

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

ADULT LEARNING UPDATE

1. Background

The information provided below offers a broad overview of adult learning in Angus which is directly supported or delivered by the Communities Service. It does not encompass all of the adult learning that goes on in Angus.

The Communities Service directly delivers and enables a range of adult learning provision which gives opportunities for adults to develop their learning in a number of settings.

In Scotland, adult learning is part of a broader strand of community learning and development activity that aims to improve life chances for people of all ages through learning, personal development and active citizenship. The provision of community learning and development, including community based adult learning, has a clear legislative basis through the Scottish Statutory Instrument, The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations (2013).

In May 2014 the Statement of Ambition for Adult Learning in Scotland was launched. The Statement of Ambition identifies the key features of future Adult Learning in Scotland. These are defined as:-

- Adults in Scotland will be empowered and supported to:
 - develop social capital and the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to make positive life choices, support economic growth, participate in their local community and take social action.
 - develop improved communication – including Gaelic language, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), literacy, numeracy and digital literacy.
 - demonstrate an inclusive adult learning ethos that encourages team work and problem solving.
 - access and take advantage of flexible learning opportunities (including on-line learning) within their own community and workplaces
 - participate in the digital civic society as it develops.
- Learning opportunities will be designed with, and for, learners based on their interests and the skill they bring in the context of both local and national economic and social drivers. Learners will be supported to take advantage of these opportunities within an adult learning support framework.

The Angus Single Outcome Agreement includes commitments and targets in relation to:-

- Adult literacy and numeracy
- ESOL
- Recognition of achievement through accreditation

The Communities Team and its partners are using the social practice approach to deliver a range of provision that contributes to achieving these outcomes and that is in line with the priorities outlined in the Statement of Ambition. This includes:-

- Angus-wide adult literacy and numeracy provision within which learners have the opportunity to gain accreditation for their learning
- Angus-wide ESOL provision targeted at the growing population of new residents
- Angus Digital Skills Academy
- Access to a range of qualifications and accreditation that recognises adults' learning

This is not an evaluative report; it simply provides information on current, recent and some planned adult learning activity.

2. General Adult learning Activity

2.1 Adult Literacy and Numeracy

The Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies 2009 found that 26.7% of the Scottish population may face additional challenges and constrained opportunities due to their lack of literacies skills but will generally cope with their everyday lives. Within this figure, 3.6% (one person in 28) faces serious challenges in their literacies practices. Although there is no accurate mechanism for recording adult literacy at a local level, the situation in Angus would appear to be consistent with the national picture.

The Communities Team delivers a range of literacy and numeracy provision for adults. In Forfar, Brechin, Arbroath and Kirriemuir where it is possible to provide literacy and numeracy tuition, which almost always includes an element of digital literacy, in dedicated adult learning spaces. In Montrose and Carnoustie this provision is delivered in libraries. In general, literacies tuition is provided in a group work setting. However, in some cases, one-to-one tuition is made available. A small number of volunteers work with the Communities team and helps to provide one-to-one support.

Learners are encouraged and supported to progress from literacies provision into other adult learning activities within the Communities Team, into further education or into volunteering or paid employment.

In 2014/15 **358** learners were involved in core literacies provision. This figure does not include learners undertaking specifically ICT learning.

2.2 Employability Provision

Job Clubs have been delivered in Angus by the Communities Team since 2012. Attendance is mainly through referrals from either Job Centre Plus or partners supporting adults with specific needs e.g. Penumbra. Traditionally Job Clubs have involved a range of employability activities including IT and literacies support. This has taken form of:

- CV building
- Interview support
- Basic beginners IT tutoring
- Setting up email
- Setting up Universal Jobmatch accounts, and providing ongoing help
- Using a range of job search websites, including Gumtree and social media

- Making links with other agencies such as SDS, DA college, CAB, Welfare Rights Team, ADAPT, VAA.

Whilst Job Clubs have been successful and well attended in terms of existing learner feedback, it has been difficult to get an accurate measure of success as those learners moving on don't always come back to report where they've gone. Job Clubs have tended to focus exclusively on employability skills and have not generally picked up issues relating to learners' broader health and well-being. However, there have been some good examples of successful wider provision being offered through the clubs, including outdoor activity and volunteering.

Therefore a review of Job Clubs Angus-wide has been undertaken and work is underway to re-focus the Job Clubs based on that review. Future provision will be planned to take account of learners' broader health and well-being needs as well as supporting them in job-seeking.

In 2015/16, **240** learners attended Job Clubs across Angus:

Montrose	71
Carnoustie	19
Arbroath	81
Forfar	41
Kirriemuir	11
Brechin	17

2.3 Digital Literacy

ADSA

The Angus Digital Skills Academy (ADSA) has now been operational since October 2013. The ADSA was conceived in response to the increasing demand for digital skills learning from unemployed adults and the realisation by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) that a significant number of their customers could not fulfil the expectations attached to job search because of a lack of digital skills. The first six months of the ADSA, jointly delivered by Libraries and Communities Team staff, was funded by the DWP through their Flexible Support Fund, covering staffing costs, and by the local authority in providing venues, resources and some qualification costs.

Building on the success of the initial programme, Angus Council has funded subsequent programmes through the Welfare Reform Fund. To date, **453** learners have undertaken the programme and almost all have achieved some level of accredited qualification including SQA ICT qualifications and British Computer Society certificates. The ADSA has a very high success rate in moving learners into work through access to qualifications, help with CVs and cover letters, and increased confidence in using job searching websites and email.

Basic IT Training

In addition to the ADSA provision, which is offered exclusively to those in receipt of benefits, the Communities Team offers basic ICT tuition on a drop in basis. In all IT tutoring provision, SQA qualifications are made available to learners. In 2014/15, **97** learners achieved SQA qualifications in ICT. In 2015/16 **71** learners achieved SQA qualifications.

2.4 English for Speakers of Other languages

There are well-attended community-based English for Speakers of Other Languages classes delivered weekly by the Communities Team in Forfar, Arbroath, Brechin, Montrose and Carnoustie. All classes offer learners the opportunity to undertake SQA accredited qualifications.

An ESOL volunteer buddying scheme was established in 2015 and offers language development support in informal settings and has had a high level of success.

An International café runs at Montrose Road Centre every Saturday morning, delivered as a partnership between Angus Council and Dundee and Angus College. This is well-attended and offers a range of activities that support integration and language development in a social setting. There is a planned rollout of this facility to the Montrose area during 2016/17.

An annual 'ESOL camp' has been delivered for the past three years and has had a high level of positive outcomes for learners. The two nights residential offers an opportunity for ESOL learners to continue to develop their language skills during the summer break by participating in a social setting with native English speakers.

All ESOL provision is very well supported by volunteers and offers good opportunities for them to gain language tuition skills. In 2015/16 three volunteers were supported to undertake PDA ITESOL through funding supplied by the Scottish Further Education Council.

ESOL Support to Syrian Refugees

In December 2015 five families from Syria arrived in Arbroath. They have received a high level of support from the Communities team, in particular ESOL support. Only one of the learners came with any English but all have progressed well in their language learning and three are now ready to attend full-time ESOL courses at Dundee and Angus College, whilst the others will continue to receive weekly tuition from volunteers supported by the Communities Team. The same level of English language tuition will be provided to the next group of Syrian families to come to Angus.

2.5 Family Learning

The Communities Team supports families to learn and develop skills and knowledge together. Learn, Laugh and Play groups meet weekly in Forfar, Kirriemuir and Carnoustie. This is provision led by parents/carers and children who plan and develop the programmes in which they participate. The model has achieved a high degree of success with weekly attendance of 15-20 participants in all areas. The programme focuses on health and wellbeing and includes cooking, healthy eating, tackling social isolation and widening opportunities. Organisations and services including money management advice, health visitors, fire service etc. regularly contribute. The model is based on sharing knowledge of child development and parental experience by introducing theory in a very informal way. There are plans to roll out this model across all areas of Angus. The next Learn, Laugh and Play group will be delivered in 2016/17 in Arbroath.

3. Locality Community Planning Events

In 2016, Angus Council convened four open space events inviting partners in each of the four Angus Community Planning Partnership locality areas to consider what collective action needs to be taken to improve outcomes for people living in those areas. Communities Team staff worked closely with some adult literacy learners to ensure that they had the confidence and skills to effectively engage with the process. Across Angus ESOL learners were actively encouraged to become involved in this community planning process. Where necessary, work was undertaken to allow ESOL learners to feed into the process in other ways.

4. Pride in Place

4.1 Men's Sheds

In Forfar and Carnoustie, small groups have been supported by Adult Learning staff to plan and deliver Men's Shed projects. As a new concept to the Angus area groups have required a fairly high level of support in defining the purpose of a Men's Shed, and in identifying and developing the specific skills needed to take forward projects. While participants may not identify learning as the principal reason for their involvement, there is a significant learning element to this activity, including peer learning and skills sharing. The social contact offered also has positive impacts on participants' sense of well-being.

4.2 Pride in Place Events Network

An Angus-wide network supporting community organisations to plan and deliver events is supported by the Communities team. During the past year this has included input from adult learning staff in delivering training in ICT skills and use of social media.

4.3 Tenant Participation

Tenant participation groups across Angus are supported to identify the learning they require in order to take forward work. Members have been given support to develop employability, committee skills and digital literacy, as well as health and well-being and outdoor activities.

4.4 Beautiful Angus

Community judges were recruited across Angus to assist in judging the Beautiful Angus gardens competition. As part of this process, adult learning staff delivered skills training to participants.

5. Accreditation and Award Schemes

5.1 SQA Qualifications

Adults undertaking learning with the Communities Team have the opportunity to undertake SQA qualifications. Qualifications offered to adult learners are:

- Core Skills – Communications, Numeracy and ICT
- Volunteering Skills
- Employability Award
- ESOL

During 2015/16 **124** learners achieved SQA qualifications. The majority of these were in ICT and ESOL and there is scope to extend access to awards in to other areas of learning activity.

5.2 Adult Achievement Awards

Between September 2015 and March 2016 Angus learners participated in piloting a new national Adult Achievement Award. Angus Council staff had a significant role in the initial work of developing the awards which were then taken forward by Newbattle Abbey College with support from a national steering group. The awards are now available at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels 3, 4 and 6. The five Angus learners participating in the pilot all achieved awards at Level 3. They are now to be part of a phase 2 pilot in which they will undertake awards at a higher

level. It is hoped that this will include planning and taking part in a residential in the Netherlands. The Service is also committed to extending access to the Adult Achievement Award to a broader group of learners across a range of learning activity.

5.3 Discovery Awards

The Discovery Award is aimed at people over 50 years of age and helps promote an active and healthy life style by offering a range of challenges undertaken through a programme of leisure activities. In Angus there are small Discovery Award groups in Forfar / Kirriemuir, Montrose and Carnoustie. Learners are supported through the award and are encouraged to plan and recognise their own learning as they work through the award.

Author: Graham Hewitson, Service Manager, Communities

E-mail for further information: CommunitiesBusinessSupport@angus.gov.uk