



**Religion and Belief  
in Adult Learning:  
Learner Views**

**Undertaken by**

**Babcock Research**

**On behalf of**

**The Skills Funding Agency**

**October 2012**

# Religion and Belief in Adult Learning: Learner Views

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## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to extend their thanks to the following groups of people, without which this national evaluation would not have been able to reach out across the adult learning sector to gather such a comprehensive picture of the experiences and views of adult learners.

- The project steering group for their enthusiasm and guidance: Dan Simons (Skills Funding Agency); John Wise (National Council for Faiths and Beliefs in FE); Margaret Adjaye (Learning and Skills Improvement Service); Kat Luckock and Rob Holland (National Union of Students); and Neil Baker (Equality Challenge Unit)
- All adult learning providers in England were provided with information about the survey via the Skills Funding Agency's 'Update' and emails direct from the research team. Many subsequently distributed the web survey link and publicity to their learners.
- Numerous learners in Further Education who took the time to log onto the online survey to share their experiences and views anonymously.
- Forty adult learners who volunteered to speak one-to-one with a researcher in more depth. Five learning providers who gave freely of their time to arrange group discussion sessions, and the learners who participated.

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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Skills Funding Agency is committed to equal opportunities for all as set out in its Single Equality Scheme. There is currently limited evidence on the needs and experiences of learners who have a religion or belief that guides their lives (or for that matter, of learners who do not have any such belief). Therefore the Skills Funding Agency commissioned Babcock Research in December 2011 to explore the impact of learners' religion and/or belief on their experiences of adult learning.

## Method

Research was undertaken with adult learners through an online survey, promoted through FE providers (1139 eligible responses from 19+ age group); 40 qualitative interviews and 5 focus groups.

## Demographics

### Religion and Belief

Just over half (52.8%) of respondents consider themselves to have a religion and a further one in ten (10.0%) consider themselves to have a non-religious belief.

Non-religious belief is under-reported, most likely because of widespread misunderstanding of, and/or aversion to, the word 'belief', with a corresponding over-reporting of the 'No religion and/or belief' group.

The majority of those reporting having a religious belief are Christian (57.1%) followed by Muslim respondents (26.5%); Hindu (4.3%); Buddhist (1.8%); Pagan (1.5%); Sikh (1.3%); Spiritualist (1.2%); and Jewish (1%) respondents.

Over a quarter (27.8%) of those learners who revealed a non-religious belief describe their belief as Agnosticism (2.8% of survey respondents). A further 24.3% of those with a non-religious belief subscribe to Humanism, and one in five (20.9%) are Atheist. Others include: spiritualism (17.4%); Ecological belief systems

(12.2%); and Vegetarianism<sup>1</sup> (11.3%). Other beliefs including Paganism and Secularism were each mentioned by fewer than one in ten respondents.

### Other Demographics

Over 6 in 10 respondents are female (63%) compared with over a third who are male (35%). Just under 3% describe their gender in a non-binary way. In comparison, across adult learning as a whole, 57% are female and 43% are male.

Respondents are split 50-50 between those under and over 30 years. Nearly three in ten responses came from learners aged 19-21 years.

The majority of respondents are 'White' (70%), with 14% describing themselves as 'Asian'; 7% as 'Black' and 3% as 'Mixed Ethnicity'.

Seven out of ten respondents (72%) report that they have no disability. Nearly one quarter (24%) consider themselves to have a disability of some sort.

### Practice and Openness of Religion/Belief

Over half (53.3%) of respondents with a religion stated that they actively practise their religion. One in twenty of those who consider they have a religious belief state they were brought up in a faith but do not practise at all – their faith being more a 'demographic characteristic' than a belief.

Half of respondents who have a religion and/or belief do not have any commitment to practices during the working day – more so for those with a non-religious belief (84%) compared with those with a religious belief (44%). Prayer at flexible times of the day (19%); at set intervals or times during the day (18%); and specific dietary requirements (14%) are the most commonly cited practices for both groups combined.

<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this report 'Vegetarianism' includes the more restricted dietary parameters of Veganism and Fructarianism / Fruitarianism

Within the learning environment overall more than half (56%) are at least partially open about their religion/belief: this includes a third (35%) who are fully open and a fifth (21%) who are only partially open.

Between a quarter and a third of respondents are fully open about their religion or belief in most situations within learning (including WBL employment situations: 27%, employers; 30% with co-workers).

Almost half of those with a religion/belief say that it is 'clear to some' or 'clear to all' that they give outward signs of their religion/belief by expressing their views in learning and social situations. A lower proportion feels that their clothing or jewellery, hairstyle or other symbols provide a fairly clear indication of their belief to those around them

In most situations, a greater proportion of learners with a religious belief than those with a non-religious belief state that they will be fully open with the people with whom they come into contact.

### **Perceptions of, and Barriers to, Adult Learning**

Respondents were asked how welcoming adult learning was in their experience on a scale of 1-10 where 1 meant 'not at all welcoming' and 10 meant 'extremely welcoming'. The average score is 7.98 out of 10. This score is very slightly higher than that given by Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Trans (LGBT) learners in a comparable survey in spring 2011 (Mean 7.56).<sup>2</sup>

Very few learners with a religion and/or belief (6.5%) say that they have encountered barriers to taking up adult learning opportunities. Just 3.1% of learners with a religion and/or belief say that they have concerns about remaining in their currently learning to complete their current learning aim. Similarly, (3.1%) of

learners have concerns about their ability to meet their current learning aim as a result of their religion and/or belief.

Learners were asked about any barriers they encountered within learning due to their religion and/or beliefs. Just over 6% of respondents state that they suffered from a lack of parental financial support for learning and again, just over 6% state that they encountered barriers to taking up mainstream funding to support learning fees and living costs. Nearly 4.9% cite provision of food suitable to other religions and/or beliefs as a barrier.

Of concern, one in twenty (5%) of those with religious beliefs, particularly those with visible signs of belief (9%), find that the provision of facilities targeted at other groups of learners (e.g. different ethnic groups; beliefs, sexual orientations etc) to be a barrier, a higher proportion than those with non-religious beliefs (3.5) or no belief (3.5).

### **Bullying/Harassment and Safe Spaces**

One in ten respondents (10.3%) reveals that they have experienced tensions between themselves and other learners in adult learning due to their own religion and/or belief. Those with non-religious beliefs are more likely to experience tensions.

Furthermore, learners with religious beliefs (7%) are slightly more likely than those with non-religious beliefs (6%) or no belief (6%) to have issues with other learners or groups of learners

Just over one in ten (11%) of the survey respondents state that they have experienced some bullying or harassment within the adult learning environment due to their religion and/or belief.

Overall, 6% of respondents state that they have experienced bullying or harassment due to religion; 5% due to belief. Those who display visible signs of their religion or belief are more likely to state they have been subject to bullying and/or harassment.

<sup>2</sup> Babcock Research (2011) 'Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Equality in Adult Learning' – Skills Funding Agency, Coventry  
[http://readingroom.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/sfa/Sexual\\_Orientation\\_and\\_Gender\\_Identity\\_Equality\\_in\\_Adult\\_Learning\\_Published\\_August\\_2011.pdf](http://readingroom.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/sfa/Sexual_Orientation_and_Gender_Identity_Equality_in_Adult_Learning_Published_August_2011.pdf)

Of those with religious beliefs, 11% have experienced bullying due to their religion, 4% due to their beliefs. Of those with non-religious beliefs, 11% have experienced bullying or harassment due to their beliefs. 5% of those without any religion and belief have experienced bullying and harassment due to their belief.

The rates of self-disclosed bullying and harassment are just lower than that disclosed by Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual learners who were surveyed in 2011 (due to sexual orientation - 14%) and Transsexual learners (due to gender identity - 30%).

Just under half (47%) of those who have experienced bullying or harassment in adult learning due to their religion and/or belief have reported at least one incident to someone.

Fewer than 3 in 10 learners who feel that they have been bullied or harassed within adult learning due to their religion and/or belief has taken steps to report the situation to someone within the learning environment, although one in six (17%) have reported it to someone else outside the learning environment.

One in ten learners (10%) feel that there is no-one they can turn to in the learning environment, with a higher proportion, one in six, of those with a non-religious belief (17%) stating this compared with those with a religious belief (12%) and those with no religion and/or belief (6%).

### **Accommodation of Religion and/or Belief by Learning Providers**

Two out of five (40.8%) respondents feel that their learning provider has accommodated their religion/belief by providing 'safe spaces' in the learning environment at least 'to the extent they can', including one in four who chose the top point of the scale 'very well'.

The next most common accommodation for religion/belief according to survey respondents is the sensitivity of the curriculum content (including practicals and assessments): scores at least 'to the extent they can' by 38.9% overall (22.7% saying 'very well'). This is closely followed

by timetabling courses flexibly for festivals etc: at least 'to the extent they can' (36.6%), including 21.7% 'very well'.

One in three survey respondents (33.5%) feel that their learning provider has accommodated their religion/belief to enable them to participate socially.

Fewer learners give the highest scores to their learning provider's ability to provide suitable food; provision of suitable spaces for prayer or meditation; timetabling/flexibility on a daily basis for prayer; and for enabling participation in sporting activities: in all cases fewer than one in three feel their provider does this to the extent they could.

The qualitative research revealed that vegetarians in particular feel that their dietary needs are only met in a tokenistic way. Those with religious beliefs stated that places to pray are not always provided.

### **Discussion of Religion/Belief in the Curriculum**

Two in five learners say that there is some opportunity for the discussion of 'religious beliefs in general' (23.2% fully and 16.9% partially) and similar proportions report that their course allows for discussion of understanding between religions and/or beliefs (24.8% fully and 16.4% partially).

Fewer learners say that their course provides the opportunity to discuss non-religious beliefs in general (20.6% fully and 15.5% partially).

A lower proportion again feel that their course provides the opportunity to discuss their own religion (16.2% fully and 13.8% partially) or their own beliefs (16.4% fully and 13.3% partially) than to discuss religion or non-religious beliefs in general.

### **Policies and Systems**

The vast majority of learners (61.5%) say that, to the best of their knowledge, their learning provider has an equality policy relating to, or including, religion. This does not differ significantly by sub-group.

Learners are less certain about whether their learning provider has an equality policy relating to, or including, non-

religious beliefs than they are about policies relating to religion. Half (49.3%) of respondents are sure that such a policy exists, which is 13 percentage points lower than the equivalent of a policy including religion. Those with a non-religious belief are less likely to feel sure that there is a policy including non-religious beliefs compared with those with a religious belief set.

Just under half (46.9%) of respondents perceive that the policies fully translate into reality and a further 6.5% feel they partially translate to reality. Learners who display visible signs of their (usually religious) belief are less likely to perceive that the policies translate to reality. Overall, between a third and one in four state that they are either not aware of a policy or aren't sure if it translates into reality. One in 20 (4.7%) overall states that the policies do not translate into reality.

Two thirds (64.1%) of learners perceive that there is a mechanism for reporting bullying or harassment within the learning environment, with one third of learners unsure or unable to state a view on this factor. A further one in fifteen (6.5%) perceive that there is no mechanism in place to report bullying/harassment within their learning provision.

### Support Services

The support systems for learners within their own learning provision of which most respondents are aware are clear rules/policies (35.7%) and Welfare Officer /Student Services (33.7%). Around a quarter of learners perceive that there is a Student Union (27.5%) and, in the context of a support system, 'other learners with the same religion/belief' at their learning provision are cited by 23.0%.

The low proportion of learners citing fellow learners (with the same religion/belief) as a support system shows that some learners might feel isolated. This is particularly the case for those with non-religious beliefs a result that may be explained because they are arguably less organised, less visible and have looser affiliations and a wider range of groups.

### Learning Experiences

A quarter (24.8%) of respondents feel that they have had positive experiences or outcomes in learning due to their religion and/or belief (see Figure 34). Those with a religion (34.8%) have a greater propensity to report positive experiences/outcomes than those with a belief (27.2%).

### Monitoring

Respondents in the qualitative research are divided on the issue of monitoring. Some learners state that they understand the reasons for monitoring, whether they liked it or not. Others are pro- monitoring but have reservations on how the data might be used, for example for positive discrimination.

Of those who are pro-monitoring, views differ about when the monitoring might take place. Some feel that during registration at the beginning of the course would be the optimal time, others feel that a better time would be during the course once students have settled in.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

There are both positive and negative messages emerging from this report, as well as results that tell us more about the perception of belief.

On the positive side, the majority of learners with and without a religion and/or belief rate their adult learning provision as 'welcoming'. One quarter of respondents felt that they have had a positive experience or outcome in adult learning due to their religion and/or belief – more so for those with a religious belief than for those with a non-religious belief or those with no religion and/or belief.

Providers should continue to build on their welcoming environment. Those respondents who feel that they have had a positive experience due to their religion/belief are more likely to be those that had religious beliefs. Furthermore those learners with visible signs of belief and those who are open in class are more likely to report a positive experience such as being invited to be a student representative or being offered training to be a welfare or student officer. Opportunities to participate need to be extended and promoted to all.

Bullying and harassment due to religion and/or belief is alive and well, with over 11% of learners overall stating that they had experienced bullying and harassment for religious and other beliefs. In the qualitative research, it was revealed that some learners do not consider verbal abuse bullying and harassment or would rather ignore it.

With over one in ten respondents with religious beliefs and over one in ten respondents with non-religious beliefs suffering from bullying and harassment, it appears that the motivations for bullying and harassment lie in the perception of difference and in competing and opposing beliefs. It would also seem that accommodation for specific groups (particularly religious groups) may result in further tensions and certain groups feeling marginalised or excluded unless these accommodations are handled sensitively (this might include, for example the provision of Halal meat or meat in general for vegetarians; provision of one prayer room for a variety of faiths with different needs).

Examples of how bullying and harassment are not tolerated and the mechanisms through which they can be reported should be displayed prominently. The consequences of bullying behaviour should also be displayed. The rules and policies and consequences should also be spelt out at the beginning of courses and reaffirmed throughout.

Before trying to accommodate a particular group's perceived or stated need, it may be worthwhile consulting the wider learner community. Beliefs clash and where they do, a lowest common denominator solution which suits all can often be found. Consultation will ensure that no learner feels totally excluded, including those with 'no beliefs'.

A very low proportion of learners who stated that they had been subject to bullying reported this to anyone within their learning provision. Furthermore there is a considerable minority of learners who state that there is no-one to whom they can turn with a problem. This is particularly the case for those with a non-religious belief.

There should be no let up in anti-bullying, and respect campaigns alongside promotion of equality policies, and reporting mechanisms. With the embedding of equality and diversity within the teaching and learning grade in the Common Inspection Framework, this work will need to be undertaken at a course level as well as at a provider level. Promotion of equality of belief should include reference to non-religious beliefs.

Lack of awareness of an equal opportunity policy that covers religion and/or belief may underpin low reporting rates for bullying and harassment. While just under two thirds of learners are aware of a policy that covers religion, less than half of learners are aware of a policy covering non-religious beliefs.

Some learners are wary of the potential for conflict or for tensions to arise between other learners whether it be with different religious beliefs, with different non-religious beliefs and/or with those with no beliefs. With over one in ten learners stating that they have experienced tensions (highest with those with a non-religious belief) and over 6% stating that they have issues with other learners/groups of learners due to their religion and/or belief (highest amongst those with a religious belief), this is a small but significant minority.

While the majority of learners in the qualitative research seemed to value compromise and tolerance, a small minority, some with religious beliefs (and in our small qualitative sample, particularly Christians) were less likely to compromise their beliefs to accommodate others.

Further to the promotion of equality policies covering non-religious belief as well as religious belief, eligibility criteria for welfare officers and student officers should be set and publicised which include: understanding and acceptance of the entirety of the provider's equality policy (all strands) and thus tolerance and understanding of all characteristics covered by the Equality Act.

There was no consensus on equal opportunities monitoring amongst the qualitative research participants. Some respondents feel that although monitoring feels invasive, it is useful to inform the meeting of need; others felt it was unnecessary, or worse, stir up issues and/or concern people who would rather not reveal their belief sets.

Prior to any religion and/or belief monitoring system being introduced by any provider, sensitive consultation should be undertaken followed by detailed publicity as to the reasons for monitoring and the use to which the data will be put.

This research has revealed the difficulties in definition of, perception of and, potentially, accommodation of non-religious belief to the same extent as religious belief. Given the complexity of the legal definition, it is not surprising that providers might find it more difficult to cater to this segment of learners, resulting in those with non-religious beliefs having less positive scores on many measures in this survey compared with those with religious beliefs or those with no religion and/or belief.

This problem is exacerbated by the barrier that the very word 'belief' poses for some with non-religious beliefs, for whom the words philosophy or life-style choice are preferable. This is a societal issue but one

which can be tackled by providers in their own learning environments. With the proportion of those with religious belief over-stated (due to those who do not practise but have a demographic affiliation only) and the proportion of those with non-religious beliefs under-stated (due to the definition issues), this is a group that should not be side-lined.

Providers should be pro-active in describing the Equality Act as it relates to religion and belief to ensure that all learners with a religious or non-religious belief understand the way the Act relates to them and the way the equality policy of the provider covers them. This is, potentially, a more difficult task with those who have a non-religious belief, some of whom do not yet recognise that their belief may be covered by the Equality Act. This is partly a result of the word 'belief' acting as a barrier for some of this group. Some state that belief does not describe the philosophy or lifestyle choice that affects the way they live their life. Others think that 'belief' refers to religious beliefs.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

The Skills Funding Agency's Single Equality Scheme sets out how it plans to meet the requirements of equalities legislation and place equality at the heart of what it does.

The Equality Act 2010 requires many public bodies to identify the areas where they can have most impact on equality, and develop and publicly set out equality objectives, based on evidence, consultation and involvement.

In contrast to the protected characteristics of sex, disability, race and age, (where the FE sector has access to extensive data on participation, success and learner views) there is currently very limited evidence available on the experiences of learners with the protected characteristic of religion or belief. However, the Agency does not currently propose any systematic collection of data about learners' religion/belief as it does not consider the case for doing so is currently strong enough to outweigh the degree of intrusion and increase in bureaucracy it would entail. Therefore, it has commissioned targeted research to quantify the issues faced by learners, as well as gather in-depth, qualitative views on solutions.

### 2.1 Aims and Objectives

The Agency invited tenders from research agencies on its Equality and Diversity theme research framework contract to meet the following aims:

- To provide evidence about the experiences and views of learners with different religions and beliefs (including those with no belief), to inform the Skills Funding Agency's equality objectives.
- To provide evidence which could be helpful to other stakeholders, including colleges, providers and sector agencies.

The specific objectives were to answer:

- Do learners and potential learners face any barriers to participating and succeeding in adult learning and skills provision as a result of their religion or belief?
- Do learners feel that the sector should monitor and analyse quantitative data about learner religion and belief through monitoring forms? If not, are there other ways of collecting information about equality?
- Does the curriculum provide space to encounter and explore issues relating to religion and belief in an appropriate and sensitive way?
- Do colleges and providers make sufficient accommodation for learners to express and observe their religion or belief, including for example clothing and symbols; prayer and chaplaincy facilities; dietary requirements; festivals and holy days?
- Where facilities for prayer, worship, meditation and celebration exist, are they appropriate to the full range of religions and beliefs?
- Do learners feel they have experienced discrimination, bullying or harassment in adult learning as a result of their religion or belief?
- How effectively do colleges and providers respond to instances of religion and belief-related discrimination, bullying and harassment?
- How do learners' experiences of having a religion or belief compare with their experiences in other areas of learning, such as school, 16-18 further education or university?
- Are there good relations between learners with different religions and beliefs?
- Do learners experience tensions between religion and belief equality and other protected characteristics such as gender and sexual orientation?

## 2.2 Methodological Overview

Babcock Research's detailed methodology is provided in Appendix 1. The following methodological overview is provided to give a simple and accessible context for the data that will be discussed within this report.

The research design comprised:

- An online survey – open to all current adult learners in further education (including 16-18 year old learners as a comparison group).
- Forty in-depth interviews (telephone).
- Five focus group discussions with adult learners.

Babcock Research worked with the Steering Group convened by the Skills Funding Agency, and with Babcock's specialist advisers to develop an online survey to address the core research questions (above). The bespoke online survey programme was tested extensively before being launched.

The web survey was launched on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2012, and following extension, remained open until 11<sup>th</sup> May 2012. Survey launch publicity was conducted via the Agency's Update bulletin for providers (Issues 95 and 96), and follow-up emails were sent to over 1500 providers on the Agency's database (28<sup>th</sup> February, 30<sup>th</sup> March, and 19<sup>th</sup> April). Fliers and posters for display/distribution to learners were included (see Appendix 3a). A copy of the survey questions is provided in Appendix 3b.

The survey gave the opportunity for participants to volunteer to participate in further research (and a secure mechanism for providing contact details to the research team). From these volunteers, 40 depth interviews were secured and conducted.

Additionally, five focus groups were held at the premises of learning providers. The discussion guide used for the qualitative research is attached as an Appendix 3c.

## 2.3 About this Report

A number of conventions are employed within this report to assist with the concise presentation of numeric data, and with brevity within text.

Whole numbers presented in brackets with Figures or Tables show the 'bases' for statistics.

All Figures and Tables present percentages (unless otherwise stated) calculated upon the bases shown. Where 'mean' averages are shown, these are calculated upon the stated base, minus any responses 'not stated' or choosing a 'don't know/not applicable' response.

Tables and graphs are all labelled with a simple sequential 'Figure Number' and title. All tables and graphs have clearly labelled base sizes (for all sub-groups) and textual definitions of bases. The total of percentages shown in a table may vary slightly from 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

As far as possible, this research adopted the definitions used in the Equality Act 2010:

*PART 2 - EQUALITY: KEY CONCEPTS  
CHAPTER 1 - PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS*

*10 Religion or belief*

*(1) Religion means any religion and a reference to religion includes a reference to*

*a lack of religion.*

*(2) Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and a reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief.*

*(3) In relation to the protected characteristic of religion or belief—*

*(a) a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person of a particular religion or belief;*

*(b) a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons who are of the same religion or belief.*

However, due to the complexity of the definitions and the range of learners the online survey was open to, a degree of simplification was used. Hence we defined belief as:

*non-religious beliefs that affect the way you live your life.*

### 3 SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

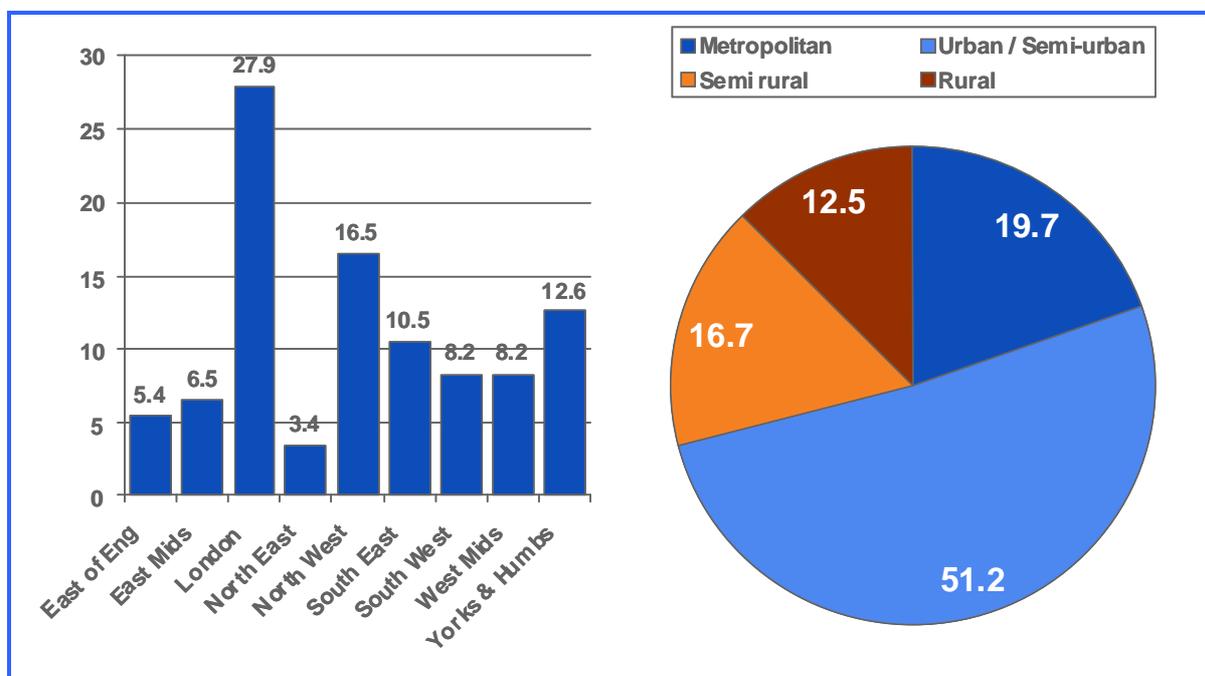
A total of 2492 attempts were made to complete the online survey: 1254 completed the entire set of survey questions appropriate to the respondent's individual circumstances, and 1238 dropped out (closed the survey window) before completing the entire survey.

Those who submitted responses up to at least Q33 (whether they had experienced any bullying or harassment due to their religion/belief) were deemed to be eligible for inclusion in analysis. A small number of responses were removed due to the apparent lack of seriousness of their responses (exhibited in open text comments). From the responses submitted, 1802 were identified as sufficiently complete, and eligible for analysis: 1139 adult learners and 663 learners aged 16-18. Data from younger learners (16-18) has been analysed separately: hence this report focuses upon the 1139 adult learners.

Survey responses were received from all regions of England. The greatest number of responses was received from learners in the London region, and the lowest number was received from learners in the North East.

**Figure 1: Region and Character of Area of Residence**

Base: All respondents (1139)



In addition, Figure 1 reveals that a fifth (19.7%) of respondents described the area they lived in as 'metropolitan' (large city), and a further half (51.2%) described their area as 'urban/semi-urban' (town or suburb of a city). Just under one in three (29.2%) described where they lived as rural (12.5%) or semi-rural (16.7%). Also see Appendix Table 1 and Appendix Table 2.

Figure 2 below compares our sample with the learning population (those in FE learning aged over 19<sup>3</sup>). Web surveys do not allow for quota setting so some sample distributions differ from the population.

<sup>3</sup> National Data Service, Statistical First Release: Table S31 Overall FE and Skills Participation (2010 – latest data) ([http://mireportslibrary.thedataservice.org.uk/demographics/equality\\_and\\_diversity/](http://mireportslibrary.thedataservice.org.uk/demographics/equality_and_diversity/))

**Figure 2: Region (Sample and Population)**

Base: All respondents (1139)

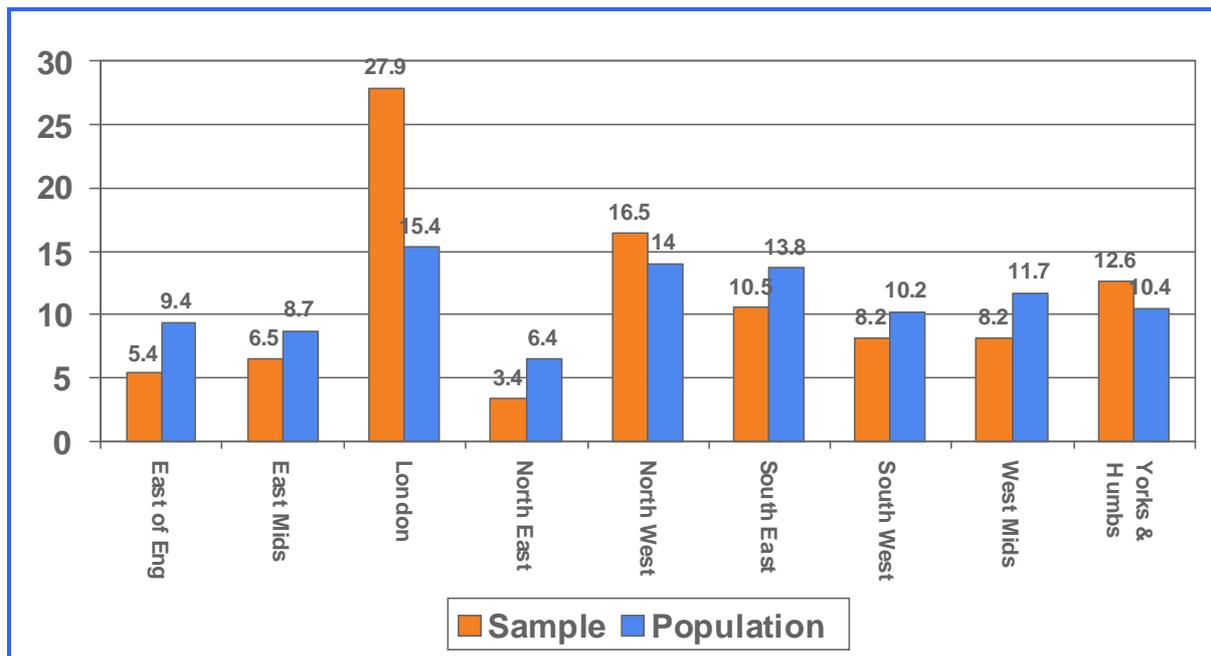


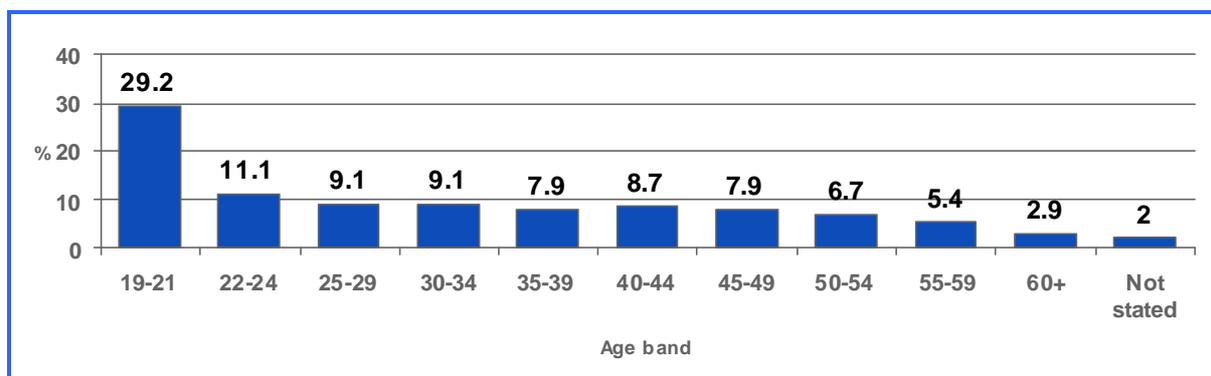
Figure 2 shows that responses to the web survey were disproportionately high in London, the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber, and slightly lower in the other regions.

### 3.1 Age Group

Respondents were split 50:50 between those aged under and over 30 years. Three in ten responses (29.2%) came from learners aged 19-21 years, and a further tenth from 22-24 year olds (11.1%) and another tenth aged 25-29 years (9.1%). There was a fairly even distribution between those aged 30 and 59 years. Just 2.9% of responses came from learners aged 60 years and over.

**Figure 3: Age of Respondent**

Base: All respondents (1139)



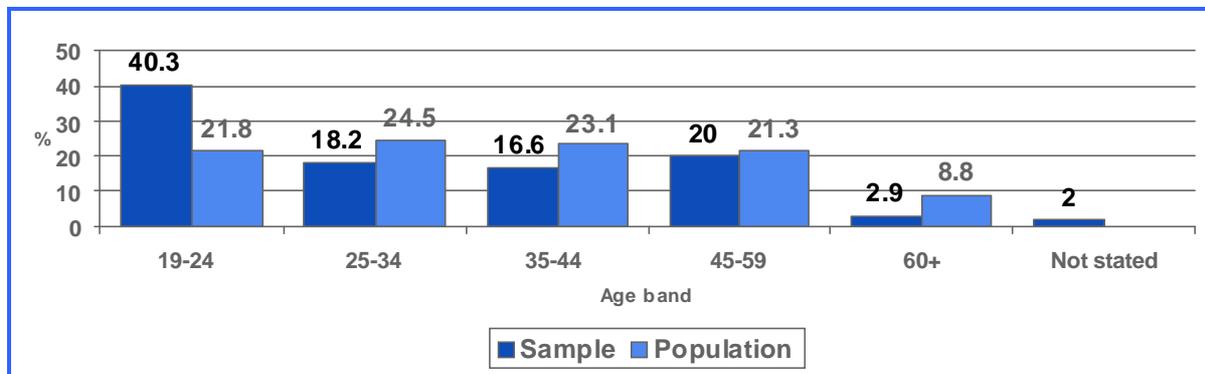
Appendix Table 3 shows the age breakdowns for key sub-groups.

Figure 4 overleaf shows the sample compared with the 19+ FE learning population. Some sample age bands have been amalgamated to enable comparison.

Our web survey has returned a higher proportion of 19-24 year olds than are in the learning population, and slightly under-represents 25-34 year olds, 34-44 year olds, and learners aged 60+.

**Figure 4: Age of Respondent (Sample and Population)**

Base: All respondents (1139)

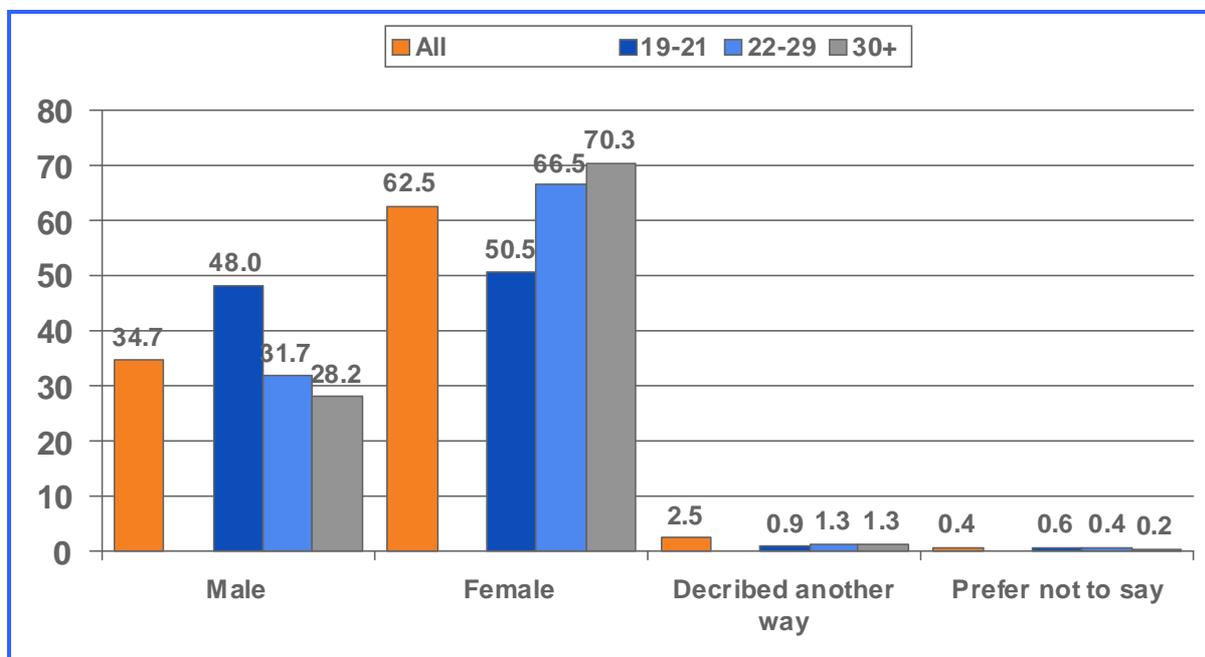


### 3.2 Gender

The majority of respondents are female: 62.5% compared with 34.7% who are male. 2.5% opted to describe their gender in some other (perhaps non-binary) way, and 0.4% prefer not to reveal their gender. Compared with the post 19 FE population overall (57.4% female; 42.6% male) our sample over-represents females.

**Figure 5: Gender by Age Group**

Base: All respondents (119)



The data reveals that amongst younger learners (aged 19-21) there is a fairly equal split between male and female respondents (48.0% male : 50.5% female). Over the age of 21, the

proportion of male learners in the sample decreases with age, to 28.2% of learners aged 30+.

Appendix Table 4 shows that a greater proportion of learners with religious beliefs than learners with non-religious beliefs or no beliefs were female (68.1% compared with 55.3% and 56.8% respectively). The detailed breakdowns also show that learners who are not open about their religion/belief with other learners in their class are more likely to be female than male (71.1% compared with 26.0%).

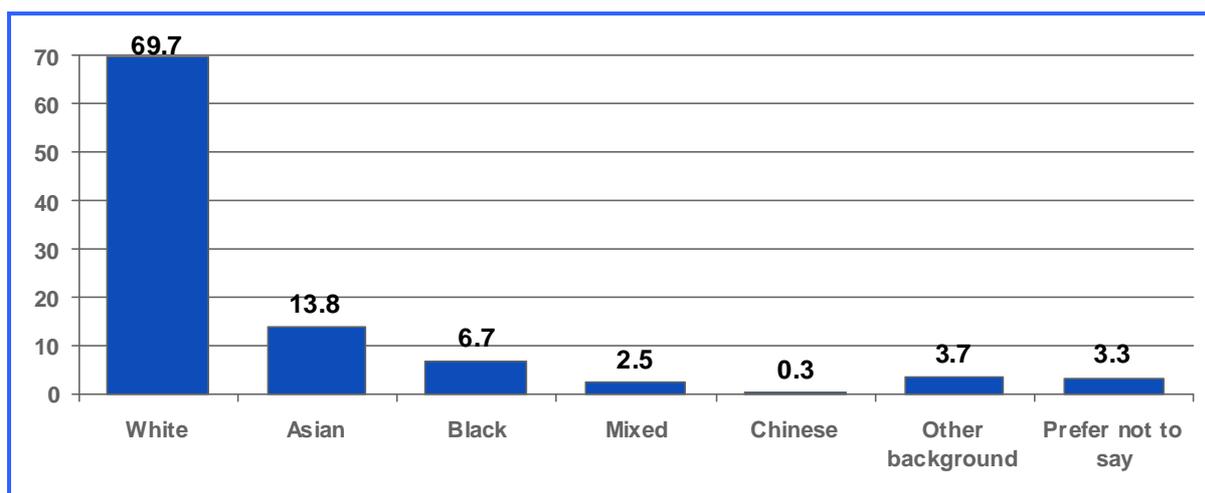
### 3.3 Ethnicity

The survey asked respondents to select their ethnicity from a list of five key groupings (used by the Office of National Statistics [ONS]), then a supplementary question (dependent upon the major ethnic group) asked for further definition. Figure 6 presents the major ethnic groups reported by respondents. Detail about ethnic sub-groups is provided in Appendix Table 5.

The majority of respondents consider themselves to be 'White' (69.7%): consisting of 59.4% White British, 1.6% White Irish and 8.5% who consider themselves as an 'Other White' ethnicity.

#### Figure 6: Ethnicity

Base: All respondents (1139)

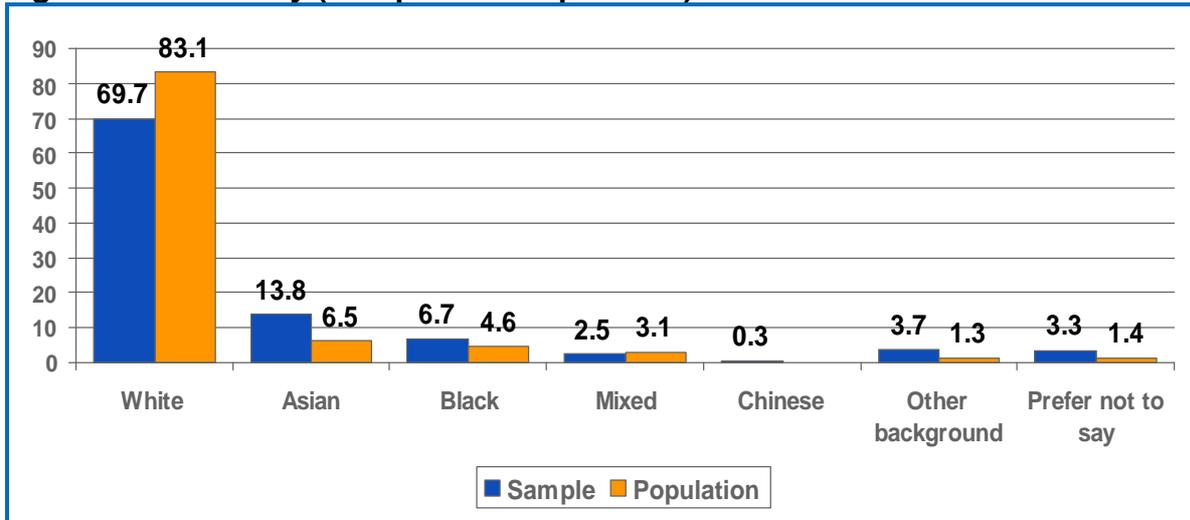


One in seven (13.8%) respondents considers themselves to be 'Asian or Asian British', including 5.8% who stated an Indian origin and 4.7% who stated a Pakistani origin.

One in fifteen (6.7%) consider themselves to be 'Black or Black British', of which the majority (4.4%) are Black African.

A small proportion, 2.5%, reported that they were of Mixed ethnicity; 0.3% were of a Chinese background, and 3.7% mentioned an ethnic background that does not fit within the main five groupings.

**Figure 7: Ethnicity (Sample and Population)**



Compared with the FE population aged 19+<sup>4</sup>, our sample over-represents Asian and Black Groups (and those with other backgrounds) and under-represents White respondents (Figure 7).

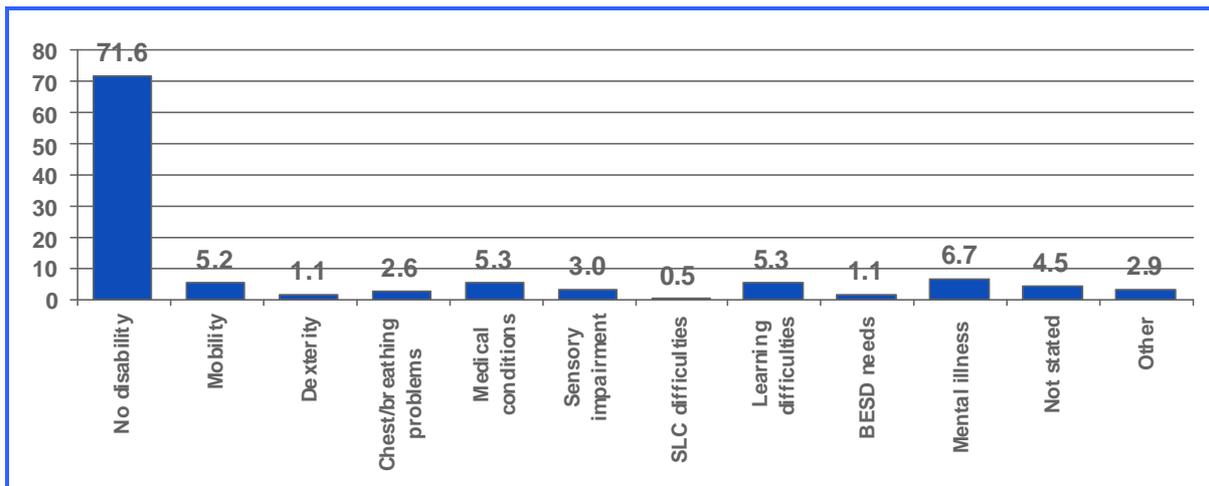
### 3.4 Disability

Seven out of ten respondents (71.6%) reported that they have no disability (compared with 82% in the 19+ FE population), and 4.5% preferred not to answer this question. The remaining 24.0% consider themselves to have a disability of some kind.

The most commonly reported type of disability is mental health problems (6.7%); 5.3% have a medical condition of some kind; 5.3% have a learning difficulty; and 5.2% have a mobility problem. The remainder of disabilities shown in Figure 8 are reported by fewer than 5% of respondents.

**Figure 8: Type of Disability**

Base: All respondents (1139)



<sup>4</sup> National Data Service, Statistical First Release: Table S31 Overall FE and Skills Participation (2010 – latest data) ([http://mireportslibrary.thedataservice.org.uk/demographics/equality\\_and\\_diversity/](http://mireportslibrary.thedataservice.org.uk/demographics/equality_and_diversity/) )

A further question was asked to explore the specific kinds of learning difficulty reported by one in twenty respondents (60 people). Dyslexia is reported by just over half of those with a learning difficulty. Around a quarter reported having a moderate learning difficulty. One in five report their learning difficulty as Dyspraxia, and smaller numbers reported having Asperger's Syndrome, Autistic Spectrum Disorder [ASD] and various other types of learning difficulty.

More detail is presented in Appendix Table 6.

### 3.5 Religion and/or Belief

Central to this research are the issues of religion and belief as defined and identified with by the respondent. While the online survey included some options that respondents could 'tick', it was also important that respondents were able to provide their own personal descriptions and terminology as an alternative. The survey also allowed respondents to identify with more than one religion and/or belief set.

Just over half (52.8%) of respondents consider themselves to have a religion and a further one in ten (10.0%) consider themselves to have a non-religious belief.

Almost four in every ten learners responding to the survey (37.4%) stated that they do not consider that they have a religion or a belief that affects the way they live their life.

A major finding of the research is that the 'religion' group is likely to be over-recorded (since it captures those who affiliate to a religion due to their background, upbringing or cultural reasons) and the non-religious belief group is definitely under-recorded due to nomenclature issues: many people with non-religious views according to which they live their lives do not associate these views as 'beliefs' but associate them with philosophies or ways of life. These people have identified themselves with the no religion and belief group, consequently inflating this group. These issues do not only affect the outcomes of research, but also the ways in which providers approach the definition of religion and belief (including non-belief) and the ways in which equality policies are presented.

Appendix Table 7 presents more detail for sub-groups within the sample.

#### 3.5.1 Religion

The majority of those reporting a religion are Christian (57.1%). The next most common religion revealed by respondents was Islam: 26.5% of respondents declared themselves to be Muslim. Figure 9 shows the religions reported by those who consider themselves to have a religion (with further detail for key sub groups in Appendix Table 8).

## Figure 9: Religion

Base: Respondents with a religion (601)

Base:	Any religion 601 %	Base:	Any religion 601 %
<b>Christian</b>	57.1	<b>Wiccan</b>	0.5
<b>Muslim</b>	26.5	<b>Baha'i</b>	0.2
<b>Hindu</b>	4.3	<b>Humanist</b>	0.2
<b>Buddhist</b>	1.8	<b>Jainism</b>	0.2
<b>Pagan</b>	1.5	<b>Rastafarianism</b>	0.2
<b>Sikh</b>	1.3	<b>Prefer not to say</b>	1.2
<b>Spiritualism</b>	1.2	<b>Other</b>	3.0
<b>Jewish</b>	1.0		

Followers of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism were asked a supplementary question which provided the opportunity to reveal the particular form or denomination of the religion that the respondent follows or feels most closely affiliated to.

A third (33.9%) of Christian respondents identified themselves as Catholic or Roman Catholic, and a similar proportion (32.2%) identified themselves as Church of England. Other Christian denominations are represented as follows: 7.9% Pentecostal; 5.6% Evangelical; 5% Methodist, 4.1% Baptist; and 11.4% report that they are of an 'other' Christian denomination.

Just over a quarter of respondents with a religion (26.5%) identified themselves as Muslim. Within this group, three quarters of respondents are Sunni Muslim (75.5%); one in ten are Shi'ah Muslim (10.3%); and 14.2% are of an 'other' Muslim denomination or stated that they do not believe that Islam has different groupings.

### 3.5.2 Non-Religious Belief

One in ten respondents (10.0%) considers themselves to have a non-religious belief. These respondents were asked to describe the non-religious belief that affects the way they live. Figure 10 below shows these results.

More than a quarter (27.8%) of those learners who revealed a non-religious belief describe their belief as Agnosticism (not sure whether there is a god): this equates to 2.8% of all respondents to this survey. A further 24.3% of those with a non-religious belief subscribe to Humanism, and one in five (20.9%) are Atheist (do not believe in a god).

A range of other belief systems are reported by more than 10% of those who hold a belief system e.g. Spiritualism (17.4%); Ecological belief systems (12.2%); and Vegetarianism<sup>5</sup> (11.3%). Other beliefs including Paganism and Secularism were each mentioned by fewer than one in ten respondents.

<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of this report 'Vegetarianism' includes the more restricted dietary parameters of Veganism and Fructarianism / Fruitarianism

## Figure 10: Non-Religious Beliefs

Base: Respondents with a belief (114)

Base:	Learners with a Belief 114 %
<b>Agnosticism (not sure whether there is a god)</b>	27.8
<b>Humanism</b>	24.3
<b>Atheism (do not believe in a god)</b>	20.9
<b>Spiritualism</b>	17.4
<b>Ecological</b>	12.2
<b>Vegetarianism / Vegan / Fructarian / Fruitarian</b>	11.3
<b>Paganism</b>	7.8
<b>Secularism</b>	7.0
<b>Non-Theist Friends</b>	1.7
<b>Wiccan</b>	0.9
<b>Other moral/political/philosophical frameworks</b>	14.8
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	7.0

Although a third of respondents to the quantitative research stated that they had no religion or belief, the qualitative research showed that there is some reticence to use the word 'belief' to describe philosophies and thought systems that affect the way respondents live their lives. Thus, some of those stating that they had no religion or belief referred to their 'lifestyle choices' or philosophies which guided the way they lived their lives. Examples of this include those that follow the following beliefs/philosophies/lifestyle choices: scientific materialism; vegetarianism, ecology, atheism and so on. Consequently, this may mean that the quantitative research has under-reported the proportion of those with non-religious beliefs and over-reported the 'no religion and belief' group.

*"As soon as you said 'belief', I thought you meant religion and spiritualism {even though the phrase used was non-religious belief}"*

Female, 19-24, FE College, Atheist

*"I wouldn't say vegetarianism is a belief. In your head you have characterised things-you think in different ways, I think of it as a moral choice"*

Male, 19-24, FE College, Vegetarian

*"I can't say I counted atheism as a belief"*

Female, 19-24, FE College, No religion or belief

*"I have no religion and no belief – I have no faith...My philosophy is scientific materialism and vegetarianism"*

Male, 61+, ACL and previously FE College, No religion or belief

When the issue of recognising belief systems that fall under the Equality Act was discussed with qualitative respondents, it seemed that the use of the word 'belief' might be problematic (even when prefixed with the words 'non-religious'), as it is so often associated with religious belief or spiritual matters. It may be some time before full understanding of the religion and belief strand of the Equality Act permeates through the learning community and society as a whole.

### 3.5.3 Religious Practices of Learners

Respondents with a religion were asked to state whether they consider themselves to be actively practising their religion. This question will help to determine whether open practice of a religion could have an impact upon the learning experience of students.

However, in order to create an indicative measure of religious practice among learners, Figure 11 (below) also shows the responses as percentages calculated on a base of 'all learners' including those who indicated that they do not have a religion.

**Figure 11: Whether Consider Self to be Actively Practising Religion**

Base: All respondents

	All~	Any Religion	Christian	Muslim
Base:	1139	601 %	343 %	159 %
<b>Yes - I actively practise my religion</b>	28.2	53.3	46.9	70.4
<b>Yes - I follow a religion, but don't feel I actively practise it</b>	13.3	25.1	25.9	20.1
<b>Maybe - I was brought up within a religion/faith and practise at least some of that teaching</b>	7.1	13.5	18.7	3.8
<b>No - despite any teaching / upbringing, I do not consider myself to practise a religion</b>	2.5	4.8	7.0	1.9
<b>Not sure / not asked</b>	48.9	3.3	1.5	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

~NOTE although this question was asked only of those revealing a religion, the 'all' column has been calculated on a base of all survey respondents for illustrative purposes.

Half (53.3%) of learners who stated that they have a religion went on to say that they actively practise their religion, and a further quarter (25.1%) said that they follow their religion but don't feel that they actively practise the religion (which may mean that they do not regularly attend church/mosque/synagogue/temple etc).

One in twenty of those who considered themselves to have a religion also stated that although they were brought up in a faith, they do not consider themselves to practise a religion at all – highlighting that for a significant number of people religion is seen as a defining demographic or cultural characteristic, even when they have chosen not to practise the religion themselves.

Figure 11 (above) examines the extent to which learners are actively practising their reported religion, for all students with a religion and for Christian and Muslim groups.<sup>6</sup> Across all religious groups, just over half (53.3%) actively practise their religion. This is significantly higher for Muslims (70.4%) than it is for Christians (46.9%). Around a quarter (25.1% overall) say they follow a religion but don't actively practise it. This is not dissimilar for Christian or Muslim groups.

Those with a religion or belief also described their commitment to a range of practices within the learning day (see Figure 12).

<sup>6</sup> Other religious groups are not examined in detail here as the bases for these groups are too small for reliable analysis.

**Figure 12: Commitment to Various Practices during the Learning Day**

Base: Respondents with a religion and/or a belief

	Any Religion/Belief 713 %	Religion 601 %	Belief 114 %
Prayer during the day - at flexible timings	19.1	22.1	2.6
Prayer during the day - at set intervals/times	17.5	20.6	0.9
Dietary requirements	13.9	15.0	7.9
Specific clothing / head covering / hair style	9.4	11.0	0.9
Gender segregation in certain activities	6.3	7.5	0
Specific travel requirement	0.8	1.0	0
Nothing required in the learning day	10.5	11.8	3.5
None of these	50.2	43.9	84.2
Other	4.1	4.2	3.5

Half (50.2%) of these respondents do not follow any of the listed practices within the learning day. This is particularly the case for those with a belief (84.2%) compared with those who have a religion (43.9%). Prayer, either at flexible timings (19.1%) or at set times (17.5%) are common practices, particularly amongst the 'religion' group, but not with the 'belief' group. Other practices that affect the 'religion' group to a greater extent than the 'belief' group are: gender segregation in certain activities, and; specific clothing/hair covering/hair style.

A commitment to follow specific dietary requirements is reported by 15% of those with a religion and 7.9% of those with a non-religious belief.

### **3.5.4 Openness about Religion and/or Belief**

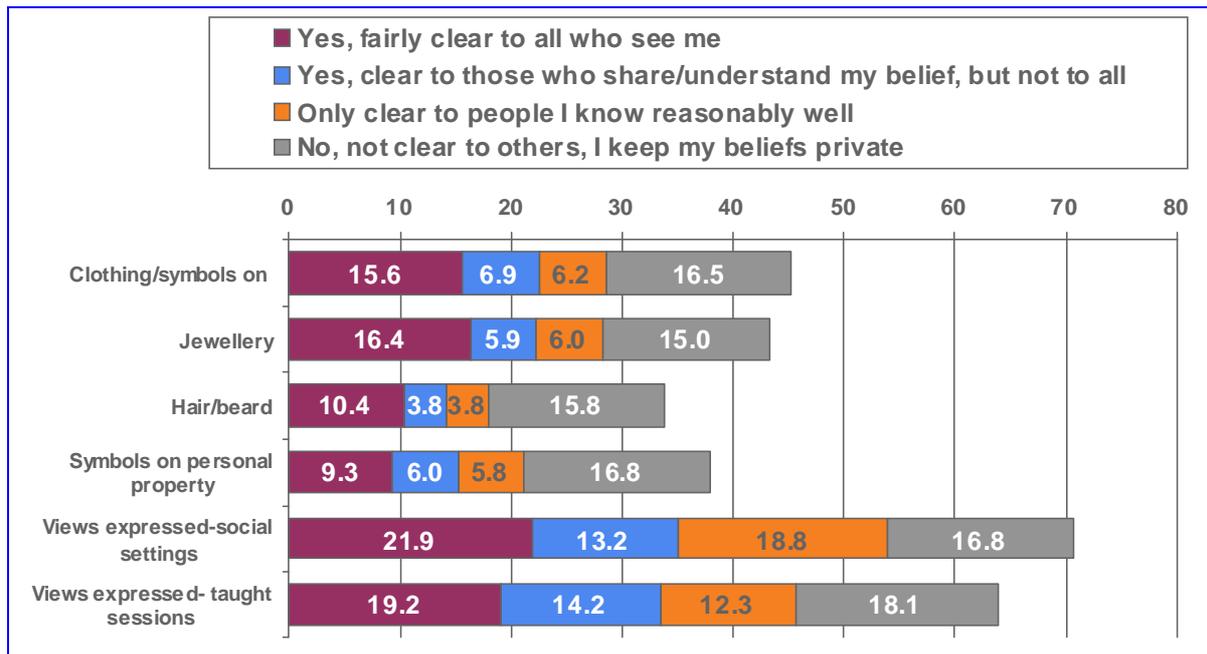
Respondents were asked to grade the extent to which they gave six different outward signs of their religion or belief. Figure 13 (and Appendix Table 9) presents the outward signs respondents show of their religion or belief in the learning setting, and their estimation of the degree of visibility this gives to their beliefs.

Almost half of those who have a religion or belief say that it is 'clear to some' or 'clear to all' that they give outward signs of their religion/belief by expressing their views in learning and social situations.

Fewer learners (around one in five) feel that their clothing or jewellery provide a fairly clear indication of their belief to those around them. Signs of religion/belief such as hairstyle (including beard) or symbols on other personal items (carried rather than worn) were less commonly displayed: approximately 15% felt that such signs were clear to all, or clear to those with an understanding of their religion. Therefore, the data shows that expressing religious/belief-related views in various environments is a stronger outward sign than personal symbols of the expression of that religion or belief or more commonly used way of expressing religious/belief affiliation.

### Figure 13: Outward Signs of Religion or Belief in Learning Setting

Base: Respondents with a religion and/or a belief (713)



A further question was asked to elicit more detail about the situations in which learners are open about their religion/belief with those around them, and allowed the flexibility to say ‘fully open’; ‘partially open’ or ‘not open’. Figure 14 (over the page) summarises the degree of openness that learners with religion/belief have with other people within and beyond learning environments.

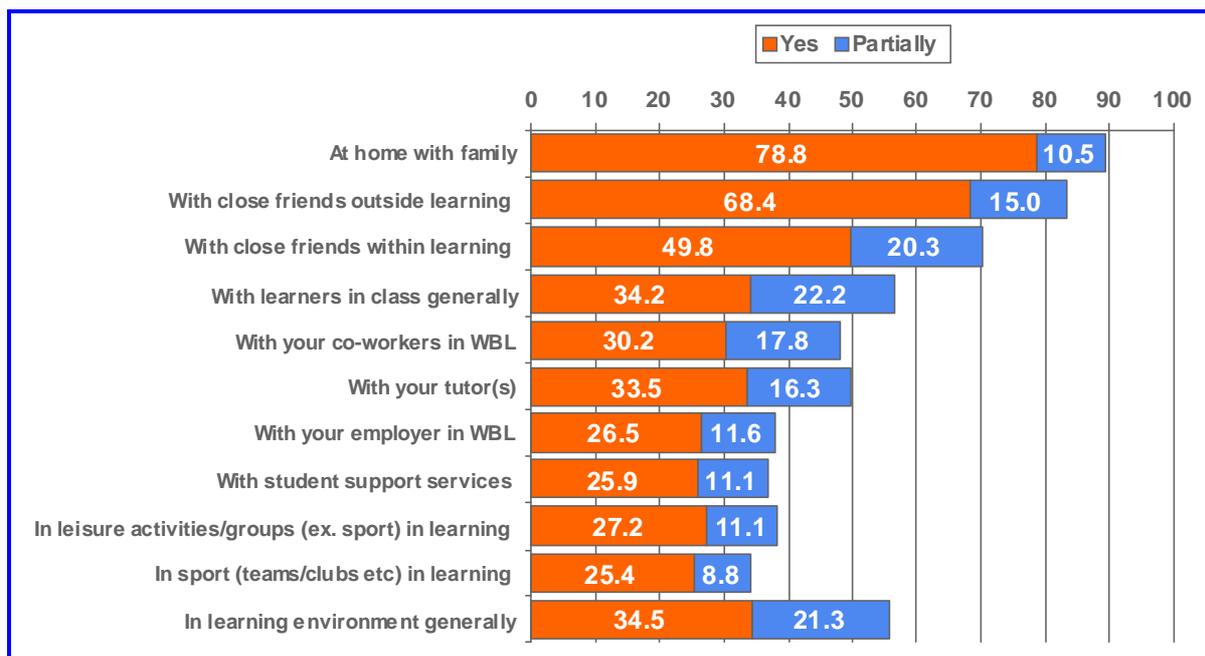
Learners tend to be most open about their religion or belief when they are at home with their family (78.8% ‘fully’ and 10.5% ‘partially’) and with close friends outside the learning environment (68.4% ‘fully’ and 15.0% ‘partially’). There is more than a ten percentage point difference between the proportions of learners who are either partially or fully open with friends outside of learning (83.4%) and compared with within learning (70.1%).

Within the learning environment generally more than half (55.8%) are at least partially open about their religion/belief: a third (34.5%) are fully open and a fifth (21.3%) are partially open.

With the exception of being open with close friends within learning (50%), the degree of openness appears to decrease when particular individuals or groups of individuals in the learning environment are specified. However, between a quarter and a third of respondents are fully open about their religion or belief in most situations within learning (including WBL employment situations).

## Figure 14: Openness about Religion or Belief in Various Environments

Base: Respondents with a religion and/or a belief (713)



Appendix Table 10 shows that in most situations, a greater proportion of learners with a religious belief than those with a non-religious belief will be fully open with the people they come in contact with. Generally there is negligible difference between the proportions of religious and non-religious learners who are 'partially open' with those around them. Unsurprisingly, learners who revealed that they display at least one of the four visual signs of their religion/belief, or who felt that they are open with learners in their class, were more likely than learners who are not open with their fellow learners to be fully open in each of the situations explored.

Various opinions about the ease of being open in the learning environment were expressed in the qualitative phases of the research:

*"I don't feel it will ever be a well and truly comfortable environment to be open about my religion, but that is often because it is not appropriate or necessary to bring religion up. I do feel comfortable talking to friends (at college) about my religion."*  
Male, FE College, 19-25, Catholic

*"The environment (at college) is a safe place and open. Whilst I'm at training I don't have to practise my religion and so I don't have any problems. I pray and wear a scarf at home but not at work or learning."*  
Female, Work Based Learning, 19-25, Muslim

*"At the start of the course I realised that having a non-belief was frowned upon by people at college with strong beliefs and now I will stay out of such conversations and avoid saying I don't have a religious belief."*  
Female, FE College, 19-25, no religion or belief

*"I don't feel it's a safe place because of the negative experiences I have had and what I have seen happen to other people. For example, a New Age female learner who expresses her opinion has been shot down by other learners and their secular view point."*  
Male, ACL, 46-55, Evangelical Christian

*“There was mild tension at the beginning of year between those without a belief and those with a strong belief, but it wasn’t a massive issue.”*

Female FE Learner, 19-25, no religion or belief



## 4 LEARNING EXPERIENCES

This section outlines learners' relationship with providers.

### 4.1 Current Learning Activity

The survey asked learners about the type of learning provider with which they were learning; where the majority of learning hours were spent; and the subject area of their learning.

#### 4.1.1 Provider Type and Location of Majority of Learning Hours

As Figure 15 shows, around half (52.1%) of respondents are currently learning in a Further Education (FE) College. A further fifth (19.9%) are learning with a Work Based Learning/Training Provider; 12.1% are in Adult/Community Learning (ACL); and 15.9% report 'other' provision, or say that they are unsure with which type of provider they are learning.

**Figure 15: Current Learning Provider**

Base: All respondents

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>A Further Education College</b>	52.1	55.2	52.6	47.7	60.9	58.0	51.0
<b>WBL / Training Provider</b>	19.9	16.1	14.0	26.8	9.9	12.2	19.6
<b>Adult/community learning</b>	12.1	13.8	12.3	9.6	13.4	12.7	15.7
<b>Other / not sure</b>	15.9	14.8	21.1	16.0	15.8	17.2	13.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Those with a religion (and to a lesser extent, those with a belief) are more likely than those with neither religion nor belief to state they are learning in an FE College. Similarly, those displaying visible signs of their religion or belief are more likely than those who are not open about their religion/belief in class to be learning at an FE college.

Conversely, those with no religion or belief are significantly more likely to be learning in WBL/through a Training Provider than those who do have a religion or belief, as are those who are not open in class about their religion/belief when compared with those who display more visible signs/are more open.

An additional question (Figure 16) was asked to ascertain the type of environment in which learners spent the majority of their learning hours: particularly important for those undertaking Apprenticeships and other forms of Work Based Learning, where the greatest number of hours may actually be spent in employment rather than in a dedicated learning environment.

Half (51.8%) of respondents spend the majority of their learning hours at an FE College, and a further 17.1% spend most of their time with an employer. One in ten (10.8%) are in adult/community learning and 5.8% spend most of their time with a training provider. Other settings were cited as accounting for the majority of learning hours for 14.5% of respondents. Those who have neither a religion nor a belief are significantly more likely to spend the majority of their learning time with an employer than those who have a religion or belief.

**Figure 16: Where the Majority of Learning Hours are Spent**

Base: All respondents

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>At an FE College</b>	51.8	54.1	54.4	48.1	57.7	55.2	54.4
<b>At a training provider</b>	5.8	5.2	7.9	6.1	3.6	5.5	5.9
<b>With an employer</b>	17.1	12.8	12.3	24.4	9.1	10.9	14.2
<b>Adult / community learning</b>	10.8	13.8	7.9	7.3	13.4	12.7	13.7
<b>Other / not sure</b>	14.5	14.1	17.5	14.1	16.2	15.7	11.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

### 4.1.2 Subject Area of Learning Activity

Respondents were asked to indicate which of a range of vocational or academic subject areas best fits their current course of study. The results are shown in Figure 17 below.

**Figure 17: Type of Vocational or Academic Subject Area of Study**

Base: All respondents

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care</b>	2.1	1.5	5.3	2.1	0.8	2.0	2.5
<b>Arts, Media and Publishing</b>	7.5	6.2	12.3	8.0	5.5	5.7	10.3
<b>Business, Admin and Law</b>	11.9	12.6	6.1	12.2	14.6	12.2	12.3
<b>Construction, Planning and the Built Environment</b>	2.9	1.7	4.4	4.2	2.4	2.0	2.9
<b>Education and Training</b>	14.6	16.5	16.7	11.5	15.8	15.4	17.6
<b>Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies</b>	4.0	2.8	4.4	5.6	2.0	3.2	1.5
<b>Health, Public Services &amp; Care</b>	16.6	17.8	15.8	15.3	13.8	16.9	18.1
<b>History, Philosophy and Theology</b>	1.2	1.0	0.9	1.6	1.2	1.7	0.0
<b>Information and Communication Technology</b>	9.5	8.3	7.9	11.5	9.9	8.0	8.3
<b>Languages, Literature and Culture</b>	5.4	7.3	3.5	3.3	7.1	7.2	4.9
<b>Leisure, Travel and Tourism</b>	3.8	2.7	4.4	5.2	3.2	2.5	3.9
<b>Preparation for Life &amp; Work</b>	3.3	4.2	2.6	2.3	4.3	3.7	5.4
<b>Retail and Commercial Enterprise</b>	7.6	6.7	4.4	9.6	4.7	6.0	5.4
<b>Science and Mathematics</b>	4.5	5.5	3.5	3.3	7.1	6.7	4.4
<b>Social Sciences</b>	3.1	2.8	6.1	2.6	4.0	3.5	2.0
<b>Other</b>	2.1	2.5	1.8	1.6	3.6	3.2	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

'Health, public services and care', 'education and training' and 'business, administration and law' account for more than two fifths (43.1%) of the range of subjects undertaken. Fewer people in the sample are studying in areas such as 'history, philosophy and theology'; 'agriculture, horticulture and animal care'; 'construction, planning etc'. There are no significant differences evident between key sub-groups.

## 4.2 Perception of the Welcome from Adult Learning

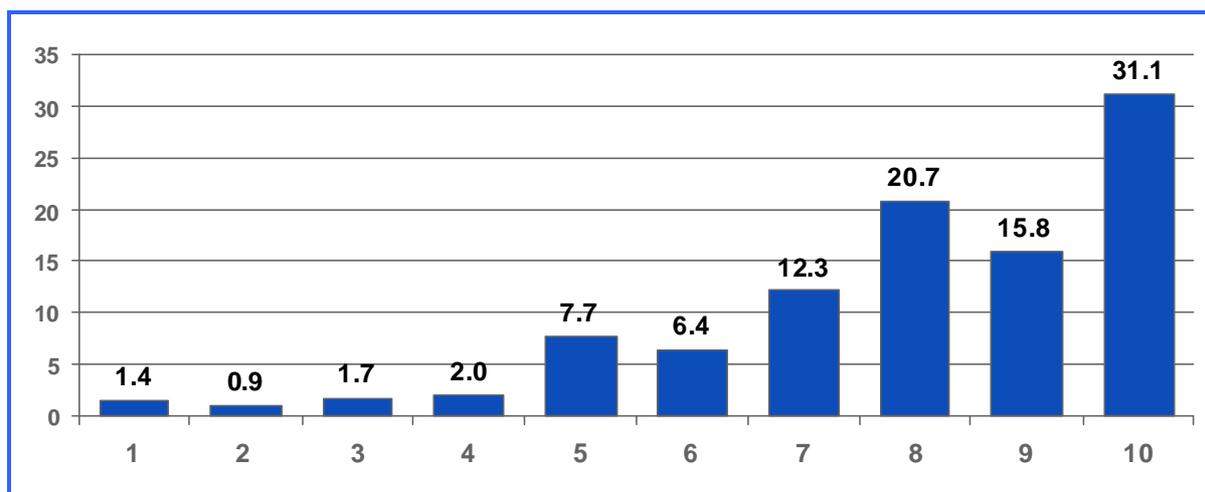
When given a scale of 1-10 to indicate how welcoming adult learning was in their experience, the average score was 7.98 out of 10, where 1 means 'not at all welcoming' and 10 means 'extremely welcoming'. As this is based on personal experience, this is a very positive outcome, revealing that most learners entering adult learning feel that it is a welcoming environment.

This score is slightly higher than that given by Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Trans learners in a comparable survey in spring 2011 (Mean 7.56).<sup>7</sup>

Fewer than one in seven (13.7%) gave a score below the mid-point (1-5). Two thirds, (67.6%) gave a score of at least 8 out of 10, including almost a third (31.1%) giving a score of 10. (Please see Figure 18 and Appendix Table 11).

**Figure 18: How Welcoming Adult Learning Is (Personal experience)**

Base: All respondents



Small variations in mean scores for 'how welcoming adult learning is' can be seen. Notably those learners stating that they show visible signs of their religion/belief give a slightly lower score (7.67 out of 10) than those with non-religious belief or no belief who give the highest mean scores (8.13 and 8.06 respectively).

The qualitative research (focus groups and depth interviews) reveals some individual experiences of providers.

<sup>7</sup> Babcock Research (2011) 'Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Equality in Adult Learning' – Skills Funding Agency, Coventry  
[http://readingroom.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/sfa/Sexual\\_Orientation\\_and\\_Gender\\_Identity\\_Equality\\_in\\_Adult\\_Learning-\\_Published\\_August\\_2011.pdf](http://readingroom.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/sfa/Sexual_Orientation_and_Gender_Identity_Equality_in_Adult_Learning-_Published_August_2011.pdf)

*"It varies enormously from place to place. FE colleges as bigger institutions are not so welcoming. Smaller community venues for adult and community learning are more welcoming."*

Female, Adult Learning, 56-60, no religion or belief.

*"It's much more welcoming than secondary or primary education."*

Male, FE College, 19-25, personal belief system

*"It (adult learning) could be more welcoming to religious beliefs."*

Male, FE College, 30-35, Christian

*"Adult learning is generally good, welcomes all groups."*

Male, FE College, 26-30, Buddhist

*"My college is very friendly. They are not there to judge anyone, learners all talk openly and different backgrounds mix. There is an understanding of people's differences."*

Female, FE College, 61+, Christian

### **4.3 Provision for Religion and/or Belief within the Learning Environment**

The online survey included questions about 'safe spaces' for the expression of religion and/or belief in the learning environment; discussion of these issues; and accommodation made by providers for learners' religious practices.

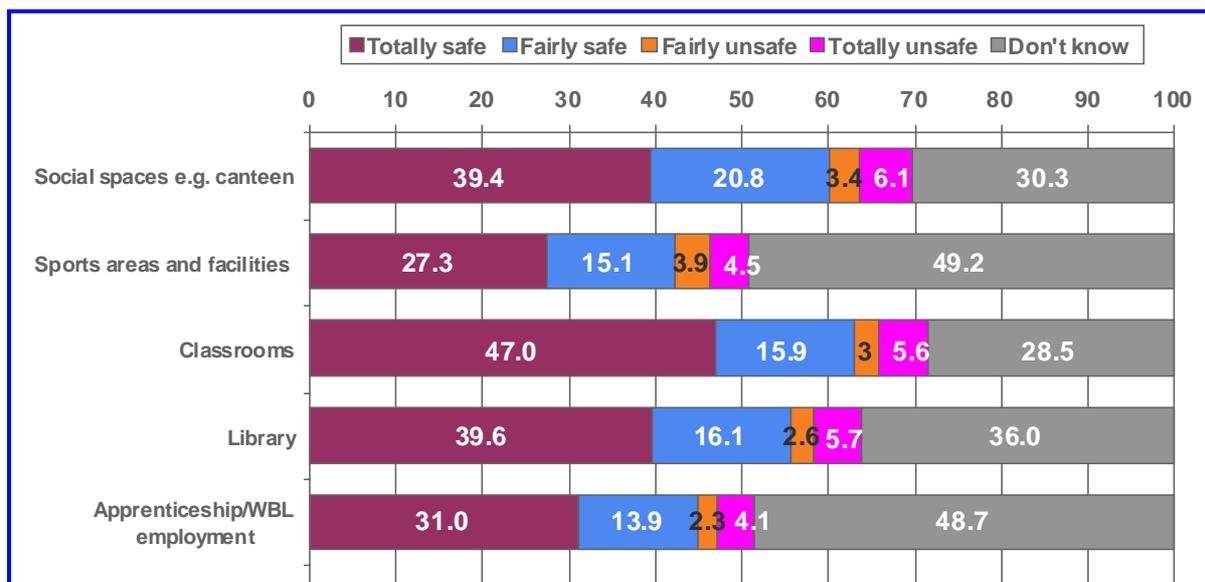
#### **4.3.1 Safe Spaces within the Learning Environment**

The online survey listed five types of area commonly found within adult learning environments, and asked respondents to indicate for each one the extent to which they feel that environment to be a 'safe space', regardless of whether or not they choose to be open about their religion and/or belief.

Response options were 'totally safe'; 'fairly safe'; 'fairly unsafe' and 'totally unsafe'.

**Figure 19: Perceived Safe Areas within the Adult Learning Environment**

Base: All respondents (1139)



For each area listed, between a quarter and half felt 'totally safe' and between one in seven and one in ten felt 'fairly safe'. Those with a religious belief were marginally more likely to state that they felt less safe across all areas.

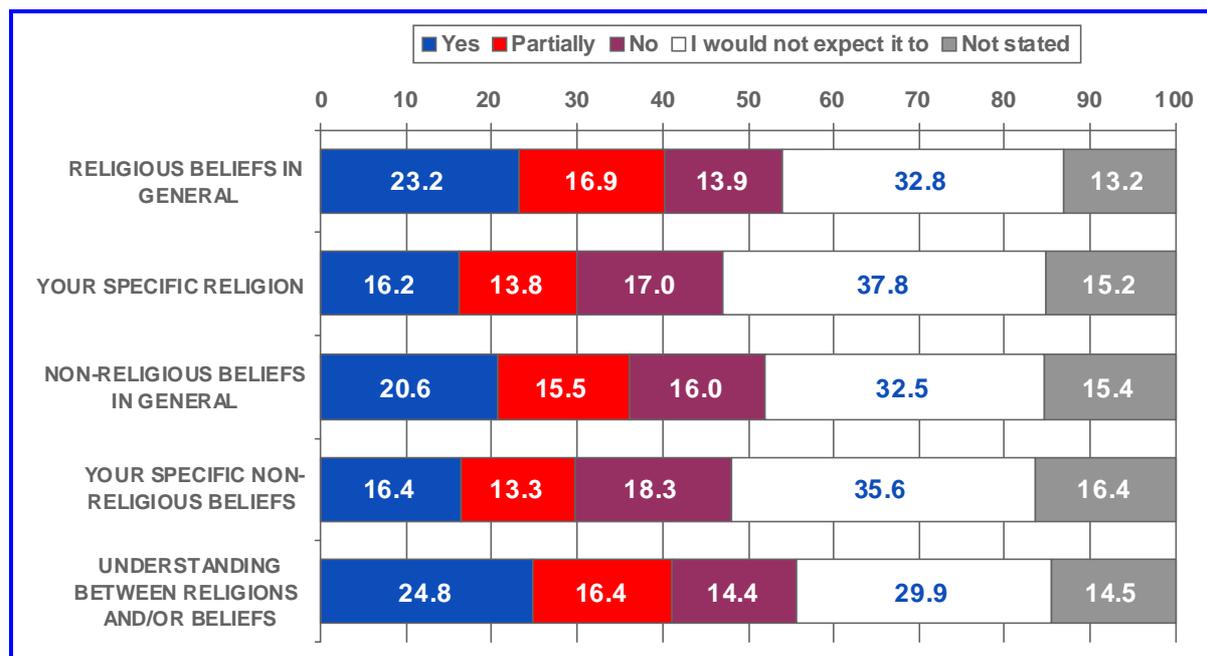
Also see Appendix Table 12 in which this data is broken down by various sub groups. This data table reveals that the feeling of being 'totally' safe is significantly more prevalent among those who are visible/open about their religion/belief in class than it is for those who are not open about their religion/belief.

### 4.3.2 Discussion of Religion and/or Belief within Course

In order to establish the extent to which religion and belief is discussed as part of learners' course content, survey respondents were asked to respond to the following question: 'Does the delivery of your course provide opportunity for discussion of [religion, belief, understanding between belief sets]?' Figure 20 below shows their responses.

**Figure 20: Religion / Belief in the Curriculum**

Base: All respondents



Two in five learners say that there is some opportunity for the discussion of 'religious beliefs in general' (23.2% fully and 16.9% partially) and similar proportions reported that their course allowed for discussion of understanding between religions and/or beliefs (24.8% fully and 16.4% partially). One in three said that their course provided the opportunity to discuss non-religious beliefs in general (20.6% fully and 15.5% partially).

Slightly fewer learners felt that their course had provided the opportunity to discuss their own religion (16.2% fully and 13.8% partially) or their own beliefs (16.4% fully and 13.3% partially) then to discuss religion or non-religious beliefs in general.

On every factor, fewer than one in five respondents say that there is no opportunity for discussion within the course.

Around a third of respondents overall say that 'they would not expect' that particular topic to be a discussion point within the course delivery.

The data (more detailed breakdowns are presented in Appendix Table 13) suggest that the perspective of the respondent may correlate with their perception of the extent to which religion and belief is a discussion point in class. Those with a religion (28.5%) are less likely than those with non-religious belief (41.2%) or those with neither religion nor belief (36.6%) to say they 'would not expect' religious beliefs to be discussed within the course. However, those with non-religious belief (40.4%) are actually more likely than those with a religion (28.6%) or non religion/belief (35.7%) to say that they 'would not expect' a discussion of non-religious beliefs in general to form part of class delivery. This suggests that those with a religion may be more likely than those with non-religious beliefs or no religion/belief to expect discussion of religions (and other beliefs) to be included within adult learning courses.

The importance of discussion of religion/belief depending upon the course being followed was raised in qualitative discussions. Some argued that such discussion has little or no place in adult learning, especially when learning 'academic' subjects or non-service vocational courses (such as construction skills). Others cite the importance of understanding other people's religions or beliefs so that offence is not given, and to ensure sensitivity towards the

needs of others, especially customers in the work environment, but also fellow learners and colleagues at work.

*"I don't feel that there is enough time to include religion and belief topics into the curriculum that I'm studying."*

Male, FE College, 26-35, No religion or belief

*"It's not come up and isn't relevant to the course. But I have a good experience with my tutor regarding religion as we're both Christians."*

Female, Work Based Learning (Hairdressing), 36-45, Christian

*"I'm on a science course so it's not applicable."*

Female, FE Learner, 19-25, no religion or belief

*"I don't think it should because it draws attention to it. It's not why we're here. It may be different for full time courses. It is not really reasonable to include in my subject."*

Female, FE Learner, 46-55, Christian

Furthermore, there were various opinions on whether it was more inclusive to talk about religion and belief as part of the curriculum or whether inclusion meant that religion and belief is excluded from course work; the nature of learning within adult education; and potential consequences of raising religion and belief issues within courses.

*"The fact that it's not mentioned, that's inclusion."*

Male, FE College, 26-35, Muslim

*"We do not have a chance to discuss it but I wish we could. We came across lots of different religions and beliefs that we wish we were not so ignorant about."*

Female, College, 19-25, religion or belief not declared

*"In some cases there has been over-saturation and learners have been indoctrinated with the term of 'inclusive learning' - so that all learning needs are covered. We've been taught about people's religious beliefs. In some cases there has been too much focus on inclusiveness policies"*

Female, ACL, 46-55, Humanist

*"It has been made clear that the course is secular, and I understand that and have not been made to feel bad because I have a belief"*

Female, FE College, 46-55, Christian – Anglican

*"Only if it is pertinent and arises naturally, not for the sake of it."*

Female, Adult Learner, 56-60, no religion or belief

*"Bring in examples as a part of people's lives. It needs to be in the curriculum. It's important to bring in a balance of the influences of spirituality, including people who are spiritually aware, not necessarily in traditional forms of religion."*

Male, Work Based Learner/Distance Learner with religious college, 56-60, Roman Catholic

*"It can be hard for people to express their view if they don't want to offend."*

Male, FE Learner, 26-35, Christian

*“You’ve got two options, don’t talk about religion or, by shining a light on it you may understand people more, but it may be better to let sleeping dogs lie.”*

Female, Work Based Learner, 36-45, no religion or belief

*“I want people to accept that my religion is a part of me and people should be able to agree to disagree”*

Male, FE Learner, 26-35, Muslim

### 4.3.3 Accommodation of Religion/Belief by Learning Providers

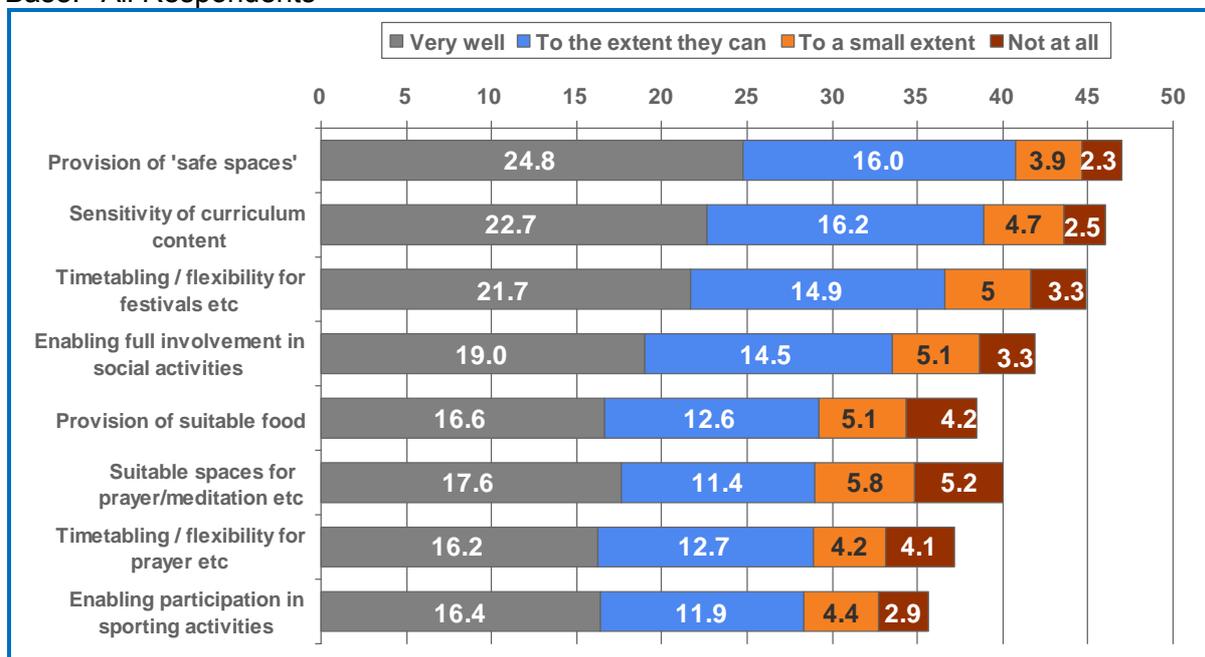
All respondents were asked how well they thought their learning provider had accommodated their religious and/or belief requirements. This question was not compulsory, and some respondents (approximately half) chose not to answer.

Two out of five (40.8%) respondents felt that their learning provider had accommodated their religion/belief by providing ‘safe spaces’ in the learning environment at least ‘to the extent they can’, including one in four who chose the top point of the scale ‘very well’.

The next most common accommodation for religion/belief according to survey respondents was the sensitivity of the curriculum content (including practicals and assessments): scores at least ‘to the extent they can’ by 38.9% overall (22.7% saying ‘very well’). This was closely followed by timetabling courses flexibly for festivals etc: at least ‘to the extent they can’ (36.6%), including 21.7% ‘very well’.

**Figure 21: Accommodation of Religious and/or Belief Requirements by Learning Providers**

Base: All Respondents



One in three survey respondents (33.5%) felt that their learning provider accommodated their religion/belief to the extent they could enabling them to have full involvement in social activities (e.g. through the place / times / activities of social gatherings / events) they organised.

*“At the moment no-one in our group needs prayer space, but I think the provider would offer this if it was requested. Festivals and holidays are recognised and if learners needed time off for a specific festival then that would be accepted.”*

Male, FE College, 36-45, Buddhist

*“The teachers are good with my beliefs.”*

Male, FE College, 26-35, Muslim

*“They let us go to meet up with other Christians. There is a prayer meeting room, and a person is always there ... They keep us safe more than others (those with no belief)”*

Female, FE College, (26-35) Christian

*“I know that the provider has a prayer room; offers Halal food; they do provide things to meet the different needs of the community. But I’m not sure how obvious these provisions are to people.”*

Female, FE College, (45-55) No belief

Fewer learners gave the highest scores to their learning provider’s ability to provide suitable food; provision of suitable spaces for prayer or meditation; timetabling/flexibility on a daily basis for prayer; and for enabling participation in sporting activities: in all cases fewer than one in three felt their provider did this ‘very well’.

Very few learners, one in ten or fewer, gave the two lowest scores to their providers. Also see Appendix Table 14.

The qualitative research provided insights into some of the areas that some learners felt provision for their belief was lacking.

*“There are no facilities for me to wash before I pray, or a prayer mat”*

Male, FE College, 25-34, Muslim

*“There is no prayer room. If you want to [pray] then you have to go to the toilet”*

Female, FE College, 19-24, Christian

*“There wasn’t enough vegetarian stuff – it had often run out and there were no vegan options. All the hot meals are covered in cheese”*

Female, FE Learner, 19-24, Vegetarian, Ecologist, Feminist

*“There are some vegetarian options but I find it hard to eat sometimes... there is minimal for vegetarians.”*

Male, FE Learner, 36-45, No religion or belief

*“The college offers support to many religions including prayer time, but I don’t know if there is a prayer room.”*

Female, FE Learner, 19+, Christian

*“We don’t have a prayer room or quiet place for people to go to pray. I think there should be one. I am aware that some Muslim students will go home to pray because of this. Some can use classrooms when there are no lessons going on. (Learning provider) is not a particularly small one.”*

Female, FE Learner, 36-45, Christian

*“The college caters for religion but not my beliefs. There is ambiguity about what people believe.”*

Female, FE Learner, 19-25, Christian

One qualitative respondent (Christian at an FE College) described tensions that had arisen because of the provision of a prayer room. The Christian groups were unhappy that some 'older' Muslim learners would 'barge in' whenever they wanted and interrupt whoever was using it. The group had repeatedly requested a second prayer room but the situation was unchanged. This example shows problems that can arise when trying to accommodate the different requirements of different religions and/or beliefs.

## 4.4 Impact of Religion/Belief on Learning Experience

Respondents' perceptions of the impact of religion and/or belief on the learning experience and outcomes were assessed through a series of questions reported in this section.

### 4.4.1 Impact of Religion/Belief of Take-Up, Retention & Achievement

The survey asked respondents three questions to assess the impact of religion and/or belief upon outcomes in adult learning: take-up of adult learning opportunities; concerns about remaining to complete the learning aim; and concerns about the ability to achieve the learning aims as a result of religion/belief. Data from these three questions is presented in Figure 22 below.

**Figure 22: Impact of Religion and/or Belief on Take-up, Retention and Achievement in Adult Learning**

Base: Those with a religion and/or belief

	All with religion/ belief	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	-	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	713 %	601 %	114 %	-	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Encountered any barriers to taking up adult learning opportunities</b>	6.5	6.5	6.1	-	11.1	8.5	4.9
<b>Concerns about remaining in your learning to complete current learning aim(s)</b>	3.1	3.3	1.8	-	4.7	3.2	2.9
<b>Concerns about ability to achieve your current learning aim(s) because of your religion and/or beliefs</b>	3.1	3.3	1.8	-	5.9	4.0	2.5

Very few learners with a religion and/or belief (6.5%) say that they have encountered barriers to taking up adult learning opportunities. Although this is very low, the actual proportion of people who wish to take up adult learning and encounter barriers might be greater due to bias in the sample (those in learning, thus excluding those who did not enter learning due to any barriers). However, it is outside the remit of this project to look at those who did not take up learning as a result of barriers they have encountered. Over 6% of those with religious beliefs (6.5%) and those with non-religious beliefs (6.1%) state that they had encountered barriers to remaining in learning.

Just 3.1% of learners with a religion and/or belief say that they have concerns about remaining in learning to complete their current learning aim. Similarly, 3.1% of learners have

concerns about their ability to meet their current learning aim as a result of their religion and/or belief.

All concerns examined are greater (and above average) among learners who display visible signs of their religion/belief or who are open about their beliefs with fellow learners on their course, than among those who are not open in class.

#### **4.4.2 Barriers within Learning Due to Religion/Beliefs**

The survey also asked learners whether they encountered any barriers in adult learning as a result of their religion and/or belief. Relatively few reported personal experience of the various barriers into which questionnaires probed (Base, all respondents)

- Lack of parental financial support for learning (6.1%)<sup>8</sup>
- Barriers to taking up mainstream funding (e.g. loans/grants etc) to support learning fees/living costs (6.1%)
- Provision of food suitable for the requirements of other religions/beliefs (4.9%)
- Lack of provision of food suitable for the requirements of your religion/belief (4.0%)
- Provision of facilities / activities targeted at other groups of learners (e.g. different ethnic, belief, sexual orientation, age, gender identity and disability groups) (4.3%)
- Timetable restrictions / lack of flexibility for festivals etc (4.4%)
- Timetable restrictions / lack of flexibility for prayer etc (4.1%)
- Lack of suitable space for prayer / meditation / quiet contemplation (4.0%)
- Lack of 'safe spaces' in the learning environment (3.9%)
- Bullying or harassment from new group of learners in new learning environment (3.8%)
- Insensitive curriculum content (including practicals/assessments) (3.8%)
- Barriers to full involvement in social activities with fellow learners (e.g. the places / times / activities of social events/gatherings) (3.5%)
- Barriers to participation in sporting activities through your learning provider (3.5%)
- Problems with bullying and harassment on way to learning (3.3%)

Funding was the issue with which the highest proportion of learners stating that they had encountered barriers. A higher proportion of learners with a religious belief (7.3% and 7.0% respectively) than those with no beliefs (5.4% and 5.9%) and than those with non religious beliefs (2.6% and 2.6%) stated that they encountered lack of parental financial support and barriers to taking up mainstream funding. Looking at problems due to lack of parental financial support among learners with religious beliefs, it is Muslims (19.1%) who have the highest propensity to state they encounter these problems, followed by Hindus (11.8% - caution low base); Sikhs (14% - caution, low base); and Christians (5.8%), the latter being on a par with those with no religion and belief (5.9%).

The pattern is similar for barriers to taking up mainstream funding. Muslims are most likely to report this problem (19%), followed by Buddhists (14% - caution low base); Hindus (11.8%) with Christians and those with no religion and/or belief showing less propensity (5.8% and 5.9% respectively). The fact that these results are similar to the results for barriers caused by lack of parental support in funding might indicate overall difficulties with funding.

Of interest is the result that the provision of food for others is a barrier to a higher proportion of learners than the lack of provision of food to comply with one's own beliefs, for example,

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<sup>8</sup> It is likely that some of the respondents were answering this question with regard to general financial barriers rather than to barriers related specifically to religion and/or belief. However, some differences in religion and/or belief groups were noted.

the provision of halal meat, or any meat, which the vegetarian, ecological, animal rights groups might find offensive; and non-halal meat which Muslims might find offensive.

Those with religious beliefs are most likely to find the provision of food suitable for the requirements of other religions/beliefs a barrier (6%) compared with 4.5% of learners with no religion or belief and 1% of learners with a non-religious belief (A result which may indicate the presence in this group of learners that live vegetarian, secular, ecological lifestyles but do not class this as a belief). Muslim learners are most likely to state that they find the provision of food suitable for other religions/beliefs a barrier (11.8%) apart from Buddhists (caution – small base) at 14.3%. A higher than average (all learners) proportion of Christians (6.5%) states that they find the provision of food suitable for other religions/beliefs a barrier to learning. Of those with non religious beliefs, atheists (11%); vegetarian groups (10%); and secularists (caution –low base, 28%) state that they find provision of food suitable for other religions/beliefs a barrier to learning.

Similarly, learners with religious beliefs are more likely to state that the lack of provision of food suitable for their own religion/belief a barrier (4.7%) compared to those without a religion/belief (3.5%) and those with a non-religious belief (1.8%). Buddhists and Sikhs (caution – low bases) are most likely to find this a barrier (14.3% for both) followed by Muslims (10.9%). Amongst those with a non-religious belief, Ecologists (20%), Secularists (caution – low base 14%) and Vegetarians (10%) are most likely to say that the lack of appropriate food to cater to their beliefs is a barrier.

Timetabling which results in a lack of flexibility to prayer is a barrier, particularly for those with a religious belief (5.5%).

Worryingly one in twenty (5%) of those with religious beliefs, particularly those with visible signs of belief (9%), find that the provision of facilities targeted at other groups of learners (e.g. different ethnic groups; beliefs, sexual orientations etc) to be a barrier, a higher proportion than those with non-religious beliefs or no belief.

Other barriers were raised through the qualitative research and in open comments in the quantitative survey. These included problems with tensions with other learners with different religions and/or beliefs and/or no beliefs; worries about marginalisation; issues pertaining to Islamophobia and assumptions about learners' religions; mixed classes; issues of dress; and other problems. Barriers expressed include:

*“The use of photo identification around the educational establishment as I wear nikkab (veil) and male tutors.”*

Female, FE College, 22-25, Muslim

*“Getting married at an early age.”*

Female, FE College, 22-24, Hindu

*“The use of PEAT [sic] in an organic gardening course.”*

Male, FE College, 22-24, Environmentalist

*“Too much emphasis on concessions to religions. A presumption that people will subscribe to a faith rather than have no faith.”*

Male, ACL, Age not disclosed, Non-religious belief

*“As I keep Sabbath, I have to request that I do not work on a Friday or finish early ideally at midday.”*

Female, FE College, 45-49, Jewish

*“Other people: meat eating/halal meat. It makes me feel sick to see and hear about it. Also the use of animal products.”*

Male, FE College, 19-21, Ecologist/Vegetarian/Animal Rights

For most factors, around 1 in 20 learners did not have personal experience of barriers, but said that they believed that barriers did exist for some people due to their religion and/or belief.

Appendix Table 15 summarises the reported personal experience of barriers to adult learning for the key sub-groups of learners.

## 4.5 Tensions between Learners, Bullying and Harassment

One in ten respondents (10.3%) revealed that they had experienced tensions between themselves and other learners in adult learning due to their own religion and/or belief (see Figure 23, over the page). One in fifteen (6.5%) also revealed that they themselves have issues with other learners or groups of learners due to their religion and/or belief: this shows that learners with religious or other strong beliefs find the views and beliefs of some fellow learners problematic and contrary to their own personal beliefs. Those with non-religious beliefs are more likely to experience tensions with other learners (13%) than learners with religious beliefs (11%) or with no beliefs (9%). Furthermore, learners with religious beliefs (7%) are slightly more likely than those with non-religious beliefs (6%) or no belief (6%) to have issues with other learners or groups of learners

Hence, some tensions do exist, as both those with no belief and learners who have religious and/or belief sets are uncomfortable about the beliefs held by others around them, and sometimes the types of accommodations made for certain beliefs that run counter to other beliefs. Thus, the existence of strongly held and opposing belief sets in the learning environment is a fact that needs to be acknowledged and accepted. This underlies the importance of high profile ‘internal marketing’ of equality policies that clarify that learners should have the right to undertake their learning without harassment or discrimination due to their religion or other personal beliefs, or lack of beliefs.

**Figure 23: Tensions Between Learners Due to Religion and/or Belief**

Base: All respondents

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Experienced tensions between self and other learners relating to own religion and/or beliefs</b>	10.3	10.6	13.2	9.2	13.8	13.4	8.8
<b>Have issues with other learners / groups of learners due to your religion and/or beliefs</b>	6.5	7.0	6.1	5.9	9.1	7.5	6.9

*“I feel unable to express Christian views without being made to feel racist...there is a great anti-Christian bias. Every other religion seems emphasised for Equality and Diversity except Christianity.”*

Male, ACL, 45-55, Christian

*“People get angry that I don’t believe in god.”*

Female, FE College, 22-25, Humanist

*“I feel some other people’s beliefs morally objectionable.”*

Male, FE College, 19-21, Christian

*“I did experience tension at college - because of my own opinions and someone else who was Christian. That is sorted now.”*

Male, FE Learner, 19-25, Personal belief system

*“In our group [course] there are no tensions, we interact well. We are at ease in our class, we have Muslims and Christians and Hindus. But there have been tensions about the prayer room. Some older Muslims will barge in no matter who else is using it. They come in and don't respect other religions...they just come in. If I walk in and find them praying I would leave them to it. We must give each other space. We have raised the issue {of there being just one prayer room} but nothing happened.”*

Male, FE Learner, 30-35, Christian

*“Sometimes with other groups. When I have brought food I cooked at home, a Muslim friend has asked if it is Halal or not. I say it doesn't matter for me, it's not what goes in it's what comes out in what you say and do. I say from the Bible, it's what you think and plan in your heart.”*

Female, FE Learner, 45-55, Christian

Just over one in ten of the survey respondents declared that they had experienced some bullying or harassment within the adult learning environment due to their religion and/or belief: 6.1% due to religion and 5.0% due to belief. Figure 24 (below) provides more detail of the proportions of learners in various sub-groups who feel they have been bullied or harassed due to their religion or belief.

**Figure 24: Bullying and/or Harassment within the Adult Learning Environment**

Base: All respondents

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Yes – due to RELIGION</b>	6.1	11.1	0.0	0.7	17.4	11.7	5.9
<b>Yes – due to BELIEF</b>	5.0	4.2	11.4	4.5	8.3	5.2	5.9
<b>No</b>	89.6	85.9	88.6	95.1	75.9	83.8	89.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Those who are open about their religion or belief in class are significantly more likely than those who are not to have been subject to bullying on religious grounds (11.7% compared with 5.9%). Learners displaying visible signs of their religion or belief are even more likely to have experienced bullying or harassment for this reason (17.4%). Therefore we deduce that

one in eight learners whose dress, hair/beard, jewellery etc reveals their religion or belief may experience bullying or harassment due to their choice not to hide their faith/belief.

One in ten (11.4%) respondents with a non-religious belief had experienced bullying due to their belief. However, due to the smaller base, there is insufficient evidence to determine whether visible signs or openness with fellow learners affects the incidence of bullying in the same way that it does for religion, although it would be reasonable to assume this.

Of those who have experienced bullying and/or harassment in learning (119), just under one in five (19%) are 'currently' experiencing bullying or harassment and a further 30% have experienced it within the last year. A further third (36%) have experienced bullying a year or more ago. Appendix Table 16 provides counts of the number of cases reporting bullying currently; within the last year; within the last one to three years; and more than three years ago, by the key sub-groups of learners.

The most common form of bullying or harassment reported by learners was 'derogatory comments or names' (61% of those who had been bullied or harassed), followed by other 'verbal abuse' (56%). Two in five of those who had been bullied or harassed felt that they had been put under 'pressure to transgress their beliefs or religious practices' (41%) or 'to dress or appear differently' (40%). Similar numbers reported feeling excluded in 'learner social settings' in 'the classroom or learning environment' (each mentioned by 39%); or had experienced 'threatening behaviour' (39%). Three in ten (30%) included 'discrimination in practical work in the classroom or WBL setting in the types of bullying or harassment they had experienced.

### Figure 25: Type, and Frequency, of Bullying and/or Harassment within Learning

Base: Those who have experienced bullying or harassment in learning (119)

	Never %	Ever %	Infreq. %	Some times %	Often %	Always %
<b>Derogatory comments or names</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>61</b>	17	24	13	8
<b>Verbal abuse</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>56</b>	12	24	12	8
<b>Pressure to transgress your beliefs / religious practices</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>41</b>	6	15	11	9
<b>Pressure to dress / appear differently</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>40</b>	8	13	9	11
<b>Exclusion in learner social settings</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>39</b>	9	13	11	7
<b>Exclusion in the classroom/learning environment</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>39</b>	12	12	6	9
<b>Threatening behaviour</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>39</b>	14	12	8	5
<b>Discrimination in practical work in classroom or tasks in Work Based Learning setting</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>30</b>	9	9	5	7
<b>Pressure to miss prayer</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>25</b>	6	8	4	8
<b>Pressure to eat /drink things you believe are wrong for you</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>24</b>	6	8	3	7
<b>Physical abuse</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>19</b>	8	3	3	6

NOTE – Data is rounded to nearest whole percentage point due to low base

One in four (25%) had been under pressure to miss prayer, and a similar number (24%) had been under pressure to eat or drink things that they believe are wrong for them. Almost one in five of those who had experienced some sort of bullying or harassment in adult learning stated that there had been some physical abuse of some kind. We cannot judge the severity of this abuse, and should also reiterate that this would be approximately 2% of survey respondents (and one may assume that due to the survey tending to attract respondents with

an interest in religion or beliefs, that the incidence would be lower among the general adult learning population).

The qualitative research strand gave some insights into the bullying and harassment that respondents had encountered in their learning environments. Some participants in the qualitative research had not experienced any bullying or harassment themselves, but perceived that there were cases in their learning provision, or had witnessed forms of harassment, for example a respondent noted that she had seen people looking ‘funny’ at women wearing headscarves.

*“There are careless remarks and generalisations - such as associating terrorism with some groups and child abuse with others.”*

Male, ACL, 56-61, Christian

*“Yes I have experienced bullying because of my religion. On one occasion all the others [learners] in the room said it was wrong and bad to follow Christ. ..They felt safe to attack me in this way, but if I were Muslim or homosexual then no-one would dare to express such views about these traits. ....the tutor didn’t do anything.”*

Male, ACL, 46-55, Evangelical Christian

The qualitative research showed that for some learners, adult learning was a more positive learning environment than school where they had experienced bullying and harassment due to their religion and belief.

*“At school there was bullying, abusive comments and so on. There were only a few Asians at my school so I hated education because of this. But I haven’t experienced anything in adult learning.”*

Female, ACL, 35-44, Sikh

*“There was always something from shouting ‘Stupid vegetarian or saying they had killed a fox; and they used to throw pieces of meat at me. College is more adult”*

Female, FE College, 19-24, No religion/belief – Atheist, Vegetarian, Environmentalist

Some bullying and harassment goes unreported and some learners don’t express their views because they fear the consequences. Furthermore, the fact that harassment might be described as “‘only’ throw away comments” belies the unsupported atmosphere in which an individual will be attempting to learn.

*“Only throw away comments and I will stand up for myself. But I’m aware that others may also talk behind my back.”*

Male, Work Based Learner and Distance Learner, 56-60, Roman Catholic

*“I avoid putting my views forward for fear of verbal abuse.”*

Male, ACL and recent FE College, 61+, No religion or Belief.

Data is provided in Appendix Table 17 to show the counts within key sub-groups of learners who have experienced bullying, and types of bullying and/or harassment they have experienced.

Respondents who mentioned they had been bullied or harassed because of their religion and/or belief were also asked to indicate the type(s) of perpetrator(s). More than one in three (37%) said that learners on their own course had either bullied or harassed them because of their religion and/or belief. Almost a third (31%) had been bullied or harassed by learners on other courses or in other year groups. While just one in thirteen (8%) felt that they had been

bullied or harassed by their tutor, more than one in seven (15%) felt that another member of staff had bullied or harassed them.

*“The tutor should take the time to get to know their students. I have had confrontations with tutors due to them not understanding my beliefs.”*

Female FE Learner, 19-25, Christian

One in twenty (5%) named a manager or supervisor in their Work Based Learning environment as a harasser, and 6% said they had been bullied or harassed by a colleague in their WBL employment.

Situations related to learning, but harder for providers to have an influence over were also reported:

- General public while travelling to the place of learning / WBL (11%)
- General public while on work placement (5%)
- A person unknown, e.g. using electronic communications (3%).

More data relating to the perpetrators of bullying and/or harassment is presented in Appendix Table 18.

Just under half (47%) of those who had experienced bullying or harassment in adult learning due to their religion and/or belief confirmed that they had reported at least one incident to someone. Fewer than 2% made a report to the Police, but it is not possible to judge how appropriate this figure is, as the online survey was not able to ask sufficiently detailed questions to be able to make assumptions about the severity of the situations learners were referring to.

However, fewer than 3 in 10 learners who feel that they have been bullied or harassed within adult learning due to their religion and/or belief took steps to report the situation to anyone within the learning environment, although one in six (17%) did report it to someone else outside the learning environment (such as family or friends).

Counts within key sub-groups of learners are provided in Appendix Table 19.

Learners were asked to indicate which people, including those in authority, within the learning provider they feel that they can go to with problems (see Figure 26 below).

Almost two thirds (63.2%) of learners would go to their tutor to report problems, yet other members of staff are much less likely to be approached with problems by learners: other college/WBL teaching staff (19.2%); Welfare Officer/student services (14.8%). Just one in twenty (4.9%) learners would go to the Chaplaincy or other religion/belief-specific support workers: however, it is not clear whether this low figure is due to choice, or lack of (awareness of) such figureheads.

More than one in ten (11.7%) learners stated that they could turn to their WBL Manager/Supervisor with problems, and 8.6% felt that they could turn to another member of staff in WBL. These proportions appear lower than they might as learners who are not engaged in WBL remain in the base for percentages.

Just under one in five (18.2%) would go to another learner (peer) to report problems. Those with a religion (15.1%) are less likely to go to a peer than those with a belief (21.9%) or those with no religion/belief (21.4%). Conversely, and as one might expect, this group is slightly more likely than others to make use of Chaplaincy or religious/belief support.

**Figure 26: People within the Learning Provider to whom Learners Feel they can go to with Problems**

Base: All respondents

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Yes, Tutor</b>	63.2	61.4	59.6	66.9	58.1	67.4	55.9
<b>Yes, other college/Work Based Learning teaching staff</b>	19.2	16.3	19.3	23.2	15.0	16.4	18.1
<b>Yes, Welfare officer / student services</b>	14.8	12.6	14.9	17.8	11.9	11.7	16.2
<b>Yes, Chaplaincy or other religion/belief specific support worker</b>	4.9	6.5	4.4	2.8	7.9	6.2	6.4
<b>Yes, Work Based Learning manager/supervisor</b>	11.7	9.5	10.5	15.0	6.3	9.0	9.3
<b>Yes, other workers in my Work Based Learning employment</b>	8.6	7.7	7.0	10.3	5.5	6.5	8.3
<b>Yes, another learner (peer)</b>	18.2	15.1	21.9	21.4	13.0	16.9	16.7
<b>Other</b>	4.2	4.5	4.4	3.8	4.7	4.2	4.9
<b>No, there's no-one I can/ could turn to</b>	10.0	11.6	16.7	5.9	14.2	10.2	14.7
<b>Not stated</b>	4.4	5.3	4.4	3.1	8.7	6.5	3.4

Only one in ten (10.0%) say that there is no-one, including authority figures, within the learning environment to whom they can turn with a problem. This is significantly higher among those with a belief (16.7%) and those with a religion (11.6%) than it is for those with no belief or religion. Those with a religion in particular, and a belief to some extent, are less likely to approach members of staff (other than Chaplaincy) with problems than those with no religion/belief.

## 5 POLICIES, SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES IN FE

This section reports on respondents' awareness and knowledge of policies and practices in adult learning.

### 5.1 Awareness of Policies

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of an Equal Opportunity Policy that included religion and/or belief in operation at their place of adult learning.

**Figure 27: Awareness of Equal Opportunity Policy – inc Religion**

Base: All respondents

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Yes</b>	61.5	60.7	63.2	62.2	56.9	59.7	63.2
<b>No</b>	5.2	6.5	5.3	3.3	8.7	6.0	5.9
<b>Don't know / Not stated</b>	33.3	32.8	31.6	34.5	19.8	34.3	30.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of learners (61.5%) say that, to the best of their knowledge, their learning provider has an equality policy relating to, or including, religion. This does not differ significantly by sub-group.

Only one in twenty (5.2%) perceive that their learning provider does not have such a policy. However, a third of respondents (33.3%) are not aware or chose not to give a solid 'yes' or 'no' response to this question.

**Figure 28: Awareness of Equal Opportunity Policy – inc Non-Religious Beliefs**

Base: All respondents

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Yes</b>	49.3	51.2	43.9	47.9	49.0	48.8	49.0
<b>No</b>	6.8	7.0	11.4	5.2	9.1	7.5	7.4
<b>Don't know / Not stated</b>	44.0	41.8	44.7	46.9	27.3	43.8	43.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Learners are less certain about whether their learning provider has an equality policy relating to, or including, non-religious beliefs than they are about policies relating to religion. As Figure 28 shows, half (49.3%) of respondents are sure that such a policy exists, which is 13 percentage points lower than the equivalent for 'awareness of policy including religion'.

Of interest, those with a (non-religious) belief (43.9%) are less likely than those with a religion (51.2%) to feel sure that a policy including non-religious beliefs exists within their

learning provision. This accords with our conclusion that the word 'belief' does not sit well with some with non-religious beliefs.

Only 6.8% of respondents overall (but rising to 11.4% among those with a belief) perceive that there is no equal opportunities policy which includes non-religious belief, in their learning provision. A further two in five (44.0%) did not have or did not state an opinion.

*"I'm not aware of an Equalities policy but I think there is a bullying charter. We shouldn't really need such policies, but I think (the provider) will follow the policies and do what they say they will do."*

Male, Adult Learner, 26-35, Buddhist

*"Needs to be mentioned in induction in a positive and open way along with other facilities like childcare, diet, transport etc as part of the norm so people don't have to raise it themselves."*

Male, Work Based Learner, 56-60, Roman Catholic

*"I know there is a policy but I'm not sure exactly what it says."*

Female, Work Based Learner, 19-25, Muslim

*"I think the equality and diversity policies cover religion and belief. I think they were glossed over a bit when we were told about them. It felt a bit like a tick box exercise, mentioning them in passing. They should explain them more in tutorial groups and have discussion forums."*

Female, FE Learner, 46-55, no religion or belief

Figure 29 below shows the extent to which learners feel that the equal opportunities policies of their learning provider translate into reality within the learning environment i.e. that it is effective in preventing discrimination (this assessment may also be influenced by learners' perception of issues and incidents that are, in reality, beyond the provider's control).

### Figure 29: Whether the Policies Seem to Translate into Reality

Base: All respondents

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible Signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Yes</b>	46.9	43.6	47.4	51.4	37.5	42.5	44.1
<b>Only partially</b>	6.5	7.0	9.6	4.9	7.9	7.7	8.3
<b>No</b>	4.7	5.5	4.4	3.5	5.9	4.5	5.4
<b>Not aware of policy/ not sure</b>	42.0	43.9	38.6	40.1	34.0	45.3	42.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Just under half (46.9%) perceive that the policies fully translate into reality and a further 6.5% feel they partially translate to reality. Learners with neither religion nor belief (51.4%) are more likely than those with a religion (43.6%) or a belief (47.4%) to perceive that the policies fully translate to reality. Of those who do have a religion/belief, learners who display visible signs have a lesser propensity than others to perceive that the policies translate to reality (37.5%).

One in twenty (4.7%) say that the learning provider's equal opportunities policies do not translate into reality.

## 5.2 Awareness of Reporting Mechanisms and Support Systems

Two thirds (64.1%) of learners perceive that there is a mechanism for reporting bullying or harassment within the learning environment. Those who have no religion or belief (66.7%), and those who are not open about their religion/belief are slightly more likely to say this (64.2%).

Just under a third (29.4%) of learners are unsure or were unable to state a view on this factor. A further one in fifteen (6.5%) perceive that there is no mechanism in place to report bullying/harassment within their learning provision.

**Figure 30: Awareness of a Mechanism for Reporting Bullying/Harassment within Learning Environment**

Base: All respondents

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible Signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Yes</b>	64.1	62.4	64.0	66.7	51.8	59.2	64.2
<b>No</b>	6.5	8.2	5.3	4.5	13.4	8.0	8.3
<b>Don't know / Not stated</b>	29.4	29.5	30.7	28.9	34.8	32.8	27.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

More than three fifths (62.1%) of respondents indicated that they were already aware that there was legal protection from discrimination due to religion and/or belief in learning, and relatively little variation in awareness can be seen between the key sub-groups (Figure 31).

**Figure 31: Awareness of Legal Protection in the Learning Environment from Discrimination Due to Religion/Belief**

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible Signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Yes</b>	62.1	61.4	63.2	62.9	57.3	60.4	63.7
<b>No</b>	21.2	22.1	22.8	19.5	23.7	22.9	21.6
<b>Don't know / Not stated</b>	16.7	16.5	14.0	17.6	19.0	16.7	14.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The support systems for learners within their own learning provision of which most respondents were aware were clear rules/policies (35.7%) and Welfare Officer / Student Services (33.7%). Around a quarter of learners felt there was a Student Union (27.5%) and 'other learners with the same religion/belief' (23.0%) at their learning provision (Figure 32). Fewer than one in twenty learners were aware of the potential support that could be accessed in the learning environment from a staff member who shares their religion/beliefs (19.3%) or from a Chaplaincy or other religious leader/support worker (17.4%).

The relatively low proportion of all learners who state that they have fellow learners as a support system is surprising. Those with a religious belief tend to state that other learners are

a support system than those with non-religious belief. The greater 'spread' of non-religious beliefs, lower visibility, and less strong 'affiliation' may explain this result.

**Figure 32: Support Systems for Learners with a Religion/Belief**

Base: All respondents

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Clear rules / policies</b>	35.7	36.6	36.8	34.3	34.0	38.1	39.2
<b>Welfare Officer / Student Services</b>	33.7	34.3	35.1	32.9	35.6	36.8	31.9
<b>Student Union</b>	27.5	28.5	28.1	26.1	31.6	30.8	28.9
<b>Other learners who share my religion and/or beliefs</b>	23.0	27.0	19.3	18.8	33.2	32.1	16.2
<b>Staff member who shares your religion and/or beliefs</b>	19.3	22.0	14.9	16.9	25.3	24.9	15.7
<b>Chaplaincy / other religious leader or support worker</b>	17.4	19.3	13.2	15.7	22.5	20.6	17.2

Overall, around one in three respondents reported that they were told about support services that may be relevant to their religion and/or belief (although not necessarily specifically designed as such); another third felt that they had not been made aware of any such support services as part of their induction, and the remainder were not clear about whether or not such support had been offered.

Specifically, 17.7% reported having been told about a range of general support services, but not about any religion/belief-specific support services; 12.7% were told about support services relating to religion/belief; and just 2.3% reported that they had been told about support services relating to their own religion/belief.

**Figure 33: Whether Any Support was Offered (regarding religion/belief) as Part of Induction**

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Yes, I was told about a range of general support services but NOT religion/belief specific support services</b>	17.7	19.0	17.5	16.2	22.1	19.2	18.6
<b>Yes, I was told about a range of support relating to religion/belief</b>	12.7	11.0	10.5	16.0	10.3	12.2	6.9
<b>Yes I was told about support relating to MY religion/belief</b>	2.3	1.8	1.8	3.1	2.0	2.7	0.5
<b>No, I was not offered any support</b>	36.7	39.8	41.2	31.0	34.0	37.3	48.5
<b>Not sure/ not stated</b>	30.6	28.4	29.0	33.7	31.6	28.6	25.5

The qualitative research confirmed that there was great variability in learners' knowledge of the support available to them.

*"There is the manager of the school, reception area and there are some teachers who are specifically for support."*

Male, FE Learner, 29, Sunni Muslim

*"There is someone above our trainer, I know she helps with financial issues but I'm not sure if it goes beyond funding."*

Female, FE Learner, 45, Christian

### 5.3 Monitoring

The qualitative research raised the issue of equality monitoring with respondents, probing on issues including: the acceptability of having monitoring for religion/and or belief within adult learning, and personal preferences regarding equality monitoring.

The results were ambiguous. Some learners stated that they understood the reasons for monitoring, whether they liked it or not. Others were pro- monitoring but had reservations on how the data might be used, for example for positive discrimination.

*"The College needs to collect information about my religion and other people's so it can cater for my needs"*

*"This is important and should be asked right at the beginning when applying for college, but should be clear that decision for accepting a student is not based on religion. Monitoring will give students the opportunity to have their needs catered for."*

Female, FE College, 46-55, Humanist

*"Yes monitoring should be done so the provider has the knowledge of how to treat people. It shouldn't be used for 'positive discrimination' purposes like the police" [when probed, respondent stated that the police positively discriminate in recruitment favouring ethnic minorities]*

Male, FE College, 26-35, No religion or belief

*"If no-one was asked, it would be difficult to discriminate against them but on the other hand, I am aware of the need to monitor to make sure different groups flourish. I am ambivalent when faced with the questions - I cringe but always answer."*

Male, ACL, prev. FE College, 61+, No religion or belief/Scientific Materialist/Vegetarian

Those qualitative respondents who did agree with the concept of monitoring for religion and/or belief differed in their opinions about when the monitoring might take place. Some felt that when registering at the beginning of the course would be optimal, others felt that during the course once students had settled in would be a better time.

*"It would be best to ask people about this later on in the course, as some people may feel they are being judged on their religion if asked when they first register."*

Female, Work Based Learning, 26-35, No religion or belief

*"Information should be collected on application and enrolment."*

Female, FE College, 46-55, No religion or belief

Others stated that they didn't like monitoring for a number of reasons including: categorisation; not fitting into the boxes; negativity around certain labels (particularly for non-religious beliefs); and other reasons.

*"It's more divisive in itself to bring it up."*

Female, ACL, 55-60, Christian

*"Trying to squeeze you into those boxes. People are diverse."*

Male, ACL, 25-34, Muslim

*"That ethnicity form, I hate it. I never know what to say."*

Male, ACL, 45-54, Christian, brought up Muslim

*"I don't like that idea ... labels don't work especially for 'atheist' which sounds like a negative."*

Female, ACL, 35-44, No religion or belief

*"Why make it an issue?"*

Female, ACL, 55-60, Jewish

*"A person's religion or belief is private and not really a concern of the college to be monitored."*

Male, FE College, 26-35, Buddhist

## 6 POSITIVE EXPERIENCES RELATING TO RELIGION/BELIEF

A quarter (24.8%) of respondents felt that they have had positive experiences or outcomes in learning due to their religion and/or belief (see Figure 34). Those with a religion (34.8%) have a greater propensity to report positive experiences/outcomes than those with a belief (27.2%). Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who were not open about their religion/belief in class were approximately half as likely as those who displayed visible signs of their religion or belief to report positive experiences or outcomes in learning as a result of their religion/belief (22.1% compared with 43.1%).

**Figure 34: Whether had any Positive Experiences / Outcomes in Learning Due to Religion and/or Belief**

Base: All respondents

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Yes</b>	24.8	34.8	27.2	9.9	43.1	40.5	22.1
<b>No</b>	70.1	59.4	68.4	85.9	47.4	52.7	74.5
<b>Don't know / Not stated</b>	5.1	5.8	4.4	4.2	9.5	6.7	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The vast majority of learners (70%) report no positive experiences/outcomes in learning specifically due to their religion and/or belief. As one might expect, this rises significantly among those who do not have a religion or a belief (85.9%).

Figure 35 below shows the types of positive experiences/outcomes experienced. In all, very few respondents identify the nature of the positive experience they had. 6.1% say that 'being able to play an active role in student life beyond standard tuition' was a positive experience/outcome for them.

## Positive Experiences / Outcomes in Learning Due to Religion and/or Belief

Base: All respondents

	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Invited to be a representative on the student council</b>	4.0	5.2	2.6	2.8	6.3	6.5	3.4
<b>Offered training to be a welfare officer to other student officer</b>	2.2	2.8	1.8	1.4	2.8	3.2	2.5
<b>Offered training to be a religion/belief specific welfare office etc</b>	2.3	3.0	1.8	1.4	4.0	3.2	2.9
<b>Offered training to volunteer in a support role for a religion/belief organisation</b>	3.2	4.5	1.8	1.6	6.7	4.7	2.9
<b>Being able to play an active role in student life beyond standard tuition time</b>	6.1	8.5	8.8	2.1	9.5	10.9	4.4
<b>Other</b>	7.1	9.5	13.2	2.1	11.9	11.9	8.8

## 7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are both positive and negative messages emerging from this research, as well as results that tell us more about the perception of belief.

On the positive side, the majority of learners with and without a religion and/or belief rate their adult learning provision as 'welcoming'. One quarter of respondents felt that they have had a positive experience or outcome in adult learning due to their religion and/or belief – more so for those with a religious belief than for those with a non-religious belief or those with no religion and/or belief.

Providers should continue to build on their welcoming environment. Respondents who felt they had had a positive experience due to their religion/belief were more likely to be those that had religious beliefs. Those with visible signs of belief and those who are open in class are more likely to report a positive experience such as being invited to be a student representative or being offered training to be a welfare or student officer. Opportunities to participate need to be extended and promoted to all.

Bullying and harassment due to religion and/or belief is alive and well, with over 11% of learners overall self disclosing bullying and harassment for religious and other beliefs. In the qualitative research, it was revealed that some learners do not consider verbal abuse bullying and harassment or would rather ignore it.

With over one in ten respondents with religious beliefs and over one in ten respondents with non-religious beliefs suffering from bullying and harassment, it appears that the motivations for bullying and harassment lie in the perception of difference and in competing and opposing beliefs. It would also seem that accommodation for specific groups (particularly religious groups) may result in further tensions and certain groups feeling marginalised or excluded unless these accommodations are handled sensitively (this might include, for example the provision of Halal meat or meat in general for vegetarians; provision of one prayer room for a variety of faiths with different needs).

Examples of how bullying and harassment are not tolerated and the mechanisms through which they can be reported must be displayed prominently. The consequences of bullying behaviour also need to be displayed. The rules and policies and consequences should also be spelt out at the beginning of courses and reaffirmed throughout.

A very low proportion of learners who stated that they had been subject to bullying reported this to anyone within their learning provision. Furthermore there is a considerable minority of learners who state that there is no-one to whom they can turn with a problem. This is particularly the case for those with a non-religious belief.

There should be no let up in anti-bullying, and respect campaigns alongside promotion of equality policies, and reporting mechanisms. With the embedding of E&D within other grades in the Common Inspection Framework, this work will need to be undertaken at a course level as well as at a provider level.

Lack of awareness of an equal opportunity policy that covers religion and/or belief may underpin low reporting rates for bullying and harassment. While just under two thirds of learners are aware of a policy that covers religion, less than half of learners are aware of a policy covering non-religious beliefs.

Some learners are wary of the potential for conflict or for tensions to arise between other learners whether it be with different religious beliefs, with different non-religious beliefs and/or with those with no beliefs. With over one in ten learners stating that they have

experienced tensions (highest with those with a non-religious belief) and over 6% stating that they have issues with other learners/groups of learners due to their religion and/or belief (highest amongst those with a religious belief), this is a small but significant minority.

While the majority of learners in the qualitative research seemed to value compromise and tolerance, some with religious beliefs (and in our sample, particularly Christians) were less likely to compromise their beliefs to accommodate others.

Further to the promotion of Equality Policies covering non-religious belief as well as religious belief, eligibility criteria for welfare officers and student officers should be set and publicised which include: understanding and acceptance of the entirety of provider's equality policy (all strands) and thus tolerance and understanding of all strands covered by the Equality Act.

There was no consensus on equal opportunities monitoring amongst the qualitative research participants. Some respondents feel that although monitoring feels invasive, it is useful to inform the meeting of need; others felt it was unnecessary, or worse, stir up issues and/or concern people who would rather not reveal their belief sets.

Prior to any religion and/or belief monitoring system being introduced by any provider, sensitive consultation should be undertaken followed by detailed publicity as to the reasons for monitoring and the use to which the data will be put.

This research has revealed the difficulties in definition of, perception of, and, potentially, accommodating non-religious belief to the same extent as religious belief. Given the complexity of the legal definition, it is not surprising that providers might find it more difficult to cater to this part of the equality characteristic, resulting in those with non-religious beliefs having less positive scores on many measures in this survey compared with those with religious beliefs or those with no religion and/or belief.

This problem is exacerbated by the barrier that the very word 'belief' poses for some with non-religious beliefs, for whom the words philosophy or life-style choice are preferable. This is a societal issue but one which can be tackled by providers. With the proportion of those with religious belief over-stated (due to those who do not practise but have a demographic affiliation only) and the proportion of those with non-religious beliefs under-stated (due to the definition issues), this is a group that should not be side-lined.

Providers should be pro-active in describing the Equality Act as it relates to religion and belief to ensure that all learners with a religious or non-religious belief understand the way the Act relates to them and the way the equality policy of the provider covers them. This is, potentially, a more difficult task with those who have a non-religious belief, some of whom do not yet recognise that their belief may be covered by the Equality Act. This is partly a result of the word 'belief' acting as a barrier for some of this group. Some state that belief does not describe the philosophy or lifestyle choice that affects the way they live their life. Others think that 'belief' refers to religious beliefs.

## APPENDICES



## Appendix 1 - Methodology

### Aims and Objectives

The Skills Funding Agency invited tenders from research agencies on its Equality and Diversity theme research framework contract to meet the following aims:

- To provide evidence about the experiences and views of learners with different religions and beliefs (including those with no belief), to inform the Skills Funding Agency's equality objectives.
- To provide evidence which could be helpful to other stakeholders, including colleges, providers and sector agencies.

Specifically to answer:

- Do learners and potential learners face any barriers to participating and succeeding in adult learning and skills provision as a result of their religion or belief?
- Do learners feel that the sector should monitor and analyse quantitative data about learner religion and belief through monitoring forms? If not, are there other ways of collecting information about equality?
- Does the curriculum provide space to encounter and explore issues relating to religion and belief in an appropriate and sensitive way?
- Do colleges and providers make sufficient accommodation for learners to express and observe their religion or belief, including for example clothing and symbols; prayer and chaplaincy facilities; dietary requirements; festivals and holy days?
- Where facilities for prayer, worship, meditation and celebration exist, are they appropriate to the full range of religions and beliefs?
- Do learners feel they have experienced discrimination, bullying or harassment in adult learning as a result of their religion or belief?
- How effectively do colleges and providers respond to instances of religion and belief-related discrimination, bullying and harassment?
- How do learners' experiences of having a religion or belief compare with their experiences in other areas of learning, such as school, 16-18 further education or university?
- Are there good relations between learners with different religions and beliefs?
- Do learners experience tensions between religion and belief equality and other protected characteristics such as gender and sexual orientation?

### Design

A small scale review of literature relating to the role and impact of religion and belief in education (learners aged 16+); equality duty/legislation and implementation; and other core issues informed the design of both the quantitative and the qualitative research.

The primary research design comprised:

- An online survey – open to all current adult learners in further education (including 16-18 year old learners as a comparison group).
- Forty in-depth interviews (telephone).
- Five focus group discussions with adult learners.

Babcock Research worked with the Steering Group convened by the Skills Funding Agency and with their own specialist advisers from a recently disbanded regional multi-faith forum to develop a self completion (online) survey to address the core research questions (above).

The survey was designed 'on paper' before being programmed as a web survey, following comments from the Skills Funding Agency, steering group members and Babcock's

specialist advisers. The web survey itself underwent extensive functional testing before deployment.

### **Web Survey Distribution and Publicity**

Without an appropriate and accessible sampling frame for learners, and with the desire to open the research to all SFA funded learners in adult learning setting the England, an open web survey was established, and the URL (link) was distributed to all known providers.

Providers were offered the option of commissioning an bespoke URL that would allow responses from their respondents to be isolated from others nationally, and receiving anonymised data from their own learners.

The web survey was launched on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2012. Survey launch publicity was conducted via the Agency's Update bulletin for providers (Issues 95 and 96). Follow-up emails were sent to in excess of 1500 providers on the Agency's database (28<sup>th</sup> February, 30<sup>th</sup> March, and 19<sup>th</sup> April). Delivery receipt, failure to deliver and out of office messages were monitored, and remedial action was taken where possible. Email addresses provided by the Agency were mainly for the head of the organisation or a senior finance officer, hence Babcock also conducted additional desk and telephone research to obtain additional contact details for Equality & Diversity Officers (or similar).

Fliers and posters for display/distribution to learners were included (see Appendix 3a). A copy of the survey questions is provided as Appendix 3b.

A small extension was made to the survey close date in response to slow take-up by providers and specific request of some providers who commenced publicity with their learners late in the period. The survey finally closed on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2012, twelve weeks after it was launched.

### **Qualitative Research**

The survey gave the opportunity for participants to volunteer to participate in further research (and a secure mechanism for providing contact details to the research team). From these volunteers, 40 depth interviews were secured and conducted.

Additionally, five focus groups were held at the premises of learning providers (including a vocational training provider). The discussion guide used for the qualitative research is attached as Appendix 3c. Qualitative research was conducted in May 2012, when survey findings were available to researchers, allowing for exploration of key issues highlighted by the survey.

## Appendix 2 - Detailed Data Tables

**App. Table 1: Region of Residence**

Base: All respondents		Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>East of England</b>	5.4	3.8	6.1	7.5	0.8	3.5	4.9
<b>East Midlands</b>	6.5	6.5	7.9	6.1	8.3	6.2	7.4
<b>London</b>	27.9	36.9	25.4	16.0	35.6	37.6	29.9
<b>North East</b>	3.4	2.3	8.8	3.5	1.2	3.7	2.5
<b>North West</b>	16.5	17.6	17.5	14.8	20.2	17.9	15.2
<b>South East</b>	10.5	10.5	7.9	11.3	12.6	10.4	11.8
<b>South West</b>	8.2	3.5	14.0	13.1	2.0	3.0	8.3
<b>West Midlands</b>	8.2	8.0	5.3	9.2	8.3	8.0	7.8
<b>Yorkshire and The Humber</b>	12.6	10.1	6.1	17.6	10.7	9.0	12.3
<b>Other</b>	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.0
<b>Unclear</b>	0.4	0.3	0.9	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**App. Table 2: Character of Area of Residence**

Base: All respondents		Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Rural (village)</b>	12.5	9.7	11.4	16.7	8.3	8.0	10.8
<b>Semi rural (e.g. market town)</b>	16.7	16.0	21.1	16.7	15.4	13.9	22.1
<b>Urban / Sub-urban</b>	51.2	51.6	52.6	50.2	54.9	55.2	48.5
<b>Metropolitan (large city)</b>	19.7	22.8	14.9	16.4	21.3	22.9	18.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**App. Table 3: Age of Respondent**

Base: All respondents		Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>19-21 years</b>	29.2	26.5	24.6	34.3	36.8	31.1	18.1
<b>22-24 years</b>	11.1	9.0	17.5	12.4	10.7	10.7	9.3
<b>25-29 years</b>	9.1	10.5	4.4	8.7	8.3	8.7	9.3
<b>30-34 years</b>	9.1	10.1	4.4	8.9	9.5	10.4	8.3
<b>35-39 years</b>	7.9	9.2	5.3	6.8	9.1	8.0	9.8
<b>40-44 years</b>	8.7	8.5	14.0	7.5	6.7	7.7	13.7
<b>45-49 years</b>	7.9	8.0	7.9	7.7	5.5	8.0	8.3
<b>50-54 years</b>	6.7	8.0	6.1	4.9	4.7	5.7	11.3
<b>55-59 years</b>	5.4	5.7	7.9	4.2	4.0	4.7	7.8
<b>60+ years</b>	2.9	3.2	3.5	2.3	3.2	3.0	2.5
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	2.0	1.5	4.4	2.1	1.6	2.0	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**App. Table 4: Gender of Respondents**

Base: All respondents		Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Male</b>	34.7	30.6	37.7	39.4	29.6	35.8	26.0
<b>Female</b>	62.5	68.1	55.3	56.8	68.4	62.9	71.1
<b>Describe in another way</b>	0.4	0.2	1.8	0.2	1.6	0.2	1.0
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	2.5	1.2	5.3	3.5	0.4	1.0	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**App. Table 5: Ethnicity of Respondents**

Base: All respondents		Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>White</b>	<b>69.7</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>83.3</b>	<b>89.0</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>48.3</b>	<b>72.5</b>
White - British	59.4	39.8	70.2	84.3	29.6	36.1	57.8
White - Irish	1.6	2.0	3.5	0.5	2.0	2.2	2.5
Any other White background	8.5	11.6	9.6	4.0	9.9	10.0	11.8
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>2.0</b>
White and Black Caribbean	1.0	0.5	3.5	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.5
White and Black African	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.4	1.5	0.5
White and Asian	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.0
Any other Mixed background	0.4	0.2	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.5
<b>Asian (inc Asian British)</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>36.4</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>15.2</b>
Indian	5.8	10.3	0.0	0.9	15.8	10.2	6.4
Pakistani	4.7	8.7	0.0	0.5	12.6	10.2	4.4
Bangladeshi	0.6	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.6	1.2	1.0
Any other Asian background	2.6	4.7	0.0	0.5	6.3	5.0	3.4
<b>Black (inc Black British)</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>5.9</b>
Black Caribbean	2.1	3.2	0.9	0.9	0.4	3.0	2.5
Black African	4.4	8.2	0.0	0.2	9.9	8.7	2.5
Any other Black background	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	1.0
<b>Chinese</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Any other background</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>2.9</b>
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**App. Table 6: Disabilities and Learning Difficulties of Respondents**

Base: All respondents		Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>No disability /long-term illness</b>	71.6	70.9	59.6	75.8	68.4	70.4	66.7
<b>Mobility</b>	5.2	5.2	6.1	4.9	7.5	4.7	8.3
<b>Dexterity</b>	1.1	1.2	1.8	0.7	2.0	1.2	1.5
<b>Chest / breathing problems</b>	2.6	3.0	0.9	2.6	3.6	2.2	3.9
<b>Medical conditions</b>	5.3	6.3	4.4	4.0	8.7	6.2	6.4
<b>Sensory impairment</b>	3.0	2.8	1.8	3.5	1.6	3.2	2.5
<b>Speech, language and/or communications difficulties</b>	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.7	0.5
<b>Learning difficulties</b>	5.3	4.3	6.1	6.3	4.7	4.2	4.9
<b>Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development Needs</b>	1.1	1.0	3.5	0.5	1.2	1.0	2.9
<b>Mental health condition (inc. depression)</b>	6.7	4.7	18.4	6.3	6.7	6.7	8.8
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	4.5	5.0	4.4	3.8	5.1	4.2	3.4
<b>Other (please describe)</b>	2.9	3.3	3.5	2.1	2.4	3.5	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**App. Table 7: Whether have a Religion and/or Belief**

Base: All respondents		Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Religion</b>	52.8	100.0	1.8	0.0	95.3	85.8	81.4
<b>Belief</b>	10.0	0.3	100.0	0.0	4.7	14.4	18.6
<b>Neither a religion nor a belief</b>	37.4	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**App. Table 8: Religion of Respondents**

Base: Respondents with a religion	All	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
		Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:		601 %	2 %	0 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>Baha'i</b>		0.2	0.0		0.4	0.3	0.0
<b>Buddhist</b>		1.8	0.0		0.4	1.7	2.4
<b>Christian</b>		57.1	100.0		39.4	47.2	67.5
<b>Hindu</b>		4.3	0.0		5.8	3.5	6.0
<b>Humanist</b>		0.2	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Jainism</b>		0.2	0.0		0.0	0.3	0.0
<b>Jewish</b>		1.0	0.0		0.8	0.6	1.2
<b>Muslim</b>		26.5	0.0		44.4	38.3	11.4
<b>Pagan</b>		1.5	0.0		2.5	1.4	1.8
<b>Rastafarianism</b>		0.2	0.0		0.4	0.0	0.6
<b>Sikh</b>		1.3	0.0		2.5	2.0	0.6
<b>Spiritualism</b>		1.2	0.0		0.4	1.2	1.2
<b>Wiccan</b>		0.5	0.0		0.0	0.0	1.8
<b>Prefer not to say</b>		1.2	0.0		0.4	0.6	1.2
<b>Other</b>		3.0	0.0		2.5	2.9	4.2

**App. Table 9: Outward Signs of Religion and/or Belief**

Base: Respondents with a religion and/or belief	Self revealed religion and/or belief				Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	713 %	601 %	114 %		253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>FAIRLY CLEAR TO ALL THAT SEE ME</b>							
Clothing or symbols on clothing	15.6	17.6	4.4		43.9	22.1	7.4
Jewellery	16.4	18.1	7.0		44.7	19.7	13.2
Hair/beard	10.4	11.8	2.6		29.2	14.4	5.9
Symbols on other personal possessions	9.3	10.5	2.6		25.7	12.7	3.9
Views I express openly in social settings	21.9	22.8	16.7		37.9	32.3	4.9
Views I express in taught sessions	19.2	19.5	17.5		34.4	29.9	3.4
<b>CLEAR TO THOSE WHO SHARE/UNDERSTAND MY BELIEF (BUT NOT TO ALL)</b>							
Clothing or symbols on clothing	6.9	8.0	0.9		19.4	9.5	4.4
Jewellery	5.9	6.5	2.6		15.8	6.2	7.4
Hair/beard	3.8	4.2	1.8		10.7	4.7	2.9
Symbols on other personal possessions	6.0	6.7	2.6		15.4	9.0	3.4
Views I express openly in social settings	13.2	13.5	11.4		23.7	18.9	7.4
Views I express in taught sessions	14.2	14.6	11.4		21.7	20.4	7.4
<b>ONLY CLEAR TO PEOPLE I KNOW REASONABLY WELL</b>							
Clothing or symbols on clothing	6.2	6.5	4.4		2.4	7.0	7.4
Jewellery	6.0	6.5	3.5		3.6	7.0	5.4
Hair/beard	3.8	4.2	1.8		4.3	5.7	2.0
Symbols on other personal possessions	5.8	6.0	4.4		4.3	6.7	6.4
Views I express openly in social settings	18.8	18.0	22.8		15.0	18.7	24.0
Views I express in taught sessions	12.3	12.5	11.4		11.9	14.2	12.7
<b>NO, NOT CLEAR TO OTHERS, I KEEP MY BELIEFS PRIVATE</b>							
Clothing or symbols on clothing	16.5	17.5	11.4		6.7	11.7	28.9
Jewellery	15.0	15.5	12.3		2.0	10.2	26.5
Hair/beard	15.8	16.5	12.3		6.7	11.9	27.0
Symbols on other personal possessions	16.8	16.8	16.7		7.5	11.4	30.9
Views I express openly in social settings	16.8	17.1	14.9		7.1	8.2	36.8
Views I express in taught sessions	18.1	18.5	15.8		9.5	8.5	40.2

**App. Table 10: Openness about Religion or Belief in Various Environments**

Base: Respondents with a religion and/or belief	Self revealed religion and/or belief				Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	713 %	601 %	114 %		253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>YES</b>							
At home with family	78.8	80.9	67.5		89.3	91.8	67.6
With close friends outside your learning environment	68.4	68.4	68.4		81.0	86.6	47.5
With close friends within your learning environment	49.8	50.1	48.2		64.8	76.4	12.3
With learners in your class	34.2	34.4	33.3		46.2	60.7	0.0
With your co-workers in WBL	30.2	30.9	26.3		39.9	48.0	5.4
With your tutor(s)	33.5	34.3	29.8		47.0	56.2	3.4
With your employer in WBL	26.5	28.0	19.3		36.4	43.8	3.9
With student support	25.9	26.8	21.9		38.3	45.0	1.0
In leisure activities/groups (exc sport) in learning env.	27.2	27.5	26.3		38.7	46.5	1.5
In sport (teams/clubs etc) in your learning environment	25.4	26.0	22.8		37.2	43.3	0.5
In learning environ. generally	34.5	35.6	28.9		49.8	57.5	2.0
<b>PARTIALLY</b>							
At home with family	10.5	9.7	14.9		6.3	6.5	20.1
With close friends outside your learning environment	15.0	15.0	14.9		9.5	11.2	26.0
With close friends within your learning environment	20.3	20.1	21.1		15.8	20.9	25.0
With learners in your class	22.2	23.0	17.5		24.9	39.3	0.0
With your co-workers in WBL	17.8	18.0	16.7		20.6	25.1	8.8
With your tutor(s)	16.3	16.1	16.7		19.8	24.4	6.9
With your employer in WBL	11.6	11.5	12.3		12.6	17.4	4.9
With student support	11.1	11.0	11.4		13.0	16.2	5.4
In leisure activities/groups (exc sport) in learning env.	11.1	10.8	12.3		10.7	15.7	6.4
In sport (teams/clubs etc) in your learning environment	8.8	8.8	8.8		9.1	13.7	3.4
In learning environ. generally	21.3	20.6	24.6		20.9	28.4	15.2
<b>NO</b>							
At home with family	4.2	3.8	6.1		2.8	1.7	10.3
With close friends outside your learning environment	8.3	8.7	6.1		5.5	1.2	26.0
With close friends within your learning environment	18.9	19.3	16.7		13.8	1.5	61.3
With learners in your class	28.6	27.6	33.3		21.3	0.0	100.0
With your co-workers in WBL	24.4	23.6	28.1		16.2	6.0	72.5
With your tutor(s)	30.4	30.3	30.7		22.1	10.2	83.8
With your employer in WBL	27.2	26.3	31.6		21.3	9.0	75.0
With student support	31.4	31.4	30.7		26.5	14.7	79.4
In leisure activities/groups (exc sport) in learning env.	31.0	31.1	29.8		26.1	13.7	79.4
In sport (teams/clubs etc) in your learning environment	31.3	31.3	30.7		26.1	13.2	81.4
In learning environ. generally	27.9	27.8	28.1		20.9	8.7	79.4

**App. Table 11: How Welcoming Adult Learning Is (Personal experience)**

Base: All respondents	Self revealed religion and/or belief			Visibility / openness about own religion or belief			
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>1 out of 10</b>	1.4	2.0	0.0	0.9	2.8	2.2	1.0
<b>2</b>	0.9	1.3	0.9	0.2	2.0	1.7	0.5
<b>3</b>	1.7	2.3	0.9	0.9	3.6	2.5	2.0
<b>4</b>	2.0	2.2	0.9	2.1	3.6	1.5	3.4
<b>5</b>	7.7	8.3	7.0	7.0	8.3	8.5	6.9
<b>6</b>	6.4	6.2	7.9	6.3	6.7	5.0	7.4
<b>7</b>	12.3	11.5	7.9	14.6	11.1	12.7	9.3
<b>8</b>	20.7	18.8	29.8	20.9	15.8	18.2	27.9
<b>9</b>	15.8	13.1	18.4	18.8	12.6	16.7	11.3
<b>10 out of 10</b>	31.1	34.3	26.3	28.2	33.6	31.1	30.4
<b>Mean score</b>	<b>7.98</b>	<b>7.91</b>	<b>8.13</b>	<b>8.06</b>	<b>7.67</b>	<b>7.86</b>	<b>7.94</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



**App. Table 12: Safe Spaces Within the Learning Environment**

Base: All respondents	Self revealed religion and/or belief				Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>SOCIAL SPACES WITHIN THE LEARNING SITE E.G. CANTEEN</b>							
Totally unsafe	6.1	7.7	2.6	4.9	9.1	8.0	2.5
Fairly unsafe	3.4	3.5	5.3	3.1	4.3	3.5	4.9
Fairly safe	20.8	21.3	19.3	20.4	23.3	20.9	24.0
Totally safe	39.4	36.9	43.0	41.8	36.8	43.5	32.8
Not applicable / not sure	30.3	30.6	29.8	29.8	26.5	24.1	35.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>SPORTS AREAS AND FACILITIES WITHIN THE LEARNING SITE</b>							
Totally unsafe	4.5	6.0	2.6	3.3	5.9	6.0	2.0
Fairly unsafe	3.9	4.3	4.4	3.1	7.5	5.0	4.9
Fairly safe	15.1	15.8	12.3	14.8	18.6	16.4	17.2
Totally safe	27.3	25.6	28.9	29.1	28.1	29.6	21.6
Not applicable / not sure	49.2	48.3	51.8	49.7	39.9	43	54.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>CLASSROOMS</b>							
Totally unsafe	5.6	7.2	2.6	4.5	8.7	7.7	2.9
Fairly unsafe	3.0	3.2	2.6	3.1	4.0	3.5	2.5
Fairly safe	15.9	16.0	21.1	14.3	18.2	15.7	21.1
Totally safe	47.0	44.8	45.6	50.2	46.6	50.7	40.2
Not applicable / not sure	28.5	28.8	28.1	27.9	22.5	22.4	33.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>LIBRARY</b>							
Totally unsafe	5.7	7.8	3.5	3.8	9.1	7.5	3.4
Fairly unsafe	2.6	2.7	1.8	2.8	4.0	3.0	2.5
Fairly safe	16.1	16.5	18.4	14.8	17.4	15.9	22.5
Totally safe	39.6	38.1	38.6	41.8	40.3	43.3	32.4
Not applicable / not sure	36.0	34.9	37.7	36.8	29.2	30.3	39.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>APPRENTICESHIP / WBL EMPLOYMENT/ PLACEMENT SITES</b>							
Totally unsafe	4.1	4.8	1.8	4.0	4.3	5.0	2.5
Fairly unsafe	2.3	2.5	3.5	1.9	3.6	2.5	2.5
Fairly safe	13.9	13.1	14.0	14.8	14.6	13.4	16.2
Totally safe	31.0	28.0	30.7	35.2	29.2	30.3	24.5
Not applicable / not sure	48.7	51.6	50	44.1	48.2	48.8	54.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

**App. Table 13: Religion and Belief within the Curriculum**

Base: All respondents	Self revealed religion and/or belief				Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>RELIGIOUS BELIEFS IN GENERAL</b>							
Yes	23.2	23.0	14.0	26.1	23.7	27.4	10.8
Partially	16.9	16.3	21.1	16.7	18.2	17.4	17.6
No	13.9	18.3	14.0	7.7	19.4	16.7	23.5
I would not expect it to	32.8	28.5	41.2	36.6	20.6	23.9	37.7
Not stated	13.2	13.9	9.7	12.9	18.2	14.6	10.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>YOUR SPECIFIC RELIGION</b>							
Yes	16.2	16.1	11.4	17.6	18.2	20.6	6.4
Partially	13.8	15.0	11.4	12.9	17.0	17.2	10.3
No	17.0	21.6	15.8	11.0	21.3	18.9	27.5
I would not expect it to	37.8	31.3	50.9	43.2	23.3	26.9	43.1
Not stated	15.2	16	10.5	15.3	20.2	16.4	12.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>NON-RELIGIOUS BELIEFS IN GENERAL</b>							
Yes	20.6	19.5	14.0	23.9	20.2	23.1	11.8
Partially	15.5	15.1	18.4	15.7	15.8	16.7	14.7
No	16.0	19.1	17.5	11.0	21.7	18.9	21.6
I would not expect it to	32.5	28.6	40.4	35.7	19.8	23.1	38.7
Not stated	15.4	17.7	9.7	13.7	22.5	18.2	13.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>YOUR SPECIFIC NON- RELIGIOUS BELIEFS</b>							
Yes	16.4	15.0	13.2	19.2	17.4	19.2	7.8
Partially	13.3	13.5	14.0	13.1	13.0	15.2	10.3
No	18.3	22.6	18.4	12.0	24.9	21.1	27.5
I would not expect it to	35.6	30.4	43.9	40.6	21.7	25.4	40.7
Not stated	16.4	18.5	10.5	15.1	22.9	19.1	13.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN RELIGIONS AND/OR BELIEFS</b>							
Yes	24.8	24.6	18.4	27.0	27.7	29.9	13.2
Partially	16.4	14.5	20.2	18.1	17.4	14.7	19.1
No	14.4	18.3	14.0	8.9	17.0	17.9	21.1
I would not expect it to	29.9	26.3	37.7	32.9	18.6	21.6	33.8
Not stated	14.5	16.3	9.7	13.1	19.4	15.9	12.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

**App. Table 14: Accommodation of Religious and/or Belief Requirements by Learning Providers**

Base: All respondents	Self revealed religion and/or belief				Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>MY LEARNING PROVIDER DOES THIS 'VERY WELL'</b>							
Provision of 'safe spaces' in the learning environment	24.8	30.0	17.5	19.5	37.5	31.8	21.6
Sensitivity of curriculum content (including practicals/assessments)	22.7	24.8	15.8	21.6	28.9	26.4	17.2
Timetabling / flexibility for prayer and other observances etc	16.2	18.6	9.6	14.8	24.9	20.1	11.8
Timetabling / flexibility for festivals and holidays etc	21.7	26.0	10.5	18.8	34.8	26.9	17.2
Suitable spaces for prayer / meditation / quiet contemplation	17.6	20.8	10.5	15.3	31.2	23.6	12.7
Enabling full involvement in social activities with fellow learners (e.g. the places / times / activities of social events / gatherings)	19.0	21.1	11.4	18.1	28.5	23.6	13.2
Enabling participation in sporting activities through your learning provider	16.4	18.5	11.4	15.0	25.7	20.9	11.8
Provision of food suitable for the requirements of your religion/belief	16.6	19.3	9.6	14.8	15.8	18.2	11.8
<b>MY LEARNING PROVIDER DOES THIS 'TO THE EXTENT THEY CAN'</b>							
Provision of 'safe spaces' in the learning environment	16.0	15.3	20.2	15.7	15.8	18.2	17.2
Sensitivity of curriculum content (including practicals/assessments)	16.2	16.8	18.4	14.6	18.6	19.4	17.6
Timetabling / flexibility for prayer and other observances etc	12.7	12.8	9.6	13.4	12.6	13.9	12.7
Timetabling / flexibility for festivals and holidays etc	14.9	14.8	13.2	15.5	15.4	16.7	16.2
Suitable spaces for prayer / meditation / quiet contemplation	11.4	11.1	8.8	12.4	11.9	12.2	12.7
Enabling full involvement in social activities with fellow learners	14.5	14.0	14.0	15.3	17.0	15.9	15.2
Enabling participation in sporting activities through your learning provider	11.9	11.1	14.0	12.4	12.3	12.4	15.2
Provision of food suitable for the requirements of your religion/belief	12.6	12.5	12.3	12.9	13.4	13.2	14.7

**App. Table 15: Barriers within Learning Due to Religion and Belief**

Base: All respondents	Self revealed religion and/or belief				Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	1139 %	601 %	114 %	426 %	253 %	402 %	204 %
<b>PERSONAL EXPERIENCE</b>							
Lack of parental financial support for learning	6.1	7.3	2.6	5.4	12.3	8.2	4.4
Barriers to taking up mainstream funding (e.g. loans/grants etc)	6.1	7.0	2.6	5.9	11.1	7.7	4.9
Bullying or harassment from new group of learners in new learning environment	3.8	4.2	2.6	3.5	7.1	4.7	3.4
Lack of 'safe spaces' in the learning environment	3.9	4.3	0.9	4.0	6.7	4.5	2.9
Insensitive curriculum content (including practicals/assessments)	3.8	4.2	1.8	3.8	5.9	4.5	2.5
Timetable restrictions / lack of flexibility for prayer etc	4.1	5.5	0.9	3.1	9.5	6.2	3.9
Timetable restrictions / lack of flexibility for festivals etc	4.4	5.3	1.8	3.8	9.1	5.7	4.9
Lack of suitable space for prayer / meditation / quiet contemplation	4.0	5.0	1.8	3.3	8.3	6.2	2.9
Problems with bullying and harassment on way to learning	3.3	3.3	0.9	4.0	4.7	3.5	2.5
Barriers to full involvement in social activities with fellow learners (e.g. the places / times / activities of social events/gatherings)	3.5	4.0	1.8	3.3	6.3	4.5	3.4
Barriers to participation in sporting activities through your learning provider	3.5	4.0	1.8	3.3	5.9	4.2	3.9
Lack of provision of food suitable for the requirements of your religion/belief	4.0	4.7	1.8	3.5	7.9	5.7	2.9
Provision of food suitable for the requirements of other religions/beliefs	4.9	6.0	0.9	4.5	8.7	6.5	4.9
Provision of facilities / activities targeted at other groups of learners (e.g. different ethnic, belief, sexual orientation, age, gender identity and disability groups)	4.3	5.0	3.5	3.5	8.7	5.7	3.9

**App. Table 16: Currency of Bullying and/or Harassment within Learning**

Base: Those who have experienced bullying or harassment in learning	Self revealed religion and/or belief				Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	119 %	85 #	13 #	21 #	61 #	65 #	21 #
<b>Currently experiencing bullying/harassment</b>	19	15	1	6	11	11	4
<b>Within the past year</b>	30	27	3	6	18	18	8
<b>1-2 years ago</b>	18	13	5	3	9	11	3
<b>3 or more years ago</b>	19	15	3	4	11	11	6
<b>Not stated</b>	15	15	1	2	12	14	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>						

NOTE: Data is rounded to nearest whole percentage point due to low base

**App. Table 17: Type of Bullying and/or Harassment within Learning**

Base: Those who have experienced bullying or harassment in learning	Self revealed religion and/or belief				Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	119 %	85 #	13 #	21 #	61 #	65 #	21 #
<b>Verbal abuse</b>	56	48	8	11	34	38	12
<b>Derogatory comments or names</b>	61	51	10	12	34	37	16
<b>Threatening behaviour</b>	39	32	5	9	20	26	7
<b>Physical abuse</b>	18	13	3	6	8	11	1
<b>Pressure to transgress your beliefs / religious practices</b>	41	33	6	10	21	25	9
<b>Pressure to dress / appear differently</b>	40	31	5	12	22	20	11
<b>Pressure to eat /drink things you believe are wrong for you</b>	24	21	2	5	12	16	4
<b>Pressure to miss prayer</b>	25	25	1	4	16	15	7
<b>Exclusion in the classroom/learning environment</b>	39	28	5	13	18	23	6
<b>Exclusion in learner social settings</b>	39	31	5	11	18	22	12
<b>Discrimination in practical work in classroom or tasks in Work Based Learning setting</b>	30	25	3	8	13	17	7

NOTE: The bullying/harassment may have been experienced 'Infrequently', 'Sometimes', 'Often' or 'Always'.  
Data is rounded to nearest whole percentage point due to low base.

**App. Table 18: Perpetrators of Bullying and/or Harassment within Learning**

Base: Those who have experienced bullying or harassment in learning	Self revealed religion and/or belief				Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	119 %	85 %	13 %	21 %	61 %	65 %	21 %
<b>Learners on your course</b>	37.0	38.8	30.8	33.3	33.3	33.8	61.9
<b>Learners on OTHER courses/different year groups</b>	31.1	27.1	46.2	38.1	38.1	27.7	28.6
<b>Work colleagues in Work Based Learning</b>	5.9	7.1	7.7	0.0	0.0	3.1	14.3
<b>Tutor</b>	7.6	5.9	7.7	14.3	14.3	7.7	4.8
<b>Other staff</b>	15.1	12.9	30.8	14.3	14.3	16.9	14.3
<b>Manager/supervisor in Work Based Learning</b>	5.0	4.7	7.7	4.8	4.8	1.5	9.5
<b>General public on the way to place of learning/Work Based Learning</b>	10.9	11.8	7.7	9.5	9.5	13.8	4.8
<b>General public while on work placement</b>	5.0	5.9	0.0	4.8	4.8	6.2	4.8
<b>A person unknown, using electronic communications</b>	3.4	3.5	0.0	4.8	4.8	1.5	9.5
<b>Other</b>	5.0	4.7	0.0	9.5	9.5	4.6	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**App. Table 19: Whether Reported Bullying and/or Harassment within Learning**

Base: Those who have experienced bullying or harassment in learning

	Self revealed religion and/or belief				Visibility / openness about own religion or belief		
	All	Any religion	Any belief	Neither	Visible signs	Open with class	Not open in class
Base:	119 %	85 #	13 #	21 #	61 #	65 #	21 #
<b>Within learning provision</b>	29	26	2	6	15	19	5
<b>Outside learning provision, to authorities e.g. police</b>	2	2	0	0	2	1	1
<b>Outside learning provision, e.g. to family and friends</b>	17	13	3	4	9	8	7
<b>No</b>	34	26	7	8	20	20	8
<b>Not stated</b>	18	18	1	3	15	17	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>						

NOTE: Data is rounded to nearest whole percentage point due to low base.

## **Appendix 3 – Research Instruments**

**Appendix 3a – Poster to promote the open access online survey for learners**

**Appendix 3b – Online questionnaire for learners**

**Appendix 3c – Discussion guide**

|

# Religion & Belief

## How does adult learning deal with the issues?

National research organised by  
the Skills Funding Agency  
and Babcock Research  
needs your views



Log onto the confidential web survey  
by Friday 27<sup>th</sup> April

<http://www.keysurvey.co.uk/survey/412651/111f/>

If you would like to do more than the survey, get  
in touch with the research team to take part in  
an in-depth interview to share more of your  
experiences and views

Your religion and/or belief(s) are important parts of who you are –  
we want learning providers to understand your needs

Skills  
Funding  
Agency

[belief@babcock.co.uk](mailto:belief@babcock.co.uk)  
or call the research team on  
07734 496664/01904 656655



**Q1 RESEARCH INTO RELIGION AND BELIEF WITHIN FURTHER EDUCATION**

The Skills Funding Agency has commissioned Babcock Research, to undertake research with learners about their experiences and views of adult learning and the influence of religion and belief in this. Adult learning funded by the Skills Funding Agency, includes Further Education, Work-Based Learning, and Adult and Community Education.

We are interested in the views of people who are currently participating in learning in Further Education, including Work-Based Learning such as Apprenticeships.

The results of the research will inform the Skills Funding Agency's equality objectives and will be used to provide evidence which could be helpful to other stakeholders, including colleges, providers and sector agencies to improve provision and help inform their equality practices It should not take more than 15-20 minutes to complete the survey, and may be much quicker.

All responses are anonymous and results will be aggregated. If you have any questions about the research, or wish to participate in a different way (webchat; telephone etc.) please email [belief@babcock.co.uk](mailto:belief@babcock.co.uk) or call 01904 656655 / 07734 496664.

Please click NEXT to start the survey. You might need to scroll down using the scroll button on the right during the survey.

**Q2 ABOUT YOU**

The first few questions of this survey will help us to get to know you and ask only questions that are appropriate to you. We will not use any of this information to identify you. In this section, we always give you the option to click a box to say that you prefer not to answer that question.

**Q3 Which of the following age bands do you fit into?**

- |                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Under 19 years | 7 40-44 years        |
| 2 19-21 years    | 8 45-49 years        |
| 3 22-24 years    | 9 50-54 years        |
| 4 25-29 years    | 10 55-59 years       |
| 5 30-34 years    | 11 60+ years         |
| 6 35-39 years    | 12 Prefer not to say |

**Mandatory -  
Single code -  
All route to Q4**

**Q4 How do you describe your gender?**

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 3 Prefer not to say
- 4 In another way (please describe)

**Mandatory -  
Single code -  
All route to Q5**

**Q5 Which area of the country do you live in?**

- 1 East of England (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk)
- 2 East Midlands (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland)
- 3 London (Inner or Outer Boroughs)
- 4 North East (County Durham, Northumberland, Teesside, Tyne & Wear)
- 5 North West (Cheshire, Cumbria, Lancashire, Manchester, Merseyside)
- 6 South East (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Kent, Oxfordshire, Sussex)
- 7 South West (Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire)
- 8 West Midlands (Birmingham, Coventry, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire)
- 9 Yorkshire and The Humber (including 'South Humberside' - now North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire)
- 10 Other (please describe)

**Mandatory -  
Single code -  
All route to Q6**

## Appendix 3b - Online questionnaire for learners

<p><b>Q6 Which of the following best describes the character of the area you live in?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Rural (village or smaller)</li> <li>2 Semi rural (small / market town)</li> <li>3 Urban / Sub-urban (town / suburb of a city)</li> <li>4 Metropolitan (large city)</li> </ol>	<p><b>Mandatory - Single code - All route to Q7</b></p>
<p><b>Q7 To which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong? (the next question will allow you to give us more detail if you wish)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 White</li> <li>2 Mixed</li> <li>3 Asian (including Asian British)</li> <li>4 Black (including Black British)</li> <li>5 Chinese</li> <li>6 Prefer not to say</li> <li>7 Any other background (please describe)</li> </ol>	<p><b>Mandatory. Single code</b> Route to Q8 Route to Q9 Route to Q10 Route to Q11 Route to Q12 Route to Q12 txt box appears Route to Q12</p>
<p><b>Q8 Would that be... (Please select one only)</b> White - British White - Irish Any other White background (please describe)</p>	<p><b>Mandatory. Route to Q12</b></p>
<p><b>Q9 Would that be... (Please select one only)</b> White and Black Caribbean White and Black African White and Asian Any other Mixed background (please describe)</p>	<p><b>Mandatory. Route to Q12</b>    txt box appears</p>
<p><b>Q10 Would that be... (Please select one only)</b> Indian Pakistani Bangladeshi Any other Asian background (please describe)</p>	<p><b>Mandatory. Route to Q12</b>    txt box appears</p>
<p><b>Q11 Would that be... (Please select one only)</b> Black Caribbean Black African Any other Black background (please describe)</p>	<p><b>Mandatory. Route to Q12</b>   txt box appears</p>
<p><b>Q12 Do you have any health problems, disabilities or learning difficulties that you expect will last for more than one year?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 No disability or long-term limiting illness &lt;exclusive/&gt;</li> <li>2 Mobility (problems with back, neck, legs or feet)</li> <li>3 Dexterity (problems with arms and/or hands)</li> <li>4 Chest / breathing problems</li> <li>5 Medical conditions (inc. heart, blood pressure, digestive, epilepsy, HIV)</li> <li>6 Sensory impairment (sight / hearing)</li> <li>7 Speech, language and/or communications difficulties</li> <li>8 Learning difficulties (another question will allow you to tell us more details)</li> <li>9 Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development Needs</li> <li>10 Mental health condition (inc. depression)</li> <li>11 Prefer not to say</li> <li>12 Other (please describe)</li> </ol>	<p><b>Mandatory. Multi code</b> Q14 Q14 Q14 Q14 Q14 Q14 Q14 <b>Q13</b> Q14 Q14 Q14 txt box – route to Q14</p>

## Appendix 3b - Online questionnaire for learners

<p><b>Q13 How would you describe your learning difficult(ies)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Asperger's Syndrome</li> <li>2 Autistic Spectrum Disorder</li> <li>3 Dyslexia</li> <li>4 Dyscalculia</li> <li>5 Dyspraxia</li> <li>6 Moderate Learning Difficulty</li> <li>7 Severe Learning Difficulty</li> <li>8 Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties</li> <li>9 Prefer not to say</li> <li>10 Other (please describe)</li> </ol>	<p><b>Optional Route to Q14</b></p> <p>txt box</p>
<p><b>Q14</b> For this survey we are using the definitions of 'religion' and 'belief' that are used in the Equality Act 2010, and that learning providers should use when considering the equality of their provision.</p> <p>As religion and belief sets are so personal, there are very many different types and we can't list them all. If your own religion or belief set isn't on any list we use, please use the 'other' box to tell us about your own religion/belief. As well as religion, we are interested in non-religious beliefs that affect the way you live your life.</p>	
<p><b>Q15 Do you consider yourself to have a religion and/or a belief?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Yes - I have a religion</li> <li>2 Yes - I have a non-religious belief</li> <li>3 No - I don't consider that I have a religion nor a belief that affects the way I live my life</li> </ol>	<p>Q16</p> <p>Q20</p> <p>Q28</p>
<p><b>Q16 How would you describe your religion?</b></p> <p>Baha'i</p> <p>Buddhist</p> <p>Christian (inc Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)</p> <p>Hindu</p> <p>Humanist</p> <p>Jainism</p> <p>Jewish</p> <p>Muslim</p> <p>Pagan</p> <p>Rastafarianism</p> <p>Sikh</p> <p>Spiritualism</p> <p>Wiccan</p> <p>Zoroastrianism</p> <p>Prefer not to say</p> <p>Other (Please describe)</p>	<p>Q20 or Q21</p> <p>Q20 or Q21</p> <p>Q17</p> <p>Q20 or Q21</p> <p>Q20 or Q21</p> <p>Q20 or Q21</p> <p>Q18</p> <p>Q19</p> <p>Q20 or Q21</p>
<p><b>Q17 How would you describe the denomination of Christianity you follow or feel most closely affiliated to? Select one only</b></p> <p>Baptist</p> <p>Catholic / Roman Catholic</p> <p>Church of England</p> <p>Evangelical</p> <p>Methodist</p> <p>Pentecostal</p> <p>Society of Friends (Quaker)</p> <p>United Reform</p> <p>Other (please describe)</p>	<p>Route to Q20 or Q16a</p>

**Appendix 3b - Online questionnaire for learners**

<p><b>Q18 How would you describe the denomination of Judaism you follow or feel most closely affiliated to?</b>          Central Orthodox          Liberal Judaism          Masorti Judaism          Reform Judaism          Sephardi          Strictly Orthodox          Other (please describe)</p>	<p>Route to          Q14 or Q16a</p>
<p><b>Q19 How would you describe the form of Islam you follow or feel most closely affiliated to?</b>          Shi'ah          Sufi          Sunni          Other (please describe)</p>	<p>Single code.          Q14 or Q16a</p>
<p><i>ASK ONLY IF Q11 = 2</i></p> <p><b>Q20 How would you describe the non-religious beliefs that you have that affect the way you live ?</b>          Agnosticism (not sure whether there is a god)          Atheism (do not believe in a god)          Ecological          Humanism          Non-Theist Friends          Paganism          Secularism          Spiritualism          Wiccan          Vegetarianism / Vegan / Fructarian / Fruitarian          Prefer not to say          Other moral/political/philosophical frameworks (Please describe)</p>	
<p><i>ONLY FOR THOSE WITH RELIGION</i></p> <p><b>Q21 Do you consider that you are actively practising your religion?</b>          Yes – I actively practise my religion          Yes – I follow a religion, but don't feel I actively practise it          Maybe – I was brought up within a religion/faith and practise at least some of that teaching          No – despite any teaching / upbringing, I do not consider myself to practise a religion          Not sure</p>	
<p><b>Q22 Does your practice of your religion or belief include a commitment to any of the following within the learning day?</b>          Prayer during the day – at set intervals/times          Prayer during the day – at flexible timings          Dietary requirements          Gender segregation in certain activities          Specific clothing / head covering / hair style          Specific travel requirement          Yes but not in the learning day          None of these          Other (please describe)</p>	

**Appendix 3b - Online questionnaire for learners**

<p><b>Q23 For each factor on the list below, please select the best description of the outward signs you give of your religion/belief within your learning setting.</b>  <i>Scale: Yes, fairly clear to all who see me Yes, clear to those who share/understand my belief, but not to all Only to people I know reasonably well No, I keep my beliefs private Not Applicable</i>            Clothing or symbols on clothing            Jewellery            Hair/beard            Symbols on other personal possessions  <b>and..</b>  <i>Scale: Yes, fairly clear to all who talk to me Yes, clear to those who share/understand my belief, but not to all Only clear to people I know reasonably well No, I keep my beliefs private</i>            Views I express in social settings in learning            Views I express in taught sessions (e.g. group discussions within your own course)</p>	<p>Single code each row. All to Q24</p>
<p><b>Q24 Are you open about your religion and/or beliefs in the following environments? For each environment, please select one description of your openness.</b>  <i>Scale: yes, partially, no, don't know, not applicable</i>            At home with family            With close friends outside your learning environment            With close friends within your learning environment            With learners in your class generally            With your co-workers in Work Based Learning employment            With your tutor(s)            With your employer in Work Based Learning            With student support services in your learning environment            In leisure activities/groups (excluding sport) in your learning environment            In sport (teams/clubs etc) in your learning environment            In your learning environment generally</p>	<p><b>Mandatory -</b>  <b>All to Q25</b></p>
<p><b>Q25 Have you encountered any barriers so far to taking up adult learning opportunities because of your religion and/or beliefs? Please feel free to include any barriers that you think exist, that have influenced what you have done (e.g. fear of discrimination).</b>            No            Yes (please describe)</p> <p><b>Q26 Do you have any concerns about remaining in your current learning provision to complete your current learning aim(s) because of your religion and/or beliefs?</b>            No            Yes (please describe)</p> <p><b>Q27 Do you have any concerns about your ability to achieve your current learning aim(s) because of your religion and/or beliefs?</b>            No            Yes (please describe)</p>	<p><b>Mandatory</b>  <b>All to Q26</b></p> <p><b>Mandatory</b>  <b>All to Q27</b> txt box</p> <p><b>Mandatory</b>  <b>All to Q28</b> txt box</p>
<p><b>Q28 With which TYPE of provider are you learning? Select one only</b>            A Further Education College            Higher Education Institution            Work Based / Training Provider            Adult/community learning            Other (please specify)</p>	<p><b>Mandatory</b> <b>All to Q29</b></p>



## Appendix 3b - Online questionnaire for learners

<p>Pressure to eat /drink things you believe are wrong for you          Pressure to miss prayer          Exclusion in the classroom/learning environment          Exclusion in the learner social setting          Discrimination in practical work in classroom or tasks in Work Based Learning setting</p> <p><b>Q36</b></p>	<p><b>You may use this space to give further details of any bullying and/or harassment mentioned above, or to tell us about any other type of bullying or harassment that you have experienced within adult learning because of your religion and/or belief.</b></p>	<p><b>All to Q37</b></p>
<p><b>Q37</b></p>	<p><b>Who were/are the perpetrators of this bullying and/or harassment?</b>          Learners on your course          Learners on OTHER courses/different year groups          Work colleagues in Work Based Learning          Tutor          Other staff          Manager/supervisor in Work Based Learning          General public on the way to place of learning/Work Based Learning          General public while on work placement          A person unknown - e.g. using electronic communications          Other (please specify)</p>	<p><b>Mandatory - Route to Q38</b></p>
<p><b>Q38</b></p>	<p><b>Did you feel able to report any problems that you encountered?</b>          Yes, within the learning environment/to learning provider          Yes, outside the learning environment to external authorities e.g. police          Yes, outside the learning environment to family and friends          No</p>	<p><b>Mandatory</b>          Q39          Q40          Q40          Q40</p>
<p><b>Q39</b></p>	<p><b>Was the response from your learning provider satisfactory?</b>          Yes totally          Yes partially          No not really          Not at all satisfactory</p>	<p><b>Mandatory</b>  <b>All to Q41</b></p>
<p><b>Q40</b></p>	<p><b>Why did you not feel able to report the problems to your learning provider?</b>          Please describe below.</p>	<p><b>Q41</b>           txt box</p>
<p><b>Q41</b></p>	<p><b>Is there / was there anyone in a position of authority in your learning environment that you can/could turn to in order to discuss any problems you have? Please select all that apply from the list below</b>          No - there's no-one I can/could turn to &lt;exclusive/&gt;          Yes - Tutor          Yes - Other college/Work Based Learning teaching staff          Yes - Welfare officer / student services          Yes - Chaplaincy or other religion/belief -specific support worker          Yes - Work Based Learning manager/supervisor          Yes - Other workers in my Work Based Learning employment          Yes - Another learner (peer)          Other (please specify)</p>	<p><b>Mandatory - Multiple code - All to Q42</b></p>
<p><b>Q42</b> <b>YOUR LEARNING PROVIDER AND EQUALITY</b> <b>Q43</b></p>	<p><b>Have you experienced any positive experiences/outcomes in your learning because of your religion and/or belief?</b>          Yes          No</p>	<p><b>Mandatory - Single code</b>          Q44          Q45</p>

**Appendix 3b - Online questionnaire for learners**

<p><b>Q44 What sort of positive experiences and/or outcomes in your learning did you have because of your religion and/or belief?</b>  <i>Scale: Yes, No, Not applicable</i></p> <p>Invited to be a representative on student council          Offered training to be a welfare officer or other student officer          Offered training to be an religion/belief specific welfare officer or other student officer          Being offered training to volunteer in a support role for a religion/belief organisation          Being able to play other active role in student life beyond standard tuition time.          Other (please specify)</p>	<p><b>Mandatory</b>  <b>All to Q45</b></p>
<p><b>Q45 To the best of your knowledge, does your learning provider have an equality policy relating to, or including, religion?</b></p> <p>Yes          No          Don't know</p> <p><b>Q46 To the best of your knowledge, does your learning provider have an equality policy relating to, or including, non-religious beliefs?</b></p> <p>Yes          No          Don't know</p> <p><b>Q47 Do you feel that the policy translates into reality within the learning environment? i.e. that it is effective in preventing discrimination (and/or deals well with any incidents that occur beyond the provider's control).</b></p> <p>I am not aware of there being an equality policy covering religion/belief          Yes, the policy translates to reality          The policy only partially translates to reality          No, the policy doesn't translate to reality          If the policy doesn't translate, or only partially translates to reality, please explain</p>	<p><b>Mandatory</b>  <b>All to Q46</b></p> <p><b>Mandatory</b> <b>All to Q47</b></p> <p><b>Mandatory</b> <b>Route to Q48</b></p> <p>text box appears</p>
<p><b>Q48 To the best of your knowledge, does your learning environment have a clear reporting mechanism for bullying and harassment?</b></p> <p>Yes          No          Don't know</p>	<p><b>Mandatory</b> <b>single code</b></p> <p>Q49          Q49          Q49</p>
<p><b>Q49 Does the delivery of your course provide opportunity for discussion of...</b>  <i>Scale: Yes; Partially; Not at all; Would not expect it to</i></p> <p>Religious beliefs in general          Your specific religion          Non-religious beliefs in general          Your specific non-religious beliefs          Understanding between different religions and/or beliefs</p>	<p><b>Mandatory</b> <b>Route to Q50</b></p>
<p><b>Q50 Please type in any comments you wish to make about how the delivery of your course provides opportunity for discussion of religion and/or beliefs.</b>          Allow space for open text comment</p>	<p><b>optional</b> <b>All to Q51</b></p> <p>txt box</p>

**Appendix 3b - Online questionnaire for learners**

<p><b>Q51 For each type of area within the learning environment, please indicate the extent to which you feel that environment is a 'safe space' for you, regardless of whether or not you choose to be open about your religion and/or beliefs.</b>  <i>Scale: Never; Seldom, Sometimes; Often; Always Not applicable</i>                  Social spaces within the learning site(s) e.g. canteen                  Sports areas and facilities within the learning site(s)                  Classrooms                  Library                  Apprenticeship/Work based learning employment/placement site                  Other areas (please specify)</p>	<p><b>Mandatory - scale - Q52</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">txt box</p>
<p><b>Q52 Are you aware that there is a legal protection from discrimination in the learning environment because of your religion and/or beliefs ?</b></p> <p>Yes No</p>	<p><b>Mandatory single code - Q53</b></p>
<p><b>Q53 How well do you think your adult learning provider has accommodated your religious and/or belief requirements?</b>                  Very well - To the extent they can - To a small extent - Not at all - Barriers are put in place - Not applicable                  Provision of 'safe spaces' in the learning environment                  Sensitivity of curriculum content (including practicals/assessments)                  Timetabling / flexibility for prayer and other observances etc                  Timetabling / flexibility for festivals and holidays etc                  Suitable spaces for prayer / meditation / quiet contemplation                  Enabling full involvement in social activities with fellow learners (e.g. the places / times / activities of social events/gatherings)                  Enabling participation in sporting activities through your learning provider                  Provision of food suitable for the requirements of your religion/belief</p>	<p>all to Q55</p>
<p><b>Q54</b> open text description</p>	<p>all to Q55</p>
<p><b>Q55 What barriers, if any, do you encounter within adult learning because of your religion and/or beliefs?</b>  <i>Scale : Yes in my experience - Yes I believe it to be the case - No, I have no knowledge of this</i>                  Lack of parental financial support for learning                  Barriers to taking up mainstream funding (e.g. loans/grants etc) to support learning fees/living costs                  Bullying or harassment from new group of learners in new learning environment                  Lack of 'safe spaces' in the learning environment                  Insensitive curriculum content (including practicals/assessments)                  Timetable restrictions / lack of flexibility for prayer etc                  Timetable restrictions / lack of flexibility for festivals etc                  Lack of suitable space for prayer / meditation / quiet contemplation                  Problems with bullying and harassment on way to learning                  Barriers to full involvement in social activities with fellow learners (e.g. the places / times / activities of social events/gatherings)                  Barriers to participation in sporting activities through your learning provider                  Lack of provision of food suitable for the requirements of your religion/belief                  Provision of food suitable for the requirements of other religions/beliefs                  Provision of facilities/activities targeted at other groups of learners (e.g. different ethnic, belief, sexual orientation, age, gender identity and disability groups) please describe                  Other (please describe)</p>	<p><b>Mandatory</b></p> <p><b>Route to Q56</b></p>
<p><b>Q56 You may use this space to describe any other barriers to participating in / staying in adult learning relating to religion/belief</b></p>	<p><b>Optional txt - All to Q 57</b></p>

## Appendix 3b - Online questionnaire for learners

Q57	<p><b>What support systems relating to religion and/or belief are you aware of for learners in your adult learning provision?</b>  <i>Scale: Yes; No; Don't know</i></p> <p>Welfare Officer / student services          Student Union          Chaplaincy/other religious leader or support worker          Staff member who shares my religion and/or beliefs          Clear rules/policies          Other learners who share my religion and/or beliefs</p>	Mandatory - All to Q58
Q58	Other (please specify)	All to Q59
Q59	<p><b>As part of your induction into your learning provision, were you offered any support regarding your religion/belief?</b></p> <p>Yes, I was told about a range of general support services but NOT religion/belief specific support services          Yes, I was told about a range of support relating to religion/belief          Yes I was told about support relating to MY religion/belief          No, I was not offered any support</p>	Mandatory Route to Q60
Q60	<p><b>Have you experienced any tensions between yourself and other learners relating to your religion and/or beliefs?</b></p> <p>Yes          No</p>	All to Q61
Q61	<p><b>Do you have any issues with any other learners / groups of learners due to your religion and/or beliefs?</b></p> <p>Yes          No</p>	All to Q62
Q62	<p><b>Is there any good practice in your adult learning experience that you would like to share?</b></p>	Open text - All to Q63
Q63	<p><b>Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience in adult learning?</b></p>	Open text - All to Q64
Q64	<p><b>In addition to this online survey, our research will include some more in-depth discussions with individuals and small groups of people in adult learning. Would you be willing to get involved in the next stage of our research by talking to a researcher (by telephone, in person or via a secure webchat)? This would take 30-60 minutes, and can be arranged for a time and communication method that suits you.</b></p> <p>Yes          No</p>	Mandatory. Single-code  Route to Q65 Route to end
Q65	<p><b>Please write in any contact details, that we can use to make contact with you. We take confidentiality seriously. We promise that we will only talk directly with you, and will not leave messages with anyone else who may answer your telephone, and will not reveal the subject matter of our research. You may also volunteer for the further research by contacting the research team directly on 01904 656655 OR email <a href="mailto:belief@babcock.co.uk">belief@babcock.co.uk</a></b></p> <p>Provide contact details here</p>	Optional. Route to end  txt box
<p><b>THANK YOU PAGE - Many thanks for sparing the time to provide your views to this important research. Once again, we would like to reassure you that all your views will be treated in the strictest confidence. You will not be identified in any reporting of this survey. If you have given your permission for us to re-contact you, we will only do so in relation to this research project, and we will only talk directly to you (we will never leave messages with other people or reveal to a third party the purpose of any contact we attempt to make with you). Your responses have been submitted and you will now be re-directed to the Babcock Research website. Thank you</b></p>		

## RELIGION AND BELIEF DISCUSSION GUIDE (GROUPS)

### WELCOME

Thank the stakeholders/participants for taking the time to contribute to this consultation for the Skills Funding Agency – research into religion and belief and the experiences of learners in adult education. Babcock Research is an independent research agency that has been commissioned to conduct the research

Housekeeping - fire exits, tea/coffee, incentives, length of time for discussion.

Recap objectives of the research and background (e-survey)

Ground rules – listen to each other, give everyone time, respect opinions.

Confidentiality – how information will be used and shared. Participants can choose to answer / talk off the record.

Check whether it is OK to audio record the discussion to back-up your note-taking, and ensure that a complete and accurate record is made of what was said.

### BACKGROUND

Give background - Conducted a web survey and individual interviews. This focus group is to explore ideas in more depth and to suggest any recommendations for the sector.

#### Religion and Belief

The Equality Act 2010 now includes religion and belief, which includes non-belief. Non religious beliefs have to affect the way you live your life to be legally recognised e.g. vegetarianism – not eating meat; environmentalism – not owning a car etc.

#### Introductions / icebreaker:

Names

Introduce yourself to the group by name

#### How welcoming do you feel adult learning is?

### EXPERIENCE OF ADULT LEARNING

#### Overall Experience and Perception:

Explore the types of provision have participated in – learning area/learning provider types.

#### (THEN PROBE)

In general is there a perception that some forms of adult learning are more friendly than others to certain belief and non belief groups? If so why? Are any unfriendly/perceived as unfriendly to certain groups?

*THEN PROMPT: Types of provision WBL etc./Types of courses in college etc.*

What can be done about this at the provider level? What can be done at a strategic level?

How do find spending time in an adult learning environment? .

### **Appendix 3c - Discussion guide**

Do you feel that the culture of your learning environment is friendly, neutral or unfriendly towards people with religion or other strong belief sets – why?

Does your learning environment generally feel like a safe space in which you can (if you wish) be open about your religion and/or belief?

Do you express your religion/belief:

- In your views? Probe with whom – learners in class, in general, with tutors
- In your dress?
- In your dietary habits?
- In prayer/meditation
- Other ways?

Are there areas within the learning environment where you feel it is particularly safe / less safe to be open about your religion and/or belief?

Are any of the areas that feel less safe for you barriers to you participating fully in the learning experience? *Probe for transport, social, sport etc*

Have you experienced any tensions with other groups of learners – e.g. other religious/belief groups or other groups in general?

#### **Making Provision for Various Religions/Beliefs**

Does your learning provider make any arrangements for your religion and/or belief? In what ways?

- Prayer/mediation space
- Recognition of different holidays/festivals
- Dietary needs
- Other requirements

What do you think it is reasonable to expect a learning provider to do to facilitate learning for different religions/beliefs including non-belief?

#### **Curriculum / Tuition**

Have you had any positive/negative experiences of the curriculum reflecting religion and/or belief in general?

Do you have any recommendations for what the curriculum (for your subject area – or others) could reasonably include regarding religion and/or belief in general, or your religion and/or belief?

Do you have any positive/negative experiences of ways of including religion and/or belief within teaching staff tuition (in groups or one-to-one)?

#### **Experience of bullying and/or harassment:**

Have you experienced bullying and/or harassment in adult learning due to your religion and belief? *(Please reassure about confidentiality – also probe for bullying and/or harassment that they are not comfortable talking about – yes/no and leave)*

### Appendix 3c - Discussion guide

What, in your knowledge, are the forms of bullying/harassment that occur in adult learning regarding religion and belief – *probe for frequency and the type of person who perpetrates each and the 'recipient'*

#### DO NOT READ OUT and adapt for different belief sets

Verbal abuse

Derogatory comments about your religion or belief

Exclusion in the classroom/learning environment

Exclusion in the learner social setting

Discrimination in practical work in classroom or tasks in Work Based Learning setting

Being taunted about dietary habits/asked to go against their beliefs

Being taunted about clothing

Being taunted about symbols

Physical abuse

Other abuse – please probe sensitively (e.g. trying to take off symbols/pieces of religion clothing)

### LEARNER SUPPORT

Are you aware of any equality policies that your learning provider has? Do they mention Religion and/or Belief issues? *[Possible prompts: Is there a Learner Charter and/or Anti-Bullying Policy?]*

How should learners be made aware of such policies?

Do you feel that any policies that exist are put into practice by their learning provider?

Do you know of any mechanisms for reporting incidents of bullying or harassment, or unequal treatment?

What support officer(s), if any, are you aware of? Generic / religion/belief specific  
*Have they made contact with any? How useful was that?*

Any suggestions for making it easier for learners with religious and/or other beliefs and non-beliefs to access support that is appropriate to them?

### MONITORING

While learning providers wish to protect people's privacy, and might not want to move towards asking all learners to reveal their religious and/or other beliefs at registration or any other time, how can learning providers sensibly monitor their accessibility and support for learners? *[NOTE: current national policy is to resist systematic monitoring, but individual providers may make different choices locally]*

*Would they be prepared to reveal their religion or belief on a form*

*a) when registering for a course*

*b) some weeks into a course, when settled in.*

Do you have any recommendations for increasing recruitment of adult learners who are have strong/open religious beliefs ?

Do you have any recommendations for improving retention (and/or achievement) for adult learners who have similar beliefs to you?

### RECOMMENDATIONS & CLOSE OF SESSION

Can you give any examples of good practice in supporting learner with similar beliefs to you? Other religious or other beliefs?

### Appendix 3c - Discussion guide

What is the worst example well meant but misguided actions you have witnessed in adult learning relating to someone's religion/belief?

Do you have any suggestions for making adult learning even more accessible to and productive for learners with religious/other beliefs?

Draw discussion to a close - thank participants for specific value of their contribution to this consultation (time, knowledge, opinion). Check whether they want to ask you anything about the research.

Remind confidentiality / what happens next / how information will be used or shared  
Check whether participants have any questions, and know how to get back in touch with the research team if they want to.

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