

THURROCK PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND

Definition: Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) is learning for personal development, cultural enrichment, intellectual or creative stimulation and for enjoyment. It is also learning developed with local residents and other learners to build the skills, knowledge and understanding for social and community action.

Policy Context :

The government white paper *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* states "We will reinvigorate PCDL through local partnerships, which look beyond just LSC-funded learning and include a wide range of recreational, health-related and cultural learning funded through other sources. We want representatives of learners, including voluntary and community groups, as well as providers, to plan provision in a coordinated and cost effective way in line with local community priorities. "

Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidance states that the PCDL safeguard was established on the principle that it is reasonable and desirable to continue to make a proportionately small amount of public funding available for all adults to participate in learning regardless of their prior educational attainment. It is a feature of a civilised society and indicates the value placed on lifelong learning that is not directly related to employability or economic success. This approach also recognises the wider benefits of learning in the community including its contribution to broader government policies such as health (mental and physical well-being) and community cohesion. There will increasingly be an expectation that individuals should pay for this kind of provision where they can afford to do so.' There is considerable evidence that although such non-accredited learning may not have the more obviously quantifiable impact of vocational programmes, its value can be no less significant to the wider economy. The partnerships will therefore also need to consider the range of skills development opportunities and progression pathways.

It is against this background that the PCDL planning partnerships have been proposed.

PURPOSE AND VISION

Purpose of the PCDL partnerships

The partnerships are primarily for planning and mutual exchange. It is not intended that they hold the LSC's funding or make the final decisions on its resource allocation. This remains the responsibility of the LSC, although the LSC will be influenced by discussion in the partnerships.

Vision statement for the PCDL partnership activity

Through working together, sharing local knowledge and information, supporting each other for innovation and sharing good practice our partnership in Thurrock will make the best use of resources to create:

- More and better learning opportunities available locally; shaped and informed by good consultation and the needs of individuals and groups in local communities
- Provision that is acknowledged locally, regionally and nationally as a model for the overall improvement in the quality of life through learning for our communities, individuals and within the work force.

Our ambition in providing post 19 learning is to develop

- **Successful Learners** who progress and achieve

- **Confident Individuals** who lead safe and healthy lives
- **Responsible Citizens** who make a positive contribution to society

Key Principles underpinning the partnerships:

- effective and extensive communication
- learner centred operating from a position of disinterested representation rather than institutional self-interest.
- be built from public, private, voluntary, community or faith organisations firmly embedded within existing planning structures and built on the existing partnerships working closely with statutory and voluntary agencies.

Remit of Partnerships: work and ways of working

- identify and involve providers who can reach under-represented groups of learners and lever in other sources of funding or services;
- plan for an appropriate range of PCDL provision at the local level;
- encourage and foster appropriate cooperation between stakeholders and providers;
- ensure an “integrated service” approach to PCDL activity;
- extend discussion beyond that which is LSC funded
- ensure a coordinated approach to maximise the effective use of all public funding, and lever in additional funding including in the health, sports and recreation and cultural sectors;
- have a relationship with Local Area Agreements although there should be no attempt to overlay further bureaucracy or impose a rigid structure;
- ensure the 'best-fit' for the nature and membership of the partnership in each area to be locally determined within broad parameters;
- include all parties delivering PCDL provision in the partnership;
- comprise not only providers and stakeholders, but also take steps to involve local communities in decisions;
- include Local Area Agreements, LSPs, local authorities and liC partnerships.

STRUCTURE

Structure of the PCDL partnership in Thurrock

A relatively simple structure is proposed for Thurrock: an overarching borough wide strategic partnership reporting to the Shaping Thurrock Board (LSP) via Thurrock Learning Partnership to whom the LSP delegated responsibility as the “learning arm” of the LSP.

Conflicts of interest

Membership of the partnerships entails the agreement to work towards the objectives of the PCDL strategic plan linked to both the Local Area Agreement and LSC policy. Members agree to work to these aims and not represent their own interests or the service to which they belong. Where there is tension between PCDL aims or proposals and those of their particular organisations, members will declare an interest and should withdraw from the discussion.

Complaints/compliments

Complaints relating to the individual provision should be dealt with through the appropriate provider complaints processes. Complaints regarding the actions of the PCDL Partnership should be referred to the Chair of the PCDL Partnership in the first instance; if unresolved through Thurrock Learning Partnership and, ultimately, the LSP. The Learning and Skills Council will be the final arbiter for complaints in terms of its funded provision.

Roles responsibilities and outputs

The PCDL partnership will in the coming year be able to form an overview of the PCDL offer in Thurrock and in particular to do the following:

1. Map, so far as possible, all PCDL-type activity in the area and identify where there are significant gaps in the provision or in the learners being served, which seem to warrant exploring additional or new ways of working.
2. Undertake some collaborative planning, at least for the core parts of the publicly funded curriculum offer, in order to secure a reasonable spread of provision across the area and ensure viable class sizes.
3. Encourage partners to align or pool their funding as well as lever in other sources of funding or resources in order to optimise the sum of learning opportunities locally.
4. Engage a wider range of agencies and organisations in thinking about the activities they offer as learning including, for example, volunteering.
5. Review their collective performance over the year in ensuring there is a wide range of high quality and inspiring PCDL provision locally, and begin to form a view on the impact and social value of such provision.
6. Ensure that a prospectus is developed by the partnership which sets out the range and volume of learning activity considered appropriate for the locality including that to be funded by the LSC.
7. Monitor the success of the PCDL reforms using national and local indicators and begin to consider a range of local indicators for 2009-10.
8. Understand the fee arrangements across the PCDL providers to ensure that those who can afford to pay do so and that LSC funding is focussed on disadvantaged learners.
9. Seek ways of maintaining levels of provision including learner volumes, seeking a broad curriculum and stimulating continued interest locally in learning for its own sake.
10. Secure an adequate range of community based progression opportunities for adults from PCDL activity.
11. Develop mechanisms for consulting learners/potential learners.

The local PCDL offer is likely to be a combination of:

1. Part time day and evening classes and courses and activities for people who want to learn for interest, pleasure, health and well being – fee paying with fee concessions and or bursaries.
2. Engagement provision and taster courses of all kinds for people who are not yet sure that learning is for them – low or no fee with fee concessions and or bursaries
3. Learning programmes developed with, and for, community groups around issues that concern them as local residents or parents, for example – unlikely to be appropriate to charge fees for this although likely to be developed in partnership with other organisations

and the resourcing, therefore, a shared responsibility between the learning provider and the partner organisation.

4. Less formal activity which has at its heart a learning purpose, for example local history walks, fitness days, art history talks, health promotion events, museum workshops etc – fees may or may not be charged depending on the organisation's policy

Membership

Representation to be sought from at least the following stakeholders in Thurrock:

- Shaping Thurrock Partnership
- Thurrock Learning Partnership
- Learning & Skills Council (Essex)
- Thurrock Adult Community College
- South West Essex PCT
- ACE (Active Citizen's Entitlement)
- Extended Schools
- Community Organisations
- Voluntary Organisations
- Faith Organisations
- LA maintained services such as Libraries, Museums, Sports & Leisure
- HE/FE Institutions

Frequency of meetings

To be determined at inaugural meeting, propose bi-monthly with dates agreed for a calendar year. Venue to be shared amongst stakeholders where appropriately sized accommodation is available.

Servicing of Partnership

Agenda circulated by Chair of meeting, scribed by Thurrock Learning Partnership administrative support or Thurrock Adult Community College administrative support.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference should be viewed as a living document and open to regular review.

24 November 2008