TRAINING NEEDS IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION SECTOR – DIGITAL SKILLS REPORT

A report of survey-based research into the training needs of people who work in post-16 education and training organisations in England

BMG RESEARCH

CONTENTS

KEY POINTS

Introduction

The specification for this study – an off-shoot of a major survey of the training needs of staff in the FE sector – asked:

- What is the current extent of digital training by individuals employed in the sector?

- What priority is given by institutions to digital skills training?

- What is the extent of future demand for digital skills training?

What is the current extent of digital training by individuals employed in the sector?

- 27% of FE sector staff undertook training related to digital and other new technologies in the past year (the third highest proportion of staff receiving any of a list of around 20 types of training).

- Of those individuals who had trained, the great majority had undertaken more than one form of training. Of these, only 4% said that digital skills training was the most valuable type they undertook. This proportion ranked digital skills training behind 8 other types of training (from a list of 28 types) where the percentages rating these other types as 'most valuable' was higher than the 4% for digital skills training.

What priority is given by institutions to digital skills training?

- The proportions of institutions reporting that they supplied digital training to their staff in the past year was 68%.

- This proportion was fifth-highest of the proportions of institutions reporting that they supplied training of various types (from a list of around 20 different types of training).

- Overall, 10% of institutions would have liked to supply more training related to digital technologies than they actually supplied. Out of a list of around 20 types of training, this was the third most frequent area of unmet demand behind leadership and management training (13% of institutions) and training in the teaching of Maths and English (12% of institutions).

What is the extent of future demand for digital skills training?

- 26% of individuals would value training in digital and other new technologies in the next year.

- 59% of institutions report that they will require training related to digital and other new technologies in the next year.

- This last survey finding from the survey of individuals was confirmed by respondents in

in-depth interviews. A minority of institutions were content with the digital skills of their staff but a majority noted that the pace of change in digital technologies and/or the introduction of new systems and equipment generated a demand for continuous or future up-dating of relevant skills.

Summary

Institutions give a moderately high priority to training related to digital technologies which resulted in a little over a quarter of FE staff receiving training in this area last year.

Future demand for this training remains at similar levels as last year with 6 out of 10 institutions and a quarter of staff reporting that further training related to digital skills would be valuable.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

A substantial survey-based research study undertaken on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) has examined the training needs of managers and staff of the post-16 Further Education (FE) sector in England. This study involved 481 structured telephone interviews and 50 in-depth interviews with training providers, and an on-line survey of 2,366 individuals working in the FE sector. The study has been reported elsewhere.[1]

The survey of training providers suggested that a significant minority of providers would like to have seen more training in the use of digital technologies in teaching programmes than was actually delivered.

This report uses data from all the elements of the training needs analysis research to examine this issue in more detail.

The specification for this examination asked three questions:

- What is the current extent of digital training by individuals employed in the sector?
- What priority is given by institutions to digital skills training?
- What is the extent of future demand for digital skills training?

These questions are used to structure the remainder of this report.

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[1] Training needs in the Further Education sector, BMG Research for ETF, April 2018
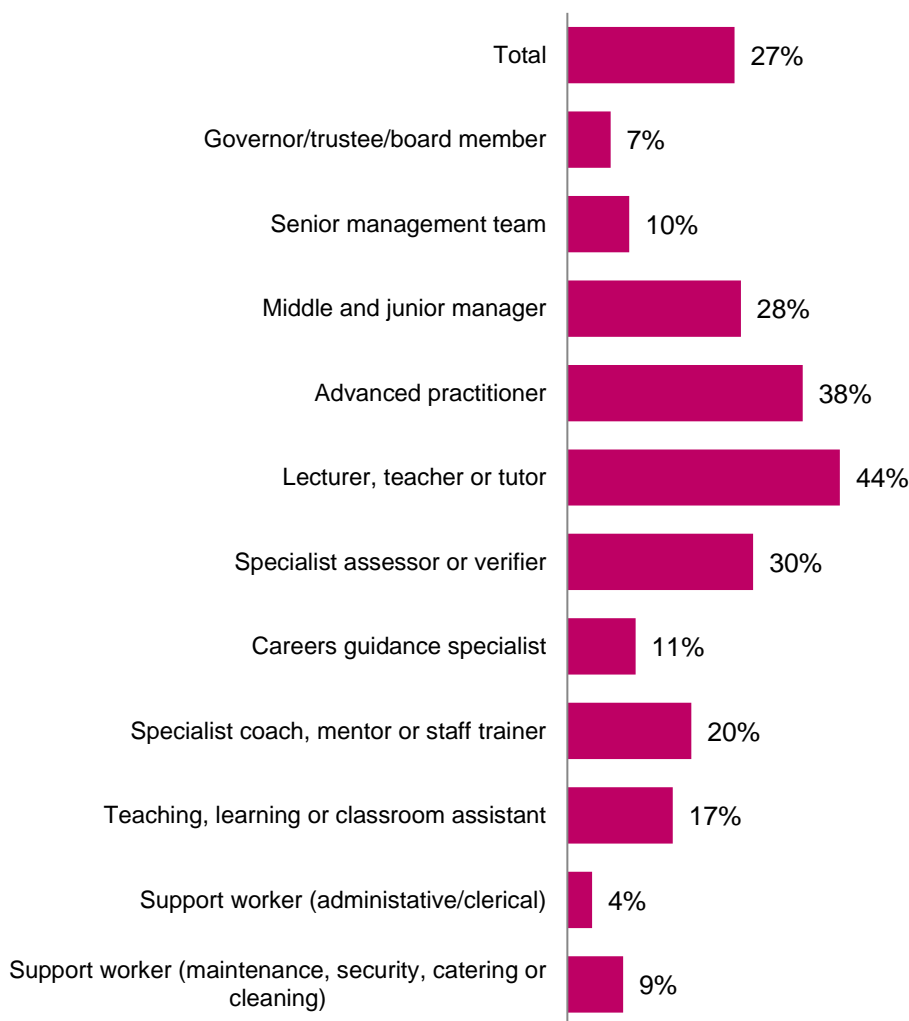
CHAPTER 2: ANALYSIS

What is the current extent of digital training by individuals?

A first analysis (see Figure 1 following) shows that a little more than a quarter of individuals (27%) undertook training in digital and other new technologies in the past year.

Excluding mandatory training, this 27% was the third most frequent area in which training took place – training related to administrative procedures (30%) and training related to other teaching or classroom competences (29%) being the two most frequent areas for training.

Figure 1 also shows that training in digital technologies was most frequent for teachers and equivalent, of whom nearly half (44%) received such training.

Figure 1: Individuals who undertook training in digital and other new technologies in a teaching or classroom setting in the past academic year

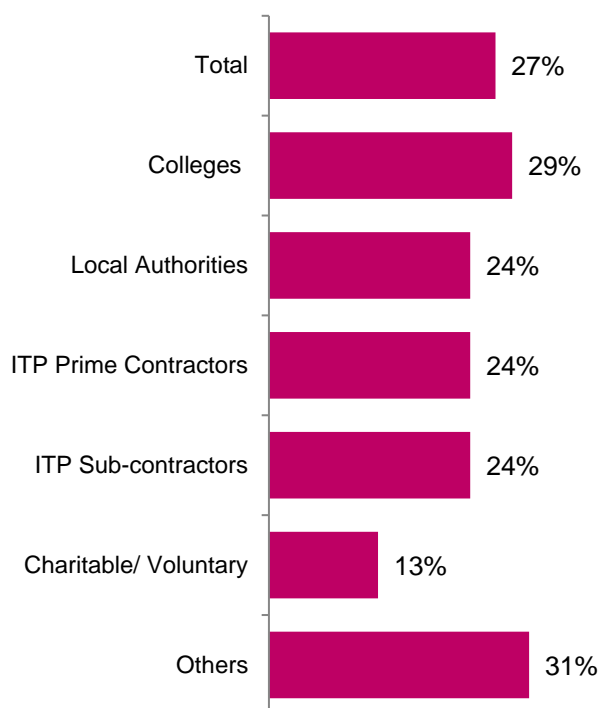| Category	Percentage
Total	27%
Governor/trustee/board member	7%
Senior management team	10%
Middle and junior manager	28%
Advanced practitioner	38%
Lecturer, teacher or tutor	44%
Specialist assessor or verifier	30%
Careers guidance specialist	11%
Specialist coach, mentor or staff trainer	20%
Teaching, learning or classroom assistant	17%
Support worker (administative/clerical)	4%
Support worker (maintenance, security, catering or cleaning)	9%

Sample base: Total (2184), Governor/trustee/board member (34), Senior management team (397), Middle and junior manager (455). Advanced practitioner (66), Lecturer, teacher or tutor (685), Specialist assessor or verifier (188), Careers guidance specialist (22), Specialist coach, mentor or staff trainer (54), Teaching, learning or classroom assistant (120), Support worker – administrative/clerical (150), Support worker – maintenance, security, catering or cleaning (23).
Q14. Thinking about the training and development you have undertaken in the past academic year, did any of it have the following aims?

Further analysis shows that training in digital technologies was more-or-less equally likely for those working in each of the different types of provider, except for workers for charities and voluntary organisations where it was somewhat less frequent than average (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Individuals who undertook training in digital and other new technologies in a teaching or classroom setting in the past academic year and the provider type they work for

Total — 27%
Colleges — 29%
Local Authorities — 24%
ITP Prime Contractors — 24%
ITP Sub-contractors — 24%
Charitable/ Voluntary — 13%
Others — 31%

Sample base: Total (2184), Colleges (1022), Local Authorities (479), ITP Prime Contractors (193), ITP Sub-contractors (67), Charitable/Voluntary (106), Others (126).
Q14. Thinking about the training and development you have undertaken in the past academic year, did any of it have the following aims?

Virtually all those who trained had undertaken more than one from of training. As noted earlier, training in digital skills was frequently one of these types.

However, when asked to identify the single most valuable type of training they had undertaken, only 4% said digital skills training had been most valuable. From a list of around 28 types of training identified as 'most valuable', this placed digital skills behind 8 other types, the list being headed by 'other teaching or classroom competences' (12% saying 'most valuable'), Prevent training (10%), safeguarding training (8%), mental health training (7%) and leadership and management training (7%).

However, the 4% proportion for the whole workforce was a little higher amongst those working in Sixth Form Colleges (9%), amongst teachers and lecturers (6%) and amongst those working in the subject areas of arts, media, and publishing (8%) and ICT (6%).

## What priority is given by institutions to digital skills training?

Data from the survey of institutions (see Figure 3 following) shows that a substantial proportion, 68%, provided training to develop competencies in the use of digital and other new technologies.

Excluding mandatory training, this 68% figure places digital technology training in fifth place in the types of training supplied by institutions, exceeded only by training in subject knowledge

(85%), in leadership and management (85%), in the teaching of maths and English (74%), and in other teaching or classroom competencies (69%).

Figure 3 also shows that colleges provided training in digital technologies more frequently than other types of institutions and, again that this training was relatively infrequent in charitable and voluntary institutions.
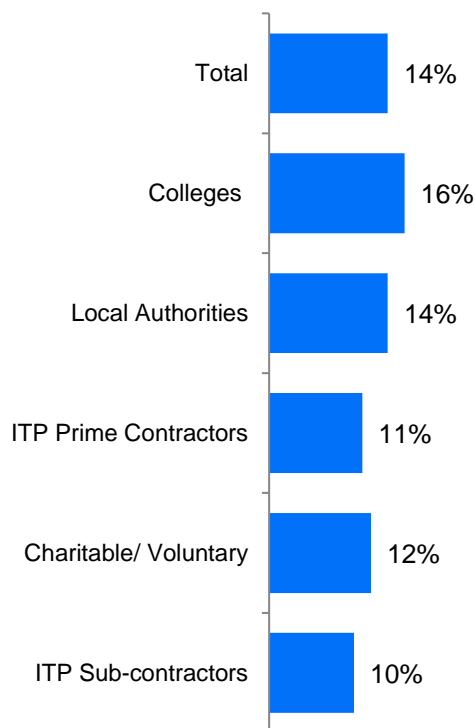
Figure 3: Proportion of institutions that have sought to develop competencies in the area of use of digital and other new technologies in teaching programmes
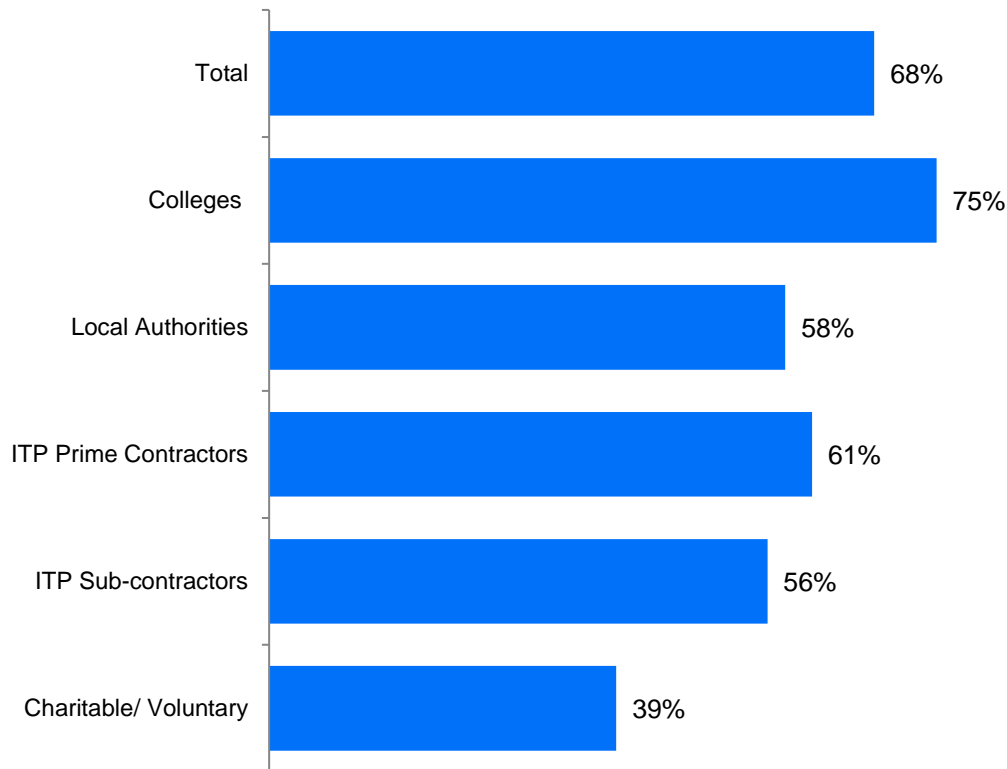
Sample base: Total (473), Colleges (107), Local Authorities (43), ITP Prime Contractors (119), ITP Sub-contractors (89), Charitable/Voluntary (62).
Q11, Q11a, Q11b, Q13. Which types of improved competence or areas of knowledge has your training and development sought to enhance or develop in the past academic year?

Those institutions which said that all their training needs had not been met in the past year (around 78% of all institutions) were asked which forms of training they would have liked to see more of. Around a seventh of these (14% or 10% of all institutions) would have liked to see more training related to digital technologies (see Figure 4 following). This was the third most frequent area of unmet demand, behind that for training in leadership and management skills (18% or 13% of all institutions) and in the teaching of maths and English (16% or 12% of all institutions).

Figure 4: Institutions that would like to have seen more training and development in use of digital and other new technologies in teaching programmes

Category	Percentage
Total	14%
Colleges	16%
Local Authorities	14%
ITP Prime Contractors	11%
Charitable/ Voluntary	12%
ITP Sub-contractors	10%

Sample base: Total (347), Colleges (77), Local Authorities (36), ITP Prime Contractors (88), ITP Sub-contractors (61), Charitable/Voluntary (49).
Q34. Which forms of training and development would you like to have seen more of? Please think about the competencies that we talked about earlier.
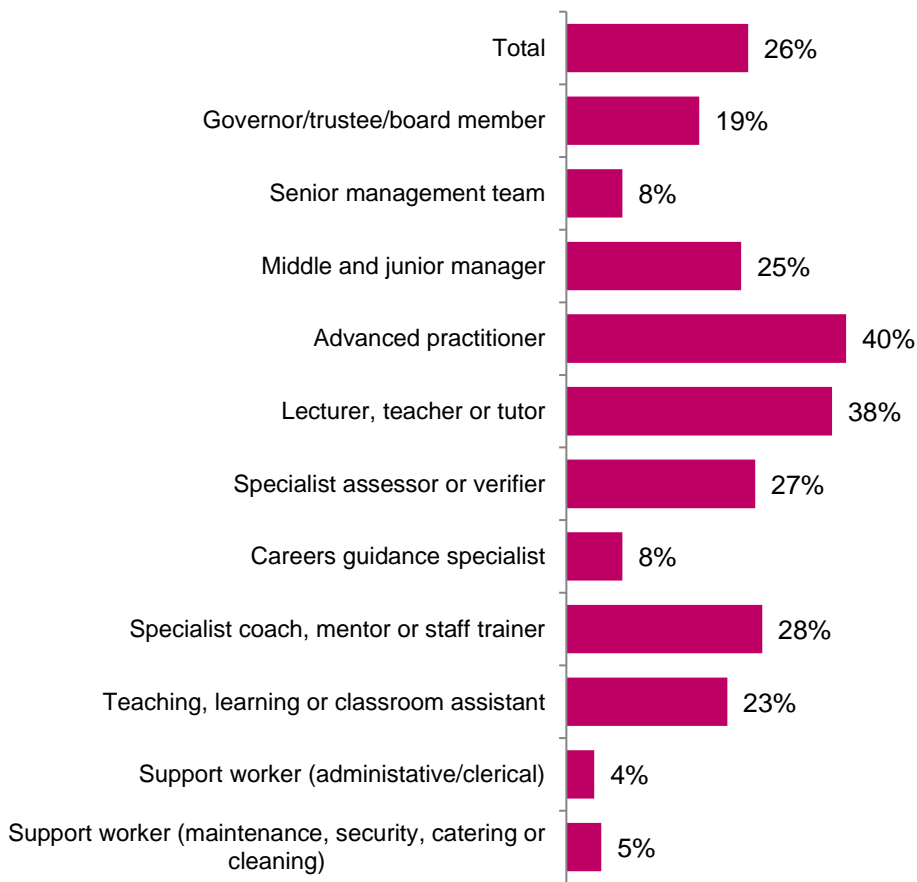
What is the extent of future demand for digital skills training?

A quarter of individuals (26%) would value training in digital and other new technologies in the next year (see Figure 5 following).

This was the third most frequent area of demand behind that only for training in leadership and management (33%) and in other teaching and classroom competencies (27%).

Figure 5 also shows that demand is particularly high amongst advanced practitioners and teachers or equivalent.

Figure 5: Individuals who think that it would be of value to undertake training in using digital and other new technologies in a teaching or classroom setting in the next year

| Category	Percentage
Total	26%
Governor/trustee/board member	19%
Senior management team	8%
Middle and junior manager	25%
Advanced practitioner	40%
Lecturer, teacher or tutor	38%
Specialist assessor or verifier	27%
Careers guidance specialist	8%
Specialist coach, mentor or staff trainer	28%
Teaching, learning or classroom assistant	23%
Support worker (administative/clerical)	4%
Support worker (maintenance, security, catering or cleaning)	5%

Sample base: Total (1594), Governor/trustee/board member (24), Senior management team (194), Middle and junior manager (346). Advanced practitioner (61), Lecturer, teacher or tutor (525), Specialist assessor or verifier (142), Careers guidance specialist (14), Specialist coach, mentor or staff trainer (43), Teaching, learning or classroom assistant (75), Support worker – administrative/clerical (86), Support worker – maintenance, security, catering or cleaning (20).
Q29. What forms of training or development would that be?

Figure 6 (following) shows that this demand is fairly evenly spread across all types of institution.

Figure 6: Individuals who think that it would be of value to undertake training in using digital and other new technologies in a teaching or classroom setting in the next year and the provider type they work for
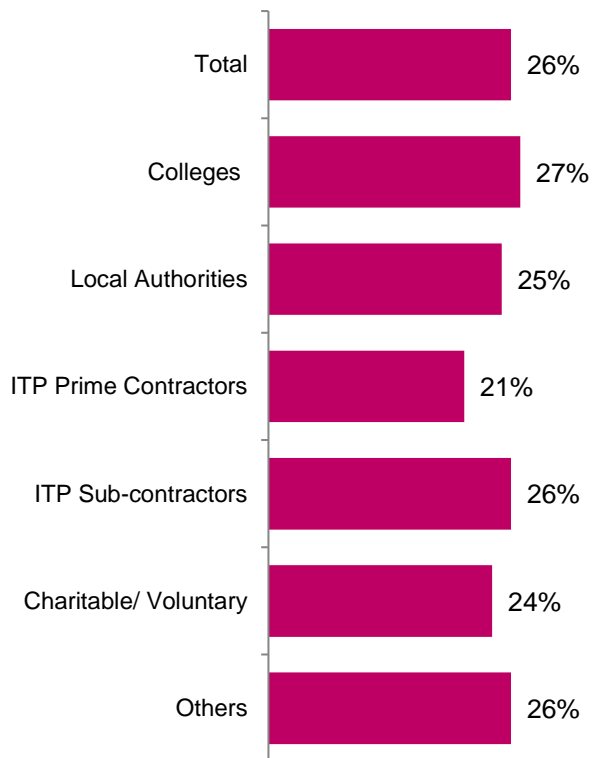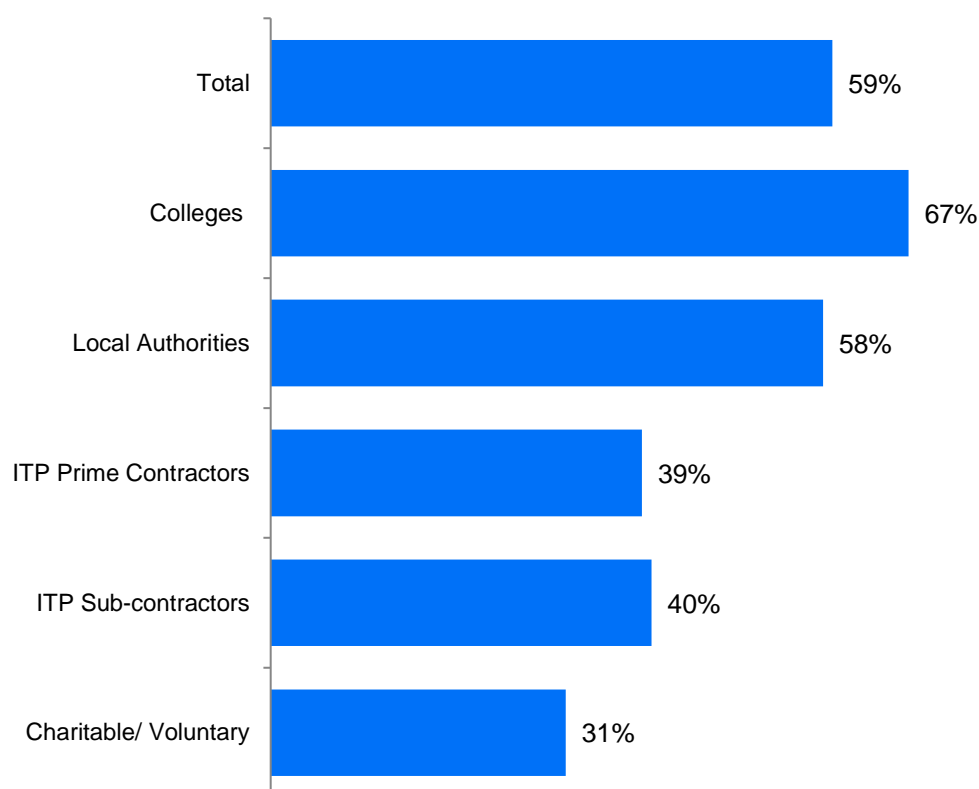

Sample base: Total (1594), Colleges (753), Local Authorities (332), ITP Prime Contractors (156), ITP Sub-contractors (53), Charitable/Voluntary (79), Others (97).
Q29. What forms of training or development would that be?

From an institutional perspective, around six out of ten institutions (59%) report that they will require training related to digital and other new technologies in the next year, with the proportion being particularly high in Colleges and noticeably lower in charitable and voluntary institutions (see Figure 7 following).

Figure 7: Institutions that will require training in the use of digital and other new technologies in teaching programmes in the next year

Sample base: Total (473), Colleges (107), Local Authorities (43), ITP Prime Contractors (119), ITP Sub-contractors (89), Charitable/Voluntary (62).
Q40, Q40b, Q40c. Which of the following types of training and development will be required?

What is the extent of future demand for digital skills training? – qualitative interviews

This majority of institutions recognising a need for further training in digital technologies in the quantitative survey was reflected in comments made in the 50 in-depth interviews which formed part of the research.

Thus, around a third of respondents in these interviews were reasonably content with the current level of competence of their staff in this area. For example:

> *"We don't need training in the digital area. Our staff are very comfortable in that area and use things like e-portfolios frequently. But it's possible our learners could have more help in that area" (ITP subcontractor).*

> *"Our staff do well on digital technologies because of the employers we work with and the time we spend in industry" (ITP subcontractor).*

> *"We haven't had any requests from staff for training in digital technologies and this hasn't been identified in any staff appraisals" (Sixth Form College).*

> *"There's no particular demand for digital technologies training but our staff do need help with social media management" (ITP subcontractor).*

"Possibly there's a need for digital technologies training but most of our staff are quite competent due to the industries that they have worked in and their subject matter" (ITP prime contractor).

However, a greater number of respondents recognised the needs to supply more training related to digital technologies. Reasons for this concerned, particularly, the pace of change in digital technologies and/or the introduction of new systems and equipment. Examples of respondents' comments to this effect are set out below:

"I feel that we could use some training when it comes to digital technologies. We are increasingly using social media as a platform to promote what we do but don't feel we have the skills that might be required" (Charity).

"In the digital area, there is a big opportunity to increase what we can do but it keeps on being put aside for day-to-day work. Digital is something more strategic" (ITP subcontractor).

"Digital technologies change so quickly and keeping up-to-date is always needed. We do quite a lot though as we partner with the Good Things Foundation" (Charity).

"Where we have digital learning resources, there is a need for staff to be trained in them so as to make the most effective use of them in the classroom" (ITP prime contractor).

"Yes, more digital training is important, particularly because we offer digital/ICT qualifications to our learners. From our point of view, it's very difficult to find a trainer out there that is already qualified with the assessor award and teaching qualification with respect to digital technologies" (Charity).

"We do need more IT training because the tech is always changing - bringing laptops to learners, webinar training etc. There's less of learners coming into the centre, more is done online" (ITP Prime contractor).

"Our staff are generally quite tech savvy, but given the way everything is going, I would be open to more training but it's not necessarily a priority" (ITP Prime contractor).

"IT training is something that is going on at the moment. We've got a new IT system so we're training for that, and some of the team have also gone on iPad training, looking at how to use them effectively in the college" (College).

"The staff probably need more help when it comes to computers. They don't use e-portfolios at the moment so we will need training in that. When the new standards commence next year in September, we will have to have training on e-portfolios because we haven't done them before" (ITP subcontractor).

"With IT there is a huge gap across the board. Technology is evolving with time and adults aren't aligned with the technology that is coming out today" (ITP subcontractor).

"I think our digital area is doing quite well but it is an ongoing need as there is always something new coming out" (College).