

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 September 2020

LEARNING & SKILLS ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update on the performance of the Learning & Skills Service for academic year 2019/20.

Summary

2. The Learning & Skills service continues to perform well with a 'Good' Ofsted grade whilst supporting some of the most vulnerable adults, young people and families in Darlington.
3. The shift of provision to better align with local priorities has had some impact on the performance of the service due to the change in demographic of the learners. The service has recognised this and is putting in place further checks and controls to ensure that the service continues to perform at a high level.
4. There will be some challenges in 2020/21 as we move towards TVCA priorities as part of the devolution of the Adult Education Budget and the ongoing challenges of apprenticeship funding.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Members note the contents of the report

Reasons

6. To give Scrutiny Members oversight and knowledge of this externally funded service.

Suzanne Joyner
Director of Children and Adult Services

Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Paul Richardson, Head of Skills and Employability - Extension 6015

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report supports the Council's Crime and Disorder responsibilities, young people engaged in learning are less likely to engage in anti-social behaviour
Health and Well Being	This report supports performance improvement relating to improving the health and wellbeing of residents
Sustainability	This report supports the Council's sustainability responsibilities
Diversity	This report supports the promotion of diversity
Wards Affected	This report supports performance improvement across all Wards
Groups Affected	This report supports performance improvement which benefits all groups
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) by involving Members in the scrutiny of performance relating to the delivery of key outcomes
Efficiency	Scrutiny of performance is integral to optimising outcomes.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report may have an impact on their education and future employment.

MAIN REPORT

The Learning & Skills Service

The Learning & Skills Service is the external training arm of the Council and is funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) to provide learning and skills provision for the local community. The service has been an Ofsted 'Good' provider since 2004.

The service provides a range of training from Pre-entry Level to Level 5, including:

- 16-18 study programme and diploma courses
- Adult education, including basic skills such as English, maths and ICT
- Community Learning, including employability
- Family Learning
- Intensive Support
- Distance Learning
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Apprenticeships
- 14-16 alternative education

Learning & Skills supports some of the most disadvantaged adults, young people and families in Darlington and contributes to the priorities of both the Children and Young People's Plan and the sustainable community strategy; One Darlington: Perfectly Placed. Often the provision delivered provides a stepping stone to those taking their first steps back into learning and a number of past learners have moved on to higher level learning at Darlington College or other providers.

Teaching takes places across three main sites; the Coleridge Centre, Tubwell Row and the units at Lingfield Way, as well as in a number of school and community settings.

Apprenticeship provision includes Health and Social Care, Business Administration, Motor Vehicle, Site Joinery and Leadership and Management.

Learner Numbers - In 2019/20, as at 4 June 2020 the service had supported 813 learners across a wide range of programmes, including:

- 54 16-18 year olds
- 728 people on adult and community learning
- 31 apprentice starts
- A small number of 14-16 year olds on alternative provision

Funding - The overall funding allocation from the ESFA and TVCA for the Learning & Skills Service in 2019/20 was £707,658. This was split as follows:

- £183,901 - 16-18 Study Programme (ESFA)
- £442,710 – Adult Education (TVCA)
- £53,406 – Adult Education (ESFA)
- £3,000 – Apprenticeships (ESFA residual contract)
- £24,641 - Adult Learning Loans (ESFA)

In addition, the service draws down funding for delivering apprenticeships. To date, in 2019/20 this has amounted to £197,909.

Adult Education Devolution – From the start of academic year 2019/20 part of the Adult Education Budget was devolved to the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), this funding supports adult learning provision for Tees Valley residents. The service's allocation for 2019/20 was similar to what it received previously from the ESFA, the service has also received a small allocation from the ESFA to support non Tees Valley learners.

Apprenticeship Levy – The Learning & Skills service supports the Council to deliver the apprenticeship levy and offers a range of apprenticeship provision to meet the training needs of Council staff and other large employers.

Non-Levy Apprenticeship provision – The service also delivers apprenticeship training to SMEs who are not subject to the apprenticeship levy. This is delivered through a sub-contract on behalf of Middlesbrough Council who are the prime provider. The service aims to bid for its own non-levy allocation at the next opportunity.

Qualification Levels in Darlington - It should be noted that national data from NOMIS shows that whilst Darlington residents are better qualified than the North East average for Level 1-3 that is not the case for Level 4 which is 0.5% below the North East average. Darlington remains below the national average at almost every level. However, the percentage of residents with no qualifications (6.6%) is 1.1% better than the national average of 7.7% and 2.4% better than in 2018. An important contributor to this is the first steps and basic skills provision provided by the service.

Qualifications (Jan 2019-Dec 2019)

	Darlington	North East	Great Britain
	(%)	(%)	(%)
NVQ4 And Above	31.4	31.9	40.3
NVQ3 And Above	53.2	52.1	58.5
NVQ2 And Above	74.6	73.5	75.6
NVQ1 And Above	87.0	84.8	85.6
Other Qualifications	6.4	5.9	6.7
No Qualifications	6.6	9.4	7.7

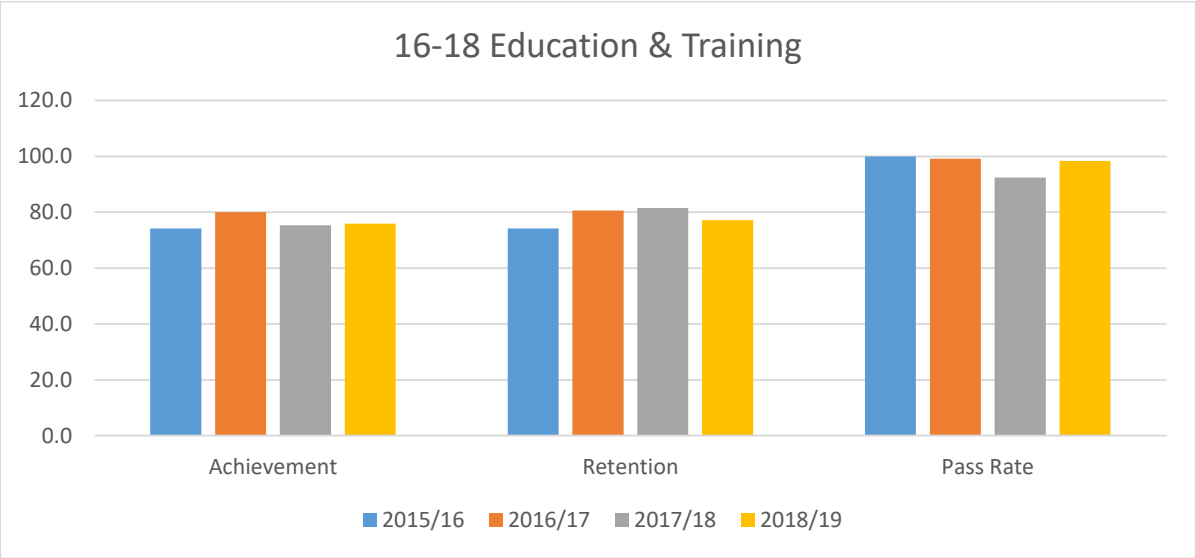
Performance

2018/19 Achievement Rates - The table below shows the 2018/19 achievement rate by provision type compared with the national benchmark. A further breakdown is given in the tables below. Due to Covid-19 no national data will be published for 2019/20.

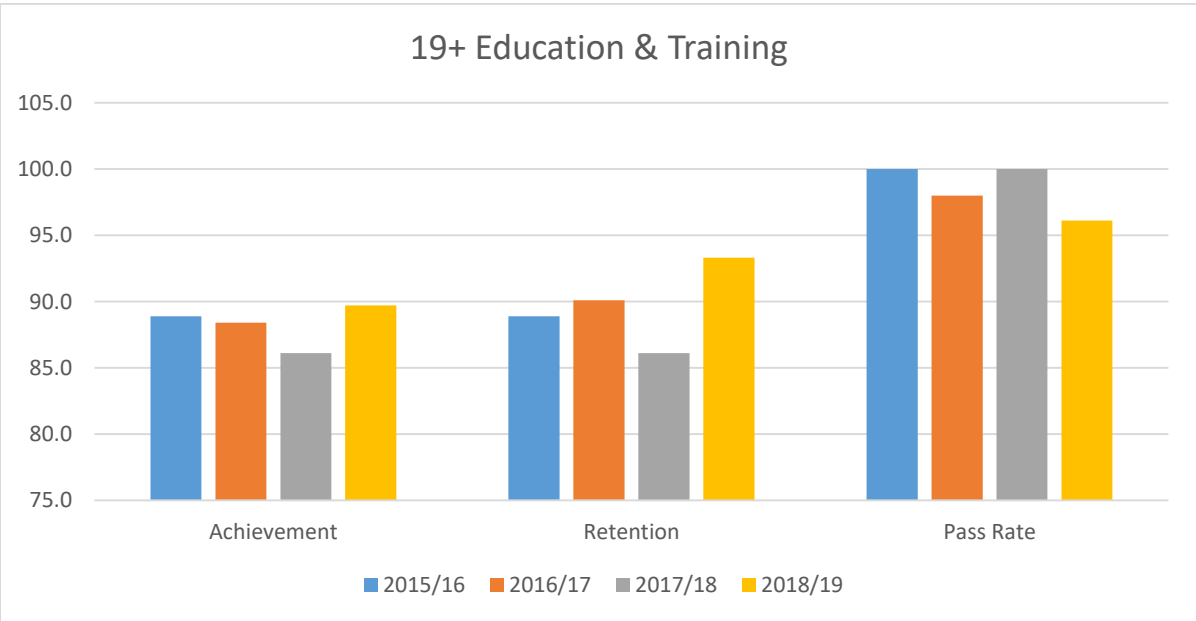
Provision Type	Learning & Skills Overall Achievement Rate	National Provider Type Overall Achievement Rate
16-18	75.9%	82.1%
Adult Education	89.7%	87.2%
Community Learning	98.7%	No comparator
Apprenticeships	76.8%	72.7%

The achievement rate percentage is calculated by multiplying the retention rate (the percentage of learners who completed their course) by the pass rate (the percentage of learners who completed the course and passed).

The 16-18 retention rate dropped between 2017/18 and 2018/19 however the pass rate rose amongst those learners that were retained resulting in a slight increase to the overall achievement rate. Please note that due to the decline in the number of providers in Darlington supporting the vulnerable 16-18 year olds there are now only two main providers Darlington Borough Council and Darlington College. The service often enrolls young people who have left college, for whatever reason, or do not feel able to cope in a large college setting.



The pass rate for 19+ education and training continues to remain high, even though the service has increased delivery of basic skills provision (English, maths and ICT) and ESOL in line with TVCA priorities. This has had a slight impact on the pass rate, although retention has improved following a dip in 2017/18.



In 2018/19 the apprenticeship achievement rate stood at 76.8%, down from 82.4% in 2017/18 this was largely due to a move from apprenticeship frameworks to standards, this was a national trend. The Service's achievement rate remains well above the national average of 72.7% and the service continues to have a good reputation with employers.







Learner Satisfaction - All learners are encouraged to complete a learner satisfaction and in 2018/19, 91.62% of learners rated the service as 'Good' or above

Learner Progression - Learners are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment and have attained relevant qualifications. A high proportion of learners progress to further/higher education, employment or training at a level suitable to meet appropriate career plans. In 2018/19:

- 93% of Apprenticeship leavers progressed to FE, employment, Advanced Apprenticeships or university
- 70% of Study Programme learners progressed to FE, Apprenticeships or employment
- 85% of Adult Learners sampled progressed to further learning or employment






Overall, the Service delivers considerable added value to both individual learners, the Council and other agencies. The diagram below demonstrates the additional benefits the service brings.

Impact of Learning & Skills

 Improved adult skills, literacy & numeracy	 Greater community engagement	 Enhanced workforce development inc. CPD, bespoke training and Apprenticeships	 Better parenting skills, resilience and independence	 Increased participation of young people and adults	 More volunteering, peer support and community integration
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Learning & Skills Provision

14-16 Alternative Education	16-18 Education & Training	Apprenticeships	Adult Learning	Community Learning	Family Learning	Intensive Support	Access to HE
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 Fewer skills gaps	 Less isolation of vulnerable groups. e.g. refugees, elderly residents and those with learning difficulties & disabilities	 Lower cost of staff development at a high quality and bespoke to DBC	 Less dependency on services. e.g. domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse and homelessness	 Fewer number of young people and adults who are not economically active. Reduced cost of NEETs. Less anti-social behaviour.
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Challenges

Covid-19 – The Service made a very successful transition to online learning at the start of lockdown using Google Classroom and both staff and learners have responded positively. There have already been a number of fully online courses which started during lockdown. In line with ESFA guidance the expectation is that all further education provision will fully restart from September 2020. For Learning & Skills, and the majority of other providers, this is likely to be a mix of online and classroom based learning. The challenge will be to maintain learner numbers going forward and supporting those that are digitally excluded.

Devolution - The Adult Education makes up a significant percentage of the service's income and devolution of that funding to TVCA will present a new challenge. In the first year (2019/20) we saw little change but beyond that the expectation is that the provision will be more aligned with the skills needs of the Tees Valley, this includes first steps provision. The service has already moved in this direction with a shift from leisure type courses to more basic skills provision and will continue to ensure it is responding to TVCA priorities whilst continuing to meet the needs of Darlington residents. This has meant moving some of the learning for leisure type provision to full cost or supporting the establishment of learning groups.

Apprenticeships - The introduction of the Apprenticeship levy continues to present some challenges with the money moving from training providers to employers and nationally apprenticeship numbers have fallen as large employers had attempted to manage their levy spend. However, the service continues to work with employers to encourage apprenticeship take up and is looking to further grow the provision.

Study Programme – It is expected that the number of young people not in employment will rise over the next few years and the current premises at Tubwell Row is almost at capacity therefore the Service is seeking to move to larger premises to meet the expected demand.

Ofsted – The Service is currently due an Ofsted inspection and the impact of Covid-19 has meant that less time has been spent on inspection preparations. However, it is hoped that the Service will be able to retain its Good grading.