

**East Sussex  
Personal and Community Development  
Learning Review**

**Research Findings from Third Sector Study**

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# PCDL Review - Research Findings from Third Sector Study

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## INTRODUCTION

The East Sussex 'Adult Skills and Learning Partnership Board' is reviewing how local people engage with learning in the widest sense, and particularly 'Personal and Community Development Learning'<sup>1</sup>. The Board recognises the need to engage learners and potential learners who presently are not engaged and is investigating how to improve engagement.

This report explores the experience, expertise and views of 23 organisations that provide learning or learning related services. This report:

- Identifies barriers to personal and community development learning
- makes recommendations from the third sector about overcoming these identified barriers
- provides ideas for promoting progression to other forms of learning

Furthermore the research was focused on three social groups that experience particular, broad social disadvantages namely:

- Disability: people with physical and sensory impairments, learning disabilities or mental health problems (D)
- Carers: people caring for adults or children with disabilities plus parents and carers of younger children (C)
- Older people (O)

### East Sussex Population data – whole population and target groups

Population in total	<b>506,200<sup>2</sup></b>
Older people (people of pensionable age)	<b>187,481</b> <b>27% of total population</b> and higher than national average
Carers	<b>54,821</b> <b>10.83% of total population</b> and higher than national average
Disabled people (people with a limiting long-term illness or disability)	<b>101,240</b> <b>20% of the overall population</b> and higher than the national average

Note: It is significant that the relative and actual sizes of each of these groups are all on the increase largely due to an ageing population. In addition the proportion of people of working age with a disability increased by 90% between the 1991 and 2001 census.

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<sup>1</sup> The LSC (Learning and Skills Council) definition of PCDL (Personal and Community Development Learning) is: "Learning for personal development, cultural enrichment, intellectual or creative stimulation, and enjoyment. It is also learning developed with local residents and others to build the skills, knowledge and understanding for social and community action. There is no requirement that learners must necessarily progress to other learning or achieve accreditation."

<sup>2</sup> National Statistics population estimates 2006

## POLICY CONTEXT

The further education sector has been expanding in recent years particularly due to increases in the numbers of young people staying on after school and the broadening of courses for adults in areas such as access courses, skills for life (literacy, numeracy and ICT) and work-based learning.

### Learning Targets:

Nationally and locally the adult skills and further education agenda is focussed on improving adult skills in areas such as:

- Literacy and numeracy - increasing the proportion of the adult population that has functional literacy and numeracy
- Higher level skills - increasing the extent to which adults are qualified to at least Level 2
- Widening learning - extending the availability of learning to develop opportunities for: learning for personal development, cultural enrichment, intellectual and creative stimulation and learning for well-being as well as learning for skills, qualifications and jobs

The Leitch review of learning and skills also identified the need to reach different people in different ways :

"we need to reform and increase the ways in which people can take the first steps towards learning"

The Leitch review of skills recommended particularly stretching and ambitious targets for increased learning, skills and achievement. By extension, increased targets in adult learning acquisition at level 2 and above will, necessarily, require increases in achievement of foundation and first steps learning. Also measures to tackle the disadvantages and barriers faced by groups who are less included in learning will be required.

### Adult Skills and Learning Strategy for East Sussex:

In East Sussex a partnership group that involves the leaders of training, learning and further education have devised a Strategy in order to improve learning participation, reach and achievement in the county. The Adult Skills and Partnership Board have identified three Strategic Priorities. These are shown below with some of the objectives listed (not all) that are especially relevant to the third sector and its role and contribution.

#### Strategic priority 1 - *Recognise, support and celebrate the value of learning*

Recognise and support learning for wellbeing; work in partnership to support those who want to learn for enjoyment; and celebrate learning.

#### Strategic Priority 2 - *Ensure that business and community need is identified and met*

Some of the objectives include:

Increase the proportion of learners from vulnerable groups engaged in PCDL; address skills deficits by focusing particularly on those with lower skills levels; ensure high quality information advice and guidance services are available to providers especially in areas of disadvantage

#### Strategic priority 3 - **Provide leadership and ensure that the infrastructure and intelligence to support the delivery of the strategy**

Some of the objectives include:

Ensure all strategic partners champion the learning and skills agenda and act as exemplars; improve intelligence, data sharing and a common understanding of learning and skills need

## Different kinds of learning and motives for engaging in learning

People come to an interest in learning with many different motives and reasons. Learning takes place in many different contexts and environments.

Motivations for committing to learning including the following categories<sup>3</sup>:

- *Intellectual progression* - learning for learning's sake acquiring knowledge and understanding
- *Technical progression* - cumulative acquisition of skills
- *Personal progression* - changes in expectations, attitudes of lifestyle
- *Social progression* - improved communications and social interactions with others
- *Economic progression* - acquisition of a job, better job, career change or self employment
- *Civic progression* - volunteering or active membership of local, civic, community and voluntary groups and activities
- *Group or collective progression* - group, organisational or team acquisition of collective and collaborative goals

These different motivations for learning suggest also that the contexts of learning are variable. Learning can take place in colleges and classes, at work, in self-help groups, in community/voluntary/sports/arts organisations and groups, day centres, at home, in families and, most of all, in the daily lives of people.

Observing the variety of reasons why people engage with learning is very relevant to identify the barriers and solutions to reaching disadvantaged groups. This is because a) many will be driven by a mixture of motives often with social interaction, personal development and belonging to something being more important b) making personal changes, dealing with confidence issues, building some basic learning skills and tackling barriers to participation are pre-requisites to participating in any formal learning.

## A picture of the third sector in the UK and East Sussex

The Third sector has some unique characteristics that contributes to the learning and skills agenda. These include:

- It has a considerable workforce of unpaid volunteers – equivalent to 1.1 million full time workers<sup>4</sup>
- The sector's paid workforce is 608,000 or about 2.2% of the workforce
- Volunteering and taking part in the services and activities that the sector runs provides foundation work skills that people deploy in the wider economy as well as providing support to accessing and maintaining employment
- 6 out of 10 volunteers say that volunteering gives them the opportunity to learn new skills<sup>5</sup> – this does not include people who learn skills as clients, participants and services users of third sector services
- The sector reaches particularly disadvantaged, socially excluded or poor people and communities

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<sup>3</sup> McGiverney, V, 'Adult Learning Pathways - Through Routes or Cul-de-sacs' NIACE and Department for Education and Skills 2003

<sup>4</sup> Data drawn from the NCVO Voluntary Sector Almanac 2006

<sup>5</sup> Voluntary Sector National training organisation's sector skills strategy 2004)

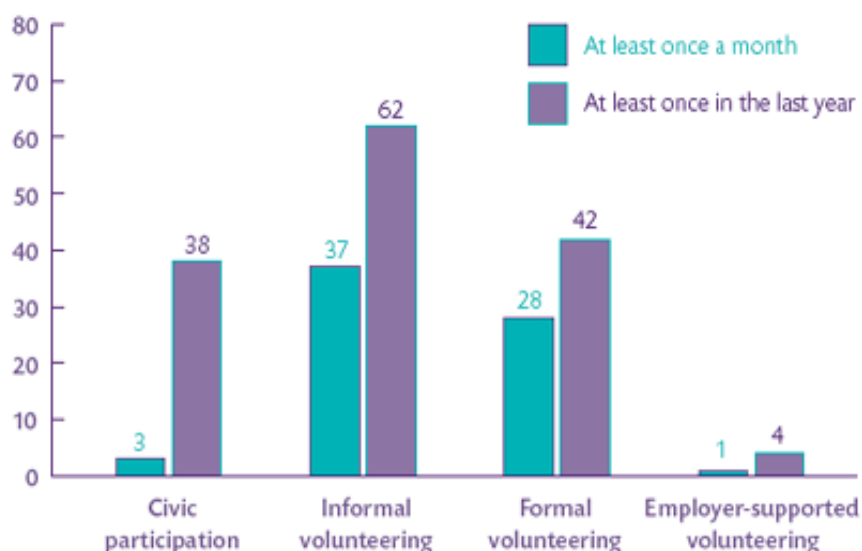
### Third sector vital statistics

	East Sussex	UK
Volunteering regularly* (formally at least once a month)	97,000 estimate at 28% of adult population	28% of adult population
Paid workforce	5000	608.000
Number of voluntary and community organisations (only those who are members of CVS's)	1200+	
Income	£217 million	£26 billion
Income earned from non-statutory sources	£134 million i.e. 62% of total	£16.1 billion i.e. 62% of total

\*from Home Office Active citizenship Survey 2003

### Third Sector Volunteering statistics – percentage of UK population who volunteer

The graph below shows that just over a quarter of the population – 28% is involved with some kind of regular volunteering at least once a month of a formal basis (that is 'giving unpaid help through groups, clubs and organisations'). A larger proportion of the population - 37% - is providing informal volunteering that is 'giving unpaid help in general not including family'.



# METHODOLOGY

The research project explored the questions about barriers to learning and solution through:

- Interviews with 23 organisations. The form used is in appendices (pilots were carried out with 2 of these 23). Stratified sample drawn from initial approaches to 50 organisations.
- Stratifying the sample in order that organisations covered the three priority groups as well as a geographical spread across the county. Organisations were also selected on the basis that they either provided learning (which they do in most cases) or that they had particular access to and involvement with priority groups.
- Interviewees’ responses were analysed and categorised under headings that were drawn up after interview data was gathered
- Throughout this report comments from the three priority groups will be referred to with the key:  
 Carers: present and former carers (C)  
 Disability: people with disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health problems (D)  
 Older People (O)

# TARGETED ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THIS REVIEW

ADHD Adult & Adolescent Support Network	Home Start South Downs
Age Concern Pevensey	Home Start Hastings & Rother
ARRCC (Activity Respite & Rehabilitation Care Centre)	Horizons
British Dyslexia Association	Older People's Engagement Manager
Care for the Carers	Peacehaven Childrens' Centre
Chalk Farm Centre	ReMEember
Circles Network	Rethink
Community Wise	Rother Seniors Forum
Crossroads Care	Rotherfield St Martin's
Eastbourne Seniors Club	University of the Third Age
Furniture Now!	Wealden Senior Citizens Partnership
	Workability East Sussex

## BARRIERS TO LEARNING PARTICIPATION

Respondents were asked to describe what kinds of barriers their communities experienced that limited or prevented participation in learning. In no particular order these are the issues that they raised. The key letter after each comment refers to the category of group from where the response came. This does not mean that the comment or issue is particular to this group or groups only.

### TRAVEL

Travel fares (D)

Distance to travel to the venue (D,C,O)

Poor rural public transport especially in North East of the County (D,C,O)

Some people have difficulties that prevent them from using public transport (D,O)

Access to appropriate transport for client's needs and affordability (O)

Clients are unable to drive and can't afford taxis (D,C,O)

### COSTS/FUNDING

No fee remission making courses unaffordable to learners who's health fluctuates and who may not be able to start or complete a course (D)

Respite costs; where respite is available there is a waiting list (C)

Child care costs, especially under 3s where there is no nursery voucher support (C)

Care costs for adult dependent (O,C)

Price increases have made courses entirely in-accessible for pensioners – around £2 for a session is probably the higher threshold of affordability (O)

Funding for courses is too restricted – e.g. completing a level 2 course prevents funding for the same learner to complete lower level courses (D,C,O)

Funding is also over-restricted by time constraint and mode of learning preventing the learner from completing in a time-scale appropriate to their needs (D,C,O)

Learners have multiple starting points and multiple pathways through learning rather than simply one upward ladder. Funding of courses does not account for this and acts to limit access and progression (D,C)

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE NEEDS

Prescribed medication can change which causes adverse effects for the client and can affect their ability to function (D)

Effects of medication can prevent participation (D)

Changes in state of health can stop a person from starting a course when they planned to or for them to drop out early (D)

Problem of fluctuating mental health makes continuation and completion of courses difficult (D)

Acute anxiety, depression, fear of failure or success, and social phobias (D)

Poor concentration and memory recall (D)

Learned lethargy and not being stretched (D)

Risk averse parents and carers who think their dependents can't participate in certain activities (D)

Some parents and carers view their dependent as vulnerable and prevent them from participating in certain activities to keep them safe when the dependent is able to safely participate. (D,C)

Inability to understand body language, facial signals and social inter-change amongst young people and adults with ADHD and related social disorders (D,C)



## TIMING

Evening classes difficult to access (O, C)

## VENUES

College environment inappropriate, intimidating or rejected by clients/users in favour of localised, more group or age appropriate venues (D,C,O)

## COURSE/LEARNING DESIGN

Usually pace of mainstream courses is too much and too fast (D)

Length of learning day or length of activity session can be too much for some people who are in rehabilitation or recovery (D)

Longer courses are difficult to commit to and can result in more people discontinuing (D)

Time to learn is an immense barrier – e.g. 6 month restrictions on New Deal attainment results in repeated non-attainment and return of people back to the start or not returning at all (D,C,O)

Dyslexics are unable to access courses including basic skills ones (D)

Ignorance from mainstream providers (D)

Institutional inability to understand and work with varying levels of person, social and intellectual skills. (D,C)

Poor differentiation of learning content or none at all (D,C)

Treating a person “specially” can be disabling – a balanced approach based on client’s needs is required (D)

Trainers or tutors who lack understanding of the clients needs (D)

Courses that follow a ‘script’ which is inflexible and does not allow for varying needs of client (D)

## CONFIDENCE, CAPACITY AND LEVEL

Feeling silly or foolish due to lack of basic knowledge – e.g. clients having no knowledge of or interest in IT use (D)

Belief (sometimes wrongly) that participation in anything leads to removal of state benefits (D)

Learning difficulties, dyslexia, dyspraxia, etc (D)

Fear and lack of confidence (D,C)

For carers or parents who are struggling, learning to cope is their priority and any organised learning is not on their hierarchy of needs (C)

Some clients lack social experiences and have been isolated for a long time making re-socialisation a difficult thing to do (D,C,O)

Some clients are involved in other learning activities and find it hard to cope with maintaining all of them (D)

Some people need to prioritise learning skills in managing their health or situation prior to participating in other learning (D)

## OTHERS

Poor access to existing facilities and courses (O)

Bad experience at school – having been failed, rejected, let down (C,D)

Prejudice (D,C,O)

Decisions made by others about what they think the client needs (D,C,O)

Older people feel “pushed” into learning activities. Some don’t want learning and would prefer social groups instead (O)

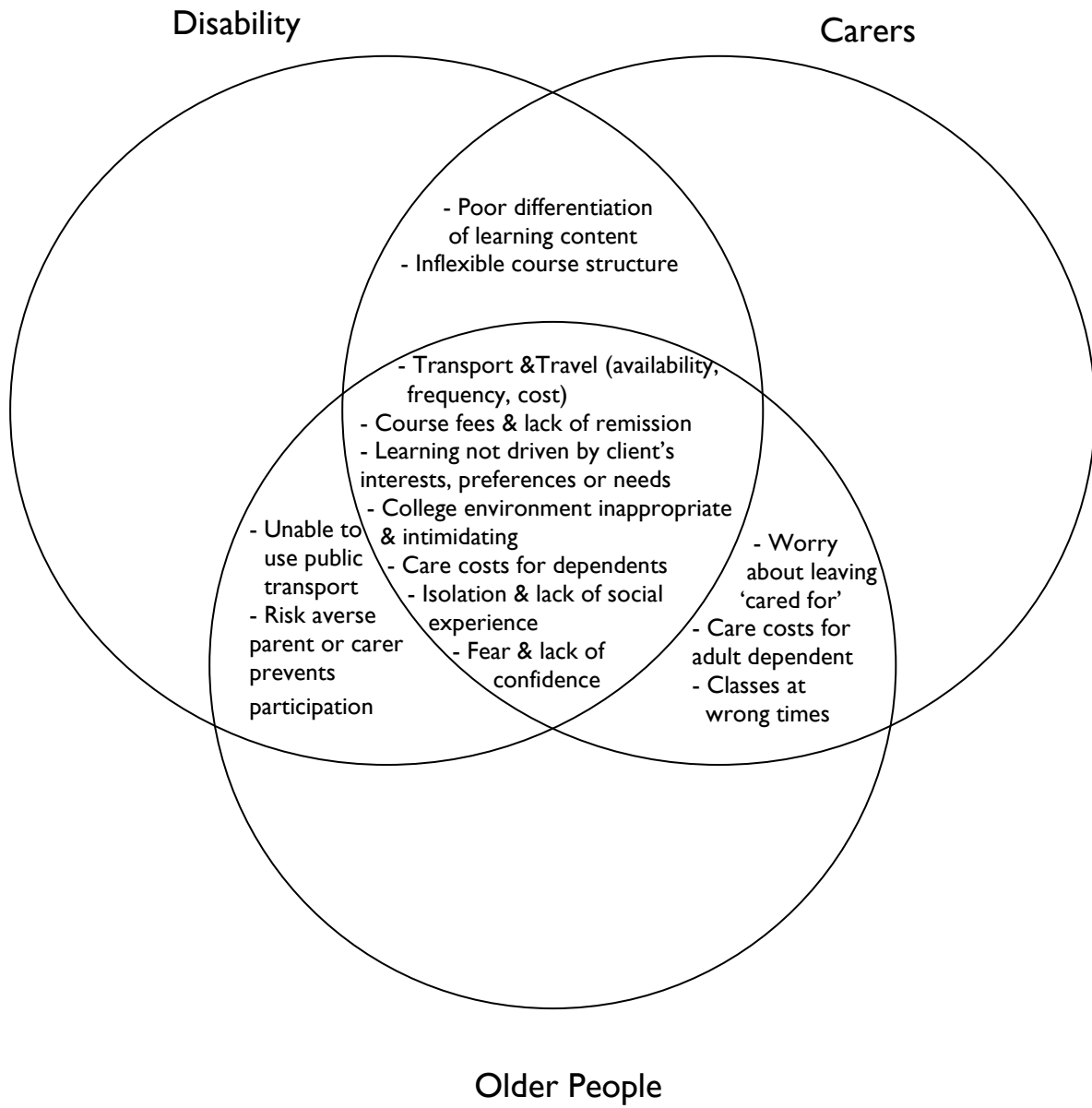
Language used when promoting courses can be off-putting as learning can be perceived as studying rather than learning for enjoyment or the experience (O)

Worry about leaving the cared for person (C)

### **Barriers to Learning**

Rethink is a mental health project that works with individuals and groups providing a range of support and activities to help people manage their health and well-being. People who approach Rethink face many barriers in being able to fully engage in society. Through individual and group based activities - recovery training, CBT (cognitive behaviour therapy), forum theatre, well-being events and work-based skills - Rethink is able to help their clients to learn personal, social and self-management skills to overcome their barriers and be set on the path of learning.

# COMMON BARRIERS IDENTIFIED



## OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Respondents were asked to identify how barriers to participation in learning could be overcome. These are the suggestions that they come up with.

### TRAVEL

Funding fares to and from venues (D)

Provide minibus pick-up and drop-offs to venues; there may be minibus capacity amongst present vehicles in use that can be shared and utilised (D,O,C)

### COSTS

Paying for course fees, especially for things where immediate gain can be promoted (e.g. driving lessons, IT use) (D)

Funding learning resources (books, pamphlets, IT, creative materials) (D)

Affordable or funded care for dependent (C,O)

Campaigning for 'community allowance' – especially in view of the recession – that enables voluntary work to be unrestricted for those on benefits (D,C,O)

Incentivise target groups by paying an allowance (C)

Funding care of dependents and promoting schemes where funding is available (D,C)

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE NEEDS

Working around known barriers and taking them into account (D,C,O)

Recognition of multiple points of entry and multiple pathways of learning needs to be recognised and planned for. (D,C,O)

Establish with client what their needs are and put a plan into place to meet needs and to deal with changes in client's health or situation – person centred or individual learning plan (D,C)

Projects need to be developed and expanded that develop local learning mentors, community tutors and support workers that can nurture people into learning, keep them progressing and help them to become more motivated and attain. (D,C,O)

### TIMING

Preference for daytime activities amongst most people in priority groups and some specific preferences against evening activities (D,C,O)

Preference for later starts to day and earlier finish to allow time for travelling to venue and organising care commitments (D, C)

### VENUES

Development of access to local venues many of which may need physical improvement but are more able to reach target groups – e.g. community centres, church halls, schools, village halls, day centres (D,C,O)

Long-term redress the imbalance between services for 'urbanites' and 'ruralites', the latter having less investment in them

## COURSE/LEARNING DESIGN:

Opening up access to learning in existing establishments (colleges, leisure centres, health centres) through targeted taster programmes in partnership with local groups (O,D)

Run courses that have a minimum number of study hours over a longer time frame so that sessions are shorter and more achievable for clients (D)

Break longer courses down into modules to give flexibility to learners and increase retention – e.g. in 6 or 8 week blocks for instance to enable completion (D,C)

Flexible approach to allow learners to dip in and out of courses according to their needs (D,O,C)

Develop close links with partners for different contributions to the course (referral, promotion, accreditation) (D)

Dyslexics need their own specific courses otherwise they are prevented from access to courses and FE in general. Government funding is supposed to cover this. (D)

Run courses with trained facilitators or tutors who have expertise and understanding of client needs (D)

Run courses to cater for the needs of the learners, be flexible and avoid scripted learning (D)

Learning in familiar and comfortable environments run by skilled facilitators using a range of resources to differentiate (D)

'Bite-size' learning to attract new people (D,C)

Run courses in group settings where people are supported (D)

Funding for more one-to-one workers to allow a stepped approach towards group learning and community involvement (D)

Learning incorporated into care settings or settings where target groups already go such as day centres, child care centres, community centres, village halls (D, C,O)

Carry out literacy, confidence building and basic skills sessions in target-group appropriate environment (D,C)

Various courses that combine caring skills with generic communication and people skills such as 'challenging children and how to raise them' and befriending courses (D,C)

Match pace of learning to the needs of the learner (D)

Tailor made courses for the needs of the group (O)

## CONFIDENCE, CAPACITY AND LEVEL

Understand learner's needs, interests and preferences then design programmes from this. This is essential for some disadvantaged groups (e.g. adults with ADHD or people recovering from mental health problems) (D,C,O)

Enable learners to take responsibility for their learning and to have ownership of their progression (D,C,O)

Find the right balance of meeting a learner's need (D,O)

Use 'meeters and greeters' to induct new learners to the group (O)

Befriending schemes; 'health trainer' style of initiatives where new learners can be supported; help realise their confidence; get to know about new activities; and be escorted (C)

Match pace of learning to the needs of the learner (D)

## VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering can be a route to learning and professional training such as nursing/caring occupations (C)

Participation in social groups and volunteering are definite 'hooks' into learning as well as providing some basic skills development in and of themselves (D,C)

Sector creates a virtual 'cycle' of offering support and activities for people and recruiting some of these people to be volunteers or 'formal learners' as a result of their positive experience (D,C)

## OTHER

Being part of a real workforce that brings positive outcomes and feedback (D)

Provide on-site crèches at colleges – more places plus cheaper or free (C)

Learners to decide what they want to participate in (and what to not participate in) (D,C,O)

Make activities accessible to as many people as possible (D,O)

Acceptance that some older people do not want to participate in learning activities and prefer to participate in gentle social activities (O)

Tutors need to get expert in facilitating learning by working 'bottom up' rather than using failed 'top down' approaches (D,C)

Social care agencies (public or third sector) need to adopt strategies that help people build confidence, skills and independent capability rather than 'co-dependence' (D,C,O)

### **Overcoming Barriers**

Rotherfield St Martin's is a busy project that caters for older members of the community. Activities are user driven and people are able to move freely between different activities. The project is holistic in the sense that there are no barriers between social care, health therapies, volunteering and social groups. The centre provides social and educational forums, volunteer home to hospital driving scheme, holidays at home, a therapy centre offering 11 different therapies and learning for health projects. Learning projects have included a partnership with a leisure centre to get older people (some with very limited mobility) involved with circuit exercises, gym machines and swimming - a learning experience for both participants and providers! RSM reaches 80 to 120 older people and has 100 volunteers.

## REACHING POTENTIAL LEARNERS

Respondents were asked to identify ways of reaching potential learners and ways of incentivising, motivating and involving them in learning. These were their suggestions.

Use courses and activities that are successful and venues that are successful as springboards to create further activities – building success from success (D,O)

Link future learning content with current learning content; interest in one course and achievement in it leads to further interest in new learning (D)

Rely on community partners and services who have relationships with the (potential) learner (D,C,O)

Develop and grow community learning exemplars, mentors and support people who are part of target communities – building real 'Learning Communities and 'Communities of Learning' (D,C,O)

Make working links with business and education (D)

Good information, advice and guidance. (D,C,O)

Make links with existing forums, networks, groups and clubs in order to talk to potential learners and to ask them what they want (D,C)

Funders need to plan work in gaps – e.g. social services funding basic care and LSC funding additional formal learning (D,C)

Being motivated and incentivised by seeing what others are participating in and have achieved (display within groups, across groups and to general public) (D)

Promoting learning or activities through non-verbal communication (e.g. radio) as so many people don't habitually read (D,C,O)

'Events' that hook in and entice the interests of target group – e.g. crèche, food, family fun with parents and "strictly carers dancing" event (C)

Use learners work and experiences to model what is possible to others (D,CO)

Out-reach - take learning activities into existing groups based on what learners want (D,C,O)

Consider use of language and promote learning activities as developing enjoyment or interest (O)

Exhibit learners work to promote activities to others and to raise learners self-esteem (D,O)

Get to know what people want and what makes them feel involved (D,C,O)

Develop partnerships with other organisations and share databases to reach a wider group of learners and potential learners (D)

Offer 'taster sessions' for people to try out different activities and to develop interest (O)

### Reaching Potential Learners

Community Wise offers a wide range of activities and learning opportunities to a large reach of potential learners. The project builds courses and activities to meet the demand of what people want. Each week up to 1700 people participate in activities that are user driven and cater for all members of the community. The approach is inclusive and allows people to come together either through shared interest or shared needs. This local learning centre involves people of all ages where one learning activity leads to another.

## THIRD SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN LEARNING

The third sector has a particular approach to learning based on its relationship with individuals which is a distinctive feature of the way in which it works. It is able to provide learning and training to meet its own workforce needs as well as provide formal, non-formal and informal learning to hard to reach groups. The third sector has the advantage of being able to be flexible in the way it meets the needs of its client groups. Through support and knowing their client base the third sector is able to reach potential learners by putting mechanisms into place that overcome barriers to learning.

The third sector:

Represents good value – expertise in its particular communities, commitment and enthusiasm, volunteer time (D,C,O)

Has a unique ability to reach priority groups and identify needs (D,C,O)

Creates good partnerships on the ground and uses its sparse resource efficiently and effectively (D,C)

Provides access to learning as part of ‘holistic’ services such as social care projects that include care services, social group participation, therapies, information and sign-posting and learning (C,O)

Has many alternative and better venues that potential learners, generally, prefer (D,C,O)

Is able to reach more disadvantaged or isolated people and engage them in learning in its broadest sense (D,C,O)

Can work with partners in order to reach both social care targets and learning targets (D,C,O)

Provides a more comfortable place for people – sector is both ‘for them’ and ‘from them’ (C)

### **Third Sector Involvement in Learning**

Furniture Now! Is a furniture warehouse and training project that displays the distinctive features of the third sector in being able to provide formal, non-formal and informal learning to hard to reach groups. The project works with adults with a range of difficulties and needs including those with disabilities and mental health issues. The furniture recycling warehouse is run by volunteers whose skills and learning is supported through a mentoring approach. The training centre offers three qualifications and is looking to expand to delivering two other NVQs. The project delivers a range of learning opportunities and offers progression to their clients through a flexible supportive structure.



## PROGRESSION TO OTHER FORMS OF LEARNING

Respondents mainly experienced 'progression' as moving from a low level of participation in learning to taking the first steps and participating in something new, often for the first time. This is because the majority of learning activity in the sector is about recruiting and supporting new learners, potential learners or 'clients'. Most learning progression in the sector is about helping people to feel confident about committing to and participating in another activity or group or course more so than, necessarily, moving up to another level. This said there are excellent examples also of learners progressing on long journeys of learning and achievement from low level starting points through to high level commitments and attainment (for them). Below is the range of comments from respondents.

Increase self confidence and self esteem through content that enables this to be surfaced, nurtured and recognised; engage people in learning that is easy and achievable and within their comfort zone (D)

Ensure that there are "next steps" sessions integrated into all courses to help individuals share their future aims and discover what resources are available to help these to be met (D)

Utilise partnerships and share existing staff to deliver a range of learning opportunities that keeps learning fresh and ongoing (D)

System needed to facilitate and support exchange of skilled staff to run learning sessions for each others organisations to keep learning fresh, enhance participation, increase motivation and to share expertise (D)

Showing people what they are able to achieve (D)

Develop person centred planning approach to learning that has a continuum for the learner to make progression and to identify ways forward on route (D,C)

Provide learning at home; including in written form and visual form where computers are not preferred means of communicating. E.g. expand online 'Learning for Caring' to written form (C)

Skills assessment with carers – in part to help them realise their capabilities (C)

### **Progression in learning and work**

Chalk Farm Centre is a unique project catering for students with learning disabilities. People progress to this training project and social enterprise from backgrounds where their skills and talents have been very limited. Chalk Farm Centre has a working hotel, pet centre and nursery. Through work experience students are able to build their confidence and develop independence. As well as learning specific skills - horticulture, pet care, and hospitality management - students learn social, communication and personal skills. Experienced staff know their students well and are able to provide flexible learning tailored to the students needs. Students are motivated by what they and others achieve. Students are stretched and engaged in different forms of learning in a supportive nurturing environment.

## CONCLUSIONS

The third sector has the distinctive feature of being able to work with hard to reach groups and it is this feature that is its strength in being able to provide learning opportunities to these groups. In the third sector people typically come together through a shared physical, social or emotional need as well as, sometimes, an intellectual need. Communities of interest and learning are formed around these needs – for instance for people with disabilities, older people or carers. Third sector organisations are able to meet some of these groups needs through providing a range of support and activities that their clients and groups want. Through participating in activities many basic learning skills can be learned and other intellectual interests can grow and be nurtured. In contrast, colleges create communities of interest around shared intellectual needs.

Innovation and good practice amongst community and voluntary organisations is evidently taking place, but in isolated pockets across the County. (one example of this is below)

### **Community Solutions and Innovations**

**Horizons** provide community based learning in a range of accessible venues in Hastings and includes Skills for Life Courses, GCSE's, Child-care and Health studies to levels 2 and 3. Other courses are drawn from learners' interests. Horizons work with people with mobility issues, learning difficulties (dyslexia/dyspraxia/autism/ADHD), 50 plusses, and people from very impoverished backgrounds.

**Community Learning Tutors** has been an innovation. The local area needed more tutors and horizons had 'graduates' willing and keen on doing it. A community tutor and community organiser training course has successfully trained up a cadre of new tutors. This has the major advantage of building community based capacity for learning and a true learning community. This enables demand for learning to be embedded in neighbourhoods and social networks as well as capacity for meeting demand. Previously these communities have experienced low-levels of learning and attainment with few learning exemplars for people to follow.

**Health Studies Course - one case that broke barriers.** This course started with 14 very unconfident learners finished with 14 successes and 60% of them got jobs (all that could or wanted to). The group included 2 people with bi-polar disorder, 2 who lived in a refuge and most needed the free-child care on offer as well as other personal and pastoral support. This course worked because Horizons nurtured the learners, multiple starting points could be taken into account, completion rates could be varied and support networks were actively built with support agencies and in the community. Without this high level support and flexibility these programmes don't work and learners are lost.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Partnership working

- Develop partnerships by building links between successful projects and providers and those wishing to develop their provision, skills and capacity
- Exploring partnership at senior level that makes better use of resources that are located separately between departments (such as health and social care, LSC, jobcentre plus, third sector)
- Using local venues and local providers to deliver learning programmes where they are best able to engage with potential learners and target communities

### Learning exchange

- Capitalise on modes and models of learning that are effective in different part of the County and amongst providers through a system of learning exchange. This might include study visits, seminars, presentations, shadowing, mentoring and other forms of knowledge exchange.

### Making the system work for target groups

- Explore better and more flexible ways of funding courses so that people with higher needs and variable starting points are not disadvantaged in their access to courses
- Explore how courses can be better modularised with flexible completion times so that learning can be paced to the needs of the learner
- Explore ways of enabling the resource to follow the person with the learning provider rather than the funding following the qualification
- Explore rewarding added value over and above blanket attainment that does not take into account distance travelled

### Better information

- Support and learning providers in the third sector; learning providers in the public sector; and potential learners do not know enough about courses and learning support that is already available. Better information (e.g. through directories) needs to be provided about: courses; learning support; venues; providers; and general learning engagement activities.

### Learning and Teaching approaches -

- Develop more 'bottom-up' learning programmes where target groups have their learning activities expertly facilitated rather than didactically taught.
- Improve the quality of skills analysis and learning support so that learner's capacity, level and skills are made explicit and learning modules are suitably differentiated
- Create more taster days and taster courses in partnerships such as health courses between Rotherfield St Martin and the local leisure centre or between Sure Start and Horizons.
- Expand the means of recruiting, training and supporting different types of community tutor, learning exemplars and learning support workers and volunteers in target communities
- Expanding outreach by taking learning into existing groups and venues where target groups will naturally come together

## **Funding and Finance**

- Explore how examples of local best practice in engaging hard-to-reach learners can be secured financially including through more efficient models of public funding (for instance Horizons, Community Wise, and Rotherfield St. Martins)
- Investigate how fund-seeking for community learning could be levered in more effectively from additional sources (such as Big Lottery, European sources and other discretionary funds)

**Appendices:**  
**Interview form**

**PCDL Review – Interview form**

**Interviewee.....Organisation.....**

**Organisations activities:**

- 1) Which priority groups do you work with?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) How many people do you reach in your day to day activities? How many of these are learners/potential learners?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) What kinds of learning, in the widest sense, do your people and communities participate in?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) What are the barriers to your clients' participation in personal and community development learning?

- 5) How do you think these barriers can be overcome?
- 6) How can potential learners be reached, incentivised, motivated and involved in learning?
- 7) How can voluntary and community organisations best be involved in:
- a) providing learning?
  - b) engaging potential learners in any training or learning?
- 8) What are the best practical ways of helping people to progress to other learning, training, or courses?

## TARGETED ORGANISATIONS

Name of Organisation	Location	Activities Undertaken	Reach	Priority Group
ARRCC (Activity Respite & Rehabilitation Care Centre)	Hastings & Rother	Day centre for working age adults with sensory & physical disabilities. Separate centre for adults aged 65+. Learning activities: arts, mosaics, IT suite, counselling, complementary therapies and wider community projects	90 to 125 at any one time	D C
British Dyslexia Association	Eastbourne	Training for professionals, parents, carers and individuals; campaigning and policy; national helpline	Receive 900 calls and 380 emails per month	D C
Care for the Carers	East Sussex	Training and support for unpaid carers. Social activities; befriending scheme; hospital liaison and careline magazine	1200 carers per annum 4000 reached through magazine	C
Chalk Farm Centre	Wealden	Eastbourne Area Parents Action Group charity, involving students in the running of a nursery, pet centre and hotel. Specific and generic skills taught for students to be able to work in the different areas of the centre. Input to parents and carers	33 Students at any one time 18 per day	D C
Circles Network	Eastbourne	New project helping people with disabilities to make natural networks and links with	Currently working with: 45 disabled	D O C

Name of Organisation	Location	Activities Undertaken	Reach	Priority Group
		the community. Activities built around client's interests and needs. Life skills, social skills and independence taught through activities. Learning is individually paced and done through person centred planning	clients 45+ Carers 12 families dealing with an older person	
Home Start South Downs and Wealden	Lewes & Wealden	Recruit volunteers; train volunteers 10 week course (listening skills, challenging assumptions; supportive behaviours, learning through play); provide home visiting service to families	31 volunteers (plus 10 being matched & 8 resting) 34 families	C
Home-start Hastings & Rother	Hastings	Recruit volunteers; train volunteers; provide home visiting service to families	20 volunteers 30 families	C
Older People's Engagement Manager- ESCC	East Sussex	Close working with Older peoples' forums in East Sussex and East Sussex Seniors Associations	20 reps per week who represent larger numbers of older people	O
Workability East Sussex (part of Impact Initiatives)	Eastbourne	Supporting people with mental health problems into recovery and into training, learning and employment	Was a provider until December 2008	D
AD/HD Adult & Adolescent Support Network	Hastings	ADHD awareness training; support, advice & information for individuals and families caring for people with ADHD	Approx 100 to 150 per annum	C D



Name of Organisation	Location	Activities Undertaken	Reach	Priority Group
Age Concern Pevensey	Wealden	Social gathering activities for older people many aged 70+ - lunch club, afternoon tea, entertainment. Activities and food run by volunteers. Transport	30+ at each session  100+ at entertainment afternoon	O
Children's' Centre (Peacehaven)	Lewes District	Parenting and health courses; paediatric first aid; and new programme currently being developed. Outreach Learning organised from other children's centres: Newhaven (Denton Island); Lewes (Westgate St). Plans for new centres in Seaford, Chailey and Ringmer.	120-140 p.a. aimed for at Peacehaven. Aim to increase outreach to 200+ and 300+ when all centres up and running	C
Community Wise	Eastbourne & Bexhill	Self-help, social and learning groups in a very busy community centre. Includes parents & toddler, languages, creative arts, exercise/dance, youth club and bookings from social care organisations/community health	Up to 1700 per week	O
Crossroads Care	Eastbourne & Wealden	Support for carers of older people, adults and children with disabilities; respite care	Currently 200 adults and children	D C O

Name of Organisation	Location	Activities Undertaken	Reach	Priority Group
Eastbourne Seniors Club	Eastbourne	Club providing learning, activities and coffee mornings as requested by seniors. Spanish; creative writing; art; craft; IT classes; multimedia classes; thai chi; line dancing; exercise to music; board games; darts; bowls; bingo; snooker; table tennis	350 members	O
Furniture Now!	Lewes & Eastbourne	Courses- L1 employment skills, L1 Creative crafts, L2 decorative painting techniques. Furniture recycling, warehouse and furniture sale	50 Course participants per academic year  25 Volunteers per week	D
Horizons Community Learning	Hastings	Learning based in community venues including: NVQs in health & social care and chilcare, GCSE's, volunteer community tutors/organisers and user community driven study groups/projects	350-400 attending at one time; 500 per year; 600 enquiries and referrals to other providers	D,C,O and wider community
ReMember	East & West Sussex	Self-management courses, campaigning, advice, information & guidance to ME/CFS sufferers.	4 courses per year  10 – 12 learners per course	D C
Rethink	Eastbourne	Recovery training; mental health first aid training; carers education taining programme; management techniques	Minimum 25 people per week	D C

Name of Organisation	Location	Activities Undertaken	Reach	Priority Group
		for anxiety, depression & stress; work based skills inc. ICT; theatre workshops; service user forums; fact sheets; social groups & activities; well-being events		
Rother Seniors Forum	Rother	Represent interest of older people to public service providers	400 members but reach is greater than this	○
Rotherfied St Martin project and centre	Wealden	Social group meetings, therapies centre, group exercise/arts/social programmes, taster courses e.g. ICT, gym and swim, volunteer driver, holiday at home project	170 members (60-80 active) 100 volunteers	○
U3A - University of the Third Age	East Sussex	Learning and social groups for older people  User driven groups with the philosophy of "Learning for pleasure"	Battle 110 members; 22 groups  East Grinstead 650 members; 33 groups  Eastbourne & Wealden 190 members; 25 groups  Also groups in Crowborough; Ringmer; Hastings & Rother; Rye & District; Mayfield; Uckfield	○
Wealden Senior Citizens Partnership	Wealden	Independent voluntary group representing the views and interests of older people.	380 members	○

<b>Name of Organisation</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Activities Undertaken</b>	<b>Reach</b>	<b>Priority Group</b>
		Provide information, organise events and regular newsletters		