

ACTION PLAN FOR ESOL PROVISION IN LEICESTER

6 key actions to be achieved by 30th September 2011

1. The City Council will continue to support an individual support fund for ESOL learners on criteria already agreed with Leicester College. This has been removed by central government but we propose to continue it. This will bring us into line with Leicester College who are continuing their version of the same fund. During the academic year 2010/11 Adult Skills & Learning received an allocation of £39,227 from the Skills Funding Agency additional Discretionary Support Fund, to be used to support ESOL learners with the cost of course fees and exam fees only. The actual expenditure currently sits at £47,847. We have supported 84 learners with course and exam fees, and a further 853 learners with exam fees only.
2. The City Council will host a public event in September to continue the pressure on central government and to campaign for the importance of ESOL to residents of the city, to community cohesion and to equalities as Ethnic minorities and women will be significantly affected by these fee remission changes. Cllr Cassidy, Assistant Mayor, has already written to local MPs to involve them in continuing the campaign and this event will include other local stakeholders including UCU and Leicester Civil Rights Movement who organised the earlier public meeting.
3. To take advantage of the recent BIS press release we will work with Leicester College to produce a proposal for Leicester for the DCLG/ AOC for informal community based learning of English linked to wider benefits of learning English including access to health provision and community cohesion. Assistant Mayor, Cllr Cassidy, has already written to Maggie Galliers, the Principal of Leicester College to take this forward.
4. Leicester Adult Skills and Learning Service will continue with a full programme of planned ESOL courses in the autumn term and will not take hasty action to reduce the ESOL workforce but will monitor the impact of the fee remission changes and produce a report with clear recommendations.
5. We will continue to explore the options for an innovative approach to a student loan/ credit system to help more learners to find ways of funding their ESOL learning producing a feasibility study.
6. In addition to the setting up of a new skills partnership that will focus on workforce development (Mayoral Pledge 95) we will establish a learning partnership that covers informal adult learning, especially where it contributes to wider agendas such as public health, culture or community cohesion. The aim of the partnership will be to promote adult learning as a core part of life in the city.

We will work with both partnerships to ensure that long-term planning and radical thinking can take place on the future of ESOL provision and the community-based learning of English in Leicester. Draft membership and terms of reference for this partnership will be complete by mid August.

Chris Minter
Head of Adult Skills and Learning
27th July 2011