

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

DATE: 27 June 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People and Economy

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

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In line with a national 24% SFA funding reduction the 2015/16 accredited provision has been reduced, with the main qualification delivery focused on priority areas such as maths, English, employability, ICT and childcare.

3.2 Established curriculum areas which produce good quality outcomes for learners with lower skills still remain, for example, Family Learning and craft based subjects. 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 8 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 2013 It has been a service priority to increase the amount of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment. This quality improvement plan has been developed by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead Officer who has implemented a programme of tutor CPD which includes termly Inspire sessions, Peer Exchange Groups and good practice newsletter, Horizon.

3.4 The service is part of a national pilot / research project to assess the impact of adult learning on the recovery of learners with mild/moderate mental health difficulties. We are currently coming to the end of Year 1 and have worked with approximately 85 learners to help them manage their condition

and move forward with their learning. Analysis of data is currently taking place at national level, after which we will hear whether we have been selected to continue into Year 2.

3.5 Further information showing the profile of adults attending Adult / Family learning programmes in 2015/16 will be provided at the meeting.

3.6 Further information showing the demographic profile of adults attending Adult / Family learning programmes in 2015/16 to date will be provided at the meeting.

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

Discussions are currently underway to implement an Area Based Review as outlined elsewhere on this agenda, and this could have financial/delivery implications for the service from 2018.

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

Community learning is a key element of employment, learning and skills strategies to engage those furthest from the labour market and improve employability. There is some provision to support marginalised residents but more investment is needed for these groups to ensure equality of opportunity.

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 learners on leisure type courses enjoy improved mental health and wellbeing. 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.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal N/A

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Funding for 2016/17 has been agreed at the same level as 2015/16 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

None under the meaning of the Act.