

CABINET

8 APRIL 2014

ADULT LEARNING ANNUAL REPORT

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Howard Doe, Housing and Community Services

Report from: Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services

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Summary

This report updates Cabinet on the outcome of the recent OFSTED inspection and outlines future proposals for the adult learning service.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 Cabinet is asked to note the progress made on OFSTED and agree the future priorities for adult learning. There are no major policy implications. This is a matter for Cabinet.

2. Background

2.1 The Adult Learning Service was inspected by OFSTED in February 2013 and unfortunately received an inadequate rating. This was disappointing as the general outcomes for learners were above the national average and the service received very positive ratings from its learners. The inadequate rating was given because there was too much variability between the quality of teaching and learning, and senior management were not receiving sufficiently detailed information to enable them to scrutinise this. In addition, there were some issues relating to equality and diversity and the use of technology in the classroom.

2.2 As a result of this inspection a number of actions were taken including:

- The setting up of an Improvement Board chaired by the portfolio holder – Councillor Doe
- Reorganisation of service both at senior management level and within the curriculum management team
- Appointment of a new Head of Service and secondment of experienced staff from both outside and within the Council
- Comprehensive review of all processes, including self-assessment, curriculum planning and observation of teaching and learning
- Robust and detailed training programme for all staff
- Review of business opportunities
- Investment in accommodation and technology.

- 2.3 In February 2014 the service was re-inspected and was rated as a 3 – Requires Improvement. This is relatively new terminology and under the previous regime would have been rated as ‘satisfactory’. This is good progress in a year and we were particularly pleased to note that one subject area (Maths) was rated at Level 2 - ‘Good’. In addition the inspectors made some very positive comments on the new management and governance arrangements and commented favourably on the partnership working. There were a good deal of comments around support for learners and the good progress they were making. The full report can be found at Appendix 1, but in summary the strengths are:
- Service priorities link closely to those of the Council with a clear strategy to provide adult learning in community, focussing on learning for life, well-being and work
 - Effective at promoting inclusion and different groups of learners achieve equally well regardless of background
 - Managers have access to good data and set demanding targets for the service and monitor progress carefully
 - Supportive and experienced tutors who actively encourage and support learners to extend their knowledge, social skills and build self-confidence
 - Good accommodation and resources
 - Expanding partnerships with other providers to create valuable opportunities
 - Results are generally at or above success rates nationally and have improved on previous years.

Areas for improvement were generally around consistency and included:

- Learners on non-qualification courses were not making sufficient progress, and progression opportunities were not sufficiently promoted
 - English, maths and employability were not sufficiently covered in general courses and tutors were not making enough use of the initial assessment information
 - Tutors do not cater adequately for the wide range of learners.
- 2.4 All the areas for improvement are already in hand. They are dependent on a number of the new processes bedding down and having a direct impact on learners. Of the 68 different observations made by OFSTED over 50% were positive and 9 out of the 12 comments on the Effectiveness of Leadership and Management were encouraging. Therefore it is clear that the service is moving in the right direction and will continue to do so over the next year with a view to achieving a ‘Good’ rating at the next inspection.

3. Future Ambitions

- 3.1 The Adult Learning Service has previously been based on a traditional model, which was around providing leisure type activities (such as creative and language courses), ESOL (English as a second language) and some skills training, such as ICT, English and Maths. In more recent years the service has started to develop more community learning and has developed some very successful employability and family learning programmes. In addition the growth of the Medway College for Social Care has provided excellent training for social care staff both within the Council and in the private/third sector. Appendix two shows the recent performance indicators and outlines some of

the service's recent achievements. However the last OFSTED inspection felt that at 40% of the provision there is still too much emphasis on leisure. It is clear that adult learning could contribute to the council's ambition to improve Medway as a place to live and work and we have developed a mission statement as follows: '**To achieve excellence for our community and businesses in Medway**'.

To support this we have reviewed our service provision to meet the following objectives:

- Improve the skill levels and employability of the community, particularly for the more vulnerable and long-term unemployed
- Support the improvement in basic skills, including English, maths and technology
- Provide a college of excellence in social care
- Reduce social isolation and support individuals to engage in meaningful activities
- Support the improvements in healthy living through physical and mental activity
- Contribute to the cultural ambitions of the area.

3.2 The current configuration of the Adult Learning Service does not fully support these ambitions, and therefore it proposed to divide the service into three distinct business units:

- **Community learning and skills development** (to be funded by the Skills Funding Agency). This area of work will be covered by OFSTED and will operate very clearly within OFSTED guidelines. Learners will be expected to progress (either through exams or assessment) and have very clear learning objectives. Outcomes will be robustly measured, and new learners will be assessed on entry to ensure they are attending the right level course and they receive the appropriate support. All learners will have individual learning plans to ensure progress. This unit will support the priorities within the Department of Business Innovation and Skills Funding statement, which are:

(i) focus on giving people the transferable skills and job specific skills to enter and progress in work

(ii) support apprenticeships as the core offer for young people

(iii) focus on turning around the lives of local people by maximising the impact public funding has on the social and economic well-being of families and communities particularly those who are most disadvantaged

(iv) provide an extended Traineeship offer, making 24 year olds eligible, enabling us to help more young people get the skills they need to become work ready

(v) ensure all those who have not yet reached English and Maths GCSE at A*-C are supported to do so.

- **Business development** – This unit will include the Medway College of Social Care, I-Share (e-learning programmes) and will have responsibility for developing new business. Current activity includes the development of healthy living programmes with Public Health, such as falls prevention, mental health programmes and GPs referral scheme. This unit will be expected to be self-funding and bring in income to enable further development of business. With the prospect of Paramount Park there are tremendous opportunities here to develop further employability courses and general skills such as languages, customer services, and tourism. In addition this unit will develop in-house training for Medway Council staff. Appendix 3 outlines some of the current activity.
- **Leisure learning** – This unit will cover the more traditional courses such as Creative Arts, floristry, needlework, bakery, and learning a language for leisure. These courses will be funded by income from learners.

4. Risk management

- 4.1 The main risks for the adult learning service relate to the volatility of the external funding, particularly funding from the Skills Funding Agency and the outcomes of OFSTED inspections.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Skills Funding Agency funding reduced or withdrawn	The criteria for claiming expenditure changes year on year and does not always match local needs	Ensure that the criteria are well-understood in advance. Diversify to ensure income is obtained from difference sources.	High
OFSTED Rating not improved	The service has moved up one level in a year and needs to continue to improve. An inadequate rating not only affects reputation, but can have a severe impact on funding.	New management in place and strict governance arrangements review progress and outcomes.	Medium
Income from learners impacted by economic downturn	Number of self-funding learners reduced due to recession, although this is on the up.	Ensure that best use is made of community learning funding and the service is as economical as possible.	Medium

5. Stakeholder Involvement

- 5.1 The Adult Learning Service currently works with a wide range of partners including other FE providers (Mid Kent College), Job Centre Plus, public health, children's' centres and libraries. There are on-going discussions with all these services to ensure that all programmes are fit for purposes and meet individuals' needs. In addition all learners are asked for feedback and there is a learner representative on the governance board. New arrangements have been put in place (including an equality and diversity group) to encourage the learners' voice to be heard. OFSTED noted the 'You said, We did' displays on the notice boards.

6. Financial and legal implications

- 6.1 There are no legal implications to this report. Any reorganisation necessary will be undertaken within budget and under Officers delegations.
- 6.2 There are no new financial implications to this report. It is however worth noting that the current budget of the service is £2.6m of which £2m is funded by the Skills Funding Agency and £600k through other external income (some European funding, grants and learners contributions).

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Cabinet is requested to:
- (i) Note the outcome of the OFSTED inspection
 - (ii) Support the mission and overarching objectives outlined in paragraph 3.1
 - (iii) Agree the future direction of the service as outlined in paragraph 3.2.

8. Suggested Reasons for Decisions

- 8.1 This report outlines the OFSTED outcomes and suggests a way forward for the service. The reconfiguration of the service will make it more robust for the future and meet both the OFSTED requirements and new priorities for funding. This will support a vibrant service which is fit for purpose, meets the Council priorities and make it more financially robust.

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Background Papers:
None

Medway Adult Community Learning Service

Local authority

Inspection dates		3–7 February 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Inadequate-4
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- On courses that do not lead to a qualification not enough learners make sufficient progress, and the systems managers use to monitor and report learners' achievements and progress are poor.
- Tutors do not consistently design lesson that develop learners' English, mathematics or employability skills well in lessons, nor promote their understanding of equality and diversity.
- Managers do not consistently plan or promote progression opportunities for learners, nor record accurately learners' destinations.
- Tutors do not adequately cater for the wide range of learners' abilities and knowledge in lessons, nor adopt suitable procedures to monitor and review the progress of learners and set them suitable targets.
- Tutors do not use information from initial assessment well to place learners on the most appropriate level of course.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Good accommodation and resources are used well by tutors to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.
- Supportive tutors actively encourage learners to extend their knowledge, develop personal and social skills and build their self-confidence.
- Learners receive particularly good pastoral and welfare guidance and support.
- Expanding partnerships with other providers in the region create valuable opportunities for managers to share local market information and good practice, and to plan the curriculum better to meet the needs of learners.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the range of courses across the service provides better for the needs of the most disadvantaged members of the community.
- Plan and promote internal and external progression routes more thoroughly and improve the information that managers capture on progression.
- Raise the quality of information, advice and guidance to learners before and during their programme of study so they receive more detailed information on course content and progression opportunities.
- Use the results of initial assessment more effectively to place learners on the most appropriate level of course.
- Improve the standard of teaching, learning and assessment further, particularly by:
 - planning lessons better to challenge the more able learners
 - making better use of information and learning technology (ILT)
 - improving the quality of target setting, and using this information more effectively to help inform lesson planning and monitor learners' progress
 - providing learners with more constructive written feedback to help them make progress and improve.
- Make better use of naturally occurring opportunities in lessons to extend learners' use and understanding of English, mathematics, employability skills, equality and diversity.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outcomes for learners across Medway Adult Community Learning Service (MACLS) require improvement. In 2012/13, the proportion of adult learners who successfully achieved their qualification improved on previous years, and was satisfactory. Success rates on most courses for adults leading to qualifications are generally at, or slightly above, the rates for learners nationally. Provisional data for the current academic year indicate success rates are continuing to improve, with the exception of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) where they have declined slightly. ▪ In 2012/13, success rates for the very small proportion of learners aged 16 to 18 were low, significantly below those for learners nationally. Managers have responded by removing provision for learners aged 16 to 18. The achievement of the very small number of apprentices is high; however, few successfully achieve their qualification within the agreed timescale. ▪ Too many learners on non-accredited courses enrol on the same course each year. Managers overstate the progress and achievements made by these learners and the quality of recording and reporting on learners' progress is often poor. ▪ Managers have good access to accurate and timely data on the performance of different groups of learners, which enables them to monitor any variations and take prompt action where required. As a result, there are no significant variations between the outcomes for different groups of learners. ▪ In the majority of lessons, the standard of learners' work is adequate. In the better lessons, learners engage actively in a wide range of appropriate activities, which enables them to develop their knowledge and insight well, and extend their personal and social skills where appropriate. For example, learners on counselling courses took part in detailed and insightful group work to share their ideas and explore themes in depth. French conversation students 	

engaged enthusiastically in discussion around current topical issues and extended their confidence and vocabulary well. The promotion of employability skills and the development of English and mathematics are inconsistent across the provision. A small proportion of learners on employability courses have good opportunities to meet and work with representatives from local businesses. These representatives support and encourage learners to make them aware of potential employment opportunities and help them prepare to apply for jobs and attend interviews. However, in too many other lessons, tutors fail to raise learners' awareness of, or to promote, the development of core skills that learners require to gain successful employment, or to develop their English and mathematics sufficiently.

- Staff do not identify, plan or promote sufficient progression opportunities for learners. Learners receive poor information, advice or guidance on either entry to, or exit from, the service. Consequently, too few learners make the progress they might to further study, to voluntary work or to employment.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. In the better lessons, tutors plan projects and homework well, which encourage learners to experiment, be creative and try new approaches. Learners complete stimulating activities where they develop and use research and self-reflection skills effectively. Community learning tutors set high expectations and encourage learners, particularly those following creative arts courses, to display work around the MACLS learning centres and in local exhibitions.
- In a minority of lessons, tutors do not design strategies to cater for the wide range of learners' abilities and knowledge in lessons. They do not plan sufficiently challenging activities to push the more able learners or those on leisure programmes who have studied the course before.
- Many of the more experienced and well-qualified tutors share their extensive subject knowledge well with learners and often have good strategies in place to check learners' understanding of key principles. These tutors foster a supportive and constructive group ethos where learners work productively in lessons and motivate each other well.
- Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective additional learning support, which helps them participate and succeed. Tutors ensure learning support staff and volunteers understand their role and generally deploy them well. However, on occasions, carers who accompany learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities take over the practical tasks, which restricts the learners' development.
- The effectiveness with which tutors use information and learning technology (ILT) to engage and develop learners' knowledge and understanding varies significantly. The more effective tutors, for example those supporting some of the languages and employability courses, use the technology well in their teaching, making highly effective use of interactive whiteboards, online learning activities, the internet and the virtual learning environment (VLE). However, on a significant minority of courses tutors make little use of ILT or the VLE to enhance the learning experience.
- Initial assessment procedures require improvement. Those learners enrolling on courses leading to a qualification complete thorough initial assessment tests, but most do not receive the results promptly, if at all. Too often staff place students on too low a level of course. As a result the course does not challenge learners sufficiently. Learners on community learning courses self-assess their starting point, but this process is cursory because many learners judge themselves as fully competent rather than identifying skills they could develop to a higher level.
- Tutors do not consistently apply procedures to monitor and review the progress of learners and set them suitable targets. A minority of learners agree suitable targets with their tutors that enable them to measure their progress and achievement well. However, many learners' targets lack measurable outcomes, or the outcomes are too broad or non-existent. This restricts learners' ability to track their progress, assess the skills they have acquired, or to review the development of their social and personal skills.

- Learners receive very positive verbal feedback and praise from tutors, affirming their achievements and progress. This helps motivate learners and develop their confidence. Tutors, however, do not give learners sufficient constructive and developmental feedback on written work to aid their development.
- Mathematics and English tutors contextualise their subjects very effectively with meaningful and everyday examples. For example, this helps mathematics learners to apply proportions, percentages and volume accurately in everyday learning activities. Community learning tutors, however, rarely plan the development of learners' English, mathematics or employability skills into lessons despite the wealth of opportunities that arise.
- Learners benefit from good pastoral care and support before and during their courses. Tutors consider carefully learners' barriers to participation and try to help learners address these. Learners receive strong welfare support, for example referrals to food banks or help and advice with travel costs to lessons.
- Since the last inspection, managers have made modest improvements in arrangements for advice and guidance to learners, particularly on accredited courses, but these still require further improvement. Many learners taking English courses are unclear about the course level on which they enrol, or the examination requirements of the course. Learners receive insufficient advice and guidance to help them progress, for example into employment or to more advanced learning.
- Although most tutors consider how to promote equality and diversity in lessons, they do not always deliver or integrate this consistently. There are, however, some examples of good practice, particularly in English, ESOL and modern foreign languages, where tutors recognise and celebrate diversity well. In these lessons, tutors encourage learners to reflect on topics associated with promoting an understanding of equality and diversity when discussing topical news stories and current events within the context of the subjects they are studying or when practising their language skills.

Community learning

19+ learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment in community learning require improvement. On courses that do not lead to a qualification, managers report outcomes for learners as high. However, the processes to determine and report on progress on these courses are under developed and managers do not apply them consistently across all courses. As a result, the outcomes data overstate the achievements of learners.
- In the best sessions, learners benefit from positive and motivational support and skilful demonstrations from tutors. The resources in workshops and studios are good. In creative project work, such as art, pottery and stained glass, tutors use a broad variety of strategies to engage and motivate learners and provide for their different needs, levels and rates of progress. In these lessons learners take pride in their work, which is of a high standard. Many display and sell finished work in local exhibitions and craft fairs.
- In a minority of weaker lessons, tutors do not plan to ensure the activities and support meet the needs of all learners. As a result, lesson activities fail to stimulate the more experienced and confident learners; less able learners have to rely too much on peer assessment and support to help them progress.
- Tutors do not always use learners' initial assessment to plan learning activities, set appropriate personal targets or assess their progress. Managers do not regularly monitor, review or record progress across the community learning courses. As a result, learners are not always clear of their priorities for development, or how well they are progressing.
- Tutors possess appropriate vocational qualifications and experience for the courses on which they teach. While most tutors provide effective and informative verbal feedback to learners, they

do not always provide suitably detailed and insightful written feedback to enable learners to reflect on their areas for development and improve.

- Tutors develop learners' critical thinking and decision-making skills well, which enable them to evaluate their own and other learners' work. However, tutors fail to develop suitable strategies to improve learners' English, mathematics and employability skills.
- The quality of information and guidance for learners requires improvement. Learners are able to access adequate details on the range of provision available across the service to determine the suitability of a course. However, during their programmes of study, learners have too little access to information or guidance on the wider progression opportunities on to further training and employment. Many learners, particularly on leisure-based courses, return to the same course over many years, and do not progress.
- The range of courses available in community learning focus predominantly on leisure activities and fail to reach the most disadvantaged communities, or those learners identified in the community learning strategy. Managers do not capture information on learners' progression or destinations, therefore the information cannot inform curriculum planning.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Tutors are very sensitive to the needs of learners; however, in most lessons they do not extend or develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity. Tutors' attention to health and safety across all community learning courses is very good, with particularly close monitoring of learners' well-being in exercise and fitness classes.

Foundation English

Requires improvement

19+ learning programmes

- Teaching, learning and assessment in foundation English require improvement, as do the outcomes of these learners. Tutors do not design lessons that consistently meet the needs of all learners. In the most effective lessons, tutors place learners on the appropriate level of study and use their experience and expertise to plan stimulating activities, which develop learners' knowledge and understanding well. However, tutors regularly fail to stretch and challenge more able learners.
- The majority of learners make good progress in developing personal skills such as self-confidence, responsibility and communication with others. Tutors are adept at encouraging less confident learners to overcome any initial reluctance, to participate more fully in group activities and to present their ideas and thoughts to others with increasing confidence. Tutors are also good at promoting an atmosphere of mutual respect and support between learners. For example, tutors regularly require learners to prepare and deliver short presentations on their topic of choice. While learners are sometimes a little anxious about this initially, tutors support them, and other group members provide positive feedback and encouragement. As a result, learners' skills develop and learners grow in confidence.
- Tutors work well with learners in many lessons to set academic and personal targets that are specific, challenging and relevant. However, in a significant minority of lessons, learners' targets are too vague, reviews do not take place regularly and tutors do not involve learners enough in setting targets or reviewing progress. Punctuality in a small minority of lessons is poor, with a few learners arriving late and causing disruption to learning.
- The quality of feedback to learners is inconsistent. Many tutors regularly provide positive verbal feedback and encouragement to learners in lessons and use questioning techniques well to enable learners to progress and grow in confidence. However, the quality of feedback is not consistent across all the provision. In particular, feedback written on learners' written work does not always provide sufficient detail to help them progress and improve.
- Learners benefit from the expertise of well-qualified and experienced staff, as well as good accommodation and physical resources that support the learning experience.

- The quality of initial assessment is inconsistent. While tutors accurately assess the academic level of individual learners at the start of the course, on occasions they enrol learners on courses that are too easy, given their level of English when they join. As a result, these learners lack sufficient challenge in lessons to achieve their full potential.
- Tutors accurately identify the additional needs of individual learners, and any potential barriers to learning, and put suitable support systems in place. Additional learning support is effective and enables learners with disabilities or learning difficulties to participate fully. Learners value the respect and help they receive from tutors.
- Information, advice and guidance require improvement. Learners are often not fully clear about the requirements and expectations of their course prior to enrolment. In addition, they are frequently unclear of the progression options that they might consider on completion of the course. Tutors do not integrate employability skills sufficiently well to improve learners' capacity to seek or gain employment. Progression rates are low. While many learners achieve their main objectives, few successfully progress on to the next level of study or into employment.
- Tutors promote equality and diversity in lessons well, for example through discussions around different cultures and religious festivals.

Foundation mathematics

Good

19+ learning programmes

- Teaching, learning and assessment in foundation mathematics are good, which is reflected in the good outcomes for learners. Most courses show an improvement in success rates over time and the majority are now at or above the rates for learners nationally. Learners produce good standards of work and are able to apply their newly acquired skills and knowledge to everyday personal and social situations. Retention rates, attendance and punctuality are good, indicating learners' motivation and engagement in their programmes of study.
- Care and support for learners are good and learners value and benefit from tutors' support to overcome barriers to learning. This helps learners make good progress and motivates them to achieve their learning goals.
- Tutors are well qualified and experienced and use their skills and knowledge well to motivate and engage learners. Tutors skilfully contextualise mathematics to everyday life and successfully encourage learners to discuss and explore different mathematical strategies and techniques. This results in learners using their new skills effectively and with confidence. For example, learners are able to calculate the amount of materials needed in home decorating projects.
- Learners build progressively on previous learning and knowledge, participate well in class and develop good collaborative skills. They are confident in working outside the classroom to practise and develop their mathematical skills. Learners enjoy their learning and are able to give examples of how they have made progress since joining the course, for example in understanding how to convert fractions to decimals.
- Most learning materials are clear and well produced, but tutors make too little use of information and learning technology within sessions to stimulate learning. In the small number of sessions where this is done well, tutors encourage learners to access valuable and engaging activities on various websites, which help capture the learners' interest and support their learning.
- Tutors pace most lessons well, planning and executing tasks to ensure learners grow in confidence as they progress. Most tutors have a good understanding of learners' individual needs, and in the better sessions use a wide variety of activities to maintain interest and promote learning. Where learning is less effective, it is often because the pace of learning is too fast. As a result, learners struggle to understand and make progress.
- In a minority of lessons, tutors and learners use the results of initial and diagnostic assessment well to set and review individual learning targets. However, too many individual learning plans

only contain general targets, for example 'to pass the exam', and these do not help learners track and monitor their own progress.

- Tutors use verbal feedback and questioning well to motivate and develop confidence, and assess learners' progress. However, written feedback to learners does not provide sufficient detail on how to improve; comments are mostly limited to encouragement and praise.
- Learners develop good speaking and writing skills within mathematics sessions. For example, learners present their mathematical solutions to the rest of the group, they write sentences to describe their analysis of graphs and share these with other learners.
- Information, advice and guidance to learners require improvement. Pre-course information is satisfactory but not all learners receive the results of initial assessment until after they enrol. Teachers and support staff provide insufficient information about course content and progression routes.
- Tutors manage learning activities well to provide safe and friendly learning environments. Planning by tutors indicates that they consider how to promote equality and diversity in lessons; however, few tutors carry this out well within their teaching.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- MACLS has a clear strategy to provide adult learning in the community, focusing on learning for life, work and well-being. Since the last inspection, the service has successfully completed a major restructure in support of its aim to raise the quality and standard of provision. Managers pay close attention to outcomes for learners and the impact of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Data are used effectively to set demanding targets for the service and staff monitor progress carefully.
- Since the last inspection, managers have made reasonable progress in improving the quality of the provision. The service's priorities link closely to those of the council. An improvement board, chaired by an elected member, has been set up, with clear objectives and performance indicators. The board provides the service with appropriate scrutiny and good support. Council leaders have a strong commitment to the continued development of the service and now have a clearer understanding of MACLS' strengths and the areas it needs to improve.
- Observations of teaching and learning are generally thorough and accurate. Since the last inspection, managers have strengthened the process, with sound arrangements now in place to moderate judgements. All observers receive suitable training. Managers use the observation reports well to identify any gaps in tutors' skills and prioritise professional development to help raise standards.
- Staff have access to appropriate professional development and training opportunities. Staff are well qualified and experienced, they work well together to support learners and share good practice.
- The council has recently committed funds to improvements to resources and accommodation, which are now good. New facilities include the installation of information and learning technology (ILT), laptops, whiteboards and video equipment. Tutors are using this technology with increasing confidence and impact.
- The self-assessment process is satisfactory; it involves all staff and incorporates learners' views. A partner organisation moderates the report, which is largely accurate and effectively identifies most strengths and areas for improvement. The self-assessed grades match those of inspectors. Managers are being increasingly effective at implementing quality improvement initiatives, and monitoring progress. This is beginning to lead to improvements in the overall quality of the provision. However, many of the service's revised quality arrangements are recent and have not had sufficient impact on key areas for improvement.
- The progression of learners to further study or employment requires improvement. Both the information and guidance given to learners and the progression routes available to them are

under developed. The service is increasingly focusing on curriculum planning and the development of more and better progression routes. Provision for community learning does not target the most disadvantaged learners. The curriculum has too much emphasis on leisure and hobby courses, many of which have little or no opportunity for progression. A new post of community coordinator is enabling contact with a range of organisations, to identify local needs and interests and to extend the potential for partnership working.

- Managers generally plan and manage learning programmes well. Planning is increasingly targeting skills, employability, health and social inclusion to try and meet local and national priorities. Managers are starting to use relevant data and information more effectively to review and plan the provision. However, managers do not currently track or monitor accurately internal or external progression or destinations for learners once they complete their courses. As a result, managers are not yet able to confirm accurately the extent to which the provision is meeting local and national needs and improving the life chances of learners.
- MACLS has very effectively developed a successful partnership with Jobcentre Plus to provide tailored employability skills programmes. Partnership working within the local authority, such as with local children's centres, includes a range of programmes that enable learners to develop new skills and gain relevant qualifications. There are early signs that productive partnership working with the local college is beginning to have a positive impact on increasing the range of provision and progression routes available to learners. Additionally, MACLS' senior managers have recognised that the classroom-based provision for the small number of learners aged 16 to 18 was not sufficiently effective and have transferred these programmes to the college.
- The service is effective at promoting inclusion. Learning centres create welcoming, inclusive and accessible environments. Adults returning to learning receive encouragement and support to help them gain confidence and participate in learning. The service successfully recruits a minority of learners from groups that are traditionally under represented in learning. However, the over-dominance of leisure community courses limits the opportunities to extend provision to the most disadvantaged learners.
- The promotion of equality and diversity varies in quality. Recent well-conceived initiatives include the introduction of a calendar to raise awareness of different cultures and a focus group to raise the profile and promotion of equality and diversity. Staff receive appropriate information on equality and diversity at their induction and in subsequent training; however, there is insufficient promotion of equality and diversity in most learning sessions.
- Managers give suitable attention to health and safety arrangements; they carry out appropriate risk assessments and promote safe working practices. The service meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. However, managers do not systematically monitor and confirm tutors' timely completion of the online safeguarding training.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Medway Adult Community Learning Service

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
Outcomes for learners	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Community learning	3
Foundation English	3
Foundation mathematics	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Local Authority							
Age range of learners	19+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 0							
	Part-time: 3775							
Principal/CEO	Neil Davies							
Date of previous inspection	February 2013							
Website address	www.medway.gov.uk/educationandlearning.aspx							
Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time	-	1241	-	675	-	-	-	-
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	4	3	6	12	-	-		
Number of community learners	1207							
Number of employability learners	84							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Winfield							

Contextual information

Medway Adult and Community Learning Service serves the needs of Medway including Strood, Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham. The population of Medway is predominantly of White British background, but with an increasing proportion of the community from minority ethnic groups. Average earnings of residents are below the average for the region. Medway is ranked within the 41% most deprived boroughs nationally according to the index of deprivation 2010. The 2011 census identifies that just under a quarter of the population of Medway has no qualifications, higher than the average for the South East of England; however, a higher proportion of adults than nationally holds intermediate and advanced qualifications.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Peter Nelson HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the Adult Learning Manager as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, the previous inspection report and the reinspection monitoring visit report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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Performance

The Adult Learning Service has had a large number of achievements during the last year, despite the fact it has been a period of upheaval in terms of staffing arrangements. This appendix highlights some examples.

1. Community Learning and Adult Skills

- 1.1 Since the opening of the MACLS Centre at Gillingham in November 2012, focus on work skills training has been successful and additional work skills courses have been set up at our Rochester Centre and outreach Centres to support the rise in numbers on the programmes. A total of 982 learners were on programme in 2011/2012 and from September 2013 (6 months) to present under Work Skills, there are a total of 624 learners, and with more provision planned in there will be an increase of learners by July 2014. Due to demand and having to increase the provision planned at Gillingham, building work is taking place at present for three additional ground floor classrooms and these will be available from March 2014.
- 1.2 The Community Learning provision has increased during 2013-14, and from September to date we have a total of 2,095 learners compared in 2012-13 of 2,387 learners. Job Centre Plus have been referring clients to the ESOL (English as a second language) provision and this area has been extremely successful. MACLS are able to offer training to learners starting at a very low level. A total of 465 learners went through this programmes in 2012/13, from September 2013 to present date, a total of 394 learners have completed or are currently on programme. We are expecting an increase of learners within this strand by the end of July 2014, due to demand from JCP and mainstream provision.
- 1.3 Within English and Maths there were a total of 374 learners in 2012/13, from September 2013 to present we have 340 learners on programme and are expecting many more to enrol onto programme through to July 2014.
- 1.4 The initial assessment process has been reviewed and managers and tutors are using initial assessment results to determine where the learners starting point is, if learners require additional support and to ensure that appropriate support is in place. From the restructure we identified we needed two induction officers to support the initial assessment for English and Maths learners prior to enrolling onto courses, this is working well and learners are accessing courses within a two week turn around.
- 1.5 MACLS continues to have excellent partnership working with the Job Centre Plus, Probation Service, Housing and the Work programme to

date has a total of 183 learners over 39 courses from September 2013, this figure will increase within this year from referral agents continuing to send their clients to us for skill base training in English and Maths.

2. Partnership Working

- 2.1 In partnership with Employ Medway we are working on a European funded project with Chichester College to provide two new strands of employment related training. Skills Support for Redundancy which seeks to help people who are at risk of redundancy or are newly redundant, and Work Place Learning which seeks to help those with low skills who are already employed but may be wishing to improve their prospects.
- 2.2 An additional project we are now involved with is Skills Support (SSR) working in partnership with South East College. This will enable employers to access further training, even if their staff already have a level 2 qualification or equivalent. Under the SSR we have worked with two large organisations who have employees at risk of redundancy.
- 2.3 Through the new partnership between MACLS and Mid-Kent College, we are planning to deliver courses, Saturdays and across the summer holidays, using the College facilities. The Programme Area Managers and the Programme Area Leaders visited the College two weeks ago and met with key curriculum staff who they will work with in planning new programmes. We will be producing a joint marketing publication outlining the courses and sign posting progression for September 2014 starts at MKC by joint curriculum planning. MACLS will be attending the promotional open day events at MKC in March, May and June 2014.

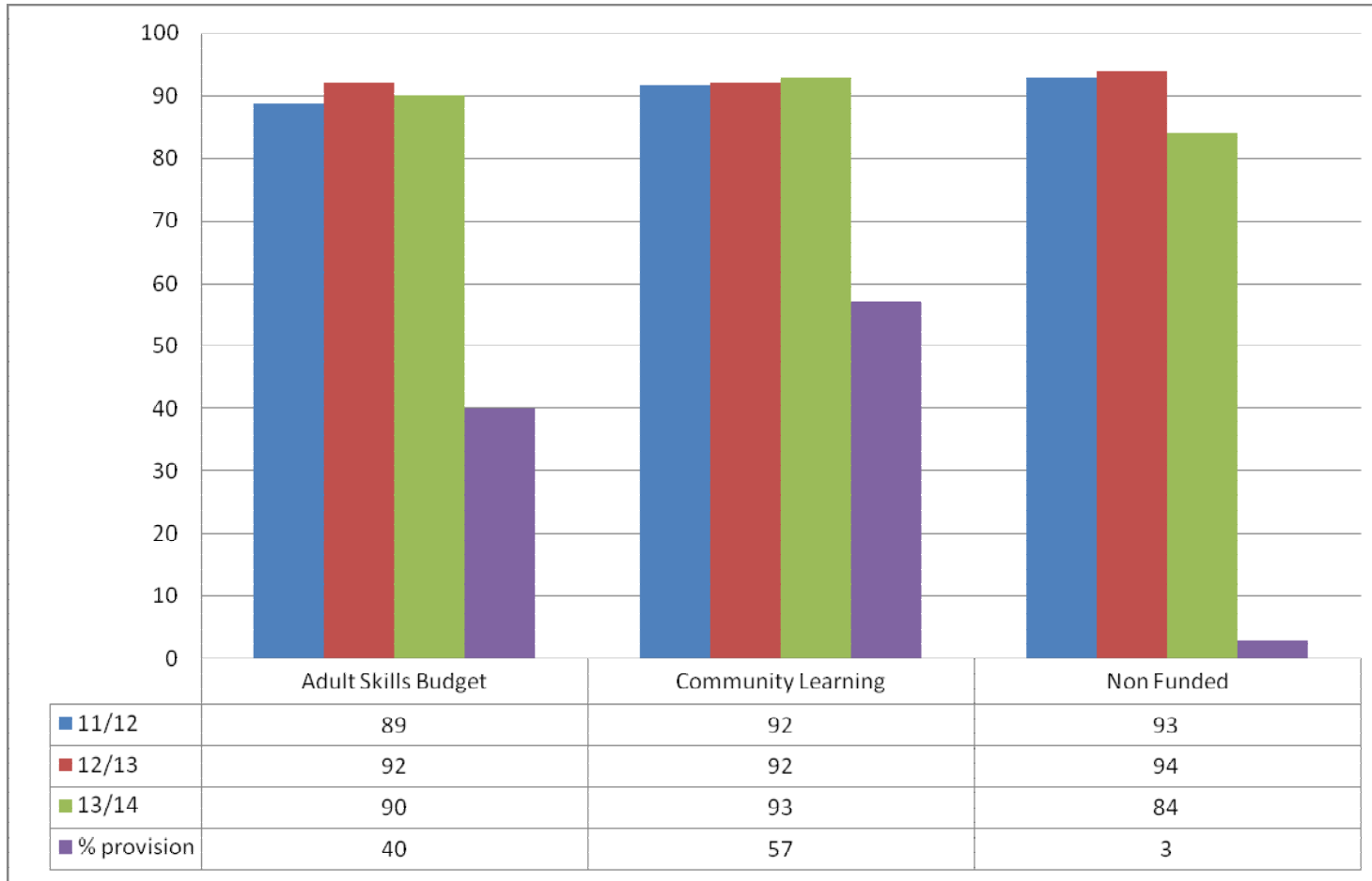
3. Business Development

- 3.1 Business development, community and partnership working has noticeably increased, both internally with teams at Medway Council and externally with community groups and charities. This includes an increased contribution to corporate training at Medway Council, covering a range of courses plus the re-instatement of the NVQ and ILM, Leadership and Management qualification.
- 3.2 There are new initiatives with Public Health with two very exciting projects in development: Falls prevention for the older person's workforce and a formal referral pathway programme with the Healthy Medway and Stop Smoking service.
- 3.3 A more strategic approach has been established for working with Children's Centres thus ensuring a wider coverage of targeted provision for those groups identified at risk, aligned to Council priorities.

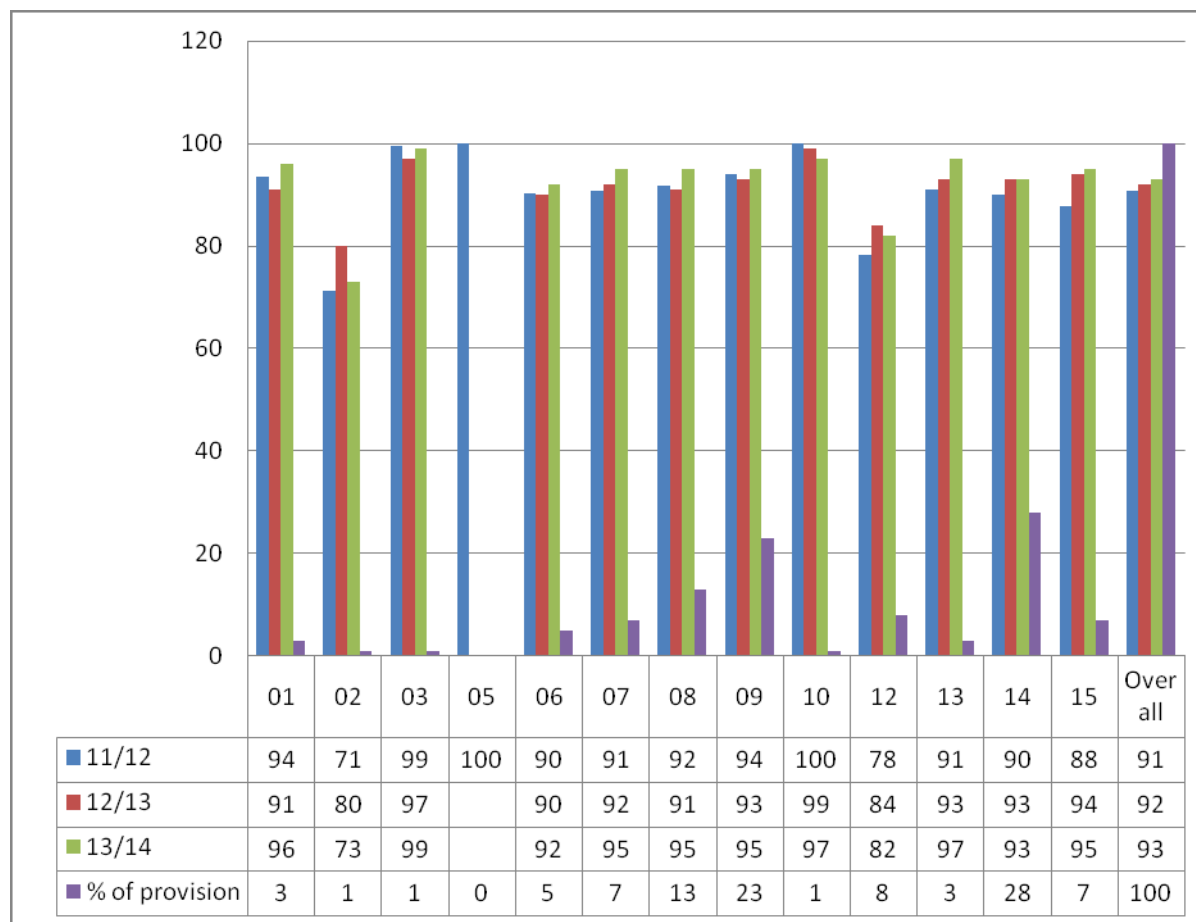
- 3.4 MACLS is also contributing to the Troubled Families programme, offering courses that support the hard to reach outcomes of the project – budgeting, alcohol dependency, nutritional issues, social exclusion, employability skills etc. thus offering a clear pathway out of poverty.
- 3.5 The Medway College of Social care is part of MACLS and is the main provider of social care training to the Private and Voluntary Care sector. We have increased this provision by offering a range of core competencies required by the workforce and now work very closely with social care teams across the area, including the Medway Direct Payment Service for the PA workforce; Adult Social care for care managers and social workers and JCP offering a NVQ level 1 in care and a direct route to employment.
- 3.6 We have recently become an I Care Ambassador Service – a national initiative promoting careers in social care.
- 3.7 Ongoing plans for increased business at MACLS includes closer links with schools and libraries as well as working with local community groups such as the Active retired, Sunlight Trust and Ethnic Minority Forum.
- 3.8 We have also recently agreed to run a new construction and trade skills qualification as a pilot project. This has been identified as a growth area and one lacking in skills by the JCP, especially with a view to the new Paramount Park project.

Retention

Overall Retention % by Funding Stream – as at 12/03/2014

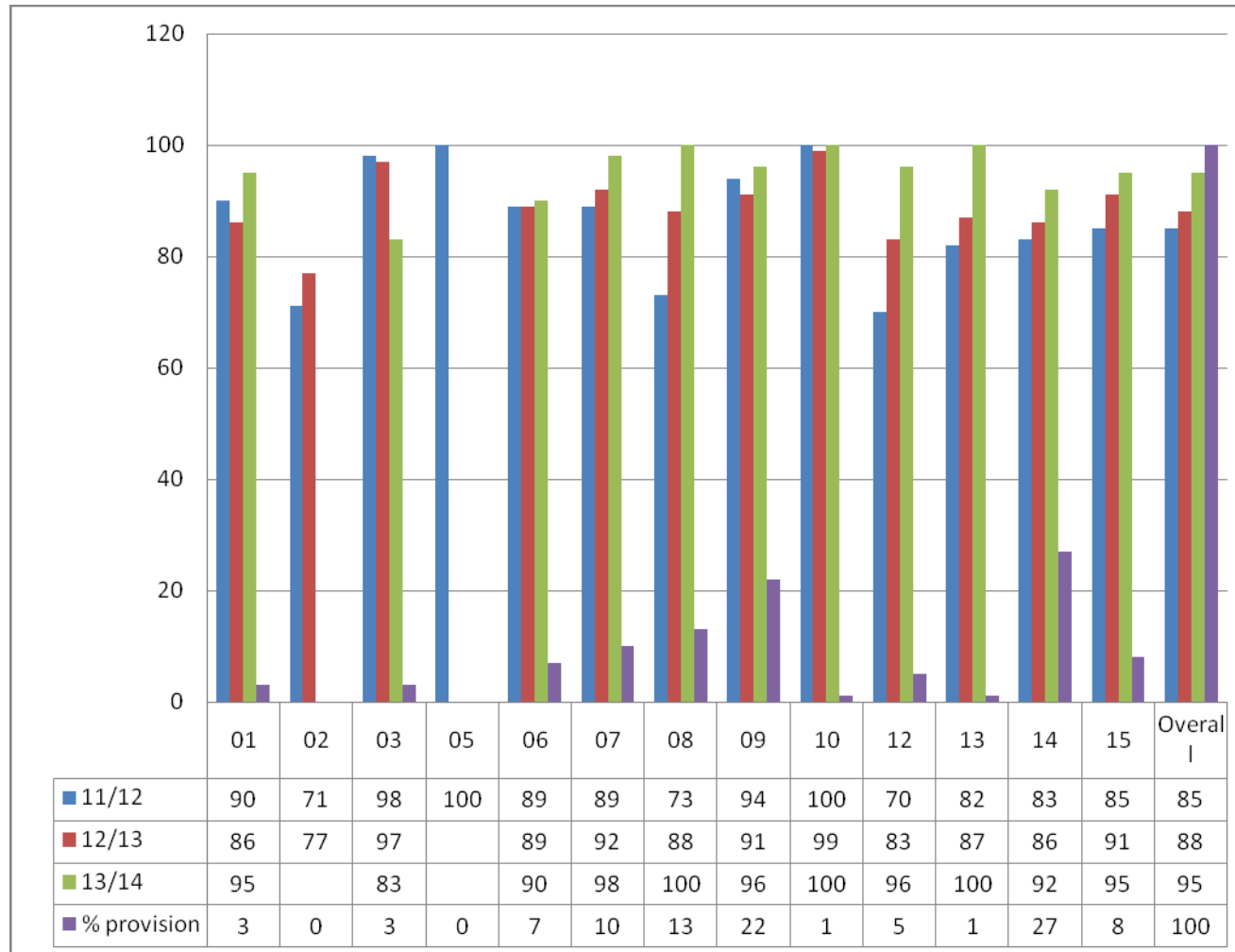


Overall Retention % by Subject Sector Area as at 21/03/2014



SSA	SSA Description	SSA	SSA Description
01	Health, Public Services & Care	09	Arts, Media & Publishing
02	Science & Mathematics	10	History, Philosophy & Theology
03	Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care	12	Languages, Literature & Culture
05	Construction, Planning & the Build Environ	13	Education & Training
06	ICT	14	Preparation for Life & Work
07	Retail & Commercial Enterprises	15	Business, Administration & Law
08	Leisure, Travel & Tourism		

Achievement for completed courses as at 21/03/2014



Business Development and New Activities

Client/Team/Partner	Activity	Next steps
Libraries	Library plan covering wide range of activities with families, reading groups, IT courses. Books purchased to align with MACLS courses, 6 book challenge, regular attendance on community bus	Continue to contribute to identified programmes
Childrens Centres	Wider Family learning programme, menu of courses across 19 centres. 25k been agreed to contribute to identified needs.	Continue to identify courses and work with skills gaps
Schools	Courses for parents, teachers, TAs, staff.	Headteachers briefing to increase this provision
Active Retired	Courses in the community aimed at reducing social isolation	On-going discussions over range and content of provision.
Troubled families	Project to support identified families with softer skills – financial management, food hygiene, CV, employability etc	Working with project team and external provider on courses that satisfy outcomes.
Public Health - Referrals	PH clients on GP support scheme formally referred to MACLS to support continued health promotion and social isolation issues	Team meeting with healthy weight and stop smoking service to determine core courses and a formal referral pathway with identified outcomes.
Conversation cafes	Set up in different locations to support learning on various courses, incl. language courses	Evaluate and roll out wider
Sunlight Trust	Health Trainer project with Public health – targeting hard to reach groups	Support the work of health trainers with care qualifications and awareness sessions as they identify clients at risk of health inequalities.

Medway Council	Workforce Development Team – ILM Management Qualification	Revival of ILM (management) level 3 & 5 from April 2014. Carefully monitor and roll out as part of leadership programme
Pinnacle People	Construction project, trade skills + employability	Content and City & Guilds qualification agreed. Implementation due Spring 2014

Links and Collaborative projects for progression routes

Client/Team/Partner	Activity	Next steps
Tesco Gillingham	Farm to Fork project between Childrens centre allotment and Tesco nutritional programme	On-going programme
Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre	History resources, IT, Dickens, local history	Continue to monitor opportunities

Medway College of Social Care

Client/team/Partner	Activity	Next Steps
Public Health	Falls Prevention project aimed at the older persons workforce in collaboration with Public Health, Ambulance Service, Falls team at Medway Hospital	Project group agreed content and provider, scoping for research and numbers, pilot sessions for evaluation, workshops undertaken
Medway Council Adult Social Care Team	Core range of social care related courses	Continued programme of needs analysis, delivery and evaluation
Private and Voluntary sector social care training	Funding from Council to upskill care sector – core range of skills to support minimum level of competence	Continued programme of needs analysis, delivery and evaluation
Medway Direct Payment Service	Range of courses to support the Personal Assistant course, for recipients of direct social care payments	Recognised by Skills for Care as exemplar, continue to offer programme and expand range

JCP (Joint Centre Plus)	NVQ Level 1 in Care for route into employment	JCP promotion and referrals
MACLS Community Learning	Range of community courses offered to Private and Voluntary sector – incl. massage, history, chair-obics	Promote range of provision through network
Medway College of Social Care website upgrade	New website in development to include Volunteer network and placements	Skills for Care committed to supporting the initiative
I care Ambassador	Skills for Care national initiative. MCSC will run the Employer Partnership service on behalf of social care employers in Medway.	Public endorsement on the good work of MCSC as a gateway to employment in the care sector