

# Halton Adult Learning. Test and Learn Innovation Projects Report.



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*Liverpool City  
Region Combined  
Authority Test &  
Learn Projects at  
Halton Adult  
Learning.  
'An Opportunity for  
Innovation and  
Growth'*



## Overview of the Test & learn Projects

### The Rationale

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Devolved Adult Education budget offered the opportunity and flexibility for Adult Learning Providers to submit and deliver innovation projects with a focused on Digital, English and/or maths aims that linked with local or regional skills needs.

***‘Educational attainment levels in the key areas of English, maths and digital have improved – but not enough’.***

**(Skills Strategy 2018-2023 page 14).**

Halton Adult Learning were approved to deliver two projects under the Test & Learn initiative in the academic year 2020-21.

### Project 1- Digital Marketing and Media

This project was divided into three delivery elements to support local residents understand, study and explore employment opportunities in the ‘Digital Employment Sector’ or into further study. The programme was co-delivered by Halton Adult Learning and a local industry specialist company ‘Mako’, with a view to upskilling tutors to take elements of the project forwards into the next academic year using our AEB allocation.

### The three elements of the project were :

#### Web Design

The project supported learners in understanding how to create their own website to either support in current employment and upskill or for those learners that were interested in setting up their own businesses and marketing their product or business idea.

### **Introduction to Coding**

This element was designed to support learners understanding of basic coding. They had the opportunity to code a variety of devices to spark an interesting in this ever growing digital sector.

### **Digital Marketing & Media**

This element of the provision was designed to support those already in employment to upskill in using digital marketing and media tools and platforms to promote their business on a digital platform more effectively. Or to support those learners who had an interest in digital marketing and media into Further Education opportunities or increase their employment prospects.

### **Overall Figures**

	Courses	Learners	Withdrawals	Attendance	Retention	Pass rate	Achievement
Autumn 2019	4	25	3	87.8%	88.0%	100%	88.0%
Spring 2020	4	35	11	77.7%	68.6%	95.8%	65.7%
Summer 2020	4	38	5	98.3%	86.7%	100%	86.8%
Workshops	2	12	0	100%	100%	-	-
Total	12	98	19	88.4%	80.6%	98.7%	79.6%

Retention has created some challenge in terms of personal reasons, health and family commitment. In response to this, workshops were organised to take place during Enrolment Days to ensure potential learners were more aware of the course content and expectations.

However, this was hindered by COVID-19 and those additional workshops could not go ahead. As a result, using remote methods, individual consultations were undertaken with learners for the online course provision to ensure it met their needs and expectations and they had the appropriate level of IT skill and kit to engage fully in the course content.

Retention for the Spring provision was hindered for a number of learners due to COVID-19, some felt uncomfortable coming to Centre in the lead up to lockdown and other could not continue to access

the provision online (5). One learner could not continue with the course as he had gained full time employment. Another could not continue to attend due to his partner's shift change and childcare challenges.

Many of the learners on course didn't have the appropriate kit or were working from home or home schooling children so were unable to transfer to the online provision at that stage to complete the course.

Summer Term was solely remote teaching and delivery, learners were clear about the time commitment and expectations of the course prior to beginning the course which then boosted both Retention and Achievement rates.

### **Learner Feedback and Evaluations**

*"Really inclusive class."*

*"I am particularly impressed that this Coding course went ahead in lock down and was still delivered to such a high standard."*

*"Provided an inclusive learning environment given the current climate."*

*"It's been great, particularly during lockdown when I could've felt quite isolated. It's been a positive experience to take part in a long term online learning plan. It's given structure to my week, a point of focus and also allowed me the chance to regularly interact with other people. I've felt part of a learning community which has had a positive effect on my mental health."*

*"Really well structured and organised lessons, amazing we could do it all amidst a pandemic."*

*"It's fun! I felt motivated and part of a little gang of learners, which has been particularly uplifting during lockdown when I've been so isolated. I'll be quite disappointed to have my Tuesday evenings to myself again and I'll actually miss seeing the others in the class."*

*"I enjoyed it, everyone was treated the same everyone had respect"*

*"The lessons are very well put together and Sean and Lindsey are very helpful and friendly. The information is extensive and I have got a lot out of it"*

*“They’re friendly, compassionate, and efficient. I really appreciated their attitude to make sure everyone had what they needed and more. Really encouraging atmosphere!”*

*“The course was well structured and packed with information. Easy to access, lots of support. I really enjoyed the course”*

*“It has extremely friendly staff who break down the lessons so that they are easy to digest and understand”*

*“The course was well organised from start to finish, the course organiser and the tutor worked well together. Considering the new format of Zoom lessons they adapted to the situation well. It was the first time that the course was presented this way and it worked extremely well. There were very few IT issues and then they were very minor things that were sorted out there and then. ”*

## **Project 2- Engage with Reading**

This project was designed to train ‘Reading Volunteers’ and match them with learners who had lower level reading skills to boost their confidence and ability, encouraging those individuals to pursue English qualifications and to support their progress within or into employment. Additionally, for the Reading volunteers it was an opportunity to give something back to the community, which was highlighted in Times Education Supplement, please see the link below:

<https://www.tes.com/news/how-liverpool-ripped-adult-education-rulebook>

### Overall Figures

	Courses	Learners	Withdrawals	Attendance	Retention	Pass rate	Achievement
Spring 2020	1	12	1	88.2%	91.66%	100%	91.6%
Total	1	12	1	88.2%	91.66%	100%	91.6%

Sadly, the Reading Volunteers programme was heavily impacted by COVID, it prevented the volunteers working with their learners as with lockdown there was no opportunity for them to work on a 1:1 basis together in community spaces as originally planned. Also, learners and volunteers didn’t have the technical ability and kit for this to be approached through a remote platform.

## **Reading Volunteer Feedback and Evaluations**

*'For something that I can do so naturally, this has been a real awareness into the complexity of the English language.'*

*'A good balance of teaching and discussion'*

*'Good level of support from course and aware of what is expected'*

*'Good all-round knowledge of both how we will help learners and also possible struggles learners may have'*

*'Lots of information to process and we have received plenty of handouts and paperwork to begin our journey with our learners'*

*'The tutors have striped everything back to basics to give us a greater understanding of how to teach reading'.*

## **New Test and Learn Projects 2020-21**

### **Reading Volunteers continued**

Due to COVID and the lockdown restrictions, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority recognised the impact this had had on Halton Adult Learning's ability to fully deliver the Reading Volunteers and funding was reallocated into a second year of delivery. However, this has been impacted in a number of ways due to National and Local lockdown restrictions. Attracting reading volunteers to the programme whilst delivering on a remote platform has been difficult. Also a number of people keen to train as a reading volunteer have been restricted by lack of kit and IT skill or have wider family or work commitments that have made attending the online course difficult. We have another launch scheduled for Spring term 2 and are currently exploring a 'Digital Equipment Loan scheme' to be able to provide the necessary IT equipment to those who need it to be able to access the provision.

### **Project 2- Digital Innovation**

This new Test & Learn has focused on developing all staff into 'Digital Champions' through the securing of TEAMS as a remotely digital platform for teaching. We have utilised members of the IT staff to become Digital Champions and train the wider team to become proficient and confident in delivering remote teaching and learning on the TEAMS platform. Additionally, a programme has been design to train 'Learner Digital Champions' to act as IT teaching assistant support in classes. Developing their skills and work experience to support them in pursuing Further Education qualifications in digital technology, develop their skills as volunteers to support in wider community projects or to gain work experience to enhance their CV and support with employment opportunities. However, due to the National and Local lockdown restrictions delivering the 'Learner Champions' element has proven difficult as again learners either didn't have the necessary kit, or were working from home or home schooling. A relaunch of this element of the project is scheduled for Spring 2, again supported by the 'Digital Equipment Loan Scheme'.

The third element of the digital innovation project is 'Film Making' which has recently launched successfully with learners gaining skills in creating short films through the use of a variety of equipment, again sparking an interest in these education or career pathways.

### **Project 3- Enhancing IT, maths and English skills for parents with young children.**

This provision is designed to support parents accessing our Children's Centre programmes. It is a combined delivery approach to support parents to up skill their English, maths and digital skills whilst developing their ability to support their child's early speech, language and communication. This is a borough wide focus as GLD scores are low across the borough. The provision works to upskill parents while supporting the development of early speech, language and communication for children aged between 0 to 5 years, contributing to raising skill levels and attainment. Interwoven with this are qualifications that lead to progression into the CACHE Caring for Children Level 1 and Teaching Assistant Level 2 qualifications as well as encouraging parents to undertake Functional Skills qualifications in English, maths and ICT.

The offer promotes a variety of activities that will develop parents' digital skills, along with employability skills, as well as developing understanding in areas such as reading, phonics and mathematical calculations.

The first launch took place in Autumn 2 on TEAMS as a remote learning platform and parents felt it benefitted them well in their own understanding and in supporting their children. However, with the recent lockdown restrictions, many parents have been unable to join these courses as they are home schooling their children. The limited IT equipment has created a barrier for some learners to access

this provision along with the continued closure of the Children Centre's for face to face delivery. These parents will also be considered for the 'Digital Loan Scheme'.

Due to the success of the Coding and Web Design provision last year, this now forms part of our AEB funding provision and continues to prove popular.