

From: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education
Matt Dunkley, CBE, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 28 March 2019

Subject: **Community Learning and Skills at Kent County Council**

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper:

Future Pathway of Paper:

Electoral Division: All

Recommendation(s):

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the report.

1. Introduction

1.1 Kent County Council's Community Learning and Skills Service (CLS) is an umbrella term for three brands: Kent Adult Education, Kent Training and Apprenticeships and Skills Plus Service.

It seeks to engage with five types of learner in particular:

1. Young people entering the world of work
2. Adults seeking skills for employment
3. Organisations seeking to improve the skills and potential of their staff
4. Adults learning for personal development, pleasure and wellbeing
5. Families, especially those in Kent's disadvantaged neighbourhoods

1.2 To achieve this, it offers a range of programmes which are either non-accredited or accredited. Non-accredited programmes can be for fee-paying learners (PCDL) or free courses for families ("Family Learning") or learners in neighbourhoods defined as deprived communities. Accredited programmes can be free for learners (in the case of all types of English and Maths), or courses designed to improve employability skills where learners make a small fee contribution to their course. CLS also provides a significant number of traineeships and apprenticeships to both young adults (16-18) and adults across the County. It also offers a "Work-Ready" programme to young adults in the County.

2. Background

2.1 Overall levels of participation for 2017-18 are shown in Table One below.

Table One: CLS Learners and Enrolments by Business Area 2017-18

Business Area	Learners	Enrolments
Community Learning (PCDL)	12,675	21,029
Community Learning (Neighbourhood and Family Learning)	4,636	5,649
Adult Skills Budget (Accredited Courses)	2,699	3,679
Apprenticeships	664	1,662
16-18	302	1,263
Other	1,708	2,287
All CLS	22,684	35,569

2.2 Its funding for 16-18-year-old learners is specifically targeted at those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). These learners have typically left school and/or their Further education course and joined CLS's Work Ready programme. To achieve this outcome CLS works closely with skills and employability teams within the Council on a targeted programme to engage this group.

2.3 Outcomes for learners on this programme are good, with many going on to take an apprenticeship, an accredited course leading to an employability outcome, a course at an F.E. College or a further course with CLS.

2.4 It is worth noting that the number of young adults classified as NEET is declining, as more young people choose to stay on at school or gain employment. The Kent NEET population of 861 in February 2019 comprises 277 in the year 12 age group and 584 in the year 13 age group and represents 2.7% of the total in this age group across the County. CLS will continue to work with other agencies in the County, including schools, F.E. Colleges and careers guidance agencies such as CXK, as well as the ESFA to reduce these numbers further.

2.5 CLS's Strategic Statement 2019-22 gives the following priorities for the next three years:

- Deliver a high-quality service which is recognised by Ofsted as Outstanding
 - Grow key areas of delivery such as apprenticeships
 - Attract new and additional sources of income
 - Achieve a financial surplus which we can reinvest in CLS
 - Support KCC's Asset Utilisation Strategy by implementing our own Property Strategy
 - Harmonise our programme with other providers
 - Improve productivity and increase efficiency
 - Work in partnership with agencies to increase opportunities and pathways for vulnerable adults
- 2.6 In doing so it will continue to support public agendas expressed by government agencies such as the Department for Education and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, as well as the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Strategy. It will also continue to work with local Colleges of Further Education to deliver the outcomes identified in the recent Area Review of post compulsory education in Kent, conducted by the F.E. Commissioner in 2017.
- 2.7 In addition to supporting the public agenda to reduce the number of NEETs, improve employability skills and promote educational and career pathways, CLS also makes a significant contribution to a range of "soft" outcomes, identified in the Government's "New Challenges, New Chances: Next Steps in Implementing the Further Education Reform Programme". These include:
- Overcoming social isolation
 - Increasing community cohesion
 - Encouraging civic engagement and volunteering
 - Reduce costs on welfare, health and anti-social behaviour
 - Turned around the lives of our most troubled families
 - Focussing on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills
 - Widen participation and transform people's destinies by supporting progression relevant to personal circumstances
- 2.8 CLS believes, based on strong evidence, that it contributes to all these outcomes. It reports on its contribution to these goals to its KCC Client

Group and in its annual Self-Assessment Report. This evidence will be critical in any Ofsted inspection under its newly revised framework.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 CLS is entirely funded from external sources. It receives no “base” funding from KCC whatsoever, although it makes an annual surplus contribution of £1.2m to KCC.
- 3.2 It currently earns £10.7m annually from central government contracts, awarded by the Department for Education via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). This is made up from £6.2m Community Learning and £2.47m Adult Skills Budget (now combined and named the Adult Education Budget), £850k of 16-18 learner responsive funding and £1.1m of apprenticeship funding. We aim to target increased funding drawdown in the apprenticeship and 16-18 learner responsive contracts. It also annually attracts £2.5m in fee income from its learners.
- 3.3 The ESFA’s £2.47m Adult Skills Budget (ASB) is for accredited provision. Although this funding is paid to KCC on a monthly basis, all students need to meet specific criteria for CLS to earn and retain these funds. If it does not meet these criteria in full then the ESFA will “claw back” the funds it has awarded.
- 3.4 In any given year, CLS needs to attract approximately 3000 students to its accredited provision in order to ensure that the ESFA does not “claw back” ASB funding. However, funding for each type of student depends on the tariff awarded by the ESFA for each course. Longer courses, and courses requiring learning resource support (e.g. for counselling courses) will attract higher levels of funding per capita.
- 3.5 If a student leaves a course after a few weeks then CLS will endeavour to replace them on that course in order to ensure the funding target is met. It sends monthly data reports to the ESFA predicting whether it will be able to meet the £2.47m funding target set for the year and constantly monitors this data.
- 3.6 Students qualify for Adult Skills Budget funding if:
 - their course learning aim meets ESFA funding criteria found on its Learning Aims Database;
 - the student is retained on the course i.e. attends for a minimum period or required time; and
 - they achieve on their course, i.e. achieve the course’s qualification aim.
- 3.7 Students’ retention rates and achievement rates are then calculated to determine an overall Success Rate for the student, their course, the curriculum area and CLS.
- 3.8 In addition to financial criteria, the ESFA also sets minimum standards for Success Rates. Failure to meet these standards can trigger a Notice to improve from the ESFA or an Ofsted inspection.

3.9 CLS has a very strong track record of meeting the financial criteria set by the ESFA and delivering accredited provision which always succeeds the ESFA's minimum standards.

4. Kent Policy Framework

4.1 Further detailed information about CLS can be found in:

CLS Business Plan 2018-19
CLS Self-Assessment Report 2017-18
CLS Strategic Statement 2019-22

5. Recommendations

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the report.
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6. Background Documents (plus links to document)

N/A

7. Contact details

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