

# Swindon Borough Council Adult Learning Plan 2012/13

## Introduction

This annual Adult Learning Plan covers performance in the last full year (2010/11 and seeks Cabinet approval for identified priorities for the next Academic Year (2012/13). The Plan also brings to Members attention the changes in funding guidelines being introduced by the Skills Funding Agency and recommends continuing discussions to maintain Adult Learning funds in Swindon in the 2012/13 academic year.

Members have the opportunity to review progress so far and to influence objectives in line with their priorities.

Adult Learning can help improve people's lives by encouraging them to take steps to better their own circumstances and participate more fully in community life. At a time when resources are scarce, this Plan will ensure informal adult learning connects with other Council services and contributes to the Council's priorities.

The Plan will help ensure that local people have access to a range of flexible learning opportunities that contribute to their personal, social, educational and economic development.

This Adult Learning Plan will

1. Report progress against the Council's stated adult learning objectives for the academic year 2010/11
2. Report progress to date (March 2011) against the Council's stated adult learning objectives for the academic year 2010/11
3. Recommend the Council's adult learning objectives for the academic year 2012/13
4. Recommend a mechanism for maximising the current level of SFA Adult Safeguarded Learning funds in Swindon to be invested in line with SBC priorities.

## 1. Performance and progress

The Council met all of its Skills Funding Agency targets in 2010/11 with the following key performance indicators:

	<b>2009/10- numbers</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>Success rate 2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12 targets</b>
Total learners	2848-total learners 91% retention	2839-total learners 93% retention	80.15%	85% *success rate target 94% retention
Female enrolments	2012-total	2798-total	79.71%	See target above
Male enrolments	836-total	780-21.3% take up	81.68%	Increase male take up to 25%
BME enrolments	380-total	636-17.9% take up	77.23%	85% success rate

	<b>2009/10- numbers</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>Success rate 2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12 targets</b>
Accredited Learning enrolments	120-total	322-9% of total	95%	99% success Target 500
Disability enrolments	255-7%	340-9.5% take up	78.5%	Target 85% success and 12% of total learners
Family Learning enrolments	481-15%	573-16% of total	89%	90% success rate

In 2009/10 the priority in planning and managing the programme was to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the OFSTED inspection in January 2011 showed a high standard of teaching as one of the strengths identified by OFSTED. For the rest of 2011 the priority has been to improve the capture use and dissemination of data, an area highlighted as a weakness by OFSTED.

The emphasis on integrating Adult Learning with Community Development continues and the full team of Learning Ambassadors have moved on and developed their work. In 2011 the Learning Ambassadors won an award for contribution to good practice in Neighbourhood Renewal and Development.

## **2. Progress against objectives in the academic year 2010/11**

The table below sets out the objectives identified in the Council's Adult Learning Plan for 2010/11 and the progress to date (half-way through the year)

<b>Objectives for 2011/12 academic year</b>	<b>Progress at March 2012</b>
i. Improving employability and work skills –being in work has a huge impact on the lives of individuals and their families	Over 360 individuals will benefit directly from training and support to develop employability skills. Also family learning which involves adults (through their children) will improve the basic literacy and numeracy of over 300 adults.
ii. Supporting individuals to live independently e.g. people with disabilities-we are working with adult care to improve employability among users of day centres	Over 200 people involved in learning which will help them live more independently.
iii. Improving basic literacy and numeracy through family learning programmes run with schools	Also family learning which involves adults (through their children) will improve the basic literacy and numeracy of over 300 adults.
iv. Targeting people who don't	A number of contracts aimed at people who do not have a high enough standard of

Objectives for 2011/12 academic year	Progress at March 2012
speak English as a first language to improve integration, family learning in schools is part of this approach	conversational English to qualify for more formal lessons will involve 200 individuals. An extremely important element of the learning is to increase the social contacts of the learners helping them integrate.
v. Passing on skills to local residents allowing them to play a fuller role in civic life, improving the capacity of people to play a bigger part in community life	We have run courses for people becoming involved in managing facilities covering Health and Safety, Food Hygiene and Trustee responsibilities. Discussions are on-going with the LIFE project about how adult learning can be integrated into their work.
vi. Improve value for money by increasing fee income-getting more from the funds that are available	Discussions have begun with contractors about encouraging fee income and we need to finalise a way of establishing a baseline and measuring success.
vii. Improvements in the quality of the teaching and learning,	Attendance and Retention have improved (retention up from 92% to 94% and attendance up from 81% to 84%).

### Use of Data

The OFSTED inspection identified the use of data a weakness and high priority has been given to improving this essential aspect of our work.

In 2010 we introduced three significant changes to the way we run courses.

- A robust RARPA system was introduced. This has impacted on the figures for success in 2010, previously success was based on completing a course. In 2010 achievement and completion together have been used to calculate success
- We asked tutors to contact absent learners and encourage their return.
- We also stopped the practice of marking learners as attending a session when absent at pre-arranged appointments and asked Providers to make it clear that learners needed to commit to all sessions when joining a course. It was expected that this may cause a slight dip in attendance figures but this did not happen.
- The improved attendance and retention may also be due to learners having clear learning aims and being able to clearly measure their own progress. In 2010 we asked tutors to contact absent learners and ask why they weren't in class and encourage their return. This appears to have had a successful impact when comparing funding streams

These changes have all contributed to increasing attendance and retention figures

Retention is higher in 2010 than 2009.

In 2011 - 12 we will increase our overall success rate to 85%. We aim to do this by working with our Providers to reduce the number of partial achievements by at least 5% and increasing the full achievement rate.

We will increase male enrolments from 21.3% to 25% by reflecting on our course provision.

We had a higher percentage of BME learners in 2010 as we provided more courses for those who speak a little or no English. BME participation in non targeted courses was 8.7% in 2010. We aim to maintain this in 2011-12. Attendance and retention for this group in particular improved compared to previous years. In 2009 we ran a greater number of courses giving qualifications to work in the security industry specifically targeting Somali and Eritrean men which reflects in the figures for male attendance and retention for 2009.

The number of learners with disabilities increased in 2010 as one of our Providers worked exclusively with clients who have both physical and learning difficulties.

We aim to increase male participation back up to at least 25% in 2011-12.

We have reduced our learner and enrolment numbers over the last three years so we can spend more per learner and increase the quality of provision. We have increased the number of enrolments in our target wards

Since 2008 we have actively reduced the number of enrolments and courses and increased the quality of provision and now spend more per learner. We have sought to reduce the number of courses our College partners run within college sites. More courses now take place within communities in a variety of buildings at over 60 different locations across the Borough. We have reduced the number of '4 hours or less one day' courses, these now must lead on to a course or must be part of a well publicised town wide event or learning event.

The number of enrolments on accredited courses in 2008 and 2009 does not include FLLN learners with Oxford and Cambridge RSA learning aims. If we include these learners we have increased our number of accredited learners by approximately 30% in 2010. In the commissioning process for 2010-11 we actively sought Providers with accredited courses in their portfolio.

In 2010-11 33 observations were completed. This represents 27% of all tutors who taught during 2010 – 11.

Those tutors teaching regularly throughout the year were prioritised for OTL.

24% of tutors observed were graded as 1 (Outstanding) (0 in 2009 – 10)

58% of tutors observed were graded as 2 (Good) (60% in 2009)

18% of tutors observed were graded as 3 (satisfactory in 2009)

No tutors were graded below 3 in 2010 – 11 or in the previous year.

Learners are given a questionnaire at the end of their course. They also have the opportunity to make comments about what they enjoyed and what they think we could do better.

We also have a direct email address available so that learners make contact independently and not via tutors if they want to do so.

### **Learning Ambassadors**

We now have a full team of 11 Learning Ambassadors from varying backgrounds and life experiences, allowing SBC to reach 'hard to reach' learners in a unique and innovative way. Each Learning Ambassador works for 3 hours per week, and through supervision are encouraged to progress and develop themselves. Their own successful outcomes include full time employment as an advisor for Pluss, delivering Creative Writing for New College and setting up a company delivering IT courses. They are also completing a level 3 NVQ in IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance).

The team has worked with 203 individuals this academic year, signposting individuals to learning, voluntary and employment opportunities. These individuals are either referred to us via different agencies (Job Centre Plus, Colleges) or are met through various community groups and networks. In addition to this, they also support the individual learners within the classroom offering IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) for further progression.

This year the project has expanded and we have encouraged the Ambassadors to deliver informal learning within their community groups. With the help and support of our Quality team, we have a number of innovative projects being delivered in the community, including Netball targeting BME women to become active, Music with Creative Writing at Mind, IT targeting Elders through the Libraries network, very basic English for non-English speakers delivered by multi-lingual Ambassadors.

The team also arrange a celebration event in May supporting Adult Learners' Week to celebrate the successes of the learners and to share the good-practice of our excellent community tutors.

### **3. Objectives for the Council's Adult Learning Plan 2012/13 - Supporting the Council's priorities**

The benefits of the adult learning programme are wider than the 2,800 people who are involved in one or more courses during a year. The learning is used to underpin other Council priorities and contributes to One Swindon priorities by:

- vii. Improving employability and work skills –being in work has a huge impact on the lives of individuals and their families
- viii. Supporting individuals to live independently e.g. people with disabilities-we are working with adult care to improve employability among users of day centres
- ix. Improving basic literacy and numeracy through family learning programmes run with schools
- x. Targeting people who don't speak English as a first language to improve integration, family learning in schools is part of this approach
- xi. Passing on skills to local residents allowing them to play a fuller role in civic life, improving the capacity of people to play a bigger part in community life
- xii. Improve value for money by increasing fee income-getting more from the funds that are available

### **4. Changes to Future Funding and Management Arrangements**

The Skills Funding Agency manages the funds and contract with Swindon Borough Council setting targets and monitoring performance. Last year they announced changes to their processes, which will impact on Swindon Borough Council in the 2012/13 academic year.

From September this year, we will no longer be eligible for an SFA contract as we will be below the Minimum Contract Level which is £500,000 a year. Officers have been aware of the development and discussions about a joint approach have taken place with other organisations

The main criteria for assessing future arrangements is the extent to which they allow Swindon Borough Council to have maximum control over the use of funds within Swindon.

## **Government Review**

A Government Review into ASL reported at the beginning of September and identified the following as aims of the funding. These aims fit well with the One Swindon and Stronger Together ethos and should increase the amount of flexibility in the funding.

- Align the content, commissioning and delivery of BIS-funded informal adult and community learning to support social cohesion, digital inclusion, stronger families, democratic involvement and active citizenship. (“Big Society”)
- Maximise the amount of informal learning taking place and the numbers of adults participating, particularly attracting more new learners.
- Engage and motivate disadvantaged groups to access learning, creating pathways to support onward progression that is relevant to each person.
- Focus public funding on supporting the most disadvantaged adults to access learning opportunities and secure fee income from those who are able to pay in order to encourage inclusive participation in learning.

There will be a further review of funding allocations and it is likely that from September 2012 a number of pilot projects covering a larger area will be developed. Initial discussions have taken place with other organisations about a joint bid to be a pilot.