

The Learner Panel: The new online FE research tool from the Young Person's Learning Agency (YPLA)

Carrying out primary research in further education, training or adult learning has now been made simpler thanks to the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA's) new research resource; *The Learner Panel*. In a drive to facilitate more cost effective yet high quality research, the panel provides access to learners across the FE sector.

The Learner Panel is a new platform for conducting online research. It is managed by the YPLA, co-funded with the Skills Funding Agency and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and operated by Opinionpanel Research. The panel is aimed at helping public sector organisations and the research agencies working on their behalf conduct highly targeted and cost effective quantitative and qualitative research projects.

Recruited at the start of 2010, *The Learner Panel* is comprised of 10,000 learners who have agreed to take part in online surveys in return for a token incentive after each project. Because panellists' demographic profiles are captured on joining it means that researchers can reach minority sub-groups as well as representative samples of respondents. Key profiling characteristics include age, ethnicity, learning provider, course, attainment and financial assistance received. The panel is suitable for both qualitative and quantitative research projects and because the panel is run online, fieldwork can be completed in a matter of days.

Using *The Learner Panel* to conduct research significantly reduces data collection costs and turnaround times on projects. This is because there is nothing payable for sourcing the research sample – our learners have already been recruited and are waiting and willing to participate in research.

For organisations carrying out research with learners or tendering for a public sector research project in this area, *The Learner Panel* is likely to be an invaluable resource.

Contact Eleanor Simmons at Opinionpanel Research on 020 7288 8789 or email eleanor@opinionpanel.co.uk to find out more. Please also take a look at www.learnerpanel.co.uk

Opinionpanel is the independent research business that specializes in building and managing panels of students and learners. As well as operating The Learner Panel on behalf of the YPLA, Opinionpanel also operates The Future Panel, The Student Panel and The Graduate Panel; students before during and after their time at university. Opinionpanel offers a full range of research services including access panel services to social and market researchers. Opinionpanel runs syndicated and ad hoc research projects for universities, brands, agencies, recruiters and advertisers. Panellists are never subjected to any marketing, selling, subscription requests or spam.