

Sustainable support for learner representatives in the further education and training system

Guidance notes

Section one

Why be a learner representative?

Aim

This section aims to introduce the role of the learner representative.

Learning objectives

Participants should:

- get to know one another
- understand that the key role of a learner representative is to improve the learning experience of the learners they represent.

Resources required

- Resource sheet 1a: My name is...and I'm a learner representative.

Suggested timings

My name is...and I'm a learner representative icebreaker

Total running time: 15 minutes

Time	Tutor notes	Resources
15 minutes	<p>Learning objectives</p> <p>Participants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get to know one another • understand that the key role of a learner representative is to improve the learner experience of the learners they represent. <p>Tell the participants that this session will give them the opportunity to get to know each other better and to understand the reasons why they became learner representatives.</p> <p>Refer the participants to Resource sheet 1a.</p> <p>Resource sheet 1a asks the participants to fill in the following information about themselves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a self portrait • an interesting fact about themselves • their ideal holiday destination • the reason that they became a learner representative. <p>Allow the participants 10 minutes to complete this activity.</p> <p>Ask each participant in turn to feedback their answers.</p> <p>Question</p> <p>Thinking about the reasons you became learner representatives, what were the common factors?</p> <p>Expected answer: As learner representatives we are here to improve the learning experience of the learners we represent.</p>	Resource sheet 1a

Section two

You and your organisation

Aim

The aim of this section is to introduce the further education and training environment.

Learning objectives

Participants should know the:

- number of learners studying in their organisation
- funding per learner in their organisation
- percentage breakdowns of 16-19-year-old learners versus part time/mature learners in their organisation
- number of further education (FE) colleges in England
- number of FE learners in England
- number of FE learners that are members of the National Union of Students (NUS)
- other types of education and training providers.

Resources required

- Flip chart
- Pens
- Resource sheet 2a: You and your organisation.

Suggested timings

You and your organisation

Total running time: 15 minutes

Time	Tutor notes	Resources
15 minutes	<p>Learning objectives</p> <p>Participants should know the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of learners studying in their organisation • funding per learner in their organisation • percentage breakdowns of 16-19-year-old learners versus part time/mature learners in their organisation • number of FE colleges in England • number of FE learners in England • number of FE learners that are members of the National Union of Students • other types of education and training providers. <p>This is a multiple choice answer exercise.</p> <p>Participants should differentiate between correct and incorrect answers to questions relating to their organisation.</p>	

Time	Tutor notes	Resources
	<p>Before carrying out this activity you will need to do the following: 1) Prepare four answers to each of the following questions (one correct and three incorrect).</p> <p>How many learners are there in the organisation? A...Correct Answer (If unknown use 12,000) B...Incorrect Answer C...Incorrect Answer D...Incorrect Answer</p> <p>The funding provided per learner in the organisation A...Incorrect Answer B...Incorrect Answer C...Incorrect Answer D...Correct Answer (If unknown use £3,500)</p> <p>The percentage breakdown of full time (16-19 year-old learners) versus part time/mature learners A...Incorrect Answer B...Incorrect Answer C...Correct Answer (If unknown use 20%/80%) D...Incorrect Answer</p> <p>2) This activity involves the participants moving around the room. To enable this ensure that all obstructing objects (tables, chairs etc) are moved to the side of the room.</p> <p>3) Attach four pieces of flip chart to four different walls in the room:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write the letter A in the middle of one piece • Write the letter B in the middle of one piece • Write the letter C in the middle of one piece • Write the letter D in the middle of one piece. 	

Time	Tutor notes	Resources
	<p>Read out question 1 accompanied with its four potential answers (A, B, C or D).</p> <p>Then ask the participants to stand by the flip chart marked A, B, C or D which they believe shows the correct answer.</p> <p>Tell the participants which is the correct answer (for example, question 1 is C).</p> <p>Repeat this process with questions 2 and 3.</p> <p>Allow 5 minutes for this activity.</p> <p>Once completed refer the participants to Resource sheet 2a.</p> <p>Ask the participants to fill in the missing blanks on Resource sheet 2a (the answers to the questions in the previous exercise).</p> <p>Then read through the remainder of Resource sheet 2a with participants emphasising the highlighted points.</p>	<p>Resource sheet 2a</p>

Section three

Making things happen

Aims

The aims of this section are for participants to identify potential issues affecting learning and to select those suitable for action.

Learning objectives

Participants should:

- be able to evaluate their own learning experience
- select issues for action
- find out some of the specific issues affecting the learners they represent.

Resources required

- Flip chart
- Pens
- Sticky notes
- Resource sheet 3a: Your learning experience so far
- Resource sheet 3b Selecting issues for action
- Resource sheet 3c: Real learners with real issues.

Suggested timings

Your learning experience so far: 15 minutes

Selecting issues for action: 10 minutes

Real learners real issues: 30 minutes

Total running time: 55 minutes

Time	Tutor notes	Resources
<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Learning objectives</p> <p>Participants should be able to evaluate their own learning experience.</p> <p>Refer the participants to Resource sheet 3a.</p> <p>This resource sheet contains a selection of issues relating to the learning experience of the participants. Ask the participants to fill in the blank spaces on this resource sheet by comparing their perceived learning experiences (when applying for their programme) with the actual learning experiences (now that they are on the programme).</p> <p>Allow the participants 10 minutes to complete this activity.</p> <p>Ask the participants to share their responses in groups of three.</p> <p>Discuss with learner representatives how their perceptions and their actual learning experiences differed.</p>	<p>Resource sheet 3a</p>

Time	Tutor notes	Resources
10 minutes	<p>Learning objectives</p> <p>Participants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • select issues for action. <p>Tell the participants that we recognise that there is always room for improvement in the learning experience.</p> <p>As a learner representative their role is to try to bring about improvements in the learning experience of the learners that they represent.</p> <p>Questions</p> <p>As a learner representative do you think that it will be possible for you to effectively take action on all of the issues that are identified by the learners that you represent?</p> <p>Expected answer: No – for several reasons, some of which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you simply don't have the time to act on all the issues. • not all issues can realistically be changed. <p>So how do we decide on which issues to act?</p> <p>Refer the participants to Resource sheet 3b.</p> <p>Resource sheet 3b again refers to a selection of issues that the participants could identify in their role as learner representatives (this list is not exhaustive).</p>	

Time	Tutor notes	Resources
	<p>Tick box exercise.</p> <p>Ask the participants to assess the extent to which these issues have potential for change on the programmes that they represent. Which ones have low priority for action and which ones high priority?</p> <p>Discuss the responses as a whole group.</p> <p>Summarise by stating that some issues will be more important on some programmes than others.</p>	<p>Resource sheet 3b</p>
<p>30 minutes</p>	<p>Learning objectives</p> <p>Participants should find out some of the specific issues affecting the learners they represent.</p> <p>Explain to the participants that it is time to find out if the issues they think are important are also important to the learners they represent.</p> <p>Tell the participants that they are now going to have the opportunity to talk to the learners that they represent to identify the specific issues that are affecting their learning experience.</p> <p>You can refer learners to the questions in the learner representative toolkit in the section on How to be an effective learner representative: Gathering learners' views.</p> <p>Refer the participants to Resource sheet 3c to support them in this activity.</p> <p>(Allow the participants 25 minutes to talk to their learners).</p>	<p>Resource sheet 3c</p>

Time	Tutor notes	Resources
	<p>Note: If it is not possible for learners to talk to their groups at this stage, you can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) finish the session here and complete at another time when learner reps will have talked to their groups b) continue and add the optional goal setting section at the end. <p>Whilst the participants are out talking to learners attach a piece of flip chart to the wall titled Your programme, your issues. When the participants return hand them a sticky note each.</p> <p>Ask the participants to write down on the post it notes the issues with high priority for action arising from their talk with learners.</p> <p>Then get the participants to post the issues on the flip entitled Your programme, your issues.</p> <p>Feedback on the types of issues posted and explore common themes.</p>	

Section four

Taking action

Aim

The role of a learner representative is to make change happen. The aim of this section is to explore the different ways that learner representatives can bring about change. Refer to the How to be an effective learner representative: Acting on learners' views area.

Learning objectives

Participants should:

- assess which issues presented by their learners have priority for further action
- plan how to take action on the chosen issues.

Resources required

- Flip chart
- Pens
- Resource sheet 4a: Taking action.

Suggested timings

Taking action

Total running time: 45 minutes

Time	Tutor notes	Resources
15 minutes	<p>Learning objectives</p> <p>Participants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess which issues presented by their learners have priority for further action • plan how to take action on the chosen issues. <p>Summarise what has been covered so far:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information on learners • that the learning experience can be improved • identifying issues for change • selecting those on which to act. <p>This section focuses on how we can take action on issues in order to improve the learning experience.</p> <p>Flip up and ideas storm</p> <p>Write Taking action on a flip chart.</p> <p>Ask the participants to give their ideas on how they could take action on the issues that are affecting the learner experience in their organisation. Write their responses on the flipchart. Draw their attention to the suggestions given in the Learner Rep toolkit. Refer to the How to be an effective learner representative: Acting on learners' views area. Ask the participants to discuss their ideas in comparison with the suggestions given.</p> <p>They will use these ideas to inform their plans in the next activity.</p>	

Time	Tutor notes	Resources
30 minutes	<p>The next activity gives participants the opportunity to action plan on the issues that they identified in the Developing skills area.</p> <p>Refer participants to Resource sheet 4a. Explain they should choose two issues to take forward from their discussion with their learners. They will plan how to take these forward using the ideas from the last section. (Allow 10 minutes to plan).</p> <p>They will then move into pairs and question each other on their plans. Encourage open questions that allow development of the plans. Allow 10 minutes each to question and develop the plans.</p>	Resource sheet 4a

Section five

Goal setting

Aim

The aim of this section is to give the participants the opportunity to set goals for their time as learner representatives.

Learning objectives

Participants should:

- set goals using the SMART acronym (ensuring that goals set are specific, measurable, agreed to, reachable and time bound).

Resources required

- Resource sheet 5a: Goal Setting.

Suggested timings

Goal Setting

Total running time: 30 minutes

Time	Tutor notes	Resources
30 minutes	<p>Learning objectives</p> <p>Participants should set goals using the SMART acronym (ensuring that goals set are specific, measurable, agreed to, reachable and time bound).</p> <p>Tell the participants that they are now going to have the opportunity to set goals to take forward the issues identified in the last section and to set wider goals for their time as learner representatives.</p> <p>Refer the participants to Resource sheet 5a.</p> <p>Resource sheet 5a requires the participants to set SMART goals for their time as learner reps.</p> <p>(Allow the participants 30 minutes to complete this activity).</p> <p>Allow time for any outstanding questions from participants.</p> <p>Thank the learner representatives for participating in the training.</p> <p>Ensure that participants are aware of the learner representative toolkit.</p>	Resource sheet 5a