

## Embedding Learner Voice

### Burton and South Derbyshire College (GFE) Solid growth takes time



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#### Background

When learners are empowered to engage with and change their learning environment, and when organisations know how to listen to feedback and embrace student involvement, there is great potential for cross-organisational change.

The role of learner representatives is to gather the views and opinions of their peers and then engage with the learning organisation to act on this feedback to facilitate developments and change where possible – and this is most effective when Learner Reps are able to communicate and work with decision makers directly. This section provides examples of how organisations have created and supported channels of communication between learners and the learning organisation to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of co-produced learning.

#### About Burton and South Derbyshire College

Burton and South Derbyshire College is a further education college located in Burton-Upon-Trent in England, offering further and higher education courses. They also offer online, open and work based learning courses for adults.

#### Their Story: What has Happened and How

The Learner Involvement Strategy at Burton and South Derbyshire College details the areas and levels at which learner representation is facilitated and supported. This college-wide engagement reflects the value of learner input and the college's commitment to involve learners in the development of their learning experience. Some of the areas where learners are actively engaged in decision making include:

- Quality Improvement – Students' Union contribute to the action plan created to address SPOC results and LSS surveys
- Teaching and Learning – Students' Union present views to College Management Team on a fortnightly basis
- Governance – Two student governors sit on Governing Body
- Staff Recruitment – Learners active on interview panels
- Learner-focused leadership team meetings – SU President sits on CMT

- Estates management (including security and facilities) – Half-termly meetings with Estates to discuss Student Council Feedback
- Health and Safety – Students' Union President is a member of the Health and Safety Committee

### **Impact, Successes and Ideas for Action**

The success and impact of this level of engagement has been developed over a number of years, supported by established students' union, including a full time paid students' union president. The students' union executive accesses a variety of training, offered both at a local and national level, which supports reps to develop specialist skills and knowledge in different areas of college practice. Learner Voice clearly shapes how the college approaches its decision making.