

Engaging with the Wider Community

Seashell Trust (ISCP)

Change happens when students act



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.

A learning community goes much further than the classroom – it impacts on the wider community in which the learning organisation is based. The local community can provide a variety of commercial and recreational opportunities that enhance the learning experience, and learners are also effected by and can affect the physical environment in which their learning organisation is based. Learner Representatives both directly and indirectly can impact on local communities in their pursuit of a quality, holistic educational experience.

About Seashell Trust

Seashell Trust is a charity based in Cheadle Hume, near Stockport in Greater Manchester, for children and young people and adults with sensory impairment, profound and multiple learning difficulties, and profound communication difficulties.

Their Story: What has Happened and How

At busy times of the day, Seashell Trust Campus has a lot of traffic both entering and leaving the site. As learners are encouraged by staff to develop their autonomy and move around campus independently, often unaided by staff, there was a strong concern regarding speeding and poor parking and the potential danger this brought. This issue was taken to the Students' Council.

The Students' Council worked with the Health and Safety Committee and the college Health and Safety group to promote on-site road safety awareness. Collectively, they agreed that a protest would take place on site. In preparation for this event, the Students' Council invited the local Community Police, Seashell Trust's Transport Officer and members of college Health and Safety group to attend their council meeting.

Students made banners and posters in the run up to the protest and ensured campaigners on the day were in a safe, visible place near the entrance to the college. Traffic has calmed down following the protest, with taxi drivers and staff paying more attention to the college environment when driving around campus.

Impact, Successes and Ideas for Action

Real change can happen as a result of learner representatives listening to their peers' concerns and proactively doing something about it. Having a clear goal and taking time to plan a considered and appropriate response will impact on the success of that change. It is also important to work openly, collaboratively and safely when organising any campaigning activity.