



HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Wednesday, 9 February 2022

REPORT TITLE:	OVERVIEW OF 2019/20 COUNCIL LIFELONG LEARNING SERVICE ADULT EDUCATION DELIVERY
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This Lifelong Learning Service update report sets out the service's developments, summary of delivery and learner achievements in the 2019/20 academic year (AY). The 2019/20 AY was the first full academic year funded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA).

Grant funding received from the LCR CA was £982,326.

Wirral Council's Lifelong Learning Service actively engages and supports local residents (aged 19+) who are furthest from the labour market. This education provision provides learners with the confidence to take the next steps back into education and employment. As a grant funded Council service, it has the capacity to support the most disadvantaged, working on difficult issues and using innovative approaches for example, supporting community cohesion, troubled families, Children's Centres, family learning, refugees and improving mental health through learning.

The 2019/20 academic year was very challenging for the service with a significant change in course delivery required in March 2020. All courses moved to online delivery as the country went into its first national lockdown as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Lifelong Learning Service was inspected by Ofsted, February 2018, and assessed as 'Good'. The service was also MATRIX re-accredited, July 2020, recognising its integrated high-quality delivery of careers education and support for its learners.

As a service, Lifelong Learning supports three of the key strategic Council themes, as outlined in the Wirral Plan 2021 – 2026. These themes include:

- Brighter Futures through the delivery of high-quality education for adults and families,
- Active and Healthy Lives through a curriculum focus on wellbeing and positive mental health, and
- Safe and Pleasant Communities through targeted engagement of adults and families in the Borough's most deprived communities / ward areas.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) support the services' planned improvements and recognise the contribution to improving the lives of adults in Wirral's more deprived communities during 2019/20.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Lifelong Service enrolled over 1,888 adults on a range of over 3,012 education provisions during 2019/20. Of those adults that enrolled on courses and workshops 55 percent were residents from Wirral's top 20 percent most deprived ward areas (identified using the indices of multiple deprivation index). Over 92 percent of those adults successfully completed their course or workshop. Over 54 percent of learners post course either progress to further learning (at a higher level), undertook volunteering locally or enter employment.
- 1.2 The overall number of course enrolments during 2019/20 was negatively impacted by the national pandemic with a reduction of 1,379 or 31 percent. Learners enrolled prior to the first national lockdown were supported to complete their course by their Lifelong Learning Service tutor. New courses for the summer term (April to July 2020) were converted by tutors and curriculum leads to online application, enrolment, and delivery. A blended delivery model has carried forward in to the 2020/21 academic year with great success.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Provision of reporting during the academic year was considered but discounted due to the availability of validated service performance data.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council's Lifelong Learning Service offers entry and lower-level learning (up to level 2) which supports local employment and skills priorities and wider social and economic outcomes, as follows:
1. Maximise the employability of Wirral residents through delivery of a range of programmes that support people to progress into work.
 2. Deliver learning and skills programmes that are responsive to Wirral employer and residents' needs.
 3. Deliver social well-being and economic outcomes.
 4. Deliver outstanding teaching, learning and assessment.
 5. Inspire and promote ambition for all learners to succeed and progress; and promote equality and diversity throughout all aspects of the learner journey.
- 3.2 In order for the Lifelong Learning Service to achieve the above priorities, the following objectives were implemented in 2019/20:
- a. Implementation of a community-based learning offer that is responsive to local needs, recognising its importance to social and economic inclusion across the Wirral.
 - b. Development of clear and effective local progression pathways from non-accredited learning; to accredited learning, improve signposting and referrals, and measure impact and progression across Wirral and the Liverpool City Region, on to further education and/or employment/enterprise.

- c. Offer targeted, local learning and skills provision that meets the current and future skills needs of Wirral employers.
- d. Focus our grant funding on people who are hard to reach, disadvantaged and least likely to participate.
- e. Maximize the funding, resources and sharing of practice through local partnership working and third sector commissioned provisions.
- f. Continually developing a universal community learning offer through a range of direct and commissioned (where appropriate) delivery.

3.3 2019/20 Service and Curriculum Developments

3.4 Learning in Deprived Communities Projects. For 2019/20 the Service subcontracted key provision to a range of providers, mostly Third Sector, to engage the hardest to reach in Wirral's more deprived communities. The providers include-Bee Wirral, North Birkenhead Development Trust, Ferries Families, Amber Button, Youth Federation, Wirral Environmental Network, Tranmere Rovers, Creating Careers, 3D Training, Belvidere Centre, Earth Moves Cooperative and Next Chapter.

3.5 The projects focused on two main themes:

1. **Employability skills, Volunteering, and qualifications.** Offering a range of Entry, Level 1 (and where appropriate Level 2) qualifications, that supported adults seeking employment and/or access to the voluntary sector. The aim of the qualifications was to bolster an individual's CV, raise their aspirations and help them gain the skills that will make employment or volunteering an attainable prospect.
2. **Mental Health & Wellbeing.** Offering a range of courses that address issues of Mental Health, Mental Health awareness and Wellbeing *with a specific focus on recovery models*. The imperative being on encouraging and enabling learners to progress and develop through an understanding of their current situation and providing the tools for them to plan for their future.
3. **Across the two themes 744 number of learner enrolments were recorded 63% being from our top 20 percent most deprived wards.** In addition to the 744 number of enrolments, 62 percent of the adults were not in employment.

3.6 Working in true partnership with key third sector providers enables the service to add real social value through;

- capacity building and engaging the providers in council adult education funded professional development and upskilling for their staff,
- support and feedback with education delivery, and
- financial capacity building through appropriately procured council funded delivery contracts.

3.7 Pre-vocational Curriculum. New entry qualification pathways were introduced in 2017/18 and built on in 2019/20. Learners start and engage with taster workshops in Sewing Skills, Sign Language, Gardening or Floristry and progress to non-accredited provision followed by an accredited Skills for Further Learning and Employment qualification. The qualifications are planned and delivered to meet specific local skills needs of residents. This type of skills provision supports pathways into lower and entry level jobs that are available across Wirral and the City Region. All courses include appropriate embedded English and Maths outcomes.

- 3.8 Digital Skills. Community Digital Skills have offered E-safety, Easy Steps, Level 1 Functional Skills IT and a new qualification, IT Fundamentals. Alongside this the service has also continued to offer E-safety training to foster carers.
- 3.9 Provision of English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programmes. The service has always offered pre-entry, entry 1, 2 and 3 non accredited courses for ESOL learners but this key curriculum area has grown significantly in the last 4 years. The number of ESOL qualifications achieved in 2019/20 was 102. The table below illustrates the year-on-year percentage increase in Black and Minority Ethnic groups enrolling on adult education courses as a proportion of overall course enrolments.

Table 1. Equality, Diversity, Impact Measure's (EDIMS) Comparative Data 5 year

Academic Year	% of all course enrolments by cohort group					
	Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME)	Recorded Disability	Deprived Area 10%	Male	Prior Attainment below Level2	Unemployed Status
2019-20	26	27	55	30	61	71
2018-19	13.97	42.5	47.3	28.2	63.48	35.3
2017-18	13.2	29	44	30	56.9	53.8
2016-17	10.1	28.5	44	28.3	55.1	56

(Source: TERMS Lifelong Learning System, 2021)

- 3.10 The ability to speak English is a skill required to secure employment, but it is also a fundamental part of improving integration and developing greater community cohesion. ESOL courses are designed for learners who are outside the labour market because of language and skills barriers, have little or no English skills, and want to develop their skills and confidence in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English. This target group of learners may also be faced with literacy issues in their own language.
- 3.11 In 2019/20 the service continued to work in partnership with Refugee Action and DWP to support the Syrian Refugees Resettlement Programme. A significant proportion of the Syrian new arrivals are pre - literate in their first language so they are learning to read and write for the first time as adults in a new language as well as learning to speak the language. Additionally, the service has continued working in partnership with the Council's Minority Ethnic Achievement Service through a volunteering project aimed at supporting the Refugee families in schools.
- 3.12 English, Maths and Family Learning. Qualifications currently on offer include accredited English and Maths steppingstone units and awards, Functional Skills

Maths and English level 1 and 2, Equality & Diversity Level 1 and Community Volunteering Level 1 and 2. The onset of the pandemic in March 2020 created a number of challenges as venues closed and digital access barriers emerged. A full explanation of how the service responded can be read in paragraph 3.19. The final number of English qualifications achieved was 96 and the number of Maths qualifications achieved was 54.

- 3.13 In 2019/20 Family Learning was incorporated into the English and Maths curriculum area offering a clear pathway for parents to progress from a 2-hour non-accredited workshop to a full level 2 Functional Skill qualification. Family learning encourages family members to learn together as and within a family, with a focus on intergenerational learning. Family learning activities are specifically designed to enable parents to learn how to support their children’s learning. Family learning is a powerful method of engagement and learning which can foster positive attitudes towards life-long learning, promote socio-economic resilience and challenge educational disadvantage. Adults often start their own learning journey through Family Learning. The number of families reached through Family Learning in 2019/20 academic year was 405.
- 3.14 The LCR Combined Authority provided additional funding through AEB for three innovative Test and Learn pilots. The pilots tested new methods of delivery not restricted to current qualifications or formularised rates of payment but tailored to delivery of provision to address skills needs more effectively in the Liverpool City Region.

Test and Learn Pilot	Number of Enrolments	Disadvantage ward - top 20% IMD	No quals at entry
ESOL	212	83%	69%
Digital	119	69%	46%
Literacy/numeracy	83	57%	38%

(Source: TERMS Lifelong Learning System, 2021)

- 3.15 Key developments and priorities for 2019/20. The LCR Combined Authority (CA), as devolved grant funders of the service, have established several broad priorities to help shape 2019/20 curriculum delivery. The LCR CA priorities are aligned to the Liverpool City Region Skills Investment Strategy priorities. The service has also shared and agreed a number of local priorities and an integrated delivery plan.
- 3.16 The LCR CA have asked LCR council Adult Learning Services and Further Education Colleges in receipt of the adult education budget (AEB) grant funding to prioritise the following:
- adults aged 19-24,
 - adults aged 50- 59,
 - long term unemployed adults,

- lone parents,
- those adults with no qualifications and,
- ex-military personnel.

3.17 Quality improvement priorities that have emerged following the self-assessment process using the newly revised Ofsted Education Framework for Learning and Skills include:

- Curriculum intent, impact, and implementation,
- staff wellbeing, and
- learner progression and destination.

3.18 Response to the National Pandemic – Summer Term 2020. Given the Lifelong Learning Services engages with the most vulnerable in the more deprived ward areas and delivers face to face, the scale of the challenge in maintaining a service in a lockdown period was immense. All staff across the service from our business support officers to tutors rose to the challenge though, with great effect!

3.19 In summary, learners mid-way through a course were supported online and via the telephone to successfully complete all outstanding assessments. New course provisions were developed, at pace, for online delivery with tutors working outside of their comfort zones and thinking very creatively.

3.20 Inclusion and access for several of our learners then became the next challenge. Classroom laptops were distributed and loaned to learners whilst further IT equipment was being purchased. A tender was also submitted to the Good Things Foundation for 100 tablets and WIFI access to support families in the more deprived communities. This tender was successful, and the kit was distributed to Wirral families seeking to engage in Lifelong Learning.

3.21 Learner enrolment and marketing approaches were also moved to online platforms following a very short period of development.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The LCR Combined Authority continued to fund Wirral in full during the pandemic and thus supports the basis on which the service was delivered which reflects the planned improvements. On that basis it is not expected that there will be a loss of grant funding and there will be no additional cost to Wirral from these proposals.

4.2 The 2019/20 adult education grant funding value was £982,326.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications directly relating to this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The identifiable risks include (a) not delivering on proposed service developments which could impact on the quality of service delivery and could be picked up by Ofsted and (b) achievement of recruitment targets which could impact on successive future funding allocations.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The views and experiences of learners are captured by tutors at the end of every course and analysed by service managers. This important service user feedback is used to inform quality improvements and curriculum changes.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and published and can be found using the link below:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

- 9.2 This EIA was originally published, August 2021 and as such has been reviewed to ensure it is still relevant and accurate.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Consideration of the climate emergency is intrinsic to Lifelong Learning in a number of ways from; for example, understanding healthy cooking and diet (reduced red meat, sugar, and salt), increasing a plant-based diet, to growing your own sustainable produce via a community allotment.

- 10.2 The services' curriculum is also being reviewed and updated following the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Low Carbon Skills for Growth action plan. As a service we have a duty to not only support the engagement of adults to learn new skills and retrain but also to raise the profile of how learners and their families can contribute to making the City Region and Wirral net zero carbon by 2040.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The Council Lifelong Learning Service will continue to target its grant resources and educational delivery at those families and adults in the boroughs most deprived communities. The service will also target those adults with low or no educational attainment to enable them to better access employment and raise aspirations.
- 11.2 Within the 2021/22 academic year up to 10 percent of the Council's Adult Education Budget will also be commissioned out to local third sector providers engaging with vulnerable adults in deprived communities. Additional support will also be provided to those organisations to help them to develop their capacity to deliver good quality education services.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix 1 – Case study presentation

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Adult Education Budget Funding Rules 2019/20

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE	13th September 2021
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	28th January 2020