

# Skills for Life Partnership

A Basic Skills Strategy for the City of Leicester

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## **Our Vision**

To support the improvement of Literacy, Numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in the City of Leicester, particularly in the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) wards.

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## Background

The Leicester City Skills for Life Partnership has come into being as the result of a successful bid into Neighbourhood Renewal funds by the Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership (LLCLP). It is chaired by Tim Ward, Principal Officer for Adult Learning, Leicester City LEA and has representation from providers of Basic Skills and ESOL programmes in the city, the Leicestershire Learning and Skills Council, the Learning Partnership and the voluntary sector.

The Skills for Life Partnership recognises that the city already benefits from a significant range of work in Basic Skills and ESOL sponsored by a number of providers, but there is a need for additional delivery, in particular, in Neighbourhood Renewal wards. Its focus is towards establishing a strategic approach to the planning and implementation of new courses. In embracing co-operative and collaborative practice, it seeks, in future, to achieve optimum levels of provision and to avoid unnecessary duplication.

The Partnership is charged with putting into place the mechanisms that will underpin this new way of working. The first of these is to secure knowledge of and agreement about its work from a wide constituency of organisations. A database of existing provision will be created to permit an overview that will inform planning. Strategies for the fair distribution of new work among providers will be decided and disseminated. New delivery will be commissioned and established. Review and monitoring processes will ensure that the work of the Partnership takes place within agreed principles. A strand of staff development opportunities will secure provider practice that conforms to current quality criteria. Publicity about the work of the Partnership will reinforce messages of joined up thinking in the delivery of these key areas of learning. Reporting on progress and achievements will keep interested parties abreast of developments.

“[The Partnership’s] focus is towards establishing a strategic approach to the planning and implementation of new courses”.

## History and Context

Leicester's growth in the last century was largely built on the textile industry which has been in sharp decline in recent years. It has been forecast by Business Strategies Limited that by 2010, the textile industry in Leicestershire will have shed 40% of its current workforce. Leicester's economy depends mainly on Small and Medium size Enterprises (SME's) with 88% of local businesses employing less than 10 people. Although there has been some restructuring in the local economy away from manufacturing into service industries, the Leicestershire employment profile still indicates that 26% of the workforce is employed in manufacturing compared with a national figure of 16%. Apart from the textiles and clothing industry, Leicester's manufacturing base is diverse and includes electronic engineering, food processing, mechanical engineering and printing. Retailing, the service industry and the public sector are the main employers in the city. The City Council is the largest single employer with a workforce in excess of 14,000.

“Leicester's growth in the last century was largely built on the textile industry which has been in sharp decline in recent years”.

## Population

The 2001 Census indicated that Leicester City had a population of 279,921 of which 200,980 were aged over 19. Of this total 36% were from ethnic minority backgrounds which represents the highest non-white population of any British city. The majority of this figure is formed from the different Asian Communities settled in the city. Following migration from the Indian sub-continent, the Caribbean and Ireland, Leicester's rich diversity has been augmented by the resettlement of East African Asians in the 1970's and, more recently, the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers, particularly from Montserrat, Somalia, Zimbabwe and Eastern Europe. With such a diverse ethnic minority community, religious affiliation has become an important element of people's identity. The 2001 Census indicated the following faith breakdown:

Christian	44.70%	(2nd lowest in Uk)
Buddhist	0.2%	
Hindu	17.7%	(3rd highest in Uk)
Jewish	0.1%	
Muslim	11.0%	(17th highest in Uk)
Sikh	4.2%	(10th highest in Uk)
Other	0.4%	
No religion	17.4%	
Religion not stated	7.1%	

The city's population, which has shrunk since the 1991 Census, is 48% male and 52% female. In common with most British cities, this is an ageing population where one in four is now aged, over 60. The city population features an unusual 'bulge' in the 20 to 24-age range with a percentage significantly higher than the national average.

## Skills for Life

The term Skills for Life has been adopted by the Partnership in line with National Initiatives. For the purpose of this plan the term Skills for Life or Basic Skills refers to Literacy, Numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

The city has a generally low-skilled workforce. Leicester City LEA remains in the bottom quartile of the LEAs with regard to GCSE attainment. Research undertaken by the Basic Skills Agency as part of a national survey in 1997 indicates that 23 of the city's 28 electoral wards have below average literacy skills. The picture with numeracy is scarcely much better with 22 wards registering below average scores. The survey shows that 30.4% of adults in Leicester City have literacy problems while 33.5% have numeracy problems. In the Leicestershire Household survey 2000, 8% of respondents rated their ability in numeracy as poor and 4% rated their literacy as poor.

These figures confirm that many individuals do not acknowledge their Basic Skills needs. Raising awareness of Basic Skills issues and providing appropriate support will be key priorities for the city. The 2002/03 Leicester and Leicestershire Business Survey indicated that 15% of local employers felt that the literacy skills of their workforce needed improving and 14% felt the same about their employees' numeracy skills. Improving Basic Skills levels is a real imperative if we are to have a prosperous local economy and if we are serious about social inclusion.

“Improving Basic Skills levels is a real imperative if we are to have a prosperous local economy and if we are serious about social inclusion”.

## Estimates of Population Participating in Basic Skills Based on 2000-01 LSC Data

Ward	ESOL			Literacy		
	F	M	T	F	M	T
Abbey	175	108	283	60	33	93
Aylestone	9	9	18	24	14	38
Beaumont Leys	53	40	93	94	41	135
Belgrave	248	104	352	70	37	107
Castle	64	83	147	40	39	79
Charnwood	183	92	275	85	43	128
Coleman	62	35	97	40	22	62
Crown Hills	173	51	224	103	37	140
East Knighton	24	9	33	14	10	24
Evington	46	16	62	25	5	30
Eyres Monsell	4	17	21	42	13	55
Humberstone	25	7	32	21	13	34
Latimer	178	86	264	48	23	71
Mowmacre	17	10	27	39	25	64
New Parks	13	3	16	64	28	92
North Braunstone	8	56	64	60	50	110
Rowley Fields	63	44	107	51	28	79
Rushey Mead	131	29	160	107	33	140
Saffron	16	5	21	97	30	127
Spinney Hill	324	117	441	149	54	203
St Augustines	32	38	70	54	36	90
Stoneygate	83	33	116	100	50	150
Thurncourt	16	4	20	40	21	61
West Humberstone	33	45	78	48	26	74
West Knighton	42	19	61	24	21	45
Westcotes	99	105	204	31	16	47
Western Park	40	15	55	85	39	124
Wycliffe	485	496	981	112	105	217
<b>Total</b>	<b>2646</b>	<b>1676</b>	<b>4322</b>	<b>1727</b>	<b>892</b>	<b>2619</b>

The Electoral Wards listed refer to those in existence prior to boundary changes in 2003

Numeracy			Other Basic Education			Total		
F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T
20	14	34	48	47	95	303	202	505
6	3	9	39	29	68	78	55	133
27	9	36	138	235	373	312	325	637
40	20	60	68	58	126	426	219	645
5	5	10	50	71	121	159	198	357
42	11	53	89	80	169	399	226	625
15	10	25	35	40	75	152	107	259
32	8	40	104	110	214	412	206	618
5	0	5	40	29	69	83	48	131
18	0	18	30	56	86	119	77	196
28	3	31	15	48	63	89	81	170
8	6	14	18	34	52	72	60	132
28	15	43	33	49	82	287	173	460
25	10	35	20	53	73	101	98	199
11	7	18	26	67	93	114	105	219
31	11	42	56	86	142	155	203	358
18	2	20	83	62	145	215	136	351
41	10	51	21	30	51	300	102	402
45	6	51	93	86	179	251	127	378
63	8	71	146	157	303	682	336	1018
11	1	12	23	60	83	120	135	255
28	6	34	97	123	220	308	212	520
16	7	23	19	75	94	91	107	198
47	10	57	76	125	201	204	206	410
7	6	13	25	30	55	98	76	174
4	2	6	44	55	99	178	178	356
4	3	7	45	65	110	174	122	296
50	25	75	124	136	260	771	762	1533
675	218	893	1605	2096	3701	6653	4882	11535

## The Skills for Life Context

This delivery plan is devised within the context of a number of supportive measures, strategies and frameworks that have already been put in place to address the English and Maths needs of those who live in Leicester.

Basic Skills and ESOL provision has long been a part of the adult learning tradition of the city. One of the strengths of having a “history” is the core of expertise and competence that exists among learning providers – a real asset for developing, establishing and maintaining a high quality provision.

This contribution has been recognised and tapped by the Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership and by the Leicestershire LSC. Since 2001 planned investment in capacity building for Basic Skills and ESOL services has resulted in effective collaborative work between providers in the City and County. There has been a rapid increase in the number of people able to deliver training, teaching and volunteer support. A centralised materials development and support group has been established to provide advice and resource suggestions for new groups of learners.

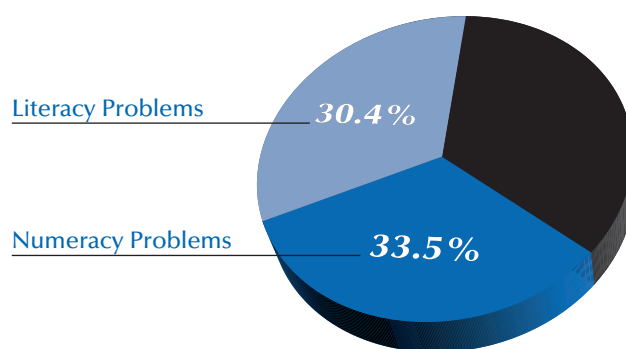
Continuing investment in family learning initiatives; funding for growth for Basic Skills in mainstream FE sector budgets and activity targeted at improving and using links with the voluntary sector have ensured that the Basic Skills and ESOL agenda remains high in the consciousness of existing and potential providers. The Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership and the Leicestershire LSC sponsorship has also produced a raft of measures designed to raise awareness about the needs of those with English and Maths difficulties and about local solutions for addressing those needs. Publicity that resonates with national campaigns, awareness raising training and extensive contact with workplaces have all ensured that messages reach potential learners directly and through the services of intermediaries.

Getting the buzz going on the ground has been further enhanced by the deployment of 5 Leicestershire LSC funded widening participation development workers in the city, 12 basic skills development and delivery posts in the 2002 – 03 period, 7 development posts being available for 2003 – 04 and by ESF funded transition workers whose task has been to make progression links from community based learning.

In addition, the wider social inclusion agenda in the city has led to a number of initiatives with Basic Skills teaching embedded.

The Leicester City Skills for Life Partnership, therefore, benefits from an operational environment that actively promotes and supports a first class service for residents in the city.

This delivery plan seeks to ensure that those charged with providing learning opportunities do so in a structured fashion so that an increase in learning numbers, particularly in areas of greatest need, may be achieved by efficient and effective use of resources.



Literacy and Numeracy Statistics for Leicester City. (1997. Basic Skills Agency Survey)

## Our Vision

To support the improvement of Literacy, Numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in the City, particularly in the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) wards.

## Our Objectives:

To achieve this aim the Leicester City Skills for Life Partnership will:

1. Secure, by formal agreement, the commitment of colleges, learning providers and voluntary sector organisations based in Leicester, to work to establish a strategic approach to the planning and implementation of new provision.
2. Create and agree a strategic planning framework for new provision that will meet the needs, and promote the progression, of a wide range of new learners in target areas.
3. Commence the piloting of the strategic planning framework in order to monitor and review its effectiveness.
4. Support the implementation of the strategic planning framework by putting in place a structure to assure the quality of new provision.

## Basic Skills Delivery Plan 2003, for the Leicester City Skills for Life Group

Objective	Action	Timescale	Evidence
1. Secure, by formal agreement, the commitment of colleges, learning providers and voluntary sector organisations based in Leicester, to work to establish a strategic approach to the planning and implementation of new provision.	Development of formal agreement.	28th February 03	Agreement sent out to providers.
	Signing of agreement for City Partnership Organisations.	31st March 03	Signed City provider agreements.
	Voluntary Signing of Agreement by further providers within the City.	30th June 03	Signed agreements from further providers.
2. Create and agree a strategic planning framework for new provision that will meet the needs, and promote the progression, of a wide range of new learners in target areas.	Create a database including all Basic Skills and ESOL provision within the City.	30th June 03	Database in place.
	Produce reports to demonstrate local areas of provision.	31st July 03	Initial report of geographic distribution of Basic Skills.
	Agree a procedure for responding to requests for new provision including quality assurance procedures.	30th August 03	Written guidelines produced by the Partnership Group.
	Identify areas of need within the city and produce a plan to target development through the Partnership into these areas.	30th August 03	Second stage of draft strategic planning framework focussing on the development of delivery within NRF wards.
3. Commence the piloting of the strategic planning framework in order to monitor and review its effectiveness.	Focus the work of the basic skills development worker posts in the city to support the implementation of new provision in target areas.	September 03	Management plan and posts in place.
	Produce new and experimental partnership publicity campaigns to reach new learners.	September 03 to Nov 03	Publicity schedule and campaign commenced.
	Renew agreed strategies for implementing new provision.	January 04	Interim review and updated strategic planning framework.
4. Support the implementation of the strategic planning framework by putting in place a structure to assure the quality of new provision.	Develop strategy for monitoring the development of new provision.	December 03 to March 04	Strategy document.
	Report on the demographic distribution of Basic Skills delivery at intervals through the project to inform reviews of the delivery plan.	As outlined in the strategic delivery plan	Geographic reports.
	Final report and agreed strategic planning framework.	June 04	

## Conclusion

The Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership has a proven track record of bringing together providers and key stakeholders to develop more coherent learning pathways throughout Leicester City and County. Providers are increasingly recognising the benefit of a more collaborative approach to the delivery of Adult Learning. Basic Skills provision is a key priority for the Partnership and we are seeking to offer the maximum support for this critical area of the Adult Learning curriculum.

The Leicester City Skills for Life Partnership, as a sub group of the Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership, is committed to promote Skills for Life to the whole community of Leicester in an innovative, flexible and learner-centred manner. We aim to put in place supportive arrangements for the planning, development and evaluation of Skills for Life provision across Leicester. We will examine other opportunities for additional funding and submit collective bids where appropriate. We will ensure that resources are targeted at those sections of the community in greatest need.

We wish to challenge the traditional belief that education begins and ends at school. We need a generally well-skilled workforce to ensure the economic future of Leicester. We believe that with the right support and learning opportunities, people can start to take greater control of their lives.

“The Leicester City Skills for Life Partnership...

...is committed to promoting Skills for Life to the whole community of Leicester in an innovative, flexible and learner-centred manner”.

## Partnership Members

The initial partners are:

Christine Charles	Leicester College
David Joseph	Voluntary Action Leicester
Elaine Nixon	Regent College
Gretta Tharratt	Leicester City LEA
Jean Collington	Gateway College
Pauline Swanton	Leicester Adult Education College
Sue Grogan	Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership
Tim Ward	Leicester City LEA

If you wish to be involved in the Skills for Life Partnership and make a difference to the City of Leicester please contact:

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**Partnership Manager**

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