

Learning and Work

# England Case Study Collection

The Impact of Adult Learning



Scotland's Learning Partnership



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**The following case studies were collected this summer from Impact Forum members and speakers. They are chosen to illustrate the impact that adult learning, in various offerings, has on the three core themes of work, health and community - sometimes separately and sometimes cumulatively.**

**We know that these are a very small sample of the excellent work that goes on in England across all sectors of provision. We believe that more work needs to happen to pull together quantitative and qualitative data so that the full impact of adult learning can be understood and valued.**

**Our thanks to: Northern College; Ashley Community Housing; Rochdale Borough Council; Bromley By Bow Centre; Oxfordshire Learning Network Area Partnership, Sovereign Housing and Abingdon and Witney College.**



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## England Case Studies

### Case Study 1

#### CHANGE at Northern College for Residential Adult Education

In an attempt to combine reports from students, about the differences which learning made to their lives, with increasing demands from funders and policy-makers to demonstrate the impact and value of adult learning, Northern College worked to find ways to capturing such impact and wider benefits.

They spent 2012-13 discussing how to realise their ambition. Firstly, they set out to listen to students, finding out what was important to them and what they felt they had gained from going to college.

They looked at the model of impact developed by Donald Kirkpatrick and drew on Frank Coffield's, 'Communities of Discovery (2011)' outlining criteria to inform assessment of learning. They also thought about happiness and looked at the 10 Steps to Happiness GREAT DREAM approach.

By the end of the year they had developed a set of outcomes grouped under the acronym CHANGE:

**C**onfidence  
**H**ealth and Happiness  
**A**spiration  
**N**ew Thinking  
**G**etting Involved  
**E**mpowerment

These were fully embedded across the college. All schemes of work and lesson plans identified CHANGE outcomes detailed alongside substantive learning achievements. Student satisfaction surveys included measurement of CHANGE as a key element and staff development and quality measures supported effective integration. Posters are displayed so that students can assess their own progress.

The impact is measured through student satisfaction surveys: at the end of short courses; at key points in longer courses and by an annual telephone survey.

The results have been positive. For example, in September 2014, a telephone survey of 1014 students attending college in the first year of CHANGE, revealed:

- 72.9% of students said that they felt more self-confident at home, work or in everyday life as a result of completing their Northern College course;
- 75.5% said that their sense of health and well-being was improved;
- 82.2% that their study had helped them to set clear goals and ambitions;
- 84% said that they now think about things differently;
- 57.7% said that they now do more for others;
- 80.8% reported that they are able to study more independently or have been helped to develop skills to enable them to make changes in their life.



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### **Critical success factors:**

1. Take time to listen, think and discuss, involving students, staff and governors, to agree a process;
2. Identify what wider outcomes will be developed before attempting to measure their impact;
3. Embed the CHANGE outcomes within every course, in delivery and planning documentation, as well as being visible throughout the college;
4. Use staff development events and structured opportunities to share good practice with peers;
5. Monitor using observations of teaching and learning and scrutiny of schemes of work and lesson plans;
6. Use focus groups, surveys and stakeholder events to also assess impact.

## **Case Study 2**

### **Ashley Community Housing (ACH) and social and civic integration**

Ashley Community Housing (ACH) was established in 2008 as a social enterprise specialising in the economic, social and civic integration of refugees through accommodation and community based training support. They have successfully resettled over 2000 individuals from refugee backgrounds in this time. The #rethinkingrefugee programme is considered outstanding and reflects commitment to making sure refugees become part of society rather than remaining marginalised and under-employed.

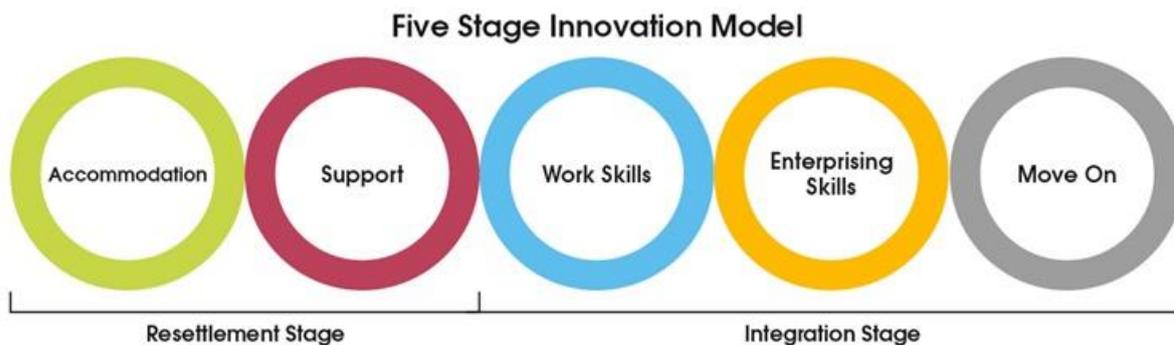
As a small, specialist Housing Association with just 425 rooms across 3 cities, they invest in adult learning because tenants “moving on” is key to the model.

The type of adult learning offered is important. For example, vocational ESOL courses enable learners to progress into work, more quickly.

The skills the workforce needs to work effectively in this way, revolve around cultural sensitivity, and having interpreters on hand for support and training provisions, including weekly job clubs. Many staff are former refugees themselves, and speak multiple languages between them.

### **What difference does this approach make?**

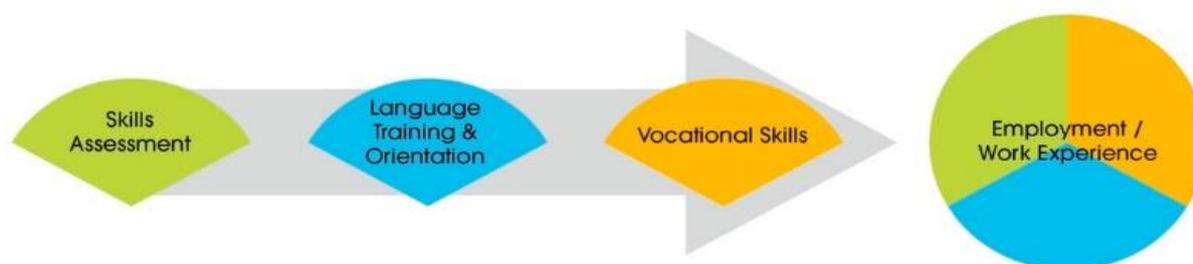
The resettlement and integration model is illustrated below.



The key principles of this are economic, civic and social integration.

### **Economic**

Early labour market integration is the best method for refugee integration, and this can be achieved through culturally sensitive support, training and sector focused employment skills, as illustrated below.



### **Civic**

Tenants contribute to the decision-making processes that affect their lives, through constant communication, giving them a voice and opportunities to improve themselves and their community; they are involved in co-designing services, thereby increasing engagement and effectiveness.

### **Social**

Accommodation is used as a basis to build strong links into communities, through a number of social activities, including day trips to Bath and Weston-super-Mare and group cycle rides. These improve mental health and reduce isolation.

### **Impact is assessed using several key measures:**

- Number of hours of 1:1 support worker appointments
- Number of successful move-ons (into housing elsewhere)
- Number of family reunions
- Number of tenants entering full-time work
- Number of tenants going onto further education
- % of tenants improving their mental health
- % of tenants improving their physical health

The CRM system captures this impact data. Reporting is also contractually required by the National Careers Service and Building Better Opportunities contracts.

## Case study 3

### Citizens' Curriculum Case Study: Rochdale

Rochdale has been using a Citizens' Curriculum approach, for three years, as part of its work integrating front line services in communities. Beginning with a pilot in the Kirkholt neighbourhood, this approach has proved successful across a range of measures and is now an important part of Rochdale's strategy for reforming public services, which is part of a Greater Manchester wide programme of public service reform.

Working with partners in the local council; Greater Manchester Police; Rochdale Boroughwide Housing; health colleagues in the Big Life Group; and a large team of public and voluntary sector partners; the Citizens' Curriculum is designed and delivered by a multi-agency team, bringing together community members with public services and educators. The programme of learning is delivered as part of a neighbourhood-based service, which is targeted at the people who have the highest levels of vulnerability to crisis and demand for reactive services. The programmes are currently delivered in three target neighbourhoods and link the provision of entry level and basic skills with wider learning and pathways into employment, particularly in growth areas.

The aim of this programme is to reduce vulnerability and high levels of costly demand for reactive services and displace that with learning, development and demand for proactive support services. The programme engages with people at points of high crisis and works through reducing the immediate risks to reaching a point where learning can take place. There is no eligibility restriction for the programme; it simply targets the households with the highest statistical demand for crisis services. Learning is a core feature, based on evidence that participation in learning reduces and, in some cases, removes the risk of further crisis occurring. People are able to engage with a keyworker, whom they come to trust and who has no agenda or target, other than to help people to prioritise and act on issues most important to them. This trust converts into engagement in learning and in a group, digital and blended setting, a curriculum offer is led by the learner. This offer includes English, maths, language, digital, financial, wellbeing and citizenship skills, along with support with employment and other important issues. The work is relevant to the person's life and ambition and applied in everyday life.

The whole programme is subject to a rigorous, validated cost benefit analysis, which returns a minimum of £3.68 of real savings for every £1 invested. The savings are realised through reduced demand for high-cost reactive services and the spend is invested in the provision of an integrated front line system that is designed to respond to needs, as they present, rather than one which delivers single services or issues. This offer has a Citizens' Curriculum at its core and the workforce (from across the public sector system) is trained and supported to identify as educators.

Positive outcomes have been identified across the whole public sector. We have been able to attribute:

- reduced crime and call-outs to police and emergency services
- increased employment
- Improved mental health and wellbeing
- reduced mental health crisis



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- reduced physical health crisis, including prevention of early death
- increased engagement with health services, including dental care
- secured and sustained housing tenancies
- reduced problem drug and alcohol use
- reduced anti-social behaviour
- reduced domestic abuse
- and, importantly, improved skill levels. In one area, by targeting provision at those least likely to participate in adult learning, the levels of engagement increased across the whole neighbourhood, from a participation rate that was well below the local average to one which is above
- in the first neighbourhood where the Citizens' Curriculum was first piloted, the demand for police services has steadily decreased over three years, and it is now 13% below the level expected for that area.

## Case study 4

### Integrated approaches: Bromley by Bow Centre

A well-developed approach to integrated services is provided by the Bromley By Bow Centre, a charity, where the focus is on offering services to vulnerable people, facing multiple challenges, based on 3 features of: accessibility; integrated services and long, slow journeys. The Centre adopts a theory of change model with 5 basic steps: making connections; initial support; developing skills and confidence; preparing for work and moving on. The programme of services are grouped under 6 headings: a) Community Connections, including language, digital inclusion, the arts and family learning; b) My Life, which focuses on health and incorporates social prescribing; day care, health and weight management and health advocacy; c) Advice including practical and financial needs of housing, rent, utilities and energy; d) Local People, Local Jobs: an employment service with a strong focus on young people with careers services; employability; job brokerage; women into work and enterprise; e) Capital Skills, upskilling the local community including health and social care; business administration; customer service; retail, leisure and hospitality services; f) Beyond Business which launches and nurtures new social enterprises.

The success of the centre's integrated service delivery model is recognised locally, across the UK and internationally.

## Case study 5

### Inspiring Minds – a Community Initiative

An initiative, inspired by a collaboration between the Oxfordshire Learning Network Area Partnership, Sovereign Housing and Abingdon and Witney College, aims to support sustainable change in an area of deprivation. The neighbourhood features high levels of employment in low-pay jobs; high proportions of single parent families and high numbers of adults with low or no qualifications.



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The response was to establish a learning offer featuring a participatory, co-designed, peer learning approach, which is 'owned' by the community. In the short term all provision was via courses and workshops already developed in other areas. Local residents were responsible for setting up the community learning hub and the hub volunteers both promote the courses on offer and identify future learning interest and demand. It was believed that local residents had the power to transform their own communities and work towards becoming a more socially and economically prosperous area.

Taster sessions were offered following community research and conversations with trusted professionals; it was felt that building trusted relationships was a key to success. Longer courses were developed including one called, 'Knowing Me', which offered an opportunity to address negative thought patterns, low self-esteem and build confidence. Participation in 'Knowing Me' led a group of six young mums to progress onto a Community Learning Champion course and the setting up of their own learning hub. They selected the name and designed the logo for their group; a butterfly was drawn by a local tattoo artist which represented their growth and transformation. Sovereign Housing and Abingdon and Witney College (via Sue and Justin) offered the group a draft constitution that was adapted to meet the aim and objectives of their specific community group.

The Inspiring Minds Learning Hub for South Abingdon was launched with the inaugural meeting being held on 31 January 2017. The management committee included a number of different agencies who could see benefits from increased community engagement, such as: local schools, the police, housing associations, the District council, other learning providers and local projects.

A programme of courses, promoted exclusively by Inspiring Minds, was launched with Abingdon and Witney College and included IT skills; Everyday First Aid; Cook and Share; Keeping up with your children; Maths and English and progression toward accredited maths and English. Sovereign Housing paid for room hire, printing costs and provided Inspiring Minds with a budget to continue to develop their project further. Abingdon and Witney College provided the tutors and course materials.

Challenges in setting up the Hub included:

- Getting the Learning Hub known in the local community
- Establishing trust with other agencies to 'take seriously' what local people have set up and offer
- Supporting volunteers to gain confidence and develop their skills
- Addressing childcare pressures

The project is still in the early days of development so it is not possible to measure the overall impact in the community at this stage. However, there is sufficient anecdotal evidence to identify the positive impact of increases in confidence and community involvement. Further impact studies will be undertaken.

The long-term aim is to establish a network of locally-run learning hubs which can share and learn from each other.

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