

Local Students Selected to join National panel to advise Government

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The National Learner Panel was set up in 2006 by the Government to give learners a say in the development of further education at national level. Since then it has been advising the Government, the Learning and Skills Council and other organisations involved in making the decisions. Anyone in further education is eligible to sit on the panel as an independent volunteer. Members are appointed for 12 months and are drawn from across the further education sector including colleges, work-based providers and community based provision. Recruitment for this year's panel took place in September. **Alphonse Mbambu and Jade Okanlawon** are two of four learners from London to be appointed to the Panel to meet with and advise Ministers.

Bill Rammell, Minister of State for Further and Higher Education, said:

"Involving learners in what we do is not optional. It must be integral to every aspect of learning; from decisions in Government, to college and provider management, to the classroom and workshop. We all have a role and a responsibility to ensure learning is guided by and responds to the needs and aspirations of all individuals in further education.

My commitment, and that of my Department, is to ensure that we also ensure the voice of learners is heard at the very heart of Government policy making. This is why we set up the National Learner Panel last year and I welcome the new members appointed to this year's Panel. I look forward to working with Alphonse, an adult learner and 19 year old A-level student Jade, both at **Newham College**, over the coming year and expect them and their fellow Panel members to help make the important learner voice contribution to the development of further education policies."

-Ends-

Editors Notes

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. It is responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. It has a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Its vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. It works nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

Background

Following the FE White Paper commitment to set up a FE National Learner Panel, Bill Rammell announced the establishment of the first ever National Learner Panel for FE in November 2006. The first Panel consisted of 15 learners aged 16 to 75 drawn from a range of backgrounds and learning settings from across the FE sector. The Minister agreed that the Panel would be independent with a remit focussed on ensuring that the learner voice can be heard at a national level able to influence policy design and delivery.

The panel held its first working panel meeting in January 2007 and since then has:

- Developed a response to the Leitch review for the DIUS
- Written the foreword to the LSC's Learner Involvement Handbook
- Given opinions on the Personalisation agenda
- Worked with Ofsted to identify ways in which learners could become more involved in the inspection process
- Highlighted the lack of support for work-based learners
- Considered the implications of demand-led funding, and made recommendations for the support and approach that they believe will be necessary to ensure that Learner Accounts are successfully introduced
- Reviewed plans to introduce Unique Learner Records through MIAP – and made suggestions for how these could be further developed in future
- Met with Bill Rammell to discuss the implications of raising the statutory participation age

www.direct.gov.uk/nationallearnerpanel

<http://www.newham.ac.uk>

Media Enquiries

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