

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning and Skills and
Community PPB

DATE: 10 November 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Children and Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Economic Development

SUBJECT: Adult Learning Provision in Halton 2014/15

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Members on the current position of Adult Learning activity within the borough.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Executive Board

(1) Notes the impact and potential of the 2014/15 adult learning programme.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

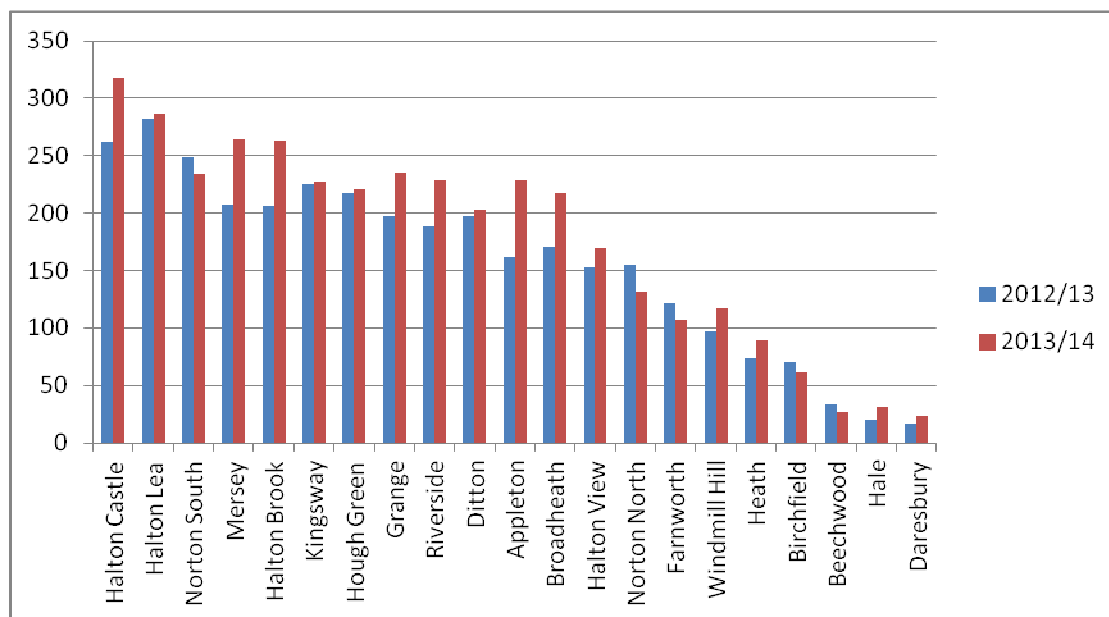
- 3.1 Members are advised that the Adult and Family Learning curriculum offer has been amended for the 2014/15 academic year to better align with the council's priorities and reflect on the wider economy.
- 3.2 The 2014/15 curriculum contains more accredited provision with a bigger focus on progression routes into further or higher education. Longer courses spanning a full academic year, such as Counselling and a Teaching Assistant course are now offered. It is expected that delivering one course over 3 terms rather than 3 shorter courses will have an impact on the number of learners that will be supported during the coming year.
- 3.3 All ICT provision is now being accredited with Functional Skills qualifications starting at Entry Level 1 and progressing through to Level 2 ECDL.
- 3.4 Those established curriculum areas which produce good quality outcomes for learners with lower skills still remain for example, Family Learning, volunteer reading programme.
- 3.5 Some popular engagement courses such as cake decorating also remain.
- 3.6 All other leisure courses have been cut for 2014/15 with alternative half day workshops being offered in these areas.
- 3.7 Table 1 shows the profile of adults attending Adult / Family learning programmes in 2013/14

Learners 2013/14	Accredited Adult Learning	Non-accredited Adult Learning	Family Learning
Number of enrolments	557	993	350
Number of qualifications	424		81
Learners with a disability / difficulty	32%	31%	16%
Learners from ethnic backgrounds	2%	1%	1%
Male learners	26%	27%	6%
Under 25	9%	6%	13%
25-34	27%	23%	43%
35-44	21%	22%	28%
45-54	24%	19%	10%
55-64	15%	15%	4%
65+	4%	15%	2%

3.8 Table 2 shows the demographic profile of adults attending Adult / Family learning programmes in 2013/14

Learners 2013/14	Accredited Adult Learning	Non-accredited Adult Learning	Family Learning
Disadvantaged Wards	17%	23%	24%
LSOAs	38%	38%	45%

3.9 Graph 1 shows engagement figures per ward for academic years 2012/13 and 2013/14



- 3.10 Members of the Employment Learning and Skills and Community PPB receive regular updates relating to adult learning performance through the Quarterly Monitoring Reports. However, it is felt that Members would appreciate a more in depth presentation, which will provide details on how the provision is currently delivered.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Analysis of the Skills for Life 2011 survey shows that IT skill levels are lower in Halton compared to the national average and development of these skills must remain a priority in Halton with a borough wide focus on digital inclusion.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Recent change in Skills Funding Agency funding has led to a move away from fully grant funded activity with more emphasis on a payment by results basis. The service is now required to draw down funding based on the number of qualifications achieved, with only a small amount devolved on a grant basis, specifically for community learning. This has led to an increase in the delivery of qualification based courses and a decrease in the number of non-accredited, leisure type courses being offered to residents.

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 Inspiring 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 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.

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

None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The removal of core council funding and a potential review of children's centre learning may have implications in reaching those in most need of skills development.

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