

A Welsh version of this document is available.

Cardiff and Vale College

Learner Involvement Strategy 2023 -2024



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1. Introduction

The college's mission is "To deliver high quality education and training, outstanding results, skilled and employable people, excellent customer experience, innovative business growth and continued investment that supports prosperous communities and a thriving economy" and its values are "Inspirational. Inclusive. Influential". We believe that these are necessary for creating a happy and successful working environment where learners can reach their full potential.

This Learner Involvement Strategy sets out the steps the college will take to maintain, enhance and build learner involvement, in order to improve the effectiveness of the college and its provision.

We believe that the continual development of our Learner Involvement Strategy is an opportunity to embed real citizenship, raise standards and improve learning by:

- providing feedback from the learners' perspective that will strengthen the quality assurance and evaluation process;
- modelling the behaviors and attitudes contained within our core values which are Inspirational, Inclusive and Influential; and helping to develop articulate, informed, reflective people, who are able to discuss and critically evaluate their learning experience.

This Learner Involvement Strategy includes every college service. It is not simply about student representative structures, and it will seek to involve learners in providing feedback about all aspects of the college.

The strategy will cover all learners of Cardiff and Vale College: Further Education full-time and part-time students and those on 14-16 programs. The College will also promote the essential elements of the Learner Involvement Strategy to managers of work-based learners, students on commercial courses, Adult Community learners, Higher Education learners as well as learners on other franchised courses under the umbrella of the College.

2. Creating the Culture

The vital importance of learner involvement as a key element of college strategy is reflected in the centrality given to it by senior management. The Senior Managers responsible for the learner involvement process are Vice Principal Learner Journey & Quality, Assistant Principal Quality, Teaching & Learning. Operational management will lie with the Vice Principal Learner

Journey & Quality, Assistant Principal Quality, Teaching & Learning and the Learner Voice and Inclusivity Coordinator.

As the learner involvement culture develops, the College recognises that relationships between lecturers and learners will alter as we move towards more genuine partnership.

Staff and learners will require support and training to facilitate this change, in order to ensure that it improves the overall learning experience and outcomes for learners. We will also need to consider the impact of these changes on parents/guardians, employers and work placement providers and their role in the learning process.

The college and learners will work together to:

- make learner involvement an explicit standing item on college meeting agendas;
- make learners aware of this involvement strategy and how they can contribute to its success;
- provide appropriate training for staff/students in encouraging and responding to increased learner involvement.

3. Aims

This strategy sets out how the College will support and further develop the 'Learner Voice'. It will encourage and facilitate learner scrutiny of existing involvement arrangements and actively involve learners in the development of new mechanisms.

By involving learners, the College will be able to gather learner views of their current experiences or emerging issues and take prompt action. When this is not possible, there is the opportunity to provide feedback. This feedback on their learning experiences is an important contribution to enabling the College to help meet learner needs in a timely and effective manner.

The college is committed to:

- giving learners more opportunities to get involved in all aspects of College life;
- helping learners to develop the skills they need to get involved;
- giving learners the support and confidence they need to get involved;

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- motivating learners to get involved;
- identifying and meeting the needs of groups of learners who are currently less involved;
- ensuring staff and managers have the skills, support and confidence they need to involve learners.

4. Outcomes

The outcome of the strategy for learners is an involvement in the management of the College, enabling them to have an impact on the quality of services they receive as well as the development of their personal skills.

For the College, the benefits reflect the recognition that its operation and self-assessment are informed by the views of its learners.

5. Monitoring and Reporting on Impact

The Learner Involvement Strategy is a living document and it will be reviewed and amended annually as part of the college's self-assessment process. The Welsh Government's Quality and Effectiveness Framework and the Estyn Common Inspection Framework are the key points of reference that will be used for this review and evaluation.

In assessing the impact of this strategy, the College will:

- provide evidence that learner views are taken seriously and have initiated improvements;
- generate a Learner Involvement Action Plan;
- gather learner representatives' satisfaction ratings regarding the impact their roles are having;
- aim to demonstrate how the self-assessment process and performance improvement can be linked directly to documented learner views;
- allow learners to be involved in the self-evaluation of this strategy.
- review the impact of the Learner Voice in conjunction with the Students' Union.

6. Formal Learner Involvement Opportunities

a. Course Representatives

All course teams will have learner representatives who take part in team meetings, thus bringing the learner perspective on their learning experience. Course representatives can provide an important channel of communication by informing college staff about positive experiences and expressing concerns of fellow learners so that they can be acted upon.

- Course Tutors will be asked to conduct Course Representative Elections during the Learner Voice tutorial which will be launched in the first Tutorial Week: **Learner Voice Week**. Faculties should raise a Course Rep Pastoral form to send the representative names and email addresses to the Learner Voice Coordinator. This will allow for direct email communication with the representatives via their student email.
- Training sessions for Course Representatives will be available online, to be completed as soon as possible after half-term and then support sessions made available for any questions afterwards. Course Representatives will be given access to a resource booklet to assist them in their role.
- A specific Course Representative page is accessible on the Student Union TEAMS page, where learners can access information to support their course rep role, or find out about upcoming events.
- Consideration will be given to a venue on several campuses which will allow students from all campuses the opportunity to mix (if circumstances permit).
- Course reps will be able to join support sessions remotely via TEAMS & will need to have completed the questionnaire at the end of their training to confirm knowledge & understanding.
- It is the intention to use Sabbatical Officers, student executives and the Learner Voice & Student Union Lead to run the support sessions.
- Course Representatives will be required to chair meetings with course peers during early November and late March. They will attend a course meeting before the end of the Autumn and Spring terms respectively. Dates for this activity will be stated in the Student Union calendar and on TEAMS.

b. Themed Course Representative Focus Groups

- Themed Course Representative Focus Groups will be conducted online via TEAMS around a Key Theme as appropriate to each quality cycle, college activities and learner feedback.
- A common set of questions will be available and distributed to the Course Representatives via FORMS to be completed beforehand so that they can discuss with their peers and bring prepared responses to the themed focus group meeting.
- The meeting will be chaired by a Sabbatical Officers and facilitated by the Learner Voice and Student Union Lead.
- The meeting will be an opportunity to feedback and explore issues affecting the college in general. In addition, cross-college issues may well be highlighted and discussed.
- Key issues will be referred to the appropriate college manager for action (e.g. student services, estates, IT Services, quality).
- Course Representatives and student executives will be kept informed by the meeting chair of relevant developments on issues raised and will receive feedback at each half termly meeting. Feedback will also be posted to Course Reps via emails and the TEAMS page. This information 'must' be relayed back to classmates.

c. Student Conference

- This will be held once a year in the Spring term. This will be a jointly run event between the College and its Students' Union.
- All learners involved in the Learner Voice process will be invited. Students from across all departments will be nominated by their tutors to attend the conference.
- The Principal will feed back on the year's key issues and the action taken and also what learners think is good about Cardiff & Vale College.

d. Cross-College Committees

- Learner representatives will sit on cross-college committees related to functions such as equality and diversity, Safeguarding, HE Academic board and HE student experience group.

- These opportunities will be advertised via emails to Course Representatives, the Learner Voice TEAMS page, the Learner Voice mailing list, the Sabbatical Officers and via course tutors and course coordinators.
- The representatives will be given the opportunity to table issues at meetings generated by the student body, via the learner involvement process.
- Dates of the cross-college committee meetings will be stated in the Learner Voice calendar.
- Course Reps will be given the opportunity to attend remotely via TEAMS where possible or another learner can attend on their behalf.

e. Ongoing Learner Suggestions

- Learners will have the opportunity to feedback throughout the year via regular pop-up stalls, via email to LVIC/officers, student crew or SABs, via links on the Student Portal and via QR codes on posters around campus.

f. Learner Themed Focus Groups

- Course reps will be invited to attend themed focus groups throughout the year in response to learner feedback where necessary and will be given the opportunity to attend remotely via TEAMS or another learner can attend on their behalf.

g. Online 'Themed' Surveys

- Online 'themed' surveys will be held at appropriate times during the academic year. Some of these will be reactive to relevant issues as and when they arise (possible themes equal opportunities, finance and safeguarding).

h. Snapshot Surveys

- Snapshot surveys will be held at appropriate times during the academic year. Some of these will be set out in advance of the academic year and some reactive to relevant issues as and when they arise.

i. Student Governors

- Two Sabbatical Officers will hold the position of Student Governor.

- This role is usually agreed as part of the SAB officer's role however, these are voluntary hours and will not form part of their paid SAB hours. Where a SAB officer is unable to do this in addition to their SAB role we will advertise & look to elect a Student Governor from the student body.
- Two students will sit on the Corporation Board of the College. These students will attend the main Corporation Board meetings and are eligible to attend a number of its sub-committees.
- The College will ensure that the selection of Student Governors is as fair and democratic as possible.
- Student Governor advertisements will be posted on the College Portals, via pop-ups, on Moodle and via emails to course reps. Dates for this activity will be stated in the Learner Voice calendar.
- Students who express an interest will be sent a remit of the Corporation Board, an overview of the role written by a former Student Governor and an application form and manifesto template.
- On receipt of applications Course Tutor references will be requested and used to inform the shortlisting process. Successful candidates will be asked to write a manifesto with support from the Learner Voice Coordinator/officer.
- An election campaign will be advertised to the student body, who will be directed to read candidate manifesto's which will be posted on the Student Union teams page.
- An electronic vote will be held over a specified period. This will be noted in the Learner Voice calendar.
- Following the result of the vote, the two successful candidates will undergo DBS checks.
- It is the intention for Student Governors to attend the first Corporation Board meeting in the Autumn Term, pending results of DBS checks.
- The college will provide training & support for new Governors into their role.
- This will include an induction and other support such as preparatory meetings and debriefings. Training of Student Governors will remind

them of their obligation to attend Governing Body meetings on a regular basis.

j. **Sabbatical Officers**

- Four part-time Sabbatical Officers will be elected to cover the following areas: To cover all campuses across Cardiff & the Vale.
- The Sabbatical Officers will be responsible for engaging with as many learners as possible within specific focus on their area.

k. **HODs Meetings**

- There will be one meeting at the start of the year where each Head of Department will meet with course reps in their area to get feedback, details for which are on the Learner Voice Calendar.

l. **Principal Meetings**

- There will be one meeting in Spring Term where the Principal will meet with course reps to get feedback, details for which are on the Learner Voice Calendar.

m. **Learner Voice Surveys**

- Survey one will be issued online to learners before half-term in the first term of the academic year. It is designed to gather information about the learners' experiences of the College from application through to enrolment and induction and also gain their initial views of life at college. Survey two will be issued online in February. This survey is designed to gain learners' views on teaching and learning, essential skills, assessment, course organisation, accommodation and equipment, support services, enrichment, work placements, general cross-college facilities and services and quality assurance. Survey three will be issued online to learners to gain their views on teaching and learning, essential skills, assessment, course organisation, accommodation and equipment, support services, enrichment, work placements, general cross college facilities and services, quality assurance, destinations after finishing the course, impact of learner voice. This will enable comparisons of the year and if improvements have been made in response to learner feedback.
- The results will be analysed within the Quality department and also by Faculties. Good practice will be shared and discussed at various forums in order to ensure that where applicable, this is adopted across the

College. Areas in need of improvement will be targeted by the Head of Academic and Professional Standards, and/or other appropriate managers.

- All three surveys are also analysed externally, this enables the college to engage in benchmarking its performance across the sector in both Wales and England.
- The Work Based Learning survey is conducted during spring term.
- The Higher Education Year 1 survey is conducted during spring term.
- The National Student Survey is an independent Higher Education survey completed annually via an external organisation with support from CAVC.

n. Students' Union

- There will be an active Students' Union in the College with its own designated budget.
- There will be an active Students' Union on each main campus which will meet on a regular basis.
- All enrolled learners are eligible to become members of the Students' Union on enrolment. It is a self-governing association of learners with its own Constitution, which functions to represent learners' interests and can act as a coherent voice of their views and concerns. The Education Act 1994 places an obligation on the college's Governing Body to acknowledge the Students' Union representative role in academic, disciplinary and other matters relating to the government governance of the college.
- It is necessary to ensure that appropriate resources and support structures are in place on each main campus to enhance the role of Students' Union executive members, by providing office accommodation, training and enabling them to communicate effectively with members.
- The new Student President will help run the Student Union Day to day with support from the vice president Union officers and other sabbatical officers.

o. Hard to Reach Learners

- The college has a commitment to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to engage in the Learner Voice process. Hard to reach learners include;

- Part-time
 - Work-based
 - Distance Learning
 - Adult Community Learners
 - 14-16
 - ESOL
 - Entry level/Level 1
 - Junior Apprentices
- Appropriate meetings will be held with key staff to ensure that Learner Voice activities and resources are accessible to all learners.
 - Sabbatical Officers, Student Crew and Student Union Executive Officers will work to reach learners within these areas.

p. Involvement with the Decision Making of External Organisations

- CAVC will work closely with the Cardiff Youth Council and Vale Youth Forum via SAB officers.
- CAVC will work closely with National Union Students' Wales, and UK, including student representative attendance at conferences and external training events.

7. Developing Learner Involvement in Teaching and Learning - has anything here changed?

The College is committed to developing teaching and learning strategies which focus on learners taking responsibility for their own learning and acquiring knowledge and skills which prepare them for work, life and self-fulfilment. We believe that the learning experience should be "owned" by every learner, no matter what Faculty they study in or what level they study at. Generating a feeling of genuine learner ownership is vital to the success of the Learner Involvement Strategy.

In order to facilitate learner ownership of the learning process, the College will continue to provide lecturing staff with training on:

- ☐ active learning strategies;
- ☐ developing Habits of Mind for successful learning;

- ☐ involving learners in formative assessment activities such as peer and self-assessment;
- ☐ innovative and interactive use of ILT to support learner development;
- ☐ developing strategies which promote independent and interdependent learning skills;

In addition, learner representation at course team meetings should facilitate informed dialogue on teaching and learning strategies and their importance in promoting students' responsibility for their own and their peers' learning.

Where Course Reps are unable to attend due to timings they should be given the opportunity to feed in any concerns prior to staff meetings, and after staff meetings provided with meeting notes & YSWD feedback on their input.



8. Supporting Information

a. Learner Voice Branding

The Student Union logo will be used on all communications.

b. Learner Voice Calendar

The calendar will include all the key dates for Learner Voice activities and will be available to all Faculties & key support areas before the start of the academic year.

c. Diversity Calendar

The Diversity calendar will include all key dates for the academic year and will be available to all Faculties & key support areas before the start of the academic year.

d. Tutorial Programme

The Learner Voice tutorial programme will be launched in the first e-tutorial: Learner Voice week in September to raise awareness among learners. This programme highlights methods of getting the learner voice heard, how the college feedback to learners, and the role of the course representative in particular, and prepares learners for their election.

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e. Rewards for Learner Representatives

Learners will be recognised for their commitment and involvement in the Learner Voice process;

- ☐ Learner Voice Awards given by the Principal or executive member, will recognise proactive representatives who will be presented with certificates confirming their involvement and stating the skills gained during the process.
- ☐ A course rep incentive scheme is available and full training on this is available within the course rep online training.
- ☐ All course representatives who complete the training and engage in various other activities will receive points to acknowledge the training undertaken and hours volunteered.
- ☐ Course Representatives must record all of their Learner Voice activity electronically via the 'Activity Form' which is checked and reported by the Learner Voice coordinator regularly (this is explained during Course Rep training).

f. Quality Monitoring Considerations

The following are important monitoring considerations regarding the implementation of the learner involvement process:

- ☐ The delivery of the Learner Voice tutorial programme;
- ☐ Representatives meet at least once per term with course peers;
- ☐ Representatives attend or provide information for course meetings;
- ☐ Course Tutors feedback to Course Representatives about issues raised and communicate information about Learner Voice activities.
- ☐ How the Learner Voice impacts the students at CAVC.

g. Communication with Learners

- ☐ TEAMS, emails, TV screens, Portals, CAVC app, word of mouth and posters will be used for general Learner Voice information, for advertising cross-college committees/Student Governor positions, promotion of Student Governor elections, Course Representative information and 'You Said We Did' feedback.
- ☐ Designated Learner Voice page on the Portal, CAVC app & TEAMS.
- ☐ Key information will be emailed to Course Representatives.
- ☐ Plasma screens in the foyers on campuses will include Learner Voice information.
- ☐ Communication via course tutors, HODs Newsletter and key information relayed via QSA and ACT Learner Voice staff & course coordinator (for work-based learners).
- ☐ Learner Voice Updates section on TEAMS which includes a 'You Said, We Did' section, Sabbatical Officer Blogs and minutes from key meetings.
- ☐ The Freshers' Fayre in September will include a Learner Voice and Students' Union stand.

h. Communication with Staff

- ☐ Course Tutor learner engagement updates will be emailed to HODs to disseminate to staff.
- ☐ Communication via Limelight.
- ☐ Staff development sessions will be held where necessary to ensure relaying of important updates.

i. Support for Learners at Meetings

- ☐ The college and the Students' Union will support learners in order that they can participate fully in meetings. This will include checking that learning support is available for those who have difficulty participating in meetings due to a disability.
- ☐ The college will also pay childcare and travel costs if appropriate. Learners will not lose any EMA payments if they are elected to attend

meetings. No learners should be out of pocket for participating in learner involvement activities.

- ☐ Learners will be supported at HODs & Principal meetings by the Learner Voice Coordinator and Sabbatical Officers.

9. Complaints Procedure

- ☐ Learner views will emerge through the complaints procedure, and through informal conversations with tutors. The College has formal procedures in place to deal effectively with learner complaints. At times the nature of some complaints may inform the need for an improvement in a college system or procedure. The Learner Voice Coordinator can support the management of this process.
- ☐ The Learner Voice Coordinator will, if required, act in an advisory capacity to help learners to make complaints.
- ☐ In addition, the Students' Union can play a key role to act as advisors and advocates to help learners to make complaints.

Date approved:

Approved by: CQSA

Review date: 1st June 2024

Responsible Manager: Learner Involvement & Inclusion Coordinator

Executive Lead: Assistant Principal, Quality, Teaching & Learning

Accessible to Students: Yes

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