

### Snapshot of the Bedfordshire Adult Skills and Community Learning Service today

1 The ASCL service currently directly delivers or commissions a broad range of learning opportunities. 83% of delivery is up to Level 1, which is lower level skills (GCSEs in comparison are level 2 qualifications). The types of activities delivered include:

- **Family learning:** to enable parents to improve literacy & numeracy skills and achieve qualifications by building confidence, communication and employability skills and accessing provision of information, advice and guidance.
- **Support Into Work:** through Work Clubs across Leighton Buzzard, Houghton Regis, Dunstable and Biggleswade to support individuals at risk of redundancy. Specifically includes working closely with Housing Association tenants to tackle unemployment and offer employment information, advice and guidance.
- **Working with employers:** to improve literacy and numeracy levels within the workforce through to leadership and management training and promoting and supporting apprenticeships. Working with employers such as RAF Henlow, 3M, DHL and local schools
- **Careers advice:** to adults in areas such as returning to work, career changes and dealing with redundancy.
- **Working with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged:** through health and well being activities for older people, including delivery in day care centres, hostels and care homes. Working with the probation service to support learning in Bedford prison and activities to engage those with no skills or low skills and support them to gain confidence, qualifications and progression on to further learning or employment. Supporting learning through organisations such as MIND, Autism Beds and Sight Concern. Working with learners who through personal circumstances have the hardest and longest journeys to get back into work or those who have difficulty or disability enabling them to gain independent living skills
- **Learning for Leisure and Pleasure:** full cost recovery courses in a range of subjects from languages to floristry that promote health, well being, relaxation and learning for fun.

2. In the 2011/12 the service engaged with 4,603 learners in 7,155 learning activities through delivery in over 145 venues. 53% of learners are located across Central Bedfordshire, 35% in Bedford Borough and 12% from neighbouring authorities. The learner profile is fairly evenly distributed across wards throughout both Local Authority areas, although there is as would be expected higher levels in more urban areas. 71.88% of learners are female and 28.12% male, this is comparable to the gender split in other ASCL services. 35% of learners are aged 55+ years. The level of engagement of Black and Minority Ethnic learners is around 11% in Central Bedfordshire and 19.2% in Bedford Borough.
  
3. Throughout 2012/13 the ASCL service has undertaken a commissioning pilot which has seen £350,000 of activity being delivered by a broad range of local providers including voluntary and community sector organisations and private training providers. This has been used as a pilot to test out the approach, the market and establish a unit cost range for delivering provision.