

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

25 September 2018

Time 6.00 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Scrutiny
Venue Committee Room 3 - 3rd Floor - Civic Centre

Membership

Chair Cllr Linda Leach (Lab)
Vice-chair Cllr Simon Bennett (Con)

Labour

Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur
Cllr Welcome Koussoukama
Cllr Asha Mattu
Cllr Barbara McGarrity
Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Susan Roberts MBE
Cllr Zee Russell

Conservative

Cllr Sohail Khan

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the Democratic Services team:

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Address Democratic Services, Civic Centre, 1st floor, St Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

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Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

<i>Item No.</i>	<i>Title</i>
1	Apologies
2	Declarations of Interest
3	Minutes of previous meetings (12 June 2018) (Pages 3 - 8)
4	Matters arising
5	Adults Social Worker Health Check survey (report to follow) [Louise Haughton, Principal Social Worker to present report]
6	Update on adult case file audits:one year on (report to follow) [Jennifer Rogers, Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner,to present report]
7	Overview of the Adult Education Offer and Outcomes for Residents (Pages 9 - 42) [Joanne Keatley, Head of Adult Education, to present report; Covering Report will be sent to Follow]

Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Agenda Item No: 3

Minutes - 12 June 2018

Attendance

Members of the Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Simon Bennett (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Sohail Khan
Cllr Welcome Koussoukama
Cllr Linda Leach (Chair)
Cllr Asha Mattu
Cllr Barbara McGarrity
Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Susan Roberts MBE
Cllr Zee Russell

Employees

Martin Stevens (Scrutiny Officer) (Minutes)
David Watts (Director for Adults Services)
Karen Samuels (Head of Community Safety)
Allison Robertson (Head of Procurement)
Hannah Pawley (Graduate Management Trainee)

Witnesses

Chief Inspector Tracey Packham (West Midlands Police)

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies**
An apology for absence was received from Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur.
- 2 **Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3 **Matters arising**
Cllr Muston requested the date of the Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel meeting be changed from the current scheduled date of 25 September 2018. The Chair agreed to speak to the relevant Scrutiny Officer to consider whether this was a viable option.

4 **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 **Adults and Safer City Scrutiny - Draft Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Officer presented the latest draft Work Programme. He stated that the Work Plan was a live document which was updated on a regular basis. It was now included as standard on the agenda for each Scrutiny Panel meeting and there was also an opportunity to discuss the Work Plan at the Annual Work Programme event scheduled to take place on 28 June 2018 at 5pm. The Director for Adults Services, added there was now a place on the Scrutiny Work Plan for Members to suggest specific questions for a scrutiny item.

The Scrutiny Officer commented that the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner would be attending the meeting scheduled for 25 September 2018. After discussion the Chair agreed to have a preparation morning meeting with Members of the Panel and the Scrutiny Officer to discuss how they would approach the scrutiny of the Commissioner, which would be on a strategic level. She agreed to fix a date in liaison with the Scrutiny Officer and Members of the Panel.

The Scrutiny Officer stated that Wolverhampton's Adult Education Service was also on the agenda for the September meeting. The Scrutiny Officer referred to the adult open day advertised on the Council's City People Intranet site and encouraged Members of the Panel to attend if possible. The open day would be taking place on 23 June 2018 from 10am -2pm in the Foyer Building on Old Hall Street which was near the Old Sainsbury's building.

6 **Modern Slavery - Update Report**

The Head of Community Safety presented a report on modern slavery. The report provided an overview of the partnership working and the Council's plans to tackle modern slavery across the City. Section 2 of the report outlined the framework in which the work on modern slavery was delivered, which followed a national framework. There was an independent anti-slavery Commissioner and Legislation was introduced in 2015 under the name of the Modern Slavery Act. Modern slavery could take on various different forms. The legislation categorised them as holding a person in a position of slavery, forced servitude or compulsory labour, or facilitating the travel of a person with the intention of exploiting them soon after. Within the West Midlands, forced Labour was a key area of focus and the exploitation of young people. It was important to raise awareness about modern slavery as it was largely hidden within Wolverhampton.

The Head of Community Safety stated that there was a national system for referring individuals experiencing modern slavery. The contract on a national level was provided though the Salvation Army and in the West Midlands the sub-contractor was Black Country Women's Aid. The landscape was complex which led to some difficulties within the system. As a consequence the Independent Commissioner was driving through changes at a national level. The numbers identified in Wolverhampton were relatively small. There were 11 cases of modern slavery submitted to the National Referral Mechanism from Wolverhampton from Jan – Dec

2017, compared to six cases the previous year, all cases were minors. These cases involved links to county lines/drugs, child sexual exploitation and forced labour.

The Head of Community Safety referred to section 3 of the report which identified the key points discussed at Scrutiny, when the subject was discussed at the meeting in September 2017. Section 3 of the report provided an update on each of those areas. A communication plan was now in place. There was an aide memoir available to staff in the event they came across an individual of concern. City of Wolverhampton's Council's plan was in line with that of the Police and a training offer was now available after the launch of the national package. The Police had been developing their intelligence gathering processes around data capture. The Black Country organised crime group had been established, which met bi-monthly to identify organised crime groups and co-ordinate tactics. A discussion with Wolverhampton Businesses Crime reduction forum was scheduled to take place in September 2018 on the efforts to combat modern slavery. The Head of Community Safety commented that the Local Government Association had issued some guidance in February 2018 which provided a summary of the implications for modern slavery for local authorities with practical suggestions as to strengthening working practices.

A Member of the Panel asked for an update on the number of cases of modern slavery reported for the year to date. Chief Inspector Packham stated that since November 2017 to the current date, there had been 19 reported crimes. The Head of Community Safety said because modern slavery was often a hidden crime, the increase of crimes reported in this area could be seen as a positive step forward. The Council were looking to encourage all partners to report cases.

A Panel Member raised an issue which had been reported in the national press release concerning hand car washes. There were health and safety concerns for some of these staff and a concern that some workers were facing exploitation. The Chief Inspector stated car washes and nail bars were particular occupations, where examples of modern slavery had been discovered in the past. All neighbourhood Police teams visited these places to speak to the people there. They tried to identify any concerns and investigate further with appropriate partners, such as Health and Safety, Environmental Services and Revenue and Customs. A car wash recently visited in the Wolverhampton area had been found to be employing an illegal immigrant. Due to the visits by the Police, a considerable amount of enforcement action was taking place. The Head of Community Safety referred to an App which was now available to download which would advise if the car wash was operating in a legitimate way. The Chair asked for the details of the App to be circulated to the Panel.

A Member asked how the Police prioritised reports of crime. The Chief Inspector stated the Police did have a system of prioritisation, with different teams responding to different reports of crime. Priority on incoming calls was based on the threat, potential harm, vulnerability level and what enforcement action could be taken. Sometimes there were national initiatives which meant a priority focus on a specific crime area.

A Member of the Panel asked about what action was being taken over illegal use of housing. In response the Head of Community Safety said they were liaising with the Council's housing department. There were certainly issues with housing including,

problems associated with multiple occupancy and rogue landlords. The Chief Inspector commented that the Police often conducted visits to houses in multiple occupancy.

The Procurement Officer stated the Council wanted to ensure that they were not using any expenditure on organisations or individuals which were involved with modern day slavery. The procurement department had been working with Community Safety to strengthen the Council's processes when selecting contractors. All the members of the procurement team had undertaken the Council's online training course and all of the team involved in direct procurement had completed the Chartered Institute for Procurement and Supplies Modern Day Slavery course. They had also worked with the Council's legal department to update and refresh the terms and conditions for contracts, to give increased powers if modern day slavery was discovered, such as termination of contracts or penalties. These terms and conditions had also been cascaded down to subcontractors. The onus had been put on the contractor to ensure that their supply chain was fully compliant. The next phase was to strengthen the tender process in higher risk areas such as construction, food and care.

A Member of the Panel asked about the relationships the Council had with schools and religious groups on the matter of modern day slavery. In response, the Head of Community Safety said the Police would regularly engage with schools on matters of child sexual exploitation in addition to modern day slavery. Children that were victims of modern day slavery would not necessarily be within the education system. It was however important to raise awareness within schools. There was robust engagement with the faith sector. Some additional work was just commencing in the voluntary community sector. A faith engagement worker had recently been employed through the Safeguarding Board. They were working proactively to engage organisations to support the Council, such as within soup kitchens.

Resolved: That the Head of Community Safety circulate details to the Panel of the App which is able to detail if a car wash is believed to be acting legitimately.

Resolved: That the Head of Community Safety circulate the briefing note to the Panel which went to the Leader on the steps being taken to fight knife crime within Wolverhampton.

7 **Safer Wolverhampton Partnership Performance Update**

The Graduate Management Trainee presented a progress update report on the Community Safety and Harm Reduction Strategy 2017-2020. The report detailed the progress of the strategic priorities within the strategy. These priorities were reducing re-offending, reducing victimisation and violence prevention. A Black Country Reducing Reoffending Strategy had been developed which would complement the work of the Black Country Strategic Group. With reference to reducing victimisation, the key work was the 2016-2019 Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. The Wolverhampton Domestic Violence Forum training plan had been refreshed and training was taking place with partners across the City. There had also been a successful 'Orange the World' campaign which aimed to raise awareness of violence against women and girls. The Council had been awarded £500,000 from the

Violence Against Women and Girls Service Transformation Fund to cover a three year period 2017-2020. The funding had allowed the Council to undertake additional strands of work as identified within the report.

The Graduate Management Trainee stated that more targeted work had taken place with businesses who could often fall victim to repeat crimes. The Youth Offending Team continued to deliver against the current Violence Prevention Strategy. There had been an increase in youth violence in Wolverhampton, which was in line with national trends, but was still a concern. There had been a robust approach to the Council's Prevent Duty, which included case management support and the work of the Channel Panel. The Safer Wolverhampton Partnership also actively monitored community cohesion across the City, which included any tensions arising.

The Graduate Management Trainee said the Annual Report of the Safer Wolverhampton Partnership was scheduled to be received by Cabinet in September. The performance data contained with the report presented to scrutiny was only a brief summary.

A Member of the Panel asked about the significant increase in violent crimes committed with the use of a firearm or a knife. The Chief Inspector agreed that there had been a significant percentage increase in the crimes, but the overall number of incidents remained relatively low. The West Midlands Chief Constable was the national lead for firearms. He was very keen to ensure all intelligence was actioned swiftly surrounding firearms no matter how minor. The amount of armed response vehicles had been increased across the West Midlands. Proactive operations were undertaken on gangs operating within the City which included mobile operations. In reference to knife crime, the Police did respond to reports from the public of people carrying knives. They also used their stop and search powers in a targeted approach in certain areas of the City. Preventative work was also ongoing within schools. Reporting from schools was encouraged where they had concerns about pupils. The Police undertook knife sweeps in areas of the City, where they believed knives had been stashed by gangs.

There was a discussion about Police response times to firearm incidents. The Chief Inspector said these varied depending on where the vehicles were based but the Police did relocate vehicles based on risk intelligence to ensure faster response times.

A Member asked whether there was enough neighbourhood Police Officers within the Wolverhampton area as they thought the shift pattern operated meant there was often times where there was no Police presence in a particular area. The Chief Inspector stated that different neighbourhood teams within the Wolverhampton area covered for the teams not on duty. Officers were moved around according to priorities and risk.

There was a discussion about knife amnesty. The Chief Inspector said that knives were deposited in the knife bins. She did not have the figures as it was the Police and Crime Commissioners Office which emptied them. It was however true to say people were carrying knives within Wolverhampton and the Police were having to use stop and search powers and were finding hidden stashes of knives. The Head of Community Safety said a briefing note had been prepared for the Leader of the Council summarising the initiatives towards reducing knife crime after the recent

murder within the Wolverhampton area. She offered to arrange for this to be circulated to the Panel.

The Head of Community Safety confirmed that there were key locations within Wolverhampton which were more likely to suffer from gang activity and knife crime. Engagement with schools in the lead up to the Summer holidays had been identified as a priority by the Police and Crime Commissioners Office. Screening tools had been updated within Wolverhampton in order to be able to better identify individuals at risk of criminal activity. To date there had not been any problems with engaging academy schools. The Chief Inspector stated training for medical students had taken place, called the Street Doctors Scheme. Young people deemed at risk of knife crime had been brought together with the trainee doctors to help educate them about stabbing injuries, debunk certain myths and provide some first aid skills.

Meeting closed at 7:30pm.

Agenda Item No: 7

Adult Education
Fees Policy
2018-19

Document Information		
Document title	Fees Policy	
Version	2.1	
Status	Draft	
First Issued	May 2018	
Maintained by	Senior Manager (Business Operations and Student Services)	
Revision History		
Version	Date	Details
1.1	May 2018	New document
1.2	May 2018	Consulted with SMT and Curriculum Managers Additional content added by Student Services Manager, alterations to Appendix A and adoption of AEW Policy format
1.3	May 2018	Additional content – sections 7, 11 and 18 amended
1.4	May 2018	Additional content – sections 2, 3 and 4 amended
1.5	June 2018	Additional content – section 8 added
2.0	June 2018	Additional content – Appendix A amended – Sent for review
2.1	July 2018	Title change to Adult Education Fees Policy 2018-19

1 Introduction

The core fee structure is used for the standard Adult Skills Budget (ASB) and Community Learning (CL) programmes and is based on an hourly rate, which includes tuition costs and an element of costs associated with running of the course such as buildings, administration and marketing.

There are four categories of fees:

- Fully Remitted Fee
- Partially Remitted Fee
- Standard Fee
- Full Cost Recovery Fee

The final cost of a course is determined when the hourly rate is multiplied by the number of Guided Learning Hours per course and then rounded up to the nearest £5. Further details are available in [Appendix A](#).

Prior to enrolling a student onto a course checks will be carried out to ensure that the student is eligible to study in the UK. If they are not, the student will be asked to pay full cost recovery fees (see section 10 for detail).

2 Students aged 16-18

Students who are aged between 16-18 on the academic year they are studying in require a programme of study. Study programmes are individually designed for each young person so they can achieve their aspirations for sustainable paid work, further or higher education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship. This provision is fully fee remitted (no cost)

3 Students aged 19-23

Full fee remission for students aged 19+ on the 31st August of the academic year they are studying in, who fall into the categories below includes:

a. Full level 2 or level 3 entitlement

Student has not already achieved a first full level 2 or 3¹ qualification.

- Old GCSE Grades A* - C
- New GCSE Grades 9 - 4 or equivalent

b. Learning to progress to L2

Students with a prior attainment of less than level 2 and need an entry or level 1 qualification to progress to a full level 2

c. Repeat full-level 2

Students who have already achieved a full level 2 and are unemployed

4 Students aged 19+

Students aged 19 or older studying English and/or Maths up to and including Level 2 are entitled to full remission if they have not previously attained a GCSE grade A* to C or grade 9 - 4 in the subject.

¹ Some level 3 qualifications are not eligible for remission but are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan

5 Unemployed students

A student who is unemployed is eligible for full fee remission. One or more of the following must apply:

- a. They receive Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)
- b. They receive Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and are in the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG)
- c. They receive Universal Credit², and earn either less than 16 times the appropriate age-related rate of the national minimum wage / national living wage a week, or £338 a month (individual claims) or £541 a month (household claims) and Jobcentre Plus determine as being in one of the following groups.
 - All Work-Related Requirements Group
 - Work Preparation Group
 - Work-Focused Interview Group

6 Local Flexibility

- a. A student may be eligible for full remission if they receive other means tested benefits and need these skills to gain employment or move into more sustainable employment and earn either less than 16 times the appropriate age-related rate of the national minimum wage / national living wage a week, or £338 a month (individual claims) or £541 a month (household claims).
- b. If a student has a low household income each application will be assessed individually. A successful application will lead to full or partial remission dependent upon the level of household income and circumstances.

7 Income Based Benefits

A list of income based benefits are found in [Appendix B](#)

a. Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) in the Health Related Activity Group (HRAG)

Students in receipt of ESA (HRAG) may be eligible for full remission upon production of appropriate, correct evidence dated within the last year.

b. Income Support

Students in receipt of income support may be eligible for full remission upon production of appropriate and correct evidence dated within the last year.

c. Working Tax Credit

Students in receipt of Working Tax Credit may be eligible for partial or full fee remission and should be asked to produce the award notice³. On page one of the award notice it will state the nature of the amount of the award and will also detail whether it is Working Tax Credit. Only those students in receipt of a household income of or below £22,000 will be eligible for either full or partial remittance.

² <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/overview>

³ People claiming these credits will be provided with an award notice on form TC602, issued by the inland revenue

d. Pension Credit⁴

Students in receipt of Guarantee Credit (on its own or with savings Credit) will be eligible for partial fee remittance. Students awarded Savings Credit only will not be eligible for partial fee remittance unless they are in receipt of another means-tested benefit.

Pension Credit replaced minimum income guarantee for people aged 60 and over. There are two elements of Pension Credit:

- Guarantee Credit, which provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over
- Savings Credit, which may reward pensioners, aged 65 and over for modest income and savings they have in retirement

The Pension Service will issue an award notice to people claiming Pension Credit which will show the amount of each element of the award under the section headed "Your Pension Credit"

e. Housing Benefit

Students receiving housing benefit may be eligible for partial remission upon production of evidence.

f. Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Students receiving a reduction for their council tax may be eligible for partial remission upon production of evidence. This does not include the single person 25% discount.

8 Students in receipt of low wage

Employed students who cannot contribute towards the cost of co-funding fees may be entitled to full remission if:

- a. They are eligible for co-funding, and
- b. earn less than £15,736.50 annual gross salary, based on the Social Mobility Commission's low pay threshold of £8.07 (hourly rate in 2016) and on the assumption of a 37.5hr contract with paid statutory holiday entitlement

Supporting evidence will be required.

9 Advanced Learner Loans 19+

Level 3, 4 and 5 courses are eligible for the Advanced Learner Loan. The loan amount may range from a minimum of £300 up to the value of either the providers fee or the funded are set by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (whichever is the lowest). For students whose employer has agreed for them to attend these courses, the funding rate (and loan) takes account of an assumed employer monetary contribution (50% minimum of the fully-funded⁵ rate).

Students who wish to start a course eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan will be invited to attend a briefing with Student Services who will provide further information and support.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit/overview>

⁵ income generated meets all direct costs (e.g. tutor materials, etc.) but not fixed costs

10 Community Learning (CL) courses

The purpose of Community Learning is to develop the skills, confidence, motivation and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds in order to:

- improve their health and well-being, including mental health and/or
- progress towards formal learning or employment, and/or
- develop stronger communities

11 Learning Clubs

Learning Clubs are informal learning classes. AEW provide facilities, equipment and support from a teacher-facilitator. Student in a Learning Club pay a course fee directly to the teacher-facilitator and a small fee to AEW where the learning takes place in one of our venues.

12 Full cost recovery⁶ courses

Fees are to be set on a course by course basis up to a maximum charge of £12.00 per hour, as this will be dependent on market conditions and the nature of the courses. Programmes can be organised for a commercial market but agreement as to the full cost fees is subject to agreement by the AEW Senior Management Team.

13 Internal programmes to Wolverhampton City Council

The service provides courses for departments within Wolverhampton City Council. These are negotiated with each department at a level which ensures that the Service covers its direct costs and where appropriate a contribution to other costs such as marketing, administration and premises.

14 Profit-making courses⁷

Fees are to be set on a course by course basis with no maximum charge set as this will be dependent upon market conditions and the nature of the courses. Programmes will be organised for a commercial market but agreement as to the fees set is subject to agreement by the AEW Senior Management Team.

15 Marketing

When advertising courses the cost of the examination will be included as a separate item to the cost of the course. The total cost of the course should be rounded up to the nearest £5. Incentives to attract new students⁸ or to address the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion targets are encouraged. Such discounts or incentives will be recommended by the Marketing team and approved by the AEW Senior Management Team.

⁶ Income generated to recover all costs of delivery including contribution to fixed costs

⁷ Income generated to make a profit on all costs of delivery, including contribution to fixed costs.

⁸ New students are defined as individuals who have not been enrolled on a AEW learning programme during the last three full academic years.

16 Enrolment

Students will be required to pay the required fee, or fees, when enrolling. Local arrangements for the paying of fees by instalment should be discussed with the appropriate AEW staff at the time of booking and will be at the discretion of the Student Services Manager.

If a student is claiming a reduction in fees they will be required to provide proof of benefit and sign a self-declaration on enrolment.

17 Exam fees

Students will be expected to pay examination, accreditation or test fees at the beginning of their course unless they qualify for remitted fees. If a student qualifies for remitted fees they do not need to pay for the examination fee.

18 Refunds

We make every effort to keep our prices as low as possible and therefore the service does not return payments to students except in the following circumstances:

- If the student confirms in writing you wish to withdraw from the course at least 6 working days before the course start date
- If we have to cancel or relocate a course for any reason
- If a course is cancelled after it has started pro rata costs will be refunded

Please note we do not issue refunds if the student is unable to attend. We will however, consider refunding partial or full payments for any exceptional circumstances. Please speak to the teacher in the first instance.

Some students have their tuition and other fees paid for by their employer; in the event of course cancellation by AEW, fees will be refunded to the employer. Should the learner leave the learning programme, or the employment of their employer, prior to the scheduled end date, for whatever reason, then there is no entitlement for any refund to be made to any party.

Our course fees are based on minimum number of students, therefore if we do not reach this level of participants the service may cancel a course or ask students to pay extra to enable the course to run. If we are unable to run a course under these circumstances, the service will refund student fees, or offer a free transfer to another suitable course.

19 Further information

Applications for financial support are subject to sufficient funds being available. The aim of the funding is to overcome financial barriers to taking part / continuing in learning.

A student must inform Job Centre Plus of any financial support they receive from AEW.

The Student Services team can advise students on any queries relating to applications for full or partial remission. The team can be contacted on 01902 551658 or by email on enquiries@aes.wolverhampton.gov.uk

Appendix A**Fees**

Funding	Fee Type	2018-19
Adult Education Budget (AEB)	Standard fee	£4.00 per hour
	Remitted fee	Free based on ESFA Guidance
		Free or partial subject to DLSF ⁹ criteria
	Level 3, 4 and 5 (Advanced Learner Loans)	ESFA HUB Value
Community Learning (CL)	Standard fee	£4.00 per hour
	Remitted fee	£15.00 per course
Non-Government Funded	Full Cost recovery	Maximum of £12.00 per hour
	Learning Clubs	£48.00 (£16 per term) reg fee to AEW, self-employed tutor then sets and collects course fees directly from attendees

Fee rates applied to a typical 60-hour course

Fee Type	2018-19
Standard fee	£240
Remitted fee	Partial / No Fee
Full cost recovery	£720

⁹ DLSF – Discretionary Learner Support Fund

Appendix B**Core Income Based benefits**

Category	Type	Further information
Jobseekers Allowance	ESFA	Including the partner where the claim is joint (FREE)
Unemployed, receiving Universal credit and mandated training	ESFA	(FREE)
Employment Support Allowance	ESFA	Work related activity group (FREE)
Income Support	ESFA/DLSF	(FREE)
Employment Support Allowance	DLSF	Support group (FREE)
Council Tax Reduction	DLSF	Partial remission
Housing Benefit	DLSF	Partial remission
Working Tax Credit	DLSF	Partial remission
Pension Credit	DLSF	Partial remission
Incapacity Benefit	DLSF	Vocational courses only (FREE)

Age related remission criteria

Category	Type	Further information
Students aged 16-18 on the 31 st August of the academic year they are studying in on a programme of study	ESFA	(FREE)
Students aged 19+ on the 31 st August of the academic year they are studying in taking their first full level 2 or 3 qualification	ESFA	(FREE)
Students aged 19+ on the 31 st August of the academic year they are studying in who are enrolling onto an entry or level 1 qualification and need a step up to achieve a FL2	ESFA	(FREE)
Students aged 19-23 who have already achieved a FL2 and are unemployed	ESFA	(FREE)
Students of all ages who have not reached GCSE Level C/4 or above in English and Maths taking a GCSE English and Maths Qualification	ESFA	(FREE) Resits for students who currently have grades A*-C / 9-4 will not be funded

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Adult Social Care

Strengths Based Assessment Guide

Purpose:

The purpose of this guidance is to guide practitioners in strengths based thinking with prompts and suggestions to consider as part of the assessment process

Approved by – Adult Social Care Management Team 06.10.2017

Published – October 2017

Review Date – October 2019

REVIEW LOG

Date	Version	Comments	Approved by
06.10.2017	1.0	New guidance produced	Adult Social Care Management Team

This system of recording review dates is designed to ensure staff at all times use the correct version of the up to date Policy. This system is used on all Wolverhampton City Council – Adult Social Care Policies and Procedures.

CONSULTATION

The following people have been consulted on this policy:

Service Director, Heads of Service, Principal Social Worker, Senior Social Work Unit Managers, Social Work Unit Managers, Social Workers.

Strengths Based Assessment Guide

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 What does working with strengths mean?
- 3.0 How to complete an assessment using a strengths based approach

Appendices

- A A blossoming conversation
- B ROPES
- C Examples of questions to ask in strengths based assessing:
- D Strengths mapping
- E The 5-column approach

Strengths Based Assessment Guide

1.0 Introduction

Holistic social work assessments should focus on strengths, as well as needs. This guide is designed to aid strengths based thinking with prompts and suggestions to consider as part of the assessment process. However, this should be considered as a starting point only, as each person will have individual needs and strengths to explore.

Key sections of the current assessment form have been referred to in this guide, but it is important that social care practitioners balance strengths and needs in all parts of the assessment and support planning documents.

This guide is aimed at people with care and support needs requiring an assessment under the Care Act 2014. It covers all service user groups.

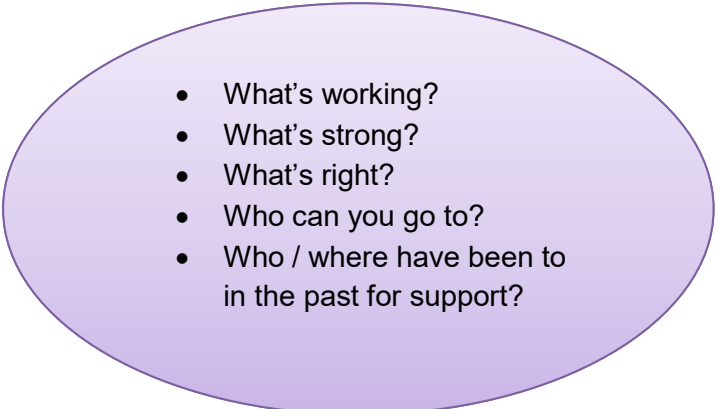
2.0 What does working with Strengths mean?

The Care Act 2014 expects social care practitioners to apply a strengths based approach when working with people with care and support needs. This means looking first at what someone can do, rather than focus primarily on what they can't. It is also about considering what they have the **potential** to achieve. This is called a "glass half full" perspective.

An important aspect of strengths based thinking is recognising an individual's ability to cope with problems and acknowledging that resilience is ordinary, not extra ordinary.

It is also based on the premise that individuals will do better in the long run when they are helped to identify, recognise and use the assets and resources available in themselves and in their environment.

A strengths based assessment should not start with the services the individual receives, or even about what needs have changed. Strengths based conversations should focus on:

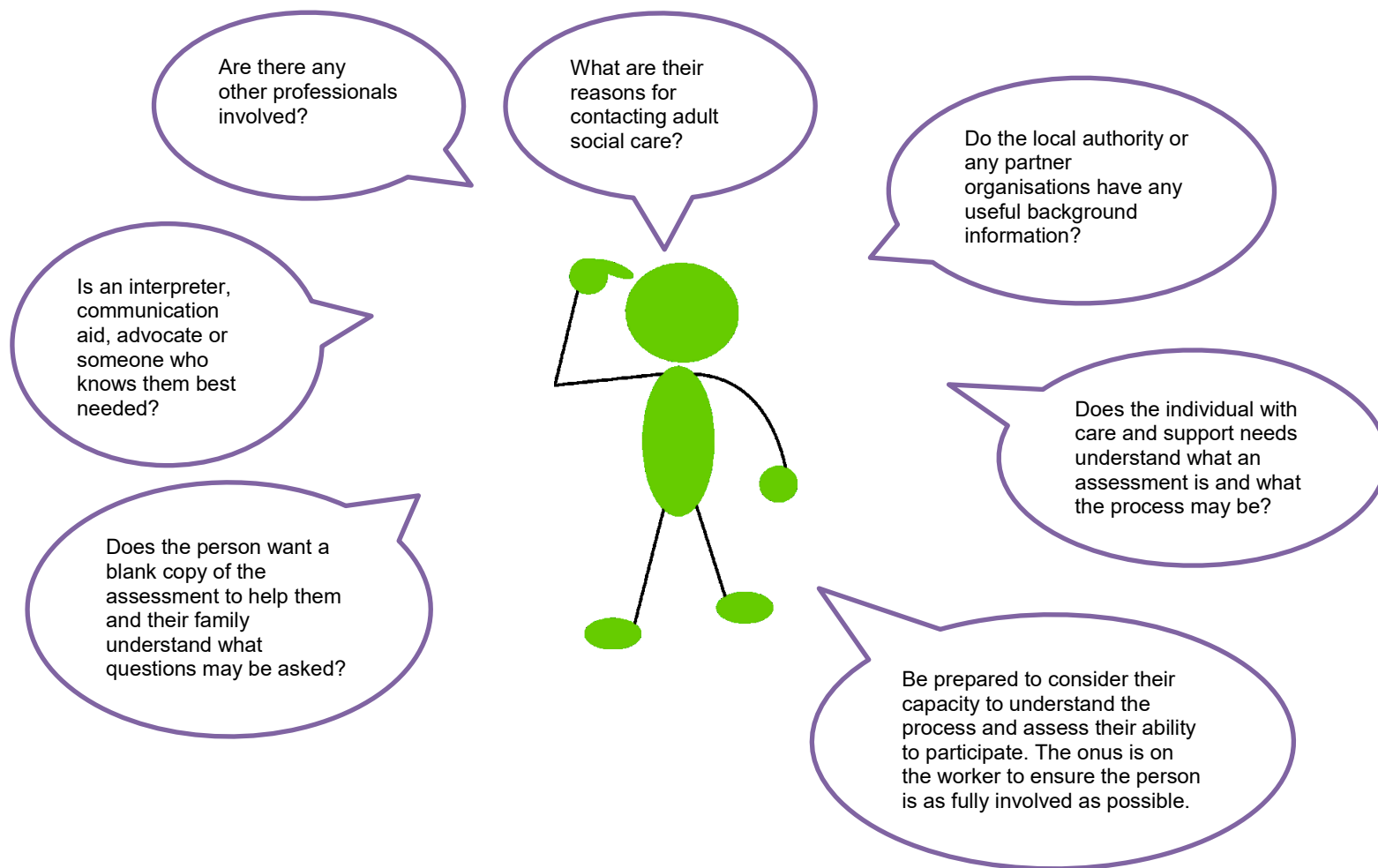
- 
- What's working?
 - What's strong?
 - What's right?
 - Who can you go to?
 - Who / where have been to in the past for support?

Practitioners need to use a different type of language to describe a person and their situation when applying strengths based approaches. The focus should not be on a diagnosis, but on helping people to identify their aspirations, interests and what's working, as well as what isn't working.

Taking the time to develop strengths based conversations with individuals who have care and support needs can be very meaningful as they are enabled to realise what they can do, and how best to use their skills and networks to achieve their outcomes.

3.0 Adult's assessment: How to complete an assessment using a strengths based approach

Preparing for an assessment is essential to make sure that the intervention is both appropriate, proportionate and empowering. Before the assessment, gather information and background on the individual's circumstances and consider factors such as:



Assessment Details

Strengths based assessments are based on good quality conversations, which focus on what people want to tell us and what they want us to know, not just about what we want to ask them.

There should be no service or needs led questions at the start. The initial conversation is not about establishing whether they meet eligibility criteria (although this will need to be considered and recorded later). Using “A blossoming conversation” (Appendix A) practice aid can help practitioners generate strengths based conversations from the outset.

Key sections of the assessment document and things to consider / tools to use to promote strengths based conversations:

Age band at time of assessment; ethnicity; sexual orientation; religion

- Focus on a “whole life” approach rather than just identifying needs and problems.
- This means exploring what makes the person unique – this can include their ethnicity, cultural observances, routines, preferences, age, sexual orientation, religion etc. This helps to build a picture about what is important to them.

Useful tools to gather information for strengths based conversations at this stage:

- Person-Centred Planning (PCP) tools such as *What’s important to / for*
- Chronologies / significant events.

Where the assessment took place

- Ask the person, or their circle of support, where they would prefer to meet and when.
- Where is the most suitable and comfortable place for them? Consider sensory needs when thinking about suitable environments.

Is this a supported self-assessment?

- Supported self-assessments are assessments led by the individual and supported by the local authority.
- Local authorities must offer supported self-assessment as a form of assessment if the adult or carer is willing, able and has the capacity to undertake such an assessment.
- When the supported self-assessment is complete, the local authority must assure itself that the assessment is a complete and accurate reflection of the individual's needs.

Communication

Communication needs

- Identify early on what the person's communications needs are and ensure that they have appropriate support or aids to be involved as much as possible.
- Useful ways of understanding a person's communication needs: communication passports; one page profiles, sensory integration reports, advocacy / someone who knows the person well; visual or sensory aids (e.g. using pictures that are meaningful to them; using objects of reference, etc); PCP tools such as the *Communication Chart*.
- Where individuals are not able to verbally communicate, observations of them in different environments may be helpful, as changes in facial expressions and body language could identify what they like / dislike and what's working / not working.
- Use of as many direct quotes as possible is recommended to record the adult or young person's "voice".
- The use of "I", where it is not part of a direct quote, should not be used if the assessment has been written by the social care practitioner and not the person.
- Where there are communication difficulties and the use of direct quotes is not possible, then person-centred planning tools and other evidence, such as observations, should be referred to in the assessment to demonstrate the "voice" of the person. This will also show how the practitioner and the circle of support have come to their conclusions about the person's wishes / views / preferences / outcomes etc.

Is advocacy required, if so has it been offered?

- Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities must arrange an independent advocate to facilitate the involvement of a person in their assessment, in the preparation of their care and support plan and in the review of their care plan, if two conditions are met:
 1. the person has **substantial difficulty** in being fully involved in these processes
 2. there is **no one appropriate available** to support and represent the person's wishes.
- Do not assume that a family member is an appropriate advocate – ask the person if they are happy for them to act in this role and reinforce their right to independent advocacy if they would prefer this.
- Record the outcome in the assessment.

About You

Your personal and family background

- Avoid focussing on a diagnosis or what services a person may have.
- Consider someone's history, significant events in their life and listen to their "story". How have these shaped the person?
- What abilities and skills has the person acquired in their life? What are their interests and aspirations?
- Don't just consider the person's current circumstances. Often, understanding the past helps to make sense of the present. For instance, there may have been significant loss in the person's life that is impacting on them now in some way; or perhaps a person's life has been spent in segregated settings so they may not know what their local community can offer them.

Some ideas about how to gather information:

- PCP tools - *What's Important to / for; Good day / Bad day; Relationship Circle; Learning log; What's working / not working; Perfect week;*
- Eco maps; genograms.
- Use of histories or chronologies.
- Exploration of important rituals and routines; likes / dislikes.
- Life story / reminiscence work (could also include memory boxes / photos / objects of reference, especially where people are unable to verbally communicate).
- Observations of body language / facial expressions in different environments / activities.

Your personal outcomes

- Personal outcomes should be about what is really important to the individual and should be agreed in collaboration with them and their circle of support (if appropriate).
- Outcomes should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time limited). Example: “To cook Sunday lunch for my family again in 6 months’ time”

PCP tools to use to help support with outcome planning:

- *What’s working / not working; Good day / Bad day; 4+1 questions; Important to / for.*

Useful approaches to generate strengths based conversations:

- Narrative approach – this assumes that inside any “problem” narrative is a story of strength and resilience. Calls for skills such as reframing to highlight strengths, critical questioning and deconstruction techniques to separate the person from the problem.
- ROPES (**R**esources **O**ptions **P**ossibilities **E**xceptions **S**olutions) model (see Appendix B).
- The 5-column approach (Appendix E)

What strengths, strategies and resources so you have, to achieve these outcomes for yourself?

Some suggested approaches when identifying outcomes:

- Narrative approach.
- ROPES (**R**esources **O**ptions **P**ossibilities **E**xceptions **S**olutions) model (see Appendix B).
- Try a conversational approach, rather than an overly structured interview.
- Use clarification to check you have understood; reflect the information back to encourage deeper conversations.
- Employ open ended questions; go where the person takes you; apply active listening.
- Enable people to see their achievements alongside pain / disappointment
- Self-reflection techniques - ask yourself: “am I really working *with* the person or am I doing *to* or *for* them?”
- PCP tool: *Gift and contributions / Like and admire*
- MAPS – a PCP tool to help people see where they are now and where they want to go. Focusing on the following steps:
 - History (exploring the person’s past)

- Dreams (identifying aspirations or goals)
- Nightmares (recognising what doesn't work for the person)
- Who is the person? (like and admire conversation)
- Gifts, strengths and talents (description of the person's strengths)
- Action plan (what needs to happen to support the person achieve their goals / dreams with timescales and actions)

Personal Care

Details of your needs with regards to Personal Care

- Ensure that the conversation starts with what the person *can* do.
- Be aware of the language being used and try not to focus on a diagnosis.
- Where the person is overly focused on their shortcomings use a narrative approach to help separate the person from the problem and reconstruct the person's perspective.
- Take a balanced view – don't ignore needs and risk
- Ask open questions to generate conversations (see Appendix C for some examples)

Other tools / approaches which may be helpful:

- PCP tools such as *What's working / not working; important to / for; good day / bad day; matching support*
- Narrative approach – critically question the view the person has of their needs / situation. Explore their potential, their resources and resilience.

Details of support you currently receive from family, friends or volunteers with regards to Personal Care

- The person's informal networks and relationships are a potential strength and vital resource.
- Explore what a "good life" looks like for the individual with care and support needs and the people who currently support them to meet their needs informally.
- Ask open questions to gather more information (see Appendix C for examples).

- Offer carers assessment where applicable

Tools that could be used:

- *Relationship circle; What's working / not working*

Family Relationship and Social Activities

Details of your needs with regards to Family Relationships and Social Activities

- When people have more informal relationships and connections to their local community (i.e. with an organisation, club or group) they are more physically and mentally active as a result, which benefits their wellbeing and health.
- Each person's network of support is likely to be different and will change over time as circumstances alter.
- We usually develop relationships with immediate and extended family members, and sometimes have quality relationships with neighbours. Also important, is an extended network of support made up of paid and unpaid specialists like doctors, solicitors, counsellors, clubs and association members, employers, work colleagues, teachers, and religious leaders.
- Recognising when support networks are weak, and galvanising the support around an individual is an important way of increasing a person's resilience.
- Also, consider how the individual's likes and hobbies might contribute to the local community. Connect people to local clubs / courses or events that will be of interest to them.
- Be aware of what universal services are available locally and not just formal services / segregated day opportunities.

Useful tools and resources to use:

- PCP tools: *Presence to contribution; learning log; relationship circle. Important to / for, what's working / not working / good day / bad day*
- Ecomaps, genograms
- Strengths mapping (Appendix D)

- Positive risk taking approach
- Narrative approach
- ROPES (Appendix B)
- Observations to identify what the person enjoys and what their interests are.
- Looking at photos / memory boxes to identify what people have enjoyed / done in the past.

Work, Training, Education or Volunteering

Accessing and Engaging in Work, Training, Education or Volunteering Support Criteria

- Wellbeing isn't just about being physically and mentally healthy, but also means being an active citizen. This may be by being able to pursue employment and / or learning opportunities.
- The practitioner's role is to identify what interests / aspirations the person has in terms of accessing work, training, education or volunteering and identifying with the person and their circle of support how to make this happen.
- A narrative approach may be needed where the person and / or their circle of support feel that the individual's difficulties preclude them from accessing such opportunities.
- The worker's role is to critically question their perspective and help them to see their strengths and potential.

Useful tools and resources:

- PCP tools: *Presence to contribution; learning log; Important to / for*
- Strengths mapping (Appendix D)
- Positive risk taking approach
- Narrative approach
- ROPES (Appendix B)

Eligibility, Wellbeing Summary and Conclusion

The 3-part test of eligibility should be applied and a record of this determination clearly recorded.

1. Are the person's needs due to a **physical or mental impairment or illness**?
2. If so, consider whether the effect of the adult's needs is such that they are unable to achieve two or more of the specified **outcomes**. There should be at least one sentence to support the decision has been made in each domain.
3. Finally, and crucially, local authorities must consider whether, as a consequence of the person being unable to achieve two or more of the specified outcomes there is, or is likely to be, a **significant impact** on the person's **wellbeing**. "Significant Impact" on wellbeing needs to be fully explored. Consider: if support is not provided what would be the outcome to the adult?

For more information and support on Care Act eligibility criteria please access the e-learning training on the Learning HUB
<http://portal/corporate/city-people/SitePages/Hub.aspx>

Assessment/Re-assessment Conclusion

A strengths based assessment will clearly distinguish fact from opinion and provide an analysis of the information to evidence why a particular course of action is being taken. It should also give details of the assessor's professional judgement based on this analysis and evaluation.

Analysis means: "examining the elements of an issue, gaining a better understanding of it and then selecting a course of action".

There are 4 stages to analysing and evaluating information:

1. **Breaking down information and understanding the main issues.** Asking "how", "what", "why" questions; critiquing evidence; cross checking information and making sense of the data.
2. **Understanding and interpreting.** Applying knowledge from theory, research and legislation; using models of practice and tools; considering values and ethics. Identifying any differences in opinion and why this is.
3. **Planning a course of action.** Evaluating the information to identify how best to intervene or not to intervene. Examining implications and consequences. Weighing up pros and cons of any particular option / action. Looking at what has happened in the past.
4. **Presenting the analysis.** There should be a conclusion by the social worker detailing their professional judgement / decision and giving the reasons for this based on the analysis of the information.

Details of information / advice / signposting given as part of this assessment, including preventing or delaying needs and promoting independence

Explain the advice given to the adult to help them to meet or reduce their needs and delay further needs developing. This should be completed as part of a consideration of a strengths based approach, identifying what else other than the provision of care and support might assist the person in meeting the outcomes they want to achieve.

This could include things like small adaptations, equipment, reablement and / or falls prevention.

When certain preventative services are appropriate it may be beneficial to pause the assessment process, so the outcome of this support can be determined prior to the assessment being finalised.

At the end:

Reflect objectively to make sure strengths, needs and outcomes have not been over or under estimated.

It may be necessary to speak to others in the individual's network (ensuring consent is obtained) and/or seek further evidence.

Support planning:

Strengths based support plans should not be service led, but based around the goals the person wants to achieve.

Outcomes identified in the support plan should:

- Be personalised and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-limited).
- Be revisited at each review / reassessment to identify if they have been met and if not explore why not.
- Change over time and should be directly linked to improving quality of life.

Example of a strengths based outcome:

Priority: Lucy wants to have her son living with her again by September 2017. **Intended Outcome:** To have a 2-bed flat where Lucy and her son can live.

What strengths apply: Lucy has successfully managed her current tenancy for over 12 months. She has used her initiative to get advice about her benefits. She is working with the mental health team to manage her feelings of depression. Lucy has attended all of her supervised visits.

What other resources are needed and who does what: For her son to move in with her Lucy needs to move into more appropriate housing; social worker to support Lucy with her housing application. Lucy agrees to be more flexible in her choice of location if required. Social worker and Lucy are in regular contact with children's services (weekly) to identify other goals that need to take place before her son is able to come home.

Remember:

- If there is a recommendation not to provide Care and Support to meet eligible needs, it must be stated on the support plan how the adult will be supported to achieve their outcomes in day to day life (e.g. family support, community support, telecare, universal services).

Tools to aid strengths based support planning:

The 5-column approach – Appendix E

PCP tools – What's working / Not working, Learning log, PATH, MAPS

S T R E N G T H S - B A S E D



A BLOSSOMING CONVERSATION

A Practice Aid designed by Jo, Angela & Alice

ROPES (Resources Options Possibilities Exceptions Solutions) model.

Clay Graybeal's ROPES (Resources Options Possibilities Exceptions Solutions) model is a way of gathering additional information rather than just relying on traditional assessment information. This model also reduces the focus on diagnosis / problems.

ROPES	Content Area
Resources (<i>where do my resources lie, what can I access today? Who are my role models? Skills and interests, community / religious involvement, family rituals, important family stories</i>)	Personal / Family Social environment Organisational Community
Options	Present focus Emphasis on choice What can be accessed now? What is available and hasn't been tried or utilised?
Possibilities (<i>glass half full concept / looking at potential; how can I prepare for the future?</i>)	Future focus Imagination Creativity Vision of the future (<i>when problem has been solved what will this look like?</i>) What have you thought of trying but haven't tried yet?
Exceptions (<i>to the problem</i>)	When is the problem not happening? When is the problem different? When is part of the hypothetical future, solution occurring? How have you survived, endured, thrived? (<i>i.e. how have you overcome other adversities / problems?</i>)
Solutions (<i>person-led; focus on constructing solutions, not solving problems</i>)	What's working now and what are your successes? What are you doing that you would like to continue doing? What if a miracle happened? (de Shazer, 1985) What can you do now to create a piece of the miracle?

Examples of questions to ask in strengths based assessing:

Individual's strengths, hobbies, abilities, wishes, etc.

- What is the individual good at? What do they enjoy doing? What did they used to enjoy doing but can no longer do?
- What would they like to be better at?
- What do they think they can do better or more of?
- What do they think they can do to improve themselves and their wellbeing?
- What do they think will help, if not to make things better, then at least to prevent things from getting worse?

Individual's support network (friends, family, neighbours, professionals, etc.), their strengths, abilities, knowledge, etc.

- Who can they count on? How would they reach them? What would they count on them for?
- Who visits them frequently? How often?
- Who do they miss? Why are they not able to see/keep in touch with these people?
- Who do they communicate with? How? With what frequency?
- Who else do they know that could be part of their lives?
- Are there any other people helping the individual? Any other professionals?
- Is there anything that could facilitate this network to increase, either in quantity or quality? Do they want it to increase?
- What has been working until now, and how have things changed?
- What could help to enable them to return to previous means of support which worked for them?
- Which needs/outcomes can be met/achieved now without waiting for/moving to a care and support plan?

Needs, challenges, risks, etc. (focusing on strengths does not mean ignoring these, but maximising and using the strengths to overcome them)

- What is preventing the individual from doing what they would like to do or seeing who they would like to see?
- What do they think they can do to change this?
- Who do they think can help to change it?

From: Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) www.scie.org.uk

Strengths Mapping

A focused discussion with the person about their strengths can lead to new opportunities to develop and share skills as well as make new connections. This is sometimes referred to as a 'strengths-mapping exercise'. This method of assessment builds a picture of the individual's strengths and of the community around them.

There are two types of strength: 'soft' and 'hard', each of which applies to the individual and the community.

'Soft' strengths:

Individual

Personal qualities
Knowledge and skills
Relationships
Passions and interests

Community

Links with neighbours
Community groups
Shared interest groups
Community leaders

'Hard' strengths:






Individual

Health
Finances
Housing
Transport

Community

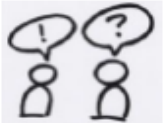




Health and social care services
Leisure
Schools
Community buildings

S T R E N G T H S - B A S E D

<p>Issues & Feelings</p> 	<p>Future Picture</p> 	<p>Strengths</p> 	<p>External Resources</p> 	<p>First Steps</p> 
<p><i>Describe the issue/problem</i></p>	<p><i>What does the future look like?</i></p>	<p><i>What are your strengths?</i></p>	<p><i>What strengths and resources do you need from others?</i></p>	<p><i>How can we achieve this?</i></p>

STRENGTHS-BASED

Example....

Issues & Feelings 	Future Picture 	Strengths 	External Resources 	First Steps 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Social Isolation</i> • <i>Loneliness</i> • <i>Access</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Socialising</i> • <i>Wider Social Network</i> • <i>Voluntary work</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Motivated</i> • <i>Outgoing</i> • <i>Willing to learn</i> • <i>Friendly</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information</i> • <i>Internet Café</i> • <i>Library</i> • <i>Local groups</i> • <i>Place of worship</i> • <i>Gym</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Find internet café</i> • <i>Register with local library</i> • <i>Ask for information</i>

**ADULT EDUCATION WOLVERHAMPTON
"MAKING A DIFFERENCE" NEXT STEPS SURVEY 2016-2017**

FORM A

Based on 787 responses as at 11/10/2017		Frequency (787) responses	%	SUMMARY		
Employment Related Outcomes	Got full-time employment	43	5%	194	25%	Actual employment outcome
	Got part-time employment	35	4%			
	Became self-employed	34	4%			
	Got a better job/promotion	82	10%			
	Got an interview for a job	87	11%	263	33%	Pre-employment outcome
	Started a traineeship	5	1%			
	Started an apprenticeship	22	3%			
	Got a work placement/internship	39	5%			
	Became a volunteer	110	14%			
	Get more job satisfaction	90	11%	117	15%	Employment related
	Helped to cope with redundancy	27	3%			
	Other (not included in summary data)	88	11%	% reported a positive employment related outcome		
	No response	114	14%			
Personal Development Outcomes	Increased personal confidence	509	65%	% reported one or more positive personal development outcomes at end of the course		
	Increased enjoyment of life	307	39%			
	Improved social life	269	34%			
	Improved physical health	149	19%			
	Improved mental health	213	27%			
	More able to live independently	0	0%			
	Helped me stay in active retirement	73	9%			
	Other (included in summary data)	85	11%			
No response	69	9%				
Family & Community Outcomes	Became more involved in my child's education	194	25%	% reported one or more positive Family/Community outcome at end of the course		
	Became a governor or similar	0	0%			
	Became more involved in my local community	137	17%			
	Improved confidence in own parenting skills	0	0%			
	Encouraged others to take up learning	320	41%			
	Other (included in summary data)	372	47%			
No response	101	13%				

Intended Destinations

Future Learning	Enrol on a course with Wolverhampton Adult Education	505	64%	81% reported an intention to progress into further learning
	Enrol on a part-time course at a different college	31	4%	
	Enrol on a full-time course at a different college	16	2%	
	Enrol on a Higher Education course	61	8%	
	Apply for an apprenticeship or traineeship	21	3%	
	Take a break from studying / learning	49	6%	
	Other (not included in summary data)	72	9%	
	No response	61	8%	
Future employment	Look for employment /self-employment	196	25%	25% reported an intention to look for employment/self employment
	Remain unemployed - not ready to look for work	114	14%	
	Remain retired / become retired	73	9%	
	Continue my current full-time employment	110	14%	26% reported an intention to continue in employment/self employment
	Continue my current part-time employment	67	9%	
	Continue my current self-employment	26	3%	
	Continue volunteering	68	9%	
	Other (not included in summary data)	102	13%	9% reported an intention to continue volunteering
No response	77	10%		

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