



## Frequently asked questions

This document contains a number of frequently asked questions and answers relating to the Tellus4 survey. If there are other questions which you would like to see answered, please use the consultation page to submit your question.

### **Why is the DCSF responsible for delivering Tellus4 and not Ofsted?**

The survey was originally developed to provide Ofsted with information for inspection events including the annual performance assessment and joint area review programmes, which are now concluding. As a consequence, and after some discussion, the decision was made to transfer responsibility for the delivery of Tellus4 to the Department. The Department have appointed NFER to deliver the survey on its behalf and will continue to work closely with local authorities and other stakeholders, including Ofsted, to implement the Tellus4 survey in 2009.

### **What are the benefits of the Tellus Survey?**

The survey provides an opportunity to engage children and young people and gauge their views on their lives (including at school) and on key services they receive. This will inform local service planning (through the Children and Young People's Plans) and provide information on their progress towards the five Every Child Matters outcomes. Schools will also be able to compare the local data to what they know about their own schools.

The survey provides statistically representative data at local and national levels allowing for national benchmarking and nearest statistical neighbour comparisons that local and/or qualitative approaches cannot provide. As such, Tellus should be viewed as a key part of the Government's wider programme of research and consultation with children and young people.

### **How will Tellus4 differ from previous Tellus surveys?**

There are a number of differences between Tellus4 and previous Tellus surveys. The key differences are:

- This year NFER is delivering the survey in partnership with RM and Triangle Services, on behalf of the DCSF.
- The survey will be live in the autumn term 2009 (rather than the summer term as in previous Tellus surveys).

- Local authorities (LAs) and schools will be given the opportunity to select additional questions from a question bank to support individual LA and school priorities and self-evaluation.
- Schools will also have the opportunity to include additional classes, in Years 6, 8 and 10, in order to collect data from a larger number of pupils.
- Schools will receive feedback of the responses from their children and young people.
- There will also be the facility for schools and LAs to do further analysis of their data using web-based analytical tools through a secure portal.

### **How will schools and local authorities find the latest information and news about the survey?**

We will provide regularly updated information and news about the survey via the [Tellus4 portal](#).

### **How can I tell you about any suggestions I have for the delivery of Tellus4?**

Please access the [consultation page](#) on the Tellus4 portal and share your views.

### **What support will be provided to schools to help them take part in Tellus4?**

We will provide each school with a support pack including an outline of the survey, key dates, frequently asked questions, instructions for personalising their online survey, and survey administration instructions. Schools will be able to access support via our dedicated email and telephone helpdesk that will operate throughout the survey period. In order to support schools in making children and young people's participation in the survey meaningful, we are developing a Citizenship teacher pack (including lesson plans) that demonstrates the process and value of consultation in a democracy, which teachers can choose to use. The Citizenship teacher pack will be made available on the portal and in hard copy to sample schools at the beginning of June 2009.

### **Which children and young people will take part in Tellus4?**

Similarly to previous Tellus surveys, we will ask for participating schools to arrange for one class of year 6 pupils and two classes of year 8 and 10 pupils to complete the survey. This year, however, there is also the option for schools to include more classes from each of the three year groups, if they so wish. This will contribute to provide more useful school-level data that will be available to schools through school-feedback reports.

## **How will the schools be selected to take part in Tellus4?**

We are identifying a representative sample of schools that is no larger than is necessary. The schools will be selected to be representative of their LA according to free school meals (FSM) and size. These criteria were used for Tellus3. In small LAs, schools have a greater probability of being selected than in a larger authority. It is likely that in all LAs some schools that took part in Tellus3 may well be selected to take part in Tellus4. We appreciate the pressures on schools and children and young people and value their support. This year, participating schools will receive feedback which will provide useful information to support school self-evaluation.

## **What is the sample size for Tellus4 in each local authority?**

In each LA we will draw a random sample of:

- 20 secondary schools (including academies)
- 40 primary schools
- 4 special schools
- 2 PRUs

Or all schools where there are fewer schools than this in an LA.

A school would still be asked to enter one class of year 6 pupils or 2 classes of year 8 and year 10 pupils but we would encourage schools to enter the whole year group as this will provide them with more data when we provide feedback to schools.

If 40 per cent of sampled schools in each LA respond to the survey, the sample size will be sufficient for LAs to be confident that their data represents the views of young people in their LA with a confidence interval of around 7 per cent for each year group.

The key factor in deciding the size of the sample is the number of young people who respond and the sample we have identified should yield sufficient numbers of children and young people if 40% of them (so 40% of sampled schools) respond.

Nevertheless, feedback from LAs through the events in January indicated that they would value being able to increase the sample size. We are not able to extend the sample to all schools in every LA in England, however, we are offering every LA with more than 20 secondary and 40 primary schools the opportunity to extend the sample to all secondary schools and 20 more primary schools, should they wish to do so. Extending the sample in this way is voluntary.

## **How will you ensure that the sample is representative?**

The random sample of schools will be drawn to be representative of schools in terms of:

- school size (based on the numbers of students in Year 6, 8 and 10)
- proportion of children eligible for free school meals (as a proxy for deprivation)
- geographical distribution

The survey data will then also be weighted in order to ensure that it is representative.

### **Can I choose the schools to be in the sample for Tellus4?**

It is important that Tellus4 gathers robust data and that any risk of bias is minimised. For this reason, it is essential that the sample is drawn randomly and that individual schools are not selected for inclusion in the sample as this would introduce bias which could not be weighted for statistically.

### **Will children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities be included?**

Primary and secondary versions of the survey will be adapted to make them more accessible to all children and young people. NFER is working with Triangle Services to provide more accessible formats such as through audio, large print, symbol and signing. These will be tested and piloted with children and young people with a range of needs during the development phase.

### **How have the questions for Tellus4 be developed?**

The development of the questionnaires was a staged process, reviewing and revising the questions used in Tellus3. We provided LA and children's trust officers with the opportunity to feed into this process during regional events held during January 2009; and LAs and schools also provided their views through the consultation pages on the one-stop Tellus4 portal. These views informed the development of the questionnaire which has been revised further following cognitive testing with children and young people. The final version will be available on the portal in April.

This year, for the first time, LAs and schools will have the opportunity to personalise the survey by selecting additional survey questions from a question bank. Those selected will automatically appear at the end of **each section** of the survey for children and young people to complete. The bank of questions will be identified through consultation and will be developed alongside the main survey.

### **What feedback will local authorities and schools receive?**

LAs and schools will have access to their own top-line feedback reports via the one-stop Tellus portal. The results will be available via a web-based analytical tool enabling schools and LAs to engage with their own data and

manipulate it in order to explore responses from sub-groups (e.g. gender and ethnic groupings). Guidance on using this web-based analytical tool will be provided. Data will be weighted to compensate for non-response. LA feedback reports will provide comparisons for each question: your LA, your statistical neighbours, your LA (contextually adjusted), and national. School feedback reports will provide three comparisons: your school, your LA, and national.

*Last updated 20<sup>th</sup> March 2009*