



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

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	12 December 2023
Subject:	Multiply - Numeracy Programme Update

Summary:

We know maths is really important in life. Having good maths skills means better employment chances, higher wages, and better well-being.

Good maths skills can make everyday life better, whether it is helping children with their homework, budgeting and money management, or understanding facts and information.

For employers, the programme helps to tackle problems of low productivity and support entry into employment.

Through outreach activities and classroom learning provision, the Multiply programme has engaged over 1,800 residents in Year 2. However, as a result of the cost of living crisis, many residents who would best benefit from Multiply interventions are in work and therefore unable to access the community based provision in place. We have therefore focused significant effort in trying to engage employers, both directly through our Provider network and also through the Champion programme, to mitigate for this. Unfortunately, our efforts at employer engagement have been met with mixed results.

This report provides an overview of the Multiply activities being delivered in Year 2 of this Department for Education funded programme, and identifies areas for additional focus to widen participation.

Actions Required:

Members of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee are invited to:

- (1) Acknowledge the work taking place to deliver the Year 2 Multiply programme.
- (2) Discuss how they can help to overcome the negative connotations associated with previous experiences of learning maths to engage more residents into the Multiply programme.

(3) Consider employers in their local areas whose workforce would benefit from Multiply numeracy provision to support increased productivity.

1. Background

Multiply and Levelling Up

- 1.1 A key component of the Government's Levelling Up agenda is to ensure that by 2030 the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of England.
- 1.2 Accordingly, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) has allocated £270m to be spent in England on local numeracy provision.
- 1.3 The programme has provided a needs-based allocation to Lincolnshire of £4,021,671 between 2022 and 2025 to deliver adult (19/+) numeracy provision.

The Multiply Programme in Lincolnshire – Year 2

- 1.4 Contractual arrangements are in place with 17 organisations, as outlined in Appendix A, to deliver the Year 2 Multiply programme.
- 1.5 A key aspect of the Multiply funding is to be innovative and try out new ways to recruit learners and deliver maths provision to widen participation and reach those learners that are not being reached through more traditional methods. An overview of the programme in place is provided below:
 - An expanded and innovative curriculum, delivered in community and employer venues across the county, at a time to suit the learner/employer, providing free refreshments and incentives linked to attainment, etc.
 - Engagement workshops with employers that provide a unique approach to learner recruitment in terms of promoting new opportunities as the primary goal rather than straight to a qualification aim.
 - Fun, low risk, engagement sessions providing practical scenario-based learning.
 - Prizes and pathways for the learners to increase the fun and engagement element of the programme through light-hearted competition and rewards.
 - Innovatively delivered series of sessions in school on lunchbox challenges and the cost of Christmas alongside maths bingo and supermarket comparisons.
 - Supporting entrepreneurship through crafting. Learners will be supported to learn a craft and sell their products in host cafes. While learning a craft, learners will also benefit from learning vital self-employment skills, e.g. forecasting, budgeting, taking payments, exploring different ways to sell their goods online, e.g. Etsy.

- Careers-centred approach providing masterclasses based on specific numeracy skills required for:
 - Agri-Food and Manufacturing/Production
 - Health and Care
 - Warehousing and Logistics
 - Business Administration
- 1.6 Providers are encouraged to work in partnership to increase the reach of the programme. Partners involved in the recruitment and delivery of the programme include employers, community organisations, District Councils, Housing Associations, churches, local social services, children’s centres, citizen’s advice bureau, food banks, YMCA, DWP, local libraries, Lincolnshire traveller initiative, Everyone Active (EA), Magna Vitae, Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU), University of Lincoln, International Institute for Rural Health, and Shaw Trust.
- 1.7 A range of employers are benefitting from Multiply provision in Year 2. These include Gousto, Bourne Salads, Bakkavor Spalding, South Kesteven District Council, Grantham Hospital, Bluebird Care (across Lincolnshire), and Lincolnshire NHS Trust (incorporating Lincolnshire wide GP practices and health clinics, Social Care (Domiciliary and Residential), Lincoln and Boston Hospitals, Mental Health NHS Trust and Community NHS Trust).
- 1.8 The Multiply Interventions approved for delivery across Lincolnshire are listed below, and mapped against delivery organisations and geographical areas in Appendix A:
- 1) Courses designed to **increase confidence** with numbers for those needing the first steps towards formal numeracy qualifications.
 - 2) Courses designed to help people use numeracy to **manage their money**.
 - 3) Innovative numeracy programmes delivered together **with employers** – including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills required in the workplace.
 - 4) Courses aimed at people who cannot apply for certain jobs because of lack of numeracy skills and/or to encourage people to upskill in numeracy in order to access a certain job/career (**supporting job skills**).
 - 5) New intensive and flexible numeracy courses targeted at people without Level 2 maths, leading to a Functional Skills Qualification.
 - 6) **Courses for parents** wanting to increase their numeracy skills in order to help their children, and help with their own progression.
 - 7) Numeracy courses **aimed at prisoners**, those recently released from prison or on temporary licence.
 - 9) Numeracy activities, courses or provision developed in partnership with community organisations and other partners aimed at engaging the **hardest to reach** learners – for example, those not in the labour market or other groups identified locally as in need.
 - 10) Additional relevant maths modules embedded into other vocational courses (**modules for Vocational Courses**).

1.9 Year 2 Multiply Performance data

The Department for Education has commended Lincolnshire County Council on its strong Year 2 Multiply learner recruitment, to date. Since the beginning of April, we have engaged with over 1,000 residents to deliver Multiply programmes to improve adult numeracy skills, as outlined below:

Aspect	Data *
Number on programme	1,018
Target groups	
Males	35.7%
Unemployed	61.1%
Ethnic Minorities	20.4%
Learning with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	36.3%
Learners with low qualifications **	49.6%
Learners living in areas of deprivation	24.6%
Location of learners	
Boston	12.4%
East Lindsey	17.5%
Lincoln	21.1%
North Kesteven	9.8%
South Holland	20.4%
South Kesteven	11.3%
West Lindsey	5.9%
Out of County	1.6%

* Data extracted 21.11.23

** Definition of low qualifications is Level 2 or under

Impact of Multiply

1.10 We are proud of the impact the Multiply programme is having on those involved. This includes:

- Melanie who attended a *Multiply Employability, Money Management and Budgeting* course run by Lagat, under contract to LCC, in partnership with Sure Trust. Melanie was living with no heat, little light and struggling to pay her bills. Her confidence was low, and she was suffering from depression. With skilful tutor support, Melanie's confidence developed over the time she was enrolled on the programme and subsequently, with support from Lagat and Sure Trust, she was successful in securing a part-time position with Lincolnshire Co-Op.

- Ethan who has completed a number of Multiply courses, including *Maths Zumba* and *Maths Fantastic* with Riverside training in Gainsborough to build his confidence with maths in interesting, engaging and practical ways. After much hard work by Ethan, he was able to secure an interview with golf manufacturer, Ping. Ethan attended his interview and was offered a role with Ping earlier in the year.
- Learners on the Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust programme who, having successfully completed their Level 2 Functional Skills qualifications through our Multiply funding, are now undertaking their Nursing Apprenticeships. A great way to develop the next generation of NHS workers.
- Krystal who attended Multiply engagement workshops in the school kitchen at Monks Abbey Primary School delivered by Abbey Access Training in Lincoln. Krystal's previous experience of learning, particularly in maths, had not been particularly positive and she was therefore hesitant about engaging. With encouragement, she agreed to try the first workshop and enjoyed it so much that she engaged in a further workshop before progressing onto a 10-hour course. Her confidence has grown astronomically and she is now considering enrolling on a qualification course. The impact has in turn extended to her children and the family's engagement with the school. Krystal also recently made an appearance on *Songs of Praise* talking about how much her confidence has grown over the past year, which is incredible progress.

Multiply Champions

1.11 In addition to the provision outlined above, the funding has been utilised to develop **Multiply Champions**. Grants have been awarded to 56 organisations including YMCA, Tonic Health, Community Maintenance Service CIC, Lincolnshire Action Trust, North Sea Camp, the Lincolnshire Travellers' Initiative, Lincolnshire Co-Op, ACTS Trust and Magna Vitae. This activity complements the work of our community training providers:

- Lincolnshire Travellers' Initiative has been running small classes with women to understand credit and navigate debt more effectively. Learner incentives are used to reward travellers for their involvement and achievements.
- ACTS Trust is overcoming people's reluctance to talk about money and maths by putting conversation prompts around the building to encourage casual conversations. The ACTS Trust Multiply Champion is helping people to understand bills and income versus expenditure with powerful results and is boosting his colleagues' confidence.
- Magna Vitae is supporting colleagues to link in with their child's school to get support from the teachers so that they can understand and help with what is being taught to their children – the Multiply champion gave them the confidence to engage with the school.

- The Multiply Champions at North Sea Camp include two prisoners who will be promoting the Multiply training opportunities via peer to peer support and encouragement which includes not just training around budgeting, but support with parental homework duties etc to support both face to face on home visits or via video link. This all helps to build skills and reduce re-offending.

1.12 A strong programme is in place to support our network of Multiply Champions. The first LinknLearn event was held on 14 November to connect our Champions, share what is working well and develop an informal Lincolnshire 'peer network'. A small sample of the issues shared across the diverse group includes:

- The conviction that 'I can't do maths ...' is a major barrier and can involve building self-confidence and 'unlearning' negative school experiences.
- Numeracy learning is often most effective in the context of 'real-life' skills, for example, understanding payslips, or improving budgeting skills, where people face significant financial / deb-management worries.
- The importance of a 'safe space' to learn numeracy skills at people's own pace.

Multiply Year 2 Resident Survey

1.13 A Multiply Resident's Survey has been undertaken to support our programme delivery. We asked the public about:

- their views on maths.
- the best ways for them to access available learning opportunities.

In total there were 315 responses, following a wide-ranging public campaign. The largest group of respondents were retired or in full-time employment. The most chosen ways to take part in learning were short sessions online, once a week. When asked what '*maths means to you*' the most common responses were:

- Numbers
- Difficult
- Problem solving
- Budgeting Fear
- Everyday life

Nearly 50% of respondents said they would like to '*have a better understanding of things like: interest rates, mortgages, loans, APR fees and debt management*'.

2. Conclusion

There is a strong Multiply programme in place that, through innovative engagement and delivery methods, is performing well.

However, it is recognised that those members of the public particularly affected by the cost-of-living crisis, and who would best benefit from numeracy support, are not engaging.

Some of this, we know, is due to poor memories of previous experiences of learning maths. Access to Multiply provision is also challenging for those residents in work. Significant work has been undertaken to engage employers to provide Multiply provision for their employees. Unfortunately, the results from this activity have been disappointing and we are keen to explore different approaches to widen this aspect of the programme.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Multiply Programme 2023-24 - Location of provision by delivery organisation

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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