

West Berkshire Council

Community Learning and Skills Plan

2013-14

DRAFT

West Berkshire Council Adult and Community Learning and Skills Development Plan 2013/14

This Plan is one part of the family of plans which set the priorities for services in West Berkshire. It builds on a series of Adult Learning Plans – see Appendix 2.

This plan summarises the requirements of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) that provides the external funding for the Community Learning and Skills Service delivered by the Council, identifies the key plans and priorities that this plan can contribute to and sets out the aims, actions and outcomes for Community Learning and Skills in West Berkshire during the academic year 2013/14. The plan also lists the strategic challenges faced by the service.

A detailed team plan is being developed that will include the responsibility for each action, the timescale for completion and success criteria. This will be monitored by the Principal Adult and Community Learning Officer and the Service Manager.

Context

Key plans, requirements and priorities that set the context for Community Learning and Skills in the district are:

1. National

A. Requirements of Providers directly funded by the Skills Funding Agency

Community Learning and Skills in West Berkshire are funded through a contract with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) for Community Learning and Adult Skills. The Council is required to:

- Commission, deliver and support a locally determined formal and non formal learning offer that conforms to the objectives set out in New Challenges, New Chances (see Appendix 1)
- Operate in strong local partnerships to ensure their plans and strategies are underpinned by engagement with communities, local authorities, LEPs and other key local stakeholders.
- Operate within the terms and conditions of the SFA funding agreement and the SFA funding rules which state:
 - Providers must have in place a strategy that sets out how they have identified and will deliver a balance of the objectives set out in New Challenges, New Chances

- Providers must show evidence on how they will operate in strong local partnerships to ensure their objectives are underpinned by engagement and consultation with their communities, local authorities, local enterprise partnerships and other key local stakeholders
- Providers must have clear outcomes and appropriate measures capable of evaluation by their community and local stakeholders
- Providers must develop and implement a robust financial strategy that adds to their Community Learning allocation
- Providers must abide by the funding eligibility (including learner eligibility) as set out in the SFA's funding rules

B Policy

Purpose of Community Learning (Extract from Department of Business Innovation and Skills “New Chances, New Challenges” Page 14)

- Maximise access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people's circumstances
- Promote social renewal by bringing local communities together to experience the joy of learning and the pride that comes with achievement
- Maximise the impact of community learning on the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities.

Purpose of the Adult Skills Budget

To support flexible and responsive provision for learners aged 19+ without level 2 qualifications or without GCSE English or Maths at grades A* to C. Funding is focussed on qualifications that are part of a regulated framework approved by the Skills Funding Agency.

2. Local

2.1 Berkshire Local Economic Partnership priorities:

- Well being for all who live and work in Berkshire
- Access to 21st Century infrastructure
- Improving employability and closing skills gaps
- A hot house of creativity and innovation creating next generation businesses.

2.2. West Berkshire Partnership, Sustainable Community Strategy “A Breath of Fresh Air” priorities:

- A prosperous West Berkshire
- Healthy individuals and communities

- Safer
- Greener
- Accessible

2.3. Health and Well Being Board priorities

Vision : Adding Years to Life and Life to Years

- Addressing childhood obesity in the Primary School Phase
- Supporting those over 40 years old to address lifestyle choices detrimental to health
- Promoting independence and supporting older people to manage their chronic conditions
- Giving every child the best start in life
- Promoting a vibrant district.

2.4. West Berkshire Council Strategy

Priorities

- Caring for and protecting the vulnerable
- Promoting a vibrant district
- Improving education
- Protecting the environment

Vision and Purpose

- Helping you to help yourself
- Helping you when you cannot help yourself
- Helping you to help one another
- Promoting and acting in the interests of communication, people and businesses of the district

Principles

- Putting people first
- Empowering people and communities
- Living within our means
- Transforming our services to remain affordable and effective
- Doing what is important well.

2,5 West Berkshire Economic Delivery Strategy

Economic objectives:

- Provide effective infrastructure that supports economic growth.

- Encourage inward investment and business retention across all sectors
- Promote West Berkshire as a good location for business, leisure and life.
- Actively support sustainable rejuvenation and regeneration projects in key locations.
- Work with partners to ensure that local skills meet the needs of today's business and work environments.

2.6 Turnaround Families Programme

The ambitions for this programme are:

- To turnaround:
 - service delivery – to help services to better meet the needs of local high need families
 - the lives of 145 families who positively engage with the programme
 - how we pay for and deliver efficient services with less money
- To enhance current local provision of services and encourage new action, basing decisions on evidence of what works
- To offer both challenge and support to families and service providers.

3. West Berkshire Community Learning and Skills Plan

3.1 Aims and Actions:

3.1.1 **Aim** *To provide strategic leadership in consultation with members of the West Berkshire Community Learning Partnership (WBCLP) to ensure that delivery of community learning and skills provision in the district is innovative, well co-ordinated, strategic and responsive to local needs.*

Actions

- Ensure regular productive meetings of the WBCLP to bring together key providers and relevant local agencies and services.
- Ensure partners have opportunities to network, to learn about each other's services and exchange good practice
- Ensure partners are consulted on a strategy to deliver the Objectives in New Challenges New Chances (appendix 1).

- Review and baseline 2012/13 activity and determine a strategy for growth to generate investment or achieve efficiencies to add to the community learning allocation
- Ensure all members of the Partnership are aware of the new processes to become subcontractors, any new funding opportunities, any new SFA Funding rules and new requirements for teaching qualifications in FE.
- Identify opportunities to join and support other Community Learning Trusts
- Keep Elected Members informed and seek their agreement on any proposals
- Keep the Skills Funding Agency informed and monitor the developing approach to monitoring providers more closely.
- Monitor the SFA's developing approach to the possibility that providers can issue small grants to support specific activities
- Develop a series of pound plus indicators to evidence how the Partnership is adding to the allocation in order to achieve the objectives
- Develop a robust funding strategy that adds to the Community Learning allocation
- Develop systems to track progression of learners from Community Learning and ASB provision.
- Evaluate the role of the West Berkshire Community Learning Partnership in light of the development of the Community Learning Trust pilots
- Identify additional funding opportunities and make applications as appropriate

3.1.2 **Aim** *To commission, deliver and support a locally determined formal and non formal community learning offer that conforms to the objectives set out in New Challenges , New Chances (see Appendix 1)*

Actions

- Deliver the 2013 /14 Community Learning and the new Adult Skills budget contract agreed with the Skills Funding Agency ensuring most public funding is invested for the benefit of disadvantaged learners.
- Prioritise internal Council providers, including schools, in the bidding process to deliver Community Learning
- Commission small voluntary and community group providers, including academies to deliver short Community Learning programmes for less than £50,000 to disadvantaged groups through the Community Education Fund procedure and bid evaluation by the Community Education Fund Panel.

- Commission national providers, FE colleges, training organisations and voluntary and community groups to deliver a Community Learning universal offer and targeted provision to disadvantaged groups through individual negotiation for contracts of over £50,000.
- Support a personal and community learning programme for learners in residential homes and day centres

3.1.3 **Aim** *To commission, deliver and support a locally determined flexible programme of Skills Funding Agency supported qualification courses either classroom based or by distance learning for learners with low levels of skills or without level 2 qualifications in English and Maths and unemployed learners on active benefits*

Actions

- Invite FE Colleges, national providers and training organisations to develop a new programme of qualifications to be funded by the Council's allocation from the Adult Skills Budget programme, ensuring funding eligibility and criteria are complied with and commission them to deliver agreed programmes

3.1.4 **Aim** *To ensure the delivery of a high quality, accessible, safe, varied adult and community learning programme for adults and families across the district.*

Actions

- To focus learning on personal needs through the continuing development of individual learning plans
- To support the development of Neighbourhood Learning Centres across the district
- Provide an information and signposting service for adult learners who live and /or work in West Berkshire
- Promote the wider benefits of adult learning across the district
- Widen participation in adult learning through targeted provision to people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills.
- Continue to develop the Community Learning and Skills workforce
- Continue to develop Children's Centres as hubs for adult and family learning with a focus on employability skills for adults
- Extend the fee and concessions policy until 31st July 2014. See Appendix 4
- Improve the governance of the work of the WBC ACL Team by requesting the scrutiny of the Adult Learning Plan and the Self Assessment Report from the Policy Reference Group.
- Revive the Quality Improvement Group to ensure the Ofsted Inspectors suggestions for improvement are put in place.

- Deliver the outcomes listed in the Community Learning and Skills Post Inspection and Quality Improvement Action Plan as approved by the Policy Reference Group.
- Consult with Adult Social Care over the possibility of putting the Keeping Active programme out to tender in order to enhance the curriculum offer through the greater use of volunteers
- Develop opportunities to support families on the Turnaround Families programme, in particular focussing on supporting unemployed adults.

3.3 Priority Groups

To ensure that public funding is focussed on people that are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, the Council will welcome bids to deliver community learning and skills from organisations that prioritise delivery to:

- People with low levels of literacy and numeracy
- People with low levels of skills
- People who are unemployed
- People who live in rural areas
- People who live in areas with low participation in learning
- Older people
- Parents who need help to support their children in school
- People from ethnic minorities who need support to access learning
- People with disabilities
- People with learning difficulties
- Ex- offenders and probation clients
- People recovering from mental illness
- People with or recovering from drug or alcohol dependency

3.4 OUTCOMES

1. The Service realigns the organisation, governance and delivery of its provision service in order to meet the demands of the Council, the Skills Funding Agency and the Ofsted Inspectorate. .
2. A varied programme of Community Learning and Qualification courses delivered in Colleges, Schools, Children's Centres, Neighbourhood Learning Centres and other community venues across the district
3. Skills Funding Agency Data and Financial requirements are met.

4. Accredited and non accredited achievement records for learners are in place
5. Key performance indicators for learner numbers and percentages from priority groups are achieved. (See Appendix 3)
6. The ACL workforce meets statutory requirements around safeguarding and teaching qualifications
- 7 The Annual Tutor Forum, an opportunity to update partners and tutors and to network and share good practice, takes place
- 8 The Annual Learner Awards celebration takes place.
- 9 Quarterly Meetings with the SFA Relationship Team take place

STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

- Reduced central support from the Skills Funding Agency and their new approach to minimum standards which judges the provider not specific provision.
- Reduced national support with the closure of LSIS which supported the Council with funds for training and support for quality improvement
- Uncertainty about the role of the developing FE Guild and the possibility that providers will be able to aspire to achieve chartered status.
- Changes in the Skills Funding Agency's funding methodology, in particular that of Adult Skills
- Simplification in the funding of qualifications which has reduced the number that qualify for funding
- The cuts in public services and their effects.
- The decisions following the 26th June 2013 Comprehensive Spending Review
- Applying the lessons of the Community Learning Trust pilots
- The probability that the geographical allocation of Community Learning and Skills funds will change over time.
- The changing focus of inspection following the revision of the Common Inspection Framework
- Commissioning and supporting providers to deliver programmes funded by the Adult Skills Budget for the first time. This budget is paid on outcomes instead of a block grant.
- Changing relationships with partners as restructures take place.
- Understanding the role of the Thames Valley local economic partnership in the context of community learning.

Appendix 1

New Challenges, New Chances

Objectives

- Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas, on low incomes and with low skills
- Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible, to extend provision to those who cannot
- Widen participation and transform people's destinies by supporting progression relevant to personal circumstances, for example:
 - Improved confidence and willingness to engage in learning
 - Acquisition of skills preparing people for training, employment or self-employment
 - Improved digital, financial literacy and/or communication skills
 - Parent/carers better equipped to support and encourage their children's learning
 - Improved/ maintained health and/or social well being.
- Develop stronger communities, with more self-sufficient, connected and proactive citizens, leading to:
 - Increased volunteering, civic engagement and social integration
 - Reduced costs on welfare, health and anti social behaviour
 - Increased online learning and self organised learning
 - The lives of our most troubled families being turned around.
- Commission, deliver and support learning in ways that contribute directly to these objectives including:
 - Bringing together people from all backgrounds, cultures and income groups, including people who can /cannot afford to pay.
 - Using effective local partnerships to bring together key providers and relevant local agencies and services
 - Devolving planning and accountability to neighbourhood / parish level, with local people involved in decisions about the learning offer
 - Involving volunteers and Voluntary and Community Sector groups, shifting long term, blocked classes into learning clubs, growing self organised learning groups and encouraging employers to support informal learning in the workplace.
 - Supporting the wide use of online information and learning resources
 - Minimising overheads, bureaucracy and administration.

Appendix 2

Background to planning for Community Learning and Skills in West Berkshire

This plan builds on the success of the following published academic year plans:

- the 2 year Adult and Community Learning Development Plan 2008/09 – 2009/10
- the 3 year Strategic Adult and Community Learning Development Plan 2005/06- 2007/08 approved on 9th June 2005
- the 2006 update to the Development Plan 2006/07 - 2008/09
- the 2007 update to the Development Plan 2007/08
- the 2008-09 -2009-10 Adult and Community Learning Strategic plan
- the 2010/11 refresh of the Adult and Community Learning Plan.

The above plans were the basis for receiving grant funding from the Learning and Skills Council until the end of the funding safeguard for Adult Safeguarded Learning in 2010/11. In April 2010 the Learning and Skills Council was disbanded and its funding function was transferred to the Department of Business Innovation and Skills' Skills Funding Agency. The Skills Funding Agency did not require a plan so the previous plan (2008/09 – 2009/10) was refreshed until the coalition government made the decisions about the reform of Community Learning.

Internal Adult and Community team plans were produced for 2011/12 and 2012/13

For 2013/14 The Skills Funding Agency do not require plans that they will sign off. They will look for evidence that the requirements set out in their Funding rules and policy objectives have been met.

The Head of Education, Communities Directorate, West Berkshire Council is responsible for this plan. The contact for matters relating to this plan is:

Sara Hanson
Principal Adult and Community Learning Officer
West Berkshire Council
Avonbank House
West Street
Newbury
RG14 1BZ

Tel: 01635 519792

Email: shanson@westberks.gov.uk

Appendix 3

Key Performance Indicator	All Provision			Notes
	2011/12 Baseline		2013 /14 Target	
	Number	%		
Responsiveness				
Total Enrolments	2782	100%		
Total Learners	2145	100%	2100	Lower target because of 9% reduction in FFS funding , extra quality demands following Ofsted Inspection
Total GLHs	31947	100%		
New learners	1728	81%		
Learners from areas of low participation in education ****	704	33%	33%	3% increase in target as team has invested in centres in these areas
Learners from areas of deprivation **	571	27%	27%	
Learners from rural areas	436	20%	22%	
Learners on courses at Children's Centres			100	New Target
% enrolments per 1000 adult population	24	2%		
% re enrolment rate	637	23%		
Courses that run in rural areas	42	13%	20%	Need to rebuild provision in rural areas but cannot achieve previous target of 26%
Total number of courses	317	100%		
Effectiveness - outcomes for learners				
Learners Retention		94.86%	90-94%	
Learner Achievement		99.28%		
Learner Success		94.18%		
Learner Attendance		87.96%	87-88%	
Learner Satisfaction		100.00%		
Learners gaining accreditation	34	1.60%		
Learners who feel safe		99.59%	100%	
Planned Progression ?	192	29%		
Actual Progression ?				
Quality of Provision				
Tutors observed	44			
Lessons graded 1	11			
Lessons Graded 2	29			
Lessons Graded 3	1			

Lessons Graded 4	0			
Number of developmental observations	3			
Project / Course visit reports completed				All providers have minuted monitoring meetings
Learner evaluations received				
Number of tutors				
Number of qualified tutors				
WBC new tutors completing induction training			100%	New Target
Tutors attending the Tutor Forum				
Finance				
Cost per learner	£220.78	N/A		
Cost per enrolment	£170.23	N/A		
Average class size	9	N/A		
Equality and Diversity - Learner profile				
Male learners	797	37%	36%	Increase in target because of change in curriculum
Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	455	21%	20%	4% increase in target because we always exceed target
Learners aged over 60 on Community Learning courses	442	21%	25%	Previous target was 26% of total but curriculum change means that over 60s will only be attracted to Community Learning courses
Learners aged over 75	145	7%	7%	Yes
Learners from ethnic minority groups *	264	12%	8%	Reduce from 10% because of forecasts of outward migration of ethnic minorities from West Berkshire
Unemployed Learners	N/A	N/A		No baseline yet
Learners on concessionary fees in receipt of benefits ***	22	1%	2%	Fees still high even with 50% discount
Learners on concessionary fees aged 60+	155	7%		
*Ethnic Minority = Total less 'White British' & 'Not known/not provided' Not known = about 2%				
**Wards = Calcot, Clay Hill, Greenham, Lambourn Valley, Speen, St Johns, Thatcham North & Victoria				
***Those learners in receipt of benefits who receive discounted course fees				
(Wards with more than 43% of individuals who have less than a level 2 qualification - from Stats on Maps)				

Appendix 4

West Berkshire Council Fee Policy on Adult & Community Learning Provision 2013-14

Fees

West Berkshire Council delegates responsibility for the setting of adult education fees to subcontracted providers, who retain fee income to support the provision made and to make provision for learners who cannot afford to pay..

Subcontracted providers are required to negotiate any fee increase with the Council.

Fee Concessions

Under current West Berkshire Council policy (as reflected in the provider's community learning and skills contract) all providers must offer a reduction on the hourly fees charged to students from disadvantaged groups as specified below. To support providers in offering concessions and to ensure providers are not financially penalised West Berkshire Council will reimburse the provider for any lost fee income caused.

30% Reduction

- resident in West Berkshire and aged 60 or over;

50% Reduction

- in receipt of a Jobseekers Allowance;
- in receipt of active benefits such as , ESA income – based, Income Support, Housing Benefit , Council Tax Benefit .
- in receipt of Pensions Credit Guarantee

- In receipt of a Disability Allowance, or if you are a registered carer for someone with a Disability Allowance and are attending the same course.

3) Learner Support - Discretionary Support Arrangements

As the Council contracts out its community learning, it is at provider's discretion whether a learner is eligible for funding to support child-care, travel and other costs. The Council takes no policy-line on this; however it would prove administratively impractical to offer hardship grants at a distance from the actual provision.

Newbury College has a Hardship and Access Fund that all learners can apply to for assistance with fees, transport, additional costs for their course e.g. equipment and materials and for registered childcare.

In addition the Council puts aside an agreed sum each year for learner support at Newbury College for learners on Community Learning funded courses.

Applications for learner support must be made by subcontractors by completing the attached form.

The Council also offers childcare support to smaller subcontractors secured which will enable adults from priority groups to engage in learning.

Additionally, it is Council policy that no fee shall be charged to adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attending a discrete adult education class supported by Council funding.

Appendix 5

References

BIS (2011) New Challenges , New Chances FE and Skills System Reform Plan: Building a world class system

LSIS (2012) A guide to making the most of the Adult Skills Budget

SFA (2013) Funding Rules 2013/14 – Version 2

BIS (April 2013) Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills

SFA (March 2013) A New Streamlined Funding System for Adult Skills

SFA (February 2013) Community Learning 2013/14 Information for Community Learning Providers

NIACE (Dec 2012) Community Learning in Rural Areas