



Education and Skills Board
14 January 2016

The Community Learning and Skills Service 2014-15 performance

Purpose of the report:

Scrutiny of the Community Learning and Skills performance for the 2014-15 academic year following the Service's completion of its Self Assessment Report. Provide an in year update on funding and policy developments relating to the Service.

The report is going to the Board as part of the governance arrangements for the Service to ensure the Service continues to meet the requirements of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and Ofsted.

1.0 Introduction:

- 1.1 The Community Learning and Skills Service (CLS) is funded by the SFA via two funding streams, a Community Learning grant, and a small Adult Skills Budget contract. The SFA provides a framework on how funding can be used, and the Service interprets this policy guidance in the context of County Council priorities. The Service is required to meet the requirements of Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework

2.0 Background:

- 2.1 CLS has maintained the delivery of a balanced programme of targeted courses and a broad universal Community Learning offer via the seven dedicated adult learning centres and 115 community Venues in North and South West Surrey. These non-accredited courses enable learners to develop a wide range of skills in areas such as Arts and Crafts, Modern Foreign Languages, English as a Foreign Language, Healthy Living, IT and Humanities.
- 2.2 There are three teams focused on delivering targeted Community Learning - one to meet the learning needs of adults with disabilities and learning difficulties; a second that delivers a Family Learning programme; and the third works in the areas of relative disadvantage providing Outreach learning opportunities to adults least likely to participate, including learners on low incomes or low skills.
- 2.3 East Surrey College holds a direct contract with the SFA for Community Learning in the eastern third of the county. An exception is for Family Learning where CLS is contracted to deliver to priority families across the whole of the county.
- 2.4 CLS also delivers an increasingly important programme of classroom-based adult skills courses, predominantly English and maths, independent living skills for adults with learning difficulties, and smaller programmes of ESOL and Computing.

3.0 Profile of the Service:

- 3.1 Learner numbers: The number of adults supported on the programme continues to remain strong. The Service's performance in maintaining its Community Learner (CL) numbers is better than the national trend that reports a decrease of more than 10% over the last 4 years. During this period the CL funding has been maintained in cash terms, Whereas, First Steps funding was withdrawn at the end of 2012-13. However, this coincided with the Service gaining a small Adult Skills Budget(ASB) contract. The ASB numbers are projected to decrease in 2015-16 following a 22% reduction in this budget allocation from the SFA.
- 3.2 In line with SFA policy guidance it has also grown its fee income. Both the Universal Community Learning and Full Cost programmes have contributed to sustaining the Service through income growth.

Table A¹ details the learner numbers in each of the last 4 years.

Table A					
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
CL Universal	7771	7725	6971	7356	7577
CL Targeted	1443	1576	1173	1722	1774
Adult Skills Budget	41	133	697	661	510
First Steps	935	698			
Full Cost	483	643	833	1081	1113
	10673	10775	9674	10820	10974

3.3 Funding: Table B. summarises the planned funding, income, and expenditure for the 2015-16 academic year. The Service makes a substantive, £856,000, contribution to SCC overheads after the payment of direct costs.

Table B			
Income	£	Expenditure	£
SFA - Community Learning	2,153,279	Staffing	3,056,333
SFA - Adult Skills Budget	329,161	Other Operating	
Fee Income	1,656,039	Costs	343,710
Other Income	117,564	Contribution to	
		SCC Overheads	856,000
Total	4,256,043		4,256,043

4.0 Quality Improvement:

4.1 The 2014-15 Self Assessment Report

4.1.1 The Service submits its Self Assessment report to the Skills Funding Agency gateway at the end of December following the previous academic year. The report has a further iteration once comparative national benchmarking data becomes available, usually in January of each year. The veracity of the current Self Assessment Report is fully tested at inspection.

4.2 A Summary of Findings

¹ The learner numbers for 2015-16 are target numbers

4.2.1 The Ofsted Common Inspection Framework requires providers to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses. Following the Self Assessment process for the 2014-15 academic year the Service's judgements are as follows²:

Strengths

- a) Learner participation and outcomes are good with high levels of enrolment, achievement and learner satisfaction
- b) Teaching and learning is good across all curriculum areas
- c) There is strong, experienced leadership and management of the service, which is committed to seeing sustained improvement
- d) A rigorous and thorough self-assessment process leads to continuous quality improvement
- e) Learners take great pride in their achievements on the programme and there is strong recognition that their engagement contributes to their well being
- f) The high level of support for learners is particularly effective in Supported Learning and Family Programmes

Weaknesses

- a) The use of modern technology needs further development, both in teaching and learning and as a communication tool
- b) Further widening participation for disadvantaged learners to access learning on the community learning programme continues to be an area for development
- c) Course progression and signposting information not sufficiently wide ranging on community learning courses

4.3 Improvements since the last Ofsted inspection

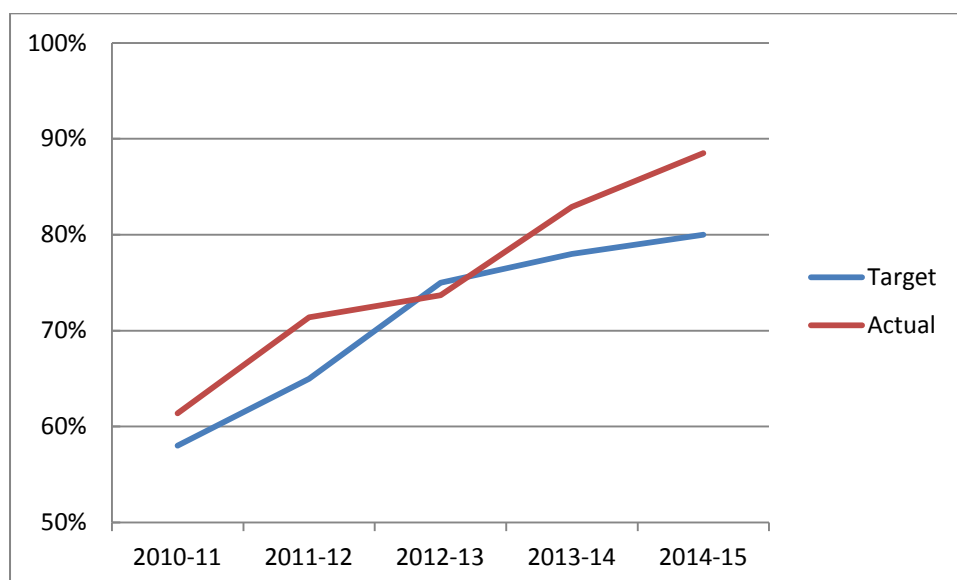
4.3.1 The Service has continued its strong commitment to quality improvement since the last inspection in 2010. In the section of that report³ titled "What does Surrey County Council need to do to improve further?" the progress is as follows:

- Teaching, learning and assessment has continued to demonstrate continuous improvements. During 2014-15, the grade profile of sessions observed for all tutors working for the service as of 31st July 2015 demonstrates 88.5% of teaching, learning and assessment graded 'Good' and 'Outstanding'. In 2009-10 it was 55.1%.
- Successful strategies have been implemented to improve cross service working and the sharing of good practice.
- Improved availability and use of technology to support teaching and learning
- Better utilisation of the accommodation and a much broader cross section of learners on centre based programmes.
- Promotion of Equality and Diversity has become embedded in all aspects of the Service including teaching and learning.
- The quality of information and advice to adults wishing to enrol on the programme has better clarity and consistency.

² The evidence base and methodology that support these judgements are found in the Self Assessment report and Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework

³ Copy of the SCC ACL Inspection report is included here

OTLA⁴ graph performance against target since last inspection



4.4 Safeguarding

4.4.1 The Service is proactive in its management of Safeguarding. Managers and tutors ensure that learners and staff benefit from a safe and supportive environment. A total of 34 concerns were raised with the Safeguarding team between September 2014 and July 2015, of which one was raised as a Safeguarding concern with the Police and three with Adult Social Care. A further two concerns were referred to Safeguarding leads of other organisations.

4.4.2 In the annual learner feedback, March 2015, respondents rated the 'explanation of safeguarding procedures: 'Excellent' (43.3%), 'Good' (35.62%), 'Satisfactory' (16.87%) and 'Unsatisfactory' (4.18%). All managers proactively contact their staff and volunteers to complete Safeguarding Refresher Training where due. The Safeguarding Officer has collaborated with Surrey Police regarding PREVENT duty. Awareness amongst learners and staff has been raised through staff and tutor newsletters and Learner Focus Groups. In addition the Service has commenced to roll out PREVENT awareness training, over 60% of staff have completed the training, the remainder are planned to complete in the Spring term 2016.

5.0 Opportunities and Threats:

5.1 Following the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn the Minister of State for Skills has set out the proposed changes and priorities for the adult education and skills sector for the remainder of the current parliament. There is much to be welcomed. The Department of Business Innovation and Skills high level budget indicate the Service's budget for the

⁴ Observation of teaching, learning and assessment is the accepted measure for grading teaching performance

2016-17 academic year is likely to be largely unchanged. Indicative budgets have also been set for the remainder of the current parliament, and funding is projected to be maintained in cash terms.

- 5.2 The Community Learning and Adult Skills budgets will be combined into a single Adult Education budget. There has been considerable research by the Department of Business Innovation and Skills that demonstrate the wider benefits of Adult Education in terms of employment, productivity and well-being. These findings have helped protect the budget.
- 5.3 The main policy drivers have been reinforced. English and Maths will remain a priority, and the value of providing ESOL courses have also been recognised; providers will be encouraged to deliver Traineeships; and to further grow their income base from fee income and other activities. The Service will aim to respond positively to each of these.
- 5.4 Apprenticeships will be the big growth area for the FE sector and the Service will need to take a view on whether we can add value to such provision in the County. The County Council will be subject to the 0.5% apprenticeship levy on its payroll from 2017, and is likely to have a challenging target in terms of the percentage of staff employed as apprentices. The Service, on the basis it can obtain additional funding to resource the programme delivery, will seek to utilise its expertise to deliver against these outcomes.
- 5.5 A series of area reviews of the post 16 education sector throughout the Country commenced in the autumn. Surrey will be in the second wave of these and the organisations that have been cited as being in scope are the County's FE and Sixth Form Colleges. While there is scant information about these reviews to date, there is an acceptance that there will be fewer providers nationally in the Further Education and Skills sector than at present. The outcome such a review therefore could represent opportunities or pose potential threats to the Service. In Surrey, the County Council is being represented by Frank Offer, Head of Commissioning for Young People on the Area Review Board.
- 5.6 In addition to the area reviews the move to a single funding stream will provide an opportunity to work differently and consider how we could re-shape the programme offer, not only the range of the courses offered but the geographic reach of the Service. Parts of Surrey where there is unmet demand for adult education will be evaluated and options explored.

6.0 Conclusions:

- 6.1 The Service has continued to make good progress on quality improvement. The Self Assessment report has identified a number of key strengths. The Service has identified how the weaknesses can be addressed. The additional requirement to satisfy the safeguarding standards have being recognised and acted upon.
- 6.2 The good performance in terms of learner numbers and income generation provide the Service with a sound basis for its sustainability.
- 6.3 The positive outlook for funding for the sector and the clear road map in terms of priorities provides the Service with the opportunity to increase adult educational outcomes for the residents of Surrey.

7.0 Recommendations:

- 7.1 The Service report on progress toward completion of the PREVENT training for all staff employed by the Service.
- 7.2 The Service identify and report on how it can further engage with the policy direction in the use of the Adult Education Budget.
- 7.3 The Service evaluate whether it can add value to the provision of Apprenticeships when the levy is introduced in April 2017.

8.0 Next steps:

Identify future actions and dates.

Report contact: Paul Hoffman, Principal, Community Learning Skills Service
Contact details: Paul.Hoffman@surreycc.gov.uk 01483 519460

Sources/background papers:

Community Learning and Skills s 2014-15 Self Assessment Report; SCC ACL Ofsted Inspection Report December 2010; Letter from Nick Boles MP, Minister for Skills;

This page is intentionally left blank