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**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Economy Scrutiny Committee – 6 December 2017  
**Subject:** Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES)  
**Report of:** Head of Manchester Adult Education Service

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**Summary**

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the MAES 2016/17 performance and 2017/18 improvement actions.

**Recommendations**

Members are requested to consider and comment on the information in the report

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**Wards Affected:**

All

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**Background documents (available for public inspection)**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Manchester Adult ESOL strategy

## **1 Executive Summary**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the MAES 2016/17 performance and the service improvement actions. In summary:

- 'Good' Ofsted inspection judgement in February 2017
- Achievement of main SFA funding contract and learner participation targets
- Good pass rates and achievement of learning goals
- Significant improvements in pass rates for GCSE Maths and English
- Improvements in Functional Maths and English to above 15/16 national averages
- 42% of 15/16 leavers contacted to date have secured work, 18% were in education and 10% in voluntary work
- 99% of learners say MAES courses improved their lives
- Talk English achieved the Learning and Work Institute 2017 President's Award

## **2 Background**

2.1 Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES) is part of the Directorate for Growth and Neighbourhoods and has direct links to the Education and Skills team, which sits within The Children and Families Directorate to connect the education, work and skills agenda across the council. Both directorates have strengthened partnerships across the education, skills and business sectors, in order to further improve educational outcomes, reduce dependency and better connect individuals and neighbourhoods to the employment opportunities being created.

2.2 In the academic year 2016/17 more than 9100 people engaged in learning with MAES. From confidence building courses in the community to gaining professional qualifications every learner has been on their own unique learning journey with us.

2.3 MAES unique selling point is its community based model of informal/first step learning and qualification courses delivered in 8 Adult learning centres and over 100 community venues. We deliver our mission by working with partners and stakeholders to co-design and deliver services to meet individual and community and employer needs and to support the city's strategic priorities to reduce unemployment, address low skills and reduce dependency. MAES provides agile and flexible provision which contributes to the achievement of the Manchester Work and Skills plan priorities, Working Well and Early Years and Early Help strategies.

2.4 MAES particular expertise and niche is in delivering first step Adult Education which includes qualification courses (Adult Skills) and non-qualification courses, and Community Learning for adults aged 19+ (with the largest cohort aged 25-50). The Adult Skills programme includes Maths and English up to GCSE, English for speakers of other languages, (ESOL) and Care and Education. The Community Learning programme includes Getting into work,

Digital Skills, Family Learning and a range of directly delivered and commissioned projects and engagement activities as a preparation for further learning, work and to improve health and wellbeing.

- 2.5 MAES provision is regulated by Ofsted and was inspected in February 2017. The service was judged to be a 'Good' provider.

**The headline judgments were:-**

**Leadership and Management** - The service offer is fully aligned with Manchester city council plans and priorities. Leaders have ensured that Learners are well prepared to benefit from the social, economic and employment opportunities in Manchester. The courses significantly improve the prospects of people with low qualifications, recent arrivals with little English language and those with significant barriers to employment. Partnership work is highly effective and allows you to engage with many hard to reach learners and help them make steps towards gaining employment

**Safeguarding** - was found to be comprehensive and effective. Records of safeguarding incidents are maintained well and record actions taken. Learners have a good understanding of the risks of radicalisation and good awareness of saying safe when using the internet.

**Capacity to improve** - good capacity to improve the provision. We have an accurate understanding of our strengths and areas for improvement in teaching learning and assessment and have implemented a wide range of staff development to improve practice. Observations and learning walks are used well to agree actions for improvement.

**Teaching learning and Assessment is good** - most tutors have a good knowledge of learners starting points and their barriers to learning. They use this information to effectively set clear individual learning targets that extend learners skills and knowledge.

**Accredited courses** - the majority of learners on accredited courses achieve their qualifications. Functional Maths and English achievement needed improvement. We had already identified a need to improve achievement on English and Maths functional skills courses. Actions we have taken have improved this year's achievement rates.

**Non accredited courses** - Ofsted found that most learners on non-accredited courses achieve their personal goals and the aims of the courses. They did find that in a minority of such courses, tutors do not set clear enough targets and do not assess learner's achievement accurately. We had already identified this in our Service Improvement Plan and actions taken since the inspection have delivered improvements.

**Benefits for learners** - effective arrangements to monitor and evaluate the benefits learners gain from the provision. Learners improve a range of

personal and employability skills. A good proportion of learners move onto to employment, further learning or other positive destinations.

### **3 2016/17 provision**

3.1 In 2016/17 MAES had a number of contracts to deliver Adult Education and Community Learning provision which totalled £9,108,672k. These were:

- Skills funding Agency (SFA) contract for both Adult Skills and Community Learning (£7,647,599)
- Education Funding Agency (EFA) contract for 16-18 year olds (£326,028)
- SFA contract for Community Learning and Mental Health pilot (£128,050)
- SFA/ESF contract for a Skills for Employment pilot (£58,147)
- Department for Communities and local Government (DCLG) contract for Talk English (£948,848)

The majority of the contract targets were achieved or exceeded

3.2 The service has a mixed model of direct delivery and commissioned activity and recruited over 9135 individual learners in 2016/17; 3224 on Adult Skills courses; 8722 on Community Learning provision; and 872 on the Talk English programme. Significant number of learners progress from a community learning programme to a qualification programme during the same academic year.

3.3 We subcontract 14% of our Community Learning funding to voluntary and community organisations who deliver practical activities, engagement and short courses to attract and engage unemployed people back into learning and employment. The voluntary and community sector providers work with target groups such as those recovering from drug and alcohol related problems; homelessness and health issues.

### **4 Who we reach:**

4.1 In 2016/17 the MAES cohort was:-

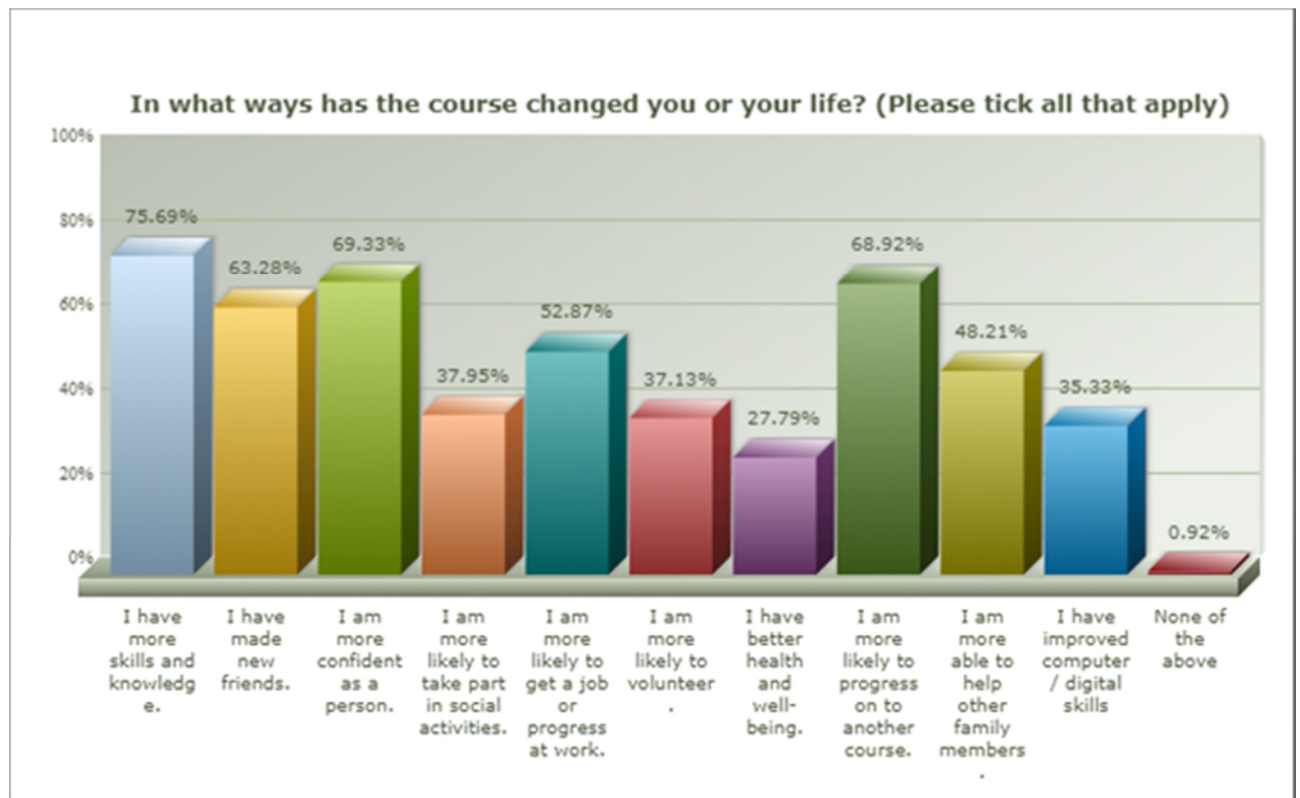
- 68% female
- 32% male
- 77% unemployed
- 85% from 'disadvantaged' postcodes
- 42% for who English is not their first language.

4.2 MAES learners include those who have left compulsory education with no or low qualifications, have had long periods of unemployment or no work history at all, mental health problems, have been homeless, are ex-offenders, drug and or alcohol dependent. Our provision enables residents, with low skills and multiple issues, to improve the skills, qualifications, attitudes and behaviours they need to secure and progress in work and become less dependent on public services. MAES learners who are in employment come to improve their Maths, English or vocational qualifications in order to secure sustainable

employment and progress at work in sectors where there are current and emerging vacancies.

## **5 2016/17 targets/performance and outcomes**

- 5.1 Ofsted judges outcomes for learners by a number of indicators which include the achievement of qualifications, individual learning goals on non-accredited courses and the development of personal, social and employability skills. They also make a judgement about the tracking of learner destinations to assess the impact of learning on future outcomes.
- 5.2 The EFA and SFA Adult Skills performance measures are retention, pass rates and achievement rates. For Community learning the measure is achievement of individual learning goals. The DCLG performance measure is the number of learners attending Talk English courses and activities. The SFA/ESF programme measures are qualifications and employment.
- 5.3 Outcomes (not validated until Jan 2018):-
- Adult skills achievement rate of 86.2%, which is a 4% increase on the 2015/16 rate;
  - Significant improvements in Functional Maths and English to above 15/16 national averages;
  - High pass rates (grade 4-9) in GCSE Maths and English - Maths 89.3% ,English 92.9%
  - High achievement of community learning goals 95%
  - 59.3 % of 15/16 academic year leavers, who have been tracked have a positive destination - 43% in employment,18% in further learning, 10% in voluntary work
  - Learners rate the service highly - FE choices learner satisfaction score 97.2%
  - MAES learners survey shows learners develop and improve a wider range of skills



## 6 Successes, Challenges and Opportunities:

### 6.1 Partnership working

MAES is working with key partners including The Manchester College, the Growth Company and DWP to deliver the Addressing Inequality strand of the Manchester Work and Skills Strategy and develop a clear offer for those furthest away from the labour market and those cycling between unemployment and low pay.

Targets and actions have been agreed to:-

- reduce the number of residents with skill levels below level 2
- reduce the number of residents who speak little or no English and to increase the number acquiring English and moving into work
- increase the number of residents with health as barrier moving into work

6.2 A wide range of activity underpins the actions including the ESOL strategy, the Skills for Employment programme and the development of the new MAES offer at the Forum in Wythenshawe. MAES is now co-located with Jobcentre Plus at the Forum, which will provide additional opportunities to align and integrate learning with employment support.

## **7 ESOL**

MAES has led on the development of an Adult ESOL strategy for Manchester, working with a number of key stakeholders and partners. The strategy analyses the need for ESOL in Manchester, gives an overview of current provision for residents and identifies key priorities and actions and progress to date. (see separate Scrutiny report)

## **8 SFA/ESF Skills for Employment pilot**

8.1 The Greater Manchester Skills for Employment Pilot aims to test the impact that better integration of employment and skills activities can have on the achievement of positive outcomes for unemployed adults who face multiple barriers to gaining and sustaining employment. The contact is being managed by the Growth Company and MAES is one of the providers delivering the skills component.

8.2 Three organisations are managing the resident journey through the programme and are responsible for recruiting residents to the programme and referring them to MAES to improve their skills and qualifications. This is a payment by results contract and the achievement of the contract targets is dependent on whether MAES receives referrals and then enables the resident to achieve. Managers from MAES are working more proactively with the organisations delivering the programme to increase referrals.

8.3 MAES has not met its targets for the 2106/17 academic year. This is due to the low level of referrals, which in some part is due to the limitations of the contract which means that an individual can only study one course during their time on the programme. This has resulted in a reluctance to refer residents to non-vocational courses and longer Functional Skills English and Maths courses and ESOL courses. The Head of Service and the Growth company contract manager have met with the managers of the referral organisations and arranged a number of awareness raising events for up to 50 advisers about encouraging clients to take up our English provision. Although numbers are small, there is the potential to make a meaningful difference to residents' skills and qualifications that will better support them to enter the labour market and sustain a job.

## **9 MAES Venues**

9.1 The primary delivery takes place in seven venues across the City from Victoria Avenue Library and Learning Centre in Charlestown ward to Forum Learning Centre in Wythenshawe. In four of the premises MAES is co-located with partners including the Manchester Library Service. Wythenshawe Forum Learning Centre is undergoing a radical remodelling to co-locate MAES and DWP including the Wythenshawe Job Centre, from April 2018, following the Manchester College withdrawal from the site. The new centre will deliver enhanced facilities and services for residents - the first phase has been completed giving MAES a new public reception, back office facilities and additional and upgraded teaching spaces. The stakeholder board and

operational group are focusing on the opportunities that the co-location affords to foster a step change in the development of a more coherent offer for residents to move into and progress in work.

## **10 Community Learning and Mental Health pilot**

- 10.1 Heads Up was a 2 year Health and Well-being partnership project funded by DfE through the SFA. The data from this national pilot is being evaluated by Ipsos Mori, and uses a combined assessment that brings together three tools used in NHS services. In year one - 2015/16, MAES delivered a project called Heads Up, which offered courses focussed on the Five Ways to Wellbeing in partnership with Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust, Manchester Mind, and Back on Track.
- 10.2 In Year 1 we delivered 6 Heads Up courses and 5 refresher workshops. 72 people benefitted from a pre-course discussion with 56 being eligible for the project and 40 of these engaging with a Heads Up course. Residents who were ineligible for the course were directed to other provision within MAES or partner organisations.
- 10.3 In 2016/17, year 2, the organisations that continued from year 1 were divided into three groups with different constraints to test the hypothesis. Manchester was put into Group A, which focussed very specifically on courses to address the symptoms of mild mental health problems - stress, anxiety and depression. Funded projects were restricted from working with mental health services or organisations so only community learning providers could deliver. MAES worked together with Back on Track to deliver the year 2 project. The majority of projects struggled to meet the nationally set targets which was reported in January 2017.
- 10.4 In Year 2 we delivered 21 Heads Up courses across the city. 229 people benefitted from a pre-course discussion with 174 being eligible for the project and 135 of these engaging with a Heads Up course. Residents who were ineligible for the course were directed to other provision, for example to MAES Preparation for Employment courses or to more focused mental health support services.
- 10.5 Learner feedback showed:
- 59% said they had improved their personal skills (i.e. confidence and positivity)
  - 26% said they were now better self-managing their mental health using techniques from the project
  - 15% said they had seen the biggest change in their mental health.
- 10.6 The full Ipsos Mori data and evaluation report is due to be released by the end of the year. MAES expects to participate in some national dissemination activities. At present we can only use limited data, which shows that of those who completed a Heads Up course in Year 2:



- 35% of learners show a significantly reduced measure of depression
- 44% of learners show a significantly reduced measure of anxiety
- 55% said they were planning on entering further learning opportunities
- 34% said they wanted to start volunteering
- 10% said they felt ready to go back to work

10.7 The Heads Up Ways to Wellbeing course is now offered by both Family Learning and Employability team as either Wellbeing for All, and Improve your Mood through Art, retaining the Heads Up brand. Back on Track also continue to deliver Ways to Wellbeing and are funded by the CLF. We are currently running five courses, four in Sure Start centres (Collyhurst, Gorton North, Martenscroft, Brooklands) and one in the Forum Learning centre.

## **11 Some of our learner journeys and their achievements:**

### **11.1 Health and Social care**

Omwale currently works in catering but wants to change career. "I want to help others and give something back to society. I've done a placement as part of my course, working in a hospital with patients with dementia. This has given me valuable experience. I've learnt a lot on the course, I'm much more aware of important issues like ensuring equality and not being judgemental. I've also developed my presentation skills, organisation skills and literacy skills through the assignments we have to do. I've increased my confidence in speaking to people through my placement. There's a brilliant atmosphere in the class – the tutor is very friendly and we all get on really well as a class".

### **11.2 ESOL**

Ahmad "I came in to the U.K in 2014 from Syria. I was studying management when the war forced me to leave. When I came to the UK, I was lucky to get a place on an ESOL course. The classes were a really good introduction to life in the UK and I really improved my language skills and job skills. We practised being in an interview which was really helpful. I had applied for three or four jobs and got interviews but I never got the job. Then I had an interview for a chef post in a Jamaican restaurant in the town centre. My tutor gave me some websites to help me with my interview. I went to the interview feeling much more confident than before and I got the job. So now I am probably the only Syrian working as a chef in a Jamaican restaurant!"

### **11.3 Digital Skills**

Jean joined a beginner's computer course for beginners at The Avenue Library and Learning Centre in Blackley in September 2016. She progressed onto the accredited course, learnt how to use using Word, PowerPoint, Excel and the internet and achieved a qualification.

"Attending these courses has built up my self-confidence and my new skills encouraged me to apply for voluntary jobs. I am now working as a volunteer cook at The Mustard Tree in Manchester. I have been on a training course at a

hotel for two weeks to further develop my skills. I would highly recommend these courses to everyone.”

#### 11.4 **Back on Track**

Phillip was referred to us after battling Mental Health problems for so many years. He hadn't worked for ten years, despite having plenty of past experience. He started on our Skills for Work programme in the catering group, then joined the Moving on Group. Soon after at the age of 62, he got a job at Morrison's.

Phillip “Before I was stuck at home on my own doing nothing. Back on Track helped me see what I was good at and gave me the confidence to apply for jobs. If you're down in the dumps it's the best place you can come, I couldn't recommend it enough”.

#### 11.5 **Proper Job Theatre Company**

The Learn, Achieve, Believe (LAB) Project is a 2 week course combining teamwork, confidence building, communication skills working towards participants delivering a drama workshop in a school.

Michelle “I have suffered with anxiety for 15 years, over which time it has had a negative impact on all aspects of my life, affecting my physical health, relationships, work, education and my social life. Over the years I have been on various medications and have tried counselling, CBT therapy, psychotherapy and confidence courses, sadly none have really helped much. Roughly 12 weeks ago I attended the LAB Project and it was the most amazing thing I could have done. By the end of the course my confidence, self-esteem and self-belief had become off the scale. My friends and family have all commented on the positive change in me. I am now volunteering on the LAB project and loving it, the excitement I feel knowing I could in some way help people like myself live a full, happy and independent life is amazing. I am also applying for lots of jobs, now I realise I CAN DO IT! To say the LAB Project has changed my life is an understatement, I now feel I have a life and a future and I can do anything I set my mind to”.

### 12 **MAES self-assessment and improvement plan**

12.1 MAES uses a range of external measures to self-assess against and inform the Service and team improvement plans.

These include:-

- Ofsted Common Inspection Framework
- Matrix standards for Information, Advice and Guidance
- National benchmarks for achievement rates on qualification courses

12.2 The service Quality Improvement and Self-assessment process follows an annual cycle. Learners are consulted through course reviews, observation of

teaching and learning feedback, forums, evaluations and surveys. Teaching and non-teaching staff are involved in the process through appraisals, management and team meetings, course and service evaluations, feedback gathering and surveys. Partners and stakeholders are involved through surveys.

- 12.3 The service was re-accredited with the MATRIX standard for the quality of its information advice and guidance last year and this aspect remains good.
- 12.4 Executive member briefings, MAES Governing Body meetings and team support and challenge sessions with the Head of Service are used to monitor progress and inform actions needed. Learner, partner, stakeholder and staff feedback is used to improve the service performance. MAES is also a member of the North West Local Authority learning provider's network, which shares good practice and initiates and delivers a range of quality improvement projects.

### **13 2017/2018 Improvement actions:**

- 13.1 Continue to improve our achievement rates and further improve the rigour of the assessment of achievement on non-accredited courses:
- Implement further training for tutors on target setting and assessment of learning
  - Coaching for managers and team leaders to ensure consistent practice across different areas of learning
  - Implement sharing of good practice and moderation of assessment practices with GM and Liverpool LA providers.
  - Increase the frequency of curriculum area moderation and cross-service standardisation
  - Focus on RARPA practices in team walkthroughs, observations and class visits, eg giving feedback and setting challenging targets
  - Work with an external consultant (Ofsted inspector) to strengthen our practice in relation to the areas for improvement outlined above.
- 13.2 Continue to improve the use of learning technology to support learning outside the classroom and enable learners to develop digital and independent learning skills:
- Increase the take-up of our online English, maths and ICT level 1 courses to extend learning, for example, 'Splendid Blended English' online. Learners will develop their skills online and will be supported by email and have regular opportunities to meet the tutor and other learners.
  - Develop and implement resources to develop employability skills in all courses
  - Develop and implement resources to improving spelling, grammar and punctuation in all courses.
  - Implement team training in use of tablets, apps and smart board features
- 13.3 Improve our course offer/flexibility for people in low paid part time work:

- ESOL for Work - co designed with DWP to help residents improve their language and job seeking skills. Now promoted to people already in low paid work. Available up to 4 sessions a week with flexible attendance and online resources.
  - Develop and promote more blended and online learning
- 13.4 Improve collaboration with stakeholders to better connect skills and employment support services:
- Training for Skills for Employment advisers on persuading clients to take up literacy provision
  - Short courses on English and Maths skills for specific occupational sectors developed with DWP and Skills for Employment providers
  - Universal Credit course developed with DWP to support their clients to start and manage their claim on line
- 13.5 Increase take up of volunteering and work experience opportunities so that learners can develop their employability skills:
- Promote and develop partnership with National Careers Service
  - Case studies on MAES online
  - Work with stakeholders including employment support and housing providers to identify and promote volunteering and work experience opportunities to our learners
  - Develop work experience and volunteering opportunities within MAES and MCC
- 13.6 Increase learners with positive destinations:
- Monitor intended destinations to focus earlier tracking
  - Improve promotion of Work Clubs
  - Work closely with the Employer Suite so that appropriate vacancies are shared with MAES learners
  - Targeted IAG based on tutor feedback of 'at risk of NEET'
  - Work and Careers Week to focus more on local employment opportunities
  - Improve promotion of work experience opportunities
  - Invite ex learners back to share their journey/act as role models
  - Share case studies on MAES online of learners with positive outcomes

## 14 Conclusion

- 14.1 MAES provision makes an important contribution to the Manchester priorities to reduce dependency and improve skills and qualifications so that residents access employment and progress in work. In future, MAES will be commissioned by the GMCA through the devolution of the Adult Education budget, but this will not now happen until 2019-20. With its learner intake/profile and its focus on employability, MAES is well placed to deliver GM priorities. MAES will continue to work collaboratively with stakeholders and partners to

ensure that the MAES offer supports the city's approach to improving resilience and outcomes for families and enables residents to contribute to the economic growth and health and wellbeing of Manchester.