



LEARNER FIRST USER INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

SLC is committed to involving users in its strategic decision-making and operational management processes. The college firmly believes that embracing learner views and offering an opportunity to have direct involvement in assessing and shaping their own learning experience will have a significant and effective impact on developing the college's quality improvement processes and increasing learner success. The college also believes in engaging learners, employers, parents, carers, and other partners in improving the service we provide. .

This User Engagement Strategy is enabled by facilitating learner input not only as a customer of the college but by ensuring learners act as co-producers of their educational experiences and outcomes, both individually and collectively, via the decision-making processes of the college

We know that when learners participate in decisions affecting their learning experience, they are likely to play a more active role in the provider's quality improvement processes - a key lever of service improvement.

Equally, the involvement of some learners can directly improve the responsiveness of the system to the concerns of learners more generally.

We will encourage more learner representation in all aspects of the system from national policymaking to course content and delivery.

Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances March 2006

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Vision and Purpose

Why are we doing this? What are we trying to achieve?

Vision:

“Creating a supportive and successful environment which will motivate individuals to be engaged and challenged, developing them both personally and intellectually beyond their aspirations.”

User voice at South Leicestershire College is open, honest, celebrated and clearly demonstrates that the College cares. It is pivotal to all quality improvements processes and built into every single thing that the College does. The College has a wide range of inclusive methods that it uses to capture the user voice, consults frequently with users and responds appropriately and in a timely way to their constructive criticism. The user voice is central to the development and improvement of learning and teaching: In all practice user voice is used in a collaborative way by staff and users to improve the experience of both. Ways of hearing and listening to the user voice are routinely planned into schemes of work and lesson plans. Formative assessment methods are designed to capture not only what users are learning, but their feelings about *how* they are learning it. Staff discuss their methods openly with users and engage in dialogue about learning and how it could be improved. The skills of staff and users are developed to achieve this. Observations and self-assessment reports on the effectiveness of user voice strategies, highlight and celebrate good practice and provide useful feedback on how to improve.

Purpose

All user voice activities have one common purpose: to improve outcomes for learners and to improve the experience of all those who engage with the college.

The expected benefits are:

- Better decisions about resource allocation and investment
- Increased participation, retention, progression and achievement
- Learners who are more expert and independent
- Better quality of information about the learners' perspective which can be used to triangulate other sources of data and drive professional and organisational development and quality improvements
- Learners who feel more involved and motivated and who can actively contribute to the success of others
- To provide a more targeted, effective and demand led curriculum that more closely reflects the needs of learners and employers
- Increased promotion and awareness of equality, diversity and safeguarding amongst all users
- Improved knowledge of entitlement, rights and responsibilities across all users

Accessibility, Engagement, Power and Control

Whose voices are heard most clearly?

It is essential that any approach to user voice fosters an inclusive culture where no groups of learners are left out and where the principles of equality and diversity inform all learner involvement activity. This strategy reaches out to all learners, including disadvantaged groups and those who are under-represented or less likely to succeed in their learning.

In addition to this, it is important that the learner voice gets heard by all those who need to hear and respond to what is being said.

To achieve this, a wide range of methods are employed to ensure that the voices of all are heard, listened and responded to. This approach is set out in more detail in the user strategy action plan.

Capacities and Dispositions

What skills and attitudes do we need to develop to make this work?

To fully realise the potential of the user involvement strategy, it is essential to develop the skills and attitudes of staff, learners and other users required to make this work.

Once identified, the appropriate skills need to be developed through a carefully crafted programme that provides all participants with the opportunity to develop in a way appropriate to their needs, and that is mindful of the impact of change.

The development programme will consider and promote the way that people need to care and have regard for each other and the need to take user voice seriously. The programme will also have due regard for those who may feel threatened by aspects of the strategy.

Systems and Structures

How will the college support people committed to learner voice?

The college will develop and communicate an appropriate range of systems, structures and processes to fully implement all aspects of the user voice strategy by providing the following:

- Clarity of procedures and requirements
- Procedures and requirements that reflect the size, remit and scope of the college
- resources, including time and space to implement the strategy
- clear reporting, monitoring and implementation procedures for all aspects of the strategy
- evaluation and review to measure the effectiveness and impact of the strategy
- support for all users to engage effectively with the strategy

Actions and Responsibilities

Does anything actually change?

It is essential that the user involvement strategy has a demonstrable impact on the experiences of all users and contributes to the improvement of outcomes for learners. To achieve this, the college clearly sets out the following:

- the full range of user involvement strategies including range of learners, staff and other users
- responsibilities for designing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing strategies
- processes for responding to views of learners
- processes for monitoring interventions and responses following user feedback
- procedures for measuring the impact of interventions and responses on the learner experience

- the range of measures in place to monitor the inclusivity of arrangements (including less formal mechanisms) and the specific steps taken to ensure that different groups are heard and responded to.

Measuring and Reporting on the Impact of the Strategy;

The impact of the User Involvement Strategy will be monitored and measured in terms of process and outcomes.

Process:

When evaluating process, the college will take into account:

- participation and involvement – how many learners are taking up opportunities provided
- are diverse groups of learners taking up opportunities equally?
- to what extent is the impact of learners' views being communicated to them?
- are learners satisfied with the processes by which they are being involved?

Outcomes

When evaluating outcomes, the college will consider:

- responses from learners/users to changes made and the impact of those changes
- improved levels of user satisfaction
- feedback from managers and teachers on changes made
- retention and achievement data
- identified improvements triggered by user views
- self-assessment content and performance improvement actions can be directly linked to documented learner views
- learner involvement activities lead to clear and well-publicised lists of actions that are then implemented

The impact of this strategy will be addressed as part of the self-assessment process and action taken to address any areas of shortfall. The user voice will be a standing agenda item at all team meetings. Monthly updates will be provided to the Strategic Quality Forum, executive and a summary of impact measures will be reported to the governors through the Performance, Development and Diversity Committee.

Status:

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