

## **Executive Summary**

The Mayor of London takes over responsibility for adult skills from 2019. In anticipation of this the draft of a new Skills and Adult Education Strategy, *Skills For Londoners*, was published in November 2017. This sets out what will be required to address skills gaps and shortages in order to enhance London's economic and social prosperity over the coming years.

The three key commitments outlined in *Skills for Londoners* are to:

- Empower all Londoners to access the education and skills to participate in society and progress in education and in work;
- Meet the needs of London's economy and employers, now and in the future; and
- Deliver a strategic city-wide technical skills and adult education offer.

This Project has been commissioned by London Councils on behalf of the four London-sub-regional partnerships and the Greater London Authority (GLA). It takes forward specific recommendations arising from the recent Area Review of London focusing on three particular areas:

- The future role and distinct focus of Adult Community Learning in London
- How outcomes and impact of ACL should be measured
- Commissioning arrangements for ACL when the Adult Education Budget (AEB) is devolved to the Mayor.

## **The context**

Education and training for adults aged 19+ is provided by London Boroughs, further education colleges and private providers. It includes a wide range of qualification based courses, Maths, English and ESOL and, in some cases, apprenticeships funded through a range of sources, including the Adult Education Budget.

A distinctive part of this work has been community learning, which focuses on working within communities and engaging individuals in learning and its benefits. Learning may include the basic skills necessary to function in society and at work; English; digital skills; numeracy and budgeting; health education; creative arts; and citizenship. It may also include pre-employability training, for example the behaviours, attitudes and expectations required by

London's employers. Community learning is local. It is often short in duration, and may be supported by volunteers, and other local public services, including those leading on childcare, social services and healthcare.

The benefits of community learning are considerable. It can transform people's attitudes and ambitions about the future for themselves and their families, deliver long-term economic benefit, build personal confidence and independence, and ease pressure on other public services.

Following widespread consultation, we believe that community learning within the context of *Skills for Londoners* should be focused on seven priority groups:

1. Those furthest away from being ready to take up work (with provision planned in partnership with DWP)
2. Those working in very low paid work or insecure employment, and those falling outside the parameters of the benefit system and seeking a return to work. (Provision for low-paid workers should be planned with reference to DWP services).
3. Residents who would benefit from training in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), with a focus on those who are not literate in their first language
4. Mental health service users.
5. Adult with learning difficulties and disabilities.
6. Those who are socially isolated or at risk of becoming so, including some older learners (50+). This might include people with chronic health problems.
7. Residents with multiple support needs including those living in areas identified as a priority by Boroughs and including family learning.

*Skills for Londoners* is clear that learning must be focused on delivering relevant outcomes. A key task for those providing community learning is how better information can be collected and collated to illustrate impact for London and its residents. In the short-term, our view is that the focus should be on measuring engagement of learners from priority groups, tracking educational and/or employment-related progression, and developing current work on social metrics to demonstrate improvements in attitudes, confidence and wellbeing. In the longer-term, Ofsted reports and pan-London data on economic activity, earnings and levels of education will be important pan-London sources of information to demonstrate valuable outcomes.

A key issue to resolve is how adult community learning should be commissioned in order to drive positive change. As a principle, we fully

endorse the recommendation of the London Area Review that the current 'block grant' for community learning should be retained.

At this stage, we believe that an allocations methodology using current Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data is too crude an approach to bring about change in London quickly and effectively. Community learning provision has been externally inspected with most services gaining an overall rating of 'good'. Initial modelling shows that, even with safeguarding a percentage of each borough's current allocation, several boroughs would experience very sharp increases or reductions in funding. The unintended consequences of this would mean a focus on reducing provision, restructuring and redundancies rather than ensuring that Boroughs work closely in partnership with others to continue to improve quality and develop new, innovative provision. An alternative approach is to implement the requirement for Boroughs to produce business plans for their community learning, showing how they meet needs, which would be subject to approval and periodic scrutiny by the Greater London Authority (GLA). Such an approach would not rule out a change to how money is distributed at a later point, when firm data on outcomes and impact is secure.

Our recommendations are:

- 1 **That the GLA adopts the definition of community learning set out in this paper, together with the allocation of a 'block grant' to boroughs and current community learning providers, who will plan and deliver provision.** The block grant will enable rapid 'integrated' action to tackle social and economic inequalities, help communities with complex and multiple support needs in learning, and directly contribute to the aims set out in *Skills for Londoners*. As an important part of the wider FE sector we expect that, in addition, Boroughs would continue to access the wider Adult Skills Budget alongside colleges, voluntary organisations, and the private sector.
- 2 **That the GLA adopts a model of business planning** rather than artificially adjust allocations at this stage. We believe that a model of business planning will produce results more quickly, it will provide continuity, and will focus providers on supporting priority groups. It will avoid the major disruption to community learning likely in the event of systemic redistribution of funding allocations.
- 3 **That the GLA supports providers in developing pan-London arrangements to measure the value of community learning using social metrics,** taking account of national developments.

These should enable providers to benchmark both regionally and nationally and to exchange good practice. It will also provide clear evidence about the types of programmes and delivery styles which promote significant improvements in health and wellbeing, confidence, empowerment and which foster positive social relationships.

- 4 **That pan-London arrangements are put in place by the GLA to track actual individual progression from community learning activities to higher levels of education and training, and/or employment as a key measure of the success of all adult learning provision.** This to include working with HMRC to agree an MoU to cover data sharing. The government should share this data with the GLA as soon as possible.
- 5 That the **GLA liaises with Ofsted and the Education and Training Foundation (ETF).** A specific focus within the Ofsted framework commenting on the quality of community learning outcomes would provide a valuable additional evidence base to the other methods and approaches proposed in this paper. The ETF is the leading organisation driving continuous professional development for the post-16 sector and should be a key partner in supporting London's providers in curriculum innovation, quality improvement and the leadership of change.

## INTRODUCTION

This is the second of two reports produced for London Councils. The first report the 'Initial Proposition' sought to define the role of adult community learning in London. The second part of this work which has culminated in the production of this report takes forward specific recommendations arising from the recent Review<sup>1</sup> of Adult Community Learning (ACL) services across London, approved by the Area Review Steering Group in November 2016. This report can be found [here](#).

The work has focused on three specific aspects:

- Refining the definition of adult community learning and the target beneficiary groups (taking account of the London's new Skills and Adult Education Strategy, *Skills for Londoners*).
- Specifying the outcomes and impact measures for community learning which are practical to implement, and which are able to demonstrate its value.
- Identifying options in relation to future commissioning arrangements following the devolution of adult skills funding to the Mayor of London in 2019/20.

### The Context

Annual funding for community learning is provided to each of the 32 London boroughs, the City of London, the Institutes of Adult Learning (IALs)<sup>2</sup> (City Lit, Morley College, Working Men's College (The Camden College), Mary Ward Settlement and the Workers' Education Association), and to a small group of other providers<sup>3</sup> as a 'block' grant. To date, this has given those in receipt of funding freedom to determine both what was offered, and how it is delivered (for example, as a directly-delivered service, sub-contracted, fully outsourced, or as a combination of these). Block grant funding has also enabled providers to establish an infrastructure for 'outreach', capacity building, and for focusing intensively on 'hard to reach' individuals and groups within deprived communities.

This is not the only funding that London Boroughs, IALs and others received for adult skills<sup>4</sup>. Most providers in receipt of a block grant for their current

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<sup>1</sup> London Adult Community Learning Review Report (March 2017)

<sup>2</sup> IALs offer provision which attracts learners across London

<sup>3</sup> Primarily colleges and the London Learning Consortium

<sup>4</sup> For example by charging fees, drawing on the wider public sector sources, including the Adult Education Budget, Department of Work and Pensions and European Social Fund sources, or through competitive bidding in conjunction with partners.

community learning also offer qualification-based courses in line with national priorities and in competition with the wider FE sector of colleges and private providers, overall doubling their allocations for community learning. These include GCSEs in Maths and English, ESOL and first Level 2 qualifications for adults in areas such as health and social care, business administration and customer service. In addition to this, some Boroughs have diversified into providing apprenticeships and have been successful in gaining entry to the new Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers<sup>5</sup>. This work, delivered through Boroughs and by the wider FE sector, will continue into the future and is an important part of encouraging progression from community learning through to high-level courses and ultimately employment.

### **The London Skills and Adult Education Strategy**

In November 2017, a draft of London's Skills and Education Strategy, *Skills For Londoners*<sup>6</sup> was published. This sets out a vision for adult education and training and what it should seek to achieve in a challenging international marketplace.

The three key commitments outlined in the document are to:

- Empower all Londoners to access the education and skills to participate in society and progress in education and in work;
- Meet the needs of London's economy and employers, now and in the future; and
- Deliver a strategic city-wide technical skills and adult education offer.

Underpinning these commitments, the Strategy draws attention to stark contrasts in equality and opportunity. It emphasises the need to drive forward London's skills base rapidly to meet both current and emerging demand, and to fill the employment gaps anticipated post-Brexit. Some of this is about the promotion of skills at higher levels. The document also makes a firm commitment to reducing inequalities. For people without skills or in low skilled employment, it recognises the critical importance of ESOL, digital literacy (for both work and to access public services) and the role played by volunteering. It acknowledges the difficulties some people face in moving forward from very low-paid roles and the benefits which would be forthcoming should social mobility be improved. Emphasis is also placed on the value of participating in

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<sup>5</sup> Established by the ESFA, the ROATP is a list of organisations approved to deliver apprenticeships under the new arrangements for funding which began in April 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Skills for Londoners, A Draft Skills and Adult Education Strategy for London, November 2017

society, and on the benefits of learning to health, wellbeing and social integration<sup>7</sup>.

Meeting these priorities will require education and training providers across London to build on their strengths. This will inevitably mean changes in focus and provision as London seeks to address its own economic and social priorities rather than abide by those set at a national level.

The process we have adopted in undertaking this work has involved a review of relevant documents and widespread discussions with Boroughs, providers and key stakeholders who have an interest in the future role and focus of community learning. This has included:

- A series of workshops (with the four sub-regional partnerships and the Institutes of Adult Learning).
- Individual discussions with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Modelling of changes in allocations using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), the size and age of the adult population.
- A London-wide analysis of the current community learning catchments of boroughs and a number of direct providers.

The work has been overseen by a pan-London Steering Group<sup>8</sup>, which met three times during the course of the Project.

This report is structured in 4 sections;

- 1 Defining (publicly funded) community learning
- 2 Measuring outcomes and impact
- 3 Commissioning
- 4 Key recommendations

**An explanation of social metrics is included as an appendix to this report. Data on modelling and maps which illustrate the present distribution of community learning beneficiaries is available separately.**

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<sup>7</sup> A number of respondents in both stages of this work drew attention to the role of learning in improving confidence, independence and wellbeing, thereby reducing dependence on a full range of other public services.

<sup>8</sup> Membership comprised representatives from the GLA, London Councils, the four sub-regional partnerships and the Institutes of Adult Learning.

# 1 Defining (publicly funded) community learning

The majority of adult education and skills training provided by FE colleges, London boroughs and private providers leads to recognised national qualifications and involves enrolment on a formal course of study, typically of at least nine months.

Adult community learning is different. It may not involve qualifications, but it focuses on building confidence and skills - inspiring people from a wide range of backgrounds to engage in what they feel motivated to learn and encouraging them to be ambitious about their next steps. A borough's portfolio of community learning may include programmes to help people acquire positive behaviours and the interpersonal skills appropriate to both work and social situations; it may also include training in digital skills, basic literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Community learning is typically planned, structured and delivered in conjunction with other local borough-based support services, which may include health, housing and social services.

Evidence that community learning is beneficial is widespread, and is captured periodically in summary publications such as the BIS Research Paper No 90<sup>9</sup>. It is particularly valuable in improving health and wellbeing, in changing attitudes and behaviours and in building confidence.

From our first report, we recognise that community learning can:

- Deliver long-term economic benefit, particularly by improving attitudes to progression and to obtaining paid employment. For individuals, this may mean progression to higher-level studies, straight to a job, or to a volunteering role.
- Encourage those who are parents to support their children in realising their potential in school, and in optimising their children's attitudes, values, health and wellbeing.
- Enable individuals to be more confident and more independent about 'self help', and therefore less reliant on any available external support, for example, other public services, including health services.
- Improve physical and mental wellbeing by motivating participants to make positive changes to their lives.
- Help vulnerable and marginalised learners rebuild their lives and better integrate in society.
- Facilitate communication with service providers (health, housing, schools, early years support) for those with poor English language skills.

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<sup>9</sup> Review and Update of Research into the Wider Benefits of Adult Learning (2012)

**There are a number of particular characteristics of high-quality community learning, and how it seeks to address the needs of these identified target groups and beneficiaries:**

- It is delivered locally, at a time and place to suit learners, including at weekends, evenings, within school hours, and across holiday periods.
- Most provision is at Pre-Entry and Entry level, which ensures that learning is accessible for those with very little education or any formal qualifications.
- Group sizes vary, but there is no established minimum size.
- Learning may last for a few hours to a few months, but it is always part-time.
- Learning is carefully designed and structured to deliver results, but it is not primarily about examinations or qualifications.
- Progress is generally assessed using a national system termed 'RARPA<sup>10</sup>,' where learners are supported to identify their personal objectives and to produce evidence that they have been achieved. RARPA is recognised by Ofsted and the ESFA as a rigorous method of measurement.
- In many cases it makes effective use of volunteers, additional support provided through other funding streams, and partners' premises and equipment without incurring direct additional costs (known as 'pound plus').
- Some of this learning can be anticipated, planned and publicised because demand is known and understood, and there is sufficient data on potential demand to be clear what is needed (the 'universal' offer). In other cases, learning needs to be planned in coordination with other services as a specific intervention (the 'client led' offer) and be able to respond rapidly to identified needs.

London boroughs are in a strong position to identify local priorities. They have the potential to offer a closely integrated service which identifies the barriers to change for local target groups and individual beneficiaries, and effective wrap-around support, which might include actions from health, education, social services, learning and employment.

**Content:**

Content is often planned in conjunction with other public services and with the target group, but we recommend that it should focus (in no particular order) on one or more of:

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<sup>10</sup> The Recognizing and Rewarding of Progress and Achievement

- Pre-employability (for example, the behaviours and general skills which an employer would expect a new member of staff to adopt).
- Confidence building
- Literacy and English language skills.
- Numeracy, including practical budgeting, managing family finances and/or banking.
- Basic digital skills, applicable to the home and the workplace.
- Health education, diet and exercise, caring support, accessing health services and more specific advice and guidance.
- Re-engagement in learning, developing literacy and English skills and increasing confidence via stimulating and interesting courses in, for example, creative arts.
- Citizenship

## 2 Measuring Outcomes and Impact

A key feature of the current landscape is demonstrating value and impact of public funding, and how this can be measured accurately and cost-effectively. *Skills for Londoners* makes it clear that the GLA intends to move to commissioning on the basis of quality and outcomes<sup>11</sup>.

All providers currently measure aspects such as learner numbers, attendance, and retention to the end of the programme of study, achievement of individual objectives through use of RARPA<sup>12</sup>, and actual progression (where data is available). A number of providers use additional evidence to capture the impact of their programmes on learners, including telephone surveys.

The role of Community Learning outlined in this paper is too broad to fall neatly into one single impact measure such as an employment outcome. In Community Learning positive impact for individuals may be paid work, volunteering, improved health and wellbeing, better long-term social integration through improved skills in English and an understanding of citizenship, or improved skills and welfare of the next generation of family members.

Our view, based on consultation, is that measuring outcomes must be proportionate to the funds available for community learning. The outcomes

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<sup>11</sup> See page 49 of *Skills for Londoners*

<sup>12</sup> RARPA guidance can be found at Quality Assuring Non-Regulated Provision: the Expanding Role of RARPA (LWI, March 2017)

themselves should be relevant, and capable of being aggregated to produce a pan-London picture of performance.

In the short-term (the lead time through to 2019/20), there are four key measures which will be of value in seeking to provide a contribution towards providing more evidence on impact:

- a) **Reporting on the proportion of learners** supported against relevant priority groups of beneficiaries as this will contribute to the measurement of impact.
- b) **Measuring educational progression** (particularly important in relation to maths, English, ESOL, and to those preparing for work progressing to accredited vocational provision). The complexity of progression and learner travel patterns, combined with the number and variety of providers offering qualification-based courses, suggests that comprehensive educational progression should be tracked pan-London over a period of 1-2 years, with learners assigned unique identification (for example, using the ILR).
- c) **Measuring social metrics.** By this we mean collecting robust data which measures improvements in health and wellbeing, levels of confidence and attitudes to progression, and social relationships. An outline of the social metrics work led by the Learning and Work Institute (LWI) is contained in the Appendix, and it now needs developing and refining further in the context of a wider roll-out across London and potentially nationally. Workshop participants and sub-regional partners consulted expressed a firm commitment to work together to agree how current pilot activities might be taken forward into a London-wide programme. A consistent model, which gives confidence about the value of those programmes which are not necessarily intended to lead **directly and immediately** to employment or higher levels of learning will be crucial to demonstrating value. Work to pilot social metrics consistently across London should take place in 2018.
- d) **There are judgements about outcomes made by external inspectors, primarily Ofsted.** Ofsted inspectors typically review providers on a rolling programme every four years, but a 'risk-based' approach is adopted should performance decline. In the period to 2020, it is anticipated that more London community learning providers will be inspected, adding to an already positive evidence base about quality of provision. Inspection methodology includes observing learning, talking to learners, staff and external stakeholders, and reviewing a wide range of self-assessment documentation and data. In relation to London, their

published judgements, which have been subject to moderation processes, comment favourably on learners' growing levels of skill and confidence<sup>13</sup>, the positive impact of joined-up public sector partnerships in reaching communities and individual learners, and in the value of providing learning locally. We would recommend that discussions take place between Ofsted and the GLA to ensure that inspectors consistently review and publish judgements about community learning, commenting specifically on attitudes to learning, the impact of community learning, and how effectively learning contributes to meeting London's priorities.

These are short term proposals, based on available data, and therefore do not cover the all possible impact measures.

### **In the longer term (2019-2022):**

- a) Assessing the value and the barriers to achieving accurate long-term tracking of community learning beneficiaries, through for example, **national data provided through HMRC or other public services such as health**. HMRC and DWP are currently working on a national system of tracking individuals who progress from learning to work, and collectively how much they subsequently earn. A Memorandum of Understanding is in place between DWP, HMRC and DfE to share data currently. Government should share such data with the GLA via a data-sharing agreement so that the GLA can assess the wider impact of the whole of the AEB. Immediate progression to employment or self-employment is not always a primary outcome of community learning. However, progression to work within a 2-3 year timescale for some beneficiaries will be realistic and achievable. Any national system is therefore relevant in measuring the medium-term impact of those community learning programmes aimed at helping people gain work.
  
- b) **Recognising the contribution made by community learning through periodic review of borough NOMIS and IMD data**. NOMIS provides access to comparative statistics in several forms about the population engaged in economic activity, those on benefits, average earnings, qualification levels and a breakdown of employment locally. IMD ranks areas of the country by seven key domains by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA). Finally, successfully addressing local issues through joint working with other public services is intended to deliver improvements in the key indicators reported through IMD and NOMIS.

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<sup>13</sup> In the course of this Project, we reviewed 16 inspection reports on London adult education providers which were published in 2016.

The ultimate measure of successful outcomes should be phased, sustainable improvements in absolute levels of employment, income, education, health and crime. However, in developing this as a robust measure of impact, account needs to be taken of the transience and mobility of London’s population, which at Borough level may artificially distort absolute results.

## **BENEFICIARY GROUPS – COMMUNITY LEARNING**

Those consulted over the Project identified seven key beneficiary groups of community learning:

- Those furthest away from work
- Those working in very low paid work or insecure employment, and those falling outside the parameters of the benefit system and seeking a return to work. (Provision for low-paid workers should be planned with reference to DWP services).
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
- Mental health service users
- Adults with learning difficulties and disabilities
- Older learners
- Residents with multiple support needs.

The impact of learning on each of these seven categories of learners varies, and the following tables summarise the expected focus, purpose and outcome for each of the seven categories of priority beneficiary:

**1 Those furthest way from work** (for example, those who would be unlikely to be ready for work within 12 months, unlikely to be referred to the Work and Health programme), but who have the motivation and intention to seek employment<sup>14</sup>. It is likely that such provision would be planned in close consultation with DWP/JCP.

	<b>FOCUS OF LEARNING</b>	<b>PRIMARY PURPOSE</b>	<b>PRIMARY OUTCOME/ MEASUREMENT</b>
1	Confidence building, empowerment activities.	To build the ‘enabling’ skills underpinning successful employability, including listening,	<u>Progression</u> through to a more advanced course, to accredited provision, or

<sup>14</sup> BIS Research Paper No129b, Investigating the Benefits of English and maths Provision for Adult Learners .October 2013 The impact of improvements in English and maths upon reducing worklessness and improving health and wellbeing show statistically significant increases in life satisfaction, mental well-being, locus of control and self-esteem. In addition, around three-quarters of those with children felt more able to help their children with homework and almost all of these attributed this to their learning.

	<b>FOCUS OF LEARNING</b>	<b>PRIMARY PURPOSE</b>	<b>PRIMARY OUTCOME/ MEASUREMENT</b>
	Numeracy and literacy, basic digital skills. Finance and budgeting activities. Pre-employability activities	questioning, working with others and employers' expectations. Managing and expressing feelings, emotions and behaviours. Engendering positive attitudes about learning and progression to work.	through to JCP. <u>Social metrics</u> (confidence and progression, empowerment, social relationships).

2 Those working in very low paid work or insecure employment, and those falling outside the parameters of the benefit system and seeking a return to work. (Provision for low-paid workers should be planned in partnership with DWP). For many, childcare support is a major barrier to participation.

	<b>FOCUS OF LEARNING</b>	<b>PRIMARY PURPOSE</b>	<b>PRIMARY OUTCOME/ MEASUREMENT</b>
2	Confidence building and empowerment. Digital skills (web browsing, digital security, transactions, accessing public services). Numeracy and literacy Pre-employment support activities	To re-engage people who have taken a break from work in learning which will help them achieve employment. To update people on expectations of employers in the modern workplace and the skills required. To engender positive attitudes to gaining and maintaining employment.	<u>Progression</u> to an accredited programme, to part-time or full-time paid employment, self-employment or volunteering roles. Successful reference to adult careers guidance services. <u>Social metrics</u> (particularly confidence and progression).

3 **ESOL** Those with very poor spoken and/or written English (including those in work on very low incomes). Community learning in particular focuses on those who are not literate in their first language<sup>1516</sup>.

	<b>FOCUS OF LEARNING</b>	<b>PRIMARY PURPOSE</b>	<b>PRIMARY OUTCOME/ MEASUREMENT</b>
3	The Pre-Entry Level ESOL curriculum may cover skills such as recognising and writing letters, basic symbols/signs and/or numbers, answering questions designed to obtain	To enable people to gain confidence in their ability to: (1) successfully apply for and learn at a higher level, working towards accreditation;	<u>Progression</u> from Pre-Entry to Entry Level ESOL measured through London-wide ILR data matching. <u>Social metrics</u>

<sup>15</sup> 210,000 working age Londoners cannot speak English well and 25,000 cannot speak English at all (ESFA localities "cube" data, GLA Economics analysis)

<sup>16</sup> A disproportionate number of those from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are without paid work. (London's Poverty Profile 2017). Changes in public funding of ESOL in 2011/12 excluded those in low paid work, those with very low levels of literacy and language and those not available for work. (English Language for All, NIACE, 2012).

	basic personal information, writing their name, address, and telephone number and following basic verbal instructions.	(2) benefit socially and economically from acquiring spoken and written English skills;	(confidence and progression)
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#### 4 Mental Health Service Users<sup>17</sup>

	FOCUS OF LEARNING	PRIMARY PURPOSE	PRIMARY OUTCOME/ MEASUREMENT
4	Creative subjects Confidence and empowerment Digital skills (web browsing, digital security, transactions, accessing services, social media). Health and wellbeing Basic employability	To engage/re-engage people with learning, to raise aspirations about how they can contribute to an economically and socially prosperous London. To promote positive behaviours and attitudes about further learning and exploring options for employment.	RARPA (to demonstrate skills acquired and improvements in current skills). <u>Social metrics</u> (confidence and progression, empowerment and social relationships). Actual <u>progression</u> to further education, training, volunteering or employment.

#### 5 Adults with learning difficulties and disabilities.

	FOCUS OF LEARNING	PRIMARY PURPOSE	PRIMARY OUTCOME/ MEASUREMENT
5	Creative subjects Confidence building and empowerment Digital skills Health and wellbeing Numeracy and budgeting activities Advocacy	To optimise the participation of adults with learning difficulties in society through maintaining current skills, acquiring new skills and instilling willingness to engage successfully with others. To support improvements in health and wellbeing, employability and social engagements according to needs. Promote/maintain independent living and support carers.	RARPA (to demonstrate skills acquired and improvements in current skills). <u>Social metrics</u> (confidence and progression, empowerment and social relationships).

6 Those who are socially isolated or at risk of becoming so including some older learners (50+). This might include people with chronic health problems.

	FOCUS OF	PRIMARY PURPOSE	PRIMARY OUTCOME/
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<sup>17</sup> London Boroughs generally produce their own Mental Health Needs Assessment which will act as a planning tool for decisions about how adult learning can help prevent but also support individuals with poor mental health.

	<b>LEARNING</b>		<b>MEASUREMENT</b>
6	Creative subjects Digital skills (web browsing, digital security, transactions, accessing public services, engaging with social media). Health and wellbeing education and activities	To address issues of social isolation and loneliness, and to promote health and wellbeing, active community participation, and enable access to support services necessary to ensure positive lifestyle choices.	<u>Social metrics</u> (social relationships) Engagement in volunteering. Establishment of self-organised groups or clubs. Successful reference to adult careers guidance services.

7 Residents with multiple support needs including those living in areas identified as priority by Boroughs and including family learning.

	<b>FOCUS OF LEARNING</b>	<b>PRIMARY PURPOSE</b>	<b>PRIMARY OUTCOME/ MEASUREMENT</b>
7	Digital skills (web browsing, digital security, transactions, accessing public services). Family learning activities (with parents, wider family members and children) Health education Courses to re-engage people in learning Literacy and language development	To raise the aspirations and ambitions of people of all ages living in deprived circumstances by giving them the practical skills and tools to engage in society and the economy, to support and encourage all family members, and to break down barriers between communities.	RARPA (digital skills) <u>Social metrics</u> (confidence and progression, empowerment, social relationships)

### 3 COMMISSIONING

Current block grant allocations for community learning are historic<sup>18</sup>. They bear no direct relationship between the current notional sum granted through the ESFA, or the numbers of learners who might potentially benefit from participation in the types of learning identified. Any significant change in allocation methodology (such as a move to a more traditional output based model) would require the use of extensive mitigation measures to reduce turbulence and minimise unintended consequences.

#### A Retention of the Block Grant for Community Learning

Community learning allocations to boroughs currently account for approximately £34 million of the Adult Education Budget and are provided by way of a 'block' grant.

The block grant is a flat rate allocation (as opposed to an alternative formula-driven approach which funds providers primarily on numbers and hours of learning delivered). It provides a secure base for ensuring continuity, and in particular, that community learning develops in an integrated way with other public services (including health, police, housing, social services, and education) to address issues of economic and social prosperity at both borough and pan-London levels, and in accordance with local priorities. We consider that the block grant should be retained for community learning based on the following:

- Current public service networks are well integrated. There are many examples of Community Learning working jointly to tackle ‘big picture’ aims such as addressing poverty, safety, equality, health and housing (for example in Islington, the City of London<sup>19</sup> and in Tower Hamlets).
- Specific expertise and strong local networks are required to plan and deliver community learning effectively and respond to referrals, which means extensive use of learning advisers and community workers. In the best examples, programmes of learning are targeted to residential areas and streets where they will have greatest impact, are well embedded with other agencies, and intelligence about needs is derived from a wide range of local public services.
- Services can be responsive. They can adapt and bring on line new provision in-year in response to newly emerging issues or opportunities in priority communities/groups or the local or wider economy.
- Almost all providers have means-tested fees policies in place which require those who are able to pay for or contribute to the cost of their learning to do so. Overall, fees have increased in recent years and, for many providers, fees subsidise and support provision funded from public sources.

## **B FUTURE MODELS**

A key issue within *Skills for Londoners* is the targeting of funding, and at one level it is logical to propose that allocations to boroughs for community learning should be a computation, using validated data, which divides the funding available between Boroughs and direct providers according to need.

London boroughs and the GLA hold significant data on issues relevant to planning community learning activity. This includes employment, qualification

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<sup>19</sup> Where for example community learning works with housing, social services and education to provide for the needs of recently-arrived refugees.

levels of residents, age, ethnicity, disability, the homeless and troubled families. If new arrangements for commissioning means that providers in receipt of community learning funding are required to focus on specific beneficiary groups, then targeted coordinated data sets will be needed to enable them to do so. **Specifically, this will require readily-accessible statistics and background information at ‘lower super output area’ about employment, age, ethnicity, income levels, health, disability, crime and family circumstances, to enable targeted action.**

Our consultations favoured two broad approaches:

- **changing allocations** now between boroughs to more fairly reflect their population of priority groups, or
- developing a clear, consistent process of rigorous **business planning**, which requires every borough and community learning provider to prepare and submit a plan on how they intend to deliver community learning to priority beneficiaries, in some cases both within and beyond their borough boundaries. Boroughs and providers would submit their plans to the GLA for discussion and approval. Progress against the commitments in the Plan would need to be reported and monitored at agreed intervals.

These two approaches are not mutually exclusive. One option would be to start with business planning, and move to a process of adjusting allocations once pan-London data has been assembled and validated, and key evidence about beneficiaries, costs and outcomes is available. It is of course recognised that the GLA as commissioner will determine the allocation methodology.

## **A Changing current allocations**

In the course of this Project, we have undertaken **illustrative** work on modelling changes in allocations for community learning using different assumptions. In all cases we have focused our work on Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), which are sub-ward groupings, used for comparative purposes comprising approximately 1400 people. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of options.

Published statistical indicators which could be used to model allocations include the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) which is comprised of weighted rankings relating to income, employment, education skills and training, health and disability, crime, barriers to housing and services and

living environment. The most recent published data is 2015, but some of the components of the IMD related to 2010 and 2012.

Other important data sources can be accessed via NOMIS (produced by the Office for National Statistics and updated regularly) which produces national and local profiles on the size of the adult population, employment, economic activity, qualifications, earnings, benefit claimants and the availability of local jobs. There are also a wide range of other data sources about health, disability and ESOL needs, but these do not necessarily provide a full picture of needs which is capable of being analysed and presented at Borough level.

The modelling undertaken, available separately, consisted of three initial sets of parameters:

- 1. A straight allocation on adult population of London only<sup>20</sup>.** *At extremes, this would mean changes in allocations for 3 boroughs (Barking and Dagenham, Ealing, Enfield) of 100%+ and a reduction for 8 boroughs (City of London, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Lewisham, Tower Hamlets and Westminster) of 30%+.*
- 2. Allocations based solely on lower super output areas which fall into the lowest three deciles of IMD ranking.** *Again, at extremes, this would mean changes in allocations of 100%+ for 3 boroughs (Ealing, Enfield and Islington) and reductions of 30%+ for 13 boroughs (Bexley, City of London, Greenwich, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston-upon-Thames, Merton, Redbridge, Richmond-upon-Thames, Sutton and Wandsworth).*
- 3. Allocations weighted towards the lower super output areas in the bottom three deciles of the IMD, but with a proportion of funding relating to the more prosperous LSOAs<sup>21</sup>.** *This is on the basis that within all LSOAs, there will be some priority beneficiaries. This would mean a change of 100%+ for 3 boroughs (Barnet, Ealing, Enfield) and reductions of reductions of 30%+ in 7 boroughs (Bexley, City of London, Greenwich, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Wandsworth and Westminster).*

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<sup>20</sup> Derived from the 2011 Census data

<sup>21</sup> Here we used a weighting of 5 for the most deprived decile, 3 for the second and third decile and 1 for the number of LSOAs in the 4<sup>th</sup> or higher decile.

To demonstrate the effect of changing allocations, but retaining a proportion of current funding to ensure service continuity across London, we modelled three further allocations:

4. **Retention of 50% of each borough's current community learning funds, with 25% modelled on the number of people aged 50+ and a weighting for the number of LSOAs in the bottom three deciles.** *This would mean changes for one borough (Enfield) of 100%+ and reductions in one borough (City of London) of 30%+.*
5. **A 'flat rate' grant of 50% of the total community learning funding pot to be divided equally between all boroughs, with 25% allocated in accordance with the number of LSOAs in the bottom 3 deciles of IMD, and 25% based on the population aged 50+.** *This gives 3 boroughs (Barnet, Ealing and Enfield) increases of 100%+ and 6 boroughs (Greenwich, Hammersmith and Fulham, Lewisham, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster) reductions of 30%+.*
6. **As (5) but with a 25% flat rate grant, and the remaining two categories modelled on 37.5% each.** *This again benefits 3 boroughs (Barnet, Enfield, Ealing) to the tune of 100%+ and 7 boroughs (City of London, Greenwich, Hammersmith and Fulham, Lewisham, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster) reductions of 30%+.*

The detailed results of this modelling are available separately.

Whichever parameters we use, applying IMD and population to the figures (in an attempt to make adjustments) results in major changes to current funding allocations. There are of course a range of other potential factors which might be used in combination with IMD which are relevant to meeting priority groups, but could create further complexity and may not produce significantly different results.

It is important to remember that any adjustment to allocations would not deal neatly or precisely with the complete picture:

- Most boroughs do not restrict use of community learning funding to their own residents. In the interests of serving learners and ensuring access remains local, they operate across local boundaries. We have modelled the catchment for each borough's community learning to demonstrate the present patterns of provision.
- There are other providers offering community learning under a direct contract. For example, the Institutes of Adult Learning are active

across London, with high concentrations of learners in Camden, Lambeth and Southwark, and the Workers' Education Association and London Learning Consortium deliver across several boroughs. This makes robust calculations and the concept of 'fairness' much more complex to achieve.

Changes in allocations, even if they are phased in over a period of time would be disruptive to provision<sup>22</sup>, and there are other important considerations:

- Significant costs would be incurred in reshaping provision on the scale required.
- Addressing the issues outlined in *Skills for Londoners* means changes to provision. We want providers to focus leadership and management of community learning on developing new and innovative provision, enhancing quality, and working together to meet the economic and social needs of London – not on restructuring and redundancies.
- Providers are generally 'good'. Funding reductions to good provision which meets the needs of priority beneficiaries may be challenging to achieve politically and practically.

Should any change in funding allocations be considered in the future, they should be phased in over a period of time to mitigate the impacts outlined above and the option to base these on more precise data that better reflects need across the borough and the specific priority groups identified in this report should be explored.

## **B Driving Change Through Business Planning**

Boroughs already produce annual plans of proposed provision, but there are significant differences in format and expectations between those receiving community learning funding.

During workshops, several participants expressed the view that the quality of a borough's plan should be a determining factor in deciding allocations. We consider therefore that an alternative approach to driving change is to maintain the current pattern of allocations in the short term, and to place the emphasis on the production of a high-quality, borough-based business plan which:

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<sup>22</sup> Many ACL providers attract a significant amount of formula funding for their provision as well. Significant changes to formula funding would also cause disruption to provision.

- Outlines how community learning funds will be used to support priority groups, and to plan and report against how this has been achieved.
- Explains how the commissioning Borough/provider will work jointly with others to improve quality, develop a London-wide system of measuring outcomes, develop new curricula to meet needs, share expertise, and improve efficiencies.
- Provides clarity on the purpose of funds for community learning and what can be classified as legitimate expenditure (which might include, for example, guidance on maximum recharges for business services and any sub-contracting arrangements).
- Includes a clear programme of monitoring to ensure that these changes take place, within agreed timescale.

These plans could be used to cover all AEB funding for the ACL service and would apply to the boroughs, IALs and other providers such as the London Learning Consortium.

We would advise that the business plan forms part of the contract with the GLA. A failure to meet outcomes within pre-agreed tolerances would result in clawback, or in a reduced allocation for the following year. This is a decision for the GLA. Persistent or significant failure to meet outcomes would result in material reduction, or in some cases withdrawal, of the contract.

**Possible content of a 'business plan' to cover AEB funding over the period 2019-2022, updated annually:**

A brief overview of the service and type of delivery (direct, partnerships, sub-contracted).

The planned curriculum offer 2019+, and how it relates to the needs of London and to relevant local priority groups.

Marketing and internal partnerships – focusing on how target beneficiaries will be engaged and supported.

Other partnership arrangements (JCP, other boroughs and sub-regional partnerships (including pan-London), health services, providers, social housing, voluntary sector etc), focusing on what these arrangements will achieve and how their value will be assessed.

Targets for engagement and retention of learners.

The expected outcomes for learners, and how these outcomes will be assessed and reviewed.

Quality (including for example, key points from the Quality Improvement Plan which accompanies the Self-Assessment Report).

Value for money, including use of Pound Plus, matched funds from other sources.

Ideally, this would be in the form of a 3-year plan, with annual reviews of performance, and confirmation of allocation for the following period in line with the wider Devolution agreement. Arrangements would be put in place to transfer funds in the case of underperformance beyond agreed levels of tolerance.

In time, this computation may be adjusted to recognise the quality of outcomes, and other related factors, for example:

- quality of provision (which should be at least 'good'). Given that community learning is *local* and is an important first step for many in re-engagement, we believe that quality of provision is more critical than offering a choice of providers.
- curriculum innovation, in particular responsiveness to current priorities and emerging local needs in the pursuit of outcomes
- efficiency/value for money in producing positive outcomes.

#### 4 Recommendations

1. **That the GLA adopts the definition of community learning set out in this paper, together with the allocation of a 'block grant' to boroughs and current community learning providers, who will plan and deliver provision.** The block grant will enable rapid 'integrated' action to tackle social and economic inequalities, help communities with complex and multiple support needs in learning, and directly contribute to the aims set out in *Skills for Londoners*. As an important part of the wider FE sector we expect that, in addition, Boroughs would continue to access the wider Adult Skills Budget alongside colleges, voluntary organisations, and the private sector.
2. **That the GLA adopts a model of business planning rather than artificially adjust allocations at this stage.** We believe that a model of business planning will produce results more quickly, it will provide continuity, and will focus providers on supporting priority groups. It will avoid the major disruption to community learning likely in the event of systemic redistribution of funding allocations.
3. **That the GLA explores with providers developing pan-London arrangements to measure the value of community learning using social metrics, taking account of national developments.** These should enable providers to benchmark both regionally and nationally and to exchange good practice. It will also provide clear evidence about the types of programmes and delivery styles which promote

significant improvements in health and wellbeing, confidence, empowerment and which foster positive social relationships.

4. **That pan-London arrangements are put in place by the GLA to track actual individual progression from community learning activities to higher levels of education and training, as a key measure of the success of all adult learning provision.** This to include working with HMRC to agree an MoU to cover data sharing. The government should share this data with the GLA as soon as possible.
  
5. **That the GLA liaises with Ofsted and the Education and Training Foundation (ETF).** A specific focus within the Ofsted framework commenting on the quality of community learning outcomes would provide a valuable additional evidence base to the other methods and approaches proposed in this paper. The ETF is the leading organisation driving continuous professional development for the post-16 sector and should be a key partner in supporting London's providers in curriculum innovation, quality improvement and the leadership of change.

## **APPENDIX:**

### **Adult community Learning, Social Metrics**

#### **OUTCOMES FOR ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING**

#### **SOCIAL METRICS :**

Traditionally community learning has been quality assured through a national process, fully recognised as valid in Ofsted inspections, known as RARPA (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement). In broad terms, RARPA expects community learners, with support from their tutors as appropriate, to identify and record their learning goals, and periodically to determine progress towards achieving them.

The potential range of outcomes arising from community learning programmes is very wide. It might include progression to more advanced studies or to work. In other instances, community learning contributes to improved health and wellbeing (potentially placing less pressure on public services), increased personal confidence to combat issues such as social isolation, or community and civic engagement

Recently the Learning and Work Institute (LWI), commissioned by the DfE, has undertaken work on social metrics and their application to community learning. The intention of this work is that it should help to provide more secure, validated data for demonstrating the impact of community learning.

**The social metrics used were fully validated and tested. They fall into three broad categories:**

***Confidence and Progression*** – questions seek to establish how positive people feel, whether they are able to make decisions, resolve problems, think more clearly and think more optimistically about their life. For the progression element (derived from LWI's work with DWP), questions focus on people's attitude to work, and how they view their readiness to take up employment.

***Empowerment***, which includes questions about anxiety, confidence in managing and completing tasks and overcoming challenges.

***Social Relationships*** asks questions such as the breadth of friendships (including those about age and racial origin and religion), levels of trust in others, and people's sense of 'belonging'.

There are some important lessons in how these tools should be applied successfully, including careful preparation, spending time with tutors explaining their potential value, administering them at a point in a course where learners feel able to engage fully in the process, and embedding social metric questions alongside other evaluative questions to relieve the burden of multiple surveys. A standardised approach to their use across London boroughs would enable valuable data to be collected about impact, and enable some benchmarking to take place.

In London, Boroughs of Hackney, Lewisham, Lambeth, Westminster and Camden have been involved in small-scale pilots.