# Lancashire Adult Learning

**Follow up re-inspection monitoring visit report**

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# Monitoring visit: main findings

## Context and focus of visit

This is the second follow up re-inspection monitoring visit to Lancashire Adult Learning (LAL) following publication of the inspection report on 11 December 2014, which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

LAL is the service in Lancashire County Council that receives funding from the Skills Funding Agency to provide learning for social and personal development, learning for qualifications and employer provision, which are mainly apprenticeships. It provides learning at three main centres and over 400 community based venues throughout the county. It provides courses in 15 subject areas as well as family learning and community development.

Non-accredited provision makes up around four fifths of provision. Apprenticeships are mainly in business administration and law, health, public services and care, and in education and training. A large number of accredited and non-accredited employability programmes are provided for adult learners. The provider delivers training throughout Lancashire and recruits learners from a very diverse range of backgrounds including from areas of relatively high unemployment and socio-economic deprivation.

## Themes

### What progress has been made in ensuring that Lancashire Adult Learning has strong leadership and management and governance?

LAL has commenced restructuring. The Associate Principal and Interim Principal have been confirmed in post until June 2016, and their respective roles are clearly defined. Middle managers have been restructured, two of the three existing Vice Principals have now left the service and their responsibilities devolved appropriately. Further restructuring is planned but it is too early to comment on the potential impact.

Key strategic decisions have been made to rationalise provision. For example, LAL will no longer offer apprenticeships or access courses. LAL will focus instead on increasing the direct provision of community learning, in line with council priorities, to meet the needs of disadvantaged communities.

Staff report significant improvements in access to resources, communications and sharing good practice, and feel more accountable and empowered to improve provision for learners.

A new governing body has been established and held its inaugural meeting on 11 March 2015. The board comprises relevant leaders within education and business to provide the breadth of expertise necessary. The role of the board as a decision making body with a critical role to play in leading LAL and setting the future strategy has been clarified, particularly with regard to the interface with Lancashire County Council. The board has considered the Ofsted inspection report (November 2014) and the first re-inspection visit report (January 2015), the dashboard of key performance indicators and recognised the importance of the post inspection action plan (PIAP) in moving forward. The new board will meet every six weeks but will attend an away day event in April to cover strategic and visioning tasks. It is intended that the board will receive the LAL self-assessment report and that some governors will be highly visible through linking to sector subject areas and participating in joint observations.

**What progress has been made to improve the quality of provision through accurate self-assessment informed by strong evidence, and thorough and frequent monitoring of challenging and measurable quality improvement plans which contain clear targets and milestones?**

The PIAP now has clearer targets and milestones, and is regularly monitored for progress. However, outcomes for teaching, learning and assessment focus too much on the revised observation process and not enough on the impact in terms of the quality of the teaching, learning and assessment experienced by all learners. The PIAP is now underpinned by curriculum area self-assessment reports and associated post inspection action plans for each area. Curriculum self-assessment reports identify strengths and areas for improvement and are currently undergoing a self-assessment report validation process. The associated PIAPs do not accurately record progress. Rather, they focus on listing events and actions undertaken but do not provide sufficient detail on the impact in improving outcomes or other aspects of the learner experience. The overall PIAP is now to be monitored through meetings of the newly established governing body.

The quality cycle now more appropriately reflects the requirements for community learning. The PIAP is available on the intranet and offices within LAL but is not yet available in staff common areas for ready reference by part-time tutors. Staff are trained in aspects of the quality cycle, for example, in the revised observation process for teaching, learning and assessment and the arrangements for self-assessment but do not yet fully understand all aspects of the revised quality improvement cycle. The process to quality assure teaching, learning and assessment focuses solely on teaching and learning sessions. Other aspects of the learner experience, such as initial assessment, support, reviews and exit interviews are not subject to the same scrutiny. Themed walkthroughs have been introduced to focus on specific aspects of teaching, learning and assessment but it is too early to judge their impact.

**What progress has been made in improving the use of data and feedback as an effective tool to manage and improve the provision and to provide frequent measures of learners' achievements and, in particular, the wider impact of community learning?**

The use of data within LAL has greatly improved. Curriculum managers and assistant curriculum managers now have good access to robust data to monitor in-year performance. Managers have received appropriate training and are confident in the use and interpretation of data, including modelling scenarios to predict best and worst case outcomes. Curriculum reviews are now focused on outcomes and trends in outcomes with comparisons to national averages. Weekly curriculum manager meetings and fortnightly meetings, which include assistant curriculum managers, ensure improved communication and team working. They routinely include detailed data analysis to ensure that data are used to full potential, identifying curriculum areas and individual courses causing concern. Further data enhancements are planned in the near future to provide more detailed analysis at learner level to build on the progress to date. Staff now recognise the importance of data and achievement as an indicator of the success of the organisation.

**What progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly recognising and recording progress and achievement on non-accredited provision?**

Revised processes to check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are in place and link closely to performance management. They include dual observations to improve consistency and inspectors found close correlation with their own findings during the visit. In the better sessions, learning was tailored closely to individual learners' needs and learners could recognise and describe the progress they had made and its impact on everyday life or work. However, too much of the observed teaching continues to require improvement. For example, the pace of learning was often too slow in observed sessions during the visit, which resulted in little progress being made by students.

LAL has taken steps to improve significantly the whole-college approach to recording learners' achievements. Minimum standards for recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA) are now in place with appropriate individual adaptation by course tutors to meet the needs of the course and its learners. Weekly drop-in meetings for tutors provide additional support for their development of RARPA in addition to support through team meetings. LAL has introduced moderation and verification activities to improve consistency, which have identified that learners and tutors are now more focused in the planning for, and monitoring of, achievement. However, in too many sessions observed during the visit, documentation was not completed to a good standard and planning did not clearly identify strategies to keep all learners fully engaged. Individual learning plans still lacked precise short-term

targets to drive progress. The tracking of achievement on non-accredited programmes has only recently been revised, so its impact could not be evaluated.

Following a recent visit by LAL staff to Nelson and Colne College, some areas of LAL are now beginning to develop an online interactive learning environment, but this is positively impacting on only a few learners at present. The service is aware that some community venues are not yet equipped to support fully the use of interactive learning technology to enhance learning. Physical resources are often lacking and access to high-speed broadband is limited. Managers are undertaking a review of venues to assess their suitability and provide better resources for learning.

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