

SUTTON COLLEGE OF LEARNING FOR ADULTS

Minutes of the Student Focus Group held on 26 June 2008

		ITEM	ACTION
1.	Apologies	MW welcomed the group and new members were introduced	
2.	Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March	Agreed as accurate	
3.	Matters Arising	<p>2.e) Complaints/Compliments box – suggestion from students to place this in the coffee shop - to be actioned.</p> <p>4.Informal Adult Learning Consultation – Margaret thanked students for sending their responses to John Denham. Over 500 individual responses were sent from SCOLA and a personal reply had been received from the Public Communications Unit. While reiterating the Government’s acknowledgement that ‘this learning contributes to people’s well-being and quality of life’, the letter also confirms that priority for funding is for ‘quality courses that directly improve people’s employability.’</p> <p>With regard to the removal of the over-60 fee concession, the letter confirms that the Age Discrimination Act applies to FE Colleges and it is for colleges to satisfy themselves that they are in compliance with the Act.</p> <p>The group suggested that key notes from the letter should be displayed in the college.</p>	<p>MW</p> <p>MW</p>
4	Prospectus 08/09	The group commented on the new prospectus, which was considered to be attractive and user-friendly. The colour-coding and the index were appreciated, although there were some omissions e.g. Food Hygiene. Page 3 excellent.	
5	Student Handbook	Suggestions were invited for the Student Handbook. The group was in favour of keeping the diary. Emphasis needs to be given to the fact that courses are subsidised. The group felt that students still do not understand that the	Marketing

		fee does not cover the full cost and discussion took place about how this could be communicated.	
6	Learner Involvement Strategy	Margaret tabled the draft strategy which is an LSC requirement. The group felt that there were good opportunities for students to voice their opinions through the Student Focus Group, course evaluations, the Roadshow Surveys and the Your Voice complaints procedure.	
7	Complaints Analysis	The complaints analysis for Autumn 2007 and Spring 2008 was tabled. There is a very low percentage of formal complaints. There were more complaints this year about fees and the loss of the over-60 concession.	
8	Roadshow Results 07/08	The results of the marketing and customer satisfaction surveys were tabled, showing comparison with previous years and showing a high level of satisfaction with SCOLA.	Marketing
9	Future Developments	<p>a)Funding – this remains a concern for non-accredited courses (ACL – Adult and Community Learning). Funding has been set at a fixed rate for 3 years with no increases for inflation, and the Government has not made a commitment to fund these courses after 2010.</p> <p>b)Business at SCOLA – the new centre at North Cheam opened in March this year and is gradually developing employer-funded courses in line with the Government directive that colleges must be more self-financing and generate their own income. This aspect of SCOLA’s work must continue to develop in order to secure other funding such as Train to Gain.</p> <p>c)There are no plans to open any further centres. The college will be looking to consolidate in order to protect the programme and offer student choice.</p>	
10	Equality and Diversity	Nothing to report	
11	Health and Safety	Jewellery – a query was raised about the centrifugal casting unit. MW to speak to the Head of Department	MW/GK
12	Any Other Business	a)Classes with low numbers – concerns were raised about the future of classes with low numbers. Margaret confirmed that the college would try to amalgamate classes where appropriate, but it is increasingly difficult to	College Management Team

		reinstated closed classes because of the loss of funding. b) Jewellery – concerns were expressed about tools, the casting unit for punching silver and enamelling materials which appear to be missing. A request was made for lockable storage cupboards for student tools. MW to speak to Head of Department.	MW/GK
13	Date of Next Meeting	Monday 2 February 2009 at 6:30 at SCOLA Sutton Centre	