

Improving learner satisfaction in the East Midlands

GfK NOP Social Research carried out a combined quantitative and qualitative research survey on behalf of the East Midlands Learning and Skills Council, to help them gain a better understanding of what drives learner satisfaction in the region, as well as what key stakeholders thought needed to be done to make learners more satisfied.



The research challenge

The East Midlands Learning and Skills Council (LSC) wanted research results that told them:

- The satisfaction level of learners
- What they could do to improve the provision for learners.

They were interested in researching all groups of learners funded by the LSC in the East Midlands, which included learners at School Sixth Forms, a group which had never participated in satisfaction research before.

Why GfK NOP?

Due to our on-going relationship with the LSC and because of our experience of conducting similar surveys, East Midlands LSC approached GfK NOP with a learner satisfaction survey in mind.

What we did

After extensive consultation, it was decided that the best approach would be a full circle survey, both quantitative and qualitative.

The quantitative survey included samples of learners in further education, work based learning, accredited adult and community education and those studying at school sixth forms. It comprised a 20 minute telephone interview looking into their experiences of their course and how satisfied they were with it.

The quantitative research was followed by focus groups across all of the learner types with age and ethnicity splits. The purpose of this work was to delve further into the findings of the quantitative survey. GfK NOP worked closely with the client to ensure that issues which were of particular interest and importance to them were covered in this part of the project.

The final part of the project was disseminating the findings to stakeholders, in this case the learning providers themselves, and asking them how they thought the issues raised should be taken forward. This was done in a series of workshops run with each of the different provider types (FE, WBL, ACL, school sixth forms).

This gave the East Midlands LSC a full view on not only how satisfied their learners were, but also any issues and problems they had, what the providers thought about these issues and what they thought needed to be done by providers and by the LSC itself to address them.

Benefits

The key benefit that GfK NOP brought to the LSC was the ability to approach the project as an evolving process, remaining flexible to respond to new information and amend the approach to the next stage accordingly. At every stage we worked very closely with the client to ensure that their needs were covered, particularly as new information showed different issues and problems with learners than was first anticipated.

Past research had measured levels of learner satisfaction and dissatisfaction, as well as assessing the key drivers of learner satisfaction. However, through including and feeding back on the qualitative work among stakeholders, the research also gave the client actionable findings with credible recommendations .



Overview of organisations

The **Learning and Skills Council** is a non departmental public body responsible for planning and funding high quality education and training for everyone in England other than those in universities.

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GfK NOP Social Research is a leading primary research partner to public sector organisations in the UK providing both quantitative and qualitative research services to all major government

departments as well as non-governmental organisations. We frequently work in partnership with a range of academic institutions and consultancies to supply outputs that incorporate specialist sector knowledge and recommendations. We combine first class research experience and public policy knowledge to deliver robust data that is used to inform policy development, spending decisions and communication strategies. ■

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