

 **BRIGHTON & HOVE**

 **ADULT**

 **LEARNING**

 **STRATEGY**

 **2013–2016**

I am very glad indeed to commend this important strategy document to you which sets out the strategy for Adult Learning in the City over the next three years.

Learning is transformational. It widens horizons, deepens our appreciation of others and the world around us and opens up new dimensions of possibility and opportunity. As the present strategy fully acknowledges, learning can be the helping hand that reaches out to the neglected and disadvantaged. "After bread, education is the chief need of the people." These words of Georges-Jacques Danton's were doubtless true when he coined them in the eighteenth century but they remain true today: nationally, almost one in four adults is held back for want of numerical skills and two in every thirteen by want of literacy skills.

The Adult Learning Group's (ALG) strategy inspires the hope that in Brighton & Hove we can make a difference. Our ALG is one of only fifteen organisations in the country to become a Community Learning Trust Pilot*. The ALG's focus on integration with the community it serves will not only bring enormous benefit to our City but will inform discussion at a national level about how we can optimise our efforts in adult education. I am sure there will also be ways in which the ALG's expertise

can inform the strategies which Brighton and Hove's Learning Partnership puts in place for younger learners in the City.

The ALG, together with the wider Learning Partnership are working to achieve a coherent and inclusive offer that makes learning personalised engaging and fun. Now be honest, doesn't that whet your appetite for learning?

Chris Thomson
Chair, Brighton & Hove Learning Partnership

* See Page 2 Community Learning Trust

“Currently 24% of adults (8.1 million people) lack functional (Level 1) numeracy skills; and 15% lack functional literacy skills” (BIS 2012)

NATIONAL POLICY – POTENTIAL IMPACTS

In 2010 the Government set out the vision for skills and how the Further Education (FE) and Skills System would need to reform. Based on the principles set out in Skills for Sustainable Growth and taking account of the responses to the government New Challenges, New Chances consultation.

The key elements of the reform programme are:

- Students at the heart of the FE and skills system: All learners from basic skills through to higher level skills will be empowered to shape the system using information to inform their choices; focused government funding on supporting students where it can have most impact, including the introduction of FE loans.

- First-class advice delivered by the National Careers Service: This service provides information, advice and guidance both to inform and to stimulate demand for further

education, work-based training and higher education. Lifelong Learning Accounts will provide learners with the information they need to make the most of their learning opportunities.

- A ladder of opportunity of comprehensive Vocational Education and Training programmes: From community learning and basic skills through to high-quality apprenticeships to clear and flexible progression routes to Higher Vocational Education. The system will fuel individual achievement, power the common good and drive upward economic performance.

COMMUNITY LEARNING TRUST

In Spring 2011, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) held a series of stakeholder meetings in order to consider proposals for maximising the impact for non-formal learning for adults. In December 2011 BIS published ‘New Challenges, New Chances Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan: building a world class skills system’.

New objectives were introduced in August 2012 and focus on:

- Using public funding to support disadvantaged people to learn and progress
- Involving local people and organisations in decisions about the local offer
- Maximising value for money for the taxpayer by increasing income generation and using it to extend provision for people who can’t afford to pay

From discussions with a wide range of stakeholders during this review it became clear that a ‘one size fits all’ approach would not work for community learning. Currently, there are 15 Community Learning Trust (CLT) Pilots which are testing different approaches throughout England – Brighton & Hove being one of these.

The priorities of the CLT have informed the Brighton & Hove Adult Learning Strategy and will continue to have an impact on adult

learning in the City for the foreseeable future. There is currently a commitment to £210M nationally for 2013-14, and pilots for Community Learning Trusts will continue to develop a community led model working in partnership with statutory bodies and agencies to maximise the social return on investment whilst streamlining operational costs. The Brighton and Hove Community Learning Trust hopes to demonstrate transformational change in the way adult community learning is delivered by engaging non statutory partners who work with learners furthest away from education economically, socially and culturally.

CHANGES IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Evidence from BHLIS (Brighton & Hove Local Information Services) shows that those with low skills are being squeezed out of the labour market. These residents are facing increasing pressure in competing for work across the city because of a scarcity of appropriate jobs; competition from those with higher qualifications; and competition from other groups including students and migrant workers. As a result, the employment rate is poor for those with low or no skills (at 53%, a third lower than the Brighton average). Economic activity rates for this group are also low. These are the very

residents that this strategy aims to reach and support.

The large number of graduates and residents with high level qualifications masks the number of residents with very low skills: more than 40,000 individuals aged between 16 and 74 hold no qualifications and almost 12,000 lack basic literacy skills and 60,000 lack basic numeracy skills.

According to the 2011 Census, for more than one in twenty residents their day to day activities are 'limited a lot' due to a long term health problem or disability; For one in twelve residents aged three or over, English is not their first or preferred language.

Many of these residents are at risk of labour market exclusion and may face multiple barriers to labour market entry. It is widely recognised that tackling multiple labour market disadvantage is required providing first rung outreach services in non-traditional, community settings that will help to develop the skills and confidence of disadvantaged residents so that they can compete for jobs in the wider labour market. Appropriate jobs at the right level are scarce; for example competition from other groups including students and migrant workers.

The Adult Learning Strategy is cross-cutting, supporting many of the city's strategic priorities and aims to strengthen communities, develop individuals, support families and enhance options for work and volunteering.

‘To ensure that coherent, inclusive and high quality learning is available for all adults in Brighton and Hove, focusing resources on disadvantaged communities and those residents with few or no qualifications.’



Partners deliver the strategy under the following five themes:

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1. To support high quality provision

2 To provide a cohesive learning offer

3. To support the learner's journey

4. To build capacity



This document sets strategic objectives for Adult Learning in Brighton & Hove for 2013 – 2016 in the context of a changing environment both nationally and locally. These priorities derive from current policy and strategies listed at the back of this document.

Objectives for this 3 year strategy have been identified as:

1. To support high quality provision
- 2 To provide a cohesive learning offer
3. To support the learner's journey
4. To build capacity

HOW WE OPERATE

The Adult Learning Group is the strategic body for adult learning in the city which sits on the B&H Learning Partnership Strategic Board*. The ALG does not have an individual or specific income stream, but is a partnership of 6 Skills Funding Agency funded providers with statutory funding, and community organisations bringing in an extensive range of alternative funding and a strong volunteer force.

The ALG operational activity takes place in two sub committees of the Adult Learning Group:

- OTCL (Operations Team for Community Learning)
- FEME (Forum for English Maths and ESOL)

The strategic planning process as a whole is managed by the voluntary members of the ALG. The ALG yearly action plan identifies local priorities, objectives and learner outcomes in line with National and local policy.

Objective 1: TO SUPPORT HIGH QUALITY PROVISION

To maintain and develop high quality teaching and learning by sharing information, good practice and experience among practitioners, providers and learners, thus supporting benchmarking for quality improvement.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Since the Adult Learning Group was formed in 2007, there has been a focus on the development of quality improvement mechanisms across the local adult sector. These have included: shared self-assessment processes; benchmarking data; learner surveys, and shared Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Recent research commissioned by the ALG provides comprehensive, comparable data and information, in order to address the needs of learners in the City. This includes baseline data and information about participation by different groups of learners.

Over the next 3 years the ALG will:

1. Work on the development of coordinated measures of quality benchmarking.
2. Continue to share comparable quality data including success rates, progression and social impact data.
3. Promote and encourage continuing professional development activities across the city for adult learning staff.
4. Continue to collect data on the social impact of Community Learning, and will develop a joint approach for measuring this.

Objective 2: TO PROVIDE A COHESIVE LEARNING OFFER

The Adult Learning Group will develop a clearly defined range of learning opportunities in response to the needs of our community in personal development, health and well-being, community involvement and citizenship, functional skills, and accredited learning in order to improve progression to high level qualifications, volunteering, training and work.

SCOPE

The broad curriculum includes learning for:

- Personal development: learning for fun and enjoyment and to develop personal skills.
- Health and well-being: includes fitness, sport and cooking and mental wellbeing
- Community involvement and citizenship: including sustainable development
- Prioritise access to English and Maths provision including functional skills, GCSE, and ESOL (English For Speakers of Other Languages)
- Employability skills
- Improving access to work and volunteering

PROGRESS TO DATE

Over the past five years the curriculum offer has been broadened through a coordinated effort across the Adult Learning Group (ALG) and its sub-groups, with a reduction in duplication, and equitable distribution of learning opportunities across the city. Across Brighton & Hove the percentage of adults taking part in Adult Learner Responsive funded learning is considerably higher than the national average and the number of learners who live in the most deprived areas has increased*. Curriculum development has included the integration of employment skills, volunteering and promoting active citizenship,

underpinning other strategies across the city. Equally important has been consultation with local communities listening and responding to the learners' voices.

The ALG and its sub-groups continue to address inconsistencies in the delivery of adult learning opportunities across the city, both geographically and across interest groups.

*City Employment and Skills Plan

Continues →

Objective 2: TO PROVIDE A COHESIVE LEARNING OFFER CONT.

Over the next three years, the ALG will:

1. Continue the development of a citywide curriculum plan to provide formal and informal learning opportunities in response to community needs and learners' voices.
2. Continue to develop clear progression pathways for learners across the City.
3. Use the recent RCU Report (www.rcu.co.uk) commissioned under previous Action Plan to develop learning programmes that support democratic participation, and community involvement.
4. Increase access to learning through new venues and new partnerships.

Objective 3: TO SUPPORT THE LEARNER'S JOURNEY

To enable all those who live and work in Brighton and Hove to have access to learning and for residents to receive Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) and other forms of support to overcome any barriers which may prevent them from engaging in learning and work.

SCOPE

Information Advice and Guidance includes:

- Advice and support to engage learners and encourage enrolment on appropriate courses
- Support for progression from engagement onto suitable longer courses
- Support for learners with particular needs
- Support for disadvantaged client groups to engage in learning and work

Learner support includes:

- Learning that is appropriate and accessible to those who wish to participate
- Understanding the barriers to learning
- Prioritising resources to assist those who are most disadvantaged
- Advice and support to engage learners and

encourage enrolment on appropriate courses

- On course support that ensures retention and encourages achievement
- Identifying through IAG mechanisms learners wants/needs to broker/develop appropriate/accessible learning.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Through partnership working, Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services have been developed in community settings.

This has enabled the sharing of good community-based IAG practice between outreach workers. This ensures that the ALG both informs and is informed by this key group.

Over the past five years, a more formalised community based IAG has been established across the City. Innovative nationally recognised ways of partnership working have been developed where the learning providers work with the 3rd Sector 'hubs' based in community settings. Moreover there is also a network of IAG & learning support workers employed by the learning providers. As an example The East Brighton Gateway Project funded by The Big Lottery has supported community-based Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services which have effectively met the needs of local people.

Objective 3: TO SUPPORT THE LEARNER'S JOURNEY CONT.

Over the next 3 years, the ALG will:

1. Continue to map learner and learning support across the city and between providers to signpost what is available and the funding streams that can be accessed.
2. Celebrate the successes of our learners.
3. Continue community and grass roots engagement through the co-ordination and development of quality Information, Advice and Guidance for learning and work across the City focusing activity in neighborhoods of deprivation.
4. Inform the development of a needs/ community based curriculum including first steps and progression routes through proactive consultation with residents.
5. Inform the development of provision which addresses key health issues identified within the JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) (e.g. mental health issues).
6. Identify sources of funding for learner support and work together to ensure that support is directed towards disadvantaged communities and those residents with few or no qualifications.

Objective 4: TO BUILD CAPACITY

Working in partnership to build capacity for an inclusive and sustainable model for delivery of adult learning.

SCOPE

- Joint curriculum planning to avoid unnecessary duplication in learning opportunities and to ensure that gaps are filled
- The development of progression routes from first steps learning in community settings to higher level qualifications and other organisations
- Resident learner input
- Ensuring value for money

PROGRESS TO DATE

The Adult Learning Group and its sub-groups have worked more closely together to plan provision. They have successfully delivered a number of key projects such as the recent Adult Learning Festival. Joint planning and working has strengthened relationships between members, which, in turn, have reinforced the commitment of providers to maintain community-based provision.

Significant progress has been made to simplify the fee structures and remission policies across providers, to make them more understandable to learners and potential learners in the city.

During 2012/13 the B&H Community Learning Trust (CLT) has established a more structured model of partnership working in order to build capacity to meet the needs of more and different learners. There is now a greater focus on increasing income generation and using it to extend provision for people who are unable to access learning opportunities.

Over the next 3 years the ALG will:

1. Develop the curriculum offer and improve progression through innovative linkage of existing funding streams and new partnership working.
2. Develop joint planning mechanisms for analysis of social impact data.

3. Improve joint planning mechanisms in line with citywide strategies.

4. Identify new resources and build new community/third sector relationships to involve local people and organisations in decisions about the local offer.

5. Funding – protect and seek out new funding opportunities to ensure sustainability and development of Adult Learning and IAG services in the City.

6. Ensure value for money.

7. Develop a joint approach to the promotion of adult education opportunities/impact through vibrant and modern case studies and use of technology.

GROUP MEMBERSHIP

- Brighton & Hove Children’s Services, Education
- Brighton & Hove Community Learning
- Brighton & Hove Food Partnership,
- Brighton & Hove Libraries
- Brighton & Hove Museums and Pavilion
- Brighton & Hove Supported Employment and Housing
- Brighton Unemployed Families Centre
- Brighton University Community University Partnership Programme
- City College Brighton & Hove
- Community and Voluntary Sector
- Friends Centre
- Hangleton & Knoll Project
- Portslade Adult Learning
- The Bridge Community Centre
- The Whitehawk Inn
- The Workers Education Association
- Varndean College

APPENDICES + FURTHER READING

- B&H Corporate Plan
- Children’s Services Business Planning Framework
- Learning & Partnership Strategic Plan
- City Employment and Skills Plan (CESP)
- Closing the Gap in Educational Achievement for Vulnerable Groups
- Co-production: valuing and enabling community delivery of outcomes
- Creating the City of Opportunities
- B&H Economic Strategy
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Learning & Partnership Strategic Plan
- New Challenges, New Chances, Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan; Building a World Class Skills System
- Single Equalities Bill
- Spotlight on Community Learning (April 2013)
- Joining the Dots a Volunteering Strategy for Brighton & Hove