

Adult & Community Learning: West Berkshire Council's Draft Three Year Development Plan 2005/06 – 2007/08

STRATEGIC SUMMARY

Our continuing mission is to assist adult and family learners, particularly those experiencing barriers to learning or under-represented in learning, to achieve their potential through adult and community learning (ACL), which should be:

- high quality
- accessible
- safe
- varied and designed to meet the needs and interests of local people
- spread across West Berkshire including rural areas
- planned to provide impartial information about learning
- structured to help learners to progress on to further opportunities

We work in partnership with Newbury College, West Berkshire schools, agencies such as libraries, social services and health, colleges, the Community Council for Berkshire and other voluntary and community partners. We provide non-qualification courses across West Berkshire, using funding from the Learning & Skills Council and other sources. We target people and families experiencing barriers to learning to create an inclusive service and we encourage parental involvement in children's education.

The five key principles underpinning West Berkshire Council's adult and community learning provision are:

- improving quality and effectiveness and ensuring value for money
- increasing participation and responding to local priorities and learners' needs
- extending provision and promoting learning
- working in partnership
- raising employability skills and promoting learning organisations.

We believe that:

Adult Learning should help individuals to:

- acquire new knowledge and learn new skills;
- enjoy leisure time and extend their circle of friends;
- achieve recognition for knowledge and expertise;
- gain or enhance work skills;
- develop social and coping skills;
- boost confidence and self-esteem;
- redress negative school experience;
- promote the 5 outcomes in 'Every Child Matters' for children to be safe, healthy, achieving, employable and able to participate as citizens;
- improve the individual's health, well-being and family cohesion;
- value their experience of learning.

Adult learning will contribute to communities by:

- attracting resources to support community centres for learning;
- helping upskill individuals so that they can participate in local activities;
- extending the range of an individual's social network;
- providing a focus & platform for community activities to stimulate learning;
- assisting schools to develop learning programmes for families and communities, eg through the Extended Schools initiative;
- promoting the safeguarding of children and young people;
- facilitating partnership working;
- encouraging environmental sustainability;
- reinforcing citizenship;
- developing community activities through family learning.

Adult learning should contribute to society by:

- equipping people to participate in a democratic society;
- encouraging mutual tolerance and respect between individuals with different backgrounds and experiences and challenging discrimination;
- increasing economic prosperity by developing a range of knowledge and skills;
- helping people embrace a future of technological change;
- reflecting an international rather than national context;
- building the capacity of communities;
- helping parents/carers to be more active in the support of their children's learning and development and to understand the impact of that support.

The courses and projects that we support also reflect national, regional and local priorities, which include:

1. the DfES Five Year Strategy, which links learning to social, economic and health factors and focuses funding on adults with few or no skills. For ACL this includes:
 - ◆ supporting the Skills for Life initiative, through Family Learning and Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN) programmes
 - ◆ embedding basic skills into some courses
 - ◆ developing teaching staff and the curriculum
 - ◆ targeting learning to overcome disadvantage
2. National developments in adult and family learning, such as:
 - ◆ Segmenting learning into two main strands: First Steps Learning and Learning for Personal and Community Development
 - ◆ Planned changes to the fees charged for learning
3. Local priorities from the Berkshire LSC and West Berkshire Council:
 - ◆ Developing coherent and innovative models of ACL and family learning to meet local needs, in partnership with other organisations including those in the private and voluntary sectors
 - ◆ Providing entry points for progression, including to qualifications-based learning in identified skills areas
 - ◆ Targeting under-represented groups in order to increase social inclusion, eg adults and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, specific minority groups including travellers, male learners and people under 60, particularly the unemployed or those with low levels of skill, people aged over 75 and those living in areas of deprivation and more isolated rural areas

- ◆ Focusing community projects and the Adult Learning Information Service on areas of deprivation and those identified as having low levels of participation
 - ◆ Working with schools and other partner agencies to develop a multi-professional approach to the needs of children, families and communities
 - ◆ Developing e-learning as a tool to enhance teaching and learning
4. National requirement & local commitment to quality assurance and improvement
- ◆ Making sure that all courses and projects provide evidence of learning taking place by managing an effective quality assurance framework
 - ◆ Consulting with learners and non-learners to understand local needs and expectations and to raise awareness about the provision
 - ◆ Improve the quality of teaching and learning, by supporting the training of ACL teachers
 - ◆ Planning and promoting learning to address gaps in provision and areas of deprivation

We also believe that it is important to:

- ◆ Work in partnership with other services within West Berkshire Council and with schools to develop extended schools serving families and communities
- ◆ Increase the opportunities for learners to use new technology, as part of their course and as a means of independent living
- ◆ Provide opportunities for inter-generational learning and, wherever possible, lead both adults and children to pursue further learning

QUALITY

The Council places the highest priority on improving the quality of the adult and community learning it offers in West Berkshire, evidenced by the December 2003 inspection Report by the Adult Learning Inspectorate.

- ◆ Our framework for improving quality has four elements:
- ◆ An over-arching structure for all aspects of planning, delivering, contracting, monitoring and evaluating provision
- ◆ Focus on Quality, which sets out the expectations for the local authority, contracted providers and partners and learners
- ◆ The Quality Standards for all providers delivering ACL programmes
- ◆ Annual Self Assessment Review and SAR Development Plan

INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

Data

A new Management Information System (MIS), LearnerTrak, was introduced in 2003/04 and this is being refined to deliver information about the provision, so that action can be taken to address potential shortfalls in targets.

Workforce Development

There are two aspects to ACL workforce development: a training programme for all staff, including contracted providers' and partner organisations' staff and a performance management framework for West Berkshire Council employees. Contracted providers are also expected to provide an appraisal system for ACL teaching and other staff.

Capital Programme

West Berkshire Children and Young People's Capital Strategy includes provision for adult and family learners within its Capital Programme. Plans currently include:

- ◆ Provision for the development of Extended Schools
- ◆ Improvements to premises and equipment for compliance with DDA Part 4.

E-Learning Strategy

Our vision is to move e-learning in ACL from a position of localised implementation by enthusiasts to mainstream implementation in order to enhance the learning experience of all ACL students. This will be achieved by encouraging tutors to be more creative in their learning methods by blending the use of ILT with more traditional methods of learning and curriculum development and by empowering learners to take more responsibility for their own learning and progress by using ILT to become self-directed lifelong learners. The use of assistive technology – of which there is already a good pool of experience - could enhance the learning opportunities available to disadvantaged learners.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Adult and community learning is always subject to uncertainty since it consists entirely of courses for which adults enrol on a voluntary basis. It is also price sensitive in that rising course fees can lead to lower numbers of learners and our plans include progressive increases in fees for some courses. In addition to these perennial risks, we identify the following risks, which apply as a consequence of the targets adopted in this Three-Year Plan.

- The switch of some resources away from general adult education and towards courses designed to widen participation and reduce exclusion could result in a decline in the total number of adult learners over the period of the Plan.
- Another threat to student numbers is the Council's policy of withdrawing funding from classes that have ceased to provide efficient teaching and learning, or have become like clubs.
- The increasing regulation and professionalisation of adult and community learning is making the supply and retention of tutors more difficult and the impact on quality of some staff unwilling to commit themselves to further training.
- The increasing regulation of classes also deters some learners, who resent being assessed and having to have their achievements recorded.
- Since all staff involved with adult and community learning are responsible for high volumes of specialist work (as teachers, administrators, managers and officers), if any leaves or resigns, it may be difficult to replace them, and to ensure continuity.
- There is a growing gulf in pay between basic skills, ACL and school teaching staff. Part-time ACL tutors' pay has declined, relatively, and recruitment in an area of high employment, is difficult.
- The impact of the funding ACL and changes to the balance of First Steps and Learning for Personal Development could cause instability.
- The MIS does not yet provide all the information we require and there are difficulties in ensuring data is accurate.

- Although the LSC is in the process of making changes, competition from the FE sector using 'other provision' funds, affects the coherence of the Council's ACL.
- Changes introduced by the BLSC as a result of Strategic Area Review and national initiatives, e.g. changes to level 2 provision, could impact on the retention and recruitment of Adult & Community Learning staff.
- Funding for the E-mpower project has expired and not all of the centres funded as UK Online Centres will become Neighbourhood Learning Centres.
- Some providers find it difficult to get projects running within the timescales they initially planned.

Risks are managed through established Council management and Member processes and in discussion with the BLSC, where appropriate.

The strategy summarised above is underpinned by policy documentation, covering equality and diversity, quality assurance, health and safety, information, advice and guidance, widening participation. A cycle of action planning, review and evaluation is established within West Berkshire Council to implement and monitor policy and performance.

HEADLINE PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The following tables provide actual figures for 2003/04 performance, where available. The 2003/04 data and discussions with providers and the Berkshire Learning & Skills Council, inform our planning assumptions for 2005/06 to 2007/08 projections.

Table 1 Summary Enrolment Data (These figures are totals and include learners who enrol on more than one course)

Performance Indicators:	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	Planned 2004/05	Planned 2005/06	Planned 2006/07	Planned 2007/08
Number of enrolments								
Sub-contracted provision	7918	8087	8275	7821	8600	8200	8200	8200
Community projects, incl. Family Learning and FLLN	1102	1885	1148	1096	800	800	800	800
Total	9020	9972	9423*	8917	9400	9000	9000	9000

* Enrolments decreased from 2002/03 onwards as a result of the termination of the contract with Reading Adult and Community College and increased delivery costs

Table 2 Summary Learner Data (These are headcount, not enrolment figures)

Performance Indicators:	2003/04	Planned 2004/05	Planned 2005/06	Planned 2006/07	Planned 2007/08
Number of Learners					
ACL	4090	4585	4285	4285	4285
Family Learning	370	200	200	200	200
FLLN	19	15	15	15	15
Total	4479	4800	4500	4500	4500

Learner Recruitment: Population Profile of West Berkshire

Adult learning supported by West Berkshire Council will take account of areas of social deprivation, based on the top ten Super Output Areas (approx 1500 residents) where there is multiple deprivation (2001 census) and areas where there are low skills levels. These are:

Calcot, Clay Hill, Greenham, Lambourn Valley, Speen, St John's, Thatcham North & Victoria.

Areas with low levels of literacy and numeracy are:

Thatcham North - 25.5% have low levels of literacy and 26.1% low numeracy skills
 Turnpike - 29.3% have low levels of literacy and 30.5% low numeracy skills
 Winchcombe - 26% have low levels of literacy and 26.8% low numeracy skills

School ethnicity numbers by ward show a high relative percentage of ethnic minority pupils in schools in the urban areas. Schools in the east of the district and Greenham continue to have more black and minority ethnic pupils.

Table 3 below details the target set for priority groups. Some targets have been adjusted, including the target for ethnic minorities, to reflect the increase in the West Berkshire population or to provide a more realistic picture of what we plan to deliver. Targets to address local needs and social inclusion (Numbers in brackets indicate the number of individual learners in each category)

Table 3

Prime Targets	2003/04 Actual	Target for 2004/05	Target for 2005/06	Target for 2006/07	Target for 2007/08
Overall number of learners	4478	4800	4500	4500	4500
Proportion of learners who are male	29.24% (1272)	27-30% (1296-1440)	28-31% (1260-1395)	29-32% (1305-1440)	29-32% (1305-1440)
Proportion of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	8% (348)	5-8% (240-384)	6-9% (270-405)	7-10% (315-450)	7-10% (315-450)
Proportion of learners aged 75+	6.21% (270)	4-7% (192-336)	5-8% (225-360)	6-9% (270-405)	6-9% (270-405)
Proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups, incl white other*	4.34% (189)	2-5% (96-240)	3-6% (135-270)	4-7% (180-315)	4-7% (180-315)
Proportion of learners from areas of deprivation	25.75% (1120)	10-15% (480-720)	11-16% (495-720)	12-17% (540-765)	12-17% (540-765)

* In addition, Equality and Diversity Impact Measures are set annually.

EDIMs for 2004/05 – 2006/07

2004-2005

1. Monitor policy by monitoring the age, gender, disabilities and ethnicity of new staff in post
2. Ongoing training of staff to meet responsibilities under equal opportunity legislation
3. Widen participation and expand provision to meet social inclusion targets
4. Review policies in line with current legislation
5. Establish an equal opportunities group with providers and partners and contribute to Education Service Equality and Diversity Group
6. Identify barriers to access premises and facilities and plan use of DDA grant to meet needs of adult learners with disabilities in schools, village halls and other centres
7. Develop provision at two Traveller sites in West Berkshire
8. Set up family learning/community projects in priority area of deprivation (North Thatcham)
9. Implement additional equal opportunities question in observations of teaching and learning

2005-2006

1. Use data to audit and monitor impact of existing systems; results to inform strategic planning
2. Introduce percentages for different categories of learning (First Steps Learning and Learning for Personal Development, etc) to attract targeted groups
3. Monitor anti-discriminatory practice as routine part of class visits and formal observations of teaching and learning
4. Monitor policy by monitoring the age, gender, disabilities and ethnicity of staff in post and promotional activity
5. Identify at least one additional group for targeted provision
6. Maintain training programme for staff to meet responsibilities under equal opportunity legislation
7. Set up family learning/community projects in a different priority area of Deprivation (area to be advised)

2006/07

1. Assess achievement, success and satisfaction of learners and staff by ethnicity
2. Ethnically monitor and analyse grievance, disciplinary action, performance appraisal, training and dismissal
3. Set up family learning/community projects in a different priority area of deprivation (area to be advised)

Table 4 Additional Indicators

Secondary Targets	2003/04 Actual	Target for 2004/05	Target for 2005/06	Target for 2006/07	Target for 2007/08
Proportion of courses that run in rural areas	N/A	40-50%	45-55%	45-55%	45-55%
Proportion of learners on concessionary fees in receipt of benefits	3.95% (172)	2-5% (96-240)	2-5% (90-225)	2-5% (90-225)	2-5% (90-225)
Proportion of learners aged	28.97%	28-34%	27-33%	26-32%	26-32%

60+	(1260)	(1344-1632)	(1215-1485)	(1170-1440)	(1170-1440)
Proportion of learners from areas of low participation*	(Purley) 133	North Thatcham 100	tba	tba	tba

*Annual priorities are set based on data analysis and needs

Table 5 Targets for ACL CEF Projects

Prime Targets	2003/04 Actual	Target for 2004/05	Target for 2005/06	Target for 2006/07	Target for 2007/08
Overall number of learners	341	285	300	300	350
Proportion of learners who are male	29.14% (102)	27-30% (77-86)	28-31% (84-93)	29-32% (87-96)	29-32% (87-96)
Proportion of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	30.29% (106)	5-8% (14-23)	6-9% (18-96)	7-10% (21-30)	7-10% (21-30)
Proportion of learners aged 75+	6.57% (23)	4-7% (11-20)	5-8% (15-24)	6-9% (18-27)	6-9% (18-27)
Proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups*	6.29% (22)	2-5% (6-14)	3-6% (9-18)	4-7% (12-21)	4-7% (12-21)
Proportion of learners from areas of deprivation	33.14% (116)	10-15% (29-43)	11-16% (33-48)	12-17% (36-51)	12-17% (36-51)

Table 6 Targets for Family Learning Programmes

	2003/04 Actual	Targets for 2004/05	Targets for 2005/06	Targets for 2006/07	Targets for 2007/08
Number of Adult Enrolments	465	350	350	350	350
Number of families participating in Family Learning	277	200	200	200	200
Number of adult learners	391	200	200	200	200
Number of children (under 19 years)	412	200	200	200	200
Male adults:	77	27-30% (54-60)	28-31% (56-62)	29-32% (58-64)	29-32% (58-64)
Adults & children with disabilities/learning difficulties:	39	5-8% (20-32)	6-9% (24-36)	7-10% (28-40)	7-10% (28-40)
Adults & children from rural areas	87	75-90	75-90	75-90	75-90
Adults 60+	24	15-30	15-30	15-30	15-30
Pre-school children	46	30	30	30	30
Primary school children	298	150	150	150	150
Secondary school children	68	20	20	20	20
Adults & children from minority ethnic groups	23	2-5% (8-20)	3-6% (12-24)	4-7% (16-28)	4-7% (16-28)

Table 7 Targets for Family Literacy, Language & Numeracy (FLLN) Programmes

	2003/04 Actual	Targets for 2004/05	Targets for 2005/06	Targets for 2006/07	Targets for 2007/08
Number of Adult Enrolments	24	20	20	20	20
Number of families participating in FLLN	19	15-25	15-25	15-25	15-25
Number of adult learners	19	15	15	15	15
Number of children (under 19 years)	0	5	5	10	10
Male adults:	0	27-30% (4-5)	28-31% (4-5)	29-32% (4-5)	29-32% (4-5)
Adults & children with disabilities/learning difficulties:	3	5-8% (1-2)	6-9% (1-2)	7-10% (1-2)	7-10% (1-2)
Adults & children from rural areas	3	2-5	2-5	2-5	2-5
Adults aged 60+	0	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2
Pre-school children	0	4-7	4-7	4-7	4-7
Primary school children	0	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5
Secondary school children	0	5-8	5-8	5-8	5-8
Adults & children from minority ethnic groups	3	2-5% (0-1)	3-6% (0-1)	4-7% (0-1)	4-7% (0-1)

Table 8 – Observation of Teaching and Learning

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Targets for the observation of teaching and learning	N/A	40 – 50% of ACL tutors per year	40 – 50% of ACL tutors per year	40 – 50% of ACL tutors per year	40 – 50% of ACL tutors per year
Council targets for observing teaching and learning of general adult education	N/A	5 % tutors per year	5 % tutors per year	5 % tutors per year	5 % tutors per year

Table 9 – Attendance

Performance Indicators	2003/04 Actual	Planned 2004/05	Planned 2005/06	Planned 2006/07	Planned 2007/08
% Attendance (sub-contracted provision)	75.32%	76%	77%	78%	78%
% Attendance (community projects, incl. Family Learning and FLLN)	89.86%	78%	79%	80%	80%

Table 10 – Retention

Performance Indicators	2003/04 Actual	Planned 2004/05	Planned 2005/06	Planned 2006/07	Planned 2007/08
% Retention (sub-contracted provision)	88.11%	88%	89%	90%	90%
% Retention (community projects, incl. Family Learning and FLLN)	98.10%	92%	93%	94%	94%

Table 11 – Workforce Capability

Performance Indicators	Planned 2004/05	Planned 2005/06	Planned 2006/07	Planned 2007/08
% Full & part-time staff qualified	25%	50%	50%	50%
% Full and part-time staff working towards qualifications	25%	25%	50%	50%

INCOME

Allocations of funding beyond 2004/05 are awaiting the outcome of the consultation on Adult & Community Learning and LSC decisions about funding allocations. Targets will need to reflect the LSC's decision not to add an inflation increase in 2005/06.

For more details, including copies of this Plan in a different format or language, please contact the ACL Team:

*West Berkshire Education Service,
Avonbank House, West Street, Newbury RG14 1BZ
Tel: 01635 519060 e-mail: ACLTeam@westberks.gov.uk*

The office is open from 8.30 – 5.00 Monday to Thursday and 8.30 – 4.30pm on Friday. There is an out of hours answerphone service.