

APPENDIX A:

HACL Looking Ahead: Opportunities and Challenges

This paper summarises the key opportunities available to and challenges faced by the service at the time of writing.

- Two funding opportunities are outlined, the first a project that finished in March and the other a competitive bid that has just been submitted.
- A summary of the quality of education provided by the service as judged by Ofsted in their last inspection in December 2019.
- A brief look at headline opportunities and challenges for discussion.

1. Additional funding

A) Strategic Investment Pot (2019-21)

In 2018 the City of London Corporation launched the Strategic Investment Pot (SIP) project, utilising newly-devolved rates to fund London's councils to identify and meet local skills needs in their area. LB Hillingdon was awarded £470k against the Skills Agenda for the Adult and Community Learning service's bid (HACL) to deliver against five identified strands:

Strand 1: Increasing the reach and scale of ESOL to get residents into work.

Strand 2: Providing opportunities for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) to engage with work.

Strand 3: Developing an information, advice and guidance hub that provides residents with support and work experience.

Strand 4: Enabling tutors and partner organisations to support residents with English, maths and digital skills. We wanted to reach out to more community-based 3rd sector partners to support their survival and to access some of these target residents.

Strand 5: Targeting support to remove barriers to progression for particular groups, for example we wanted to target new home-based childcare micro-businesses and help them to overcome the barriers of the first two years, when enterprises are most at risk of failure.

Details of targets and achievements and case studies can be found in Appendix B. A challenge facing the service is to identify ways in which to ensure this legacy work continues and thrives.

B) GLA Good Work for All (2021-23)

Led by the Good Things Foundation, this new bidding opportunity is to help Londoners recover following the pandemic. Focused on Digital, Health and Social Care, Green Economy and Creative Industries, it asks bidders to offer 'training, education and employability support that helps Londoners gain relevant skills, retrain and move into good work in sectors key to London's recovery'.

The service has submitted a bid for £200k over two academic years focusing on developing residents skills to enter the Digital, Health and Social Care and Creative Industries sectors.

2. Ofsted and the Quality of Education provided by Hillingdon's Adult and Community Learning Service

Ofsted inspect all publicly-funded education providers on a 3-year cycle, inspecting against criteria laid out in its Education Inspection Framework. HACL was last inspected in December 2019 and is due for inspection again in the 2022-23 academic year.

Ofsted's focus is on the impact of the education provided to learners. To do this, they make judgements against four key areas:

- Quality of Education through the 'Intent', 'Implementation' and 'Impact' of the curriculum offer
- Behaviour and Attitudes
- Personal Development
- Leadership and Management.

Within the Leadership and Management section Ofsted states that inspectors evaluate the extent to which,

'those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively. They ensure that the provider has a clear vision and strategy and that resources are managed well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education or training', (Ofsted Inspectors Handbook, 2019).

The service's last report included the following three recommendations for improvement:

- Managers should ensure that feedback from tutors helps learners improve the standard of their writing, including their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Managers should establish measures that more effectively capture the impact of the curriculum on learners.
- Senior leaders should put in place arrangements that provide the support and challenge managers need to further improve the quality of education provided.

The inspection report is attached as Appendix C.

Whilst the service is working towards these recommendations, challenges remain in the speed of the progression and HACL may not be able to demonstrate significant improvement in some of the areas by the next Ofsted inspection.

3. Headline Opportunities and Challenges

A) Headline Opportunities

The list below is not exhaustive but includes some initial ideas for maximising the service's impact on residents.

Adult Education and Careers Hub	This could support a greater number of residents if more people were aware of the support it provides Hillingdon Adult & Community Learning (hae-acl.ac.uk)
Partnership work	3 rd sector partnership is strong but strengthening partnerships with other council services and micro-employers could increase the impact of the service's offer for residents.
Developing a clearly identifiable service 'brand'.	Most of our learners refer to the service as 'Brookfield' or 'Harlington'. 'Hillingdon Adult and Community Learning' is too long a title to slip off the tongue for most residents. Greater awareness of HACL's offer amongst residents, council staff and Members could support the service to reach more people.
Achieving an Ofsted Outstanding inspection grade	This REESPOC Review has provided support and challenge to service managers, but this would be further strengthened by the introduction of an 'Advisory Board' championed by Members.
Accessing additional funding through short-term bidding	HACL is adept at identifying and bidding for additional funding, creating opportunities that adult residents may not otherwise have.

B) Headline Challenges

The list below is not exhaustive but represents some of the immediate challenges identified by the management team.

Grant funding levels are too low to meet demand for qualifications.	Historic grant funding levels have led to an imbalance between different local authorities. The service manager continues to lobby for increased grant funding to extend the offer to a greater number of residents but other support
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	<p>for increased grant funding for the support might help achieve this.</p> <p>The removal of the £60k council subsidy in the current economic climate requires an increase in our fees and charges.</p>
Increasing learner enrolments following Covid-19 lockdowns	Enrolments have reduced since the pandemic. Historic learner numbers were approx 3000 pa making 5000 enrolments. In the current academic year we have 1600 learners making 4000 enrolments.
Accommodation	Brookfield is well-established in residents' minds in relation to adult learning, as is Harlington. The new Harlington School build will severely limit the accommodation available to adults in the south of the borough and only carries a 2-year commitment. The service's long-term accommodation in the south is under threat.
Progression data for learners	The external contract for HACLS data system is due to be renewed in December 2021. Generating new reports prior to that renewal is challenging, limiting the time available to demonstrate the progression into work highlighted in the Ofsted report.