



Individuals Panel 2005

Results from Wave 2



SUMMARY REPORT

Customer Research Strategy – Report 7



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

INDIVIDUALS PANEL 2005

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GfK NOP is the UK part of the GfK Group which is one of the top 4 market research organisations world-wide.

GfK NOP is based in the UK and employs around 600 staff and it is split into specialist divisions. The team working on the Employers Panel is in the division that specialises in Social Research and there are 30 researchers dedicated to this field. The team has relevant experience of both large-scale social research surveys and of carrying out customer satisfaction research.

FOREWORD by Steve Marshall



The Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS) has a robust research capacity examining education and learning issues, including a comprehensive programme of customer research. This reflects the principles of the Welsh Assembly Government's Making the Connections agenda to make public services more citizen-focused. To modernise post-16 learning, we need to listen to citizens to understand their views on learning.

The Individuals Panel was established to understand what motivates people to learn in order to widen and deepen participation in learning. This report presents the results from the second wave of the Individuals Panel. By interviewing the same individuals again, we are able to track how participation in learning and the attitudes of both learners and non-learners change over time. This has enabled us to identify what triggers motivation to learn and what are the barriers to people's learning. This knowledge will be used to tailor and strategically market learning initiatives to encourage the take-up of learning in the future.

I'm pleased to note that over half of respondents had undertaken some form of learning in the last twelve months, with much of this learning being job-related.

The most common reasons for undertaking learning were to improve salaries and to meet new people. I'm encouraged by the finding that the majority of respondents felt that learning helped them achieve their aspirations – it is this message that we need to market to a wider audience to increase participation in learning.

I would like to thank the individuals who continue to participate in this important research, as their views on learning help us to shape and market learning in the future.

Steve Marshall,
Director,
Department for Education, Lifelong Learning
and Skills.





This report explores the data arising from the second wave of the Individuals Panel in Wales. In December 2003 and January 2004 a total of 2,000 individuals were interviewed about their attitudes and experiences of learning, and this presented a Wales wide picture. In 2005 the individuals that gave permission were re-interviewed (1,309 in total), and this report highlights the most significant shifts in attitudes and behaviour amongst these 1,309 individuals over the space of a year.

Formal Learning

The overall picture 2005: Just under a half (49%) of respondents had not been involved in any learning, either formal or informal since the 2004 survey.

The main focus of the learning which had been undertaken was job related, as follows:

- Been on courses designed to help you develop skills that you might use in a job (24%).
- Spent time keeping up to date with developments in the type of work that you do e.g. reading books, manuals or attending seminars (17%).
- Been on general courses at work e.g. induction, health and safety or first aid training (15%).
- Received supervised training whilst you were actually doing a job (12%).

Respondents who had either carried out additional or new learning had studied a wide variety of subjects over the last year. The most popular were Information and communication technology (28%) and health, public services and care (24%).

More than six out of ten (62%) who had done any additional or new forms of training or learning in the past 12 months undertook courses that were designed to lead to a qualification or certificate. Nearly two in ten (18%) reported that their course was designed to lead to an NVQ and just over one in ten

(12%) to a vocational professional qualification. Similarly one in ten (10%) received a general certificate to show attendance/completion.

Four in ten (40%) respondents indicated that they had not gained the qualification that they had taken the course to achieve. It is worth noting that although in some cases it may be due to them failing the course it may also be that the respondents had yet to finish the course. At least 4% of respondents had gained the following qualifications:

- NVQ (10%)
- General certificate to show attendance/ completion (8%)
- Other vocational professional qualification (6%)
- City and Guilds qualification (4%)

The detail year-on-year: When exploring formal learning activity year-on-year, there had been little change. However, significantly fewer respondents had been on general courses at work e.g. induction, health and safety or first aid training (15% compared to 22% in 2004), or had spent time keeping up to date with developments in the type of work they did (17% compared to 21% in 2004).

In terms of types of qualifications studied, there had been a significant decrease in between 2004 and 2005 in the number of respondents studying for GCSEs (9% compared to 4% in 2005) and driving licenses (6% compared to 1% in 2005).

Gender differences were evident

- Men were less likely in 2005 than in 2004 to have undertaken courses designed to lead to an A/S level (1% compared to 5% respectively), A levels (3% compared to 7%), degrees (6% compared to 10%) and City and Guilds qualifications (7% compared to 11%).
- Women, on the other hand, were less likely in 2005 to have undertaken a course that

would lead to an NVQ than in 2004 (14% and 25% respectively) but more likely to have undertaken another academic professional qualification (7% compared to 3%).

Informal learning (Learning with children and/or teaching yourself new skills)

Activities with 3 – 7 year olds:

The overall picture 2005: Parents continued to undertake a multitude of learning activities with 3 – 7 year olds. The vast majority of parents had looked at books/read stories to their child or played with their child (96% and 94% respectively).

Almost nine in ten had:

- helped him/her to read (88%)
- helped him/her with drawing, paintings or craft (88%)
- helped him/her to recognise/learn about letters, numbers or shapes (86%)

Just over three quarters had helped their child with other school work (79%) and taught their child about nature e.g. by visiting the zoo, countryside or farm (78%). Significantly less had taken their child to a museum, gallery or historical building (48%), helped as a volunteer at their child's nursery, playgroup or school (25%) or attended a course with their child e.g. literacy course (7%).

The detail year-on-year: Almost all types of activities undertaken with 3 – 7 year olds remained static between 2004 and 2005. However, parents were less likely to be helping their children with drawing, paintings or crafts in 2005.

There were some changes in degrees of activity by gender. A greater number of females were doing activities such as reading stories/looking at books, helping them to recognise or learn about letters, number or shapes or helping as a

volunteer at their child's nursery, playgroup or school. A lower percentage of males were playing with their child, helping them with drawing, paintings or crafts, to recognise/learn about letters, numbers or shapes, helping with school work, and teaching their child about nature.

Findings for activities with children 8 years plus:

The overall picture 2005: Once again there were high levels of activity amongst parents and children 8 years plus. A minority (6%) had not done any of the activities mentioned with their child, but more than six out of ten had:

- helped their child with their school work (82%)
- discussed the news or a documentary with their child (70%)
- helped their child to look up information on a computer or the internet (67%)
- helped their child to read or consult books, magazines or newspapers (63%)

Around a half had attended a sports event with their child (56%), taken them to a museum, gallery or historical building (52%) or discussed religion with their child (47%). Fewer still had advised their child on learning, training or job options (39%), helped as a volunteer at their child's school (15%) or attended a course with their child (2%).

The detail year-on-year: The percentage of parents taking their child to a museum, gallery or historical building had increased from the previous year (47% in 2004 and 52% in 2005). There were no specific shifts in activity year-on-year by sub group.

Increasing participation

The 2005 analysis shows that there was a willingness to participate in and facilitate more learning with children of all ages. Respondents



Table 1: Summary of Activities undertaken with children and barriers to undertaking more activities with children

	3 – 7 year olds	8 years plus
Base	All respondents with children aged 3 – 7 who carry out activities with them (208)	All respondents with children aged 8 plus who carry out activities with them (289)
Proportion of parents who carried out activities with children and wanted to do more activities with children	81%	73%
Specific activities that parents would most like to do more of (most commonly mentioned)	More than four in ten would have liked to teach their child about nature (46%), helped their child to read (46%), looked at books or read stories to their child (45%), played with them (45%) or helped them with drawing, painting or craft (40%)	More than three in ten wanted to either help their child with school work (38%) or help their child look up information on a computer or the internet (32%). Males were particularly likely to report that they would like to do more of these activities
Barriers (<i>Note: base for this question is all those with children in each age group who would like to do more activities with their child</i>)	Over a third (34%) reported that nothing was stopping them from doing more of these activities but a similar number (35%) cited work commitments as a barrier	Again when parents were asked what stopped them from doing more of these activities with their children a sizeable number (24%) reported that nothing prevented them. However, work (39%) and home (32%) commitments were the biggest factors

did agree that they would like to do more activities with their children. Table 1 identifies the proportion that would/could be encouraged to take up more learning with their children, what specifically they would like to do more of and what was currently stopping them from doing so.

It is interesting to note the following when comparing the age of children amongst parents that would like to do more activities. Whilst 34% of those with 3 – 7 year olds said that nothing is stopping them, this decreased to 24% for those with older children. Commitments to work and home were a more significant barrier for those with older children.

The indication that a lack of time amongst respondents to dedicate to learning or commitments to other pursuits is a theme that arises throughout this report. The time barrier appears to be a fundamental one to address when trying to encourage individuals into additional learning of any nature.

Improving knowledge/teaching yourself

The overall picture 2005: In terms of respondents improving their own knowledge or teaching themselves a new skill only four in ten (42%) had done so in the last four weeks. Amongst those who had improved their knowledge/taught themselves something in the previous four weeks, the main forms of teaching themselves were by reading printed material like books, journals or manuals (78%) or information from the internet (51%).

Learning opportunities at work

The overall picture 2005: The majority of respondents (67%) felt that they got the right amount of training for their current job. Almost two thirds felt that their employer valued them (66%) and slightly fewer (58%) agreed that they had a wide variety of opportunities for learning.

There was however a substantial proportion of respondents who were unhappy about their potential not being recognised (40% said that their current job did not make the most of their abilities and personal qualities and 33% agreed that they did not get the chance to progress). Just over three in ten respondents (32%) said that people in their role did not get offered much training.

The detail year-on-year: Overall the situation relating to opportunities at work remained broadly the same year-on-year; the most consistent attitudes over time were that:

- their employer values them (78% of those that agreed to this last year did so again in 2005)
- respondents get the right amount of training for their job (74% of those that agreed in 2004 did so again in 2005)

There had been several shifts for particular sub groups to the positive and several to the negative; amongst these were that the AB social class group (SCG) was much more positive on many statements and the under 24s were more negative. Table 2 provides a summary.

Attitudes to learning

The overall picture 2005: In relation to enjoyment, confidence and motivation, most of the respondents felt that learning was enjoyable for its own sake (87%). The other statement which registered a high level of agreement was related to confidence about learning new skills (77% agreed to some extent to this statement). However, a quarter (25%) agreed that they did not feel confident in a classroom environment and three in ten (30%) felt that they had not got the motivation to do a course.

There was still a sense that some respondents were reluctant to take responsibility for job related learning (in terms of time and money); more than a half (53%) agreed that they should not have to pay and nearly a quarter (23%)



agreed that they should not have to do it in their own time.

Less than three in ten respondents (28%) agreed that there was not enough help and advice about the sorts of learning people can do.

Whilst very few respondents (13%) agreed that the rest of their own family were not interested in learning, just four in ten (38%) said that they knew a lot of people in their area that were learning (note: 'area' refers to a geographical or local area).

The detail year-on-year: Overall attitudes toward learning remained similar year-on-year. The only significant shift had been a positive one toward the amount of information and advice that was available.

When exploring attitudes year-on-year the data showed the most consistent attitudes to be that:

- learning is enjoyable for its own sake (90% of those that agreed to this last year did so again in 2005)
- I am confident about learning new skills (87% of those that agreed in 2004 did so again in 2005)

This seems to suggest that once the enjoyment of learning and confidence in tackling learning has been instilled it remains relatively constant for the individual. This in turn suggests that the marketing of these messages needs only be focussed at the groups that are not already agreeing with these statements.

Table 3 highlights all groups that had shown a significantly increased or decreased shift toward positive or negative attitudes. There were some positive moves in the attitude of the under 24s toward paying for job related learning and undertaking job related learning in their own time. Respondents not working appeared to be more confident than they were last year about learning new skills.

From the new statements added in 2005, the data showed that a fifth of respondents were nervous about the standard of work required for learning (more likely to be female and older respondents). Approximately a third of respondents had too many commitments at work or home to undertake additional learning.

The data also showed that whilst just over three quarters of respondents agreed that they liked a new challenge, just over six in ten (62%) agreed that they liked to stick to a routine. This being the case (there was overlap where the respondent held both views) the data suggested that either:

- the 'new challenge' needed to have little impact on other areas so that routine was not compromised; or
- liking a challenge was a personal trait they saw themselves having but did not necessarily lead to action all of the time.

Time to relax was important (six in ten agreed that they needed lots of it). Four in ten respondents said they would not take on extra responsibilities unless they had to. These findings again make the link to individuals being reluctant to use what spare time they have for anything that adds more responsibilities or pressure.

As mentioned previously, the pressure of time for the individual emerged time and time again. It appears that this perceived, or real barrier, needs to be tackled in order to attract more people into learning.

Barriers to learning

The overall picture 2005: The main reason for non-participation in 2005 was not having enough time (24%) or work pressure/hours of work (12%). Family and childcare commitments including care of the elderly was also a large factor that prevented participation (18%). The reasons given were strongly linked to the gender and working status of the respondent.

Table 2: Summary of shifts in attitudes towards learning opportunities at work

	Significant shift towards greater agreement	Significant shift towards lower level of agreement
I get the right amount of training for my current job		Males Under 24s 35 – 44 year olds Social Class Group group DE
I feel my employer values me	Males Social Class Group AB	
I have a wide variety of opportunities for learning, not just ones related to my immediate job	Social Class Group DE	Males 35 – 44 year olds Social Class Group C2
I feel that my current job does not make the most of my abilities and personal qualities*	under 24s	Females 25 – 34 year olds Social Class Group AB
People in my role do not get a chance to progress*	under 24s	25 – 34 year olds Part time employed Social Class Group AB
People in my role do not get offered much training*	Social Class Group DE	

Note: Sub groups are shown on the table in no particular order.

* Negative statements therefore shifts to lower agreement is a positive outcome



- Women (28%) were significantly more likely than men (7%) to cite family or childcare commitments as a barrier to learning.
- Men (15%) found that work pressures or hours of work were more of an issue than women (8%).
- Not enough time and work pressure or hours of work were more likely to be given as reasons by working respondents than those who were not working.

The detail year-on-year: Many barriers mentioned across the two waves remained the same. However, family or childcare commitments had increasingly become a barrier to learning – women were particularly likely to report this as a barrier. Males had become more likely to report that they did not have enough time to undertake learning. However, across the two waves they had become increasingly likely to have actually considered undertaking learning in the past year.

Motivations for learning

The overall picture 2005: Overall motivations for learning and were work related in 2005. The two most common reasons given for choosing their main subject or skill were to help in my current job (33%) and/or to get a recognised qualification (9%).

Other responses mentioned by between 5% and 8% were:

- to develop myself as a person (7%)
- to get a job (7%)
- I am interested in the subject/personal interest (7%)
- To change the type of work that I do (6%)
- I enjoy learning it gives me pleasure (5%)

Respondents in 2005 were also asked about impacts on timetables and journey to provider:

- For two thirds (65%) the timetable was not influential in their decision however for one in ten (12%) the timetable had a great deal of influence.
- Half of those who attended a course part time during the week in the evening would not have attended it if it had been run at a different time.
- In terms of journey time to reach the provider of the course, just over four in ten (44%) were prepared to travel up to half an hour, one in fourteen (7%) up to 45 minutes, one in seven (15%) up to an hour and three in ten (30%) an hour or more.

Respondents were asked to rate how beneficial their learning had been to them in their professional, personal and social lives. Learning was seen as beneficial for work related aspects rather than their family or social life. Two thirds (63%) reported that the learning was either not very or not at all beneficial to their family or social life. This was a relatively low rating compared to other benefits. In contrast more than eight in ten considered it to be either very or fairly beneficial to their own personal development (89%) or working/professional development (86%).

The detail year-on-year: Between 2004 and 2005 there was a significant increase in the number of respondents reporting that they started the learning to help them in their current job (25% in 2004 to 33% in 2005).

Encouragingly, incidence of work related impacts increased year-on-year. For example, I learned new skills for the job I was doing at the time (30% in 2004 to 36% in 2005) and I was able to do my job better (33% in 2004 to 37% in 2005). However, fewer respondents said that they had got a new job (13% in 2004 to 4% in 2005) or got a pay rise (10% in 2004 to 5% in 2005).

Table 3: Summary of shifts in attitudes towards learning in general

	Significant shift to greater agreement	Significant shift towards lower level of agreement
I am confident about learning new skills	Social Class Group C2	Social Class Group AB
I don't see why I should pay for learning that is to do with my job or career*	35 – 44 55 plus Males Employed F/T Social Class Group C2	Under 24 25 – 34 Not Working
I know a lot of people in my area who are learning		Female Under 24 25 – 34 Not working Social Class Group C1
There is not enough help and advice available about the different sorts of learning people can do*		Shifts to a lower level of agreement across all groups
People should not be expected to learn new skills for their career in their own time*		Female 55 plus 35 – 44 Employed PT Retired Social Class Group AB
I haven't the motivation to do a course*	Female 25 – 34 55 plus Employed P/T Retired Social Class Group AB Social Class Group C1	

Note: only asked of those who were not retired or incapable of work.

* Negative statements therefore shifts to lower agreement is a positive outcome



Aspirations and future plans

Aspirations in general

The overall picture: Aspirations for the following year were varied. The most common response, amongst just over a third (36%) of respondents, was a rise in earnings. Respondents were interested in personal development with around a third wishing to meet people (33%), to develop themselves as a person (32%), to learn a new skill (30%), to help their children or grandchildren with their learning or homework (28%) and to improve their self-confidence (26%). Generally career development aspirations

were mentioned by less than one in eight respondents – to change the type of work that I do (13%), to get a promotion (13%), to get a job (9%) and to get a job with a different employer (7%).

The detail year-on-year: The wish for an increase in earnings had increased between 2004 (32%) and 2005 (36%). However, beyond this, aspirations were, as in 2004, focused on personal development. Respondents were more likely to cite that in the next year they would like to meet new people (2004, 23% and 2005, 33%) and develop as a person (2004, 27% and 2005, 32%). Positively the number of respondents

Table 4: Summary of groups with a significant increase in the proportion mentioning each aspiration in 2005 compared with 2004

Aspiration	Groups who show a significant increase in % mentions year-on-year		
To get a job	Not working		
To get a recognised qualification	Working Part time		
To be better at my current job	Males	Working Full time	
To get a rise in earnings	Males	Females	Working Full time
To make my work more satisfying	Males		
To develop myself as a person	Working Full time	Working Part time	
To improve my self confidence	Females		
To meet people	Under 24	Retired	Working Part time
To help my children with their learning/homework	Retired		

NB: Sub groups are shown on the table in no particular order

reporting that they have no aspirations for the next year had decreased (2004, 18% and 2005, 12%).

Positively, respondents with aspirations for the next year and who had not done any learning in the last year were increasingly likely to view learning as important to develop themselves both professionally and personally.

Exploring the shift in aspirations year-on-year amongst the sub groups there were some significant increases in what respondents would like to achieve. These are shown in Table 4.

It is important to note that the percentage stating ‘that they had no aspirations’ on the list had significantly decreased for the retired group year-on-year.

In line with last year, when asked how much they thought learning would help achieve aspirations, respondents were more likely to say that it would ‘help a lot’ for the job/career related aspirations. Importantly however, year-on-year there had been an increase in the likelihood to say that learning would help achieve many of the

aspirations stated. Table 5 shows in which areas this has been the case for both professional and personal areas of life.

Likelihood to learn again in the next three years

The overall picture: In 2005 just over six out of ten (62%) respondents reported that they would either be very (35%) or fairly (27%) likely to take up learning in the next 3 years.

The detail year-on-year: Overall the likelihood to take up learning in the next 3 years remained static across the two waves. It is however worth noting that certain groups such as females, those aged under 24 years old, part time workers and those classified as social class groups AB or CI had become more likely to say they were either very or fairly likely to take up learning in the next 3 years.

Table 5: Summary of aspirations for which a significantly larger proportion of respondents said learning would ‘help a lot’ in achieving each aspiration in 2005 compared with 2004

Aspirations where there has been a significant increase year-on-year in respondents saying that learning would ‘help a lot’ in achieving these goals	
Aspirations related to job/career	Aspirations related to personal development
Change the type of work done	To get on to a future course of learning
To get a new job	To meet people
To get a rise in earnings	To improve my self confidence
	To develop myself as a person



Key discussion points raised from the research

The remaining paragraphs below take a few of the key issues and pose them as questions for the Department for education, Lifelong learning and skills (DELLS) and partners to explore further in terms of the messages they might draw from the survey and how they may develop and deliver learning across Wales.

‘Too much to do, too little time’

How are individuals managing their time outside of work and how can DELLS find the potential to increase participation in learning? There are so many instances throughout this report where respondents cite ‘time’ as a barrier for learning for themselves and/or a barrier for doing more activities with their children. We also found that a significant proportion of respondents have problems managing commitments at work and home. A side issue, but one that is inextricably linked, is the prevailing attitude amongst most respondents of needing a lot of time to relax and liking a routine.

We almost get the impression that a significant proportion of individuals believe that time is a resource or ‘luxury’ they do not have. This is a key barrier to breakdown and a challenge for DELLS because in fact, individuals may have little spare time to invest in a learning event. Encouragingly, more respondents than last year agreed that learning helped them achieve their aspirations and perhaps it is this ‘pay off’ that could be high-lighted. Those that had some spare time but were reluctant to compromise their relaxation are the ones that need to be persuaded of the benefits. The research this year shows that individuals see the benefits of learning related to career and personal development as opposed to relatively few citing the benefits for family and social life. Perhaps one action might be to continue to prove benefits to career and personal development but

also demonstrate the positive impacts on family and social life.

Focussing on changing attitudes to learning that shift over time

When exploring the attitudes to learning that the research has tracked over time, confidence and enjoyment of learning appear to be very consistent. Whilst the proportion of respondents agreeing to the other attitude statements has stayed the same year-on-year, the types of respondents agreeing has changed. For the following attitude statements we found a very different profile of individuals with a positive/negative stance than we did last year:

- I don’t see why I should pay for learning that is to do with my job or career
- I know a lot of people in my area who are learning
- People should not be expected to learn new skills for their career in their own time
- I haven’t the motivation to do a course

This being the case the data implies that some attitudes about learning are more fixed in an individual’s mind over a set time period than others. Attitudes related to levels of confidence in learning and enjoyment of learning are relatively consistent over time whereas attitudes toward funding and taking personal responsibility for work related learning are not.

Increase in perception that help and advice is available

When tracking the agreement to the statement ‘there is not enough help and advice available about the different sorts of learning people can do’ there has been a significant decrease in the percentage of respondents agreeing since last wave (28% agreed there is not enough help and advice compared to 37% in Wave 1).

Agreement with the statement has decreased significantly for all sub groups in the analysis (i.e. males and females, all age groups etc). This is an encouraging shift in attitude and one that should be explored by DELLS to see if there are any learning points or best practice in how this aspect of policy and marketing has been developed.

The vast majority of parents would like to do more. DELLS may wish to explore whether this is a trigger for more action in terms of encouraging family learning in Wales and how this might be addressed.

Using aspirations to motivate individuals to participate in learning

The research shows that aspirations for key groups of individuals change over time, even in the space of 12 months. What is interesting however is the increasing acceptance over the course of 12 months that learning will have an impact on individuals achieving their aspirations. It may be worthwhile DELLS exploring internally and externally what has contributed to this particular shift of attitude in order to inform best practice for future marketing.

The desire to increase learning activities undertaken with children

The research for 2005 shows that the amount of activities undertaken with children aged 3 – 7 and 8 plus remains high and stable over time. What is interesting this year is that the survey explored whether parents would like to undertake more activities with children and if so, which activities.