

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE****NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ADULT AND COMMUNITY  
LEARNING SERVICE: PRIORITIES FOR 2013/2014****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to:
  - a) report on the current national policy in relation to Community Learning
  - b) report on the Adult and Community Learning Service's (ACLS) priorities for funding for 2013/2014 and approve their inclusion within the Adult and Community Learning Service Business Plan for 2013/14
  - c) seek approval for expenditure relating to the receipt of a provisional allocation of £2,145,428 from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to the Adult and Community Learning Service as required by Financial Regulation 2.7
  - d) seek approval of the Fees Policy for 2013/14.

**Information and Advice**

2. The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) published its strategy document 'New Challenges, New Chances. Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan: Building a World Class Skills System' in December 2011. This was the policy document that led to the creation of 15 national Community Learning Trust Pilots. Whilst a local bid was submitted to become a pilot, it was unsuccessful.
3. December 2012 saw the publication of BIS's Skills Funding Statement 2012-2015. The Statement noted that:
  - a) In 2013/14 BIS would expect providers of Community Learning to deliver a truly locally determined learning offer. Providers would need to operate within strong partnerships to ensure their strategies and plans were underpinned by engagement and consultation with communities, local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and other key stakeholders.
  - b) The 2013/14 allocation should now be seen as a contribution in locally owned community networks with clear strategic plans, priorities, delivery objectives and measurable learner outcomes. To achieve this, additional revenue over and above the public subsidy would need to be achieved.

4. In 2013/14 ACLS will receive a single line budget from the SFA to deliver a balanced programme of activity across the following types of provision:
  - a) Personal Community Development Learning (PCDL) - learning for personal development, cultural enrichment, intellectual or creative stimulation and enjoyment.
  - b) Wider Family Learning (WFL)
  - c) Family English, Mathematics and Language (FEML).
5. It is understood that BIS will not roll out a single Community Learning Trust model as it acknowledges that providers will need to determine their own local strategies. ACLS provision is already delivered by an extensive network of providers and partners. The majority of provision is delivered by an academy, four colleges of further education and the Workers' Educational Association. The Service also works with a wide variety of voluntary and community groups, schools, children's centres, charities and a number of private providers. Working with such a cross section of delivery partners increases the reach, flexibility and responsiveness of the Service to target audiences. Delivery partners can access ACLS funds via a commissioning process for those with a successful history of working with ACLS and who offer a programme of learning throughout the year. Those providers wishing to offer more ad hoc or bespoke provision have access to funding throughout the year via a grant application process. Grant applications are considered by a panel which meets on a monthly basis
6. To aid responsiveness and flexibility, where required, the Service will deliver a number of activities directly using the skills and expertise of staff within the team. This activity will be part of the Service's income generation programme.
7. To comply with BIS's requirement, the Service targets its resources on those facing barriers to learning, living in areas of greatest disadvantage and who are often unconvinced of the benefits of learning. This approach has synergy with and supports the achievement of County Council priorities. With this in mind, ACLS will require its provider network to deliver learning activities that address one or more of the following themes:
  - developing stronger communities and promoting social wellbeing
  - supporting parental and community engagement in schools and children's centres and equipping parents and carers to assist and encourage their children's learning
  - fostering aspiration, independence, personal development and responsibility, improving health, wellbeing and quality of life
  - developing skills that prepare people for training, employment or self-employment.
8. ACLS will require its provider network to primarily target the following priority learners for PCDL resources in 2013/14:
  - those with low qualification and/or skill level (below Level 2)
  - individuals or groups who are socially excluded
  - Black and minority ethnic individuals with low qualification and/or skill levels (below Level 2)

- those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those experiencing mental health difficulties.
9. Priorities for Wider Family Learning and Family English, Mathematics and Language programmes will be parents/carers whose English and mathematics qualification levels are below Level 2.
  10. The majority of the above mentioned priority learners will be from the areas of greatest economic and social disadvantage as measured by the Multiple Index of Deprivation. The recommended economic and social disadvantage target for 2012/13 is 73% of learners to be from the 250 most disadvantaged super output areas (SOAs). There are 497 SOAs in the County. This target will be maintained for 2013/14 so enabling a limited amount of activity to be delivered in areas of less disadvantage and or rural areas.
  11. This targeted approach has a proven record of success in raising aspirations, increasing confidence and building social capital. Comments from learners attending celebration events and their course evaluations provide evidence of the value of this activity and the impact that engagement in learning can have on their outlook and lives. Comments made by learners in the current year include;

*“This course has given me the confidence to try things I would never have dreamt of doing before.*

*I will be starting a voluntary role serving meals so a lot of what we covered was helpful.*

*I feel more confident about going into a full time course at college now that I know I am able to learn again.*

*Being on the course has made me feel more confident in being able to do things. I have enjoyed doing this and I have achieved something I didn't think I could do, thank you.*

*I can learn! I will be attending the next course.*

*It has helped me to change the way I look at things in a more positive way.*

*Confidence to help and more at local groups/ activities as a volunteer.*

*It has made me think twice about what food I give my kids and how much I put on their plate.*

*Has made a huge difference, hopefully gain a level 2 in English to help towards my further achievements in life.”*

12. The Service will continue to locate a number of programmes, especially Family Learning, in schools and children's centres to benefit parents and carers. During 2011/12, 313 national tests in literacy and/or numeracy were achieved through family learning programmes, 107 Level 2 passes were achieved in literacy and 83 Level 2 passes in numeracy. Activities are also provided for day service users. Beneficial links will be maintained with libraries, 2011-12 saw an increased use of libraries as venues for

learning; this will be sustained into 2013/14. The two services have also benefited from shared training events.

13. Where appropriate the Service intends to utilise a proportion of its tuition fee income to finance activities that help individuals move closer to the labour market. Such activity will not be eligible to be funded via other available budgets but it will enhance learners' opportunities to access employment and/or volunteering opportunities. This activity has proven successful in previous years and for this reason the Service is looking to continue this approach with an identified financial allocation from its resources during 2013/14.
14. Performance Indicators for the Service for 2013/14 will be based on our 2012/13 performance. The table below shows a breakdown of learner numbers to date for the current year i.e. 2012/13:

<b>SFA PCDL</b>	<b>Actual to Date</b>	<b>Year End Target</b>
Learners	4087	6,300
No of males	29%	34%
No of students with learning difficulties/disabilities	34%	-
No of students from Ethnic Minority groups (BME)	2%	2.7%
No of students age 60+	26%	-
Learners feeling more confident to learn	91%	-
Learners who feel their course met their expectations (greatly)	93%	-
Learners who intend to become more involved in their community	56%	-
<b>Wider Family Learning</b>		
Learners	398	750
Children	428	-
<b>Family English, Mathematics and Language</b>		
Learners	492	900
Children	286	-

*Figures as at 26/2/13*

15. BIS has introduced the concept of 'Pound Plus' for 2013/14 programmes. This relates to an expectation that providers will generate additional resources in addition to the SFA funding allocation. Tuition fee income is seen as a key element of this concept as are resources in kind. Through the generation of fee income and on-going in kind resources e.g. free use of accommodation in schools and children's centres, ACLS is able to respond to this new requirement.
16. With regard to the Fees Policy, given the number of delivery partners within the ACLS Provider Network and the number of delivery locations used, it is important that the

Policy is relatively easy to administer and apply to ensure consistency of approach. Given the focus of this funding on those with low skills/confidence, along with the current economic climate, it is proposed that the hourly tuition fee of £2.50 should not be increased. Providers will continue to be encouraged to use a small proportion of their allocation to deliver activity in areas of less deprivation where participants are less likely to be eligible for fee remission. Provider income targets will be increased to reflect this requirement. Family Learning activity remains free of charge in line with national policy. The proposed Fee Policy for 2013/14 is attached as **Appendix 1**.

17. It is proposed that the fee remission categories remain unchanged from the agreed policy for 2012/13, bar the inclusion of identified elements of Universal Credit as a remission category.

### **Other Options Considered**

18. None. ACLS has a proven record of delivering an effective and efficient Service. A self assessment is undertaken on an annual basis to identify areas for improvement and strengths. In November 2012 the Service was graded as 'Good' by Ofsted.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

19. The Adult and Community Learning Service wishes to utilise the SFA funding to engage the most disadvantaged members of our communities in learning activity.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

20. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Implications for Service Users**

21. The proposed Service targets will focus the majority of the SFA funding on areas of greatest economic and social disadvantage. This will leave a small balance to support activity in less disadvantaged areas of the County.

### **Financial Implications**

22. The provisional SFA grant figure for the period 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2014 is £2,145,428 and it is expected that this will be fully utilised delivering the services as set out in the report.

### **Equalities Implications**

23. This paper is not proposing any significant change to policy. The Service has robust monitoring arrangements in place in relation to the learning activity that takes place. Equality and diversity are standing items on monthly management meetings where engagement and performance of minority groups is reviewed. The Service prioritises

certain geographical communities and communities of interest in line with national policy guidance.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That:

- 1) national policy changes in relation to Community Learning be noted
- 2) ACLS Service Priorities and activity for 2013/2014 be approved
- 3) expenditure relating to the receipt of a provisional allocation of £2,145,428 from the Skills Funding Agency be approved
- 4) approval is given to the Fees Policy for 2013/14 as outlined in **Appendix 1**.

**Derek Higton**  
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### **Constitutional Comments (LM 01/03/13)**

24. The Adult Social Care and Health Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

### **Financial Comments (KLA 28/02/13)**

25. The financial implications of the report are set out in paragraph 22 above.

### **Background Papers**

Department for Business Innovation and Skills: Skills Funding Statement 2012-2015: December 2012.

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

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