

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Committee

15th March 2018

Report of the Head of Participation – Chris Millis

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All wards

Adult Community Learning Service in Neath Port Talbot

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Member of the progress of Adult Community Learning Service in Neath Port Talbot.

Executive Summary

2. This report contains an update of the work carried out by Adult Community Learning since the presentation of the RBA Report Card. ACL Data has been validated.

Background

3.

Adult Community Learning (ACL) delivers a range of learning activities for post 16 year olds in Neath Port Talbot. It is non-statutory and approximately 60% of adult community learning courses provided in Neath Port Talbot County are delivered by Adult Community Learning (ACL).

Adult Community Learning is externally funded through a grant from the Welsh Government and a franchise agreement with NPTC Group. Both contracts amount to a value of £478K. The ACL direct funding grant from the Welsh Government increased by 13% for 17/18 and will remain the same for 18/19. Funding from the college covers the academic year – August - July and the service is on track to deliver the appropriate amount of learning to ensure the funding allocation for 17/18.

ACL is one of the lead partners of the Adult Learning Network (ALN). The partnership, which was set up in 2000 under the New Learning Network, is now well established and involves a range of public and voluntary-sector organisations in Neath Port Talbot County Borough including: NPTC Group; Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service; Adult Learning Wales; Swansea University Department of Adult Continuing Education; NPT Homes; Open University.

ACL delivers courses in line with Welsh Government priorities as set in the Adult Learning in Wales policy, developing soft skills (including their confidence to learn) improving literacy/numeracy skills and ensures progression into more formal learning and/or employment. An example of this is the Introduction to Childcare which raises awareness of opportunities and helps learners improve their learning skills in preparation for undertaking more formal training onto the QCF level 2 and then the level 3 in Children's Care, Learning and Development. Other courses delivered by ACL are literacy, numeracy, study skills, confidence building, employability skills, GCSE Mathematics and English etc. New courses delivered by the service this year have been GCSE History, AS level English Language / Literature, Level 3 Award in Education and Training, TAQA and Level 3 Award in Work with Parents. In September,

ACL also started offering a life skills gardening course in Tirmorfa Centre. Learners who have enrolled onto this course also attend a cookery class in Taibach Community Education Centre where they learn about healthy eating and will shortly be cooking their own produce from the garden.

Adult Community Learning ensures that costs are kept to a minimum with numerous classes being free e.g. literacy, numeracy, study skills, employability, retail, hospitality etc. to enable all residents in NPT to be able to access learning to their improve skills. 69% of learners enrolled onto courses this year, live in communities first areas.

ACL continues to have good links with Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Remploy, Communities First, The Work Programme, NPT Primary Schools, HSBC etc. ACL has recently formed links with NHS (Mental Health), Hafal, and has been working closely with doctors and pharmacists in the Dulais Valley. ACL will be delivering a Healthy Lifestyle course in April at the Dulais Valley Primary Care Centre with more courses planned.

ACL delivers learning programmes in a number of schools in NPT to provide as many free courses as possible to encourage parents back into education these includes Phonics, Numicon, Retail, Food Hygiene, British Sign Language, Health and Safety in the Workplace etc. More schools are requesting these types of courses with Melin Primary School creating a new community room this academic year to promote learning for parents.

ACL staffing levels have reduced, in 2014 ACL had 7 full time staff, 3 part time and approximately 40 tutors. Present staffing levels are 3 full time, 3 part time and 15 adult tutors.

ACL has always worked within budget and our sickness records indicate the commitment by staff to provide a high quality of service.

Even though staffing levels have decreased, the number of learners enrolled onto courses has started to increase and in 2016-17 numbers were up by 19% on 15/16 figures. 2016-17 figures are now only down by 13% on 2012-13 enrolments. ACL is on track to maintain and may improve slightly, on the number of enrolments in 17/18.

One of the main reasons why ACL has been able to maintain these figures is because of the management information service that has been designed for the service and which is maintained internally. As Adult Community Learning website/MIS is fully web enabled, learners are able to enrol and pay for their course online. We still provide other methods for people, so that they can choose how to enrol onto a course. As the system has developed over the years, staff and tutors are able to use the website to record learners' progression, complete/review registers and pay claims, view internal feedback and external reports etc. However, in 2017 the IT Officer who maintained and developed the website, left the authority and as a result, the ACL service has had to update the system and upload data to Welsh Government, which has been a big learning curve for all staff.

Another reason for maintaining good enrolments figures is the partnership working that the service has with organisations. ACL attends regular events arranged by different organisation e.g. DWP Providers Events, Family Bonanza Fun Days at Outreach centres which included Tairgwaith, Seven Sisters, Croeserw, Community First Job Fairs and we participate in group sessions at Neath and Port Talbot job centres. These raise ACL's profile and generate many referrals for work skills courses such as Hospitality, Retail, Admin and other provision e.g. literacy, numeracy, Childcare etc. It also allows ACL to anticipate changes such as the introduction of universal credit, monthly employment themes e.g. Retail skills etc.

Benchmarking data in 16/17 has improved:

Direct Funding - Completion – 100% (↑1.1%) Attainment – 97.9% (↑3.1%) and Success – 97.9% (↑4.3%)

Franchise data - Completion – 99.6% (↑1.1%) Attainment – 92.8% (↑4.9) and Success – 92.6% (↑6%).

Family Learning Day

Adult Community Learning has been successful in securing funding to provide a Family Learning Day on the 21st March in The Orangery, Margam Park. This event aims to encourage people with low skills back into education by providing a range of taster sessions and information regarding learning opportunities that are available (or could be available)

in their local school / area. The Family Learning Day taster sessions will include a number of different activities for parents and their children to participate in together, focusing on literacy, numeracy and digital literacy. This will include the use of iPads by using speech and language apps, a treasure hunt using numeracy; story time, including making puppets; using communication through arts and crafts and a knowledge of Welsh culture. If the weather permits, there will also be outdoor activities. A similar event was held last year which was very successful, with over 200 people attending the session.

Award Ceremony

ACL and NPTC Group are working in partnership to organise an Award Ceremony this year for learners and tutors. This will be held on the 14th June in Neath College. The last award ceremony was held in 2014, through ACL have continued to recognise achievement via the National Inspire Awards on an annual basis.

Adult Community Learning will continue to look at ways to improve the service. This is evidenced by the learner survey and the steps taken to implement feedback.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts in relation to this report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality impacts associated with this report.

Workforce Impacts

There are no direct workforce or staffing issues in relation to this report.

Legal Impacts

There is no legal impact in relation to this report.

Risk Management

There is no identified risk to this report.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Recommendations

The report is for information purposes only.

Appendices

None

List of Background Papers

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