



# Contributing to the Wellbeing of Future Generations

the role of Further Education Colleges

## Leadership for Sustainable Development



Guy Lacey, Gwent College (Left) and Andrew Gibbs, Bridgend (Right), at the 2013 Sustainable Development Charter Conference.

There is now a wide body of evidence from around the world and across different sectors that supports the argument that leadership is essential for sustainable development (SD) but that traditional concepts of leadership are more of a hindrance than a help. The World Business Council on Sustainable Development has summarised much of this evidence in their report "People Lead". The report makes the case that while it would be too simplistic to identify a single leadership style or approach as being ideal for sustainable development, there are general trends and characteristics that are found across all organisations who are successfully translating a commitment to sustainability into practical outcomes. We have found the same qualities and profiles in signatories of the Sustainable Development Charter and other organisations we work with.

### GENERAL TRENDS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP;

- The Board and Senior Management team understand SD and are committed to its principles.
- This commitment is communicated to all staff.
- There is "shared responsibility, clear accountability"
- All staff are welcome to contribute ideas and make constructive criticism.
- The specific expertise of different departments and middle managers is utilised.
- An SD committee/manager co-ordinates activity across departments and reports directly to the executive and board.

Our general report and the specific examples overleaf illustrate that these general points are well established in the Further Education sector.

### Commit

Board and Executive understand and commit to the principles of sustainable development.

### Share

This commitment is shared with all staff and the leaders show that they are prepared to walk the talk!

### Identify

Key people and enthusiasts are identified throughout the organisation. They are given permission to take the initiative.

### Own

Everyone understands that they share responsibility for the values and actions that the commitment represents.

### Do it!

Commitment to SD is translated into action with measurable outcomes. These are recorded in an SD strategy which informs the corporate plan.

# Commitment - Bridgend

Click on the “About Us” tab on Bridgend College’s website and you will find in the drop down menu a section on [“Health, Wellbeing and Sustainable Development”](#). This section offers a detailed and comprehensive review of The College’s commitment in the form of links to specific strategies, reports and resources.

The College was the first to sign the Welsh Government’s Sustainable Development Charter and is a signatory of the United Nations Declaration for Sustainability. The Principal signs these and other public commitments and re-endorse them each year.

**The Sustainable Development Vision and Strategy** articulates practical commitments over a six year period to 2020.

Sustainable Development is now part of the job description of all members of staff.

A sustainability newsletter called **“Gweledigaeth/Vision”** communicates activity and celebrates good practice. An **integrated management system** provides co-ordination and coherence for a range of separate but complimentary auditing processes such as Investors in People, ISO14001 and the Corporate Health Standard.



*Bridgend College  
Principal Simon  
Pirotte signs the  
Welsh Government’s  
SD Charter.*



*Staff at Coleg Gwent*

# Structure - Gwent

Coleg Gwent say, “It’s not just about having champions - that allows other people to abdicate responsibility. We have people who are specialists and authorities on specific issues but we want it embedded across the whole staff team.”

Each Gwent campus has an **Environment, Health and Safety Advisor**. They report to two Senior Officers who in turn report to the **Environment, Health and Safety Manager** who reports to the Vice Principal and the Director of Estates and Facilities. The VP chairs the **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee** and the Director chairs the **Environmental and Sustainability Management Group**.

Each campus has its own sustainability committee chaired by the Campus Directors who are line managed by The Principal. They all meet monthly via the Senior Management Team which has SD issues as a standing item on the agenda.

# Doing it - Cambria

The College has published a statement of responsibilities for sustainable development which explains in detail who is responsible for what aspect. This starts with The Corporation and The Principal and proceeds through the full staff structure ending in a statement of what is expected from Learners, Contractors and Visitors.



*Anwyl Construction Director Tom Anwyl  
presents a slate plaque commemorating the award  
for the new Learning Centre at Northop as North  
Wales’s Best New Educational Building to Deeside  
College Principal David Jones.*

The key actors in the College structure are the team led by The Head of Estates (Health, Safety and Sustainability). This includes the Health, Safety and Sustainability Officer and Technicians. The latter provide the lead role on each campus/site. They monitor the use of resources, the generation and processing of waste, carry out audits and maintain records to ensure legal compliance. The Officer manages the work of the Technicians and works with colleagues across departments to link estate management with ESDGC, staff wellbeing and behaviour change.



**Cynnal Cymru - Sustain Wales** is Wales’ Sustainable Development organisation (est. 2002).

We integrate policy, engagement and leadership to create positive change. We are not-for-profit.