

SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18th June 2012

OXFORDSHIRE ADULT LEARNING - UPDATE

Introduction

1. This paper aims to give an update on current issues facing Adult Learning, concentrating on the following:-
 - Ofsted Inspection outcomes
 - Merger with Learning and Development
 - Update on centres
 - Current picture of provision
 - Financial position moving forward
 - Adult Learning's contribution to reducing the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training
 - New developments – Community Learning Trusts
 - Challenges going forward

Ofsted Inspection outcomes

2. The service was inspected in late January/early February 2012, with very successful outcomes which gave the best grade profile the service has received under the current system. Ofsted found that learners enjoyed a safe, relaxed, friendly and enjoyable learning environment with excellent teaching and supportive tutors.
3. In particular, the work of the Workforce Development team was found to be outstanding (grade 1) in the area of Health, Public Services and Care. This was the only outstanding grade awarded in this area to a local authority provider in the financial year 2011/12. The majority of other areas were graded as good (grade 2).
4. This was the full set of grades awarded. (There are four possible grades – 1: outstanding; 2: good; 3: satisfactory; and 4: unsatisfactory.)

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2

Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	3
	Grade
Learning for qualifications in employment	
Health, public services and care	1
Learning for qualifications	
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)	2
Literacy and numeracy	3
Learning for social and personal development	
Arts, media and publishing	2
Classical and modern foreign languages	2

5. Areas which received a grade 3 are the subject of a post-inspection action plan which has been written and is now in place. This plan includes quality improvement needs we have identified ourselves in areas which were not in the scope of the inspection.
6. Members of the committee have received an electronic version of the full report, which is also available at - www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/50182

Merger with Learning and Development

7. As noted in the last update, it was planned for the Adult Learning Service and Learning and Development services to merge and move to a commissioner/provider model. The initial merger has taken place and the new service, called the **Oxfordshire Skills and Learning Service** came into being on 1st May 2012. The restructuring work falls into three phases and the first phase of the process has been completed, with delivery teams in Workforce Development being merged, and staffing in AL centres rationalised. Phase two is also complete, and the management teams of both services have been interviewed and allocated posts in the merged service. Phase three work relates to dividing the new service into three areas: commissioning; delivery; and support. A consultation process for managers and curriculum staff has just finished and as a result staff will be largely assimilated into new roles from 1st August 2012. Work on preparing the phase three process for support staff is already in hand and following a consultation, will be in place for 1st October 2012.
8. Work to explore options for the externalisation of the delivery arm of the restructured service has begun. An options appraisal report which examines the possible models and tests their suitability for the Oxfordshire context was received in May. Once accepted at Director level, work will be able to proceed further on this.

Update on centres

9. The new arrangements for AL centres were introduced in January 2012 and have bedded in successfully. Our major administrative centre is in Unipart House, with three main centres in Kidlington, Cowley and Grove supporting work in centres in the north, city and south. Other centres are open when required for class provision, and tutors can arrange to make use of them to prepare work, hot desk and use photocopying facilities.
10. We are pleased to have moved into new premises at Glyme Hall in Chipping Norton where we have very attractive teaching and administrative spaces in a new building purpose designed for youth and adult work.

Current picture of provision

11. The learner numbers shown below are those who are currently enrolled on adult learning courses. We have already met and exceeded our target for 16-18 apprentices and will shortly meet our Education Funding Agency targets. In other areas we will need the whole academic year to meet learner and funding targets and there is a risk of a potential clawback in this academic year, depending on the number of enrolments in the final term.

Funding Stream	Areas of work covered	Learner numbers
Adult Skills budget	Skills for Life, ESOL, Work based learning	1787
16-18 Apprentices		81
Adult Safeguarded Learning	Community learning and Family Learning	4778
First Steps	Provision designed to bring learners into FE provision	504
16-18 Young People's Learning Agency funding	Targeted work to 16-18s who are not in education, employment or training	143
		7293

In addition, we delivered 2221 adult careers guidance sessions in the financial year just ended, over-performing our contract by 23%.

Financial position going forward

12. Underperformance against the Skills Funding Agency adult skills budget in 2010/11 was reduced from a potential £400,000 to £125,000 following

submission of a robust business case and a change in national policy regarding the calculation of claw back.

13. Adult Learning has had a policy of not replacing staff that leave and this has resulted in reduced costs.
14. Following receipt of final funding allocations from Skills Funding Agency and Young People's Learning Agency for the 2012/13 academic year, detailed curriculum planning is now being undertaken to ensure that financial targets are met so that there is no clawback of funds. Part of this planning will look at the cost of delivery of the planned curriculum to ensure its financial viability.

Adult Learning's Contribution to Reducing the Numbers of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

15. Adult Learning has taken a strategic decision to use its Education Funding Agency funding, mostly through subcontracting arrangements, to deliver flexible, alternative provision aimed at young people not engaged in any form of employment, education or training.
16. Adult Learning is currently funding a range of 'alternative' and flexible provision available for 16-18 year olds who are NEET, with the aim of maximising the chances of them progressing positively. This provision has start dates throughout the year and so is able to pick up those that become NEET partway through the academic year.
17. By subcontracting, Adult Learning has been able to fund niche providers that are able to successfully engage young people, who due to their previous experiences may find it difficult to attend a more formal learning setting.
18. In 2011/12 the numbers of 16-18 year olds enrolled through Adult Learning will reach around 200, with the majority undertaking foundation learning provision.

Community Learning Trusts

19. The consultation on informal Adult and Community Learning undertaken by The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has concluded. The major outcomes of the review include a new definition for this area of adult learning, one which very much reflects our current delivery principles and practice, together with a proposal to establish a number of Community Learning Trusts as pilot projects. It is envisaged that these trusts will draw together providers of Community Learning in each area to plan and coordinate delivery. This is an approach which we have been following for some years now since the inception of the Oxfordshire Learning Network and we intend to build on the published guidelines to develop our work more closely in line with them. Given the current far-reaching changes in the service it was decided not to bid to be a pilot project, but we will follow developments in this area closely.

Challenges going forward

20. There are five main challenges facing the service:

- a) To complete the restructuring of the service and integration with Learning and Development**
- b) To prepare for externalising a viable service**
- c) To adapt and cope with on-going funding changes**
- d) To find ways of attracting learners against a national picture of declining numbers of people taking up adult learning opportunities.**
- e) To develop current and directed new learning courses to establish a set of opportunities that will stimulate demand.**

Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the issues and actions outlined in this report.

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