

# **Citizens' Curriculum**

## **Phase 2 Project Report Executive Summary**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Learning and Work Institute (L&W) is an independent policy and research organisation dedicated to promoting lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion. In 2015/16, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) supported L&W to further develop the Citizens' Curriculum. This model promotes learning which is locally-led, involves learners in shaping its contents, and interlinks basic skills in language (English for Speakers of Other Languages), literacy and numeracy with digital, financial, health and civic capabilities.

L&W supported 13 pilots to establish the added value of the Citizens' Curriculum in contexts not included within the scope of the first piloting phase, such as English and maths provision for unemployed adults and in the workplace. In addition, L&W aimed to support effective practice in the use of the Citizens' Curriculum by developing health and civic capability frameworks or reference tools for provider and practitioner use.

This report presents the findings of the evaluation carried out during and at the immediate end of the Phase 2 piloting activity. This report also presents the process through which the Citizens' Curriculum capability frameworks were developed and validated.

## Findings

The evaluation found that the Citizens' Curriculum resulted in statistically significant outcomes for learners, including:

- Changes in their **employability**, with 8% finding a new job, 20% starting to apply for jobs, 33% starting to look for work, 49% improving their work-related skills, and 14% starting to volunteer on a regular basis.
- Improvements in their **attitudes towards learning**, with 94% feeling more motivated to learn and 42% signing up for another course.
- Increased **social and civic engagement**, with 73% making new friends, 59% reporting an improved social life, 28% improving their relationships with their family and 16% joining a community group.
- Improved **self-efficacy**, with 67% improving their self-confidence, 65% reporting a greater satisfaction with their life, and 31% reporting improved physical health.

It can be calculated that Phase 2 Citizens' Curriculum pilots created a public value of at least £1,443,390. However, the actual value of the pilots will be far greater than this total, as only a small number of the outcomes achieved by the pilots have been allocated a monetary value. Data on the costs of the pilots were not collected, so it is not possible to do a full cost-benefit analysis of the Citizens' Curriculum. However, Rochdale Borough Council's cost-benefit analysis suggests that for every £1 the council spent, they achieved a £3.68 financial return and generated a public value of £19.65.

In addition to the outcomes for learners, the pilots achieved a range of outcomes for practitioners and providers. These included:

- Increased confidence in adopting a learner-led approach;
- Enhanced capability to adopt interlinked and contextualised approaches to teaching Citizens' Curriculum capabilities;
- Improved understanding of their impact on learners;

- Improved practitioner morale through greater autonomy and involvement in curriculum design and development;
- Improved organisational ways of working, including the sharing and adoption of good practice and expertise across curriculum teams;
- More effective planning and interlinking of provision through adoption of a recognised and evidence-based framework; and
- Increased number of learners returning as volunteers.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The findings from the Phase 2 pilots extend our learning from the initial 2014/15 pilots in a number of ways. In particular, the new pilots:

- demonstrated the feasibility of implementing a Citizens' Curriculum model in new contexts;
- assembled an enhanced evidence base for learner, provider and practitioner outcomes as a result of implementing the Citizens' Curriculum;
- laid the foundations for further follow up work to assess the longer term impact of implementing the Citizens' Curriculum<sup>1</sup>; and
- developed indicative Citizens' Curriculum capabilities frameworks which have the broad support of practitioners and subject specialists.

In the light of the above findings, and in recognition of recent policy developments and current priorities, we recommend that further work on the Citizens' Curriculum focuses on implementing the model through:

- Engagement activity across the adult learning, skills and employment sector to achieve buy-in from providers and more widely amongst sector representative organisations, executive agencies and other sector bodies.
- Further activity, and the development of supporting resources, to help commissioners and providers use the Citizens' Curriculum model to ensure that devolved adult learning and skills includes a focus on Entry Level and basic skills learning which supports progression and meets local needs.
- The development and identification of further resources to support practitioners (including the use of peer volunteers and mentors) to adopt and implement the Citizens' Curriculum in their teaching, learning and support activities, particularly in alignment with current workforce development priorities for English and maths practitioners.
- Further piloting including settings not covered in depth by previous Citizens' Curriculum pilots, including English and maths in the secure estate (complementing our current Language for Change project which will pilot the Citizens' Curriculum for ESOL learning in prisons<sup>2</sup>), workplace English and maths, and 'place-based' pilots and development work.

This interim report therefore sets a clear direction for L&W's continuing programme of work on the Citizens' Curriculum, to be delivered in 2016/17 and beyond.

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<sup>1</sup> Follow up research activity will be carried out and reported on as part of our programme of work as UK National Co-ordinator for the European Agenda for Adult Learning 2015–17.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/our-work/life-and-society/citizens-curriculum/language-change-project>