



# Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee

**Date:** TUESDAY 26 OCTOBER 2021

**Time:** 7.00 PM

**Venue:** COMMITTEE ROOM 6 - CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH STREET, UXBRIDGE

**Meeting Details:** Members of the Public and Media are welcome to attend. This meeting may also be broadcast live.

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## Councillors on the Committee

Philip Corthorne (Chairman)  
Heena Makwana (Vice-Chairman)  
Judith Cooper  
Becky Haggar  
Kerri Prince (Opposition Lead)  
Paula Rodrigues  
Jan Sweeting

## Co-Opted Member

Tony Little, Roman Catholic Representative

**Published:** Friday 15 October 2021

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**Putting our residents first**

Lloyd White  
Head of Democratic Services  
London Borough of Hillingdon,  
Phase II, Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

## Terms of Reference

To undertake the overview and scrutiny role in relation to the following Cabinet Member portfolio(s) and service areas:

<b>Cabinet Member Portfolios</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cabinet Member for Families, Education &amp; Wellbeing</li><li>• Cabinet Member for Health &amp; Social Care</li></ul>
<b>Relevant service areas</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Children's Services (including corporate parenting)</li><li>2. Adult Social Work</li><li>3. Safeguarding</li><li>4. Provider &amp; Commissioned Care</li><li>5. SEND</li><li>6. Public Health</li><li>7. Health integration / Voluntary Sector</li><li>8. Education</li><li>9. Children and Families Development (including Early Years and Children's Centres)</li><li>10. Green Spaces, Sport &amp; Culture (only young people universal services, adult education, music hub, sport, libraries, culture and heritage)</li></ol>

This Committee will also act as lead select committee on the monitoring and review of the following cross-cutting topic:

- Domestic Abuse services and support

This Select Committee may establish a Panel to support strong oversight of the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities. The Committee may appoint 3 Members to this Panel based on political balance. Membership may include non-Cabinet Members not on the Committee. The Committee may also appoint relevant Council officers and other external stakeholders to the Panel and agree its chairmanship and operation. In agreeing its operation, the Committee will provide for the Panel not to be able to establish any other sub-group or body to carry out its responsibilities.

### **Specific portfolio responsibilities of the Cabinet Member for Families, Education, & Wellbeing – Cllr Susan O'Brien**

1. To oversee and report to the Cabinet on the Council's responsibilities and initiatives in respect of:-

- School attendance,
- Grants and awards schemes,
- Home and hospital tuition,
- Transport and travel concessions for school pupils,
- School places,
- Raising standards of education.
- All other education services to children.
- Youth services and youth centres
- Early years centres and children's centres
- Wellbeing of residents and Wellbeing strategies
- Careers service,
- Adult and Community Learning and skills development (including the Hillingdon Music Service)
- Libraries
- Sports Strategy
- Leisure services
- Cultural Services & activities
- Development of the Arts
- Theatres, Museums, Heritage Education Centres
- Maintenance of Heritage Assets

### **Specific portfolio responsibilities of the Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care – Cllr Jane Palmer**

1. To oversee and report to the Cabinet on the Council's responsibilities and initiatives in respect of:-

- Care services for children and adults
- Services for children and adult clients in need with disabilities
- Safeguarding of children and adults
- Mental health services
- Juvenile Justice
- The Council's Domestic Abuse services and support
- Services to asylum seekers
- Corporate parenting
- Public Health services
- Partnerships with the Health and Voluntary sector to deliver better social care and health outcomes for residents
- Health Control Unit, Heathrow

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# Agenda

- |    |  |           |
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| 2  | Declarations of Interest in matters coming before this meeting   |           |
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## Minutes



### FAMILIES, HEALTH AND WELLBEING SELECT COMMITTEE

8 September 2021

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge

	<p><b>Committee Members Present:</b> Councillors Philip Corthorne (Chairman), Heena Makwana (Vice-Chairman), Judith Cooper, Becky Haggart, Kerri Prince (Opposition Lead), Paula Rodrigues and Jan Sweeting</p> <p><b>Co - Opted Member:</b> Tony Little</p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b> Anisha Teji (Democratic Services Officer), Darren Thorpe (Head of Business Delivery &amp; Support), Vikram Hansrani ( Director of Service – SEND), Dominika Michalik (Service Delivery Manager for SEND) and Ian Anderson (Business Manager, Complaints and Enquiries)</p>
27.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
28.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
29.	<p><b>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>Members queried whether the report due to go to Cabinet on 14 October 2021 on the reduction of published admission numbers could be made available to the Committee. It was explained that only the draft report for consultation was going to Cabinet in October 2021 and Members would have an opportunity to consider and make comments on the report in January 2022 as per the Committee's work programme. It was questioned whether any information could be provided to the Committee before this stage and it was agreed that a request would be made.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes from the meeting on 27 July 2021 be approved subject to the addition to the following additions:</p> <p><b>Minute 20 to include -</b></p> <p><b>Questions were raised on how lessons learnt from the incidents in Rotherham 2014, involving young vulnerable girls, had been applied to Hillingdon's</b></p>

approach to child safeguarding. It was confirmed that learning was captured from both a national and local level and various areas of practice were reviewed through the development forum. A national panel had also been introduced that considered areas of concern across the country, capturing information and publishing national reports and ongoing feedback.

**Minute 26 to include -**

**It was noted that the Committee asked for specific information in relation to Education Health Care Plans.**

30. **TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED AS PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE** (*Agenda Item 4*)

It was confirmed that there were no Part II items and that all business would therefore be conducted in public.

31. **MAJOR REVIEW - WORKING TITLE: ASSISTED LIVING TECHNOLOGIES REVIEW** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The Committee heard an update on the witness session programme for the Assisted Living Technologies (ALT) review. It was noted that due to scheduling, it had been difficult to secure the attendance of a service provider witness at the meeting.

**Site visit to Park View Court**

The Head of Business Delivery & Support provided an update following the Member site visit to Park View Court on Wednesday 11 August 2021.

The Committee Park View Court was an extra care facility in the south of the Borough. As part of the session, Members were provided with a tour of the facility where they viewed an empty flat containing ALT equipment, common areas including a bath facility with reflective lights, a relaxation area and a treatment room. Following the tour, Members met with a range of staff that worked at Park View Court including the Head of Home and Extra Care.

General questions were asked around service users' thoughts and the feedback was generally positive. Park View Court reported that they had moved all their systems online making it easier to record and follow up actions. Care plans could be updated in real time to record prescription changes and family visits. This had previously been done through manual care records.

In terms of system failures and backups, it was noted that if a service user was not wearing their pendant, this could cause issues. The Committee heard that service users were sometimes unwilling to ask for assistance to avoid any inconvenience and work had been done to educate service users about the technology. Service users were encouraged to ask for assistance when required.

It was confirmed that training for staff was part of their contractual obligations and they needed to comply with Care Quality Commission requirements. The Council also provided training to staff.

The Committee raised some concerns with the gaps with online services, particularly in



domiciliary care, where the systems were not always accessible. Questions were raised on how users with dementia would be able to update care providers and elderly residents who were not familiar with smart phones and Alexa. The concerns were noted and Members had an opportunity to ask these questions directly to families and carers at the informal witness session arranged with service users.

Following service user feedback, it was noted that there had been adequate demonstrations of the technology and users were comfortable.

### **Witness session programme**

The Committee had regard to the witness programme which provided details of upcoming witness sessions. A session had been arranged open to all the Committee for Monday 13 September 2021 at 2 pm, involving various representatives from:

- Hillingdon Autistic Care & Support;
- Carers Trust Hillingdon;
- Hillingdon Mind;
- Alzheimer's Society; and
- a service user that lives in a supported living service.

Although the witness session had been arranged at short notice, it was noted that the session had been set around the availability of service users in an informal setting to enable an open environment.

The Committee was informed that a virtual headset training session was also being proposed for Tuesday 26 October 2021 and Democratic Services would finalise details in due course.

It was noted that a provider had been identified for another site visit to consider wider technology however the unit was not in the Borough. The Committee was also informed that extensive efforts had been made to secure witness attendance, however this was dependent on engagement.

Some concerns were raised that only three Members were able to attend the site visit on Wednesday 11 August 2021, that there was no service provider present at the meeting, that there had been a late notification of the meeting on Monday 13 September 2021 and the October meeting had missed out local authority exemplars. It was explained that given the nature of the settings and the Covid -19 pandemic restrictions, only a selected few Members attended. It was also confirmed that witness sessions had been arranged the availability of witnesses.

Contact had been made with the community engagement team in respect of an online surveys. Many local authorities were in the same stage of delivery as the London Borough of Hillingdon and efforts to find a suitable direct exemplar that would add value to the review would continue. Members were also keen on hearing from younger service users in addition to elder residents.

### **RESOLVED: That the Committee:**

- 1. noted the feedback from the site visit; and**
- 2. agreed the witness sessions arranged for Monday 13 September 2021 and Tuesday 26 October 2021.**

32. **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED AND DISABILITY (SEND) PROVISION WITHIN HILLINGDON** *(Agenda Item 6)*

The Director of Service – Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) and the Service Delivery Manager for SEND introduced the report on the SEND provision within Hillingdon.

An update was provided on the SEND provision within Hillingdon and on the support available for children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) support.

It was noted that transformational work had continued to develop with more education settings now accessing pre statutory pathways despite financial pressures and the Covid 19 – pandemic. Although there had been an increase in early intervention and children accessing pre – statutory support, it was noted that there were still systemic funding pressures in SEND and these were being challenged both nationally and locally.

The Committee was provided with a context of the SEND reforms and it was highlighted that the London Borough of Hillingdon had seen a growth rate between 2014 – 2021 of 90% in comparison to London. The Committee heard information in relation to the impact of the pandemic, the SEND service, the SEND Advisory Service, the Educational Psychology Service and next steps.

The Committee noted the progress with Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) assessments. In response to questions around support packages available for residents and access to services, it was explained that success was measured through provision and how well the provision was delivered. Although there were six pupils out of provision through statutory school age, within that cohort pupils still had access to home education whilst the most appropriate provision was being sought. Once an appropriate setting had been finalised, the responsibilities were then discharged onto that provision. There had been recent development to expand the pre - statutory support available through the stronger families work where the most appropriate provisions could be triaged. Work was being done to address the identified gaps. It was agreed that further information would be provided in relation to performance indicators around how many people were looking for support packages and how many people were unable to access services.

The growth in the spending and the breakdown of SEN numbers by schools data was considered. Members enquired whether there were incentives in place for schools to have pupils with EHCPs. It was explained that the percentage of the pupils with EHCPs was against the percentage of pupils on that school roll and that data was used by the Council to consider how support could be best provided. Where there was a disproportionate number of pupils with ECHPs, work was being done to work with schools and representatives to address this. Support to all settings was provided by the SEND service and feedback was provided to schools and parents with follow up phone calls. A training plan had also been developed for SEND coordinators and SEND leads.

In response to questions around the support provided to pupils with EHCPs who home were educated, it was confirmed that a guidance had been developed with the Participation Team for parents who home educated children. There were home education officers to guide parents to ensure that the right provisions were provided. It was noted that electively home educated children with EHCPs were not provided with local authority funding as the local authority did not have a legal duty to arrange special educational provision, however guidance was provided. These EHCPs were also

reviewed more often.

The Committee heard what EHCP reviews involved and was advised that best practice learning and in-house services all played a significant role.

It was noted that there were some discrepancies in the audit of school's information that detailed the number of children with EHCPs. Officers were asked to review the statistics provided. Further information was requested on the number children waiting for placements to meet their needs and the most recent up to date information on the audit of school information. Members were informed that the data was obtained from the census earlier this year and it was accepted that there could be a difference in information before the Committee.

It was reported that the Council had implemented a scheme whereby schools that past the three percent threshold of their population of pupils with EHCPs or early support funding received funding of an additional £6000 per pupil. The engagement of governors was important and, since April 2021, a permanent team had been recruited to manage caseloads.

In response to queries in relation school places, the key challenges were explained noting that many specialist schools were close to being full. A strategy was being developed to focus on schools with high percentages. Surveys and annual review projects had been initiated to ensure that every EHCP had been reviewed and children and young people were placed in the right provisions.

Questions were asked around the action had been taken following the completion of assessments and what challenges were predicted for the future. Although 20 week performances looked positive and there was engagement with early support funding, it was acknowledged that there were still challenges in the context of policies and the growth of EHCPs. Engagement with school settings was significant. Further information regarding modelling growth, case load numbers and parent carer forums would be circulated to Members.

It was noted that in cases where early support funding was not appropriate due to complexity of the long term needs and waiting for assessments, exceptional funding could be considered as part of the process. There was a national shortage in educational psychology and ways on how to train and retain them was ongoing. The framework for local area inspections had not yet been published and it was conducted by the CQC and Ofsted and wider stakeholders. Further information was requested on short break services and what was being done to ensure that this was being offered to all children with additional needs.

The Committee welcomed the thorough and wide-ranging report. It was encouraged by how the service had transformed, particularly in light of the growth of numbers and ongoing challenges. For future reporting, figures and bar charts differentiating progress made and case studies were welcomed.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the contents of the report.**

33. **ANNUAL COMPLAINT & SERVICE MONITORING REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021** (*Agenda Item 7*)

The Business Manager, Complaints and Enquiries introduced the report on Annual

Complaints & Service Monitoring Report for 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 and provided an oral summary of the key highlights.

It was reported that the Council focussed on trying to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of residents. Across the Council only 30% of informal complaints (2,587) had been escalated to a Stage 1 complaint (789) and only 5% of Stage 1 complaints had been escalated to Stage 2 (42).

It was noted that the Council had received a significant number of compliments (502) and the number of compliments recorded over the past 5 years had continued to rise from 76 in 2016/17 to 502 for 2021/21. Residents had been particularly complimentary about the wild flowers across the Borough.

The number of informal complaints recorded for 2020/21 of 2,587 was higher than the 2016/17 figure of 2,081. However, the number of formal complaints recorded (Stages 1, 2, and 3) was generally lower for 2020/21 than in previous years.

The number of Ombudsman Investigations was lower for 2020/21 than in any other previous years. This was because the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman decided to pause their investigations for four months to allow local authorities to follow their Covid 19 response. It was also noted that the Council's corporate complaints procedure had been revised in 2017 which allowed a direct escalation of complaints to the Ombudsman.

The Committee discussed the options in place to manage complaints informally prior to them reaching a formal stage. It was explained that the volume of complaints were generally low in social care but higher in other areas such as waste and housing. It was agreed that good communication was highly valued in all complaints. A number of steps were taken at an informal level as complainants often preferred quick responses. Learning and feedback was identified and shared with senior management teams.

Concerns were raised in relation to the audit of Members Enquiries information. Although the main source of information was extracted from Members Enquiries data and from one source, officers were asked to review this information as there were discrepancies in the figures. Further information would be provided to Members.

It was noted that there had been complaints about trying to contact the relevant teams with concerns of long waiting times. Members heard that generally people contacted the contact centre with issues and these calls would then be filtered to the relevant teams. To make the complaints process easier for residents, there was also a form on the Council's website that was sent directly to the complaints team.

Further information would be provided in relation to highways complaints. It was noted that education complaints were low and many complaints were raised directly with the school.

The Committee discussed the importance of using officer resource sensibly and whether it would be possible for the digital agenda to provide better information to Members to reduce the number of Members' Enquiries. Members also asked what amounted to sufficient evidence in the complaints process and it was agreed that residents would benefit from better information on this.

Members thanked officers for the full and thorough report, that covered a wide range of services.

	<b>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the contents of the report and provided any comments to officers as appropriate.</b>
34.	<b>WORK PROGRAMME</b> <i>(Agenda Item 8)</i>  <b>RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.</b>
35.	<b>CABINET FORWARD PLAN</b> <i>(Agenda Item 9)</i>  <b>RESOLVED: That the forward plan be noted.</b>
	The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.13 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Anisha Teji on Tel: 01895 277655 Email: [ateji@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:ateji@hillingdon.gov.uk). Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

**The public part of this meeting was filmed live on the Council's YouTube Channel to increase transparency in decision-making, however these minutes remain the official and definitive record of proceedings.**

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## REPORT - MAJOR REVIEW - WORKING TITLE: ASSISTED LIVING TECHNOLOGIES REVIEW

<b>Committee name</b>	Families, Health and Wellbeing Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Anisha Teji, Corporate Services and Transformation
<b>Papers with report</b>	Scoping Report - Working Title: Assisted Living Technologies Review Notes from the witness session with service providers on 8 September 2021
<b>Ward</b>	All

### HEADLINES

The Committee will consider the third witness session focussing on Assisted Living Technologies from a service provider perspective. Members will hear evidence from service providers and have the opportunity to ask any questions.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

**That the Committee hears evidence from the witness session and asks questions of those present.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

At its meeting on 3 June 2021, the Committee received the draft scoping report for its major review on Assisted Living Technologies (ALT). Members considered the scoping report and agreed to commence the witness session programme.

The agreed Terms of Reference for the review are set out below:

1. To understand the Council's current offer with regard to Assisted Living Technologies;
2. To understand the demand and take up of services and explore the limitations residents encounter in accessing Assisted Living Technologies;
3. To explore the national setting and best practice around the implementation of ALT within local authorities and amongst the care sector;
4. To assess the ALT work that is currently taking place across Adult Social Care and to explore possible areas for improvement and future development by both inhouse and external care providers;
5. To review how the current Telecare Line service works from end to end and suggest ways by which the installation and repairs process could be streamlined;

6. To explore any lessons that may have been learnt in relation to ALT following the Covid-19 pandemic;
7. To influence or propose any emerging Council plans, guidance or policies with respect to the use of ALT;
8. Subject to the Committee's findings, to make any conclusions, propose actions, service and policy recommendations to the decision-making Cabinet.

## **Review update**

At the meeting on 27 July 2021, the Committee commenced its first witness session as part of the review. Members heard from The Head of Business Delivery & Support and the Community Development Manager and had regard to the information report entitled 'Review of Assistive Living Technology'. The first witness session focussed on establishing and creating an understanding of the current ALT local picture, objectives and future aims in Hillingdon.

On 11 August 2021, some Members of the Committee undertook a site visit to one of the Borough's extra care settings, Park View Court. Given the nature of the settings and current climate with the pandemic, only a selected few Members and officers undertook the site visit. The site visit was informative and was a good opportunity to consider the practical settings of a facility that used ALT. Members and officers present at the site visit provided feedback from the session at the meeting on 8 September 2021.

Following the Committee's decision that it would be beneficial to hear from service users in a session outside the usual Committee meetings to allow users to speak openly in an informal setting, an informal meeting was set up on 13 September 2021 at the Civic Centre. At that meeting, the Committee heard from a number of service users' organisations including:

- Hillingdon MIND
- H4All
- Alzheimer's Society
- Carers Trust
- Hillingdon Autistic Care Services (HACS)
- Hillingdon Carers Partnership
- Comfort Care Services

This session focussed on the service user perspective identifying areas that worked well and challenges. Key points noted from the meeting can be found at appendix A.

## **Witness session on 26 October 2021**

At the meeting on 26 October 2021, the Committee will hear from service provider organisations including:

- Buddi – a technology company that focusses on providing peace of mind by enabling people to live independently in their own homes for longer.



- Apello – technology company that has developed products such as a monitored personal emergency alarm to enable people to lead independent and fulfilled lives.
- Tunstall – technology company that uses technology to support those requiring care and health intervention to live independently in their chosen home setting. Solutions enable independent living by defining new models of care and creating globally connected healthcare solutions.

The aim of the session is to provide an overview of their products and some insight into how it benefits residents.

A virtual headset training session has also been scheduled for 26 October 2021 prior to the Select Committee meeting. Members will be guided through a range of experiences, have an opportunity to use the headsets and gain an insight into what a person with dementia and autism experiences.

### **Implications on related Council policies**

The role of Select Committees is to make recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

### **How this report benefits Hillingdon residents**

None at this stage, pending any findings approved by Cabinet.

### **Financial Implications**

None at this stage.

### **Legal Implications**

None at this stage.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

See Scoping Report.

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## **APPENDIX A: ALT REVIEW – NOTES FROM WITNESS SESSION WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2021**

### **List of organisations attending:**

- Hillingdon MIND
- H4All
- Alzheimer's Society
- Carers Trust
- Hillingdon Autistic Care Services (HACS)
- Hillingdon Carers Partnership
- Comfort Care Services

### **Witness session notes**

Officers introduced the witness session with a short explanation of what exactly was meant by Assistive Living Technology (ALT). ALT was explained using several examples, including wearable pendants, home and door sensors, gps trackers, Alexa, apple watches, etc.

Attendees at the meeting were then split into two groups to facilitate more open discussion on the topic, before reconvening to the whole group at the end of the meeting. The groups agreed that there were many benefits to using technology to assist independence and care. It was echoed that technologies like pendants and Alexas were beneficial. It was noted, however, that it was difficult for service providers to keep up with the many new developments in ALT. It was suggested that it would be useful to have some form of information hub for service providers to be able to get information on these developments.

A major strand of discussion for both groups was the concern that some service users were left behind by the move to more technologically based care and assistance. Several barriers to service user take up of ALT were noted, including a lack of access to wifi or the lack of know-how or confidence to be able to use ALT effectively. Mental health issues could also inhibit service users' take up of ALT. Paranoia about online fraud and person data theft could make the use of the internet triggering for service users.

It was also noted that many people had a general resistance to change, and that this could be an impediment to the take up of ALT. This problem was not just related to the service users themselves; often it was family members who were most resistant to changes in services due to technology. For example, family members might be used to their relative having four calls from a carer per day, and would be upset if this were to be reduced and replaced by remote meetings through technology. However, in some cases, the service user preferred the new format more.

A related strand of discussion related to the use of ALT during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar concerns as the above were raised, but additional issues were also highlighted. The use of zoom/teams over the pandemic for services was discussed, with zoom being used for a variety of services, including exercise classes, social events and games. Some service users liked this move online, but others found it confusing and distressing when lots of people were on a call. Problems had arisen as a result of the transition back to in-person services, particularly due to the negative impacts of the pandemic on service users' personal development.

Education was posited as one solution to breaking down the barrier for those who lack the technological literacy to use ALT. It was emphasised that, as more services return to in person delivery, IT literacy help schemes must also return in-person, with online schemes insufficient. Pre-pandemic examples included services offered at the library, particularly a scheme where Brunel students volunteered to sit with residents to help them use the computers. The issue of outreach was also raised. Service providers were concerned that, even with strong services provided to help people with technological literacy, some people would still slip through the net.

It was agreed that the barriers to the take up of ALT emphasised that a one size fits all approach to its use would be wrong. A tailored approach was preferable where it was acknowledged that technological solutions were not always appropriate.

### **Summary of key themes of discussion:**

- Ability to access services/technology/internet
- Training requirements
- Financial implications
- Impact on mental health/social isolation
- Difficulty of booking online sessions/limited session time
- Importance of community hubs/safe spaces
- Overcoming resistance to change
- Balance of technology with personal interaction
- Overcoming health issues such as dementia and remembering how to use technology
- Digitisation of paper records
- Redundancy and resilience should records be lost/technology becomes unavailable
- Engagement with end users + carers/family/guardians/service commissioners and third party providers
- Promotion of life skills/independence
- Promotion of services available
- Early assessments to identify all available solutions at outset
- No one size fits all solution



## Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee Draft Review Scoping Report - 2021/22

### **Working Title: Assisted Living Technologies Review**

#### **1. REVIEW OBJECTIVES**

##### **Aim and background to the review**

The aim of this review is to consider how the Council can improve its Assistive Living offer by taking stock of the Council's current offer, exploring ways in which current processes could be streamlined and investigating possible future developments and direction for Hillingdon's implementation of Assisted Living Technologies (ALT). Subject to any findings, the review could make practical, feasible and supportive recommendations to improve the Council's ALT offer to residents.

The Covid-19 pandemic has emphasised the suitability of a scrutiny review which focusses largely on Hillingdon's most vulnerable residents. As the country emerges from the pandemic many vulnerable people, particularly older adults who may have been shielding for extended periods of time, may be lacking confidence, specifically with regard to their health and care arrangements. ALT can be utilised as an important facet in older and vulnerable people regaining that confidence. In addition, the promotion of independence of younger adults as part of lifelong care planning with technology supports the management of the social care budget by delaying the need for residential or high needs care.

At the Social Care, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee meeting on 13 April 2021, it was agreed that the Committee's next major review would focus on Assisted Living Technologies.

### **Terms of Reference**

The following Terms of Reference are suggested for the review, subject to any changes agreed by the Committee:

1. To understand the Council's current offer with regard to Assisted Living Technologies;
2. To understand the demand and take up of services and explore the limitations residents encounter in accessing Assisted Living Technologies;
3. To explore the national setting and best practice around the implementation of ALT within local authorities and amongst the care sector;
4. To assess the ALT work that is currently taking place across Adult Social Care and to explore possible areas for improvement and future development by both inhouse and external care providers;
5. To review how the current Telecare Line service works from end to end and suggest ways by which the installation and repairs process could be streamlined;
6. To explore any lessons that may have been learnt in relation to ALT following the Covid-19 pandemic;
7. To influence or propose any emerging Council plans, guidance or policies with respect to the use of ALT;
8. Subject to the Committee's findings, to make any conclusions, propose actions, service and policy recommendations to the decision-making Cabinet.

## **2. INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **Context**

Assisted Living Technologies (ALT) are used as an important facet in helping people to maintain independence and improve social care and health outcomes. It is utilised to promote independent living and support people in need of care to live longer at home, in homely environments and in their communities. Traditionally, ALT is seen as a way in which elderly people and their carers can remain confident that, should an accident happen, there is a simple and effective way in which they can call for help. Although elderly people make up a majority of those using ALT, there are a variety of reasons for an individual to access ALT; this may include returning home after a period of illness and those living with chronic health conditions such as epilepsy. In fact, any resident with a need to be supported to remain independent could consider ALT which can include both simple and more complex systems and equipment; equipment has conventionally utilised mobile and landline technology but in recent years there has been a steady shift in exploring ALT internet connectivity ([TIHM - Technology Integrated Health Management for Dementia](#)).

In the UK, the population of people over 85 years old is expected to double over the next 20 years (Officer of National Statistics 2017); and with four in five people over 85 having two or more serious health conditions (Barnet K et al 2012), the increase in people using ALT means that employers and staff need to be more aware of what types of ALT is available and how it can be used. Just as technology has become part of everyday life, the use of ALT has also become more acceptable and established. By embracing this sort of technology, we can empower people to own their own care and transform the way that services can be delivered.

## **Key information**

The London Borough of Hillingdon currently has a variety of Assistive Living Technologies in place which enable residents to remain within their own home, or a supported setting, and retain their independence. The technology used is aimed at supporting residents in daily life and providing peace of mind for them, their families and carers. As a range of preventative services, promoting independence, the development of ALT can also remove or delay the need for high cost placements in residential care home settings.

The Council's Extra Care settings at Grassy Meadow, Park View Court, Triscott House and Cottesmore House have a range of Assisted Living Technologies in place. All flats and communal areas have Tunstall alarms available should a resident require support. Door sensors are fitted as well as smoke alarms to ensure residents are safe. Park View Court and Grassy Meadow Court have interactive bathrooms available set up with special lighting and Bluetooth connectivity so music can be played whilst using. Both schemes have a Tovertafel (Magic Table) situated in the communal lounge to encourage interaction, reminiscence and relaxation for people with dementia. The combination of light and sound provides physical and mental stimulation and is reported to encourage movement, eye contact, focus and social engagement. This is a great example of interactive technology within the Council's schemes which can be used by residents or the wider community by appointment. Grassy Meadow Court has been built to Gold Stirling Standard and was awarded Gold Status in 2019, the same year it won 2nd place in the Pinder Awards.

Ipads, Facetime, Amazon and Google equipment has been used during the pandemic for resident and service user communication with family members and also for interaction with their community health providers, such as the GP, Community Matrons and Consultants. There has been allocation of this type of equipment via NWL, NorthWest London CCG to enable daily contact, care and support to continue throughout the pandemic and this type of technology progress will be retained as invaluable. Further work to explore Telehealth options with the local HHCP will be a positive step forward for Hillingdon residents.

In addition to the technology used in care homes, home care providers have started to use and in some cases develop tools for compliance with the CQC regulations in Domiciliary Care. These systems are in the form of apps on phones for the care plan to be read by the allocated worker, the tasks are then highlighted and when completed

they are accepted/receipted, this includes the high risk area of community medication administration and this significantly improves the outcomes for residents and providers. If the task is not receipted by the worker, an alert is sent to the call centre to advise that a task has been missed, enabling action to be taken promptly.

Other examples of devices and systems include:

[Everon GPS watches](#) being used to enable people with dementia or other cognitive impairment to live a more active, safer and freer life. 'Safe' zones can be configured on the watch and position alerts are sent on a regular basis which makes it easy for family members, carers or emergency services to follow or locate the wearer via computer, smartphone or tablet. This technology encourages independence whilst also providing peace of mind.

[Just Checking](#) technology consists of small wireless movement sensors which can be discreetly placed around the home, which gather data on the activity of the person living there. It can identify which rooms have been visited and for how long. It includes door sensors on internal and external doors to see when they are opened and for how long. In combination with the movement sensors, you can tell when visits have been received and when an individual leaves or enters the property and how long they are out. This technology provides full activity reports which can help care professionals complete objective, evidence-based assessments and create appropriate care plans. The ability to understand when support is needed puts the focus on maximising independence and autonomy without compromising on the quality of care. The reports can also be used to enable evidence-based decisions on whether a person can remain at home or needs to be placed in an appropriate residential care home-based setting.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been various projects undertaken to support residents. In December 2020, the Sport and Physical Activity Team began working with WeCareUK (an independent charitable organisation) to supply Alexa Echo devices to residents living with dementia for a 6-9 month trial. The aim was to study the usefulness of such devices in supporting a person living with dementia. Each Alexa Echo device has an 8-inch screen and a total of 10 devices were distributed to 6 residents and 4 professionals working in dementia support in the Borough. Success so far includes the use of video calling both by professionals and family members. This proved very helpful in assisting the person living with dementia to recognise who they are speaking to which is difficult in a traditional phone call. Family members reported the benefits of the drop in call functionality, which allows them to check on their loved ones without them needing to answer the call. Vocal reminders can also be set which are relevant to the person, including things such as 'time to take your medicine', 'it's time to drink some water', 'why don't you take a walk'. It was also used as a reminder for other dates or appointments such as doctors or phoning the hairdresser. Photos can also be uploaded to the screen so it can be used as a frame, setting reminders for favourite music or TV shows to be played at set times throughout the day. This was found to be especially useful with 'sundowning' to help distract a person.



As an expanding market, there is an opportunity to conduct wider research and implement pilot projects either internally or with external partners (e.g. private care providers). Some example products and solutions are listed below:

[ARMED](#) – falls prevention, risk modelling, medication management

[Buddi](#) – GPS tracker, falls detector

[Apello](#) – smart living solutions, digital alarms, telecare monitoring, technology enabled care

[Tunstall](#) – connected care and health solutions

[The Happiness programme](#) - portable magic tables, interactive light technology

Any services implemented would need to meet the [TSA Quality Standards Framework](#).

### **Executive Responsibilities**

This review would fall fully under the Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee's remit as set out in the Constitution and also cut across the Cabinet Member portfolios of:

- Health and Social Care;
- Families, Education and Wellbeing.

Discussions on draft or emerging recommendations may be undertaken with Cabinet Members as per the Protocol on Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet Relations approved by full Council on 12 September 2019.

## **3. EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY**

### **Lines of Enquiry and Witness testimony**

Lines of enquiry will be worked up by Members as the review progresses.

Potential witnesses could include:

- Testimony from LBH Officers;
- Testimony from representatives of external ALT service providers;
- Testimony from external Care Providers;
- ALT experts (Representatives of the TSA);
- Local service users and/or their carers (in person in an informal setting and through a survey);
- Testimony from the Cabinet Members.

### **Emerging conclusions or themes for development**

As the review progresses and feedback is received, a prospective area to explore could pertain to ALT user statistics e.g. usage data or the type of ALTs commonly being requested. These will emerge and become apparent as the review progresses.

## Surveys, site-visits or other fact-finding events

There is the possibility of a prospective site visit to one of the Borough's Extra Care settings (Grassy Meadow/Parkview etc.) or other care service where ALT is being implemented. Visits such as this may afford Members a greater opportunity for understanding ALT services than the formal Committee environment.

Members may invite service users and/or their carers to attend a meeting of the Select Committee to offer witness testimony; however, Members may wish to use a survey to obtain service users views if, in the current climate, a visit to the Civic Centre is deemed untimely.

## **4. REVIEW PLANNING & ASSESSMENT**

As the Membership of the Council, and therefore the Committee, may be subject to change following the May 2022 local elections, the suggested timescale for the conclusion of this detailed review is spring 2022.

It is advised that witnesses attend in 'themed' sessions to better focus questions and discussion. A draft schedule for the review is set out below, this can be amended as the Committee sees fit:

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Possible witnesses / activity</b>
3 June 2021	Review Scoping Report	Consider and agree Scoping Report
27 July 2021	Witness Session 1	Council Officers Establish understanding of current ALT local picture, objectives and future aims
	Prospective visit to one of the Borough's Extra Care settings (Grassy Meadow/Parkview etc.) or other care service where ALT is being implemented.	
8 September 2021	Witness Session 2	Council Officers Service Providers
13 September 2021	Feedback from Service Users	Daytime session with service users from supported living, accompanied by either a relative or support worker.  Also, session to be attended by voluntary sector, represented by Hillingdon MIND, Carers Trust Hillingdon, the Alzheimer's Society.

26 October 2021	<p>Witness Session 3</p> <p>Input from Technology Providers</p> <p>In addition, further input from Care Providers.</p> <p>Technology Demonstration</p>	<p>Buddi, Apello and Tunstall.</p> <p>Care provider and possible HE partner.</p> <p>Officer-lead VR Headset demonstration to take place prior to the standard meeting.</p>
30 November 2021	Consider initial findings and suggested areas for recommendations to evaluate further.	<p>Cabinet Member may wish to be invited at this stage.</p> <p>Officers to be present to offer advice.</p>
4 January 2022	Agree findings and recommendations.	Clarification from Officers if required.
2 February 2022	Consider Draft Final Committee Report	Delegate authority to finalise text to Chairman and Labour Lead.
Cabinet- February 2022	Report presented to Cabinet.	Cabinet considers and decides whether to agree recommendations to be actioned / become Council policy.
Spring 2023	Monitoring of implementation of any recommendations.	

Specific meetings can be shortened or extended to suit the review topic and needs of the Committee.

### **Financial Assessment**

This review is not expected to require a financial assessment at the scoping stage.

However, as the review progresses, the Committee should seek to ensure any recommendations are feasible, cost-effective or indeed can save the Council money. Any early findings or recommendations by the Committee which may result in a call on Council budgets should be discussed at the earliest opportunity by the Chairman, with the relevant Cabinet Member, Cabinet Member for Finance and the Leader of the Council to assess viability.

This is in accordance with the approved Protocol on Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet Relations approved by full Council on 12 September 2019.

### **Resource requirements**

None identified - Officer support from Democratic Services and Adult Social Care.

## Further reading

TCES – Community Equipment Services

[Home - TCES Community, Your Community Equipment Software Solution](#)

Telecare Services Association – The voice of Technology Enable Care

<https://www.tsa-voice.org.uk/>

Technology Integrated Health Management for Dementia – Surrey and Border Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

[TIHM \(sabp.nhs.uk\)](http://TIHM.sabp.nhs.uk)

National Institute for Health Research – Help at Home: Use of assistive technology for older people

<https://evidence.nihr.ac.uk/themedreview/help-at-home-use-of-assistive-technology-for-older-people/>

Skills for Care – Assistive Living Technology

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Learning-development/ongoing-learning-and-development/Assistive-living-technology/Assisted-living-technology.aspx>

NHS – Personal alarms, security systems (telecare) and key safes

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/care-services-equipment-and-care-homes/personal-alarms-security-systems-and-keysafes/>

Telecare Services Association – The TSA Quality Standards Framework

[Quality Standards in Technology Enabled Care \(tsa-voice.org.uk\)](http://QualityStandardsinTechnologyEnabledCare.tsa-voice.org.uk)

Everon GPS Watch

[Vega GPS Watch - Everon UK Cloud-based call systems](#)

Just Checking Activity Monitoring

[Detailed activity monitoring, helping people stay at home for longer \(justchecking.co.uk\)](http://Detailedactivitymonitoring.helpingpeoplestayathomeforlonger.justchecking.co.uk)

## BETTER CARE FUND SCHEME FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES UPDATE

<b>Committee name</b>	Families, Health and Wellbeing Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Kate Kelly-Talbot - Social Care and Health, LBH Jane Hainstock – Commissioning, NWLCCG
<b>Papers with report</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b> – Improving integrated care and support for people with learning disabilities governance summary.
<b>Ward</b>	All

### SUMMARY

1. As part of its monitoring function the Committee has asked to receive an update on the delivery of the Better Care Fund (BCF) scheme entitled Integrated Care and Support for People with Learning Disabilities and Autism. The BCF is a national initiative intended to deliver integration between health and social care to improve outcomes for residents. Essentially it is the mechanism for delivering aspects of the agreed Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy that require integration between health and social care and/or close working between the Council and the NHS on a '*place-based*' level, which for Hillingdon means the geographical footprint of the borough. It is a means by which the Government has sought to implement the integration duty under the 2014 Care Act since its commencement in 2015/16.

2. The Council and health partners have sought to avoid separating the BCF from the broader transformation agenda in Hillingdon. The update in this report therefore reflects progress in delivering the component of the Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Workstream identified in the draft Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS). Supporting the independence of adults with learning disabilities is included within the scope of this workstream. The Committee may be aware that the draft JHWS is currently out to consultation.

3. The main focus of this report is on adults with learning disabilities because the Committee has recently considered reports about support for autistic people and also children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

4. The report is structured as follows:

- Strategic context
- Achievements and Challenges
- 2021/22 Priorities and Update

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. Notes the work being undertaken by the Council and partners to support people with learning disabilities and their families; and
2. Question officers and partners on the content of the report.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### Strategic Context

#### Learning Disability Defined

5. A learning disability is a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and learn new skills and a reduced ability to cope independently which started before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development. That means that people with learning disabilities often may find it harder to manage basic everyday skills, and rely upon support for many tasks, including communicating, managing money or looking after themselves.

6. A learning disability is different to a learning difficulty because the latter does not affect intellectual functioning whereas the former does. Examples of learning difficulties would include dyslexia and Hyper-activity, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

#### Population of Adults with Learning Disabilities

7. Information from the Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI) developed by the Institute of Public Care and Oxford Brookes University suggests that there were 5,588 people aged 18 and above living in Hillingdon in 2020 who had a learning disability and projected that this would increase by 5.8% to 5,914 by 2030. PANSI projections also suggest the number of people with a moderate to severe learning disability and therefore likely to be accessing statutory services will increase by 5% from 1,198 in 2020 to 1,258 in 2030. The Committee is reminded that access to financial support from the Council is subject to assessed needs meeting the National Eligibility Criteria and the outcome of a financial assessment. This does not apply regarding access to health services.

8. The total number of adults with a learning disability on Hillingdon GP registers is **1,158**. The Committee may wish to note that there are residents of Hillingdon with learning disabilities who are registered with GPs in other areas. This means that they will not be reflected on NHS reports for Hillingdon as the sample base for these is typically based on GP registration.

#### Numbers of People Supported

9. The Council's Learning Disabilities Team is responsible for assessing and reviewing the needs of people with learning disabilities who meet (or may meet) the National Eligibility Criteria for financial support in meeting their assessed social care needs by the Council. The Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities provided by the Central and North West London NHS

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Foundation Trust (CNWL) deliver specialist support in meeting the health needs of people with learning disabilities who are at risk of developing a mental health condition or behaviours described as challenging. 'Specialist support' would include psychiatry, psychology, speech and language therapy and community nurse support.

10. As at 30 September 2021 there were 641 people with a learning disability primary support reason aged 18 and above being supported by the Council and table 1 provides a breakdown of support provision. This compares to 630 on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and 661 on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

<b>Table 1: People with Learning Disabilities Breakdown of Council Support Provided 30/09/21</b>			
<b>Service Type</b>	<b>18-64</b>	<b>65+</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Residential Care Home	108	20	128
Nursing Care Home	1	3	4
Supported Living	179	38	217
Adult Care Scheme	11	3	14
Home Care	40	6	46
Outreach	64	6	70
Day Care	83	1	84
Direct Payments	76	1	77
Education placement	1	0	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>641</b>

Source: Protocol 30/09/21

11. As at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 the CNWL team was supporting 272 people. This is an increase on 2020/21 when 245 people were supported but is equal to the 2019/20 position.

## **Achievements and Challenges**

12. **Achievements:** Some of the key achievements in last 18 months include:

- *Contact calls:* All people supported by the Council and their families received weekly support calls from the Social Care Team and the Health Team during the lock down. This was in addition to calls from the Covid Hub.
- *Vaccination:* As at 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021 94.1% of people with learning disabilities registered with Hillingdon GPs had received both doses of the Covid vaccine. This meant that Hillingdon's performance was the highest in North West London (NWL) and resulted from close working between the social care team, the GP Confederation (The Confederation) and the Primary Care Networks (PCNs).
- Of the 89 residents in care homes 93% had had their first vaccine dose by the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and 92% had also had their second dose.

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### **Primary Care Networks Explained**

PCNs are collaborations of GP practices serving a total population of between 30 and 50,000 people.

Each PCN has a clinical director and must agree a collective system of governance, including identification of the lead practice for accepting funding.

Practices within a PCN must collectively decide which one will lead on enhanced services, such as extended opening or support for care homes.

The PCN workforce will include a pharmacist and social prescribing link workers in addition to a clinical director.

- *Learning Disabilities Liaison Nurse:* Hillingdon Hospitals recruited to this new post to support people with a learning disability and their families throughout their hospital journey and increase awareness amongst hospital staff.
- *Complex Care Panels:* Weekly multi-agency complex case discussions continue to be held to mitigate risks and avoid inappropriate hospital admissions. Where hospital admissions have taken place, it is with a clear rationale and supported with discharge plans.
- *Clinical leads in primary care:* Specialist learning disability clinical leads have been allocated to each PCN to ensure better understanding of needs and how to address them.
- *Challenging behaviour triggers:* Training delivered by the Council's Positive Behaviour Support Team (PBST) has improved recognition of the linkages between physical health needs and challenging behaviours in the Social Care referral, assessment and review process.
- *Care homes:* Hillingdon's 12 care homes for people with learning disabilities remain open and have managed the needs of complex residents admirably during the period of the pandemic as well as providing assurance to families. Several homes have had to manage outbreaks over the last 18 months. At the start of the pandemic CNWL staff gave advice and support on infection prevention and control (IPC) measures. Support included undertaking IPC audits. This role has now been undertaken by the Care Home Matrons within the Care Home Support Service.

### **Care Home Support Service Expanded**

This multi-disciplinary service comprising of GP's, nurses and therapists, provides daily calls to care homes for older people and weekly calls to care homes for people with learning disabilities and/or mental health needs. The team also supports the four extra care housing schemes.

Working closely with the Council's Quality Assurance Team the intention is to provide clinical advice and support to care homes to avoid unnecessary demand on the London Ambulance Service (LAS) and avoidable attendances at A & E.



13. **Challenges:** Examples of the challenges faced by people with learning disabilities, their Carers and families and the health and care system include:

- *People with learning disabilities:* Isolation during lockdown, the closure of community services and disruption to established routines have presented particular challenges to people with learning disability, many of whom would not have been able to understand the reasons for the changes to their daily activities.
- *Carers:* Managing the issues referred to above have added additional strain on Carers, for whom the lock down period meant scope for them to take a break from caring was limited. Many Carers have also been reluctant for both themselves and the people they are caring for to re-engage with the community as Covid restrictions are lifted through concerns about infection. The Committee will be aware that Carers Trust Hillingdon will be monitoring the longer-term impact of the pandemic on Carers and particularly on their mental and physical wellbeing and issues will be fed into the Carers Strategy Group and escalated as necessary. Cllr Haggar is a member of the Carers Strategy Group in her capacity as Carers' Champion.
- *Care homes:* From the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 staff who have not received both jabs of the Covid vaccine will not legally be able to continue to work in a care home environment. All of the care homes concerned have strategies in place and the Council's Quality Assurance Team will continue to monitor the situation and provide support.
- *Broader regulated care market:* Care providers are facing increased costs and staff shortages. The impact of the likely extension in 2022 of mandatory Covid vaccination to all care workers delivering activities regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will require close monitoring. The Council's Quality Assurance Team, which is funded through the BCF, is already contacting providers to gauge potential impact should this be mandated.
- CQC registered providers have received financial assistance with meeting infection control and testing related costs through the Government's Infection Control and Testing Fund. Hillingdon has been allocated £6.6m between May 2020 and September 2021. Unfortunately, inflexible criteria have meant that providers have not always been able to spend their grant allocation. The fund has been extended until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 and the grant conditions are awaited to see whether these have been made more flexible in response to representations from providers.

## 2021/22 Priorities and Progress Update

14. The statutory Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2022 - 2026 that is currently the subject of a consultation exercise, identifies *Improving mental health, learning disability and autism services through prevention and self-management* as one of its priorities. This section highlights the key deliverables for 2021/22, some of which pre-date the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

15. The Committee may wish to note that responsibility for monitoring the delivery of the priorities necessary to ensure the independence and wellbeing of people with learning disabilities, people with mental health needs and autistic people sits with the Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Transformation Board. The Board oversees delivery of the mental health, learning

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disabilities and autism workstream and the senior responsible officer for it is CNWL's Director for Hillingdon and Mental Health Services. **Appendix 1** summarises the governance arrangements for this workstream and how this fits into the broader structure for monitoring delivery of the priorities within the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

**16. Support Covid-19 vaccination of people with learning disabilities and/or autism:** The Confederation recognised that there could be many challenges in supporting people with learning disabilities to get vaccinated and these included:

- Location of the vaccination hubs being unfamiliar
- Lack of understanding of the vaccination procedure
- Vaccination hub is a noisy environment
- Needle phobia
- Communication issues

**17.** Very close working between The Confederation, CNWL and the Council has resulted in a range of adjustments and a personalised approach being put in place that have contributed to the high vaccination rate mentioned earlier in this report and these include:

- Vaccinators identified by CNWL and the Council were trained by the Community Nurses within CTPLD to specifically support people with learning disabilities.
- A quiet area was established within the vaccination hub.
- A purple sticker system on the vaccination card was introduced that highlighted the need for the person to be fast tracked to the quiet area to limit the stress of the vaccination process.
- Early or last appointments in the day were given to avoid crowd and noise levels.
- Double appointment slots were given to allow the process to go at a pace that the person with learning disabilities was comfortable with.
- Utilisation of the children's immunisation team, Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support (HACS) and the Council's social care team to be physically present at the vaccination hub. This was specifically to provide support to individuals who knew the people from these teams and was intended to provide reassurance.
- Communication adjustments were implemented including development of pictorial information, use of role play or medical dolls to demonstrate the vaccination procedure.
- Home visits were undertaken as familiar environments can be helpful.
- Needle phobia has been addressed through information about what to expect prior to the appointment and offering the use of numbing cream. Where this has not worked a best interest decision to offer mild sedation undertaken in conjunction with families and the GP has proven to be beneficial.

18. It is intended that boosters will be offered to people with learning disabilities from mid-November onwards, as this will align with when the six month point following the second dose is likely to be reached.

19. ***Deliver new care and wellbeing service contracts for people with learning disabilities and/or autism who are in a supported living setting:*** A Social Care priority over the last five years has been to stabilise the care market for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people to ensure the availability of realistic alternatives to institutional care such as long stay hospital or care home provision. During 2019 a tender was undertaken that brought together five contracts affecting 103 people in 10 supported living schemes into two contracts with two separate providers. The aim was to create a scale of business necessary to ensure the financial viability and sustainability of the providers. Full implementation of the tender was delayed as a result of the pandemic and this finally completed in Q2 with the transfer of Swan House. The two providers are Comfort Care Services and Certitude London.

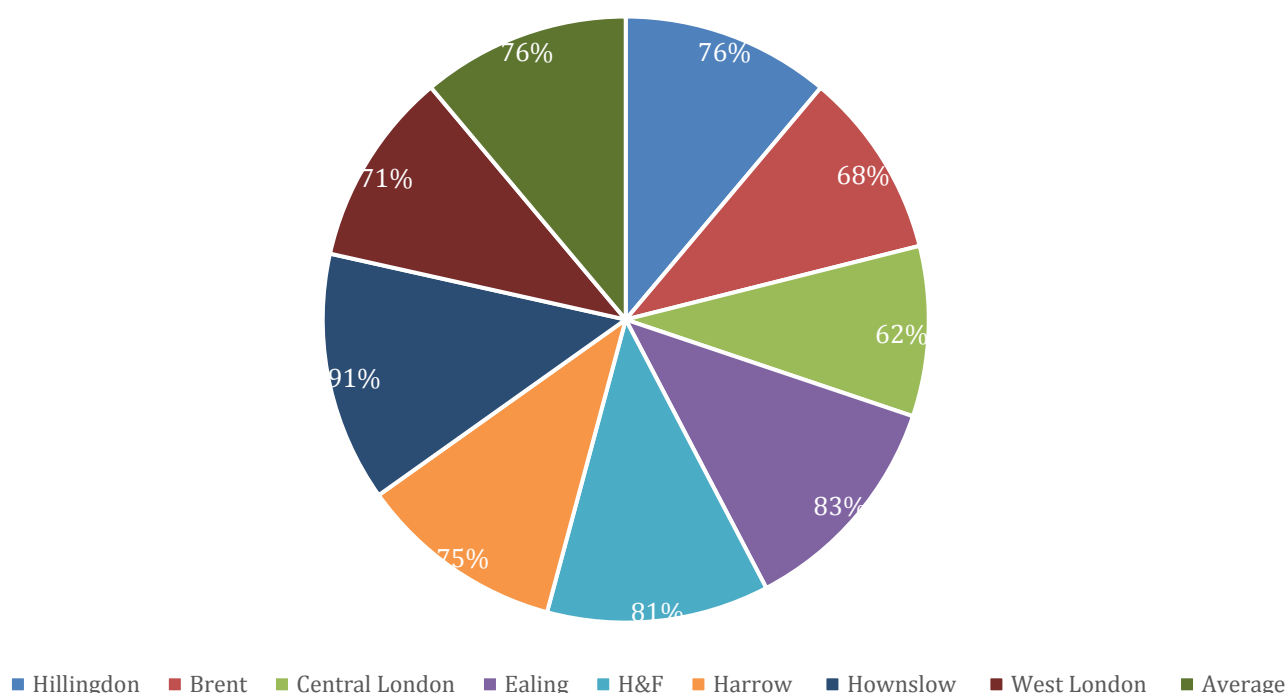
20. ***Deliver annual health checks for people with learning disabilities and autistic people:*** During an annual health check for people with learning disabilities and/or autism a doctor or nurse will:

- Do a physical check-up, including weight, heart rate and blood pressure
- Ask whether the person is staying well and whether they need help with this.
- Ask about conditions that are more common with people who have a learning disability, such as epilepsy, constipation or problems swallowing and also issues with eyesight and hearing.
- Talk about medicines to make sure that the right ones are being taken.
- Ensure that vaccinations are up to date.
- Check whether there are any other health problems such as asthma or diabetes.
- Check the support being received by the person's family or Carer.
- Give the person and/or their Carers a personalised care plan that can be monitored and shared with other key individuals to help support the individual's health and wellbeing.

## **Performance**

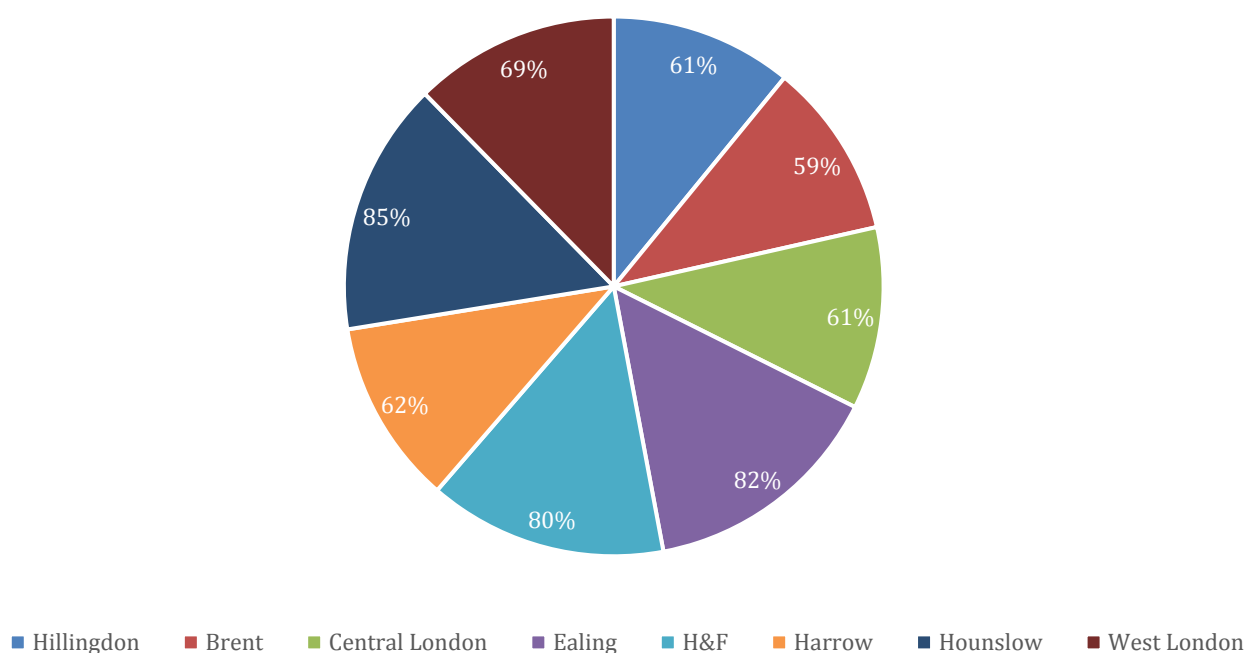
❖ **Annual health checks:** The NHS Long Term Plan (NHSE 2019) sets an ambition that by 2023/24, at least 75% of people aged 14 or over with a learning disability will have had an annual health check. Hillingdon has seen a steady improvement over the last three years. Chart 1 below shows that in 2020/21 76% was achieved, which reflected the NWL average. This compares to a performance of 52% in 2019/20 and 51% in 2018/19. Performance in both years was below the NWL average.

Chart 1: 2020/21 Annual Health Checks Performance Compared



❖ **Health action plans:** Health action plans (HAP) are intended as a key outcome of the annual health check and summarise health needs and how they will be met. The measure is the proportion of people aged 14 or over with a learning disability who have had an annual health check with an up to date HAP. Chart 2 below shows that in 2020/21 Hillingdon's performance was 61%, which was the sixth highest in NWL. An issue for Hillingdon has been that some GPs have not been using the correct template and that therefore their data has not been collected. Work with GPs means that 2021/22 performance should see an improvement.

Chart 2: Health Action Plan Performance 2020/21



**21. Deliver action plans from reviews completed between health and social care under the Learning Disabilities Mortality Review Programme:** The Learning Disabilities Mortality Review (LeDeR) programme was established in May 2015 to support local areas across England to review the deaths of people with a learning disability to learn from those deaths and to put that learning into practice. In June 2021 Integrated Care Systems assumed responsibility for ensuring that reviews are completed in their area and that all organisations within their area learn from reviews to prevent people with learning disabilities dying too soon. Diagnosed autistic people without a co-existing learning disability aged 18 and above have now been brought within the scope of death reviews.

### **Performance**

❖ There were 14 deaths of people with learning disabilities in 2020/21 compared with 17 in 2019/20 and 2018/19. Any avoidable death is one too many, but improvements referred to paragraph 12 arising from the outcome of LeDeR reviews should assist in the earlier identification of signs of deterioration in care settings and contribute to bringing the numbers in Hillingdon down to as close to zero as possible.

**22. Development of an integration model between health and social care that will secure improved outcomes for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people:** As referred to you in paragraph 9, the assessment and review of the needs of people with learning disabilities is undertaken by the Council and specialist health input is provided by a CNWL team. Before the pandemic these teams were co-located at the Civic Centre but are now located in different buildings. The Council's Positive Behaviour Support Team (see below) is also available to give advice about behaviours that challenge and strategies for managing them and is located at the Civic Centre. Although the three teams work closely together, they operate as distinct teams and

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better outcomes for people with learning disabilities and/or autism could be achieved by closer integration. Options for integrating the teams are therefore under discussion between the Council, the CCG and CNWL and the goal is for a decision to be made in Q3 for implementation in 2022/23.

### **Positive Behaviour Support Explained**

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) a person centred framework for providing long-term support to people with a learning disability and/or autism, including those with mental health conditions, who have, or may be at risk of developing, behaviours that challenge.

Behaviour that challenges usually happens for a reason and maybe the person's only way of communicating an unmet need. PBS helps with understanding the reason(s) for the behaviour the individuals needs can be better managed to enhance their quality of life and reduce the likelihood that the behaviour will recur.

Behaviours that challenge can include tantrums, hitting or kicking other people, throwing things or self-harming. Behaviour is challenging if it is harmful to the person and others around them and if it stops them achieving things in their daily life, such as making friends or going out into the community.

23. The Committee may wish to note that the Council's social work team provides case management support on behalf of the CCG to people who have a diagnosis of a learning disability and/or autism who are in an inpatient hospital setting as well as those who could be at risk of inpatient admission unless support is commissioned to meet their assessed needs. The service is also provided on the CCG's behalf to people with a learning disability diagnosis who have been assessed as being eligible for NHS Continuing Healthcare Funding and also to those entitled to aftercare services under section 117 of the Mental Health Act, 1983 and are jointly funded between the Council and the CCG. These arrangements are reflected in the agreement established between the Council and the CCG under section 75 of the NHS Act, 2006 that gives legal effect to aspects of the BCF plan that require delegation of functions and/or transfer of funds between the two organisations.

### **Additional Performance Measures**

24. The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measures how well care and support services achieve the outcomes that matter most to people. The ASCOF is used both locally and nationally to set priorities for care and support, measure progress and strengthen transparency and accountability. There are two additional ASCOF measures that are specific to the wellbeing of people with learning disabilities and these are shown below with the 2019/20 outturn. The 2020/21 comparative data is due to be published in October 2021 and results will be made known to the Committee once available:

- ❖ ***Paid employment:*** This measures the proportion of adults with a primary support reason of learning disability support who are receiving long-term support from the Council who are recorded as being in paid employment. Hillingdon's score in 2019/20 was 2.6% which made us the fourth lowest performer in NWL. The average London region value was 7% and that for England was 5.6%. The NWL average was 7.8%. The impact of Covid-19 on Hillingdon's labour market means that improving performance in this area is likely to be a considerable challenge.



- ❖ ***Living in own home or with family:*** This measure seeks to identify the proportion of working age adults with a primary support reason of learning disability support who are receiving long-term support from the Council, who are recorded as living in their own home or with their family as a long-term arrangement. Hillingdon's score in 2019/20 was 80.2%, which made us the second highest performing Council in NWL. The Committee may wish to note that the Council has invested significantly in delivering a supported living programme and continues to work with the independent sector to ensure suitable provision to meet current and future need. The average London region value was 76.2% and that for England was 77.3%. The NWL average was 74.2%.
- ❖ ***Supported in care homes:*** An objective is to support people with learning disabilities in the community and not in a care home setting. Comparative data through the Short and Long-term (SALT) returns for 2019/20 show that at 18% Hillingdon had the fourth lowest number of adults with a learning disability primary support reason living in residential and nursing home care in NWL.
- ❖ ***Long stay hospitals:*** The Committee may be aware of the drive through the Transforming Care Programme initiative to move people out of long stay hospital. Hillingdon currently has 8 people in long stay hospitals and 3 of these were admitted during 2020/21. Admissions were as a result of a legal process to ensure access to treatment and plans are in place to facilitate discharge at the earliest opportunity. Data showing how Hillingdon's inpatient numbers compare with the rest of NWL is not currently available.

25. For the Committee's information, the CCG has established a '*Dynamic Support Register*', which is intended to identify people with a learning disability, autism or both who display (or are at risk of developing) behaviour that challenges or mental health conditions and who were most likely to be at risk of a hospital admission. Everyone on the register is entitled to a care and treatment plan, which is then reviewed. Review meetings are chaired alternately by CNWL, Social Care Learning Disabilities Team and PBS Team. The reviews help to improve the quality of care people receive in hospital by asking key questions and making recommendations that lead to improvements in safety, care and treatment. They reduce the amount of time people spend in hospital and bring professionals together to help to sort out any problems which can keep people in hospital longer than necessary. They do this by helping to improve current and future care planning, including plans for leaving hospital.

## **Financial Implications**

26. There are no direct financial implications arising of this report.

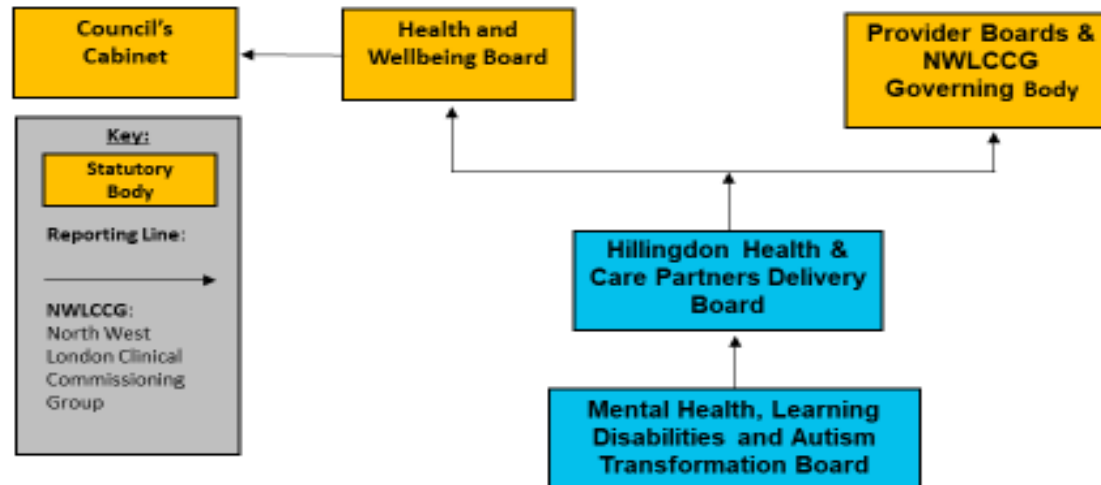
## **Legal Implications**

27. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[NHS Long Term Plan](#)

## Improving Integrated Care and Support for People with Learning Disabilities Oversight Summary



## Integrating Care and Support for People with Learning Disabilities and Autistic People Governance Arrangements Summary



## PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE ON INITIATIVES BROUGHT IN AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

<b>Committee name</b>	Families, Health and Wellbeing Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Dan Kennedy - Corporate Director, Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services  Sharon Daye – Consultant in Public Health / Deputy Director of Public Health
<b>Papers with report</b>	N/A
<b>Ward</b>	All

### HEADLINES

The purpose of this report is to provide a public health update on initiatives introduced as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Hillingdon Council is committed to Putting Residents First. From the start of the COVID-19 public health pandemic in 2020, the Council has worked closely with the NHS, the voluntary sector and other partners to proactively provide advice, support and assistance to residents, businesses, care homes and schools to help keep residents safe and minimise the disruption to everyday life from the restrictions that had to be put in place to help protect our health.

The Council has delivered food parcels to vulnerable residents who need them, administered grants to support local businesses and worked with a wide range of commercial, voluntary and charitable organisations to put in place measures to protect health, such as the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to care providers and schools, contact tracing, testing, support for self-isolation and more recently support to rollout the COVID-19 vaccine

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

**That the Committee note the contents of the report.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### COVID-19 – The Current Position in the London Borough of Hillingdon

1. As at 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021, the COVID-19 infection rate in Hillingdon was 237.5 per 100,000 population (down from 250.8 seven days previously). This is higher than the rate for London (205 per 100,000 population) and 7<sup>th</sup> highest in London. The top three boroughs in London are Kingston Upon Thames - 338.8, Hounslow - 327.5 and Richmond - 309.9 per 100,000. Overall, the trend line in infection rates in Hillingdon has risen gradually, as the graph

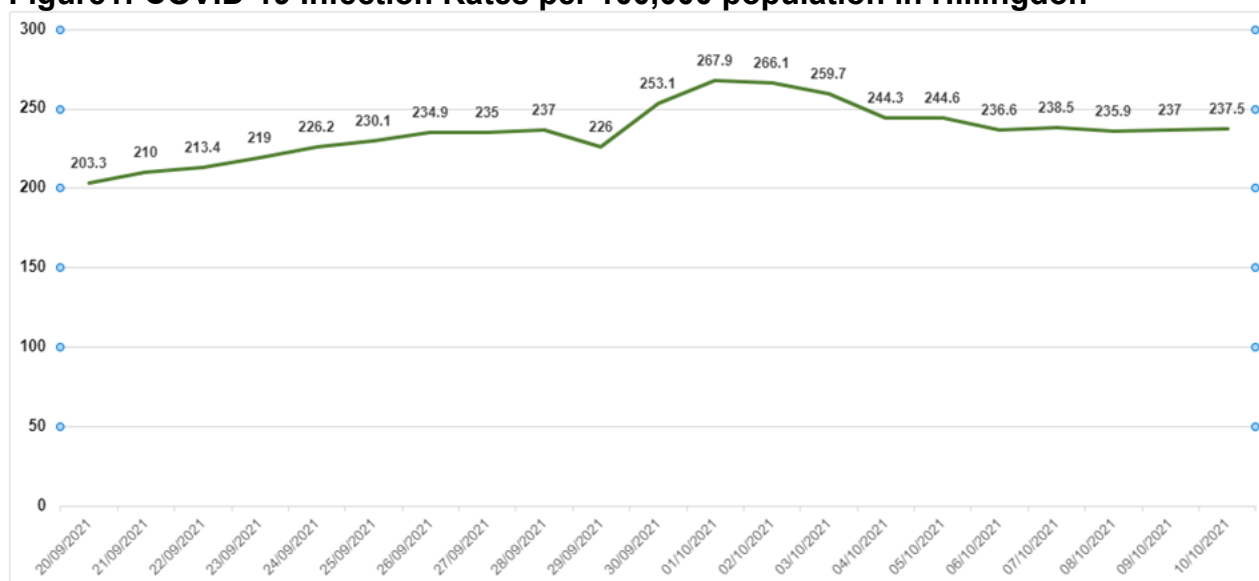
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Classification: Public

Families, Health and Wellbeing Select Committee – 26 October 2021

(covering the period 20<sup>th</sup> September to 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021) in **Figure 1** illustrates, but with some fluctuation – peaking at the beginning of October and levelling off over the past 5 days:

**Figure1: COVID-19 Infection Rates per 100,000 population in Hillingdon**



2. Currently those aged between 4-18 years of age are recording higher levels of infection. Of the 829 cases recorded over the last 7 days (4<sup>th</sup> October – 10<sup>th</sup> October):

- 338 were associated with schools (219 secondary and 119 primary)
- 6 cases at MQS Facilities
- 1 social care case

## Settings

3. In general, infection rates remain low in care settings due to most residents and staff being vaccinated and robust adherence to infection control practices. Care homes continue to have multi-agency 'wrap around' support to enable them to continue to provide safe services to the residents of Hillingdon, prevent the spread of infection and ensure that safe visiting takes place (where this has been agreed).

In line with latest guidance, the Council and CCG manage the discharge of patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 from hospital to designated beds for isolation. All patients who are discharged from hospital to a care setting are tested and their COVID-19 status known. For those who test negative, are discharged to 'step down' facilities, or to their original care home placement, to enable a further period of isolation at home to continue.

4. Schools: All schools have access to a council link officer who acts as a central point of contact for COVID-19 queries to ensure they can follow the latest government guidance to help keep their schools safe. Education advisors are also on hand to support headteachers with maintaining education provision and provide additional support and guidance, should this be required. Schools returned to the classroom setting before the end of the school term in July 2021, and prepared for the return of pupils from the start of the term in September 2021.

5. Housing: Housing providers in the Borough have been contacted and provided with nationally published information to share with tenants living in shared housing. This sets out what they can do to keep safe and to help prevent the spread of the virus. Landlords of shared accommodation and their tenants have been written to by the Council setting out practical advice and guidance to prevent the spread of the infection.
6. Helping Residents to Shop Safely: The Council has undertaken a proactive programme of providing advice and inspections to support business to re-open to keep residents safe. Since the start of the pandemic, licensing and environmental health and regulatory officers have:
- Completed over 10,000 business compliance visits
  - Issued over 250 written warnings
  - Issued 40 Fixed Penalty Notices for breaches

Council teams have been supporting businesses and venues to safely reopen:

- 108 free pavement licences issued to Hillingdon businesses
- 1600 advice and support visits from specially trained officers
- COVID-19 marshal patrols in all shopping areas
- Support to hospitality sector for the Euro Tournament
- Licensing visits and advice to beauty and personal care businesses

## Testing

7. A key element of the national strategy to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus is to establish a robust testing strategy, targeting specific occupations, such as care staff. Working jointly with the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Council has put in place regular testing arrangements for care settings. In terms of the broader approach to testing, in Hillingdon this has involved:
- Mobile testing units visiting on a regular basis;
  - Access to home testing kits, available to all residents;
  - Pop-up testing sites as required;
  - Local testing sites (walk through).

Testing will continue to be kept under review and targeted where this is needed and arranged at the convenience for residents (e.g., promoting home testing kits).

## Local Contact Tracing

9. The Council is continuing to support contact tracing by using its local knowledge to successfully trace hard-to-reach individuals. The team makes contact with these residents either by text, phone or email to enable them to capture information about their activities in the days prior to their positive result. Home visits are arranged where necessary.

## COVID-19 Vaccinations

10. The NHS is continuing to offer the COVID-19 vaccine to people most at risk, in priority order. The vaccine, like all vaccines in the UK, has been approved for use after meeting the strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. So far, reports of serious side effects, such as allergic reactions, have been very rare. No long-term complications have been reported.
11. COVID-19 vaccinations are making a real difference to the population of Hillingdon - preventing residents from becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 and preventing deaths from COVID-19. As of 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021 COVID-19 cases in North West London continue to be high and many of the people who are the most unwell in hospitals are unvaccinated - including pregnant women and young people.

It is imperative that we continue to encourage residents to come forward for vaccination, whether that is for their first, second or booster vaccine. Our community engagement team continue to work with communities, faith groups and residents to increase the number of people who come forward for the vaccine.

12. Phase 3 of the national vaccination programme: has commenced, with particular focus on providing first vaccination to 12-15 year olds and boosters within care homes. 12-15 year olds are being offered their vaccination at their schools and all schools in NWL will have a vaccination team visit before November 5th. The Booster vaccination program has also started with those eligible now able to book through the NHS. The NHS are also continuing to encourage residents to come forward for their first or second vaccination.

Teenagers aged 16-17 are eligible for vaccination. 'Sixth Formers' will be offered the opportunity for vaccination when the vaccination teams visit their school to vaccinate younger pupils.

13. Performance: In terms of overall performance Hillingdon remains top in delivery of vaccines in North West London. In relation to the average for London and England - as at 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2021 **73.2%** of our residents had received their first dose (London average 67.1%, England average 79.3%) and 67.0% their second dose (London average 61.0% and England average 73.6%).
14. COVID-19 Vaccination & Care Home Staff: Operational guidance was issued in August 2021 to all care homes by the Care Quality Commission regarding the requirement for COVID-19 vaccination of staff deployed in care homes. All relevant Council staff have been issued with a letter advising them of the requirements. A vaccination webinar for Hillingdon Care Home staff took place in August to promote uptake of the vaccine.

## Monitoring / Surveillance

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Families, Health and Wellbeing Select Committee – 26 October 2021

- 15.** COVID-19 infection rates are closely monitored by the Council daily, so that any patterns in infection rates are swiftly identified and responded to, in order to limit the spread of the virus. Monitoring includes the following:
- The rate of infection for Hillingdon per 100,000 population (the standard measure used by the UK Health Security Agency (formerly Public Health England) which allows for comparison across local authorities).
  - The number of new infections registered for Hillingdon in the last 24 hours.
  - Cumulative demographic information on gender, age, and ethnicity.
  - Number of tests completed and the positive infection rate.
  - Incidence of infection, broken down at ward level.
  - Comparative information from geographic neighbours (North West London and Home Counties);
  - Vaccination uptake.
- 16.** In addition, officers of the Council are working closely with colleagues in the Clinical Commissioning Group and health partners to exchange information to help track changes in infection rates. Analysis and interrogation of COVID-19 related data continues to evolve and develop as the understanding of patterns of infection becomes more sophisticated and the data available to the Council improves.
- 17.** The take up of the vaccine is being closely monitored by the NHS and the Council.

### **Supporting businesses**

- 18.** The Council has provided a range of targeted support and guidance to businesses throughout the pandemic, ensuring that financial assistance is given to those who are eligible. The Council has paid out grant funding as follows:
- Local Restrictions Support Grant (£16.6 million)
  - Additional Restrictions Grant (£9 million)
  - Restart grant (£11 million)

### **Supporting Vulnerable Residents**

- 19.** The Council is putting its residents first during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to coordinate support, working with partners for vulnerable residents who need to self-isolate. This helps to keep residents safe by helping to prevent the spread of the virus, particularly important for those that are clinically extremely vulnerable.
- 20.** Hillingdon's approach to protecting and supporting residents is centred on:
- Practising social distancing and hand and respiratory hygiene and wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where required, in line with Government guidance;
  - NHS testing for the presence of coronavirus if residents display symptoms;
  - Supporting the tracing system if residents have tested positive and have been in close contact with others; and
  - Supporting self-isolation, in line with NHS guidance.

**21.** During the pandemic the Council has maintained a COVID-19 Community Hub within the Council's Contact Centre to respond to COVID-19 enquiries. It is open from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. The Council has a dedicated contact centre which responds to resident queries. The Council is supporting local foodbanks to provide food parcels where required and signposting residents to Hillingdon 4 All and other charities to provide support.

## **Communications and Engagement**

**22.** The Council, together with partners, has been and continues to be proactive in delivering health protection messages to residents using a range of communication channels.

**23.** Since the start of the pandemic, the Council and partners have publicised key guidance to residents and businesses, ensuring that they are aware of:

- Important health, testing and any restriction/lockdown messages.
- The impact on Council events and services.
- The Council support available i.e. community hub.
- Various government campaigns.
- The easing of restrictions and subsequent recovery of Council services.
- Maintaining infection control practices – promoting government messaging.
- The benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine and how to get vaccinated.

**24.** Coronavirus messaging has been widely communicated using all available Council channels, including the Council's website, social media platforms, media relations, regular e-newsletters, GP texting, Hillingdon People, JC Decaux boards, refuse lorries, lamp post banners, posters and signage, and internal communications.

**25.** Communications plans and localised assets for raising awareness of coronavirus, local outbreaks and promoting the take up of the vaccine have been produced.

**26.** The team is also working with a range of services to support their messaging, ensure consistency and amplify/target messages to their audiences. This has included services working with schools and universities, businesses, and community and faith groups.

**27.** Corporate Communications has also linked up with a variety of communications colleagues from neighbouring, pan-London, and outer London local authorities, UK Health Security Agency and partner agencies to share best practice and resources, and in the case of partners amplify messages via each other's channels.

**28.** The Council is supporting health partners and the rollout by sharing NHS information and messaging to ensure that residents are well informed about the COVID-19 vaccine. The Council is encouraging residents to have the vaccine when they are informed that it is their turn, so that they can protect themselves, their friends, families and local community – and help to keep Hillingdon safe. The Council is also working with H4All (a collaboration of local charities) to deliver the Community Champions scheme to support those most at risk from COVID19 and booster vaccine take-up by providing advice as well as tackling misinformation.

**29.** The Council has already built a strong network of community, faith and voluntary sector groups since the start of the pandemic, working closely with health partners. The Community Champions scheme will further strengthen this by working with trusted local champions from faith and community groups to help reach older people, disabled residents, and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

### **Targeted Actions**

**30.** Whilst there is a degree of confidence that the action taken to date has helped to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus in the Borough, there is no room for complacency. It is recognised, therefore, that there will be a need for a range of ongoing proactive actions to keep COVID-19 infection rates as low as possible.

### **Local Outbreak Management Plan**

**31.** As part of the national effort to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus, every local authority has a Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP) which sets out how the local authority and partners are working together to help reduce the likelihood of further outbreaks of COVID-19, particularly for some of the most vulnerable residents, such as those living in care homes. The plan presents preventative action as well as what the approach will be in the event of an outbreak. The plan has been recently updated in line with national guidance and will be updated again for the winter.

### **Implications on related Council policies**

The Covid-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan contributes to Hillingdon's Health and Wellbeing Strategy by helping to protect the health of residents.

### **How this report benefits Hillingdon residents**

Preventing and controlling the spread of the COVID-19 virus will help to keep Hillingdon's residents safe.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial costs arising from the recommendations set out within this report.

### **Legal Implications**

The Borough Solicitor confirms that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil.

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## REESPOC'S REVIEW INTO HILLINGDON'S ADULT & COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE - FINAL REPORT

<b>Committee name</b>	Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Neil Fraser, Democratic Services
<b>Papers with report</b>	Final review report
<b>Ward</b>	All

### HEADLINES

In 2020/21, the (now retired) Residents, Education and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee (REESPOC) carried out a review into adult and community education within Hillingdon. The final report, attached, details the information received throughout the review and the Committee's subsequent findings and recommendations. The report has been passed to the Members of REESPOC for comment, and endorsed by the former Chairman, Councillor Bridges.

Following the move to Select Committees in May 2021, the report is now submitted to the Families, Health and Wellbeing Select Committee for endorsement to Cabinet.

### RECOMMENDATION

**That the Families, Health and Wellbeing Select Committee endorses and refers the report for submission to Cabinet.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

At the meeting on 3 November 2020, members of REESPOC agreed that the Committee's next review topic would focus on 'Hillingdon's Adult & Community Learning Service'. Following this agreement, witness sessions were conducted, and information was received from:

Debbie Scarborough (Service Manager, Adult and Community Learning), Thoria King (Curriculum Manager for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities team), Ginette Powis (Sessional tutor for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities), Ebony Gonzalez (Learner who has completed ESOL and Maths courses during the lockdown period), Cristi Gonzalez (Ealing Adult Learning Manager), Eamon Scanlon (Head of Adult Learning and Skills Service, LB Hammersmith and Fulham).

The final report details the information received and makes recommendations for approval by the Cabinet.

### Implications on related Council policies

The role of Select Committees is to make recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

### How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

None at this stage, pending any findings approved by Cabinet.

**Financial Implications**

None at this stage.

**Legal Implications**

None at this stage.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

NIL.

# Hillingdon's Adult and Community Learning Service



**A review by the Residents, Education & Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee (2020/21)**

**Members of the Committee:** Councillors Wayne Bridges (Chairman), John Morgan (Vice Chairman), Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead), Allan Kauffman, Devi Radia, Colleen Sullivan, Alan Chapman, Stuart Mathers, Paula Rodrigues & Mr Tony Little



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## Chairman's Foreword

On behalf of the former Residents, Education and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee, I am pleased to present this report detailing the Committee's review into Hillingdon's Adult and Community Learning Service.

Following presentation of the Ofsted review of the service carried out in December 2019, and the following self-assessment report by the service itself, it became clear that the service was performing well. The review therefore focused on how to make further improvements to promote resident awareness and broaden participation, together with ensuring that the service remained agile to learner needs in a post-Covid world.

Information gathering focused on understanding the current service offering to residents, how the service had adapted to ensure service continuity throughout the pandemic, and what further challenges were to be overcome to turn a 'good' service into an 'outstanding' one.

Through all information gathering, the Committee was mindful of the need to find cost-effective, workable solutions, and the recommendations in this report are endorsed as prudent, effective actions to maintain and grow learner participation and achievement.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those officers and volunteers who have given up their time to help the Committee in reviewing this topic, and commend them for their continued hard work to support residents in their personal and professional development.

### Councillor Wayne Bridges

**Chairman of the former Residents, Education and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee, and current Chairman of the Environment, Housing and Regeneration Select Committee.**



## Summary of recommendations to Cabinet

Through the witness testimony and evidence received during the detailed review by the Committee, Members have agreed the following recommendations to Cabinet:

**1** That Cabinet recognises the good work and improvisation of the HACL service during the recent COVID pandemic and notes the new ways of working identified and underway.

**2** That the service be rebranded to 'Hillingdon ACE' (Adult & Community Education), supported by a communications campaign to support a 'soft relaunch' of the service to stimulate demand and uptake of courses.

**3** That the service continues with the new ways of working identified as a result of the pandemic, including increased use of technology, support for blended learning, instigation of new courses, and increased interdepartmental and partnership working via new processes.

**4** That officers continue lobbying the GLA to increase their grant funding allocation, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Families, Education and Wellbeing, and also investigate other funding or lobbying options.

**5** That Council continues to review and develop oversight and scrutiny, and includes an annual report to the Families, Education and Wellbeing Select Committee & Cabinet Member (inclusive of feedback from learners and tutors).

## Background to the review

At its meeting of 03 November 2020, the Residents, Education and Environmental Services Committee (now retired) considered the topic of Hillingdon's Adult and Community Learning Service (HACL) as its next major review.

Members were provided with an overview of the service, and understood that the service provided the following:

- Courses for Adults with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD)
- Community based courses that engage residents facing particular disadvantages (Engagement - delete engagement)
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- English, Maths and ESOL
- Digital Skills, IT and Business
- Vocational Learning
- Courses for Personal Development

The service's main learning centre was confirmed to be located at Brookfield in Uxbridge, with Harlington acting as the centre in the south. Two additional centres were located in South Ruislip and Ruislip Manor, both of which are shared with the Library Service. Courses were run in centres and online, or as a blend of the two, and many are run in the community as outreach provision.

It was noted that the service was externally funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the GLA following the delegation of funds to the Mayor of London in August 2019. Historically, approximately 3000 learners have taken courses a year, resulting in approximately 5000 enrolments, the vast majority of whom are Hillingdon residents.

The Service Manager, Adult and Community Learning, advised that whilst grant funding remained stable, the additional funding generated by the Strategic Investment Pot funding bid would end when the two-year project completed in March 2021. Any reduction in fee income because of declining learner numbers (for example, due to the Covid-19 pandemic), could also impact on the financial viability of certain courses.

While courses aimed to be as accessible as possible to residents, the Covid-19 pandemic and periodic lockdowns had meant that some residents had been unable to attend classes in person. The move to virtual learning, using remote meeting technology, had also proved difficult for some learners, through a combination of lack of IT skills or lack of availability of the requisite IT equipment at home.

Members were keen that any review focused on understanding how the service was helping support resident participation, how the service was helping residents to prepare to enter or re-enter employment, and how the service was helping residents to manage stress and mental health within

its cohorts (particularly as residents were learning to cope with the pressures of the pandemic). In addition, Members requested that the review addressed how the service was set up to cope with demand for its current, and potential new, courses, and how the service was addressing the areas for further improvement raised by Ofsted following their inspection in December 2019.

It was expected that a greater understanding of these areas of the service could highlight potential improvements, including how to further support learners in a post-pandemic world, whether there were any efficiencies to be gained by increased interdepartmental or partnership working, how to further promote the service to residents across the Borough, and whether there was any scope for increased funding.

The Committee considered that a strong understanding of these issues was a source of great importance for the residents of Hillingdon, and therefore, approved the topic as its next major review.



## Evidence & Witness Testimony

The Committee's first information gathering session was held on 23 February 2021 and was themed around broadening an understanding of the service through feedback from officers and service users. The session was attended by Debbie Scarborough (Service Manager, Adult and Community Learning), Thoria King (Curriculum Manager for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities team), Ginette Powis (Sessional tutor for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities) and Ebony Gonzalez (Learner who completed ESOL and Maths courses during the lockdown period).

The second information gathering session was held on 17 March 2021 and focused on the planned service offer for 2021-22, including the available funding and how it was to be used in comparison with other West London providers. The session was attended by Debbie Scarborough (Service Manager, Adult and Community Learning), Cristi Gonzalez (Ealing Adult Learning Manager), and Eamon Scanlon (Head of Adult Learning and Skills Service, LB Hammersmith and Fulham).

The final information gathering session was held on 20 April 2021 and was themed around current and future challenges and opportunities, and was attended by Debbie Scarborough (Service Manager, Adult and Community Learning).

The sections below summarise the information presented to the Committee by way of witness testimony and supporting written data.

### **The benefit of Adult Education to residents & Hillingdon's mission statement:**

Firstly, the Committee wished to understand the current service offering and resultant benefits to residents. To aid this, the Committee was provided with the 'LGA Handbook for Councillors', (**Appendix E**), which suggested that adult education services had outcomes in six main categories:

1. Employment, skills and qualifications
2. Health and wellbeing
3. Integrations and inclusion
4. Culture and creativity
5. Attitudes, aptitudes and characteristics
6. Life transitions.

The handbook went on to list several clear positive impacts on learners because of adult education, including gaining and retaining employment, increased earnings, and aspirations, improved mental

health, healthier lifestyle choices, boosted social connections and cohesion, greater community involvement and democratic participation, and reduced crime and antisocial behaviour.

Hillingdon's Adult and Community Learning's mission statement was therefore aligned to these six categories, and promised that:

*'Every learner receives an outstanding learning experience that supports them towards a clearly identified and ambitious goal and encourages their economic, social and emotional wellbeing'.*

## Performance of the service

The Committee was advised that each year, the service produced its own self-assessment report (**Appendix B**). Each report contained an overview of the service, including learner profiles and achievements, recent Ofsted inspections, and now, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the most recent report, the service gave itself a score of **'2 – Good'**, which was in line with the grade given by Ofsted following their most recent inspection in December 2019.

### Ofsted's Review

Ofsted inspects 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 as due for inspection again in the 2022-23 academic year.

During its review in December 2019, Ofsted's focus was on the impact of the education provided to learners, with judgements made 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 of their guide to reviews, 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).*

Following the most recent review in December 2019, a 'good' verdict was achieved (**Appendix C**). However, inspectors highlighted a number of areas requiring improvement, set out below, alongside the work currently underway to address these:

Ofsted recommendation	Officer response
Targeted professional development is required to ensure that feedback from tutors consistently helps learners improve the standard of their writing including their spelling, punctuation and grammar.”	The service had addressed this through additional training for staff.
Existing measures to robustly and effectively capture the impact of the curriculum on learners’ lives should be strengthened. Improved progression data will help managers to better understand the learner journey and plan for learner progression over longer periods of time.	To address this, the service’s data systems were to be reviewed and updated to improve data capture.
Senior leaders should put in place arrangements that provide the support and challenge managers need to improve further the quality of education provided.	To address this, officers, together with the Cabinet Member for Families, Education and Wellbeing, were working to provide additional support. Officers had also reviewed the feasibility of creating a regular ‘advisory board’ meeting with the relevant stakeholders to share best practice and canvas opinions regarding direction of travel for the service.

On the last recommendation, the Committee noted that due to the new Select Committee structure in place as of May 2021, Councillors would not attend any such meetings, and to demonstrate that Hillingdon was providing support and challenge as highlighted by Ofsted, it was suggested that the Service Manager, Adult and Community Learning, bring an annual report to the new Families, Education and Wellbeing Select Committee as a regular part of its work programme.

## Learner Profiles

The Committee was provided with additional detail regarding the profile of residents engaging with the service, and their achievements. In 2019-20, the HACL learner profile was:

Residency	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Hillingdon resident	4610 (91.2%)	4798 (92.8%)	3566 (90.9%)
London resident	318 (6.3%)	256 (5.0%)	301 (7.7%)
Out of London resident	123 (2.4%)	116 (2.2%)	58 (1.5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>5051</b>	<b>5170</b>	<b>3925</b>

Two thirds of learners were from the south of the Borough, likely due to the fact that the area had a proportionately higher number of lower skilled or unemployed residents, who were attempting to

upskill with the aim of furthering their job prospects or career development. Learners in the north tended to be an older group that chose take up more courses focusing on personal or social development, particularly during retirement. In addition, this older group had often been less comfortable using online meeting tools, and so learner numbers had fallen during the pandemic.

The Committee was advised that the majority of residents engaging with the service were women, often with low confidence or with little formal education.

### Achievement Rates in a pandemic:

The Committee was advised that achievement rates across the service in 2019-20 had been good for learners who had adapted to online learning and there had been no significant difference in achievements between learners living in the north and south of the Borough. However, lower enrolment and retention rates had impacted on results in some curriculum areas leading to varied and nuanced rates within and between curriculum areas and provision types. Further detail is set out in the table below:

Service Headline Data	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Enrolments	5051	5170	3925
Retention	93%	92.6%	84.7%
Pass Rate (results of those who stay until the end of the course)	95.5%	96.6%	92.9%
Achievement Rate (results of those who left before the end of the course)	88.9%	89.5%	78.6%
Underpinning data			
Qualification courses and non-regulated ASB	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Enrolments	2423	2236	1992
Retention	93.4%	93.6%	79.2%
Pass Rate	95.0%	95.9%	92.0%
Achievement Rate	88.7%	89.8%	73.0%
Community Learning: Personal Development courses	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20

Enrolments	1816	1351	1012
Retention	94.6%	92.2%	93.0%
Pass Rate	93.6%	96.9%	95.9%
Achievement Rate	88.5%	89.9%	89.2%
<b>Community Learning: Targeted Outreach</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
Enrolments	722	1512	921
Retention	93.2%	92.1%	86.9%
Pass Rate	93.6%	96.9%	93.4%
Achievement Rate	88.5%	89.4%	81.2%

Pass rates within Hillingdon for the last year were confirmed to be approximately 90%, despite the impact of the pandemic.

The Committee considered the strengths of the service identified by officers which included effective leadership and management, team working, and financial and resource management, as well as the quality of the education provided. The team's ability to respond to emerging issues had been seen in the swift efforts to address the impact of Covid-19 on the way in which the service was delivered, and which had resulted in the positive numbers of learners achieving their qualifications in June 2020.

It was noted that comparisons to statistical neighbours were difficult to determine due to differences in population sizes, learner demographics, and grant funding levels.

Enrolment numbers for the 20-21 academic year were confirmed as 3860, which equated to 1758 learners. More recent retention, pass and achievement data was not yet available, as the service was awaiting outstanding qualification results to be confirmed from the awarding bodies, or the signing-off of portfolio work.

## Bidding for additional course offerings & certification

The Committee learnt that the service regularly bid for additional projects to develop the course offer and provide support to residents. In 2019-20 these included the Strategic Investment Pot (education and careers advice and intensive support for learners to overcome barriers to learning); the Talk English project (for residents with low levels of English to begin speaking and listening in English); and work to develop and upskill childminders, in partnership with local authority colleagues.

The service also has a manager whose role includes overseeing vocational and employment partnerships, with the aim of furthering partnership working including film and television-based courses covering make up, costume design and creation, etc, and another whose role includes targeting outreach programmes at the most deprived and disadvantaged of Hillingdon's residents.

The Committee learnt that the service regularly bid for additional projects to develop the course offer and provide support to residents that was not possible within the grant funding rules. In 2019-20 these included the Talk English project (for residents with low levels of English to begin speaking and listening in English); work to develop and upskill childminders, in partnership with local authority colleagues and the Strategic Investment Pot. The latter funding was for a 2-year project which enabled HACL to provide the most disadvantaged residents with education and careers advice, intensive support for residents to overcome additional barriers to learning, staff training and bespoke courses for community partners, and targeted work-skills development for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. Although the funding for this project has ended, most of the support developed for residents has been sustained by the service.

The Committee were informed that a wide range of English, maths and vocational qualifications were available to Hillingdon's adult residents. As of September 2020, the Government had funded new courses on developing digital skills, for which certifications were given upon completion. Whilst awaiting publication of the new qualifications, courses until this point had focused on introducing learners to digital learning, while adults with learning difficulties or disabilities (ALDD) had been provided with a low-level 'how it works' courses in an effort to promote comfort with online learning. Once introductory courses were completed, learners could move into the higher-level certified courses. In January 2021, new funding was released, which allowed for more digital skills courses across all learner groups.

## Mental Health & Wellbeing of learners

The Committee was particularly keen to understand how the service was promoting and supporting good mental health within its learner cohorts and were advised that the service had been building mental health provision for several years, called 'emotional health and wellbeing'. When courses had moved online as a result of Covid-19, mental health provision was also moved online. For some learners, this was not suitable, however optional online wellbeing questionnaires had seen increased submissions vs. in-person questionnaires, possibly due to the increased confidentiality that the online medium afforded. Enrolments into the mental health provision had decreased, though this was expected to rise once people were allowed back into centres. The 'In Your Shoes' provision, a course designed to help parents support their children's mental health, had seen a significant rise in numbers. Recent team restructuring had resulted in a dedicated officer whose role was to help support health and social care within the service.

Hillingdon's support for mental health was provided free of charge to all learners, with general service fees used to support those learners who did not pay for courses. The Committee was advised that interdepartmental working had increased, for example via referrals to the social care teams, and external organisations such as MIND and Hillingdon Carers were regularly engaged.

Officers were proactive, with targeted outreach involving GP's, neighbourhood care teams, public health etc. Ealing and Hammersmith and Fulham highlighted additional engagement with partners such as MENCAP, housing associations, Hoxex, and the Education and Training Foundation, among others, reflecting the position in Hillingdon.

The Committee recognised that further work could be done to promote the services available among Hillingdon residents, many of whom were unaware of the availability of the service. Such promotional work could result in increased uptake of the service among all demographics.

## Funding

The majority of funding for the Council's Adult Education service was via the Department for Education's (DfE's) adult education budget, apportioned by the ESFA. However, funding had reduced markedly in recent years, with national funding reduced by 47% between 2009/10 and 2018/19. In March 2021, with the externally funded Strategic Investment Pot completed and a reduction in learner numbers due to ongoing Covid-19, fee income had reduced.

The Committee noted that Government funding levels were allocated to different boroughs based on historical figures and had not been reviewed in many years. It was highlighted that the GLA could potentially review funding in the future, but that this would require successful lobbying by officers. Hillingdon was recognised as having the third lowest funding in West London. LBH funding compared to that of Hammersmith and Fulham can be found in the table below:

### Hillingdon vs. Hammersmith and Fulham LA Adult Education services comparative data.

Data type	LB Hillingdon Adult Education service		LB Hammersmith and Fulham Adult Education service	
		Notes		Notes
Annual grant funding level	£1.489m		£2.8m	
No of learners	2,917	93% Hillingdon residents	6,480	87% H&F residents
No of enrolments	5,170		9,320	

Officers provided the figures below which summarised the service's income in 2018-19, (the last full year of education and funding prior to the interruptions brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic). 'Learners' are the total individuals engaging with the service, with some learners signing up to multiple courses ('enrolments').

Academic year 2018-19	Data	Notes
No of learners	2917	
No of course enrolments	5,170	(93% Hillingdon residents)
Funding total (only ESFA in 18/19)	1,489,375	AEB devolved to GLA in Aug 2019.
of which qualifications	761,079	
	728,296	

of which non-qualifications		GLA funding this academic year is £1,524,877, plus ESFA funding 20-21 of £60,217
Adult Learning Loans allocation	127,461	
Additional funding:		
Flexible Learning Fund	61,976	Year 2 of 2
Talk English project	42,250	Year 1 of 2 (total sum shown)
Strategic Investment Pot (SIP)	470,000	
Local Authority income:		
Fee concession subsidy	70,000	20-21: £60k
Early Years funding	20,000	

The Committee noted that in November 2020, the GLA granted an additional £100k for courses focusing on employment due to increased threat of redundancy due to the pandemic. However, the funding had come with the caveat that qualifications were required, and so the service was trying to balance this requirement with the needs of residents. In the academic year 2020/21, the service used approximately £40k of this £100k, with the remaining £60k rolling over to the academic year 2021/22.

In April 2021, a further £15k was granted by the GLA to take into account a new funding initiative that gave some free funding for a selection of L3 courses, if the learner reached the correct criteria to benefit from this pot of funding.

£25k had recently been granted for new equipment, with £77k approved for the remainder of equipment, with the aim of increasing lending stock of chromebooks and laptops, among other resources. This enabled the service to introduce a new 'learn and loan' scheme, which allowed learners to borrow the devices to support their learning. At times, procuring sufficient equipment from suppliers had been difficult, due to overall marketplace demand during the pandemic.

Similar to neighbours such as Ealing or Hammersmith & Fulham, core funding was received via grants from the GLA or ESFA. Where appropriate, fees were charged in line with funding rules, with lower fees or concessions provided for learners receiving benefits, or from certain socio-economic backgrounds. Additionally, in Hillingdon, residents were subsidised by £60k annually, to ensure tuition fees remain low.

Grant funding levels varied between West London councils but were recognised as being too low to meet demand for qualifications in Hillingdon. In addition, the removal of the £60k Council subsidy in the current economic climate could require an increase in fees and charges.



### **Strategic Investment Pot (2019-21)**

The Committee were informed that in 2018, the City of London Corporation had 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. Hillingdon was awarded £470k against the Skills Agenda for the Adult and Community Learning service's bid (HACL) to deliver against the following five identified strands. One of the challenges facing the service was to identify ways in which to ensure this legacy work continued:

1. Increasing the reach and scale of ESOL to get residents into work.
2. Providing opportunities for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) to engage with work.
3. Developing an information, advice and guidance hub that provides residents with support and work experience.
4. Enabling tutors and partner organisations to support residents with English, mathematics and digital skills. We wanted to reach out to more community-based 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partners to support their survival and to access some of these target residents.
5. Targeting support to remove barriers to progression for particular groups, for example we wanted to target new home-base childcare micro-businesses and help them to overcome the barriers of the first two years, when enterprises are most at risk of failure.

The Committee was advised that the Strategic Investment Pot funding was unlikely to be repeated. To utilize the funding efficiently, a decision had been made at an early stage to manage the project in-house, to ensure the skills and expertise developed was retained rather than lost through engaging with external contractors. Officers advised that, despite this funding stream ending, the service was well placed to continue to sustain many of the benefits for residents, including offering free careers and education advice.

### **GLA Good Work for All (2021-23)**

Led by the 'Good Things Foundation', the Committee were made aware of a new bidding opportunity designed to help Londoners recover following the pandemic. Focused on Digital, Health and Social Care, Green Economy and Creative Industries, it asked bidders to offer 'training, education and employability support that helped Londoners gain relevant skills, retrain and move into good work in sectors key to London's recovery'. In March 2021, the service had submitted a bid for £200k over two academic years, and though this had since been confirmed as unsuccessful, new courses have been launched to help residents gain qualifications to work in local creative industries.

Details of the programme planning for the 2021-22 academic year are attached as [Appendix D](#). The AEB funding for these programmes included learning support and splits into two sections: qualification and non-qualification courses.

## Funding for courses that lead to qualifications

The Committee were briefed on funding courses leading to qualifications. It was noted that the priorities for this funding were driven by improving the economic prospects for learners by increasing qualifications, to strengthen skills and CVs and lead into work/improved prospects. The ethos underpinning the funding rules was that learners should progress from beginners in their subjects (often English or maths) to qualified status in their chosen field (usually vocational) and preferably into employment or a new career.

These qualification courses attracted fixed amounts of funding for each enrolment. Some qualifications were fully funded for all, so learners made no financial contributions, e.g. English, maths and digital skills up to and including level 2 (GCSE). Where this was the case, the full amount of funding was drawn from the Council's grant.

Other qualifications were fully funded for the unemployed and those on a low wage (less than London living wage). Learners not in these categories are co-funded, which meant the service could utilise its grant to pay up to 50% of course fees. 25% of the balance had historically been paid by the Council in concessions, with the learner contributing the rest. Each course had four Fee Bands attached, and fees were paid according to means, (for example, Band 1 was the fee for learners not in receipt of any benefits, whereas Band 3 was for the unemployed or low waged i.e. below London Living Wage). By recruiting enough 'learners', the Council 'earned' its grant allocation for qualifications of £823k.

Although the service could deliver any qualifications it wishes, only those specifically listed on the Learning Aims Register and in line with government priorities attracted funding, which influenced choices when designing the qualification programme offer.

## Funding for courses that do not lead to qualifications

The Committee noted that this was funded differently from qualifications funding and termed "community learning". The priority for this £705k funding was to engage those furthest away from seeking learning opportunities and encourage them to improve their social and mental wellbeing, as well as support, for example, their children's own learning and development.

The 'Community Learning' funding was broken into two distinct types of provision:

- a. **Community Development** courses relied on partnership work, most often with the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector but also with schools, children's centres and libraries, and were targeted at the most disadvantaged residents and those in deprived areas, many of whom were least likely to have the time or financial resources to attend classes or who may have had poor educational experiences as a child resulting in personal barriers to learning.

This provision was delivered in partner premises across the Borough. It was offered free, funded from the Community Learning funding stream, and was usually made up of shorter (e.g. 10 hour) courses that build up in duration and difficulty over time.

Target groups included:

- those with mental health issues;
- carers;
- parents who need to improve their own English and maths to support their children's education;
- families who would benefit from multi-generational learning to encourage cooperative interactions and strengthen relationships;
- those with long-term health issues, such as stroke, dementia, diabetes, obesity;
- those most isolated from the wider community, such as older members of minority ethnic groups who are most likely to stay within their own communities;
- asylum seekers who often need basic English skills to support their settlement;
- specific vulnerable groups, through work with partner organisations e.g. Hillingdon Women's Centre re domestic abuse; Hestia re modern slavery;
- those who are the lowest skilled/lowest paid who would not otherwise recognise or engage in learning as a means to enhancing their life chances.

The purpose of this provision was to help learners progress into the wider community, such as volunteering and/or progressing into formal qualifications through more demanding, stepping-stone courses. Along the way, most began to build their social and emotional capital and see their own potential, increasing their self-esteem and allowing them to imagine a better future for themselves and their families.

**b. Personal Development courses.** Traditionally seen as 'leisure courses', learners reported that their learning these new skills reduced isolation (especially for older learners), improved wellbeing and 'keeps the brain cells ticking over' for working and post-retirement learners. These learners used their disposable income to pay tuition fees and while they did not often progress into qualifications, they did go into volunteering, self-directed clubs and new social networks. Learners could spend years trying out new courses with the service, whether learning a language, developing arts and crafts skills or keeping fit through yoga classes. Courses were run day and evening, usually in the north of the Borough where demand was greatest.

## Other funding

Members were informed that from April 2021, residents who were attempting their first full Level 3 qualification would be fully funded through the government's Lifetime Skills Guarantee; if they already had a full level 3 qualification (2 'A' Levels or equivalent), they were able to take out a student loan or pay their fees independently.

A long-standing partnership with the Council's Early Years team allocated £20k p.a. to the service to provide initial training and CPD opportunities to the Borough's childminders, which had raised standards of childcare in the Borough. The service's online Childminder's Forum had encouraged online learning, networking and peer support opportunities for these micro-businesses.

A pilot project working with Adult Social Care whilst utilising the Designated Schools Grant had funded the service to provide bespoke courses for eight young people with learning difficulties and disabilities who had Education, Health and Care plans or through the Council's Education Support Allowance. Adult Social Care officers have since confirmed continued funding for those already on the pilot, though there is no confirmation to date that this funding will be approved for any more residents with LLD.

## Response to the Pandemic

The Committee was particularly invested in understanding how the service had adapted its course delivery and learner support as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Debbie Scarborough (Service Manager, Adult and Community Learning), Thoria King (Curriculum Manager for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities team), Ginette Powis (Sessional tutor for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities) advised the Committee that this had been a uniquely challenging period for the service, especially for residents with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) most of whom struggle to learn online.

In March 2020, with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, delivery of the courses had been forced to change to online or stop. Although some classroom and homework activities were already carried out online within the courses delivered in person at the services learning centres using the service's virtual learning environment (Moodle), when the lockdowns came delivery of face-to-face courses had to be postponed and the centres were closed. Those learners in higher level qualification courses who could manage online learning were able to continue their classes with additional support in place. However, whilst some residents did not wish to learn online, others were unable to do so, for example most adults with learning difficulties and disabilities have remained unable to adapt to online learning sufficiently to continue their classes, which resulted in a 25% achievement rate for these classes. (Courses resumed in centres once the Government's lockdown rules were relaxed.)

It was noted that in May 2020, during the first lockdown, service staff were offered training to upskill digital teaching skills. Learning more about the tools available in Moodle and using the Google G-Suite tools provided the tutors with more confidence and alleviated some of the fears they had toward using technology in teaching and learning. This contributed to the high pass rates for learners doing qualifications. Additionally, many of the general tools were not suitable for Adults with Developmental Difficulties (ALDD) and especially learners with profound cognitive disabilities so the delivery tools therefore needed to be rigorously adapted in order to be fully effective but many adults with LDD were reluctant or unable to engage in online learning despite significant additional support.

In June 2020, the service tested out its newfound skills for adults with LDD in a 5-week online pilot project involving some of its high-needs learners. Each session was taught by a pair of teachers who delivered a topic they wanted to experiment with. As the pilot progressed, whatever was learned from previous sessions was shared forward, and in this way each session improved week on week. Since September 2020, teachers of those with LDD had placed all learning activities for their sessions on Moodle and used this in their classrooms so that the learners became more

familiar with the platform. Teachers had also moved Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) online. These ILPs were posted onto Moodle pages to encourage learners to visit when out of class. Learner work completed in class each week was also posted to encourage learners to want to go online and admire their work, which helped those learners who missed classes to catch up. Then, with increasing instances of shielding and Covid-isolation, the service had encouraged learners and teachers to continue to attend remotely when necessary, providing they were well enough to do so, though this had proved challenging for learners who depended on their parent/carers, and without whom they were unable to connect.

Members heard that since some learners had been reluctant to transfer to online learning, leading to an adverse impact on their achievement rates. Other courses that relied on in-person learning, or which were held in community centres, had been paused and then resumed once lockdowns had ended. It was advised that a 'Loan and Learn scheme' had been introduced for learners that did not have devices, which had been positively received, but they still required an internet connection which was not always possible. As a result, the service had identified an area for improvement in their self-assessment report that, 'Sustainable models are needed for areas of provision and activities that didn't transition well during the pandemic, including ALDD courses, outreach, IT, volunteering and enrichment activities'.

It was welcomed by Members that the service had provided many hours of telephone support to assist learners, and their parent/carers where appropriate, to join online, which was challenging when there was no face to face physical assistance.

As many learners with LDD were in residential care or supported living, they sometimes relied on the staff to support them 1:1. This is not always possible due to staffing numbers which could result in a lack of attendance. In addition, the environment in such locations was not always appropriate and conducive to learning. e.g. in residential homes, several learners may be in the same room which makes it noisy. While this situation was out of Council control, attempts had been made to support carers to connect, and staff had demonstrated the functions of Google Meet and other meeting tools, to enable them to encourage the learner to participate as fully as possible.

The service had an established optional wellbeing and health self-assessment for learners to self-assess and disclose any mental health issues they may be facing. This assessment was refined and adapted to become an online form. Completion of this online assessment had proven popular, likely due to the additional privacy afforded to learners. Once received, the team was well placed to provide support and target interventions, where necessary, but health and financial issues meant many of this cohort were unable to join online courses.

The Committee were informed that changes to the service as a result of the pandemic would include continued provision of 'blended learning' with a number of courses remaining online, alongside an increased focus on courses linked to health and wellbeing. Members recognized that adults need a wide variety of learning models and providing face-to-face learning to allow for social interaction and engagement between learners, as well as for those learners who were unable to use remote learning technology was important. It has been noted that social interaction formed a core influence over the mental health of learners. Internal working practices between departments

had also been strengthened to better support new working practices, and by extension, learners.

Partnership working between Hillingdon and other authorities has included regular online meetings to discuss how to overcome challenges or share best practice. Joint training sessions and the sharing of resource materials was also carried out, while authorities often submitted joint bids for funding, where appropriate. Each authority engaging with Hillingdon also drafted their own annual self-assessment of their service, which was then peer reviewed by the other councils.

Work placements and volunteering opportunities for adults with learning difficulties aged over 25 were recognised as needing to increase, and to this end the service was developing pre-employment workshops to help these learners make the transition into employment. Some learners were particularly strong with regard to digital skills and were being trained to be 'digital champions' to help support their peers.

## Feedback from learners & witness testimony

An important area of the Committee's interest was the user experience and feedback from the learners themselves. In general, officers advised that feedback received throughout the last 18 months had shown that learners were reporting good progress in their own personal development, behaviours and attitudes to learning. Learners had advised of feeling increased confidence, skills, and self-sufficiency. Attendance had remained high, with learners committing to their courses while managing their additional responsibilities. An annual survey of learners carried out by HACL, as well as a separate survey conducted by Ofsted, was detailed within the self-assessment report. Results showed that learners felt overwhelmingly positive regarding the service offering.

The Committee's witness session on 17 March 2021 was attended by Ebony Gonzalez, a learner who completed ESOL and Mathematics courses during the lockdown period. A full learner profile for Ebony is attached as **Appendix A**.

Feedback from Ebony had been very positive. The service had provided help and support for both learning and mental health, as well as other matters, through what had been a difficult personal time. Ebony advised that communication from service staff had been excellent and confirmed that the courses provided much needed social interaction with officers and other learners, especially during the periodic covid lockdowns.

The service had provided equipment which allowed Ebony to log in and attend courses via laptop, which was felt to be much easier than through a mobile phone. The course had helped Ebony to increase her self-confidence and allowed her to present a positive role model for her children.

More general feedback from some older residents had been that they were less comfortable with online tools, and had therefore been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, through an inability to attend classes in person and a reluctance to join them online.

In addition, the Committee viewed video testimony from learners, who outlined their positive experiences with the service.

## **Improvements made since 2020:**

The Committee were made aware that the service had made several improvements since 2020, including specific improvements relating to service delivery and learner support as a result of the pandemic. These included:

- A refreshed course offer for adults with learning difficulties, including pre-employment workshops and a pilot programme for high needs learners;
- Targeted course delivery for learners with emotional health and wellbeing issues;
- Newly created systems to support online learning, including online learning walks and shared folders;
- Support for learners moving to online learning;
- Creation of a new online initial assessment process to ensure learners join the most appropriate courses;
- New processes to progress learners to next qualification levels upon completion of their current courses; and
- New webpages to support online enrolment and the access of information and support.
- Following Brexit, there was the potential for EU learners to be unable to complete settlement forms. To address this, forms had been simplified and support was available to help residents complete the paperwork successfully.
- General encouragement for parents/carers to gain and improve digital skills. Encourage learners to enroll on a digital skills course to improve their ability to join in online. Encourage parents and carers to do the same.

## **Challenges and Opportunities**

Throughout the review, the Committee acknowledged that all evidence from Ofsted's review, the service's own self-assessment, and feedback from learners, showed that the service was performing well. However, the service remained ambitious to make further improvements, with the aim of achieving a rating of 'outstanding' moving forward. To this end, a number of risks and challenges to overcome, and opportunities for further improvements, were identified:

### **1. Funding**

As set out earlier in the report, the Committee recognised that historic grant funding levels had led to an imbalance between different local authorities, and while the service continued to lobby for increased grant funding to extend the offer to a greater number of residents, additional support through consultation with the Cabinet Member for Families, Education and Wellbeing could help achieve this.

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

The required further improvements identified by Ofsted were being addressed, as set out earlier in

this report, though work remained to fully address them.

### **3. Development of a clearly identifiable service ‘brand’ and widely highlighting the service offering**

The Committee considered that some residents were perhaps not aware of the services provided. In addition, the Committee heard that learner enrolments post Covid-19 had reduced somewhat. Of those residents aware of the service, most referred to the service as ‘Brookfield’ or ‘Harlington’ and that the actual service name ‘Hillingdon Adult and Community Learning’ was felt to be too long a title to slip off the tongue.

The Committee expressed a view that a possible rebranding of the service to ‘Hillingdon ACE’ or something similar, together with a concerted communication campaign highlighting the rebranding and promoting the service widely amongst residents, Council staff and Members, could result in increased engagement with residents and improved learner numbers. It was felt that a positive communications campaign could highlight the varied service offering and as part of the rebrand the online Adult Education and Careers Hub could also be further updated and developed.

### **4. Increased interdepartmental and community working**

The service currently works with other council departments to benefit residents, such as the qualifications and professional development it delivers to local childminders funded by the Early Years team. A long history of working with local 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations has led to community partnerships that include Carers Trust, MIND, Hillingdon Dementia Action Alliance, Austin Sewing Group, Hillingdon Women’s Group and Care for Calais, each of which targets residents facing additional challenges and barriers to learning. The service has a robust volunteering offer for residents (currently 40+ engaged), who are trained as ESOL or Digital or Community [Interpreting] Champions in order to support and encourage learners on courses.

Members noted that voluntary sector partnerships remained strong but strengthening partnerships with other Council services and micro-employers could increase the impact of the service’s offer for residents. Additional interdepartmental working with other areas of the Council, as well as external partners such as the NHS, and increasing engagement with local volunteers, could allow the service to provide further support to residents engaging with the service.

### **5. Accommodation for adult and community learning courses**

The service has two main sites in the borough: Brookfield in the north and Harlington in the south, with smaller centres based in two library sites in Ruislip and a range of classes delivered in community venues across the borough.

Spread of classes within the borough					
North			South		
Residents	Enrolments	% of total	Residents	Enrolments	% of total
1,651	3,045	57%	1,250	2,303	43%



Notwithstanding the move to more online courses, the Committee considered that the Uxbridge (Brookfield site) was well-established in resident minds in relation to adult learning, as was Harlington. However, it was recognised that the new Harlington School build taking place could somewhat limit the learning accommodation available to adults in the south of the Borough, and officers indicated that they would explore new teaching locations that would meet the needs of residents, including suitability of public transport links.

## The Committee's Findings

### General conclusions

From the information presented to the Committee throughout the review, the Committee concluded that the service was one of great value to those residents that use it, not only through upskilling and providing a platform for employment and career development, but also as an avenue for social interaction and the promotion of mental health.

Through the 2019 Ofsted review, the service's own self-assessment and feedback as part of this review, the Committee also concluded that the service was performing well, and the Committee was particularly impressed with the timely and effective measures put in place to support service continuity throughout the pandemic.

However, the Committee acknowledged the challenges ahead and also the potential for further improvements to ensure the continued service and financial sustainability of the service and, therefore, agreed the following recommendations to Cabinet set out below.

### The Committee's recommendations to Cabinet

The Committee was appreciative of the uniquely challenging circumstances presented by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and wished to place on record their admiration for the manner by which the service has adapted and improvised to ensure its continued support to its service users. To this end, the Committee recommends:

**1**

**That Cabinet recognises the good work and improvisation of the HACL service during the recent COVID pandemic and notes the new ways of working identified and underway.**

The importance of reaching as wide a demographic of learners as possible was recognised as key to growing the service user base. Following the new ways of working identified as a result of the pandemic, and the service's continued commitment to maintaining these new practices to include blended learning moving forward, the Committee believed that a strong communication campaign would be extremely beneficial.

To provide structure and aim, and to help identify the key messaging for the campaign, it was suggested that the service be rebranded as part of a 'soft relaunch' of the service. The campaign could include use of social media platforms and YouTube to deliver short, punchy messaging to residents highlighting the courses available (inclusive of the provision for adults with learning difficulties and support for guardians and carers to help support their dependants/learners), the new ways of engaging with the service (including online meeting tools and available equipment),

how the service helps to support physical and mental health and wellbeing of its learners through social interaction, and engagement with health partners, To this end, the Committee recommends:

**2**

**That the service be rebranded to ‘Hillingdon ACE’ (Adult Community Education), supported by a communications campaign to support a ‘soft relaunch’ of the service to stimulate demand and uptake of courses.**

Further to recommendation 1, the Committee recognised the importance of increased co-operation with partners, including health services, as well as greater interdepartmental working as part of a continued review of service delivery to ensure it is meeting the needs of learners. The Committee, therefore, recommends:

**3**

**That the service continues with the new ways of working identified as a result of the pandemic, including use of technology, blended learning, new courses, increased interdepartmental and partnership working via new processes.**

The historic way councils are allocated funds from the GLA was recognised by the Committee as having resulted in significant inequality of available funding for use in delivering adult education services, with Hillingdon receiving the third lowest allocation of funds within West London. Members viewed this as a potential threat to the continued delivery of high-quality services to Hillingdon residents, and that additional funding routes and sources must be sought wherever possible. To this end, the Committee recommends:

**4**

**That officers continue lobbying the GLA to increase their grant funding allocation, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Families, Education and Wellbeing, and also investigate other funding or lobbying options.**

While the most recent Ofsted review into the service resulted in a ‘good’ determination, the Committee wished for the Council to continue its ambitions and further improve the service to ‘outstanding’ status. As part of their review, Ofsted made a number recommendations for improvement to be made, including evidencing that oversight and challenge of the service is regularly taking place. To assist in meeting these recommendations, in particular to ensure that greater scrutiny is being carried out, the Committee recommends:

**5**

**That Council continues to review and develop oversight and scrutiny, and includes an annual report to the Families, Education and Wellbeing Select Committee & Cabinet Member (inclusive of feedback from learners and tutors).**

## About the review – witnesses and activity

The following Terms of Reference were agreed by the Committee from the outset of the review:

1. To understand Hillingdon's current adult education service offering, including feedback from learners and from recent Ofsted inspections;
2. To review existing best practice and identify further innovative ways of working, as identified through research and examination of other local government and volunteer service providers;
3. To examine how the service is currently funded, any risk of reduced funding, and how to ensure service continuity or expansion through the identification of additional funding opportunities;
4. To identify budget considerations and determine the service's value for money proposition;
5. To examine departmental, partnership, and multi-agency working to identify any gaps and opportunities to draw together the different strands of activities, ensuring the service is agile and responsive and is meeting the needs of its learners; and
6. To make practical, prudent recommendations to Cabinet, (and other bodies if applicable), from the Committee's findings to support residents engaging with the service.

The Committee received evidence from the following sources and witnesses:

<b>Witness Session 1 –</b>  <b>23 Feb 2021</b>	Debbie Scarborough (Service Manager, Adult and Community Learning)  Thoria King (Curriculum Manager for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities team)  Ginette Powis (Sessional tutor for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities)  Ebony Gonzalez (Learner who has completed ESOL and Maths courses during the lockdown period)
<b>Witness Session 2 –</b>	Debbie Scarborough (Service Manager, Adult and Community Learning)

17 March 2021	Cristi Gonzalez (Ealing Adult Learning Manager)  Eamon Scanlon (Head of Adult Learning and Skills Service, LB Hammersmith and Fulham)
Witness Session 3 - 20 April 2021	Debbie Scarborough (Service Manager, Adult and Community Learning)

## References

[HOLEX \(2019\), \*Adult Community Education – Supporting Place and People: Characteristics of Success\*](#)

[The Further Education Trust for Leadership](#)

[UK Parliament, Education Committee, House of Commons \(2019\), \*A plan for an adult skills and lifelong learning revolution\*](#)

## Appendices

**Appendix A** – Learner Profile, Ebony Gonzales

**Appendix B** – HACL Self-Assessment report 2019-20

**Appendix C** – Ofsted HACL Report December 2019

**Appendix D** - Curriculum plan for academic year 2021-22

**Appendix E** - Learning for Life: the role of adult community education in developing thriving local communities – A handbook for Councillors



## **Appendix A – Learner Profile for Ebony Gonzalez**

Born in the Dominican Republic, Ebony had spent her childhood travelling the world with her working mother, a model. Although she had learned five languages, her formal education had been frequently interrupted. When she settled in the UK in October 2015, with her husband and two children, she knew she wanted to acquire formal qualifications to fulfil her dreams of using her languages to build a career, either in teaching or interpreting.

At the time of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, Ebony was studying English and mathematics with the service. By then, her 9-year-old and 15-year-old daughters had a 3-year-old sister, but sadly her husband was suffering from Parkinsons and was increasingly depressed. During the lockdown, Ebony struggled to balance her children's welfare with her role as her husband's carer, though she tried hard to continue her studying. Her courses had transferred online and, with the family's laptop so often used by the children for their schoolwork, she found it difficult to attend regularly and keep up with homework. She managed to pass her English exams, but failed her mathematics qualification.

When her husband died in the summer 2020, Ebony returned to college to pick up her studies again. Following a conversation with the staff there, she decided to concentrate on just one of her subjects while she helped her children manage their grief, and with the help of a laptop borrowed from the service, she is now studying English at Entry Level 3. She has also struggled with her own grief and has felt isolated and exhausted much of the time. Despite this, she values her time at college and is determined to show her children that studying and working hard is the way to a better life.



**Hillingdon Adult and Community Learning**

**SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**2019-20**

**Date submitted: December 2020**

## 1. Overview of the service

Hillingdon Adult and Community Learning (HACL) service works towards the following mission: that 'every learner receives an outstanding learning experience that supports them towards a clearly identified and ambitious goal and encourages their economic, social and emotional wellbeing'. Although the service attracts adults from all walks of life into a wide range of provision, it particularly targets low-skilled, low-paid residents, those facing disadvantages and those living in deprived areas of the borough.

The learner profile in 2019-20 was:

Residency	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Hillingdon resident	4610 (91.2%)	4798 (92.8%)	3566 (90.9%)
London resident	318 (6.3%)	256 (5.0%)	301 (7.7%)
Out of London resident	123 (2.4%)	116 (2.2%)	58 (1.5%)
Total	5051	5170	3925

The service had a successful Ofsted inspection in December 2019 resulting in a Good judgement (Grade 2). Inspectors were impressed with the provision overall, stating that,

'Learners look forward to attending their classes. Whatever type of course to attend they learn much that helps them in their daily lives, their wellbeing or in their search for a job or further training. Many greatly develop their self confidence and esteem. Learners say that the centres are great places to learn and they would recommend them to their friends. Learners feel safe and are safe wherever they study. They benefit from learning in an environment where there is mutual respect whatever background they come from.' (Ofsted Inspection Report, 2020).

HACL officers work very effectively as a team. They are committed to the service's aims and to supporting residents to achieve their goals. Staff work hard to put learners first and their significant effort to adapt to online learning so swiftly and effectively during the Covid-19 lockdown was the critical factor in so many learners achieving their qualifications in July. All 62 staff members surveyed by Ofsted said they were proud to work for the service and thought it was well led and managed.

Inspectors also highlighted areas where the service could improve: inconsistent correction of learners spelling, punctuation and grammar; improved capture of progression data; and increased support and challenge by senior managers to further improve the quality of education provided. These are reflected later in this report and work is underway to address them.

The service regularly bids for additional projects to develop the course offer and provide support to residents. In 19-20 these included the Strategic Investment Pot (education and careers advice and support for learners to overcoming barriers to learning), the Talk English project (for residents with low levels of English to begin speaking and listening in English) and work to develop and upskill childminders, in partnership with local authority colleagues.

In March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown interrupted the provision. Learners on 85% of qualification-based courses benefited from their swift and efficient transfer to online delivery, utilising the groundwork that was already in place by using existing online platforms to enhance their learning.

Other classes also transferred online, including many language and arts classes but not all of these could continue and some learners were reluctant to transfer to online learning which was clearly seen in the poor achievement rate in IT. Learners on floristry qualifications could not access flowers so their courses were paused and resumed in September 2020. Classes scheduled to run in community venues in summer term had to be cancelled but some new online outreach courses were introduced such as e-safety for parents and a digital skills course for carers.

Adults with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) were unable to adapt to online learning sufficiently to continue their classes. When the centres were closed in March, these courses were also closed, leading to a 25% achievement rate for LDD courses. Tutors for these courses kept in contact with learners and completed training and preparation work for safe re-opening and introduction of blended delivery in September 2020.

<b>Service Headline Data</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
Enrolments	5051	5170	3925
Retention	93%	92.6%	84.7%
Pass Rate (results of those who stay until the end of the course)	95.5%	96.6%	92.9%
Achievement Rate (results of those who left before the end of the course)	88.9%	89.5%	78.6%
<b>Underpinning data</b>			
<b>Qualification courses and non-regulated ASB</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
Enrolments	2423	2236	1992
Retention	93.4%	93.6%	79.2%
Pass Rate	95.0%	95.9%	92.0%
Achievement Rate	88.7%	89.8%	73.0%
<b>Community Learning: Personal Development courses</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
Enrolments	1816	1351	1012
Retention	94.6%	92.2%	93.0%
Pass Rate	93.6%	96.9%	95.9%
Achievement Rate	88.5%	89.9%	89.2%

<b>Community Learning: Targeted Outreach</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
Enrolments	722	1512	921
Retention	93.2%	92.1%	86.9%
Pass Rate	93.6%	96.9%	93.4%
Achievement Rate	88.5%	89.4%	81.2%

Achievement rates across the service were good in 19-20, although they present a mixed picture. Results were good for most learners who adapted to online learning and continued with qualifications at a range of levels, particularly for those on vocational courses. There was no significant difference in achievements between learners living in the north and south of the borough, however lower retention rates had an impact on results in other areas leading to varied and nuanced rates within and between curriculum areas and provision types.

## **2. Overall Effectiveness**

### **2.1 Key Strengths**

- Leadership and management is good. Leaders, managers and staff use their expertise well to ensure that residents can access and engage in learning and achieve their goals, despite the challenges in 2019-20 leading to curtailed provision for some learner groups. Committed, highly-skilled staff; a culture of flexibility and 'going the extra mile'; and a determination from learners who continued their learning led to sustained, high quality education for learners.
- Good financial and resource management enables the service to provide a high quality service to residents. The service made highly effective use of externally-funded projects to provide additional services to residents and to overcome barriers to learning. As a result 47 tutors were trained to deliver courses and provide support effectively online; learners benefitted from the development of new systems that provided online initial assessment; and residents accessed individualised, online education and careers advice supported including 1-1 telephone placements in classes, ensuring they could make informed decisions whilst staying safe. Funding targets were met at 97%, significantly above the London average of 88%.
- The quality of education is good. Teaching staff work hard to meet the needs of learners, building their skills and knowledge and adapting their sessions to new delivery modes and assessment methods to ensure the best possible chance of success. The long-term development of online learning expertise within the service enabled the very effective transition needed during lockdown. Learners benefited from a focus on digital skills through bespoke courses and electronic portfolios. Tutors and managers with experience in running online sessions put in rapid online support to their peers.

- Support for learners is very good. Learners benefit from targeted support based on accurately identified needs at enrolment and support is put in place where needed during courses. Good use is made of skilled learning support assistants and volunteers to support learners and well-established pastoral mechanisms provide individualised support for learners struggling with their mental health and wellbeing. These existing systems were adapted during lockdown and worked well together to support achievement contributing to a pass rate of 92.85%.
- A range of good progression routes underpin the overall programme. The focus on building the basic skills of low-skilled learners and encouraging them to progress into vocational training and employment also encourages them to try new things. For example, increasing numbers have trained as volunteers, who report benefits in their own self-esteem as they support their peers.

## **2.2 Improvements made in year and their impact on learners**

Learners benefited from an effective programme of improvements in-year, including:

- The refreshed course offer for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) was embedded and pre-employment workshops were begun to help learners raise their expectations and consider new horizons. A pilot programme for high needs learners was embedded into the wider LDD provision, maximising integration for learners whilst ensuring the specific support they needed was in place.
- Well-adapted course delivery targeted at learners with emotional health and wellbeing issues and some family learning courses allowed them to continue learning online during lockdown. Learners reported that this continuity significantly helped them maintain their wellbeing during the uncertainties of the lockdown period.
- New systems were created and others adapted to support online learning, such as online learning walks and shared folders where electronic evidence could be uploaded, marked and returned to learners supported managers well to maintain high quality provision. The introduction of online individual learning plans, shared between learners and tutors, effectively supported ongoing communication between the two.
- Support for learners in moving to online learning was strong and a system was put in place to immediately contact learners who were struggling. 414 tutor referrals enabled learners who were struggling to receive support to access online learning. Across the service 57% of learners said that their digital skills improved while on their course and this figure was higher for courses which ran during summer term 2020.
- A new online initial assessment process was devised and successfully introduced in July 2020, with learners completing assessment and receiving IAG online for most subjects and by telephone for ESOL learners. Consistent initial assessment and start of course advice throughout the year ensured that learners joined the right course. 94% of learners stated that they received good information before joining the course which helped them to make decisions.
- Learners completing qualification courses benefitted from new initiatives that supported them to progress into the next level of qualification as they finished their courses. This ensured that learners' next steps were confirmed swiftly and efficiently, negating the

need for them to return to the centres in the summer to enrol and beginning to address Ofsted progression concerns (see below).

- New webpages were designed and the learner portal was updated ready for summer enrolments. Residents could more easily access information about the course offer online, could ask questions and receive 1-1 support and enrol electronically, maximising the efficiency of enrolment procedures and minimising the need to visit centres.

### **2.3 Areas for improvement in 2020-21**

- Targeted professional development is required to ensure that feedback from tutors consistently helps learners improve the standard of their writing including their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Existing measures to robustly and effectively capture the impact of the curriculum on learners' lives should be strengthened. Improved progression data will help managers to better understand the learner journey and plan for learner progression over longer periods of time.
- Senior leaders should put in place arrangements that provide the support and challenge managers need to improve further the quality of education provided.
- Sustainable new models are needed for areas of provision and activities that didn't transition well during the pandemic, including ALDD courses, outreach, IT, volunteering and enrichment activities.

### **Personal development, behaviours and attitudes, including learners' feedback**

Learners have reported good progress in their own personal development, behaviours and attitudes to learning during 2019-20. Despite the upheaval of the Covid-19 lockdown, and partly because of it, learners felt proud of their achievements. In addition to increased confidence, learners on low level qualification courses developed the skills to participate successfully in online sessions by learning how to behave in online meetings and became more autonomous learners, for example by using online self-study resources that were tracked by tutors.

Attendance remained high, and learners demonstrated their commitment to learning whilst managing multiple personal responsibilities during lockdown, such as childcare while schools were closed. However, as mentioned above some learners were either unable or reluctant to continue and retention and achievement rates fell as a result. Despite the challenges, many learners appreciated that continuing learning online gave them a sense of some normality and personal progress. The following comment from a learner is typical of what learners told staff during summer term 2020.

*'Staying at home while learning online was the best thing and it was a great experience....If I will be given the opportunity to do more courses I will love to do so. It was my motivation during the lockdown and it kept me busy. Now the course is about to finish and I will miss the online learning.'* (Learner feedback, June 2020)

Learners actively participate in, and benefit from, a range of events and initiatives throughout the year. They have a strong voice in influencing both curriculum design and the quality of education through individual feedback and through course representatives and the learner council. In Parliament Week, 2019, 505 learners elected 15 learners onto the Learner Council

which engages in a range of organised activities throughout the year from feedback about fire and lockdown drills, to carrying out Secret Shopper exercises and improving advice and guidance mechanisms provided by the service. Groups of learners took part in events including debates, diversity celebrations and visits to Parliament.

### **What learners say about their experiences in HACL**

There was an extremely high response rate to the annual learner survey, with 1215 learners taking part.

- 98% (1190 learners) said they felt safe and respected in their class
- 96% (1163 learners) said their teacher gave helpful feedback
- 94% learners said that the information they received before joining the course was good and helped them make decisions.
- 96% learners agreed that they have made progress and developed their knowledge and skills
- 60% learners said they set an individual social skills goal and they achieved it and 59% learners said they set wellbeing and work skills goals and achieved them.

Questions about the online learning experience were added to the survey in the summer term. Most of the learners said that they benefited from online learning and improved their digital skills.

346 learners took part in a separate survey conducted by Ofsted. Of those,

- 98% recommend us to friends.
- Nearly all say they're getting the help they need, with comments such as:  
'Good teachers who explain things well'  
'Well organised, helpful pace of work'  
'Helpful and patient teachers'  
'Respectful'  
'Increased confidence'.

Additional comments included:

- 'I look forward to going to class'
- 'I have learned so much that I use at home and at work, and using technology helps every day'.



## Appendix 1 - Summary of Provision for Academic Year 2019-20

97% of our funding allocation was achieved in 19-20 against a London average of 77%.

Provision type	ENROLMENTS			RETENTION RATE			PASS RATE			Overall Qualification Aims Rate (QAR)		
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Qualifications	2406	2203	1992	93.3	93.7	79.4	95.1	96.1	90.7	88.7	90.1	72.0
Personal Development	1816	1351	1012	92.6	92.1	93.0	97.2	97.6	95.9	90.0	89.9	89.2
Targeted Outreach	722	1512	921	94.6	92.2	86.9	93.6	96.9	93.4	88.5	89.4	81.2
<b>Overall Totals</b>	<b>5051</b>	<b>5170</b>	<b>3925</b>	<b>93.0</b>	<b>92.6</b>	<b>84.67</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>96.6</b>	<b>92.85</b>	<b>88.9</b>	<b>89.5</b>	<b>78.62</b>

Curriculum Area	ENROLMENTS			RETENTION RATE			PASS RATE			Overall QAR		
	17-18	18-19	19-20	17-18	18-19	19-20	17-18	18-19	19-20	17-18	18-19	19-20
Childcare	231	480	498	92.6	91.0	92.4	97.2	98.9	97.9	90.0	90.0	90.5
Counselling	49	54	34	87.8	83.3	79.4	100.0	97.8	100.0	87.8	81.5	79.4
H&SC	27	55	87	92.6	100.0	91.9	92.0	90.9	93.4	85.2	90.9	85.8
<b>Total for curriculum area</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>91.9</b>	<b>91.2</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>97.2</b>	<b>98.0</b>	<b>97.4</b>	<b>89.3</b>	<b>89.3</b>	<b>89.2</b>
Floristry	331	228	243	97.6	96.5	90.9	98.8	98.2	99.1	96.4	94.7	90.1
Horticulture	66	59	150	93.9	100.0	98.7	83.9	98.3	99.3	78.8	98.3	98.0
<b>Total for curriculum area</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>97.0</b>	<b>97.2</b>	<b>93.9</b>	<b>96.4</b>	<b>98.2</b>	<b>99.2</b>	<b>93.5</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>93.1</b>
Art	526	467	260	93.2	93.1	92.3	97.6	96.8	96.2	90.9	90.1	88.8
Languages	688	503	351	91.6	89.7	92.6	97.3	96.0	93.5	89.1	86.1	86.6
Leisure	192	240	47	94.3	93.3	91.5	94.5	97.8	95.3	89.1	91.3	87.2
<b>Total for curriculum area</b>	<b>1406</b>	<b>1210</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>92.4</b>	<b>97.0</b>	<b>96.7</b>	<b>94.7</b>	<b>89.8</b>	<b>88.7</b>	<b>87.5</b>
<b>Total for IT curriculum area</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>96.9</b>	<b>91.5</b>	<b>86.3</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>98.7</b>	<b>79.3</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>90.2</b>	<b>68.4</b>
English	372	335	457	90.1	93.7	87.3	91.9	91.1	87.0	82.8	85.4	75.9
ESOL	624	621	469	94.1	93.6	86.0	95.1	96.0	87.7	89.4	89.9	75.4
Maths	374	268	311	88.8	93.3	91.5	95.8	97.6	91.5	85.0	91.0	83.7
<b>Total for curriculum area</b>	<b>1370</b>	<b>1224</b>	<b>1237</b>	<b>91.5</b>	<b>93.5</b>	<b>87.9</b>	<b>94.4</b>	<b>95.0</b>	<b>88.4</b>	<b>86.4</b>	<b>88.9</b>	<b>77.7</b>
<b>Total for ALDD curriculum area</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>96.2</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>29.0</b>	<b>98.7</b>	<b>99.5</b>	<b>88.1</b>	<b>94.9</b>	<b>94.1</b>	<b>25.5</b>
Family English, Maths and Language	100	301	52	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	90.4	100.0	100.0	90.4
Multi-generational family learning (WFL)	498	539	385	91.4	87.0	82.9	90.5	97.2	95.0	82.7	84.6	78.7
<b>Total for curriculum area</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>92.8</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>84.9</b>	<b>92.3</b>	<b>98.3</b>	<b>94.3</b>	<b>85.6</b>	<b>90.2</b>	<b>80.1</b>
<b>Total for Emotional Health and Wellbeing area</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>90.5</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>79.6</b>	<b>92.8</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>84.0</b>	<b>85.6</b>	<b>73.0</b>

# Short inspection of Hillingdon London Borough Council

Inspection dates:

4–5 December 2019

## **Outcome**

Hillingdon London Borough Council continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

At the time of the inspection, there were 1458 learners on roll. Most learners study on courses at level 1 and below with around two hundred and seventy studying at level 2. Around fifty study at level 3. A small proportion of these learners use an advanced learner loan to fund their learning.

Courses are provided to build learners' vocational skills, primarily in childcare and supporting teaching and learning in schools. English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), English, mathematics, arts and crafts form a large part of the curriculum on offer. The service also delivers provision aimed at building the independent living skills of adults with a learning difficulty or disability and provision for learners with mental health concerns. Courses are taught at three main sites, plus several outreach locations across the borough. The previous short inspection in February 2016 confirmed that the service continued to provide a good quality of education.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Learners look forward to attending their classes. Whatever type of course they attend, they learn much that helps them in their daily lives, their well-being or in their search for a job or further training. Many greatly develop their self-confidence and esteem. Learners say that the centres are great places to learn and they would recommend them to their friends.

Learners feel safe and are safe wherever they study. They benefit from learning in an environment where there is mutual respect whatever background you come from.

Experienced and skilled tutors make topics easy to follow because they explain things clearly. Tutors are patient and work through topics at a pace that suits learners. They are easy to approach when learners need guidance or assistance.

Learners develop their enthusiasm for learning whatever subject they follow, including subjects in which they may have had negative experiences while at school.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

In line with local priorities, leaders and managers ensure that learners from the borough's most disadvantaged communities take part in the courses they offer. Working with a wide range of partners, they ensure that the curriculum meets effectively the needs of many different communities in the area. Leaders and managers introduce new courses that respond well to newly identified needs, such as the emotional health and wellbeing of residents.

Tutors teach their subjects in a logical order. They teach fundamental concepts first and check that learners understand these before moving on. For example, those on childcare courses are taught about basic child development before learning about the more specific needs of children, such as those with learning difficulties and disabilities. In ESOL, tutors help learners' recap on prior learning to ensure they have learned the language skills they need before moving on to the next stage.

Most learners receive effective advice and guidance that helps them plan their next steps. Learners seeking employment receive good guidance from external agencies, such as the national careers service, to help them get jobs. A few learners following the arts curriculum are not made aware of other courses that are available elsewhere.

Learners attend regularly and produce good-quality work. Those taking qualifications are successful and achieve well. A high proportion of learners on courses without qualifications achieve their personal goals. They gain pride and a sense of achievement in their work. Learners, such as those who are retired, gain a sense of purpose from attending classes. Those with mental health conditions build their resilience very well. They make friends, become more active in their community and learn to cope better with everyday life.

A few tutors do not provide helpful feedback on learners' written work. As a result, at times learners do not know what they need to do to improve. Too often, tutors do not correct spelling and grammar mistakes that learners make. This hinders learners improving their writing.

Managers have good expertise in adult learning. They have a good track record in making improvements and in ensuring that the quality of education that learners receive is good. However, senior leaders and the relatively new governing body do not provide enough support and challenge to managers to help them develop further the quality and impact of the curriculum. They are not sufficiently informed about the impact that the curriculum has on learners once they complete their courses.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Learners know how to report any concerns they have about their own or others' safety. Staff report any safeguarding concerns appropriately. These concerns are dealt with effectively. Managers and staff closely monitor and support learners where there are safeguarding concerns.

Managers provide effective oversight of safeguarding practices in the service through their 'staying safe' board. They have in place a suitable range of policies and procedures aimed at safeguarding learners. They meet their obligations under the 'Prevent' duty.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- 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 improve further the quality of education provided.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	53129
<b>Address</b>	Adult and Community Learning – Hillingdon London Borough Council Park Road Uxbridge UB8 1NP
<b>Contact number</b>	01895 676 690
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.archive.hillingdon.gov.uk/adultlearning">www.archive.hillingdon.gov.uk/adultlearning</a>
<b>Principal</b>	Debbie Scarborough
<b>Provider type</b>	Local authority
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 February 2016

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the second short inspection carried out since Hillingdon London Borough Council was judged to be good in February 2016.

The inspection team was assisted by the service manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

Jon Bowman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kanwaljit Dhillon	Ofsted Inspector
Saher Nijabat	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christina Christou	Ofsted Inspector

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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## Curriculum plan for academic year 2021-22

Provision type	Delivery plan	Funding stream
Courses for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities	Offer all learners 1 digital skills course + any two other choices (except repeats from previous a/y). Mostly centre-based delivery.	Qualification
Community Engagement through targeted outreach	<p>Family English, Maths and Language (FEML): ESOL and English and Maths to help your Children Learn; partnership approach</p> <p>Multigenerational learning: range of subjects based on target group. Gardening together; Discovering Nature; Healthy Eating and Cooking; E-safety for Families...</p> <p>Targeted outreach in the community for disadvantaged adults; free. Short intro courses themed around supporting partner organisations; Health, e.g. obesity, diabetes, dementia, stroke Digital, e.g. carers, lone parents, asylum seekers Reducing isolation, e.g. older people, esp from ethnic minorities who may be reluctant to engage with the wider community EHW (see below)</p>	<p>Non-qualification</p> <p><i>Outreach, small amount of online delivery</i></p>
Emotional health and wellbeing	<p>Core programme of support courses, including: Boost your confidence and self esteem Managing anxiety and understanding depression Healthy mind, healthy body</p> <p>Progression into self-care courses, including: Knitting to improve your mental health; therapeutic art; de-stress with yoga; mindfulness and meditation; tapping into positive health and wellbeing; 5 steps to wellbeing for men (men only course).</p> <p>Seasonal courses, including Coping with Christmas; Dig for Recovery</p> <p>Stepping-stone into mainstream courses, including Improve your confidence to try new things (qualification)</p>	<p>Non-qualification</p> <p><i>Mix of centre, outreach and some online</i></p>
English, maths, ESOL Community Interpreting	<p>Introductory speaking and listening ESOL Pre-Entry ESOL courses Build your English/Maths with Digital Skills between levels</p> <p>Stepping-stones units</p>	<p>Non-qualification</p> <p>Qualification</p>





Horticulture	<p>L1 Award in Creative Craft (Floristry) with E3 Employability Skills embedded  L2 Certificate in Floristry (Year 1)  L2 Diploma in Floristry (Year 2)  L3 qualifications to be decided (research ongoing)</p> <p>E3 Award in Occupational Studies (Horticulture)  L1 Award in Occupational Studies (Horticulture)  L2 Certificate in Practical Horticulture Skills and/or  L2 RHS Certificate in the Principles of:  Plant Growth  Garden Planning  Practical Horticulture (3-year course)</p> <p>Get Started with Floristry (3x 1-term courses)  Flower Arranging  History of Flower Arranging  Contemporary Flower Arranging  Get Ready for Winter/Spring/Summer  Workshops both subjects</p>	Non-qualification
Personal development	<p>French, Spanish and British Sign Language  Arts and Crafts, e.g. calligraphy, yoga, creative writing, textiles, painting and drawing, sketching on location  Return to Learn intro courses  Photography  Drama  Flower arranging  Online cookery (healthy eating)  Links with Hillingdon Heritage and Archives teams</p>	<p>Non-qualification</p> <p><i>Mixed delivery: some online, most in centres</i></p>

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# Learning for Life: the role of adult community education in developing thriving local communities - A handbook for councillors



The handful of case studies featured in this councillors' handbook demonstrate the excellent work of ACE services, but there are hundreds more great examples out there.

Employment and skills

27 Oct 2020

**Jump to section**



## Foreword

Council run or commissioned adult and community education (ACE) plays a vital role in supporting residents on their journey to learn skills to enter, return or progress in work. Alongside the economic benefits, it reduces loneliness and makes people happier, healthier, more confident, capable and resilient – making places smarter and more inclusive.

Put simply, ACE transforms people's lives. As the COVID-19 crisis continues to grip our communities, it is a more important lifeline than ever before. It is the cornerstone of adult learning. Without it, many of the 600,000 adults – including some of our hardest to reach, vulnerable or isolated residents – that access it every year would not progress into further learning and work or be able to cope with what life throws at them.

Delivering a range of informal and formal learning from entry-level courses to professional qualifications, as well as interview support and confidence-boosting programmes in a range of community settings, ACE gives residents a first, second, third or even fourth chance to access learning. It works with the grain of other place-based services including employment, regeneration, education, health and culture, and adds value to each, as well as connecting with agencies like Jobcentre Plus and local colleges.

The handful of case studies featured in this councillors' handbook demonstrate the excellent work of ACE services, but there are hundreds more great examples out there. We know that because 92 per cent of ACE providers are rated good or outstanding, the best performing in the further education sector. We should be extremely proud of that.

But there are challenges and opportunities ahead for ACE services.

Over the last decade, as national funding for adult learning halved, councils innovated to source new funding or faced a reduction in provision or a wind down of the service altogether. Just prior to the pandemic, national investment in retraining was boosted to enable people to adapt to a rapidly changing economy which is more likely to displace the least qualified. Today, as unemployment soars, we need all hands to the pump to direct that skills investment to where it is most needed and that must include local ACE services.

Soon, two White Papers – one on further education (FE) and the other on devolution – should provide an opportunity to develop a more coherent, place-based approach to adult skills that connects the entire provider base together across a local area. The LGA's Work Local model provides a framework for how that could happen.

So, it is a significant time for the future of ACE. That's why this handbook is so timely and a must-have for all councillors. You have a real leadership role in understanding, supporting, scrutinising and advocating for it, so you can make your service the best it can be. We provide some top tips on how you can do that which we hope you will find useful.

**Cllr Sir Richard Leese CBE, Chair, LGA City Regions Board**

**Cllr Kevin Bentley, Chairman, LGA People and Places Board**

## **Introduction**

This handbook for councillors focuses on the direct and indirect impact of adult community education (ACE). It aims to help councillors effectively plan, promote and scrutinise their local ACE service so that it is relevant, robust, efficient, responsive and ambitious.

It builds on a report by HOLEX, the lead professional body for adult community education and learning, which recommended that more should be done to explain and promote the vital role of councillors in ACE services and the value they add to this sector.

Councillors have a critical role to play in planning and promoting ACE; in support, oversight and challenge; and in ensuring that provision is joined up and responds to the needs of local communities. Their input, scrutiny and leadership are essential in realising the rich potential of adult community education.

This handbook will set out the importance of ACE in place shaping: how it brings economic and social benefits to local communities, enhancing the lives of residents and contributing to the culture and cohesion of the places in which they live and work. It will encourage planners and policy-makers to work in a way that acknowledges and makes use of the special role played by adult education in connecting and adding value to other council services.

We hope that this handbook will help councillors take an active role in planning, promoting and scrutinising ACE in their local areas, and that it will help councillors and officers to design services that improve the lives of residents and support the development of thriving, inclusive communities.

As we will see through the examples of good practice included here, the places in which ACE services deliver the most for their communities are the places where councillors recognise and champion their intrinsic value.

## **The role of ACE in shaping people and places**

“Adult education is not just about what goes on in the classroom. It is about having the ability to support residents to develop wider outcomes for their own personal lives which, in turn, support and have an impact on their local communities, local businesses, and therefore the local economy.”

**Pat Carrington MBE, Assistant Director for Employment and Skills,  
Peterborough City Council, and Principal, City College Peterborough**

ACE matters. As well as having clear and direct benefits in terms of economic prosperity, employment and productivity, adult learning is linked to the ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle, grow confidence and self-esteem and provide meaning and purpose in life. Associated outcomes of participation include the development of collaborative and creative thinking skills such as problem solving, innovation, curiosity and adaptability; enhanced physical and mental health; greater interest in politics and community engagement; and greater diversity in the workforce.

Despite the wide range of positive economic, social and cultural outcomes, ACE remains poorly understood, which means that its potential benefits often go largely unrealised. This is in part due to its complex nature, wide cross-sectoral reach and contribution to an array of different local services, portfolios and policy priorities, not to mention the variety of different ACE delivery models. As a result, adult education can be difficult to describe simply, which can make effective championing, advocacy and scrutiny challenging.

While there is a great deal of evidence on the broad benefits of adult learning, little has been written about how it is delivered in local communities, where it sits among the other services provided by councils, or how it supports and strengthens those services.

This handbook focuses on how effective leadership, planning and delivery of ACE has a demonstrable impact on six distinct but related outcomes:

- **employment, skills and qualifications:** getting people onto the skills ladder and helping them gain, retain and progress at work
- **health and wellbeing:** supporting people with physical and mental health issues, thus reducing health costs such as GP visits
- **integration and inclusion:** reducing isolation, promoting interaction and integration and bringing communities together
- **culture and creativity:** supporting individuals and communities in becoming creative and cultural producers
- **attitudes, aptitudes and characteristics:** helping people to acquire the characteristics needed to participate fully in work and life
- **life transitions:** helping people to navigate challenges such as redundancy, retirement and parenthood.

## Chapter 1: Why ACE matters

### A safe, empowering, local space Page 96

Adult community education (ACE) services educate, train and retrain more than 600,000 adults each year, including many from the most deprived wards in England. They have a combined annual income in excess of £350 million.

In 2017, the 222 community learning providers in England included 139 councils, as well as 72 not-for-profit organisations and 11 'specialist designated institutions' (independently constituted charities regulated by their own trust deeds).

Most council adult education services were founded early in the 20th century, though some can trace their history back further. Today they continue to provide a safe, empowering local space in which adults can build their confidence and capacity, learn new skills, and take steps towards further education and new employment opportunities.

A large proportion of ACE learners are considered 'hard to reach'. This includes the long-term unemployed, vulnerable families, people with substance issues and young people who are not in education, employment or training. For example, 75 per cent of Leeds City Council's adult learners come from the 20 per cent most deprived lower-layer super output areas on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

This first-step engagement, giving adults and young people a second, third or fourth chance to access learning, is a crucial part of what ACE services do. More than any other provider, ACE services reach people and communities experiencing multiple disadvantage, whose support needs often demand the coordinated intervention and engagement of different council services.

From the learner's perspective, ACE's reach into other local services, and its close connection with employers and other education providers, enables them to connect with employers, further learning opportunities and their community – and ultimately to maximise their own potential.

### **In brief: ACE within the further education sector**

Further education (FE) is a diverse sector of the education system, comprising many different types of provider offering a wide range of vocational, academic and recreational courses.

FE providers are institutions or organisations (other than schools and universities) that receive government funding to provide education and training to people over the age of 16. There are five different types of FE provider:

colleges, councils, independent training providers, the voluntary sector and employers.

- General further education **colleges** offer a wide range of programmes including vocational courses, apprenticeships, academic courses and higher education, from Entry Level to Level 4 and above. Most FE college students are aged 16 to 19, but they also provide courses for adult students and for 14/15-year-olds. While general FE colleges are the largest and most common provider in the sector, there are others including sixth-form colleges, land-based colleges, specialist designated colleges and art, design and performing arts colleges and Institutes for Adult Learning.
- **Councils** provide a wide variety of ACE and work-based learning. Some councils provide educational services directly to their communities, while others contract out to service providers. These services provide accessible learning to people from all backgrounds and abilities, usually on a part-time basis. Courses can be unaccredited or qualification-bearing.
- **Independent training providers** (ITPs) receive government funding to provide off-the-job training. While all work closely with employers, some are small and focus on a single area of vocational training (such as hairdressing or construction), while others are large and provide a range of vocational training opportunities across the country.
- **Voluntary sector providers** are non-profit organisations such as charities, foundations and community groups, usually directly providing adult community education, but also delivering other kinds of specialist courses to specific groups of learners.
- **Employer providers** deliver their own in-house training rather than contracting out to an external provider such as a college, an ITP or a council.

These organisations have a specific and important role in delivering skills in their communities. It is critical that they work together in partnership across a local area for the good of local learners and employers. This is why knowledge and expertise of local areas is critical to both the commissioning and oversight of skills provision.



**Despite** the complex issues facing many of their learners, ACE providers are the best-performing part of the FE sector, with **92 per cent of services rated ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted inspectors** (compared to 81 per cent for colleges and 75 per cent for independent training providers).

As well as being the best-performing part of the further education sector, ACE can claim to be the most resilient. During the coronavirus crisis of 2020, many ACE providers quickly switched their provision to online delivery, enabling residents to access learning under lockdown conditions.

## The ACE offer

Most ACE providers offer courses at Level 2 (GCSE equivalent) or below, including ‘non-accredited’ courses that do not lead to a formal qualification. While in recent years provision has tended to focus increasingly on maths, English and digital, other offers include:

- ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) to help refugees or people recruited from overseas, such as health and care workers, to improve their English
- family learning courses to enable parents to better support their children in literacy and numeracy
- employability and preparing for work
- programmes to help learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop independence, social skills and employment skills
- training in mentoring and counselling for learners recovering from drug and alcohol misuse
- courses in music, ceramics and other cultural and creative arts.

ACE services work in close partnership with other agencies and council services. Councils have an important role both as providers of learning and as partners with other stakeholders such as local businesses, job centres, the voluntary and community sector, and other education and training providers.

ACE adds real value to these partnerships. For example, ACE services are often based at centres in the heart of disadvantaged communities. Not only do they bring together people of different backgrounds in a friendly, supportive local space, they also provide a place in which different services can address the multiple needs of learners at a neighbourhood level. This provides ACE with an opportunity to add value to other services, such as those relating to health and wellbeing.

The cross-cutting nature of ACE services and their capacity to add value to other services means they have an especially important role to play in councils' place-shaping ambitions and in responding to entrenched, complex issues such as poverty or long-term unemployment.

## **Chapter 2: What do ACE services achieve?**

### **The six core ACE outcomes**

Much has been written about the wider benefits of adult education and their relevance to different social and economic agendas. While a strong case can also be made for ACE's long-term, indirect impact on issues such as social mobility and reduced costs to other services such as public health, this section focuses on the direct outcomes of adult community education.

These outcomes can be organised into six distinct but overlapping categories, each of which will be explored here in more detail:

- employment, skills and qualifications
- health and wellbeing
- integration and inclusion
- culture and creativity
- attitudes, aptitudes and characteristics
- life transitions.

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### **Outcome 1: Employment, skills and qualifications**

Adult community education is critical in creating new opportunities for people – particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds – to prepare for, enter and progress in the workplace.

Many of the adults who engage with council ACE services are unemployed, often on a long-term basis, and may face multiple disadvantages related to poverty and poor mental or physical health. They often have low literacy and numeracy skills and limited basic digital skills. ACE offers these adults a crucial first step back into learning and onto the skills ladder. It offers cross-service, integrated solutions for learners facing multiple disadvantage, and puts learners on course to further education and employment.

Adult learning is not only of benefit in terms of helping people to gain and retain employment, it also helps them to increase their earnings, raise their aspirations and gain more satisfaction from their work. It supports employers in raising productivity,

increasing profitability and reducing staff turnover, and helps boost the country's employment rates and tax revenue.

Skills and employment challenges differ from one local area to the next – some, for example, may have high unemployment as a result of the decline of traditional industry, while others may need adults to acquire industry-specific skills to match local demand. Responding to these challenges requires a coordinated local effort, which ACE can help to address or overcome.

Demographic change has huge implications for education and skills. In common with other developed countries, the UK has an ageing population. Some 80 per cent of the workforce of 2030 is already part of the working population. Figures pre-COVID show that a third of all workers are now aged over 50, and the number of people over 70 in work has doubled since 2009 to half a million. Longer working lives and fewer young people entering the workforce increases the need for adults to be retrained, upskilled and supported into local jobs. They need opportunities to engage and routes for progression, particularly given the changing nature of work and the growth in automation and artificial intelligence.

The Industrial Strategy Council predicted that seven million additional workers would be under-skilled for their job requirements by 2020 – about 20 per cent of the labour market. The UK's departure from the EU is likely to mean a reduction in the number of EU national workers, increasing our reliance on home-grown talent, including adults who are already in the workforce or unable to access it.

While unemployment as a national average remains relatively low (or was so before the impact of COVID-19), there are large numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training. If this is not effectively addressed at an early stage, there is a risk this group becomes more marginalised resulting in pockets of acute, long-term unemployment which demand targeted, coherent cross-service support. In addition, there will be more demand for adult skills training as the cohort get older.

According to the **Social Mobility Commission**, adults with the lowest qualifications are the least likely to access adult training – despite being the group that would benefit most. Further, men in routine and manual occupations are the least likely to engage in learning, creating what the commission describes as 'vicious cycles' of low-paid, low-skilled insecure work.

## Experience: Unlocking new opportunities

Islington Council supports more than 1,500 residents every year through a wide variety of courses, including in ESOL and digital skills. Olga, for example, who is originally from Romania, used what she learned on an ESOL course to progress to further learning and improve her career prospects.

Olga said: “I am now studying in Morley College in my first term of professional sewing and tailoring. The course is in English and I am happy that I can now understand and learn something new. I work part-time doing alterations in a dry-cleaners shop and as a cleaner, but now I would like to find a job in the fashion industry.”

Another issue that ACE can address is low levels of literacy and numeracy, with England tending to fare poorly in international comparisons such as the OECD’s survey of adult skills. Some nine million adults lack functional literacy and numeracy skills (the level expected of nine-year-olds). Around **11.9 million adults are thought to lack digital skills**. This represents a significant barrier to further learning and better job prospects, and is a major issue for employers in hiring staff with the right skills.

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## Outcome 2: Health and wellbeing

ACE has clear and well-evidenced benefits for the health and wellbeing of people and communities. The challenges in this area include increased incidence of long-term complex health conditions associated with an ageing population, lifestyle factors such as alcoholism and substance abuse, entrenched health inequalities and the growing prevalence of mental health problems in society.

It addresses these issues in several ways. ACE is associated with healthier lifestyle choices and better understanding and management of health conditions. It has been linked to increased life expectancy and prolonged independent living among elderly people, and there is a clear correlation between level of education and diseases such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes, which represent a huge cost to the health service.

Studies also demonstrate a link between participation in adult learning and improved mental health and wellbeing. It fosters a sense of identity, an ability to cope and a sense of purpose in life, as well as greater levels of wellbeing and life satisfaction. It reduces social isolation and increases confidence and self-efficacy among learners. There is evidence too that participation in learning prevents early ageing and slows the onset of dementia.

Many ACE providers created new online provision to help with isolation and mental wellbeing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included online courses based around health and wellbeing, mindfulness, crafts, relaxation, chair-based exercises and family learning.

### **Experience: Supporting mental health**

'Working in mind' is an employability initiative developed by Redbridge Institute of Adult Education. It targets priority Jobcentre Plus clients – unemployed adults with mental ill health and older people with poor literacy skills.

Working with partners such as Redbridge Concern for Mental Health and other local mental health charities, the initiative combines traditional employability support, dyslexia screening, wellbeing coaches and access to social prescription provision, such as mindfulness training. Around 50 per cent of the participants progress into work, while others go on to further learning.

### **Experience: 'This course turned my life around'**

Lincolnshire County Council supported 7,511 adults onto 1,235 learning programmes during 2018/19. It targeted specific groups including people with learning difficulties and disabilities, people with no or low qualifications, the unemployed, and residents from the most deprived neighbourhoods – which accounted for 20 per cent of learners.

Ninety-two per cent of learners said their course helped to develop their self-confidence. One learner, Victoria, suffered with low self-esteem, back problems and other illnesses before taking part in a 'Get into catering' course. By the end of the course, Victoria had secured employment in a café in Lincoln. She said: "This course has turned my life around. I am so happy with my new job and the fact that I am now off benefits."

Many learners face digital barriers to accessing the help and support they need. In response, a growing number of ACE services are introducing an NHS-funded digital health module, embedded in their main delivery programmes, which helps people get

online, set up an email account and make doctor's appointments online. As well as digitally empowering learners, it has the added benefit of taking pressure off local doctor's surgeries.

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### **Outcome 3: Integration and inclusion**

Council ACE services have a crucial role to play in boosting social capital and promoting community cohesion and interaction. Adult learning is associated with higher levels of interpersonal and social trust, as well as increased community involvement and civic participation, particularly at a local level. It can also lead to greater understanding of diversity.

ACE services support the integration of new community members, both through ESOL courses and community-based courses that bring different groups together and facilitate the sharing of experiences. They provide a space in which stereotypes can be challenged, conversations begun, and tensions reduced.

The broad range of wider individual benefits to adult learning include increases in confidence and self-esteem, higher aspirations, a sense of purpose, engagement in the community, an active body and mind, and improved 'soft skills' such as collaboration, teamwork and communication. ACE has a special role to play in supporting integration and community engagement, and thus in making places safer and more cohesive.

#### **Experience: 'I can talk to anyone now'**

Hussein came to the UK as a refugee from Sudan in 2014. He had no formal schooling, little money and no grasp of English. Hussein lived in a shared house with other refugees from various countries. Their lack of English meant there was no communication between them, leaving them all quite isolated.

To improve his English, Hussein took free English classes, walking an hour and a half each way to attend class. Four months later, he started studying at Manchester's adult education service. The skills he acquired there enabled him to gain employment as a warehouse operative. Hussein said: "I was feeling sad because I couldn't understand when people were talking to me. Now I can talk to and understand anyone and I work with a lot of people from different countries."

Adult learning has been found to have a positive impact in the following five areas linked to integration and inclusion:

- 1) **Social capital:** adult learning is associated with higher levels of interpersonal and social connection. It has been shown to promote civic engagement and activity. ACE community venues are among the few surviving public spaces where people from different backgrounds can come together with a common goal in mind.
  - 2) **Social cohesion and integration:** ACE has in general, and in literacy and numeracy provision in particular, a significant positive impact on communities. It can lead to higher levels of respect, tolerance and trust. Literacy and numeracy programmes and ESOL courses are key to ACE service efforts to promote social cohesion and integration. It forms a key part of councils' efforts to integrate refugees.
  - 3) **Community involvement:** adult learning fosters civic participation, through local involvement, and can help overcome loneliness and social isolation. The Government has linked feeling lonely to increased risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, depression, cognitive decline and Alzheimer's. It is estimated that between five and 18 per cent of UK adults feel lonely often or always.
- According to a survey by the Workers' Educational Association, 82 per cent of people on adult education courses make new friends, while **97 per cent say it helps to keep their minds active**. Participation also boosts 'civic capability', the ability to make sense of and shape one's own culture and community. Adult learners report increased civic participation, community involvement and wider social networks.
- 4) **Democratic participation:** adult learning, through civic education programmes, positively improves people's political understanding, feelings of empowerment and level of political participation. It encourages active citizens who are empowered to find solutions to the problems their communities face and engaged in informed dialogue.
  - 5) **Crime and anti-social behaviour:** adult learning can reduce crime and anti-social behaviour by raising aspiration, improving the self-confidence of learners and offering them routes into further learning and work.

**The prison population in England and Wales has increased by around 90 per cent since 1990 to about 84,000 prisoners.** Recidivism rates are high and represent a significant economic cost: a one per cent reduction in recidivism rates would lead to an estimated annual saving of £130 million. Education is one of the pillars of effective rehabilitation. Almost half of prisoners have a reading level at or below that expected of an 11-year-old. ACE can give people the chance to escape cycles of crime and anti-social behaviour.

## **Outcome 4: Culture and creativity**

Creative and cultural courses bring together people from different backgrounds around a common interest and can help to enhance community cohesion. Creative learning can be empowering and is often the catalyst for improved confidence and greater community involvement. It can lead to new employment opportunities and further self-organised learning.

While this form of provision has been much reduced in recent years, it can be vital in allowing learners with limited access to the creative arts to express themselves and contribute to their own local cultures. As well as contributing to employment, civic, and health and wellbeing outcomes, cultural and creative courses give people an enhanced sense of purpose and help them become creative producers as well as consumers.

Cultural and creative production can be a source of pride, celebration and empowerment, not only for the learners but also for the communities in which they live. Learners can host exhibitions of their work or volunteer their services for local fundraising or community activities such as arts festivals. Creative learners may set up self-organised learning groups to continue the activity, reducing isolation and providing social support networks; or establish small businesses to sell their work.

For example, the Quaggy Printmakers, a group of learners from Lewisham, were encouraged by their tutors to make the step into self-employment and sell their work. The 20-strong group of screen printers and etchers now sells its work through a website, with social media used to publicise events and exhibitions. A precondition of membership is to have taken a course with the Lewisham service.

### **Experience: Careers, community, culture**

The strategic plan for Westminster Council's adult education service clusters its curriculum into three key areas: careers, community and culture. This approach reflects the needs, starting points, ambitions and potential of learners.

Head of service, Arinola Edeh, said: "It is easy to think we should focus on the economic benefits. People forget about the social, mental health and wellbeing benefits that are also important parts of education. Adult education is about employability, but it is also about bringing communities together and enabling local residents of different ages, ethnicities, cultural backgrounds and socio-economic backgrounds to have a better understanding of each other.



“Our strategic plan clusters what we do in terms of these three key areas. Alongside the ‘careers’ element, we do a lot of work bringing communities together, reducing isolation and supporting vulnerable people, which we capture in the ‘community’ element. The ‘culture’ strand is all about celebration and bringing people together at the cultural level. So we have a careers, community and culture focus, which enables us to transform lives.”

Every year, Westminster supports over 8000 learners to achieve their goals in these three areas.

## **Outcome 5: Attitudes, aptitudes and characteristics**

ACE fosters positive attitudes and aptitudes such as resilience, cooperation, communication and critical thinking, which are key to success – not only in the workplace but also at home, in the community and in wider civic life. Often, gaining these attitudes and aptitudes can make all the difference for learners seeking to enter the workforce, manage transition or be more active in the community.

This includes the competences required to live an independent life and be more self-reliant; skills such as communication, team working and problem-solving (which are essential in finding a job and getting on at work); and the confidence and capacity parents need to better support their children and become more involved in school and community life.

Participation in adult education improves people’s social relationships, making them less isolated and more tolerant and trusting, while boosting levels of community engagement. ACE services also promote changes in attitudes to learning, which is crucial in a society in which few adults will have a job for life and most will have to upskill throughout their working lives and/or retrain for a new job role or multiple roles, which will for many become a reality as a result of economic impact of COVID-19.

### **Experience: Overcoming anxiety**

When Laura started her Health and Care Sector Work Academy course, funded by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, she lacked confidence and found it a struggle to interact with new people. Laura had become a mum at a very early age, so missed out on further education and work.

It took her an hour to get out of the car for her first class but she found the courage and, over the next few weeks, her anxieties receded. Through the course, Laura gained confidence in her skills and abilities, and grew to understand the values and attitudes required to work in the health and care sector.

After achieving her Level 1 'Preparing to Work in Adult Social Care' qualification, Laura received mentoring in CV writing, job applications and attending interviews. She secured a job at a care home and is now completing a Level 3 qualification. Had it not been for the course, she said, "I would still be struggling with my anxiety and depression and still be unemployed." Laura was City College Peterborough's 'Adult Learner of the Year' in 2019.

## **Outcome 6: Life transitions**

This final type of outcome, though sometimes overlooked, is in supporting life transitions, particularly redundancy, parenthood, a return to work and retirement. The skills required in negotiating these life transitions can be enhanced parenting skills, independent living skills and increased capacity to support a child's learning.

Many adults reaching points of transition in their lives will have been out of learning for some time, and some may not have engaged in formal education since school. As noted already, ACE services provide an accessible, safe environment where learners can step back into education and find the space in which to reflect on and shape the next phase of their lives. They also offer the flexibility and adaptability required to respond to changing local need. For example, helping a community to cope with mass redundancies, or ensuring continuity of learning during the COVID-19 lockdown.

It is at such key moments in people's lives that adult education can be most effective and beneficial. As a recent study shows, transitions such as returning to work, becoming a parent, raising a family, living independently or retirement 'often lead to a reappraisal of the decisions and actions that shape an adult's life course', and engagement in learning 'can become more of a priority, especially when seen to play a pivotal role in helping people achieve their ambitions and aspirations'.

## **Case studies**

This section of the handbook sets out a series of short case studies that demonstrate how different ACE services are working to achieve the six outcomes.

### **London Borough of Redbridge: A culture of excellence**

**Rochdale Borough Council: Connecting local services****Manchester City Council: A co-owned, city-wide plan****London Borough of Lewisham: Valuing culture and creativity****Peterborough City Council: Promoting adult education****Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES)****Chapter 3: How ACE services work****Structure**

Although all ACE providers are influenced by government policy and the national funding structure, there is no common model or recipe for success. While national policy sets the tone and imposes common constraints on funding, each council area will adopt its own structure, governance and scrutiny arrangements based around local circumstances.

The chief role of councillors is to lead the direction of adult education policy, linking their ambitions for ACE to local challenges and priorities; to provide scrutiny and challenge; and to signpost residents towards the service. Portfolio holders provide leadership in terms of championing adult education across and beyond the council, advocacy at a community and regional level, involvement in service planning, and fostering or strengthening partnerships and connections.

The ACE's head of service is generally responsible for service strategy and its alignment with the council's core objectives, as well as creating and maintaining partnerships, ensuring the service's work is understood and visible, and making sure the service has a seat at the right tables.

A survey of local ACE providers by HOLEX found that there was no common structure among ACE services. Services differ in their model of delivery – whether direct, indirect or a blend of both; in where they sit within council structures and wider partnership arrangements; and in how they shape and adapt their provision to respond to local need.

In general, the organisational structure in which an ACE service sits does not make much difference to the quality of the service. However, making the right connections with other services seems to be easier for officers when they are based in a

directorates with a strong focus on place and/or on education or enterprise.

There is a variety of approaches to governance, with some ACE services convening advisory boards of governors (comprising a combination of councillors, employers and representatives of key community groups); and others held accountable by the council's scrutiny committee. Some councils do both.

However, it is possible to identify some common elements in the way in which ACE services work and to recognise some critical success factors. Although provision has reduced somewhat over the past decade, the best services remain agile and responsive, with exceptional reach into communities (particularly the least advantaged communities); they have strong partnerships within their council and more widely; and they have adopted meaningful governance and scrutiny arrangements through which councillors can add real value to the service.

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## Delivery models

There are two main models of ACE delivery – direct and indirect (through sub-contracting), although in practice many local areas offer a combination of both.

- **Direct delivery:** providers offer adult education services themselves rather than contracting them out. In some cases, courses are provided through a large college-type facility; in others through smaller, community-based centres where other council services may be co-located. Many councils combine a large institutional hub with smaller community centres, often based in areas of acute need where learners may be reluctant or unable to travel.

For example, Hertfordshire's adult education service has set up learning hubs in some of the county's most deprived areas, with a specific focus on wards where there is currently little or no support service. Each hub is set up with a local organisation from the voluntary sector, with the aim of creating a welcoming environment for people from disadvantaged groups.

- **Sub-contracted delivery:** other councils sub-contract the delivery of ACE courses out to private and/or voluntary and community sector partners. Councils providing courses that are either wholly or largely provided on an indirect basis typically have a smaller team responsible for planning and managing provision. These councils rely on the specialist knowledge and reach of different community services in engaging learners in provision planned to match local need.

Unsurprisingly, ACE services often work in very complex local structures, which may include multiple levels of planning and commissioning and different players interested in shaping service plans. For example, mayoral combined authorities are now

responsible for the adult education budget which funds ACE provision.

According to HOLEX's analysis of ACE service inspection reports, good or outstanding services tend to have strong governance with clear accountabilities, and councillors with excellent knowledge of the service and how it supports local need.

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## Leadership

Councils are place shapers and conveners. They must address the needs of their communities in an integrated and coherent way, making smart and efficient use of the resources they have. While working within the national-level constraints, councils must plan ACE provision that is sensitive to local need and informed by relevant labour market and other intelligence. To be effective, a council's ACE service must find a way to make national policy support local need.

While job titles vary, every ACE provider will have a head of service or principal who is responsible for assessing local need and developing a working plan which addresses these needs through clear goals that support the council's vision and reflect the national policy framework.

Dr Sue Pember, Director of Policy for HOLEX, says: "It has to build on what the area and the residents need, be integrated into the council's other services, and it must reflect what the government wants. And it must be well monitored, so that if something goes awry, it can be dealt with quickly."

Councils have access to a wide range of data on issues such as pupil performance, public health and the location of areas of greatest need. It can be disaggregated in terms of age group, socio-economic group, equality of access or employment status. It is important that

ACE services use this data to plan provision, ensuring close integration with the council's wider plans and priorities. ACE services are themselves a source of useful data on learner performance and progression, which should be used to identify gaps, challenge practice and improve.

In addition to interpreting data and planning in the context of local and national policy frameworks, the head of service has an important role as a leader or facilitator of partnerships. There is an important role too for councillors in supporting this, both through strengthening existing partnerships and fostering new ones.

One form of partnership particularly relevant to councils that contract out some or all of their ACE provision is the delivery partnership. ACE services often work with community organisations that specialise in a form of provision or that have a special

reach into a particular community, often one considered marginalised or hard to reach. These subcontracting arrangements are generally robustly managed, and learners know they are students of their respective ACE service.

The relatively small scale of ACE service operations means they can move swiftly and with agility, adapting provision to the specific needs of their communities. This makes them an ideal partner – able to work in a smart, collaborative way with organisations from the private, public and voluntary sectors to deliver a wide range of programmes tailored to local need.

ACE services work in close partnership with organisations in sectors where adult education has an important contribution to make, for example health. They are more likely than other providers (such as colleges or private training providers) to partner with, for example, the NHS in working collaboratively on issues such as obesity, suicide prevention, loneliness or social prescribing.

Since the COVID-19 crisis, providers are strengthening their relationships with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Jobcentre Plus to provide an enhanced service for the newly unemployed and people facing redundancy. This covers everything from DWP referrals to online advice and guidance, supporting job applications and skills needs analysis.

The link between councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) mean that ACE services are also well positioned to contribute to the regional skills and employment agenda.

### **Experience: Families learning together**

Lewisham Adult Learning has forged a long-term partnership with the Horniman Museum. Family learning and ESOL learners have taken part in projects organised with the museum: for example, ESOL family learning students have helped the museum to review labels and interpretation for its exhibits. The museum offers learners the chance to volunteer through Lewisham's 'Volunteering: a stepping stone into work' programme. Parents on the family learning course have given presentations at community events and have supported the museum in developing new activities for families.

## **The national funding framework**

All services work to the council adult education governance regulatory framework set by the then government in 'New challenges, new chances' in 2011, and the way in which that is expressed in the funding guidance from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

'New challenges, new chances affirmed the focus of ACE services on 'people who are disadvantaged and who are furthest from learning and therefore less likely to participate', highlighting their role in widening participation and supporting progression into work and further learning, and in developing stronger communities with 'more self-sufficient, connected and pro-active citizens'.

### **In brief: 'New challenges, new chances'**

The purpose of government-supported community learning, according to 'New challenges, new chances', is to:

- maximise access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people's circumstances
- promote social renewal by bringing local communities together to experience the joy of learning and the pride that comes with achievement
- maximise the impact of community learning on the social and economic wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

The objectives of community learning are to:

- focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including people in rural areas and those on low incomes with low skills
- collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use this where possible to extend provision to those who cannot
- widen participation and transform people's destinies by supporting progression relevant to personal circumstances
- develop stronger communities with more self-sufficient, connected and pro-active citizens
- commission, deliver and support learning in ways that contribute directly to these objectives.

The ESFA, an agency of the Department for Education (DfE), provides funding for adult skills and community learning. Its **funding guidance** is based on the purposes and objectives set out in 'New challenges, new chances', which it characterises as to develop the skills, confidence, motivation and resilience of adults in order to progress into learning or employment, improve their health and wellbeing, and develop stronger communities.

Council ACE services are funded through the DfE's adult education budget. Since August 2019, this budget has been apportioned between the ESFA, which distributes the funding to councils, and the six mayoral combined authorities (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Tees Valley, West Midlands and West of England) along with the Greater London Authority, to which it is devolved by the DfE. AEB devolution will soon also cover the West Yorkshire, North of Tyne and Sheffield City Region.

The mayoral authorities received £630 million in adult education funding in the first wave of skills devolution in 2019. The move was welcomed as a serious attempt to give adult education funding more local discretion and flexibility. This has required more local conversations to agree the right balance of provision. There is a view that it could change the relative stability in funding and policy direction that has been a major part of ACE's success over the past decade.

**Overall funding for adult learning nationally has reduced by 47 per cent between 2009/10 and 2018/19**, which has affected all ACE, and other adult learning providers. According to the 2019 Learning and Work Institute analysis, this has coincided with adult learner numbers falling by 3.8 million in the last decade.

On top of these funding cuts to adult learning, councils have experienced a 40 per cent reduction in government funding since 2010. Despite this, they continue to run successful programmes of adult education provision, with ACE learner numbers declining at a slower rate than in FE colleges – and even increasing for Level 4 (higher technical qualifications, such as higher apprenticeships) and ESOL courses. Learner satisfaction with ACE services remains higher than for any other part of the FE sector.

In spending their allocation, councils and combined authorities are expected to maintain a clear line of sight between government policy and regional and local adult education service plans and cannot go over budget. ACE services have managed to do this with great success, despite a steady reduction in funding.



## **Experience: Setting up a community learning trust**

Following a recommendation made in 'New challenges, new chances' (2011), New Directions College, the learning and employment service for Reading, set up a community learning trust (Reading Community Learning Network) to support joint curriculum planning and delivery with strategic partners from the public, community and voluntary sectors, to ensure the service's community learning offer meets local priorities.

The network consists of 38 members including Reading libraries, children's centres, voluntary sector agencies and the probation service, each providing targeted or specialist provision. Such partnerships are critical for a service that aims to reach some of Reading's most disadvantaged communities.

Two-thirds of the council's learners come from the most deprived areas. The service aims to reach out to people where they live, engage them in learning and give them routes to further learning and employment. It works with other council teams to add value to their activities.

Reading has found that partnership is key not only in engaging the hardest-to-reach adults, but also in generating new income for the service, enabling it to better meet the needs of learners and ensuring the available resource goes a long way. The service, for example, recently obtained £170,000 from the LEP to develop its catering and hospitality facilities, in response to development of the area's hotel and leisure sector.

The service generates added value through its use of volunteers, free venues and course fees. Around £250,000 is collected annually and used to offset the costs of working with Reading's most vulnerable and disadvantaged learners.

Many councils, finding that demand for ACE services surpasses ESFA funding, have attempted to increase the available funding by adopting a 'Pound Plus' model of income generation. This means that they look to add to their existing budget through, for example, course fees, financial sponsorship, low or no-cost learning spaces, donations of equipment, and other funding sources and grants. This is a highly effective approach that allows ACE services to do more within a shrinking public funding context.

## **Experience: Making money go further**

Southampton City Council's adult education service has used a 'Pound Plus' model to increase service income and drive up participation within a constrained public funding environment.

Although the majority of the service's provision is sub-contracted out (84 per cent in 2018-19), there are clear expectations concerning Pound Plus set out in the original specification issued to all potential sub-contractors, along with guidance in the annual provider guide.

Sub-contractors are expected to demonstrate Pound Plus improvements including:

- increase in fee income
- increase in commercial sponsorship and support via contributions in kind
- increased use of volunteers
- increased income from external bids
- rationalisation, enhancing and re-focusing of the curriculum offer
- improved efficiency
- greater social impact of learning on the wider community.

Sub-contractors are expected to use the money saved or created by these policies for the benefit of learners, particularly priority groups and those who might otherwise not be able to engage in learning activity.

## **Governance and scrutiny**

It is important that ACE services are rooted in the needs of their communities, which means that local people should be democratically involved in the governance of these services through councillors and other stakeholders. This is the key role of councillors in respect of their council's ACE service.

Councillors are the equivalent of a further education college board of governors and are responsible, ultimately, for ensuring the service on offer to residents is of high quality and relevant to their needs. Councillors also have a wider role as leaders of their local places and in helping to set the direction of local services.

Different councils take different approaches to governance. More than half (53 per cent) of the services that responded to the HOLEX survey said they were governed and held accountable through the council's scrutiny committee, while 38 per cent had

an advisory board. Despite this mixed approach, it is clear that all councils attach importance to ensuring that their ACE services are democratically accountable to the people they serve.

Councils' scrutiny and challenge committees play a fundamental role in ensuring ACE funding is well spent, monitoring services and ensuring that learner outcomes are improving. They help councillors understand what the service is for, how service plans are developed and how success is evaluated. They give councillors from different backgrounds the opportunity to make connections and see the wider relevance of ACE. These committees can also bring in other local partners and providers to be scrutinised.

ACE service governance or advisory boards usually comprise a number of councillors, the head of service, and representatives of the private, public and voluntary sectors. Having a breadth of membership adds expertise to the board and creates new opportunities for partnership. These boards do not merely assure the quality of learning in the service – they ensure that the service is meeting local need and engaging in self-evaluation (as well as evaluating sub-contracted providers).

The 2018 'outstanding' Ofsted inspection report on Redbridge Institute of Adult Education, for example, found that:

'Governance is very strong. Governors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the organisation...They strongly promote the organisation's vision to target the most disadvantaged learners and increase participation from the most deprived neighbourhoods. Governors and senior leaders work effectively together to achieve the positive standing of Redbridge Institute in the community. They are rightly proud of the positive contribution it makes to the local area.'

In some high-performing services – Reading, Redbridge and Peterborough, for example – new governors undergo a process of induction, learning about the service and the people it supports. They are encouraged to attend classes and meet learners, thus deepening their understanding of adult education and adult learners. Some heads of service arrange 'learning walks' for councillors to find out more about their service. All services interviewed for this handbook highlighted the importance of bringing governors/councillors and learners together.

The high level of scrutiny in council ACE services helps ensure service plans are in line with local need and the wider plans of councils, and that the available resource is sensibly and smartly allocated. Effective scrutiny is one of the core considerations brought to bear by Ofsted in their service inspections.

## Place shaping

‘Place’ is an important concept for councils. While national and local strategies and interventions to support communities with significant, complex needs are important in their own right, without sufficient join-up they risk being stand-alone and less effective than they might be. Place-based interventions, bringing together different council services and other core partners, can be a hugely effective way of coordinating policy and provision.

The strong physical presence of ACE services in the communities they serve is an important factor in this – often, service buildings become a “community resource that is about high-quality learning but can also be a point of connection, information-sharing and collaboration among different services” as described in the Redbridge Institute case study.

As leaders of place, councils are not only democratically mandated but are best placed to convene and take a lead, in collaboration with national government, employers, LEPs and other key partners. ACE services, sitting within their council and with unparalleled reach into other services, are uniquely well positioned to contribute to this agenda.

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## The role of councillors in ACE

Leadership plays an important part in the success of the best ACE services. Lead members with responsibility for ACE policy provide the political vision and accountability for the service, while the head of service will manage its day-to-day activities. Together, they must play the part of local leaders of learning. That means they must keep the learner at the forefront of their minds and strive to offer a service that is accessible, appropriate, inclusive and effective.

The lead member with responsibility for ACE should be:

- working with all stakeholders to set the strategy, plan and scrutinise delivery of the service
- the voice of residents and learners
- ensuring the plan is underpinned by the objectives of the council
- exploring the potential to join-up with other services (section 106 and regeneration, public health etc) and partners (local businesses, representative bodies including local chambers, colleges and jobcentre plus and wider regional connections).

They should be adept in determining, through local data and intelligence, the needs of their learners, and be able to make the most of limited resources to meet those needs.

Increasingly, they should be opportunistic and entrepreneurial, looking at all available funding sources and ensuring that learners are adequately supported.

Councillors who have scrutiny responsibility for the ACE function should:

- hold the executive to account and provide a scrutiny role, and where relevant seek independent advice
- scrutinise the finances and effectiveness of ACE to deliver outcomes
- be the voice of residents and learners
- provide suggestions on how to improve service delivery.

As well as assuring the democratic accountability of the service and ensuring that the offer meets local need, councillors are also key advocates – spreading the word about their service and helping to ensure greater buy-in and support across and outside of the council.

As essential ‘conduits’ between the council and local communities, the councillor’s role in fostering public engagement – whether engaging people as service users or service supporters – is vital. Councillors can arm themselves with information and signpost people to services, making connections that the individual may not have acknowledged, such as seeing how it could help someone experiencing isolation. There is still a general lack of appreciation of what ACE can achieve. Councils need to consider how to build that knowledge and awareness in their own communities.

In many of the most successful services, there is strong, informed understanding of what ACE does and long-term support for the local service. In others, services face more of a challenge to raise the profile of the service.

As well as holding heads of service to account, councillors have a key role in supporting them and enabling them to do their job better. They can help them to see the big picture, where the ACE service fits within it and where it can add value and facilitate the development of new partnerships and pursue new funding sources. The conversations councillors have, and the connections they make, can be crucial in expanding the scope and ambition of their ACE service.

### **Summary: The leadership role of councillors**

- Councillors are responsible in different ways for ensuring that their local ACE service is of high quality and relevant to the needs of residents. This can be done through the portfolio holder with responsibility for ACE and

through scrutiny members who hold the service to account.

- Councillors provide challenge and advice, evaluating service progress and guiding its development, through scrutiny committees and advisory boards. Often, they have high-level expertise gained in the private, public or voluntary sectors.
- Councillors are responsible for ensuring money is spent properly and in line with local priorities and national funding guidelines.
- Councillors are key advocates for the service, promoting its work within the council and across the whole community.
- Councillors are forgers of new partnerships, using their perspective across council services to help assure effective join-up and support place-based planning.
- Councillors promote wider understanding of ACE and its outcomes, drawing on their knowledge of the service and their learners, to spread the word and get other councillors on board.

Through good governance and effective scrutiny, smart, place-based planning, sound financial management and strong partnerships, ACE leaders can create a culture of excellence and inclusivity across the service and a climate of innovation and creativity, in which staff feel confident in meeting the needs of their communities within their limited resources.

The best-led, most effective services have in common ‘a strong sense of belonging and respect among staff, learners, stakeholders and the community, including employers’, as well as an acknowledgement of the broad set of outcomes that ACE can achieve.

## **Chapter 4: Key issues for councillors**

### **The national context**

This is a moment of opportunity for adult community education in England. There is renewed interest in adult education, as reflected in the various commissions or reviews of lifelong learning which took place during 2019, and the Commons Education Select Committee inquiry into adult skills and lifelong learning.

The Government has committed £3 billion over the lifetime of this Parliament to a new National Skills Fund for adults. This will be in addition to the existing £1.5 billion per year adult education budget. It has also indicated that it will replace European Social Fund money and ensure that £500 million of its successor, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, is used to give disadvantaged people the skills they need to succeed in life.

This reflects a growing appreciation at both national and local level of the value and broad benefits of adult education, particularly its threefold capacity to boost productivity and economic growth, improve people's health and wellbeing and build strong, thriving communities.

It also represents an important opportunity for council ACE services to draw on new sources of funding and expand or revise their provision. The challenge for ACE is that while some high-performing services are adept at working in an entrepreneurial way and turning their expertise into bids for funding, others will face a steep learning curve if they are not to fall behind. This will be one of the main challenges for ACE services in the near future.

## **The case for adult education**

As we have seen, ACE matters to people and places. It reaches into the least-advantaged, most-marginalised communities, supports those who are furthest from work into education, training and employment, and has a broad range of positive effects on citizens and communities.

The case for adult education is getting stronger. Technological developments are changing the world of work and the skills required to thrive in it, the population is getting older, and inequalities remain in educational opportunity, health and wellbeing, civic participation and access to cultural experience. In addition, the COVID-19 crisis means adult learning will need to expand to help adults retrain for work.

Addressing these issues demands a coherent, joined-up educational offer, at every level (including adult education), with links to other services and to further learning and employment, and – perhaps above all – a strong commitment to places and to the people who live in them.

Only councils have the democratic mandate and local insight to lead efforts to foster local economic growth and give people the support, skills and competences they need to get on at work and in life. They have a unique ability to bring together local partners, and the flexibility and agility to target specific problems in a concerted, coherent and creative way.

ACE can connect with other council services and other agencies to transform people's lives, in a way other education providers cannot. It is only through councils' democratic local leadership and strategic social and economic priorities and duties that this can happen.

Focusing on place is key to bringing partners together and offering a coherent local response to the challenges and issues faced by different communities. This handbook has demonstrated the significant contribution made by ACE services to place making. Their presence at the heart of communities and their reach into other services give them a special role in placed-based policy, connecting and adding value to other services.

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## Top tips for councillors

The handbook has attempted to set out what makes a good ACE service and has explored some of the key factors associated with success. It has shown how the best services draw on local data to identify service gaps and plan provision that meets the needs of residents and businesses, and the important role played by scrutiny and challenge, governance, partnership and leadership in delivering an effective, high-quality service.

In considering the characteristics of successful leadership, the handbook has also explored the qualities councillors need to effectively contribute to the planning, scrutiny and promotion of a service, highlighting the importance of councillors in:

- understanding the service that they support and scrutinise
- providing challenge and advice
- supporting the development of service strategies and plans
- ensuring resources are used effectively
- advocating for the service
- fostering partnership working
- considering the service's role place making.

The following 'top tips for councillors' summarise what they can do to fulfil this critical role as effectively as possible. There is also a responsibility on officers to ensure that ACE in the local context is understood by portfolio holders, scrutiny committee members and all councillors.

## Top tips for councillors



- Understand adult community education – you can only scrutinise your service if you understand what it is trying to do, the local context and the limitations in terms of service delivery.
- Get to know your service and the learners it supports – there is no better way of doing this than meeting learners. Ask your head of service to organise a ‘learning walk’ through one of their centres.
- Try to understand the needs of your community – know the data and ask whether your service could do more, or work in a different way. A clear understanding of local need will help you hold the service to account and will make you a better advocate.
- Champion the role of ACE, both within the council and outside of it. Make it your job to have conversations about ACE with local education providers, senior officers, the elected mayor, the LEP chair and local MPs.
- Be vocal about your service’s achievements – if people aren’t aware of what your service does, it will be left out of, or arrive late, to area planning.
- Make use of all the data available – councils hold detailed data on public health, pupil performance, local need and so on, which can be accessed and aggregated in terms of factors such as age, locality or employment status.
- Be aware that sometimes the need will exceed the resources available to your service. A common-sense approach to providing the offer within the available funding is essential.
- Familiarise yourself with the main national policy guidance for ACE. This is the context for the work – and the basis of your service’s funding.
- Speak to other councillors about the ACE service, what it can provide and its potential to change lives: they will be the most effective link into local communities.
- Can you bring in new partners or strengthen existing ones? ACE services are only as strong and as valuable as the partnerships they foster and the connections they make.

- Celebrate your service and your learners and promote learner achievement within the wider community.
- Share your enthusiasm for the service and your passion for service improvement and raising learner aspiration – enthusiasm can be infectious!

## Looking to the future

Adult community education has enjoyed relative stability, compared to other parts of the FE sector. However, the introduction of the adult education budget and the ongoing process of devolution are changing the game and asking new questions both of ACE services and the local leaders responsible for them. The new environment in which ACE services operate requires them to be outward-looking, responsive to local need and place focused.

Councillors have a special role in this process in terms of scrutiny, advocacy and building partnerships. They are best placed to maximise the reach and quality of the local ACE service, and to fully realise its potential in relation to other council services and in the context of local communities.

## COVID-19

Prior to COVID-19, the LGA had called for funding for adult learning to be restored to 2010 levels, increased over time and fully devolved through the adult education budget. This was seen as critical, given people's extended working and non-working lives and a rapidly changing labour market.

ACE providers and services demonstrated agility and flexibility in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Throughout the lockdown, centres were busy adapting their activities and ensuring that learners were supported. Online learning was introduced, while many centres remained open for vulnerable learners. ACE providers are keen to continue to provide blended learning where appropriate, while recognising that the needs of learners can be complex, and a virtual learning environment will not suit everyone.

As we move towards COVID-19 recovery, it is anticipated that **adult training will need to increase rapidly to help the unemployed retrain for new occupations or even sectors and increase digital skills, therefore funding will need to match that demand.** Learning providers are asking for clarity of funding and flexible processes to enable them to support those already seeking support.

DfE is reviewing the work of post-16 education and training and is intending to produce a new white paper on further and adult education in autumn 2020. The white paper will also respond to the Augar Review 2019 and may include a COVID-19 recovery plan detailing the importance of skills and retaining.

Councils and their Adult Community Education services should be centre stage to any recovery plan and should feature in the implementation plan in two ways. Firstly, by working with local Jobcentre Plus centres, schools and colleges to coordinate the response for 16-24 year olds and secondly, through the ACE services, provide a training and employability offer to get adults back into work.

It is important that the role played by councils is reinforced and that the Government is encouraged to strengthen councils' role in determining and supporting local residents to recover from the impact of the pandemic.

## Devolution White Paper

It is clear from this handbook that the case should be made to strengthen ACE services for the benefit of local communities. And while councils have a direct role in ACE, they have limited direct influence on the wider skills and employment system, which remains highly centralised. Many councils want that to change, so that they can have more influence over skills and employment issues for their area.

The Government has prioritised the need to 'level up' prosperity across the country, and we expect more detail in the White Paper on devolution, which is likely to be published around the same time as the FE White Paper. The advent of both White Papers is a unique opportunity to **Re-think Local**.

The LGA has already set out its vision and framework for devolution in this area in LGA's **Work Local' model**. It recommends that councils and combined authorities should have the powers and funding to design, commission, and have oversight of a devolved and integrated employment and skills service that brings together information, advice and guidance, skills, apprenticeships, employment support and wider support for individuals and employers. This approach makes sense given every council area has its own unique challenges and opportunities and its own economic and social needs which cannot be addressed by a one-size-fits-all approach.

This should be used as blueprint for a skills and employment devolution that works for all people and places. The Government should back and fund the trialling of it. This could for a medium sized combined authority, lead to additional fiscal benefits for a local area of £280 million per year, with a benefit to the economy of £420 million. This

would be associated with an additional 8,500 people leaving benefits, an additional 3,600 people achieving Level 2 skills, and an additional 2,100 people achieving Level 3.

## Closing thoughts

We asked our interviewees – heads of service and senior councillors – what they thought were the key points for councillors to consider in thinking about the future of their ACE service. Here are some of their responses:

- ‘The obvious one is about funding and how they can support [the service] by leveraging funding from different areas of the council for maximum benefit.’
- ‘Their lobbying power is important and making sure they have a voice in key decision making.’
- ‘It’s that understanding of where the need is greatest within your area in order to ensure that the funding we do have is used to maximum effect.’
- ‘I think this role in bringing partners together and collaborating, especially in more difficult challenges, is really key.’
- ‘We have to get our residents the basic skills they need – English, maths, digital skills – if we are to address a whole range of social injustices.’
- ‘Adult learning contributes to civic pride, and it is important to celebrate what our local residents are doing, through learning, to contribute to their local communities. What I see our learners are juggling with, and what they achieve, and the ambitions they have for their children and their future, it is all about civic pride and wanting to make that contribution, to do well. That is a key point for councillors to understand.’
- ‘It’s about lobbying, being advocates for the service, and bringing those key players together.’
- ‘Know your outcomes, know what you are there for, which outcomes you need to achieve and how to design your curriculum to achieve those.’
- ‘Get the support and the advocacy partners in place, so the council understands the purpose of adult learning and can see its utility.’

- ‘You have to be really brilliant at partnerships. Brilliant partnerships can transform a service.’
- ‘What councillors need to be thinking about, first and foremost, is what is important to local people. Put the politics to one side and think about the priorities for that area, the challenges. That is the brief they should be expecting from officers, that is what they should be looking at.’

## Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all the heads of service and councillors who were interviewed for this handbook, and in particular to Dr Sue Pember CBE, the Head of Policy at HOLEX, and to Gerald Jones who was until recently Head of Adult Learning at the London Borough of Lewisham, and Chair of the Local Education Authorities Forum for the Education of Adults (LEFEA) before taking on a new role at Morley College.

## More publications about Employment and skills

**Learning for Life: the role of adult community education in developing thriving local communities - A handbook for councillors**

**Re-thinking youth participation for the present and next generation: education to employment**

**Kickstart: what good looks like**

**More publications in this topic**

## You may also be interested in

**Learning for Life: the role of adult community education in developing thriving local communities**

**Work Local**

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## Political groups



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## FAMILIES, HEALTH & WELLBEING SELECT COMMITTEE - CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL MINUTES

<b>Committee name</b>	Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Anisha Teji, Chief Executive's Office
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix A – Draft Corporate Parenting Panel Minutes
<b>Ward</b>	All

### HEADLINES

The Corporate Parenting Panel met on 26 July 2021.

### RECOMMENDATION

**That the Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee notes the Corporate Parenting Panel minutes.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The draft minutes from the Corporate Parenting Panel from the meeting on 26 July 2021 are included as Appendix A. For the Select Committee's purposes, these minutes are for noting and will be approved by the panel at the next meeting on 3 November 2021.

### Implications on related Council policies

The Panel will provide an important voice for children in care and care leavers, ensuring their views are heard as part of the council's policy making and decision-making processes

### How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

The Panel gives young people in Hillingdon a valued role within our democratic process and enables Councillors to work directly with them and hear their views.

### Financial Implications

None at this stage.

### Legal Implications

None at this stage.

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.

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## Minutes

### CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

26 July 2021

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge



	<p><b>Voting Panel Members Present:</b> Councillors Heena Makwana (Vice-Chairman), Kerri Prince</p> <p><b>Non-Voting Panel Members Present:</b> Siobhan Appleton (Designated LAC Doctor/Nurse), Helen Smith (Principle Social Worker and Corporate Parenting Manager), Alex Coman (Assistant Director, Safeguarding, Partnership and Quality Assurance), CiCC Representatives, and Beverley O'Dwyer (Virtual School Representative, in place of Kathryn Angelini)</p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b> Neil Fraser (Democratic Services Officer)</p>
33.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Cllr Denys and Kathryn Angelini. Beverley O'Dwyer was present as Kathryn's substitute.</p>
34.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
35.	<p><b>MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 27 MAY 2021</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2021 be approved as a correct record.</p>
36.	<p><b>ANNUAL REPORT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Alex Coman - Director, Safeguarding, Partnership and Quality Assurance, introduced the annual report for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.</p> <p>The report was summarised, including detail of the impact of Covid-19, rising numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeker children (UASC), placement stability, engagement, education, and health and dental checks. The achievements of the service in what had been a challenging year were set out as per the report, with achievements in participation particularly highlighted. Broadly, performance remained very good, and in some cases significantly higher than that of statistical neighbours. It was accepted that the number of young people receiving annual dental checks had reduced, owing to the reduced availability of dentists throughout the pandemic.</p> <p>Visits with Looked After Children (LAC) continued to take place throughout the pandemic, whether face to face or by phone or remote meeting tools. Any child</p>

deemed to be risk was visited in person. In an instance where a social worker could not attend a meeting, other professionals such as health or school representatives would engage with the young person.

All missing children are being offered a return interview with their choice of interviewer, with most choosing to carry out the interview with their allocated worker, demonstrating trust and engagement with the Council and its professionals. Children missing from care were regularly reviewed alongside partners such as the Police or Schools in order to ensure the child's safety. All children were assigned a dedicated Independent Reviewing Officer who ensure the relevant information is used in LAC reviews and care plans.

In line with national trends, foster homes in Hillingdon had reduced in number due to some foster carers choosing to retire or end their fostering, (often due to changes in familial circumstances or pressures felt during the pandemic). To address this reduced number, there were currently six foster carer households under assessment. The majority of foster carers choosing not to continue were without child placements, though if a young person was in such a placement, the Council would ensure an appropriate handover to a new placement.

Following Brexit, LAC and Young People who were nationals of an EU country had been supported to engage with the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) to change their status and allow them to retain lawful residence in the UK.

Regarding UASC young people contesting the Home Office assessment of their age, in previous years the service had received low numbers of requests to undertake a new Age Assessment (under 10). As the number of UAS referrals from the Home Office was increasing, requests for age assessments were in turn increasing, which would have an impact moving forward.

The report referred to 16% of LAC in 'unsuitable' accommodation. The provision of suitable accommodation to meet the needs of young people was one of the priorities for the year ahead, and anyone in unsuitable accommodation would be found a more suitable home as soon as possible. Where young people were not ready to move into independent accommodation, they remained in semi-independent provisions, for instance to ensure the move to independence was successful and well supported.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

**37. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE DATA Q1 (Agenda Item 5)**

Alex Coman - Director, Safeguarding, Partnership and Quality Assurance, introduced the report detailing the Children's Services data from Quarter 1 of this financial year.

The report was summarised. Regarding Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UAS), it was confirmed that numbers were rising and, due to the pandemic some Local Authorities on the South Coast were unable to cope with the increase in number of new arrivals.

The government had therefore made additional provision available to house UAS (over the age of 18) in hotels and other accommodation, while assessments were carried out. It was forecast that the increase in UAS from across the channel would continue throughout the summer months, while the relaxation of travel restrictions was likely to result in an increase in new arrivals in Hillingdon through Heathrow from September 21

	<p>onwards. The increase in the demand for age assessments, and subsequent appeals, was expected to be reflected in performance data in later quarters.</p> <p>Regarding Hillingdon's UAS numbers versus other boroughs, the government had proposed a National Transfer Scheme that would assess capacity nationally and place young people into boroughs that could accommodate them safely. It was confirmed that, once settled in Hillingdon, Looked After Children would not be moved to other boroughs.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</b></p>
	<p><b>CICC TAKEOVER</b></p> <p>The Children in Care Council representatives in attendance hosted a 'take over', comprising a question and answer session, role play, and a short presentation.</p>
38.	<p><b>WORK PROGRAMME</b> (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme. It was agreed that the KICA Feedback item, currently scheduled for the January meeting, be incorporated into the Review of Summer to be considered in October.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. That the Work Programme be noted; and</b></li> <li><b>2. That the KICA Feedback item, currently scheduled for the January meeting, be incorporated into the Review of Summer to be considered in October.</b></li> </ol>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 5.30 pm, closed at 6.45 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Neil Fraser on 01895 277655. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors and officers.

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## CABINET FORWARD PLAN

<b>Committee name</b>	Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Anisha Teji, Democratic Services Officer
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix A – Forward Plan
<b>Ward</b>	All

### HEADLINES

The Committee is required by its Terms of Reference to consider the Cabinet Forward Plan and comment as appropriate to the decision-maker on key decisions which relate to services within its remit (before they are taken by the Cabinet or by the Cabinet Member).

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**That the Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee notes and comments on items going to Cabinet.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The latest published Forward Plan is attached.

#### Implications on related Council policies

The role of the Select Committees is to make recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet, who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

#### How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

Select Committees directly engage residents in shaping policy and recommendations and the Committees seek to improve the way the Council provides services to residents.

#### Financial Implications

None at this stage.

#### Legal Implications

None at this stage.

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.

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Upcoming Decisions		Further details	Ward(s)	Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Private (with reason)
SI = Standard Item each month Council Departments: PE =Planning, Environment, Education & Community Services IT - Infrastructure, Transport & Building Services SH = Social Care & Health CS&T = Corporate Services & Transformation FD= Finance										
Cabinet meeting - 11 November 2021 (report deadline 27 October)										
91	Variation of contract to Lead Provider for Community Based Care and Support	Cabinet will consider whether to extend the term of the current contract by a further twelve months due to the impact of the pandemic on service mobilisation.	All		Cllr Jane Palmer - Health & Social Care	Families, Health & Wellbeing	SH / FD - Darren Thorpe / Sally Offin		NEW ITEM	Private (3)
Cabinet meeting - 16 December 2021 (report deadline 1 December)										
54	Contract Awards for spot provision of Home Care and Outreach	Cabinet will consider future procurement arrangements with respect to the spot provision of Home Care and Outreach services Borough-wide.	All		Cllr Jane Palmer - Health & Social Care	Families, Health & Wellbeing	SH / FD - Darren Thorpe / Sally Offin			Private (3)
040	2021/22 Better Care Fund Section 75 Agreement	A report to Cabinet regarding the agreement under section 75 of the National Health Service Act, 2006, that will give legal effect to the 2020/21 Better Care Fund plan, including financial arrangements.	All		Cllr Jane Palmer - Health & Social Care	Families, Health & Wellbeing	SH - Gary Collier			Public
Cabinet meeting - 17 February 2022 (report deadline 2 February)										
073	Approval of school admissions arrangements	As an education authority the Borough must plan for a sufficiency of places and efficient use of resources. There has been a slight decline in demand across the primary sector, with some fluctuations, but it is clear that the level of primary surplus places continues to be too high, pooling in a few schools. There is the opportunity to review the number of primary places and potentially reduce Published Admission Numbers (PAN) in some schools to ensure schools and the authority best meet the needs of all pupils across the Borough, and make effective use of resources in schools and between them. Therefore, the Council is proposing to reduce the Published Admission Number for a number of Hillingdon primary schools. Cabinet will make a decision on this following consideration of the consultation responses.	Various		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Families, Education & Wellbeing	Families, Health & Wellbeing	PE - Dan Kennedy / Haley Murphy / Sarah Phillips	Public consultation and Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee		Public
Cabinet meeting - Thursday 21 April 2022 (report deadline 6 April)										

Ref	Upcoming Decisions	Further details	Ward(s)	Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
SI = Standard Item each month Council Departments: PE =Planning, Environment, Education & Community Services IT - Infrastructure, Transport & Building Services SH = Social Care & Health CS&T = Corporate Services & Transformation FD= Finance										
58	Standards and quality of education in Hillingdon during 2020/21	The Annual Report to Cabinet regarding children and young people's educational performance across Hillingdon schools.	All		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Families, Education & Wellbeing	Families, Health & Wellbeing	PE - Daniel Kennedy / Rani Dady	Select Committee		Public
Cabinet Member Decisions expected - May 2022										
Cabinet meeting - June 2022 (date to be confirmed)										
SI	Carers Strategy Update	Cabinet will receive a progress report on the Carers Strategy and Delivery Plan.	All		Cllr Jane Palmer	Families, Health & Wellbeing	SH - Kate Kelly Talbot			Public
Cabinet meeting - July 2022 (date to be confirmed)										
88	Older People's Plan update	Cabinet will receive its yearly progress update on the Older People's Plan and the work by the Council and partners to support older residents and their quality of life.	All		Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council / Cllr Jane Palmer - Health & Social Care	Families, Health & Wellbeing	SH - Kevin Byrne	Older People, Leader's Initiative		Public
SI	School Governing Bodies and Governors / Authorising Academy Appointments	To approve appointments, nominate appointments and make reappointments of local authority governors and to approve any changes to school governing body constitutions. To also authorise any Member to be a Governor or Director of an Academy.	N/A		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Families, Education & Wellbeing	Families, Health & Wellbeing	CS&T - Democratic Services			Public
SI	School Redundancy Payments	To consider requests for School Redundancy Payments and decide whether to approve them on behalf of the Local Authority	TBC		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Families, Education & Wellbeing	Families, Health & Wellbeing	PE - Daniel Kennedy			Private (1,2,3)
The Cabinet's Forward Plan is an official document by the London Borough of Hillingdon, UK										



## FAMILIES, HEALTH & WELLBEING SELECT COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME

<b>Committee name</b>	Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Anisha Teji, Chief Executive's Office
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix A – Work Programme
<b>Ward</b>	All

### HEADLINES

To enable the Committee to note future meeting dates and to forward plan its work for the current municipal year.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**That the Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee considers the report and agrees any amendments.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. The Committee's meetings will start at 7pm and the witnesses attending each of the meetings are generally representatives from external organisations, some of whom travel from outside of the Borough. Forthcoming meeting dates are as follows:

<b>2021/22 Municipal Year Meetings</b>	<b>Room</b>
03 June 2021, 7pm	CR5
27 July 2021, 7pm	CR6
08 September 2021, 7pm	CR6
26 October 2021, 7pm	CR6
30 November 2021, 7pm	CR6
05 January 2022, 7pm	CR6
02 February 2022, 7pm	CR5
31 March 2022, 7pm	CR 5
20 April 2022, 7pm	CR 5

### Implications on related Council policies

The role of the Select Committees is to make recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet, who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

### How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

Select Committees directly engage residents in shaping policy and recommendations and the Committees seek to improve the way the Council provides services to residents.

**Financial Implications**

None at this stage.

**Legal Implications**

None at this stage.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

NIL.

# Multi year work programme

May 2021- May 2022

2022

## Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee

July  
27

August  
No meeting

September  
8

October  
26

November  
30

December  
No meeting

January  
5

February  
2

March  
3

April  
20

May  
CABINET

### REVIEW : Assisted Living Technologies

Topic selection / scoping stage

Witness  
Session 1

Witness / evidence / consultation stage

Witness  
Session 2

Witness  
Session 3

Findings, conclusions and recommendations

Findings

Final review report agreement

Final report

Target Cabinet reporting

CABINET

### Regular service & performance monitoring

Mid year Budget Update

X

Annual Complaints & service report update

X

Cabinet's budget proposals for next financial year

X

Children's Safeguarding Partnership (formerly the LSCB)

X

Annual SAB (Adults Safeguarding Board report)

X

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services update

X

Standards and Quality in Education in Hillingdon 20/21

X

Quarterly School Places Planning Update

X

X

Standards Attainment report (incl. School Improvements & Outcomes of Discussions on Performance)

X

Report / minutes from the Corporate Parenting Panel

X

X

X

X

Cabinet Forward Plan Monthly Monitoring

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

### One-off service monitoring

Update on Telecare Line

Semi-Independent Living for Young People

X

Carers Strategy Delivery Update

Update on the new SEN Strategy, and the new Additional Needs Strategy - TBC

X

Better Care Fund - Learning Disabilities/Autism Workstream

X

A review of Hillingdon Adult and Community Learning Service on behalf of the previous Residents, Education & Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee

X

Promoting Healthy Lifestyles (Sport and Physical Activity)

X

Public Health Update on Initiatives brought in as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic

X

Public Health Integrated Service Contracts

X

Overview of Corporate Parenting Responsibilities										
Changes to our admissions criteria										
Access to EHCPs for Children with SEND										
Elective Home Education policy - update on new policy implementation (TBC)										
Youth Services update										
Early Years Provision Update										
<b>Past review delivery</b>										
Making the Council more autism-friendly (1 year on)										
<b>Internal use only</b>										
Report deadline	14 Jul 21		25-Aug-21	13-Oct-21	17-Nov-21		17-Dec-21	20-Jan-22	16-Feb-22	07-Apr-22
Agenda published	19 Jul 21		31-Aug-21	18-Oct-21	22-Nov-21		24-Dec-21	25-Jan-22	23-Feb-22	12-Apr-22