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Learner Voice Wales Survey 2014 Question Bank and Easy Read Questionnaire Cognitive Testing: Final Report

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Question Bank and Easy Read Questionnaire
Cognitive Testing: Final Report

Ipsos MORI

For further information please contact:
Siân Hughes
Education and Skills
Welsh Government
Rhodfa Padarn
Llanbadarn Fawr
Aberystwyth
SY23 3UR
Tel: 0300 062 2239
Email: Post16Quality@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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1 Introduction and methodology

1.1 Learner Voice Wales is now in its second year. It was introduced by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 2013 as part of the 'Responsiveness' element of the Quality and Effectiveness Framework for post-16 learning in Wales that was launched by the Welsh Government in 2009. Whilst recognising that providers have their own approaches to gathering learner views, the Learner Voice Survey has established a consistent set of 'core' questions which will allow benchmarking of learner satisfaction in relation to advice and guidance; quality of teaching and learning; support; well-being; and overall satisfaction with the learning experience.

1.2 The core questions underwent extensive testing and development including a full-scale pilot in 2010. The questions use a consistent scale and cover several aspects of the learning experience, as well as asking learners about learning in Welsh and offering them the opportunity to provide verbatim responses. The survey also asks learners to confirm some demographic information such as their age, gender and qualification level.[1]

1.3 Building on the core questions developed for the 2013 Learner Voice Wales survey, there were two significant developments for the 2014 questionnaire:

i. an Easy Read questionnaire for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, low numeracy and literacy levels and those whose first language is not English or Welsh; and

ii. a 40-strong question bank from which providers can choose additional questions.

1.4 These developments were part of a general drive in Year 2 to give providers more choice and flexibility and cater for a wider range of learners. This report details the findings from the second and final stage of cognitive testing of the new Question Bank and Easy Read questionnaire. The Welsh language

[1]. The three questions about learning in Welsh were re-tested during the 2013 cognitive testing. Subsequent changes are outlined at 2.12

versions were also cognitively tested, and amendments to these versions are discussed at 2.13 and 3.23.

1.5 Cognitive testing involves a series of in-depth interviews to see how respondents understand, retrieve information for, decide upon and ultimately arrive at responses to quantitative questions. Although the technique ultimately deals with quantitative questionnaire design, it is a qualitative approach which makes use of data concerning respondents' cognitive processes, that is, perceptive, understanding and decision-making processes: How do the respondents arrive at an answer to a particular question? Cognitive testing assesses whether the right question is being asked given a particular area of inquiry, and whether the proposed question works.

1.6 Both the Question Bank and Easy Read questionnaires were developed in consultation with the Welsh Government and providers. In relation to the former, providers were invited to submit suggested content through an online survey, and later to review the draft questions. The Easy Read questionnaire was developed with Inspired Services[2] following provider feedback at the Year 1 dissemination workshop, and more detailed discussions with six providers in August 2013. The questions were subsequently drafted and cognitively tested in September and again in October following a redraft.

1.7 During the first stage of cognitive testing, a total of 23 cognitive interviews were conducted (10 Easy Read and 13 Question Bank) amongst three providers: Neath Port Talbot College (Further Education (FE)), Torfaen (Adult Community Learning (ACL)) and Torfaen Training (Work Based Learning (WBL)). Interviews took place on 17th and 18th September 2013.

1.8 During the second stage of cognitive testing, 22 interviews were conducted: 11 Easy Read, 11 Question Bank and among these, 7 interviews which tested the Welsh language versions of the Easy Read questionnaire and Question Bank. This second stage took place on 10th October 2013 at two Coleg Cambria sites (Deeside and Yale), spanning FE, WBL, WfA and ACL.

[2] Inspired Services is a consultancy specialising the provision of information in accessible formats

1.9 The findings and recommendations arising from the second stage of cognitive testing are detailed in the following chapters, on a question by question basis.

2 Question Bank

Summary of findings

2.1 The first stage of testing of the Question Bank revealed that overall the concepts and wording were generally well understood by a range of learners (different types of learning and abilities). However, there were a number of items which needed minor amendments to wording or answer options. The key issues from stage one can be summarised as:

- Some confusion amongst WBL learners regarding employer/ provider distinction;
- Uncertainty where learners had to consider whether a question applied to them (e.g. canteen food, online learning materials) which resulted in some inconsistency in terms of how they responded, mostly related to 'don't know' versus 'this does not apply to me' (TDNATM) options; and
- Use of multiple attributes in questions asking about quality (e.g. Question 8 referred to both the 'quality' and 'choice' of food) - learners felt they were essentially being asked two questions in one.

2.2 Findings from stage one, which were discussed in detail with Welsh Government, led to changes being made to twenty Question Bank questions and the removal of one question (an item on the Perceived Impacts matrix: Questions twenty-six to thirty-five). The three items about the use of Welsh language from the set of Core Questions were also amended, and a new item added to the Question Bank on Welsh culture and history.

2.3 The changes made are detailed in the tables below. They mostly relate to minor tweaks to question wording and provision of brief explanations to support understanding. There are also several instances where answer options have been added, amended or removed to encourage consistency in how learners respond and limit the amount of thinking they have to do in completing the questionnaire.

2.4 For the most part, the revisions worked well, particularly the new questions on Welsh culture and the 'net promoter' score. However there were two notable exceptions; i) it was difficult to achieve consensus across learners in Question 22 relating to opportunities to socialise – we would recommend removing this question from the Question Bank; and ii) the response scale at Question 17 (relating to asking for learner views) requires some further thought.

Detailed findings

2.5 Information, advice and choice

Q1: Which of the following options best describes your choice of course/ training? All of my course/training was my first choice / Some parts of my course/training were my first choice / None of my course/training was my first choice, I wanted to do something else / Don't know	
Range of interpretation stage one	This question was subject to some variance in interpretation, with some participants interpreting it as including their choice of provider/type of learning (i.e. *where*, as well as *what* they study), whereas others answered in response to their course/subjects only.
Recommendation	WG to consider whether this should relate to course/training or location/provider also. The question can then be reworded/clarified e.g. 'Which of the following options best describes your choice of course/training? By this we mean what subject, rather than where, you study', or similar. Incorporate an answer option into the TDNATM code to cater for those whose learning is compulsory as per Welsh Government's recommendation.
Revised wording	**Q1: Which of the following options best describes your choice of course/training? By this we mean what subject, rather than where, you study.** All of my course/training was my first choice / Some parts of my course/training were my first choice / None of my course/training was my first choice, I wanted to do something else / Don't know / This does not apply to me /I had to do my course/training as part of my employment.
Range of interpretation stage two	The revised wording worked well, no learners interpreted it as being about their provider during stage two. Although two WBL learners felt the question a little confusing because the course was directly related to their employment and career progression, they answered correctly without support (i.e. that it was their first choice).
Recommendation	No change required.

Q2: How would you rate the quality and usefulness of the college's/provider's website? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know / This does not apply to me	
Range of interpretation stage one	It appears that some people interpret 'usefulness' as being about ease of use (e.g. being able to navigate the website) as opposed to the usefulness of the content for them personally. Also, there is felt to be some potential for misinterpretation amongst WBL learners who are unsure which website to refer to, some learners mentioned that they were thinking of the Careers Wales website through which they first heard about the course.
Recommendation	Welsh Government to consider whether to simply refer to 'usefulness' as quality and usefulness were seen as different things. Revise final answer option to 'This does not apply to me/I have not visited the website'. Welsh Government to consider clarification of which website the question should refer to for WBL learners.
Revised wording	**Q2: How would you rate the usefulness of the college's/provider's website?** Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know / This does not apply to me/I have not visited the website
Range of interpretation stage two	The revised wording worked well. In interpreting 'usefulness' learners referred to the amount, and relevance of the information, and whether it was helpful to them personally.
Recommendation	No change required.

2.4 Help and support

Q3: **How would you rate the support your employer gives you to undertake your training?** Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know / This does not apply to me	
Range of interpretation stage one	The concept of support was well understood (included reference to flexibility and ability to answer questions quickly when asked, and encouragement to do well); however, some learners answered with reference to their provider rather than their employer.
Recommendation	Welsh Government to consider how this question might be reworded to provide a definition/distinction of 'employers' for WBL learners.

Revised wording	Q3: This question is about your **employer.** How would you rate the support your **employer** gives you to undertake your training? Options as above.
Range of interpretation stage two`	The revised wording worked well and none of the WBL learners misinterpreted the question. As per stage one, the concept of support was understood and learners were able to give a range of relevant examples.
Recommendation	No change required.

2.6 Accessibility/convenience

Q4 How easy or difficult is it for you to get to your course venue? Very easy / Fairly easy / Fairly difficult / Very difficult	
Range of interpretation stage one	Many further education learners were unfamiliar with the term 'venue' and thus found it difficult to answer this question. Rather than select the 'don't know' option, many of these learners answered the question according to their own interpretation of 'venue' or asked the cognitive interviewer to explain the meaning of word. Among the learners who were not familiar with the term 'venue', the question was interpreted in a variety of ways. These included understanding the question to be asking how difficult it was to gain admittance to the course. In general, ACL learners understood the question clearly, interpreting it as asking about the length of their journey time and how easy it is to remember the route.
Recommendation	We would recommend re-phrasing this question as follows: 'How easy or difficult is it for you to get to your course location?'
Revised wording	**Q4: How easy or difficult is it for you to get to your course/training location?** Answer options revised to include 'This does not apply to me'.
Range of interpretation stage two	The revised wording worked well, learners all understood what was meant by 'location' and discussed factors such as journey duration and the availability of public transport options.
Recommendation	No change required.

Q5 How convenient are the times of classes/training sessions for you? Very convenient / Fairly convenient / Not very convenient / Not at all convenient	
Range of interpretation	The question elicited varied interpretations from other learners but all were valid within the context of the question: ▪ Whether the times of the classes suited the learners, i.e. '1-3pm on a Tuesday suits me' ▪ Whether the number of hours in a day were convenient.
Recommendation	No change required.
Range of interpretation stage two	Matched that from stage 1.
Recommendation	No change required.

2.5 Equipment and facilities

Q6 How would you rate the library/learning resource centre? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know	
Range of interpretation stage one	The question was understood by a full range of learners, although was thought to be inapplicable to those who attend a provider where there is no library/resource centre. In terms of interpretation, learners thought this related to whether they were given access to computers, relevant books, desk space.
Recommendation	Include the following as a response code: 'This does not apply to me/I do not have access to a library/learning resource centre'
Revised wording	Question as above. The options were revised to include the following as a response code: 'This does not apply to me/I do not have access to a library/learning resource centre'.
Range of interpretation stage two	As per stage one, the question was understood by all learners. As all stage two testing locations had a library (and learners were aware of it), it was not possible to test the new answer option.
Recommendation	No change required.

Q7 How would you rate the availability of computers and IT support to help you with your learning/training? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know	
Range of interpretation	The question was understood clearly by a full range of learners. Availability was understood as either meaning that the provider has a large number of computers and available support services, or that there were computers readily available when needed. Despite this differing interpretation, the core understanding of the question remained stable. The question elicited varied interpretations but all were valid within the context of the question: ▪ Whether or not there was always one computer available per person. ▪ Whether there were computers free and close by when you need them. ▪ The number of computers held by a provider, rather than one being free when needed.
Recommendation	No change required.
Range of interpretation stage two	Matched that from stage 1.
Recommendation	No change required.

Q8 How would you rate the quality and choice of food at your college/ provider? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know	
Range of interpretation stage one	This question was thought to relate to choice; whether there were food options to suit all dietary and lifestyle choices (vegetarian, Halal, Kosher etc.), and quality; whether the food was well sourced, healthy, and fresh. In terms of interpretation, learners were able to distinguish between quality and choice, although do not view the terms as interchangeable and would give differing responses for each. For learners who did not have a canteen on site this question was not applicable.
Recommendation	We would recommend either;

	▪ Choosing quality **or** choice as the measure to be examined, rather than including them both in the question wording. Doing so would provide data that relates to a specific aspect of learner experience and thus actionable. ▪ Re-phrase the question in broader terms, such as 'overall, how would you rate the food at your college/provider?' We would also recommend revising the final response code to 'This does not apply to me/food is not available at my college/provider'.
Revised wording	**Q8: Overall, how would you rate the food at your college/provider?** Answer options revised to include 'This does not apply to me/food is not available at my college/provider'.
Range of interpretation stage two	There were no issues around interpretation during stage two. Learners referred to quality, choice and cost/value for money.
Recommendation	No change required.

2.6 Teaching and training

Q9 How would you rate the balance between theory and practical work on your course? Too much theory / Too much practical / About right / Don't know	
Range of interpretation	The terms 'theory' and 'practice' were understood similarly by learners. 'Theory' was understood as understanding why we do things, writing things down, and reading, while 'practice' was understood to mean 'doing' things such as using a computer, attending a workshop, or conducting an experiment.
Recommendation	No change required.
Range of interpretation stage two	Matched that from stage 1.
Recommendation	No change required.

Q10 How would you rate your teachers, tutors, or assessors at stretching you to do your best? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know	
Range of interpretation	The term 'stretching' was thought to relate to the course tutor being encouraging, motivational, providing feedback, and being patient.
Recommendation	No change required.
Range of interpretation stage two	Matched that from stage 1.
Recommendation	No change required.

Q11 How would you rate the workload on your course? Too much / About right / Not enough / Don't know	
Range of interpretation stage one	The term 'workload' elicited varied interpretations: ▪ Some learners understood workload to encompass classwork only. ▪ Other learners understood this term to encompass classwork, homework, and exams. ▪ In a few instances, this term was understood to mean how challenging the subject matter was, rather than the volume of work given.
Recommendation	Welsh Government to clarify the focus of 'workload'. For example, one option would be re-phrasing the question as follows: 'How would you rate the amount of work you are given as part of your course, both in and outside the classroom/workplace?'
Revised wording	**Q11: How would you rate the amount of work you are given as part of your course/training, both in and outside of the classroom/workplace?** Options as above.
Range of interpretation stage two	The revised wording/clarification worked well and there were no issues around interpretation during stage two. The concept of both in and out-side the classroom was noted, for example homework or practical work completed in learners own time. One learner explained that she would say 'Too much' if the workload interfered with other aspects of her life.
Recommendation	No change required.

Q12 How would you rate your teacher, tutor or assessor at explaining how your work will be marked? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor/ Very poor / Don't know	
Range of interpretation stage one	In instances where work was not marked (on short evening classes, for example) respondents were unsure how to respond. Amongst other respondents the question was understood to ask whether or not a tutor explained the marking and grading procedure prior to work being marked. In addition, some further education learners understood this question to include whether or not their tutor had explained how frequently and thoroughly their work would be graded. All learners felt comfortable 'grading' their teacher. As one learner remarked 'It's their job. They grade me and it's important I provide them with feedback too'.
Recommendation	Welsh Government to clarify whether the question means to exclude those who do not have work marked. One option could be to expand the question to refer to assessments/reviews/marks. An alternative could be to include the following as a response code: 'This does not apply to me/I do not receive marks for my work'
Revised wording	**Q12: How would you rate your teacher, tutor or assessor at explaining how your work will be marked?** Answer options revised to include 'This does not apply to me/I do not receive marks for my work'.
Range of interpretation stage two	The question appeared to cause some confusion for ACL learners during stage two, the majority of whom answered in relation to the quality of the marking, as opposed to the marking process being explained to them.
Recommendation	We would recommend no change to the wording; however, it is worth noting that this question is most suitable where there is regular programme of assessment, perhaps of a formalised nature (e.g. essays, coursework, tests). It may be less suitable for ACL settings.

Q13 How would you rate your teacher, tutor or assessor at marking your work fairly? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know	
Range of interpretation stage one	The question elicited varied interpretations of the term 'fair' but all were valid within the context of the question: ▪ Pointing out the positive elements of an assignment alongside the negative. ▪ Providing detailed feedback on why a negative mark was given and advice on how to improve. ▪ Ensuring that all marks are kept private and not made available to the whole class.
Recommendation	Welsh Government to clarify whether the question means to exclude those who do not have work marked. Otherwise no change required.
Revised wording	Question wording as above. Answer options revised to include 'This does not apply to me/I do not receive marks for my work'.
Range of interpretation stage two	There were no issues around interpretation during stage two. Understanding of the concept included rating whether the teacher gives comments to explain marks. The new answer option was unable to be tested as all learners felt the question was relevant to them.
Recommendation	No change required.

Q14 How easy or difficult is it for you to contact your teacher, tutor or assessor when needed? Very easy / Fairly easy / Fairly difficult / Very difficult / Don't know / Does not apply to me	
Range of interpretation	This question was well understood. Learners understood the term contact to encompass email, face-to-face, and phone contact.
Recommendation	No change required.
Range of interpretation stage two	Matched that from stage 1.
Recommendation	No change required.

Q15: How would you rate the online teaching materials on your course? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know / This does not apply to me	
Range of interpretation stage one	This question was well understood. However those who did not have access to online teaching materials were unsure whether to select 'don't know' or 'TDNATM'. A number of learners had access to an online portal to download course worksheets and send course related messages.
Recommendation	Clarify 'TDNATM' to read 'This does not apply to me/I do not have any online teaching materials'.
Revised wording	This question was not revised following stage one.
Range of interpretation stage two	The majority of learners misinterpreted this question, referring to file sharing platforms (typically as a means of submitting work to their tutors) and/or use of the internet in general to find material relevant to their course. The one learner who did give relevant examples also referred to file sharing.
Recommendation	Revise wording to say 'How would you rate the **teaching materials** made available **online** for your course' to support understanding. Consideration could be given to providing examples but on balance it is felt to be better to keep the question simple and uncluttered. An alternative could be to consider the word 'resources' rather than 'materials' Clarify TDNATM to read 'This does not apply to me/I do not have any online teaching materials'.

Q16: How would you rate your teachers'/tutors'/assessors' knowledge about their subject area? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know / This does not apply to me	
Range of interpretation	This question was well understood. Learners attributed knowledge based on the teachers experience (how many years they had been teaching the course), and whether they provide good answers to questions in class.
Recommendation	No change required.
Range of interpretation stage two	Matched that from stage 1.
Recommendation	No change required.

2.7 Responsiveness

Q17: How would you prefer your provider to ask for your views? Online surveys / Written surveys / Social media such as Facebook / Focus groups / One-to-one discussions with teachers, tutors or assessors / Don't know / None of the above	
Range of interpretation stage one	The concept of 'asking for your views' was well understood; however learners were unsure of some response options. Some participants struggled to understand what was meant by Focus groups (one learner thought this could be group discussions about classwork); others questioned what gathering views via Facebook would involve. All learners selected only one option but a number asked if they could select more.
Recommendation	Agree whether this will be a single choice or 'tick all that apply' question. If single choice, this should be emphasised in the question wording, for example 'In which of the following ways would you most prefer…' Welsh Government to clarify what is meant by group discussions - does this relate to student groups/panels, or to discussions led by staff. This item would benefit from greater clarity. Consider whether an example should be provided regarding use of Facebook e.g. 'Facebook – e.g. through posting questions/statuses that you could comment on'.
Revised wording	**Q17: Through which one of the following would you most prefer your provider to ask for your views?** Online surveys / Written surveys / Online forums, for example a college/provider Facebook page or Twitter account / Student groups/learner panels/class representatives / Group discussions outside of the classroom / workplace, led by staff / One-to-one discussions with teachers, tutors or assessors / Don't know / None of the above
Range of interpretation stage two	Some learners felt the question didn't read well and suggested there was no need for the word 'most' to be included. Additionally, whilst most options were understood, a small number of learners felt the answer options were too long and noted they had not read to the end of the lines, this was clear when they suggested that 'class representatives' should be included, already featured in the answer options.
Recommendation	Revise question wording - remove 'most' to simplify. Reverse the order of answer option 4 so that 'class

	representatives' is upfront. WG to consider removal of either 'student groups' or 'learner panels' as these are felt to be too similar and create a list of options that looks quite lengthy which can be off putting.

Q18: How would you rate your provider at recognising and celebrating learners' achievements, for example through feedback and awards? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know	
Range of interpretation stage one	'Recognition and celebration' was generally well understood; however WBL learners were again confused about the distinction between employer and learning provider - for example, there were some references to Employee of the Month schemes. In addition, some respondents discussed their general perceptions of their provider's propensity to reward achievements, but stated that this is different to how they would rate the provider at recognising their own personal achievements.
Recommendation	Refer to 'learning provider' to support understanding amongst WBL learners that this does not relate to their employer. Consider inserting a clarification. Welsh Government to consider whether this should relate to own personal experience or general perceptions.
Revised wording	This question was not revised following stage one.
Range of interpretation stage two	The stage two learners had no problems with this question including two WBL learners. Learners tended to think of either formal or informal recognition, dependent on the nature of their course, but this is not seen as problematic as the question encompasses both, and learners gave sensible examples such as certificates and receiving 'special mentions' in verbal feedback.
Recommendation	No change required.

Q19: How would you rate your provider at keeping in touch, for example, telling you about changes to your course or classes? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know	
Range of interpretation	This question was well understood. Two respondents noted, for example, that their provider had been good at keeping in touch over the telephone when they were undertaking work placements.
Recommendation	No change required.
Range of interpretation stage two	Matched that from stage 1.
Recommendation	No change required.

Q20: If you have ever made a complaint about your provider, how would you rate the process? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know / This does not apply to me	
Range of interpretation stage one	There is potentially some ambiguity here - of two participants who had not previously made a complaint, one ticked 'TDNATM' and the other 'don't know'. In addition, one person queried what would count as a complaint – she had raised some issues with her employer (WBL) but felt we were asking about what she referred to as more 'formal' complaints. Another clearly felt that a complaint could include more informal dialogue.
Recommendation	Welsh Government to clarify what is being sought: (a) level of actual complaints made (b) whether learners would know how to make a complaint if they had one (c) general perceptions around the provider's willingness to deal with complaints (d) for those who have made a complaint, their satisfaction with how it was handled. Considering anticipated low levels of actual complaints made, we would suggest focusing on (b) and/or (c) and rewording the question accordingly.
Revised wording	**Q20: How would you rate your provider at dealing with complaints raised by learners?** The answer options were revised with 'This does not apply to me' removed.
Range of interpretation stage two	The question worked better with the revised wording. Most learners gave a rating based on their general perceptions, despite not having made a complaint personally. Learners also tended to refer to both formal and informal complaints during

	stage two, therefore the question seems to work well as a means of gauging perceptions about providers' general willingness to deal with complaints.
Recommendation	No change required. However it should be noted that there is likely to be a relatively high proportion of 'don't know' responses compared to other questions. This is because some learners will feel they do not have an experience to draw on – for example if neither they nor their friends have made a complaint.

2.8 Health and wellbeing

Q21: Does your course timetable include enough time for breaks/relaxation? Yes, includes enough break time / No, too much break time / No, not enough break time / Don't know	
Range of interpretation	Well understood. Whilst one person suggested including 'TDNATM' (not an option currently) as her course is just two hours per week, we would recommend no change because although there are no breaks, she deems this a sufficient arrangement for her two hour course.
Recommendation	No change required.
Range of interpretation stage two	Matched that from stage 1.
Recommendation	No change required.

Q22: How would you rate the social activities available at your college/provider? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know / This does not apply to me	
Range of interpretation stage one	Generally people understood what was meant by social activities, though some commented that it did not apply as 'social activities are not done here' – in these cases it is unclear whether they feel it would be appropriate for the provider to run social activities- i.e. are they dissatisfied or not? The term 'activities' was also subject to slightly different interpretations in that some people felt it encompassed more informal 'activity' whereas others felt it referred to organised events.
Recommendation	Welsh Government to consider whether or not this encompasses informal activities - if so, the question may benefit from rewording e.g. 'How would you rate the social *opportunities* available at your college/provider', or similar.

Revised wording	**Q22: How would you rate the social opportunities available at your college/provider?** Answer options as above.
Range of interpretation stage two	Participants struggled to answer this question. Learners recommend a variety of better ways to word the question, however there appears to be a discrepancy in interpretation according to age, with younger learners referring mostly to organised activities and events, and older/elderly learners undertaking ACL referring to simply being able to get out and mix with people.
Recommendation	There does not appear to be a simple way to capture both formal/structured and informal/unstructured social opportunities within one question. The Learner Voice Wales steering group previously discussed the difficulty of this question and suggested that it may be worth considering removing it from the question bank.

2.9 Welsh Language and culture

Q23: How much opportunity do you have to use Welsh informally during your studies (for example, in conversations with other learners or tutors)? Very often / Fairly often / Not very often / Never / Don't know / This does not apply to me	
Range of interpretation	Responses reflected an issue with the distinction between formally/informally – more clarity is perhaps needed. A number of learners also selected 'TDNATM' by default because they do not speak Welsh. The Welsh Government request for a question on the requirement to promote Welsh culture and history was noted.
Recommendation	Consider rewording, for example: 'How *often* do you have the opportunity to use Welsh informally during your learning time (for example when *talking* with other learners or your tutors/assessors, for example)? In response to a suggestion for a question on culture and history, we would suggest: 'To what extent does your learning provider celebrate or raise awareness of Welsh culture and history?' • A great deal • A fair amount • Not very much • Not at all
Revised wording	**Q23: How often do you get to use and hear Welsh informally during your studies (for example when talking**

	with other learners or tutors/tutors or assessors, or attending events organised by the college)? Answer options as above.
Range of interpretation stage two	The new wording worked well in supporting learners to understand what was meant by 'informally', though some learners tended to 'switch off' because they did not speak Welsh personally, as per stage one. It is probable that there will be a tendency amongst many of these learners to tick 'TDNATM' without considering that they may *hear* Welsh.
Recommendation	No change recommended. Whilst splitting into questions about use of and hearing Welsh might encourage more non-Welsh speakers to answer positively, this must be balanced against length and usefulness of the information.

Q23b[3]: To what extent does your college/learning provider celebrate or raise awareness of Welsh culture and history? A great deal / A fair amount / Not very much / Not at all / I don't know	
Range of interpretation stage two	Learners all understood what was meant by this question and were able to give appropriate examples such as displays, activities, events and themed weeks. One learner noted their provider had created displays about the history of the local area.
Recommendation	Retain this question, no change required.

2.10 Perceived Impact

Q24: How would you rate your course in preparing you to progress into employment or further learning? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know / This does not apply to me	
Range of interpretation stage one	This question was broadly well understood, 'preparation' was seen to be building up confidence and helping get the required grades. The Welsh Government suggested the amendment to provide greater clarity for WBL learners was noted (insert 'training' and 'further learning or your chosen career').
Recommendation	It is recommended to revise the question as follows: 'How would you rate your course/training in preparing you take the next step in your life – for example to undertake more learning, to pursue your chosen career or get a better job within your current company'? However it should be noted that this suggests overlap with

[3] This question was added following stage one. The next question will now be renumbered as Q24.

	elements of Q25-35 below (career prospects, your ideas about what you want to do in life).
Revised wording	**Q25: How would you rate your course/training in preparing you to take the next step in your life – for example to undertake more learning, to pursue your chosen career or to get a better job? '**TDNATM' removed from answer options.
Range of interpretation stage two	The new wording worked well and is felt to capture a broader range of people and learning goals. Learners were able to describe what the next step would be for them personally.
Recommendation	No change required.

Q25-35: Please say how your learning/ training has affected each of the following. It's a lot better / It's a little better / It hasn't changed / It's a little worse / It's a lot worse / Don't know / TDNATM	
Range of interpretation	Overall people were comfortable with the answer choices, though there were some interpretation issues in relation to specific items on the list of items to rate, see recommendations. Whilst several items could be strengthened by clarifications/explanations, this must be balanced against space constraints.
Recommendation	**General** – it is recommended to remove the 'TDNATM' option for this question. This will remove the possibility of people who have experienced no change ticking it (e.g. 'my confidence is high anyway'). ▪ **Confidence** – No change required. ▪ **Enthusiasm for future learning** – No change required. ▪ **Independence** - generally understood, though it is noted that this was answered with reference to both independence in learning and within life generally. No change recommended. ▪ **Friendship group** - No change required. ▪ **Problem solving skills** - No change required. ▪ **Communication skills** - No change required. ▪ **Numeracy/ literacy/ IT** – No change required. ▪ **Health and wellbeing** – it is noted that some respondents answered with reference to knowledge gained through their course (WBL learners undertaking training in workplace hygiene) whereas others referred to their general wellbeing. Welsh Government to confirm whether they are comfortable with these two types of responses. Focusing on general health and wellbeing may require an explanation e.g.: 'Your health and wellbeing (by this we mean the extent to which you are feeling good/positive and functioning well physically)'.

	▪ **Career prospects** – there was some variance and uncertainty in interpreting this item- some respondents linked it to 'softer skills' and attributes such as confidence, others felt it referred to actually being able to secure the job you wanted, and some felt it was too similar to 'Your ideas about what you want to do in life'. Welsh Government to consider what is meant by this item, potentially it could be revised. ▪ **Ability to do your job** - it is recommended that this is only incorporated for WBL providers to avoid confusion. ▪ **Your ideas about what you want to do in life** - No change required.
Revised wording	'Career prospects' removed from the list of items to rate and 'TDNATM' answer option removed.
Range of interpretation stage two	Learners all understood each of the items. However, with the overall list being fairly lengthy, it was observed that some learners were answering latter questions in relation to how good their skills were rather than whether they had improved as a result of their learning/training.
Recommendation	Welsh Government to consider an appropriate way to display these items (e.g. grid versus each item individually) in order to remind learners of the original question.

2.11 Other

Q36: If you have undertaken a work placement as part of your course, how would you rate your provider at organising a suitable placement? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know / This does not apply to me	
Range of interpretation stage one	There were no real issues around comprehension/interpretation of organising a 'suitable' placement, which learners understood as being tailored to the things they would like to do. However two people responded to the question who had not yet undertaken a work placement, they had based their answer on the experience of friends and the progress that had already been made by the provider in attempting to set up a placement.
Recommendation	Clarify whether this question only relates to those who have 'completed' a work placement, or whether the question should be opened up to all learners (even those yet to make a placement) Depending on the agreed scope, amend the final response option to 'This does not apply to me – I have not started a work placement'.

Revised wording	Question wording as above. Final response option amended to help ensure learners only give a rating if they have undertaken a placement: 'This does not apply to me/I have not started a work placement'.
Range of interpretation stage two	Learners during stage two were all able to answer the question appropriately. There were none whose courses included a placement but were yet to start it, therefore the usefulness of the clarification above was not able to be tested.
Recommendation	No change required.

Q37: If you have undertaken a work placement as part of your course, how relevant was the experience to you and your goals? Very good / Good / Fairly good / Fairly poor / Poor / Very poor / Don't know / This does not apply to me	
Range of interpretation stage one	No real issues around comprehension/interpretation, though it is acknowledged that some learners will have completed multiple placements. As above, two people responded to the question who had not yet undertaken a work placement.
Recommendation	Clarify whether this question only relates to those who have 'completed' a work placement. Depending on the agreed scope, amend the final response option to 'This does not apply to me – I have not started a work placement'. Consider adding a clarification: 'If you have undertaken more than one placement, please give an answer that relates to your overall experience', or similar.
Revised wording	**Q37: If you have undertaken a work placement as part of your course, how relevant was the experience to you and your goals? If you have undertaken more than one placement, please give an answer that relates to your overall experience'**. Answer options revised so that final option reads 'This does not apply to me/I have not started a work placement'.
Range of interpretation stage two	As per stage one, there were no issues around interpretation. None of the learners had undertaken multiple placements, so the addition to the question wording was unable to be tested.
Recommendation	No change required.

Q38: Would you recommend your college/provider to others? Yes, definitely / Yes, probably / Probably not / Definitely not / Don't know	
Range of interpretation stage one	No real issues around comprehension/interpretation, in thinking about a recommendation, it was common for learners to compare their current provider to previous experiences or their knowledge of friends in other providers. This question was easy to answer if the answer was 'yes definitely' however several felt that in terms of the answer choices, 'Yes definitely' and 'Yes, probably' were too similar; and that if they were unsure they would struggle to choose between 'Yes probably' and 'Probably not'.
Recommendation	Potentially this could be revised so that answers are based on a clearer scale of advocacy; for example: Which of the following phrases best describes the way you would speak about your provider/college? ▪ I would speak highly about it without being asked ▪ I would speak highly of it when asked ▪ I would be neutral about it ▪ I would be critical of it if asked ▪ I would be critical of it without being asked ▪ Don't know This is a scale used commonly across other Ipsos MORI surveys with the two 'speak highly' and two 'be critical' codes aggregated together for analysis.
Revised wording	**Q38: How likely would you be to recommend your college/provider to a friend? Please give your answer on a scale of nought to ten where nought means you would definitely not recommend your college/provider and ten means you would definitely recommend your college/provider if asked.**
Range of interpretation stage two	The scale was felt to work better as it removed the answer options which were felt to be too similar. As per stage one, there were no issues around comprehension and learners gave appropriate reasons for their individual ratings. Learners were able to comment on what would need to change in order for them to give a higher score, for example better quality of teaching.
Recommendation	No change required.

Welsh language version

2.12 As per the English version of the Question Bank, cognitive testing of the bilingual version revealed that the concepts and wording were generally well understood; however, a number of amendments were incorporated to ensure that the Welsh questions made sense and were interpreted to mean the same as the English version. These included minor amends to the wording of some questions and responses, which are outlined in the table below.

Question	Summary of change
Q2: Sut byddech chi'n disgrifio defnyddioldeb gwefan y coleg/darparwr?	The word 'defnyddioldeb' was interpreted as 'useability' rather than 'usefulness', causing confusion among some learners. This was amended to 'Pa mor defnyddiol yw', as 'Defnyddiodeb' is not a word learners were familiar with. Following the amendment the question translates as 'how would you describe how useful the college's website is?
Q6: Sut byddech chi'n disgrifio'r llyfrgell/canolfan adnoddau dysgu?	One of the responses was amended as learners interpreted 'fynediad' as 'access', but were unsure whether this referred to use or availability, and felt this should be clarified if possible. This was rephrased to read 'nid yw'r lyfrgell/ganolfan ar gael i mi' which means 'the library/learning resource centre is not available to me'.
Q17: Drwy ba un o'r ffynonellau hyn, y byddai orau gennych i'ch coleg/darparwr ofyn am eich barn?	One of the responses was amended, with 'y' added between 'Twitter' and 'coleg', to read: Twitter y coleg- i.e. the college's twitter account (rather than 'college twitter')
Q20: Sut byddech chi'n disgrifio'r modd mae'ch coleg/darparwr yn mynd i'r afael â chwynion sy'n cael eu codi gan ddysgwyr?	'Mynd i'r afael â' was felt to be too colloquial a phrase, meaning 'to get to grips with'. This was replaced with 'delio â' which means to deal with, and was closer to the original English version of the questionnaire.
Q35: Eich syniadau ynglŷn â'r hyn rydych chi am ei wneud mewn bywyd	This was amended to read 'Eich syniadau ynglŷn â'r hyn yr ydych chi am ei wneud mewn bywyd' so that the grammar was consistent with the rest of the questionnaire.
Q11: Sut byddech chi'n disgrifio'r gwaith yr ydych yn ei gael ar	Feedback indicated that one of the responses- 'Tua'r maint cywir' did not fit the verbal rating scale. This was amended to

eich cwrs/hyfforddiant, yn yr ystafell ddosbarth/y gweithle a thu allan iddynt?	read 'Yn iawn fwy neu lai', to mean sufficient.
Q17: Drwy ba un o'r ffynonellau hyn, y byddai orau gennych i'ch coleg/darparwr ofyn am eich barn?	Two of the answer options –'Arolygon' and 'Arolygon ysgrifenedig' were amended so that 'Arolygon' was replaced with the Welsh word for questionnaire (Holiadur). As this specified the research tool rather than a survey process this was felt to be less ambiguous.

Core Welsh language questions

Q7a Which of the following best describes how you prefer to learn? I prefer to learn in Welsh / I prefer to learn in both Welsh and English / I prefer to learn in English	
Range of interpretation stage one	Learners found this easy to answer as all chose 'English'. However when prompted, some participants questioned whether 'Both' meant in a mixture of English and Welsh, or that they would be happy with learning in either English or in Welsh.
Recommendation	It is recommended to revise the answer options as follows: • I prefer to learn in Welsh only • I prefer to use a mixture of both Welsh and English • I prefer to learn in English only
Revised wording	Question wording as above. Answer options revised as follows: I prefer to learn in Welsh only/ I prefer to use a mixture of both Welsh and English / I prefer to learn in English only.
Range of interpretation stage two	There were no issues around comprehension and learners seemed more comfortable with the revised wording for the second option. 'Mixture' was interpreted as either 'English or Welsh or a bit of both'
Recommendation	No change required.

Q7b Did your college/provider offer you the chance to learn through Welsh or with Welsh language support? Yes, I was offered the choice to learn in Welsh only / Yes, I was offered the choice to learn in both Welsh and English / No, I was not offered the chance to learn in Welsh / Don't know	
Range of interpretation	When prompted, participants generally did not understand what was meant by 'Welsh language support', with suggestions that it might mean support for those who speak Welsh during lessons conducted in English, or support for English-speakers for lessons conducted in Welsh. When answering unprompted, learners did not distinguish between learning in Welsh and learning with Welsh language support. As above, further confusion about whether 'both' meant a 'mixture' or 'either' English or Welsh. Recall on when they were offered the chance to learn in Welsh was most commonly in induction week when completing course related paperwork.
Recommendation	Welsh Government to clarify what is meant by 'Welsh language support', and consider the usefulness of this reference, balanced against potential for confusion. Response options should be consistent with the question above.
Revised wording	**Q7b: Did your college/provider offer you the chance to learn in Welsh?** Answer options revised as follows: Yes I was offered the chance to learn in Welsh only / Yes I was offered the chance to learn in a mixture of both Welsh and English / No, I was not offered the chance to learn in Welsh / Don't know
Range of interpretation stage two	The revised wording was felt to work better, and learners all understood the question, though recall again proved to be an issue for a small number.
Recommendation	No change required. However, it should be noted that 'Don't Know' includes learners who feel that the question is not relevant to them because they have no Welsh skills and therefore never considered whether this was an option at the start of their course.

Q7c How would you describe your Welsh language skills? Fluent / Some Welsh language skills / None at all	
Range of interpretation stage one	This question received a good level of understanding from all learners. Knowing the odd word of Welsh and being able to say hello or goodbye was still considered as no skills. To have some skills, learners felt that you would have to be able to put short sentences together and maybe hold a short conversation (for example to order some food).
Recommendation	No change required.
Revised wording	Question wording as above. Answer options were revised as follows: I am fluent and can use Welsh in all situations / I can understand and respond to most everyday communication / I can understand and respond to most basic greetings, phrases or questions only / I have no Welsh language skills
Range of interpretation stage two	The question was understood, but in terms of the answer options a small number of learners felt that options two and three were too similar, and one person felt that they would fall somewhere between options 3 and 4 because she could understand, but not respond, to most basic greetings, phrases or questions.
Recommendation	Consider revision of options as follows: ▪ I am fluent and can use Welsh in all situations ▪ I can participate in most everyday conversations ▪ I can understand and respond to most basic greetings, phrases or questions ▪ I have very limited/no Welsh language skills

3 Easy Read

3.1 Across the two stages of cognitive testing, interviews were conducted with a range of learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; learners whose first language is not English or Welsh; and learners with low numeracy and literacy levels. The time taken to complete the questionnaire in both stages ranged from 5 to 35 minutes in length, with learners differing in the level and type of assistance they required to complete the questionnaire. Given the profile of learners, it should be noted that cognitive testing with this group was challenging. Not all learners were able to articulate their thought process and thus a number of recommendations are based on observations rather than feedback that was collected.

Key themes

3.2 In addition to specific points detailed below, some key themes emerged from stage one of cognitive testing, which underpinned the development of the second draft:

- Since several learners required assistance to complete the questionnaire, it is expected that those for whom the questionnaire is particularly challenging will be supported by a member of staff. With this in mind, the second draft was developed to strike a balance between the use of language that is both accessible to learners with varying levels of ability, but which also allows a depth and breadth of questioning. In some cases, longer words are necessary to ensure the correct concept is conveyed.

- Particularly challenging were the longer questions with the subject at the end, rather than the beginning, of the question. Amendments were therefore made to the second draft to keep the sentence structure as simple as possible, with the subject of the question appearing up front to better help the learner recognise what, precisely, the question is asking about. This involved introducing new words such as ‘feedback’ (Question 9) to test in stage two of cognitive testing.

3.3 In general the feedback gained during stage two of cognitive testing supported the above approaches. The second round of interviews suggested the choice of wording used was pitched at a level that was understood by those learners interviewed, even if some specific words needed to be read out to the learner. In general where learners struggled, the main challenge was with the reading and pronouncing specific words; once read out, the meaning and nuance of the questions was understood.

3.4 We therefore recommend that even though the questions are more accessible, **support with completing the questionnaire is still offered to those completing the Easy Read version** of the Learner Voice Wales survey.

Review of illustrations

3.5 The questionnaire used in the first round of cognitive testing an illustration to depict each question. We also tested two versions of the instructions: one using illustrations and one using photographs.

3.6 Feedback in stage one indicated no strong preference for either photographs or illustrations, and neither version aided understanding more than the other. However, interviewing did highlight the greater flexibility of illustrations in being more easily adapted to capture the meaning of a question. Learners also focused on the illustrations to varying degrees but in general, the nuances of the more detailed images were not successfully communicated.

3.7 The decision was therefore made to use illustrations in the second draft, simplifying the more complex images and choosing more appropriate images based on feedback for specific questions.

3.8 In general, the use of colour and illustrations to accompany (otherwise solid) text was well received and seen to make the document more digestible and approachable as a whole, verifying learners' understanding of the text. One learner stated, for example: "they give a clue to the words if you don't understand them….I wish all forms were like this!"

3.9 The second round of cognitive testing identified a small number of recommendations aimed at aiding understanding further. We have included these final recommendations for individual illustrations below.

Response scale

3.10 The first stage of cognitive testing gained feedback from learners on the granularity of the scale, the use of 'thumbs up/down' illustrations, the use of the terms 'quite' and 'very' and the lack of a mid-point in the scale. These aspects worked well for learners and were therefore retained, but with the repositioning of the statement 'Please tick 1 box only' to appear above the response scale.

3.11 In the second round of interviews the scale was again found to be appropriate for learners in allowing them to express a granularity of views, and the images evoked positive responses from learners who had seen this before in other Easy Read documents. Two learners did comment on the lack of a mid-point in the scale, however they were then able to select an answer without reverting to 'don't know'.

3.12 We would recommend retaining the response scale, with no further changes to be made.

Layout, design and appearance

3.13 Stage one of cognitive testing indicated no problems or difficulties for learners in following the general layout of the questions and response scale, with the exception of the need to reposition tick boxes in the 'About you' section.

3.14 Further feedback however did highlight the need to condense the instructions, and to bring forward the entry boxes for name, date of birth, learner number and provider number (to allow the latter two to be pre-printed for learners). This worked well – indeed several learners found it natural to print their name at the top of the front page when given the document.

3.15 Stage two sought to test the combining of the instructions and questionnaire into a single document, particularly since this necessitated the instructions ending half way down the second page, with the questions beginning thereafter.

This did not pose a problem as the learners interviewed read each page from top to bottom, meaning the end of the instructions and start of the questions was clear. We would therefore recommend retaining this layout.

3.16 One learner did comment on the lack of an open ended question to leave additional comments. We would be happy to discuss this, though it should be noted that this option would necessitate the removal of a question in order to maintain the overall questionnaire length at 8 pages.

Review of instructions

3.17 Following stage one of cognitive testing, the instructions and questionnaire were combined to form a single document. This led those learners who were interviewed to progress naturally through the document, starting with the instructions, before moving on to the questions.

3.18 Positioning the text with Question 1 on the bottom half of page two did not pose any problems to learners, however we would like to reposition the phrase 'The questions start here' so that it is left aligned, and to embolden the text to be consistent with the title and sub-heading on page one.

3.19 At the top of the second page, the statement 'Please tell us how good or bad your course is' did lead two learners to hesitate, in thinking at first that they were to write in their first response at this point (one wrote 'very good' underneath this statement). We would therefore suggest amending the statement to read 'The questions will ask you how good or bad your course is'.

3.20 The statement 'The Welsh Government has asked Ipsos MORI to find out what learners think about their course and their organisation' was amended after stage one to 'The Welsh Government has asked a survey company called Ipsos MORI….' . This led to a much better understanding of the statement; though many learners found it difficult to pronounce Ipsos MORI, their understanding of it being a company conducting a survey was clear, and this was indicated by further comments given by learners after reading the statement 'If you have any worries or questions about this please call Ipsos MORI on…'.

3.21 We have included our final suggested wording in the box below.

3.22 As regards illustrations, the only image that was not clear to several learners was the second image on page two, which accompanies text informing learners to place their questionnaire into the envelope provided to keep their answers private. On the basis of comments given we suggest that the detail on the form depicted in the image is simplified.

Suggestion for revised wording to instructions:
What do you think about your course? These questions are for people on all different types of training or courses at colleges and other places. The Welsh Government has asked a survey company called Ipsos MORI to find out what learners think about their courses and their organisation. The questions will ask you how good or bad your course is. When you have finished, please put your answers in the envelope. These will be kept private, so no one will know what you have said. If you have any worries or questions about this please call Ipsos MORI on 0207 347 3000.

Welsh language version

3.23 The Easy Read questionnaire has also been made available in a Welsh language version, which was also subject to cognitive testing with learners. Whilst learners were invited to comment on the design, layout and illustrations, because these replicate the English language version of the questionnaire, this testing focused predominantly on comprehension of the Welsh translation and identifying whether the questions were interpreted the same as the English.

3.24 Potential changes identified during the process were discussed between Ipsos MORI, Welsh Government and Inspired Services, resulting in one change to the content. Some learners were confused by the word ‘ymsefydlu’ (settle) at Question two and thought it referred to an induction process rather than settling in, so an alternative translation was found (ymgartrefu).

Review of the questions

Original question wording: Q14. What is the code number for your college? What is your learner number?	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	Two of the learners who participated looked straight to their student cards for their provider number and learner number (though one reported their provider number was not on their card and so could not enter it).
Recommendation for wording	We recommended keeping the questions as they are, but shifting to the front page of the document to allow the provider number to be pre-printed for learners, with the addition of '*What is your name?'* and *'What is your date of birth'* with the appropriate boxes for entering this information.
Revised question wording	What is your name? What is your date of birth? What is the code number for your college? What is your learner number? Please ask a member of staff if you do not know.
Range of interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	It seemed natural to learners to write their name on the top of the front page once given the document, so this did not pose any problems. As in stage one of cognitive testing, at least two learners reached for their student ID cards for their provider and learner number.
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	No change required.

Original question wording: Q1. *Before you started your course, how good or bad was the information you got about it?*	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	Not all learners understood what the question was asking about. The fragment 'before you started your course' confused some learners and distracted from the main subject of the question ('information'). Some learners who did understand the question responded simply that they did not know the answer, since they could not recall the start of their course.
Recommendation for wording	We suggest removing the first fragment to shorten the question and focus learners' attention on the subject: *How good or bad was the information you got about your course?*
Revised question wording	*How good or bad was the **information** you got about your course?*
Range of	This was understood by the learners interviewed; when asked to

interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	elaborate on the meaning of the question, one stated, for example, "*The information from the college… And we went to see them*."
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	No change required.

Original question wording: Q2. When you started your course, how good or bad was the help you got to settle in?	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	As with question one, the first fragment prevented some learners from understanding what the question was asking about by distracting from the question subject. Among those learners who could read the question, interpretations of 'settling in' included 'helping you fit in with your group' and 'setting you up with the internet and the library'.
Recommendation for wording	We suggest removing the first fragment to shorten the question and focus learners' attention on the subject: *How good or bad was the help you got to settle into your course?*
Revised question wording	*How good or bad was the help you got to* ***settle into*** *your course?*
Range of interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	Two learners had initial difficulty in reading the word 'settled', however after assistance was given, the meaning of the question was well understood, with one learner paraphrasing "*Things to help you be comfortable with people and the course"*, for example.
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	No change required.

Original question wording: Q3. How good or bad are the staff at telling you where you can get help or support from?	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	Most learners understood the term 'staff' as their teachers and other main points of contact. However some learners interpreted the question as asking them how good or bad the support from staff is (*e.g. 'Yes, the teachers give me help'*); the nuance of telling you where to go for support was lost. Interpretations of 'support' included helping learners do research, for example, as well as pastoral support.
Recommendation for wording	This question was selected for the Easy Read questionnaire because of its importance as a focus for improvement based on the results for year 1 (with only 41% responding 'very good'). The consultations with providers also highlighted this question, along with question two (above) and question three (below), as particularly relevant to the learners who will take part in this strand of the survey. One option is to retain these questions but modify this question to ask learners to rate the help and support they receive, rather than how good or bad the staff are at telling them where they can get it. Since being told where to go for support is a constituent part of the quality of support received overall, this would still allow learners to rate their provider in this area (of pastoral care). We would also recommend making a greater distinction between this question and the next, so that question three is about receiving help more generally, and question four about specific types of support. The question could therefore be amended to read *How good or bad is the help you get on your course?*
Revised question wording	*How good or bad is the **support** you get from staff?*
Range of interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	Learners understood this question, and gave examples including *"… Everything you need – facilities, counsellors.. etc.*".
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	No change required.

Original question wording: Q4. How good or bad are the staff at giving you extra support with reading, writing or maths, if you need it?	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	This question was more readily understood than question three, since it asks directly about the help and support given (as opposed to the slightly more complex notion of rating being informed of knowing where to go for support). Examples of support offered by learners included going to an additional class after school.
Recommendation for wording	This question was also selected for its relevance to learners and the results from year 1, with only 40% of learners responding 'very good'. We suggest that if this question is retained, in order to distinguish it from question three and remove any focus on staff in general, it reads *How good or bad is the extra support for reading, writing or maths you get on your course, if you need it?* An alternative option to explore is to reduce questions three and four to one overall question about help/support. Although this would move further form the main questionnaire, the theme of help and support is retained, so could allow some level of comparison with the relevant composite score.
Revised question wording	*How good or bad is the **help** you get for **reading, writing or maths**, if you need it?*
Range of interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	This question posed no problems and at least two learners identified with the concept, mentioning the help they receive to spell words, for example.
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	No change required.

Original question wording: Q5. How good or bad are the staff at treating you properly and with respect?	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	Some learners did not understand the terms 'properly', 'treating' and 'respect' (though this was less of a problem for the latter). Interpretation by those who did understand included 'saying good morning', 'being nice to you' and 'they treat you like an adult here'.
Recommendation for wording	We suggest amending the question to read *How good or bad is the respect you get from staff?* to focus learners' attention on respect (as opposed to rating their staff in general) and to simplify the question.
Revised question wording	*How good or bad is the **respect** you get from staff?*
Range of interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	Although some learners require help reading aloud the term 'respect', once assistance was given here, the meaning was well understood. When asked to paraphrase, learners mentioned "*How people treat you"* and "*She doesn't put us down… Respects you as a person".*
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	No change required.

Original question wording: Q6. How good or bad are the staff at asking you what you think about the course or college?	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	Asking about 'staff', 'what you think' and 'course/college' all in one question proved challenging for some learners.
Recommendation for wording	We recommend testing learners' understanding of the term 'asking for your views' in the second round of cognitive testing. The question could read *How good or bad are the staff at asking you for your views about your course?* This would relate more to their views on their course and college/provider than asking '*how good or bad… at asking you what you think?',* which is more ambiguous and may lead some learners to interpret 'what you think' in relation to answering questions on their work/in class.
Revised question	*How good or bad are the **chances** you get to **say what you***

wording	***think** about your course?*
Range of interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	Again, the word 'chances' was sometimes misread, but understood when read aloud to the learner, with one learner elaborating: "*Asking you your views too"*.
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	No change required.

Original question wording: Q7. How good or bad are the staff at making you feel safe while you are learning?	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	It was unclear whether this question is referring to feeling safe in general (with reference to anti-bullying or crime, for example) or feeling safe specifically whilst in the classroom or workplace (which lends itself to more of a health and safety interpretation of 'safe'). 'While you are learning' was amended from 'whilst on your course' in the main questionnaire, but does have a more time-limited definition, in implying that the question only applies to the period in which learners are in the classroom/workplace. One learner mentioned bullying in their interpretation, but others were not sure what 'while you are learning' meant, and could not think of any examples, needing prompts to help them.
Recommendation for wording	We recommend amending the question so that it refers either to safety in general (*How good or bad is the safety on your course?)*, or specifically in the classroom/workplace (*How good or bad are the staff at making you feel safe when you are working?)*.
Revised question wording	*How good or bad is the **safety** on your course?*
Range of interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	Learners gave different examples to explain their understanding of 'safety', such as "*We can leave our bags and they are safe*" and "*If you're safe to go to the toilet on your own*".
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	No change required.

Original question wording: Q8. How good or bad are your teachers at explaining the work you have to do?	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	This question was selected for the Easy Read questionnaire after being identified by providers in the consultations as being particularly relevant to the learners who will be taking part in the Easy Read survey, as well as being in line with the types of measures Estyn use. However, some learners found it difficult to distinguish between this question and the next (*How good or bad are your teachers at showing you how to do better work?).* This tended to happen when the learner did not understand the term 'explaining'.
Recommendation for wording	The question could be amended to read *How good or bad are your teachers at telling you how to do your work?* ('Telling you what to do' should be avoided as this has connotations with being told off, or 'bossing around').
Revised question wording	*How good or bad are the staff at **explaining the work** you have to do?*
Range of interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	Some learners required assistance reading the term 'explaining', though it was the length of this word and not the meaning that these learners had difficulty with. When asked to elaborate, comments given included "… *Comes over and explains if we're struggling*".
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	No change required.

Original question wording: Q9. How good or bad are your teachers at showing you how to do better work?	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	Again, the consultations with providers indicated this was an important question to select for the Easy Read questionnaire due to its relevance to learners, and to Estyn's measures. But some learners could not distinguish between this and the previous question asked. Those that did understand the question interpreted it to mean 'telling you how to do your work, after the first draft', for example.
Recommendation for wording	The question was modified from *Giving you feedback on how to improve* in the main survey. However given learners' difficulty with terms such as 'explaining', the term 'improve' was removed for the Easy Read version. We think any modification like '*…showing you how to get better'* may have connotations with recovering from illness, or similar, so we would recommend leaving the question as it is, with the amend to question eight in

	place.
Revised question wording	*How good or bad is the **feedback** you get on how to improve?*
Range of interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	Learners could generally read and understand the term 'feedback', and the meaning of the question was contextualised with the phrase 'on how to improve' (though one learner needed 'improve' to be read out to her). One learner expressed their understanding as her teacher telling her what her spelling mistakes are, for example, and how to correct them by breaking the word into chunks. Another said "*Information on whether you've done it right or wrong, and telling you how you could improve*".
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	Amend the green tick on the learner's work to a different colour, so as not to confuse with the tick preceding *Please tick 1 box only* or to appear leading.

Original question wording: Q10. Thinking about everything, how good or bad do you think your course is?	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	In general, learners understood this question.
Recommendation for wording	We would recommend keeping this question the same. In this instance, the use of the illustration could assist learners.
Revised question wording	*Thinking about **everything**, how good or bad do you think your course is?*
Range of interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	As in stage one, learners understood this question with no problems.
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	No change required.

‘About you’ paragraph	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	Some learners thought the illustration looked as though the man was pointing to himself in a rude manner. The text was understood, though the paragraph a little long for some learners to follow.
Recommendation for wording	The first and second sentence could be separated to appear on different lines.
Revisions	The first and second sentences were separated to appear on different lines. Alternative images were considered, but the original illustration retained as it was deemed the most appropriate.
Range of interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	There were no problems with the comprehension of this text, and no comments on the illustration. However we would suggest repositioning ‘About you’ so that it is left aligned, to be consistent with the other sub headings.
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	No change required.

Original question wording: Q11. How old are you?	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	This question was easy to understand, though several learners did not know what ‘prefer not to say’ meant and why that option was there.
Recommendation for wording	We would recommend amending the wording to read *I would prefer not to say.* If space permits, we would also like to move the tick box for this option to be horizontally in line with the box to enter the age number.
Revised question wording	*Prefer not to say* was amended to *I would prefer not to say*, and the tick box for this option repositioned to be horizontally in line with the box to enter the age number. The illustration was also amended to a more appropriate one.
Range of interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	The question and response codes were both generally among the easiest in the questionnaire for learners to understand.
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	No change required.

Original question wording: Q12. Are you a man or woman?	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	This question was easy to understand, though again, the 'prefer not to say' option was not understood by all.
Recommendation for wording	We would recommend amending the wording to read *I would prefer not to say.* If space permits, we would also like to move the tick box for this option to be horizontally in line with the other two tick boxes.
Revised question wording	*Prefer not to say* was amended to *I would prefer not to say*.
Range of interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	There were no problems with comprehension here.
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	No change required.

Original question wording: Q13. Please tick the box that describes you best	
Range of interpretation in stage one of cognitive testing	This question was understood by learners. When probed, some were able to explain why the 'Other' tick box was there and some were not; many did not understand 'prefer not to say'.
Recommendation for wording	We would recommend amending the wording to read *I would prefer not to say.* If space permits, we would also like to move the tick box for this option to be horizontally in line with the other two tick boxes.
Revised question wording	*Prefer not to say* was amended to *I would prefer not to say*.
Range of interpretation in stage two of cognitive testing	The question was easily understood. One learner required the word 'described' to be read out, as well as '*Other, please say in the box*', but this learner understood the concept once this was read out to her.
Recommendation for wording	No change required.
Recommendation for illustration	No change required.