

Guildford College Group Merger with Activate Learning Group Finalised

Posted on 29 March 2019

By welcoming Guildford College Group's three colleges at Merrist Wood, Farnham Sixth Form College and Guildford College to its ranks, Activate Learning now oversees seven further education colleges across Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Surrey.



This merger represents an exciting chapter for Guildford College Group and Activate Learning and ensures the long term security for the Surrey-based colleges, while also giving learners and stakeholders access to new opportunities and greater choices.

Sally Dicketts, Chief Executive of Activate Learning, said the merger would help to drive growth within the local economy.

She added: "Further education colleges have always been the engine that drives social mobility, providing training and education to those who want to learn new skills and improve themselves.

"At Activate Learning we have focussed on working with businesses to help shape the education we provide and ensure the skills and attributes our learners leave college with, are the skills and attributes that employers need.

"This is an approach we will take with us into Guildford, developing a rich talent pool for the benefit of local communities and the businesses that serve them."

Ms Dicketts said the merger also reflected the increasing challenges faced by the FE sector, which has seen a real terms reduction in funding for learners over the past 10 years.

She added: "Activate Learning has grown significantly over the past several years, as we have recognised the need to expand in order to be able to offer development opportunities to more people and keep talent within the regions where we operate. But this scale now works to our advantage, it gives us more scope to work across different sectors and strengthens our position at the negotiating table."

Guildford College Group chose Activate Learning as its preferred merger partner after being impressed by our award-winning Learning Philosophy, which looks at the dynamic relationship between the brain, motivation and emotion on learning. The other key reason for Activate being selected is our marketing and schools liaison capacity to increase learner recruitment.

Cheri Ashby, one of our Group Executive Directors who will become the new Head of Campus at Guildford College Group, has been working closely with staff over the past several months as we worked towards the finalisation of the merger.

She said: "There are so many fantastic things going on across Guildford College Group and we want to ensure the things that are being done well are preserved and maintained.

"This will see our award-winning Learning Philosophy and attributes being woven through the fabric of how we deliver learning here.

"Having worked alongside the staff team at the Surrey colleges over the past several months, I can say that everyone is passionate about providing the best possible education we can for our learners.

"The merger represents a fresh start with a new focus on the future, with the benefits of being part of a successful, ambitious organisation focused on changing lives through learning. The merger will bring stability to the colleges and greater professional development opportunities for staff and learning opportunities for students."

John Denning, the outgoing Chair of Governors for Guildford College Group Corporation, said he welcomed the new partnership.

He said: "The Guildford Corporation Members believe that Activate Learning is well placed to build on the

improvements over the last couple of years to meet the education and training needs of students, employers and the wider community.

“We look forward seeing the new Group going from strength to strength and wish all concerned with Activate Learning much success.”

Guildford College Group’s colleges now join City of Oxford College, Bracknell and Wokingham College, Reading College and Banbury and Bicester College, as a destination for further and higher education and apprenticeships under the Activate Learning banner.
