

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board

14 October 2021

Report of the Head of Head of Education Development – Chris Millis

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All wards

Adult Community Learning Update (Diweddariad Dysgu Oedolion yn y Gymuned)

Purpose of the Report

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

Executive Summary

This report contains an update of the work carried out by Adult Community Learning:

The number of learners enrolled onto courses has started to increase despite the pandemic. In 2020-21 numbers were up by 5% on 2019-20 figures. ACL is on track to maintain and may improve slightly, on the number of enrolments for 2021-22.

During the COVID outbreak, tutors quickly adapted their teaching and kept in contact with as many learners as possible using google classroom, google hangout, skype, emails, you tube, phoning. Not only

was this for learners to continue their learning journeys but also to support people during that difficult time.

Learner's attitudes to digital literacy has changed due to COVID. ACL has supported learners to be able to 'get online' with more learners now engaging in the use technology to allow them to continue their learning journey. Also, ACL developed online courses for the first time because of the epidemic to be able to continue to offer courses to the community.

Adult Community Learning was successful in securing Welsh Government funding from the Adult Learning Support Fund 2020-21. This funding was used for staff to support their mental health and well-being and professional development.

Funding from the Digital Inclusion Grant was also secured in 2020-2021. This funding allowed ACL to purchase equipment which is loaned out to learners to support their learning.

Background

Adult Community Learning (ACL) continues to deliver 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 approximately £500K. The ACL direct funding grant from the Welsh Government remained the same for 20/21. 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 20/21.

ACL is one of the lead partners of the NPT Learning and Skills Network partnership. The partnership, 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 and Tai Tarian.

The Network is committed to the continuous development of quality, curriculum and learner support across the county. Welsh Government continues to look at ways it funds Adult Community Learning with options being put forward to the minister for approval. The ACL Manager has attended regular meetings to ensure that the service is kept up to date with current information on funding.

ACL continues to deliver 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/digital literacy skills, employability skills, engagement activities and ensures progression into more formal learning and/or employment.

For example the service continues to have a large number of learners on Childcare course and aims to give people the knowledge and understanding to achieve a professional qualification which may lead to employment in the sector. The service is also delivering, the new Children's Care, Learning, Play and Development qualification with progression opportunities from the Introduction to Childcare which helps to improve their skills in preparation for more formal training onto the QCF level 2 and 3 qualifications. Other courses relevant to childcare learners are: autism awareness, phonics, dyslexia awareness, classroom Welsh.

Other courses delivered by ACL are literacy, numeracy, study skills, confidence building, IT and employability skills. Our GCSE and A-Level programme remains highly attended. New courses delivered by the service this year have been Introduction to Mental Health, Interview Skills with a difference, Award in Health and Social Care and GCSE Psychology.

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.

ACL continues to have good links with Department of Work and Pensions; Communities for Work+; DOVE; Glynneath Training Centre; Skills and Training (part of the Skills Academy); Mental Health Co-ordinators.

ACL delivers a variety of courses in schools throughout NPT. The Family Learning delivery has given parents opportunities to increase their Literacy and Numeracy skills and support their children's learning. The majority of learners ask for progression courses after attending the Family Learning course and then go onto course such as Introduction to Childcare, BSL, Child Psychology that are being offered in schools etc. ACL has provided Family Learning in a number of different schools within NPT in 19/20.

The learning programmes in schools are planned to provide as many free courses as possible to encourage parents back into education these include Popat, Child Psychology, Food Hygiene, British Sign Language etc. Due to Covid ACL have been unable to deliver in schools; now restrictions are easing ACL will look at returning to schools to continue to deliver their Family Learning programme.

Staffing levels this year - 4 full time, 2 part time and 8 adult tutors. Will be monitoring delivery to see if there is a possibility to employ more adult tutors if demand increases.

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

The number of learners enrolled onto courses despite of Covid remain very good. In 2020-21 numbers were up by 5% on 2019-20 figures. ACL is on track to maintain and may improve slightly, on the number of enrolments for 2021-22.

One of the reasons for maintaining good enrolments figures is the partnership working that the service has with organisations. ACL attends regular events arranged by different organisations e.g. DWP, Crisis, Communities for Work+ etc. 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. It also allows ACL to anticipate changes such as the introduction of universal credit, monthly employment themes.

Our aim is to deliver throughout NPT in outreach community venues. ACL are currently working with local libraries such as Cymer and Pontardawe to develop a learning programme to suit the needs of the community.

Data

2018/19 (Due to COVID no data published for 2019/20)

Direct Delivery

Data set by DfES for ACL local authority direct delivery for 2018/19 is:

Completion – 99.1% Attainment – 98.5% Success – 97.1%

Franchise Delivery

Completion - 97.9% Attainment - 95.7% Success - 93.7%

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. ACL will also be sending out a survey to organisations who refer learners onto courses, to gain information regarding our service.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts in relation to this report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

The report is for information purposes only.

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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