

Following an extensive consultation and review process in 2015, the London Borough of Merton took the decision that its Adult Learning Service contract out its provision to local organisations. In arriving at this decision the Council considered that “the commissioning model protects adult education in Merton” and that “this was not a cut to the service beyond any future reduction made by the ESFA” although it did recognise that “this model does not fully protect services from the impact of those cuts. As commissioners the council will be in a position to steer provision and the spread of venues so that the service fully addresses the challenge of “bridging the gap” between east and west. This ability will be maintained.” (*Cabinet Committee minutes, 16th February 2015*).

As a consequence, prospective subcontractors are invited to tender for the delivery of provision and a core team of LBM staff manage the contracts.

Subcontracting enables us to:

- engage with hard to reach learners via partnerships with appropriate community organisations.
- provide a wide range of expertise to meet the skills and learning needs of adults and employers in Merton.
- enable community based organisations to develop the capacity necessary to provide learning programmes to meet the needs of their clients.

Providing high quality and sustainable adult learning through a commissioned service enables us to improve the social, economic, health and wellbeing of our residents. We deliver this through a strategic investment approach: commissioning provision to the best providers in the field and using an evidence based approach to inform commissioning decisions.

We aim to reduce inequalities across the borough by focussing investment on those most socially and / or economically disadvantaged whilst providing a broad range of learning opportunities to develop all of our resident’s skills.

Underpinning this are the commitments of our elected members to adult learning in Merton, the requirements of our funders and auditors such as the Greater London Authority (GLA) and Ofsted and our understanding of the current and future needs of our residents.

Adult learning in Merton will:

- Use an evidence based approach to commissioning to ensure the fullest return on investment.
- Embrace technological developments and support residents through the delivery of courses that improve learners economic and digital opportunities.
- Deliver courses to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents and reduce social isolation.
- Continue to provide popular courses whilst expanding provision for families to encourage intergenerational learning.
- Increase the quality and number of courses in employability and ensure that a thread of employability and life skills is weaved into all courses.
- Provide targeted courses for adults to improve literacy and / or numeracy skills to enable learners to participate more fully socially and / or economically.
- Further develop the range of courses for learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities to enable them to live as independently as possible to improve their wellbeing and life chances.
- Tailor the learning journey for all learners from beginning to end so that they progress onto new opportunities.
- Deliver excellent teaching and learning across providers and work collaboratively with them to ensure that best practice is shared and embedded in course provision.



Underpinning our objectives are the following key principles for adult learning:

- Provide a broad range of accredited and non-credited courses to meet market demand and based on evidence and intelligence of future needs.
- Make full use of national, regional and local data to understand, target and track the delivery of our services to different parts of the resident population to ensure the widest reach of adult learning.
- Ensure all courses (apart from some apprenticeship opportunities) are delivered in the borough.
- Be delivered in an inclusive and welcoming environment in high quality venues that are easy for people to access whilst ensuring the safeguarding of all our learners.
- Embed appropriate assessment and selection processes to ensure that course criteria match learner needs and they progress appropriately following course completion.
- Learn from, and contribute to, best practice around the country in the field of adult learning and actively seek to embrace new approaches.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching provision and develop enhanced systems to manage quality and improve feedback from our learners.
- Clear pathways are established, recorded and monitored to enable progression of learners onto new courses, employment opportunities and / or improved health and wellbeing as appropriate.
- Market our services to the community through a variety of different methods and ensure a strong thread of localism is embedded into our course offer.

List of Subcontractors

2020-2021 (as at August 2020)

- South Thames College Group (Merton College)
- Richmond and Hillcroft Adult Community College (RHACC)
- Global Solution Services (GSS)
- MI ComputSolutions
- Adult Training Network (ATN)
- The Assessment and Training Centre (TATC)
- City Literary

2019-2020

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The Adult Learning commissioning service is reviewed by Merton Council Scrutiny Panel annually.

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