



# **NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus February 2010 Survey**

**Information, advice and guidance (IAG)**

**The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)**

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## Introduction

Three questions were submitted by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) to the secondary teachers in NFER's Teacher Voice Omnibus survey in February 2010. The questions covered the following topics:

- the extent to which respondents are being asked by students for information, advice and guidance (IAG) on learning pathways and career pathways
- teachers' confidence in providing responses to IAG queries
- teachers' views on the extent to which those providing IAG are professionally trained
- teachers' perceptions on the status of careers education in their school.

This report provides an analysis of the responses to these questions, along with supporting information about the survey. Results are also presented by teacher seniority level (classroom teachers or senior leaders). This report forms one part of the output from the Omnibus survey. The analysis is also presented and given in more detail in a set of interactive web-based tables produced separately (in Pulsar Web).

## Context

The TDA is a national body that was established to promote high-quality training and the continuing professional development (CPD) of the school workforce<sup>1</sup>. In 2004, the TDA's remit was expanded to focus on the training and development of the *whole* school workforce, including support staff, such as classroom-based teaching assistants.

The TDA oversees teacher training and the CPD of all aspects of teaching. One of these elements is the provision of IAG for learners about their future education, training and employment pathways. Careers education and IAG can be provided in many ways – for example, by form teachers, by teachers with pastoral responsibilities, and also by specialist school staff such as careers coordinators, usually supported by a careers personal adviser from Connexions, for example. Since April 2008, responsibility for IAG has devolved to local authorities, which have the newly-developed Quality Standards<sup>2</sup> to further support the development of consistently high-quality and impartial IAG across the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.tda.gov.uk/about/role.aspx> [3 March 2010]

<sup>2</sup> DCSF (2007). *Quality Standards for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance*. Nottingham: DCSF Publications. Available: <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=IAGQS07&> [3 March 2010]

country. In the light of current considerations of the provision of IAG in schools, including plans to develop a new qualification for careers coordinators, the TDA wished to build on the knowledge gained one year previously through Omnibus survey questions on this topic and thus find out more about current patterns in requests for, and the provision of, IAG in schools.

## **Analysis of findings**

### **The sample**

The Teacher Voice survey was completed by a sample of over 1,700 teachers, and these questions were routed to the roughly 800 secondary school teachers who responded. The data was weighted to ensure representativeness. The sample included teachers from a wide range of school governance types and subject areas. Sample numbers were sufficient to allow for comparisons by seniority (classroom teachers and senior leaders). Detailed information about the sample is given in the supplementary section of this report.

### **The extent to which teachers are being asked by students for IAG**

The first question submitted to the Teacher Voice survey asked secondary teachers in the different capacities of their role, about the extent to which, over the past academic year, they had been asked by students for information, advice or guidance (IAG) on learning pathways for progression through the 14-19 phase and or / career pathways. Results are presented in separate tables (Tables 1 to 5) for each possible capacity of the teacher's role.

As Tables 1 to 5 show, the majority of teachers are most frequently being asked for IAG in their capacity as a subject teacher, rather than in any other role. For the subject teacher role (see Table 1), the responses were fairly evenly spread across the categories: over a third (37 per cent) of teachers had been asked more than 10 times, about a quarter (26 per cent) had been asked 4-10 times and similarly about a quarter (24 per cent) said 1-3 times. Only 11 per cent of teachers had never been asked for IAG. A similar pattern of responses was reported when the question was used a year ago, in February 2009.

**Table 1. During the past academic year, in your capacity as a subject teacher how many times have you been asked by students for information, advice or guidance on learning pathways for progression through the 14-19 phase and/or career pathways**

	<b>Secondary</b>
Never	11%
1-3 times	24%
4-10 times	26%
More than 10 times	37%
Not applicable	2%
Local base (N)	793

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100*

*Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2010*

As can be seen from Table 2, for form tutors, the most frequent response was that they had been asked more than 10 times (24 per cent). Smaller proportions had also been asked 4-10 times (16 per cent) and 1-3 times (14 per cent). Just over a tenth (13 per cent) of teachers had never been asked for IAG in their role as a form tutor. Data collected one year previously on this question mirrored that of 2010.

**Table 2. During the past academic year, in your capacity as a form tutor how many times have you been asked by students for information, advice or guidance on learning pathways for progression through the 14-19 phase and/or career pathways**

	<b>Secondary</b>
Never	13%
1-3 times	14%
4-10 times	16%
More than 10 times	24%
Not applicable	32%
Local base (N)	779

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100*

*Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2010*

The data in Table 3 reveals that nearly two-thirds of respondents (63 per cent) did not have the role of PSHEE (or PSHE) teacher. Where teachers did have this role, nine per cent had been asked for IAG more than 10 times, seven per cent 4-10 times and another seven per cent 1-3 times. Fifteen per cent of respondents had never been asked about IAG in their capacity as a PSHEE teacher. These findings mirror those reported one year previously.

**Table 3. During the past academic year, in your capacity as a PSHEE teacher how many times have you been asked by students for information, advice or guidance on learning pathways for progression through the 14-19 phase and/or career pathways**

	<b>Secondary</b>
Never	15%
1-3 times	7%
4-10 times	7%
More than 10 times	9%
Not applicable	63%
Local base (N)	762

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100*

*Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2010*

Table 4 shows that only a small proportion of the teacher sample had fulfilled a career coordinator role. Interestingly, a tenth of all the teachers (10 per cent), and therefore a large majority of those who had experienced the role, said that they had never been asked by students for IAG. Three per cent of the teachers had been asked more than 10 times, none had been asked 4-10 times, while one per cent had been asked 1-3 times. Given that the careers coordinator often has the main responsibility for careers education in the school, this finding may at first seem surprising. However, it is worth bearing in mind that careers coordinators may not in fact have much student contact and are thus not in frequent receipt of direct questioning from learners. This is a pattern of response which has continued from February 2009.

**Table 4. During the past academic year, in your capacity as a careers coordinator how many times have you been asked by students for information, advice or guidance on learning pathways for progression through the 14-19 phase and/or career pathways**

	<b>Secondary</b>
Never	10%
1-3 times	1%
4-10 times	0%
More than 10 times	3%
Not applicable	86%
Local base (N)	748

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100*

*Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2010*

As can be seen in Table 5, for senior leaders, the most frequent response was that they had been asked more than 10 times (17 per cent) in the past academic year. In addition six per cent of respondents reported that they had been asked 4-10 times and a further four per cent had been asked 1-3 times. A tenth (10 per cent) had never been asked. Again, this reflects the responses given one year earlier.

**Table 5. During the past academic year, in your capacity as a senior leader how many times have you been asked by students for information, advice or guidance on learning pathways for progression through the 14-19 phase and/or career pathways**

	Secondary
Never	10%
1-3 times	4%
4-10 times	6%
More than 10 times	17%
Not applicable	63%
Local base (N)	769

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100  
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2010*

**Teachers’ confidence in providing responses to IAG queries**

Where teachers indicated that they had given IAG advice to students, they were routed to two further questions which asked how confident they felt when providing responses to IAG queries. The findings from these questions are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

**Table 6. How confident do you feel when providing responses to queries about learning pathways for progression through the 14-19 phase?**

	Secondary
Very confident	17%
Fairly confident	40%
Confident in some areas but not others	37%
Not very confident	6%
Not at all confident	<1%
Local base (N)	740

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100  
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2010*

As Table 6 reveals, in terms of responses to queries about learning pathways for progression through the 14-19 phase, most teachers felt confident in dealing with student

queries. Just under a fifth reported that they were ‘very confident’, and a further two-fifths (40 per cent) reported they were ‘fairly confident’. Over a third (37 per cent) were ‘confident in some areas but not others’, six per cent were ‘not very confident’ and under one per cent were ‘not at all confident’. Since the question was asked a year ago, the proportion of teachers who felt ‘very confident’ has declined slightly (by three per cent) and those feeling ‘confident in some areas but not others’, has increased by six per cent. This finding may reflect a realisation of the complexity of the current and developing 14-19 agenda.

There were differences in terms of seniority: on the whole senior leaders seemed more confident than the classroom teachers. For example, 43 per cent of senior leaders reported being very confident compared to 12 per cent of classroom teachers, and seven per cent of classroom teachers reported being not very confident compared to only two per cent of the senior leaders. This could be due to a number of reasons: for example, it may be that those who have been in the teaching profession longer may have more experience of dealing with IAG requests, or that those in more senior positions, due to the more strategic nature of their roles, have a better overview of the learning pathways available to young people.

Teachers were also asked about their confidence in providing responses to queries about career pathways (Table 7). This year, just under two-fifths of respondents (38 per cent) reported that they were ‘fairly confident’ in responding to career pathways queries, 13 per cent reported they were ‘very confident’ and 39 per cent reported that they were ‘confident in some areas but not others’. Just over one tenth (11 per cent) said they were either ‘not very confident’ or ‘not at all confident’. Last year, responses showed that overall, teachers seemed slightly less confident in responding to requests about careers pathways compared to their confidence in responding to requests about learning pathways.

**Table 7. How confident do you feel when providing responses to queries about career pathways?**

	Secondary
Very confident	13%
Fairly confident	38%
Confident in some areas but not others	39%
Not very confident	10%
Not at all confident	1%
Local base (N)	739

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100*

*Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2010*

When the findings were analysed by seniority, senior leaders again seemed more confident than classroom teachers. A higher proportion of senior leaders were ‘very confident’ (29 per cent compared to ten per cent) and a higher proportion of classroom teachers reported ‘not being very confident’ (eleven per cent compared with one per cent). It is also interesting that there is a much wider apparent gap between senior leader confidence in providing information on learning and career pathways: 43 per cent of senior leaders were very confident about responding to requests around learning pathways, while only 29 per cent reported feeling very confident about responding to requests around careers pathways. It is not possible to establish the reasons for this from the data but it could be that careers pathways have, to some extent, taken a back seat while recent changes to 14-19 learning pathways have made this almost a guaranteed item on the IAG agenda.

### **The extent of CPD around information, advice and guidance**

Teachers were asked about the extent to which they agreed that most people who provide careers information, or careers advice and/or guidance, in their school have had specialist training.

Table 8 below shows that findings were mostly positive: 60 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed that their careers advising colleagues had had specialist training. Around one in eight respondents (13 per cent) neither agreed nor disagreed, 15 per cent disagreed and two per cent strongly disagreed. Since last year’s Omnibus survey, the proportion of respondents who did not know has decreased (16 per cent in 2009 compared with nine per cent in 2010), while the proportion who agreed with the statement had risen by six per cent. This may suggest that teaching staff over the last year have become more aware that training in IAG is being received.

**Table 8. To what extent do you agree that most people who provide careers information, or careers advice and/or guidance in my school have had specialist training?**

	<b>Secondary</b>
Strongly agree	17%
Agree	43%
Neither agree nor disagree	13%
Disagree	15%
Strongly disagree	2%
Don't know	9%
Local base (N)	797

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100  
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2010*

While this data on the whole appears to be positive, it is important to consider whether or not teaching staff considered only those in a formal IAG role (such as careers coordinators or PSHE teachers) when they answered this question, and possibly overlooked the informal roles that other colleagues play in the provision of IAG. Given the finding that learners are more likely to approach staff informally about learning and careers pathways (as opposed to those in more formal IAG positions) some caution may be exercised when considering the outcome of this question.

When the responses were analysed by seniority, it was found that classroom teachers were more likely than senior leaders to say that they didn't know (11 per cent of the former compared to none of the latter) demonstrating perhaps that senior staff are, unsurprisingly, more aware of the CPD opportunities that have been accessed. Senior staff were also more positive about the extent to which they agreed that those providing careers advice or guidance had had specialist training (68 per cent of senior staff either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed', compared to 60 per cent of classroom teachers), which, again, may reflect a better strategic overview of the CPD delivered to staff.

### **The status of careers education**

In terms of whether careers education is seen as an important part of the curriculum, just over half (54 per cent) of the teachers 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that careers education was seen as a very important part of the curriculum in their school: a quarter (26 per cent) neither agreed nor disagreed and nearly two fifths (17 per cent) 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' (Table 9). Senior staff were more positive than classroom teachers about the importance given to careers education (76 per cent of the former 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' compared with 50 per cent of the latter), and the proportion of senior leaders who

‘strongly agreed’ has risen by five per cent since they were surveyed one year previously. The fact that they were more positive than classroom teachers is perhaps not surprising, but the increased positivity over the year amongst senior staff would suggest that they consider careers education to have been given more space on the agenda.

The fact that almost half of respondents did not consider careers education to be seen as an important part of the curriculum, may in part be because careers education is rarely an examined subject and may therefore be less of a priority for schools concerned with league tables and results. While changing careers education to an examined subject may raise its status, this would ignore the finding (as indicated in the responses by subject teacher and form tutor roles) that young people seemingly prefer to approach staff on a more informal basis for IAG. Therefore, perhaps, equal consideration should be given to how the status of careers education can be raised: (a) as a subject (or as dedicated time in the curriculum); and (b) as a function of the pastoral team.

**Table 9. To what extent do you agree that careers education is seen as a very important part of the curriculum in my school?**

	<b>Secondary</b>
Strongly agree	15%
Agree	39%
Neither agree nor disagree	26%
Disagree	14%
Strongly disagree	3%
Don't know	3%
Local base (N)	797

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100  
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2010*

## **Conclusions and implications for the client**

Overall, the findings regarding teachers’ views of IAG continue to be positive and this year’s data reveals some interesting developments in this area.

It would seem, for example, that learners continue to approach subject teachers, form tutors and senior staff for IAG more often than those delivering PSHEE or coordinating careers education. This has implications for the status of IAG as a pastoral focus and thus for the CPD activities offered to those who provide IAG in an informal capacity. Given this finding, it is important to note that there is an increasing gap in the confidence felt

amongst staff in relation to advising young people around some aspects of learning pathways compared with others. This would suggest that as the 14-19 learning landscape has become more complex (with, one example being the phased introduction of the new Diploma qualification), it is providing new challenges in respect to IAG provision and its accompanying CPD. With a disparity in confidence in advising on different 14-19 learning pathways, it seems inevitable that staff could sometimes struggle to provide full and impartial guidance to young people. Added to this, there is still some scepticism about the status given to careers education in some schools.

However, classroom teachers have become more aware of staff in their school accessing CPD in relation to IAG over the past year, and have become more positive about the extent to which those providing IAG have received specialist training. When coupled with the finding that senior leaders were more likely this year than they were last year to consider careers education as an important part of the curriculum, this would seem to demonstrate that an enhanced focus on IAG is in fact in place but is yet to show its full impact. It may be that this has been driven by the 14-19 reforms acting as a more 'organic' driver for change rather than any imposition of status on careers education (i.e. in the form of examinations or targets).

Recommendations therefore would be that the TDA continues to facilitate this change and assist school leaders in identifying the appropriate CPD necessary for *all* staff, to ensure that awareness and understanding is high amongst those involved in providing IAG in both a formal and informal capacity. Given that senior leaders themselves have higher confidence levels and quite possibly a better understanding of the learning and careers pathways available than classroom teachers, it might be considered appropriate that the TDA better engage the resource of senior staff to deliver and cascade CPD to colleagues.

## Supporting information

### How was the survey conducted?

This report is based on data from the February survey. The survey was completed in January – February 2010 by a panel of 1,758 practising teachers from 1,201 schools in the maintained sector in England. The survey was conducted online and teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire between 29 January and 10 February 2010. During the survey period all ‘open’ questions (those without a pre-identified set of responses) were coded by a team of experienced coders within the Foundation.

### What was the composition of the panel?

The panel included teachers from the full range of roles in primary and secondary schools, from headteachers to newly qualified class teachers. Fifty two per cent (916) of the respondents were teaching in primary schools and 48 per cent (842) were teaching in secondary schools.

### How representative of schools nationally were the schools corresponding to the teachers panel?

There was an under-representation of schools in the highest quintile in terms of eligibility for free school meals in both the sample of primary schools and the sample of secondary schools. The sample of secondary schools also had an over-representation of schools with low eligibility for free school meals. To address this, weights were calculated using free schools meals factors to create a more balanced sample. Due to the differences between the populations of primary schools and secondary schools, different weights were created for primary schools, secondary schools and then for the whole sample overall. The weightings have been applied to all of the analyses referred to in this commentary and contained within the tables supplied in electronic format (via Pulsar Web)<sup>3</sup>.

Tables S.1, S.2 and S.3 show the representation of the weighted achieved sample against the population. Table S.4 shows the representation of the weighted teacher sample by role in school.

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<sup>3</sup> *The sample was not weighted for missing free school meal data*

**Table S.1 Representation of (weighted) primary schools compared to primary schools nationally**

		<b>National Population</b>	<b>NFER Sample</b>
		<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Achievement Band (Overall performance by KS2 2008 data)	Lowest band	16	18
	2nd lowest band	17	18
	Middle band	18	17
	2nd highest band	20	22
	Highest band	22	24
	Missing	7	1
% eligible FSM	Lowest 20%	20	20
	2nd lowest 20%	20	20
	Middle 20%	20	20
	2nd highest 20%	20	20
	Highest 20%	20	20
	Missing	1	0
Primary school type	Infant/First	15	12
	Primary/Combined	77	73
	Junior	8	15
	Middle/other type	<1	1
Region	North	31	25
	Midlands	32	31
	South	37	44
Local Authority type	London Borough	11	10
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	17
	English Unitary Authorities	18	20
	Counties	51	53
<b>Number of schools</b>		<b>17019</b>	<b>784</b>

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100*

*Some information is not available for all schools and some schools included more than one respondent*

*Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2010*

**Table S.2 Representation of (weighted) secondary schools compared to secondary schools nationally**

		<b>National Population %</b>	<b>NFER Sample %</b>
Achievement Band (Performance by GCSE 2008 data)	Lowest band	17	13
	2nd lowest band	18	20
	Middle band	18	21
	2nd highest band	18	23
	Highest band	20	20
	Missing	10	2
% eligible FSM (5 pt scale)	Lowest 20%	19	20
	2nd lowest 20%	19	19
	Middle 20%	19	20
	2nd highest 20%	19	20
	Highest 20%	19	20
	Missing	4	2
Secondary school type	Middle	7	<1
	Comprehensive to 16	33	22
	Comprehensive to 18	44	66
	Secondary Moderns	5	4
	Grammar	5	5
	Academies	6	2
Region	North	29	25
	Midlands	34	27
	South	37	48
Local Authority type	London Borough	13	13
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	21
	English Unitary Authorities	19	20
	Counties	47	46
<b>Number of schools</b>		<b>3336</b>	<b>417</b>

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100. Some information is not available for all schools and some schools included more than one respondent. Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2010*

**Table S.3 Representation of all schools (weighted) compared to all schools nationally**

		<b>National Population %</b>	<b>NFER Sample %</b>
Achievement Band (By KS2 2008 and GCSE 2008 data)	Lowest band	17	16
	2nd lowest band	18	19
	Middle band	18	18
	2nd highest band	20	22
	Highest band	21	23
	Missing	6	1
% eligible FSM (5 pt scale)	Lowest 20%	20	20
	2nd lowest 20%	20	20
	Middle 20%	20	20
	2nd highest 20%	20	20
	Highest 20%	20	20
	Missing	1	1
Region	North	30	25
	Midlands	32	30
	South	37	45
Local Authority type	London Borough	11	11
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	18
	English Unitary Authorities	18	20
	Counties	50	51
<b>Number of schools</b>		<b>20355</b>	<b>1201</b>

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100*

*Some information is not available for all schools and some schools included more than one respondent*

*Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2010*

**Table S.4 Comparison of the achieved (weighted) sample with the national population by grade of teacher**

Role	Primary schools				Secondary schools			
	population		weighted sample		population		weighted sample	
	N*	%	N*	%	N*	%	N*	%
Headteachers	17.1	10	81	9	3.3	2	7	1
Deputy Headteachers	11.8	7	87	10	5.5	3	34	4
Assistant Headteachers	6.4	4	57	6	11.5	6	73	9
Class teachers and others	129.8	78	687	75	161.8	89	684	86

*\*N is expressed in thousands*

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100*

*Sources: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2010, DCSF: School Workforce in England (including Local Authority level figures), January 2009 (Revised)*

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000874/index.shtml> [18 February, 2010]

### **How accurately do the findings represent the national position?**

Precision is a measure of the extent to which the results of different samples agree with each other. If we surveyed a different sample of teachers would we get the same results? The more data that is available the more precise the findings. For all schools and a 50 per cent response, the precision of that response is between 47.7 per cent and 52.3 per cent. or secondary schools the same precision is + and – 3.38 percentage points and for primary schools it is + and – 3.24 percentage points.

With the weightings applied to the data, we are confident that the omnibus sample is broadly representative of teachers nationally and provides a robust analysis of teachers' views.