Framework for Excellence: School Sixth Form Pilot 2009/10

Learner Views Survey
4 January – 26 February 2010

Introduction
1. The Learner Views performance indicator for school sixth forms is based on the learner’s responses to an online survey that will be available for completion between 4 January and 26 February 2010. The aim of the survey is to capture the learner’s perception about their learning. Once the results have been analysed, scored, graded and published, they will in turn help inform other learners. The survey covers the following elements:

   - questions regarding the learner’s overall satisfaction with their experiences, and
   - questions about the learner, for example age and gender, to help with analysis of responses.

In addition to Learner Views questions there is an additional section with questions about health and well-being issues.

2. Learners also have the opportunity to give feedback on whether their school is responsive to their views.

3. All the questions have been cognitively tested in schools. The survey takes most learners less than 10 minutes to complete.

4. All learners in the sixth form are entitled to complete the survey and we would ask you to encourage all of them to complete it. The sample of learners responding to the survey should be as near as possible to a representation of the proportion of age and gender in the school as a whole.

5. If the difference between the proportion of learners responding to the survey and the proportion of learners in the school is too great, the resulting sample skew means that it is not possible to award a grade.

6. We have developed an online calculator to help you work out the minimum number of responses you will need to ensure a robust result. The calculator can be found here. If you are interested to read more about this, please see paragraph 76 in the Unified Post-16 Performance Assessment: Framework for Excellence Provider Guide 2009/10.
Learners are asked to give their names to enable us to identify any learners who reply more than once and to correct the school reference number if it is entered incorrectly. However, it will not be possible to identify individual responses from the results that are shared with schools.

Feedback to schools

Dissemination of the survey results to the schools participating in the pilot will take place in summer 2010.

Learners will comment on their overall experiences of their school rather than at subject level. Once the survey is fully operational, the results will be published along with other Framework for Excellence indicators and used to provide important information to future learners and their parents to help them make choices about post-16 learning options. The results of the current pilot will not be published, but your school will receive feedback on how your learners responded to each question and the pattern of responses broken down by broad learner group. This will include comparison to average scores from other schools taking part in the pilot.

Completing the survey

To complete the survey, learners will need access to an internet-linked PC or laptop and have the following information:

- Your school’s unique reference number (URN) as used in Ofsted inspections
- The URL link for the survey which is www.ipsos-mori.com/schoolslearnerviews

Checking the web link to the test version of the survey

Before you ask learners to complete the survey you should test that this link is accessible from the school’s computers at each site where the survey will be completed. You can test the link until the 18 December 2009 from this URL www.ipsos-mori.com/schoolslearnerviews. You will need to enter your school's URN and a fictitious learner name and date of birth to proceed.

Testing is essential to ensure there is no interference from your firewalls. You are encouraged to test this link widely, including tests from all centres at which learners are based, as firewall settings can differ on different sites. We therefore encourage you to take this opportunity to avoid problems once the survey has started. Please note that access to test web link will close on 18 December 2009.

If you are not able to access the survey, please talk to the colleagues that administer your IT systems and ask them to check your firewall settings. If this does not resolve the issue please e-mail learnerviewssurvey@ipsos-mori.com and quote “Learner Views Schools Pilot” in the subject line. Please give as much information as you can about any error messages you may be getting and give a contact name and telephone number and we will get back in touch with you.

Timing of the survey

We expect that most schools will want learners to complete the survey in teaching or tutorial groups, although they can complete it at any time from any internet-linked device as long as they have access to the information listed in paragraph 10 above. Learners can complete the survey at any time between 4 January and 26 February 2010.
15 These dates are set, so please start early enough to ensure that you can capture your learners’ views in the time available. By planning early, you will be able to avoid any challenges created by unexpected events such as swine flu outbreaks.

**Briefing your colleagues**

16 A separate section for teachers is included at the end of this document which will help them answer any questions they may get from learners.

17 The survey gives learners the chance to comment on a wide range of issues relating to their experiences in the sixth form. Please ensure that staff who will be with learners when they fill in the survey have been briefed on its aims and benefits as set out in the “Guidance for teachers” section of this document. Your school sixth form is helping to pilot the survey this year and, if it proves to be successful, it will be rolled out to all sixth forms next year. Parallel surveys are already completed in all colleges and training providers throughout England and together will form the biggest survey of all post-16 learners in the UK.

**Answering learners’ questions**

18 The on-line survey contains all the information and instructions your learners will need. In recent cognitive testing, sixth formers found the instructions clear and easy to follow and understood the wording of each question. However it is still possible that some learners may ask staff for clarification of certain terms. Staff should use their professional discretion to ensure that their responses do not influence the answers learners give. This will be easiest if staff restrict themselves to giving dictionary definitions of any terms that are causing confusion but avoid giving examples as these can be inadvertently misleading.

**Learners needing additional support**

19 We have taken steps to ensure that the survey is as accessible as possible. For example all the questions and instructions have been screened for readability and advice has been taken from the Campaign for Plain English. The survey includes on screen buttons that learners with dyslexia or visual impairment can use to change background colours and increase font size. The design of the survey also makes it compatible with most screen readers.

20 However we recognise that some learners, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, may need to use a supported completion approach to filling in the survey. This might include (but would not be limited to) translation, BSL signing support or recording the answers of learners who are unable to use a computer. The basis on which such help can be provided mirrors that commonly used by examining bodies. Broadly speaking, the support must be as neutral as possible, allowing learners to make their true views known without influencing or commenting on these views. Please refer to the Schools Supported Completion Protocol available here for more information.
Guidance for teachers

What is the Learner Views survey?

- The Learner Views survey is used to calculate a performance indicator (PI) for Learner Views, one of several indicators that make up the Framework for Excellence. The Framework for Excellence is the Government's performance assessment framework for further education colleges and post-16 education and training providers and it is being piloted in school sixth forms in 2009/10.

- It is an online survey of all learners in the school sixth form and takes place between 4 January and 26 February 2010.

What will the survey be used for?

- The aim of the survey is to capture the learner's views about their learning which in turn, after analysis of the results and publication, will help inform other learners in the future. The following areas are covered by the survey:
  - the learner's overall satisfaction with their experiences, and
  - questions about the learner, for example age and gender, which are used in analysing the results.

  The last section covers health and well-being issues.

- Learners are asked to comment on their overall experience rather than at subject level.

- The survey gives learners the opportunity to give feedback on whether their school is responsive to their views.

Who should complete the survey?

- All learners in the sixth form are entitled to complete a survey although participation is optional.

How does it work?

- It is an online survey that takes most learners about ten minutes to complete.

- Learners will need access to an internet-linked PC or laptop and they should be given the following information:
  - The school's unique reference number (URN) as used in Ofsted inspections
  - URL link for the survey.

The person coordinating the survey in your school will provide this information.
• Learners are asked to give their names to enable us to identify any learners who reply more than once and to correct the school reference number if it is entered incorrectly. However, it will not be possible to identify individual responses from the results that are shared with schools.

**Answering learners’ questions**

• Some learners may ask for clarification of certain terms. You should use your professional discretion to ensure that your response does not influence the answers learners give. This will be easiest if you restrict yourself to giving dictionary definitions of any terms that are causing confusion but avoid giving examples as these can be inadvertently leading.

• There is separate guidance which can be found [here](#) for staff who will provide supported completion of the survey for learners who need additional support, for instance learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

**What happens next?**

• The results will be analysed and used to produce scores and grades for the Learner Views PI. They will not be published but your school will receive feedback on how learners responded to each question and the pattern of responses broken down by broad learner group.

• If the pilot is successful, the Learner Views survey will be rolled out to all school sixth forms from 2010 onwards. Parallel surveys are already completed in all colleges and training providers throughout England and together will form the biggest survey of all post-16 learners in the UK.

• Once the survey is fully operational the results will be published from 2012 and will provide important information to future learners and their parents.