



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

A DUAL MANDATE FOR ADULT
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
CONSULTATION

Your details

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Please tick the box below that best describes you as a respondent to this consultation

- Representative organisation
- Independent Training Provider
- College
- Awarding Organisation
- Charity or social enterprise
- Individual
- Legal representative
- Local government
- Local Enterprise Partnership
- Large business (over 250 staff)
- Medium business (50 to 250 staff)
- Small business (10 to 49 staff)
- Micro business (up to 9 staff)
- Professional body
- Trade union or staff association
- Industrial Strategy sector
- Other (please describe) Non-Departmental Government Body

Arts Council England is the national development agency for the arts, museums and libraries in England. Our remit for 'the arts' includes a wide range of visual and performing art forms, music, dance, theatre and literature. We have funding responsibilities for regional museums, and a development role across libraries and the wider museums sector. We are sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in order to make the arts, and the wider culture of museums and libraries, an integral and accessible part of everyday public life. Importantly, we are tasked with the dual responsibility of ensuring that arts and culture are understood as essential to the national economy and to the health and happiness of society.

National Colleges

Question 1: How can the National College proposals be developed to ensure the employers across the whole sector benefit?

From interim data from the Creative Employment Programme (CEP)¹ we can see that the largest group of employers benefitting were small employers. 28.5% had a turnover of less than £100k and 36% had a turnover of between £100k and £499k². Qualitative findings also suggest that employers value the opportunity to share their skills and good practices with a new generation of creative industries professionals and that this is key to their motivation for applying for CEP funding³. Therefore:

- Any developing National College should strive to gain stakeholder input from small organisations/businesses as much as those with a larger turnover.
- Best practice case studies should be shared and peer learning used to ensure that employers learn from each other on how best to benefit from the opportunity and to provide the best possible experience and outcomes for Higher Vocational learners.

Question 2: How can National Colleges best work in partnership with local FE colleges, private training organisations and HEIs?

Question 3: Which priority sectors should be targeted for future National Colleges?

The development of a National College for the Creative and Cultural Industries⁴ will have a strong impact for our sector; increasing the visibility and value of higher vocational education, contributing towards economic growth, meeting sector skills shortages, increasing access routes and subsequently the diversity of our workforce. We will invest £1.2M between 2015-18 in order to connect employers and FE colleges and improve vocational pathways and skills development in the cultural sector.

Importantly, the value of the arts and culture can be felt in other sectors. Creative people have a strong role to play in ensuring that industries are responsive and able to adapt to and lead digital and technical progress. Nesta estimates that creative employment accounts for 24% of the overall workforce⁵. Job growth in the creative economy (the wider economy that includes creative jobs inside and outside of the creative industries) grew by 2.6% between 2012 and 2013, a higher rate than for the UK Economy as a whole (1.6%)⁶.

We would encourage all of the National Colleges and their employer-led consortiums to consider how a STEAM⁷ approach might help them deliver the best possible outcomes for their sector⁸. We strongly believe that the arts and culture and creative industry sectors have a key role to play in the industrial strategy, contributing directly to growth and indirectly supporting innovation and skills development in the 11 industrial strategy priority areas⁹.

The Higher and Further Education sectors are an increasingly important strategic partner for us. We are working with them to understand how we can work more closely for mutual benefit for the arts and culture and wider society at a local and national level, according to the following common agendas:

¹ <http://ccskills.org.uk/supporters/funding/england/the-creative-employment-programme>

² Data available on request

³ Data available on request

⁴ <http://ccskills.org.uk/national-college>

⁵ <http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/creativity-vs-robots>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-economic-estimates-january-2015/creative-industries-economic-estimates-january-2015-key-findings>

⁷ http://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/assets/userfiles/files/CIF_EduAgenda_spreads.pdf

⁸ See pg 44

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/finalreport/warwick_commission_final_report.pdf

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/industrial-strategy-government-and-industry-in-partnership>

- As investors in arts and culture and the provision of cultural resources (which may be integral to a HEI/FE campus)
- Supporting talent development and progression
- Retaining local talent and investing in the local area
- Developing partnerships to encourage widened and more diverse participation in HE/FE
- Diversification of the workforce
- Place-based partnerships
- The civic role of HEIs/FEIs, and shared interests in local authorities
- Research and developing a joint approach to understanding the impact of arts and culture
- As partners in the Creative Economy
- As partners for investment from EU and LEP funding
- Impact of research

The arts and culture sector have an indirect but valuable role to play in creating engaged and creative learning communities. National Colleges could reap the benefits of partnering or co-locating with cultural organisations, benefitting from spillover place-based benefits to create an attractive and innovative learning environment as well as personal benefits of having access to excellent and inspiring cultural activity.

Case study 1

Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA) is partnered with Teesside University with an ambition to retain alumni in the area and to attract students to the area in the first place. MIMA and the university are working together on the place-making and civic universities agenda. The mission is about improving the life of people in Teesside.

Communications and branding

Question 4a: Would you support rebranding English higher vocational education as either "Professional Education and Training" or "Professional and Technical Education"?

Yes

No

Don't know

Question 4b: If so, which would you prefer and why?

Professional Education and Training

Professional and Technical Education

Please explain your response:

Question 5: Would you support a national advertising and marketing campaign for higher vocational education?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your response:

Yes. We agree that higher vocational education should be valued at a high status level and that work-focused pathways should be encouraged.

Question 6: What other means of promoting higher vocational education do you think would be desirable?

Our network of National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) and grant-funded activity nationally has a strong role to play in promoting higher vocational education. Many of our funded organisations

already deliver vocational qualification and non-qualification based learning and so could play a role in communicating available opportunities.

As the national development agency for libraries in England, we believe that our national network of public libraries can promote and support delivery of the proposed Dual Mandate for adult vocational education. Included in this network are trained staff and volunteers who are an important resource for signposting and connecting learners to national and local information about higher vocational education and the learning options available to them. Library staff are experts in helping people find, evaluate and use relevant information in whatever format. They are trained to deliver the Universal Information Offer and have a pivotal role in signposting people to other local learning opportunities¹⁰. A fuller investigation into the diversity implications of higher vocational education can be found below, but it is important to note that “those living in the most deprived areas are proportionally higher users of the library ICT services [and] they are also bigger users of the information services, ie more of them are likely to want to try and find something out”¹¹.

Libraries, then, can play a key role in signposting higher vocational education options to those that may be harder to reach through conventional means. We encourage BIS to consider both how libraries can support the delivery of the Dual Mandate for Adult Vocational education and how best our network of public libraries can support the promotion of higher vocational education.

From the interim report of our Creative Employment Programme (CEP), many employers surveyed suggested that they did not have capacity or resource to take on a paid internship or apprenticeship before this opportunity¹². Therefore we recommend that promotional activity is also designed to reach employers to articulate the value and opportunities on offer through higher vocational education and work-based learning.

Question 7: How can we encourage more individuals to study higher vocational education?

As noted in the consultation, due to the education funding system higher vocational options have to date been seen as “second tier” to non-vocational/academic education¹³ and have a more “variable” wage return¹⁴ as a result.

Arts Council England has a national development role for libraries across England. In our response to “*Envisioning the library of the future*”¹⁵ we have identified priorities for our ongoing work with libraries. Two are pertinent to this response:

1. Place the library as the hub of a community
2. Make the most of digital technology and creative media

We believe these priorities help position libraries in a context where they can help encourage participation in higher vocational education.

Libraries have social value and a community learning role

Public libraries have a long tradition in supporting lifelong learning and as far back as 1938 were described as “the people’s university”¹⁶. They are still valued in society. Recent willingness-to-pay (WTP) amongst library-users in England is £19.51 per year in increased council tax and £10.31 per year for non-users¹⁷. Our network of libraries continues to deliver a significant and varied¹⁸ learning

¹⁰ <http://www.tinderfoundation.org/our-thinking/blog/digital-skills-and-beyond-training-library-trainers>

¹¹ CIPFA Public Library Users’ Survey Deprivation report 2012/2013 pg 3

¹² Data available on request

¹³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/427342/bis-15-145-A-dual-mandate-for-adult-vocational-education.pdf pg 25

¹⁴ <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-ethnicity-education-full.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-libraries/other-links/library-of-the-future/>

¹⁶ JOHNSON, Alvin Saunders. *The Public Library: A People's University*. American Association for Adult Education, 1938

¹⁷ http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/Health_and_wellbeing_benefits_of_public_libraries_summary_paper.pdf

pg 3

¹⁸ See for example many ways in which libraries support learning are exemplified in “[Learning at the Library of Birmingham](#)”.

offer: for example, library spaces are used by other learning providers such as WEA or U3A to provide learning sessions¹⁹.

Libraries provide digital access and learning opportunities

Libraries have a pivotal role to play in developing an individual's digital skills, directly or indirectly supporting them to then study higher vocational education. 52% of library service points in England have a public access Wi-Fi network²⁰ and by March 2016 we aim to provide free Wi-Fi and a consistent high tech and stable connections in every library across the country²¹. This builds on libraries long standing community internet provision which support learners who do not have online access at home. According to an evidence review in 2014, several studies highlight the personal benefits of digital inclusion by increased employability²². Much fewer people without access to the internet have taken part in learning in the previous three years according to a NIACE study (47% with access compared to 12% without access)²³.

Libraries, providing a crucial access point for those with limited access to digital resources, are increasingly enabling learners to participate in online learning opportunities, such as MOOCs. Around half of the 3,000 UK Online Centres are based in libraries²⁴ and these are shown to have strong social, work and learning progression outcomes for learners (e.g. 74% of learners progress to further learning)²⁵. We would recommend that the higher vocational offer works in collaboration with or furthers the digital inclusion and educational opportunities already provided through libraries and the UK Online Centres.

Case study 2

Devon Libraries FabLab, or fabrication laboratory, is a low cost digital workshop which enables learners to make models and prototypes and develop digital and technical skills.

<http://fablabdevon.org/about/>

Developing more further vocational learning and access routes will help build the diversity of our sector

It is important to note the socio-economic and protected status of those who currently enrol in higher vocational education. For our sector in particular, the 2014 Consilium evidence and literature review noted that the "high level of graduate recruitment in the sector and an over-reliance on degrees amongst new entrants contributes to a lack of workforce diversity in terms of socio-economic background"²⁶.

This makes encouraging individual learners to participate in higher vocational education particularly important. Of the 2,929,600 adult learners participating in further education in 2013/14²⁷:

- 56.6 per cent were female and 43.4 per cent were male
- 15.0 per cent declared a learning difficulty and/or disability
- 19.2 per cent were from a Black or Minority Ethnic background (including Mixed, Asian, Black and Other Ethnic Group learners)

¹⁹ See for example <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/libraries/learn>

²⁰ http://cc.bingj.com/cache.aspx?q=cipfa+library+statistics+2013%2f2014&d=4529156114023262&mkt=en-GB&setlang=en-US&w=N9sXooy5ZfsLnxXi6Tia_ZKdiLqsA-mR

²¹ £7.4 million was awarded to the Arts Council in the March 2015 budget to provide Wi-Fi in every public library in England, http://artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/Darren-Henley-speech_SCL_4-June-2015.pdf

²² http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Evidence_review_economic_contribution_libraries_2014.pdf pg 50

²³ <http://www.niace.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/2015%20Adult%20Participation%20in%20Learning%20-%20Headline%20Findings.pdf> pg 4

²⁴ <http://www.tinderfoundation.org/annualreview/online-centres-network.html>

²⁵ <http://www.tinderfoundation.org/what-we-do/uk-online-centres>

²⁶

http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/Equality_and_diversity_within_the_arts_and_cultural_sector_in_England.pdf pg 66

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/432351/SFR_commentary_March_2015_Ofqual_Update.pdf

Through Goal 4 of our strategy *Great art and culture for everyone* we aim to ensure that the “leadership and workforce of the arts and cultural sector – and especially the organisations that we invest in – reflect the diversity of the country, indicating that there are fair routes to entry and progression”²⁸. The promotion of higher vocational avenues is important to ensure that those with disability or from a BME background have continued and increased access routes into our sector.

Voluntary arts and culture organisations play a significant vocational learning role

The value of the voluntary arts and culture sector should also not go unnoticed in terms of the role it plays in the delivery of further vocational education. The arts and culture sectors are second only to sport in terms of the scope of its work and it is suggested that “cultural and educational associations provide learning activities for about 20 to 30 per cent of the populations in the [EU] member states”²⁹. The voluntary arts and non-commercial arts sector has a key role to play in attracting individuals across the social spectrum to engage in learning.

Case study 3

The **Culture Guide** service aims to introduce and help marginalised social groups – especially inactive senior citizens, vulnerable families, immigrants, poor and low-skilled in areas of economic deprivation, and other disadvantaged and marginalised citizens – to participate in local art based and cultural learning activities that can enliven their learning motivation and renew their relations to other people and the community. There are 4 pilot volunteer-led projects in England and Wales.

<http://www.cultureguides.eu/pilot-work/pilot-work-in-uk/>

Part-time higher education provision

Question 8: How can we encourage more individuals to study part-time Higher Education?

We view the decline in part-time higher education³⁰ with concern. A report from the Institute of Education notes the value of part-time higher education in delivering what are essentially the two aspects of the proposed Dual Mandate: ‘up-skilling’ from a low educational base and ‘re-skilling’ or having a second chance at study³¹. An increase in ‘up-skilling’ from an undergraduate baseline has been at “the expense of the participation of students with low-level entry qualifications or none at all”³².

Recommendations

1. Improving access for women and those with family/caring responsibilities. There are implications for women with child-caring responsibilities. Women are four times more likely than men to identify lack of childcare arrangements or other care responsibilities as standing in the way of their learning³³. The majority of part-time students in higher or further education are over the age of 25 with family and domestic commitments.
2. Using the national network of public libraries to signpost opportunities for learning and supporting individual development (see Q 7)
3. It would appear that in face of strong demand but falling availability there is a potential opportunity for the further vocational education sector to meet even further the need of those requiring accessible and work-based part-time vocational education³⁴.

Our national network of arts and cultural organisations, museums and libraries already play a role in delivering vocational education. We believe that this role could be strengthened to support flexible models of delivery that would encourage increased flexible, part-time, work-based study.

²⁸ http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/Great_art_and_culture_for_everyone.pdf

²⁹ <http://www.cultureguides.eu/concept/background-and-need/>

³⁰ http://www.ioe.ac.uk/about/documents/About_Policies/Callender_-_FINAL3_.pdf

³¹ http://www.ioe.ac.uk/about/documents/About_Policies/Callender_-_FINAL3_.pdf

³² http://www.ioe.ac.uk/about/documents/About_Policies/Callender_-_FINAL3_.pdf pg 5

³³ <http://www.niace.org.uk/our-thinking/news/urgent-reform-skills-system-priority>

³⁴ http://www.ioe.ac.uk/about/documents/About_Policies/Callender_-_FINAL3_.pdf pg 8

A new overarching body to manage awarding powers for higher level vocational qualifications

Question 9: Should a new overarching vocationally focused body be established to grant higher vocational awarding powers?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your response:

Question 10: How could we increase the role of employers in scrutinising applications for new awarding powers?

Question 11a: How can the role of National Colleges in defining qualifications, apprenticeships standards and assessments and curricula best be taken forward?

Question 11b: Should other, high performing providers be empowered to do this?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your response:

Question 12: Are the right awarding powers in place to facilitate an increase in the uptake of HNC, HND and BTEC type qualifications?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your response:

Question 13: How do we design delivery and assessment in a way which imparts work ethics, occupational attitudes and standards, while enabling learners to reflect on and improve these?

Question 14: How do we develop these mechanisms without losing existing quality products that already meet these standards and which employers recognise and have faith in?

Refocusing the Foundation Degree curriculum

Question 15: Should the Government be prescriptive about the role of employers in the design, development and delivery of Foundation Degrees?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your response:

Reviewing Foundation Degrees Awarding Powers (FDAPs)

Question 16: Should we consider some form of specialised FDAPs rather than general powers to award any kind of foundation degree?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your response:

Question 17: Could the FDAPs process and/or criteria be changed to improve access while maintaining quality?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your response:

Question 18: How do we ensure that the quality assurance arrangements are appropriate to foster the right type of HVE (higher vocational education)?

Work-based learning and higher vocational education

Question 19: Should all HVE courses involve work based learning?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your response:

Where possible, yes. We exemplify this through our investment of £1.2M in the National Skills Academy between 2015-18 in order to connect employers and FE colleges and improve vocational pathways and skills development in the cultural sector. We agree that training young people without 'considering innovation'³⁵ does not make sense and we feel that this starts with participation and inspiration in the workplace.

By March 2016 we will have invested approximately £15M in the Creative Employment Programme to create up to 6500 apprenticeships, paid internships and traineeships. Since 2012 almost 2500 new opportunities have been created through the Creative Employment Programme. We are also sure that there are reciprocal benefits for employers - only 23% of the 980 participating employers had employed an apprentice before joining the programme.

There are positive employment-based outcomes from apprentice- and work-based learning. 89% of employers surveyed reported that their apprentices improved their chances of working in the creative and cultural sector³⁶. Qualitative evidence indicates that since taking on an apprentice, it is more likely that employers will work with Further Education colleges in the future (47% likely engagement compared to 32% likely previous engagement)³⁷. There are also significant benefits for the apprentice. From the interim findings of the CEP, an apprenticeship means increased confidence (100%), improved communication (93%), improved sector specific/technical skills

³⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/427342/bis-15-145-A-dual-mandate-for-adult-vocational-education.pdf

³⁶ Data available on request. This data has been taken from a sample of CEP employers who have been surveyed to date. The data should be treated as an indication only, not a conclusive set of findings.

³⁷ Data available on request. This data has been taken from a sample of CEP employers who have been surveyed to date. The data should be treated as an indication only, not a conclusive set of findings.

(83%), an improved chance of working in the creative and cultural sector (89%) and an improved chance of working in any sector (79%)³⁸.

However, a literature review funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation entitled 'Poverty, ethnicity and education' notes the complexity of the picture. It showed that at a post-16 further education level non-white students are 'overrepresented' yet there is limited take-up of apprenticeships and poor progression routes for those from a BME background that do go down that route³⁹. More work needs to be done to interrogate and mitigate against this disparity.

Case study 4

Streetwise Opera is an award-winning charity that uses music to help people with experience of homelessness make positive changes in their lives. They have also supported 34 people to undertake work placements based in arts organisations.

<http://www.streetwiseopera.org/who-we-are>

Specialisation in colleges

Question 20: Are there other lessons to learn from the implementation of the CoVE (Centres of Vocational Excellence) programme?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your response:

Question 21: Should there be a new status for colleges specialising in higher level vocational skills as the Institute of Public Policy Research recommended?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your response:

Question 22: How can we support FE colleges to achieve excellence in higher level vocational skills?

HVE in the higher education setting – extending the role of universities and links with research and innovation

Question 23: What are the barriers to effective collaboration between colleges, universities and Catapult centres?

Question 24a: Should all Catapult centres be engaged in developing vocational education and higher level vocational skills training?

Yes

No

Don't know

Question 24b: If so, how best can this be achieved?

³⁸ Data available on request

³⁹ <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-ethnicity-education-full.pdf>

Question 25: What should the role of universities, colleges and Catapult centres be in growing technician level skills?

Question 26: How do we ensure even stronger employer/university engagement?

Stronger virtual learning and use of technology

Question 27: How can Government drive the further adoption of new technology in FE institutions?

Making the overall system more effective

Question 28: What is the best way to ensure greater local accountability on the part of providers towards learners and employers, in terms of relevance and quality of provision, and social and economic impacts?

Question 29a: What benefits would there be to commissioning Adult Skills Budget provision through local partnerships or through a lead provider acting on behalf of a partnership?

We believe that the vision for FE can only be delivered in collaboration with partners – sharing buildings, programmes, expertise and content/collections. We appreciate the reforms made to the Community Learning budget which ensures that delivery, local services and stakeholders are required to work in partnership. We would welcome closer working between our sector and those delivering the Community Learning budget.

Similarly, we believe that a range of providers, drawing in on local specialist knowledge and working in partnership, should be able to access the Adult Skills Budget. Since 2013 we have supported the National Campaign for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) to deliver the Cultural Commissioning Programme⁴⁰ with the aims of:

- Raising awareness of the ability of the arts, museums and libraries to deliver public service outcomes;
- Increasing sector capacity to do so;
- And enabling commissioners to develop awareness of how this could be achieved.

We suggest that this pilot delivery model for public service outcomes could be expanded so as to support the delivery of the Dual Mandate for Adult Vocational Education, whereby the sector could be supported to deliver adult vocational learning outcomes (both qualifications and social/non-qualification skills outcomes such as interview skills development).

Arts Council funded arts and cultural organisations have significant local knowledge and expertise that would support the delivery of a local, flexible and innovative FE offer. Many have formed vital and innovative partnerships with local higher education delivery bodies. There is strong potential for such partnerships between our sector and the Further Education sector that could deliver excellent and innovative teaching and practice and the strongest possible vocational outcomes for students.

Case study 5

Northumbria University and Baltic 39 have partnered to create BxNU, a world class base for teaching and mentorship in contemporary arts.

<http://www.baltic39.com/bxnu-institute-of-contemporary-art-2/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/public-services/cultural-commissioning-programme>

Case study 6

Earlier this year, the **University of Birmingham** partnered with the **Royal Shakespeare Company** (RSC) to recreate an iconic theatre space to support cutting-edge research and creative practice and to act as a centre to facilitate connections between the arts, the academy and society at large.
<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2015/02/rsc-collaboration-05-02-15.aspx>

We feel that local FE delivery partnerships should expand to include Cultural Education Partnerships or Bridge organisations that already have experience of local partnership delivery. This will expand access routes into further vocational education in the arts, culture and creative industries and develop the quality and creativity of the local FE offer.

Public libraries and arts and cultural organisations should be pivotal partners in local community learning networks. Libraries, for example, can help to deliver an informal learning offer which supports the hardest to reach. An innovative, high status and locally responsive vision for FE can only be delivered in collaboration with partners. There are examples of the co-location of libraries with FE which can encourage a more integrated learning offer.

Case study 7

Newcastle College runs some of its classes for students from the High Heaton branch library. The library building has been acquired by Newcastle College on a three year lease and courses in literacy, numeracy and IT will be run on five half-days a week with people able to access the full set of library services with a council librarian on hand.
<http://www.ncl-coll.ac.uk/news/127/newcastle-college-secures-the-future-of-city-libraries>

Case Study 8

The Forum, Southend-on-Sea, opened in 2013 and is a £27m partnership between Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, the University of Essex and South Essex College, providing a state-of-the-art integrated municipal and academic public library.
<http://www.theforumsouthend.co.uk/about/>

Question 29b: What downsides might there be to such an approach?

Question 30: How do we ensure a stronger focus on outcomes without encouraging cherry picking of the easiest to help?

We value the longitudinal evidence-based perspective proposed in the consultation document. Continuing such an approach should support long-term outcomes shown as valuable in the second part of the dual mandate.

Question 31: What issues would there be with supporting programmes of study rather than qualifications?

We welcome the vision set out of “an FE sector confident and capable of reaching into its local community, joining up services and addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged”⁴¹. We feel that there is a strong case for making available individual units or non-qualification bearing programmes of study (e.g. see NIACE⁴²). These options provide pathways into more formal, qualification-based programmes of study and can bring those previously disengaged with learning or employment into more formal educational settings in a non-threatening way. As noted, these issues rely on highly localised interventions, often spanning much more than just education.

⁴¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/427342/bis-15-145-A-dual-mandate-for-adult-vocational-education.pdf pg 19

⁴² http://www.niace.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Ten%20Policies%20for%20Ten%20People_0.pdf pg 13

NIACE have noted that 1 in 5 British people lack the skills needed for everyday life⁴³. We believe libraries have a specific value they could bring to the delivering of the second part of the dual mandate. Libraries provide accessible, safe and informal spaces at the heart of communities and are used by learners of all ages and backgrounds. For example, there are over 3,000 public libraries in England and more than 300 million visits are made to them each year⁴⁴.

Case study 9

The Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester has a dedicated series of vocational, non-exam based learning programmes involving play writing or using theatre as a means of improving English.

<http://www.royalexchange.co.uk/discover-adults>

Case Study 10

The Curve is Slough's new learning and cultural centre, housing a brand new library, learning rooms, computer suite, museum, performance centre and café.

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/business/regenerating-slough/the-curve---cultural-and-learning-centre.aspx>

We propose in particular libraries have a valuable role to play in the delivery of NIACE's proposed Citizen's Curriculum⁴⁵. Libraries are not seen as formal learning environments and have shown success in re-engaging people in learning opportunities at whatever level. It is positive to note that the standard of customer care in libraries has been rated as good or very good by over 90% of library users from across the social spectrum⁴⁶. In the same survey, 85% of those from the most deprived social quartile felt that library information provision was good or very good⁴⁷. Our research has shown that it is challenging to find a causal link between library use and adult literacy⁴⁸. However, libraries provide "support in a myriad of ways to their users both in terms of lifestyle, eg health and wellbeing or family/relationships, and necessity, eg job seeking or finance/consumer matters"⁴⁹ – addressing education and career development outcomes and beyond.

- Library engagement has a positive association with **general health**. After controlling for other confounding factors, being a regular library user is associated with a 1.4 per cent increase in the likelihood of reporting good general health.
- Library use is positively associated with **subjective wellbeing** after controlling for a wide range of other factors.
- People who use 'health services' at libraries (£39.03), 'attend lectures and other events' at libraries (£29.08), and those who use their library as a 'space for socialising' (£26.44) are willing to pay more than the average user to maintain services at their local library (WTP amounts in brackets)⁵⁰.

Testing alternative approaches

Question 32: What risks do we need to cater for in testing out new local arrangements to deliver skills provision for unemployed individuals and those with skills below level 2?

We would encourage arts and cultural organisations and libraries to be involved in the proposed local pilots (pg 62) that will test new approaches to developing locally responsive, flexible and

⁴³ http://www.niace.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Ten%20Policies%20for%20Ten%20People_0.pdf pg 13

⁴⁴ http://www.goscl.com/wp-content/uploads/SCL_Inspiring-People_Connecting-Communities-2.pdf

⁴⁵ http://www.niace.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Ten%20Policies%20for%20Ten%20People_0.pdf pg 13

⁴⁶ CIPFA Public Library Users' Survey Deprivation report 2012/2013 pg 12

⁴⁷ CIPFA Public Library Users' Survey Deprivation report 2012/2013 pg 18

⁴⁸ http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Evidence_review_economic_contribution_libraries_2014.pdf

⁴⁹ Public Library Users' Survey Deprivation Report 2012/13

⁵⁰ http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/Health_and_wellbeing_benefits_of_public_libraries_summary_paper.pdf

outcomes focussed partnerships. We feel that there is a strong offer (outlined in Q 31) for the unemployed and those with skills below level 2.

Cultural organisations have demonstrated their ability to deliver locally responsive educational-based offer through three pilot Cultural Education Partnerships⁵¹. Research by the National Foundation for Educational Research (commissioned by Arts Council England) shows positive evidence of increased engagement in cultural activity by young people as a result of arts and cultural organisations working together and delivering improvements to the coherence and quality of the local cultural offer⁵². From these programmes critical success measures have emerged which we will use to guide a national roll-out while at the same time allowing for a locally-shaped offer.

We would encourage any offer to be developed with local stakeholders and in parallel with those whose needs are being addressed.

Question 33: What new approaches can be taken on commissioning and funding streams to maximise the value gained from public spending to support unemployed and disadvantaged learners?

Community Learning

Question 34: If we were to make the changes described in paragraph 208 of the consultation document, how should we look to phase them in over time?

Question 35: Would a greater focus on commissioning partnerships enhance partnership working and deliver a more coherent Community Learning offer?

Yes. In our experience, partnership working should be at the core of any locally responsive learning offer (based on our findings from the Cultural Education Partnerships outlined above). It is important that the offer is constantly challenged and refreshed to meet the changing needs of the population it aims to address. Creative and innovative responses to local challenges should be encouraged and we feel that libraries and arts and cultural providers can bring these skills to a wider partnership.

Our response ends here.

Please acknowledge this reply

⁵¹ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/children-and-young-people/cultural-education-partnership-group/>

⁵² Research available on request



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