



## Surrey Adult Learning



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## 1. Assessment Information

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| Assessment Type                                       | ACCREDITATION REVIEW    |
| Assessor's Decision                                   | STANDARD MET            |
| Assessor's Name                                       | STUART MCRILL           |
| Visit Date  | 04/02/2019 - 06/02/2019 |
| Client ID   | C18917                  |
| Assessment Reference                                  | PN104024                |
| Continuous Improvement Check Year 1 due by            | 05/02/2020              |
| Continuous Improvement Check Year 2 due by            | 05/02/2021              |
| Accreditation Review on-site visit to be conducted by | 05/02/2022              |

## 2. Organisation – Introduction, Aims, Objectives & Outcomes

Surrey Adult Learning (SAL) is a key service of Surrey County Council, whose broad curriculum offer has been designed to play a key part in realising the Council's wider purpose of ensuring '*Surrey residents remain healthy, safe and confident about their future*'. SAL resides in the 'Children, Families, Learning and Communities' Directorate and all planning and review procedures are fully integrated into the broader County Council processes. The organisation last met the **matrix** Standard in 2016 and soon after achieved a 'good' Ofsted outcome.

This well managed organisation is firmly focused upon making a measurable contribution to the wider County Council strategic goals. SAL's strategic priorities have been developed and themed within the Council-wide wellbeing, economic prosperity and resident experience priorities. The last three years have been especially successful for SAL (the organisation) whose resources are maximised to reach out to residents county-wide from its seven dedicated adult learning centres whose reach is extended through 100 smaller community delivery venues that include children's centres, targeted schools and voluntary organisations. Year on year increases in learner engagement (an increase of over 30% over the last five years) are testament to the proactive and responsive approaches of the organisation.

Since the last assessment, there have been changes to SAL's leadership and governance. A new, internally promoted, Principal has refreshed the governance model and, whilst in its early stages of steering the direction of SAL, this tier of strategic support is already focused upon developing stretching and challenging approaches to ensure the maximum added value from the organisation during times of County Council efficiency savings. The curriculum offer continues to evolve, particularly in relation to an emphasis upon health and wellbeing, but its themes are broadly the same as in 2016 and comprise:

- Universal Programme - incorporating languages, movement and wellbeing, cookery, humanities, arts, craft and ICT. Additionally, the Universal Programme includes accredited English and Maths courses with pre GCSE and GCSE accredited provision
- Supported Learning - delivered across the adult learning centres with IAG support inspiring and enabling clients with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Outreach Learning - a small team of staff targeting disadvantaged individuals and seeking to reach out and motivate those adults least likely to embrace adult learning, including those on low incomes and with low skills
- Family Learning - provision here aims to encourage family learners to learn together, providing opportunities for intergenerational learning where parents' and carers' skills are enhanced and so facilitating their children's development and learning.

The expansion into direct delivery of apprenticeship standards is a new development for SAL. Here, a team of tutor/assessors support a small cohort of around 30 apprentices who are internally trained and deployed across a broad range of Council services. This provision is intrinsically linked with the Apprenticeship Levy and mirrors approaches that are taking place across local authorities throughout the country. It is also an area of growth that SAL is seeking to maximise.

Funding for the organisation combines a blend of Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) income with an ever-increasing income stream that is generated via full cost recovery fees from learners.

Today, the **matrix** Standard is not only deeply embedded as the organisation's IAG quality framework, it is highly valued by the organisation. SAL embraced the annual Continuous Improvement Checks, maximising each to build upon the previous year's progress. In raising the profile of outcome based IAG, SAL has helped the workforce to more fully understand how this service contributes to the organisation's key performance indicators. Through careful planning and implementation, the organisation has strengthened all aspects of the IAG which was described by one key manager as the *'wrap around service that now firmly equips our learners with the support they need to achieve their potential'* - a statement that the staff clearly demonstrated at all three centres visited.

A more robust diagnostic and initial assessment has played a pivotal role in improving retention and achievement data sets, including those for GCSE English and Maths. Here, tutors successfully motivate their student base to overcome sometimes deep rooted fear of these core qualifications, and the staff's motivational coaching techniques are really having an impact. For example, the 2017/18 English GCSE retention rate of 85.7% led to an achievement rate of 84.5%, both surpassing projected targets. Across GCSE Maths a 10% leap to 85.5% retention and 84.7% achievement was considered by the curriculum team to be testimony to an IAG support service that ensures learners are much more aware of their expectations relating to attendance. One tutor explained how *'the learner profile hasn't changed but what has changed is our ability to support remotely and face to face, and make better use of the individual learning plan to support and review'*. The IAG service here is much welcomed as highlighted by one learner who confirmed:

*'My tutor has provided me with outstanding support and helped me to overcome my fear of Maths. I achieved the GCSE and am now able to progress my career'*.

Service delivery comprises initial IAG, provided by a competent customer services team based in Woking. This team is efficient, responsive and is intrinsically linked with marketing and promotional activities which have seen the organisation move from a whole organisation prospectus to centre specific brochures. Pre entry IAG has developed significantly since the last assessment with quality assured initial assessment testing used where appropriate to understand English and Maths support needs. The apprenticeship manager and her team have developed robust IAG practices to support around 30 apprentices who are employees of the Council and working towards business administration, customer services or team leader standards. This team has been given the lead-in time to embed quality, and a review of IAG evidence highlights effective learner reviews and support to instil End Point Assessment confidence.

On programme IAG combines ongoing and naturally occurring support with more structured reviews that are summarised within the individual learning plan. Always focused upon developing services, SAL has invested in Kudos AD software. This adds an additional in-house resource for tutors and the designated IAG champions to use to support those adults requesting in depth advice and guidance. Kudos AD, along with external referrals to the National Careers Service, are well known across the tutor base where there is a good understanding of signposting.

Learner outcome based practices have matured significantly throughout the last three years and combine case studies, focus groups and surveys. When used, questionnaires are well designed with an emphasis placed upon capturing the difference realised through a SAL experience with questions exploring IAG support. A review of evaluation reports confirmed the difference the organisation is having upon improving residents' skills. The organisation has actively participated in national adult education outcome based surveys with findings confirming that across Family Learning, 94% of learners cite improved confidence and positivity about their role as parent/carers and a gained sense of community. Destinations and progression outcomes are also captured. In 2017/18 destination data collected from 823 learners highlighted that 20% of learners continued in education after their SAL course and a further 3% progressed at work or found employment. Building upon outcome based monitoring and evaluation is firmly on the SAL quality improvement plan and the exciting Passport to Wellbeing is one such area where capturing the impact over the six course learner entitlement is particularly encouraged.

Learners were effusive in celebrating the impact of their SAL experience to date and feel very supported:

*'My amazing tutor has not only improved my skill set but has transformed my self-belief from a cul-de-sac mindset into an avenue of possibilities'.*

Elsewhere students effused:

*'SAL have been wonderful. After losing my husband I felt very scared about managing my finances and had never used a computer. This course has been perfect for me and the tutor so caring, supporting each of us individually. I have already enrolled onto the next level and can't tell you how good it feels to use the internet to communicate';*

*'SAL provides such an exciting learner offer. We get such value for money with excellent trainers who care so much for their learners. I am glad to pay for the service and feel we need to campaign to keep the richness of the offer for the benefit of all Surrey residents'.*

### 3. Strengths

A number of strengths were identified during the assessment. These are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- SAL is a listening organisation with great care taken to capture the voice of learners and staff. Learner surveys are well designed and have achieved high return rates with feedback incredibly positive about the impact the learning and IAG support is having on wellbeing and economic and social prosperity. Focus groups are embedded across the five delivery approaches with feedback informing the self-assessment report and quality improvement plan. The staff (many of whom are employed only a few hours a month) are benefiting from the coaching and empowering leadership model and feel trusted and supported by their managers. The three centres provided many examples of how the Principal *'inspires, motivates and enables us all to reach out and help to transform lives through learning'*. (1.2, 1.7, 4.3)
- Care is taken to manage resources effectively with all staff focused upon efficiency saving approaches yet maintaining a high quality IAG and learning service. Tutors in particular gave many examples of how they go above and beyond their contractual working hours to support learners to achieve. Their passion and commitment to SAL is key to creating an environment that is inclusive, safe and making a difference. (2.1)
- SAL has defined its IAG service with much clarity and promotion. Today the service is visibly promoted across every centre and has an identity that includes Safeguarding, equality and diversity, additional learner support and careers information. Learners and staff can describe the offer and entitlement which is further outlined in an IAG policy and in a short video that is at its final stage of editing. (3.1, 4.7, 4.8)
- Delivery of the IAG service across the curriculum is bespoke and customised to the course. Tutors skilfully make use of the individual learning plan, incorporating key IAG goals and feedback in a manner that learners are valuing. Instead of it being seen as a tier of bureaucracy on a leisure course the learners are utilising IAG support to celebrate what they are achieving and plan what their future goals are. Contextualisation and differential IAG practice is just as bespoke across Supported Learning. These approaches reflect a skilled workforce with much understanding and knowledge of reviewing and presenting options and choices. (3.3, 3.4)
- The Curriculum Manager for Family Learning has embraced the **matrix** champion role and is a proficient implementer of the Standard as a business improvement framework. Over the last three years SAL has transformed into an IAG confident organisation that has raised its own quality and standards, established a firm foundation of county-wide IAG champions and has strengthened linkages and evidence of the role of IAG in achieving wider key performance indicators (4.5, 4.8)

## 4. Areas for Development

Areas for development are offered in the spirit of continuous improvement and a way for an Assessor to add value e.g. where the service is of a high quality development areas are offered to help the service be even better than it already is; or to give insight to practice seen elsewhere. There is no correlation between the number of strengths and areas for development. Where development areas are greater in number this is not intended to indicate that the information, advice and guidance service is in anyway lacking. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard. These will form the basis for discussion at the Continuous Improvement Checks (CIC) conducted twelve and twenty-four months from the date of this Assessment, along with any other notable developments.

- SAL's Passport to Wellbeing is an exciting offer for the community that is intrinsically linked to the wider corporate wellbeing strategic goal. Ever evolving, the programme has grown from a pilot in 2016 to an offer that is clearly branded, promoted and implemented. As part of its continued development SAL is encouraged to develop monitoring and evaluation methodologies to capture the impact. Certainly, the learner offer is a generous one and it would be powerful for funders and wider stakeholders to learn about its transformative impact. In exploring evaluative approaches, the team could adopt some of the well developed practices that are working particularly well across Family Learning. There may also be merits in partnering with Surrey Recovery College and evaluating Passport to Wellbeing's impact upon outcomes such as renewed sense of purpose; realising life goals; positive attitude; and self-awareness and belief. (1.5, 3.1, 4.2)
- The identification, training and deployment of a team of IAG champions across the county is just one illustration of this listening organisation's approach to keeping IAG practice firmly on the self-assessment and quality improvement radar. Looking ahead the organisation is encouraged to explore whether this champion role or perhaps a centre coordinator would benefit from enhanced IAG training (for instance at Level 4 or 6). This 'grow your own' approach to enhanced IAG would provide a degree of in-house expertise that builds upon the in-house IAG module that all staff complete. (2.4)
- IAG delivery across the SAL learner journey has been highlighted as a key strength and it is against this backdrop that the organisation is encouraged to enhance practice still further. One area worthy of reflection pertains to IAG delivery at the progression, exit and after care stages of the learner journey. This exploration would be appropriate to consider to benefit the full range of learners and help them to leave SAL with not only raised aspirations but a plan to help them achieve a progression outcome of volunteering, supported internships and continued learning. Reinforcing the importance of exit IAG, for instance by delivering an internal CPD workshop on raising aspirations, is likely to be of particularly benefit to staff delivering Supported Learning and Passport to Wellbeing. A review of the Progression leaflets is also encouraged to ensure content explores options and choices in accessible language. (3.4)

The annual **matrix** Continuous Improvement Check will allow the organisation to demonstrate on an ongoing basis the developments they are continuing to make in order to support individuals <http://matrixstandard.com/continuous-improvement-checks/>. These may include the Areas for Development above.

## Commercial in Confidence

Please note that annual Continuous Improvement Checks are mandatory and non-completion within the required timescale will impact on your organisation's accreditation, please see Section 1 for dates.

## 5. Methodology

The following methods were used to gather evidence against the **matrix** Standard during the assessment process.

- One-to-one interviews with the leadership team (4)
- One-to-one interviews with operational managers and staff delivering the service (26)
- One-to-one interviews with external partners (3)
- One to one and small group interviews with a diverse and representative sample of learners accessing IAG (26)
- Visits to the adult learning centres at Woking, Camberley and Moseley
- A review of planning, service delivery and evaluation documentation which staff used to help illustrate examples of business planning, the IAG service and its monitoring and impact.

## Conditions of Accreditation

Holders of the **matrix** Standard Accreditation must:

- Maintain and continually improve upon their services.
- Throughout the period of accreditation satisfy Assessment Services Ltd that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the **matrix** Standard via the annual continuous improvement checks and the three-year accreditation review.
- Complete annual continuous improvement checks in a timely way, it is expected these will be carried out annually by the accreditation anniversary date.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd or their Assessor if the key contact name/contact details change.
- Submit their Booking Form for re-accreditation to the **matrix** Standard at least 3 months prior to the accreditation anniversary date ensuring all pre on-site activity is completed in a timely way including planning, payment and interview scheduling. Accreditation Reviews are due 3 years from the anniversary accreditation date; it is expected that organisations will be assessed by this date or will risk being de-accredited.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd of any significant changes made to the organisational structure, senior management or systems that may impact on their accreditation; email: [matrix@assessmentservices.com](mailto:matrix@assessmentservices.com).
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd immediately if they wish to extend or reduce the scope of their accreditation.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd of any serious complaint or rise in numbers of complaints received (within the scope of the accreditation).
- Not undertake or omit to undertake any activity that may be misleading and/or may cause Assessment Services Ltd and/or the **matrix** Standard to be brought into disrepute.
- Only use the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark for the areas within the scope of the accreditation and in accordance with the guidelines. For example, if a certain department is successfully **matrix** accredited, the Quality Mark can only be used on that department's letterhead or on that department's page on their internet homepage.
- Ensure in cases where accreditation is withdrawn or where they do not come forward for accreditation review, remove from display any certificates or plaques issued by Assessment Services Ltd and do not display the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark nor refer to being a former holder of the **matrix** Standard.
- Be aware that Assessment Services Ltd reserves the right to remove any accreditation and/or certification previously applied if payment is not received for services provided.

Whilst accredited the organisation will be signed up for IAGonline - a community website for all **matrix** holders. Once signed up, any employee of the organisation can join the community and access regular posts and join specialist interest groups for support and discussion.

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