Skills Funding Agency

FE Choices: Community Learning Learner Satisfaction Survey 2014 to 2015

Technical Report

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

October 2015

Of interest to colleges and training organisations

Ipsos MORI

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1. Introduction

Purpose of this Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to give the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Department for Education and other interested parties detailed descriptions, analysis and explanations of all phases of the research, analysis and calculation stages of the 2014 to 2015 Learner Satisfaction Survey for Community Learning.

1.2 The report should enable the SFA and others to replicate precisely the approach adopted. As a result it contains necessarily technical information but, wherever possible, we provide explanations to help non-specialist readers.

2. Methodology

Overview of the survey

2.1 The main survey mechanism was an online survey, available 24 hours a day, from 3 November 2014 to 29 March 2015, which learners accessed using a link to a dedicated survey page. Colleges and other training providers delivering Community Learning could either distribute the link separately or embed it in their intranets, with the latter offering them the option of posting an accompanying link to internal surveys. Guidance on how to do this was contained in the provider guidance notes posted by the SFA on the FE Choices pages on the GOV.UK website.

2.2 To complete a survey, learners needed their provider code (UKPRN). They also needed their individual learner number (LearnRefNumber field of the individualised learner record (ILR) or unique learner number (ULN)). The UKPRN was validated in real-time using an online database and respondents were only able to continue with the survey if they entered a valid UKPRN. However UKPRNs are issued consecutively, which means that learners mistyping the number could easily submit a valid but incorrect identifier. This issue was detected and corrected for during the validation phase using ILR details (see Section 5).

2.3 As colleges and other training providers delivering community learning providers submit full learner records retrospectively, we cannot validate learner codes in real time. Therefore we asked learners to provide personal details that were later matched into the ILR during the extensive post-survey validation and checking phase (see Section 5).

2.4 Colleges and other training providers with learners for whom it was impossible to complete online surveys (for example, those based in locations without internet access), were able to apply to use paper questionnaires. These were provided as a printable template with embedded, scannable, provider codes. Colleges and other training providers applied to use this approach through the Provider Extranet. The closing date for the paper survey was set at 9 March 2015 to allow for the longer processing period required for paper surveys.

The questionnaire

2.5 The survey questionnaire had 10 scoring questions with a rating scale from zero to 10, with bipolar labels only (very bad and very good). It asked respondents to rate:

- the information they received when choosing their course or activity
- the help staff gave them in the first few weeks of their course or activity
- the teaching on their course or activity
- the respect staff show to them
- the advice about what they can do after the course or activity
- the support they received on the course or activity
- the staff at listening to views of learners
- the staff at acting on the views of learners
- the course or activity meeting their expectations
- the organisation that provides the learning

2.6 The questionnaire also asked learners to state how likely they were to recommend their course to friends and family, on a scale of extremely likely, likely, neither likely nor unlikely, unlikely, extremely unlikely and does not apply. We did not include responses to this question in the final overall score. The survey also included questions about the learner's main reasons for taking a course and what they felt the impact of the course had been. The aim of these questions was to capture information on the wider benefits of Community Learning, such as the impact on health and well-being, taking up social activities, building confidence and supporting family members.

2.7 Online and paper versions of the survey contained clear data-protection statements developed as a result of previous dialogue with the SFA's legal team. These are evident in the explanatory copy at the start of the survey (refer to Annex 4 for details). Legal and ethical issues are discussed further in Section 6.

Technical aspects of the online survey

2.8 Technical issues relating to completing the online questionnaire have been tested in previous years. This has assured us that learners can successfully transmit responses from a wide range of devices in a range of settings.

Technical aspects of the paper survey

2.9 A paper-based survey was available for those learners unable to complete a web-based survey. This option was only available with the prior agreement of the SFA Project Manager.

2.10 We sent a paper questionnaire template in PDF format to staff co-ordinating the paper surveys. We also sent survey co-ordinators a set of guidelines on how to reproduce the questionnaires and conduct the survey with learners.

2.11 To ensure compliance with minimum type size guidelines, we designed the questionnaires for printing in landscape format on A3-sized double-sided paper. RCU staff liaised directly with survey co-ordinators at colleges and other training providers using paper questionnaires. They arranged for the completed surveys to be collated into sealed envelopes and collected by courier to ensure there was no risk of them going astray.

2.12 At the end of the survey process, RCU arranged for a secure courier to collect the completed survey forms and deliver them to the company's headquarters. On receiving the questionnaires, RCU carried out an initial checking process to assess the suitability of questionnaires for scanning. Wherever possible, RCU processed the surveys using a high-specification scanner using Formic optical character-reader software. This software scans and captures the data from each survey response and also has the added advantage of retaining a full image of the document. Where scanned entry was not possible (for example because colleges and other training providers had photocopied the questionnaire on A4 or used staples), RCU entered the responses manually. Ten percent of all responses entered manually were checked again to validate this process. An electronic image of all hand-entered questionnaires was also captured for secure electronic storage.

Colleges and other training provider communications

Extranet guidance and daily updates

2.13 In November 2014 the SFA sent a letter to key contacts within colleges and other training providers delivering community learning under the Community Learning budget. The letter set out the details of the 2014 to 2015 survey and included a reminder of the provider's UKPRN and personalised password (new providers were supplied with a password for the first time). This information allowed each provider to access a specially-designed extranet site (Provider Extranet) containing survey information specific to their organisation. Ipsos MORI hosted the site.

2.14 Guidance was available on the GOV.UK website, including a Sample Size Calculator to allow providers to calculate the overall minimum target for responses to the survey.

Technical and policy-related assistance

2.15 Colleges and other training providers had three routes they could follow to gain assistance during the survey:

1. Contacting the SFA Service Desk directly.
2. Visiting the Contact Us website page for the Learner Satisfaction Surveys (http://fechoices.ipsos-mori.com/contactus).
3. Visiting the FE Choices Information pages on the GOV.UK website.

2.16 The Contact Us website page was part of the Provider Extranet and included Frequently Asked Questions. Colleges and other training organisations were able to submit a query to Ipsos MORI if they required further information. Any queries relating to policy issues were then forwarded on to the SFA.

Technical operation of the online survey

Testing the on-screen survey

2.17 The on-screen survey was made available to colleges and other training organisations for testing between 27 and 31 October 2014. During this period, colleges and other training organisations were able to test accessibility, functionality and compatibility of the on-screen survey with their own IT

infrastructure. Colleges and other training organisations were able to fully simulate the respondent experience and were allowed to submit responses containing 'test data'. We then deleted this data from the response database before the survey went live at midday on 3 November 2014.

Delivering the on-screen survey

2.18 The on-screen survey was available for 24 hours each day, every day of the week from midday on 3 November 2014 to midnight on 29 March 2015. Details of the survey responses are included in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey responses

Survey Responses	
Total Visits	**34,858**
Complete responses (pre-validation)	21,119
Incomplete responses	13,739
Reasons for non-completion	
Did not visit log-in screen	10,381
Failed log-in	1,012
Successful log-in but incomplete response	2,346

Data storage and file transfer

2.19 The raw survey data was stored securely through the Dimensions (IBM SPSS Data Collection) research software.

2.20 The SQL server in Dimensions is only available through the Interviewer Server Administration portal and this greatly increases security. Any code within surveys is contained on the server side, so it is not susceptible to common attacks such as SQL injection attack vectors. Access to the Interviewer Server portal is password controlled; only staff assigned to the project have access to the password.

2.21 The internet service provider Rackspace hosted the survey database, with the following security measures:

- Strictly monitored access to all data centres using keycard protocols, biometric scanning protocols and continuous interior and exterior surveillance.
- Access limited to data centre staff only, without exception.
- All data centre staff undergo thorough background security checks before being employed.

2.22 Having been extracted into a password-protected SPSS file, 'raw data' was transferred to RCU from Ipsos MORI using a secure File Transfer Protocol website. RCU then used this information to produce weekly updates for the SFA project manager and to begin the process of response validation.

3. Sample design

3.1 Sampling for the Community Learner Satisfaction Survey rests entirely with colleges and other training organisations to generate a sufficient and representative sample, although they are expected to take account of the guidance, which was shared on the Learner Satisfaction pages of the GOV.UK website. All eligible learners attending an eligible provider within the survey period (3 November 2014 and 29 March 2015) were potential participants (the "population").

3.2 Colleges and other training organisations entered the number of eligible learners they expected to have in the survey period and the calculator showed the minimum required sample. The guidance recommended exceeding this minimum sample because some responses might prove to be duplicates or from ineligible learners.

3.3 The minimum sample size for all colleges and other training providers given by the calculator was based on a calculation. This calculation was the number of responses that would allow 95% certainty that the result that emerged would be within 3% of the result that would have been obtained had every learner responded to the survey (Annex 5). The calculator also took account of the policy decision to set the maximum target as 70% of their learners where that resulted in a smaller value. The calculator reflected the standard market research formula for calculating minimum sample sizes. This comprises four main elements:

1. The population (in this case the total number of eligible learners).
2. The confidence level (how certain you want the result to be).
3. The confidence interval (the margin for error you are willing to accept).
4. The estimated true level of the figure you are trying to measure (in this case the satisfaction level of learners, which was assumed to be 80%. The figure of 80% was established as a conservative estimate of satisfaction levels based on the results of the FE Choices Learner Satisfaction survey).

3.4 This approach is based on the assumption that all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected to take part in the survey. Where this

appears not to have been the case, and when the pattern of responses differs clearly from the make-up of the population, the sample is said to be biased or 'skewed'.

3.5　Colleges and other training organisations were asked to aim for a sample size that would give a margin for error or "confidence interval" of 3% either side of the true level of learner satisfaction. However, samples up to a confidence interval of 5% were accepted, provided they were not badly skewed.

4.   Post-survey data preparation and quality checks

Data preparation

4.1   In 2014 to 2015 24,696 learners (64%) completed the online survey and a further 14,146 (36%) completed paper surveys. (These figures include responses from the Community Learning Learner Satisfaction Survey and from Community Learners who had responded on the main Learner Satisfaction Survey questionnaire.) After we completed validation checks and removed duplicates, there were a total of 32,315 responses by eligible learners attending eligible providers. A total of 194 colleges and other training providers took part in the survey.

4.2   To validate the surveys we used the ILR return R06 2014 to 2015, which covered the period of learning from the start of the academic year to 6 February 2015. The validation process ensured:

- the removal of duplicate responses (the last response was retained)
- the reallocation of learners who had wrongly completed the UKPRN
- the removal of the responses from learners known to be ineligible
- The relatively small percentage of unmatched learners was assumed to be from valid respondents (this was based on the premise that providers would only ask eligible learners to participate).

4.3   We entered the data from the paper-based survey questionnaires using a combination of electronic scanning and manual data entry.

4.4   We used a Formic Survey Design and Data Capture System for scanning questionnaires and the process was followed by a 100% manual verification and editing procedure. We entered responses manually from questionnaires that we could not scan using SNAP software. SNAP has built-in data validity checks that ensure all entered data are within set parameters, which are predefined when setting up the survey. In addition, a supervisor undertook checks on 10% of the data that was entered by hand.

4.5   We combined the two datasets from the electronic and manual data capture processing and carried out a further verification check to ensure consistency between the two sets of data.

4.6   Annex 4 describes the process of matching responses to the ILR, including the fields used to make these matches. We applied all 120 of the automatic matching combinations, followed by a final manual matching process in which we checked "near-misses" in aspects such as surname or date of birth. Following these processes, we matched 85% of all respondents to the ILR.

4.7   Within the final dataset there were a number of duplicate responses which needed removing. We removed these using the following two-stage process:

i) The first stage was to focus on respondents who had been matched through to the ILR and therefore had an accurate unique learner reference. The dataset was flagged to identify any repeated learner references. Following the identification, the response which was entered last was taken to be the valid response and all other responses were removed. For the responses which were not matched into the ILR, we identified duplicates by tracing instances where respondents had inputted exactly the same information for the surname, forename, date of birth, learner reference and UKPRN. Again the last instance of duplicate records was used and all other responses were removed.

ii) In the next stage, we removed the following invalid responses from the dataset:

- Where the word `Test` was in any name field (except if the forename was entered correctly for example a respondent called 'Richard Test').
- Any response using a clearly obscene or bogus name.
- Responses were under UKPRN 99999999 (the SFA Test code).

4.9   The next process identified whether respondents were eligible during the survey period. Following the matching of respondents to the ILR, we updated each record to indicate if the respondent was funded from the Community Learning budget.

4.10 All linked responses had their key characteristics updated from the ILR to ensure accurate comparison of response levels to the learner groups used for the weighting and skew calculations. Respondents not linked to the ILR, were presumed to be eligible and their entered data correct.

4.11 The four learner groups were:

1. Females under 40 years of age.
2. Males under 40 years of age.
3. Females aged 40 years and over.
4. Males aged 40 years and over.

4.12 The final calculation of eligible learners and provider profiles was based on the ILRs:

- R06 2014 to 2015, which the SFA provided.
- The calculation took into account the number of eligible learners who attended the provider during the survey period. The final element of this process was to calculate the provider learner profiles. Each learner within each of the relevant datasets was flagged into one of the four categories.

Data quality checks

4.13 Ipsos MORI carried out the following quality checks on the raw learner response data:

- Checked all questions were present.
- Ran frequency counts for each question to check that (i) all codes were included and (ii) the correct number of people had answered the question.

4.14 RCU also carried out the following quality checks before the delivery of the final Community Learning Learner Satisfaction Survey dataset to the SFA:

- Created the data outputs using two different production processes and compared the data outputs for any differences. RCU only delivered data to the SFA when there was a 100% agreement between the two independent production processes carried out by different personnel.

- Ensured that final outputs met RCU-defined validation rules (for example, mean scores had to be between zero and 10).
- Peer reviewed all syntax used for the production of outputs.
- Experienced personnel manually sense-checked reports.

4.15 In the process of matching responses to the ILR, a number of learners were identified as having responded to the survey using the mainstream Learner Satisfaction questionnaire. However, according to the ILR, the SFA was funding them through the Community Learning budget. Therefore, to ensure that we included the views of as many learners as possible, we counted these responses as part of the Community Learning Survey results.

5.   Data analysis following the preparation of the survey data

Introduction

5.1   The key quantitative elements of the data analysis phase were:

- calculating base sizes and minimum sample size targets
- applying corrective weightings for sample skew and survey method
- applying tests for sample validity
- calculating final scores

Validation

5.2   We used the latest available ILR datasets to calculate the number of eligible learners attending each college or other training organisation in the survey period (3 November 2014 to 29 March 2015). We then used this figure to calculate the minimum returned sample size that would generate 95% confidence that the measured results were within 5% of the estimated true value, providing the sample was broadly representative.

5.3   We validated the response data and removed ineligible learners and duplicate submissions. Seventy-two (42%) of the 170 colleges and other training organisations passed the threshold of valid responses for either a sample that gave a 95% confidence level with a 5% confidence interval or the threshold of at least 70% of all eligible learners providing valid responses. Sample sizes with a confidence interval of 3% or less passed the quality test automatically, whereas those with confidence intervals between 3% and 5%, and those who had 70% of all eligible learners providing valid responses, were checked for skew.

Skew testing

5.4   We used the skew test to ensure that the degree of bias within the sample submitted by individual colleges and other training organisations was within acceptable parameters. Analysis of ILR data for the population (refer to paragraph 4.2) produced a profile of learners for each individual provider, based on the four categories listed in paragraph 4.11.

5.5 We derived the measure for skew by comparing the spread of a provider's returned sample across these categories to its population profile based on the ILR. In a perfectly representative sample, the percentage of learners within each of the four categories would be exactly the same as the percentage of learners within each category based on the ILR data. The skew factor was defined as the sum total percentage of respondents within each category that were above or below the required percentage for a perfectly representative sample (Annex 2 records the formula used). Skew factors up to 40% were defined as correctable with the application of appropriate weighting. Skew factors above 40% were regarded as not correctable, unless the returned sample was large enough to generate a confidence interval of 3% or less.

Corrective weighting

5.6 The sampling process was managed by colleges and other training organisations at the time of the survey rather than being based on the ILR after the learning was completed. It was therefore inevitable that most samples would be skewed to a greater or lesser degree. To ensure that no college or other training organisation was advantaged or disadvantaged by the skew in their sample, we applied weightings to all returned samples. These ensured that samples were rebalanced to be representative in terms of age and gender before the calculation of a score. This allowed a fair comparison between colleges and other training organisations. The combinations of age and gender produced four different categories listed in paragraph 4.11, and returned samples were compared to population profiles for each college or other training organisation using these categories. The formula used to calculate skew is set out in Annex 2.

Scoring

5.7 All the scoring questions in the survey have 11-point response scales, running from "0" representing "very bad" through to "10" representing "very good." No intervening points on the scale are labelled. Responses of "not applicable" (or missed questions in the case of paper responses) were removed from the numerator and denominator before any score calculations were made, ensuring they had no impact on the calculation of the college or other training organisation's score.

5.8   We calculated each college or other training organisation's weighted total of valid survey responses after the application of the weights and the net effect of any correction for skew (see Annex 2), although this was typically neutral.

5.9   We divided the points total from the weighted scoring responses by the total number of weighted scoring responses to give a mean score out of 10. Annex 3 provides a flow chart to explain this process. We assigned equal weightings to all questions in the score calculation.

Reporting of results

5.10 RCU produced a detailed interactive report tailored for each individual college or training organisation that was downloadable from the Provider Extranet. It included feedback on the question which asked learners how likely they were to recommend their learning provider to friends and family. RCU analysed responses to show the percentage of learners that were extremely likely, likely, neither likely nor unlikely, unlikely or extremely unlikely to recommend their learning provider. A combined percentage score was also produced to show the proportion of learners that were likely or extremely likely to recommend their college or other training organisation.

5.11 The survey also included questions about a learner's main reasons for taking a course or activity and what they felt the impact of the course had been. RCU presented the results in the reports as bar charts, with response numbers and percentages. Additional charts showed respondents' single most important reason for taking the course or activity and the single most important outcome of their learning.

6.   Legal and ethical issues

Compliance issues

6.1   The contractors appointed to deliver the 2014 to 2015 Community Learning Learner Satisfaction Survey, Ipsos MORI and RCU Ltd, both adhere fully to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and are accredited under the international market research industry standard ISO 20252. These both emphasise obtaining informed consent from survey respondents to their involvement in any survey and ensures that the uses of respondents' answers are made clear to them before they participate.

6.2   The Code of Conduct and ISO 20252 also require full compliance with data protection legislation, which ensures that the arrangements for holding and sharing of a respondent's answers are made clear to the individual before they consent to take part. In the case of public bodies such as the SFA, this requirement has to be taken into account alongside the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, under which an organisation can be asked to make data it holds available to a third party.

6.3   During the development of the survey in 2008 to 2009, the then LSC's Learner Satisfaction performance indicator lead worked closely with the LSC's solicitor to ensure compliance with all these aspects. A particular challenge was to ensure that any form of wording required by legislation was presented to learners in clear and accessible language, so that the learner could be judged to have given informed consent to their participation. Almost inevitably these parts of the questionnaire had a higher standard measure of unintelligibility (the SMOG test rating is a measure of readability that estimates the years of education needed to understand a piece of writing, summaries of which are available across the internet, for example -http://www.readabilityformulas.com/smog-readability-formula.php).

6.4   It was particularly important to make clear to learners that although the survey was confidential it was not anonymous. This is because the identification of learners was essential to allow validation and to support linkage to ILR data to enhance analysis (without asking a long series of cross-referencing questions).

6.5 The protections built into the survey were as follows:

- A statement on the opening page that "your answers will go directly to two survey companies – Ipsos MORI and RCU".
- A statement on the next page to reassure respondents that the survey analysis would produce aggregate results, non-identifiable responses and that, "None of your lecturers, trainers or supervisors will be able to see your answers".
- Explanation of the prime purpose of the survey, namely that the results would be used "to tell future learners what different colleges are like".
- Confirmation at the end of the survey that the process had followed the rules of the Market Research Society and provision of a direct email address for Ipsos MORI that respondents could use if they had any concerns.
- Guidance on the proposed length of time for which we would retain the data and an opportunity to accelerate this: "Ipsos MORI and RCU will keep your answers for no more than 18 months".
- A final check that learners were happy with their responses before they pressed the submit button.

Undertakings given to learners

6.6 The FE Choices Community Learning Learner Satisfaction Survey is a complex logistical and methodological exercise. To ensure that the results of the Community Learning Learner Satisfaction Survey gave a fair and consistent assessment of the views of learners, the circumstances in which learners made their responses had to be as consistent as possible. Sections 2 and 3 of this report explain the approaches taken to ensure that the survey was undertaken at a standard time, towards the end of the learning period, that there were no biases resulting from the selection of learners and that the survey was as accessible as possible. However, to trust the robustness of the results it was important that the atmosphere in which learners' views were gathered (such as the way the survey was introduced to learners by staff and how it was administered) was as consistent as possible.

Opt-out on data storage

6.7 The ability of learners to opt out on having their responses stored for 18 months is a standard approach in surveys. This allows respondents concerned about the security and confidentiality of their responses to have them deleted. Normally this does not preclude the respondents' answers from contributing to the survey outcomes.

6.8 Incoming data from the online survey was subject to daily encrypted back-ups which we stored off-site in line with the RCU Information Security Policy. We have now stored all the responses from the survey in password-protected areas of secure data servers, with limited access rights for authorised personnel. We have encrypted all back-ups and stored them off-site. Paper surveys are stored securely at RCU. We will delete electronic copies and shred paper copies 18 months after the survey closed.

7.   Equality, diversity and accessibility issues

Compliance with web accessibility standards

7.1   The questionnaire was designed to be user-friendly. In-survey navigation buttons allowed respondents to return to questions and review their answers before submitting their final responses. Additionally, a progress bar appeared at the top of each screen, which provided respondents with a continuous update on how many questions remained.

7.2   The survey was compatible with handheld computers such as BlackBerry devices and smartphones.

7.3   Learners were also able to change the background colour (particularly important for learners with visual impairment or dyslexia) and size of the font using prominently placed 'accessibility buttons'. This aspect was informed by guidance obtained from the Royal National Institute for the Blind website.

7.4   The main online questionnaire was developed to minimise respondent error and increase its accessibility for all ability levels. Where possible, we put checks in place to make sure that respondents were not inputting incorrect data. Respondents were also informed automatically if they had failed to complete an essential field. When such errors were made, prompt screens appeared to inform respondents of the necessary corrective action to continue with the survey.

7.5   The guidance notes made clear that colleges and other training organisations were to use discretion when deciding whether or not to include individual learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in their sample. Where the application of such discretion would significantly impact on the potential population (total number of eligible learners) for the survey, providers were advised to notify the SFA. Providers also had the option (see Section 3) of applying to use paper questionnaires for learners for whom on-screen completion would be impossible.

8.   Summary of key methodological aspects

- **Population base:** all eligible learners.
- **Required confidence level:** 95%.
- **Required confidence interval:** 5%.
- **Small provider concession:** sample over 70% deemed sufficient.
- **Acceptable skew level:** up to 40% providing the achieved confidence interval is 5% or lower (or sample over 70% for small providers). Any provider with a confidence interval of 3% or less is not tested for skew.
- **Basis for corrective weightings:** four categories (two genders and two age bands).
- **Assumed satisfaction level in sample calculator:** 80%.
- **Observed satisfaction level for confidence interval calculation:** 85%.
- **Rating scale:** 0 to 10 for 10 scoring questions, five-point agreement scale for provider recommendation question.
- **Approach to unvalidated respondents:** allow.
- **Inclusion of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities:** provider discretion based on guidance provided to encourage participation where appropriate.

Annex 1: ILR fields used to match and validate survey responses

RCU used a two-stage process to link the survey responses through to the ILRs for 2014 to 2015. In Stage 1, RCU designed a protocol to link the survey responses to the ILR using key fields in each dataset. The fields used were surname, forename, initial (derived from forename), date of birth, gender, age band, learner reference, unique learner number and provider reference number (UKPRN). To allow for this process fields were recoded to enable a direct match between the datasets (for example, in the survey data, gender was coded 1 for Female and 2 for Male, while in the ILR these are coded F and M).

RCU then designed a process hierarchy which used the most robust matching first, with all the possible fields for matching, then removed fields in order of least impact. This resulted in 120 different matching combinations, which linked the survey data and the ILR. Following the automated matching, a further manual process was undertaken to match responses that could not be done automatically. Once a match was established, the survey data were then updated to include the learner identifier from the ILR and the process used to match.

In each process the UKPRN was used to filter by provider. However, in some later processes this was excluded to catch any respondent who had entered the UKPRN incorrectly but other checklist information correctly.

Table 2: ILR fields used to match and validate survey responses

Matching Process

Order	UKPRN	Learner Ref	Unique Learner Number	Surname	Date of Birth	Forename	Initial	Ageband	Gender
1	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
4	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
5	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
6	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
7	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
8	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
9	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
10	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
11	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
12	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
13	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
14	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
15	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
16	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
17	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
18	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
19	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
20	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
21	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
22	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
23	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
24	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
25	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
27	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
28	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
29	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
30	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
31	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
32	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
33	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
34	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
35	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
36	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
37	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
38	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
39	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
40	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
41	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
42	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
43	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
44	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
45	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
46	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
47	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
48	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
49	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
50	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
51	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
52	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
53	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
54	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
55	✓	✓	✗	Forename	✓	Surname	✓	✓	✓
56	✓	✗	✓	Forename	✓	Surname	✓	✓	✓
57	✓	✓	✗	Forename	✓	Surname	✓	✓	✗
58	✓	✗	✓	Forename	✓	Surname	✓	✓	✗
59	✓	✓	✗	Forename	✓	Surname	✓	✗	✓
60	✓	✗	✓	Forename	✓	Surname	✓	✗	✓
61	✓	✓	✗	Forename	✓	Surname	✓	✗	✗
62	✓	✗	✓	Forename	✓	Surname	✓	✗	✗

Matching Process (Cont.)

Order	UKPRN	Learner Ref	Unique Learner Number	Surname	Date of Birth	Forename	Initial	Ageband	Gender
63	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
64	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
65	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
66	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
67	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
68	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
69	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
70	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
71	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
72	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
73	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
74	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
75	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
76	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
77	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
78	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
79	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
80	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
81	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
82	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
83	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
84	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
85	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
86	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
87	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
88	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
89	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
90	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
91	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
92	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
93	✓	✗	✗	Forename	✓	Surname	✓	✓	✓
94	✓	✗	✗	Forename	✓	Surname	✓	✓	✗
95	✓	✗	✗	Forename	✓	Surname	✓	✗	✓
96	✓	✗	✗	Forename	✓	Surname	✓	✗	✗
97	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
98	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
99	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
100	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
101	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
102	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
103	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
104	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
105	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
106	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
107	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
108	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
109	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
110	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
111	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
112	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
113	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
114	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
115	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
116	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
117	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
118	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
119	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
120	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
99	Manually Matched								
null	Not Matched								

Annex 2: Formulas used to calculate confidence intervals and skew

Confidence interval (minimum sample size)

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

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

Correction for Finite Population (for known population size):

$$Adjusted\ sample\ size\ = \frac{Sample\ Size}{1 + \dfrac{Sample\ Size - 1}{N}}$$

Confidence interval of a returned sample:

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

Where:

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

p = Assumed / observed % expressed as a decimal (85% satisfied = 0.85).

c = Confidence interval, expressed as decimal (± 5% = 0.05).

N = Number of eligible Learners on provider's ILR.

n = Number of valid responses.

Skew formula

The skew test was used to ensure that the degree of bias within the sample submitted by individual colleges and training organisations was within acceptable parameters. Analysis of ILR data for the population produced a profile of learners for each individual college and training organisation, based on four learner categories:

1. Females aged under 40 years of age.
2. Males aged under 40 years of age.
3. Females aged 40 years and over.
4. Males aged 40 years and over.

The measure for skew was derived from comparing the spread of a provider's returned sample across these categories to its population profile based on the ILR. In a perfectly representative sample, the percentage of learners within each of the four categories would be exactly the same as the percentage of learners within each category based on the ILR data. The skew factor was defined as the sum total percentage of respondents within each category that were above or below the required percentage for a perfectly representative sample. Skew factors up to 40% were defined as correctable with the application of appropriate weighting. Skew factors above 40% were regarded as not correctable.

Skew formula

Skew calculation:

$$Skew = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{4} |r_i - s_i|}{2}$$

Where:

i = Each individual learner category, ranging from 1 to 4.

r = Percentage of learners on the provider's ILR in the ith category.

s = Percentage of learners in the sample in the ith category.

$| |$ = Absolute value.

Weighting

The first stage of producing a weighting factor was to calculate a quotient for each of the four categories by taking the percentage of learners in the sample and dividing by
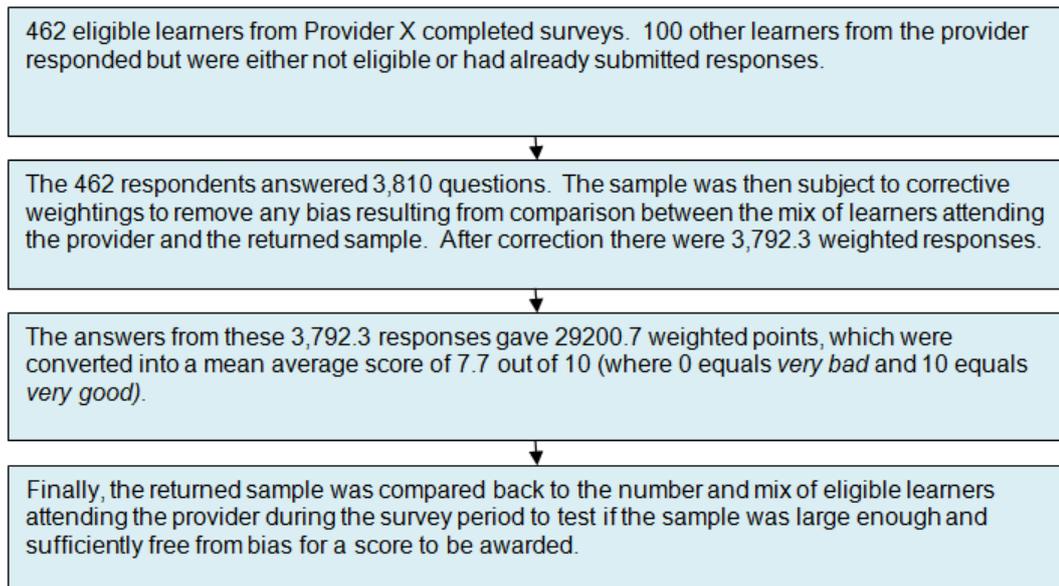
the percentage of learners on the provider's ILR. A result with a value greater than one would mean that the provider had over-sampled in that particular learner category; a value of less than one would mean the provider had under-sampled.

The inverse of this quotient was then calculated to produce the weighting factor for each of the four categories. Every individual learner in the sample was then assigned a weighting factor depending on the category to which they belonged according to their age and gender. The assigned weighting factor was then applied to the individual's score.

In effect, the scores of individual learners in under-represented categories had a slightly greater impact on the overall provider score than the scores of individual learners from over-represented categories. However, because this is a neutral weighting system the overall net effect on the sample base size is zero where all learners could be assigned to one of the four categories. In practice, not all learners could be matched to a category and so these were assigned a weighting factor of one, producing slight variations in sample base sizes when weightings were applied.

Annex 3: Formulas used to calculate scores for valid samples

An example of how we calculated a provider's score:

> 462 eligible learners from Provider X completed surveys. 100 other learners from the provider responded but were either not eligible or had already submitted responses.
>
> ↓
>
> The 462 respondents answered 3,810 questions. The sample was then subject to corrective weightings to remove any bias resulting from comparison between the mix of learners attending the provider and the returned sample. After correction there were 3,792.3 weighted responses.
>
> ↓
>
> The answers from these 3,792.3 responses gave 29200.7 weighted points, which were converted into a mean average score of 7.7 out of 10 (where 0 equals *very bad* and 10 equals *very good*).
>
> ↓
>
> Finally, the returned sample was compared back to the number and mix of eligible learners attending the provider during the survey period to test if the sample was large enough and sufficiently free from bias for a score to be awarded.

Colleges and other training organisations that were not awarded a score were allocated a Missing Score Reason Code (MSRC) to describe the reason why they did not receive a valid score. 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	72
66	No ILR available to assess the sample reliability of the responses to the survey	1
67	Provider did not participate in the survey	15
68	Only invalid responses to the survey were received	7
69	The Skew % test was not passed	0
70	The Confidence Interval % test was not passed	94
71	There were fewer than 10 eligible learners on the ILR	5

Annex 4: Copies of paper and online questionnaires

Skills Funding Agency

**Community Learner
Satisfaction Survey
2014 to 2015**

Welcome to this short Learner Satisfaction Survey. Learners all over England are answering these questions. Your answers are very important. The Skills Funding Agency will use your answers to tell future learners what different organisations that provide learning are like.

Your completed survey will go to two survey companies - Ipsos MORI and RCU. Ipsos MORI and RCU will add your answers to the answers from other learners. They will send us, the Skills Funding Agency, the results. None of your lecturers, trainers or supervisors will see your answers.

The survey follows the rules of the Market Research Society. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact the research company, Ipsos MORI at http://fechoices.ipsos-mori.com/contactus.

Ipsos MORI and RCU will keep your survey for no more than 18 months. If you want us to destroy your answers before then, please email us at servicedesk@sfa.bis.gov.uk.

If you are happy to take part in the survey, please carry on.

Community Learner

Q13. How likely is it that you would recommend the organisation that provides your learning to friends or family?

- ☐ Extremely likely
- ☐ Likely
- ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely
- ☐ Unlikely
- ☐ Extremely unlikely
- ☐ Does not apply

**Q14. As a result of taking the course or activity would you say that:
(Tick ALL that apply)**

- ☐ You have more skills or knowledge
- ☐ You have made new friends
- ☐ You are more confident as a person
- ☐ You are more likely to participate in social activities
- ☐ You are more likely to get a job or progress at work
- ☐ Your health or wellbeing has benefitted
- ☐ You are more likely to progress on to another course
- ☐ You are more able to help other family members
- ☐ None of the above

**Q15. The main outcome of taking the course or activity was:
(Tick ONE only)**

- ☐ You have more skills or knowledge
- ☐ You have made new friends
- ☐ You are more confident as a person
- ☐ You are more likely to participate in social activities
- ☐ You are more likely to get a job or progress at work
- ☐ Your health or wellbeing has benefitted
- ☐ You are more likely to progress on to another course
- ☐ You are more able to help other family members
- ☐ None of the above

Thank you very much for your time.

Provider Code
5 | 1 | 0 | 0

(a) What is your personal learner number?
(Please ask your learning provider if you do not know it).

(b) First name

(c) Surname or family name

(d) Date of birth (dd/mm/yy for example, 15/02/82)
d d / m m / y y

(e) Are you writing in the answers yourself?
☐ Yes
☐ Yes, with someone helping me
☐ No, someone is writing in my answers for me

(f) How old are you?
☐ Under 20 ☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49
☐ 50-59 ☐ 60-69 ☐ 70 or over

(g) Are you:
☐ Female? ☐ Male? ☐ Prefer not to answer

Q1 What were your reasons for taking the course or activity?
(Tick ALL that apply)
☐ To gain skills and knowledge
☐ To meet people and make new friends
☐ For personal interest or pleasure
☐ To help you participate in social activities
☐ To help you get a job or with your work
☐ To benefit your health or wellbeing
☐ To progress on to another course
☐ To help other members of your family
☐ Other reason

Q2 The main reason for taking the course or activity was:
(Tick ONE only)
☐ To gain skills and knowledge
☐ To meet people and make new friends
☐ For personal interest or pleasure
☐ To help you participate in social activities
☐ To help you get a job or with your work
☐ To benefit your health or wellbeing
☐ To progress on to another course
☐ To help other members of your family
☐ Other reason

To answer the following questions please give each a score out of 10.
"0" will mean "very bad". "10" will mean "very good".

Try to answer every question, but if a question does not apply to you at all, please choose "Does not apply".

	Very Bad									Very Good		Does not apply
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Q3 How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course or activity?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q4 How good or bad was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks of your course or activity?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q5 How good or bad is the teaching on your course or activity?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q6 How good or bad is the respect staff show to you?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q7 How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course or activity?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q8 How good or bad is the support you get on this course or activity?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q9 How good or bad are the staff at listening to views of learners?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q10 How good or bad are the staff at acting on the views of learners ?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q11 How good or bad has the course or activity been at meeting your expectations?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q12 Overall, how good or bad do you think the organisation that provides your learning is?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Skills Funding Agency

Welcome to this short Community Learner Satisfaction Survey. Your answers will go directly to two survey companies – Ipsos MORI and RCU.

Choose 'Next' to carry on.

Next →

Skills Funding Agency

Ipsos MORI and RCU will add your answers to the answers from other learners. They will send us, the Skills Funding Agency, the results. None of your lecturers, trainers or supervisors will see your answers.

If you want to go back at any time choose 'Back'.

← Back | Next →

Skills Funding Agency

What is the code number for your learning provider?

Please ask your learning provider if you do not know.

← Back   Next →

Skills Funding Agency

What is your personal learner number?

Please ask your learning provider if you do not know.

← Back   Next →

Skills Funding Agency

Give the details below.

First name

Surname or family name

Date of birth
(dd/mm/yy for example 15/02/82)

Next →

Skills Funding Agency

How old are you?

- ○ Under 20
- ○ 20 to 29
- ○ 30 to 39
- ○ 40 to 49
- ○ 50 to 59
- ○ 60 to 69
- ○ 70 or older

Next →

Skills Funding Agency

Are you:

- ○ female?
- ○ male?
- ○ prefer not to answer

Next →

Skills Funding Agency

Learners all over England are answering these questions. Your answers are very important. The Skills Funding Agency will use your answers to tell future learners what different organisations that provide learning are like.

← Back Next →

Skills Funding Agency
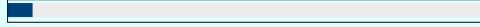
progress

Are you putting in the answers yourself?

- ○ Yes
- ○ Yes, with someone helping me
- ○ No, someone is putting in my answers for me

← Back Next →

Skills Funding Agency

progress
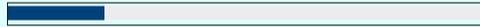
What were your reasons for taking the course or activity?

Please select all that apply

- ☐ To gain skills and knowledge
- ☐ To meet people and make new friends
- ☐ For personal interest or pleasure
- ☐ To help you participate in social activities
- ☐ To help you get a job or with your work
- ☐ To benefit your health or wellbeing
- ☐ To progress on to another course
- ☐ To help other members of your family
- ☐ Other reason

← Back Next →

Skills Funding
Agency

progress
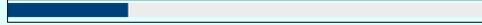
The main reason for taking the course or activity was:

Please select one option only

- ○ To gain skills and knowledge
- ○ To meet people and make new friends
- ○ For personal interest or pleasure
- ○ To help you participate in social activities
- ○ To help you get a job or with your work
- ○ To benefit your health or wellbeing
- ○ To progress on to another course
- ○ To help other members of your family

← Back   Next →

Skills Funding
Agency

progress

For the questions starting on the next screen we ask you to give a score out of 10, where 0 is very bad and 10 is very good.

Try to answer every question. If a question does not apply to you at all, choose the 'Does not apply' option. (Some questions do not have this option.)

Choose 'Next' below to continue.

← Back   Next →

Skills Funding Agency

progress

How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course or activity?

Very bad 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very good 10	*Does not apply*
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

← Back   Next →

Skills Funding Agency

progress

How good or bad was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks of your course or activity?

Very bad 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very good 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

← Back   Next →

Skills Funding
Agency

progress

How good or bad is the teaching on your course or activity?

Very bad 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very good 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

← Back   Next →

Skills Funding
Agency

progress

How good or bad is the respect staff show to you?

Very bad 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very good 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

← Back   Next →

Skills Funding Agency

progress

How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course or activity?

Very bad 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very good 10	*Does not apply*
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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How good or bad is the support you get on this course or activity?

Very bad 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very good 10	*Does not apply*
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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How good or bad are the staff at listening to the views of learners?

Very bad 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very good 10	Does not apply
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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How good or bad are the staff at acting on the views of learners?

Very bad 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very good 10	Does not apply
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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How good or bad has the course or activity been at meeting your expectations?

Very bad 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very good 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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Overall, how good or bad do you think the organisation that provides your learning is?

Very bad 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very good 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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How likely is it that you would recommend the organisation that provides your learning to friends or family?

- ○ Extremely likely
- ○ Likely
- ○ Neither likely nor unlikely
- ○ Unlikely
- ○ Extremely unlikely
- ○ Does not apply

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As a result of taking the course or activity would you say that:

Please select all that apply

- ☐ You have more skills or knowledge
- ☐ You have made new friends
- ☐ You are more confident as a person
- ☐ You are more likely to participate in social activities
- ☐ You are more likely to get a job or progress at work
- ☐ Your health or wellbeing has benefitted
- ☐ You are more likely to progress on to another course
- ☐ You are more able to help other family members
- ☐ None of the above

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The main outcome of taking the course or activity was:

Please select one option only

- ○ You have more skills or knowledge
- ○ You have made new friends
- ○ You are more confident as a person
- ○ You are more likely to participate in social activities
- ○ You are more likely to get a job or progress at work
- ○ Your health or wellbeing has benefitted
- ○ You are more likely to progress on to another course
- ○ You are more able to help other family members

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If you are happy with your answers, and how the Skills Funding Agency will use them, please choose 'Submit' below.

If you want to change any of your answers please choose 'Back' below.

← Back   Submit

Your answers have been sent to us.

Thank you very much for your time.

The survey follows the rules of the Market Research Society. If you have any worries about the survey, you can contact the research company Ipsos MORI at
http://fechoices.ipsos-mori.com/contactus

Ipsos MORI and RCU will keep your answers for no more than 18 months. If you want us to destroy your answers before then, please email us at
servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk.