

Committees: Community and Children's Service – For Information	Dated: 4 th July 2024
Subject: Adult Skills, Education and Apprenticeship Update.	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse Engaged Communities • Providing Excellent Services • Leading Sustainable Environment
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Barbara Hamilton, Head of Adult Skills Education and Apprenticeships, Department of Community and Children's Services	

Summary

- The purpose of this report is to provide Committee Members with an update of the Adult Skills Education and Apprenticeship Service's delivery activities.
- The report will include a brief outline of some activities which are delivered as part of Adult and Community learning (ACL) course programmes. These courses are delivered in venues such as Barbican Library, Portsoken Community Centre, and the Golden Lane Community Centre. Additional course delivery venues are being discussed. For example, the Artizan Library and newly refurbished Community Hall space in East Aldgate.
- An increased emphasis has been placed on the delivery of accredited Maths, English and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses. The aim of these courses is to provide support to local Londoners. An increased number of City Corporation staff have enrolled on these courses.
- The ACL service currently delivers 85 courses each term. There are approximately 400 enrolments per quarter: 55 courses are accredited and will enable learners to progress onto higher/further education. For most of the learners, enrolment and fee payments are carried out online.

- The changes in concession and general course fees for 2024/25 programme have meant that the courses can be more competitive, better structured, and resourced (approximately a 40% increase in concession rates and a 15% increase in standard course fees). The increase in concession fees is in direct response to a percentage increase in course material.
- The demand for apprenticeship training in certain areas such as Customer Service, IT Digital Skills, Business Administration and Finance continues to grow.
- An increasing number of apprentices will complete their training in these areas and progress into sustainable employment and/or further education.
- The number of apprentices who are being recruited directly from local schools' academies and from neighbouring communities continues to remain low.
- The Bootcamp courses provided training for unemployed people in Cyber Security and Data Science. The service is in the process of delivery the fifth wave of Bootcamp courses.
- The recent partnership with the Job Centre Plus/Department for Work and Pensions programmes has enabled the service to develop a more direct link between training skills and employment. The Greater London Authority (GLA) supports a skills development programme. The links with Job Centre Plus provide the Adult Skills, Education and Apprenticeship Service (ASES) with a guarantee that participants will be currently unemployed and so will respond positively to employment options.
- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) secured the London contract for universal support for those not in employment, education, or training (NEET). This contract will be delivered in partnership with seven local authorities.
- An extensive project is being delivered in conjunction with Job Centre Plus. This project requires ASES to work with an increasing number of local unemployed people to provide training in a range of areas. These learners are also offered support with job search, CV writing and interview practise.
- The annual City Guides Green Badge training has been revised, and improved ways for delivering this course are now in place.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The design of the new timetable for delivery of ACL courses has meant that the new type and course delivery times can now attract a wider group of learners. For example, additional jewellery and textile design classes have been included. An increased number of twilight and evening courses allowed learners who are on the waiting list to immediately engage in learning.
2. The service has also increased the number of maths classes and expanded the availability of different levels and course locations/venues. Additional community space situated in the East of the City is currently being discussed and is being considered for further expansion of the maths, English and digital skills/information technology courses.
3. There has been an increase in the number of learners who have enrolled on ACL courses. For example, the table below shows the enrolment numbers for the last academic year compared to the current enrolment.
4. The increase in enrolment for these subject areas is linked to employers stipulating that potential employees should have basic level maths and English qualifications.

Academic Year	Course/Enrolment Numbers	Course/Enrolment Numbers	Course/Enrolment Numbers
2022/23	English Functional Skills 75	Maths Functional Skills 70	Health and Social Care – Level 2/3 80
2023/24	English Functional Skills 90	Maths Functional Skills 85	Health and Social Care 87

5. There has also been an increase in enrolments for courses such as Pilates and ballroom dancing. These courses are directly linked to the need for improvement in residents' health and wellbeing, and the need to reduce individual social isolation and loneliness.
6. The ACL personal development training areas have grown into what the GLA and Ofsted will define as social clubs. These clubs cannot be funded with the GLA grant. It is therefore necessary for each course to develop a clear structure that demonstrates individual progression and growth.

7. The courses must demonstrate clear evidence of effective teaching and learning.
8. The GLA has recently introduced seven criteria for assessing the effectiveness of this area of learning:

Purpose (for the Adult Learning sector)	Objectives
i. Engaging and/or building confidence	Improved confidence and willingness to engage in learning
ii. Preparation for further learning	Acquisition of skills preparing people for training
iii. Preparation for employment	Acquisition for skills preparing people for employment or self-employment
iv. Improving essential skills including English, maths, ESOL and digital skills	Improved digital, financial literacy and/or communication skills
v. Equipping parents/carers to support children's learning	Parent/carers are better equipped to support and encourage their children's learning
vi. Health and wellbeing	Improved/maintained health and/or social wellbeing
vii. Developing stronger communities	Develop stronger communities, with more self-sufficient, connected, and proactive welfare, health, tackling anti-social behaviour, increased online and self-organised learning, leading to the lives of our most troubled families being turned around.

9. ASES has ensured that all seven purposes are included in the Individual Learning Plan for all learners.
10. Over many years the service has maintained a low concession fee of £20.00 for learners who are over the age of 60 years or those who are unemployed. It has become necessary to increase the concession rate to £30.00 per enrolment.
11. The concession rates are not affecting enrolment numbers; these rates are affecting the number of learners who are retained on the programme and those who eventually complete their learning.
12. There is a consistent increase in the number of learners who have enrolled on ESOL courses. Currently 190 learners are enrolled. The service is delivering 10 ESOL sessions per week, with levels ranging from pre-entry to level 1. The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) course, a professional language qualification, is due to begin in autumn term 2024.
13. There are several evening classes being delivered at the Golden Lane Community Centre and at Guildhall. These courses cater for those learners who are working during office hours.

14. Functional skills maths and English courses are also recruiting well. The completion rates for these courses are approximately 98% and the examination success rate is 95%. The progress rate to a higher-level qualification for these learners is also good.
15. There has also been an increase in the number of learners who have secured employment because of completing a maths, English or ESOL qualification. Learners take full advantage of the GROW Employability Project employment support activities.
16. This is a project that offers information advice and guidance to learners who are seeking employment. The GROW Employability Project offers support with drafting a CV and provides one-to-one preparation for interviews.
17. The number of learners who have secured employment has increased from five in 2022/23 to more than 15 in 2023/24. The request from learners for this level of support continues to grow.
18. ASES continues to be responsible for the delivery of a range of apprenticeship qualifications. These include courses such as Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT), business administration, customer service, zookeeper and aquarist horticulture, human resources, payroll, information technology, digital skills, and events.
19. The service also provides additional learning support to those apprentices who need it. A minimum of level 2 functional skills maths and English is an essential requirement for completing the apprentice qualification. For those apprentices who do not have this qualification, ASES will deliver both sets of learning.
20. In 2022/23, 80% of apprentices successfully completed their apprenticeship (in year of completion). In areas such as customer service and business administration, 73% of apprentices achieved the highest examination/end point assessment award, with distinction grades.
21. An increased number of apprentices are using their qualification as part entry to university/higher education courses. The number of apprentices who secure employment with their apprentice training organisation also continues to increase.
22. The City of London Corporation has successfully secured the GLA tender to deliver a universal NEET programme. This programme will require ASES to deliver an individual learning planned programme for 1,000 16- to 25-year-olds who are NEET. The programme will be delivered within 12-months. It is scheduled to be completed in March 2025.
23. Project work with East London Job Centre Plus continues to progress well.

24. During the current academic year, 90 adults recently participated in ASES training courses: 85% have secured interviews for employment.
25. City Guides is an annual programme. On average, it receives between 180 and 250 applications for 28 places for the Green Badge course. This badge allows qualified and registered guides to conduct guiding walks/tours within the Square Mile.
26. There are 28 candidates due to successfully complete the Green Badge course in July (the final number will not be known until after participants finish sitting their exams). Graduation of successful candidates takes place in October 2024 at Mansion House, where participants are presented with two badges/certificates: one from City of London Corporation; and the other from the Institute of Tourist Guiding.
27. Successful candidates can register with the Institute of Tourist Guiding to gain a place on their register to be recommended as an approved tour guide.

Current Position

28. The ACL programme has increased its range of courses. The course programme includes more accredited courses and ensures that there are more Job Centre Plus activities. The outcomes continue to exceed expectations. Learners have engaged with the ASES training to improve their employment potential. For example, more than 240 unemployed adults have been referred onto the skills programme. Of these learners: 75 have completed the ASES skills and employment course; and 140 engaged with national apprenticeship week activities. In response to a Job Centre Plus centre manager request, a new numeracy programme is currently under discussion with the aim to support learners with budget management.
29. There are currently 104 apprentices on various Levels 2, 3 and 4 programmes through ASES.
30. So far in 2024, there have been 10 completions: three apprentices secured a distinction grade; and three apprentices secured four passes. All of these were timely completions. Eight apprentices secured sustainable employment and one apprentice has progressed onto higher education.
31. Completing in July 2024 will be a further six customer service apprentices, four Level 3 business administration, and three apprentices from the horticulture level 3 course. A further 12 apprentices will complete their training within the calendar year. The forecast is that 10 apprentices will secure distinction grades.
32. In the previous full teaching year, 26 apprentices completed their apprenticeship courses, 14 achieving distinctions across the various apprenticeship areas, such as Levels 2 and 3 in AAT, and Level 3 business administration.

33. The ASES team secured the wave 5 Bootcamp programme. The wave 4 courses delivered learning to 80 data science and 30 cyber security learners: 85 students (65%) secured interviews with employers such as Barclays, Amazon, BBC, BP, PWC and Transport for London.
34. The wave 5 Bootcamp programme will commence in July 2024. The GLA, (the funders), are waiting for the outcomes from the Green Construction Sustainability bid.
35. The Digital Hub programme completed in March 2024. Overall, there were 629 participants in training programmes, and 95 learners started new jobs as a result. Apprenticeships or work placement were offered as pre-apprenticeship option.

There were 142 employers who engaged in training and individual recruitment events, such as the Digital Skills Careers Fair. Employers who engaged with various programmes included Amazon, BBC Academy, Ford Motors, Pearsons UK, and Symons.

36. The main partners for delivering the UKSPF Universal NEET targets are in place. The seven local authority partners have each been given a profiled delivery plan. This plan includes target achievement numbers, completion deadlines, training content, and a calculated payment schedule. Delivery contract agreements have been prepared and circulated to all partners.
37. A first step into computing course is due to commence shortly. The Job Centre Plus management team are keen for the joint approach to delivering training, skills, and employment options to continue.
38. The City Guides programme continues to go from strength to strength. The number of applicants who have applied to engage in this 12-month course has increased.
39. The course has recently undergone a detailed review of its delivery processes, and due to the final report recommendations, the structure of the course has been slightly amended. These changes include all students having full online access to the Moodle information-sharing platform.
40. **Strategic implications** – ASES is fully aligned to and fully supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan.
41. **Financial implications** – None
42. **Resource implications** – None
43. **Legal implications** – None
44. **Risk implications** – None

45. **Equalities implications** – ASES is fully compliant with our public Sector Equality Duty 2010. The proposals in this report will not have any negative impact on people protected by existing equality legislation – age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

46. **Climate implications** – None

47. **Security implications** – None

Conclusion

48. The ACL provision continues to provide a good community training and skills service. The service has successfully secured appropriate funding to deliver a combination of local and London-wide education skills and community programmes.

49. ASES is committed to responding to the skills and education needs of different communities. For example, ESOL, maths and English skills are in demand in many communities, especially those who are seeking employment and further education opportunities. The service is also responsible for the delivery of health and wellbeing activities. The course file includes the delivery of courses such as Pilates, jewellery making, sewing and textiles, and ballroom dancing. These high-demand courses continue to successfully recruit from residents.

50. The UKSPF, universal NEET programme and the London delivery agreement with seven local authorities is clear evidence of ASES's commitment to working to support local communities. A further extension of that commitment is demonstrated in the ongoing work with East London Job Centres.

51. The Bootcamps programme provides training in the skills that employers need, such as cyber security and data science, and has successfully progressed to wave 5. In the last training, 160 learners successfully completed the courses, and approximately 75% of learners secured interviews with recruiting employers.

52. ASES's skills projects are directly linked with the needs of employers. The work with apprentice fishmongers in the northern regional areas is an example of the service working with employers to assist them with training and their educational needs.

53. The apprenticeship programme is working well and delivers good outcomes, with an increase in apprentices progressing into employment. The 2023 figures show an 80% completion rate for apprentices. The forecast for 2024 shows a marked increase in successful completion and progression rates.

54. Additional outreach, individual support and marketing work may be needed to ensure that the service provides apprentice training and employment opportunities to young adults – especially those who attend the City of London family of schools, and those who are disadvantaged and live in our neighbouring communities.

Appendices

- None

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