



Skills Funding
Agency

Employer Satisfaction Survey 2013 to 2014

Technical Report

This report was undertaken by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Skills Funding Agency.

December 2014

Of interest to colleges, training organisations and the general public interested in research, analysis and calculation phases of the 2013 to 2014 Learner Satisfaction Survey

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1. Introduction

The Employer Satisfaction performance indicator and score calculation

1.1 The Employer Satisfaction Performance Indicator is a score derived from responses to an attempted census¹ survey of employers who have received training from eligible providers during a pre-determined reference period. For the 2013 to 2014 survey, the reference period was August 2013 to February 2014. This is in line with the reference period for the 2012 to 2013 survey. In 2012 to 2013 the reference period was changed from previous years, so that the survey was about training received that same year. Prior to 2012 to 2013 the reference period was August to the following July. This change was made because the feedback from providers indicated that in-year reporting would be more useful for planning purposes. The survey captures employers' perceptions of the quality of training and providers' responsiveness to the employer's needs. The survey is multi-mode comprising online, postal and telephone methodologies.

1.2 The Employer Satisfaction questionnaire comprises three classification and nine rating questions (see Appendix 1). The response to each of the nine rating questions is a score from 0 to 10 where 0 denotes a very poor rating and 10 is very positive. For each provider, ratings for the nine questions are aggregated to provide a mean score. Each of the nine questions carries equal weighting.

Definition of eligible providers

1.3 Subject to certain eligibility criteria,² the Employer Satisfaction Survey 2013 to 2014 applied to all general further education colleges, tertiary colleges, land-based colleges, art and design colleges and most independent learning providers that deliver Employer-Responsive provision. The exceptions were:

- Sixth-form colleges;
- Apprenticeship Division Direct Grant Employers; and
- Providers funded to deliver training exclusively to their own employees – these providers were not eligible for Employer Satisfaction.

1.4 The total number of eligible providers was 737 at the start of the survey period in March 2014. The list of eligible providers changed throughout the course of the survey, and the final list contained 834 providers (see Appendix 4) although not all of these providers had eligible employers during the survey period.

¹ A sample approach is adopted for the largest providers.

² For more information please refer to the FE Choices information available at <http://fechoices.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk>

Definition of eligible employers

1.5 Any employer for whom an eligible provider had delivered publicly-funded training during August 2013 and February 2014.

1.6 The source of the base information for each college and provider's eligible employers was the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) which contains an employer identifier (the Employer Data Registration Service (EDRS) for each eligible learner. The EDRS is matched to the Blue Sheep database to append employers' contact details³. The database provided to Ipsos MORI contained 265,005 employer records relating to 737 providers.

Minimum number of employer responses

1.7 In order to be awarded an Employer Satisfaction score, a provider must achieve a minimum number of survey responses. Providers were advised, via an *online calculator*, of the likely minimum number of responses required to ensure a valid score. There were two criteria (A & B) used to calculate the minimum number of interviews as detailed below.

1.8 As in previous years, different confidence intervals were used for the online calculator and final scoring. The confidence interval used to derive the minimum sample size in the online calculator was +/- 5% (as detailed below). The confidence interval used to determine whether to award a valid score was +/-10%. This difference helps to minimise instances of providers not achieving a score because some employers submitted 'invalid' responses (i.e. missing data for all nine scoring questions).

Criteria A - Statistical

The formulas for calculating the target number of interviews were based on the standard Confidence Interval for a percentage (%), incorporating the Finite Population Correction Factor⁴.

The criteria used to set the sample size target were:

- Confidence Level = 95%
- Confidence Interval = +/- 5%
- Observed % = 80%⁵
- N = Number of Employers in the Providers' database (i.e. the population).

Details of the formulae for calculating the sample size are included in Appendix 2.

The Confidence Interval and Observed percentages above applied to the online calculator which providers used to advise them on the minimum number of employer responses they

³ <http://www.bluesheep.com/portfolio/skills-funding-agency>

⁴ This approach was introduced in the 2009/10 survey and endorsed by a committee which BIS attended. It reduces required sample sizes where a sample represents a high proportion of a known (fixed) population.

⁵ This percentage was used to maintain consistency with the Learner Satisfaction sample size calculator.

needed to achieve. These percentages were used to maintain consistency with the Learner Satisfaction calculator, which was set at 80%; this ensured comparability across the two measures. This meant the initial target was set slightly higher than would be required to achieve the minimum sample size to be awarded a score.

The criteria used to award a score were:

- Confidence Level = 95%
- Confidence Interval = +/- 10%
- Observed % 84% ^[1]
- N = Number of Employers in the Providers' database (i.e. the population)
- n = Number of Employers with valid survey responses.

Criteria B - Proportion of Database

At least 70% of the database (the list of employers having received training from a given provider) were interviewed. (This was used as an alternative to A for small populations where A would require an unreasonably high percentage target).

2. Development of the questions

2.1 The nine scoring questions were consistent with previous years of the survey (see Appendix 1). There were three versions of the questionnaire – one for each of the survey modes: postal, online and telephone (Appendix 1). As in 2012 to 2013, the online survey included additional course subject questions to give providers valuable subject level data. These questions were included in the online version only because they would add significantly to the survey length for the postal and telephone versions with obvious implications for response rates and costs. As in 2012 to 2013, for the online survey, the Agency was able to append to the employer list details of the learning by Sector Subject Area (SSA) that was delivered to each employer. This means that only employers with more than one SSA were asked to select up to five SSAs they would like to comment on.

2.2 As in previous years, the postal and online surveys invited respondents to offer comments on the overall quality of the training provided. No such open-ended questions were included in the telephone questionnaire due to the relative high costs.

Legal and ethical requirements

2.3 The contractors appointed by the Skills Funding Agency to deliver the 2013 to 2014 Employer Satisfaction Survey, Ipsos MORI working with RCU Limited, both adhere fully to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and are accredited under the international market research industry standard ISO 20252. These place a heavy emphasis on ensuring that survey respondents give informed consent to their involvement in any survey and that the uses that will be made of respondents' answers are made clear to them before they participate.

2.4 The Code of Conduct and ISO 20252 also require full compliance with Data Protection legislation, which ensure that the arrangements for the holding and possible sharing of a respondent's answers are made clear to the individual before they consent to take part. Related to this requirement, in the case of public bodies such as the Skills Funding Agency, is the obligation under the Freedom of Information Act where an organisation can be asked to make data it holds available to a third party.

2.5 Under Data Protection legislation, factual responses given by company representatives, such as size of the workforce, are not classed as personal data however, evaluation questions, such as how good was the training?, are classed as personal data. This means that a form of wording had to be found, agreed by the Agency's legal advisers that allowed employers to withhold their permission for providers to see their responses.

2.6 The form of wording used in the postal questionnaire is shown below and this was replicated in the online and telephone interviews. Respondents were advised that their open comments (see Appendix 1, questionnaire section 4) could not be passed back to the provider unless they ticked the box allowing their responses to be shared.

<input type="checkbox"/> I agree that any comments I have made and the ratings I have given can be shared with the training provider to assist them with their quality improvement processes.
<small>If you do not want us to share your comments or ratings with the training provider we can still use your responses to generate an overall score for them. Please be assured that we will, insofar as we are able due to statutory (for example, but not limited to, the Freedom of Information Act 2000) or other restrictions or obligations, endeavour to keep everything you tell us on this questionnaire confidential.</small>

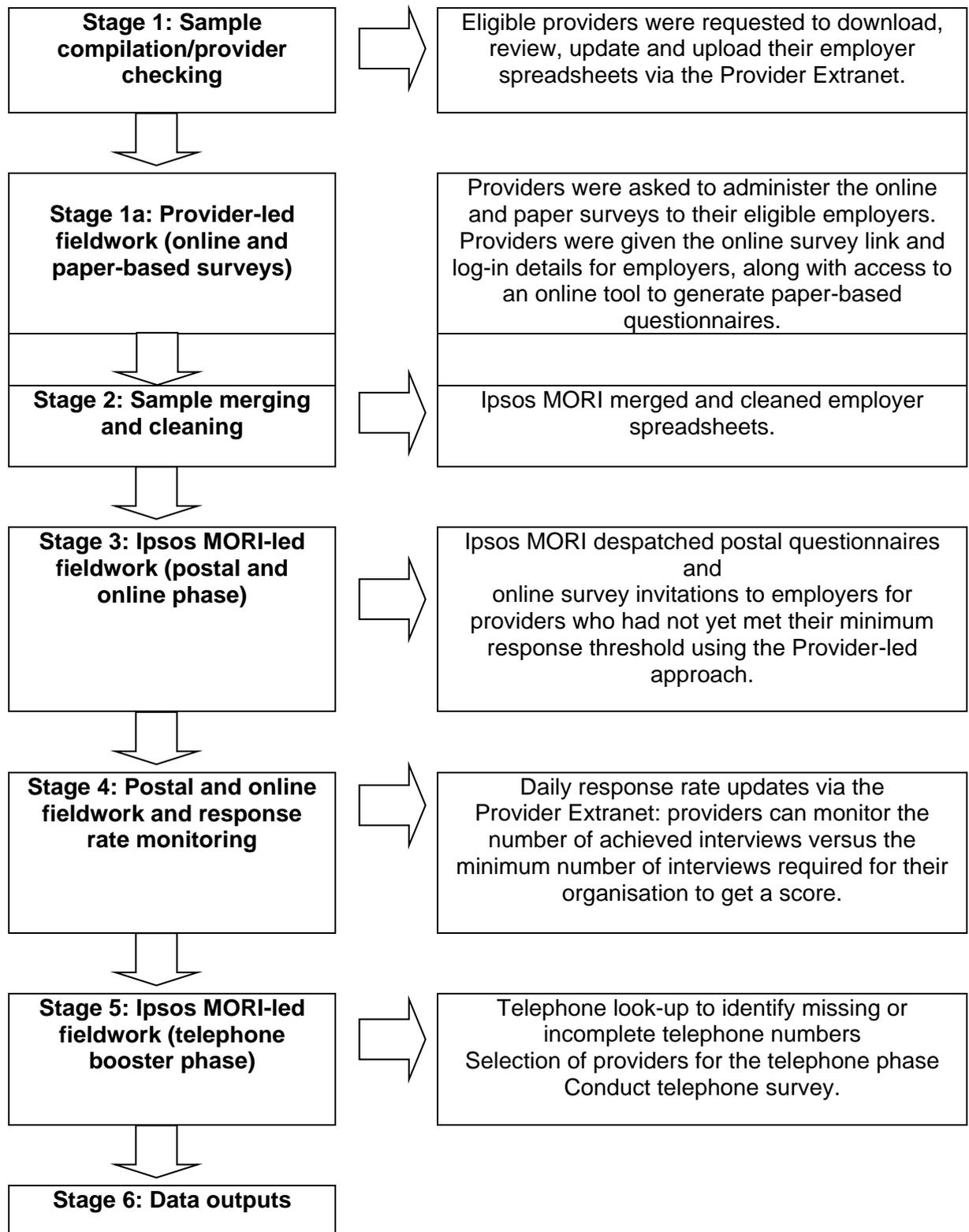
3. Overview of Methodology

3.1 The survey used a multi-mode approach starting with the most cost effective methodologies: postal and online (where a valid postal address or email was available for the employer). Employers who had not responded to postal/online contacts were followed up by telephone by Ipsos MORI, if it was likely that the provider would meet the minimum response threshold as the result of a telephone boost.

As in 2012 to 2013 the survey approach enabled providers to initially administer the survey before the process was then taken forward by Ipsos MORI. Providers were asked to administer the online and paper surveys to their employers during April and May 2014, and to achieve the minimum number of responses to qualify for an Employer Satisfaction score. Ipsos MORI conducted further surveys for providers that failed to reach the minimum threshold using the provider-led approach. This approach was introduced in the 2012 to 2013 Employer Satisfaction Survey. Prior to 2012 to 2013 the survey had been administered centrally by Ipsos MORI.

Figure 1 on the following page provides an overview of the process.

Figure 1: Overview of the survey process



4. Sample Compilation

Overall sample

4.1 Initially 737 providers were identified by the Agency as being eligible for the Employer Satisfaction Survey. The employer database provided to Ipsos MORI contained 265,005 employer records relating to these providers.

4.2 Ipsos MORI generated an employer list for each provider containing the following fields:

- Unique alphanumeric survey ID
- EDRS (Employer Data Registration Service)
- Employer name
- Employer contact details: postal address, telephone number, e-mail address and contact name
- Provider UKPRN
- Provider legal name
- Provider recognised name
- Subcontractor UKPRN
- Flag to indicate invalid entries (this column was left blank for providers to complete – they were asked to flag employers who were incorrectly listed such as duplicate entries, employers no longer trading, records relating to training of own staff).

Stage 1: Sample compilation and provider checking

4.3 Although the completeness of the employer details has improved significantly in recent years, important information such as a contact name in each employer and email addresses was still missing in the majority of cases.

4.4 In order to address the gaps in the contact information, providers were asked to update their employer list and submit this additional information to Ipsos MORI. The reason for asking providers to submit this information was to enable Ipsos MORI to contact employers for providers that failed to achieve the minimum number of responses themselves. As in previous years, Ipsos MORI designed and set-up a dedicated Extranet site (<http://fechoices.ipsos-mori.com/login/?ReturnUrl=%2fdefault.aspx>) to enable providers to update their employer contact details securely. Providers were each given a unique login that allowed them access to their organisation's homepage where they could view real-time response rate information.

4.5 The Extranet site was operational from January 2014. From this date, providers were able to contact Ipsos MORI with technical queries relating to the Employer Satisfaction employer list and survey procedures and timing.

4.6 In April 2014 all colleges and providers known, at that stage, to be eligible for the Employer Satisfaction Survey were sent an email correspondence by the Skills Funding Agency explaining the nature of the survey, introducing the Provider-led approach and emphasising the need to ensure contact details were accurate and comprehensive. In particular, providers were asked to identify a named contact and email address for each employer, to ensure that the most appropriate person was contacted for the survey. Providers updated their lists by downloading an Excel spreadsheet from the Extranet site, amending it off-line by adding information to identified fields and using the information to survey their

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employers. Providers were only required to upload the amended employer list onto the Extranet site for Ipsos MORI to use if: 1) they were *not* taking part in the provider-led approach or 2) they did *not* achieve the minimum number of responses required via the provider-led approach.

4.7 When providers first logged onto their homepage on the Extranet to download their employer spreadsheets, they were also asked to indicate whether they wanted to take the opportunity to link the Employer Satisfaction Survey with their own employer survey - 33 providers took up this option. These providers were asked to provide further details about their survey, such as the URL for their survey, to enable Ipsos MORI to set-up the linking.

4.8 Providers were asked to undertake the following tasks with their downloaded spreadsheet prior to uploading the updated spreadsheet back on to the Extranet:

- Check it for completeness;
- Add/amend missing/incorrect contact information;
- Amend the recognised as name where the training was subcontracted or employers would recognise a different name for the provider;
- Flag incorrect entries that needed to be removed⁶.

4.9 Providers downloaded, updated and uploaded their employer lists between 22 April and 23 May 2014. All providers that had not downloaded their spreadsheet by 29 April 2014 were sent an email reminder by Ipsos MORI⁷.

4.10 Ipsos MORI incorporated a series of automated validation checks into the employer spreadsheets to minimise the amount of incomplete and incorrect information in the spreadsheets returned by providers. In particular, it was important to increase the number of email addresses provided. Missing or incomplete data were automatically flagged to the provider with details of the error provided at the end of each row of data. The inclusion of these checks again helped ensure the quality of the data provided, in particular the completeness of email addresses.

4.11 Providers who attempted to upload spreadsheets onto the Extranet that did not follow the naming convention of the file provided were sent an error message asking them to amend and re-upload their spreadsheet.

4.12 Providers who had registered an email address on the Extranet were sent a confirmation email once their spreadsheet had been uploaded.

Stage 1a: Provider-led fieldwork

4.13 Following the success of the provider-led approach in 2012 to 2013, providers were again encouraged to take the lead in inviting their eligible employers to take part in the Employer Satisfaction Survey 2013 to 2014. Providers were given unique survey IDs for each employer, a link to the online survey to share, and access to an online tool to generate paper-based questionnaires where this was required for employers. A detailed step-by-step guide,

⁶ For example, duplicate entries, employers who had ceased trading and employers training their own staff.

⁷ This reminder was sent to providers who had signed-up on the Provider Extranet to receive updates.

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developed in collaboration with the Skills Funding Agency and tested with six pilot providers, was made available to providers to assist them with administering the survey (Appendix 3).

4.14 Response rate reports were generated daily throughout the period. Providers were supported by Ipsos MORI in generating paper-based surveys. Since this approach was new to providers, considerable technical support was given by Ipsos MORI on how to generate the paper questionnaires.

4.15 During the provider-led approach a total of 24,484 responses to the Employer Satisfaction survey were received (either online or on paper) from across 429 providers. This shows that the provider-led approach had worked well in its second year with nearly 60% of eligible providers making use of the opportunity to administer the survey themselves. At the end of the provider-led approach, a total of 182 providers had already achieved a sufficient number of responses to meet their minimum response target (for the 10% Confidence Interval). In addition, a further 89 providers had achieved 50% or more of their target responses through this approach.

Stage 2: Sample merging and cleaning

4.16 At the end of the uploading period, Ipsos MORI merged all the employer spreadsheets into a master file. A small number of providers submitted spreadsheets that were not in the required format and these had to be merged manually.

4.17 The proportion of providers checking and uploading their employer list continues to decline as the result of the provider-led approach, and the requirement for providers to only check and upload their employer list if they did not hit their target during the provider-led approach. Overall, only 10% of providers downloaded and then uploaded their employer list (compared with 61% in 2010 to 2011, 74% in 2011 to 2012, and 61% in 2012 to 2013).

Stage 3: Ipsos MORI-led postal and online fieldwork

4.18 This phase included all employers (with a postal or e-mail address) belonging to providers that had not achieved their minimum response threshold in the provider-led phase. Employers were invited to take part in the online survey in the first instance, where email addresses were available. The remaining employers, including those whose email addresses bounced-back, were sent a postal survey.

Stage 4: Postal and online fieldwork and response rate monitoring

4.19 Fieldwork took place between 9 July and 8 August 2014. In total, 117,645 postal questionnaires were printed and despatched by Ipsos MORI as well as 29,771 online invitations, during June and July 2014. During July and August 2014, two e-mail reminders were sent by Ipsos MORI to employers with e-mail addresses. Throughout the survey window, the Skills Funding Agency encouraged providers to ask their employers to take part. This was initially done via the "Update" newsletter and Area team Relationship Managers. In addition, one week before the close of fieldwork, Ipsos MORI sent a further email reminder to Providers who had signed-up for Extranet updates, and had not yet achieved their minimum response level.

4.20 Completed postal questionnaires were logged daily and combined with the completed online replies to provide daily updates on response levels for each provider. This meant that, throughout the fieldwork, providers were able to go to their homepage on the Provider Extranet

to monitor the number of employer responses for their institution against the minimum target. The daily updates also identified which employers had responded to the survey. This enabled providers to contact employers who had yet to respond to encourage them to take part.

Stage 5: Telephone booster interviews

4.21 A total of 6,002 telephone interviews were conducted between 26 August and 18 September 2014 for 301 providers to boost their chances of gaining a valid score. The main purpose of these booster interviews was to increase the number of providers passing their minimum response threshold.

Stage 6: Data outputs

4.22 In total, 53,079 completed and usable responses were received: 32,608 online, 14,469 postal and 6,002 telephone. Data from the postal, online and telephone interviews were merged and provided to RCU Limited in SPSS format for the analysis. This file also included SSA level responses in the online survey. As part of the analysis conducted by RCU Limited 'invalid'⁸ responses were excluded when calculating provider scores. In total 52,771 responses were classed as 'valid' and therefore used in calculating provider scores.

4.23 In addition, 6,947 employers left at least one verbatim comment on the survey (either at the final open question or at one of the SSA level open questions). Of these 6,947 employers 6,852 left verbatim comments at the end of the survey questions. (Employers leaving these comments may have also left a verbatim comment at the SSA level open questions). Postal verbatim comments were typed up, before being combined with online verbatim comments. Individual provider verbatim reports in Excel format were prepared to disseminate the verbatim comments (where employers had given their consent). Consent was given by employers to share these comments in 84% of cases. Individual provider reports were also prepared to share indicative Employer Satisfaction results with providers within six weeks after the survey ended.

5. Technical queries received

Provider queries

5.1 Providers who had queries could access a frequently asked questions (FAQs) drop down menu on the Extranet. The menu contained responses to a range of potential queries. However, providers who had queries after viewing the FAQs could contact Ipsos MORI directly for technical assistance. Providers with non-technical queries were asked to contact the Skills Funding Agency via the Data Service, Service Desk. (servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk)

5.2 Ipsos MORI dealt with over 600 provider queries by telephone and e-mail which is a similar volume to the previous year. A number of the queries were related to the provider-led approach. In particular, providers were requesting help using the paper-based questionnaire generation tool. Other queries raised by providers were similar to previous years including a number of questions about the employer list. They also included:

- Requests for replacement passwords for the Provider Extranet.

⁸ A response is classed as 'invalid' if no answers were received to the questions used to calculate scores (questions 3 – 6).

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- Requests for clarification on how the minimum sample size is derived.
- Requests for clarification on the definition of eligible employers, which were passed on to the Skills Funding Agency to answer.
- Requests for clarification on how errors on the employer spreadsheet can be avoided.
- Requests to Ipsos MORI to accept spreadsheets with hard errors.
- Requests for certain employers to be removed from the employer spreadsheets during fieldwork (i.e. from providers who had not checked their employer list fully or at all).
- Requests for an extension for submitting employer spreadsheets.
- Requests for confirmation on survey fieldwork dates.
- Queries relating to the response rate updates posted on the Provider Extranet.

Employer queries

5.3 Employers could access a list of employer-specific frequently asked questions posted in the survey website. They could also submit direct queries to Ipsos MORI. In excess of 1,000 queries were received by telephone and email relating to the following issues:

- The employer had not heard of the provider (where the provider had not flagged the name of the sub-contractor in their employer spreadsheets).
- Confusion on the part of the employer about the training they were meant to have received.
- Notification of a wish not to take part in the survey.
- Notification of an alternative contact person.
- Notification that the training manager was no longer there and their replacement was unable to answer the questions.
- Requests for the online survey link to be resent.

Appendix 1: A. Questionnaire (postal)

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Ipsos MORI



<TITLE> <FIRST NAME> <SURNAME>
<JOB TITLE>
<NAME>
<ADDRESS1>
<ADDRESS2>
<ADDRESS3>
<TOWN>
<COUNTY>
<POSTCODE>

<EMPLOYER ID>

July 2014

Dear <TITLE><SURNAME>

Your provider, your experience, your say

I am writing to ask for your help in telling us how your training provider is performing.

We understand that between August 2013 and February 2014 you received training <in INSERT SSA> from <Recognised as>. We would like your views of the training they provided.

Your answers to the survey along with those from other employers will be used by the Skills Funding Agency's contractors, Ipsos MORI and RCU Limited, to calculate an Employer Satisfaction score for each training provider. These scores will be published to help you and other employers make informed decisions about your future choices of training providers. In 2012/13 we received nearly 60,000 employer responses. You can view an Infographic of these results at this address:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/304730/FE_choices_infographic.pdf

Please complete the attached questionnaire and return it to Ipsos MORI in the pre-paid envelope provided by 8 August 2014.

If you are not the best-placed person to respond within your organisation, please pass this questionnaire to the most appropriate person. If you prefer, you can complete the survey online using this link: www.ipsos-mori.com/employersatisfaction and entering your unique reference number <EMPLOYER ID>. It should take no more than five minutes to complete.

If you have received training from more than one training provider, you will receive a separate survey invitation for each one. This is because it is important for us to understand how your experience compares for different providers.

Further details about the survey can be found at <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/FE+Choices/Indicators>. If you have other queries about the survey, please email: employersatisfaction@ipsos-mori.com stating your reference number located in the top right corner of this letter.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Dalton

Head of Consumer Services Planning, Skills Funding Agency

1234567890

BARCODE

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Page No. **1**

Employers' Satisfaction with Training

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Employers' Satisfaction with Training

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. Please answer the questions below in relation to the training provider named in the cover letter. Your answers will be confidential unless you indicate that you wish to share them with your training provider. Please return this questionnaire by 8 August 2014.

Section 1: Background Information about Your Organisation

Q1a Including you and any working proprietors, how many people are on the payroll at this location?
PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

1	2-9	10-49	50-249	250+
<input type="checkbox"/>				

Q1b Between August 2013 and February 2014, approximately how many of your staff received any training or assessment from this training provider?
PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

1	2-4	5-9	10-19	20-29	30 or more	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>						

Q2 As the employer, did you have to pay for any of this training?
PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, in all cases	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, in some cases	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

Section 2: Rating the Training Received

In this section you are asked to rate the overall quality of the training delivered by this training provider between the period August 2013 and February 2014. Please consider all training that you have received from this provider during this period.

Q3 How do you rate their overall performance in each of these aspects on a scale of 0-10, where 0 = very poor and 10 = excellent?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT

	Very poor											Excellent	Don't know	Did not apply
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
a) Understanding your organisation's training needs.....	<input type="checkbox"/>													
b) Offering training and/or assessment in a flexible way to meet your needs.....	<input type="checkbox"/>													
c) Communicating clearly with you throughout the process.....	<input type="checkbox"/>													
d) Their overall efficiency in their dealings with you	<input type="checkbox"/>													
e) The professionalism of the staff delivering training and/or assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>													
f) Delivering training that reflects up-to-date practices in your industry/sector.....	<input type="checkbox"/>													



Section 3: Overall Satisfaction

Q4 How would you rate the benefits of the training/assessment to your organisation, on a scale of 0-10, where 0 = no benefits and 10 = very significant benefits?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

No benefits												Very significant benefits	Don't know/ too early to tell
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>												

Q5 How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the overall quality of the training/assessment, on a scale of 0-10, where 0 = extremely dissatisfied and 10 = extremely satisfied?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Extremely dissatisfied												Extremely satisfied	Don't know
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q6 How likely would you be to recommend this training provider to another employer seeking similar training, on a scale of 0-10, where 0 = highly unlikely and 10 = highly likely?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

High unlikely												Highly likely	Don't know
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
<input type="checkbox"/>													

Section 4: Final Comments

If you have any suggestions to help improve the services offered to employers by this training provider, please record these in the box below. Please note that we will not be able to pass your suggestions or ratings on unless you have ticked the permission box below.

I agree that any comments I have made and the ratings I have given can be shared with the training provider to assist them with their quality improvement processes.

If you do not want us to share your comments or ratings with the training provider we can still use your responses to generate an overall score for them. Please be assured that we will, insofar as we are able due to statutory (for example, but not limited to, the Freedom of Information Act 2000) or other restrictions or obligations, endeavour to keep everything you tell us on this questionnaire confidential.

If you would like to receive a report based on the responses for the 2013/14 survey, please provide your email address in the box below.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

Please use the envelope provided to return the questionnaire to us.
If this has become detached, please send it to: Freepost R5AE RCET ATJY,
Employer Satisfaction, Ipsos MORI, Research Services House, Elmgrove Road, Harrow, HA1 2QG

FINAL version
13-098608-01
020714

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Appendix : B. Questionnaire (telephone)

Employers' Satisfaction with Training CATI questionnaire 7 August 2014

Please may I speak to **<CONTACT NAME FROM SAMPLE>**. IF NO CONTACT NAME: Please may I speak to the person responsible for training at this site?

Good morning/afternoon, my name is ... and I am calling from Ipsos MORI, an independent research organisation. We are conducting a very short survey on behalf of the Skills Funding Agency to find out how well training providers are meeting the needs of businesses.

<'RECOGNISED AS' NAME FROM SAMPLE>, gave us your name as an employer that had used their training services between August 2013 and February 2014. I would be grateful if you could give us your views by answering this short telephone survey. It should only take around 5 minutes.

CONTINUE WITH INTERVIEW OR ARRANGE TIME TO CALL BACK

DID NOT USE NAMED TRAINING PROVIDER BETWEEN AUG 2013-FEB 2014. CLOSE INTERVIEW

Please answer the following questions in relation to **<'RECOGNISED AS' NAME FROM SAMPLE>**. IF HAS SUBCONTRACTORS DISPLAY FOLLOWING TEXT: Some of this training may have subcontracted to **<<SUBCONTRACTORS>>**. Please tell us about your overall experience for all these training providers combined. Your answers will be completely confidential unless you tell us at the end of this survey that you are willing to share them with your training provider.

Firstly I would like to ask you for some background information about your organisation.

- Q1a Including you and any working proprietors, how many people are on the payroll at this location?
SINGLE CODE ONLY.

1	1
2-9	2
10-49	3
50-249	4
250+	5
Don't know	6

- Q1b Between August 2013 and February 2014, approximately how many of your staff received any training or assessment from **<'RECOGNISED AS' NAME> and/or <<SUBCONTRACTORS>>?**
SINGLE CODE ONLY. IF ZERO, CLOSE INTERVIEW

1	1
2-4	2
5-9	3
10-19	4
20-29	5
30 or more	6

FE Choices Employer Satisfaction Survey 2013 to 2014

Don't know	7
------------	---

Q2 As the employer, did you have to pay for any of this training?
SINGLE CODE ONLY. INTERVIEWER: IF YES – CHECK IN ALL CASES OR SOME CASES

Yes, in all cases	1
Yes, in some cases	2
No	3
Don't Know	4

I would now like to ask you to rate the overall quality of the training delivered by **<RECOGNISED AS NAME> and/or <<SUBCONTRACTORS>>** between the period August 2013 and February 2014. Please consider all training that you have received from this provider during this period.

Q3 How do you rate their overall performance in each of these aspects on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is very poor and 10 is excellent?
READ OUT EACH STATEMENT. SINGLE CODE ONLY FOR EACH STATEMENT

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know	Did not apply
	Very Poor										Excellent		
a) Understanding your organisation's training needs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
b) Offering training and/or assessment in a flexible way to meet your needs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
c) Communicating clearly with you throughout the process	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
d) Their overall efficiency in their dealings with you	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
e) The professionalism of the staff in delivering training and/or assessment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
f) Delivering training that reflects up-to-date practices in your industry or sector	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	

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Q4 How would you rate the benefits of the training and/or assessment to your organisation, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is no benefits and 10 is very significant benefits?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Don't Know/
No Very Know/
benefits significant too
early
to tell

Q5 How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the overall quality of the training on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is extremely dissatisfied and 10 is extremely satisfied?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Extremely Extremely
dissatisfied satisfied

Q6 How likely would you be to recommend **<RECOGNISED AS NAME> and/or <<SUBCONTRACTORS>>** to another employer seeking similar training, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is highly unlikely and 10 is highly likely?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Don't
Highly Highly know
unlikely likely

Q8. Finally, do you consent to having your responses shared with **<RECOGNISED AS NAME>** in order to assist their quality improvement processes? If you do not want us to share your ratings with the training provider we can still use your responses to generate an overall score for **<RECOGNISED AS NAME>**. Please be assured that we will, insofar as we are able due to statutory (for example, but not limited to, the Freedom of Information Act 2000) or other restrictions or obligations, endeavour to keep everything you tell us during this interview confidential.

SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Yes – 1

No - 2

Q9. Would you like to receive a copy of the survey findings by email?

Yes – 1 - RECORD EMAIL ADDRESS FOR FINDINGS TO BE SENT TO.

No - 2

THANK AND CLOSE.

Appendix 1: C. Supplementary questions for the online version

Browser



Skills Funding Agency



44% Complete

Training and/or assessment in different skill areas

Q7a. We understand that your organisation received training from this training provider in the following skills areas. Is this correct? Please select all the skills areas that are correct.

- Science
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Engineering
- Philosophy
- Geography
- Law and Legal Services
- None

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Skills Funding Agency

50% Complete

We would like to ask you a small number of questions to help us understand how well the provider is performing in each skill area.

Q7b. Please select the 5 skill areas that you would like to comment on:

- Science
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Engineering
- Philosophy
- Geography
- Law and Legal Services

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Skills Funding Agency

55% Complete

Q11. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the overall quality of the training/assessment in this skill area: Science?

Please select one option only

Extremely dissatisfied 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Extremely satisfied 10	Don't know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12. If you were asked by another employer seeking training in Science to recommend this training provider, how likely is it that you would recommend them?

Please select one option only

Highly unlikely 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Highly likely 10	Don't know
<input type="radio"/>											

Q13. Please use the box below if you have any suggestions to help the provider improve the quality of their training in Science.

Please only make a suggestion if you are happy for us to pass your comments back to the provider. This textbox has a limit of 4000 characters

I do not wish to make any comments.

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Appendix 2 : Employer Satisfaction Survey 2013 to14 Provider Guidance

Introduction

Building on the success of the 'Provider-led' approach in 2013, we will again ask colleges and training organisations to administer the Employer Satisfaction Survey 2014 to their employers in the first instance, followed by an 'Agency-supported' phase, if needed.

There are a number of changes to how the Employer Satisfaction Survey 2014 will be administered this year, which will affect colleges and training organisations taking part. The Skills Funding Agency has published this document to help you to:

- (a) administer the Employer Satisfaction Survey (during the 'provider-led' phase), and
- (b) help you to update your Employer list (if you do not meet the minimum response levels during the 'provider-led' approach). The Employer List will be used by the Skills Funding Agency and our survey contractor Ipsos MORI during the 'Agency-supported' phase. (NOTE: If your organisation is taking a proactive approach to the survey during the 'Provider-led' phase, you may not need to do this.)

Administering the Employer Satisfaction Survey

Please follow the steps below to invite your employers to take part in the Employer Satisfaction Survey.

Inviting your employers to take part

Step 1: Follow the steps outlined below to download, review, and update your Employer List.

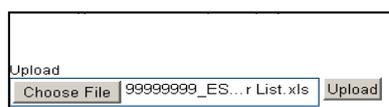
NOTE: Colleges and training organisations which **meet their minimum response level** during the 'Provider-led' approach will **not be required to update and submit their employer list**.

Step 2: Plan your strategy for contacting employers. Please send a survey invitation to all of the employers on your list.

Step 3: Email your employer customers the survey link: (<http://www.ipsos-mori.com/employersatisfaction>) and provide them with their unique Employer ID (**Column A on the Employer List**) which they will need to access the online survey.

Step 4: If you wish to generate paper-based surveys for all, or some of your employers, please follow the steps below to make use of the mail merge function, which is available to you. You may use this function as many times as you wish to generate paper based questionnaires.

- a. Save a new version of your Employer List for use with the mail merge tool, you may give this a new name such as: 99999999_ES_EmployerList_Paper.
- b. Indicate 'Yes' in **Column Q (Postal Questionnaire)** to identify those employers for which you wish to print questionnaires. Use the 'Salutation' field (**Column J**) to indicate how you would like the letter to be addressed, such as Mr Smith, or John.
- c. Delete **Columns R to AH** (including column AH) in your spreadsheet (ensuring you have first saved this elsewhere). You do not need the information in these columns for the mail merge function. For details on how to do this, please contact employersatisfaction@ipsos-mori.com. Then **upload your Employer List** on the 'Create paper questionnaires' page as follows:



The image shows a file upload interface. At the top, the word "Upload" is displayed. Below it, there is a text input field containing the filename "99999999_ES...r List.xls". To the left of the input field is a "Choose File" button, and to the right is an "Upload" button.

- d. **Please write** the text you wish to add to the core message by putting this into the boxes provided to personalise the letter, and add a signature (you can add an electronic signature, in addition to name and/or job title). An example of the cover letter that will be generated **is provided at the end** of this document.
- e. Press the “Generate” button to create your questionnaires.



- f. Check that the unique Employer ID (**Column A**) for each of your employers is printed on each questionnaire.
- g. Check the wording of the letter. Does it convey what you want it to say? Please ensure you have not duplicated the sign off. We include:

Thank you in advance for your help. Yours sincerely'

- h. When you have finished, print off your questionnaires.

PLEASE NOTE: You must print the cover letter and include this with each questionnaire, stapled together.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are using older versions of Microsoft Office, then you will need to download Microsoft Word Viewer from the following link:

<http://www.microsoft.com/en-GB/download/details.aspx?id=4>

If you are on a network, then you may need administrator rights to download and install this programme, in which case you should contact your IT Support Team.

- i. As a final check, read your printed questionnaires before distributing them. Please remember that we cannot allocate any responses to you for any questionnaires issued to employers without a **unique Employer ID**. Please also make sure that you use the correct unique Employer ID for each employer so that their responses count towards your score.

- j. Post the questionnaires to your employers. You will need to pay for the postage. Alternatively, you can give them the paper versions of the survey when you visit them.
- k. Employers should return their questionnaire to the Ipsos MORI Freepost address (provided at the end of this document); they do not need to pay postage. You can either print this address onto labels or envelopes for your employers, or simply ask them to write it onto a blank envelope into which the questionnaire can be placed.

Step 5: Please monitor your organisation's Daily Response Rate Update, which will appear on the [Provider Extranet](#) throughout the survey period, and encourage your employer customers to respond. We suggest three reminders in the timetable below.

Survey Timetable

Please send out the survey invitation as soon as possible between **22 April 2014 and 16 May 2014** ('Provider-led' approach). We recommend sending up to three reminders to non-responding employers during this period, as detailed in the timetable below. To check which employers have responded/not responded, please view your organisation's daily response rate information on the [Provider Extranet](#).

The initial survey period ('Provider-led' approach) will end on the **16 May 2014**. The Skills Funding Agency working in partnership with our survey contractors Ipsos MORI, will then identify colleges and training organisations with insufficient employer responses to contact for the 'Agency-supported' phase of the Employer Satisfaction Survey.

It is therefore imperative that if you **have not** met the minimum response level required for the provider-led survey period **or** if you have had to remove some employers participating in the survey, for example if they have ceased trading, that you upload your amended Employer List (please see 'Updating your Employer List' section below). This information will be needed to support the Skills Funding Agency/Ipsos MORI in contacting those employers yet to participate with the Employer Satisfaction Survey during the Agency-supported phase.

NOTE: The 'Agency-led' phase will be prioritised to assist those closest to achieving a valid score first.

Action	Start date	End date
Your organisation sends out survey invites 'Provider-led' approach	22-April-14	16-May-14
Your organisation's Daily Response Rate Update available	22-April-14	8-August-14
First reminder to employers sent out by your organisation	28-April-14	28-April-14
Second reminder to employers sent out by your organisation	6-May-14	6-May-14
Third reminder to employers sent out by your organisation	12-May-14	12-May-14
End of 'Provider-led' survey approach	16-May-14	16-May-14
'Agency-led' approach starts	2-June-14	8-August-14

Cover Letter Example

+

+

--	--	--

<Name>
<Address line 1>
<Address line 2>
<Postcode>

Employer ID: a12bc31

Your answers to the survey along with those from other employers will be used by the Skills Funding Agency's contractors, Ipsos MORI and RCU Limited, to calculate an Employer Satisfaction score for each training provider. These scores will be published to help you and other employers make informed decisions about your future choices of training providers. The results of the 2012/13 survey are available for learners and employers to view at <http://fechoices.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk>

Please complete the attached questionnaire and return it to Ipsos MORI (Freepost address provided at the end of this questionnaire) by 16 May 2014. If you prefer, you can complete the survey online using this link: www.ipsos-mori.com/employersatisfaction and entering your unique reference number a12bc31. It should take no more than five minutes to complete.

Further details about the survey can be found at <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/FE+Choices/Indicators>. If you have other queries about the survey, please email: employersatisfaction@ipsos-mori.com stating your reference number located in the top right corner of this letter.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

+

Page No.

a12bc31
Employers' Satisfaction with Training



+

Ipsos MORI Freepost Address

Freepost RSAE-RCET-ATJY
Employer Satisfaction Survey
Ipsos MORI
Research Services House
Elmgrove Road
Harrow
HA1 2QG

Updating your Employer List

Please note that only those colleges and training organisations **who do not meet their minimum response level** during the provider-led approach will be **required** to update and submit their employer list.

You should follow the instructions below to review and update your employer list by **23 May 2014**.

Step One:

- a. **Download** your Employer List from the Employer Satisfaction Survey homepage on the [Provider Extranet](#) by selecting the file
- b. **Save** the Excel spreadsheet to your own network or PC without changing the file name.
NOTE: We will not accept your file if the file name differs from that downloaded.

Step Two:

Check your spreadsheet against the information in the fields listed in Table A below.

NOTE: Where necessary, add in the correct information.

Table A: List of fields you need to check and update/populate

Title (column K)	Title of the person receiving the survey questionnaire (Mr/Miss/Mrs/Ms)
First name (column L)	First name of the person receiving the survey questionnaire
Surname (column M)	Surname of the person receiving the survey questionnaire
Job Title (column N)	Job title of the person receiving the survey questionnaire
Telephone number (column S)	Telephone number for the person receiving the questionnaire including area codes

Email (column T)	Email contact for the person receiving the questionnaire
Recognised as name (column B)	If your organisation subcontracted the training, please supply us with the name of the subcontractor organisation that delivered the training. If your organisation is known to the employer under a different name, please write in this name. Please note that the name that appears in the 'Recognised as' column in the Employer List you download is the name that will appear in the online survey.

Please do not alter the structure of your files. We cannot accept files that have been structurally altered.

Identify and exclude ineligible employers. Follow the instructions in the 'What you need to do' column in Table B below to mark these employers on your Employer List spreadsheet.

Please do not remove or add any employers to the list.

Columns A, C-I, O, P, R and U cannot be edited.

Table B: Identifying and excluding ineligible employers

Reasons for wanting to remove an employer	What you need to do on the Employer List spreadsheet
The employer is no longer trading	Select 'Ceased trading' from the drop-down menu in column V 'Reason for removing employer'
The employer is also the college or training provider (that is you are delivering training to your own staff)	Select 'Training own staff' from the drop down menu in column V 'Reason for removing employer'
Duplicate records for exactly the same workplace. (This must have exactly the same address)	Select 'Duplicate site' from the drop-down menu in column V 'Reason for removing employer'. If there are two identical records, flag one only. If there are three identical records, flag two records only. Make sure you keep one record un-flagged.

Step Three:

Once step two has been carried out, please:

a. **Validate** your spreadsheet.

The employer spreadsheet contains a validation script to help you check the data is suitable for the survey. It will highlight errors or missing information in the following fields:

- Title and Contact Names
- Job title
- Email address
- Telephone number

Any errors found during the validation will appear in column W on the spreadsheet.

b. **Check** the error showing in column W and correct it.

Step Four:

Upload your employer spreadsheet and provide a contact name for any queries by:

a. **Selecting the 'Browse' button;** this can be found immediately below your Employer List.

Locate your file and send it to us by clicking on the 'Upload' button. The uploaded file must have the same name as the file you downloaded.

b. **Providing us with contact details** for the appropriate person to contact in your organisation should we need to contact you about the Employer Satisfaction Survey. To do this, select 'Add/amend my contact details' tab on the [Provider Extranet](#).

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act covers the use of personal data only and does not apply to organisations or limited companies. Therefore, you are able to share the name and contact details of an individual occupying a given position with an organisation or limited company.

In some cases, the contact information we require may be classed as personal data; for example, the name and address of an individual operating as a sole trader. This personal data will be processed solely for the research purposes permitted to be undertaken by, or on behalf of, the Chief Executive of Skills Funding. It will only be kept as long as necessary and then will be securely destroyed.

Any questions

If you have any questions about the Employer Satisfaction survey, please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions below or the [Contact Us](#) page to select a query. If you require further information, follow the instructions on this page and you will be able to submit a query to us directly.

Questions and Answers

Q: Who do I contact if I am having trouble downloading my employer list?

A: Please refer to the [Contact Us](#) page on the Provider Extranet to select a query. If you require further information, follow the instructions and you will be able to submit a query to Ipsos MORI directly.

Q: Why can't I just send you our own employer list?

A: For the survey, we are dealing with more than 200,000 records and so we need to work in a systematic way, which is why it is essential you use our spreadsheet format.

Q: Why can't I change your spreadsheet format?

A: We need to understand the changes you have made and so it is essential you use our spreadsheet format, so we understand why and where you have made changes.

Q: Do I need to supply a contact name for each employer on the list?

A: Yes, this is essential to ensure your questionnaire reaches the right person. Following the provider-led approach, Ipsos MORI will be conducting follow-up survey work among providers with insufficient employer responses. Therefore, it is important to make sure that the information provided is correct. Without a contact name, the questionnaire is likely to go astray. (Employers respond well to receiving personalised correspondence as it conveys providers are interested in their views. It is proven that non-personalised correspondence generates less response.)

Q: The contact person we dealt with has left the employer and there is no-one appropriate to comment on the training. What do I need to do?

A: Please include an alternative contact name and/or Job Title, if possible. We will still invite the employer to take part in the survey.

Q: We deliver training to a number of sites for the same business but the contact name is the same across all the sites. Can I delete some of the sites so that our contact does not get more than one survey invitation?

No. Each site may have different experiences and we want employers to have the opportunity to express this.

Q: My list contains employers whose learners did not complete the training/dropped out early on. Can I remove them?

A: No. Some questions in the survey will still be relevant to the employer.

Q: My list contains employers who do not want to be contacted. How do I remove them?

A: The survey is voluntary so employers do not have to complete it if they do not want to. The survey questionnaire will contain information on how employers can notify Ipsos MORI that they do not want to take part.

Q: Can I add additional employers to my list?

A: No. Additional entries are not permissible. The list is compiled from the Individual Learner Records (ILR) 2013/14 of all employers notified by eligible providers to the Skills Funding Agency as having received full or part funded training delivered to them by a college/training organisation funded for Apprenticeship or work placed learning and contracted to received an Adult Skills Budget between August 2013 and February 2014.

Q: What does Employer ID refer to on the spreadsheet?

A: Employer ID is the unique reference number that Ipsos MORI has allocated to each employer, to enable them to track their participation in the survey. This number is also used to provide you with daily update reports during field work.

Q: Why can't I delete the Employer ID?

A: The field is protected and cannot be changed. It is important that the unique Employer ID is retained so it can be used as detailed in the question above.

Q: What is the EDRS (Employer Data Registration Service) number?

A: The number identifies each workplace and is sourced from field A44 on the ILR

Q: How do I update an employer's address?

A: If the address provided for any of your employers is incorrect, then you should notify the [EDS helpdesk](#). For the purposes of the Employer Satisfaction Survey, Ipsos MORI will not be able to use updated addresses. Instead, you can follow the instructions below to either send the employer the link to the online survey, or generate a paper-based version of the questionnaire to send out to them.

Q: What do I do if there are employers on my list who fall under the exempt categories in Table B?

A: As indicated in Table B, you should flag them in column V 'Reason for Employer Removal.' Ipsos MORI will then ensure they are not included in the survey. We ask that you do not delete them from the list, as we need to have a record of the employers that you wish us to remove.

Q: Do I include multiple sites of the same organisation?

A: Yes. It is valid to include multiple sites of the same organisation if you have delivered training to different sites and each site has a separate EDRS number.

Q: Why do you need me to list the name of our subcontractors on the spreadsheet?

A: It is important you list the name of your subcontractor. We can then indicate to the employer the name of the provider that may have delivered the training. In many cases, this name is more recognisable to the employer and so they are more likely to respond to the questionnaire. Without correct information here, we are unlikely to get a response.

Q: What do I need to do to correct errors found on my Employer List spreadsheet after I have pressed save?

A: Please check these errors in column W and then make the appropriate corrections.

Q: Do I need to worry about spelling the employers' details correctly?

A: Yes. We will use the exact information you provide. So if you make spelling mistakes these will appear in the mailing to employers.

Q: Have you included the information I provided last year?

A: Yes, where possible we have included the information you provided last year in your employer list. Please check that the details are still relevant and that the contact names are in the format required for this year's survey.

Appendix 3 : Formulae used to calculate confidence intervals

Confidence interval (minimum sample size)

Sample Size Calculation (as used in the Sample Size Calculator)

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times (1-p)}{c^2}$$

Correction for Finite Population (for known population size)

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Adjusted sample size} \\ = \frac{\text{Sample Size}}{1 + \frac{\text{Sample Size} - 1}{N}} \end{aligned}$$

Confidence interval of a returned sample

$$\text{Confidence Interval} = Z \times \sqrt{\frac{px(1-p)}{n}} \times \sqrt{\frac{N-n}{N-1}}$$

Where:

Z = Z value (e.g. 1.96 for 95% confidence level)

p = Assumed / observed % expressed as a decimal (e.g. 84% satisfied = 0.84)

c = Confidence interval, expressed as decimal (e.g. $\pm 5\%$ = 0.05)

N = Number eligible employers

n = Number of valid responses

Appendix 4: Formulae used to calculate scores for valid samples

How an example provider's score was calculated

100 eligible employers of Provider X completed online surveys, 28 eligible employers of the same provider completed postal surveys, and 79 eligible employers of the same provider completed telephone surveys, giving a total of 207 valid respondents. 4 other employers of the provider responded but had already submitted responses or did not answer any of the scoring questions.

The 207 respondents answered 1,857 questions. The answers from these 1,857 responses gave 16,156 points, which were converted into a mean average score of 8.7 out of 10 (where 10 is the most positive response).

Finally, the returned sample was compared to the number of eligible employers of the provider to test if the sample was large enough for a score to be awarded.

Appendix 5: Missing scores

Reasons given for providers not being awarded a score

Providers who were not awarded a score were allocated a Missing Score Reason Code (MSRC) to describe the reason why a valid score could not be given. These are shown in the table below, along with the number of providers receiving each MSRC.

Missing Score Reason Code	Description	Providers
NULL	Score is robust and can be shown	538
47	No Eligible Employers	98
49	Less than 10 Eligible Employers	48
50	Less than 10 Valid Respondents	59
51	Confidence Interval >10%	91



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