

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
23 OCTOBER 2023**

LEARNING AND SKILLS ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update on the performance of the Learning & Skills Service for academic year 2022/23.
2. To allow Scrutiny members oversight of, and an opportunity to challenge, the performance of this externally funded service

Summary

3. The service is now seeing a recovery of learner numbers and performance remains high.
4. The service is growing provision whilst continuing to respond to employer and community need.
5. The service was inspected by Ofsted in June 2022, retaining its assessment of 'Good' overall.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Members note the content of this report

Tony Murphy
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Background Papers

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

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S17 Crime and Disorder	The service supports the Council’s crime and disorder responsibilities, young people engaged in learning are less likely to engage in anti-social behaviour
Health and Wellbeing	The service actively promotes health and wellbeing
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	The service promotes sustainability
Diversity	The service actively supports the diversity agenda
Wards Affected	The service offers provision across all of Darlington
Groups Affected	The service offers learning for 16–18-year-olds and adults
Budget and Policy Framework	The service is externally funded. This report does not impact on the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	The service contributes to the priorities in the Council Plan allowing people to develop their potential, improve their skills and help improve their employment opportunities
Efficiency	Scrutiny of performance is integral to optimising outcomes
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Looked After Children or Care Leavers may access the service offer

MAIN REPORT

The Learning & Skills Service

7. 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.
8. The service provides a range of training from Pre-entry Level to Level 5, including:
 - (a) 16-18 study programme and diploma courses
 - (b) Adult Education, including basic skills such as English, maths, ICT/Digital
 - (c) Learning for Inclusion
 - (d) Bespoke Employer Led Programmes (BELPs)
 - (e) Family Learning
 - (f) Intensive Support
 - (g) Distance Learning
 - (h) English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
 - (i) Apprenticeships
9. 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 Council Plan. 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 and other providers.
10. Teaching takes place across three main sites: the Coleridge Centre, Bennet House and the units at Lingfield Way, as well as in a number of school and community settings.
11. Apprenticeship provision includes Health and Social Care, Business Administration, Motor Vehicle, Site Joinery and Leadership and Management.

Learner Numbers

12. In 2022/23 the service supported 1,537 (1,177) learners (previous year's numbers in brackets) across a wide range of programmes, including:
 - (a) 46 (49) 16–18-year-olds on study programme
 - (b) 1,029 (428) people on Adult Skills courses
 - (c) 415 (667) people on Community Learning
 - (d) 47 (33) Apprenticeship starts

Funding

11. The service is totally externally funded. The overall funding generated from the ESFA and TVCA for the Learning & Skills Service in 2022/23 was £1,203,148 (£1,007,210). This was split as follows:
 - (a) £275,419 (£221,801) 16-18 Study Programme (ESFA)
 - (b) £472,590 (£462,760) - Adult and Community Education (TVCA)

- (c) £64,497 (£66,776) - Adult and Community Education (ESFA)
- (d) £242,189 (£224,501) - Apprenticeships (ESFA / Employers)
- (e) £14,639 (£6,501) - Adult Learning Loans (ESFA / SLC)
- (f) £133,814 (£24,871) - Other Income

Performance

12. Due to the impact of the pandemic on post 16 providers no achievement rates were published nationally in 2020/21 or 2021/22 therefore there are no national benchmarks for comparison. However locally produced performance data shows:

Provision Type	Overall Achievement Rate		
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 (Provisional)
16-18	78.4%	92.3%	95.7%
Adult Skills	73.8%	82.8%	93.6%
Community Learning	98.5%	97.2%	99.3%
Apprenticeships	84.0%	88.0%	71.4%

13. The achievement rate percentage is calculated by multiplying the number of learners who complete their course by the percentage of those that sat their exams / assessments and passed.

Learner Progression

14. Learner progression, or the positive destination rate, measures the percentage of learner who move into education, employment or training after completing a course with Learning & Skills. TVCA changes in the Learning for Inclusion (previously Community Learning) offer have resulted in a decrease in positive progressions following a shift from qualification led funding to funding for individuals.

Provision Type	Positive Destination Rate		
	20120/21	2021/22	2022/23 (Provisional)
16-18	90.0%	73.0%	90.0%
Adult Skills	72.3%	82.0%	84.6%
Community Learning	75.0%	87.5%	66.3%
Apprenticeships	83.0%	81.1%	72.0%

Learner Satisfaction

15. Learner satisfaction (those rating the service good or above) has remained fairly static, standing at 92% in 2021/22 and 91% in 2022/23.

Employer Satisfaction

16. Employer Satisfaction (those rating the service good or above) rose from 95% in 2021/22 to 96.3% in 2022/23.

Observation of Learning, Teaching and Assessment

17. In 2021/22 91% (12 in number) of observations of learning, teaching and assessment were rated Good or above. This is a slight increase from 90% (10 in number) in 2021/22.

Impact of Covid

18. Whilst there still appears to be a reluctance for some people to engage in learning, learner numbers appear to be recovering following a significant dip during Covid.

Ofsted Inspection Outcome

19. The service was inspected in June 2022 and retained its overall grade of 'Good'. The inspectors looked at eight discrete areas;

(a) The quality of education	Good
(b) Behaviour and attitudes	Good
(c) Personal development	Good
(d) Leadership and management	Good
(e) Education programmes for young people	Good
(f) Adult learning programmes	Good
(g) Apprenticeships	Good
(h) Provision for learners with high needs	Good

20. Only three areas for improvement were identified, all of which are being addressed.

- (a) Ensure that all tutors use information about learners' starting points to effectively plan learning that meets individual needs
- (b) Ensure that all learners benefit from a range of work experience opportunities
- (c) Ensure that tutors receive appropriate training to enable them to continue to develop their teaching skills

21. The report highlighted the fact that the service is meeting the needs of the local community and local businesses, learners were well supported and that the service was well led.

Challenges Ahead

22. The service was awarded a further three-year funding contract by TVCA for Adult Skills in 2021/22 and continues to respond to the demands of local skills needs. However, there are also potential uncertainties if the TVCA devolved funding model starts to diverge from what the rules and requirements were under the ESFA when the service has to re-tender for academic year 2024/25, unless a one-year extension clause is enacted.

23. The government proposed a review of the further education funding system in their white paper 'Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth' which was published in January 2021. These reforms are due to be implemented from academic year 2024/25. At present the service has no indication of the likely impact those funding reforms will have on Learning & Skills or the TVCA devolved funding.