

INSPECTION REPORT

City of Sunderland Council

03 December 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Overall judgement

Where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, **or**
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory.

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

INSPECTION REPORT

City of Sunderland Council

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. City of Sunderland Council (City Council) has a range of training and education provision, including two work-based learning providers that were both inspected within the past two years. It is also responsible for adult and community learning and a large programme of work-based learning for ensuring that workers in care homes in the Tyne and Wear area are appropriately qualified.
2. Since August 2004, all of these have been included in a single contract with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). This inspection covered the adult and community learning and the provision for the care sector. The adult and community learning provision is managed by the assistant head of service participation, who is a member of the standards and quality service, and reports to the head of standards and quality, who in turn reports to the director of education. The assistant head of service participation has a deputy and four project development officers, one of whom is responsible for literacy, numeracy and language skills, one for quality assurance, one for family learning and another for widening participation. All of the provision is subcontracted to a range of 12 organisations, including the local college of further education. Most of these subcontractors work with a particular group of people such as a local community, women's groups or the elderly. Learning is also commissioned through six area life-long learning forums to enable smaller organisations to deliver learning and to build capacity in the sector. Increasingly there is work with schools, particularly extended schools. The service offers courses in 14 areas of learning, including family learning and community development, although only seven were large enough to be inspected. During the week of the inspection the service offered 145 classes.
3. The work-based learning for the care sector trains people from a wide area of Tyne and Wear. It is funded through the European Social Fund and co-financed by the LSC. The project is run by an alliance of councils from the Tyne and Wear area, 600 employers and 130 training providers. The City Council is the accountable body for the contract and the contract is managed by social services and supervised by the single contract strategic group. The manager is the chair of the care alliance executive, which comprises representatives from employers and other councils. A cabinet, comprising employers and the leaders of seven network groups, works with the executive to determine the alliance's strategic direction. The network groups represent employers in a geographical area of the Tyne and Wear sub-region.
4. Sunderland has high levels of deprivation, with 39 per cent of the population living in wards which fall within the most deprived 10 per cent in England. At 2.8 per cent, unemployment is higher than the national average of 2.1 per cent. The 2001 census identified that, at 1.9 per cent, the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is low compared with the national average of 9.1 per cent. This figure does not include a significant number of asylum seekers and refugees that have moved into the city in recent years.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

5. At the time of inspection there are just over 160 learners registered on 16 courses in this area of learning. Courses are offered mainly as day-time provision, but there are some evening courses. All but one of the courses are timetabled as two-hour sessions. Most courses last for 10 weeks, but there are some short three-week introductory taster courses. The provision is non-accredited and targeted at learners with little or no previous information technology (IT) experience. Courses available at the time of inspection include desk-top publishing, an introduction to IT and using the internet. All of the provision is subcontracted. There is no direct delivery of courses. Provision is offered at a wide range of community-based locations at different times throughout the day and evening.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

6. The Local Education Authority (LEA) contracts out all hospitality, sport and leisure programmes to eight training providers in the city. In 2003-04, there were 960 enrolments, which represented the third largest area and more than 10 per cent of the LEA's adult and community learning programme. There are 866 learners currently registered, of whom 361 are new learners. There are 26 courses offered at 13 venues throughout the city, in city centre and outreach sites. Courses include keep fit, tai chi, Pilates, Chinese exercise and relaxation, women's wellbeing, discovering antiques and sugarcraft. None of the courses is accredited. In 2003-04, 35 per cent of learners progressed to accredited courses with other providers. More than 42 per cent of learners are aged over 55 and 86 per cent of them are women. Ten per cent of learners have learning or physical disabilities.

7. Courses are organised on a termly basis, and most last 10 weeks. Most sessions last for between an hour to two hours and are offered in mornings, afternoons and evenings from Monday to Friday. There is no weekend provision. A range of accommodation is used, including church halls, secondary and primary schools, community centres, sheltered accommodation and working men's clubs.

8. Each contractor has a community development officer based at their main site. There are 19 part-time tutors responsible for teaching all of the programmes in this area of learning, with most working between four and eight hours each week. Some tutors are contracted by several providers for different courses.

Health, social care & public services

9. During the week of the inspection, there were 729 learners on national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes and short courses provided for care-sector workers by an alliance of local authorities' employers from the care sector. The alliance began working together in December 2003 and more than 1,000 learners have attended training in its first year. There are 521 learners on NVQ programmes in care or promoting independence programmes, of whom 91 are at level 2, 298 are at level 3 and 48 are at level 4. There are also 81 learners working towards the registered managers' award. All NVQ learners are employed. During the week of inspection there were 25 short courses, including mandatory training in moving and assisting, first aid, and non-mandatory subjects, such as diabetes awareness, effective listening skills and management training in recruitment and retention. Courses run during the day at a wide range of local venues, including hotels, residential homes, community centres, colleges of further education and purpose-built training venues. Learners are aged between 18 to over 60, with most learners in the 40 to 60 age range. Fifteen per cent of learners are men, and 4 per cent are from minority ethnic groups.

10. At the time of the inspection there are 119 learners enrolled on 14 part-time adult and community learning health-related programmes. In 2002-03, there were 428 enrolments and in 2003-04 there were 594 enrolments. All of the adult and community learning provision is subcontracted to a variety of community and voluntary organisations. The providers offer a range of health-related programmes, including complementary therapies, healthy eating and life skills programmes, for a range of learners, most of whom have mental health, learning or physical disabilities. Most programmes are for 20 hours delivered over 10 weeks, although a small number are short eight-hour courses delivered over four weeks. All programmes are non-accredited and are referred to as 'first step' programmes. Most of the programmes run in the day and some at the weekend. The programmes are offered at a wide range of venues such as community centres, local health centres and day centres throughout the city. At the time of the inspection, 23 of the learners are men and nine are disabled. There are no learners from minority ethnic groups. There are a total of 13 tutors working in the area. These tutors are managed and employed by the contractors.

Visual & performing arts & media

11. At the time of inspection, there are 687 learners on 59 courses. Seventeen per cent are in dance classes, 12.5 per cent are in music classes, 24 per cent are in art classes and 46.5 per cent are in craft classes. In 2003-04, there were 1,360 enrolments on 119 courses, accounting for 15.4 per cent of the total enrolments across all areas of learning. Classes are provided across the city within local communities, and run at 21 sites in schools, community centres, drop-in centres and day centres, residential homes, libraries, women's centres and the local college. Courses in visual arts and crafts include watercolour painting, Chinese brush painting, ceramic art, needlework, quilting, soft furnishings, egg decorating and flower craft. Dance and music includes salsa dancing, Egyptian belly dancing, tap dancing, guitar playing, singing and samba drumming. All of the programmes are non-accredited. Most courses take place during the day and in the evening from Monday to Friday. The duration of most courses is 20 hours delivered over 10 weeks. Some taster courses are also provided and are linked to specific projects. Most classes have a mix of beginners and improvers. Currently, 87 per cent of learners are women, 3 per cent are between 19 and 25, 93 per cent are over 25, and less than 1 per cent are from minority ethnic groups.

Foundation programmes

12. Four contractors provide 12 classes in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) on behalf of the LEA. Seven tutors plan and deliver the sessions that take place in local community-based venues. All courses operate for two hours each week, with 10 classes taking place during the day, and most courses run for 10 weeks. There are 44 literacy and 20 numeracy learners enrolled on these courses at the time of inspection. Twenty-two learners attend ESOL classes.

Family learning

13. The City Council offers family literacy, language and numeracy provision (FLLN) and wider family learning programmes. Courses are offered during the day and in the evening in nursery, infant, primary and secondary schools, and community centres throughout Sunderland. FLLN programmes are aimed at learners who wish to develop entry level, level 1 and level 2 skills. Learners gain accreditation for the short programmes and have the opportunity to take the national literacy tests. Wider family learning courses are used to attract new and diverse groups of learners and include programmes in sports, family health, languages, football coaching, arts, animal care, arts and crafts, computer activities, and courses with links to national curriculum subjects. At the time of inspection, 12 wider family learning courses and 34 FLLN courses were offered. Most courses run for eight weeks. There are 298 learners on FLLN programmes and a further 97 on wider family learning programmes. In addition, there are a number of short and weekend events. All provision is subcontracted and managed by a family learning project officer. Twelve tutors teach on the programmes, of whom 33 per cent are men. In 2003-04, learners made 603 enrolments onto programmes, of which 13.6 per cent were from male learners, 2.8 per cent from people with disabilities, and 1.5 per cent from minority ethnic groups. Thirty-one per cent of the enrolments were from new clients. In addition, 456 learners completed short taster events and workshops of less than six hours.

Community development

14. Community development aims to widen the participation of individuals and organisations in local communities and to increase social inclusion. It has four areas of activity, including non-accredited part-time courses, adult learners' week, special projects, and an accredited part-time course. All the provision is subcontracted to a range of organisations, including community groups and the local college. At the time of inspection there are 28 courses, with 276 learners enrolled on them. In 2003-04, there were 3,112 enrolments over the year. Currently, 15 per cent of learners are men and 21 per cent have a disability or learning difficulty. There are no learners from minority ethnic groups. Courses currently take place at 19 venues, including schools, community centres and a church. Most courses are delivered for two hours each week over 10 weeks during the day or evening. Subjects include committee and youth work, arts and crafts, and family history. The accredited adult learner support level 2 course is delivered at eight venues with a variety of attendance modes. Adult learners' week offers one-off taster sessions over a week in May each year. Special projects contribute courses for particular groups, such as young men and adults with learning disabilities. There are a total of 31 tutors working in community development, employed and managed by the subcontractors.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	10
Number of inspection days	49
Number of learner interviews	386
Number of staff interviews	72
Number of employer interviews	14
Number of subcontractor interviews	69
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	69
Number of partner/external agency interviews	19

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

15. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The City Council's leadership and management are satisfactory and equality of opportunity is satisfactory, but quality assurance is unsatisfactory. In the areas of learning, community development and family learning are good, information and communications technology (ICT), health, social care and public services, visual and performing arts and media, and foundation programmes are all satisfactory. Hospitality, sport, leisure and travel is unsatisfactory.

GRADES

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

Leadership and management		3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality assurance		4

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		
- Adult and community learning	160	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Leisure, sport and recreation		
- Adult and community learning	866	4

Health, social care & public services		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Care		
- Work-based learning for adults	729	3
Complementary health services		
- Adult and community learning	119	3

Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas		
- Adult and community learning	687	3

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> - Adult and community learning	22	None
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> - Adult and community learning	64	3
Family learning		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
- Adult and community learning	395	2
Community development		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
- Adult and community learning	276	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

16. The standard of learners' work across the provision is at least satisfactory in all areas of learning. **Standards are particularly good in some dance and textiles lessons and in community development classes.** Many learners are able to use the skills they use in their everyday lives.

17. Levels of achievement are generally satisfactory. In family learning classes, 77 per cent of learners achieved short accredited modules at levels 1 and 2. **There is good achievement of personal learning goals in most areas of learning, although these are poorly recorded in most areas.** Retention rates are good in all areas. Similarly, attendance rates are generally good, except for the sport and recreation classes where attendance averaged approximately 50 per cent during the inspection. Much of the provision targets disadvantaged groups and aims to improve social inclusion. Although this is difficult to measure, there is clear evidence that the City Council is achieving it in most areas of learning.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Information & communications technology	0	0	2	5	0	0	0	7
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	2	0	3	2	0	0	7
Health, social care & public services	0	4	2	5	1	0	0	12
Visual & performing arts & media	1	2	6	3	1	0	0	13
Foundation programmes	0	1	2	3	1	0	0	7
Family learning	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	7
Community development	0	4	3	2	0	0	0	9
Total	2	15	17	22	6	0	0	62

18. **The City Council's range of courses meets the needs of learners and the wider community.** Classes are run in collaboration with a wide range of partner subcontractors, each of which has close links with one particular community. Learners are comfortable learning in an environment that they find non-threatening. However, the literacy, numeracy and language needs of learners on programmes other than foundation, family learning or community development are not always assessed or met.

19. **All learners are well supported with very good relationships with tutors.** In many centres, crèche facilities are available for those with children. Information about courses is not effective in all areas of learning, such as sports and recreation. Progression opportunities are discussed with some learners, but not all. Support for NVQ learners is satisfactory, with learners receiving appropriate information about the NVQ requirements.

20. Teaching is generally satisfactory, with 54 per cent of lessons judged as good or better, and a further 36 per cent as satisfactory. **In family learning and arts classes, some of the teaching is outstanding.** The teaching in community development inspires and encourages learners. The teaching on the adult and community learning element of health and social care area of learning is good, generally well planned, and uses creative approaches. **Teaching and learning are particularly good in dance and textiles lessons. However, some of the coaching and instructing in sport and recreation classes is poor.**

21. Resources in all areas of learning are generally satisfactory. However, some of the accommodation for visual and performing arts, family learning and for sport and recreation classes is unsuitable. Some venues used for family learning and for community development are very good or excellent. The location of teaching venues is good in that they are easily accessible for learners and provide places in which learners feel comfortable. Tutors are generally appropriately qualified, although some tutors in sport and recreation classes do not have qualifications in aspects of the disciplines that they are teaching.

22. **In all areas there is insufficient planning and monitoring of individual learning.** The

LEA has recently introduced a new form of individual learning plan but most tutors are not using this effectively. Learners' targets are often insufficiently detailed and their progress towards them is not monitored. Assessment of learners' prior knowledge is not always effective. In some foundation lessons there are poor assessment practices, with informal and unrecorded assessments.

Leadership and management

23. **The City Council has established a wide range of very effective partnerships.** Some are specifically designed to widen participation and some have the effect of creating a more coherent range of courses across different providers. Partners include voluntary organisations, the local college of further education, a local university and small community groups.

24. **The LEA's contracting process ensures that the provision contributes to the City Council's strategic objectives.** Subcontractors must agree with the LEA the range of courses that they will offer. Their contract specifies the range of courses, the target groups of learners, the number of learners and the venues. The work-based provision for the care sector has been set up to meet the City Council's strategic objective of raising the skills levels in care homes.

25. **The LEA uses a very effective system to monitor agreed actions and to monitor the performance of the adult and community learning service.** There is no equivalent system that it uses in the work-based provision.

26. **The City Council has very effective measures in place to attract new and diverse groups of learners.** Small community groups are able to apply for funding through a number of community forums to develop and run programmes that meet the needs of their particular community. However, the City Council has poor formal procedures to ensure the promotion of equality of opportunity. There is a City Council equal opportunities statement, but this has not been adapted for either adult and community learning or for the work-based learning for the care sector. The City Council requires subcontractors to have an equal opportunities policy, but it does not check their implementation.

27. **Curriculum management in all areas except two is poor.** There has been no individual member of staff to lead, manage and develop most areas until recently. Planning of courses has been to conform to the City Council's broad strategic aims but there has been no strategic plan in these areas to determine what courses should be offered in the future. There are insufficient opportunities for tutors to share good practice.

28. **The City Council's management does not use data effectively.** Achievement is measured as the number of learners who complete the course, and not the number who achieve their learning objectives, although this will change with the implementation of the new individual learning plans. The City Council does not monitor the number of learners on courses other than the numbers who start and those who complete. Achievement

data on accredited foundation and family learning courses is not recorded.

29. **Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete.** Effective observation of teaching and learning has started only recently and has not yet had an impact on the quality of the provision. The City Council has clear contracts with subcontractors specifying, for example, the target group of learners, the number of learners, and the venues. However there are no targets related to quality, such as retention or achievement rates. Similarly, there is no clear statement to ensure that the contractor uses appropriately qualified tutors.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- very good working partnerships which benefits learners
- clear links between the provision and the City Council's strategic objectives
- very effective systems to monitor actions
- very effective integrated approach to attract new and diverse groups of learners
- good examples of celebrating learners' work

Weaknesses

- insufficient curriculum management in most areas
- poor use of data to help develop management decisions
- poor formal procedures to ensure effective promotion of equality of opportunity
- insufficient analysis and monitoring of data for equality of opportunity purposes
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

Information & communications technology

Using IT

Strengths

- good retention rates
- strong community-based approach to provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning and monitoring of individual learning
- weak curriculum management

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good attainment of individual learning goals
- wide range of venues to facilitate community access
- very good relationships with tutors to overcome barriers

Weaknesses

- some poor coaching and instructing
- poor awareness of health and safety by some tutors
- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- some inappropriately qualified staff
- weak curriculum management

Health, social care & public services

Care

Strengths

- very low drop-out rates
- good participation on additional learning programmes
- exceptional involvement of employers

Weaknesses

- poor attendance in some sessions
- insufficient use of individual learning plans
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

Complementary health services

Strengths

- good teaching and learning
- high level of responsiveness to meet community needs
- particularly productive partnerships

Weaknesses

- inadequate planning and monitoring of individual learning
- inadequate learning support and guidance for learners

Visual & performing arts & media

Other contributory areas

Strengths

- good teaching in dance and textiles
- good individual guidance and support for learners
- high level of responsiveness to meet community needs
- very effective personal development activities

Weaknesses

- some cramped and unsuitable accommodation
- insufficient planning and monitoring of learners' progress
- weak curriculum management

Foundation programmes

Literacy and numeracy and ESOL

Strengths

- good differentiation in most literacy and numeracy lessons
- very effective achievement of wider learning skills
- very local and easily accessible learning opportunities
- very effective support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor assessment practices on many courses
- insufficient variation in teaching materials and methods in some lessons
- weak curriculum management

Family learning

Strengths

- good achievement and retention
- some inspirational teaching and learning sessions
- clear strategic planning for FLLN courses

Weaknesses

- some recent inappropriate recruitment of learners on to FLLN programmes
- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- insufficient quality assurance

Community development

Strengths

- high standards of learners' work
- good teaching and learning that encourages and inspires learners
- strong partnerships promote community development and inclusion
- very good additional support for clients' diverse needs

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of individual learning plans
- insufficient curriculum leadership, management and development

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT CITY OF SUNDERLAND COUNCIL:

- the friendly, welcoming atmosphere
- 'I feel mentally stimulated'
- local and convenient venues
- secure and reassuring environment
- feeling included
- 'helping my child to learn'
- 'the chance to make a difference. It's not just about training'
- 'getting a buzz from the end result'
- 'the course has changed my life - I'm going to keep going.'
- 'This is my community centre where I can also learn.'
- childcare arrangements

WHAT LEARNERS THINK CITY OF SUNDERLAND COUNCIL COULD IMPROVE:

- longer lessons
- different levels of courses at the same centre
- better marketing and promotion of courses
- more creative writing and poetry
- more family fitness
- more space for treatment in reflexology
- more storage for artwork and more display space
- 'I need to know what's on next term.'

KEY CHALLENGES FOR CITY OF SUNDERLAND COUNCIL:

- fully implement a quality assurance system across all the provision
- improve planning, recording, and monitoring of individual learning
- develop racial equality procedures
- improve health and safety monitoring
- improve curriculum management
- develop the lifelong learning forum's strategic capability
- maintain and build on partnerships to increase coherent provision
- ensure better sharing of good practice between tutors
- improve use and accuracy of management information

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

Terminology varies across the range of education and training settings covered by the *Common Inspection Framework*. The table below indicates the terms appropriate to Adult and Community Learning

Single term used in the framework	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning	
Provider	Provider	Any organisation providing opportunities for adults to meet personal or collective goals through the experience of learning. Providers include local authorities, specialist designated institutions, voluntary and community sector organisations, regeneration partnerships and further education colleges
Learner	Learner	Includes those learning by participating in community projects, as well as those on courses. Learning, however, will be planned, with intended outcomes.
Teacher / trainer	Tutor	Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning.
	Mentor	Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them achieve their learning goals.
Learning goals	Main learning goals	Intended gains in skills, knowledge or understanding. Gains may be reflected in the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications. Or they may be reflected in the ability of learners to apply learning in contexts outside the learning situation, e.g. in the family, community, or workplace. Learners' main goal/s should be recorded on an individual or, in some cases, group learning plan. Plans should be revised as progress is made and new goals emerge.
	Secondary learning goals	These may include planned-for gains in self-confidence, and inter-personal skills. These should also be included in learning plans where appropriate.
Personal and learning skills	Personal and learning skills	These include being able to study independently, willingness to collaborate with others, and readiness to take up another opportunity for education or training.

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning
Unanticipated, or unintended learning outcome	Adults often experience unanticipated gains as a result of being involved in learning. These include improved self-esteem, greater self-confidence and a growing sense of belonging to a community. Gains of this kind should be acknowledged and recorded in any record of achievement.
Subject-based programme	A programme organised around a body of knowledge, e.g. the structure and usage of the French language or ceramic glazing techniques. Students could be expected to progress from one aspect of the subject to another, to grasp increasingly complex concepts or analyses or to develop greater levels of skill or to apply skills to a new area of work.
Issue-based programme	A programme that is based on the concerns, interests and aspirations of particular groups, for example members of a Sikh Gurdwara wanting to address inter-faith relations in their town, or parents worried about the incidence of drug abuse in their locality. Issue-based learning tends to be associated with geographically defined communities, but the increasing use of electronic means of communication means that this need no longer be the case. Progress is defined in terms of the group's increasing ability to analyse its situation, to access new information and skills which will help it resolve its difficulties and generate solutions and its growing confidence in dealing with others to implement those solutions.
Outreach provision	Provision established in a community setting in addition to provision made at an organisation's main site(s). Outreach programmes may be similar to courses at the main site(s) or be designed to meet the specific requirements of that community.
Neighbourhood-based work	The provider's staff have a long-term presence in a local community with a specific remit to understand the concerns of the local residents and develop learning activities to meet local needs and interests.
Community regeneration	The process of improving the quality of life in communities by investing in their infrastructure and facilities, creating opportunities for training and employment and tackling poor health and educational under-achievement. Community regeneration requires the active participation of local residents in decision-making. Changes and improvements are often achieved either directly or indirectly as a result of the adult learning activities which arise from this.

Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning	
Community capacity building	The process of enabling local people to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to take advantage of opportunities for employment, training and further education and to become selfmanaging, sustainable communities.
Active citizenship	The process whereby people recognise the power they have to improve the quality of life for others and make a conscious effort to do so: the process whereby people recognise the power of organisations and institutions to act in the interests of the common good and exercise their influence to ensure that they do so. Adult learning contributes to active citizenship.

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- very good working partnerships which benefits learners
- clear links between the provision and the City Council's strategic objectives
- very effective systems to monitor actions
- very effective integrated approach to attract new and diverse groups of learners
- good examples of celebrating learners' work

Weaknesses

- insufficient curriculum management in most areas
- poor use of data to help develop management decisions
- poor formal procedures to ensure effective promotion of equality of opportunity
- insufficient analysis and monitoring of data for equality of opportunity purposes
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

30. The City Council has developed very good partnerships that benefit learners and the wider community. Most of its subcontractors focus on a particular group of people, such as the elderly or a local community or a women's group. These partnerships provide venues that learners find accessible, friendly and reassuring. Its links with the local college of further education are strong and the college is one of the providers who is contracted by the LEA to run adult and community learning programmes on its behalf. In addition, the college franchises accredited courses to most of the other contractors. This network of providers has enabled some to offer a coherent programme, from first-rung adult and community learning courses through to accredited courses, which are run at the local centre and accredited mainstream courses which are run at the college. There is some evidence that in 2003-04, 10 per cent of learners in these centres chose to progress in this way. However, these opportunities are not available at all centres and in all curriculum areas. Some subcontractors use their experience of running programmes on behalf of the LEA to enable them to successfully bid for further funding from other funding bodies to enhance the provision offered. The City Council has worked with other sections of the City Council to provide training places for learners from another provider which had closed down. The director of education is the chair of the local learning partnership. This position has enabled the development of a number of partnership projects which have benefited the community. The head of participation at the City Council is closely involved in the City Council's 14 to 19 developments, and is using this experience to further develop the adult and community learning provision to enhance the opportunities for people within this age group. The City Council has been instrumental in the formation of an alliance of 600 employers and 130 private training providers to provide training for those who are working in the care sector without

qualifications.

31. There are very clear links between the City Council's strategic objectives and the provision it offers. The community strategy outlines the City Council's strategic objectives. The education directorate produces a service plan which has clearly identified objectives that contribute to the achievement of the City Council's broader strategic objectives. This plan is in turn supported by the adult learning plan, which is developed taking into account the objectives of the local learning partnership. The adult and community learning service ensures that these objectives are met through the contracting process with subcontractors. Each contractor agrees with the LEA which courses it will offer and the target groups of learners that it will enrol. These details are included in the contract. The work-based programme for the care sector has been introduced to ensure that staff at private care homes are appropriately qualified. This is in response to one of the City Council's strategic objectives. Staff on both the work-based learning care programme and the adult and community learning programme are aware of the City Council's strategic objectives and how they contribute to them.

32. The LEA uses a very effective method of monitoring identified actions. This is particularly effective in monitoring the adult and community learning development plan. The system is computer based and identifies the detailed actions and completion dates to ensure the development plan is implemented on time. The actions for each member of staff are flagged as red if they have not been completed by the agreed deadline. Managers are able to see what actions are still outstanding after the deadline. Managers, including the director of education, are using the system effectively to monitor the performance of the adult and community learning service. This system is not currently being used for the work-based learning programme for the care sector but there are well-developed plans to introduce it.

33. City Council members and senior managers within the City Council receive regular reports on the adult and community learning provision and monitor its performance. Communications throughout the service are generally satisfactory, although some tutors do not always receive information from the LEA.

34. The City Council has an effective system of staff appraisal and performance management which leads to the identification of individual targets for staff. However, some subcontractors do not have any appraisal or performance management system for their tutors and the City Council does not effectively monitor this.

35. There is insufficient curriculum management in most areas. In these areas of learning, there has been no individual member of staff to lead and develop the curriculum until very recently. They have not been in post long enough to have had any effect on the provision. In one area, learners at a particular centre are not being made aware of progression opportunities that are within a short walk of their centre. In most areas there is no overall plan for the development of the area of learning. The range of courses offered is largely determined by the subcontractor working with the LEA during discussions about the contract, and there is no strategy to determine what courses will be needed in the future. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between tutors within

the area of learning to improve the quality of the provision. Individual learning plans are not used effectively in most areas of learning. The LEA has recently introduced a new version of the individual learning plan and has issued guidance notes to all tutors. This has space for tutors to record learners' personal learning objectives as well as the group learning objectives. However, many tutors are not using these effectively. They are not always used to plan or to monitor learners' individual learning. Some tutors do not record the results of any initial assessment and do not plan effectively for each individual learner's programme. Tutors do not always record or monitor learners' progress. However, in a small number of classes, the individual learning plan is used very effectively to plan and monitor learning.

36. The City Council does not use data effectively to help develop management decisions. For example, achievement has been measured on the basis that if learners complete the course, they have achieved. The City Council has well-developed plans to replace this measurement of standards with the achievement of personal goals, but this has not yet been implemented. The City Council receives information from subcontractors about the number of enrolments at the start of the course but does not receive any further information about learner numbers until the end of the course. The City Council does not monitor the number of current learners and the number of learners who leave a course until it has been completed. On foundation programmes, data about learners who have passed the accredited courses is not recorded. Similarly, there is no systematic approach to the collection and analysis of accredited achievements in family learning.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

37. The City Council's adult and community learning service has a very effective integrated approach to attract new and diverse learners. The service integrates its planning and activities with a number of statutory and voluntary organisations to meet this aim. Managers work closely with other council departments, for example, every service user of the City Council's social services day care centres has access to appropriate, relevant and challenging learning activities. These are provided either in the day care centre or at local community venues. Day care centres are now being used as a base for other courses for general community access. The service provides family learning programmes that link into both the extended school and community agendas. The service liaises closely with the library service to increase its access to ICT and learning through its social inclusion projects. In addition, the service provides support and funding to voluntary and community organisations through a network of geographically based community forums. These forums report to the widening participation subgroup of the local learning partnership. Community groups and voluntary organisations apply to the forums for small amounts of funds to develop new learning and leisure courses to meet identified local needs. The community development approach adopted by the service is effective in increasing the capacity of community and bringing learning to many new groups and learners, for example, the purchase of ICT equipment for the black and minority ethnic e-champions project through new neighbourhood learning in deprived communities (NLDC) funding.

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38. There are some good examples of celebrating learners' achievements. Many short courses have effective celebration events at the end of the programmes. On family learning programmes children and parents receive City Council certificates of attendance. On other programmes, such as the family learning football coaching programme, trips are organised to the local football stadium. Celebration events are used as an effective opportunity for groups of learners to join together, for example, three groups of learners with severe learning difficulties and their carers joined together to celebrate their achievements and plan for future courses. However, for visual and performing arts programmes there are insufficient opportunities for learners to display their work.

39. The service is responding appropriately to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995. A wide range of information is available to staff. The City Council has carried out access audits to the teaching premises of contractors and other partners and is making the relevant adaptations. However, some premises are not yet accessible to people with limited mobility. Some community organisations have been supported to improve signage and additional support facilities, such as hearing loops.

40. The City Council's staff have recently received training on the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Effective work takes place with groups of asylum seekers and the service's staff support the work of local groups on race equality. The City Council has recently started to check the appropriateness of learning materials through the observation of teaching and learning. In one case, it adopted an innovative approach, through the use of a community theatre group, to stage an equality and diversity awareness event and promote equality of opportunity to learners, employers and staff. Learners on workplace learning programmes have a satisfactory awareness of their rights and responsibilities as learners and employees.

41. The formal procedures to ensure the effective promotion of diversity and equality of opportunity are poor. The City Council does not have a set of procedures that places the City Council's equality of opportunity statements in the context of adult and community learning. There is no policy or procedure on the service's duty to promote race equality and diversity. Similarly, publicity documents are not explicit on this responsibility. Subcontractors are required to have their own equality of opportunity policies as a condition of funding, but there is no system to check that these policies are implemented and updated. Equally, there is no system to ensure that complaints made to subcontractors are dealt with effectively. The City Council is aware of this weakness and plan to link with a council-wide initiative on race equality in January 2005.

42. The analysis and monitoring of data for equality of opportunity purposes are insufficient. There is no analysis of achievement or retention by learner, subcontractor or area forum group.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

43. The quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. Some quality assurance of the subcontractors takes place but much of it is informal, unstructured, and there is no

process to ensure that all aspects of the provision are covered adequately. Observation of teaching and learning is currently insufficient and the LEA is not aware of the quality of much of the teaching and learning. Observations have taken place over a number of years but they have not been adequate to lead to quality improvements. Many are not graded and they do not always identify actions to improve the quality of the teaching. One tutor has not been observed for more than two years. More recently, a new system of lesson observation has been introduced. All observations are now graded and every tutor will be observed at least once each year. However, this has not had time to have had an effect on the quality of teaching and learning. Subcontractors are not set targets for either retention or achievement. Neither is there any clear statement in the contract specifying that tutors should be appropriately qualified or experienced, and in many cases the LEA is not always aware of the tutors' qualifications or experience. In one area of learning inspectors found staff who were inappropriately qualified to teach the subject. The LEA meets regularly with every contractor but until recently these meetings have been primarily concerned with compliance and not the quality of the provision offered. Contractors receive little information about many of the key elements of the learning process, such as how tutors should run induction sessions. Each subcontractor gives its own tutors guidance about this, but there are few procedures to ensure that all learners receive an equally good experience. Learners' views are sought through the use of questionnaires, but these have not been used to improve the quality of the provision. There are few procedures to assure the quality of the work-based learning provision for the care sector. This provision is subcontracted to 130 providers but there is no systematic quality assurance of this provision.

44. The self-assessment process is not effective in some areas of learning. The City Council's most recent report is the third that the adult and community learning provision has produced. The report is appropriately self-critical and evaluative in some areas but not in others. Many of the weaknesses identified by inspectors were not recognised by the City Council. The self-assessment process was insufficiently consultative to ensure that tutors recognise the strengths and weaknesses, and accept the final report. The work-based care provision produced its first self-assessment report in 2004 with assistance from the adult and community learning team. This report accurately identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses identified by the inspectors and has been used to implement a range of new processes to rectify some of the weaknesses. These have not been in place long enough to have had an impact on the quality of the provision.

45. The LEA has taken steps recently to improve the quality assurance arrangements but most of these are too recent to have had any impact on the quality of the provision. For example, the LEA now has a set of well-written procedures, most of which are clear and sufficiently detailed. They include procedures for contracting, recruitment, enrolment and induction, assessment, observation of teaching and learning, and lesson planning. Each procedure includes references to the relevant part of the 'Common Inspection Framework'. However, the range of procedures does not include sufficient detail about some of the key parts of the learning process. For example, the section covering initial assessment describes the process and its purpose only in broad terms and does not give sufficient detail to ensure that all learners receive an equally good experience. Similarly, the section on writing a scheme of work and lesson plan is insufficiently detailed.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT - Adult and community learning	160	3

Using IT

Strengths

- good retention rates
- strong community-based approach to provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning and monitoring of individual learning
- weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

46. Retention rates on ICT courses are good. In 2002-03, 80 per cent of learners were retained and, in 2003-04, the figure rose to 90 per cent. Attendance during the week of inspection was good. Data on achievement of learning goals was not available at the time of inspection. However, the standard of work produced by learners is satisfactory. They develop good practical ICT skills and some learners on desktop publishing courses combine the development of their ICT skills with their interest in graphic design to produce a range of attractive documents. Many learners are able to use the skills they have acquired in their everyday lives. For example, some learners are using their ICT skills to e-mail friends and relatives. One learner has used his word-processing skills to write a book and another is using the skills learnt on a digital photography course to develop his photography hobby. Learners also understand and use ICT language correctly to describe their learning. They are enthusiastic and highly motivated, and for many the course has enabled them to overcome their initial fear of using computers. Learning about ICT has broken down learners' previous fears and ignorance of computers. Learners have an enthusiasm for learning about computers and many progress from basic computing classes to desktop publishing or internet courses. Many learners are enrolled on several ICT classes and have experienced a growth in confidence as a result of their learning. Many of the older learners have found the courses mentally stimulating.

Quality of education and training

47. There is a strong community-based approach to the provision. Courses are targeted to meet the needs and interests of local communities and learners through the use of a range of courses which, for example, local community groups or voluntary organisations operate in order to meet the needs of particular groups of people. Providers are based in the heart of communities and recruit learners who would be unlikely to access other provision. For example, some providers are located on large housing estates, either in purpose-built accommodation or in converted flats. Other providers target specific groups of learners, such as older retired learners. Learners find the community location convenient, accessible and conducive to learning. Learners also benefit from learning with their colleagues and their neighbours at local community venues. Learners who do not own computers use the open access facilities available at many centres to develop their learning skills. Other learners who do have computers use the open access facilities to access additional tutor support. The provision attracts new learners and is particularly successful at attracting older learners, many of whom have never had the opportunity to learn about computers and often have not participated in formal learning for some time. During 2003-04, 67 per cent of the learners were aged 55 or over.

48. In general, teaching is satisfactory. Much of the teaching is workshop style and during lessons learners work independently towards their own individual learning goals. Some lesson plans are insufficiently detailed. Many are content driven and contain only basic information about topics to be covered during the session rather than details about tutor and learning activities. Tutors guide and coach learners effectively during sessions. Some tutors use examples and illustrations effectively to explain technical terms. In the better sessions, tutors use short exercises and quizzes effectively to consolidate learning and check learners' understanding. In many classes there is insufficient focus on planning individualised learning. This is also the case in some of the courses that are specifically designed to allow learners to choose the content of their programme. There is also insufficient attention to the process of teaching and learning as opposed to instruction. Some learners comment on the fact that sometimes during sessions they were following instructions rather than understanding the processes involved in performing various operations on the computer.

49. Resources are satisfactory. There is some very good purpose-built accommodation and resources at some sites. At these sites, IT suites provide good, clean, well-lit accommodation, and the furniture meets the minimum ergonomic requirements for computer use. Equipment is up to date and facilities for learners with disabilities are also available. Disabled learners can access most venues. However, the accommodation at some sites is not fit for its purpose. At these sites rooms are poorly lit, cramped and chairs are not adjustable. At one centre where desktop publishing is taught, there is no printer. The quality of learning materials varies. Most tutors produce handouts to support learning during sessions and to support independent learning, but some of these are poor. For example, some handouts are packed with text and do not contain diagrams or illustrations. Others are well written and user-friendly. Tutors are appropriately qualified with a range of ICT and teaching qualifications.

50. Learners feel supported with their learning and have good relationships with their tutors. Evaluations show a high level of satisfaction with their courses. Additional support needs are identified when learners complete their learning agreement. Support is available for learners with literacy, numeracy, language or additional needs but not all tutors are aware of the arrangements for securing additional support. There is little evidence of a systematic approach to the provision of information and guidance to further learning opportunities, although many learners are encouraged by their tutors to continue learning.

51. There is insufficient planning and monitoring of individual learning. Many workshops are designed to cater for individual learning needs and interests, but there is no planning to meet individual learning goals or target-setting for individual learners. Most tutors carry out initial assessment but this is not systematically used to help develop individual action plans. Some tutors carry out a more detailed initial assessment but this is informal and is not recorded. Tutors have a good knowledge of learners' individual progress but this is not reflected in the individual learning plans. There is no detailed and dated recording of learners' progress. Most tutors complete the individual learning plans but these are not used in a meaningful way to help the learners to progress.

Leadership and management

52. Curriculum management of ICT is weak. There is no overall plan for the development of the ICT area of learning. Providers plan and develop the provision largely in isolation and without collaborating with other providers who may be targeting the same client groups and offering identical or similar provision. The LEA is represented on the ICT subgroup of the local learning partnership and as part of its remit it is reviewing ICT provision across the city. The LEA has also been involved in various city-wide ICT projects but this has not led to a strategy within the adult and community learning provision. Providers are unaware of the range of ICT learning materials in use across the city and this leads in some cases to duplication. For example, some tutors are delivering the same course but develop their own learning materials without reference to other providers who may be offering identical or similar provision. There are no formal opportunities for providers to discuss and share good practice. However, tutors can access training provided by the LEA.

53. The quality assurance of teaching and learning is inadequate. There is an observation of teaching and learning scheme but this has been introduced only recently and there is no evidence of it having an effect on the ICT area of learning as yet. Most observations of teaching and learning sessions were carried out during the few weeks preceding inspection. Before that, there had been little systematic observation of sessions. There is no systematic approach to monitoring the overall quality of courses through course evaluations and course reporting. Quality checks on contract compliance are carried out regularly, but these focus on the completion of paperwork. There is no systematic course review process and data collection on attainment of learning goals. However, this has been recognised in the City Council's most recent self-assessment report and is identified as an area for improvement in the development plan.

54. Health and safety is covered during induction but it is not reinforced sufficiently. For example, health and safety notices about safe use of computers were not visible in any provider sites that the inspectors visited.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Adult and community learning	866	4

Leisure, sport and recreation*Strengths*

- good attainment of individual learning goals
- wide range of venues to facilitate community access
- very good relationships with tutors to overcome barriers

Weaknesses

- some poor coaching and instructing
- poor awareness of health and safety by some tutors
- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- some inappropriately qualified staff
- weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

55. There is good attainment of individual learning goals. Learners enrol on courses with a variety of personal aims, such as to learn new skills, improve their fitness or health, build their confidence, increase their mobility and to meet new people. Learners are able to identify their own progress, with some surprised at their progress. Other learners report significant benefits to their physical and mental health, including becoming more supple, having better balance and feeling less depressed.

56. There is a strong social element to all of the courses and learners value this highly. Many learners are struggling to deal with loneliness and isolation in their homes, and some are re-building their lives after bereavement or separation from partners. For these learners, the courses achieve the added goal of giving them the opportunity to socialise with others in a secure environment and to try new activities. In many cases, learners form friendships and enrol together on other courses. This represents a significant achievement for learners who have been outside education activities for many years and have low levels of self-confidence.

Quality of education and training

57. There is a wide range of community learning sites dispersed across the city to facilitate community access. These offer a range of accommodation, from small workshop rooms to large halls. Most are on bus routes and are easily accessible. One provider offering alternative therapy and related disciplines has created a relaxing and welcoming environment that learners enjoy and where they feel comfortable in. Equipment at most sites is satisfactory, although there are few exercise mats and some learners are obliged to lie on towels on cold floors to perform their routines. Some sites are not well signed and one is positioned some way from the road along a poorly lit approach. Another site has very limited parking and learners are afraid to leave their cars to walk several streets to the centre for evening classes.

58. Learners develop very good relationships with their tutors and, in most cases, class sizes are sufficiently small for tutors to be on first-name terms. This is a key factor in encouraging many to overcome their personal barriers and to engage in learning. Tutors have good interpersonal skills and are able to motivate and lead learners towards new achievements. Many find their tutors inspirational to the point that they still make the effort to attend even when ill or in bad weather.

59. The standard of instructing and coaching of skills is inconsistent and in some cases poor. In the best lessons, tutors show good understanding of how to instruct a range of learners. However, in most sessions demonstrations are given from one view only and facing the learners. Learners struggle to copy a mirror image and are not given sufficient individual help. Explanations of movements and techniques are sometimes inaccurate, and lack sufficient detail for the level of the learners. There is little differentiated teaching, limited teaching methods and minimal use of incremental learning in many lessons. Learners are asked to repeat exercises or moves several times but poor technique or position is left uncorrected for fear of embarrassing them. Key learning points are often not emphasised. Many tutors use music as part of their sessions and some prepare handouts for learners to use at home. Most of these are typed but fail to take into account that some learners experience reading difficulties. However, one tutor encourages his learners to bring a blank videotape, onto which he copies a sequence of movements performed by himself, so that they are able to practise at home or catch up after a period of absence. This has proved to be most beneficial for the learners.

60. Some tutors have insufficient awareness of health and safety. They perform all of the exercises or activities and positions themselves at the front of their class, often lying down. They do not monitor learners adequately and are unable to see if most of the learners are performing the activities correctly. Some do not carry out health screening of their learners or carry out a verbal check at the start of each session to identify illness or injury problems.

61. Most tutors do not use individual learning plans effectively to plan programmes and to measure learners' progress. Some tutors do not complete the individual learning plans and others enter only minimal details. Programmes do not reflect the range of individual aims or needs. In most cases, learners set themselves targets that are difficult to

measure. Tutors' evaluations of the learners' progress are often insufficiently detailed to be a useful document to themselves or the learners. Some learners receive little or no feedback about their progress. Many tutors' comments are about the content of the lesson rather than on what the learner has learnt. There is no evidence that learners are aware of, or access, literacy and numeracy support.

62. Some tutors do not have appropriate qualifications. The LEA expects all tutors to hold a teaching qualification and encourages them to have an adult tutor/teachers' award. However, validating the occupational competence and teaching ability of tutors is left to the providers who employ them. Some tutors have a range of professional qualifications and externally accredited awards. However, many tutors have no teaching or training qualifications and some have no qualifications in the discipline that they teach. Tutors are not aware of occupational qualifications available on the national qualifications framework to develop their professional skills. The LEA has carried out a number of teaching observations over recent months to assess standards but as yet these are not linked directly to tutors' personal development plans and provider contracting does not consider these results.

63. In some areas there are a limited range of opportunities for learners to progress. Once they have completed their course they can only enrol for a similar course or another course of the same level. They would like to have access to intermediate-level courses, and some would welcome the chance to gain accreditation in subjects such as aromatherapy, Chinese medicine, and reflexology. These courses are offered through local further education colleges but learners are unaware of them and have been given no guidance to help them identify suitable progression routes.

Leadership and management

64. The LEA has good working relationships with providers and with a number of other organisations, such as the National Health Service, social services and voluntary organisations. This has led to a number of initiatives to widen participation. However, the management of the LEA's subcontracted provision needs further strengthening. The curriculum is not planned as a coherent, city-wide strategy embracing and maximising provision in leisure centres, colleges and other providers. Some courses are cancelled without starting and others are closed after a few weeks, leaving learners frustrated.

65. Curriculum management is weak. There is no strategic overview of provision in this area of learning to help develop future planning and development. The LEA officer responsible for the area is currently on sick leave and his duties have been covered by others on a temporary basis. Promotion of the range of courses is not effective and learners complain that they are unaware of what is available. Many find courses by accident, by word of mouth, or by visiting a specific centre to find out for themselves. The LEA has recognised the need for better information and is about to launch a website that will give very detailed information and guidance about courses and their locations. This will also be accessible to the public at the computerised learner-points which have touch screens and are situated across the city centre.

66. Quality assurance processes are insufficiently thorough, both in terms of ensuring the accountability of contractors and in gathering accurate data to contribute to curriculum planning. Retention rates are satisfactory at 79 per cent, but attendance averages at approximately 50 per cent. For example, one course has eight enrolled learners but the actual number of learners is no more than four and during the week of the inspection none attended the class. Observation of teaching and learning has been weak until recently. A new system has been introduced recently but this has not yet had time to have an effect on the quality of lessons.

Health, social care & public services

Health, social care & public services		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Care - Work-based learning for adults	729	3
Complementary health services - Adult and community learning	119	3

Care

Strengths

- very low drop-out rates
- good participation on additional learning programmes
- exceptional involvement of employers

Weaknesses

- poor attendance in some sessions
- insufficient use of individual learning plans
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

Complementary health services

Strengths

- good teaching and learning
- high level of responsiveness to meet community needs
- particularly productive partnerships

Weaknesses

- inadequate planning and monitoring of individual learning
- inadequate learning support and guidance for learners

Achievement and standards

67. There are very low drop-out rates on NVQ programmes, with approximately 2 per cent of learners withdrawing. Most learners have been in training for less than nine months and it is too soon to comment on achievements, but learners are making satisfactory progress towards achieving the full qualification through completion of NVQ units. Work in learners' portfolios is of a satisfactory standard. Learners are very motivated and enthusiastic and able to identify how their learning on NVQ programmes and short courses has improved their work practices.

68. The attendance and retention rates on the adult and community learning

programmes are satisfactory. The overall retention in 2003-04 on the non-accredited programmes was over 70 per cent. Attendance rates averaged over 70 per cent at the time of inspection. Learners make satisfactory progress and are able to demonstrate appropriate skills and techniques. Learners with significant learning disabilities are able to practise and demonstrate aromatherapy techniques independently. Learners develop personal skills and remark that they feel more confident and are more able to cope with their lives. For example, one learner is now planning to return to work after years of unemployment due to mental health difficulties.

69. Attendance in some off-the-job sessions for work-based learning is poor. In the sessions observed during the inspection, attendance averaged 59 per cent of those expected to attend, and at one session was as low as 23 per cent. Registers indicate that this is not unusual.

Quality of education and training

70. Teaching and learning are good on the adult and community learning health and social care courses. Most of the learning sessions are good or better. Learning sessions are well planned and are taught by knowledgeable tutors who inspire the learners to succeed. Tutors use a range of creative approaches to deliver differentiated methods to fully engage the learners. Tutors demonstrate expertise and knowledge and use appropriate teaching methods that help learners to progress. For example, learners with learning disabilities are given sari and bright-coloured mats, and are encouraged to take part in roleplay. Learners are enthusiastic in their roles and are able to practise aromatherapy techniques in pairs. Tutors on a Fresh Start course use materials and learning resources that challenge learners to think about stereotypes and discrimination. There are excellent relationships between learners and tutors and the learning environment is supportive.

71. There is good participation in additional learning programmes by learners on the work-based learning programme. The care alliance responds quickly to identified needs for specialist short courses and learners are also encouraged to attend other relevant training or education. For example, support workers have attended an epilepsy management course to reduce their anxiety about dealing with seizures, and a manager on the registered managers award attended a course on training the trainers to help her in training her staff.

72. There is a high level of responsiveness to meet community needs on adult and community learning programmes. Voluntary and community organisations use the adult and community learning area forums to develop courses that meet the specific needs of the community. The forums encourage organisations to share information and good practice. All contractors develop effective networks with a variety of schools and health and social care organisations to plan an integrated provision to meet the needs of groups of learners. These networks enable learners to enhance their personal development through a range of supportive activities. Staff consult effectively with community groups to identify and recruit new learners successfully.

73. Resources for adult and community learning programmes are generally satisfactory. Tutors supply their own teaching and learning materials. Learning sessions take place in various community centres and accommodation can range from excellent to unsuitable. The experience and qualifications of adult and community learning health and social care tutors is satisfactory. All tutors hold appropriate occupational diplomas and teaching qualifications and are engaged in relevant professional development activities.

74. Resources for the delivery of the work-based learning courses are mostly satisfactory. All venues are fully accessible and most provide very pleasant learning environments. However, one venue is too small for the size of the group and for the style of teaching, and impedes learning. None of the venues visited had IT facilities available for learners' use, although tutors did have information about e-learning centres for those learners who did not have the use of a computer at work or at home. At temporary venues, tutors bring learning materials and resources with them. Tutors have appropriate vocational experience and teaching qualifications, and the care alliance commissions the services of specialist tutors where needed, especially for level 4 programmes.

75. On work-based learning courses standards of teaching are satisfactory. There is some good teaching, where learners demonstrate the attainment of new knowledge, understanding and skills in critical analysis, for example in reviewing job applicants' curriculum vitae or in understanding challenging behaviour. Tutors are skilled in promoting good working relationships and this is particularly important where learners are required to attend by their employer, rather than by choice. In some sessions there was an over-reliance on tutor-led discussions where the learners were not challenged to think for themselves.

76. There is satisfactory support for learners on NVQ programmes. Induction ensures that learners know about NVQ requirements and progression opportunities. Learners are also aware of their own rights and responsibilities, including employers' equal opportunities policies and the NVQ complaints procedure. In one area, a theatre in education group was commissioned to stage an event to raise awareness of equality and diversity. This was a memorable experience for the learners and employers who participated in the drama workshops. Assessors use a variety of assessment methods to suit individual circumstances and adapt recording methods for learners with additional support needs. One large employer runs work-based literacy and numeracy lessons to support NVQ learning.

77. There is inadequate planning and monitoring of individual learning on adult and community learning programmes. Initial assessments are not used to support target-setting. Tutors rely on learners to identify their own learning needs and levels of literacy and numeracy skills. There is a slow response to the identification of learners' literacy needs. Assessments are rarely recorded. Learners' progress reviews are not carried out systematically and there is inconsistent monitoring of learning objectives. Not all learners are aware of their progress, as feedback is mostly verbal and the learners often forget.

78. There is insufficient use of individual learning plans for work-based learners. Approximately 40 per cent of learners do not have an individual plan. Where there is a plan, some do not record initial assessment findings or use them to contribute to the plan, and there is little recording of reviews of progress or medium- and long-term target-setting. End dates for NVQs are sometimes missing, although unit achievements are recorded. Written feedback following assessments is mostly descriptive and congratulatory. There is little critical and constructive comment to inform learners about how they are performing and how they might develop further. This weakness was identified in the organisation's most recent self-assessment report. The City Council has produced a workforce development and learning toolkit for the use of employers and training providers, which includes an individual learning plan template. The use of the toolkit has not yet been implemented but its introduction is planned for December 2004.

79. There is inadequate learning support and guidance for learners on adult and community learning programmes. There are no formal or comprehensive information and guidance systems for learners. Tutors deliver a session at the end of the programme where learners are asked what they would like to do next. Most providers are unaware or do not have information on progression routes available to learners. Tutors are aware that some learners have literacy and numeracy needs and attempt to support learners by helping them to write notes or giving them help to complete forms. However, there is no formal support available to learners with literacy, numeracy or language skills needs.

Leadership and management

80. There is exceptional involvement of employers in training needs analysis and the planning and commissioning of work-based learning. Five geographical and two specialist network groups are chaired by employers or managers and meet regularly with network development officers and training providers to share good practice and communicate training needs. Employers are very satisfied with the ease of access to, and the range of, training provided through the care alliance. The alliance is employer-led and its role in decision-making ensures ownership of the decisions made. Sharing of good practice has resulted in many learners now being paid for their training time as an effective way of encouraging them to participate in learning.

81. In adult and community learning programmes there are particularly productive partnerships. The area forums are used to develop partnerships with community organisations. Staff consult effectively with community groups to identify and recruit new learners successfully. The City Council uses a wide range of partners' community centres to attract learners and widen participation. There is effective planning of integrated services to meet the learners' health, social care and educational needs. However, curriculum planning and development are unstructured. Community organisations identify the objectives for courses and managers do not always have a clear overview of areas of duplication, progression routes and gaps in the provision.

82. Equality of opportunity and diversity are reflected in the teaching materials used in adult and community learning programmes. Learning sessions are planned effectively to

reflect positive images of different social groups. Effective teaching styles and learning materials are used in health and social care lessons that challenge learners' assumptions about stereotyping and discrimination. Through the forums, community and voluntary organisations are able to target learning activities to widen the participation of certain groups.

83. There are inadequate quality assurance arrangements on work-based programmes to ensure consistently high quality education and training across the 130 training providers. Network development officers carry out quality checks on training providers as part of the subcontracting process in the work-based provision, but these are informal and do not always identify problems. Initial assessment, individual learning plans, and arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language skills support are inconsistent for learners with different training providers and there is variable quality in teaching and their learning experience. While the care alliance has targets for the recruitment of learners, there are no targets set for achievement and progression against which to measure performance. The care alliance's first self-assessment report accurately identifies most areas for improvement. It is a new and rapidly developing organisation and has already taken action to rectify this area of weakness. It has developed a commissioning strategy but this has not yet been implemented.

84. The City Council has a system of observation of teaching and learning in the adult and community learning programme. This has been introduced recently and most tutors have been observed during the past three months. Tutors receive appropriate feedback on their performance, including an action plan to lead to quality improvements. However, it is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that any issues are acted upon. There is no evidence that the curriculum manager has monitored this.

Visual & performing arts & media

Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas - Adult and community learning	687	3

Other contributory areas

Strengths

- good teaching in dance and textiles
- good individual guidance and support for learners
- high level of responsiveness to meet community needs
- very effective personal development activities

Weaknesses

- some cramped and unsuitable accommodation
- insufficient planning and monitoring of learners' progress
- weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

85. Standards of practical work are high in textiles and belly dancing. In textiles lessons each learner had a portfolio of samples showing an individual creative response to technique. Learners had collaborated on a large quilted banner for the community centre. In belly dancing, learners used improvisational skills to enhance the dance routine. In one painting class, learners practised and refined the use of Chinese brush strokes to produce multi-layered coloured paintings.

86. Standards of practical work in art are good and in crafts and music they are satisfactory. In several craft classes, learners made their own boxes to a high standard, learning new technical skills but had little opportunity to extend their work through creativity. In art classes learners experienced a variety of painting media, but the painting was over-reliant on copying pictures rather than working directly from a still life or landscape. In singing, learners could sing in unison but have yet to harmonise.

Quality of education and training

87. Teaching is good in dance and textiles. In the best lessons, learners are motivated and work with enthusiasm and conviction. Lessons are well structured, with demonstrations that enhance learning and good, effective individual discussions. Learners help and support each other as their work progresses and learn from each

other. For example, in one painting lesson learners discussed how to mix a specific colour and, in one music class, learners explained the score to each other.

88. The provision responds well to the needs of the community. Learning is located in a wide variety of community settings, including community centres, primary and secondary schools, a charity for the aged and a young person's association, sheltered accommodation, drop-in centres and women's centres. These centres have an understanding of their locality and target groups and are responsive to learners' requests to follow-on courses. However, widening participation is limited to certain focused groups, for example, vulnerable women and those with learning difficulties. The 'Guys Aloud' project, a collaboration between a local university, adult and community learning and a young person's association, targeted socially excluded young men to develop skills through participation in music. After the initial taster activities of drumming, singing and song-writing, short music courses were delivered during the summer. However, although this highlighted the potential for future initiatives, there are few opportunities for this target group to progress. The range of adult and community learning courses is traditional, relying on arts, crafts, textiles, and some dance and music.

89. There is good individual guidance and support for learners. Tutors have a good knowledge of individual learners' backgrounds and they are encouraged to work on individual projects. In one flower-arranging lesson, a student with restricted vision and her support worker completed an arrangement that could be appreciated by touch and smell. Other learners with physical disabilities were improving their manual dexterity and concentration through craftwork. Learners report that the new skills they have learnt have improved their confidence and self-esteem. Learners make small craft items for use in the home and as gifts for friends and family. However, in some classes creative skills were not developed or extended, and learners were over-reliant on ready-made boxes and decorations. In music, learners were enthusiastic and a singing group was preparing for a concert in the local church.

90. Effective personal development activities enhance learning. Learners make visits to museums, exhibitions and theatre performances. A tutor organised a salsa party to bring together learners from different courses, and to practise their dance skills in a social environment and build their confidence towards dancing in public. In a textiles class, learners' enjoyment of making new friends was reinforced in learning to create friendship quilts and continue a local tradition.

91. Accommodation is sometimes cramped and unsuitable. Many rooms are multi-purpose and furniture is not always moved to accommodate the activity. There is insufficient opportunity to display and celebrate the work in some venues. In a number of lessons, resources were provided by the learning provider. However, due to insufficient storage space these were often transported by tutors. Some of the rooms used for dance are cold and one had inappropriate flooring for barefoot work. Some of the rooms used for art classes have no sink in which to clean brushes and equipment. Many centres are hard to find and are not clearly signposted from the road. Some centres have noticeboards for adult and community learning showing current programmes and a suggestions board for next term. Other centres have no information.

92. The planning and monitoring of learners' progress is insufficient. Initial screening is ineffective. Screening is over-reliant on learners initiating a request for support and they are unclear of the support available, apart from childcare and transport. The information on the learning plans does not help to develop teaching and learning strategies. The mid-programme assessment recording is cursory. Individual learning plans are in place but they are not used consistently to monitor learners' progress. In one particular lesson the plans were used effectively as a springboard for a comprehensive written assessment tutorial. However, the assessment details in most learning plans are too brief and insufficiently detailed, and there are no clear targets or goals other than the completion of the course.

Leadership and management

93. Curriculum management is weak. There is no overview of curriculum management and development within the adult and community learning service. In some centres there are good management strategies, but these are not shared across the whole provision. Levels of staff development vary. Some day-to-day support for the part-time teachers and communication are poor. Few lesson observations have been carried out, and where this has been done there is little focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Good teaching practice is not shared and there is no forum for communication or peer support between part-time tutors. The information on file is not used to plan improvements in teaching and learning and curriculum development. There is limited dialogue between accredited and non-accredited course providers.

94. Learners are able to progress to accredited courses at the local college of further education at their main site or local centres. For example, one learner has completed a number of craft courses, and is studying on a 'first step to teaching' course with the intention of enrolling on a teaching qualification course, all run in her local centre. Learners from a local women's centre have progressed from 'return to learn' and art-based classes onto access to higher education and then to degree level study in art and design. However, many learners return to the same level of course, but a different activity. The possibilities for introducing literacy and numeracy into the art, craft and performance activities have not been fully explored.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> - Adult and community learning	22	None
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> - Adult and community learning	64	3

Literacy and numeracy and ESOL*Strengths*

- good differentiation in most literacy and numeracy lessons
- very effective achievement of wider learning skills
- very local and easily accessible learning opportunities
- very effective support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor assessment practices on many courses
- insufficient variation in teaching materials and methods in some lessons
- weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

95. Courses are short and most run for two hours each week for 10 weeks. Retention of learners is satisfactory, with 79 per cent of learners in 2003-04 remaining on their course.

96. Achievement is satisfactory. All learners report that they have developed personal qualities, such as confidence, as well as acquiring new literacy, language or numeracy skills. Learners in some classes are able to work towards external certificates, such as the national tests in literacy and numeracy. However, there is no comprehensive data to identify the number of learners who have passed these tests. There is no data to show how learners have used their newly acquired skills to go on to further training, employment or other positive outcomes, although there are some good case studies showing how individual learners have progressed successfully.

97. The standard of learners' written work is satisfactory. Written work and completed worksheets are marked, although there is limited written commentary on the work to help learners to progress.

Quality of education and training

98. In most literacy and numeracy lessons, tutors adapt their teaching well to meet individual learning needs, including those classes where learners' abilities range widely from pre-entry to level 2. For example, in one literacy lesson, learners worked on different kinds of relevant writing tasks related to the same topic. More advanced learners wrote about the advantages and disadvantages of identity cards, whereas other learners at entry level 1 practised writing their name and address on simple forms.

99. There is very effective achievement of wider learning skills. There are good relationships between tutors and learners that help to promote further learning. Learners grow in confidence and ask questions if they need further clarification if they do not understand. In most lessons, tutors encourage learners to think about their work and encourage them to be open and honest about the lessons. Many learners are able to clearly identify what they learn and what they find difficult.

100. Classes are held in very local and easily accessible venues. Many learners like to attend local centres that are within easy reach of their homes or work. For example, many of those attending evening literacy sessions at the women's centre like the venue as it is close to where they work and within easy reach of the bus to get them home. Learners with mental health problems like to attend sessions in the places that are familiar to them and where they feel reassured by the centre's staff. Many learners would not attend more traditional education providers even when they are nearby. Learners like the friendly atmosphere of the centres and find staff helpful and welcoming. However, there is limited access to one of the centres for learners with significant mobility difficulties.

101. There is good support for learners. They welcome the opportunity to use the crèche provision available at most centres. Many of them identify that they would not be able to attend if childcare was not available. Learning support assistants are used well to support learners with particular support needs. Dyslexic learners are identified and support is provided in lessons through the effective use of learning support assistants as well as with work designed to meet the specific style of individual learners.

102. Tutors are well qualified and many are working towards completing the new level 4 specialist teaching qualifications in literacy or numeracy. Teaching and learning resources are satisfactory, although there is limited availability of bi-lingual dictionaries in ESOL lessons and some reading books in literacy classes are old. In some locations, there is no whiteboard. ICT resources are available in all centres.

103. The provision of information, advice and guidance is satisfactory. Many learners continue to develop skills by returning to the same class over a number of years. Some learners do not always receive information about other kinds of learning opportunities available elsewhere.

104. There are poor assessment practices on many courses. There is wide variation in how tutors approach initial and further early assessment processes for similar groups of learners. In a minority of courses, there is thorough initial assessment as well as more detailed diagnostic assessment. This is used to write clear learning targets on learning plans and deliver effective teaching, without assessment being too time-consuming for learners. However, in some classes, there is an over-reliance on informal, often lengthy formative assessment. In many of these classes, tutors fail to make any record of the outcomes of this kind of assessment. In other classes, learners complete initial assessments to identify their general levels of ability but fail to fully identify and record the specific individual skills and knowledge that learners need to acquire. No classes identify the learners' preferred ways of learning. This is identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report.

105. There is insufficient variation in teaching materials and methods in some lessons. Too much time is spent on the same activity and learners lose interest and motivation. For example, in one lesson a discussion was allowed to continue without a clear focus and with little learner involvement for over a quarter of an hour. There is an over-reliance on worksheets and workbooks as the main method of teaching and learning in many lessons. In one lesson, learners were practising form-filling on a worksheet rather than using real forms.

Leadership and management

106. The management of the curriculum area is weak. Subcontractors are set target numbers for recruitment but they are not specific or based on analysis of data. For example, targets do not specify whether learners are new or returning to adult learning or whether they are from under-represented groups, such as men. There are many success stories about learners' achievements and progression. However, data on learner progression and other positive outcomes is incomplete. Quality assurance arrangements are weak. There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning. There has been no systematic approach to observe the quality of teaching until recently. Observations before that are inconsistent, with some being graded and others not. There is no monitoring of the suitability of accommodation for the kind of lessons taking place or the numbers of learners who may enrol while a course is taking place. There is little sharing of good practice. There is wide variation in initial assessment practices for similar groups of learners. However, there is a clear, strategic vision and effective partnerships have been developed to ensure that the vision can be realised.

Family learning

Family learning		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
- Adult and community learning	395	2

Strengths

- good achievement and retention
- some inspirational teaching and learning sessions
- clear strategic planning for FLLN courses

Weaknesses

- some recent inappropriate recruitment of learners on to FLLN programmes
- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- insufficient quality assurance

Achievement and standards

107. In 2003-04 there was good achievement and retention. On FLLN programmes, 199 learners made 557 enrolments over the year. Seventy-seven per cent of these learners completed and achieved short accredited modules at levels 1 and 2 in reading together, numbers together and story sacks. Fifty per cent of learners progressed onto a variety of other programmes, including courses for computing, teaching assistants, childcare, general certificates of secondary education, leisure and health. Forty-two per cent of learners chose to enter for and achieved the national tests in literacy. Retention rates are high. For 2003-04, on FLLN programmes, 94 per cent of learners completed their programme and 98 per cent of learners completed wider family learning programmes.

108. Learners on both FLLN and wider family learning programmes achieve many additional benefits. Parents and carers gain increased understanding of their children's learning in school. They also gain confidence significantly in dealing with schools and wider activities. Many new skills gained on family learning programmes are used effectively in local communities, for example, to support local play schemes and sports activities. Learners on the football coaching programmes gain very effective knowledge of health and safety matters.

109. On some programmes, head teachers have put in place specific and effective procedures to measure the achievement of children completing the family learning programmes and compare this with their peers who have not taken part. For example, in comparison with their classmates, there has been a significant improvement in children's reading, writing, and speaking and listening skills through taking part in the programme in one nursery. All FLLN programmes record the children's individual achievements.

However, there is no systematic approach across the LEA to the collection and analysis of this data.

Quality of education and training

110. Clients on family learning programmes take part in some inspirational teaching and learning sessions. Seventy-one per cent of sessions observed by inspectors were good or better, with one session judged to be outstanding. Clients work well together and develop their own literacy skills as well as increasing their knowledge about how to help their children. Teaching is lively, delivered at a good pace and includes a wide variety of different and participative activities. All literacy activities are made relevant and meaningful to learners. In one lesson, learners used individual pieces of paper to record a fact and an opinion about their own child. These were then collected together and the whole group then discussed and identified whether the statement was a fact or an opinion and sorted the paper into two separate groups. At the end of the activity, all learners were confident they knew the difference and were able to use this in a similar but more difficult task later on in the lesson. In another short numeracy session in a secondary school, parents and carers were inspired to learn current methods used to teach mathematics and explore the rationale for the differences in teaching compared with their own time at school. Practice exercises were completed on individual wipe-clean boards that ensured confidentiality and parents enjoyed taking part in the lively and fun group activities used with year 7 pupils. The reasons and learning outcomes for these activities were effectively shared. On literacy programmes there is very effective promotion of the use of the national tests at the end of the short programmes. However, in the weaker sessions, there is insufficient differentiation to meet the needs of all learners, an over-reliance on worksheets, some of which are poorly produced, and insufficient skill development for learners to complete the required activity.

111. Resources are generally satisfactory. Some schools have purpose-built family rooms, while other programmes are provided in community locations, many of which have been built recently. Most locations are suitable for learning sessions for adults. However, in some schools, accommodation is cramped and some sessions were subject to interruptions. Tutors are generally well qualified, although some have not been able to access training sessions on family learning and quality requirements.

112. Most courses are meeting the learners' needs and interests. There is a wide range of courses and some imaginative wider family learning provision. Courses are provided in local community settings and teaching is non-threatening and very community orientated. Learners' progress from FLLN programmes is measured effectively. However, there is some recent inappropriate recruitment onto FLLN programmes. In some sessions, a small number of learners have higher-level qualifications than the targeted groups. These learners, although enjoying the courses and the increased interaction with their children, are not sufficiently challenged by the programmes. In one school, a waiting list existed for the next programme but some places on the course were taken by parents with high-level qualifications. Previous systems used by the LEA to check the levels of parents' qualifications have not been effectively applied this term.

113. Support and guidance are generally satisfactory. Information is provided at the end of the sessions by some tutors in response to requested needs. Discussion of potential further learning opportunities take place in some sessions. However, this is not consistent across all of the provision. Childcare is good and much of the provision has available on-site crèche and nursery provision. Most learners receive effective personal support and relationships between tutors and learners are good.

114. Tutors and learners do not use individual learning plans effectively. Learners' targets are vague and do not relate to measurable outcomes. Targets do not support the effective measurement of achievement on non-accredited programmes. Mid-programme reviews are not always completed. On some courses, there are examples of imaginative initial assessment. For example, on the family learning through football coaching programmes, learners assess their starting points on a scale ranging from red card to goal. However, these initial assessments do not link to individual learning goals. On some programmes, initial assessment for literacy is used inappropriately for learners above the assessment levels. In many cases, learners and tutors are aware of their learning targets and achievements and these are often discussed but they are not recorded.

Leadership and management

115. The City Council's adult and community learning service provides clear strategic planning for FLLN programmes. Programmes are well linked to the school improvement agenda. A family learning steering group operates effectively as a subgroup of the learning partnership. There is clear targeting of programmes to the areas of highest deprivation. A high priority is given to attracting new learners and, of those learners enrolled on FLLN programmes to date in 2004-05, 67 per cent are new. The service links effectively with the other four northeast LEAs and the region has recently launched its joint Skills for Families programme. However, the strategic planning for the wider family learning programmes is not yet as effectively developed. Some programmes have been developed to attract new groups of learners but as yet there is insufficient coherence to the provision. There is good celebration of learners' achievements at the end of the programmes.

116. The service does not carry out sufficient quality assurance checks on the subcontracted provision. Target-setting for individual providers is incomplete and does not drive improvement in the provision. Targets rely heavily on national benchmarks and are not specifically related to the individual subcontractor. The checking of retention and achievement is retrospective. The observation of teaching and learning is not well developed for all tutors. There is a variation in the quality of completed observations, where some are not graded and are insufficiently analytical. Some of the tutors in subcontracted provision do not have sufficient instruction and guidance on completing the required documents. While head teachers are very effective in sharing good practice and supporting the development of programmes, this sharing of good practice does not operate at tutor level. However, there is planned training for tutors provided by a local university.

Community development

Community development		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
- Adult and community learning	276	2

Strengths

- high standards of learners' work
- good teaching and learning that encourages and inspires learners
- strong partnerships promote community development and inclusion
- very good additional support for clients' diverse needs

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of individual learning plans
- insufficient curriculum leadership, management and development

Achievement and standards

117. The standard of work produced at the end of courses is high. Learners make good progress. Many have no previous knowledge or skills in their chosen subject and have been out of education for some years. They are set challenging tasks by the tutors and work hard to achieve these. Learners are often surprised at their progress and achievements in a relatively short time. Displays of work are mounted during end-of-course celebration events for staff and family members to admire. Learners are encouraged by the tutors to achieve personal and group goals, as well as the general objectives for the course. A family history IT course enabled learners to produce highly individualised websites on a range of topics for friends and family to access. One group of learners used a committee skills course to build their confidence to set up a management committee. Learners also develop self-esteem and social skills. They are able to take on roles and responsibilities in their community or progress onto other courses which they would once have considered out of reach. Learners achieving the first stand-alone unit on the adult learner support course, can work in the community as a volunteer or as paid staff, providing help with literacy, numeracy and language skills, and can also take further units to achieve a full certificate.

118. In 2003-04, the retention rate for the non-accredited courses was 97 per cent and both the retention and achievement rates for the accredited course were 93 per cent. Attendance is also very high, with 100 per cent on many courses.

Quality of education and training

119. Much of the teaching is good, capturing the learners' imagination and holding their attention to the end of their course. Tutors employ a range of creative techniques very effectively to encourage and inspire learners to progress and build confidence in their own abilities. Tutors draw on the life experiences and existing knowledge of the group in ways that help individuals to relate their learning of new skills and understanding to their own lives and communities. Tutors maintain the learners' interest and application by using visual, tactile and musical stimuli as well as words. Adults with severe learning difficulties and disabilities took part in samba drumming and keep-fit classes, and improved their levels of mobility and confidence. A group of learners produced a set of banners for a local church, taking inspiration from some drawings by their tutor.

120. The courses meet the needs of individual learners, groups and organisations, and encourage wider participation by them in the local community. Learners express high levels of satisfaction about the quality of the teaching and the content of the curriculum in matching their interests and goals. The establishment of lifelong learning forums with funding for courses in the six regeneration areas across the city has enabled community organisations to identify local learning needs and run appropriate courses. An introductory course includes a work placement and is a taster for local people with the potential and aspiration to be youth workers.

121. There is very good additional support for learners' diverse needs. The use of community mentors in two centres to act as role models and a source of information, advice and guidance, has been very successful in encouraging adults on courses who would not otherwise attend. The presence of carers and learning supporters in the classroom has also enabled adults with a learning disability or sensory impairment to engage in learning activities which otherwise would be inaccessible to them. Information, advice and guidance on careers and other learning opportunities is provided at some centres. The adult learner support course offers this on entry, mid-way and on completion. At other centres, provision is insufficient.

122. Assessment of learning is appropriate to the level of learning and the ability of the learners. It is carried out regularly in practical classes like arts and craft, with weekly observation if appropriate, but it is not always formally recorded. It is also sensitive to the needs of certain groups. Tutors work closely with carers and learning supporters to plan and monitor the progress of learners with physical or learning disabilities. The assessment, verification and moderation procedures for the accredited adult learner support course adhere to the awarding body requirements.

123. Accommodation, equipment and learning resources are satisfactory. A wide range of suitable venues are used for courses. Some buildings are good, with purpose-built classrooms, for example for needlework or cookery. Courses for learners with disabilities are held in rooms which enable them to participate fully and feel included. Teaching and support staff are experienced in working with adult learners and they hold relevant qualifications.

124. There is insufficient use of individual learning plans across the curriculum. Although some tutors use individual learning plans effectively to identify goals and evaluate achievement, some plans are partially completed, have no mid-term monitoring or are missing. The organisation recognised this weakness in its most recent self-assessment report.

Leadership and management

125. The adult and community learning service has developed strong partnerships that promote community development and social inclusion, reflecting the strategic priorities of the LEA, and this is recognised in the self-assessment report. Previously disadvantaged and excluded groups take part in education and in their communities. Collaboration has enriched the learning experience for adults. For example, a partnership with social services has included adults from three day care centres in the life of a community centre, and the local police based at a community centre contributed to a course on criminology. There have been very effective strategies to increase social inclusion and widen participation in learning among traditionally excluded groups, particularly adults with disabilities. Diversity is celebrated in this area of learning.

126. The management of the lifelong learning forums and the bidding process to access their funding have been effective, both in meeting the needs of local organisations and in increasing their capacity to play an active role in their communities.

127. The self-assessment report identified most of the strengths and one of the weaknesses. Managers and some staff were involved in the self-assessment process but this did not include all tutors.

128. There is insufficient leadership, management and development of the curriculum. The central management has begun to make progress with this but there is very little curriculum leadership in the local areas or sharing of good practice among tutors. Observations of teaching and learning have been carried out recently but the process needs to be established across the curriculum, together with opportunities for all tutors to be appraised. There has been some staff development and tutors are encouraged to gain extra qualifications, but there is a need for more joint training and curriculum development activities involving the tutors.