Q: What has an independent training provider and a college based training provider got in common?

A: A genuine desire to find out if their learners feel listened to and how they could capture and use learners’ views to improve the quality of training.

Fortunately Nuneaton Training Centre and Zenith Apprenticeships both based in the West Midlands had just the opportunity to do this with the help of the learner involvement development pilot. To set the scene, we at Nuneaton Training Centre deliver government funded, pre-work and work-based learning programmes for young people aged 16–24 years in North Warwickshire. And Zenith Apprenticeships, as part of Warwickshire College, offers a wide choice of apprenticeships in the area to provide training and achieve full employment for young people.

The starting point for the pilot was Alice Pethick of Zenith persuading me, Anne Stanton, of Nuneaton Training to join her on the project. The setting down of a simple action plan to design a learner friendly questionnaire together and work in a smart way to get it processed were the corner stones of our approach. We were confident that by using this feedback and focus groups to formulate a learner involvement strategy we would be able implement effective policies and procedures in this key area by the deadline of September 2007.

The synergistic approach made easy work of the questionnaire, and this first piece of joint working alone started to give me ideas about things that Nuneaton Training could learn from the college.

Both Alice and I already had great faith in focus groups and so used these to support the survey activity.

In short what could have been a complicated and big task was conducted simply and efficiently and provided more than enough evidence and inspiration to put learner involvement at the top of our development plans. What’s more there’s plenty of material to help you already out there including:

- LSC Agenda for Change
- LSC Sustainability Development Strategy Manager
- The Further Education Reform White Paper
- Every Child Matters [2004]
- Youth Matters [2005]
- Post-16 Citizenship Support Programme resources
- Post-16 Citizenship website: www.post16citizenship.org

By Anne Stanton, Nuneaton Training Centre Ltd

A happy collaboration

For more tips on how to put your strategy together or how to make collecting learner views count, contact Anne Stanton at Nuneaton Training Centre on 024 7650 4454 or Alice Pethick at Zenith Apprenticeships on 077404 19325. We look forward to hearing from you.