



Children's Services

Lifelong Learning Skills ESOL – Skills for Life

1. Executive Summary

Tower Hamlets Lifelong Learning Service (LLS) is a local education authority directly delivered community adult education service. A main focus of the lifelong learning service is to widen participation in adult learning. Therefore, it is key to promote equality in the service to ensure that local people have access to appropriate learning opportunities.

Current assumptions and practices can set up barriers that prevent access and can discriminate against people on the grounds of race, gender, faith or religious belief, sexual orientation and disability. A main focus of the service is therefore to widen participation in adult and family learning.

- Family learning is a new area of learning. Protocols were developed in partnership with City Lit and the Lifelong Learning Service.
- This is part of an offer co-ordinated with Tower Hamlets College across the borough.
- Different groups – Bangladeshi and Somali in particular – are brought together for family learning and skills for life provision. Many participants are taught by tutors from different cultural and language backgrounds who teach through methods encouraging communication between people from different cultural backgrounds
- Family learning is often (by definition) inter-generational. Skills for life also has a wide range of age ranges participating.
- Lifelong learning courses enable people from a wide cross-section of the community to come together and engage in shared learning and activities

2. Data Collection & Consultation

Data Collection

QLS Management Information System

Student Surveys

Learner Voice Survey

LSC national, London-wide and local data

Evaluation sheets completed by parents after Family Learning events.

Partner Communication / Reviews

Minutes of meetings

Ethnicity breakdown of the service users

Consultation

Consultation re: Joint bids to national and local agencies.

1:1 reviews with partner organisations (30 in total)

LAP Consultations and meeting groups

Cross borough forums

Learner Satisfaction Surveys

Classroom Observation Reports

3. Key Findings

Ethnicity

All race target groups are reflected, with a bias towards the Bangladeshi and Somali communities. However, the wider representation of the borough may not be evidenced. Partnership provision means that Tower Hamlets College target other groups in the Community so that the community is represented *overall* across both service providers. I.e. provision is planned on a joint basis. Everything is 'mapped' via the Developing Communities project.

Gender

Few men attend Family Learning, with higher numbers of females also attending ESOL classes. This reflects national trends and cultural issues within the target groups.

Women are the traditional child carers and are often isolated, meaning they also have greater ESOL needs. This leads to higher participation.

Alternatively, low levels of interest and lack of motivation and opportunities to access learning has an impact on male participation.

The policy does have the potential to affect gender groups differently (in particular, family learning). However, in this context it may be construed as positive discrimination in that the Department targets specific gender groups in order to redress the historical imbalance of more females enrolling than males.

Disability

A lack of disabled access at some venues present a physical barrier to disabled people.

Many of these venues are not owned or maintained by the Service.

However all Idea Stores are fully accessible, an effort will be made to deliver classes in Idea Stores on ground floor of other buildings.

New partnerships at sites that are not DDA compliant are not being approved (unless a priority and no other option) re: the risk assessments being carried out.

New DDA resources have been bought across the LBTH maintained sites.

A loop system for the hearing impaired was installed at Idea Store Whitechapel

Disabled people are poorly represented, this could also be due to poor self-declarations of voluntary data on the enrolment forms means that under-reporting might be taking place.

Partnerships are developed around the delivery of learning for parents of children with special needs (inc. behavioural problems)

Age

Family Learning is inter-generational and therefore it encourages people of all ages to join in. ESOL / Skills for Life classes have a broad mix of age ranges with a broad age range of adults represented.

Most provision is developed in partnership, which by definition means different parts of the age range are targeted with different partners.

Sexual Orientation

There is no evidence that the policy affects LBG groups differently or has the potential to do so. However, this is not a matter for complacency as there is equally no evidence that the policy does not affect LBG groups differently.

Faith and belief

There is no evidence that the policy affects faith groups differently or has the potential to do so. However, this is not a matter for complacency as there is equally no evidence that the policy does not affect faith groups differently.

4. Conclusions & Recommendations

- More LAP based approach to family learning as opposed to venues based.
- The monitoring of student enrolment data
- Awareness training for all 6 s Equalities strands especially for partner organisations.
- Regular review of accurate data on under-representation of target groups
- Curriculum review
- Course reviews
- Collection of accurate data
- Training for partner organisations

Action Plan

Recommendation	Key activity	Progress milestones
Development of detailed protocols to include 'sight-off' requirement for partner organisation policies to ensue they address the 6 Equalities strands	Full compliance with LBTH Equalities standards and policy requirements by partner organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporation of Equalities standards into screening protocols for partner organisations
Improving awareness of skills for life and family learning opportunities across the service	Training staff in partner organisations to ensure consistent awareness of the curriculum offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training and development of staff in partner organisation in ways and means of promoting different FLN or S4L programmes• Training in needs analysis
Improve data analysis and co-ordination across LLS and THC Family Learning / S4L provision	Recruitment of inter service / College project co-ordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruitment of project co-ordinator – April 2007• LAP based planning – autumn 2007
Improve literacy and numeracy targeted provision	Introduce discrete literacy and numeracy courses for particular groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate need – Summer 2007• Introduce course – Autumn 2007