



## **CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>OVERVIEW OF ACADEMIC YEAR 2022/23 COUNCIL LIFELONG LEARNING SERVICE ADULT EDUCATION DELIVERY</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION SERVICES</b>

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This Lifelong Learning Service update report sets out the service's developments, summary of delivery and learner achievements in the 2022/23 academic year (AY).

Grant funding received from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority was £1,173,362.

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 2022/23 academic year was very challenging for the service with further growth in qualification course delivery, new test and learn projects plus continuation of the MULTIPLY maths intervention support programme.

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 2023 – 2027. These themes include (1) Early help for children and families through the delivery of high-quality education for adults and families, (2) Promoting independence and healthier lives through a curriculum focus on wellbeing and positive mental health, (3) Safe, resilient and engaged communities through targeted engagement of adults and families in the Borough's most deprived communities / ward areas, and (4) Protect our environment through courses and provisions that include engagement with community allotments and themes including environmental sustainability.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

This is not a key decision.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

1. note the report; and
2. endorse the services' planned improvements and recognise the contribution to improving the lives of adults and families in Wirral's more deprived communities during 2022/23.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 The Lifelong Service enrolled 2,137 adults on a range of over 4,200 education provisions during 2022/23. Of those adults that enrolled on courses and workshops 60 percent were residents from Wirral's top 20 percent most deprived ward areas (identified using the indices of multiple deprivation index). The employment status of the learners engaged through the service included 67.7% (1,480 learners) being unemployed (either seeking employment or unable to work at the time).
- 1.2 Of all adult community learning enrolments 93.4% successfully completed their course or workshop. Over 87 percent of learners sampled post course either progressed to further learning (at a higher level), undertook volunteering locally or accessed employment.
- 1.3 The overall number of course enrolments during 2022/23 has now reverted back to pre-national pandemic levels with an enrolment increase of +17 percent (+558 enrolments compared to AY 2017/18). A limited blended delivery model has continued in to the 2022/23 academic year for course delivery as necessary with continued success.
- 1.4 Areas of the service requiring improvement following self-assessment of the 2022/23 academic year included; 1. recruitment to vacant posts to ensure capacity: teaching and support posts, 2. challenges in data collection due to upcoming changes in learning aims for community learning, and 3. ensure learner feedback provides constructive and developmental guidance on how learners can improve their work.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 Other reporting points in the academic year were considered but were discounted due to service performance data not being validated. Annual reporting includes validated 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 (including health) 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; and

6. Support and develop 3rd sector organisations across the borough in the delivery of quality education provision. Facilitating capacity building and underpinning Social Value outcomes.

### 3.3 2022/23 Service and Curriculum Developments

- 3.4 Learning in Deprived Communities Projects. For 2022/23 the Service expanded prioritise in 2022/23 and subcontracted key provision to a range of providers, mostly Third Sector, to engage the hardest to reach in Wirral's more deprived communities. The investment value of the subcontract was £180,150 and 13 providers were procured. The 2022/23 providers included: Amber Button, Bee Wirral, Three D Training, Be Well, Crea8ing Careers, Earth Moves, Energy Plus, FTW, Next Chapter, Wirral Environmental Network, Wirral Mind, Youth Federation and Building Learning.
- 3.5 The projects focused on three main themes:
  1. **Pre-employability skills, Volunteering, and qualifications.** Offering a range of Entry, Level 1 (and where appropriate L2) 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. **Environmental, Horticulture and Working Outdoors.** Offering a range of courses that promote vocational opportunities in Horticulture, Environmental and working outdoors. These courses were targeted at individuals who had an interest in working outdoors and developing a range of skills to help them progress and develop towards employment and/or volunteering opportunities.
- 3.6 Across the three themes 930 learner enrolments were recorded with 57 percent being from Wirral's (a) top 20 percent most deprived wards and (b) 66 percent of the adults were recorded as unemployed at point of enrolment. This cohort of learners enrolled on 1,484 courses.
- 3.7 Working in true partnership with key third sector providers enables the service to add real social value through, (a) capacity building and engaging the providers in council adult education funded professional development and upskilling for their staff, (b) support and feedback with education delivery, and (c) financial capacity building through appropriately procured council funded delivery contracts.
- 3.8 Pre-vocational Curriculum. 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.

- 3.9 Digital Skills. The service has worked alongside Third Sector Organisations and Jobcentre Plus to develop approaches for delivery of Essential Digital Skills for their client groups. The objective being to assist residents to make eligible online benefit claims and apply for jobs. The Community Digital Skills curriculum also offered E-safety, Easy Steps, Level 1 Functional Skills IT, and IT Fundamentals.
- 3.10 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 5 years. The number of ESOL qualifications achieved in 2022/23 was 156.
- 3.11 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 face with literacy issues in their own language.
- 3.12 We continue to work in partnership with DWP, Wirral's Resettlement Team and key VCS organisations. The ESOL curriculum is well designed to effectively meet the needs of learners and local priorities. Tutor planning takes into consideration the wide range of backgrounds, cultural experiences, range of abilities and previous experiences in education and employment. Learners progress to a range of additional courses including Community Interpreting, Volunteering, Employability and Interview Skills
- 3.13 Essential skills, literacy and numeracy, are increasingly crucial for life, work and economic growth. In 2022-23 the Service experienced significant delays recruiting tutors. Tutors were recruited in February 2023 and July 2023. Recruitment late in the academic year impacted delivery with 84 qualifications and 35 qualifications recorded in numeracy and literacy respectively both down circa 43 percent compared to 2021-22 AY.
- 3.14 Family Learning provides a valuable steppingstone for parents who would benefit from learning in a more informal way or who are ready to reengage in learning as part of second chance support to get into work and progress. Delivery included: Promoting a love of reading and helping your child to read KS2, keeping up with your Child's Numeracy, Cooking on a Budget, Internet Safety- KS1, Positive Emotional Well-being, Food and Mood, Phonics to Support Early Reading. Participation in 2022-23 was buoyant with 142 learning aims recorded with 95 percent of which being achieved. Of the learners participating 83 percent were residents in the top 10 percent disadvantaged ward areas.

- 3.15 Family learning has seen significant positive impact through improved family cohesion, parents are more able to help their families have a healthy and independent lifestyle, more able to engage their children in learning activities, in and out of school, and have higher enjoyment of and aspirations for their own.
- 3.16 The LCR Combined Authority provided additional funding through AEB for three innovative Test and Learn pilots (see data table 1. below). 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.

**Table 1. 2022/23 Test and Learn Project Performance**

Test and Learn Pilot	Number of Enrolments	Successful Achievement (%)	Disadvantage ward - top 20% IMD
ESOL	92	96%	71%
Family Learning	48	92%	79%
Health & Wellbeing	88	94%	78%

(Source: Wirral Council Community Learning TERMS database, January 2024)

- 3.17 Key developments and priorities for 2022/23. The LCR Combined Authority (CA), as devolved grant funders of the service, have established several broad priorities to help shape 2022/23 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 a delivery strategy.
- 3.18 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: (1) adults aged 19-24, (2) adults aged 50- 59, (3) long term unemployed adults, (4) lone parents, (5) those adults with no qualifications and, (6) ex-military personnel.
- 3.19 Headline quality improvement priorities that have emerged following the service 2022-23 self-assessment process using the current Ofsted Education Framework for Learning and Skills include: (1) recruitment to vacant posts to ensure capacity: teaching and support posts, (2) challenges in data collection due to upcoming changes in learning aims for community learning, and (3) ensure learner feedback provides constructive and developmental guidance on how learners can improve their work.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no financial implication to be noted relating to this report. The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority reintroduced minimum financial performance thresholds for formula funded provisions in the 2022/23 academic year. The Council's Lifelong Learning Service performance was in an over performance position requiring no mid or end of year return of funding.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from 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 Council Lifelong Learning Service and any subcontracted providers must comply with the Conditions of Funding grant and AEB funding guidance documents for academic year 2022/23. Failure to comply may result in a bad audit and subsequent funding clawback.

7.3 There are no significant risks identified with the key decisions set out in this report.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

8.1 Consultation and engagement with service users and providers is focused on the programme content, access, and the quality of delivery and integral to service planning and review; this is undertaken throughout the academic year.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity.

9.2 There are no direct equality implications from this report.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Lifelong Learning provisions are delivered in areas of the borough experiencing significant social and economic disadvantage and the curriculum focus will also specifically promote and support positive responses to many of the impacts within climate adaptation, particularly energy, waste, water, food, and homes.

## **11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 Sufficient and appropriate entry level community-based learning opportunities for all Wirral resident adults is fundamental. Inactive and unemployed adults must be supported and encouraged to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to enable them to access local jobs, support their families, have good health and wellbeing as well as supporting local economic growth.

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## **APPENDICES**

None

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

LCR AEB Funding Rules 2022/23  
Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022  
FE and Skills Handbook, Ofsted

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in accordance with Section B of its Terms of Reference, the functions and powers conferred on or exercisable by the Council as Local Authority in relation to the provision of education.

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE &amp; EDUCATION COMMITTEE</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> June 2023</b>
<b>CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE &amp; EDUCATION COMMITTEE</b>	<b>19th July 2022</b>
<b>CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE &amp; EDUCATION COMMITTEE</b>	<b>13th September 2021</b>