

Leading the Learner Voice Awards 2011

Learning Skills and Improvement Service in partnership with
National Union of Students





The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) in partnership with the National Union of Students (NUS) will host the Leading the Learner Voice Award 2011. Throughout the further education and skills sector thousands of learners and trainees are actively engaged in leadership, representation and quality improvement. They are supported by active, motivated practitioners and embedded models of support from providers.

The Leading the Learner Voice awards are about celebrating individual and organisational achievement and success. The awards seek to celebrate innovation, effort and action. The nomination for awards are open to learners, individually or collectively, and for practitioners, managers and whole organisations who have shown leadership and commitment to the learner voice whether for organisational change and development, or in a wider community, social or political context.

LSIS
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Leading the Learner Voice awards are also an opportunity to disseminate best practice. Looking at the effective practice of others offers opportunities to reflect on how such practice might work within our own organisations, and can provide us with ideas, solutions and encouragement to develop our own work

The awards also reflect the key aims of the further education and skills sector. This year we have introduced some new categories, and along with the nomination criteria for each category highlight the changing and evolving priorities facing the further education and skills sector.

The Categories for 2011

Learner Voice Practitioner of the year. This category recognises the key role of the Learner Voice Practitioner (sometimes called Student Liaison Officer or Learner Voice Co-ordinator for example) in supporting and promoting the learner voice within a further education and skills organisation. In this category we are seeking someone who has actively raised the profile and role of the learner voice within their organisation, who has been supportive of learners and who has worked with learners allowing them to set and lead the agenda. We are looking for someone who has demonstrated commitment to ensuring opportunity and access for involvement for all learners.

Leading learner of the year. In this category we are looking for a learner from the further education and skills sector who, in their capacity, for example, as student officer, student governor, apprentice representative or course representative, has shown outstanding leadership in their role. We want to recognise those individuals who have introduced new initiatives, demonstrated real and active commitment or generated new interests and new membership. We are looking for commitment to ensuring opportunity and access for all, and an affinity for all learners they represent.

Student Governor. Taking on the role of student governor can feel daunting and overwhelming. In this category we are looking for individuals who have embraced that challenge and shone in their role. We want to hear about student governors who used provider representation structures to inform their governance role, and who have effectively contributed to strategic decision making to make a real impact on the work of the board.

Principal or Senior Leader. In this category we are looking for a Principal or Senior Leader that has fully supported the development of the learner voice within their organisation. We are keen to recognise people who have used their leadership position and leadership skills to work with learners and to encourage them to take the lead across a range of issues and activity. We are looking for someone who has demonstrated a commitment to ensuring opportunity and access for involvement for all learners.

Outstanding contribution to the leadership of learners. This award seeks to recognise an individual who has played a key role in the development of the learner voice agenda, demonstrating passion, vision, commitment, making a real and visible impact in raising the profile of the learner voice and setting a shining example of best practice.

Social cohesion and civic participation. The voice of the learner in the further education and skills sector can play a vital role in promoting social justice, equality and inclusion. It is a means of, and a way of enhancing, civic participation and of supporting democratic representation. Applications for this award are likely to come from particular campaigns or projects that learners have developed and led and could be focussed around such diverse subjects as responding to national or local policy, environmental issues, barriers to participation among groups within the community, equality and diversity, local regeneration or global issues.

Health and wellbeing. Further education and skills provision can be an important setting in which to promote the health and wellbeing of all who learn and work there. This award acknowledges that learners can have a vital role in promoting and taking responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and that of others. We are interested to hear about learner led projects and campaigns that support and promote a whole organisational or community based approach to promoting health and wellbeing. This could include work to promote healthy eating, sexual health, exercise, mental health, anti-bullying or respect campaigns.

Most improved provider – FE College. Learner representative structures are always developing. Improving representative structures could involve raising the profile of the learner voice in your organisation resulting in more learners putting themselves forward to be involved, or more learners voting in election. It might include learners leading more active and inclusive campaigns reflecting the concerns of the wider learner body. It might mean that more learners are playing a more effective role in the continuous improvement of your organisation. This award is about recognising the distance your college has travelled in improving your learner voice structures.

Most improved provider – Work-based learning, Adult and Community Learning, Offender Learning. This award recognises that developing learner voice structures in work-based learning, adult and community learning and in offender learning will meet different challenges and different opportunities in improving representative structures within their organisations. This award is to recognise that though the outcomes may be similar to those described in the above category, providers of work-based learning, adult and community learning and offender learning may also made huge strides in raising the profile of the learner within their organisation.

Provider of the year. This award is for providers who are outstanding in having a whole organisational vision and commitment to promoting the learner voice. We want to receive nominations from providers across the further education and skills sector who visibly and actively value the learner voice at every level within their organisation.

How to enter

LSIS and NUS are keen to receive nominations from across the further education and skills sector. Please complete the attached nomination form and include any supporting evidence with your nomination. Return your nomination by April 20th 2011 to learnervoice@lsis.org.uk. We will only consider electronic nominations. Any nominations received after the closing date will not be considered.

Process and Timeline



Tips for preparing your nomination

- Get the right information across. Each category provides information outlining what the judges are looking for. Make sure you address the category criteria
- Read the nomination form carefully and make sure you provide all the information required and on time
- Supporting evidence is important;
 - Testimonials and quotes from those who have benefitted from by the work that has been done can be a powerful way to communicate your effectiveness and the impact you have made
 - Figures, statistics and reports can also help to demonstrate impact but stick to headline figures rather than providing too much detail
 - Evidence of media coverage is also a great way to show an initiative or project has had a tangible impact on its beneficiaries
- Make it worth reading. Nominations should be well-presented, clear and easy to understand. Check your presentation is clear, spell-checked and grammatically correct. Don't use jargon and explain what acronyms or terms that may not be generally understood
- Remember, there will be many nominations and judges will not be able to go through all the nominations in great detail. Stick to relevant facts. Make each sentence count. Make it easy for the judges to understand what you are saying and to see the impact you have made.

Leading the Learner Voice Awards winners in 2010 were:

• Student Governor of the Year

Winner: Simon Lord, Preston College

Highly Commended: Emma Champion, Fareham College

• Student Liaison Officer of the Year

Winner: Ben Rowswell, Cornwall College

Highly Commended: Graham Wooldridge, Tresham College

• Most Improved Provider

Winner: Burton College

Highly Commended: Tresham College

• Community and Social Cohesion

Winner: City of Wolverhampton College

Highly Commended: College of Haringey, Enfield and North London

• Representative Organisation of the Year

Winner: Derwen College

Highly Commended: Canterbury College

• Principal or Senior Leader of the Year

Winner: Dick Palmer, City College Norwich

Highly Commended: Norma Curtis, RNIB College

• Outstanding Contribution to the Leadership of Learners

Winner: Donna Pender, Warwickshire College

Highly Commended: Adele Burrow

• Provider of the Year

Winner: Bournemouth and Poole College

Highly Commended: Walsall College

• Leading Learner of the Year

Winner: Kelly Omanyo, Lewisham College

Winner: Bill Hazon, North Lincolnshire Council community Learning

Highly Commended: Alexander Hannon, Barnet College

Highly Commended: Gary Wilkinson, Walsall College



Contact us

For further information about the Leading the Learner Voice Awards

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