

SUMMARY OF THE ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING PLAN 2001/2002

1. The LEA's rationale for spending:

- i) In Hertfordshire adult education has been delivered by the four colleges of further education. The LEA acts primarily as an enabler and contributor to adult and community learning. It is not a major direct provider. Therefore the authority's overall aim for adult and community learning is 'to contribute to the provision of local opportunities for adults to learn and develop through life'. The authority will achieve this in a number of ways.
 - a. By using County Council resources to support the development of learning opportunities.
 - b. By using County Council accommodation as the venues where local learning opportunities that are accessible to local people can be provided by the authority and others.
 - c. Through securing learning provision for those groups not catered for by other post 19 providers.
 - d. By securing access to basic and key skills for those that are least skilled or qualified.
 - e. By developing and extending family learning opportunities.

- ii) Current surveys reveal relatively high levels of learning participation across Hertfordshire. However they also demonstrate that specific groups and areas have particular learning needs. These are:
 - Men who have lower participation rates than women
 - Particular minority ethnic groups e.g. Bangladeshi community and Travellers have low participation rates
 - Levels of functional literacy and numeracy are low in specific areas e.g. Stevenage and indicate a need for more and improved basic skills training
 - There are groups of young adults aged 19 - 25 who have few or no qualifications and experience difficulty getting permanent employment
 - Learners with complex and severe learning difficulties need more assessment and progression built into their learning programmes
 - Those in rural areas want improved access to learning opportunities
 - There are increasing demands for ICT related learning with online access for disadvantaged groups

- iii) Current survey and consultation mechanisms do not give sufficiently coherent and robust information on learner needs. Systematic processes will therefore need to be established for regularly consulting with learners at a local level to identify need and feed this information back to providers. The authority will need to carry out larger, regular

surveys across the county to monitor needs and receive feedback on current provision.

- iv) The authority will need to work in partnership to deliver the plan:
- With colleges and the University to ensure their development of programmes meets demand and conforms with quality standards
 - With schools to extend their opening hours and develop further facilities for adult to learn alongside children
 - With basic skills professionals to increase family literacy and numeracy opportunities and extend basic skills provision
 - Within formal partnership structures such as the Hertfordshire Learning Partnership (HLP), the Information Advice and Guidance Partnership (IAG), University for Industry (UfI)
 - With voluntary and community organisations to effectively address the needs of particular groups of learners e.g. Age Concern and MIND for those experiencing mental health difficulties

2. How coherence will be achieved

The authority has confirmed that there is coherence between its ACL Plan and other plans, such as the Education Development Plan. It will be important that there is linkage and synergy between the ACL Plan and local Community Strategies as they unfold. An HCC Adult and Community Learning Steering Group is being formed to ensure that resources are maximised and developments are streamlined.

3. How quality of provision will be managed

- i) The LSC will expect the LEA and all providers to comply with the new Common Inspection Framework. There is an expectation that providers will:
- deliver minimal drop out, high completion and achievement rates and appropriate progression
 - ensure competent and appropriately qualified staff deliver and assess learning
 - offer equality of access to learning opportunities and close equality gaps in learning and job outcomes
 - provide a safe healthy and supportive environment which meets the needs of learners
 - provide good management and leadership of the learning process
 - delivery value for money and financial probity

Inspections under the Common Inspection Framework will be in April 2001. A separate Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) is being established. Inspections of adult learning in the first year will be pilots with a full roll out in April 2002.

- ii) The authority's current quality assurance arrangements are being reviewed to ensure compliance with the above requirements. This includes revising the contractual arrangements with colleges and the University and the service level agreements with the WEA and WI. Schools which offer adult learning opportunities will be tied in more closely with these arrangements.

4. How learning will be made accessible

Promotion of learning to adults in the area will be through the following means:

- i) Published programmes from a range of distribution points including the Herts Direct website
- ii) Online through community centres, colleges, workplaces and schools
- iii) Improved marketing led by the IAG Partnership
- iv) Identifying strategies for overcoming some of the current barriers to learning such as lack of transport, childcare facilities and financial constraints
- v) Further developing access to schools and HCC sites for disabled people
- vi) Further developing partnership working with colleges to increase the participation of adults from minority ethnic communities and other underrepresented groups

5. How the delivery of programmes will be managed and monitored

Learning opportunities are currently delivered in a number of different ways:

- i) The authority contracts with the major external providers - the four further Education Colleges and the University of Hertfordshire
- ii) A separate contract exists with Oaklands College to deliver courses specifically for those with profound and complex learning needs
- iii) Grants are provided to fund programmes delivered by the Worker's Educational Association - Eastern and London districts - and the Federation of Women's Institutes
- iv) Programmes are organised and delivered through Social Services Day Care Centres
- v) Countryside Management courses are offered at sites across the county
- vi) Youth Service learning programmes are available targeted at young adults with learning disabilities
- vii) Adult learning opportunities, including family learning, are offered on school sites and in libraries
- viii) Specific development activities, including first rung initiatives, are funded through Standards Fund

During the period of the plan there will be increased use of school and other HCC premises, more learning offered online, less duplication and provision where there are gaps. The contracts with colleges and the University will be revised to ensure that provision is in line with the plan. More robust service

level agreements will be drawn up with the WEA and WI in line with County Council and voluntary organisations COMPACT arrangements. The Adult and Community Learning Steering Group will agree what overall monitoring arrangements should be in place for April 2001.