

## Appendix 1

### Collated responses to the public survey conducted between 9 March 2022 and 18 April 2022 by the Adult Learning and Skills Task Group

Please note that only the responses of respondents who confirmed they are content for their responses to be published have been included in this document. Unanswered questions, personal information and contact details have been omitted.

#### Response dated 9 March 2022

I have been attending the same "beginners" watercolour class for over 25 years now. I go because I like the teacher and the other students, and it has improved my painting skills hugely so that I am now able to exhibit and sell my work. I have made good friends at this class and it has improved my confidence too.

The class is full of people who paint for a hobby and do not intend to follow any further education, so I find it very irritating that I am expected to fill in an IEP, this takes time away from my painting and does nothing to improve my skills.

#### Response dated 9 March 2022

Language lessons should revert to classroom learning with immediate effect.

#### Response dated 9 March 2022

There are MASSIVE mental health and well-being benefits to adult education.

\* it provides for contact with other adults, something very lacking during 2021 and 2022 due to a Covid.

\* it keeps adults minds active.

\* it helps prevent depression and anxiety by occupying the mind and body learning new skills.

A day spent learning pottery or jewellery making or flower arranging may not lead to additional GDP, but it does have a huge effect on the wellbeing of the attendee and so (ultimately) lead to happier residents and less illness.

#### Response dated 9 March 2022

I am over 70, with a background of DIY. I had always wanted to work with glass and attended 2 classes in glass fusing. They gave me

- welcome social contact, following enforced COVID isolation
- a new skill, which energised me and reminded me I wasn't too old to take up a new

activity and produce interesting work  
- the possible basis of a future small business.

### **Response dated 9 March 2022**

Social interaction is important. Keeping your brain working.

I have no barriers in accessing learning although the price would stop me doing more than one course. I don't qualify for any reduction.

### **Response dated 9 March 2022**

Having the opportunity to learn new skills as an adult is great. I find that the prices of the courses for individuals are quite high, for example £50 for a 5-hour session in sewing is a lot. Same for the two-month sessions (£176). The courses from the Henrietta Parker Trust get booked immediately and from what I understand, quite often from the same people who have been on the previous ones, therefore not allowing new learners to enrol.

Additionally, I would like to see more everyday skills courses like gardening. I can also see that there is mention of a web design course which does not seem to be available. Is it due to lack of interest?

### **Response dated 9 March 2022**

I consider myself lucky to be part of Surrey adult learning centre. I am currently studying GCSE Maths and in the past I've taken GCSE course and some sewing courses as well. I am very thankful for the Surrey Adult learning centre to give us Adult an opportunity to learn again and move ahead in career/life.

### **Response dated 14 March 2022**

As a retired professional, I highly value the opportunities for learning and social interaction Adult Learning provides. In my class the majority are also retired, some at risk of loneliness and isolation. Covid has obviously been a barrier to learning for many people including myself. I persevered with Zoom lessons for several months but they haven't been satisfactory. I think they require a certain type of teaching in order to work, ensuring that no student receives more than their fair share of attention. The result is that the lesson becomes less spontaneous and more like a business meeting. The hugely important social value to all, not just the retired, is lost. As it now suits my Spanish teacher to only teach online and is no longer physically working at the Westfield Centre, no real-life class has been offered have reluctantly decided to leave.

## **Response dated 14 March 2022**

I have been attending a workshop session (Clock Repair and Horology) at West Molesey for many years and continue to learn from every project I undertake with the specialist who runs the course.

I have no issues with the content of the sessions as students bring their own clock to repair and receive expert guidance in the process.

An issue that has irritated me for years is that Surrey Adult Learning doesn't seem to understand the difference between courses and workshops and insists that enrolment of these different types of session can be identical.

I believe that SAL likes to think that all 'courses' follow a syllabus. As such the syllabus can be timed to run and complete in a single term. A workshop activity e.g. clock repair and upholstery, cannot almost never be completed in a single term.

The enrolment process requires that there is a scramble for places on enrolment day. It is inevitable that some of those working on their clock/upholstery or another project will not be able to get onto their 'course' because a newbie has taken that seat by enrolling slightly earlier. Where does this leave the paid-up and committed student? On such classes as clock repair and upholstery, it can be impossible to move on as one simply does not know the special technique required to manage a task. If one is unable to get back onto the same 'course' in the next term the project and the hobby has to stop!

My suggestion, that I have made before, is that current students are allowed to enrol one day prior to general release of places if they wish to continue. Some will not need to continue if they have completed their task, but most, from my experience, will want to return.

Also I have witnessed that many new starters in workshop sessions do not continue to the end; they simply pull out if and when they find it is too technical/practical for them, leaving regular members who could not get onto the course, to miss the term and the ability to complete their project despite there now being a spare place on it that cannot be filled for the period remaining in the term.

I therefore believe that students on workshop-style classes are given a raw deal, being unable to guarantee a place in the following term.

If there are many new students wanting to get onto a workshop class, surely SAL should try to tempt the tutor to add an additional class to enable current students to continue uninterrupted by months of inactivity.

## **Response dated 14 March 2022**

1)Benefits - In practical terms learning a new skill or developing an existing one particularly in retirement as in my case.

Being with like-minded people enjoying learning as a group enhances the above, also with the benefit of making new friends and a new social circle/support group. A good tutor makes all the difference - my current art tutor is outstanding and has had me attempting subjects I've never tried before with great success, a complete contrast to the previous one who wasn't even a teacher and with whom I learned nothing.

I also attend a pilates class with the aim of maintaining my fitness, balance, flexibility etc which is really important in later years, with obvious benefits.

Overall the benefit to society is that adult learning stimulates the brain and physical

fitness, providing interest and purpose for participants day-to-day, not just in class. Maintaining health is such an important investment. AL is really valuable for people's mental & physical health and general well-being, but also potentially prevents illness, loneliness etc and saves money & resources within the NHS and other areas.

2) Current and anticipated economic and social needs - If AL is reduced/removed there will potentially be more strain on health & social care resources for the reasons mentioned above.

3) Groups - Retired people like me, those wanting to get/stay fit, those wanting to learn a new skill/enhance existing skills for professional development or just to find a job in a new area.

4) Barriers - cost, availability of courses, timing of classes, calibre of tutor.

The only other thing I'd add is that it's clear some classes have been withdrawn through lack of people enrolling. I'm sure there is much more SAL could do to get the word out there and promote itself, it all feels rather low-key. For instance there are banners all around Spelthorne advertising activities at Sunbury Leisure centre, why not raise the profile of AL in a similar way. The centres themselves are excellent facilities but they are under-used which is really sad and unnecessary.

Also we hear of problems recruiting/keeping tutors - SAL should do all it can to streamline the admin required by tutors wanting to take a class, it sounds very convoluted at the moment and not attractive to potential applicants. It'd be a shame if a good tutor was available but they were put off by over-complicated admin procedures. Adult learning is optional unlike school, people pay to be there because they want to be there, so let's not deter good tutors who want to be part of that.

Thank you.

### **Response dated 14 March 2022**

I have been impressed by the variety of classes and have attended art classes, photography, pottery and silver jewellery making which has brought me pleasure and set me on my journey learning to paint. Had it not been for the adult education opportunities I would never have taken up painting which has helped balance my stressful work life.

### **Response dated 15 March 2022**

Each year the choice for adult learning seems to decrease. There are less subjects and less venues available. Plus the courses seem quite expensive.

### **Response dated 15 March 2022**

I really value the classes that I take. As well as learning some good skills the social aspect is very important to me. I think that many people would benefit from some of the practical courses which help towards maintaining independence. If anything I would like to see many more courses offered.

## **Response dated 17 March 2022**

There has been no access to SCC adult education in Mole Valley for many years which shows inequity across the county and other local boroughs within the SCC boundary.

We used to have a wonderful setting at The Dene Centre but that has been closed for many years.

We have two wonderful libraries but the old library in Dorking has been closed and could be a fabulous centre for adult learning for all ages and stages as well as those with additional needs.

Of course there are U3A groups and some provision from WEA as well as private provision .

However, the spirit of adult learning should be intergenerational and accessible and clearly in Mole Valley it is not!

## **Response dated 17 March 2022**

As an ex Adult Ed tutor and participant, with a degree in teaching in post 18 education, I fully appreciate the importance of Adult Education, both from learning and social points of views. It is a scandal that there is no provision in the County Council plan for any form of learning in Mole Valley. Why have we been left out?

## **Response dated 17 March 2022**

Having left home at 17, I completed an NNEB course in 1990 & then went onto a degree in 1993 with three children. I had my fourth child in my final degree year, went on to complete a PGCEA & then taught for 22 years, retiring in 2019.

Going back into education as an adult was life-changing for me as my personal circumstances had not allowed me to complete my A-levels.

I wasn't easy at the time, trying to juggle childcare with studying but I am a great believer that knowledge is power and that there are so many adults that would benefit from further or higher education. I think for many people, the cost of returning to education is the main barrier & the easier it is made in terms of online or flexible studying, the better, so that people can still work around their learning & help with childcare.

To have a more educated workforce is beneficial for both the local & national communities & businesses could be encouraged to work with local councils to help facilitate access to adult education for their staff to enhance skills & provide skills necessary for the 21st century.

## **Response dated 17 March 2022**

Learning is lifelong and should not be dependent on whether or not you have the budget to cover expensive private tuition/lessons etc. we seem to have no adult education in MVDC and yet I can remember when I was a child my mother attending adult education classes and indeed, later on, my stepfather teaching them. What has happened in the intervening years? All gone by the looks of it and yet they have such

huge benefit in terms of skills taught, not to mention the social outlet they bring. I would strongly urge the council to reconsider why we do not have provision for these classes in our area.

### **Response dated 17 March 2022**

Adult education is important. Why is there no provision in Mole Valley? This is very poor and should be rectified as a priority.

### **Response dated 17 March 2022**

There needs to be more accessible adult learning around the Surrey Hills. Mole Valley is noticeably lacking in this area which poses challenges to those of us without transport and needing local services.

### **Response dated 17 March 2022**

Opportunities for education after 18 are so important. They need to be affordable and easy to access.

Courses to learn skills such as wood work, cookery, dress making, languages, is also of great benefit to all adults.

### **Response dated 17 March 2022**

Social benefits: allows people to meet like-minded individuals in a safe and supportive environment.

Provides motivation to learn a new skill or hobby.

Above points very valuable for people suffering from mental health concerns, or who find themselves isolated.

Economic benefits: allows individuals to learn new skills that may help in their work life, at a time to suit them.

May allow a young person to develop or acquire a skill/knowledge that was not available when they were in full time education - for work, or for personal satisfaction.

Barriers: undoubtedly cost. Those with means can afford courses while others who could also benefit may be prevented due to financial problems.

Also timings - those in work cannot always access daytime courses.

Groups using the service: as above. Financial and timetable barriers may prevent access to courses.

Technology has been a brilliant way of working for some courses, bringing people together yet reducing the problems around physically accessing a course. However, the problems of access to technology need to be addressed, especially for those on low incomes, to allow full participation.

Surrey Adult Education appears to take great care in safeguarding terms - this is excellent.

## **Response dated 17 March 2022**

It is vital that all boroughs in Surrey has access to adult learning so that it is servicing all residents and not those who are able to travel or pay.

There is a huge benefit to the local and wider society of expanding adults skills and knowledge. In terms of socioeconomic, physical and mental health to name a few.

## **Response dated 17 March 2022**

Adult education plays an important role in training people in new skills. This both improves their life chances and helps adapt the county's workforce to new skills needed by local employers. This, in turn, is good for the local economy and reduces unemployment.

Another benefit of Adult education is the community it can build by bringing people together and through this help develop people's social skills and lessen loneliness and isolation.

## **Response dated 19 March 2022**

The adult learning I've done was brilliant and I regularly look to do more.

Unfortunately despite having a voucher a few years ago the local courses I wanted to book onto didn't have enough people booking and were cancelled, which put me off trying again, especially as it was incredibly difficult to get through on the booking line to use my voucher - which will now have expired.

I now have long covid and my focus is on managing my energy for work, but if I recover I would definitely be looking to do more courses in future. I'd be interested in language classes but never sure which is the right level if I've learnt the language before, or how to get into the beginners classes as they all seem sold out.

Generally really impressed by the adult learning provision and would love to see some courses offered by younger teachers - eg social media and TikTok, coding, etc.

## **Response dated 19 March 2022**

I have attended a number of different courses over the last 30 years. Most have been to gain qualifications. As a learner in my older years it is not qualifications that I aspire to but simply mastering a skill. Courses provide opportunities to meet new people and reduce social isolation which is far more important than achieve a "grade".

I have also become qualified as a tutor but have not taken up a position due to the amount of paperwork required to complete. As a tutor of lipreading there are many hours (unpaid) spent preparing class resources. Add your paperwork into the mix and the hours of unpaid work make it unviable hence why I have not applied for a post.

As a learner pay-as-you-go would be an option that would have enabled me to attend more classes. Also childcare facilities would have been another incentive.

I feel that the education monitoring aspect of the provision needs to be reviewed and be proportional to the outcomes of the course. Where an examinations and qualifications are involved then records of goals and achievements are helpful for tracking progress and evaluating outcomes. However with "daily living skills" type classes such as cooking, lipreading, conversational second language (including BSL) or health related such as dance the monitoring needs to be less goal orientated and simpler, feedback style. Do they enjoy learning, do they want to come back for more that kind of thing.

Also with the social non-academic subjects, having classes available all year round with fewer breaks. Have them available in more community spaces - village halls, day centres, church halls etc. With the health ones consider inviting related health screening services to provide drop-in sessions at the same venue.

### **Response dated 19 March 2022**

I feel it is extremely important that adult learning is offered in Mole Valley. People's circumstances change through life so the opportunity to learn and adapt to change is vital.

### **Response dated 21 March 2022**

I have benefited enormously from adult learning at all my adult life. From basic woodworking skills when I was in my 20s, through an introduction to computer skills helped in my working life, to the many courses taken at the Leatherhead Institute that aided the transition from work to retirement in 2013. It is difficult to calculate the economic benefit of all of these but I'm sure that they enabled me to be more productive in my work and more contented in my retirement years, keeping my mind active and avoiding isolation. Avoiding mental health problems is a real economic plus. It is sad to see the sparsity of courses now available, especially in the Mole Valley. I realise that resources are very tight but I see no reason that the courses couldn't be self-financing but with financial support for those unable to pay. It is down to the local authorities to be not the paymaster but to be the catalyst in the restoration of adult education - possibly in tandem with social enterprises. In my mind adult education should have equal status to our excellent libraries.

### **Response dated 22 March 2022**

Continuing to learn in whatever subjects may be of interest to a person is of paramount importance as one grows older. This is particularly relevant when we have all sustained a near life-changing experience such as a pandemic. Continued and sustained learning, whether actually or virtually on zoom, encourages cognitive



ability and promotes sociability, however limited this may be when lessons are virtual ones. Lessons in technology also need to be available to encourage older folk to be tech savvy.

### **Response dated 22 March 2022**

My experience has been that the Adult Learning Centre in Camberley not only provides

education leading to employment, it is also meeting ground where friendships form.

The wide variety of non-vocational courses give opportunity for lifelong learning, greatly enriching the community.

In the past I took two A levels at the Adult Education Centre in Camberley which enabled me to progress to a university diploma to qualify for a career I followed for many years. The pension I earned now forms the bulk of my retirement income.

A course in Creative Writing at the same centre has also enabled me to earn income from my writing.

Now in my senior years I have improved my mobility beyond that of most of my contemporaries by attending pilates classes.

### **Response dated 26 March 2022**

I work in adult social care and have been trying for many years to further my career.

I have dyslexia and have been trying to gain my maths and English level 2, so I am able to apply for the apprenticeship course to become a qualified occupational therapist. I have met many challenges trying to achieve this. I am currently at college doing a night class alongside working full-time but having difficulty with gain support in my exams even though I have a learning statement. I recently failed both my exams and have sat them around 3 times. I am told that unless I have maths and English C or above I cannot access the course. I have an NVQ level 3 but I need to have this as an extra rather than as an equivalent to my GCSEs. The support is limited and no one really understands and I feel like as I have a disability I should just not do further education as I'm not clever enough adult learning has been nothing but a challenge for me but all I want is to be on par with those who don't have a disability.

### **Response dated 26 March 2022**

The benefits (to me) of participating in adult learning are both to enhance my skill set in a particular area, and to enjoy the social aspect of my course by interacting with like-minded people and forging friendships: an important aspect for me as someone

who moved to the area in later life when opportunities to make new friends are somewhat more limited.

In the context of adult learning for an older demographic, the benefits are (I believe) as much to do with personal well-being and social interaction as they are to do with learning a skill. This doesn't devalue the learning aspect, but it should nevertheless not be relegated to the status of a side issue.

Having previously worked as a tutor in adult education, I'm very familiar with the background issues which are of importance behind the scenes. I refer specifically to funding issues, fulfilment of whatever government criteria are "flavour of the month" and so on. However, it has only been since Covid struck that we appear to have been spared some of the totally unnecessary and unwelcome form filling and box ticking which seem to form part of the process: things which bring little added value to learners but can be used to demonstrate (or, at least, it's perceived they can demonstrate) "progression".

Which brings me to the thorny issue of "progression". There appears, for many courses, to be a trend towards erecting barriers to prevent learners from continuing to enjoy a course beyond a certain point. The erection of these barriers takes a number of forms. For example, the reluctance to have an "advanced level" class which may attract the same learners to enrol term after term, but instead to mix up abilities within classes so that absolute beginners end up in the same classroom as seasoned attendees, frustrating almost all the learners and rendering the task of the tutor nigh on impossible. This seems to be in direct contradiction of the government's "Lifelong learning" mantra, although I confess I've been away from the sharp end of adult Ed. for a while so maybe that particular train has left the station by now. This, for established learners, is a barrier to their ongoing pursuit of a particular course, and whilst I appreciate that new learners will wish to join, classes should be increased to allow them in at an entry level, rather than depriving tutors of the ability to teach more advanced students at the appropriate level. I fully understand the concept of differentiation, but some classes simply do not lend themselves to this, particularly when there is a high degree of tutor input required for the new learner. It should be noted that within a mixed ability class, all the learners are paying the same fee, and should therefore all have access to the same amount of tutor time. In the class I currently attend, this has proved impossible, through no fault of the tutor.

Another barrier I've had experience of is the enrolment system, which over the last few years has often seemed unfit for purpose. Opening enrolment to all learners in a specific date is laudable - equal access, etc...although that seems only to be the case when it suits, cf the preferential enrolment given to pottery students who participated in zoom lessons during lockdown. Previously after lockdown 1, pottery students whose work had to be summarily abandoned in the studio were given no preferential enrolment rights, despite having had to abandon work \*for which they had paid\* and had a much reduced chance (due to restricted numbers) of being able to sign up for classes due to the rigid imposition of the "first come, first served" criterion.

Woe betide anyone with limited access to online enrolment, either because the system doesn't recognise their login details (I have that t-shirt) or because they don't use or have access to a computer at the required time. Having spent over an hour on hold by phone last term and then been cut off without getting through, I can vouch for the frustration involved. Surely a more accessible method of enrolment could be found? As a tutor, working in Spelthorne and Runnymede, classes I taught were always available for early re-registration to current learners, yet in this area that appears to be categorically refused. If demand exceeds supply, it's hard to see why more classes isn't the solution, rather than an attempt to force existing learners out with a "first past the post" enrolment lottery. Also, recognition of the progression in craft-based subjects isn't considered. If a learner can go through a series of levels in order to be deemed to have progressed in, say, learning a language, why aren't the same criteria used to distinguish between ability levels for craft-based subjects?

### **Response dated 26 March 2022**

I have participated in watercolour evening classes for about 3 years now. Pre Covid we were at Esher Green and now online zoom. I have benefitted hugely from being part of a learning community....I had recently retired and this class has given me a social group ( even if it is a virtual one) and a focus outside the home. It has given me the space impetus and focus to develop my painting skills to such an extent that I now sell my work. Last year I sold about 20 paintings and gave away a similar number. I have also developed the confidence to have my own sales website and online gallery.

As a learning group we very much determine our own learning pathway...the tutor facilitates that. We discuss our work, and related subjects away from the weekly meetings, and support each other through difficult learning trajectories.

I would very much like for classes to resume in person again, although I also understand the benefits of remote learning. I would also like to gain some understanding of how our tutor is supported to ensure the learning pathways she provides are as useful and focussed as they can be.

I hope you find these comments useful.

### **Response dated 27 March 2022**

The organisation fixes too much concentration on those who are unemployed or elderly. There is no route for "routine" working adults to undertake anything. The organisation hides from future developments such as online learning courses. Its payment schedule is not compatible with many.

## **Response dated 28 March 2022**

The benefits can often be hard to measure and also be realised over a long timespan - for example assisting with social and emotional welfare for people who are: care givers for young children, Relatives who are chronically or acutely ill. Those retired civilians can also remain both physically and mentally agile by their involvement in adult learning. Additionally learning a new skill can not only build confidence but open doors to alternative employment opportunities. Personally I volunteer in several roles eg school governor, children's club and elderly support volunteer and being able to participate in a creative activity enables me to re-balance and fulfil my other responsibilities more effectively and with renewed vigour and enthusiasm. Barriers to access: I know several people who have stopped courses reluctantly because they No longer have sufficient money to sign up and these are people unlikely to be in receipt of benefits. Personal fulfilment opportunities should not only be available to those who can afford them easily. Perhaps some kind of community credit scheme where someone who provides a community service can exchange time they spend positively contributing to the community for access to adult learning opportunities or something else that benefits the community. The National Citizenship Service which was set up to inspire young people to contribute to society whilst building their ambition and exposure to university life and challenge is potentially a model that could translate to a wider age profile of individuals. Skills leading to employment: Such areas as basic household maintenance ie basic plumbing, carpentry, electrical understanding if supported by local businesses could not only assist people with the confidence to understand and undertake the typical maintenance task needed to keep their residence in good repair but could be an entry point for those who might make it a successful career. Similarly some of the fitness classes such as Pilates or tai chi could be excellent areas for GPs to socially prescribe.

## **Response dated 28 March 2022**

Participating in adult learning and skills training is enriching for anyone. For those who missed out during their years of formal schooling, the chance to go back into some form of education later in life is essential.

## **Response dated 28 March 2022**

I started attending pottery classes with SAL after I stopped working. It was a great opportunity to do something I had always wanted to do. Not only did it give me 'me' time when I was not running the home and looking after the family but it enabled me to mix with a new group of people. Being with people who had been potting for a few years to over 40 years was truly fantastic and I have formed some lifelong friendships. I have also learnt a new skill. However, just before the pandemic SAL made the decision to stop the Woking centre offering 'intermediate' pottery courses and made all of them 'all abilities'. This has been detrimental in many ways.

Beginners arrive expecting one to one full on teaching. More experienced potters who are still wanting to learn new techniques are sidelined and often get no attention during class. If they do, the beginners constantly interrupt and everyone is left frustrated. Come the next term these beginners are no longer termed as beginners and find themselves cast adrift as the poor tutor is having to teach a new group. The ex-beginners then find themselves floundering due to the lack of attention. I lay this completely at the feet of SAL and not the tutor who works their socks off trying to accommodate everyone. Unfortunately many watch Pottery Throwdown and think you can produce work quickly as that show is no reflection of how producing a piece of pottery actually happens in real life.

In my opinion SAL need to revert to offering intermediate courses as well as advanced and beginners' courses. It seems very unfair that Esher, Sunbury and Guildford offer such courses but Woking does not. Splitting up the courses would enable everyone to get a proper service. I, as a long serving potter who has recently started throwing and needs help, should be able to receive help in every lesson. I pay the same amount as everyone else and therefore am entitled to receive 1/9th of the tutors time. I simply am not getting this and SAL needs to address this. As I have previously said, this is NOT the tutor's fault. They do a brilliant job.

As an aside the studio also needs to be looked at as the current layout is simply not working as well as it should.

Finally, I would like to state that the courses I attend are great value and have been invaluable for my mental health. I have learnt a new skill which I thoroughly enjoy and in which you can never stop learning.

## **Response dated 28 March 2022**

Adult Education is a vehicle enabling members of the community to continue learning - exercise of the body and mind - and developing, benefiting the individual concerned on a personal level (social interaction, reducing stress levels, learning, an holistic benefit) and also the community by keeping active, lessening / delaying chances of dementia, physical illness, and supporting each other. Younger people can use it to help them in their existing or preferred careers. It can be a life-saver for the retired population and was particularly important during recent Covid lockdowns. The possibility of continuing relevant courses via Zoom allows those less mobile, immuno-suppressed - themselves or their partners, or perhaps concerned to go out at night in their own, to maintain their place in the community & social activity.

## **Response dated 30 March 2022**

I am in the second year of an online Spanish course and I do hope that classes via Zoom continue in September 2022 because this is a safe and cost effective for me, and surely for Surrey County Council also: no travel time, no petrol costs, less time

away from caring responsibilities, etc. Let's keep both classroom and Zoom course options available.

When I talk to other people about Adult Learning, I am always surprised by how many people are completely unaware of this. I feel there is a huge untapped market of potential participants and a new approach to marketing may be worthwhile.

## **Response dated 5 April 2022**

An integrated programme of local venues and varied activities is essential for mental well-being, personal horizon-widening and gaining qualifications.

Covid has really shown how important socialising and learning are. they are assumptions about life that we take for granted until they are removed from us.

Dorking has lost its adult education centre but there are many smaller venues which could be used and this must be typical in most communities: using small venues also improves their income with hiring fees.

Much adult education is prohibitively expensive and takes place in some remote location.

Perhaps as well, better advertising of other education groups. Eg the WEA site is excellent - informative, accessible & dynamic.

And can you improve your website to make it similar?

## **Response dated 5 April 2022**

I am specifically addressing the provision (or indeed the lack of) Adult Education opportunities in East Surrey.

To have easy access to Adult Education is a lifeline to people living alone. It is not only gaining new skills but also the contact with like-minded people which is so important to alleviate the dire loneliness some folk find themselves in. It is a necessity of one's mental health to have a focus on an activity, with the stimulation of joining in a group and to have something to strive for.

Unfortunately there is no provision in East Surrey. I have been referred to Reigate College, which offered very little, contrasting to other parts of Surrey like Guildford, Woking, Sunbury and Esher.

I do hope Surrey County Council will redress the imbalance of provision of this vital service to ALL areas rather than forcing residents to either drive for miles (if they are able) or they miss out altogether.

Adult Education is also important to allow people to upskill in order to be able to apply for new jobs that come up with better prospects which will in turn help the skills shortage in the UK. So helping to build a more prosperous economy for the next

generation. These courses must be accessible to the working population to allow them to fit them around their work life.

This review is an opportunity to try and build a better Adult Education system for the benefit of Surrey Residents and businesses, please give it the attention it deserves.

### **Response dated 7 April 2022**

Lack of Education, Training & Skills has a catastrophic effect on individuals impacting not just their economic potential but every aspect of their life including mental health, physical health, stability of relationships, and child rearing.

The impact starts in childhood with limitations on Oracy and Literacy which then reduces their ability to access knowledge and their life chances. Providing more access to truly local adult education has the capacity to change that to some extent particularly when it results in the individuals learning gaining marketable skills including dealing with customers, working as part of a team, health and safety, hygiene, site safety, or computer literacy, and provides the qualifications that enable entry into jobs and into training programmes.

It is important that it is local relevant and low cost. Current provision can be too expensive to get to for those on limited incomes or may seem to designed for less deprived groups.

### **Response dated 7 April 2022**

Over the years, I have participated in many forms of adult learning, the last of which was the OU and I obtained a degree, this took 6 years on a part-time basis whilst raising a family and also working part-time. Over the years, I have been working against a great many obstacles to try and get some space to be able to concentrate on learning so that I could eventually provide for my family, sadly the hurdles placed before me were too much and I have found that trying to make achievements has left me facing a brick wall. It is right that you can only really do things that change your direction in life with support, however, in the UK, it seems that hindering others is game on. I have seen that apprenticeships do not work and also that if you do not obtain a degree earlier through the proper channels then you do not get very far in life. In fact, you are forced into poverty and this often leads some people to be desperate to then get into crime as a form of survival. It is an absolute tragedy that we as a country are not forward-thinking enough to realise that the healthier our children the better the country and the economy. If we constantly drive our own children into the gutter what do we expect? I do not know of another country that would play roulette with their children's outcomes but for us.

## **Response dated 8 April 2022**

The benefits of participating in adult learning and skills:

I believe it is very important and beneficial for adults to participate in adult learning. This improve their employment options and develop skills to upskill the workforce, improves chances of getting and keeping a job; increasing earnings; raising aspirations; and job satisfaction.

Another benefit, education improves their physical health and mental health as it gives them a purpose in life and improve quality of life. This results in adults who participate in learning themselves are more likely to engage in their children's education and improving outcomes.

Education can lead to many benefits such as improving community involvement, political understanding and involvement as they have the confidence and skills to participate in local involvement and volunteering for example.

Finally the benefits of participating in adult learning and skills can reduce crime and antisocial behaviour: Adults that engages in employability education and cognitive behavioural techniques can reduce reoffending.

The barriers to participating in adult learning and skills:

I think there are internal and external barriers to participation in adult learning. Example internal Barriers could include busy work schedule, which results can result in no time to allocate studying. Family and children can also be a barrier and in some cultures can be seen to be a Women's role. Other barriers can be financial barrier, child care issues.

External issues could include, course fees, courses not meeting learner needs, location can also be a barrier, online education may suit some adult learners.

## **Response dated 9 April 2022**

Due to the last few years there has been a large number of my residents who have found themselves without a job and in some cases the best solution for getting a new job would be to retrain and gain experience in areas other than where they originally trained.

The will also be some members of the community that had previously not worked but due to necessity need to find employment needing to find suitable training.

The cost of this training is also very relevant as it needs to be made accessible to all.



## **Response dated 10 April 2022**

I have personally benefitted greatly from my Adult Learning, giving me new direction and interest in life.

With restrictions placed upon us during the pandemic, retraining has become almost essential in order to maintain / find employment.

Environmentally, the general population appears to be mostly indifferent to dealing with their own direct influence upon the environment. People are littering / fly-tipping / dog-poop-bag leaving with remarkable regularity. There needs to be both local and national action to tackle this, with adult education in the fore.

The main barriers appear to be local political infighting, as well as a general indifference of the local populace.

Local provision is very good, although accessing Adult Education can be a somewhat involved task. There should be greater publicity of the courses available and the benefits of AE to the general population.

Provision of online learning (especially if free) would help, as well as greater ease of accessing courses.

## **Response dated 11 April 2022**

Appreciate the benefits of participating in adult learning and skills

If possible wish to collaborate in facing the current and anticipated economic and social needs of Surrey's residents and communities (in the context of adult learning and skills)

## **Response dated 11 April 2022**

- Old Dean is in the worst 10% in England for Education, Training & Skills
- Large part of the population in unskilled occupations
- Many on Zero-hours contracts
- Large economically inactive group (Retired/ Disabled etc)
- Old Dean + St Michaels =27% of all 16-24 year old UC claimants in Surrey Heath (the only age group with ward level data)

But also:

- Many NHS staff
- Number of skilled craftspeople/ small businesses struggling to re-establish business

Schools in Old Dean:

- Lorraine Infant School

Ofsted rating GOOD

- Pine Ridge Infants School

Ofsted rating GOOD

- Cordwalles Junior School

Ofsted rating GOOD

- Collingwood College

Ofsted rating GOOD

BUT

- 45% Pupil Premium and 31% SEND @ Cordwalles Junior School

- 25% Pupil Premium and 29% SEND –Lorraine, and Pine Ridge Infants

Adult Literacy is a major issue

Young Adults & Skills is a major issue

## **Response dated 12 April 2022**

You're always learning no matter how old you are. Adult learning is there for anyone wanting to learn a new skills, key skills or update an old skill.

I have taken courses, the last being teaching English as a foreign language.

I have also taught key skills and employment skills to people aged 15 - 64, so I have seen it from both sides.

Everyone should have access to Adult learning not just for the learning but also for the meeting of other people.