



Language and IT Training

Lead director: **Ian Bailey**

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: all
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1. Purpose of report

This report details how the Adult Skills and Learning Service is addressing the increasing adult population from diverse and new communities in Leicester, in terms of helping them to compete for employment and training opportunities and engage better in local community life with particular regard to the majority of these adults having language difficulties (with little or no English) and difficulties accessing digital services (with little or no IT skills).

2. Summary

In addressing the identified needs of the city the Council's Adult Skills and Learning Service prioritises English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and IT related courses and activities to support adults in new communities to participate in day to day life and work.

The service currently has over 1,800 ESOL enrolments and 250 Beginners IT related enrolments on a wide range of courses across the city.

There are three significant barriers to participation in ESOL:

1. Fees and/or eligibility for subsidy
2. Lack of available and affordable childcare
3. Irregular working patterns (shift work / temporary work / gig work / zero hours)

The service has also recently secured additional funding to enhance its services in both areas including support for financial literacy and transition to Universal Credit.

3. Recommendations

Members are asked:

- To note the work being carried out in this area by the Adult Skills and Learning Service and refer residents to the service when needs are identified.
- To identify and inform the service of areas of unmet need, so that, if possible, they can be addressed within the planning of programmes for 2018-19.

4. Report/Supporting information including options considered:

4.1 The Leicester context.

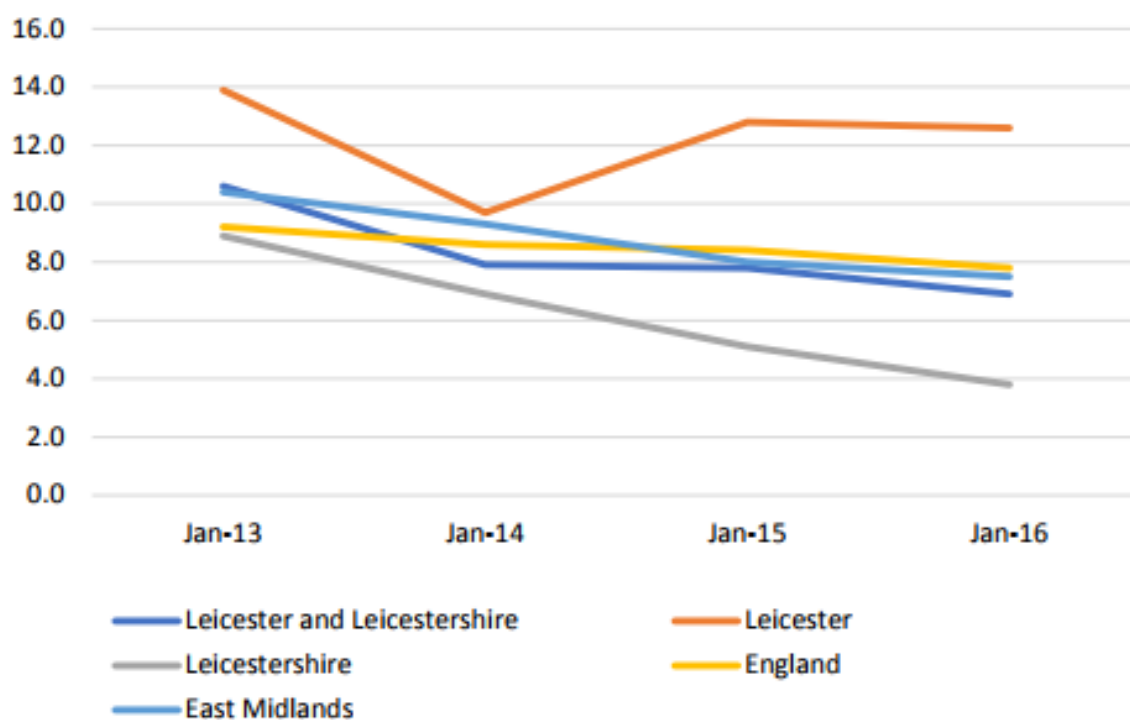
Leicester has a total population of 342,600 and the population aged 16-64 is 63%. It is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse places in Britain. Leicester is also the

locality with the highest number of non-UK born residents with 110,843 residents, amounting to 33% of the local population. In the 2011 census only 51% of the population was White and this included nearly 5% from countries other than Britain or Ireland. There have, and continue to be, significant numbers of new arrivals to the city creating a need for English as a Second Language provision. Leicester is the 14th most deprived local authority of the 152 upper tier authorities and is therefore in the bottom decile nationally. 46 out of the city's 192 local super output areas (LSOAs) fall within the top 10% most deprived in the country with a further 37 falling in the second decile.

There are close links between deprivation and educational attainment and a key challenge is to raise attainment amongst the most disadvantaged. The Leicester Area Review (completed March 2017) shows that compared to the national average:

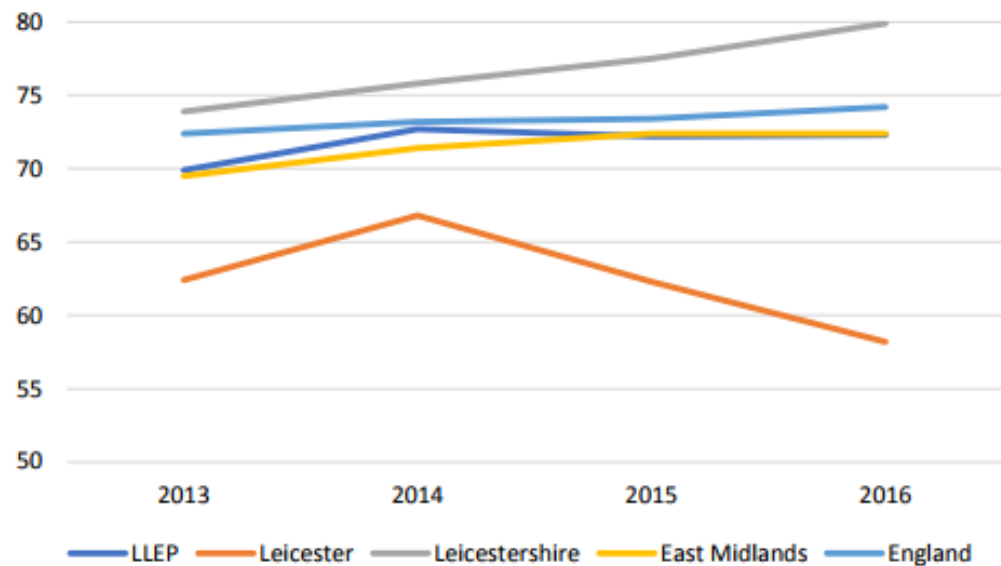
- 28% of Leicester residents are less likely to have a higher level qualification
- 62.2% of Leicester residents are less likely to be qualified to level 2+
- There are high levels of benefit claimants
- The earnings of Leicester residents are particularly low

Fig 1: % of population with no qualifications



Source: Labour Force Survey 2017

Fig 2: % of workforce qualified to Level 2



Source: Labour Force Survey (ONS)

4.2 The Leicester Adult Education and Learning Service (LASALS)

The Leicester Adult Education and Learning Service (LASALS) is a key partner in the Leicester to Work theme of the Leicester: Great City Economic Plan (2016-2020) to:

- Develop a more coordinated and locally accountable approach to improving skills and delivering quality training across the city.
- Achieve a better match between skills needs of businesses and those responsible for delivering education, training and advice.
- Increase the percentage of Leicester City residents qualified to Level 2 or above.

The Service is supported by the Council's ambition to re-engage more adults on the margins of the labour market and to further develop suitable skills progression pathways that can effectively respond to local labour market needs. The Leicester to Work theme also fits with the ambitions of LASALS to improve the lives of Leicester residents by working in partnership to raise aspirations, build achievement and protect the most vulnerable and is underpinned by the Service's Strategic Plan (2017-20) to deliver to Adult Learning and Skills programmes in Leicester. The strategy aims are to:

- To improve employability and economic prosperity
- To raise standards of English, maths and digital literacy
- To encourage longer and healthier living and combat loneliness through participation in learning and supporting the cultural life of Leicester
- To strengthen local cultural participation and production to build stronger communities
- To raise aspirations and motivation to learn through the provision of outstanding learning and skills opportunities

- To make efficient and effective use of the funding available for adult learning and skills development.

The Service provides learning opportunities that enable all adults, irrespective of background, to develop their skills and improve their wellbeing for themselves, their families and their communities. It actively targets learners who are low skilled; have no or low qualification levels; are living in poverty; unemployed, workless or vulnerable to social exclusion; and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and mental ill health. Courses are shaped by learners' needs which are identified through work with learners and effective networking and partnership arrangements across the city.

Leicester City Council holds contracts with the Education Skills Funding Agency for the Adult Education Budget (formerly Adult Skills Budget) and Community Learning. Courses are delivered in 112 community venues across the city to help residents access learning and training. Courses are run at entry level to level 3 and include qualifications in English, maths and ESOL, digital and finance skills and Early Years, Education and Care (EYC&E) courses. Community Learning includes personal and community development learning (PCDL) in deprived communities through courses such as employability and ICT, arts, humanities and languages, and the Family Learning programme. There is also a well-established REMIT programme for those with mental health issues seeking learning both for employability and well-being. The Service was last inspected in November 2013 with Ofsted awarding the provision 'Good' in all areas.

4.3 English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

In 2017-18 LASALS have 197 ESOL courses planned. There are currently 1826 enrolments on those courses (30% of LASALS enrolments) and the courses equate to 9,628 hours of teaching (35% of LASALS provision). Most learners attend classes twice per week (5 hours), however arrangements are made to accommodate those who need to attend 4 times per week to meet DWP requirements.

Most courses lead to qualifications in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening from Entry Level to Level 2. Some non-accredited options are provided for learners at pre-Entry Level and for those who need a little additional time to move from one level to the next.

Courses are offered at 12 venues across the city:

- African Caribbean Centre
- Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre
- Fosse Neighbourhood Centre
- Home Farm Neighbourhood Centre
- Leicester Adult Education College
- Medway Primary School
- Moat Community College
- North Evington Children's Centre
- St Matthews Neighbourhood Centre
- St Matthews House
- Northfields Neighbourhood Centre
- Pork Pie Library and Community Centre
- St Barnabas Library

Enrolment and assessment events are held in all the venues at the beginning of the year. In addition a weekly drop in enrolment and assessment session is held at the Adult Education College every Thursday morning in term time and roll-on courses are provided to enable learners to start learning straight away.

In 2016-17 1,511 learners enrolled on qualification courses. Retention was very good at 94% and 92% of those completing passed the exam, resulting in an 'achievement rate' of 86.8%, significantly above the national minimum standard of 70%. In a recent Welfare Advice meeting the Leicester Race Equality Council stated that they track the progress of people they refer to ESOL provision and those who come to LASALS make significantly better and quicker progress than those attending courses with other providers.

There are three significant barriers to participation:

1. Fees and Eligibility – the rules regarding funding are complex and change frequently. Learners are assessed as 'fully funded' (on benefits and seeking work) and the course is free; 'part funded' (part funded by the ESFA and part by the learner) or 'not eligible for EFSA funding' (due to their residency status)
2. Lack of available and affordable childcare
3. Irregular working patterns (shift work / temporary work / gig work / zero hours)

Asylum seekers and refugees - Asylum seekers and refugees face additional financial barriers and LASALS has secured additional funding and found creative solutions to support as many as possible.

Asylum seekers who have been waiting more than 6 months for a Home Office decision are, like those with refugee status, eligible for co-funding. However, as they are not eligible to work, they don't qualify for fully funded places but do not normally have any source of income from which to pay fees. In order to help address this contradiction, the service successfully applied for funding from the Home Office Migrant Impact Fund to support people in these circumstances. In addition, where the service has groups of a viable size but there is room in the classroom, a place has been provided for an asylum seeker. As a result this year we are supporting over 70 people who would not otherwise have access to ESOL provision.

A second Migrant Impact Fund project - Real English in Action is taking groups of newly arrived ESOL learners into community situations to practice their English in real life situations, whilst also learning about life in the UK. For example, understanding how different aspects of the NHS work, how to register a child for school, volunteering opportunities etc.

Family Learning is another, less formal option for people with children. Short courses are offered in schools and Children Young People and Family Centres across the city, with a focus on parenting skills and supporting children in school.

The Family Learning and ESOL teams have been integral to providing support for the Syrian families who have been resettled in Leicester. The 8th cohort will be welcomed shortly. The Family Learning team provide very basic English classes for the whole family as soon as they arrive and until the children are settled in school. Once the children are in school, the adults are enrolled onto our main ESOL programme at a suitable level. This has proved to be a highly effective strategy with one of the first students, who arrived 2 years ago with no English at all, now enrolled on an

electrician's course with Leicester College in order to enable him to practice his trade in the UK.

New this year, following changes to the requirements, we are offering Citizenship test preparation courses.

We also have 3 ESOL and IT courses this year, taught by an ESOL tutor and combining the language of IT with basic digital skills.

4.4 Digital Inclusion

This year we have 162 IT and Digital Inclusion courses in the programme with more than 250 enrolments to date. Ranging in level from courses for absolute beginners and Computer Skills for Job Search, to European Computer Driving License and basic web design. Most are at the lower level. There has been a general decline in the market for office based IT courses as the majority of people now have the core skills they require. Those who remain are reluctant and harder to reach learners. Digital skills for Beginners and Computer Skills for Job Search courses are free.

Courses are offered at 13 venues across the city:

- African Caribbean Centre
- Beaumont Leys Library
- Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre
- The BRITE Centre
- Central Library
- Eyres Monsell Community Centre
- Highfields Library
- Leicester Adult Education College
- New Parks Library
- St Matthews Neighbourhood Centre
- St Matthews House
- Pork Pie Library and Community Centre
- St Barnabas Library
- The Tudor Centre

Enrolment and assessment events are held across the city at the beginning of the year and a weekly drop in session is held on Thursday mornings at the Adult Education College in the city centre.

In 2016-17 134 people achieved qualifications with a retention rate of 88% and a pass rate of 92% resulting in achievement of 80% which matches the national minimum standard.

54% of participants on IT related courses are from Black and Minority Ethnic groups and 65% of those are female.

We have secured funding for two new initiatives:

Moneywise + This is an ESF funded project of which LASALS is a partner. We offer free 1:1 digital skills support with a focus on saving and managing money online and signposting to financial support.

Universal Credit - We are currently designing a short Introduction to Universal Credit course with colleagues from Revenues and Benefits and the DWP locally. This will be rolled out on a referral basis with the roll out of UC across the city. The courses will focus on the Basic Digital Skills needed to complete an application and maintain the account as well as signposting to appropriate further learning opportunities (ESOL, English, maths, IT or employment support) and support services.

4.5 Embedded English, maths and IT skills

A key strength of the service is that all courses have embedded English, maths and IT skills. Tutors work creatively to include relevant activities and provide signposting to other courses where they identify learners with development needs in these areas. For example on an arts based course a tutor will show learners how they can access instructional videos on YouTube, inspirational material about different artists on the websites of galleries and museums or buy materials more cheaply online.

Learner feedback in 2016-17 indicated that, across all courses:

- 64% improved their reading skills
- 62% improved their writing skills
- 74% learned new vocabulary
- 61% developed their use of technology
- 60% increased their employability skills
- 59% learned how to stay safe online

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Martin Judson, Head of Finance, tel: 0116 454 4101

5.2 Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Paul Atreides, Head of Law (Employment, Education & Litigation), tel: 0116 454 1428

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

The provision of courses at community venues in local neighbourhoods across the city reduces the travel distances for learners and makes sustainable travel modes more viable – helping to keep any carbon (and air pollution) emissions from travel to a minimum.

Duncan Bell, Senior Environmental Consultant, tel: 0116 454 2249

5.4 Equalities Implications

The work of the Adult and Skills and Learning Service helps us to meet our statutory responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, in particular the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) the main aims of which are: to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups. The service is addressing the increasing adult population of diverse and new communities in Leicester by helping them to participate in day to day life and work, getting them better prepared for the jobs market and improving other skills with particular regard to the majority of these not having English as their first language, and for some having little or no IT skills. These areas contribute to the three above mentioned aims of the PSED and should lead to a positive impact.

The current services/courses on offer, as well as the new initiatives being proposed, should lead to a positive impact across all the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act, with specific courses focussing on vulnerable groups such as refugees and asylum seekers.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer, Ext 374175

6. Background information and other papers:

None

7. Summary of appendices:

None

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a “key decision”?

No