
ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING: FUNDING CHANGES

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with an overview of on-going discussions with Welsh Government regarding the future of Adult Community Learning (ACL) funding across Wales and the potential impact of changes to existing provision in Cardiff.

Scope of Scrutiny

2. At its meeting on 18 July 2017 the Committee heard from Cabinet Members and Directors about the key challenges they faced for 2017/18 and how they felt the Committee could best constructively assist in addressing these and driving improvement. Councillor Sarah Merry (Cabinet Member: Education, Employment and Skills) highlighted that the Welsh Government review of funding may result in a reduction in funding for Cardiff and suggested that this Committee *'examine proposed funding changes and the repercussions of this for ACL provision in Cardiff.'*¹

Background

3. The Welsh Government define Adult Community Learning (ACL) as *'flexible learning opportunities for adults, delivered in community venues to meet local needs...mainly for adults aged 19+... both formal and informal/ non-accredited*

¹ Councillor Merry presentation to Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee 18 July 2017

*learning opportunities.*² Currently, the Welsh Government fund several ACL schemes, including Learning for Work, Basic Skills, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and Welsh medium courses.

4. In July 2017, the Welsh Government issued an '*Adult Learning in Wales Policy 2017*', attached at **Appendix A**, setting out their strategic aims, priorities and the need to review funding arrangements. The policy statement draws on two recent reviews of ACL initiated by Welsh Government, '*A review of Adult Community Learning in Wales*' (ARAD Research, October 2016) and '*Adult Community Learning in Wales 2015 -2016*' (Estyn, November 2016).
5. The Welsh Government policy statement highlights the significant reductions in funding for adult learning over the last few years and states that '*Future funding for the sector remains vulnerable to additional cuts. We must be realistic about the funding that will be available to us and make best use of it.*'
6. The Welsh Government policy statement details the following key areas of ACL which providers will be expected to consider and prioritise:
 - a. Essential Skills – including communication, ESOL and numeracy
 - b. Digital Skills
 - c. Employability Skills
 - d. Older Learners and Social Engagement
 - e. Engagement Activity and 'hook' courses
 - f. Welsh Medium Provision.³
7. The Welsh Government is proposing to undertake public consultation on the above options in Spring 2018, with a view to implementing changes in funding from April 2019.

² Welsh Government website – downloaded 22 September 2017
<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/communitylearning/?lang=en>

³ Further details on these categories can be found on Pages 5-7, Appendix A

Current Provision in Cardiff

8. The Cardiff and Vale Community Learning Partnership (CVCLP) Adult Community Learning providers are Cardiff and Vale College, Vale of Glamorgan County Council, City of Cardiff Council and Adult Learning Wales (formerly WEA Cymru and YMCA Wales Community College).

9. Adult Community Learning in Cardiff is delivered through three main strands:
- a. **Learning for Work:** Funded by Welsh Government for priority learners, who include: those aged 16+ accessing basic skills; those currently not in Education, Training or Employment; and those aged 50+ who are currently unemployed. Key learning categories include ESOL, Basic Skills, Digital Literacy and Welsh medium provision.
 - b. **Learning for Life:** Recreational lifelong learning courses for all residents, provided by Cardiff Council on a cost recovery basis.
 - c. **Learning for Adults with Additional Needs** (Disability Inclusion in Community Education [DICE]) covering both courses for learners who wish to progress and achieve a work-related qualification and recreational courses for adults who wish to participate in an enjoyable activity to improve their health, wellbeing and social skills.

The prospectus for each learning strand is available at:

<https://goo.gl/5DFXcy>

10. Cardiff Council is a provider of ACL and delivers courses in each of the above learning strands. The main ACL centres are Severn Road, Canton and Llanover Hall Arts Centre, Canton, with circa 900 courses delivered across Cardiff at over 25 venues including schools, libraries, hubs, community centres, community halls, churches and enterprise centres.

11. The CVLCP curriculum planning group works to identify which courses are required locally in addition to those prioritised by Welsh Government. Cardiff Council employs community education officers to design and write courses identified as required and maintains a list of qualified tutors which the Council then contracts to deliver the courses.

12. Cardiff Council currently receives £1,064,000 Adult Learning Grant from Welsh Government to deliver Learning for Work courses. The Welsh Government carry out an annual performance assessment⁴ of the success rates for the delivery of ACL, measuring the number of learners who have completed their course in full and attained the relevant accreditation from the course. The table below shows recent performance results for Cardiff Council and other providers in Cardiff, with an improving trend. The figures for 2016/17 are being verified and will be available later in the year.

Provider Success Rates	Success 2012/13	Success 2013/14	Success 2014/15	Success 2015/16	Target 2015/16
Cardiff and Vale College	77%	80%	88%	88%	89%
The City of Cardiff Council	60%	72%	87%	94%	88%
Vale of Glamorgan County Council	81%	85%	86%	96%	88%
WEA Cymru	81%	88%	99%	86%	93%
YMCA Wales Community College	97%	99%	97%		
Partnership success rate	80%	88%	91%	90%	90%

13. In 2015-16, across all ACL providers in Cardiff, there were 2,615 individual learners. The official statistics show that there were 805 male learners and 1680 female learners⁵, with the following age profile:

⁴ Post 16 learning providers are required to submit data on learners in Wales via the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR), which provides the official source of statistics on post 16 (non-higher education) learners in Wales.

⁵ Taken from <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Learners/Local-Authority-Community-Learning>
There are 130 learners where the gender is not specified and 135 where the age is not specified

Unique learners in Cardiff ACL by age group and gender 2015-2016

	Male	Female	
All ages (1)	805	1680	2480
16	15	20	30
17	10	5	15
18	10	15	30
19	15	15	30
20 - 24	70	130	200
25 - 39	235	730	965
40 - 49	170	355	525
50 - 59	170	230	400
60 - 64	40	65	105
65 and over	70	110	180

14. The following table shows the subject areas studied by learners in Cardiff:

Cardiff ACL activities by subject 2015-2016⁶

Health, Public Services and Care	1185
Science and Mathematics	180
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	5
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	
Information and Communication Technology	690
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	505
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	10
Arts, Media and Publishing	240
History, Philosophy and Theology	5
Social Sciences	
Languages, Literature and Culture	40
Education and Training	75
Preparation for Life and Work	245
Business, Administration and Law	125

Way Forward

15. Councillor Sarah Merry (Cabinet Member: Education, Employment and Skills) has been invited and may wish to give a statement. Isabelle Bignall (Assistant Director, Communities and Customer Services) and John Agnew (Corporate Customer Services Manager) will attend to answer Members' questions.

⁶ Taken from same website as above. There are 1,370 cases where the subject area is not known.

Legal Implications

16. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

17. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/ Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

Recommendations

18. The Committee is recommended to consider the information in this report, its' appendix and received at this meeting, and to submit any recommendations, observations or comments to the Cabinet.

Davina Fiore

Director, Governance and Legal Services

29 September 2017