IFF Research

Learner Voice Survey

Medr
Y Comisiwn Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil
Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

About the Learner Voice Survey
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About the survey

1. What is the Learner Voice Survey?

The Learner Voice Survey is a new annual survey commissioned by Medr to gather learners' views and experiences. It aims to provide consistent feedback across Wales to support quality improvement and help ensure learner perspectives are at the heart of tertiary education.

2. Why is Medr introducing this survey?

The survey will provide robust and comparable evidence about learners' experiences across Wales. It will help providers, Medr and the wider sector identify strengths, understand areas for improvement and monitor learner experiences over time.

Medr recognises that many providers have well-established learner voice arrangements. The purpose of the Learner Voice Survey is not to replace these approaches, but to provide a consistent national evidence base that enables learner experiences to be understood across the tertiary sector while complementing local feedback mechanisms.

3. Which providers are expected to take part?

All providers of further education, apprenticeships and adult community learning are expected to participate. The survey will also be piloted with sixth forms in 2027/28. Higher education students are not in scope for this survey, which is being designed to complement the existing National Student Survey for final-year undergraduate students.

4. How has the survey been developed?

The survey has been developed through a programme of research, testing and engagement with learners, providers and sector stakeholders including Estyn. We have a steering group with provider and stakeholder representation to advise us on the survey's implementation.

Before national rollout, Medr piloted the survey with eight providers and learner groups. Feedback from learners and providers was used to refine the survey content, accessibility features, administration arrangements and reporting approach.

Our aim is to develop a survey that is relevant to different learner groups while also providing consistent results that can be compared across Wales.

5. Who is running and funding the survey?

Medr has commissioned IFF Research, an independent social research agency, to manage the survey, including its administration, analysis and reporting.

The survey is funded by Medr. Providers are not required to pay to participate in the core survey.

6. How does the Learner Voice Survey relate to the National Student Survey (NSS)?

The Learner Voice Survey does not replace or duplicate the NSS. Learners who are eligible to complete the NSS are not in scope for the Learner Voice Survey. The purpose of the Learner Voice Survey is to provide coverage for some of the learner groups that are not already covered by national survey arrangements.

Survey content

7. What topics does the survey cover?

The survey include questions about:

- Information provided before starting
- Support for learning
- Teaching, learning and assessment
- Welsh language provision
- Organisation and management
- Wellbeing and mental health
- Safety and respect
- Learner voice and feedback
- Progression and next steps
- Overall satisfaction

8. How has Medr decided what topics to include?

We have decided that the survey should focus on topics and questions that provide an insight into the quality of learners' experiences, and factors that providers can influence or control. This means that some broader topics about, for example, the advice or guidance that learners received at school on future learning options, their future aspirations, and their general health and wellbeing are out of scope.

In designing the survey, we have also aimed to articulate the questions in ways that learners will understand, recognising that for some topics a survey is not the most suitable research tool.

9. How long does the survey take to complete?

The survey has been designed to take around 10 minutes to complete.

10. Can learners provide comments as well as ratings?

Yes. Learners will have opportunities to provide open-text comments about what they like most about their provider and what they feel could be improved.

11. Can we add our own questions to the survey?

Medr recognises that providers already collect learner feedback and wants the Learner Voice Survey to complement, rather than duplicate, existing arrangements.

For the first year of the survey, we are focusing on getting the main survey established with a set of standard questions, so that results can be benchmarked across Wales and, eventually, compared over time.

In subsequent years, Medr intends to introduce greater flexibility. We anticipate that this will include options for:

- Additional questions selected from a nationally agreed question bank
- Options to link Medr's survey with an existing provider learner survey
- Opportunities for providers to add bespoke questions, at an agreed cost

Further information on these developments will be included in future survey guidance.

Accessibility and survey formats

12. What versions of the survey are available?

The survey has been designed to meet the needs of different groups of learners.

Available versions include:

- English and Welsh language versions
- Three additional language options, to be determined in consultation with providers
- Versions tailored for further education, apprenticeships and adult community learning learners
- An Easy Read version for learners who may benefit from simpler language and formatting
- Paper versions where online completion is not practical

Providers should encourage learners to complete the version that best meets their needs.

13. Which learners should complete the Easy Read version?

The Easy Read version is intended for learners who may find the standard survey difficult to access, including some learners with additional learning needs, lower literacy levels or for whom English or Welsh is not a first language.

Providers should use their knowledge of individual learners to help them choose the most appropriate version. Learners should not be required to complete the Easy Read version if they would prefer to complete the standard survey.

Provider responsibilities

14. What is expected of providers?

Providers are expected to:

- Promote the survey to learners
- Distribute the survey link to eligible learners
- Encourage participation
- Support learners who need assistance accessing the survey
- Work towards achieving a strong response rate
- Evaluate the survey outcomes and consider how to use them to support continuous improvement, as part of overall quality assurance processes.

15. Is there a target response rate?

Yes. Providers are expected to work towards achieving at least a 50% response rate.

16. How can we increase participation?

Experience from the pilot suggests that one of the most effective approaches is setting aside around 10 minutes during classes, workshops or assessor visits for learners to complete the survey.

Senior leadership support, clear communications and regular reminders can also help encourage participation.

Providers should appoint a survey lead to coordinate local arrangements, liaise with IFF Research, oversee communications and monitor response rates throughout the survey period.

Learners who complete the survey have the opportunity to enter into a prize draw; details on this will be included in guidance for providers.

17. What should we do if we have our own learner survey planned during, or close to, the Medr survey period?

Providers are encouraged to review any planned learner surveys that may overlap with, or take place shortly before or after, the Medr Learner Voice Survey.

Running multiple surveys within a short period can lead to survey fatigue, which may reduce participation rates and the quality of responses. Where possible, providers should consider adjusting the timing of local surveys or reviewing whether all planned survey activity is necessary during this period. We appreciate that providers will want to see how the national survey works before making decisions on long-term changes to their own survey activities.

The Medr Learner Voice Survey is intended to provide a consistent national evidence base. Providers may wish to use the survey results alongside their own feedback activities rather than duplicating questions through separate surveys at the same time.

18. Will providers be able to monitor response rates during fieldwork?

Yes. Providers will have access to a live dashboard showing response rates during the survey period.

Survey administration

19. When will the first full survey take place?

The first full survey is scheduled to run from **25 January to 5 March 2027**. We anticipate that future annual surveys will take place at around the same point in the year.

20. Which learners are eligible to take part?

The survey is intended for all learners who are actively participating in further education, apprenticeship or adult community learning programmes during the survey period.

21. What about subcontracted provision?

Lead contractors are responsible for ensuring that learners whose programmes are delivered by subcontractors are invited to participate. Results and response rates will be available at subcontractor level.

22. Will I be able to see the survey results at course level?

Yes, depending on two factors:

- Whether we are able to accurately identify what course or programme the respondent is studying, which relies on accurate and up-to date LLWR data as well as learners inputting their learner ID correctly when they complete the survey
- The number of respondents; to protect learner confidentiality and ensure robust reporting, we will only report on results for courses where 10 or more learners have completed the survey.

Data and confidentiality

23. Will learner responses be confidential?

Yes. Responses will be handled by IFF Research and reported in line with research and data protection requirements. Individual learner responses will not be shared with providers in a way that identifies individual learners, except in cases where safeguarding issues are identified (see Question 26).

24. Why are learner ID numbers being used?

Learner ID numbers help link survey responses with existing learner records. This reduces the amount of information learners need to provide in the survey and improves the quality of analysis and reporting.

25. Why is Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) data important?

Accurate and timely LLWR data helps ensure survey results can be analysed by learner and course characteristics, supporting more meaningful reporting and benchmarking. Providers should make sure their LLWR data is accurate and up to date before the December data freeze.

26. What happens if a learner discloses a safeguarding issue in their survey response?

The survey is not intended to be used to report urgent concerns or seek immediate support. Learners are advised within the survey that, if they have an immediate safety or welfare concern, they should speak directly to their provider or another trusted source of support.

IFF Research will review open-text responses for safeguarding concerns. Where a response suggests there may be a serious risk of harm to the learner or another person, established safeguarding procedures will be followed and the concern may be shared with the relevant provider or organisation so that appropriate action can be considered.

Learners should avoid including names or unnecessary personal information in their comments, although information may be shared where this is necessary to respond to a serious safeguarding concern.

Results and reporting

27. What reports will be produced and when?

Outputs are expected to include:

- Individual provider reports, including an online dashboard
- Provider-level data, including anonymised open-text responses
- An all-Wales analysis report
- An all-Wales technical report explaining how the survey was conducted

We have asked IFF Research to prioritise the delivery of provider reports, and will work closely with them to ensure that the turnaround between survey fieldwork and the sharing of results with providers is as short as possible. Some analysis will need to take place before provider results are released, including the production of national findings and benchmarking data, to ensure that provider results can be interpreted in the appropriate context.

We recognise that providers will want to receive feedback as quickly as possible in order to inform improvement activity and, where appropriate, communicate outcomes and actions back to learners while they are still enrolled. We anticipate that providers will receive their results by the end of May 2027, and will provide more detailed information on reporting ahead of the first full survey.

28. Will providers be able to compare their results with others?

Yes - the survey is designed to provide a robust evidence base that can support benchmarking and comparison across Wales.

29. How will Medr use the results?

Medr will use the results to better understand learners' experiences across the tertiary education sector in Wales.

The findings will help Medr:

- Identify sector-wide strengths and areas for improvement
- Understand the experiences of different learner groups
- Inform policy development and strategic planning
- Monitor trends over time
- Encourage improvement through the sharing of effective practice

The survey is intended to support enhancement and improvement rather than create league tables. The Learner Voice Survey will be one of a number of evidence sources that Medr will use to understand learner experiences and quality across the tertiary sector. Survey findings will be considered alongside other evidence and indicators and will not be used in isolation when forming views about quality. We will also share the results of the survey with Estyn to inform inspections.

30. Will the results be published?

Medr intends to publish national-level findings from the survey from the first year onwards.

Providers will receive their own results, which will not be published initially. We anticipate that the results of the survey at provider level will be published as part of Medr's overall suite of quality performance measures, but not until the survey is established. We do not anticipate starting to publish provider outcomes before 2029.

Any published results will be subject to appropriate quality assurance and disclosure controls to protect learner confidentiality.

31. How can the results be used?

Results can support:

- Self-evaluation
- Quality improvement planning
- Learner engagement activities
- Understanding the experiences of different learner groups
- Monitoring changes over time

Support and further information

32. What support will providers receive?

Providers will receive:

- Detailed survey guidance
- Access to webinars
- Promotional materials and templates
- Ongoing support from the IFF Research team through a dedicated helpdesk

33. Who should providers contact with questions?

Questions about survey administration should be sent to lvsqueries@iffresearch.com .

Providers can also contact learnerengagement@medr.cymru for policy-related queries.