

MAYOR OF LONDON

London Learner Survey Webinar – Questions and Answers

Monday 5 September, 12.00-13.15

Meeting the 50% learner participation rate

Q1. What was the overall response percentage for last year, and is 50% unrealistic?

GLA response: We do not yet have final learner participation rates in the LLS for 2021/22, because ILR-based enrolment figures for the year have not been finalised. The final participation rate for 2021/22 will be far below 50%. However, this figure is heavily impacted by relatively low levels of participation early in the academic year when learner start volumes were highest. Some of our funded providers returned no data in September and October 2021.

Learner participation increased substantially in the second half of the academic year, and all GLA-funded providers are now administering the survey. If this momentum can be maintained, we consider that the 50% participation rate will be achievable. Achieving a high level of response to the baseline survey is especially important in order to ensure that robust and representative data can be collected through the follow-up survey.

Q2. We have an issue with the LLS. We are getting checked for an average of 21/22 and 22/23 combined. This will make achieving 50% target impossible. In order to achieve 50% both academic years together, we have to get 90% of our 22/23 learners to complete the LLS (considering we will have fewer learners this academic year). Can you not separate the 21/22 and 22/23 targets please?

Q3. Are you taking the target of 50% from across both years combined or just on each academic year?

GLA response: Separate participation rates will be calculated for each academic year. If providers achieved a relatively low participation rate in 2021/22, this will not impact your 2022/23 participation rate. The clauses in the AEB Funding Rules relate to the 2022/23 participation rate specifically.

Q4. What are the expected response rates for providers who are not London based and have smaller numbers of GLA AEB funded learners?

GLA response: Out-of-London providers are expected to achieve a 50% learner participation rate among learners that are London residents.

Q5. If the learners have started last academic year and are continuing in 22/23 do they need to complete the survey again? Will this be calculated negatively towards 22/23 overall participation rate?

GLA response: If the learner started a learning aim in the 2021/22 academic year and are continuing in 2022/23, they would not be required to complete the survey again. But if the learner were then to start a new learning aim in 2022/23, they would then be expected to complete the survey.

Learners are **only required to complete the baseline survey within four weeks of starting a new course**, unless they have already done a baseline London Learner Survey in the previous 90 days at your

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organisation. If there is any uncertainty, we recommend they are asked to attempt to log into the survey. If they have done a survey in the last 90 days, they will be automatically told this when they enter their details and will not need to complete it.

Q6. Will this also include all online short courses where learners only may come in to enrol?

GLA response: Yes, online courses are included. You could consider administering the survey when they come in to enrol or deliver an online session to support learners to complete the survey.

Q7. Are you basing the 50% on enrolments, starts or learner headcounts?

Q8. How will the response rate be calculated with learners on multiple courses?

A full response to these questions will be provided in a forthcoming publication of a methodological note which explains how the participation rate will be calculated.

Multiple enrolments – 90-day rule

Q9. If learners are enrolled onto the same learning aim multiple times within the same academic year, they only need to fill in the survey once?

GLA response: When a learner completes the survey, they will not be required to complete the survey again within 90 days of that learning aim start date. Where another learning aim start occurs more than 90 days later, they will be required to complete the survey again. This also applies if they are undertaking the same learning aim. If there is any uncertainty, we recommend they are asked to attempt to log into the survey. If they have done a survey in the last 90 days, they will be automatically told this when they enter their details and will not need to complete it.

Q10. Most of our learners will have to do three surveys due to 90 day rule, plus any surveys we run to gather feedback, which is a lot. The LLS should be on first start and you can track the final leaving date through the ILR, would also be clearer data if measured over a year rather than 3 months.

Q11. The survey should be by individual headcount rather than having to manage with the 90 day rule.

GLA response: Much consideration has been given to the methodology being applied.

The primary reason that we are using enrolments rather than learner headcount as the basis for completing the survey is to enable more robust analysis of the impact of different learning aims on individual learners. A key objective of the London Learner Survey is to measure the impact of learning and particularly to identify which learning aims are more likely to achieve the outcomes being prioritised by the Mayor.

Q12. One slide stated that all AEB funded learners should be given the opportunity to complete the survey once in a 90-day period, except those on "taster courses". Please can you provide a definition of "taster courses"?

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GLA response: Many providers choose to offer ‘taster’ courses which should last a maximum of two weeks, but in most cases, learners take part in one or two sessions. They should have been designed only to allow learners to decide whether they want to progress to a subsequent learning programme, and not aiming to deliver any other outcomes on their own.

As a rule, learning aims should only be included where they are funded enrolments, that is a learning aim for which the GLA has funded a provider.

Paper questionnaire / Easy read

Q13. Can we ask learners to complete paper-based surveys?

Q14. Is there guidance for learners completing paper surveys?

GLA response: Paper-based surveys are only intended to be used where the learner cannot complete the survey online, for example due to low levels of digital literacy, or a disability or learning difficulty preventing them doing so.

Completing the survey online is the far more efficient option for the purposes of capturing the data. For example, paper surveys must be sent back to IFF Research and the information captured manually entered into a database. The data would also take longer to appear in the providers’ participation statistics due to the lag caused by manual data entry. There is also greater scope for learners to make errors filling out a paper form.

Guidance for completing the paper survey is available on the paper form itself and is similar to the guidance available for completing the online survey.

Q15. Where do we get the paper surveys?

Q16. Is there a limit on the number of paper-based surveys per provider?

Q17. If we cannot get any more paper questionnaires from IFF, can we photocopy these and send those back to IFF?

Q18. Where do we send completed questionnaires?

GLA response: IFF Research wrote to all providers in July to ask them how many paper-based copies of the survey would be needed for the upcoming year and how many easy-read copies would be needed. Each provider received an allocation of paper surveys for the new academic year based on the responses received.

Providers are limited to the paper questionnaires that have been allocated to them. It is not possible to make more paper copies available to providers due to the costly nature of postage and the resource intensive process of data entry. It will not be possible to print / photocopy additional questionnaires for this reason.

Completed questionnaires should be returned to IFF Research using the prepaid return envelopes provided with the paper copies.

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Q19. We appreciate the "easy read" version of the survey, aimed at LLDD/SEN learners. However, on first viewing, this is a very long document with very "busy" pages, perhaps not ideal for some of our learners. We requested 100 copies but were in fact allocated 30. We have around 80 adults in our discreet LLDD provision alone. We are also considering using the easy read survey for pre-entry ESOL learners where a translation is not available.

GLA response: We will appreciate feedback from providers on use of the Easy Read survey in 2022/23. The length of the Easy Read survey is currently tied to the length of the main survey, since we need to gather similar data. The Easy Read is intended to be more accessible for SEND learners by further simplifying the terminology used and using images to support their understanding.

Easy Read surveys are neither suitable nor intended for ESOL learners. If ESOL learners speak only a language not available online, a telephone survey can be requested from the front page of the online survey, by typing in the name of the language (in English or the language itself) on the front page, and then their name and phone number on the next page. This is designed to be as usable as possible for those who do not understand English, with icons shown for telephone number, for example.

The telephone option is also available in English, **only for LLDD or SEN learners who are unable to use the online, paper or Easy Read surveys**, including if you have run out of paper surveys for them. A box will appear on the online survey allowing the disability or learning difficulty to be specified.

IFF will make every effort to call back using that language in a few days' time, although this is subject to interviewer and/or translator availability for the specific language requested.

Unfortunately, demand for the paper questionnaire and Easy Read questionnaires has outstripped the amount that we have available for 2022/23 which is why you will have been allocated fewer than you need.

Tracking learners / identifying non-responders

Q20. Information on which learners have not completed it would be really useful so we could chase more efficiently.

Q21. Providers are well placed to chase up learners who haven't responded. If we can access the learner reference numbers for those who have responded, we can compare to those invited and automate reminders where needed. I don't think that breaches GDPR as it doesn't reveal any personal information that we don't already have i.e the learner reference number. This is an efficient way to improve the response rate

GLA response: Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide updates on the specific learners that have responded due to a range of technical and logistical barriers.

When learners respond to the survey at the start of their learning aim, IFF Research and GLA will not know that learner has started their course. This is why we cannot distribute the survey directly to learners and ask you to do it on our behalf. We only become aware of this several months later, when the ILR extract is published by ESFA, based on information submitted by your organisation. This enables us to identify who has completed the survey. Therefore, we could not identify which learners were 'missing' quickly enough for them to take part.

Providers cannot obligate learners to complete the survey in any case. Depending on how providers are administering the survey, our advice is to find a way to track the dissemination of the survey rather than completions specifically. For example, this could mean tracking when time for the discussing and completing the survey was set aside in class. If you feel it would be useful, you are also free to distribute

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blanket reminders, noting that they may already have completed the survey, but you cannot tell at this stage.

Q22. Ideally, we would be told which student has started and has not completed a survey (stopped in the middle) - do you have technical availabilities to help us with this - usually ESOL learners make these mistakes due to lack of language or not enough IT Knowledge.

GLA response: We cannot provide updates on where learners have paused the survey for many of the same reasons outlined in the response above. In addition, learners may start one survey, and later start another which they complete. We would be unable to link these learners until the matching process was complete.

Understanding terminology in survey / language translations

Q23. ESOL students struggle with the depth and terminology used in the survey. The hard copy forms are useful, but you don't employ sufficient staff to input, and therefore will reduce our ability to meet the 50% target.

Q24. Language translations - can you remind us what the existing translations were last year? Is Arabic available?

GLA response: Providers have fed back to us to highlight the challenges of engaging ESOL learners that may struggle to understand some of the terminology in the survey. The survey was developed with the needs of all cohorts of learners in mind. We shared early versions of the survey questions with some provider ESOL teams to ensure the content could be simplified for these types of learners. The survey questions also underwent cognitive testing to ensure they could be understood.

Despite this, we understand that the level of English required to understand and complete the survey will be beyond some learners, particularly ESOL learners. That is why we have expanded the range of language translations for the upcoming year of the survey. The survey is now available in 12 languages – English, Arabic, Bengali, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Ukrainian and Urdu. If the learner's preferred language is listed, they can request to complete the survey by telephone in their preferred language.

A learner can request a telephone survey by typing in the name of the language (in English or the language itself) on the front page, and then their name and phone number on the next page. This is designed to be as usable as possible for those who do not understand English, with icons shown for telephone number, for example.

The telephone option is also available in English, **only for LLDD or SEN learners who are unable to use the online, paper or Easy Read surveys**, including if you have run out of paper surveys for them. A box will appear on the online survey allowing the disability or learning difficulty to be specified.

IFF will make every effort to call back using that language in a few days' time, although this is subject to interviewer and/or translator availability for the specific language requested.

Q25. Your email messages are in English. Can these also be translated into the 12 languages?

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Q26. Will the survey information that has already been sent through be available in other languages?

GLA response: Unfortunately, emails and other materials provided to support providers with administration of the survey cannot be provided in other languages.

Response Rate Dashboard

Q27. Is the tracking IFF platform going to be updated?

Q28. Will we no longer know how many have completed the survey?

Q29. Would complete data show 90-day period in the dashboard?

GLA Response: The IFF Response Rate Dashboard has been updated. Providers are no longer required to update the dashboard. The dashboard will continue to display the number of survey responses generated in real-time.

The dashboard will show all responses to the survey that are generated. If that specific learner has already completed the survey in the previous 90 days, they will be informed by the system that they are not required to complete the survey again at this time provider they enter the same identifying student number on the landing page.

Q30. I'm concerned that we will no longer be able to update the dashboard manually to review our response rate on a weekly basis. This was a really useful tool we used to update staff with completion rates and encourage them to continue to push survey completion. Can I ask why we no longer have this functionality?

GLA Response: Providers will still receive real-time data on the number of responses generated to the survey. We will shortly be publishing a methodological note on the computation of the participation rate which will provide more information.

2021/22 participation rates

Q31. Is the follow-up survey participation rate of 24% come from the 19% who completed from Sep-May 2021-22?

Q32. Where are you getting the information from as they ILR does not go in until Dec?

GLA response: The data presented in the slides was based on the 2021/22 R10 ILR return. This analysis will be revised following receipt of the R14 ILR return in December.

The follow-up survey participation rate of 24% reflects the responses to the follow-up survey received for 2021/22 to date. The follow-up survey for 2021/22 will continue to be administered until January 2023.

To be clear, participation in the follow-up survey will not be relevant to your 50% target in any case; this will be based on response to the baseline survey only.

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Other questions

Q33. Has it been agreed that we can use either the Learner Reference Number or the Unique Learner Number for learners to complete the survey? Subcontractors may have delays in obtaining the LRN from primes' systems (eg after a short course has finished).

Q34. If learners do not have their student number, can they still do the survey like last year and does this impact on our participation percentage if they don't enter their number.

GLA response: Learners can use either the LRN or the ULN to complete the survey. These are treated equally.

They can still complete the survey if they do not have either of these. It will be important for them to provide other identifying information such as their name, address and phone number to enable them to be identified in the ILR. Learners who cannot be identified in the ILR will not count toward your 50% target.

Q35. How many learners have won an iPad?

GLA response: An iPad is won once per month. At the time of writing 12 iPads had been won so far.

Q36. Last year we completed the survey with learners and then some were also contacted by IFF to do the survey by phone, is this going to be the same this year and if so how are they selected?

GLA response: All providers are required to administer the baseline survey by supporting learners to complete the survey. The vast majority of learners complete the survey online, but other modes are available where it may not be possible for learners to complete the survey online. These include paper questionnaires, easy read questionnaires and completing the survey by telephone.

Learners are contacted by telephone when this is requested by them or you from the online survey link (see answers to other questions above). This option should only be reserved for learners that cannot complete the survey online due to language barriers, disability or learning difficulty only. Due to limited resources, it is only possible for a very small percentage of learners to complete the baseline survey over the phone.

Many learners will be contacted by phone five months after they complete the course to be invited to complete the follow-up survey. They will be selected as part of a sample of learners defined by learner characteristics, delivery provider, and type of provision. It is important to note that different questions are asked in the follow-up survey, and taking part in a follow-up survey has no impact on eligibility for the baseline survey (i.e., there is no 90-day exclusion period from the baseline survey if the learner receives a follow-up survey by email or phone).

Q37. Will SEND learners have to complete the survey?

GLA response: Yes, SEND learners are required to complete the survey. To support with engaging SEND learners, we have introduced an Easy Read version of the survey for 2022/23. They can also take part using the normal online or paper survey, if they are able to do so, or can request a telephone interview (see above).

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Q38. When will the questions that are asked in the survey be reviewed?

GLA response: The survey is unchanged for 2022/23. We are still awaiting final data from the first year of the survey which is due in March 2023. Following receipt of the data we will review the questions that are asked ahead of the launch of the 2023/24 survey.

Generally, we will want to keep changes to the survey to a minimum. This is because any changes to the survey can impact upon analysis of trends in reported outcomes. Our intention is to build a longitudinal picture of AEB outcomes enabling us to measure the impact of learning over several years.

Q39. It is difficult to administer the survey without additional funding being available. Tutors in the ACE sector are mainly employed on an hourly sessional basis and courses are costed accordingly. To enable time in a lesson to complete the survey, we would need to add an hour or so to lessons, more in some areas of the curriculum than others, and therefore pay the tutors for that time. There is no additional funding to cover this. We would not want to impinge on guided learning hours for actual course content. There is also the issue of access to digital devices.

GLA response: Data from the survey in 2021/22 showed that the survey takes 11½ minutes to complete on average, though this may take longer for certain cohorts of learners. Some time would need to be allocated to explain the purpose of the survey to learners and answer questions but in most cases we would not expect a full hour to be required.

Providers have the flexibility to integrate this into their delivery models in a way that best works for them. We have found that dedicating time in class is the most effective method for achieving this but what really matters is that learners complete the survey, not how or where they complete the survey. Some providers have incorporated the survey into the learner induction, others have developed short dedicated sessions outside of class time. We are keen to hear about other approaches being taken by providers and support sharing of best practice.

Regarding access to laptops, if it is helpful, the survey is smartphone compatible and is accessible outside learning provider premises.