skills and problem solving capacity

Generally IT support for learners is limited, although most e-learners want assistance with their IT problems

Content suitability barriers

Lack of educator skills

Organisations have difficulty in recruiting experts therefore the trainers lacked the necessary skills set

Poor content development

The digital teaching and learning resources market is under-developed

Development costs for content are higher than expected and yet the quality of e-learning content is still poor

Website performance can turn people off

There is not enough relevant up-to-date content available

Lack of resource access

Too much information has been duplicated, but resources are still not accessible to all learners because either they do not know what the internet is, what courses are available, or the language used makes the subject difficult to understand

There is a lack of specialist course material as most providers offer generic material and do not consider specialised users

The e-resources that are available are not used enough

Poor learner assessment systems

There is no systematic mapping of learning needs and skills gaps for the social care workforce, therefore training does not match learner needs

Learners want their assessment to capture the new skills and capabilities they are acquiring through using e-learning, however there is a lack of quality feedback

Technological barriers

Low hardware penetration

There is no coordinated technology strategy for e-learning, ICT access and use in the social care sector

There is a lack of hardware in organisations to e-enable all learners

Lack of internet connection

Many private and voluntary care organisations are not yet connected with broadband

Although adults are twice as likely to participate in learning if they have internet access, obtaining a broadband connection is a major barrier

Incompatibility

Organisations suffer from having outdated or inadequate software as well as a shortage of equipment

Learning style barriers

Learning style

Learners preferred certain styles which are not seen as being compatible with e-learning

Learner styles and preference do not match the demands of the technology. However, not enough attention is paid to the new ways of learning opened up by e-learning – changes are technology lead

Trainer attitudes

Where training is already ineffective for social care subjects because delivery is poor, e-learning is not seen as improving matters

Teachers prefer a blended approach as learners express a dislike for fully online learning

Instructional and network barriers

Organisational networks

IT systems and learning resources do not “fit”

Multi-site organisations lack coordination in networking, collaborating, sharing e-learning systems and not using portal arrangements

There is very little cross-sectional collaboration in supporting learners as they move through the education system and on through life

Lack of learning communities

There is a general lack of learning communities as networked learning is not embedded in courses for small organisations

Some organisations are not willing to collaborate in a learning community

Poor knowledge sharing process

Where there are pockets of excellence in e-learning the benefits are not shared because there is a lack of common standards that would ensure that e-learning software is both shareable and affordable

Inaccessibility

Awareness of e-learning is limited, benefits are not universal, and training is accessible to the more professional groups rather than administrative or manual workers

Organisational barriers

Culture

There may be a strong culture in social care organisations that resists training and e-learning

Learning environment

Trainers lack incentives for e-learning involvement within social care organisations

There is too little training or rewards for instructors/tutors who wish to adopt or develop e-learning

Physical space needs to be re-allocated and used differently in terms of class size, layout and structure if e-learning is to be embedded

Learning links

E-learning is not embedded in normal work processes so that trainers and courses do not make links to the learners' workplace

Personnel barriers

Lack of motivation

Sustaining learner motivation is a problem

Health and social care staff and carers are found to be apathetic towards training

Self awareness

Experienced or self aware social care workers do not always want or need paper qualifications

Language and culture

The dominant language of the internet is English. However, for nearly 60% of the social care work English may not their first language

Unpaid carers may not feel the internet or computers have anything for them and therefore stay away

Confidence and fear

There is a distinct generation gap in terms of who chooses to take up e-learning

‘Technofear’ is a barrier to e-channel engagement

Social care staff may not be able to identify the root cause of their discomfort with using the internet but simply feel that ‘they do not want to use it’

Employer Questionnaire

E-learning in social care: research on behalf of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

Welcome to the Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE)/ MORI survey on e-learning. Completing the survey will only take around 15 minutes.

E-learning is an inclusive term meaning: *the use of information and communication technologies – including the internet and worldwide web – to improve and support teaching, training and learning*

This survey builds on the recent SCIE consultation into e-learning, and the feedback which social care providers – such as yourself – gave us as part of the consultation. **It is being used to gather information which will help all of us working in social care to provide better services – so that all our staff can benefit from effective training and learning and use these skills to improve services to our clients.**

The survey is being conducted by the **independent** social research agency MORI. This means that your **responses are anonymous** and SCIE will not have access to individual or identifiable responses.

Thank you for taking part in this important piece of research – and as a thank you, we will enter all completed questionnaires into a competition to win a laptop computer.

Oswin Baker
MORI Social Research Institute

Demand for and access to learning

Q1. How satisfied are you with your staff's levels of work-related knowledge and skills?

- Very satisfied.....
- Fairly satisfied
- Not very satisfied.....
- Not at all satisfied.....
- Don't know.....

Q2. Which of the following methods/resources for improving work-related knowledge and skills do your staff currently have access to? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Q3. And which do you think they have used for work-related learning in the last six months? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Q4. And which two or three methods do you feel are the most effective learning route that you would like them to use? PLEASE TICK UP TO THREE BOXES

	Q2	Q3	Q4
Face-to-face external training (where employees have to leave their place of work)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Face-to-face internal training (whether provided by a formally qualified internal or external training provider).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internal training by a colleague	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Books/ magazines/ leaflets/ manuals at their place of work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Books/ magazines/ leaflets/ manuals outside of their place of work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intranet (i.e. internal website) at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet at work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet: other (e.g. internet café, library)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital television at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital television at work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SMS text messaging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of these	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q5. In general, how satisfied are you with the *amount* of training your staff have received? By training we mean assisted methods to improving their learning.

Q6. How satisfied are you with the *quality* of training your staff have received?

	Q5	Q6
Very satisfied.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairly satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not very satisfied.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all satisfied.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q7. What proportion of your induction training for staff is delivered in-house and what proportion do you have to buy-in from an external provider?

We deliver all induction training in-house.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
We deliver most induction training in-house.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
About half and half	<input type="checkbox"/>
We buy-in most of our induction training	<input type="checkbox"/>
We buy-in all of our induction training	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know.....	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q8. And regarding the induction training at your organisation, what proportion of it, if any, uses e-learning?

By e-learning we mean the use of computer based information and communication technology (ICT) – such as the internet and world wide web, but also digital television, digital players or mobile phones - SMS – to improve teaching, training and learning by individual access or in a group situation.

All of the induction training uses e-learning.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most of the induction training uses e-learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
About half and half	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most of the induction training does not use e-learning.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the induction training uses e-learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know.....	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q9. **How positive are you personally about the use of e-learning for training your staff?**

- Very positive.....
 - Fairly positive
 - Neither.....
 - Not very positive.....
 - Not at all positive
 - Don't know.....
-

E-learning: current and desired usage

Q10. **Do your staff have access to computers while at work?**

- Yes, they all do.....
 - Yes, they all do.....
 - No.....
-

Q11. **How confident are you in your own ability to help others in your organisation use e-learning ICT tools such as computers and computer based training?**

- Very confident
 - Fairly confident.....
 - Not very confident
 - Not at all confident.....
 - Don't know.....
-

Q12. Which of these e-learning methods, if any, have you personally used at work in the last three months? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Q13. And which methods, if any, do you think your employees have used at work in the last three months? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

	Q12	Q13
a World wide web for a general search/ browse for social care-related information.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b World wide web to access a specific website relevant to social care.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c World wide web to access a specific virtual learning environment (VLE) relevant to social care (<i>A VLE is a set of teaching and learning tools designed to enhance the learning experience by including the Internet in the learning process</i>)... ..	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d An interactive, social care-related program on the web. <i>By interactive we mean a web-based program you have to contribute to (e.g. answer questions, route through a site) rather than simply browsing for information</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e Social care related programme on a CD-ROM.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f A CD-ROM in general (i.e. not necessarily related to work).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g Mobile phone SMS Text messaging (for work-related e-learning).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h Digital Television (for work-related e-learning)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of these.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q14. Please look at the options below. What proportion of training and learning in your organisation currently makes use of e-learning methods/resources compared to traditional methods? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Q15. And what proportion of training and learning in your organisation would you like to see making use of e-learning methods/resources compared to traditional methods? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY. We would like to see training in our organisation that had:

	Q14	Q15
100% e-learning.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
90% - 100% e-learning.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
60% - 89% e-learning.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41% – 59% e-learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11% - 40% e-learning.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
0% - 10% e-learning.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
100% traditional methods – we use not e-learning at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Effectiveness of e-learning: current and desired

Q16. **In general, how effective, if at all, do you feel e-learning is as an approach to training and education?**

- Very effective.....
 - Fairly effective
 - Neither.....
 - Not very effective.....
 - Not at all effective.....
 - Don't know.....
-

PLEASE ANSWER IF YOU USE E-LEARNING METHODS IN YOUR ORGANISATION. **IF YOU DON'T, PLEASE GO TO Q21**

Q17. **And regarding your organisation specifically, how effective, if at all, do you feel e-learning currently is as an approach to training and educating your staff?**

- Very effective.....
 - Fairly effective
 - Neither.....
 - Not very effective.....
 - Not at all effective.....
 - Don't know.....
-

PLEASE ANSWER IF YOU FEEL THAT E-LEARNING IS **EFFECTIVE** AS AN APPROACH TO TRAINING AND EDUCATING YOUR STAFF – THEN GO TO Q25

Q18. **And why do you say you feel e-learning is an effective approach for your organisation?** PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- It is cost effective for me as an employer
 - My organisation invests in the ICT needed to deliver e-learning.....
 - It is more time effective for me as an employer (for example, than employees having to go for external training).....
 - It is flexible timewise for employees (they can learn in their own time)
 - We have adequate resources (in terms of hardware) to deliver e-learning (e.g. employees have access to computers)
 - Employees have the knowledge and confidence in ICT to make use of e-learning.....
 - Employees will be more excited by e-learning than more traditional learning methods
 - Good quality e-learning, training and information resources are currently available (in terms of software, such as programs, on-line programs, CD-ROMs, websites, etc.)
 - Other (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
 -
 - Don't know.....
-

PLEASE ANSWER IF YOU FEEL THAT E-LEARNING IS **NEITHER EFFECTIVE NOR INEFFECTIVE** AS AN APPROACH TO TRAINING AND EDUCATING YOUR STAFF – THEN GO TO Q25

Q19. **And why do you say you feel e-learning is neither an effective nor ineffective approach for your organisation?**

- I am just not interested in e-learning
 - E-learning is just not relevant to my organisation (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
 -
 - Don't know.....
-

PLEASE ANSWER IF YOU FEEL THAT E-LEARNING IS **NOT EFFECTIVE** AS AN APPROACH TO TRAINING AND EDUCATING YOUR STAFF – THEN GO TO Q25
 Q20. **And why do you say you feel e-learning is an ineffective approach for your organisation?** PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- It is expensive for me as an employer
- My organisation does not have the budget necessary to invest in the ICT needed to deliver e-learning
- My organisation is not interested in investing in ICT necessary to deliver e-learning
- It is too time intensive for me as an employer to organise/ manage
- It is too time intensive for my employees
- We do not have adequate resources to deliver e-learning (e.g. employees do not have access to computers)
- Employees do not have the knowledge and confidence in ICT to make use of e-learning
- Employees will be intimidated by e-learning more than by traditional learning methods
- Employees may not be interested in e-learning
- Good quality e-learning, training and information resources are not currently available (in terms of software, such as programs, on-line programs, CD-ROMs, websites, etc.)
- Other (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
-
- Don't know

PLEASE ANSWER IF YOU **DO NOT USE ANY E-LEARNING METHODS** IN YOUR ORGANISATION

Q21. **And regarding your place of work specifically, how effective, if at all, do you feel e-learning could be to training and educating your staff over the next two years?**

By place of work we mean the specific care home you work in, the social services department if in a local authority, or social care related section of the company you work for

- Very effective
- Fairly effective
- Neither
- Not very effective
- Not at all effective
- Don't know

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION IF YOU FEEL THAT E-LEARNING **COULD BE EFFECTIVE** FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATING YOUR STAFF OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS – THEN GO TO Q25

Q22. **And why do you say you feel e-learning could be an effective approach for your organisation?** PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- It is cost effective for me as an employer
 - My organisation invests in the ICT needed to deliver e-learning.....
 - It is more time effective for me as an employer (for example, than employees having to go for external training).....
 - It is flexible timewise for employees (they can learn in their own time)
 - We have adequate resources (in terms of hardware) to deliver e-learning (e.g. employees have access to computers)
 - Employees have the knowledge and confidence in ICT to make use of e-learning.....
 - Employees will be more excited by e-learning than more traditional learning methods
 - Good quality e-learning, training and information resources are currently available (in terms of software, such as programs, on-line programs, CD-ROMs, websites, etc.)
 - Other (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
 -
 - Don't know.....
-

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION IF YOU THINK THAT E-LEARNING WOULD BE **NEITHER EFFECTIVE NOT INEFFECTIVE** FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATING YOUR STAFF OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS – THEN GO TO Q25

Q23. **And why do you say you feel e-learning is neither an effective nor ineffective approach for your organisation?**

- I am just not interested in e-learning
 - E-learning is just not relevant to my organisation (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW).....
 -
 - Don't know.....
-

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION IF YOU FEEL THAT E-LEARNING **WOULD NOT BE EFFECTIVE** FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATING YOUR STAFF OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS – THEN GO TO Q25

Q24. **And why do you say you feel e-learning would be an ineffective approach for your organisation?** PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- It is cost effective for me as an employer
- My organisation does not have the budget necessary to invest in the ICT needed to deliver e-learning
- My organisation is not interested in investing in ICT necessary to deliver e-learning
- It is too time intensive for me as an employer to organise/ manage
- It is too time intensive for my employees.....
- We do not have adequate resources to deliver e-learning (e.g. employees do not have access to computers).....
- Employees do not have the knowledge and confidence in ICT to make use of e-learning
- Employees will be intimidated by e-learning more than by traditional learning methods
- Employees may not be interested in e-learning
- Good quality e-learning, training and information resources are not currently available (in terms of software, such as programs, on-line programs, CD-ROMs, websites, etc.).....
- Other (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
-
- Don't know.....

EVERYONE SHOULD ANSWER THIS QUESTION

Q25. **Would you like your organisation to make more use of e-learning for your employees?**

- Yes
- No.....
- Don't know.....

E-assisted training

Q26. Are you personally involved in training social care staff?

Yes

No.....

Q27. Regarding your current face-to-face training and learning, how often, if at all, do you as a trainer or other trainers in your organisation use **e-assisted training/learning**?

By e-assisted we mean training which is primarily face to face but which uses tools such as Power Point slides, or a program taken from a CD-ROM or downloaded from the web as part of the blended delivery

Very often

Fairly often.....

Neither.....

Not very often

Not at all often

Don't know.....

Q28. How useful do you feel e-assisted training could be, if at all, to you as a trainer or to trainers who work with or for you?

Very useful

Fairly useful.....

Neither.....

Not very useful

Not at all useful.....

Don't know.....

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION IF YOUR ORGANISATION USES E-ASSISTED TRAINING AND YOU FEEL IT IS USEFUL TO YOU AS TRAINERS. OTHERWISE, PLEASE GO TO Q31

Q29. Which of the following, if any, would enable you or your organisation to make better use of e-assisted training? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- Better quality e-assisted training software (e.g. CD-ROMs, online sites or programs)
- Better knowledge/ signposting of where to access e-assisted training software
- More hardware (e.g. PCs/laptops/ projectors)
- More training in how to use e-assisted training.....
- Other (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
-
- Don't know.....

Q30. How much would you say you know, if anything, about where on the web to find online social care learning facilities?

- A great deal
- A fair amount.....
- Not very much
- Nothing at all
- Don't know.....

ICT Audit

Q31. Approximately how many computers do you have at your place of work?

- None.....
- 1 – 10
- 11 – 20
- 21 – 50
- 51 – 100
- 100+

PLEASE ANSWER Q32-Q34 IF YOU HAVE AT LEAST ONE COMPUTER AT WORK. IF YOU HAVE NO COMPUTERS AT WORK, PLEASE GO TO Q35

Q32. **And what proportion of you staff would you say have access to a computer at work?**

- 90% - 100%.....
 - 75% - 89%.....
 - 51% - 75%.....
 - 50%
 - 26% - 50%.....
 - 11% - 25%.....
 - 1% - 10%.....
 - None.....
 - Don't know.....
-

PLEASE ANSWER IF **SOME OF YOUR STAFF HAVE ACCESS** TO COMPUTERS AT WORK

Q33. **And what proportion of these computers give their users online access?**

- All of them
 - Most of them.....
 - About half
 - Not very many of them
 - None of them.....
 - Don't know.....
-

PLEASE ANSWER IF THE COMPUTERS AT WORK HAVE **ONLINE ACCESS**

Q34. **Are these computers broadband or dial-up?**

- Broadband.....
 - Dial-up.....
-

EVERYONE SHOULD ANSWER THE REST OF THE QUESTIONS

Q35. **Do you have any of the following at your place of work? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- A digital television.....
 - A laptop
 - An interactive whiteboard
 - A projector (computer projector, not an overhead)
 - None of these
 - Don't know.....
-

Q36. **And which of the following funding streams, if any, do you feel could be used to fund the provision of e-learning materials for your employees (such as CD-ROMs or online courses)?**

- Local Authority grant (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
 - Other government grant (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
 - National Lottery grant.....
 - Internal budget ringfenced specifically for e-learning.....
 - Internal budget for training generally.....
 - Other (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
 - Don't know.....
-

Q37. **And which of these, if any, have you accessed in the last six months?**

- Local Authority grant (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
 - Other government grant (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
 - National Lottery grant.....
 - Internal budget ringfenced specifically for e-learning.....
 - Internal budget for training generally.....
 - Other (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
 - None – I'm not currently aware of any such funding.....
 - Don't know.....
-

Q38. **And which of the following funding streams, if any, do you feel could be used to fund the provision of Information & Communication Technology hardware or software (such as computers and general programs)?**

- Local Authority grant (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
 - Other government grant (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
 - National Lottery grant.....
 - Internal budget ringfenced for ICT.....
 - Other (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
 - None – I’m not currently aware of any such funding.....
 - Don’t know.....
-

Q39. **And which of these, if any, have you accessed in the last six months?**

- Local Authority grant (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN)
 - Other government grant (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
 - National Lottery grant.....
 - Internal budget ringfenced for ICT.....
 - Other (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW)
 - None – I’m not currently aware of any such funding.....
 - Don’t know.....
-

About you

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE USE THESE DETAILS FOR ANALYSIS PURPOSES ONLY. YOUR RESPONSES ARE KEPT COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS.

Q40. **Which part of the country do you work in?** PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| East of England..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| South East..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| London | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| South West..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| West Midlands..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| East Midlands..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| North East | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yorkshire and Humberside..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| North West | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know/not sure..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q41. **What sort of organisation do you work for?**

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| A local council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A public sector care organisation which is not a Local Authority..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A private care organisation..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A charitable/voluntary sector care organisation..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN BELOW) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | |

Q42. **Approximately how many people work at your place of work?**

By place of work we mean the specific care home you work in, the social services department if in a local authority, or social carerelated section of the company you work for

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| 1 – 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 – 20 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21 – 50 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 51 – 100 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 100+ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q43. **And how many staff, if any, report directly to you?**

- None.....
 - 1
 - 2 – 5
 - 6 - 10
 - 11 – 20
 - 21 – 50
 - 50+
 - Don't know.....
-

PLEASE ANSWER IF YOU ARE **NOT** A LOCAL AUTHORITY EMPLOYER

Q44. **What sort of work do you do?** PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

- Run the organisation
 - Managerial work.....
 - Frontline staff with a professional qualification..
 - Frontline staff working towards a qualification
(e.g. support worker)
 - Support, maintain the organisation.....
 - Other (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN
BELOW)
 -
 - Don't know.....
-

PLEASE ANSWER IF YOU **ARE** A LOCAL AUTHORITY EMPLOYER

Q45. **Which of the following best describes your job title?** PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

- Director.....
 - Assistant Director
 - Manager
 - Officer.....
 - Other (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN
BELOW)
 -
-

Q46. **Do you tend to work . . . PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY**

In one fixed location (e.g. a care home).....

A number of locations (e.g. providing care in domestic settings)

Q47. **Is your work . . . PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY**

Full-time.....

Part-time.....

Q48. **How long have you been in your current job? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY**

Less than six months.....

Between six months and a year

Between one and two years

Between two and five years

Between five and ten years

Over ten years.....

Thank you for taking part in this important research. We would also like to gauge the views of frontline staff working in social care.

To do so is simple: please just answer the next four short questions. Once this has been done we will either send employee questionnaires direct to your employees or send you the required number of hard-copy questionnaires which we would be grateful if you could distribute them. Then your role is over.

Your employees will need to fill out the questionnaires and post them back to MORI in the stamped reply envelope included with their questionnaire.

If your organisation takes part, as an added thank you to you, we will double the chance of you winning the laptop.

Q49. **Do you want your organisation to take part in the Employee Survey?**

Yes

No.....

IF YOU DO WANT YOUR ORGANISATION TO TAKE PART IN THE EMPLOYEE SURVEY, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

Q50. Are you able to supply MORI with a database of staff names and home addresses? We would use this database only for the purposes of sending your employees the employee questionnaire and we would then destroy the database.

Yes

No.....

IF YOU CANNOT SUPPLY A STAFF DATABASE, PLEASE ANSWER THIS QUESTION

Q51. For us to send you the questionnaires for you to distribute, we need to know how many staff you employ. Please could you write the number in here.

PLEASE WRITE IN BELOW

Q52. Can you please confirm that we have your correct name and address. If our information is not correct, then please make any necessary changes in the space below.

Q53. Finally, if you have any other comments regarding e-learning and social care, please make them below.

Employee Questionnaire

E-learning in social care: research on behalf of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

Does your employer ever send you on training courses?
Do you ever use a computer or the internet in your working life?
Do you ever read books or magazines which help you do your job better?

We want to find out how people who work in the social care sector are trained – and what opportunities exist for using information technology to improve people's skills. That is why we would like you to take ten minutes to fill in this important questionnaire. The results of this survey will be used to develop strategies for improving opportunities for training and learning within the social care sector.

MORI, the independent research agency, is carrying out this survey on behalf of the Social Care Institute for Excellence, the body which aims to develop and promote good practice across the sector.

We would like to reassure you that all your answers will be confidential and anonymous and that it will not be possible to identify you from your answers. Because of this, we would like you to be as honest as possible when filling in the questionnaire.

As a thank you for taking part, all completed questionnaires will be entered into a prize draw for a digital camera – so please remember to send the questionnaire back to us, using the enclosed pre-paid envelope!

If you would like to talk to anyone about this survey, please feel free to call Oswin Baker confidentially at MORI on 020 7347 3000.

If you would like assistance in completing this questionnaire over the telephone, please contact Katya Kostadintcheva at MORI on 020 7347 3000.

Thank you

Oswin Baker
MORI Social Research Institute

YOUR WORK

Firstly, we'd like to ask you a few questions about what you do.

1. Which part of the country do you work in?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| London | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| South East | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| East of England | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| South West | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| West Midlands | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| East Midlands | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| North East | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| North West | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know/not sure | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. What sort of organisation do you work for?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| A local council/public sector care provider | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A private care provider | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A charitable/voluntary sector care provider | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please write in) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. What sort of work do you do?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Run the organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Managerial work | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Frontline work | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Support/maintain the organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please write in) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know/not sure | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Do you tend to work . . .

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| In one fixed location (e.g. an office or a care home) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In a number of locations (e.g. in the field or in domestic settings) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Is your work . . .

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| Full-time | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Part-time | <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. How long have you been in your current job with your current employer?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Less than six months | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Between six months and a year | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Between one and two years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Between two and five years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Between five and ten years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Over ten years | <input type="checkbox"/> |

USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

We'd now like to ask you a few questions about your use and familiarity with IT (Information Technology).

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'I feel I have the skills I need to use information technology' (e.g. computers, SMS texting, digital television)?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tend to agree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tend to disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

8. Do you have access to a computer at *home*?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> PLEASE GO TO Q9 |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> PLEASE GO TO Q10 |

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION IF YOU HAVE ACCESS TO A COMPUTER AT HOME. OTHERWISE, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 10

9. How often do you *use* a computer at home?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Every day | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| At least once a week but not every day | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| At least once a month but not every week | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Less than once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Never | <input type="checkbox"/> |

10. Do you have access to a computer at *work*?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> PLEASE GO TO Q11 |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> PLEASE GO TO Q12 |

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION IF YOU HAVE ACCESS TO A COMPUTER AT WORK. OTHERWISE, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 12

11. How often do you *use* a computer at work?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Every day | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| At least once a week but not every day | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| At least once a month but not every week | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Less than once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Never | <input type="checkbox"/> |

12. Would you *like* to use a computer at work?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Yes – and I already do | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yes – but I don't at the moment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No – but I use one at the moment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No – and I don't use one at the moment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

13. What do you think could be the advantages or disadvantages of using a computer at work?

(PLEASE TICK AS MANY AS YOU AGREE WITH)

- It can speed up my work
- It can free me up to do more interesting work
- It can get in the way of my work
- It can make everything 'faceless' and bureaucratic
- It can be too time-consuming
- It can be too complicated to use

TRAINING

We would like to get an idea of the sort of training you may undertake in your work. By training, we mean that your employer either sends you on a course, brings a trainer to your organisation or that there is an in-house training programme where you are trained by colleagues.

14. How often, if at all, do you receive training?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- Every day
- At least once a week but not every day
- At least once a month but not every week
- At least four times a year
- At least twice a year
- Once a year
- Less often than annually
- I've never received training in my current job(s)

PLEASE ANSWER THIS QUESTION IF YOU HAVE BEEN TRAINED BY YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER. IF YOU HAVEN'T, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 17.

15. When you have been trained by your current employer, has the trainer ever used a computer to help them deliver the training (e.g. for a Powerpoint slide show or to demonstrate a website)?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- Yes – all the time and it is always helpful
- Yes – all the time and it is sometimes helpful
- Yes – all the time and it is never helpful

- Yes – sometimes and it is always helpful
- Yes – sometimes and it is sometimes helpful
- Yes – sometimes and it is never helpful

- No – but it would be helpful if they did
- No – and it is not needed
- Don't know/not sure

PLEASE ANSWER THIS QUESTION IF YOU HAVE BEEN TRAINED BY YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER. IF YOU HAVEN'T, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 17.

16. When you have been trained by your current employer, what type of training have you received? (PLEASE TICK AS MANY BOXES AS APPLY)

An external course which lasted *more than a day* and which:

- refreshed my current skills
- gave me new skills

An external course which lasted *less than a day* and which:

- refreshed my current skills
- gave me new skills

One-to-one training (i.e. just me and a trainer) which:

- refreshed my current skills
- gave me new skills

Internal training with a colleague which:

- refreshed my current skills
- gave me new skills

'On-the-job' or 'hands-on' training which:

- refreshed my current skills
- gave me new skills

Training which involved me reading books or magazines in my own time to:

- refresh my current skills
- give me new skills

Training which involved me using a manual in my own time to:

- refresh my current skills
- give me new skills

Training which involved me using CD-ROM-based materials on a computer to:

- refresh my current skills
- give me new skills

Training which involved me using the internet in my own time to:

- refresh my current skills
- give me new skills

Training which involved me using an in-house intranet (by 'intranet' we mean a private network within an organisation available to its employees only) in my own time to:

- refresh my current skills
- give me new skills

Training which involved me using a Virtual Learning Environment (a place on the internet where learners and tutors can communicate and share knowledge) in my own time to:

- refresh my current skills
- give me new skills

Other (please write in)

Don't know/can't remember any training

17. Which of the following statements, if any, do you agree with? (PLEASE TICK AS MANY BOXES AS APPLY)

- I know how to do my job and don't need more training
- I think it's important that people are regularly trained to do their job better
- Training is too time-consuming – it takes me away from my work
- Training is important but I wish it could be done more efficiently
- Training is important but it isn't always as relevant as it should be
- I don't agree with any of these statements
- Don't know/not sure

18. Whether you have received training or not, what would be your preferred type of training?

(PLEASE TICK UP TO THREE BOXES)

- An external course which lasts more than a day
- An external course which lasts less than a day

- Group training with a trainer training small groups
- One-to-one training (i.e. just me and a trainer)
- Internal training with a colleague
- 'On-the-job' or 'hands-on' training

- Training which involves me reading books or magazines
- Training which involves me using a manual
- Training which involves me using CD-ROM-based materials
- Training which involves me using the internet
- Training which involves me using an in-house intranet
- Training which involves me using a Virtual Learning Environment

- Other (please write in)
- Don't know/not sure

19. To what extent do you agree or disagree that your employer gives you enough support and encourages you to undertake training?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree that your employer gives you enough support and encourages you to undertake training using information technology?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

LEARNING

Training is a formal way of learning. There are many other ways to learn apart from formal training. This final section asks about other ways in which you can learn to do things better.

21. Thinking about your life outside work, when you need advice or information about any issue, where do you look for it?

(PLEASE TICK AS MANY BOXES AS APPLY)

- From colleagues
- From my manager/employer
- From clients
- From friends and family outside work
- From magazines and books, etc.
- From the internet
- From mobile phone text messages
- From Digital TV
- From training courses
- Other (please write in)
- Don't know/not sure

22. Now thinking about when doing your job, where do you pick up advice or information about how to work better?

(PLEASE TICK AS MANY BOXES AS APPLY)

- From colleagues
- From my manager/employer
- From clients
- From friends and family outside work
- From myself and the practical aspects of doing my job
- From magazines and books, etc.
- From the internet
- From the in-house (organisational) intranet
- From mobile phone text messages
- From Digital TV
- From training courses
- Other (please write in)
- Don't know/not sure

23. Which of the following do you think are the best sources of advice and information on how to work better?

(PLEASE TICK UP TO THREE BOXES)

- Colleagues
- Manager/employer
- Clients
- Friends and family outside work
- The practical aspects of doing my job
- Magazines and books, etc.
- The internet
- An in-house (organisational) intranet
- Mobile phone text messages
- Digital TV
- Training courses
- Other (please write in)
- Don't know/not sure

24. How interested, if at all, would you be in receiving training and learning resources via a computer or through the internet?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Very interested | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fairly interested | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neither interested nor uninterested | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fairly uninterested | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very uninterested | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

25. How practical would it be for you to receive training and learning resources via a computer or through the internet?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Very practical | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fairly practical | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neither practical nor impractical | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fairly impractical | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very impractical | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

26. To what extent do you agree or disagree that your employer gives you enough support and encourages you to learn?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tend to agree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tend to disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

27. To what extent do you agree or disagree that your employer gives you enough support and encourages you to learn *using information technology*?

(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tend to agree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tend to disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. To round it off, we just have some quick questions about you.

Are you . . .

- Male
- Female

What age group to you fall into?

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55+

What, if any, is your highest educational or professional qualification?

- GCSE/O-Level/CSE
- Vocational qualifications (e.g. NVQ1 or 2)
- A-Level or equivalent
- Bachelor Degree or equivalent
- Masters/PhD or equivalent
- Other
- No formal qualifications
- Don't know

Are you either of the following:

- A qualified, registered social worker
- A qualified teacher
- Still studying

Once you have filled in the questionnaire, please put it in the reply-paid envelope which came with it and send it back to MORI. Our address is MORI House, 79-81 Borough Road, London SE1 1FY

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME