

# The importance of preparing for the delivery of functional English and maths

## Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC): Adult Learning Service

### Summary

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) Adult Learning Service delivers adult and community learning through a range of delivery partners including:

- Action Disability Kensington and Chelsea (specialist work with learners with sensory impairments);
- Kensington and Chelsea College (a wide range of subjects including arts and media);
- Historytalk (local history);
- Nova New Opportunities (literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages, ESOL);
- Open Age (a range of activities for older people);
- SMART (specialist work with learners with mental health issues);
- Clement James Centre (ESOL and family learning);
- Video College (film and video production);
- Virtual Engine (literacy and numeracy); and
- Westway Development Trust (ESOL).

#### Supported provider

**Patricia Carlisle**

Adult and Community Learning Manager, RBKC

#### Improvement partner

**Lesley Robinson**

Adult Learning Manager, Lambeth Adult Learning Service

Changes to funding and first step training required the service to move more towards accredited training. This has provided both new challenges and new opportunities for the managers and staff. RBKC Adult Learning Service has some experience of delivering English, maths and ESOL in family learning and as discrete provision with a small amount of accredited provision. The introduction of accredited learning and functional skills by all providers gave a new challenge for all aspects of planning and delivery.

During this project, senior managers at RBKC worked with managers from the sub-contracted providers to enhance the business planning procedures and awareness of securing value for money. Workshops were held for tutors from across the providers working in health, public services and care, agriculture, horticulture and animal care, information and communication technology, retail and commercial enterprise, leisure, travel and tourism and media and publishing.

We requested help from LSIS for training our managers and staff to raise awareness of the need to have systems in place to deliver accredited training and provide structured progression routes for learners embarking on employability and functional skills training. In addition, the need to embed functional skills and to plan for discrete delivery of functional skills for learners that wished to gain accreditation was critical to enhance the learning experience and to prepare

for inspection. It was important for us as a service to ensure that all staff were fully aware of the implications of moving from informal recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA) based curriculum to formal qualifications including the logistics of learner registration, internal and external verification and examinations.

“The information and support was invaluable in preparing for next year; the opportunity to ask specific questions that impacted on our provision was very useful. We received clear and relevant information with a hands-on approach that enabled us to understand and move positively forward.”

**Training Provider**

## Impact

There was an immediate impact for the managers at RBKC in organising the commissioning of provision for next year. The support enabled us to ensure that clear business planning procedures were implemented to drive the curriculum across both community learning and skills. Our provider managers are now equipped with a business model that will enhance their planning and efficiency by being fully aware of costs and the implications of the new funding model. For tutors it is early days, but the results of the training are already beginning to have an impact as staff begin to rewrite schemes of work and lesson plans to address the new curriculum. Initial response from our ESOL tutors was that the functional skills criteria for English were much more responsive and fit for purpose for their learners than the ESOL core curriculum.

Tutors from wider community learning understand that they too have a role in developing learner functional English and maths skills, even though it is not a direct aim of their course. Staff are gaining a greater understanding of functional skills and their application to the community learning areas. They appreciate that learning is more effective where this is a shared responsibility and not just left to the English or maths tutor.

Managers are more positive about the business planning process and the need to have clear progression pathways. Overall, the recognition of the vital role played by English and maths is better understood throughout the organisations.

## Outcomes

- Providers are more confident in planning the delivery of functional skills.
- Providers are better informed and can plan their commissioning bids for 2013-2014 provision.
- Tutors have more information and have looked at examples and standards from different awarding bodies.
- The Adult and Family Learning Service is clearer about the impact of functional skills across the provision.
- Providers have been given support and have had the opportunity to seek further clarification when this was needed.

## Contact information

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