Framework for Excellence
2009/10 Learner Views Survey

1 October 2009 – 12 February 2010

Supported Completion Protocol

Purpose

Some learners, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, will need to use a supported completion approach to complete the Learner Views survey. The protocol outlined in this document will ensure that the results of the Learner Views survey are rigorous, comparable and reflect the individual views of those learners requiring support. Its success relies upon college and provider processes and the professionalism of those staff who work with such learners, both in identifying and supporting the learners who would benefit from support.

The purpose of the supported completion protocol is to:

- Identify those learners who would benefit from such an approach, which may include learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, or learners for whom English is their second language;
- Assist in designating the staff who might support them;
- Provide guidance on the nature and level of support that learners might receive.

This protocol deals particularly with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It can also be used when considering the needs of some other groups of learners which may also require support, for example those whose first language is not English or who require assistance with written language.

Please see the associated 2009/10 Learner Views survey guidance notes which clarify the degree of intervention that is appropriate from staff.

College and Provider Processes

An important element of the process is the individual’s right to self-determination, access and equal opportunity. For example, there is no problem with the support worker being someone that the learner knows, but to ensure self-determination it would be best practice for the college or provider to offer the learner a choice of support worker.
Supporting Staff

To ensure that the support to learners is consistent and effective, it can be provided by the same teachers or learning support practitioners who support them on a regular basis. The support workers will be trained professionals with particular skills and expertise in enabling learners to produce their own work without being influenced by those supporting them. They will also be the most skilled at meeting each learner’s individual needs. The survey is web-based, and gives the option of the learner completing the responses or the supporting staff member doing so on their behalf.

Guidance for Providing Support

It is recommended that staff supporting learners:

- Undertake preparatory discussion of key words and issues in lesson time between now and the survey start-date;
- Choose a time that suits the learner, in the context of their known needs and preferences; give breaks as required (the survey can be completed over a period of time if necessary);
- Choose a familiar location;
- Explain the task and the purpose (see the 2009/10 Learner Views survey guidance notes);
- Agree whether the learner or the supporting staff member will complete the responses;
- Provide the same type and level of support that this learner would normally require to access the curriculum, including explaining the meaning of words or terms used in the statements. Prepare for the session as you would for any other support activity, so that you are aware of the methods and any materials you will be using. This includes ensuring that you have the provider reference number and learner reference number to hand.

For the purposes of the survey, support may vary as follows:

- In normal circumstances, you may encourage learners to request support. However, as this is a ‘one-off’ activity, you may wish to be more proactive in offering support;
- You may not use any evaluative or judgemental terms in your explanations and should only give examples as a last resort (see 2009/10 Learner Views survey guidance notes);
- You may not comment on the learner’s choice of response, encourage them to make a particular response or encourage them to change their response;
- The last few questions are factual (gender, date of birth and level of study) and it is acceptable to ensure that these are correct.

This is an individual rather than a class activity, but it may not be practical to offer one-to-one support for each eligible learner at a different time. It is
therefore appropriate to work with a small number of learners together, so long as the learners are giving individual rather than collective judgements and supporting staff are able to provide the appropriate support to each learner as required on an individual basis. In the run up to the survey period, it is good practice to use group discussions to ensure that learners understand the key terms used in the survey. Discussions could take place around words that you know your learners will not be familiar with and around terms such as ‘respect’ and ‘support.’

The Learners

Learners who need significant support to access the curriculum are likely to need the same level of support to respond to the survey statements. The supported completion approach is designed to make the survey accessible to those learners with moderate or severe learning difficulties and/or communication needs, including some learners with dual or multiple disabilities, who would have difficulty in understanding the questions without some degree of explanation.

The supported completion approach could also include some more able learners with Autism Spectrum Disorders or complex dyslexia, whose tendency to interpret statements literally would impair their understanding. This approach will enable these learners to take part in a survey from which their views would otherwise be excluded.

Learners who would not be expected to require the supported completion approach include those learners who, by means of assistive technology such as spoken output and non-written response mechanisms, can complete the survey independently, for example those with visual impairments or dyslexia.

There are two groups of learners with high-level support needs that may not be able to complete the survey using the supported completion approach:

- **Those learners who cannot make choices:** those staff supporting learners using the supported completion approach will need to be alert to those few learners who cannot or will not make choices, including those who produce the same response to every enquiry. In doubt, a simple check to test their ability to make a yes/no choice may be used (see the Supported Completion Approach Guidance Notes for examples), although in most situations staff who know the learner well will be able to make this decision. Learners in this position should not be asked to make a response to the survey using the supported completion approach.

- **Those learners with complex needs.** If supported completion will not help the learner, the college or provider needs to decide if inclusion in the survey is appropriate for that individual.
The identification of learners who will need support to complete the survey is the responsibility of the college’s or provider’s staff who work with them on a daily basis, using their professional judgement and reflecting the assessed support needs of the learners. However, to aid in decision making further guidance is available in the form of an assessment grid, which accompanies the supported completion approach guidance notes.