

Committee	Dated:
Education Board	24/09/2020
Subject: Adult Education, Skills and Apprenticeships Update	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Barbara Hamilton, Head of Adult Skills, Education and Apprenticeship Service Daniel McGrady, Lead Policy Officer (Education, Culture and Skills)	

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on the City Corporation's delivery of adult education and apprenticeship training by the Adult Skills and Education Service (ASES). This update is brought to Members due to their strategic oversight of the Skills Strategy 2019-23 which commits to ensuring the delivery of high quality and impactful adult education and apprenticeships.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note:

- Updates on the provision of adult education and apprenticeships at the City Corporation including performance data summaries in **Appendix 1** and summaries of current projects in **Appendix 2**.
- Updates on the ASES' response to COVID-19.
- Progress on preparations for a likely Ofsted inspection of the service under the new Ofsted Inspection Framework.
- Progress on addressing some of the wider policy challenges for apprenticeships as discussed by the Education Board at the 5 March 2020 meeting.

Main Report

Background

1. The Adult Skills, Education and Apprenticeship Service (ASES) is the City Corporation's main Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Greater London Authority (GLA) contracted provider of adult education and skills services. The service and its external delivery partners also provide fully accredited vocational training and support to apprentices at the City Corporation and partner employers across London.
2. Since the last update submitted to the Education Board on 23 May 2019, ASES have:
 - a. Integrated the recommendations from an independent review into its Quality Improvement Plan and continues to implement these.
 - b. On a monthly basis implemented a process of continued service improvement in preparation for achieving an outstanding quality in a likely inspection by Ofsted.
 - c. Responded to the COVID-19 lockdown by moving the majority of its education and training to online virtual learning environments and hybrid learning models.
 - d. Launched a Digital Strategy Programme aimed at improving learners' and tutor's digital skills and use of technology in teaching and learning; and,

- e. Reflected the Education Board's discussion on the Apprentice Levy in its own delivery of apprenticeships.

COVID-19: Recover, Retain and Reform

3. Leading up to the Prime Minister's announcement of lockdown on 23 March 2020, ASES had begun to move its provision of adult learning (ACL) courses and apprenticeship training to online delivery. Since the start of lockdown, the service has delivered 95% of all Adult Learning courses online and 100% internal apprenticeship training, equalling around 103 of the 145 planned ACL courses due to be delivered over the 2019-20 academic year. To support this transition for learners and tutors, ASES:
 - Rapidly commissioned virtual learning software packages to enable online lectures, classes, and work and feedback exchanges
 - Assessed every course for its suitability for virtual teaching and learning, making alterations to course content where needed
 - Assessed every learner's access to technology and digital skills levels to access online content
 - Provided one-to-one support to learners to access digital content and participate fully in virtual learning
 - Sent hardcopy resources and gestures of goodwill to learners who would struggle to continue their learning online
 - Trained tutors in using virtual learning software and adapting their teaching to the virtual environment
4. ASES are preparing for a phased return to hybrid and face-to-face teaching over the 2020/21 Academic Year which will be in line with the opening of the main learning centres: Guildhall, Golden Lane, Avondale, Portsoken and Sir John Cass. ASES will prioritise face-to-face learning for those learners who are digitally excluded and for courses which are compromised and/or made impossible by online delivery (such as ballroom dancing). To retain some of the benefits of online learning, ASES are reviewing the curriculum to understand which courses may continue to be delivered online long-term and where flipped models of learning would be beneficial.

Adult Community Learning (ACL) Update

5. The data for ACL enrolment numbers for Academic Year 2019/20 is included in **Appendix 1**.
6. In summary, there has been a slight increase in the number of learners who have registered onto Functional Skills: Maths and English courses. Moreover, there has been an increase in the number of certified qualification achievements in English and Maths, leading to further learning and progression into employment.
7. ASES provides effective training and skills development activities to support social mobility. The curriculum is carefully designed to respond to the employment and skills needs of businesses and the resident communities. Qualifications and full accreditation are available in subject areas such as Maths, English, City Guides, ESOL, Bookkeeping and AAT Finance. This focus has stimulated an increase in the provision of Level 2, 3 and 4 apprenticeship courses. Discussions are taking place within senior management to determine the feasibility of delivering non-apprenticeship, full-cost recovery subjects to adults and employers.

8. Summaries of current projects are included in **Appendix 2**.

Apprenticeships Update

9. The data for apprenticeship achievement and progression rates for Academic Year 2019/20 is included in **Appendix 1**.
10. In summary, there were 175 active apprenticeships over the 2019/20 Academic Year. This number includes 45 non-COL apprentices. The achievement and progress of apprentices managed by ASES is so far good. There has been an increase in the number of apprentices who are completing their apprenticeship training from the previous year. The number of early leavers is now 7 (this includes apprentices who have left their apprenticeships to secure permanent employment). The overall success rate is 89% and 17 apprentices successfully completed their End Point Assessments (EPA) with 10 of these apprentices achieving a final distinction grade for their completed work.
11. In 2020 so far, there has been a total 15 apprentices who have progressed from a Level 2 to a Level 3 apprenticeship and 14 apprentices secured COL employment or further apprenticeships. Additionally, 9 apprentices completed their apprenticeships and were employed by other organisations and 2 apprentices progressed onto university-based degree courses.

Ofsted Readiness

12. The next inspection of ASES by Ofsted will be under the Universal Inspection Framework introduced by the Department for Education in September 2019. This framework focuses on three main areas of investigation: The Intent of the curriculum, the Implementation of the curriculum and the Impact on learners' achievement and progression. To support the service to prepare for the inspection under the new framework, the Strategic Education and Skills Director Chairs a monthly Ofsted Preparation Working Group which joins colleagues from ASES, HR and Commissioning with support from an independent consultant to self-assess ASES against the framework and address areas for improvement as they are identified. The Education Board will be updated on the progress towards inspection and any outcomes.

Strategy and Policy Considerations

13. At the meeting of the Education Board on 5 March 2020, Members discussed a paper on the national outcomes and challenges of the Apprenticeship Levy and raised some considerations for officers. *Table 1* below outlines these considerations and presents work underway across the Corporation to address them:

Table 1: Members' Comments on Apprenticeships and Work Underway across the City Corporation

Members' Comments	Work Underway
The need for apprenticeships to be recognised and valued by the Family of Schools in the same way as	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The promotion and value of apprenticeships is a regular agenda topic at the termly Skills Forum which brings together one governor and one staff member from each of the Family of Schools to cover operational and strategic oversight in the school.

progressions to university and not considered as a second-tier option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeships are heavily showcased in the annual London Careers Festival (LCF). At LCF 2019, Apprentice19 showcased 57 apprenticeship providers to over 2000 young people. At LCF 2020, a wholly virtual event, there were 6 online sessions focused on apprenticeship pathways and over 17 resources promoting the route to young people. Planned visits to school assemblies and parent open days.
It was suggested that the City Corporation could review its support to small and medium enterprises in their delivery of apprenticeships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASES are developing stronger links with Small Business Forums. ASES actively markets sector specific apprenticeships to small businesses. ASES provides inhouse support to SMEs in how to best engage with the apprenticeship programme.
It was suggested that the City could provide case studies of people that have come through the apprenticeship system and flourished	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Education Unit will include case studies of apprenticeships in its Annual Report which could then be showcased more widely to promote the benefits of apprenticeships to education providers, businesses and families. Positive news stories featuring apprentices have been covered in both internal and external media reports. ASES is in the process of reviewing its online presence and promotion of apprenticeships and is working with Communications and HR on effective strategies for using case studies as an effective means of promotion and recruitment. The re-construction of the COL website has resulted in some problems in promoting apprenticeships and booking various courses and adult education. These matters are being resolved.
It was suggested that the City could focus its attention on relevant skills for the local area and garner support from companies within the City to support apprentices to develop those skills (e.g. Digital/Artificial intelligence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASES have launched a Digital Programme focused on ensuring that digital skills development is offered and embedded across the curriculum, that tutors have the digital skills to tutor effectively, that digital technologies enhance teaching and learning and that ASES have a strong web presence. A key action of the curriculum work stream is to engage businesses in digital sectors in enriching the curriculum with work-based learning and/or offering their expertise to tutors and learners. ASES are developing stronger links with local London business to identify their skill needs.
Collate evidence of apprenticeship pathways that have led to MBAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collation of evidence and case studies of apprenticeships in Business Administration would be included in the wider collation of evidence and best practice mentioned above.

Conclusion

14. This report updates Members on the provision of adult education and apprenticeship training by ASES, including the service's response to COVID-19, its preparations for an Ofsted Inspection under the new framework and work underway to address Members' comments on apprenticeships during a past meeting of the Board. The next update from ASES is due at the May 2021 Education Board meeting.

Appendix

- Appendix 1 - ACL and Apprenticeships Performance Data
- Appendix 2 – ACL and Apprenticeships Projects and Case Studies (Non-Public)

Barbara Hamilton

Head of Adult Skills Education
and Apprenticeships Service
T: 020 7332 1755/07920703087

E: barbara.hamilton@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Daniel McGrady

Lead Policy Officer (Education,
Culture and Skills)
T: 020 7332 1864

E: daniel.mcgrady@cityoflondon.gov.uk