



Communities Select Committee
20 March 2014

The vision for Community Learning & Skills

Purpose of the report: Development and Review

- Review of the Service's progress, with specific reference to the PVR action plan, and to provide affirmation of its plans for the future.
- Support to establish a highly effective web presence with the functionality to provide online enrolment, which is critical to increasing learner participation and income.
- Support to seek new sources of funding to extend the reach of the Service.

1. Introduction:

1. The Adult Learning Service is largely a direct delivery provider, funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) as well as fee income paid by Service users.
 - 1.1. It has seven¹ Adult Learning Centres in North and South West Surrey. In addition it delivers its Family Learning programme working with schools and Children's Centres across the whole of Surrey.
 - 1.2. The SFA income is contracted in two funding streams; the main grant **Community Learning Funding** offers support opportunities to learn on over 2000 non-accredited courses. The second much smaller funding stream is from the **Adult Skills Budget** and funds accredited learning for adults up to Level 2 qualifications. The latter was introduced at the start of the 2013-14 academic year. This £278,000 is not new money, but funding whose use has been redefined by the SFA.

2. Service Development

2. The Community Learning programme has large programmes in Family Learning, Supported Learning, Art, Craft, Languages, Computing and Health and Well-Being.

¹ The seven Centres are at Esher, Molesey, Sunbury, Guildford, Woking, Farnham and Camberley
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- 2.1. The Service has continued to maintain its learner numbers in a difficult environment, where it has faced: erosion in the value of the SFA grant in real terms in each of the last seven years; increases in the portion of the Services income being allocated towards County Council overheads; and falling real income levels among Service users.

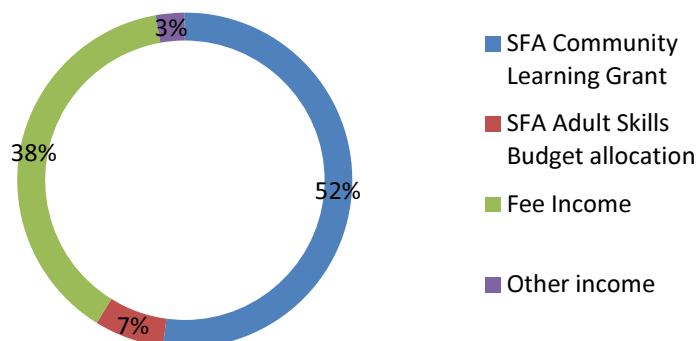
Key Performance Measures

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Enrolments	19,007	18,461	18,712
Learners	9,702	9,250	9,315
BME group %	18.1	19.1	18.8
non-White ethnic groups %	7.9	7.4	8.1
Learners < 50 years old %	49.0	47.0	46.7
Males %	21.9	23.3	24.7
Learning Difficulties or disabilities %	10.8	11.2	12.3

3. Service Delivery

3. The move into accredited learning is proving successful with demand far exceeding the funding allocation from the SFA.
- 3.1. The funding has been used to address English and Maths needs:
- a) through GCSE's and courses that prepare adults to undertake these qualifications in subsequent periods
 - b) working with Job Centre Plus to provide skills for work for the unemployed
 - c) improving the life skills of adults with learning difficulties
 - d) through accredited computer training
- 3.2. The Service is attempting to negotiate additional funding from the SFA to meet the excess in demand, and it would also like to extend its offer to traineeships for unemployed young adults.
- 3.3. The table and graph below show the sources of funding that are used to deliver the Service. The pressures on the Service's budget will continue. In order to continue to be successful it needs to sustain its income growth so it can improve people's lives and wellbeing.

3.3.1. 2013/14 Income Sources



3.3.2. 2013/14 Income and Expenditure Figures

Summary of Income and Expenditure	
	2013-14(£)
SFA Community Learning Grant	2,153,000
SFA Adult Skills Budget allocation	278,000
Fee Income	1,586,000
Other income	116,000
Total income	4,133,000
Pay Expenditure	2,839,981
Non-pay expenditure	441,804
Contribution to SCC overheads	850,000
Total Expenditure	4,131,785

4. What next for the Adult Learning Service?

- 4.1. A quality online presence, equal to the best adult learning services in the country, is required if we are to maximise the potential of the Service and to ensure its sustainability.
- 4.2. The bar set and inspected by Ofsted continues to be raised. The Service was judged to be 'Good' at its last inspection in December 2010, and it has been focusing on continuous quality improvement in the subsequent period. The rigorous Self Assessment process that the Service subjects itself to maintains the 'Good' rating. This should ensure a positive outcome when Ofsted next inspect the Service sometime in the next eighteen months.
- 4.3. Build on the initial success with the accredited programme to negotiate additional funding to increase the skills development opportunities for Surrey residents.
- 4.4. Develop new opportunities for adults to engage with the Community Learning programme, including a review of the possibility of re-establishing the Service with a base in Dorking.

4.5. The Service was the subject of a public value review in 2012, and the subsequent report and action plan was agreed in February 2013. The actions within the Service's control are now complete. A full summary of the themes, subsequent actions, and outstanding matters are summarised below.

PVR Theme		Action taken
4.5.1	Re-align the Organisational Structure to support the delivery of the strategy, to achieve excellent outcomes for residents and to enhance Surrey's reputation	Major restructure of the Service is complete: new posts introduced to bring a sharper business focus to the management of the Service; resources reallocated to ensure better communication with adults who may be interested in enrolling on the programme by making use of technology to generate new enrolments; centralised telephone enrolment process to facilitate a single professional response to customer enquiries; staff with a responsibility for growing the business not administering 'business as usual'.
4.5.2	Develop and Implement Service Improvement Plan and Zero Based Budgets that will drive income generation and cost efficiencies	The new roles that have been developed and introduced have been funded by streamlining previous processes and procedures, identifying opportunities to re-define roles and to deliver some functions with fewer resources. The new structure will provide the opportunity to grow income and continue to maintain service levels to both the targeted and the core programme offer.
4.5.3	Develop an overarching marketing strategy, and plan, centred on effective interactive web presence, to drive increased participation rates and income	The poor quality of the Service's web presence and the lack of functionality to provide online enrolment are the business critical matters that remain outstanding from the PVR implementation plan. This is significantly holding back the Service's marketing strategy. Means of overcoming the problem have been addressed through the shift programme.
4.5.4	Develop and implement a new performance and quality framework	The Service is subject to the Ofsted inspection framework. Continuous quality improvement, particularly in relation to teaching and learning is embedded in the Service. The Service faced two new challenges in 2013 - the introduction of an accredited learning programme and the raising of the bar by Ofsted with their revised Common Inspection Framework.
4.5.5	Undertake a full detailed research and evaluation project of alternative business models that positions cultural services to deliver sustainable solutions of a national standing	This is very much work in progress. There has been some work done for the Customers and Communities Policy and Performance team. Elsewhere in the country there is some movement towards Adult Learning Services becoming independent of the Local Authority remit. There is little evidence to date to indicate that such a transition would be beneficial to communities where such Services are externalised. Our past experience with such a move in the Eastern third of the County should caution us not to make such a move without fully understanding the consequences. The opportunity to grow and increase the impact provided by the Service is very much dependent on it having a high quality web presence and for it to utilise modern technology to engage and communicate with members of its community in new and targeted ways.

5. Notable achievements

5. We would like to take this opportunity to highlight the work of the Family Learning team within the Service. There was a NIACE (National Association for Continuing Education) national publication in October 2013 on the impact of Family Learning (attached).

5.1 A key conclusion of the study was: *“Family learning not only improves the skills and aspirations of children, it also has a demonstrable impact on the attainment and aspirations of their parents and carers, with important benefits in terms of confidence, motivation and willingness to learn, as well as a range of other factors crucial to progression to further education and employment.”*

5.2 This certainly mirrors the experience in Surrey and the Family Learning team is committed to working with Schools and Children’s Centres where attainment levels are in the bottom quadrant.

6. Family Learning Overview

6. Family Programmes aim to encourage family members to learn together. Programmes include opportunities for inter-generational learning and wherever possible, lead adults to pursue further learning. Family English and maths programmes are designed to help parents/carers with low academic achievement develop their own English and/or maths skills. They also offer opportunities for accreditation. Family Learning funding is aimed only at parents and carers of children.

6.1. Family Programmes engaged with 1379 learners in 2012-13. A total of 171 courses were delivered across the County (see map attached at **annex 1**), located either in key target areas or areas where parents and children were identified as fitting targeting criteria. All activities took place in schools, Children’s Centres and other community settings. Efficiencies were made this year by increasing average group sizes from six to eight.

6.2. Family Learning works in the 11 borough/districts in Surrey and focuses on targeting individuals who have low levels of educational achievement and typically do not have a GCSE maths or English at Grade C. The engagement of target learners is always through partner organisations who are already supporting the learner or through sub-contracting. Through very effective partnership working we are targeting, engaging and retaining learners, improving academic skills and increasing their ability to support their children.

6.3. Family Learning actively recruits those most disadvantaged and supports their achievement within learning. They benefit by the use of effective differentiation strategies, appropriate assessment and individual target setting. The success of those strategies converges to the fact that there is no appreciable achievement gap between different groups of learners. Examination success rates for 2012-13 were 100%.

6.4. Parents and carers of children are achieving and making very good progress. They are accessing opportunities to increase their qualifications, confidence and communication skills, and gaining qualifications for work. The majority of these parents have not engaged in learning since leaving school and have low skills. They start their learning journey with some interest in helping their children’s achievement and work towards gaining accreditation.

6.5. Parents report positive changes to their lives, aspire to progress to other training and prepare for employment. This directly responds to local priorities. Learner feedback continues to record high levels of learner enjoyment. Learners express confidence in helping their children and an increase in their own skills and aspirations to progress.

6.6. The Service recognises that it needs to measure and record the longer term impact of its work. To achieve this, 18 parents have been tracked over the past 3 years and there is good evidence of employment, personal and social gains on record. To further improve our collection of tracking data, we asked 50 learners who took part in the 'Learner Focus Groups' to sign up to be tracked for three years.

7. Family Learning Case Studies

7.1. A prizewinning nomination was made for Surrey Adult Learner of the Year in 2012-13. Another nomination has been submitted this year. (Both case studies are attached to this report at **annex 2**). These highlight the impact Family Learning is having on the lives of both adults and children in Surrey.

8. Conclusions

8.1. The Adult Learning Service is achieving very good outcomes for the residents of Surrey. It has been able to maintain service levels, improve quality, and introduce a new set of accredited programmes in an environment of declining real grant income. The Service is heavily reliant on fee income to sustain its future. In order to grow income it needs to reach new users, it needs the technology and communications channels in place to achieve this critical aim.

8.2. The overview and examples of the impact the Family Learning team are having across Surrey provide strong arguments on why the Service should seek new income to grow the Family Programmes delivery.

9. Recommendations:

9. The Service seeks Select Committee support on three fronts:

9.1. The Service's bid to establish a highly effective independent web presence to market its courses and engage in e-commerce.

9.2. Review of the Service's progress, its plans for the future and its commitment to quality improvement.

9.3. Identification of new sources of funding and the removal of barriers to support Service growth.

10. Report contacts:

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11. Sources / background papers:

1. Surrey Community Learning and Skills SAR 2012 -13
2. NIACE Family Learning Report