4. A national measure of learner satisfaction: The National learner Satisfaction Survey

4.1. The National Learner Satisfaction Survey (NLSS) has been used effectively by the LSC as a national measure of learner satisfaction since 2001. The NLSS is the largest survey of the views of post-16 learners ever undertaken in England and has been completed for four years. Over 43,000 learners on further education, work-based learning or adult and community learning programmes were surveyed in 2004/05.

4.2. The results of the survey give a valuable insight into learners’ perceptions of what is already working well in post-16 education and training and what might be improved. As well as generating a national picture, the results provide wealth of information about different subgroups of learners. For example in further education provision, results can be analysed by different variables such as:
   - age
   - gender
   - ethnicity
   - area of learning
   - level of current qualification
disability, learning difficulty
   - prior attainment level

4.3. In 2003, the LSC developed seven core questions for the NLSS and encouraged providers to replicate these core questions in their own surveys and benchmark their results against the national picture.

4.4. In order to help providers adopt the core questions and methodology used within the NLSS to measure learner satisfaction within their own provision, the LSC has produced the following support materials for providers and local LSCs:

   - An interactive website containing the 2004/05 NLSS dataset and all the NLSS published reports. This is available at http://researchtools.lsc.gov.uk and allows providers to benchmark their own results against NLSS results.
   - NLSS: Guidance on the core methodology and core questionnaire. This document contains the NLSS questionnaire and guidance for providers when conducting local level surveys. This guidance is available on the research tools website.

4.5. The NLSS was not undertaken for 2005/06 so as to allow assessment of the fitness for purpose of the current survey. As an outcome of this work, the survey will be refined in time for the fieldwork for the 2006/07 NLSS to begin in February 2007.
4.6. The NLSS will continue to provide a national picture of learner satisfaction:
- for reporting purposes, to allow the LSC to demonstrate its impact and levels of customer satisfaction.
- to inform policy development and evaluation.
- to provide information to inform local/regional planning by LSC’s.
- to facilitate benchmarking by providers.

4.7. Learner satisfaction and the Framework for Excellence

4.7.1. Work on learner satisfaction undertaken as part of the new measures of success programme is informing the developing of the responsiveness to learners’ key performance indicator (KPI) within the Framework for Excellence. This includes evidence from the survey undertaken by the Responsive College Unit (RCU) on current practice for collecting and using the views of learners.

4.7.2. Work is also underway to revise a small sample of core questions from the NLSS for use within provider surveys and it is envisaged that evidence from these core questions will contribute to the responsiveness to learners KPI.

4.7.3. Further information is available on the LSC website. For further information on the Learner Satisfaction Measure please contact Yvonne Fullwood at: Yvonne.fullwood@lsc.gov.uk