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Provider Led Learner Voice for Wales 2010: Technical report of the full pilot
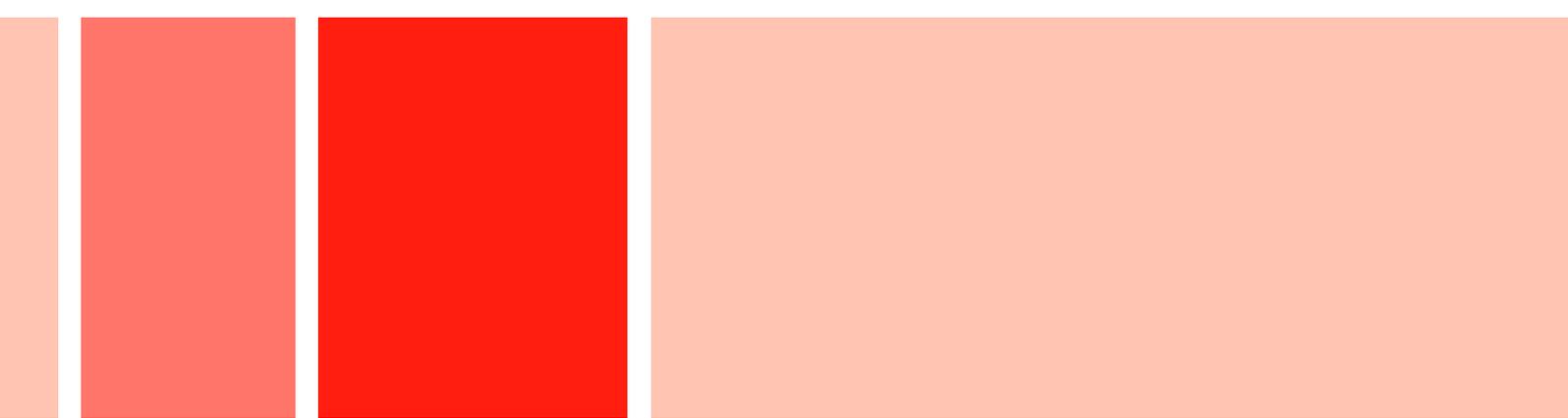
Provider Led Learner Voice for Wales 2010: Technical report of the full pilot

GfK NOP

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Assembly Government

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1 Introduction and design of the pilot

Introduction

The Welsh Assembly Government has made a commitment to putting the learner voice at the heart of its new Quality and Effectiveness Framework for post-16 learning (QEF). Within the context of the QEF and Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills' (DCELLS) Customer Research Programme, the importance of listening to the views of the learner is emphasised. A lot of consideration has already gone into developing an effective approach to engage with learners and providers, so that the learner voice can be heard and considered when looking at the quality of provision.

In the past, national surveys for DCELLS in Wales amongst learners have used a "top down" approach and have involved agencies sampling learners from the Lifelong Learning Wales Records (LLWR) and undertaking interviews with a sample of learners. The current aim, however, is to develop a "provider facilitated" approach whereby providers themselves administer a core set of survey questions to learners, enabling them to use the results to benchmark and compare, as well as to inform their own internal quality assurance processes. This work will complement DCELLS' benchmarking initiatives and support the self-regulation agenda in further education. DCELLS are working with Estyn to agree a set of questions which will also be used to support their Common Inspection Framework (CIF) that is being rolled out in the autumn of 2010.

This technical report is a working document and discusses the technical details of the *Learner Voice for Wales 2010: full scale pilot*. This exercise followed a smaller scale pilot amongst seven providers in Wales in 2009.

The *Learner Voice for Wales 2010: full scale pilot* was deemed a success on many levels, not least the engagement and success of providers in managing to generate a response from 33,406 learners. This is the largest ever dataset of learners' views for Wales and DCELLS and also GfK NOP wish to thank all providers for their help and assistance in making this pilot a true test of the strategy. Over the 'life' of the pilot project an enormous amount of learning points have been observed and recommendations based on feedback are detailed throughout this report.

Summary of work preceding the Learner Voice for Wales 2010: full scale pilot

Much of the development work for the *Learner Voice for Wales 2010: full scale pilot* had taken place in 2009 when an initial pilot of this approach was undertaken in seven Further Education (FE) institutions and a more intensive cognitive test for the questions followed. A résumé of previous activities informing the 2010 survey is as follows:

- various research team meetings/steering groups held at DCELLS

- initial pilot 2009

    o workshop with seven providers (FE institutions) who agreed to take part in an initial pilot (Nov 2008)

    o cognitive test of core questions used in the initial pilot (January 2009)

    o fieldwork 2009 pilot (April 2009)

    o depth interviews with the seven providers to inform process for full scale rollout (May 2009)

    o workshop with seven providers (FE institutions) who agreed to take part in the initial pilot (September 2009)

- cognitive re-test prior to full scale roll out (Nov 09)

The initial 2009 pilot

From the initial pilot a summary of key challenges was established. The 2010 pilot attempted to tackle them all.

- **Resource:** In 2009 most institutions designated one key contact to organise the survey within their college. This seemed to prove a problem in a couple of cases where, if the key contact was absent for any reason or overloaded with other work, resource on the project was at risk. In 2010 it was recommended that each institution had at least two champions for the survey.

- **Timing:** In 2009 fieldwork started at the end of April and ran to the beginning of June. Many of the providers thought that this was too late in the year. Learners had assignments to complete and exams to prepare for and spare time was at a premium. Some learners were also on study leave. Tutors were already chasing learners for assignments so reminding them about survey completion was a relatively low priority. The 2010 pilot started at the end of January and the fieldwork period was six weeks. Apart from avoiding busy course work periods this timeframe was thought to ensure:

- learners had still experienced a reasonable amount of their course by this time and would be able to give considered answers

- learners were still relatively motivated and committed to their learning mid year (FE)

- a good chance of getting results in or shortly after the Easter break.

- **Bespoke analysis:** In 2009 it was highlighted that for the data to be useful and actionable to the provider it needed to be broken down by course type. Several institutions also requested further bespoke analysis variables such as college site, tutor group etc. Unique learner IDs or course codes were linked to course information in 2010. This required some extra administration time from providers and GfK NOP but in the absence of opportunities to use LLWR it was the only option available. This is described later in the report.

- **More detailed updates**: In 2009 several providers asked GfK NOP to provide fieldwork updates on responses for online completions broken down by course type and level so that they could target survey reminders to the relevant departments. In 2010 numbers of completes for online data was supplied by learner type (full time, part-time and WBL) and by personal demographics and also by faculty. However, due to course names running to over 1,000 in some providers, it was difficult to supply number of completions at this level via the project portal used.

- **Timing of data delivery:** In 2009 it was raised that data should be given back to providers before the start of the Easter holidays. It would then be possible for providers to share the findings with survey participants and implement changes which will directly affect them. It will also be possible for the provider to use the findings for internal or external quality reviews. In 2010 GfK NOP delivered data in a series of phases from the middle to the end of May (later than the Easter deadline due to the complexity of the editing, cleaning and analysis stages). It is envisaged that next time round processes can be tightened to ensure that a mid to late April deadline is met (Easter period).

- **Facilitate extra questions:** In 2009 it was felt that whilst having the core questions was useful, the ability to add modular questions might avoid parallel surveys in some providers being run at the same time. In 2010 this did not happen. The set up time was relatively short and the full scale pilot concentrated on getting the core module across. The strategy offered integration as a possibility whereby providers put the core questions into their own surveys.

- **Readability of the questionnaire:** Amongst some providers in 2009 there was still some scepticism that the core questions were accessible

to learners who had low levels of literacy or learning difficulties. In 2010 a cognitive pilot took place to ensure that core questions were understood by learners and as easy to read as possible. This is commented on later in this report.

- **The need for paper questionnaires:** In 2009 a few of the providers were concerned about how they would conduct the survey online for all types of learner. Most providers were confident that they could conduct the FE survey with most full-time learners online, however, there was less certainty about how well this would work for FE part-time and Work Based Learners (WBL). Problems occurred when courses were run off site, learners were in employer settings with no access to computers and when there were connectivity issues with access at home. 2010 did allow providers to request as many paper questionnaires as they thought they needed.

The cognitive re-test November 2009

It was agreed that a cognitive test was needed before the full scale 2010 pilot. This is explained more fully in section 2. In total 44 interviews were conducted in October/November 2009 with learners from four providers (two FE institutions, one Welsh for Adults language centre and one other training provider). Different learners were interviewed as part of the exercise in order to establish a range of views; FE (full-time & part-time), WBL (employed and centre-based), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LLDD) and both English and Welsh speakers.

The majority of interviews were conducted in person and a small number were conducted over telephone (WBL in employer settings). The think-aloud method was used and followed by pre-prepared probes (this is explained fully in the next section). The good/bad scale in the 2009 questionnaire was tested with all respondents and half were given an agree/disagree scale and asked about preferences.

The cognitive pilot delivered a wealth of insight into learners' understanding of questions and the use of scales. The overall conclusions were:

- the 'good to bad scale' was deemed more appropriate to a wider audience than agree/disagree scales

- the midpoint was needed for the overview (the survey is not course specific) and was easily understood in context

- many questions were revised slightly but not substantially

- there were some learning points in the English to Welsh translation that needed addressing

Planning for the *Learner Voice for Wales 2010: full scale pilot*

In 2010 DCELLS moved into a full scale pilot and asked all FE institutions, 12 other WBL providers and one Welsh for Adults language centre to take part in the next stage of the pilot roll out. The resulting methodology was self completion via mixed mode (online or paper). All providers were told that they would receive their data in the form of data tables in return for their efforts. Providers were also told that, if engagement in 2010 was good, DCELLS should be able to produce some interim benchmarks at the analysis stage (provider results against a national weighted average)[1].

As consultations evolved prior to the pilots in both 2009 and 2010 DCELLS believed that the project should offer providers both the option for a **stand alone approach** (where GfK NOP would deliver survey materials and process all returns), and also an approach whereby the core questions could be incorporated into other questionnaires the provider was administering in the same fieldwork period (an **integrated approach**). At the time of fieldwork in 2010 all but one of the providers were happy to proceed with the survey as a stand alone approach.

In Coleg Powys, DCELLS *Learner Voice for Wales 2010: full scale pilot* coincided with another census survey in the institution. At the college's request, an 'integrated' approach was developed so that the core learner voice questions were embedded into the college's own survey, administered via Moodle. The GfK NOP team discussed the following points with Coleg Powys – all guidelines were adhered to and integration worked very well:

- care would be needed to ensure that the core questions were comparable, the exact same wording for the core questions and response scales should be used

- the core questions should be inserted at the start of the questionnaire (to avoid order effects).

- respondents needed to be informed that the data for the core questions, alongside some demographics, would be sent outside the institution to the contractor and DCELLS.

In four providers a QDP learner survey was in operation at the time of the DCELLS *Learner Voice for Wales 2010: full scale pilot*. In order to minimise survey fatigue an attempt was made to integrate the two exercises. In this approach it was agreed that learners should use one URL, so that, in theory, this would be a better experience for the learner. It was also agreed that learners should complete the DCELLS survey first and this strategy gave more control of events. Learners logged onto the DCELLS URL and completed the Learner Voice survey. At the end of the DCELLS survey they were told that they were now being redirected to the QDP survey (via a

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[1] It was made clear that the official benchmarks would be not be established in the 2010 pilot. Any national figures in 2010 were derived from pilot data and had various caveats attached.

hyperlink) and given the QDP paragraphs relating to confidentiality. It was important that learners were aware they were undertaking two separate surveys and that they were informed about the confidentiality of each one. In the paper scenario learners were given two very separate questionnaires and filled them in as two discrete exercises.

The 2010 trial worked well in terms of joint efforts made between GfK NOP and QDP. The practical issues in the set up stage such as setting up hyperlinks and merging scripts were successfully tackled in good faith. This trial did, however, highlight a number of issues for further consideration:

- QDP use different response scales for their questions, any integration needs to evaluate if this will confuse the learner

- the providers who piloted this approach reported more technical difficulties than those providers who opted for the stand alone approach to administering the survey. It would be desirable if this option were to go ahead again that a lengthier lead time will allow for more testing. Aspects that would need addressing were:

    o providers getting the materials/survey links at least 2 months before fieldwork

    o a judgement as to whether the hyperlink should be used as opposed to a shared landing page.

The *Learner Voice for Wales 2010: full scale pilot* developed a revised set of core questions (designed by DCELLS and Estyn with help from GfK NOP), taking account of the outcomes of the initial pilot (2009) and the cognitive testing summarised above. Additional questions on learners' broader experiences, including aspects of wellbeing, safety and respect, were included to align with Estyn's new Common Inspection Framework.

Efforts were made to make the core questions as easy to read as possible but it has been accepted that if the provider-led approach is rolled out in the future, learners with the more acute learning difficulties and disabilities (LLDD) will need a different version of the questions via a different survey instrument. Providers were given guidance that teachers/tutors could help LLDD learners when needed (a question at the end of the survey would identify if this had happened).

Two versions of the questionnaire were adapted; one for learners in FE and the other for work-based learners. The core questions remained the same apart from changes in some of the terminology, for instance, 'college' versus 'training provider'. Questionnaires are in Appendix A.

The *Learner Voice for Wales 2010: full scale pilot* included both FE and WBL in FE institutions and work-based learners in other training providers. The sample methodology was comprehensive as it needed to test response rates in a 'real' scenario and is detailed in the remainder of this report. As mentioned previously, at the end of the full scale pilot in 2010 almost 33,500 questionnaires were received.

Timings

The project was planned around three timelines; that the survey was live in January and the fieldwork should last six weeks and the data was sent out to providers around Easter time.

The online survey was live from midday Monday 25th January to midnight Wednesday 10th March. In terms of the paper self completion options, the start day was the same but returns were parcelled up and ready to be collected by a courier on Monday 8th March. One page benchmark reports and standard data tables for each provider started to be despatched in mid May. Spreadsheets with data analysed at a course level and faculty level were disseminated between 25th May and 2nd June.

2 The core questions

Introduction

This section outlines how the core questions developed over time and the impact of the cognitive pilot in November 2009. In terms of the broad design of questions DCELLS needed one measure of satisfaction with overall experience and then a number of measures which looked at each of the following areas (based on previous work relating to drivers of satisfaction and the needs of Estyn):

- quality of teaching/training

- responsiveness

- advice and guidance

- support

- environment

To this end a series of questions were developed and tested in the initial 2009 pilot. The initial pilot showed no major issues in relation to the questions. The data indicated that a considered response was being given (only a minority ticked the same box to all questions), a minority were using the mid point and very few were giving a stated non response to questions. The other element that the initial pilot tested was the usefulness and efficiency of having an open ended question at the end of the survey asking the learner if they wanted to 'add anything else'. Analysis of responses in this open verbatim showed that very few learners were giving substantial insight here that could be of any practical use to the provider or DCELLS. The majority of responses highlighted the fact that they indeed had 'nothing to add' or just gave very vague responses. On this basis and bearing in mind the cost for scanning and editing open ended responses DCELLS decided that the open question was not yielding enough insight to justify the added investment. It was also felt that other feedback mechanisms within providers in the course of the year (i.e student forums) would give providers qualitative feedback and that the Learner Voice Survey was perhaps not the best mechanism (open verbatims cannot be benchmarked and measured in a uniform way like the remaining measures in this survey).

Cognitive testing

An important part of the Learner Voice research strategy was to carry out thorough cognitive testing of the FE and WBL core questions used in the 2009 initial pilot. Cognitive Interviewing is a form of in-depth interviewing which pays explicit attention to the mental processes which respondents use to answer survey questions. It is therefore an efficient way to gain insight into respondents' understanding of new survey questions.

The cognitive element allowed the project team to check the following:

- what does the respondent think we are asking?

- what do specific words and phrases in the question mean to the respondent?

- what types of information does the respondent need to recall in order to answer the question?

- what judgement do learners make about the information the question requires?

- are responses 'full' or are there essential pieces of information that are left out?

The cognitive testing was carried out in late 2009 face to face (and a small number of telephone interviews for the WBL group) by members of GfK NOP's executive team working on the strategy. A group of learners (44 in total) were chosen to take part in the testing in four providers and interviews were conducted on an individual basis. The cognitive interview was targeted to last 30 minutes in length.

Two main approaches to cognitive interviewing, which are 'think aloud' and 'probing' techniques, were used. In the think-aloud method used in this project, the respondent was given the questionnaire and asked to verbalise their thoughts whilst completing it and working out their answers to the survey questions. This approach is usually used for self-completion methodologies, and has the dual advantage of checking that survey questions are correctly understood and that the layout/structure of the questionnaire is easy to follow. In this instance the interviewer sat with the respondent as they completed the online or paper questionnaire and asked them to verbalise their thoughts. The interviewer also had the opportunity to observe how the respondent completed the questionnaire and noted any questions where they seemed to struggle or any issues they had with the layout of the questionnaire.

Of course talking someone through our thought processes is not an activity with which most of us are familiar. Therefore, at the start of the interview respondents were given an example of someone answering a question in this way and be given opportunity to practice answering a survey question whilst thinking aloud. During the 'think aloud' part of the interview respondents were reassured and encouraged by the interviewer that there are no right or wrong answers and were gently reminded to tell the interviewer what they were thinking.

Once the respondent had completed the online or paper questionnaire, the interviewer used specific probes to explore thought processes more fully. These were a mixture of probes prepared in advance and also spontaneously in response to something the respondent has said or that the interviewer had observed during the 'think aloud' part of the interview.

This combined approach gave a thorough, robust testing of the questionnaires on which recommendations for amendments were made. These are outlined below.

Whilst the cognitive pilot served many uses the two main issues to resolve were the rating scale (good to bad) and the use of a mid point. The cognitive pilot suggested that the good to bad scale was fit for purpose (compared to an alternative agree/disagree scale) and that a mid point in the scale was both necessary and understood in the correct context.

References to the mid point:

> *"It is like 50, 50. Half/Half. They do it and sometimes they don't. Sometimes yes and sometimes no. It is like something has happened 50% it is not like 100%."*

> *"I meant like ok at certain times but other times really bad*

References to the type of rating scale:

> *"I prefer being asked rather than having a statement with I in it, as if someone started it for me and I have to finish it, I prefer to be asked as if I am being interviewed."*

> *"…I am a foreigner of course… I never use strongly agree, I will say very good…but I wouldn't say, 'strongly agree', it doesn't match as much. When you say very good you are talking from your emotions..."*

> *"Prefer to use good to bad. It sounds better than agreeing. To me agree/disagree sounds posh where good/bad and all that just seems normal. Most people use good instead of agree."*

The final core questions used in the *Learner Voice for Wales 2010: full scale pilot* are in Appendix A.

3 Methodology

Introduction

This section of the report reviews the scope of the survey, the sample requirements and the analysis options given to providers. A total of 24 FE institutions took part in the survey plus a sample of 12 other training providers and one Welsh for Adults language centre. The 12 training providers were selected by DCELLS with the aim of covering different types of learning and sizes of provider. Throughout the report the Welsh for Adults language centre is grouped together with FE institutions.

Scope of the survey

Institutions were asked to **include** all active learners within the survey period Monday 25th January to midday Monday 10th March. They were asked to exclude any learners who finished their course/programme before this period or any that started afterwards. Learners would be at various stages in their course –the survey was designed to be a snapshot of all learners in this period.

The following other **exclusions** applied:

- learners on higher education courses

- learners on Adult and Community Learning (ACL) courses which are not funded by DCELLS or who were in provision contracted from local authorities to the institution

- learners who were registered at another provider but who came into the institution for part of their learning.

There were three broad learner groups in FE institutions; full-time learners, part-time learners and work-based learners in FEIs. In other training providers all learners were WBL by default.   In the participating Welsh for Adults language centre, all of the learners were part time.

FE institutions were told to include all three broad learner groups in the survey (where appropriate) and think of them in terms of three separate samples. In terms of the definition for part-time learners the LLWR defines them as those with less than 450 guided contact hours on a learning programme in a year, and this definition was included in the guidance to providers.

Sampling requirements

Providers were asked to target the following:

Further Education Institutions and Welsh for Adults centre:

- **A census of all full-time FE learners** – target all full-time FE learners.

- **A sample of part-time FE learners** – sample 1 in 4 of all part-time FE learners. So, in terms of sample size, if a provider had 16,000 part-time learners within the scope of the eligibility criteria they were asked to either sample 1 in 4 individuals or sample of 1 in 4 classes, giving approximately 4,000 learners to target

- **A census of work-based learners** – target all work-based learners.

Other Training Providers:

- **A census of work-based learners** – target all work-based learners.

All providers were told that DCELLS were looking for a minimum of a 40% response rate from the issued sample. It was felt that a target minimum framed expectations and 40% reflected a good response rate that would allow for reliable data at the analysis stage and, although ambitious (in light of the first stage of the pilot) it seemed achievable based on other survey work in institutions.

It is important to note that the survey was an overview of a learner's experience at an institution (not course based feedback). Efforts were made via workshops, guidance notes and emails/Q&A sheets to ensure that providers understood that there should be one return per learner. Technical notes were given to the co ordinator, tutors/teachers to use and a one page set of guidance was produced for the learner themselves.

Providers were told that they should monitor responses and ensure that the achieved sample was as representative as possible. They were given full breakdowns of demographics within learner type on a portal which they could log into to see how the online response was looking. Of course monitoring response via paper is harder. Providers in these cases had to use intelligence from faculty managers (which classes had responded) and make a view as to whether that would ensure a good spread of learners in their sample. The final data was weighted to the providers own population profiles (age, gender, ethnicity and learning difficulty/disability within learner type) to account for any misrepresentation in response rates.

Sampling part-time learners

An advantage of asking providers to target a census of learners (aside from the obvious optimum response) is the simplicity of the sampling process. In many ways it is easier to target all learners than go through a process of sampling. However, due to the volume of part-time learners coupled with the fact that they are harder to reach (learning off-site and/or perhaps only for two or three hours a week) a sample was deemed necessary (a census of all

three learner groups in FE institutions would have been unrealistic). Providers were instructed on how to take a sample by means of guidance notes and conversations on the telephone. In an ideal world one would stratify all individuals by a range of variables and then go down the list of individuals and take every 1 in 4 for the survey. Because, however, this survey was to be done in class/session/tutorials, providers were asked to operate the sampling procedure in a similar way, but selecting classes rather than individuals. Guidance was given as follows:

List all part-time classes within the institution that meet eligibility criteria, i.e. **exclude**:

- HE level courses

- courses that have more than 450 guided contact hours in a year

- any ACL courses which are not funded by DCELLS (for instance those funded by local authorities).

Stratify or sort these classes on a number of variables, options being perhaps:

- sector/subject area

- academic vs vocational or other;

- class size.

Once the list of classes had been stratified or sorted, providers were asked to count down the list and take every fourth class as being part of the sample for part-time learners.

Administration of the survey

Paper versus online completion

The pilot was large-scale and the cost advantages of online versus paper self completion are well versed. Because of this, DCELLS and GfK NOP encouraged as many returns as possible for this survey to be online. Having said this, it was recognised that some learners (those with some specific LLDD or language issues for instance) would find a paper version easier to complete. There were also a range of situations where paper versions of the questionnaire were necessary – for instance learners in environments outside the main college or campus where connectivity is an issue. Whilst providers were aware that online is more cost effective they were asked to inform GfK of how many paper questionnaires they would need in order to meet the selection criteria. In reality just over 17,000 paper questionnaires were printed. Just two providers facilitated the survey to all learners on paper (they facilitated part-time learning in community settings), one provider solely used online methods (a vast majority being full-time and on site) and the remainder approached the pilot using a mixed mode for learner groups.

As previously mentioned two questionnaires were designed; one for learners in FE/Welsh for Adults Centre and one for WBL. Whilst the questions

remained essentially the same, some wording altered across the versions (for instance using the word college for FE learners and training provider for WBL).

Two online links per provider were sent out to FE institutions (one for FE full and part-time learners and one for WBL for each institution). Just the WBL links were sent out to the other training providers.

Providers were asked to test their links to ensure that they were compatible with their operating systems e.g. firewalls. The online survey had an option for respondents to increase text size and change the background colour. These mechanisms were designed to help learners with specific disabilities or learning difficulties. DCELLS signed off the online survey for content, format and style before it was launched.

Paper questionnaires were signed off by DCELLS then printed by GfK NOP and sent to providers before fieldwork. They were despatched in one delivery to an address agreed with each provider. For each questionnaire there was a blank envelope. Providers were instructed to ask learners to complete the questionnaire and enclose it in an envelope. The survey co-ordinator in each provider was responsible for organising paper questionnaires to be collated and sent back to a central point. At the end of fieldwork GfK NOP organised for a private courier to pick up a single despatch for return to their data office at an agreed date and time. All paper self completion questionnaires were then opened, ordered and scanned. Data could then be merged with online data for each provider.

Administering the survey to learners

- Although guidelines were given to providers, DCELLS/GfK NOP were not too prescriptive on how to administer the survey itself. In the initial pilot GfK NOP found that institutions used various methods and that institutions knew the best way to reach their learners. The incidence of use of email for instance varied enormously between providers. DCELLS requested a minimum of a 40% response rate on all targeted sample so institutions had an end target in sight.

Chasing completions/monitoring response rates

Providers had the responsibility of chasing non-responses and motivating teachers/trainers and managers to get a good response. Where providers were using paper self completion, GfK NOP relied on institutions to monitor their own progress. Where institutions were using the online links to the survey sent out by GfK NOP, institutions were able to see their response rates online via the survey portal set up by GfK NOP. They were given a detailed breakdown of response by all personal demographics within each of the three learner types (so they could monitor how representative online responses were looking) and also the volume of response by faculty/site (to chase non- or low responders). Providers did say that they would value the option of seeing the number of responses per course but in some cases, where the number of courses ran into the thousands, this was beyond the initial capacity

of the portal. The logistics should be reviewed for providing this information going forward.

Providers entered the area of the portal for online response rate information via a password which meant that no other institution could see this level of information.

GfK NOP monitored online response as fieldwork progressed. Any providers which seemed to show a low online response were called to check that there were no technical issues.

Options for course level analysis

In order to give providers information about number responding at a faculty level and also to produce analysis at this level, the survey needed to ask the learner for a serial number at the start of the survey. This was a learner serial number generated by the provider **OR** a code that identified what course they were attending at the time of completing the questionnaire. GfK NOP talked to providers about which method might work best in their organisations and the response was mixed. It appeared that, in many instances, full-time learners have a unique ID number allocated to them by their provider and would know what it was, but part-time learners would not have the same familiarity with their learner numbers.

To this end providers were told they could initiate, per respondent, **either** an individual serial number or a course code mechanism (the one that best fit their administration). However, institutions needed to use **the same method** of serialisation for all their learners – this avoided confusion in terms of administration.

The learner ID or course code entered during the survey could then be linked to further course information for that learner during the data analysis stage, based on background information provided to GfK NOP via the codeframe spreadsheets.

If a learner failed to enter a relevant ID or course code the analysis could not attribute the data to any course level during the data processing. This was clearly not desirable. To limit this happening:

- for online returns, course codes or learner IDs were loaded by the online team at GfK NOP to the script and any learner who typed in anything irrelevant for that provider were asked to 'try again'

- for paper returns, providers were asked to ensure that teachers/tutors advise learners to enter their ID or course code at the start of the exercise and ask learners to double check they have done so before putting the questionnaires into envelopes. Of course with paper completions there was no systematic check at the point of completion so due care and attention from the learners was the primary mechanism for quality control.

In both instances, and wherever the survey was administered in class by teachers/tutors, coordinators were asked to ensure that the teachers/tutors had the relevant serial numbers at hand so that they could prompt the learner with their course code/learner ID as necessary.

4 Communication and management of the survey

Introduction

This section examines the communication strategy used for the *Learner Voice for Wales 2010: full scale pilot*.

Initial communications

At the start of the project all providers were given a personal telephone call by a project executive at GfK NOP. This initial conversation gave a brief overview of the requirements of the project, checked that fieldwork dates did not conflict with the provider's own internal surveys, and gauged interest from providers about taking part. It was also an opportunity for providers to ask questions or express any concerns about the project which they had. Where survey timings did conflict with an internal surveys most providers were willing to adjust the timing of their own survey to fit in with DCELLS Learner Voice for Wales 2010 pilot or in a few cases to integrate the two surveys (for example one college placed the core questions into its own college survey and in four providers DCELLS Learner Voice for Wales 2010 pilot was linked to the college's own survey administered by QDP). After the initial telephone conversation all providers were sent an email which outlined the key requirements and what they had agreed.

Subsequent communications and support

All of the providers were kept informed of each stage/requirement of the project by e-mail. A direct mail box for the project was set up which was checked daily and most queries were answered within 24 hours. Although e-mail was the main form of communication, the team also called providers to answer queries that they had or to chase for outstanding information. Providers also had the executive team's direct telephone numbers so they always had a contact who they could call during working hours with any queries.

Population and course code information

Two aspects of the project which generated extra work for providers were the completion of the population and course code spreadsheets. The former was needed for weighting purposes. It was agreed with DCELLS that providers' own estimates of their learner populations in the survey period would be better than using counts from LLWR due to time lag in getting the LLWR populations ready. To this end FE institutions needed to provide the following information:

- number of full-time learners by age, gender, LLDD and level of learning

- number of part-time learners by age, gender, LLDD and level of learning

- number of WBL by age, gender, LLDD and level of learning.

Other training providers needed to provide the number of learners by age, gender, LLDD and level of learning.

As mentioned previously in this report, the course code spreadsheet was needed so that as part of the analysis, data could be supplied back to the college by course, faculty and/or subject if sample numbers were high enough to protect anonymity.

Guidance notes

Instructions and information about the project were given. Separate guidance notes were issued for the survey co-ordinator about the organisation and administration of the project; for teachers and tutors about the background to the project and their role in administering the survey, and for learners to explain the purpose of the survey and the way that it would work. Guidance notes were also provided to survey co-ordinators about how to provide information for analysis by course code i.e. how to fill in the course code spreadsheet. Data outputs were also sent out with separate guidance notes which explained how to navigate the data and the statistical significance testing and the weighting which had been applied to the data.

Development of a project portal

An online portal was also set up pre-fieldwork whereby providers could access task lists, the project timetable, the core questions and guidance documents. The key facility of the portal was that during fieldwork it allowed providers to view their online response rates (which were updated daily). Providers could only view response rates for their own institution.

5   Administration of the survey at provider level

Introduction

Providers were sent a self-completion questionnaire as part of the evaluation of the pilot and they were asked to fill this in and/or be prepared to give feedback about the issues on the form at the post pilot workshops[2]. This section of the report focuses on feedback received from the 11 providers who formally responded to the questionnaire, plus comments received in the workshops. It is important to bear in mind that this section focuses on activity within the providers, the previous section having reviewed management of the survey by DCELLS and GfK NOP.

Sampling and facilitating survey

Full time learners in FE institutions

It seems that there were differences in the ease with which FE institutions could contact their full-time learners. The process appeared to be more straightforward if coordinated through personal or course tutors and classroom sessions. The process could be difficult if the timing clashed with preparations for inspections or competition on resource for other reasons.

A variety of methods were used to administer the survey to full-time learners; class sessions, intranet and email.

Part time learners in FE institutions

The survey guidance asked FE institutions to attempt to contact 1 in 4 of their part-time learners and ask them to take part in the survey. Most seemed to understand the sampling process and the need for selecting a representative spread of learners.

A few providers mentioned difficulties in contacting the amount of part-time learners needed for the survey. Issues were related to many learners in *"out-centres"* or not having *"access to IT facilities"*. As such, many of the part-time learners needed to be given a paper questionnaire, so it was the extra resources and administration needed to manage this process that posed difficulties in getting the survey out to people.

Completion for part-time learners was predominantly in class.

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[2] Three post pilot workshops took place at the end of May/start of June 2010. A total of 24 providers attended the events. They took place in Neath Port Talbot, Cardiff and Llandrillo. Workshops were set up and managed by DCELLS. Invites went out to all providers who took part in the pilot.

Work Based Learners in FE institutions and other training providers

The survey guidance asked FE institutions and other training providers to attempt to contact all their work-based learners and ask them to take part in the survey.

A combination of methods for administering the survey to work-based learners was mentioned.   It appears that class sessions were used to a degree along with some completion in the workplace (e.g. with a trainer).

Some extra administration was necessary for this learner group. Providers had to organise their lists of learners by training adviser and course lists and decide the best way of accessing them (in class/session or in the workplace/placement).

Many providers didn't encounter any problems in contacting their learners. This tended to be because either their learners were centre based (mentioned by one of the providers) or because they had good levels of communication and contact with learners.

Engaging staff/motivation

Full and part-time learners

A number of techniques were used to monitor response. Providers mentioned the resources provided by GfK NOP via the portal and/or emailed up-dates, however it should be noted that these only provided an update in terms of online completions. This meant that internal monitoring was also carried out. One of the providers who monitored the surveys online also mentioned using a *"booking system in the Learning Centre".* Another provider mentioned that weekly emailed reminders were sent to course tutors. One provider appeared to rely solely on internal resource to monitor responses. Quality managers within faculties met with their teams of (course) tutors to get feedback about response.

Work Based Learners

Responses were monitored by the training advisers against the lists that were given to them for each learner on each course. Monitoring was done on an individual basis and this secured high response rates for most FEIs and other training providers for this group.

Inclusiveness

FE institutions who fed back on this question agreed that there were no sub groups of their full-time *learners* who were harder to reach than others.

In relation to part-time *learners*, some FE institutions did mention certain types of learner who were harder to reach, such as learners in the community, in evening courses and/or off site – it was *logistically difficult to get the questionnaires to outreach centres.*

In relation to **Work Based Learners** some FE institutions mentioned difficulties in reaching learners who were not timetabled to be in college or that were on placements. The timing of the survey window would also lead to a greater inconvenience when the learner *"had already had their review undertaken therefore the training advisers had to go out again to see them".*

Integration of the questionnaire and/or exercise

There was much discussion about the integration possibilities for this survey and 2010 trialled two methods of integration. One provider fully integrated the core questions into their own survey (done in house at the same time) while four providers were asked to administer the DCELLS survey at the same time as a QDP survey that was already planned. These trials were very insightful and main points to consider going forward are given below.

The full integration exercise went very well. The college integrated questions in prime locations in the questionnaire and discussed order effect with GfK NOP. The data provision was on time and in a format we could all work with. This trial illuminated no issues on the part of the provider or GfK NOP and was an example of how integration can work well. The main considerations taking this strategy forward are ensuring:

- core questions are up front in the questionnaire – there needs to be some sign off at a central level (DCELLS and/or the lead contractor for the survey) that questions are in the best place within the questionnaire (and ensuring that dialogue happens in good time before fieldwork so that fieldwork dates are not compromised)

- fieldwork takes place at the same time

- sampling in the provider survey is either a census of all learners or at the very least sampled in the same way as stipulated in the Learner Voice guidance

- data is returned by a particular deadline in a common format

- providers understand that when they see their data in the benchmark reports it will have been weighted and it will look different from the raw numbers.

In terms of integrating the exercise so that two surveys can run alongside each other as harmoniously as possible, the following sensitivities need to be observed:

- making technical links to each questionnaire as trouble-free as possible (the discussion was over hyperlinks or other mechanisms)

- ensuring the learner understands the difference between the two exercises and which data is going where

- ensuring that the learner understands any differences in confidentiality statements between the two surveys.

Outputs

Providers received data tables and also a one page benchmark report. The benchmark report compared meanscores across learner types within the institutions and compared them across all respondents. Some critical design points relating to the benchmark report are given below:

- there was a strong preference for graphics/charts in the report

- there was a definite leaning towards percentages as opposed to mean scores. This was seen as much easier for internal dissemination. Providers had no strong feelings toward 'top box' or 'top two box' visibility. We would propose to show the percentage 'Very good', 'Good' and 'Less than good' (the latter being a combination of sometimes good/sometimes bad and very bad ratings). This way the charts are not too cluttered but show some degree of granularity

- an extra benchmark of 'best performing' provider was met with enthusiasm

- the average and best performing benchmarks should be available across all levels of analysis i.e. by sector subject of learning

- providers expected to see RAGing[3] and it should be incorporated fully (in 2010 a green light was flagged but no others)

- providers felt that if they could have a series of one page reports that showed results to all questions across all demographics and by faculty/subject and course, that were displayed as percentages, they would very rarely (if at all) need to consult the tables/raw data.

- when discussing the format for the series of benchmark reports above, providers were introduced to the concept of an interactive dashboard or report where they could, by way of pull down menus, change the charts to tailor reports. Many thought that this would be the ideal scenario,

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[3] RAGing is a system whereby data is flagged so that providers can immediately see their performance; Green (achieving positive rates in comparison with the average), Amber (in line with the average performance) and Red (achieving less positive rates in comparison with the average).

tailoring to needs and reducing the number of files and paper based reports were key to this preference.

6 Response to the survey

Introduction

This section of the report gives some detailed feedback in terms of the breakdown of responses and response rates.

Response by mode (online and on paper)

Overall the response to the survey was very good with almost 33,500 returns in total. The summary of response below shows response by mode (online and paper) and learner type.

Table 1   Response by mode of completion and learner type

	FE Institutions/Welsh for Adults Centre (a)				Other training providers (b)	Overall total (c)l
	Total	Full time	Part time	WBL		
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Online	20,788	17,238	1,725	1,410	1,000	21,788
Paper	7,934	2,425	3,872	1,411	2,295	10,229
Not known (c)	1,389	739	556	64	-	1,389
Total (a)	30,111	20,402	6,153	2,885	3,295	33,406

Notes:

(a) Not all FE learners specified whether they were full-time or part-time learners so are not included in those breakdowns. However, they have been included in the figures for total responses from FEIs.

(b) Pilot sample of 12 "other" WBL providers

(c) For one institution (which integrated the learner voice survey into their own and processed the data) we do not have information about how many learners completed the survey by mode of response.

Population profiles and response rates

Across all providers the use of online options varied enormously, the percentage of online responses per provider ranged from zero to 100% of their responses. Three FE institutions concentrated solely on the use of paper questionnaires (they administered part-time learning in community settings or at external providers) and one provider solely used the online survey (they concentrated their provision with full-time learners). The remainder of FE

institutions used mixed mode, usually concentrating on online methods for full-time learners and introducing more paper facilitation for part-time and WBL groups.

In the pilot of 12 other training providers, four administered the survey solely using paper and three providers administered the survey entirely online. The remainder used a mixed mode approach.

A review of response rates per provider was undertaken once the questionnaires had been processed. Before fieldwork began, each provider reported their learner populations by learner type. Table 4 shows the survey responses by learner type against the population profiles, along with response rates.

Table 2   Population profiles and response rates

	FE Institutions/Welsh for Adults Centre				Other training providers	Overall total
	Total	Full time	Part time	WBL		
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Survey response	30,111	20,402	6,153	2,885	3,295	33,406
Issued sample profile (estimate from providers)	59,051	38,582	12,055	8,414	4,737	63,788
Response rate	51%	53%	51%	34%	70%	52%

An overall response rate of 52 per cent was achieved which well exceeded the minimum response rate set at 40 per cent. The 12 WBL providers did particularly well achieving a response rate of 70 per cent. FEIs/Welsh for Adults Centre achieved good response rates with their full and part-time learners (a 53 per cent response rate with their full-time learners and a 51 per cent response rate with their part-time learners). Response rates differed by individual providers but on the whole providers did well with 19 of the 25 FEIs (including the Welsh for Adults centre) and 11 of the 12 other WBL providers achieving a response rate of 40 per cent or more. Feedback about methods used and how well they worked will be collated and this information will be used as guidance for providers in future waves.

7   Quality checks, review of the data and weighting

Introduction

The protocols for data processing and editing are summarised below. There was no routing on the questionnaire and no coding required for datasets, however, with the mixed-mode approach and merging of datasets the quality assurance was key at all stages.

Checks and edits: Online data

Each provider was sent its own links to the survey (one for FE learners and one for WBL learners) and this ensured that all data captured was ring-fenced by individual provider.

By having the code-frames from providers with either course code or individual ID listed, we could at the time of fieldwork ensure that the learner typed in a relevant ID or course code at the time of completing the questionnaire. These code-frames were fed into the online set up and each time a respondent typed in an inappropriate code they were asked to try again or consult with their teacher/tutor.

By default, the online data needed little editing, due to the fact that there is no routing on the questions and the online method ensured single code/multiple code responses (as appropriate).The only edit to the online data was a review of non-response items - if a respondent failed to reply to any questions they were filtered out of the final data-set (NB, to mirror the paper completion mode respondents could go to the next page without giving a response). Just under 300 respondents were removed from the online data set (a very low proportion given the total volume of response online).

Due to the fact there was no coding involved, the data was ready for processing at completion of fieldwork.

Checks and edits: Paper self completion

All providers who incorporated a paper element to the administration of the survey were contacted a week before the end of fieldwork and a date for pick up was organised. Couriers were sent to the providers to pick up packages of returns and then delivered back to the data processing centre.

Paper questionnaires were all pre-printed with a provider code. The number sent out to each provider was agreed before the start of fieldwork. Once we were in fieldwork a number of 'boosts' were sent out on request. In total just over 17,000 questionnaires were printed and approximately 11,000 returned.

Merging integrated datasets

One provider sent data in a clearly labelled format to GfK NOP as they had integrated the exercise with their own survey. The data was checked thoroughly for:

- the correct number of variables (or questions)

- correct values (pre-codes) for each variable or question (codes need to be within range)

- matching findings – results run off the dataset at GfK NOP were sent to the provider so they could check that they matched their own dataset and nothing had become lost in translation. The results were checked for consistency by GfK NOP against the national dataset against the learner groups (full time, part-time and WBL within FEI).

Weighting the data

In this instance there were limitations in terms of what could be done to handle non-response bias. In surveys where the sampling is centrally controlled, there are opportunities to do a follow-on survey of non-respondents and look for insight as to why they opted out. Given that providers administered the survey, we can only look at non-response on the basis of what the total profile is within each provider. To do this we have to assume that all providers will have targeted respondents according to the guidelines. Whilst non-response will be reported in detail on this basis, there are limitations in what we could be done to correct for any bias other than weighting the data within provider to correct for any 'demographic' differences. The demographic weighting should deal with a lot of non-response bias but it can't handle attitudinal bias. Maximising response is the best antidote to attitudinal bias and this was successfully achieved in many of the providers.

The aim of the weighting is to ensure that the final survey estimates are reflective of the total population of Welsh learners. To that end, in learner groups where there was a census of learners (full time FE and WBL), we need to weight to adjust for any non-response in particular demographic groups and, where a sample of learners had been selected (part time FE), weighting ensures that the demographic profile of the weighted sample matched that of the population. The weighted total is equal to the population of learners.

The weights ensured that any provider level analysis would be representative of the demographic profile of learners at that provider and, when aggregated across all providers, the total level analysis will be representative of all learners in Wales.

8 Completion of the questions

Introduction

When exploring the quality of response to the survey we have reviewed in detail the average completion time for the online survey and the use of various colour screen options, item non response, flat-lining and any perceived mode effect on response to the questions. These are all discussed below and any recommendations arising from this analysis are given in the conclusions to the section.

Completion of online questionnaires

Completion time

On average learners took eight minutes to complete the survey. This was in line with the initial pilot in 2009. This length of time was the maximum recommended by GfK NOP and it is encouraging that the questionnaire kept to time.

As we might suspect, the following groups, on average took slightly longer to complete the survey online:

- Minority ethnic groups; on average white learners took slightly under eight minutes to complete the survey and an average for all ethnic minority learners stood at nine minutes. The following groups, on average, took at least nine minutes to complete the survey:

    o Black African respondents (a total of 238 respondents in the total online data set prior to cleaning and an average time of 10.6 minutes)

    o Asian other (a total of 147 respondents in the total online data set prior to cleaning and an average time of 10.5 minutes)

- Learners with learning difficulties or disabilities; these learners took, on average, 9.5 minutes to complete the survey compared to 7.8 minutes for those who said they had no such problems

It is also interesting to note that questionnaires completed in Welsh online took, on average, slightly longer. The average completion time for the English scripts was 8 minutes and 8.5 for the Welsh.

Use of screen options for readability

Respondents were all offered the opportunity to change the colour of their screen. The preferences are shown below and illustrate that a wide range of colours was selected.

- 24 per cent (grey)
- 11 per cent (yellow)
- 9 per cent (dark pink)
- 29 per cent (light pink)
- 27 per cent (purple)

In terms of font size, the vast majority of learners selected to use medium (which was the default size) or large font size (together these accounted for 83% of all learners in the dataset pre cleaning):

- Small: 7 per cent
- Medium: 48 per cent
- Large: 35 per cent
- Extra large: 9 per cent

Item non-response

Due to the fact that data was to be merged response options were mirrored between paper and online versions of the questionnaire. To this end both could show a non-response. Non-response to questions in either the online survey or the paper self completion was very low, ranging between 1 per cent and 4 per cent over all questions. This indicates that questions/response codes were relevant for the learners.

Flat-lining[4]

When we explore the data from self completion projects we look for 'flat-lining'. Flat-lining is when the respondent appears to have answered every question in the same way, for example, methodically ticking the first or middle or last box given. First of all we looked at the per cent with the same response at every question and then evaluated with the client whether this was feasible given the nature of the questions. We were essentially looking for a considered response to the questions and the pattern of response can assess the risk of this not happening.

In 2009 (in the initial pilot) GfK NOP reported no cause for concern in the data. In the FE data in 2009, it appeared that 90 per cent gave considered answers and this is quite a typical score. In the 2009 WBL data, the

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[4] Flat lining is where the respondent gives the same response to every question in the survey.

percentage with considered answers was a little lower with 81 per cent giving what we might call a considered answer.

In 2010 the evidence remains that flat-lining is not an issue for this survey. It appeared across all the data that 92 per cent gave a considered response (89% on paper and 94% online). Whilst there were a number of respondents who answered 'very good' or 'good' at every question we must bear in mind that these are not agree/disagree scales, so it is possible for 'delighted' learners to give a 'very good' score for everything. We would also say that given the tendency for people to give positive scores in this survey, the high number of 'goods' and 'very goods' is not necessarily indicative of negligent flat-lining.

Another positive sign from this analysis is that there are relatively few respondents who were mid-point flat-liners. This indicates that most respondents have tried to give a non neutral rating for most questions.

Finally, an interesting feature is that online and paper respondents did not seem to have vastly different levels of flat-lining. This supports the case that mode did not impact heavily on considered response.

Exploring online or paper responses across the survey

Statisticians at GfK NOP explored the data to calculate any mode effect between paper and online datasets. The paragraphs below outline the analysis performed. The first stage involved splitting the groups of respondents into their four types:

- in further education providers: full time

- in further education providers: part time

- work-based learning in further education providers

- work-based learning other training providers

The data was re-weighted and explored for significant mode effect. Responses to questions using very good/good responses and also mean scores were directly compared, without fear that differences were being confounded in the differing demographic profiles of the groups.

It appears that, exploring all 18 of the core questions by the four learner groups there was some mode effect in response on paper compared to response online. There is evidence that respondents completing the survey on paper may be more inclined to rate the questions more favourably than those online. It is always incredibly difficult to isolate mode effect and whilst we observe this in the 2010 data we also have to accept the following mitigating circumstances:

- respondent profiles: whilst we have weighted the data in the exercise we can do little about the fact that most respondents in the online exercises were different to those using paper even when we have split out respondents by learner type. For instance we know that amongst

part-time learners it is those on in community settings or off site that will have filled in paper and perhaps those on campus who undertook the exercise online. In WBL those in employer settings will have been more likely to have utilised paper and those on-site will have undertaken the survey online. We know that these groups are very different and whilst the weighting can tackle respondent bias in terms of demographics it cannot tackle other factors inherent in an attitudinal bias such as type of course/programme and environment.

- environment: in this survey environments change depending on mode of response, a great many of those that fill the survey in online have had to interrupt a class and go into an ICT suite. Those that used paper questionnaires will have little disruption to their usual class. It is conceivable that some change in environment may have had an impact on response. Those respondents who experienced technical difficulties when logging onto the system may have responded more negatively.

The 2010 pilot is not conclusive in aspects related to mode effect and its impact and scale. It does however highlight a need for further investigation which should involve a rigorous test between modes on specific sub groups of learners to attempt to isolate the above list of possible effects. An attempt in 2010 was made for some parallel testing. This highlighted that mode effect could be present in the data and needs to unpicked in more detail.

9 Summary

The *Learner Voice for Wales 2010: full scale pilot* was a success on many levels. The level of engagement and response was testament to the hard work on all sides. 2010 ensured that a full pilot was achieved and has fed into how the strategy should work from here. It is clear, nonetheless, that further work is needed to establish an approach which can meet the two main aims of the Learner Voice strategy:

- supplying a reliable, benchmarked all-Wales dataset which can be used by DCELLS, providers and Estyn to measure providers' performance; and support quality improvement

- supplying timely, detailed information in an accessible format at individual provider level, so that it can be used to identify best practice and address weaknesses at course, subject area and departmental level.

The following bullet points highlights areas where further deliberation is needed before the next phase:

Broad methodological outline

- A review of sample sizes requested: the parameters set in 2010 seemed feasible in most cases but this should be explored before final guidance for the next phase

- Safeguarding representativeness of sample:in some providers the weighting had to be capped within particular learner types as the effect was deemed too great – this indicated that in some areas the achieved sample could be improved.

- The use of LLWR for population profiles for weighting purposes and the possibility of using unique identifiers for respondents in the near future

- Integration with other surveys: a decision is needed on integration (the 2010 pilot demonstrated positive reasons for exploring options with provider who are using internal resource for survey work at the same time and/or external resource

Timing and outputs

- Timing: the possibility of extending the six week window should be discussed to improve flexibility

- Outputs: DCELLS need to work on dissemination, a results portal where providers can log in to explore their results was met with some enthusiasm

Communication and support

- Style of communication: communication from the central co ordination should be flexible and personal. Guidance should minimise jargon without compromising on the technical aspects.

- The online monitoring for response should offer as detailed a breakdown as possible for providers to chase non response.

10 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire (FE version/version with no course code allocation)

GfK   **GfK NOP**

Learner Voice for Wales 2010
Further Education Learners

You have been asked to take part in the Learner Voice Survey for Wales 2010. The survey will help your college and the Welsh Assembly Government look at how learners are feeling about their courses and their colleges.

For most questions you have a choice of answers. You can answer 'don't know' or if the question does not apply to you please say so.

You will place your survey inside its own envelope and hand it in. It will go to a survey company called GfK NOP. Your teachers or tutors will not look at your answers. Any information you give us in this survey will be kept in strict confidence within the Market Research Society Code of Conduct. No one outside the GfK NOP research team will know how you personally answered the questions.

The next few questions are about advice and information you have been given by your college.

1   How good was the <u>information</u> you were given by <u>this college</u> when you were <u>choosing</u> your <u>course(s)</u>, was it...? PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

Very good	Good	Partly good/ partly bad	Bad	Very bad	Don't know	This does not apply to me
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2   How good was the advice you have been given by <u>this college</u> about what you can do after your course(s) has <u>finished</u>, was it...? PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

Very good	Good	Partly good/ partly bad	Bad	Very bad	Don't know	This does not apply to me
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3   How good was the help staff gave you in the <u>first few weeks</u> at this college, was it...? PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

Very good	Good	Partly good/ partly bad	Bad	Very bad	Don't know	This does not apply to me
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The next question is about the support the <u>college</u> gives you.

4   How good is the support you get on your course(s)? Please think about support from your teachers and tutors and other support offered by your college. PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

Very good	Good	Partly good/ partly bad	Bad	Very bad	Don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Serial No.

The next questions are about your teachers and tutors. Please think about all the teachers and tutors you have contact with.

5   How good are your <u>teachers</u> and <u>tutors</u> at each of the following…
     PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

	Very good	Good	Partly good/ partly bad	Bad	Very bad	Don't know	This does not apply to me
Explaining the work you have to do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Listening to you and what you need to help you learn	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Talking about your learning aims or goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Giving you feedback on how to improve	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Making sure that learners behave well and do not disturb your work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The next questions are about what you think about your <u>college</u>. If any of the questions do not apply to you then please say so.

6   How good is your <u>college</u> at each of the following…
     PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

	Very good	Good	Partly good/ partly bad	Bad	Very bad	Don't know	This does not apply to me
The respect shown to you by staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Asking you to give your views about the college	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Listening to your views about the college and telling you what has happened as a result	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7   And how good is your <u>college</u> at each of the following, … If any of the questions do not apply to you then please say so.
     PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

	Very good	Good	Partly good/ partly bad	Bad	Very bad	Don't know	This does not apply to me
Making sure that you feel safe whilst on your course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Helping you to have a healthy lifestyle	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Helping you to understand and respect people from different backgrounds	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Making sure that you have someone to talk to when you are worried	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Offering you the chance to learn through Welsh or with Welsh-language support if you want to	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

These questions are about how you are feeling about your course(s) and your college overall.

8   **Overall how good do you think this <u>college</u> is?** PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

Very good	Good	Partly good/ partly bad	Bad	Very bad	Don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The next few questions are about you so that we can understand your answers.

9   **How old are you?** PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

Under 19	☐
19-24	☐
25-34	☐
35-54	☐
55-64	☐
65 or older	☐
Prefer not to say	☐

10   **Are you...?** PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

Male	☐
Female	☐
Prefer not to say	☐

11   **And which of these best describes your ethnic group?** PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

White	☐	Chinese	☐
Black - Caribbean	☐	Other Asian background	☐
Black - African	☐	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	☐
Other Black background	☐	Mixed - White and Black African	☐
Asian - Indian	☐	Mixed - White and Asian	☐
Asian - Pakistani	☐	Other Mixed background	☐
Asian - Bangladeshi	☐	Other Ethnic background (Please write in below)	☐

Prefer not to say	☐

12   **Do you see yourself as having any disabilities or learning difficulties?**
PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

Yes	☐
No	☐
Prefer not to say	☐

13   **Is your learning...?** PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

Full time	☐
Part time (short or long)	☐
Prefer not to say	☐

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14 **Do you prefer to learn through the medium of the Welsh language? If you do not speak or read Welsh please use 'not applicable'.** PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

Yes – in part or full ☐
No – not at all ☐
Don't know ☐
Not applicable ☐

15 **What is the highest level of qualification you are taking now? Please choose the level you think is right or ask a member of staff for help. Please use not applicable if your course does not lead to a qualification.**
PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2 or Entry Level 3
(For example, Entry Level Certificate, ESOL, Skillbuild, Certificate in Adult Literacy or Numeracy [Entry]) ☐

Level 1
(For example, NVQ Level 1, BTEC Foundation Certificates, Foundation Diplomas, Introductory Diploma, Certificate for IT users, Certificates in Adult Literacy or Numeracy [Level 1] or Welsh Baccalaureate Foundation Diploma) ☐

Level 2
(For example, NVQ Level 2, Foundation Modern Apprenticeship, GCSEs, Intermediate Certificates, BTEC First Certificates, Certificate in Adult Literacy or Numeracy [Level 2] or Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma) ☐

Level 3
(For example, NVQ Level 3, Modern Apprenticeship, A/S, A Level, Applied A Level, Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma or Access to Higher Education) ☐

Other ☐
Don't know ☐
Not applicable ☐

16 **How did you complete this survey?** PLEASE TICK <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

I had little or no help from my teacher or tutor ☐
I had help from a teacher or tutor with most or all of the questions ☐

If you have any issues about your course that have not been covered in this survey, then please contact your college.

Please put the survey in the envelope given to you.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP.

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