

Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Scrutiny Committee

Report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services

Consideration of indices of multiple deprivation and the provision of Adult Education

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Committee in response to their question about the nature of adult learning provision with priority groups and in priority areas.

Background

2. The Adult and Community Learning (ACL) Team are externally funded by the Skills Funding Agency to provide Community Learning on behalf of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council.
3. The ACL Team work in partnership with further education colleges, voluntary organisations, libraries and schools, borough wide, to support adult learner engagement and progression. Learning is delivered directly and commissioned through partners with each organisation working to their strengths.
4. Learning in the community in the Dudley Borough is planned within a strategic framework by the Post 19 Learning, Employment and Skills Partnership. The group aims to support adult and family engagement and learner progression, identify gaps, co-ordinate learning that meets local needs and avoid duplication of provision.
5. The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) funding conditions require a targeted introductory learning offer for those adults who may not have benefitted from learning previously or without a Level 2 (equivalent of GCSE A to C) qualification. However the achievement of qualifications is not the main priority of this funding and learners are supported to progress to further learning to pursue qualifications. It is also required as a condition of funding to provide a universal, fee paying offer with a wider curriculum for health, well being and personal development in the community.
6. The adult and family learning offer is an activity rich range of opportunities for adults and families including: language, arts, crafts, sports, fitness, culture, healthy living English, maths, employability and IT skills.

7. The Dudley MBC service was inspected by Ofsted in March 2012. The quality of provision, outcomes for learners and overall effectiveness was graded good. Some outstanding features were highlighted in the report. Inspectors said:
- *” Excellent strategic management and leadership ensures that the ACL provision very effectively contributes towards the achievement of the Council’s strategic priorities.”*
 - *“Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are well planned, highly individualised and effectively paced.”*
 - *“The service provides good value for money. Learners benefit from good teaching and progress from often low starting points to achieve good outcomes. Partnerships are effective in providing efficient use of accommodation.”*
 - *“The provision has a very strong ethos of promoting equality and diversity through engaging with the most deprived and hard to reach residents.”*
 - *“The service has developed exceptionally strong partnership working which has benefited many learners.”*
 - *“Many Learners go on to make significant contributions to their community. Many have established community development groups or self-sustaining activity groups to benefit community members. The service works well with other community organisations to encourage learners and volunteers to engage in activities to benefit their communities. In most areas learners develop a good awareness of the advantages of adopting healthy lifestyles.”*
8. Some people living in the most deprived areas of the borough may be unemployed, have few, low or no qualifications and have poor experiences of education or training. These barriers together with the negative experiences of making financial ends meet, has suppressed the natural inclination of some adults to think and act through learning, to better adapt and improve their lives. It is difficult to value learning when the daily goal is tackling pressing problems related to health, poverty, language or cultural barriers.
9. The ACL Team has a skilled community outreach team and highly qualified tutors that work in priority areas to reduce the barriers to learning and to engage adults and families in activities that will improve their economic, personal and social well being.
10. Family Learning has been particularly effective in areas where there is significant disadvantage. Experience has demonstrated the value of partnership with schools and children’s centres as community hubs in which families are engaged. Work may address single or linked outcomes and supporting their children’s learning provides an incentive to encourage the whole family to improve their lives through learning.
11. Adult and family courses are developed with learners in neighbourhoods to build the skills, knowledge and understanding for social and community action. Learning outcomes are individually negotiated. Learners may progress to further learning or self sustained activities and volunteering.
12. Support for adults with employability and skills needs starts with a whole team approach to targeted outreach work. Individual advice and guidance is provided and

an action plan is developed. Learners progress to further learning and work is facilitated through strong local partnerships .

13. 'Live 4 Less' is a bespoke course developed to meet a local need. It includes sustainable living themes such as; budgeting; travel utilities; food; energy and volunteering. The Team are working in partnership with the Benefits Team and Housing Department staff to promote this to communities and tenants who will be directly affected by welfare reform. Joint working with the Citizens Advice Bureau provides more intensive support for those who need it.
14. The Work Club initiative has been developed by the ACL Team with libraries, voluntary organisations and Jobcentreplus. The approach makes the most of local knowledge and resources to help unemployed people in their communities gain employment. The clubs provide unemployed people with a place to meet and exchange skills, find opportunities, make contacts, share experiences and receive support to help them in their return to work. Many clients progress to learning and work from these initial contacts.

Finance

15. The Skills Funding Agency has allocated 1.2 million to Dudley Council for borough wide provision in community settings.
16. Conditions of funding require learners who can pay, to contribute to their learning through fees. It is expected that income generated from fees is reinvested in targeted provision.

Law

17. The Council is under a duty to secure the provision of adequate facilities for further education under Section 15 of the education act 1996. The ACL Team manages a subsidised programme of adult and community learning on behalf of the Council.
18. Under the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970 councils have the power to enter into agreements with each other and a large number of designated public bodies listed in the act.

Equality Impact

19. The ACL team facilitates a Lead Accountable Body model of partnership and delivery for Community Learning through the Post 19 Learning and Skills Partnership.
20. Adult Skills is a priority for Dudley MBC, who recognise the importance of English, language, numeracy and employability learning which in turn, will improve economic outcomes for our targeted communities and wards. Priority groups also include adults with disabilities, older learners, unemployed, black and minority ethnic groups with the aim of transforming their lives and improving their well-being.
21. Appendix 1 illustrates the key areas of multiple deprivation in Dudley Borough. However, the areas of most need in learning and training are slightly different as illustrated by the second map. The ACL Team targets work with priority groups as well as in priority areas.

22. The table below shows a profile of learners participating.

Profile of ACL Team adult learners funded by the Skills Funding Agency: Quarter 4 2011/12: Financial Year	
Total enrolments in adult learning courses	10,449
Adults enrolled in skills for life and work programmes	5,080
% of adults achieving learning outcomes	93%
% adults from top 20% deprived neighbourhoods	29%
older Learners 60+	22%
% adults from Black and minority Ethnic Groups	18%
% unemployed adults 19+	37%
% adult learners with disabilities	21%
% of adult learners receiving concessions	59%
Number of entries for qualifications	114
% adults achieving qualifications	95%

23. The block graphs in Appendix 2 shows a demographic breakdown of Dudley Borough priority groups in the population and the percentage of people from the priority groups participating in adult learning.

24. It is recommended that:-

- The Committee note the contents of the report, the issues raised and the progress made to work with priority groups of Dudley adult learners.



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List of Background Papers

Appendix 1: Dudley Borough Map of multiple deprivation and training and learning domains.

Appendix 2: Dudley Borough Deprivation data.

Adult and Community Learning 2012 Ofsted report <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/50218>