



Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director – Place

Report to:	Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee
Date:	20 October 2020
Subject:	Adult Skills & Family Learning Programme 2020/21 and the impact of Covid-19

Summary:

This report provides a summary of changes made to the delivery of the Adult Learning programme, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and outlines its potential impact on future programme delivery.

Actions Required:

Members of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee are invited to review the Adult Learning Service's response to the Covid-19 crisis in respect of helping to future proof the delivery of the Council's Adult Learning programme, and the continuing impact of Covid-19 on programme delivery.

1. Background

The Council's Adult Skills & Family Learning programme provides training for around 6,000 Lincolnshire residents each year. A large part of the programme is subcontracted to training providers across Lincolnshire ensuring residents have access to high quality, local provision.

Context

At the height of the pandemic all classroom learning provision was cancelled. Combined with very limited experience of delivering online and challenges in accessing learners, the Adult Learning Service set itself two main targets which were to:

1. Maintain learning for those learners on programme
2. Support staff and providers and reduce some of the anxieties where possible.

In response, we refreshed the service's website, www.2aspire.org.uk, to provide learning at home advice and activities, careers and job hunting advice and links to online learning. We provided online training, buddying and mentoring for our tutors and providers, and changed the curriculum offer to better suit the online

arena. Through this we have been able to maintain a learning programme for our learners which, in part, have helped them to complete the qualifications they signed up for back in August 2019. We are particularly pleased that we have been able to continue to deliver our Construction courses to groups of long term unemployed learners to achieve their CSCS card (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) to gain employment in Construction. Progression into work from these Construction courses has been very positive, despite the on-going challenges.



To support the continued development of the Adult Learning programme, we are launching an online learning platform this month. This will provide our tutors and providers with a single, robust, secure and integrated system to create personalised learning environments. The service will be better equipped to reach out to its learners and ensure continuity of provision regardless of whether or not they are able to attend classroom learning.

Challenges

Working in the current climate has increased the risk of under-delivering against the targets agreed for the 2020/21 academic year, as outlined in Appendix A: *ASFL 2020-21 planned programme*. These challenges include:

- Increasing uncertainty as a result of the spread of the virus and unwillingness to attend classroom learning
- Reduced appetite for staff development from smaller businesses because they are focussing on survival
- Difficulties in delivering qualification programmes due to restrictions and lack of IT equipment
- Lack of suitable school teaching space to ensure the safety of those involved leading to the postponement / cancellation of school based programmes
- Fragility of local providers, combined with restrictions, impacting on community engagement

A risk analysis has been undertaken to mitigate against risks identified. As a result, a wider range of provision has been commissioned to encourage learner engagement, as well as planning for 30% of the provision to be delivered online to reduce reliance on classroom delivery. A flexible curriculum, combined with a

blended delivery model, has helped to improve Provider resilience. A promotional programme is in place to raise the awareness of the changing online offer.

The Adult Learning Service continues to deliver a responsive programme, offering a flexible approach to accessing Adult Learning courses to meet the changing needs of Providers and learners alike; positioning itself as part of the post Covid-19 recovery.

2. Conclusion

Members of the Committee are invited to comment on changes made, in year, by the Adult Skills & Family Learning Service, and the continuing impact of Covid-19 on programme delivery.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Risks and Impact Analysis have been included in the body of the paper

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	ASFL 2020-21 planned programme

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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