



ADULT & COMMUNITY LEARNING IN RUNNYMEDE

JANUARY 2004

KEY ISSUE:

To present to the Local Committee in Runnymede an annual report on Adult and Community Learning in the area for 2002/03 and to offer the Committee an opportunity to influence the Three Year Development Plan for Adult Learning (2004/5 to 2006/7) and the review of the "mission" for Adult and Community Learning.

SUMMARY:

This report sets out the current context for adult and community learning together with a summary of current provision in the Runnymede area. It seeks the input of the local committee on the future direction of the service.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Runnymede Committee should

- (i) Consider and comment on the annual report for 2002/3.
- (ii) offer comment on the overall objectives for the service, and on priorities for adult and community learning in Runnymede for the next three years, and how they could be addressed.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE SERVICE IN RUNNYMEDE

Adult and Community Learning (ACL) attracts 33,000 learners and 68,000 enrolments annually to a programme of recreational learning which is delivered through a network of 16 centres and over 200 community locations across 9 of the 11 Boroughs/Districts in Surrey. A programme is provided in Tandridge and Reigate & Banstead by East Surrey College under a contract with Surrey County Council.

In April 2001, the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) assumed responsibility for all post-16 further education. This includes all sixth form provision, Further Education Colleges and work-based learning as well as adult and community learning. Local education authorities (LEAs) lost the **duty** to provide adult learning to the LSC but retain the **power to secure provision**.

The transfer of the legal duty for ACL from LEAs included the financial resources that were allocated by the County Council for Adult and Community Learning. From April 2001, the service has been funded by a grant based on the annual Adult Learning Plan submitted to the LSC.

Funding

For 2003/4, ACL expenditure countywide will be £7million. This is funded by £3.5m from learner fees and other income, and £3.5m in LSC grant. Surrey County Council provides no direct funding for ACL. As the grant is based on activity in 1998/9, providing improved quality and new programmes within the available budget is challenging.

The Secretary of State guaranteed the level of funding until August 2003. The LSC wished to move to a funding methodology based on learner numbers, but research and consultation revealed such significant disparity in costs, income and level of provision between LEAs that grant funding was extended for 2003/4, and the LSC has recently notified the County Council that these difficulties have not been overcome for 2004/5. We therefore expect to receive a grant for 2004/5 based on the current grant uprated by 2.8% for inflation. In addition, nearly £600,000 has been offered to improve the condition of, and access to, ACL buildings.

ACL has benefited since April 2001 from additional resources made available by the LSC to achieve specific objectives. In 2003/4, specific grants have been received for a new Management Information System, additional family learning (£240,000) and learning for people from minority ethnic backgrounds (£50,000).

Scope of provision

Surrey's ACL provides recreational learning, which learners choose to undertake courses for a wide range of reasons, including a step towards more formal study, a desire to develop a new skill, to meet new friends or to maintain mental or physical fitness. In the last year, family and community learning activities have

been expanded, engaging more people in learning and contributing to both the self-reliance and school improvement agendas.

47% of ACL students are aged 50 years and over; 28% of our students are 60 years and over compared to 20.9% in the Surrey population generally. 17% of learners, though, are in the 30 – 39 age group. There are a disproportionate number of women (75% of enrolments). In the last year, learner numbers have increased by 3.22% and enrolments by 5.78%, and the number of men participating has increased by 9.21%. 45% of learners are in employment, and 34.7% are retired.

There is an extensive programme of learning for adults with learning disabilities and difficulties, and more support is being provided for learners with disabilities to enable them to access our programmes (150 learners in 2002/3).

Learners express high levels of satisfaction with the provision. 96% of learners gave an excellent or good rating for the content of their course, a 95% rating for the overall effectiveness of their learning and 96% for quality of teaching. 99% of learners said they had gained at the two highest levels (of five) from their course. Learners express lower levels of satisfaction for the accommodation used at 66%, reflecting the age and condition of the ACL property portfolio.

ACL works closely in partnership with the Colleges of Further Education, which provide basic skills courses and accredited and vocational learning for adults in our Adult Learning Centres. Students regularly progress from ACL to college courses as they seek to improve their vocational opportunities. Similar partnership arrangements are maintained with the University of Surrey.

A rigorous quality regime has been introduced that has required the development of a Quality Assurance Framework and annual self-assessment. An inspection by the Adult Learning Inspection is expected within the next two years.

2. ADULT & COMMUNITY LEARNING IN RUNNYMEDE

Runnymede has 1 ACL centre (Runnymede Centre) from which the course programme is planned for the surrounding area. Enrolments are also taken at New Haw Library where there are dedicated rooms for adult learning where courses are delivered. However, the closure of the Runnymede Centre projected for late 2005 will mean that, unless a replacement building is identified and funded, the provision is likely to be shared between a number of disparate sites within the borough.

Learner enrolments for the academic year 2001/2 compared to 2002/3 were:

Centre	Learners	Learners	%	Enrolments	Enrolments	%
	2001/2	2002/3	change	2001/2	2002/3	change
Runnymede	1216	1163	-4.6%	1983	2371	16.4%
Surrey*	26669	27490	3.0%	54295	57408	5.4%

NB – excludes East Surrey College courses

Particular subjects that are attracting interest are languages, especially French and Spanish, Tai Chi, Singing, Guitar, Golf and French Polishing. ACL always looks to deliver new subjects in addition to those that have proved popular in the past. New courses which have run successfully in Runnymede borough include Japanese, French at New Haw library, Line Dancing to Keep Fit, The Healing Energies of Crystals, and Herbs for Women of a Certain Age. Despite much attention being drawn to the need for improving IT skills, there has been a decline in interest both locally and nationally, reflecting perhaps the increased skills in the community and over-provision.

Students often travel some distance to join a course. The figures above do not represent the number of Runnymede residents undertaking ACL courses. An analysis of postcodes shows the number of Runnymede residents and their enrolments, who undertook courses at an ACL centre in Surrey. In many cases, the postcode covers more than the Runnymede area.

Postcode	Residents	Residents	%	Enrolments	Enrolments	%
	2001/2	2002/3	change	2001/2	2002/3	change
KT15	595	624	4.87%	1140	1253	9.2%
KT16	379	380	0.26%	844	922	8.45%
TW20	303	346	12.42%	585	671	12.8%
GU25	123	115	-6.9%	261	280	6.7%
Total	1400	1465	4.46%	2830	3126	9.46%

2.43% of Runnymede's 60225 adult residents (19+) undertook an ACL course in 2002/3.

3. ADULT & COMMUNITY LEARNING ISSUES IN RUNNYMEDE

Self-reliance

Learning is a significant factor in promoting self-reliance in individuals and communities. Projects are targeted at the areas of highest deprivation and the needs of specific communities. Learning to support self-reliance responds directly to the needs of communities and individuals within those communities by offering free learning outside main ACL centres and also by offering types of learning that the community has specifically requested. Three Widening Participation Co-ordinators have been appointed in ACL covering Mid, North West and South West, specifically to establish community learning projects targeting the areas of Surrey most in need. As these are new appointments the level of activity to date has been low as the Widening Participation Co-ordinators have been identifying the most appropriate way to meet needs before putting together activities.

In Englefield Green there is an Arts and Crafts course operating in the Englefield Green Youth Centre which has significantly built up numbers since last year and now has 24 learners enrolled.

Between January and March 2004 ACL will be delivering 'CV Writing and Written Applications', 'Personal Presentation Skills' and 'Textiles' as part of the successful Global Grants bid for embedded basic skills in Chertsey St Anns.

Family Learning

Using the additional funding provided by the Learning and Skills Council, significant development is taking place to enhance the delivery of family learning opportunities which contribute to the raising of achievement by children and widening participation by adults in learning, particularly literacy and numeracy.

The programme of activity includes:

- Publishing a strategy for family learning, linked to other key strategies including the Education Development Plan, Early Years, Parenting strategy
- Innovative family learning delivery programmes based in the community and using resources such as museums, Youth Development Outdoor Centres, and the Surrey History Service
- Expanding the number of schools offering family learning opportunities.
- Developing a new curriculum, resources, evaluation and accreditation

In Runnymede, Meadowcroft Infants School, Pycroft Grange Primary School and Englefield Green Infant School and Nursery all have family learning activities planned for the 2003/04 academic year.

Access to learning

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 now applies to education establishments and services; by September 2005, we need to ensure that buildings offer no barriers to participation in our programme. Many of ACL's dedicated buildings have significant access deficiencies, which, despite additional funding from the Learning and Skills Council and the County Council, may not be overcome by September 2005.

Improving access is a significant issue for ACL, and emphasises the importance of the discussions with secondary schools and other possible partners about alternative locations, although it is challenging in most communities to secure space for daytime classes, and specialist facilities needed for subjects like art.

The Runnymede Centre and New Haw Library both offer full accessibility to teaching rooms.

4. THREE YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND MISSION REVIEW

The requirement for an annual Adult Learning Plan has been replaced by a three year development plan, for the academic years 2004/5 to 2006/7. The Plan is due for submission to the Surrey LSC by April 2003. This changed requirement is a key strategy within 'Success for All', the Department for Education & Skills' plan to improve the quality and responsiveness of the post-16 Learning sector.

Three-year plans are required from other providers of Learning, and are linked to three year funding and agreed targets; Adult & Community Learning is encouraged to develop a three-year plan but will not have access to three-year funding arrangements until 2005/6. ACL three year plans support the Strategic

Area Reviews being carried out by local Learning and Skills Councils, which are intended to analyse provision in their areas and develop plans which match the need of learners, employers and local communities. The role ACL can play in widening participation in learning, advancing social inclusion and supporting community regeneration is valued by the LSC, and needs to be evidenced in the ACL plan.

We are required to develop the plan through discussions with stakeholders and partners, including Local Committees.

The Adult Learning Plan is required to address the Learning and Skills Council's priorities for 2003/4:

- improving basic skills, and enabling more adults to gain qualifications at level 2
- widening participation in learning to those who do not traditionally participate in education and training
- increasing family learning provision, especially family literacy and numeracy
- contributing to neighbourhood renewal through learning

Key objectives

The proposed key objectives for Adult and Community Learning for the next three years will be to:

- Attract new learners, especially learners aged 20 – 50, and particularly men; learners from minority ethnic backgrounds; and learners who are from “hard to reach” groups
- Develop the curriculum to ensure that it meets learners' needs, identified through market research; achieves income targets; and contributes to local priorities
- Expand programmes of family learning and family literacy and numeracy, working in partnership with schools and Colleges, building capacity and enhancing quality
- Develop new learning and enhance current provision to contribute to self-reliance, targeting learners with lower level skills, and providing progression routes with our partners
- Develop capacity and innovative provision which contributes to targets for Basic Skills and level 2 qualifications
- Examine other models for governance and delivering provision to ensure viability and stability of the service

In addition, the Plan sets improvement targets for:

- Quality management
- Health and safety
- Staff development
- Management information

Service mission

The current mission statement for Adult and Community Learning is to:

Deliver quality recreational learning for the residents of Surrey at convenient locations and times, at reasonable cost to the learner and in subjects that reflect demand.

This statement no longer fully reflects the role of the service. As part of the Strategic Area Review, Surrey Learning and Skills Council has asked all providers of learning to reconsider their missions, consulting with stakeholders and partners. While the core “business” of Adult and Community Learning remains the programme of recreational learning, the service’s key activities now include:

- First-step learning
- Family learning
- Learning for people with disabilities
- Engaging reluctant and unconfident learners

ACL also makes a significant contribution to the planning of learning for adults across Surrey, and to self-reliance and other key County Council targets and policies.

5. CONCLUSION

The views of Members of the Local Committee on both the strategic objectives for Adult and Community Learning and its overall purpose and mission are sought.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER:	Judith Dey, Area Manager, Adult & Community Learning, NW Surrey
TELEPHONE NUMBER:	01932 794181
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Adult & Community Learning Plan 2002 Local Education Authority Learning Plan 2003/4 (published by the Learning & Skills Council)