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quality standard for information
advice and guidance services

Assessment Report

Learn Hillingdon Adult and Community Education

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION	
Assessment Type	Review Assessment
Assessor's Decision	Standard Met
Assessor's Name	Graham Pickup
Evidence Gathering/Assessment Date/s	21/01/2025 to 23/01/2025
Client ID and Assessment Reference	C18985 – PN202779
Accreditation Review to be conducted by	11/02/2028

METHODOLOGY	
Evidence gathering	3 days evidence gathering remotely by Teams and phone
Staff interviews	24
Recipient interviews	23
Partner interviews	3
Document review	Strategic Plan 2023-25, management meeting minutes, KPIs, SAR/QIP, Policies including the IAG Policy, ILP, other learner support documentation, learner survey insights, IAG Statement.

About the organisation

The Learn Hillingdon Adult and Community Education (hereafter referred to as the Service or HACL) is a local authority service that provides training courses for adults over 19 years of age, particularly for residents of the Borough. The Service operates from three Centres across the Borough and from other outreach sites, such as Children's Centres and Libraries. The courses provided aim to help people to get work or move closer to getting work, and personal development including developing skills for independent living and wellbeing. The courses offered are part time day and evening classes, including accredited qualifications and non-accredited courses, and it aims to reach people in the most disadvantaged areas. The Service has increased its enrolments from 3417 in 2022-23 to 4451 in 2023-24.

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The Service is led by the Service Manager, who reports to the council's Head of Education and Lifelong Learning, and is supported by two Quality Managers, the Curriculum Development Manager, the ILT Development Manager and the Learner Engagement Officer. The Quality Managers manage the Programme Area Leads (PALs), who manage the Tutor Co-ordinators, who supervise the teams of sessional Tutors and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). The ILT Development Manager manages the Student Services Manager, who manages the Student Services Officers (SSOs), who work in the daytime, and the Student Services Administrators (SSAs), who work in the evenings.

The Service's Mission is,

'Every learner receives an outstanding learning experience that supports clearly identified and ambitious goals that drive their economic, social and emotional prosperity.'

And its Vision is,

'Enhance and transform the lives of adults through tailored lifelong learning.'

And they are supported by the Service's values, which are,

'Aspiration, Commitment, Integrity, Passion, Pride'

It has strategic objectives identified in its Strategic Plant 2023-25, which include,

- 'Every learner receives an outstanding learning experience that supports clearly identified and ambitious goals that drive their economic, social and emotional prosperity.

- Strive to provide consistently outstanding learning opportunities for all adult residents

- Increase the engagement of disadvantaged groups and residents from deprived communities in learning

- Improve the English, Maths and digital literacy skills of residents

- Provide robust and successful vocational and second chance learning opportunities for residents, offering a clear line of sight to work

- Promote residents health, wellbeing and independent living through bespoke learning opportunities

- Provide free, high quality information, advice and guidance for every adult resident who requests it, whether or not they are enrolled with us.'

The Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) is provided through the website and Social Media, the Careers and Education Hub, various documentation, by staff at events the Service attends, and at several points in the learner journey with the Service. The SSOs and SSAs provide initial IAG when people first enquire, the PALs, Tutor

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Coordinators, and Tutors give IAG at pre-course meetings with potential learners, including assessments and Digital Screeners, and Tutors provide IAG throughout the time of the course.

Learners come to the Service through word of mouth, the website, partner organisations, events and social media. The SSO or SSA will take the initial enquiry, by phone or face to face. They will answer any queries about courses the Service offers, provide information documentation and, where appropriate, book a learner onto an initial assessment and digital screener. The SSO/SSA will refer a learner to their manager or a PAL if they need more detailed IAG regarding a course they are interested in, and to the National Careers Service if they are looking for more detailed careers advice. They will also signpost enquirers to other providers for courses the Service does not offer. For learners who enquire about how they could progress after the course they are doing, the SSO/SSA will refer them to a PAL or Tutor Coordinator for further IAG.

As at the previous assessment, learners who are looking to take a qualification are required to take an initial assessment to ensure they get onto the right level of course for them. The PAL, Tutor Coordinator or Tutor will have a pre course interview with the potential learner, for courses requiring an initial assessment, to discuss with the learner what options are available to them, to help them choose the right course for them and ensure they are right for the course. Learners also take a digital screener to identify the level of digital skills they have and any support or training they may need to develop those skills required for the course. The SSO/SSA will check the eligibility of the learner for funding and financial support and will enrol the learner.

The Learner is then taken through an induction, when they are informed about how the course will work, what is involved and provided with more detailed information about the course. Learners are also informed about the commitment required, with a minimum attendance requirement of 85% with the aim to be at or above 95%. Additional support available to the learners is described, and learners are referred to videos which explain potential progression options to them. Learners are informed about information they can access through the Moodle, including the Education and careers hub, which describes the careers advice provided by the Service. Any additional support required by the learner will be identified and notified to the Tutor to ensure appropriate support is in place, and a LSA is available if required.

Once a learner has started a course, the Tutor will develop the Individual Learning Plan (ILP), which includes the learner's goals, including personal goals such as Health and Wellbeing and Work and Volunteering Goals. It also includes various outcomes for the learner such as increased confidence, skills for work and skills for independent living, amongst others. The ILP is reviewed in Tutorials when the Tutor will discuss their progress with the learner with respect to their goals and outcomes, what next steps the learner may be considering, and what options and pathways the learner could consider. The Tutor will signpost the learner to other providers for courses not offered by the Service, and the Tutor will refer the learner to the National

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Careers Service for more in-depth careers advice, and to the online Jobs Board for job opportunities. The Tutor and the LSA will have informal conversations with the learner, when they discuss progression options with the learner, the learner's wellbeing, help the learner with their research and refer the learner to websites for job opportunities, and to other providers for courses not offered by the Service. For more detailed IAG support the LSA will refer the learner to the Tutor or PAL.

The difference the IAG makes to recipients and the overall impact

Staff described how they aim to ensure that the right person goes on the right course for them, that they are effectively supported throughout their time on the course to overcome any barriers they may be facing, help them identify the options available to them following on from their course and support them with any decisions they make.

The impact made by the IAG provided is demonstrated through learner success and progression, such as the examples given below, as well as from learner feedback.

The Service monitors its performance at management and staff meetings. It monitors attendance, retention, success rates and achievement rates. Its targets for 2023/24 were to achieve 96% attendance, 95% overall retention, and between 90% overall achievement, it achieved 95% attendance, 94% overall retention and 91% overall achievement. It also analyses the data by ethnicity, age, gender and geography, across the different areas of delivery.

Changes the Service has made include the development of CPD for sessional staff, the introduction of free bus tickets for learners, which has had a significant impact on attendance, the introduction of visual timetables for LLDD learners to help remind them of when their course is, enabling them to be more independent, and the use of RAG ratings to help identify learners with low attendance and at risk of leaving their course, enabling staff to provide timely support to help them continue and complete their course.

What is working particularly well

Two strengths/areas that are working particularly well were identified during the assessment, which are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- The Service continues to have many strong partnerships in the region, including libraries, children's centres, and schools as well as other service providers such as GPs. This has enabled the Service to maintain delivery across the region, and to further develop its services in response to changes in funding requirements and learner needs. (2.7)

- Learners reported that they found staff to be very welcoming, friendly, and supportive, which made them feel safe, able to build their confidence and progress towards their aims. Comments from learners include,
"I suffer from depression, and I would not be here without them."
"They are incredible and offer no end of support."

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"They are all very kind and help me build my confidence." (1.3, 1.4)

Development suggestions

Development suggestions are offered in the spirit of continuous improvement and a way for an Assessor to add value e.g. where the service is of a high quality, development areas are offered to help the service be even better than it already is, or to give insight into practices seen elsewhere. There is no correlation between the number of strengths and development suggestions. Where development areas are greater in number this is not intended to indicate that the information, advice and guidance service is in any way lacking. These will form the basis for discussion at the Continuous Improvement Checks (CIC) conducted twelve and twenty-four months from the date of this Assessment, along with any other notable developments. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- The Service has a comprehensive IAG policy and describes the support available to learners at their induction. The Service may wish to consider developing the 'IAG Statement' to include the purpose of the IAG provision, and what outcomes it would help learners achieve. It could make this available to potential learners before they enroll, to help them decide if the Service is the right place for them to come to. It may also help to ensure learners are clear about the IAG they can expect to receive and help to ensure they access the IAG as they require. (3.1)

- Some staff have taken IAG courses, and others reported they had attended IAG training sessions in staff meetings, but some have not. The Service may wish to consider developing regular IAG CPD sessions/workshops for all staff to ensure that those providing IAG continue to develop their skills and knowledge of IAG, which may help them to further develop the way they provide IAG to learners. (2.5)

- The Service may wish to consider developing an IAG Champion team, with a member from each area, to be a focus for all things IAG related. They could oversee the quality assurance of the IAG provision in all areas to help ensure consistency and be a focal point for IAG training needs to help staff with their development of IAG skills, and through this drive the development of the IAG provision across the Service. (2.6, 2.8)

- Staff refer and signpost learners to organisations for support or courses that the Service does not provide. Some do this based on their personal knowledge of organisations to which they refer/signpost. The Service may wish to consider developing a central list of organisations for all staff to use for referrals/signposting, to be contributed to by all staff. The Service can quality assure the organisations on the list to ensure that the services they provide are appropriate to help ensure the learner receive the support they are looking for. (2.7)

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Conditions of Accreditation

Holders of the **matrix** Standard Accreditation must:

1. Maintain and continually improve upon their services.

2. During the period of accreditation satisfy The Growth Company that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the **matrix** Standard via the annual continuous improvement checks and the three-year accreditation review.

3. Complete annual continuous improvement checks in a timely way, it is expected these will be carried out annually by the accreditation anniversary date.

4. Inform The Growth Company or their Assessor if the key contact name/contact details change.

5. Submit their Booking Form for re-accreditation to the **matrix** Standard at least 3 months prior to the accreditation anniversary date ensuring all pre on-site activity is completed in a timely way including planning, payment and interview scheduling. Accreditation Reviews are due 3 years from the anniversary accreditation date; it is expected that organisations will be assessed by this date or will risk being de-accredited.

6. Inform The Growth Company of any significant changes made to the organisational structure, senior management or systems that may impact on their accreditation; email: matrixStandard@growthco.uk.

7. Inform The Growth Company immediately if they wish to extend or reduce the scope of their accreditation.

8. Inform The Growth Company of any serious complaint or rise in numbers of complaints received (within the scope of the accreditation).

9. Not undertake or omit to undertake any activity that may be misleading and/or may cause The Growth Company and/or the **matrix** Standard to be brought into disrepute.

10. Only use the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark for the areas within the scope of the accreditation and in accordance with the guidelines. For example, if a certain department is successfully **matrix** accredited, the Quality Mark can only be used on that department's letterhead or on that department's page on their internet homepage.

11. Ensure in cases where accreditation is withdrawn or where they do not come forward for accreditation review, remove from display any certificates or plaques issued by The Growth Company and do not display the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark nor refer to be a former holder of the **matrix** Standard.

12. Be aware that The Growth Company reserves the right to remove any accreditation and/or certification previously applied if payment is not received for services provided.

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