

# **Self Assessment Report (SAR) September 2015 – July 2016**

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## 1. Introduction

The Learning Partnership Bedfordshire and Luton (the Partnership) was established in 1999 and has built an infrastructure to engage with a wide range of partner organisations in order to:

- Promote provider collaboration in support of lifelong learning
- Maximise the contribution of learning to local regeneration
- Make a difference to the residents of local communities

Since the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer and of a new Chair in 2015 the Board of Trustees has developed a clear strategic direction for the organisation.

The Partnership continues to secure funding to develop, evolve and expand its delivery in order to meet the learning needs of the community, widen participation and progress individuals into work whilst ensuring quality of provision.

### **Organisational vision and purpose:**

*“We are passionate about lifelong learning. We believe that every person should have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.”*

### **Purpose statement:**

*“enrich the local community and make a positive difference to the lives of those wanting to learn and work, through partnership and collaboration.”*

### **Values:**

The Partnership operates in accordance with the highest standards in all relationships with partners, suppliers, learners and the local community.

We foster a climate which encourages innovation and diligence amongst staff and partners and rewards accordingly.

## In scope provision: September 2015 – August 2016

### **Community Learning Funding (CLF)**

The Partnership is a stakeholder within the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Learning Trust (CLT) which comprises those organisations in receipt of funding from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to deliver adult learning provision. As part of the work of the CLT a ‘Bedfordshire and Luton Community Learning Fund’ was developed.

The Partnership, in conjunction with Luton Adult Learning, allocates a proportion of their SFA funding towards managing the fund and subcontracting with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to deliver a range of community learning projects (up to £12,000 each) in the most deprived areas and working with hard to reach individuals.

An annual prospectus is produced inviting eligible organisations to apply for funding. After a process of marking, against a clear framework, successful applications are selected and invited to subcontract. Procurement of partner organisations is planned to meet the needs of a wide range of adults, from the most disadvantaged groups, to widen participation and address social inclusion.

In 15/16 the Partnership subcontracted with 7 organisations to manage and support them in delivering Community Learning projects. In addition the Partnership also undertook direct delivery of learning for the first time as part of the CLF.

In total the provision engaged 235 unique learners’ across 286 course enrolments.

## Breakdown of all 15/16 CLF provision:

Subcontractor	Project Title and brief	learners enrolled	learners achieved
Amicus Trust Ltd	"My Tenancy Matters": 12 hr courses delivering an accredited level 1 unit in 'maintaining a tenancy'. The course developed life skills, self-confidence and resilience of vulnerably housed people living, enhancing their skills for independent living and developing a habit of learning for the future.	36	31
Bengali Womens Project (BWP)	"First steps to learning": 2 courses (stage 1 and 2, 45 and 30 hours respectively) non accredited ESOL and Citizenship provision for BME women in Luton.	37	36.5
Community Works 4U CIC (CW4U)	"Scrapbook of memories": non accredited art based courses for those isolated, with learning difficulties or life limiting conditions. 2 courses: 1 x 20wk (50) and 1 x 4wk (18 hr).	22	18
Disability Resource Centre (DRC)	"The way ahead – steppingstones": Non accredited series of self-development courses allowing learners to progress from one to the next. Each course 18 glh and for learners with disabilities, health conditions or carers.	58	45
Family Groups Bedford	"Health and Social Care Level 1": Gateway accredited course, delivered to women in Bedford suffering from a range of disadvantage, to improve their employment prospects.	18	14
Home Counties Community Media (HCCM)	"Community News": delivered a non-accredited 36hr course plus 5 x 3hr workshops in basic journalism and media skills, creating an 'in the community' newspaper for Dunstable.	27	27
Youth Inspired CIC	"Steps towards...Healthy living and Cookery": Delivered 2 x accredited courses, 70glh each, one in Healthy, one in Cookery, to learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.	15	14
The Learning Partnership	"IT for work, rest and play": 10 courses (18glh each) of blended teaching and learning (online and tutor led) with learners achieving a number of Learn my way badges and a C&G online basics E3.	73	65

## The process of self assessment

This report has been compiled by the Community Learning Fund Project Coordinator in conjunction with the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and a member of the Board.

The report is structured to follow the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework (CIF) 2015 and its scope is exclusive to the provision described above.

The SAR is produced annually, following the end of the academic year. When compiling the report data, information and feedback from Learning Partnership staff, CLF subcontracted delivery providers and learners, collected throughout the year, is incorporated and used to form judgements against the performance criteria within the CIF.

To further help the process the Partnership has engaged with a local FE provider to act as a critical friend and moderate the grading and judgements made within the report.

The final report is planned for completion by the end of October following the end of the academic year and is signed off by the Board of Trustees prior to dissemination.

Once the SAR is agreed the annual Quality Improvement Plan is written and progress against its actions will be monitored, recorded and evaluated by the Learning Partnership Quality Team on a monthly basis.

## Ofsted Report 2012

The last Ofsted inspection graded the overall effectiveness of provision as good.

Findings concluded that Leadership and Management is excellent; staff work hard to ensure that learning programmes on offer are of high quality and learners successfully achieve their goals. The service is well managed and excellent support is provided to subcontractors.

Quality of teaching and learning was graded good. Learning sessions are well planned; meet the needs of individual learners well and provide them with support to enable them to achieve their goals.

Learner Outcomes were good. Success and achievement rates for learners were high and the majority of learners achieve their course, career and personal aims. Learners enjoy their learning and feel safe.

Ofsted recommended the strategies used for recording learners' progression post programme could be improved further by ensuring that planned formal information and guidance sessions take place for all learners and the outcomes are accurately recorded.

The Partnership have since aligned the delivery of NCS CIAG to all CLF provision with careful planning to meet the specific needs of learner groups. The introduction of learner focus groups and feedback mechanisms are improving the capture of learner progression.

## 2. Summary of grades

		Grade
Overall effectiveness	This report	2
	Previous inspection Jan 2012	2
Effectiveness in leadership and management		2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		2
Outcomes for learners		2

## 3. Overall effectiveness

**Grade 2**

The Partnership continues to use community learning funding to develop a successful range of provision that meets the learning needs of the community, widens participation for the most disadvantaged and those least likely to participate, drives ongoing quality improvement and the capacity building of local voluntary and community sector learning providers. This is demonstrated by:

**Excellent engagement of a diverse range of learners** through the careful selection of voluntary and community sector providers to deliver community based learning provision. Subcontractors have areas of specialism, and in-depth knowledge of their communities, which enables well planned provision that meets the specific needs of a diverse group of learners, widens participation and addresses social inclusion.

**Equality of opportunity and embracing diversity** promoted effectively across provision. Data confirms engagement with a range of diverse groups and provides appropriate provision that allows equality of opportunity and an environment that removes barriers enabling all learners the opportunity to succeed and recognise their potential.

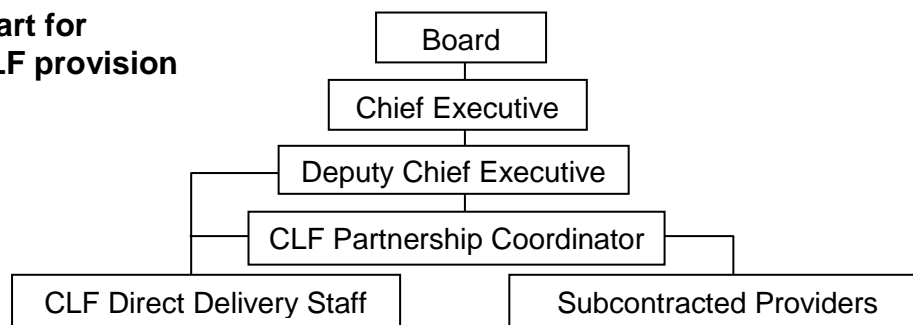
**The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is very good** with some examples of outstanding practice. This is endorsed through a robust Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) process, learner feedback and outcomes achieved by learners. Tutors provide appropriate support, that meets learner needs, balanced with levels of stretch and challenge that enables them to achieve their learning goals whilst supporting their wider personal and social development.

**The majority of learners complete their programme with consistently very good or excellent attendance.** Learners develop wider skills and knowledge relevant to their future plans and move on to further training, education, employment, or develop the confidence to become more independent in their lives and/or active within their communities. Provision in 15-16: promoted citizenship; created 2 volunteer support groups set up and run by learners; produced a community newspaper that has continued on a voluntary basis beyond the life of the project; produced 2 project films with active participation from learners.

**Safeguarding arrangements are effective.** Learners are safe, feel safe and know how to report concerns. Learners demonstrate excellent behaviours and show high levels of respect for staff and peers.

**A cycle of continuous quality improvement** that seeks excellence in all aspects of performance. The Quality Team have established a process for continuous review of the quality improvement plan, the results of which are ensuring a consistent approach to addressing weaknesses and assuring that all quality measures in place are effective in driving the overall quality of the service.

### Organisational Chart for Management of CLF provision



### Key strengths

- Excellent working practices in place with subcontracted organisations
- Very good leadership and management of the organisation providing staff with a supportive and effective environment in which to work and develop

**The Partnership develops excellent working relationships with subcontractors**, and with other Community Learning stakeholders through the CLT, in order to ensure that provision is of the highest quality and that all learners have the opportunity to achieve positive outcomes.

**Leaders work effectively with subcontractors to set contract performance targets** that deliver and achieve success. Targets are clearly communicated at the beginning of contracts and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

**Performance management of staff and subcontractors is very effective.** Partnership staff are highly trained and qualified with a wealth of expertise in supporting and managing subcontractors and in the delivery of learning and support to individual. A robust performance and review process ensures development needs are met as far as possible.

Subcontractors support their own staff to develop and teaching is consistently strong across provision. When available subcontractors are signposted to capacity building support and training opportunities and are encouraged to implement standards that go beyond compliance with contractual requirements and help deliver sustainability.

Performance management is an ongoing process underpinned by robust systems and reporting that ensures the quality of provision. As part of the process the Quality Team review performance to identify good practice and ensure that areas of weakness are addressed, including review of learner progression information.

**Self assessment provides a good understanding of the Partnership's effectiveness**, informing the quality improvement cycle and driving the organisation towards achieving excellence in its quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for learners. Managers evaluate the quality of the provision through a robust evaluation process that takes into account the views of subcontractors and learners.

The Partnership makes continuous improvements, planned and monitored for effectiveness and impact by the quality team. Quality improvement measures implemented since 14-15 have seen achievement, retention and success rates all improved: Outcomes for learners and their post course progression is more closely monitored; the learner journey is better recorded by subcontractors; Learner interaction has increased through focus groups and the refinement of the OTLA process.

**The range and content of provision aligns effectively to regional and local priorities and responds to the needs of communities** as identified by the Voluntary and Community Sector. Leaders have strong links with SEMLEP and are represented on the VCS sub group, in addition to representing the VCS on several local authority strategic boards. The local



economic and social contexts are understood and priorities reflected into the design of learning programmes. CLF is reviewed annually for continued relevance and updated as necessary.

**Equality of opportunity and embracing diversity** is actively promoted by leaders. There is a zero tolerance approach to any form of bullying or discrimination, direct or indirect, embedded within the culture of the organisation with high expectations cascaded through to staff and subcontractors. Effective policies and procedures underpin organisational practice where all staff understand their rights and responsibilities.

Ensuring that all learners can participate in learning and fulfil their potential, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is at the heart of the CLF. Continued monitoring and review of project delivery is effective at ensuring that no group of learners are disadvantaged. Learner feedback and data confirms that all learners can progress and achieve regardless of their background or barriers.

There have been no reported incidents or complaints from learners or subcontractors specifically relating to equality, diversity or bullying, with OTLA's and focus groups evidencing a positive learning environment. British values are discussed with learners and are promoted through teaching and learning. Providers are supported to embed British values through group exercises at steering group meetings and are also provided with a poster to display in the learning environment.

**Safeguarding arrangements are very effective.** Safeguarding and health and safety policies, procedures and monitoring are in place with regular review. Enhanced DBS checks are in place where required. Staff hold up to date Safeguarding and WRAP training certificates appropriate for their roles. Subcontractors have robust policies and procedures in place that support and promote the safeguarding of learners.

The Induction process ensures learners are informed about arrangements and the responsibilities for safeguarding, including health and safety. Learner focus groups and feedback confirm that learners feel safe, know how to report concerns and are confident that concerns would be taken seriously. Learners feel respected and there is no evidence of bullying or harassment. 95% of learners completing feedback (217) said that the information given to them about safe working in the classroom was good or excellent.

## Areas for improvement

- Continue to develop and refine training, monitoring and support in the area of **embedding of British values** to ensure staff are equipped with skills and knowledge and to recognise and record the impact of this on teaching and learning.
- **Greater emphasis on the provision of English and maths** to improve learners levels of skills in these subjects compare to their starting points
- **Continue to improve how the progression** and destination information of learners is captured in order to refine provision to achieve the best possible outcomes.



**Key strengths**

- Excellent systems are in place to ensure quality of teaching, learning and assessment is appropriate and continually striving for best practice.
- Elements of outstanding practice in the delivery of teaching and learning
- Support for learners and understanding of their needs is very high, enabling them to develop and progress well.

**A majority of learners enjoy their learning (91%).** Teaching and assessment methods support learners to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills – 98% of learners learned new skills, making good progress relative to their starting point. Learners affirm positive teaching that make them feel ‘inspired’.

**Staff demonstrate excellent understanding of the often complex needs** and challenges of learners. Subcontractors are experts in their field and plan and design provision carefully to address such needs right from the tendering stage. Learners have a diverse range of needs and the use of providers with which they are familiar further increases their chances of success. Learners confirm that they receive support to help them progress whilst on programme (96%).

Additional support measures are tailored for groups and individuals to minimise learner withdrawals, negative effects on attendance and punctuality, and to maximise progress and achievement. Examples of care and support provided include: onsite crèche facilities, one to one support to reduce learner anxiety and increase confidence, bilingual learning support, adaptations to the classroom environment, provision of quiet rooms, regular breaks and financial support for travel expenses.

**Appropriate and effective initial assessment** establishes learner starting points and identifies support needed to enable them to achieve as well as they can. Tutors apply their experience and are skilful in identifying appropriately challenging goals that remain attainable, keep learners motivated and allow them to develop: *“Gillian is an excellent tutor, brilliant with people and energises the group.” “Gill is inspiring” [Learners, DRC].*

OTLA’s and learner feedback confirm that sessions are well planned and meet both the individual and group needs of learners with appropriate differentiation that enables all learners the opportunity to develop their skills and understanding.

*“The course tutor was keen to adapt the lessons to individual needs and showed excellent support and encouragement for all the learners.” [Learner, HCCM]*

*“I can take pictures of the board as that helps me learn, matches my learning style and helps me build evidence for my portfolio.” [Learner, Family Groups]*

*Tutor aware of people’s circumstances through one to one and reviews and adjusts teaching styles. [Family Groups, focus group]*

*Tutors take individual needs into consideration [Youth Inspired]*

**Tutors apply high standards to their teaching and learning practice.** Staff are appropriately qualified with expertise in their fields and with working with the most disadvantaged learner groups. Standards are assured through a robust Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) procedure. During sessions effective planning, differentiation and good checking of learning is evident. Tutors demonstrate high levels of subject knowledge, effective classroom management and teaching that challenges, motivates and inspires learners.

**Individual learning plans are used effectively** by learners and tutors to regularly capture and review progress towards learning goals. Learner focus groups and OTLA’s confirm that

learners receive feedback on their progress and ongoing achievement and what they can do to improve their knowledge and skills. Tutors give learners confidence to participate and tackle activities. *“Everyone has different objectives to take away and progress for the next session.”* [DRC focus group]

The wide range of diverse course provision and learner groups is reflected through the variety of approaches to assessment which are appropriate to the course learning objectives.

**Equality of opportunity** is actively promoted by tutors and planned into teaching to ensure that the materials, teaching methods, learning resources and accommodation allow all learners to participate fully to fulfil their potential. Learner feedback and data confirms that all learners can progress and achieve regardless of their background or barriers. Tutors raise awareness of equality and diversity from induction stage. 94% of learners confirm the information provided about equality and diversity was good or excellent.

**English, maths, ICT and employability skills** are directly addressed by some CLF provision. The Bengali Women’s Project provided English language training to BME women who would not access mainstream education. ‘IT for work, rest and play’ delivered entry level online basics training. For all programmes tutors embed the required elements into learning programmes so that course objectives can be achieved. Learners requiring specific maths, English, ICT or ESOL training are referred to other appropriate provision.

### **Areas for improvement**

- **Improve the process for capturing how English, maths, ICT and employability skills are embedded** into provision and how this impacts on learners development in these areas.

## Key strengths

- Personal development of learners through provision specifically designed to deliver broader skills and produce wider outcomes.
- High levels of respect that are demonstrated by learners to both their peers and staff.

**Learners across all provision value their opportunity to learn and are motivated** to develop and achieve. Learners show pride in their achievements and enjoy celebrating their success. Attitudes to learning are excellent, demonstrated through very high achievement and attendance rates. There are few instances of punctuality problems.

**High levels of personal development are demonstrated.** A majority of provision is focused on the development of learner's broader skills and projects are designed to meet specific needs including personal, social and employability skills. Learners have increased self-confidence and belief in their abilities: 87% of learners report feeling more confident in their ability to learn after completing their course; 75% have improved confidence through their achievement; 63% have achieved more than they thought they could; 49% feel empowered to take on more challenges generally;

*"The course has made me more confident in myself and being around other people. It has made me feel like I can take part in more activities and learning experiences."*

[Learner, Youth Inspired]

**Some subcontractors identified healthy living** and cookery as a need for their learner groups and delivered provision specifically to improve skills and knowledge in this area. Other provision delivered self-development and skills to help learners in aspects of the lives affecting their mental wellbeing. As a result 27% of learners reported improved physical health, 66% reported feeling less stressed/improved mental wellbeing and 29% reported that they needed less help from other agencies – demonstrating an increased confidence and independence.

*"The course has given me new ideas on healthy foods and to live a healthier lifestyle. I am more aware of different foods and reading labels"* [Learner, Youth Inspired]

*"The course reminded me that your mind state is a big part of helping you move on in life. The clearer or more settled your mind is the better you will be and feel, including your actions"* [Learner, Amicus Trust]

**Learners develop employability skills where it is appropriate** to their personal circumstances. Some accredited provision develops skills specifically designed to increase the employment prospects of learners. Across all provision 44% of learners feel more motivated to seek work at the end of their programme.

**High quality information, advice and guidance** provided on post course progression helps learners to make informed decisions about appropriate training, education, employment and volunteering options available to them post course. 92% of learners rated the information and advice received about their next steps as good or excellent - an increase of 15% from 14-15.

Learners on a level 1 Health and Social care course report:

*“It has made me more confident, given me more knowledge of different topics. The updating of my CV in particular has allowed me to get a temporary Christmas job which is my first job in 12 years”.*

*“This course has given me the confidence and vision to move closer to my goal of becoming a carer for vulnerable adults. I am a lot happier now I have a vision and a plan for my future”*

**Learners confirm they feel safe**, that they know how to report concerns and are confident that concerns would be taken seriously. Learners feel respected. There is no evidence of bullying or harassment. 95% of learners completing feedback (216) said that the information given to them about safe working in the classroom was good or excellent.

The induction process ensures learners are informed about arrangements, and of their own responsibilities, for safeguarding, including health and safety, keeping others safe and how to report concerns.

Learners using technology as part of their programme demonstrate understanding of how to stay safe online: *“excellent reinforcement of safe working practices with Martin confirming and promoting internet safety.”* [session OTLA, HCCM].

**Provision allows learners to explore personal, social and ethical issues**, and to take part in life in wider society and in Britain, in a variety of ways commensurate to its main aims: BWP learners joined the library and were encouraged to use their democratic right to vote; HCCM developed a community newspaper that gave learners opportunity to become more involved in their community by interviewing locals and reporting on social issues; DRC delivered personal development involving exploring and addressing personal issues.

**The vast majority of learners demonstrate high levels of respect** within the classroom for both peers and tutors, creating an environment with appropriate behaviours and conduct, observed and reported by both learners and staff. Diversity, and respect for the views and opinions of others, is actively promoted by staff and its effect is evident in behaviours. Many groups work together to set and agree class ground rules to follow throughout the course. Induction underpins behavioural expectations and sessions flow smoothly as a result. 93% of learners stated the effectiveness of information given about their rights and responsibilities as at least good. Peer support levels are high within a majority of learning groups. *“each week we have goals and other learners help us with them”* [Youth Inspired focus group]. OTLA’s consistently recognise good levels of peer support and collaboration within the classroom. Learners bond and form friendships - 67% report making new friends.

Reported during a focus group with Amicus Learners: *“Had a big debate about this [diversity] at our first session, we recognise we all have our own views but we should respect each other’s views. We had ground rules set at the beginning which we all agreed to and signed up to.”*

## **Areas for improvement**

- **Better capture of the embedding of English and maths** (see Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment).
- **Enhance the range of evidence collected**, relating to personal development and welfare, from the learning environment during both monitoring and OTLAs by introducing unannounced walk through visits and taking relevant photographs.
- **Increase awareness with subcontractors about how learners are staying safe online**

### Key strengths

- A large majority of learners make good progress relative to their starting points during their course/programme.
- All groups of learners are supported with their specific needs ensuring there are no significant differences in attainment or progress. Subcontracted providers have expertise in their field which results in tailored provision and high achievement rates for all learner groups engaged.

**Outcomes for learners are very good.** A large majority of learners achieve their learning and personal goals, make progress relative to their starting points, achieve a minimum of 75% attendance and enjoy their learning (91%). In 15-16 CLF achieved:

- 99% achievement
- 88% retention
- 87% success

Success is good on both non-accredited (88%) and accredited provision (86%).

49% of successfully completing learners achieved accredited unit(s) – over and above the expectations of community learning. Of these learners 25% declared they had no qualifications prior to starting the course.

Achievement, retention and success rates have all increased from 14-15.

### **12% of completing learners gained their first ever accredited certificate:**

58 achieving learners declared on enrolment that they had no qualifications. 30 of these learners achieved an accredited certificate as part of their learning – 57% at Entry level 3 and 43% at level 1.

Tutors report that 98% of learners make progress relative to their starting points. Tutor feedback on ILP's supports this.

98% of learners report they have learned new skills while 91% of learners rated how well they were able to develop their skills as good or excellent.

*“this course has reinforced previous learning and has added things to my toolbox for the future.”* [DRC Learner]

**There is excellent engagement with disadvantaged groups all of whom make good progress and achieve well relative to their starting points.** Provision recruits learners from some of the most socially deprived backgrounds with a diverse range of needs: 73% living in the top 50% of deprived areas in the country (IMD 2015); 45% from BME communities; 80% unemployed; 50% with a learning difficulty or disability or health condition (LDD).

Data shows no significant difference in achievement between groups of learners.

**Learners gain skills and knowledge that enable them to move into relevant progression for their personal circumstance. Learners are prepared of the next stage of their journey.** A large majority of learners make steps towards their longer term plans and aspirations. Learners have differing starting points and provision is carefully planned to prepare them for the next stage of their education, training, employment or life.

Capturing of learner progression data post course continues to develop and improve. 15-16 data shows that out of those learners completing programmes longer than 3 hours:

- 28 (12%) progressed onto further learning within their learning programme
- 78 (34%) progressed or intended to progress onto further learning
- 38 (16%) progressed or intended to progress into full time employment
- 12 (5%) progressed or intended to progress into part time employment
- 12 (5%) progressed or intended to progress into voluntary work

- 2 (1%) progressed into HE – starting university courses in September 2016
- 4 (2%) progressed or intended to progress into self employment
- 24 (10%) were economically inactive, not seeking work (inc retired)
- 15 (7%) progressed in ‘other’ ways
- 25 (11%) were unknown

A minority of learners in employment report that their learning is relevant to the workplace:

Learner case studies demonstrate distance travelled both during and post course. The impact of funding is showcased in an annual CLF evaluation report and celebration event which commends the outstanding achievements of learners and subcontractors.

As a result of her learning programme one learner stated: *“after taking on the Chiltern fibromyalgia support group I feel a lot more confident in myself addressing the group and all the paperwork and listening skills needed.”* [Learner, DRC]

*“I would love to do more courses. I am very excited about the IT skills that I learned and looking forwards to added on my CV and applied it in my new job. I would like to do a Master Degree in Social Worker programme so more I learn from these courses, better for my confidence in the future job.”* [Learner, IT LP]

*“I enjoyed this course and I found problem solving interesting and my boss was impressed about what I have done and it will help me at work.”* [Learner, DRC]

## Areas for improvement

- **Learner progression data** – Steps continue to be taken to improve the capture of learner progression post course. Measures for capturing accurate progression information at the end of courses and beyond continue to be reviewed and revised in striving for consistent and accurate reporting.
- **Reasons for withdrawals** to be better recorded so any patterns or concerns can be identified