

New Customer Panel will help transform customer experience

At SLC we have made a strategic commitment to improving customer experience. Recently, we have established our Customer Vision:

To be widely recognised for enabling student opportunity and supporting the future economic prosperity of the UK. We aspire to provide an outstanding customer experience, helping customers to invest in their futures by providing an intuitive, supportive and trusted service.

We recognise that we have some way to go to achieve this vision, so we will strive to deliver excellence across everything we do, from our information and guidance, through to the quality of our customer care and the design and reliability of our platforms, products, and services. But it is only by listening to our customers that we can become a truly customer centric organisation – delivering an end-to-end customer journey that is centred on their needs.

A key part of this work is the establishment of a Student Finance Customer Panel which complements our existing user research and testing work. The Customer Panel gives us a new way of meaningfully engaging with a broad and diverse range of future, current and former higher and further education students who reflect the wider population we serve.

I was joined by colleagues from SLC's UX team, who lead the research, design and testing of our products and services with users, for our first Customer Panel meeting which took place virtually last month. During this session we discussed the importance of communication, with panel members sharing their thoughts on how they prefer to engage with organisations such as SLC.

We wanted to hear their opinions on our service and their expectations on areas such as opening hours, response times and channel usage for specific types of enquiry. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we also wanted to hear the panel's comments on their current service expectations of SLC and how that might change going forward. The discussion generated some very constructive and considered feedback which will be invaluable to SLC as we work to improve our services going forward. I appreciated how open and engaged all our panel members were and was encouraged to hear that they had also found the session useful.

One panel member Mark, very much echoed my own sentiments when he said:

We have panel members from all over the UK, representing many different backgrounds, qualifications and realities and I truly believe the rich diversity of experiences and journeys to, through and after university will prove invaluable to the Customer Panel

overall. I thoroughly look forward to continuing the constructive discussions with my fellow panel members and supporting SLC's desire to continuously improve its customer experience, now and in the future.

From SLC's perspective, we are also looking forward to future meetings. If the first session is anything to go by then I am confident the panel will be a success in helping to ensure the voice of the customer is reflected in future service design.

With our Customer Panel in place and a keen focus on our Customer Vision, I believe that we are well placed to build on our existing and planned improvements and deliver an outstanding experience for those we serve.