



Northumberland

County Council

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 2020

LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE DRAFT SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR 2018/19

Report of: Dean Jackson, Service Director - Education and Skills

Cabinet Member: Councillor Wayne Daley

Purpose of report

This report provides an overview of the draft Northumberland Learning and Skills Service (LSS) Self-Assessment Report for 2018/19. This report is an early indication of the service performance in the academic year 2018/19 and is subject to the nationally validated data which will be released in early 2020.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members note and scrutinise the LSS performance report for the period 1st August 2018 to 31st July 2019.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the corporate objectives, and specifically impacts on the "Learning" and "Thriving" priorities included in the Corporate Plan 2018 - 2021.

Northumberland County Council
Learning and Skills Service Draft Self-Assessment Report
1st August 2018 - 31st July 2019

1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the draft self-assessment of the LSS for the period 1st August 2018 to 31st July 2019, based on interim final data. The nationally validated data set is expected to be available in early 2020. It is set out against the new OFSTED Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and therefore the format and focus will differ from previous self-assessments.

2. Service Organisation and Background

The LSS is externally funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) with around 90% of its funding earned through grants and contracts or earned via the Apprenticeship Levy. The service also attracts a number of grants for specialist work and is a sub-contractor for two Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) programmes, the Work Programme and its successor the Work and Health Programme. It delivers the Northumberland element of the regional Generation North East programme which is funded through the Cabinet Office. The service has a policy for the collection of enrolment fees and for lettings for premises. In 2018/19 the service delivered:

- targeted careers guidance for school-age children and for 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET);
- work related learning activities for school age children;
- supported internships, traineeships and apprenticeships;
- study programmes and adult education from Entry Level to Level 3 including technical and professional education funded through student loans;
- employability support and coaching for young people and adults participating in Work Programme, Generation NorthEast and Work and Health Programme.

In addition, the service hosts the Northumberland Information Advice and Support Service (IASS), a statutory service which provides confidential and impartial advice and support for children and young people with special educational needs and their families.

The service has good geographical coverage of the county with permanent delivery centres in Berwick, Alnwick, Morpeth, Cramlington, Bedlington, Ashington, Blyth, Prudhoe and Hexham.

Good use is also made of community and partner venues for the delivery of the service where this is appropriate.

3. Inspection

The service was inspected by OFSTED in June 2018 and retained its “Good” status. Immediately following the OFSTED inspection, the service was also inspected against the Matrix standard for Information, Advice and Guidance. It is mandatory to meet this standard in order to hold an ESFA contract. The scope of this inspection was widened to include the employability and careers guidance teams for the first time. The service was successful in maintaining its accreditation for the standard.

4. Headline Performance

The reduction in non-accredited learning delivery continues in line with the changes to government funding and priorities with a planned increase in the delivery of skills provision to meet the economic needs of the county, the LEP priorities and the needs of the unemployed and the low skilled. This strategic move will be a key feature of the curriculum moving forward in line with the requirements for the devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to the North of Tyne Combined Authority.

Accredited skills provision is complemented by non-accredited community learning which provides stepping-stones into learning for the hardest to reach and most disadvantaged groups.

The performance data below is provisional until the national validated data set is released.

Table 1: Classroom Learning Qualification Achievement Rates Summary

Achievement rates by Age		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	National Average
16-18	Leavers	335	278	361	
	Retention	92.8%	95.0%	94.7%	91.2%
	Pass	96.8%	94.7%	91.9%	89.0%
	Achieve	89.9%	89.9%	87.0%	81.2%
19+	Leavers	3398	3732	3266	
	Retention	94.6%	93.2%	95.6%	95.0%
	Pass	97.5%	97.1%	97.9%	94.6%
	Achieve	92.3%	90.5%	93.5%	89.9%

All Ages	Leavers	3733	4010	3627	
	Retention	94.5%	93.3%	95.1%	93.1%
	Pass	97.4%	97.0%	94.9%	91.8%
	Achieve	92.1%	90.5%	90.2%	85.5%

Performance in both age groups continues to be strong and remains above both national and provider type averages. The slight reduction in the 16-18 rates can be explained by the fact that, in line with service plans and in response to local need, the service is now working with more young people and adults with more barriers to learning and who have lower levels of attainment and greater levels of support needs when they enrol.

Apprenticeship performance continues to be very strong against national averages.

Table 2: Apprenticeships by age

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	National Average
16-18	Leavers	76	56	86	
	Overall Achievement	81.6%	90.4%	84.9%	69.1%
	Timely Achievement	74.4%	83.0%	75.0%	61.5%
19-23	Leavers	78	51	82	
	Overall Achievement	87.2%	89.1%	84.1%	70.4%
	Timely Achievement	80.8%	79.0%	70.9%	62.0%
24+	Leavers	51	47	48	
	Overall Achievement	82.4%	83.6%	75.0%	67.4%
	Timely Achievement	75.6%	83.2%	45.1%	56.8%

Table 3: Apprenticeships by level

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	National Average
Intermediate (Level 2)	Leavers	124	105	151	
	Overall Achievement	79.0%	88.1%	87.6%	64.9%
	Timely Achievement	76.0%	86.3%	81.4%	61.8%
Advanced (Level 3)	Leavers	78	47	63	
	Overall Achievement	92.3%	90.0%	73.4%	69.2%
	Timely Achievement	80.8%	83.6%	54.3%	58.8%
Higher (Level 4)	Leavers	3	1	2	
	Overall Achievement	66.7%	92.0%	100%	60.5%
	Timely Achievement	33.3%	90.0%	0.00%	49.5%

Table 4: Classroom Learning by Sector Subject Area

SSA Title		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	National Average
Health Public Services and Care	Leavers	376	224	256	
	Pass	100%	99.1%	96.9%	89.6%
	Timely Achieve	97.7%	96.4%	92.7%	
Science and Maths	Leavers	117	83	38	
	Pass	97.8%	89.7%	95.0%	81.9%
	Timely Achieve	77.8%	72.6%	95.0%	
Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal care	Leavers	57	26	23	
	Pass	100%	100%	100%	84.7%
	Timely Achieve	100%	100%	100%	
Engineering & Manufacturing	Leavers	59	37	23	
	Pass	98.2%	94.1%	100%	86.4%
	Timely Achieve	93.2%	86.5%	90%	
Construction, Planning & Built Env't	Leavers	87	96	125	
	Pass	100%	98.9%	87.9%	86.1%
	Timely Achieve	100%	96.9%	48.7%	
Information & Communication Tech	Leavers	496	335	254	
	Pass	97.3%	97.5%	99.4%	89.4%
	Timely Achieve	93.9%	92.5%	99.4%	
Retail & Commercial Enterprise	Leavers	59	61	6	
	Pass	98.2%	100%	75.0%	89.4%
	Timely Achieve	94.9%	98.4%	75.0%	
Arts Media & Publishing	Leavers	154	418	649	
	Pass	95.1%	98.7%	97.8%	88.2%
	Timely Achieve	87.7%	87.7%	97.8%	
Languages Literature & Culture	Leavers	785	1025	989	
	Pass	98.8%	98.2%	89.9%	82.9%
	Timely Achieve	90.7%	89.3%	89.9%	
Education & Training	Leavers	217	103	158	

	Pass	99.5%	100%	94.1%	67.7%
	Timely Achieve	94.0%	89.3%	91.2%	
Preparation for Life & Work	Leavers	1317	1581	1066	
	Pass	95.6%	95.2%	99.3%	84.9%
	Timely Achieve	91.3%	91.1%	99.1%	
Business Administration & Law	Leavers	11	18	201	
	Pass	100%	100%	79.7%	68.7%
	Timely Achieve	81.8%	83.3%	70.0%	

5. Quality of Education

The service makes use of a range of good and appropriate resources to support initial assessment, personal development and skills delivery. Many sites now offer much improved facilities. Learning through technology is encouraged although there is still more work required to fully harness the use of technology, particularly for learners' use outside classroom sessions.

Staff support an increasing number of vulnerable learners to overcome barriers. The coaching delivered to young people who are NEET that supports them into full time study or apprenticeships is invaluable. There is an early identification of need and well-planned bespoke interventions through the programme. As a result of this structured coaching, alongside strong mentoring and teaching, most learners are making effective and timely progress and know what to do to improve.

The bespoke SEND support, particularly for those young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), is providing appropriate options and support which stays with the family throughout. The service has delivered a small and specifically tailored employability and life skills programme for six learners in the Berwick area with EHCPs, for whom there was no other appropriate local provision. All six learners achieved positive progressions from the programme including continuing in learning, taking up employment and beginning Supported Internships. It is envisaged that this programme can become a permanent feature of the service offer.

Although achievement is high, not all lecturers take sufficient account of learners starting points to ensure they make rapid progress. Personalised planning and target setting for learners requires improvement in some cases, particularly in order to stretch and challenge the more able. In addition, the record keeping by lecturers on the personal learning records needs improvement in

some cases. The service delivered a staff development programme in early September focusing on the accurate completion of mandatory documentation.

Support for those at risk of leaving their programme or falling behind is very strong. Support for those who require additional learning support is also very good and is well focussed to develop learner confidence and to help them remain on programme. The measures put in place successfully remove the barriers to educational success. There is good monitoring of these interventions to help learners succeed and, as a consequence, most learners do achieve on time.

There has been particularly strong action on auditing the quality of learner records to ensure lecturers are using recording well to support the learner on their journey. The team is clear about who and what needs to improve to ensure all records are good or outstanding. To support this, the service implements a programme of 'Stop the Clock' days to look at the quality of learners' work across the service as part of measures to check that learners are make timely progress and that work is well marked and in a timely manner.

6. Behaviour and Attitudes

The service's safeguarding arrangements are effective. Learners and apprentices feel safe and work safely. Managers understand the risks, particularly those pertinent to Northumberland e.g. neglect and Prevent. CPD programmes for staff are effective and staff are appropriately trained to confidently discuss issues with learners and report concerns. The use of monthly Hot Topics covering health and safety, equality and diversity, sustainability and safeguarding is effective and is communicated well by lecturers to learners. Safeguarding champions in each learning centre ensure that staff will confidently discuss issues relating to safety, welfare and life in modern Britain with all learners and apprentices. Domestic violence champions have been trained across the whole service to support learners who may be experiencing this type of abuse.

A very thorough log of any safeguarding issues is kept on the electronic system, *Tootoot*, and this ensures all concerns are raised rapidly, are well documented and are responded to appropriately including where external agencies are involved. All learners are given their own login to the system so that they can report their concerns. The now-embedded use of *Tootoot* allows effective and timely reporting, recording and oversight of safeguarding incidents so that the safeguarding lead managers are swiftly notified of them and are therefore able to address concerns affecting learners anywhere in the county. Safeguarding links well to the multi-agency safeguarding hub. The service is effective at dealing with complex safeguarding cases including those that fall under the Prevent

duty and those that require multi agency working. Sophisticated technology ensures robust monitoring of online activity and information breaches.

7. Personal Development

The service provides effective end to end support. Attendance is good and continues to show a marked improvement through a clear focus and specific monitoring. There is good support from staff to learners to break down barriers to attendance including childcare and support with travel. Learners describe the support as critical. There are, however, a number of sessions where attendance remains low. Lecturers and centre staff continue to vigorously enforce attendance strategies and reiterate the importance of regular attendance.

The well qualified team of careers advisers provides independent and impartial careers information advice and guidance for learners. The advisers work with a range of external agencies to effectively source provision from a range of providers, not just the service, and this both ensures and demonstrates impartiality. They also provide excellent ongoing advice and guidance to learners that prepare them effectively for their next steps. As a result of strong guidance and support, most young people progress into learning and work.

The Careers Guidance team performs the Council's statutory duties to encourage enable and assist young people over the statutory school age but under 19 (or 25 with an EHCP) to participate in education and training. The team is also responsible for the statutory duty to track, record, report and support Northumberland residents in this cohort in relation to their post-16 education and training.

The annually published NEET Scorecard demonstrates the strong position in Northumberland.

Indicator	2018		2019	
	LA	England	LA	England
% 16/17 yr olds NEET or Not Known	4.5%	6.0%	4.4%	5.5%
% 16/17 yr olds NEET	3.8%	2.7%	3.8%	2.6%
% 16/17 yr olds Not Known	0.6%	3.3%	0.5%	2.9%
% 16/17 yr olds participating in	91.7%	92.0%	91.6%	92.5%

education or training				
% 16/17 yr olds offered a place through September Guarantee	98.0%	94.7%	97.9%	94.5%

In the county fewer young people remain in full time education than nationally (78.8% against the national average of 83.8% in 2018, and 80.4% against the 2019 national average of 84.8%) but in both the county and the region as a whole, participation in Apprenticeships and other post-16 study is significantly higher. In 2018, Northumberland 16-18 year old participation in Apprenticeships was 9.9%, four (4) full percentage points higher than the national average. Whilst there was a very slight dip in 2019, Apprenticeship participation remains very high at 8.4% against the national figure of 5.5%.

The service's Employability team performs well against its payment-by-results welfare to work contracts, Work Programme and Work and Health Programme. These national projects target working-age adults who are currently not in employment and are claiming benefits. The team's continued success is dependent on their excellent external relationships with a range of partners and agencies who support workless adults, and on the skilled team of employment advisers whose robust caseload management and reporting ensures that any individual who is referred to the service receives prompt tailored and appropriate support and challenge to move them into work.

The Work Programme contract is now being run-down nationally with no new entrants but it continues to generate some income from those participants who remain in employment. Its replacement, the Work and Health Programme, is a significantly smaller, more challenging and less financially rewarding contract. The programme is part of a wider package of support for disabled people announced by the government and aims to bring jobseekers, support provision and employers together to provide greater opportunities for those looking for work. The employability team provides holistic and targeted support to people across Northumberland with health conditions and those who are long term unemployed or who fall into a priority group including prison leavers, BAME individuals, young people who are NEET, refugees, ex-Armed Forces personnel and Care Leavers. Customers on Work and Health Programme are referred to the programme by Job CentrePlus Work Coaches or Disability Employment Advisers and this is the only way that individuals can join the programme.

Performance on the new programme has been challenging but the team has worked to build local relationships with partners and employers and this work is now generating positive results. The performance for the year September 1st 2018 – August 31st 2019 resulted in 391 individuals joining the programme, of which 93 have gained employment. Work placements are also utilised in the programme to support those furthest from the labour market and to provide current work experience. Of the 15 work placements that have been organised with employers such as Lloyds Bank, BAM Construction, Alnwick Gardens and B&M Stores, one (1) of the individuals has gone on to gain employment.

8. Leadership and management

Leaders and managers continue to implement and monitor the carefully crafted vision for the service to a very high standard. Excellent management has ensured that the very high proportion of learners and apprentices who achieve their qualifications has been maintained.

Managers successfully prioritise the recruitment of learners and apprentices who face significant barriers to learning. Leaders and managers have a clear strategy to provide courses for learners that enable them to develop the skills and vocational knowledge required for employment. Managers and staff cultivate excellent relationships with external agencies and employers. There is a mission to reach the economically inactive whilst also taking into account the challenges of the ageing population. Managers use funding effectively to increase participation, target areas of deprivation and reach under-represented groups in learning.

There is robust monitoring across the service of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and service managers have an accurate view of the quality of this. Managers evaluate the quality of teaching learning and assessment accurately through frequent and rigorous unannounced lesson observations and learning walks that take account of a wide range of evidence to identify what lecturers need to do to improve. The vast majority of sessions are delivered effectively, and support is in place for the few lecturers who are currently not performing to the required standards.

Implications

Policy	Improving the education and skills of Northumberland's post-16, adult and hard-to-reach learners is a key feature within the corporate plan.
Finance and value for money	The service continues to focus spending on teaching and learning and seeks to secure additional funding for project work that meets service priorities.
Legal	None
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Applicable
Risk Assessment	No formal risk assessment is required but there continues to be changing national funding arrangements for which ongoing monitoring will be necessary.
Crime & Disorder	No implications identified
Customer Consideration	The service continues to be mindful of funding organisations and possible further changes to apprenticeship funding particularly for SMEs in Northumberland. Going forward, the NoTCA will be increasingly a key partner / customer.
Carbon reduction	No implications have been identified at this stage.

Health and Wellbeing	No implications identified.
Wards	All

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

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