



POET™

Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool

**Children's Services
User Guide
September 2017**

Contents

Introduction	page 3
Background	page 4
Undertaking POET at a glance	page 5
Communication about POET	page 6
Tips to increase returns	page 7
Parental consent	page 9
Frequently asked questions	page 10
Terms and conditions	page 17
Appendix 1 – template POET press release	page 17
Appendix 2 – template cover letter for parents/carers	page 20
Appendix 3 – user instructions for online reporting	page 21

Introduction

This guide is for councils using the Children and Young People’s Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool (POET).

It describes:

- What we are asking you to do
- The key elements of the process
- Frequently asked questions and answers
- How to make best use of the results
- Next steps

We hope this guide tells you everything you need to get started with using the POET, but should you need any further information or advice please contact the In Control office using poet@in-control.org.uk or on 01564 821650.

The guide is a live document and will be updated from time to time. The latest copy will be available at: www.in-control.org.uk/poetuserguide

Background

The Children and Young People’s POET has been developed by In Control and the Centre for Disability Research at Lancaster University with funding from the Department for Education (DfE). It builds on work In Control and Lancaster University have done on POET for use in adult social care and in health.

See: www.in-control.org.uk/poet for further information.

The Children and Young People’s POET has been developed with children and young people, parents/carers and practitioners initially in six local authority areas who volunteered to work with us on the development of the tool. In the second phase was tested by 18 local children’s services and has subsequently been tested further by 70 local areas and refined in the light of experience and feedback.

Further information about how the tool was developed and the results from the first three periods of testing can be found in our three national reports on the children and young people’s POET, published in July 2014, Spring 2015 and July 2016.

See link: [about POET for children’s services](#)

POET has been designed to capture the views of children and young people, parents/carers and practitioners so that results can be triangulated to establish the key process conditions associated with positive outcomes. Testing has already demonstrated that POET has the potential to provide a straightforward and powerful way of finding out about the experience of obtaining an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and in some cases a personal budget and related outcomes.

The Children and Families Act aims to transform the SEND system to better meet the needs of children, young people and their families. The national and local datasets generated by using POET provide a way to evidence this change and influence implementation locally and nationally.

The DfE’s March 2015 *publication SEN and disability: supporting local and national accountability*, describes the Department’s view that there should be a combination of local accountability measures; data analysis and independent inspection to show how the SEND system is performing, which parts are working well and less well and whether outcomes are improving for children and young people. POET is suggested as one of the ways in which such data and intelligence might be collected.

By using POET local Authorities are contributing to a national data set from which findings will be published periodically and local benchmarking reports produced for each local area (subject to their delivering sufficient returns). Local areas will be encouraged, with the support of In Control, to use their report to review and action plan.

Local areas are also being asked to share any feedback on the tool itself with In Control so that it might, if necessary, be further refined over time.

Undertaking POET at a glance

All local areas should confirm local authority and, where possible, Clinical Commissioning Group(s) senior management commitment to being involved in and using POET.

Each authority should provide a named contact in order to ensure ease of communication with In Control. Please let Gaynor Cockayne at gaynor.cockayne@in-control.org.uk know if the single contact changes at any time.

In addition to a named contact, we recommend that local areas identify a person to be responsible for administering the survey.

It is important to take a planned approach to undertaking POET. We have included within this guide tips from local authority areas who have been involved in the earlier test periods.

Communicating about POET

It is important to let stakeholders know why the survey is being carried out, how the survey results will be used locally and nationally. It is important too to let people completing the survey know that they will be able to influence the further iterations of the questionnaires

In Control has produced a template press release and template letter which can be used to help publicise the survey. Please see appendix 1 and 2.

The survey period starts in September and will continue to July to follow the academic year but it is helpful to start raising awareness amongst stakeholders about POET now.

Stakeholders include:

- Schools
- Health and Well Being Boards
- Senior Management Teams across the local authority and CCG(s)
- Parent/carer forums
- Children/young people forums
- SEND operational teams
- Social workers
- Health practitioners
- Key workers
- Independent supporters
- Information, advice and support services
- Providers
- Voluntary and community sector

It is worth checking with your adult social care colleagues and clinical commissioning group(s) and/or commissioning support unit(s) whether they are intending to use the adults or health POET in order to ensure coherent messaging locally. If you are unable to find out this information internally then please contact Gaynor Cockayne gaynor.cockayne@in-control.org.uk

Tips to increase returns

Include information about POET and your online links to the questionnaires on your Local Offer.

The local authority/CCG and Parent/carer forum can provide leadership for POET by organising and supporting some of the following:

Parent/carer questionnaire

- Organising events for parents/carers to learn more about POET.
- Parent carer forums and/or individual parent/carers championing POET. actively, and repeatedly, promoting POET and your online links on websites/in newsletters.
- SEND team including reference to POET in all communications relating to EHC plans.
- Information, Advice and Support Services including Family Information Services including information about POET and the on-line link on their website and (regularly) in their newsletter; also distributing the questionnaire to their email/ mailing list.
- Including POET on the agenda for any parent/carer events.
- Distributing the questionnaire via email/ mailing lists.
- Explaining what POET is at any EHCP meeting(s) so that families are expecting it and will recognise it when it arrives.
- Independent Supporters raising awareness about POET and encouraging families to complete returns.
- Holding meetings in schools for parents/carers to hear about POET and potentially completing the questionnaires whilst there.
- Asking practitioners and other parents/carers to encourage parents/carers to complete the questionnaires.
- Encouraging community groups to take a leadership role in supporting families to complete the questionnaire particularly where English is not their first language.
- Including the questionnaire with something else that you are sending that is part of the EHCP process.
- Including a pre-paid return envelope.

Children and young people's questionnaire

- Send them directly or via parents/carers, schools or other providers, (being mindful of parental consent).
- Explain what POET is at any EHCP meeting(s) so that children and young people are expecting it.
- If needed agree and record at the EHCP meeting who will support the child or young person to complete the POET if they want support and what format it needs to be in – this will also serve as a reminder to all to keep the voice of the child/young person heard in the process.
- Include the link to the children and young people's questionnaire in the information sent to parents/carers.
- Ask SENCO forums to support the completion as needed for each young person.
- Ask practitioners working with children and young people in the community to support the completion as needed for each young person.
- Raise awareness of POET with short breaks providers and ask practitioners there to support children and young people to complete questionnaires.

Practitioners

- Send an email with the link to do the survey online to all practitioners involved with EHC assessments and plans.
- Include a paragraph in the email to all involved with the outcome of the assessment.
- Send reminder emails regularly.
- Develop a mailing list of practitioners.

Parental consent

Recruiting participants under age of 16

All participants under the age of 16 must take part with full parental or guardian knowledge and consent. In order to ensure this is the case, the POET requires respondents to indicate they have parental / guardian consent. This should be highlighted in any communication inviting participation. Communication inviting participation may be addressed to the child or young person but should also be addressed and copied to the parent or other appropriate adult.

Ensuring informed consent

All participants regardless of age should only be invited to participate if you are satisfied they are able to give informed consent. The front sheet of the POET should ensure help in making this judgement. Participants taking part should be able to understand and consider the content of the front sheet which amongst other things details:

- An Invitation and brief summary of the POET.
- What taking part involves? (Completing the questionnaire and allowing answer to be used)
- The possible benefits of taking part? (the respondents views help influence local and national practice.)
- What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?- (the respondent can stop at any point)
- The confidentiality of information provided (anonymous)
- What will happen to the results of this study? (publication of reports and development of practise)
- Who is organising and funding this study? (In-Control and DFE)
- Why you have been asked to take part (You have an EHC Plan)
- Further information and contact details (back sheet of POET)

If you are not satisfied that potential participants can understand, consider and agree to take part in the way that is described they should not proceed.

Frequently asked questions

Q: Who should we distribute the questionnaires to?

A: The parent/carer questionnaire should be circulated to:

- All parents/carers whose child/young person has an EHC Plan.

B. The children and young people's questionnaire should be circulated to:

- Children and young people with an EHC plan

Consideration should be given to a variety of ways of encouraging children and young people to complete the questionnaires / give feedback. For example schools might initiate discussions and then encourage the child/young person to complete the questionnaire or someone else might record the child/young person's views on the form on their behalf – there is a space on the questionnaire to record that this is the case.

C. The practitioners' questionnaire should be circulated widely to:

- Practitioners co-ordinating the EHC planning process including transfers from statements of SEN to EHC Plans
- Practitioners carrying out keyworking/lead professional functions
- Practitioners such as social workers, teachers, teaching assistants, personal assistants, health practitioners including therapists, Further Education lecturers - all those colleagues who support children and young people with EHC Plans
- Independent Parental supporters
- Practitioners involved in providing advice for EHC assessments
- SEND Strategic Managers

Q: What is the recommended sample size of the survey?

A: You should try to secure at least 125 completed returns:

- 25 children and young people
- 50 parents/carers
- 50 practitioners

We know from experience that response rates tend to vary but are normally between 20% - 30%. We, therefore, recommend sending the questionnaires to all, children, young people and parent/carers who have an EHC Plan.

Q: How do we circulate the questionnaires?

A: It is essential that a local contact should be given for people with queries and/or to request help with completing the questionnaires.

Questionnaires can be circulated by email and should include the direct link to your online surveys.

In Control will send you online links specific to your local authority for each survey type once you confirm your interest in using the POET. To confirm your interest you can complete the form [here](#)

Some parents/carers and children and young people will prefer to complete a paper version of the questionnaire. When paper versions of the questionnaires are used it is strongly recommended that a freepost return envelope is provided together with a requested date for return. We suggest this is no longer than one month.

Our experience is that areas which adopt a variety of methods tend to get more returns – please see tips to increase returns below.

Families may receive the survey through different channels which is fine – they only need to complete one return.

Likewise, practitioners only need to complete one return.

Q: Are the questionnaires available in other languages?

A: The questionnaires are not currently available in other languages.

Q: In our letters to parents/carers, can we use our own letter head but lift the POET logo to accompany it?

A: Yes

Q: Can the links to the surveys be shortened?

A: Yes the hyperlink can be edited in word

Q: Can we change the questions in any way?

A: In Control welcomes suggestions for changes to POET however POET cannot be amended or adapted without the explicit prior permission from In Control. We welcome [feedback on the questionnaires](#).

Q: When should we distribute the questionnaires?

A: The survey will be open and ongoing. We aim to produce local reports at a point each area has sufficient returns. We aim to produce a national report each term throughout the year. There is no requirement to survey parents/carers at the same time as their children and young people although it is recommended.

Q. How long does it take to complete the questionnaires?

A. An average of 10-15 minutes for parents/carers and practitioners.

Q. Is there a completed POET survey or demo version that could be included in delegate packs at conferences to promote POET?

A. You can include blank copies of the questionnaires in delegate packs.

Q. Can the questionnaires be completed online via the In Control website?

A. The questionnaires and online links are specific for individual local authorities, contact Gaynor.cockayne@in-control.org.uk if you are missing any questionnaires or online survey links.

Q. When completing the children/young people survey could a parent/teacher complete some of the questions for the child/young person?

A. The child/ young person would need to be in agreement with the answers provided, if someone answers it on their behalf. It would be useful to try and get reasons why they have difficulty answering them to help with future design.

Q. Are we able to rephrase the 'descriptors' on the surveys?

A. The questions cannot be varied at this point or the POET would cease to be a national benchmarking tool. Please [provide feedback here](#).

Q. How many forms should practitioners complete?

The practitioner survey is about their general experience of EHCPs. So they should complete no more than one per year.

Q: How is data entered?

In Control will send you online links specific to your local authority for each survey type once you confirm your interest in using the POET.

Data is entered by each area using the links that you will be provided with. The on-line portal that has a user friendly data analysis function for local areas to see their own data.

If hard copies of the questionnaires have been completed these should be entered via the links to the easy-to-use online system. As a guide, entering data from surveys onto the system for 100 responses would take between 4 and 6 hours of input.

Q. Will we receive regular updates on returns from our area?

A. You can see how many returns have been made in your area by using the online management system. You will receive a user name and password to the online management system – see appendix 3.

Q: How can POET be used locally?

A: DfE's *SEN and disability: supporting local and national accountability*, March 2015 outlines the Department's intent that there should be a combination of local accountability measures; data analysis and independent inspection to show how the SEND system is performing, which parts are working well and less well and whether outcomes are improving for children and young people. POET is suggested as one of the ways in which such data and intelligence might be collected.

Experience from the first three years of testing of the children and young people's POET has demonstrated that it can be used to:

- Find out about the experience of obtaining an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and/or personal budget and related outcomes.
- Identify through analysis and benchmarking, those areas of local strength and those requiring improvement action.
- Form the basis of local action planning with stakeholders, in the context of other intelligence and perspectives.
- Demonstrate involvement of parents, carers, children and young people
- Meet Ofsted requirements.

Participating local authorities and their partners are encouraged to embed POET into local information and performance review systems as they introduce EHC assessments and plans and as more children, young people, families and practitioners gain experience of personal budgets. In Control are working closely with a number of Authorities to embed the POET into local systems. If you would like to be involved in embedding the POET please contact In Control at poet@in-control.org.uk

Q: When will we see our local results?

A: Each local authority will have their own link so once results are inputted it will be possible to see this real time data using your online portal. Once the enough local data has been inputted an individual benchmarking report will be produced.

Q: Has POET had Research Ethics Committee approval?

A: The POET surveys have been designed for people to evaluate their experiences of the EHC planning process and personal budgets. They are therefore service evaluation rather than research, according to guidance from the National Research Ethics Service, and as such do not require Research Ethics Committee approval.

Q. What do I do with any comments about the questionnaires themselves?

We are actively seeking feedback on the questionnaires themselves. Please collate any comments you receive and send them to us or [provide feedback here](#)

Q. How to make best use of the results

- A. In Control is able to support local areas to consider and use their data to inform action planning. Please let Gaynor Cockayne know if you would like to agree a date for this to take place.

In Control is building up a library of resources, including case studies which show examples of local use. For example please see quotes below from colleagues in Cambridgeshire and West Sussex:-

“It is easy to talk about developing an outcomes approach to the support we give disabled children and their families, yet so much harder to achieve. POET offers a practical tool to support what we are seeking to achieve; taking into account the experience of children, parents and the staff who support them. I look forward to seeing POET embedded into our ongoing evaluation of how we can do better in achieving positive outcomes for disabled children and their families.” (Richard Holland, Cambridgeshire County Council)

“West Sussex is delighted to be working with In Control using this new outcomes focused evaluation tool (POET) which enables us to benchmark ourselves with other areas and measures in detail our performance locally so we can really understand the experience of families going through the new processes. It’s great to have something that helps us measure the impact and POET has already been shared at workshops and training sessions. We are

looking forward to receiving our 2nd local report soon.” (Debbie Buckwell, West Sussex)

See also example from Leeds City Council’s adults’ services, detailing their involvement in POET, and a blog post on the engagement event they held:

<https://betterlivesleeds.wordpress.com/talking-heads/personal-budgets-are-helping-local-people-to-live-the-way-they-want/>

Q: If I have any queries about POET who should I contact?

- A: John Water, research and evaluation lead –
Email: john.waters@in-control.org.uk Tel: 0403 413476

Gaynor Cockayne, POET admin support –
Email: gaynor.cockayne@in-control.org.uk Tel: 01564 821650

Or general enquiries
Email: POET@in-control.org.uk Tel: 01564 821650

Terms and conditions

The POET surveys remain the property of In Control and may only be used with explicit permission from In Control.

Data collected by using the tool will be made freely available to the participating local authority/clinical commissioning group from where the data was collected. The data collected remains the property of In Control.

Data from the participating sites forms part of a growing national data set and will be used by In Control in various publications. All individual data will however be anonymous.

Participating local authorities are free to publish data collected using the tool provided appropriate acknowledgement is made to POET and In Control.

In Control welcomes suggestions for changes to POET however POET cannot be amended or adapted without the explicit prior permission from In Control.

Appendix 1: Template press release for local media coverage

For immediate release

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, FAMILIES AND STAFF IN [INSERT AREA] URGED TO SHARE EXPERIENCES OF NEW Special Educational Needs and Disability REFORMS

Children and young people, families and practitioners across [insert council area] are being asked to take part in a national pilot looking at the impact of parts of the new special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms. These reforms require health, education and social care to plan and work together to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

[insert council name] is taking part in a programme of work to measure the difference that the newly introduced Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans and personal budgets have made to the lives of children and young people with SEND. .

The programme is being led by the charity In Control with Lancaster University. It will involve use of a new questionnaire that has been developed known as the Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool (POET) to look at what's working well and what's not working with new EHC plans and also whether they have made a difference to children and young people's lives. We will also be able to look at how many children and young people have personal budgets and their impact.

Children and young people, parents/carers and practitioners who have experience of the EHC assessment and planning process and EHC Plans are encouraged to take part to give their views and share their experiences. The results from this will be used to help improve what happens locally and will also be used on a national level to influence the implementation of the reforms.

Local areas will be using the questionnaire between academic calendar year, September 2017 to July 2018.

[Insert local definition of EHC plan/personal budget eg... An EHC plan is for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and where an assessment of education, health and social care needs has been agreed. EHC plans replaced Statements of Special Educational Needs and Learning Disability Assessments from September 2014. EHC plans are available from birth to age 25. The aim of the EHC plan is to coordinate services and support into one plan focused on meeting the support needs of that child or young person. A personal budget is the amount of money identified by the council and/or clinical commissioning group needed to deliver the support set out in the EHC plan and this may be given as a direct payment to the family or young person.]

Julie Stansfield, In Control's Chief Executive, said: "The Children and Families Act introduces the most wide-ranging reforms for children and young people with SEND and their families for 30 years. The new EHC plans and the right to request a personal budget are a key part of these reforms and it is critical that councils and CCGs work directly with families and practitioners to learn what's working and what's not in their delivery so they can make improvements and ensure they are making a real difference to people's lives."

This programme of work follows three phases of a national pilot project. Stage one involved six council areas and a survey of 133 people, stage two involved eighteen councils and a survey of over 700 people and stage three involved seventy councils and a survey of 5774 people. The results showed positive results about the impact that EHC Plans and personal budgets were having across a range of areas.

Anyone wishing to find out more information about this work should contact [insert local contact details]. Those wishing to find out more about the SEND reforms, EHC plans and personal budgets should get in touch with [insert local contact details]

-ends-

For further information, please contact [insert council press office details]

Notes to editors:

1. In Control is a national charity. Since 2003 it has been at the forefront of personalisation, pioneering the concept and practice of self-directed support. Its mission is to ensure that everyone has the support they need to live a good life and make a valued contribution. Further information can be found at www.in-control.org.uk
2. The POET is a personal outcomes evaluation tool that has been developed over a number of years by In Control and the Centre for Disability Research at Lancaster University. It was initially developed for use in adult social care, and then in health.
 - The Department for Education initially funded In Control and Lancaster University to develop and test a children and young people's POET through the National Prospectus Grants Programme 2013-2015. The Dfe awarded In Control an additional grant to complete further work on the children and young people's questionnaire and to test the tools in 50+ local areas during 2015, 74 councils took part including:
 - East: 7
 - East Midlands: 8
 - London: 20
 - North East: 3
 - North West: 7
 - South East: 7
 - South West: 4
 - West Midlands: 10
 - Yorkshire & Humber: 8

The POET continues to be used by local authority children's services for children and young people, annually, in line with the academic year. The POET for adult's services is beginning to be embedded in local systems at naturally occurring assessments and reviews.

The reports: *Measuring the outcomes of EHC plans and personal budgets* (July 14) and *Report on the development and use of POET for children and young people with SEND* (Spring 15) can be downloaded at <http://www.in-control.org.uk/what-we-do/children-and-young-people/our-work/poet-personal-outcomes-evaluation-tool.aspx>

Spring 2016 report on the use of the Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool (POET) for Children with Education Health and Care Plans can be downloaded at: <http://www.in-control.org.uk/media/239850/national%20ehcp%20poet%20spring%202016.pdf>

Appendix 2 – template letter for parents/carers

Dear

National Education, Health and Care Plans Survey

We are writing to ask for your help in finding out how Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) are working for children, young people and families in XX.

We know that your son or daughter already has an EHC plan so are interested in your views on both the process and what it has achieved for your son or daughter.

In Control, with the help of children, young people, families and practitioners from across the country, has devised questionnaires for people to complete about the process of obtaining an education, health and care plan.

We would be grateful if you could spare some of your time to complete the parent/carer survey.

You can complete the survey on line using the link below or complete the enclosed paper version and return it to us in the enclosed envelope by *insert date*.

- *Link*

Locally, we will use the results of this survey to monitor how we are doing and how we can make improvements. The information you give us will also be used in a national report to help improve the way things are done for others in England. You will not need to give any personal details and there will be no way of identifying individuals.

We are asking people to complete surveys during the XX term this year. A national report with the results will be published in Autumn 2018 and we will receive an individual benchmarking report, subject to us providing sufficient returns. . We will share the results and what we will be doing as a result of the findings. If you are interested in working with us to consider the results and identify any actions please let me know and I will contact you again nearer the time.

- There is also a survey for children and young people to complete. You can access the questionnaire via this link
Insert link

..... It would be helpful if you could encourage your son or daughter to complete the questionnaire. Alternatively, they may be offered the opportunity to complete it at school, at activities or clubs or at a short break. *Practitioners* from education, health and social care involved in supporting children and young people with EHC Plans are also being asked to complete a questionnaire.

In Control continues to adjust and improve the survey questionnaire based on feedback about the forms so we would also be very interested in your views or comments you have about the format of the surveys. If you have any questions, feedback about the format of the surveys or wish to be involved in considering the findings next year please contact me. My contact details are at the top of this letter.

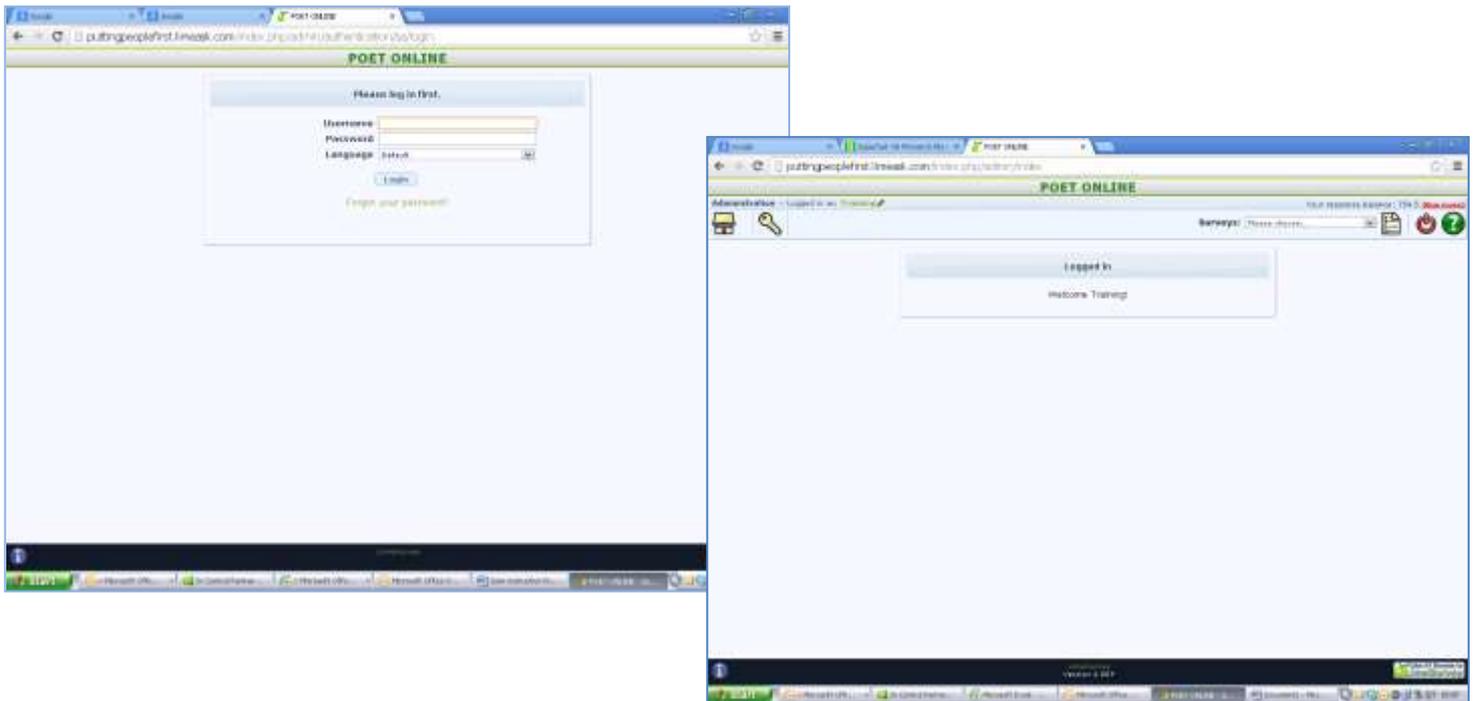
If you would like to know more about the work of In Control or see previous Children and Young People's POET reports you can visit their website at www.in-control.org.uk or contact them on 01564 821 650.

We do hope that you will agree to help us in this very important piece of work and thank you in advance for your time.

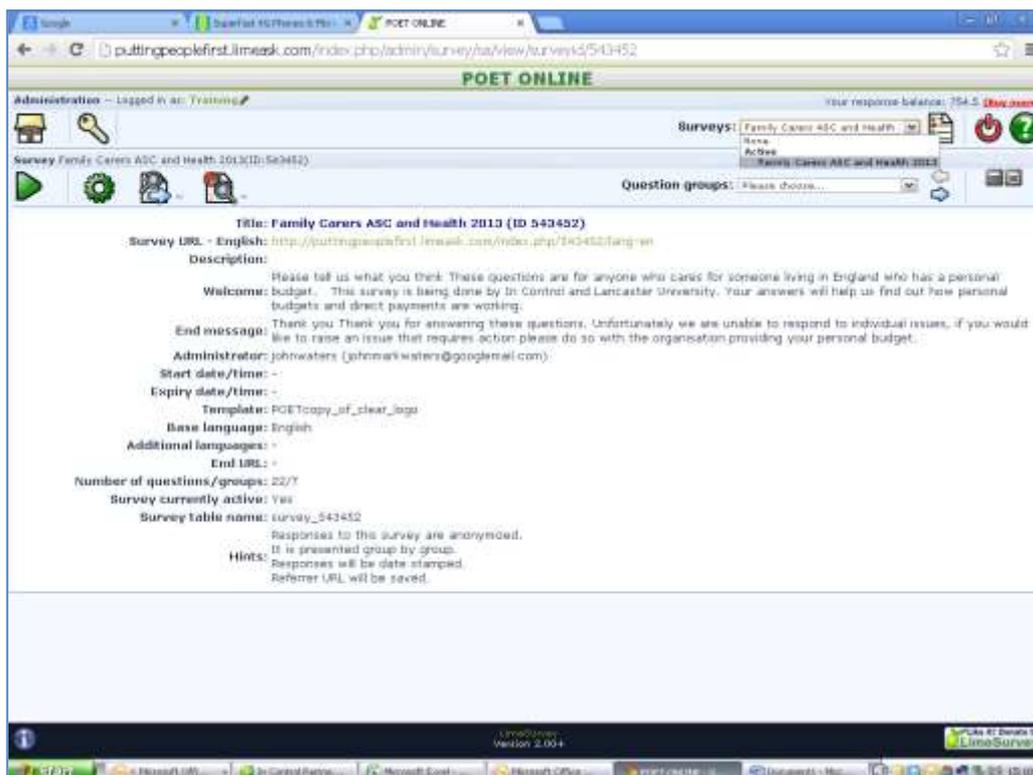
Yours sincerely

Appendix 3: User instructions for online POET reports

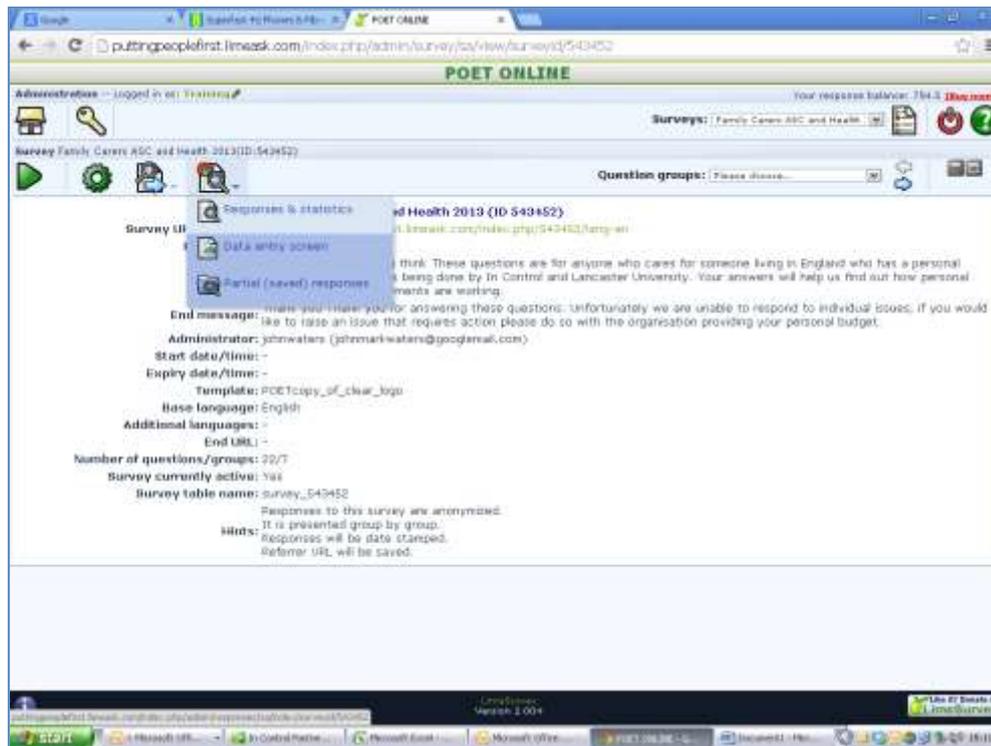
1. Log in to Lime Service following the link below, using your allocated user name and password <http://puttingpeoplefirst.limeask.com/index.php/admin/authentication/sa/login>



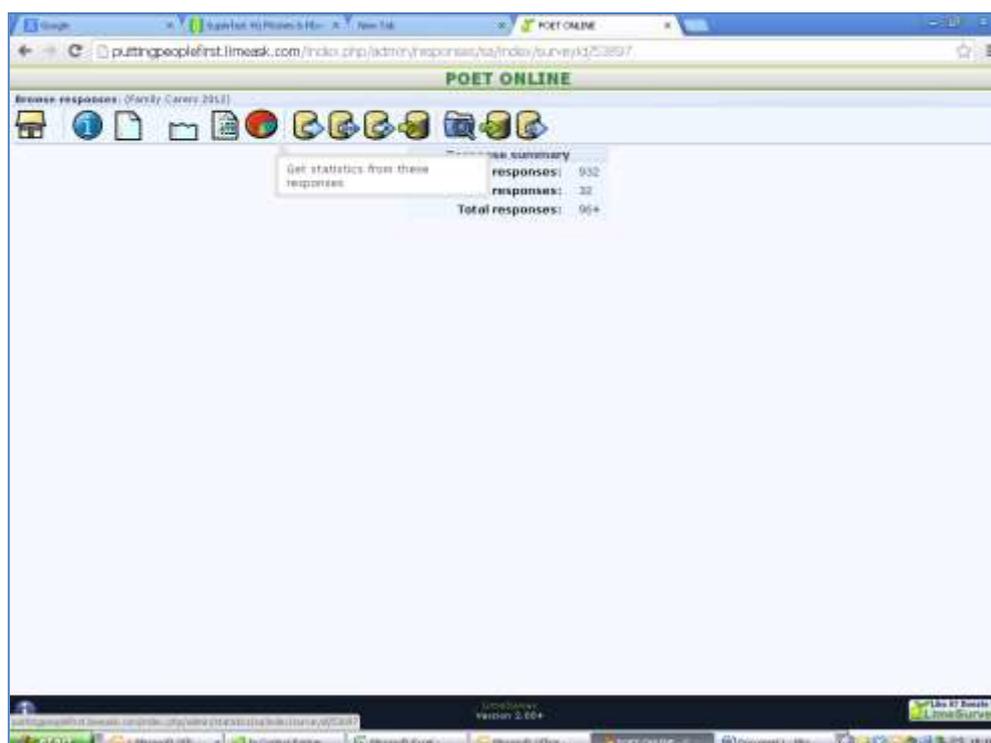
2. Select the survey you want to view from the dropdown 'Surveys' list



3. Select 'responses & statistics' see icon in the screenshot below, this will then show you how many responses there have been for this survey.



4. Select the 'piechart' icon 'get statistics from these responses' in order to prepare the report.



5. Tick the boxes of the data type you would like to see in your report, or tick 'view summary of all available data' tick the your preferred format PDF or excel and then select 'view statistics'



If you need further help or support on producing POET reports please contact..
Email: gaynor.cockayne@in-control.org.uk Tel: 01564 821650

