



# LWBLA survey on the delivery of GCSE English and mathematics

## LWBLA Report

December 2015

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### Background

Independent learning providers delivering both apprenticeships and the study programme are finding a challenge in delivering GCSE English and mathematics. The majority deliver Functional Skills up to Level 2 but are finding the jump to GCSE a step too far for both their learners and their tutors. It was decided to carry out a survey with the LWBLA providers to find out providers who could deliver GCSEs and might be able to support other providers or deliver for them. The survey also looked at resources and good practice.

The LWBLA circulated the survey through Survey Monkey in October/November 2015. The response rate was disappointingly low with only 15 providers responding. However, the results do show key issues for delivery of GCSEs and therefore identify areas where the LWBLA could offer support/workshops.

### Overview of findings

The number of respondents is low so the findings may not be representative of the providers in London. The majority of providers are finding the delivery of GCSE English and mathematics a challenge either in finding tutors who are able to teach to the syllabus, finding partners they can work with or fitting in with the timings of the examinations. One of the aims of the survey was to find providers who do deliver these GCSEs and who might be able to support other providers by offering tutors and/or use of their awarding body registration. However, although the majority of providers do want to share their experiences, only two of the providers delivering GCSEs have the capacity to offer this support.



## Main findings

Out of 15 providers:

- 7 deliver GCSE English and mathematics in-house
- 5 are a registered centre for GCSE English and mathematics
- 5 either use another centre to register their learners or to deliver for them
- 2 providers have the capacity to deliver to other organisations
- 12 providers are interested in sharing information with other providers.

## Key challenges providers face

Out of 15 providers, 10 said they had challenges in delivering GCSEs and only one said they did not have challenges. Providers do not seem to have issues with delivering Functional Skills. Some of the key challenges mentioned are:

*'Learner engagement is a challenge as we draw learners from very disadvantaged backgrounds, SEN, those who have dropped out of or been removed from mainstream, those with multiple barriers to learning or with poor experiences at mainstream school before they come to us. We are an Alternative Provision School, for 14 - 19 learners.'*

(City Gateway)

*'As a training provider for childcare the GCSE is a huge challenge. We need more flexibility around the delivery of GCSE's.'*

(The Childcare Company)

*'We are not delivering GCSEs at the moment but we are offering Functional Skills maths, English and ICT as part of our apprenticeship programme. We are planning to deliver GCSEs in the near future but this depends on up-skilling our current assessors and tutors so that they are confident in implementing these qualifications as well as finding the right resources.'*

(Wandsworth Lifelong Learning)

*'Retention of learners if we offer it over a longer period than one academic year, ensuring all content is covered with enough time for each topic when delivering over one year.'*

(Haringey Adult Learning Service)

## Ways in which providers link with other organisations

These are listed below but are not linked to a specific provider.

- Use local subcontractors.



- Day release delivery patterns. Roll-on, roll-off supported by standard testing submission windows.
- Work with other members of our consortium and share costs. Centres are local to learners and are run in a coherent way to allow for all learners irrespective of needs.
- A blended mix of electronic and face-to-face tutorials.
- A private tutor who comes in once a week to deliver GCSE English to our Child Care learners. He charges £100 per session. The learners respond well to him, however, the learners still need to revise and do homework if they are going to achieve A-C grades.
- Use a local school.

## Resources used

Out of 15 providers, nine gave information on resources. These have been listed below but are not linked to a specific provider as many use the same resources.

### **Awarding Body Materials:**

- Sample papers
- Marking schemes
- Examiners' reports
- Texts from chosen awarding body

### **bksb:**

- Maths, English and ICT resources
- Diagnostics

### **Web-based:**

- Excellence Gateway ([www.excellencegateway.org.uk](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk))
- Skills Workshop ([www.skillsworkshop.org](http://www.skillsworkshop.org))
- BBC Skillswise ([www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise](http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise))
- Times Education Supplement ([www.tes.com/teaching-resources](http://www.tes.com/teaching-resources))
- CIMT ([www.cimt.plymouth.ac.uk](http://www.cimt.plymouth.ac.uk))
- MyMaths (subscription) ([www.mymaths.co.uk](http://www.mymaths.co.uk))



## Additional information

*'Drop-in maths classes worked very well last year with all GCSE maths students who attended receiving a C or above. This has been extended to GCSE English this year. There was a maximum of 15 in a class and English GCSE success rates were 94% and for maths, 89%.'*

(Kingston Adult Education)

*'It is important to assess the needs of the learners first and foremost. This includes implementing an initial and diagnostic assessment to find out what areas they need to develop in order to gain their English and Maths qualifications. Learners should also be given SMART targets, which should be reviewed regularly and it is important that they are realistic and achievable, especially for learners who are on programmes such as apprenticeships as they have to complete work for their NVOs as well.'*

*There are also some learners who might have learning difficulties, so it is important to ask them about this and offer them professional support in this area. It is also important to ensure that the content of what is being delivered is relevant to their work, so, for example, if they were on a childcare apprenticeship programme, then they would learn about communicating with others on different levels such as parents, managers and children for English. For maths, an example would be calculating the area of a play room in order to find out how much space they have for toys, tables etc.'*

(Wandsworth Lifelong Learning)

Several providers mentioned the ETF Enhancement Programmes.

## Providers with capacity to support other providers:

- LSDN
- Kingston Adult Education

Please contact Nicola Mayell at LWBLA if you want to make contact with these providers. (nicola.mayell@lwbla.com)

## Recommendations

It is very difficult to make recommendations from such a small response but the resources and additional information in this report will, hopefully, be useful. The LWBLA will be running a workshop entitled 'Sharing Practice: GCSE English and mathematics' after Easter next year (2016).



## LWBLA members who completed survey

Thank you to the following members who completed the survey.

- City Gateway
- The Childcare Company
- eTraining Ltd
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- GP Strategies Training Ltd
- Skills for Growth
- LSDN
- Smart Training
- Training Trust
- First Rung
- Kingston Adult Education
- The Bosco Centre
- Wandsworth Lifelong Learning
- Big Creative Training
- Haringey Adult Learning Service