

# Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Tuesday 10 July 2012

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G01C - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1  
2QH

## Supplemental Agenda

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	Submission from Save Southwark Adult Learning	
	London Borough of Southwark (Southwark Adult Learning Services) Inspection report	

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Date: 9 July 2012

# **ADULT LEARNING: CRISIS? WHAT CRISIS?**

**submission to Education Committee**

**July 10 2012**

**from SAVE SOUTHWARK ADULT LEARNING**

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In Autumn 2010, Southwark Adult Learning introduced a 'repeat fee' for arts and leisure courses. This represented an up to 255% increase for anyone wanting to study for more than one term. In addition, tutors were instructed that only classes with eight new – or 'unique' learners - *each term* could go ahead.

This spelled the end of 'lifelong learning' and heralded an effective shutdown of arts & leisure adult education for the borough's poor.

This sparked protests at Thomas Calton Centre from students who were about to be shut out by the new fee and 'unique learner' rule. Responding, last year, Southwark council ordered an investigation by a Scrutiny Panel.

The wheels turned slowly and management have done their best to put a gloss on dwindling enrolments and class closures resulting from the 'repeat fee'.

But students have kept up the campaign and conducted research into the effects of the 'repeat fee' and 'unique learner' rule, using the council's own figures, the Ofsted report, and testimony and evidence from students. Tutors have not been able to contribute information, under threat of disciplinary action.

No other adult learning provider that we have found has applied the measures.

Now, councillors have the power to end the notorious, discriminatory 'repeat fee' and unworkable 'unique learner' rule.

Read on for the full story.

<b>MANAGEMENT MYTH</b>	<b>REALITY CHECK</b>
'Fees have been frozen'	The repeat fee represents an increase of over 250% for those entitled to concessions and an increase of over 50% for others
'Class closures have not increased'	Arts and leisure course closures increased from under 5 per term in 2009 to 76 in 2011. Class cancellations have rocketed from 6.6% to 63.9%
'Any increase in closures simply reflect a greater number of courses on offer'	The number of arts and leisure courses has increased – but only because 10-week courses have been cut into multiples of 2,3,4, and 5-week courses
Southwark Adult Learning has been deemed “outstanding” and “excellent value for money” by Ofsted	Ofsted did not reflect on arts & leisure class closures or on the ‘repeat fee’ level
Each class must attract 8 new – or ‘unique’ in the jargon – learners each term	This target has proved totally unworkable and has been adapted, lapsed and waived in various ways for various courses

### **Arts and Leisure Classes Collapsing**

At the end of 2010 a new fee structure was introduced for Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL, or arts & leisure) in Southwark’s Adult learning service.

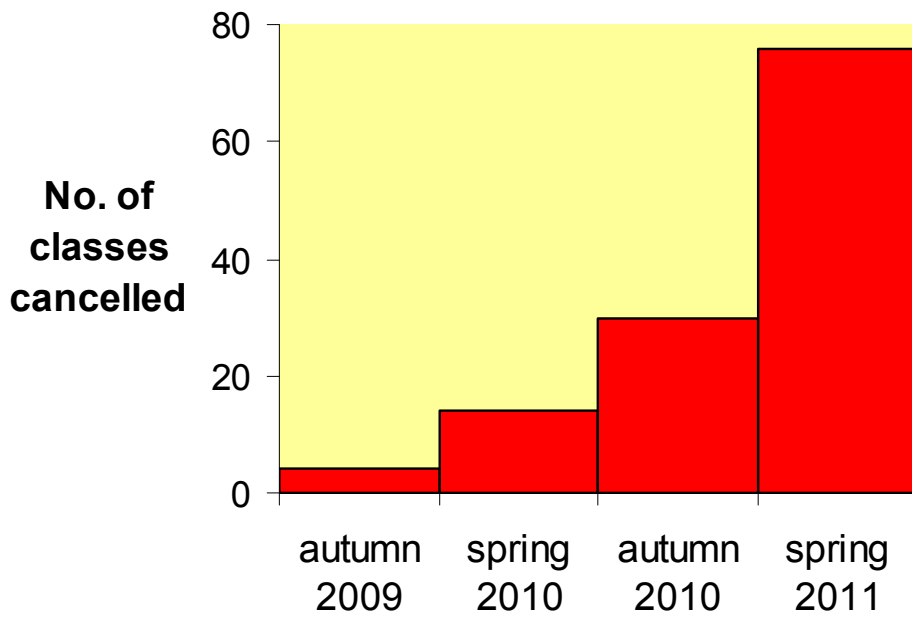
Each learner would now be entitled to attend just one class for one term, paying the standard or concessionary fee. To progress in the same class into the next term, or to take any other class, everyone would have to pay the ‘repeat fee’.

For a typical three-hour class taken over 10 weeks this would mean:

1. Learners paying the standard fee of £108 have to find £165.
2. Those entitled to a concessionary fee of £46.50 also have to pay the ‘repeat fee’: £165. A staggering and quite unaffordable increase for those on low incomes.

A campaign of learners and staff was formed to oppose this policy. The campaign argued that these new fees were not only damaging and unfair to learners, particularly for those on low incomes, but that learners would be driven away and classes would face wholesale closures. Regrettably, this warning has proved correct and PCDL, or arts & leisure, has seen a precipitous collapse in classes.

The graphs below are based on latest available figures from Southwark Council (11/6/2012). These figures show an alarming increase in class closures, rising to 76 cancellations in spring 2011.

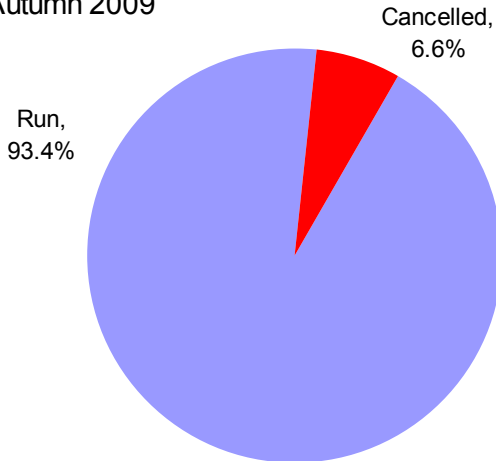


**Seventy six arts and leisure classes cancelled in spring 2011 compared to just four in autumn 2009**

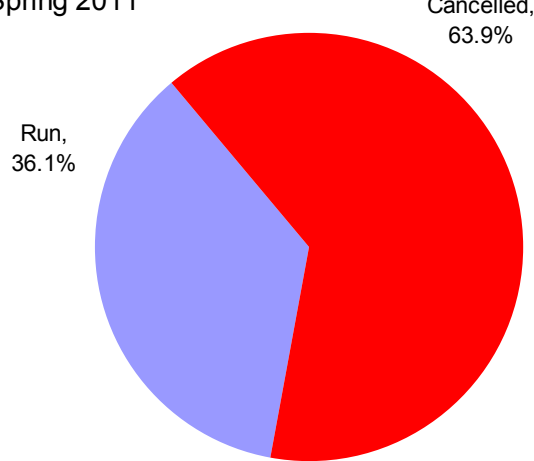
This sharp collapse in classes is seen even more clearly in the figures for the percentage of planned classes actually run. In autumn 2009, 93.4% of planned classes were

delivered, by the spring of 2011 this had plunged to just 36.1%. Almost two thirds of all arts and leisure classes were cancelled in spring 2011 compared to less than 7% in autumn 2009.

Autumn 2009



Spring 2011



**Classes run fell from 93.4% of those planned in autumn 2009 to just 36.1% in spring 2011**

### **Why has this happened?**

Before the repeat fee was introduced, classes were not 'un-economic', but there was a need to increase student numbers. Southwark's own figures showed that with 12 learners classes would cover running costs and with 14 or more would make a profit. What was needed was better marketing. It was a standing joke that hardly anyone in the borough even knew it had a PCDL, or arts & leisure adult learning service! Many warned that introducing an exorbitant 'repeat fee' would be counter-productive and so it has proved.

## **What about similar providers? What are they doing?**

Neighbouring local authorities have not followed Southwark's lead.

In Lambeth, all arts and leisure (two-hour, 11-week) classes charge £75 per term (£30 concessions). There is no 'repeat fee'. All further classes taken are charged at the standard or concessionary rate.

Nor is there a 'repeat fee' in Lewisham. All classes are charged at the standard rate, typically £80 (£40 concession). For a similar (two-hour, 10-week) class in Southwark the fee compares well, typically £71 (£31 concession). But, after just one term of one class, **all** learners face a 'repeat fee' of £110.

There is no justification for asking the most hard pressed in Southwark to pay £110 per term compared to £30 in Lambeth and £40 in Lewisham.

## **Why is Southwark's policy so wrong?**

Southwark has needlessly driven many away from adult learning, including the poorest and most vulnerable. Moreover, the 'repeat fee' is so high many who pay the standard rate cannot afford to continue and class closures result.

The community spirit built up in classes running over several terms, with a core group of returners and new people each term, has been destroyed.

Community learning has been proved to be highly effective in promoting physical and mental well-being, social inclusion and community cohesion. Many learners develop skills and talents over time and many of Southwark's learners have moved on to professional practice in arts, crafts, dance and movement.

This melting pot of growth and happiness has taken a mortal kick.

## **What needs to be done**

Southwark's standard and concessionary fees compare well to other local authority providers. These fees should apply to all classes taken and the 'repeat fee' abolished. This would bring Southwark back into line with Lambeth and Lewisham and would allow learner numbers to begin to improve again. This would not only be fairer to learners, particularly those on low incomes, but would allow class numbers to increase to levels where running costs are not only met, but a surplus generated and classes safeguarded.

## **Objections you may have heard**

**But the number of learners has not fallen?** It is true that the total number of 'unique learners' has not fallen, but this figure includes those on the free basic skills classes as well as fee paying students. This skews the picture. More to the point, the unique learner figure does not distinguish between the case where a learner is content with the new fee structure and carries on with their class, and the case where a learner takes one class for one term at the standard/concessionary rate, but is unable to afford the repeat fee and leaves. In each case, the student would count as one 'unique learner'. Even if it were the case that all learners had been driven away by the 'repeat fee' after taking just one class for one term the total number of unique learners would not be affected and could even increase! The number of unique learners is thus a meaningless statistic in the context of discussing repeat fees and no other data on learner numbers has been provided by the council.

**But haven't the number of classes delivered increased?** Actually, the number of arts and leisure classes delivered has fallen from 57 in autumn 2009 to just 43 in spring 2011, but even this hides the

submission to July 10 2012 Education Committee  
from SAVE SOUTHWARK ADULT LEARNING

extent of the collapse. Learners are still entitled to one standard or concessionary fee so classes won't collapse completely. The **real** reason why the number of classes reported to be delivered has not fallen by a much greater extent, however, is that many new 'short' classes have been introduced as even the more well-off students find they can't afford the repeat fees for a 10-week class. Thus, one 10-week class becomes two five-week classes – thus artificially inflating the total number of classes delivered.

**But didn't Southwark adult learning receive a good Ofsted report?** Southwark classes are fantastic, which is one of the reasons why the campaign has received so much support. And the standard and concessionary fees are good value. It is the 'repeat fee' that is so unfair and is driving learners away. Few can afford to pay the repeat fee and Ofsted would not have come across many in classes. Rather, Ofsted would have come across learners paying the standard or concessionary fee who, because of the 'repeat fee', were worried that they would not be able to afford to continue their classes into the next term. And this is precisely what is highlighted by Ofsted in their report (p6):

*What learners would like to see improved:*

- **opportunities to attend longer courses**
- **opportunities to continue studying their course from term to term**

The only way to comply with the Ofsted recommendations is to abolish the 'repeat fee' and to charge all classes taken at the standard and concessionary rate.

**But Southwark's adult learners say they are satisfied with the service provided?** There is a clear and unambiguous call from learners to abolish the repeat fee. At the daytime workshop held by Southwark Council on 16 January 2012 for current students (Supplemental Agenda for scrutiny sub-committee March 7, p 25) learners commented:

*If repeat you have to pay more, it's too expensive for some*

*Courses cannot be continued by students for another term without excessive fee.*

*And this leads to class closures: A class cancelled due to too few people – get more people.*

The need to abolish the repeat was again emphasised at the evening workshop for current and former learners held on June 18 (report to July scrutiny sub-committee forthcoming):

*The fee structure means I can only do one course for one term which debars me from developing and being part of a learning community;*

*I cannot afford the repeat learner fee. After attending various courses in Southwark for 25 years I now no longer attend one because of cost;*

*If I could take on more courses such as carpentry and still afford it on jobseekers, and if I felt this was a place I could progress in – basically remove the repeat fees, as I can't afford it but really want a new career;*

*I want to get access to more woodworking/ creative/ arts courses – be able to build and develop my skills. At the moment this centre is not available to me because of repeat fee structure.*

### **The way forward is clear: abolish the repeat fee**

The message from class closure figures, from the Ofsted report and from the learner consultation is abundantly clear and unambiguous: if learners are to be able to continue attending classes and if classes are to be safeguarded from closure then the repeat fee must be abolished.

# London Borough of Southwark

## (Southwark Adult Learning Services)

### Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 53145

**Name of lead inspector:** David Martin HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 9 March 2012

**Type of provider:** Local authority

**Address:** PO Box 64529  
London  
SE1 5LX

**Telephone number:** 0207 525 3294

## Information about the provider

1. The London Borough of Southwark provides adult and community learning through Southwark Adult Learning Services (SALS), a business unit of the culture, libraries, learning and leisure division in the department of environment and leisure. SALS has one main centre, in Peckham Rye, and also offers learning across the borough at off-site venues, through partnership arrangements, including those with its 15 subcontractors. Provision is largely funded by the Skills Funding Agency.
2. SALS is one of a large number of learning providers in the borough and surrounding boroughs, that include general further education colleges, sixth form colleges, other adult education providers, private training organisations, voluntary sector organisations and higher education providers. SALS offers part-time adult learning, both for qualifications and for social and personal development. Since the previous inspection, a significantly increased proportion of courses lead to accreditation.
3. Of local authority districts nationally, Southwark is ranked the 17th most deprived and 6th out of the London boroughs. The unemployment rate, of around 8%, is above the inner London average. Of Southwark's population, just below 40% are of minority ethnic heritage, the largest single minority ethnic group being Black African, constituting just over 16% of the population. In 2010/11, 89% of SALS' enrolments were from black and minority ethnic communities. Southwark school pupils perform below the national average at all key stages and for the General Certificate of Secondary Education.
4. The following provide training on behalf of SALS:
  - Aylesbury Every Woman Centre (non-accredited sewing courses)
  - Aylesbury Information Advice and Guidance (employability courses)
  - Blackfriars Settlement (English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), pre-entry level, information and communication technology (ICT), entry level and family learning, entry level)
  - Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (non-accredited family learning, entry level)
  - Eclectic Productions (ESOL, entry, foundation and intermediate levels, ICT, entry levels personal development, entry level, media courses for beginners)
  - Elephant Jobs (enterprise and social enterprise skills at intermediate level)
  - Flux Studios (jewellery courses)
  - Learning Unlimited (family learning, entry levels and foundation level)
  - London Wildlife Trust (family learning)



- Red Kite Learning (ESOL and literacy and numeracy, entry to foundation level, ICT beginners to advanced, money management, foundation level, family learning, entry to foundation level)
- Southwark Muslim Women’s Association (ESOL, pre-entry to foundation level, food safety, intermediate level, first aid, intermediate level, ICT, mixed levels, employability, foundation level, sewing for beginners, fitness for beginners, introduction to hair and beauty with ESOL for beginners)
- Walworth Garden Farm (non-accredited gardening and horticulture, bee keeping, beginners level)
- Southwark Council Community Games team (health and fitness programmes, mixed levels)
- Southwark Council events team (how to run a community event, all levels)
- Southwark Council arts team (performing arts programme, mixed levels).

Type of provision	Number of learners in 2010/11
<b>Provision for adult learners:</b> Learning for qualifications  Learning for social and personal development	548 part-time learners  3,893 part-time learners

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
<b>Learning for qualifications</b>	
	<b>Grade</b>
Literacy and numeracy	2
English for speakers of other languages	2
<b>Learning for social and personal development</b>	
	<b>Grade</b>
Arts, media and publishing	2
Community learning	2

## Overall effectiveness

5. SALS is a good provider of adult and community learning. With scarce resources it achieves excellent value for money. Good leadership and management place SALS at the heart of the local community. Its good partnerships are used to excellent effect to help the borough achieve its objectives, especially for social and economic regeneration. SALS and its partners make a valuable contribution to meeting the needs and interests of users and work well together to achieve good outcomes for learners. Quality improvement and SALS' self-assessment of its own strengths and areas for improvement are good. SALS' quality monitoring of subcontractors' work requires further improvement. Equality and diversity are well promoted.
6. Outcomes for learners are good. Learners' success is good, both on courses for qualifications and on those for social and personal development. Learners' skills and standards of work are good. Learners make good progress, achieve their

own objectives and apply new skills in their daily lives, including at work. Learners enjoy their studies and are often strongly motivated to study further. They feel safe and SALS' arrangements for safeguarding learners are good.

7. Teaching and learning are good, with much more good or better teaching than at the previous inspection, although the quality of teaching by subcontractors is more variable. Tutors make learning enjoyable and pay good attention to meeting learners' individual needs. Arrangements to provide information, advice and guidance to learners are good.

## Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good and have significantly improved since the previous inspection. Success rates are high, both for learners on courses for qualifications and for those on courses for social and personal development.
- Learners' skills and standards of work are good. In practical activities, as in the visual arts, some work is outstanding. Learners often make good progress, attain their learning goals and apply their new skills, including those for work, in their daily lives.
- Learners enjoy their studies and are rightly proud of what they achieve and can now do. They are strongly motivated by their studies and develop the confidence and enthusiasm to engage in further learning. SALS has no current systematic arrangements to gather and record information on the onward progress of its learners.
- Learners feel safe and demonstrate safe working practices. SALS' arrangements for safeguarding learners are good and government requirements are met.
- SALS and its partners work very well together, jointly improving outcomes for learners. Good partnerships provide learners with a rich variety of learning opportunities. These play a strong part in enabling SALS to reach learners from specific communities and other unrepresented groups.
- Teaching and learning are good, although less consistently good in provision managed by subcontractors. SALS' process to observe and to grade teaching and learning is robust, although this does not generally include lessons taught by subcontractors. Lessons are mostly well planned and executed, with very good attention to individual learners' needs. Tutors make learning fun.
- Individual learning plans are used well by tutors and learners, in particular to recognise and record progress towards the achievement of non-accredited outcomes. Targets for learners are appropriately specific, measurable and individualised. SALS does not formally record and measure learners' acquisition of wider skills, such as confidence and self-esteem.
- The range of the provision is good, meeting the needs and interests of learners well, and ensuring clear progression routes. Programmes are planned with consideration for local employment opportunities and to avoid duplicating courses offered by other providers. A number of courses include good additional activities to enrich learners' studies.

- The care, guidance and support for learners are good. Initial information regarding courses is good as is the availability of initial advice and guidance. Tutors provide sound advice on next steps for learners, although SALS has no systems to ensure that this is either comprehensive or impartial. Tutors give good individual support during lessons. Pastoral support is good.
- Good leadership and management have brought about significant improvements since the previous inspection. Much has been achieved by the slender management team with scarce resources. Operational management is good. Managers are sometimes stretched to address all issues promptly, given their small number.
- SALS' clear strategic vision and mission are very well promoted. It makes a substantial contribution to the promotion of the council's vision of a 'fairer future for all', including the economic development and regeneration of Southwark.
- Quality improvement arrangements, including self-assessment, are good, and much improved since the previous inspection. Quality assurance arrangements are increasingly consistently applied, but SALS has more work to do to ensure that subcontractors fully implement them. The availability and use of learner data are much improved.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The most disadvantaged and vulnerable learners are successfully attracted into learning. Tutors promote equality and diversity well in lessons.

### **What does SALS need to do to improve further?**

- Through improved monitoring, ensure that agreed quality assurance arrangements are fully implemented by subcontractors, including the observation of teaching and learning, to promote further improvements in outcomes and the quality of provision.
- To ensure that next steps information, advice and guidance are comprehensive and impartial, develop and implement arrangements to keep staff up to date and quality assure the advice and guidance given.
- To contribute to the evaluation and planning of provision, introduce arrangements to gather and analyse the destinations and progress of learners when they leave SALS.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- the adult environment which gives learners confidence
- the helpful and supportive staff
- being treated with respect
- the good quality of teaching
- the availability of child care

- the improved facilities at the Thomas Calton Centre
- meeting with others
- the opportunity to progress through levels of course and to further studies elsewhere.

**What learners would like to see improved:**

- opportunities to attend longer courses
- opportunities to continue studying their course from term to term
- the extent of certainty about the continuation of their studies in the period of economic difficulty.

**Summary of the views of partners as confirmed by inspectors****What partners like:**

- the responsiveness of SALS
- SALS' willingness to think flexibly
- their good working relations with SALS
- the excellent communication with SALS
- SALS' commitment to helping develop vocational skills
- SALS' central role as a key player in the community
- the improved clarity of contractual arrangements with SALS in recent times.

**What partners would like to see improved:**

- no significant areas of improvement were identified.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 2**

8. SALS has significantly improved its capacity to make and sustain improvements since the previous inspection. With good leadership and management, the momentum to improve has gained pace. Helped significantly by the improved availability and use of reliable management information, managers know their provision very well and what requires further improvement.
9. Quality improvement is now good. All key areas for improvement noted at the previous inspection have significantly moved forward. Outcomes for learners and the quality of provision, including teaching and learning, are now good. The management and support for partner providers is stronger, although SALS needs to help them further to better implement agreed quality improvement arrangements.
10. Self-assessment is rigorous and comprehensive. SALS uses a broad range of evidence, including learners' and partners' views, to produce an accurate self-assessment report and productive action plans.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 2**

11. Outcomes for learners have significantly improved since the previous inspection. Success rates for the increased number of learners on courses for qualifications are high, improving from 66% in 2009/10 to 83% in 2010/11, which is well above the national average for similar providers. SALS' overall success rate for long courses is further above the national average. Most learners are at foundation level, where the overall success rate is 82%, some five percentage points above the national average. Most subject areas exhibit high success rates.
12. Success rates for the many learners on non-accredited social and personal development courses are high, at 93% overall in 2010/11. They have increased by some 20 percentage points since the previous inspection. Both achievement and retention rates are high.
13. Since the previous inspection, SALS has increasingly analysed success data to identify any significant achievement gaps and has removed these. Overall attendance is satisfactory and high for some subcontractors.
14. Learners' standards of work, including their practical work, are good. Learners are particularly good in the visual and creative arts. Learners develop their skills well, often applying them in their daily lives. In community learning, the development of skills for work is particularly good. Learners make good progress and attain their learning goals. They enjoy their studies, value the benefits of studying alongside others and are proud of their achievements.

15. Learners are strongly motivated by their studies and many develop the confidence and enthusiasm to study further. Their progression to further courses is often good. Staff highlight many cases of individuals successfully progressing to courses elsewhere or to work following their studies, but SALS does not systematically track leavers' destinations or ongoing progress, although it plans to do so.
16. Learners feel safe at their studies. Venues offer a safe social and learning environment. Tutors pay close attention to implementing safe working practices and, where relevant, promote healthy living and well-being.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 2**

17. Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. Much of the teaching and learning seen by inspectors was good, with a small amount that was outstanding. None was inadequate. The quality of teaching and learning for subcontractors varies more than that taught directly by SALS.
18. SALS' system to observe and grade teaching and learning is good, with effective moderation of grades. Inspectors had confidence in the accuracy of the grades awarded. Tutors receive clear action plans to address areas for development, with progress well monitored by team leaders. The sharing of good practice is promoted through a complementary scheme of peer observations.
19. Lessons are mostly well planned, addressing individual needs of learners well. A small number of lesson plans places too much emphasis on the completion of tasks rather than on the achievement of learning objectives. Learning materials in many lessons are good and used well. Tutors mostly use questioning well to reinforce and check on learning. They make learning enjoyable. Lessons are lively and taught at a pace carefully chosen to meet learners' needs. Tutors are well qualified and many have relevant commercial experience. Almost all lessons are taught in bright and pleasant rooms and teachers use information and learning technologies (ILT) well.
20. Individual learning plans are often used well to recognise and record the progress learners make towards non-accredited learning goals. Individual learning objectives are clear, individualised, and measurable. Whilst learners improve their confidence and self-esteem, these improvements are not measured or formally recorded.
21. The provision meets the needs and interests of users well, offering progression routes to other studies, both within and outside of SALS, although these are sometimes not clear to learners.
22. The range of subjects and courses is good, whilst avoiding duplicating provision of other providers. For example, SALS introduced pre-entry level ESOL classes, which no other local provider offers. Effective partnerships with a range of

organisations have enabled SALS to expand and broaden the provision as well as ensuring that it is matched to employment opportunities in London. An increased emphasis on employment includes programmes aimed at improving success in job interviews.

23. A number of courses include additional elements to enrich studies, often using the wide range of possibilities in London. For example, those on art courses benefit from a visit to some of the many art galleries, such as Tate Modern, and family learners have sessions by the British Film Institute.
24. Partnerships are central to SALS' work. It has developed a good range of partnerships with schools and other organisations, in particular to provide extensive family learning. Partnerships with community-based groups are very effective in broadening the provision and attracting a wider range of learners.
25. The care, guidance and support of learners are good. Learners generally find it easy to get information about the courses available, although some details on SALS' internet website are limited. Many hear positively about courses from friends. Brochures are available at a wide range of local locations such as libraries, community-based centres such as mosques, and doctors' surgeries.
26. Information officers visit many, but not all, courses to inform learners about the information, advice and guidance services available to them. Tutors give valuable information regarding next possible steps near the end of courses. However, no structured systems exist to ensure that tutors have comprehensive information, or that their advice and guidance are impartial.
27. Individual support from tutors is good, provided with care and sensitivity. Pastoral support is good. Tutors help learners with problems and refer them to specialist agencies when appropriate. On some courses tutors make sure that learners are able to get home safely.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 2**

28. Good leadership and management have brought about significant improvements since the previous inspection. The very small management team achieves much, with scarce resources. Outcomes for learners and the quality of provision are now good. At the same time, since the previous inspection SALS has nearly doubled its number of new learners.
29. SALS promotes its clear strategic vision and mission very well. It makes a substantial contribution towards the council's vision of a 'fairer future for all', including the economic development and regeneration of Southwark. SALS reviews proactively its role and structures and is currently contributing to the council's overall strategic review. Oversight of the service is sound, with clear and effective lines of management reporting.
30. Operational management is good. The head of service and her team are experienced and able. Team leaders know their areas well and communicate



well with their many hourly-paid tutors. An infrastructure of essential meetings supports operational management. Sometimes, managers are over stretched, because of their very small number. Tutors occasionally feel that feedback on issues they raise is insufficient and that their engagement could be improved.

31. The availability and use of learner data are much improved since the previous inspection. A new, customised, management information system has recently been introduced, providing a good range of increasingly well-used data to managers and tutors.
32. SALS and its partners work very well together, jointly improving outcomes for learners. The management of subcontractors has improved since the previous inspection. Contracts are more specific and applied more rigorously. New arrangements for the use of key learner data are in the early stages of introduction to subcontractors. Where already introduced, the management of subcontractors, and their own management, has improved.
33. The safeguarding of learners is good, with government requirements fully met. SALS benefits from the comprehensive arrangements put in place by the council. The checking of staff, and those of subcontractors, using the Criminal Records Bureau, is comprehensive and well recorded. Staff and learners have a sound understanding of safeguarding. Risk assessments for health and safety, weak at the previous inspection, are now good.
34. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The most disadvantaged and vulnerable learners are successfully attracted into learning. A good range of learning opportunities, on their doorsteps, improves their life chances, and promotes good social and educational inclusion. SALS now provides well-run childcare facilities.
35. Tutors promote equality and diversity well in lessons. Learners learn to challenge their preconceived ideas and stereotypes and better understand each other. SALS' work is supported by the comprehensive infrastructure of council policies and procedures.
36. Learners' and partners' views are used effectively to help improve provision, including the structure and content of courses, although SALS does not always tell learners how it has responded to their comments. Partners are increasingly engaged in discussions to plan a curriculum that complements and improves the range of provision.
37. Quality improvement is good and improved since the previous inspection. Agreed quality assurance arrangements are increasingly consistently applied, although SALS has more work to do to ensure that subcontractors fully implement them. Tutors conduct valuable reviews of their courses, used well by team leaders to generate area self-assessments. Learner performance data are often well used to support judgements. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. SALS' scheme to judge the quality of teaching and learning is rigorous.

38. SALS provides excellent value for money. It has significantly improved the quality of provision whilst extending the range and reach of services at a time of financial austerity.

## Learning for qualifications

Other learning for qualifications provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded

### Literacy and numeracy

### Grade 2

#### Context

39. Currently, 482 learners are enrolled on part-time courses at foundation and intermediate levels. All courses lead to external qualifications. Around 85% of learners are recruited from the borough. Most courses take place during the day at SALS' main site and in a small number of community locations. The majority of learners is female and 78% is from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds.

#### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. The standard of learners' work is good. Learners develop written, verbal and information technology skills well and become more confident in using mathematics. Those learning to read for the first time develop the strategies and skills needed to participate more fully in everyday life. Learners enjoy their learning, making good progress in the safe environment provided by SALS.
- The achievement of qualifications is good. Success rates are high or outstanding in literacy, at entry, foundation and intermediate levels, and in numeracy at entry level. Success rates for numeracy at foundation level are satisfactory, but low for a small number of numeracy learners at intermediate level. Attendance is satisfactory overall, but low in too many lessons.
- The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. All tutors make very good use of questioning in lessons, promoting the discussion of key learning points and reinforcing learning. Tutors employ a good range of learning activities including, for example, practical tasks in numeracy helping learners' understanding of ratio. Functional skills English lessons stretch and challenge learners effectively.
- Initial and diagnostic assessment of learners' additional needs is thorough. It leads to well-written individual learning plans with clear and measurable targets. These are understood by learners and regularly reviewed and monitored by tutors. However, the initial assessment of beginner readers is too general and insufficiently identifies the starting points of individual learners.
- ILT is well used by tutors to add variety to lessons and motivate learners. Interactive whiteboards and data projectors are used effectively to demonstrate, for example, different types of texts in English or to give worked examples of rules in mathematics. In many lessons learners use ILT well in developing their writing and editing skills.
- Planning for learning is comprehensive. Tutors know their learners well. Lesson objectives are well written but they, together with individual learning targets,

are not always clearly linked to learning activities in lesson plans. Resources are good overall, but tutors do not always make sufficient use of items such as newspapers to link learning to everyday life.

- The range of programmes is satisfactory overall. Literacy and numeracy courses are offered over a full range of levels, but community provision is small. All learners receive a comprehensive induction, helping to ensure that their programme matches their needs. Some learners enrol on to 'fast track' programmes to refresh their skills and enable them to achieve their qualifications quickly.
- Support for learners is good. Tutors provide a supportive learning environment and give one-to-one support to learners in lessons. Tutors are aware of learners' individual needs and ensure that support is in place. Further additional support for dyslexic learners is being developed. Pastoral support and advice and guidance for learners are good.
- Curriculum management is good. Substantial improvements have been made to teaching and learning, quality assurance, accommodation and resources since the previous inspection. Course files are comprehensive and give a good overview of individual learners' progress. Internal moderation processes are robust. Enrolment procedures and the initial assessment of learners are good, but some learners spend too long on waiting lists for courses.
- A Skills for Life/functional skills policy and action plan gives clear and robust targets for improvement. Arrangements for the safeguarding of learners are good. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Self-assessment is appropriately inclusive. Teaching and learning observations are rigorous and inform tutors' appraisal.

### **What does SALS need to do to improve further?**

- In planning lessons, make clear links between lesson objectives and individual learning plan targets to ensure that teaching fully meets learners' needs.
- To help improve attendance and reduce waiting lists, explore ways to offer courses which provide learners with more flexible options for attendance.
- Improve the specificity of the initial and diagnostic assessment of beginner readers to clarify the correct starting points of individual learners.

## English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)

## Grade 2

### Context

40. ESOL provision is available from pre-entry to intermediate levels. Currently, there are some 400 enrolments, all by adults. Around 80% of learners are female. Courses are part time, with varying durations, and take place mainly in the daytime, with a small number as early evening sessions. Courses are taught primarily at the main SALS' site with some provision at community venues. ESOL provision, largely for social and personal development, is also offered by subcontractors at community venues.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. The overall success rate improved impressively, across all levels, from 51% in 2009/10 to 80% in 2010/11. Learners make good progress. Their confidence, motivation and general social skills improve significantly and they engage enthusiastically in learning.
- Learners develop good language skills and well enhance their personal qualities. They improve their employment prospects and they enjoy being able to communicate with a wide variety of individuals. Although SALS has much informal evidence of progression of learners into further education or employment, it does not routinely collect or record this information.
- Learners feel safe and demonstrate good positive attitudes within the centres. They behave well and treat each other with care and respect.
- Teaching and learning are good. A good variety of teaching methods is used to engage learners effectively, promote learning and meet the individual needs of learners. Learners find lessons enjoyable and rewarding. In a few lessons, tutors talk too much, individual needs are not fully met, independent learning is not actively encouraged and tutors do not offer enough opportunities to extend learning.
- The initial assessment of learners' skills is good and clearly identifies existing skill levels in reading, writing and spoken English. In the better lessons, the outcomes of tests are used effectively to help plan teaching, learning and individual learning aims. A small minority of learners have not been placed on the most appropriate courses.
- Tutors and learners review learners' progress, both for individuals and the group, and tutors set and monitor clear measurable targets for progress and behaviour. However, in lessons, tutors and learners insufficiently discuss the progress and success that learners have made.
- Links with partners are good, resulting in the range and extent of ESOL courses being expanded. Taking all ESOL provision into account, including the significant community work and that of subcontractors, the needs and interests of learners are well met.

- The support, care and guidance of learners are good. Tutors are highly supportive of their learners, often extending their care to issues which learners have in their everyday lives. In lessons, learners are supported well as they progress with their individual learning plan targets.
- Leadership and management are good. Outcomes and the quality of provision have significantly improved since the previous inspection. Tutors receive good support from team leaders and communication is good between all teams. A comprehensive programme of internal staff development is available for all staff.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners' diversity is celebrated. Their own varied experiences and backgrounds are well used to enrich teaching and learning. Tutors help learners to improve their understanding of other cultures and learning materials build on the theme of diversity.
- The safeguarding of learners is good. Learners are aware of basic safeguarding procedures and know who to contact when they have, or are aware of, any safeguarding problems. All staff are appropriately trained and are aware of SALS' safeguarding arrangements.
- Quality improvement and self-assessment are good. Inspectors largely agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report. Staff are increasingly confident in the use of learners' performance data to improve their course reviews. Learners' and partners' feedback is well used to help improvement and curriculum development. Tutors feel that they receive insufficient information on any issues raised and on the overall analysis of views.

### **What does SALS need to do to improve further?**

- Build on the best teaching and learning. Support learners to become more independent learners, with the increased development of thinking skills, by engaging them more through questioning, creative problem solving and independent research skills.
- Establish procedures for the systematic collection and recording of learners' progression to further education and employment, using the outcomes to help match courses to learners' longer term aims.

## Learning for social and personal development

Other social and personal development learning provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded

### Arts, media and publishing

### Grade 2

#### Context

41. There are 431 enrolments on programmes in arts, media and publishing. All learners are part time and over the age of eighteen. Of all learners 78% are female, and 48% are non-White British. All courses are for social and personal development. Learners can progress from beginners to intermediate and advanced levels in art, crafts, fashion, upholstery, woodwork, ceramics, therapeutic arts, and dance.

#### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates have improved significantly over the past three years, and are now good. Learners' retention is good and has risen by eleven percentage points over the past three years. Learners achieve their learning aims and are satisfied with their learning experience. Attendance is good at nearly 90%, and learners are punctual.
- The standard of learners' work is high. Learners acquire good, and sometimes outstanding, skills in drawing, sculpture, dance and fashion. Learners are highly motivated and enjoy the opportunities they are given to exhibit and market their work. In recent years learners have won some prestigious prizes including the V&A student award.
- Learners make good progress. A high number progress from beginners to intermediate level. A significant proportion of older learners continue to develop their skills in arts and crafts, painting, and dance for fitness, over a period of years. Some learners progress from advanced level courses to full-time further or higher education courses.
- Good safeguarding measures are in place. Health and safety protocols are observed rigorously in studios and classrooms. Learners state that they feel safe and supported in the learning environment. Good care is taken to make sure that learners travel home safely after evening lessons.
- Teaching and learning are good. Tutors are experienced, creative practitioners, highly committed to helping learners achieve their full potential. In the most successful lessons, learners enjoy making picture frames, upholstering furniture and designing clothes to a professional standard. Course and lesson planning is thorough and promotes enjoyable activities that are fun, as well as successful learning.
- Learners participate in a good range of additional activities to support their studies. Gallery and museum trips are incorporated in many courses, and

learners relish the social aspect of these visits, as well as the learning opportunities they provide.

- Successful partnership working is developing wider social inclusion. Partnership with centres, such as the Southwark Elderly Learners' Centre and the St Matthew's Centre, encourage learners to join high-quality courses close to their own homes. Dance classes offered in a range of community centres encourage learners to keep fit and develop social skills.
- Support for learners is good. Learners are recruited onto courses which fully suit their needs and interests. They are encouraged to set challenging targets for themselves on individual learning plans, which are increasingly well used to monitor their attainment. Enrolments on some course are low.
- Leadership and management are good. Communications with tutors, staff development and lesson observation have all improved significantly since the previous inspection. All tutors have developmental and supportive annual observations of their lessons. Managers and tutors receive good in-house training in equality and diversity, safeguarding, and lesson planning.
- Resources and accommodation are good. Lessons at community centres take place in comfortable studios and teaching rooms, most of which are well equipped. Studios and classrooms at the Thomas Calton Centre have improved significantly over the past three years. All studios are spacious, clean and well lit, with some very good displays of learners' work.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Equality and diversity are well established in the curriculum and lessons and are prominent in team meetings. All learners are treated respectfully and made equally welcome in lessons. Increasing efforts are being made to provide courses which will appeal to under-represented groups.
- Self-assessment is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is accurate about the good quality of teaching and learning, but does not mention the significant improvements in leadership and management. The use of data to support judgements is insufficient and the results of learner surveys and exit interviews are not analysed fully to effect improvement.

### **What does SALS need to do to improve further?**

- To assist further quality improvement, make greater use of data and feedback from learners to inform and improve judgements in the self-assessment report. Visit some outstanding adult learning providers who do this well.
- Build on the developing work to improve recruitment strategies to increase class sizes in areas which currently have low enrolments.



## Community learning

## Grade 2

### Context

42. Currently, 332 learners follow courses in community learning. Most courses are provided by subcontracted community organisations, although family learning is also provided directly by SALS. Courses are one- or two-day workshops or longer courses of up to ten weeks. Some courses lead to qualifications and run during the daytime, in the evenings and at weekends, in community outreach locations across the borough.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. They develop a good range of skills. Parents gain a better understanding of how children learn at school and are more confident to support them with their homework. The standard of work is good. In a significant number of family learning and music lessons, for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, it is very high. Retention is satisfactory, but in a minority of lessons it is low.
- Learners enjoy their courses very much. They are well motivated and keen to improve their chances of promotion at work. They progress to further studies and levels of courses when possible, but opportunities vary, depending on the extent of provision with each subcontractor. Attendance is satisfactory.
- Teaching and learning are good. Courses and lessons are well planned. Tutors provide learners with stimulating and interesting learning activities, engaging them well, using an encouraging manner and humour in demonstrations and feedback. Group work is used effectively to ensure learners practise discussion skills. Tutors reinforce the need to proofread and make corrections in written text.
- The use of learning resources is good. Learning materials are colourful, well produced, topical and of interest to the learners. Where it is available, tutors use ILT effectively to enhance lessons. They refer learners to useful internet websites which they can access at home to continue learning independently or with their children. Some tutors rely too heavily on poorly photocopied handouts.
- Initial assessment effectively identifies learners' starting points. Learners are placed at the appropriate level and have a good understanding of their learning plans. Learners record their progress and achievements well, but not all managers monitor the quality of the individual learning plans with sufficient rigour.
- The provision meets the needs and interests of learners very well. Specialist community organisations offer an imaginative range of courses in local, easily-accessible centres and community venues. Classes very effectively meet the needs of learners who require skills or qualifications to increase their

employability or support their children. Some classes make flexible arrangements to meet the needs of shift workers and parents.

- SALS has particularly good partnerships with a wide range of community groups or other organisations working with hard-to-reach learners, including ex-offenders, learners with mental health issues or those with a history of substance abuse. Partners contribute well to the curriculum and enrichment activities, encouraging many local residents to take up learning opportunities for the first time.
- Support of learners is good. Tutors and trained volunteer helpers provide much individual attention in lessons. Subcontractors provide advice, guidance and support based on their own specialism, such as employment and careers guidance or learning difficulties and disabilities. Others offer crèche facilities and counselling services, including on domestic violence.
- Leadership and management are good. Management arrangements benefit from new clear contracts with subcontractors. SALS communicates effectively with subcontractors and often provides good support. It monitors their performance regularly and provides feedback, using its new management information systems. SALS is helping subcontractors to understand this new information to best manage and develop their programmes.
- Resources are used effectively to support learning. Centres are safe, accessible and in locations well known to learners. They are well equipped and resourced. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. However, subcontractors' staff do not have sufficient opportunities to share their practice and experience.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners from a wide variety of backgrounds work well together in lessons. Equality and diversity are incorporated well in the curriculum. Some tutors make excellent adaptations to resources to ensure all learners can participate fully in lessons. Subcontractors promote safeguarding well and pay good attention to health and safety.
- Self-assessment is inclusive. Subcontractors produce their own self-assessment reports, but these are not always informed by robust individual course reviews and vary in quality. SALS has a largely reliable observation scheme for teaching and learning, although the checking of subcontractors' arrangements is insufficiently rigorous. Some subcontractors do not have detailed action plans for the improvement of teaching and learning.

### **What does SALS need to do to improve further?**

- Provide further support on curriculum development to all subcontractors to extend potential progression opportunities for learners.
- To help secure further improvement, ensure that SALS works with all subcontractors to require the rigorous implementation of the agreed quality improvement systems, including the observation of teaching and learning and robust self-assessment overall.

## Information about the inspection

43. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by SALS deputy head of service, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the service's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, Framework for Excellence indicators, the previous inspection report, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
44. Inspectors used group, individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gather the views of learners. They looked at questionnaires learners and partners had completed in relation to the service. They also visited learning sessions, assessments or progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subjects the provider offers.

### Record of Main Findings (RMF)

#### London Borough of Southwark

**Learning types: 14-16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships. **Social and personal development:** all adult safeguarded provision

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	19+ Learner responsive	Social and personal development
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>			
Part-time learners	1,018	271	747
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>2</b>		
<b>A. Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2		
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2		
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	2		
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2		
A3. Do learners feel safe?	2		
A4. <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2		
A5. <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	n/a		
<b>B. Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2		
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2		
B3. How well do partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2		
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2		
<b>C. Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2		
C2. <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	n/a		
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2		
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2		
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2		
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2		
C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2		

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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MUNICIPAL YEAR 2012-13**

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