

EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 13 th July 2023
Report Subject	Adult Community Learning (ACL) within the North East Wales Adult Community Learning Partnership
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is to provide members with an update on progress being made against the recommendations made by Estyn in their May 2022 inspection of the North East Wales Adult Community Learning Partnership. Adult Learning in Flintshire is delivered in partnership with Wrexham local authority.

Estyn judged the Partnership to be well led, with strong support from both local authorities in delivering provision for adults in the community across Flintshire and Wrexham. They found that leaders set very high aspirations for the partnership, the providers and for learners. The vision for the partnership is ambitious, and reflects Welsh Government policies for community learning.

The findings of the inspection mean that there is no requirement for any follow up by Estyn during this inspection cycle.

Estyn invited the Partnership to prepare two case studies. The first was on its work in relation to family learning and the second on establishing a new Adult Learning Community partnership. These have been published on Estyn's website.

Estyn recognised that the Partnership understands its own strengths and areas for improvement and has clear quality improvement planning processes. Areas for improvement are identified appropriately, including more consistent approaches to quality assuring teaching and learning across the wider Partnership and developing a data management system to track outcomes and learner progression that will support the rapid growth of learners accessing provision.

There were four recommendations from the inspection:

R1 Increase opportunities for adult learning in the community bilingually and through the medium of Welsh

R2 Track, monitor and evaluate learners' long-term progress through the partnership's provision

R3 Develop a partnership approach to self-evaluation and improvement of learning and teaching across all the partnership's provision

R4 Improve opportunities for learners to receive advice and guidance about joining the partnership's provision

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	The Committee is asked to note the progress made against the Estyn Inspection recommendations and be assured by the rigour of improvement planning and evaluation within the Partnership.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ESTYN INSPECTION 2019
1.01	<p>R1 Increase opportunities for adult learning in the community bilingually and through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>The Partnership audits the provision through the medium of Welsh for adult learning in the community every quarter, working closely with key partners in North East Wales including Coleg Cambria and Adult Learning Wales.</p> <p>Throughout the commissioning process for all ACL lead providers, the ability to deliver courses and sessions through the medium of Welsh is an essential part of the process.</p> <p>Work is also undertaken with the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The National Centre for Learning Welsh, established in 2016, is responsible for all aspects of the Learn Welsh sector - from curriculum and course development to resources for tutors, marketing and e-learning. The Partnership therefore signposts and support learners to access courses through the Centre's provision.</p> <p>The aims are to ensure that current needs are being met, there is minimum duplication and progression pathways are built in to provision. Throughout 2022-23, the Partnership introduced two new courses through the medium of Welsh based on supporting Welsh medium primary to high school transition. Additional provision has also been added that addresses gaps in or enriches current provision. Two examples are Canu Shotton, a Welsh singing group for bilingual learners and an event organised for Welsh</p>

	<p>learners presented by a contemporary Welsh author who publishes almost exclusively in Welsh.</p> <p>Two additional Welsh medium courses have been planned for delivery throughout 2023 including employability skills and an introduction to the health and social care sector.</p> <p>The Partnership has been working with Adult Learning Wales to promote their Welsh for Speakers of Other Languages (WSOL) provision and ensured that learners had the support they needed to access this provision.</p> <p>The Partnership contributes to the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic 10-year Plan (WESP) and is an active member of the workforce development sub-group.</p>
1.02	<p>R2 Track, monitor and evaluate learners' long-term progress through the partnership's provision.</p> <p>During the second year of the Partnership, 1,969 learners attended courses funded through the CLG, this is an increase of 33% from the first year of the Partnership.</p> <p>The Partnership has developed its tracking, monitoring and evaluation of learners' long-term progress through the introduction of additional quarterly monitoring data points. This includes follow-up activities to track longer term progress. This has been actioned by adding capacity to the team through the appointment of a learner voice coordinator funded through an additional grant for learner voice activities. Progression is a core theme throughout all the activities undertaken.</p> <p>The Partnership has been developing a management information system for all partners to use to improve the tracking, monitoring and evaluation of a learner's journey. This will support the coordinator and follow-up of a learner's journey by live tracking data. The new system will be up and running for April 2024. Learners' progression pathways are a key outcome indicator for the Partnership. The progression pathways include progressing into employment or volunteering, further study or further engagement courses based on individual needs.</p>
1.03	<p>R3. Develop a partnership approach to self-evaluation and improvement of learning and teaching across all the partnership's provision</p> <p>The Partnership produces an annual self-evaluation report for the Welsh Government which includes all core learning grant provision and summary reports on partners' provision. This is submitted in July.</p> <p>The establishment of a quality committee that has representatives from the three main providers for adult learning in the community ensures that approaches to quality assuring provision and subsequent evaluation reports feed into the overall Partnership systems and processes. The quality committee discusses approaches to quality assuring provision including learning and teaching. The Partnership has introduced a standardised session observation template that is used by all providers who are funded through the core learning grant.</p>

	<p>A partnership-wide learner voice framework has also been introduced that includes learners' feedback on learning and teaching, this is used to inform improvement planning. An example of a key message from learners was that they would like a greater number of courses being delivered online. The Partnership has responded by increasing the amount of online provision for 2023-24.</p>
1.04	<p>R4 Improve opportunities for learners to receive advice and guidance about joining the partnership's provision</p> <p>The effective use of social media platforms has continued. The post reach is monitored monthly. In the last 28 days for example, the post reach on Facebook was 1,497 and post engagement was 230. Twitter is aimed at engaging schools and professional partners.</p> <p>Learner voice feedback has affirmed that the majority of learners use social media to find out about courses and provision. In addition, the Partnership attends networking events to promote provision, for example, the recent Wellbeing and Employability event held in Connahs Quay and works with a wide range of partners to promote ACL.</p> <p>The Partnership is currently investigating the viability of designing an app.</p> <p>In order to reach those not on social media, the Partnership interacts and promotes its courses through a range of wider partners including the learning for wellbeing brochure, DWP network and in-person events such as the recently supported launch of Hwb Caergwre.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Welsh Government provides local authorities with funding for ACL and provides guidance on the use of the funding in an annual letter (Adult Community Learning Service Delivery Plans Guidance). The community learning grant (CLG) for 2023-24 is £265,418.</p> <p>Local authorities are required to submit an ACL service delivery plan and a strategic plan to Welsh Government annually. Local authorities must demonstrate that they are working in partnership with local providers to deliver adult learning in their area. The Welsh Government analyses and discusses these plans with the local authority.</p> <p>The Partnership is also very active in looking for additional funding to innovate and further enhance provision. This was noted by Estyn in their report.</p>
2.02	<p>The strategic responsibility for ACL provision within Flintshire sits within the Education and Youth Portfolio. The Community Learning Grant enables some provision for a co-ordinator role across both local authorities but this is not sufficient for the resource requirements of delivering an effective service. Capacity within the school improvement service was therefore, increased in 2021 to enable the portfolio to meet the growing</p>

	<p>demands of this valuable provision, through additional Learning Adviser support for Adult Learning.</p> <p>Estyn noted that senior officials and managers from both authorities play an important role in managing and overseeing the Partnership.</p>
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3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>There are no specific risks arising from this report and subsequent actions. The Education Portfolio has a detailed risk assessment which outlines key risks related to the delivery of education services and method statements which describe how these risks are managed. These are regularly reported to the Education, Youth and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The partnership has also established a quality committee to monitor and review the partnership's self-evaluation processes and evaluate outcomes across the partnership. The quality committee contains appropriate senior leader representation and membership from partnership organisations.</p>
3.02	<p>Anti-poverty Impact – Flintshire County Council seeks to mitigate the impact of poverty through its partnership work programme. Adult Community Learning is key to delivering priorities which aim to support the wellbeing and mental health of citizens and to alleviate poverty and inequality.</p> <p>Adult Community Learning supports the Welsh Government's agenda for tackling poverty and its wellbeing agenda set out in the Well Being of Future Generations Act (Wales) (2015), particularly in meeting the needs of older learners.</p> <p>The Adult Community Learning Partnership seeks to contribute to this by supporting adult learners to have positive aspirations and to learn and achieve their potential. It will help ensure that specified groups of learners have access to a range of provision that will help them to develop the skills and knowledge to secure a better future for themselves.</p>
3.03	<p>Equalities Impact – The 2019 inspection of Flintshire's education services undertaken by Estyn recognised good practice in provision for pupils' wellbeing and additional learning needs. This continues to be reflected in Flintshire's values, strategy, provision, and outcomes.</p> <p>The 2022 Estyn inspection of the ACL partnership identified that provision is focused on the needs of learners in their communities. The report provides assurance that "<i>senior leaders and partnership members' work closely to develop provision that focuses on hard-to-reach learners and those in need of considerable support before they can progress to more formal learning opportunities.</i>"</p>
3.04	<p>Use of the grant funding and quality of provision will continue to be monitored by the Flintshire and Wrexham ACL Partnership and by Welsh Government. Regular update reports will be provided to Education and</p>

	Youth Portfolio and an annual report to the Education, Youth and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
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4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	None required.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>The priorities for the delivery of Adult Community Learning are set out in the Welsh Government Adult Learning in Wales (2017) guidance. https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-08/adult-learning-in-wales.pdf</p> <p>Estyn Thematic Report/ Engagement work: Further education and adult learning in the community sectors update – autumn 2021 https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-report/engagement-work-further-education-and-adult-learning-community-sectors-update</p> <p>Effective Practice; Establishing a new adult learning in the community partnership in Wrexham and Flintshire https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/establishing-new-adult-learning-community-partnership-wrexham-and-flintshire</p> <p>Effective Practice; Family Learning https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/family-learning</p>

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Vicky Barlow, Senior Manager for School Improvement Telephone: 01352 704054 Cymraeg/ Welsh 01267 224923 E-mail: vicky.barlow@flintshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Contact Officer: Dawn Spence, Learning Advisor Post 16 & Adult Community Learning E-mail: dawn.spence@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Estyn - Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Adult Community Learning (ACL) – non statutory education of people 19 or over in adult basic education (literacy and numeracy), digital literacy) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

Community Learning Grant (CLG) - Welsh Government provides funding each year for the provision of ACL through this grant to local authorities.

WESP – Welsh Education Strategic Plan.