Manchester Adult Education Service

MAES Service Plan 2014 -15 Summary

Mission

To raise aspirations and achievement so that residents contribute to and benefit from economic success and social well being, by delivering outstanding education and skills for individuals, communities and employers.

Service objectives:

- To improve the skills and qualifications of adults in Manchester.
- To work with partners to commission and deliver integrated services to support residents into employment.
- To stimulate participation and achievement in community learning and volunteering to improve health, well being and community cohesion.

MAES core priorities:

- To improve strategic planning with partners so that our curriculum supports residents to become more independent, reach their potential and improve their communities
- To improve the amount of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment
- To ensure learners receive guidance that promotes progression to work, volunteering and/or further/higher level learning opportunities
- To collect and analyse information on learner destinations in order to assess the impact of learning on future learning, employment and citizenship
- To improve the service value for money by operating efficiently and effectively in all aspects of service activity

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES) is part of the Education and Skills Service which sits within the Children and Families Directorate of Manchester City Council and has direct links to the Directorate for Growth and Neighbourhoods to connect the education, work and skills agenda across the council. The Education and Skills service has strengthened partnerships across the education, skills and business sectors, in order to further improve educational outcomes, reduce dependency and better connect individuals and neighbourhoods to the employment opportunities being created.

1.2 In the last 2 years, MAES has revised its business model to extend the course programme from 36 to 48 weeks, delivered a 20% increase in provision and repositioned its course offer in conjunction with the other main provider The Manchester College, to better meet the City strategic priorities to reduce unemployment, address low skills and reduce dependency.
1.3 MAES provision is English, Maths, English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL), Family Learning, Employability, Digital skills and vocational courses linked to local employment opportunities. The curriculum is focused at entry level, level 1 and level 2 and provides a first step into sectors where there is an employer demand or progression route to other providers.

1.4 MAES’s provision is regulated by Ofsted and was inspected in October 2013. The service was judged to be ‘good’ on all measures. Ofsted found that ‘leaders and managers have transformed the service very successfully so that it now focuses on meeting the educational needs of adults from the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city and on preparing adults for work’.  

2.0 MAES overview and business model

2.1 For the academic year 15/16 MAES has a £7.7million SFA contract for the delivery of learning and skills provision to residents.

2.2 MAES offers agile and flexible provision which focuses on unemployed residents and on those with few or low skills and qualifications. This meets the City’s work and skills priorities but also enables MAES to have a key role in driving forward some of the Public Service Reform initiatives such Troubled Families. MAES delivers a coherent set of opportunities and pathways. This includes tasters and projects to engage people who are not in learning, through to the delivery of national qualifications and skills and routes to employment and volunteering which link directly to the Council’s strategic priorities to reduce unemployment and address low skills.

2.3 In 2013/14 the Adult Skills and Community Learning provision delivered 24,977 enrolments to 10,053 individuals. The cohort consists of mainly 19-59 year old residents who have no or low skills and qualifications (below level 2). Of these, 64% are women and 36% are men with 80% unemployed and 46% for whom English is not their first language. MAES’s learners who are in employment come to improve their Maths, English or vocational qualifications in order to secure sustainable employment and progress at work in sectors where there are current and emerging vacancies.

2.4 MAES unique selling point is its community based model which delivers very effective local provision and outcomes in 9 Adult learning centres and over 100 community venues. This delivery model enables MAES to reach those residents who have low skills and complex dependencies to overcome if they are to improve the skills, qualifications, attitudes and behaviours needed to secure and progress in work and become less dependent on public services. MAES learners include those who have left compulsory education with no or low qualifications, have had long periods of unemployment or no work history at all, mental health problems, have been homeless, are ex offenders, drug and or alcohol dependent. The strength of delivering in a wide range of community locations is that this enables more effective co-design and delivery with other organisations and services and provision can be customised to meet local needs.

2.5 The service has a mixed model of direct delivery and commissioned activity with 14% of the Community Learning funding sub-contracted to other providers to deliver provision to targeted groups such as young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), those recovering from drug and alcohol related problems and learners suffering from mental health issues.
3.0 Adult Skills provision

3.1 In 2013/14 there were 3947 learners on Skills courses. The majority of learners achieve one or more qualifications in English, Maths and ICT, and delivers vocational courses in Childcare, Education, Health and Social Care, Digital Skills and Community Interpreting. This means that residents are accessing training in those sectors where there is predicted job growth. MAES has also delivered a successful pre employment programme for 18-24 year olds with learning difficulties for a number of years. This includes a work placement or volunteering opportunity which is the key factor in this cohort gaining employment. Many learners need to improve their Maths and English skills before they are able to progress to a vocational course which will lead to employment. Many learners progress to further learning, volunteering and employment. The majority of job outcomes are in the education, care, retail, administration and hospitality warehousing sectors where MAES, its partners and Jobcentre Plus have worked together to develop and identify work experience and volunteering opportunities.

4.0 Community Learning

4.1 In 2013/14, there were 8018 learners on MAES Community Learning provision, who participated in a wide range of tasters, projects and courses. The provision has an outcome framework which includes a range of distance travelled measures for employability skills and health and well being.

4.2 Community Learning is made up of four strands: Family English, Maths and Language (FEML) Wider Family Learning (WFL) Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC) and Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL).

4.3 MAES Community Learning Plan was developed in consultation with residents and key stakeholders. Resources are now focused on developing skills which progress residents towards employment and which reduce dependence on public services.

5.0 Family Learning (Family English, Maths and Language and Wider Family Learning)

5.1 MAES delivers courses in Family English, Maths and Language (FEML) that addresses gaps in parent’s skills and teaches parents about how their children learn at school. Wider Family Learning (WFL) offers personal development and parenting courses to develop confidence and resilience in parents, and as a result, their children. Through other courses such as Learning through Play and Ready for School, parents learn how their children develop and help them prepare for the transition from home to school. Family Learning programmes are designed to embed broader employability skills such as communication, team work, creative thinking and digital skills.

5.2 Family Learning programmes are delivered predominantly in primary schools and Children’s Centres. The team have very well-established and effective partnerships with MCC Early Years team and schools leading to joint planning of provision which contributes to local and city priorities and meets the diverse needs of residents in neighbourhoods across the city. MAES is contributing to the integrated approach, working with families with complex needs (Troubled Families) to reduce their dependence on public services, increase their participation in skills training and improve their employment prospects.
6.0 Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC)

6.1 In 2013/14 MAES commissioned 13 voluntary and community providers to deliver its NLDC programme. The majority of the provision used practical activities to attract and engage unemployed people back into learning and employment, such as digital skills, cookery, drama, sports leadership and radio production. Several providers organise voluntary work experience as an integral part of their NLDC funded training.

7.0 Personal and Community Development learning (PCDL)

7.1 The PCDL programme (4008 learners in 2013/14) delivers a wide range tasters and projects to engage residents with the courses particularly focused on Employability, Digital skills, Volunteering, ESOL for Everyday Life and Sustainability.

7.2 MAES delivers learning programmes that concentrate on the development of employability skills, improving mental health and wellbeing and progression to further learning or work. These support residents to set goals, recognise their transferrable skills and the gaps they need to address particularly around Maths, English and ICT. Through the use of self-assessment processes and tools, learners record changes in their levels of confidence and motivation as well as improvements in their communication skills, teamwork and positive approach.

7.3 The provision is co-designed with stakeholders including Jobcentre Plus (JCP), and housing providers such as Working Well. MAES works in partnership with a number of VCS organisations which support residents with barriers to employment. MAES has combined the management of the ICT/digital team and the Employability team in order to deliver more responsive and relevant programmes for unemployed residents whose lack of digital skills is a barrier to them finding and sustaining work.

7.4 New activities have been designed for job-seekers who have no ICT/digital skills and for those who are speakers of other languages. These are delivered in learning centres and community venues across the city for residents who are digitally excluded to those who need to improve their skill levels and qualifications to find work.

7.5 MAES has also established work clubs at several of its Learning Centres and at a number of partner venues in order to fill gaps in other such provision across the city. These provide residents with high quality support to develop job-search skills and apply for work.

7.6 MAES delivers volunteering programmes for ESOL, Work Clubs and Digital Champions. They are designed to increase capacity in third sector organisations and focus on the development of a pool of volunteer trainers as a cost effective and sustainable investment of limited public funding.

8.0 Talk English Project

8.1 MAES led a successful regional consortium bid to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) English Language Competition in 2013. The Talk English project, in collaboration with partners from across the North West, was launched in early 2014. It aims to enable people with little or no English to access services and get more involved in their communities, to encourage community cohesion and also to give the wider community a better understanding of the challenges faced by migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.