

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

**DATE:** 21 October 2020

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**WARD(S):** All Wards

### **PART I**

#### **FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

##### **COMMUNITY AND LEARNING SKILLS**

###### **1. Purpose of Report**

- To inform the Scrutiny Panel of the developments that has occurred within the Service during 2019/2020 to date.
- To share with the Scrutiny Panel the positive impacts these developments have made to key Service performance indicators.

###### **2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The scrutiny panel to note the progress the service has made during 2020/21 both in terms of overall quality improvement and increasing evidence of the impact the service is having locally

###### **3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

###### **3.1. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

There is a considerable amount of evidence both from within the East Berkshire Community Learning and Skills Service and nationally that adult learning changes lives for the better. Adult learning supports people with second chance opportunities to reach their potential and to achieve their goals. The information, advice and guidance service offers support for learners into further learning and nearer or into employment. To support its work to deliver on the strategies the Service works with a range of partners and stakeholders through commissioning and projects. The Service is well placed to respond to local priorities, needs and issues. The service has a critical role in helping people realise their potential and especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

#### Priority One: Starting Well

The Service delivers and commissions a range of family learning courses to support parents to support their children during Early Years Foundation Stage education.

#### Priority Two: Integration

The Service has offered a range of online courses to reduce the impact of COVID-19 in communities and residents' mental health. The Service moved from face-to-face learning in March 2020 onto full remote learning delivery e.g. online and other accessible means of learning support. The Service delivered around 60 courses online and embedded health and wellbeing into these.

#### Priority Three: Strong, Healthy and Attractive Neighbourhoods

The Service has worked with partners on the localities agenda. The Service has applied and successfully secured funding to deliver ESOL learning for migrant communities across Slough and ESOL integration fund for residents not currently accessible traditional learning. The Service has a plan in place to meet some of the local priorities and will be implementing them when hubs go live such as in Chalvey.

#### Priority Four: Workplace Health

The Service offers a range of both intensive and shorter courses targeted at local communities to bring people closer or into employment. The latter includes intensive provision targeted at those with a long term health condition and those in contact with secondary mental health services. The Service also commissions providers such as The Real Experience (who provide supported training and employment opportunities) for people recovering from mental health issues. Such providers have demonstrated an impressive track record of supporting learners into employment.

### **3.2. Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The whole Community Learning & Skills offer has now been redesigned to focus on (i) learning, skills & employment (ii) Wellbeing directly contributing to the following five year plan outcomes:

- Outcome 2: Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs
- Outcome 3: Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay

#### 4. Other Implications

##### (a) Financial

The Council receives an annual grant from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to provide targeted learning in local communities including supporting residents into employment through skills provision.

COVID has a significant impact on the ability of the Service to enrol sufficient learners to meet ESFA targets. This could result in the ESFA seeking clawback part of its grant for the previous year and this current year.

##### (b) Risk Management

The Service has a robust risk management plan which predominantly covers the following areas:

- Ensuring the service continues to offer a strong and meaningful offer during the COVID outbreak ensuring the safety of participants and staff
- To secure a Good OFSTED rating at its impending Inspection
- To ensure risk of any financial claw back by the ESFA is minimised as a result of COVID impacting on service delivery

##### (c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no significant Human Rights Act or other Legal implications.

##### (d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no need for an equalities impact assessment.

##### (e) Workforce

During COVID-19 outbreak the Service has supported its staff to adapt to working from home through the provision of new IT equipment, regular communication, risk assessments of their mental health. The Service is now working and supporting its staff to a safe return to work and face to face provision.

#### 5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 The Councils Community Learning and Skills Service is the prime delivery agent of the East Berkshire Community Learning and Skills Service. The Service is responsible for delivery of community learning and skills across Slough and the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead. The Service is primarily funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agency. In Slough the service also leads on supporting residents to secure employment through Careers Information, Advice & Guidance and relevant training programmes.

##### 5.2 **Changes to the Curriculum 2019/20**

The Service has progressed from a 'one size fits all' course provision to a 'mix and balance' provision. Where previously courses were offered for five hours per

week on a half/full termly basis there is now the option for learners to participate in a number of intensive courses delivered over 16 hours per week for eight weeks. For example, a person wishing to improve their English so that they can take part in the everyday activities of society would tend to enrol on the shorter course provision. Many of these learners are women with childcare responsibilities who are looking to support their children at school and are learning English so that they can access and participate their local communities. A person wanting to move more rapidly nearer or into work would enrol on the intensive provision.

Intensive courses offered by the service include English Language Level 1 and 2, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Entry Level 1, 2, and 3, Personal Development into Employability (“Selfing”). These intensive courses have been developed in partnership with the Job Centre Plus (JCP). Each learner who enrolls on an intensive course is allocated a named Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) advisor to support them.

### 5.3 **Improvements to the Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

Following changes in the curriculum, each course now has a clearly defined intent. During 2019/2020 tutors have been comprehensively supported in order to plan their delivery, the activities they use, and the sequencing of those activities to match the intent of the course. Before any course planning is signed off, curriculum managers have to be assured that the tutor has focussed their delivery on the course intent.

Tutors have also been supported during the year to ensure that their courses fully implement the ‘Recognising and Recording, Progress and Achievement’ (RARPA) requirements.

Tutors have been fully consulted and involved in the planning of the new curriculum and feel very positive about being involved in the process.

To ensure that learners are triaged onto a correct course that meets their needs, the Service has developed a “Progress and Provision Report”. The Report contains information on learners’ intent, their progress on the course, their “Behaviour and Attitude” towards learning, and a tutor recommendation on their next step progression course.

The above report is used by Curriculum staff to triage learners onto their appropriate next course. For 2019/2020 skills courses, the report formed the basis of a one-to-one discussion between the curriculum staff member and the learner.

## 5.4 Impacts

Changes to the curriculum and intensive support for tutors to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) have led to a number of positive impacts.

## 5.5 Achievement Rates.

Achievement rates are now excellent across Community Learning, Commissioned and Skills Provision.

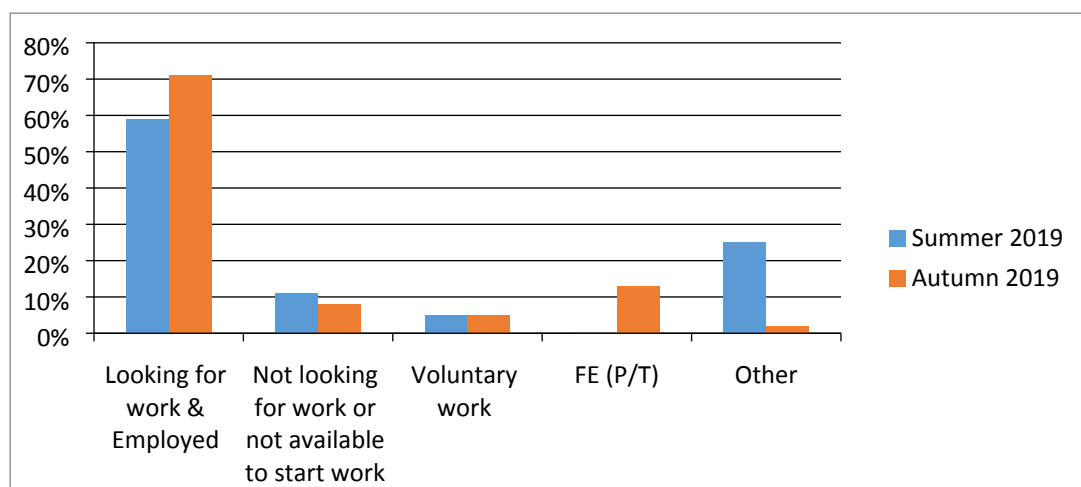
Achievement	AY 2018/19	Autumn 2019	Spring 2019
Direct Delivery (Community Learning	90.0%	86.6%	94.0%
Direct Delivery Adult Skills	71.9%	81.4%	85.5%
Commissioning all	85.4%	95.9%	94.1%

As can be seen from the above table, the most dramatic improvement has occurred in skills provision moving from 71.9% at the end of 2018/2019 to 85.5% currently. In Ofsted terms, this is a movement in “Outcomes for Learners” from “Requires Improvement” to “Good”. In terms of impact locally this means that learners are now achieving on their courses and progressing towards their goals.

## 5.6 Progression of Learners.

The introduction of intensive courses in the skills provision has meant that there are now increasing numbers of learners progressing nearer or into work.

### Intended destinations for Direct Delivery Adult Skills courses



The expectation is that as this type of course is offered more there will be further evidence that skills provision leads to very good learner employment outcomes.

## 5.7 The Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Due to the continuing work with tutors during 2019/2020 the Service has consolidated its improvements to TLA from 2018/19. The Service can now confidently judge itself as a Grade 2 (Good) in this area.

## 5.8 COVID-19: Recovery Planning

Due to Covid-19, face to face learning came to a temporary halt on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 - two weeks before the end of the second term.

As a requirement of funding and to ensure that there is no future clawback the ESFA has stipulated that learning providers must do everything they can to meet the needs of existing learners.

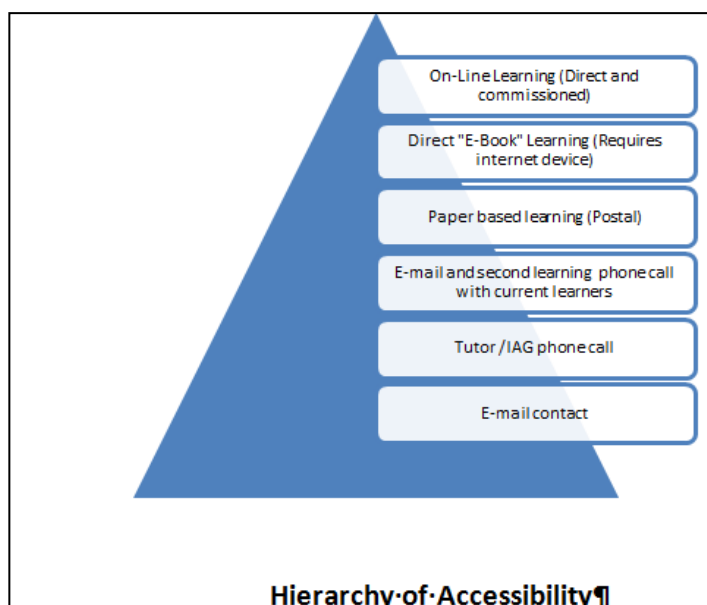
From a standing start, the Service has managed to not only deliver learning for existing learners but also develop provision for new learners.

Tutors have been flexible and worked hard adapting and developing their courses to ensure that there was an innovative and broad distance-learning offer to learners.

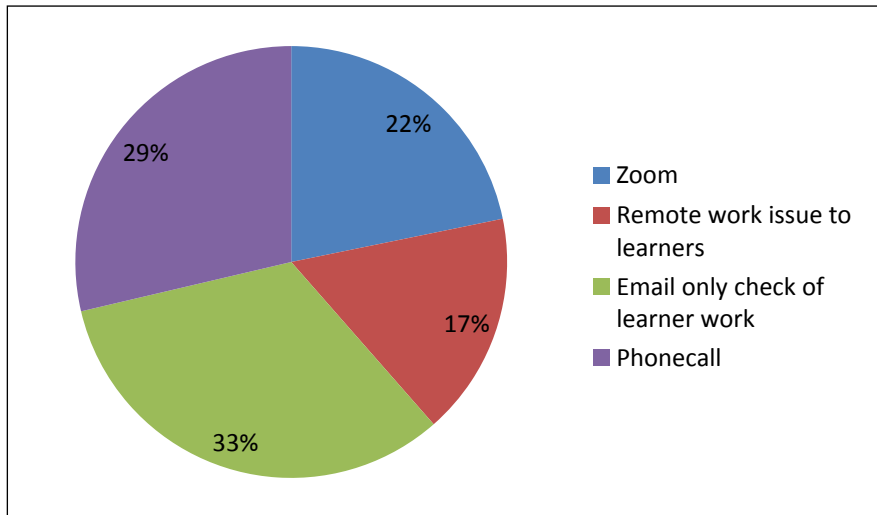
During this time the administrative team have set up new arrangements for enrolling learners on-line which included learning new software purchased to enable this process.

The IAG team and tutors have also have been busy ensuring all learners enrolled with the Service during the year have been kept up-to-date with developments in the Service and offered learning opportunities to suit their particular circumstances.

### Hierarchy of Accessibility model



### Existing learners by learning type



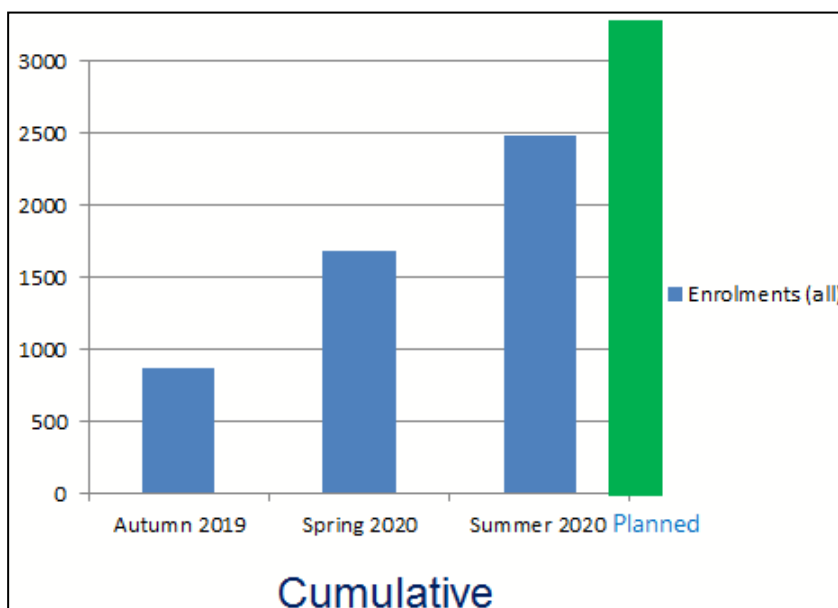
The Service has put together a recovery plan with five elements to it: 1) Business Continuity Plan, 2) Phased Return, 3) Risk Assessment for the Phased Return, 4) Communication and Support to staff and learners and, 5) Blended Learning model for the curriculum.

At this point in time the Service is still awaiting formal update from ESFA on when it can return to face to face learning and the impact of social distancing. It is planning for a form of blended learning – online and face to face learning; this flexibility will enable it to be prepared for September.

#### 5.9 Reduction in Enrolments

Learner numbers have declined during 2019/2020 (see table below).

#### Service Enrolments 2019/20 (cumulative)



The decline in learner numbers is due to a number of factors:

- The Service reduced the numbers of repeat learners who were not progressing on their courses (see above).
- Following the re-structure (completed in September 2019) there were a number of staffing issues, including tutor vacancies, which led to a restricted programme of delivery.
- Whilst typically commissioning would normally be completed by September of the academic year, this time it was not completed until January 2020. This was due to challenges with the procurement process. The impact of this was particularly felt in RBWM where there is comparatively a greater percentage of commissioned delivery.

The introduction of Intensive courses has meant the delivery method has negated the need for learners to enrol on more than one course per term.

The Service has responded effectively to COVID 19 by moving its provision online. However, there has been a reduction in the number of courses that had been planned for this term. This is especially so with the delivery of commissioned provision which is proving to be challenging for some providers.

## **6. Moving Forward**

### **Curriculum Planning**

The Service regards the Localities Agenda in both Slough and RBWM as affording significant opportunities for its development.

The Service has developed a detailed learning offer to support the localities agenda in Chalvey and parts of RBWM and is now well placed to roll out appropriate programmes as part of Sloughs Localities Agenda.

The Service has also developed its curriculum for 2020/2021 to impact and contribute to Sloughs Inclusive Growth Strategy and the borough's Wellbeing Agenda.

Learning from the experiences of the online curriculum during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Service will in future deliver face-to-face, blended and fully online provision.

### **Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

Curriculum and quality managers will continue their work with tutors placing a greater emphasis on creative and innovative course delivery.



## **Organisational Implications**

The Service needs to review all of its accommodation to ensure that it is best placed to serve our local communities going forward.

To ensure the Service is delivering its updated curriculum it will need to recruit tutors with the appropriate skill set.

Leadership will also be working with all staff they fully understand the vision and their role in the delivery of the changed service.

## **7. Comments of Other Committees**

This information has not been to any other committees.

## **8. Conclusion**

Since receiving a requires improvement grade at its last OFSTED inspection (2019) the Service has worked extremely hard in improving its offer and quality of teaching.

An intensive programme of training and coaching, robust management practice and a clearer curriculum offer focussing on skills, employment and wellbeing has seen a significant improvement and a clearer demonstration of how the service contributes to Sloughs priorities.

Although 2019/2020 has proven to be a challenging year, the Service is emerging from this in excellent shape. Achievement rates are now very good / excellent and the quality of TLA continues to improve and is now good.

There are strong early indications that learners are progressing in increasing numbers nearer and into work.

## **9. Appendices Attached**

## **10. Background Papers**

- Course leaflet (separate PDF)