

Skilled to go evaluation

Researching the effectiveness of the Skilled to go further education toolkit

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Annexe H

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H ANNEXE H: LEARNER CASE STUDIES

- H.1 The purpose of the case studies below is to provide examples of learners' experience of participating in the pilot programme. Five individuals were selected to reflect the contexts of learning, age groups, gender and LLN levels of learners in the pilot programme.
- H.2 The analysis was based on learners' profiling data, pre and post benchmarking results, feedback from activities and final evaluations.

Learner A

- female
- over 18
- studying in a Level 1/Intermediate 1 numeracy class
- level: Level1/Intermediate1 numeracy, Entry 3/Access 3 literacy
- English not first language
- overall enjoyment of taking part in the pilot programme: 'OK', and
- provided feedback on four Buying and selling activities and one 'Technology' activity.

Benchmarking results

	Pre benchmarking results	Post benchmarking results	Difference between pre and post benchmarking results
Consumer knowledge	12/35 (34%)	15/35 (43%)	+ 3 (9%)
Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills	1/40 (3%)	20/40 (50%)	+ 19 (47%)
Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills	4/25 (16%)	12/25 (48%)	+ 8 (32%)

H.3 Learner A doesn't yet feel confident buying something on the internet but she does now feel more confident complaining to a manager. Learner A stated that now, when trying to find the best product for her needs, she would usually go to shops or different companies and get information from written sources such as newspapers, as opposed to only doing this occasionally at the beginning of the pilot programme. In other words, she would do her research in order to try to get the best product for her needs. She also stated that she will now always check bills and invoices more carefully, and will be more careful about her decisions as a consumer generally. Overall, she stated that she feels a bit more confident but would like to know more about consumer skills.

H.4 Learner A demonstrated significant improvement in her ability to handle consumer scenarios with related LLN skills in particular. Her own self-assessment of skills shows some interesting results. Before the pilot

programme she assessed her abilities in spoken English, reading and writing as 'good', but reassessed these skills as 'ok' at the end. She did, however, report that she felt all her literacy skills had improved and that she had gained quite a lot of confidence in her listening skills.

Conversely, at the beginning of the pilot programme, she assessed her maths skills as 'ok' and IT skills as 'good'. At the end, she reassessed these skills as 'good' and 'very strong' respectively. She also reported that she was a lot more confident in her numeracy skills after taking part in the pilot programme.

Consumer knowledge

- H.5 Improvements were made on questions relating to what you need to know if changing internet service providers, recognising the internet security logo and when digital switchover is in your area.

Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills

- H.6 Learner A improved on all three questions in this section but this was largely due to the fact that she had only attempted one of the questions in the pre benchmarking. Learner A scored 50 per cent of the possible marks for this section in the post benchmarking, scoring on all three questions but doing particularly well on the question which asks for the learner to write questions (using correct punctuation) they might ask in relation to a special offer for a TV/phone/broadband package. This question tests consumer skills and knowledge and related literacy skills as they have to ask about contract length and price as well as technical support and television channels. This learner participated in, and provided feedback on, several activities that included a literacy focus and said that some of them, such as the Digital quiz and Car boot sale activities, were good for developing her reading, speaking and listening skills.

Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills

H.7 Learner A improved on questions which related to calculating the cost of several items in a shop, calculating change, working out a discount and working out VAT. This learner participated in and provided feedback on several activities on ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills, namely 'Best buys', 'The price is right' and 'Car boot game'. She reported that the 'Best buys' activity and the 'Car Boot game' had been good for developing her ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills.

Conclusions

H.8 Learner A has improved her consumer knowledge relating to internet service provision and digital switchover. This could relate to her having more interest in this topic, taking part in related activities that were more appropriate for her learning style or having covered this more recently within the pilot programme (she took part in the Digital quiz toward the end of the pilot programme). Despite her improvements in consumer knowledge in 'Technology', she recorded that she did not feel her consumer skills in this aspect had improved but did say that she felt her consumer skills in 'Buying and selling' had improved a little. This may have been due to her greater exposure to activities and materials from the 'Buying and selling' module of the toolkit.

H.9 Although this learner did not make any significant progress in the part of the consumer knowledge section relating to buying goods - including knowing the three main things that the Sale of Goods Act 1979 says that things you buy must be, knowing what you are entitled to if goods do not meet those standards and knowing about contracts and tie ins - she clearly demonstrated a change of attitude towards getting the best product for her needs and checking bills and invoices. She also said that she would be interested in finding out more about consumer issues. Therefore, even a brief exposure to consumer education has had a positive effect on her actions as a consumer relating to buying goods.

- H.10 Learner A's lower assessment of her ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills after the pilot programme may have been due to the fact that she has not had to focus on these skills previously as she is not in an English class. The maths class she attended would not normally focus on the learners' literacy skills but the pilot programme changed that and the learners took part in several activities that involved working on literacy skills. Thus learner A may have been surprised at how difficult she found the literacy elements of the task. She did, however, feel confident enough to try the consumer scenarios with related literacy skills section of the post benchmarking and managed to do quite well. This ties in with the fact that the class tutor reported that she found it particularly useful to include some literacy activities and that the learners really benefited from doing them as it 'highlighted poor listening skills'.
- H.11 This learner assessed herself as having improved her ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills at the end of the pilot programme. This agrees with her improved results in this section as she did make a significant improvement in her ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills. The improvement could have happened without the OFT pilot programme but as the period was quite short and much of this time had to be devoted to trialling the modules, it is likely that the improvement was connected with taking part in the pilot programme.

Learner B

- female
- 16 - 18
- studying in a vocational class (NQ in Social Care – mixed level course)
- level: Level 2/Intermediate 2 English, Level 2+ /Higher numeracy
- English first language

- overall enjoyment of taking part in the pilot programme: 'really enjoyed it', and
- provided feedback on four Buying and selling activities.

Benchmarking results:

	Pre benchmarking results	Post benchmarking results	Difference between pre and post benchmarking results
Consumer knowledge	18/35 (51%)	20/35 (57%)	+ 2 (6%)
Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills	14.5/40 (36%)	25.5/40 (64%)	+ 11 (28%)
Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills	17/25 (68%)	20/25 (80%)	+ 3 (12%)

H.12 Although learner B scored quite well in the consumer knowledge section in the pre benchmarking, she still recorded improved confidence in most aspects of her consumer skills, particularly related to finding out about her rights in relation to consumer issues. Learner B now feels very confident researching choices, features, prices and deals on the internet, buying on the internet, getting a good deal, checking bills and invoices are correct and following up errors on bills. She also feels more confident writing letters or e-mails of complaint. This learner reported that she found the 'Buying and selling' activities and materials very useful and those from the 'Technology' module quite useful. However, she did not provide feedback on any activities from 'Technology'.

- H.13 Learner B was one of the more confident and able learners at the start of the pilot programme. She assessed her skills in her ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills, IT and all aspects of literacy, apart from writing, as being 'very strong' both at the beginning and at the end of the pilot programme. However, she reported that she felt her ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills had improved quite a lot due to taking part in the pilot programme. With respect to her writing skills, she assessed them as being 'OK' at the beginning but 'very strong' by the end.
- H.14 Generally, this was backed up by her performance in the benchmarking. In the pre benchmarking she scored quite high marks in the ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills section, had a reasonable score for consumer knowledge and a comparatively low score in the ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills section. She demonstrated improvements in all three sections by the end, with the largest increase in the ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills section, going from 36 per cent to 64 per cent.

Consumer knowledge

- H.15 Improvements were made on questions relating to knowing the three main things that the Sale of Goods Act 1979 says that products you buy must be, naming websites with price saving information on switching and knowing when digital switchover is in your area.

Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills

- H.16 Learner B made improvements on the questions that explicitly referred to writing skills. One question asked for the learner to write questions (using correct punctuation) they might ask in relation to a special offer for a digital television, broadband and telephone package. Her largest improvement was on another question that asked the learner to write a letter of complaint to a music store relating to a faulty DVD. These questions tested consumer knowledge and skills and related literacy

skills. She did, however, lose marks on the question that required the learners to write what they would say in a shop when trying to get a refund.

Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills

H.17 Learner B improved on questions relating to estimating the cost of several items in a shop, calculating change and working out VAT. Her ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills at this level was already quite good but she still managed to improve her score by 12 per cent by the end. Furthermore, she reported that she felt more confident in her ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills as a result of taking part in the pilot programme.

Conclusions

H.18 Learner B's completed benchmarking point to someone who was already fairly aware of consumer issues but she appears to have been motivated by improving her consumer knowledge as indicated by her improved knowledge of the Sale of Goods Act and improved confidence connected to getting a good deal. Her loss of points in the question that relates to knowing where to go for support when unhappy with a purchase in a shop may indicate the need for more input relating to this issue. However, overall, she is much more confident about her ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy and numeracy skills and has more consumer knowledge.

H.19 This learner made significant improvements with her writing skills, particularly relating to the letter of complaint. Again, she may have been motivated by wanting to improve her consumer knowledge, including knowing her rights and being able to complain effectively. In the question where she lost points, which asked her to write what she might say in a shop when trying to get a refund, it appears to have been due to poor grammar and punctuation which could be linked to the fact that it was not explicit that this question required correct grammar and punctuation and/or connected to the fact that she has written more in

response to this question in the post benchmarking and may have concentrated more on the content than on the punctuation. That aside, the brief period of taking part in the pilot programme has made a huge impression on her self-belief related to her writing skills, which may be linked to the fact that motivation has such a significant effect on how much progress learners make.

H.20 Although Learner B's ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills was already good, she still made some progress, most noticeably in the Level 2/Intermediate 2 skill of being able to calculate VAT. She also improved her ability to estimate the total cost of several items despite, as with learner A, scoring fewer marks on the rounding question.

Learner C

- male
- over 18
- studying in an Entry 3/Access 3 numeracy class
- level: Level 1/Intermediate 1 literacy, Entry 3/Access 3 numeracy
- English not first language
- overall enjoyment of taking part in the pilot programme: 'quite enjoyed it', and
- provided feedback on three 'Buying and selling' activities and three 'Technology' activities.

Benchmarking results:

	Pre benchmarking results	Post benchmarking results	Difference between pre and post benchmarking results
Consumer knowledge	7/35 (20 per cent)	16/35 (46%)	+ 9 (26%)
Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills	16.5/40 (41%)	26.5/40 (66%)	+ 10 (25%)
Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills	10/25 (40%)	19/25 (76%)	+ 9 (36%)

H.21 This learner's confidence has grown in most aspects of consumer knowledge and consumer skills including knowing his rights, getting a good deal, making complaints and checking bills. In fact, it is in the area of making a complaint that he now feels most confident. There has been a significant change in his attitude towards buying products and services, most noticeably related to researching the best product for himself and checking terms and conditions. He has also stated that he now feels happier making consumer-related decisions. This learner reported that he really enjoyed finding out about consumer issues.

H.22 Learner C is studying in a numeracy class so it is interesting that he has made fairly consistent progress in absolute terms across all areas: consumer knowledge, ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy and numeracy skills. In percentage terms he made most progress in his ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills. In terms of self-assessment, he felt that his speaking, writing and

consumer skills improved from 'OK' to 'good' by the end of the pilot programme. He assessed his listening and reading skills as 'good' at the beginning and at the end. His self-assessment of his IT skills remained at 'OK'.

Consumer knowledge

H.23 Improvements were made on questions relating to organisations that provide support with purchases that you are unhappy with, the Sale of Goods Act and rights relating to buying goods and services. He reported that he found the 'Buying and selling' activities quite useful to him personally.

Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills

H.24 Learner C made improvements on all three questions in this section, with slightly larger improvements on the written aspects - particularly related to grammar and punctuation. He reported that he felt his literacy skills had improved quite a lot, especially his listening skills. This learner reported that he found several activities to be great for developing his writing skills, including the letter of complaint.

Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills

H.25 Learner C improved on questions which related to estimating the cost of several items in a shop, calculating the actual cost of those items, working out a percentage discount and working out VAT. He reported that he feels a lot more confident in his ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills, having taken part in the pilot programme. This learner also reported that he found the Tariff game, where learners calculate the cost of using mobile phones for various activities such as sending text messages on different networks, and the Dimensions activities, where learners estimate the dimensions of items of furniture in order to improve their ability to buy from internet sites with confidence, to be 'great' for developing his ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills.

Conclusions

- H.26 Learner C's completed benchmarking show that he was not very aware of consumer issues but he has now made a significant improvement in his consumer knowledge and confidence and ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy and numeracy skills. His answers in the post benchmarking indicate a determination to do his research in future so that he can compare prices and other factors before making purchases. Thus he will be able to apply his consumer skills and knowledge in order to get the best deal he can. He has actually put this into practice as in the final learner interviews he said that he 'checked price comparison sites and saved £125 on a laptop.'
- H.27 His self-assessment of having improved his consumer skills seem to have been fairly accurate as this is where he has made the most progress. This may be linked to those needs being met within the context of the pilot programme which may in turn be linked to a motivational aspect of improving his consumer skills and knowledge and/or an awareness of his needs. Either way, it indicates the appropriateness of the modules to meet those needs. This is further supported by the feedback from the class teacher who was very satisfied with the activities and materials and who also reported that her learners really enjoyed them and benefited significantly from the pilot programme.
- H.28 This learner's ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills was fair before the pilot programme but he still managed to improve his score by an impressive 36 per cent by the end. This was largely due to an improvement in his ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills at Level 1 and 2. This was particularly significant as the class he attends is an Entry 3 level class.

Learner D

- male
- over 18
- studying in an ESOL class (Entry 3/Access 3)
- level: Entry 3/Access 3 ESOL, numeracy level not recorded
- English not first language
- overall enjoyment of taking part in the pilot programme: 'really enjoyed it', and
- provided feedback on seven 'Buying and selling' activities and three 'Technology' activities.

Benchmarking results:

	Pre benchmarking results	Post benchmarking results	Difference between pre and post benchmarking results
Consumer knowledge	2/35 (6%)	21/35 (60%)	+ 19 (54%)
Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills	9.5/40 (24%)	23.5/40 (59%)	+ 14 (35%)
Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills	8/25 (32%)	12/25 (48%)	+ 4 (16%)

- H.29 Learner D's confidence has grown significantly in all aspects of consumer knowledge and consumer skills, going from not confident to very confident. He felt that his confidence has grown particularly in areas relating to researching product features, comparing the advantages and disadvantages of different products and services and looking at the small print and details generally before making consumer decisions. He is now confident that he will be able to check that bills are correct and that he will not be swayed by product/service advertising or what sales people have to say.
- H.30 Learner D is studying in a discrete ESOL class which would not normally address the development of numeracy skills. He has made most progress in consumer knowledge and ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills with less progress in his ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills. In terms of self-assessment, he felt that his speaking, listening and reading skills had improved a lot, particularly his speaking and listening skills which he assessed as not good at the beginning of the pilot programme and good by the end. He felt his ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills had also improved despite having already assessed them as being good before the pilot programme. Most interesting is his self-assessment of his IT skills, which have gone from 'OK' to 'very strong'. He commented that he 'couldn't use a computer to choose the best thing I was looking for neither to get the best price or the best seller but now I can do it easily.'

Consumer knowledge

- H.31 This learner made significant improvements on those questions relating to consumer knowledge of organisations that provide support with purchases that you are unhappy with, the Sale of Goods Act, small print on contracts, rights relating to buying goods and services and digital switchover. He reported that he really enjoyed finding out about consumer issues as well as doing the activities and using the materials. He also found the materials and activities from both the 'Buying and selling' and 'Technology' modules very useful to him personally.

Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills

H.32 Learner D made a little progress in the question that asked learners to write questions that they would ask a sales representative in order to find out about a special offer for a digital television, broadband and telephone package, and significant progress on the question regarding the letter of complaint. He actually lost points on the question which asked the learner to write what they would say when trying to get a refund in a shop. This learner reported that his ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills had improved a lot as a result of taking part in the pilot programme. Learner D also reported that he found the letter of complaint 'great' for developing his literacy skills.

Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills

H.33 This learner made improvements on the questions, which relate to calculating the cost of items using a calculator and calculating change. He was already able to calculate discounts and VAT but was unable to round prices or estimate the total cost of several items both at the beginning and at the end of the pilot programme. However, he reported that his confidence in his ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills had improved a lot. This learner reported that he found the Dimensions activity, where learners estimate the dimensions of items of furniture in order to improve their ability to buy from internet sites with confidence, 'great' for developing skills in measures and data handling skills and 'good' for developing number skills.

Conclusions

H.34 Learner D made most progress in relation to consumer knowledge and his ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy and numeracy skills. He was clearly very motivated by finding out about consumer issues around goods in particular and this has driven him to improve his IT skills and confidence. He undertook several activities that had a research element, such as researching types of mobile phone usage and researching digital and Freeview TV availability in his area. He

also participated in the Small ads activity which includes online searches to find information. These results point to the significant role consumer-related topics can play in ESOL courses. They can support the development of confidence and cultural awareness and can be usefully integrated with citizenship skills and community cohesion – all of which are very much part of the national themes for ESOL.

- H.35 As shown in much research, speaking skills in particular are most frequently identified as being a priority for learners on ESOL courses. Learners frequently cite their productive skills in English as being weaker than their receptive skills. Learner D reported that he was not confident in his speaking and listening skills but, in his opinion, these have improved during the pilot programme. He doesn't feel his writing skills have improved but the completed benchmarking show that he has now made a significant improvement in his ability to write a letter of complaint. This may again be connected to both the motivational aspect of the usefulness of being able to write a letter of complaint and the opportunity to focus on letter writing as part of his ESOL class.
- H.36 Learner D's ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills was quite spiky at the beginning of the pilot programme. He was able to calculate discounts and VAT, which are Level 1 and 2 skills, but unable to round, estimate and calculate costs or change. One of the teachers involved in this project reported that learners educated in the part of the world where this learner is from, are often not taught estimation and rounding skills in maths classes and often find it hard to accept that these skills are valid mathematical tools. Sometimes learners possess these skills and can use them in everyday life without realising or accepting that they are 'doing maths' and therefore, have real problems transferring the skills to an assessment situation inside a classroom. This learner did, however, improve his ability to calculate change and use a calculator and therefore benefited from the numeracy related activities within the toolkit.

Learner E

- female
- 16 -18
- studying in an ESOL class (Entry 3/Access 3)
- level: Entry 3/Access 3 ESOL , Level 1/Intermediate 1 numeracy
- English not first language
- overall enjoyment of taking part in the pilot programme: 'quite enjoyed it', and
- provided feedback on one 'Buying and selling' activity and one 'Technology' activity.

Benchmarking results:

	Pre benchmarking results	Post benchmarking results	Difference between pre and post benchmarking results
Consumer knowledge	1/35 (3%)	5/35 (14%)	+ 4 (11%)
Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills	9/40 (23%)	9.5/40 (24%)	+ 0.5 (1%)
Ability to handling consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills	7/25 (28%)	6/25 (24%)	-1 (-4%)

- H.37 Learner E demonstrated no significant change in her ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy and numeracy skills. Her own self-assessment shows some change when comparing pre and post benchmarking. She felt she had improved her reading and writing skills quite a lot and her listening skills a lot, but her numeracy skills only a little.
- H.38 This learner showed some improvement in her confidence in consumer knowledge and her consumer skills, mainly around the areas of getting a good deal when purchasing goods or services (that is, best value for money), complaining and checking bills. She has said that there will be some change in her behaviour with a stated intention to talk more to sales assistants and do some research from books, newspapers and magazines in order to find the best product for her needs prior to making a purchase. This learner has also said that she now intends to check her bills for mistakes, which is something she never did before. An important development is that she thinks she will feel happier with the consumer decisions and choices she makes from now on.

Consumer knowledge

- H.39 Improvements were made in questions which relate to consumer knowledge relating to receipts, refunds and legal rights associated with trading and the important things you need to know when changing to a new internet service provider.

Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills

- H.40 Overall, there was little change in the marks for the section on ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills. However, within this section Learner E improved her score on the question which asked the learner to write correctly punctuated questions that they might ask in order to get information about goods and services. She did, however, get a slightly lower mark for the question which asked learners to write what they would say to a shop assistant when trying to get a refund in a shop for a pair of trainers. In her feedback, this learner reported that she

found the letter of complaint, key words and essential information activities in the Skilled to go toolkit were all good for developing her reading and writing skills.

Ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills

H.41 Learner E gained marks on calculating change but lost marks on rounding prices in order to be able to estimate the total cost of several items. As a result she actually scored one less mark in the ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills section at the end of the pilot programme than at the start.

Conclusions

H.42 Although Learner E was exposed to fewer activities from the toolkit than learners in most other classes, it is interesting to note that there were still some gains. It also demonstrates that even a brief exposure to the toolkit can result in changing attitudes and behaviour relating to consumer issues. This is evidenced by case study Learner E's intention to find out more about products before buying and an intention to try to check her bills more often.

H.43 This learner felt her writing skills had improved and this tied in with the fact that she did better on the question that required correctly punctuated sentences relating to asking for information on a consumer product prior to sale (something that she has said she will do more of). Therefore, with the right context, and clear instructions to use correct punctuation, some progress in this learner's writing skills have become evident. As with several other learners, she lost marks in the question that did not indicate that the learners should use correct grammar but asked them to write down what they would say to a shop assistant. Again, as with other learners, she wrote more in response to this question in the post benchmarking which would indicate increased knowledge and confidence relating to the subject matter but her grammar and punctuation were not adequate to support the content of all that she wanted to communicate.

H.44 Learner E did not feel that she had made much progress in her ability to handle consumer scenarios with related numeracy skills. As she had only limited exposure to the activities and she is in an ESOL class, she may not have done many of the numeracy related activities. She only provided feedback on two activities, neither of which had a numeracy content. However, she may have tried some other activities and not completed a feedback sheet as she did demonstrate an improved ability to calculate change in the post benchmarking. This suggests an improved understanding of how to write money to two decimal places and how to set out a calculation involving subtraction of money. She lost marks on the question involving rounding. On studying her completed benchmarking, this seems to be due to the fact that although she can round amounts of money correctly, she cannot do it effectively in a practical situation. As with another learner who was born in a country with similar education practices, she may not have been taught estimation within maths lessons as a child and consequently may have trouble transferring the skill of rounding, which she can do well, to the practical everyday situation of shopping.

Overall conclusions

- H.45 These conclusions have been drawn from analysis of data from the cohort of learners, their teachers and also the five learner case studies above.
- H.46 As shown in case study Learner A, despite learners' results showing improvements in consumer knowledge in 'Technology', some learners recorded that they did not feel they had improved in this area, whereas they did feel that their ability to handle consumer scenarios in literacy and numeracy skills in 'Buying and selling' had improved. This may have been due to their greater exposure to activities and materials from the 'Buying and selling' module of the toolkit.
- H.47 The teacher delivering a Level1/Intermediate 1 maths group reported that she found it particularly useful to include some literacy activities and that the learners really benefited from doing them as it 'highlighted poor

listening skills.' This class normally focuses on developing learners' maths skills only but the pilot programme changed that and the learners took part in several activities that involved working on their literacy skills. As with case study learner A, this influenced learners' assessment of their consumer skills and also increased some learners' confidence to try some of the ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy skills section of the post benchmarking.

- H.48 Some learners lost marks on two questions when the post benchmarking was compared with the pre benchmarking. This fact raises a question about the importance of feedback to learners: would the learners have benefited from getting their results (including the correct answers) from the pre benchmarking activity? An argument against giving out the results was that the post benchmarking was to replicate the pre benchmarking conditions as closely as possible and therefore, had to use the same or very similar questions. Giving out the results and answers could have compromised the accuracy of the post benchmarking results. However, this would have been beneficial to the learners and may have had a significant impact on the post benchmarking results.
- H.49 Like case studies Learner B and E, some learners lost marks in the question that asked them to write what they might say when trying to get a refund in a shop. This may be linked to the fact that the question did not state the need for learners to use correct grammar and punctuation. Again, as with the case study learners, some learners wrote more in response to this question in the post benchmarking which could indicate increased knowledge and confidence relating to the subject matter, but, possibly as a result, their grammar and punctuation were not adequate to support what they wanted to communicate or they may have focused more on content.
- H.50 A significant number of learners had trouble with the rounding question and this may indicate either that they were unclear what was required from them in this question or that there is insufficient emphasis on teaching rounding skills in some Skills for Life classes.

- H.51 One of the teachers involved in this research project reported that learners educated in a part of the world where some of the learners come from may not have been taught estimation and rounding skills in maths. As a result some learners find it hard to accept that these skills are valid mathematical tools. Learners may possess these skills and use them in everyday life without realising or accepting that they are 'doing maths' and therefore, have real problems transferring the skills to a classroom assessment situation. Some of the numeracy-based activities in the module have estimation skills implicit within them but it may be necessary to make the teaching of these skills more explicit, particularly where the teacher may not have a numeracy background.
- H.52 Learners in the ESOL Entry 3/Access 3 class were exposed to fewer activities from the toolkit than most other classes which may explain the relatively slower progress made by these learners. It is interesting to note that there were still some gains, particularly in consumer knowledge and confidence. This indicates that, as expected, these skills can be developed more quickly than the time required to demonstrate measurable progress in ability to handle consumer scenarios with related literacy and numeracy skills. It also demonstrates that even a brief exposure to the toolkit has had an effect on changing attitudes and behaviour relating to consumer issues. This is evidenced by case study Learner E's intention to find out more about products before buying and an intention to try to check her bills more often.