

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 25/09/2017

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Resources & Community

PORTFOLIO: Economic Development

SUBJECT: Adult Learning Service - Update

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to update the PPB on the activity taking place in Adult Learning.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

The PPB welcomes the progress made to date in managing an effective adult learning service.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The funding for Adult Learning comes from the Education & Skills Funding Agency via the Adult Education Budget. Funding levels for 2017/18 are of a similar level to 2016/17 and this funding is used to offer a range of accredited and non-accredited learning in a variety of subjects including maths, English, sector specific and general employability skills, ICT, childcare and a small number of leisure type courses such as art, garment construction and calligraphy.

3.2 Programmes are currently delivered from Kingsway Learning Centre, Widnes, Acorn Learning Centre, Runcorn and Halton Lea library.

A good quality Children's Centre contract continues to be delivered in all of the children's centres, offering a range of engagement and qualification courses that both enhance parents' ability to support their children's development and support parents into further learning or employment.

3.3 The service currently employs 3 full time and 18 part time or sessional tutors. Following our latest Ofsted inspection in March 2017, the service was commended for continuing to place a high priority on recruiting learners who have high levels of disadvantage, face significant barriers to participating in education and training and face challenges in getting a job. Ofsted reported that the service continues to develop the provision well to

improve the life chances of our learners and that we respond effectively to the community needs in Halton. Partnership working with employers was deemed to be exemplary. An area of focus following inspection was that on a few courses such as introductory courses in English and mathematics and early years and playwork, too many learners leave early so the team will make this a key area of focus.

- 3.4** The service participated in a national pilot / research project to assess the impact of adult learning on the recovery of learners with mild/moderate mental health difficulties. The 2-year project ended in July 2017 and the Adult Learning Service has worked with 175 learners to help them manage their condition and move forward with their learning. Analysis of data is currently taking place at national level and will be released in January 2018.

The Adult Learning Service has allocated funding within the 2017/18 Adult Education Budget to continue the delivery of provision to support learners' personal growth and positive wellbeing. In addition learners who completed the course during the 2-year project and may need to develop their skills and enhance their well-being will be offered courses to in Assertiveness, Stress Management and Confidence Building and Self-Esteem

- 3.5** Further information showing the profile of adults attending Adult/Family learning programmes in 2016/17 is detailed below:

Disability/Learning Difficulty

Yes	41%
No	63%

Gender

F	72%
M	28%

Ethnicity

Arab	0.2%
Bangladeshi	0.2%
Black African	0.3%
Black Caribbean	0.1%
Black Other	0.3%
Chinese	0.4%
Indian	0.2%
Not known	1.3%
Other	0.2%
Other Asian	0.6%
Other Mixed	0.3%
Pakistani	0.1%
Prefer not to say	0.4%
White and African	0.1%

White and Asian	0.2%
White and Caribbean	0.3%
White British	92.7%
White Irish	0.7%
White Other	1.9%

3.6 Further information showing the demographic profile of adults attending learning programmes in 2016/17 is detailed below:

Ward

Appleton	7.1%
Beechwood	2.0%
Birchfield	2.9%
Broadheath	5.0%
Daresbury	0.9%
Ditton	7.5%
Farnworth	4.3%
Grange	4.3%
Hale	0.4%
Halton Brook	5.3%
Halton Castle	7.8%
Halton Lea	7.3%
Halton View	7.5%
Heath	2.4%
Hough Green	5.8%
Kingsway	5.7%
Mersey	6.2%
Norton North	3.1%
Norton South	6.0%
Riverside	6.3%
Windmill Hill	3.8%

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Improving skills and employment prospects of residents is a key strategic theme in the Corporate Plan and therefore the development of maths, English and ICT must remain a priority.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In 2016/2017, an Area Based Review of skills took place across Liverpool City Region. Part of the review includes the devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB), which both council Adult Learning services and FE colleges in the region receive. Full devolution of the budget is expected to be for the 2018/19 academic year. The Adult Learning Team is co-operating with city region colleagues in determining key requirements

necessary for receiving an AEB allocation. It is likely that there will be a redistribution of AEB across the providers in the city region; current allocations are based on out of date historical data.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The relationship between adult skills and children's achievement is well documented. Family learning data shows that children who are involved in family learning enjoy higher attainment. Feedback shows that parents also feel better able to support children's learning and are more confident to work in partnership with schools. These outcomes could potentially support other initiatives such as Troubled Families and offer supplementary interventions to develop skills of both children and parents. A national enquiry into Family Learning in England and Wales, 'Family Learning Works', outlines recommendations for England which include:

- Family Learning should be integral to school strategies to raise children's attainment and to narrow the gap between the lowest and highest achievers
- Key government departments should include Family Learning in their policies and strategies in order to achieve cross-departmental outcomes

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Adult learning is a key element of employment, learning and skills strategies to engage those furthest from the labour market and improve employability. 76% of learners are unemployed and 66% have been employed for longer than 6 months, 44% longer than 36 months. The Adult Learning Team and wider division secured European Social Funding (January 2016- end December 2018) to deliver a Ways to Work project and this funding is helping to increase the employability levels of Halton's residents who are out of work through a range of targeted interventions. ESF funding is able to work in a complementary way with the Education & Skills Funding Agency allocation.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

There is a relationship between poor health and low skill levels. By increasing learners' skills and confidence levels, community learning can contribute to an increase in the number of adults enjoying better health. Evidence of impact measures collected within the service show that 25% of learners on leisure type courses enjoy improved mental health and wellbeing and 36% improved their confidence. More clinical measures employed on the Mental Health project show improved PHQ and GAD scores following adult learning intervention.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Learners on Family Learning programmes have options to study units to keep children healthy and safe. Childcare learners study Safeguarding

units in more depth and this knowledge contributes to a safer community as well being applied professionally. Learners on sector specific employability courses (e.g. Care, Construction) cover health and safety in the workplace as part of their studies. The most recent Ofsted report recognises that safeguarding policies and procedures within the Division, including referrals, are comprehensive and implemented well. It goes on to say that managers have implemented successfully a detailed and high-quality action plan to reduce the risk of extremism and radicalisation to learners. Learners are made sufficiently aware of the risks associated with using the Internet to keep themselves safe.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal
N/A

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Funding for 2017/18 has been agreed at the same level as 2016/17 and as such we feel there are no significant risks arising in the coming academic year.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Whilst there is good provision to engage those working at Entry 3 – Level 2 skill levels, further investment is needed to engage those furthest away from the labour market.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.