

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Report to Executive Board

Date: 22 March 2017

Subject: Ofsted Inspection of Adult Learning

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. Through the Adult Learning Programme the Council provides a broad range of learning and support to 8,000 adults each year. The programme aims to widen participation, build stronger communities and challenge disadvantage through learning. Through participation many adults, often with multiple and complex barriers, become involved in learning, work or life in their community and improve their personal, social and employability skills. This contributes to the achievement of Best Council Plan 2016-17 priorities of supporting economic growth and access to economic opportunities, supporting communities and raising aspirations.
2. This Skills Funding Agency funded provision is subject to inspection under Part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Ofsted undertook the inspection of provision on 8th and 9th February 2017. Ofsted published the Inspection Letter on 8 March 2017, recording that the Council Adult Learning provision continues to be Good and that safeguarding is effective.

Recommendations

3. Executive Board is asked to note the inspection outcome for the Council's adult learning provision and the actions being taken to continue to strengthen performance and quality.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information on the outcome of the recent Ofsted Inspection of the Council's adult learning provision delivered in communities across Leeds.
- 1.2 The report provides summary information on the Adult Learning programme, the Inspection process, the key findings and the actions required to continue to strengthen the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The City Council is contracted as the local fund manager by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to deliver a broad and balanced programme of adult learning in Leeds. The Adult Learning Programme is aimed at re-engagement of adults aged 19 years plus (25 years plus for those learners with a Learning Difficulty or Disability), with learning in an informal and safe environment to acquire new skills and interests for the benefit of the individual, their family and their wider community. Adult Learning aims to provide a progression gateway to more formal adult learning, social mobility and longer term employment opportunities.
- 2.2 The programme supports up to 8,000 learners each academic year at over 125 venues across the city including community centres and community hubs. 30% of the provision is delivered by the Employment and Skills service and 70% is sub-contracted to 22 providers. The majority of providers are third sector organisations with strong networks within local communities along with two of the largest providers of adult learning in the city, Leeds City College and Swarthmore.
- 2.3 Courses are largely non-accredited and are offered across a range of subject areas primarily at entry level and level 1. The programme offer was reported in detail at the October 2016 meeting of the Executive Board. The current range of courses can be viewed on the Council's website under [Learning Opportunities](#)
- 2.4 This Skills Funding Agency provision is subject to inspection under Part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. Ofsted use a four point grading scale:
 - Grade 1: Outstanding
 - Grade 2: Good
 - Grade 3: Requires improvement
 - Grade 4: Inadequate.

The Council's Adult Learning provision was last inspected by Ofsted in April 2013 and was awarded 'Good' across all performance areas.

- 2.5 Providers awarded 'Good' or 'Outstanding' for overall effectiveness at their previous inspection are unlikely to be inspected for at least three years unless their performance drops or, where there is a breach of other priority considerations e.g. safeguarding. This will normally be a short inspection but may be a full inspection where information suggests that this is the most appropriate course of action, for example if the provider's performance has declined.

3. Main Issues

3.1 Ofsted Inspection Framework

- 3.1.1 Ofsted notified the Council on 6 February that it would undertake a short inspection on 8th and 9th February 2017 to review the Council's Skills Funding Agency provision, including subcontracted provision, against all aspects of the Common Inspection Framework 2015.
- 3.1.2 The Framework is broadly focused on four areas: the effectiveness of leadership and management, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, outcomes for learners and personal development behaviour and welfare. The main purpose of short inspections is to evaluate:
- whether the provider remains good
 - whether safeguarding is effective or not
 - the capacity of all leaders, managers and governors to drive continued improvement
 - how well the provider has dealt with any areas for improvement identified at the previous full inspection or areas identified as requiring attention following a previous short inspection.
- 3.1.3 There are three possible outcomes for a short inspection. These are that the provider continues to be assessed as good; or there is sufficient evidence of improved performance to suggest the provider may be judged outstanding therefore the short inspection will be converted to a full inspection; or there is insufficient evidence to satisfy the inspection team that the provider remains good and the short inspection is converted to a full inspection.

3.2 Inspection Process

- 3.2.1 The inspection examines key documents such as the strategy and implementation plans, improvement plans and arrangements for safeguarding as well as a range of quality and performance data. Central to this is the annually produced Self-Assessment Report (SAR). The inspection examines the findings against the self-assessment to evaluate how accurately providers have self-assessed their own performance.
- 3.2.2 The team of 5 Inspectors met with and spoke to the Executive Member, Employment, Skills and Opportunity and senior officers and programme managers in the Employment and Skills service. The team visited a range of contracted providers and the direct delivered provision to observe lessons and assessments; held meetings with managers, tutors and learners; and scrutinised learners' work and assessment records.

3.3 Inspection Outcome

- 3.3.1 Ofsted published the Inspection Letter at Appendix 1 on 8 March 2017 recording that the Council Adult Learning provision continues to be Good and that safeguarding is effective.

3.3.2 The inspection letter also highlights the fact that the Council has a clear vision and strategy to target provision to residents who will benefit from it the most; the integration of provision with the wider employment and skills offer and support services managed by the Council and that of partners; the quality monitoring and improvement procedures have been strengthened.

3.3.3 The Letter confirms that good progress has been made in addressing the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection although some are yet to be fully resolved and include:-

- Performance management of sub-contractors to ensure that service objectives and the needs of the targeted learners are met
- Improving information on learner destinations to inform decisions on the suitability and impact of programmes provided
- Improving the monitoring of how well tutors recognise and record learners' progress and achievements

3.4 Improvement Plan

3.4.1 A Quality Improvement Plan is developed by the service each year. This plan sets out the actions required, as identified in the SAR, with an ambition to move the provision from good to outstanding.

3.4.2 A number of improvement areas were identified at the last inspection and actioned through the Quality Improvement Plan. Progress against these has been good and key strengths identified through the recent SAR and Inspection include:-

- High levels of retention and achievement – outcomes for learners are good with 99.6% achieving the main aims of their course and 41.8% progressed into further or higher levels of learning
- High levels of learner satisfaction at 98.5%
- Good programme coverage and an extensive range of partnerships to reach learners in deprived neighbourhoods with 56.5% living in the 20% most deprived Super Output Areas and good engagement with BME communities which make up 47.7% of the learners on programme
- Good support to tutors to improve their teaching to meet the needs of learners and effectively raise standards through training, best practice forums and toolkits with 87% of all lessons demonstrating characteristics of good or outstanding practice
- Support to providers to meet key objectives on Equality and Diversity, Prevent and British Values and Online Safety
- Good Information, Advice and Guidance offered to learners to access a range of further learning and employment opportunities and wider support services. This has been strengthened through integration with the wider service offer and improved links with the Council's Community Hubs
- Strong contract management arrangements with improved use of data and management information systems to support quality improvements.

3.4.3 The improvement areas identified through the recent inspection have already been included in the draft Quality Improvement Plan with specific actions and outcome measures. The plan will be subject to further discussion and agreement with key stakeholders and providers through the Adult Learning Trust Board chaired by the Executive Member, Employment, Skills and Opportunity. The implementation of the

plan will be monitored through the service's performance framework and reported quarterly to the Board. These include:-

- Performance management of sub-contractors to ensure that service objectives and the needs of the targeted learners are met
 - The programme content will be reviewed to ensure that it fully meets the aims and objectives of the Adult Learning Strategy 2016-19
 - The Project Brief, against which provision is commissioned, will be refreshed to sharpen the focus
 - Performance reviews are undertaken on a regular basis these will include additional support and challenge where providers do not fully meet performance expectations
- Learner destinations – improving access to information and progression opportunities and the collection of actual destination data to assess the longer term impact of provision and improve progression opportunities through
 - surveys of learners that have completed courses commenced in December 2016
 - Ongoing observations of learning sessions and learner evaluations to confirm that progression routes have been planned and identified to learners.
 - Data sharing on referrals to providers of further and higher learning opportunities – work ongoing with Further Education providers
 - Strengthening links with other services and partners including Community Hub Jobshops, providers of volunteering opportunities and further and higher learning to provide information and a more coherent offer for progression
- Support to tutors to improve and take a consistent approach to recognising and recording learner progress and achievement
 - Identifying weak practice through observed teaching and learning assessments and internal verification processes
 - Improve SMART target setting with clear links to assessment activities by identifying and sharing best practice through provider meetings, tutor forums and workshops and toolkit resources on the programme's digital platform
 - By developing generic tracking and recording documentation (Individual Learning Plans) and working with individual providers and tutors to identify actions to improve the tracking and recording of learning where required.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 The Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan informs the commissioning, management and delivery planning of the Adult Learning programme. Information and evidence is gathered across the year from a variety of sources including the Leeds Adult Learning Trust Board (ALTB) comprising council services, HE, FE learning institutions and third sector stakeholders and is chaired by the Executive Member for Employment, Skills and Opportunity.
- 4.1.2 Provision has been determined by SFA requirements, Council priorities and, identified local need including intelligence obtained through Community

Committees, elected member led Employment and Skills Boards and other neighbourhood groups and local partnerships. Briefings are provided each term on the delivered and planned activity to Community Committee Champions providing them with the opportunity throughout the year to shape provision to better meet local needs. In addition, the programme is shaped by feedback received from providers and learners through the annual self-assessment reporting process, learner focus groups and classroom observations.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The Ofsted Common Inspection Framework requirements are built into the contract monitoring and quality assurance processes. This includes a key focus on equality and diversity including providing quality inclusive services, identifying and removing barriers and narrowing any gaps in learner participation and achievement.
- 4.2.2 All programme providers are required to submit Equality Diversity and Community Cohesion information as part of their contractual reporting to demonstrate that equality issues have been considered and will be embedded in the planning, delivery and review of provision. The process for reporting and monitoring equality and diversity information is clearly defined in the Adult Learning Programme provider handbook that is updated annually.
- 4.2.3 An equality screening was carried out on 21 July 2016 to inform the commissioning of the current provision. The findings from this assessment are that equality, diversity, cohesion and integration issues have been appropriately considered. Given that this is a report focused on the Inspection findings, the Equality Impact Assessment is not appended to this report.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

- 4.3.1 The Adult Learning programme contributes to the Best Council Plan 2016-17 priorities of supporting economic growth and access to economic opportunities, supporting communities and raising aspirations by providing skills programmes and access to employment opportunities. The programme also supports the achievement of the Council's ambitions to build a Child Friendly City by helping to improve the progression and achievement of children at school.
- 4.3.2 The programme will also help to deliver outcomes under the Best Council Plan's More Jobs, Better Jobs Breakthrough Project, in particular supporting the integration of skills support and health interventions including people with mild to moderate mental ill-health.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 Value for money is assessed under the Inspection framework measure relating to the effectiveness of Leadership and Management. The £2.1m programme is funded by the Skills Funding Agency through the Adult Education Budget 2016-17. Providers delivering the programme were selected from the Council's Adult Learning Framework 2014-17 contract following a robust procurement process which assessed factors such as quality of provision, learner outcomes and cost per learner to ensure the programme delivers value for money.

- 4.4.2 The set tariff rates for standard provision under the Council's Adult Learning Programme are comparable with those set by other local authority districts where provision is externally commissioned. Payments made to providers will be subject to the submission of invoices and satisfactory evidence of delivery and learner achievement.
- 4.4.3 The Adult Learning programme has been enhanced by a number of Pound Plus Initiatives with fee income raised by providers totalling £36,279 in the 2015/16 reinvested in provision, the alignment of other grant funding programmes, the use of volunteers and the shared use of premises and facilities by providers.
- 4.4.4 A Quality Improvement Plan has been drafted to address areas for improvement identified by the self-assessment and Inspection process and all planned activities can be resourced from within the Adult Learning budget.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 There are no significant legal issues relating to the recommendations in this report. This report is eligible for Call-In.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 All contracts awarded are subject to robust financial and quality monitoring procedures led by officers in the Employment and Skills Service and in accordance with the Council's and the SFA's regulations.
- 4.6.2 A privacy impact assessment was undertaken on 21 July 2016 to ensure that the Council and its external providers on the Adult Learning Framework remain compliant with information governance policies and statute

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The Council's Adult Learning provision is judged to be good and is effectively targeted to meet local needs and supports adults, many of whom have multiple and complex barriers to becoming involved in learning, work or life in their community, improve their personal, social and employability skills. Provision is effective in reaching those in most need – those furthest from the labour market including the long term unemployed; refugees; those recovering from long term health conditions; those with learning difficulties and disabilities; and those who have been victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.
- 5.2 While retention and achievement rates are consistently high more needs to be done to create a comprehensive picture of progression and destinations to understand the suitability and impact of provision in meeting learners' needs and service objectives. The established improvement planning processes has recognised these issues and informed actions already underway to address these and feed into our longer term ambitions to develop visible progression pathways as part of a responsive placed based approach with providers of higher level accredited training.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Executive Board is asked to note the inspection outcome for the Council's adult learning provision and the actions being taken to continue to strengthen performance and quality.

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1 There are no background documents.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.