

Wandsworth Lifelong Learning Learner Involvement strategy

June 2009

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Introduction

This document sets out Wandsworth Lifelong Learning's initial strategy for involving its learners in the development of its education, skills and employment programmes to ensure that they meet the needs and aspirations of Wandsworth's learners.

Wandsworth Lifelong Learning works with a very wide range of learners and learning providers so a single approach to learner involvement is not likely to be appropriate to all its learners' needs. This document outlines Lifelong Learning's plans to develop a range of methods for providers to their respective learner groups.

This strategy has been prepared with the Lifelong Learning Team. It will be circulated to the Lifelong Learning Development Group, learners, providers and other agencies for further comment. This strategy should be read with other Wandsworth Lifelong Learning plans, in particular, the Equality and Diversity strategy.

How the strategy works

Learner involvement strategy is led by Wandsworth Council Lifelong Learning (WCLL) in consultation with London Central Learning and Skills Council and Wandsworth Lifelong Learning Development Group (LLDG) which represents partners from Further and Higher Education, other Council departments, schools, libraries, Prospects, Jobcentre Plus, voluntary and community sector groups.

WCLL is part of the Council's Children and Young People's Services Division. Its Learner Involvement Strategy is one of a number of strategies and plans that support the Lifelong Learning Development Plan which contributes to the wider Children and Young People's Plan (CYYP), the Employment and Skills Strategy and the Community Strategy which are all available on the Council's website.

Monitoring and Review

WCLL will review progress throughout the year and respond to any new priorities as they emerge, recommending further action where necessary.

Partner organisations will also carry out their own internal monitoring and review. All learner involvement work must meet the quality guidelines and the standards of the Common Inspection Framework and WCLL will support staff and providers to ensure that this is achieved.

Our Vision

Lifelong Learning will work in partnership with its learners to create exciting, relevant and high quality learning which meets the needs and aspirations of its almost 12,000 learners, from very different backgrounds and experiences, who take part each year in our adult and community learning, Family Learning or skills and employment training programmes.

Crucial to our vision is the active and consistent involvement of learners in the development of an inclusive and wide ranging service that truly offers 'something for everyone'.

Key activities

Learner involvement has included the following:

- Borough-wide learner surveys (annual) in addition to the National Learner Survey and local provider surveys;
- Awards events and celebrations for learners;
- Targeted events such as Adult Learners' week, Family Learning week, Black History week;
- Promoting the establishment of learner groups, eg Friends of Putney School of Art and Design which contributed to the LA's response to the Informal Learning consultation in 2008;
- Vigorous widening participation and community development work resulting in courses that have been established specifically in response to learner demand (eg Storm, Imani, taster sessions on the Learning Bus);
- Collation and analysis of individual learner feedback collected by providers which is fed back to the lifelong learning team and providers to assist service improvement;
- From March 2010, we will use our Learning Bus to provide video, audio and face-to-face interview opportunities for learners to give us their views. For example, Big Brother style video diaries and vox pops';
- We will also initiate a series of coffee/lunch/tea-time meetings with learners in the community to discuss their ideas;
- Our most recent learner survey (November 2009) asked learners if they would be part of a learner panel and 116 agreed.

This strategy supports Lifelong Learning's Priorities 2009-12 by:

Involving learners in the development, monitoring and evaluation of learning cuts across and supports each of the priorities listed below. We already have a good understanding of learners' needs and aspirations from the feedback we currently collect, particularly through our widening participation work.

By developing a consistent strategy which will inform each provider's engagement and involvement activities we will develop a more detailed picture which will enable us to develop a service which is more flexible and more responsive to learner need. By working with learners to identify the ways in which they prefer to learn, we will be in a better position to meet the government's skills for life and employability targets.

Consultation and review

Providers and learners have been involved in the preparation of this plan through the Lifelong Learning Development Group. The Employer Engagement Strategy underpins the Adult and Community and Lifelong Learning strategies and contributes to the Children and Young People's Department Plan, in particular Priority 5 which highlights the improvement of post-16 learners' educational achievements; increasing the number of young people in employment, education and training and promoting employment programmes for parents and carers.

Lifelong Learning carries out an annual learner survey and collects regular feedback from learners to inform plans for future learning.

Feedback section

Are there other priorities or actions you think should be added to the Learner Involvement Strategy? Is there anything in it you would not include? Please tell us what you think in the box below.

Additional actions/priorities are:

Other comments:

Please return this form to:

Karen Tolton, Professional Centre, Franciscan Road, London SW17 8HE

Email: ktolton@wandsworth.gov.uk

Your name & organisation (if appropriate)

Address

Postcode

Thank you!

Appendix 1: The local context: meeting need – stimulating demand

Wandsworth Lifelong Learning (WLL) is part of the Children and Young People's Department of Wandsworth Council. It includes Adult and Community Learning, Family Learning, 14-19 Developments, Business and Education and also manages a range of training and employment projects. Adult and Community Learning provides an entry point for a large number of learners who can access Skills for Life, employability and IT training in a range of community settings that are non-threatening and provide important routes back into learning and training.

WLL works with a wide range of partners including colleges, libraries, schools and community groups to deliver learning to approximately 10,500 adult learners each year. In 2008, it won contracts to deliver Train to Gain, Apprenticeships and to establish a dedicated supported learning and employment network for people with learning disabilities and difficulties. With funding from the European Social Fund, WLL established skills and employment projects for residents in the more deprived wards of the borough and between 2009-11, it will be working as part of a European partnership to develop training and tools to assist self-employment.

About the London Borough of Wandsworth

Wandsworth is the largest inner London borough and reaches from Vauxhall in central London to the edge of Richmond Park to the west – including five miles of frontage onto the River Thames. Wandsworth has five distinct town centres: Clapham Junction, Balham, Tooting, Wandsworth, Putney and smaller district centres at Earlsfield, Southfields, and Roehampton. It is largely residential (with some dense areas of employment) and has many different types of housing from the leafy suburbs of Putney to the inner-city housing estates of Battersea.

WBC Policy Unit's Priority Area Overview, January 2007, identifies Latchmere as 'being the most deprived ward by quite some distance' in the borough. Queenstown and Roehampton are the next most deprived sharing similar deprivation indices, followed by Tooting. These areas are particularly targeted in the borough's Employment and Skills, Community and Lifelong Learning strategies.

Wandsworth is a young borough with an expanding population, the largest growth is expected in the riverside wards where largescale housing development continues. In 2007, Wandsworth's total population was just over 281,800 compared with 272,200 at the time of the 2001 census. Wandsworth also has a much higher proportion of younger adults than other boroughs – 48% of its population compared with 28% nationally and 36% in Greater London.

Wandsworth has an increasingly ethnically diverse population, 26.3% of its residents are from BME groups compared with 20% in 1991. Wandsworth Local Strategic Partnership reports that 13.7% of the economically active population are people with disabilities.

Employment and skills in Wandsworth

50% of the working age population in Wandsworth is qualified to NVQ Level 4 or above. This is twice the national average and a likely product of the high number of professionals who choose to live in Wandsworth. However, 13% of the working age population has no qualifications, the same as the national average. *The Wandsworth CYPP* reports that: “the overall economic position in Wandsworth is good. The employment rate is one of the best nationally. However, unemployment rates vary significantly across the borough, with a higher than average proportion of claimants living in the Roehampton and Battersea areas. The Census also reveals that these areas have a high proportion of dependent children living within workless households, correlating with areas of significant social housing. Overall in Wandsworth, 22% of all children live in workless households.

The Learning and Skills Council Central London 2007 Needs Assessment outlined a number of skills gaps in Central London. These include:

- ICT, particularly Microsoft products and networking
- web design and wider communications technologies
- hospitality and catering
- construction industry (employers are demanding “a general increase in skill levels and qualifications”)
- professional and business services
- retailing.

Appendix 2: Glossary

BPS	Battersea Power Station
BSF	Building Schools for the Future
CIF	Common Inspection Framework
CLC	City Learning Centre
FL	Family Learning
FLLN	Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy
IAG	Information Advice and Guidance
ILP/R	Individual Learning Plan/Record
LCLSC	London Central Learning and Skills Council
LLDG	Lifelong Learning Development Group
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
OTL	Observation of teaching and learning
PSAD	Putney School of Art and Design
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan
SCC	Southfields Community College
SoW	Scheme of Work
STC	South Thames College
WFL	Wider Family Learning
WLL	Wandsworth Lifelong Learning

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Revision history	
Most recent update and version no:	June 2009 v.1
Original strategy/policy issue date:	n/a
Previous revision/update	n/a
Next review date:	June 2010
Target audience:	All
Name/job title of originator/author:	Santino Fragola, Head of Lifelong Learning
Contact details:	sfragola@wandsworth.gov.uk
Location on system:	

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