

Written evidence submitted by HOLEX

HOLEX welcomes this inquiry and is pleased to provide a further written submission and answers to the questions on the value of adult education and lifelong learning. This submission builds on our previous submission which described the benefits of adult education and lifelong learning to the individual, society and the wider economy and covers the role played by local authorities/ combined authorities and what more they could do in ensuring that all adults benefit from learning throughout their lives.

HOLEX represents a network of 120+ adult community education (ACE) providers and is the sector membership body for Local Authority Community Learning (ACL) services, Institutes for Adult Learning (IAL) and independent third sector providers. HOLEX members have the largest geographical reach of all providers of post-19 education and work with those often furthest away from employment and society.

Adult community education (ACE) services educate, train and retrain 600,000+ adult learners annually and provide quality provision. They are the best performing part of the FE sector as judged by Ofsted with 92% being good or outstanding. They also top the league table for customer satisfaction.

Answers to the Inquiry's Questions

- 1. From the perspectives of the providers you represent, what have been the consequences of cuts to the Adult Education Budget?**

Over the past 10 years, adult education budgets (currently managed by DfE and prior to that by BIS) have been cut by 40%. On top of these actual cuts, several other funding issues have led to the budget reductions and their impact being greater than the recognised austerity cuts of 40%. For example, the community education budget has remained the same since 2007 and has not been increased in line with inflation, while costs have gone up year on year. Government has introduced higher programme specifications (eg, for functional skills) but has not matched these with a rise in funding and there has been an expansion of entitlements and the introduction of new programmes such as the low wage initiative without increasing the overall funding envelope. These cuts and changes, coupled with the devolution of the adult education budget to mayoral combined authorities, have caused destabilisation and serious financial strain. This has been managed well by providers, but the strain on the system should not be underestimated.

These cuts and the lack of financial mitigation for new initiatives have led to:

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1. A reduction of the offer and a consequent reduction in participation of over 1.5 million people in the last 10 years, with a further 5.1% being lost in last year alone.
2. Curtailing reach - a reduction in outreach and engagement activity, with decisions having to be made on cost effectiveness and not on local learner need. For example, high cost activities and rural centres have had to close, withdrawal from some community venues to reduce room hire costs, reduced spend on minor capital works (including IT) to ensure venues are suitable, safe and secure and to increase occupancy rates of main centres.
3. As funding allocation is based solely on programmes and does not reflect the actual cost of delivery, providers are not able to deliver the add-ons that bring real benefits to learners, such as enhanced information advice and guidance.
4. Funding values do not reflect the real cost of providing current qualifications, requiring increased class sizes and reduced access to support which results in low achievement and a poor experience for many adult learners who have been failed by the system in the past and need more time and input to achieve.
5. Devolution of funding has resulted in a 'postcode lottery' in terms of people losing choice over where they can study.
6. There is now very little family learning - many centres can no longer afford the cost of hiring local school premises for family learning activities and, as schools have also felt the impact of cuts, many can no longer offer free accommodation.
7. Additional bureaucracy and audit have added to the costs of delivery, which in turn leads to a reduction of funding going on learning opportunities.
8. Curriculum changes - reduction in the number of subjects offered because subsidies are at a level which make them unaffordable to learners who are the most disadvantaged and least likely to be able to afford to pay a contribution to the costs in order to participate - examples include languages, fitness, cookery, enrichment, art and crafts - these are often run as mixed economy groups with full-fee and reduced-fee paying participants, such courses have been squeezed out to "prioritise the priorities" with more targeted provision. Whilst many of these "personal enrichment interest" courses have continued, they are outside the AEB and often not accessible to disadvantaged individuals, because subsidies are not sufficient to make courses affordable. Increasing fees further for those who are able to pay (to generate income to subsidise those on low income) makes courses too costly and then all learners lose out.

It should be noted that, although government reductions to core/ infrastructure costs have been damaging to participation figures in the ACE sector, good management and efficient use of funds have kept services going. Tough as it has been, services

have been able to survive and have managed to continue to provide good quality learning experiences for learners, with 92% of services rated good or outstanding as judged in Ofsted inspections and ACE services/ centres overall continue to be the best performing sector.

Ready to grow

With the core infrastructure already in place, there is potential for high value for money growth and the capacity to provide targeted support for adult learners who, because of COVID-19 have lost their jobs and/or are looking to retrain.

2. Does the Adult Education Budget provide enough support for community learning, particularly regarding support for vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals?

The overall Adult Education Budget is currently too small to meet identified need, and notably, the Adult Community Learning strand of this budget has been capped at an arbitrary level for 10 years. It should be noted that Adult Community Education providers use all the different strands of the AEB and are not confined to using only the adult community learning strand. The offer of many services and centres is dependent on using several different strands of the AEB including adult community learning, regulatory, non-regulatory and student support strands. They also use FE loans and ESF funding, with many charging full-cost fees and/or using co-funding involving individuals and employers. However, even with agile and clever use of the various funding streams available, the reduction in overall funding and lack of investment has curtailed activity and reduced the support available to many vulnerable learners, such as:

1. ACE providers have not had access to capital funding. This lack of capital investment has made it more difficult to move provision to where the need is greatest and existing centres often look tired and lack facilities for the disabled and those with mobility issues.
2. There has been a lack of investment to provide equipment/ resources for community learning delivered away from main centres. And, in providers' main centres - as highlighted by the COVID-19 response and challenge of switching to online learning - many ACL providers do not have the latest technology and rely on tutors having their own kit and connectivity.
3. Offering learning in the learners' communities is often more costly than having learners travel to provider sites - before the funding cuts providers were often able to provide their own transport solutions, but there are no longer funds to do that.

4. In rural areas, there is often not a sufficient volume of learners be able to fund small classes and so these may not be financially viable for providers when working to their ESFA funding agreements and performance targets.
5. As the Community Learning strand of the AEB is non-formula funded there is plenty of flexibility. However, there is still a lot of pressure to demonstrate value for money through Pound Plus, participation figures, Guided Learning Hours and outcome measures. Such pressures limit innovation/ risk and the amount of funding which is targeted at working with the those with the greatest need (the most resource heavy to engage with) individuals and communities (ACL Mental Health projects are a good example).
6. The scope of Community Learning and how it should be measured and recorded was set out in 2012 and there ought to be better and less bureaucratic ways to record performance in this area.
7. The grant can only support a given number of learning hours and this number is reducing because funding has remained stagnant for many years - a real terms reduction. People are increasingly vulnerable and the costs of wraparound support have to come from the grant, which further reduces the number of people who can be supported.
8. Current levels of funding have been reduced in many areas due to devolution. In Thurrock, this did not reach the minimum of £100,000 and people living on the borders of London Boroughs are having to travel to get support when they would prefer to access learning outside London.

3. Why are providers underspending their Adult Education Budget allocation, and what flexibilities would be helpful?

ACE providers do not regularly underspend their AEB allocation and, for the last 5 years, they have been asking to grow. They have welcomed the commitment to fund 103% in 2019/20 funding agreements and would like to see the mid-year and year-end growth process restored. They would also like to see FE colleges who regular underspend their allocation having their funding removed, and that same funding being redistributed locally.

ACE providers are looking to expand their adult skills activity, finding ways to respond to COVID-19 challenges. For example, Sussex sought growth funding to cover the low-wage learner entitlement, new digital entitlement and require further funding to respond to higher levels of unemployment following on COVID-19 (particularly in and around Crawley/ Gatwick).

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Having said that, there are still flexibilities that could be brought in which would make delivery easier, meet local need and reduce bureaucracy, such as:

1. The flexibility in the Adult Community Learning funding stream (non-formula funding) allows some cross-fertilisation of costs and activity (eg, marketing, engagement, partnership development) which helps to underpin the Adult Skills provision as well as the ACL provision and meet local needs. It would be helpful if this flexibility could be extended to other strands of the AEB.
2. Relaxing/ simplifying the eligibility rules for AEB up to Level 3.
3. Funding agreements which guarantee funding for more than 1-year at a time (a rolling 3-years would be significantly better), which would allow more effective and efficient planning, implementation and evaluation in a range of business elements. (eg, commissioning/ subcontracting, or changing delivery models whether required to, or through choice, building rentals, staffing/ contracts, system investment/ development, curriculum planning, development and progression).
4. Giving the new unemployed an entitlement to learn while still claiming Jobseekers Allowance or converting Jobseekers Allowance into a training allowance.

4. [AoC] AoC's written evidence called for a one-off increase in the Adult Education Budget to be announced in the next spending round. How much should it be increased by?

HOLEX's evidence to the Spending Review asks that the AEB be increased by £1.5 billion. It sets out how the existing spend post 19 is unbalanced and only benefits those who have already done well at school.

As well as an increase in overall budget, the budget should be re-prioritised to fund those without a Level 2 who need basic skills support. The same issue arises in apprenticeships, with over a 50% reduction of apprenticeships in Level 2 in a five year period - dropping from 273,000 in 2015/16 to 130,980 in 2018/19 - with early data for 2019/20 showing another decrease. Level 2 is a key route onto the employment ladder for the 30% of young people who leave school without 5 GCSE's.

Lifelong learning in the UK compares poorly internationally, is heavily skewed towards wealthier socio-economic groups, and is disproportionately consumed by graduates. Adult participation funding was reduced by 40% as part of the austerity measures in 2011 and has not grown since. The result of this cut was a drop of over 1.5 million participating and as such England falls below other OECD countries at a time when we need more people learning new skills and participating in adult

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education to ensure their own wellbeing. Adult community education has a track record of supporting those learners furthest away from the workforce and most at risk of exclusion from society, getting them back into work and able to contribute to society. However, it is held back from doing what is needed for this country because of an inadequate level of resource. **Less than 1% of the post-18 education and skills budget is spent on adult community learning, and only 7% on those with poor basic skills even though there are 17 million adults without a Level 2 qualification and 1 in 5 of our adults struggle with maths and literacy.**

England is facing the COVID-19 employment challenges with an unbalanced post-18 funding system. It is unbalanced in the sense that:

- 83.75% of total spend in the prescribed higher education sector compared to 16.25% for adult further education and apprenticeships,
- the cash cost of full-time prescribed higher education at Level 4-6 in the form of fee and maintenance loans represents 72.84% of total post-18 spending, and
- at least 75% of cash spending on post-18 education is for Level 4-6 HE and FE (specifically in the form of fee and maintenance loans) excluding adult apprenticeship funding, and HE and adult FE support funding.

The current post-18 education system short-changes:

- adults who require basic skills, training and retraining at Level 2 to maintain their employability and participate in wider adult education to improve their quality of life, and
- the economy and society in terms of the benefits of investment in adult education in relation to health and social outcomes.

In response to COVID-19, there should be a large injection of funds for training this September, including the equivalent of maintenance awards so that all unemployed adults can be retrained - see recommendations in the answer to Question 6.

5. What proportion of AEB funding for providers currently goes into delivering statutory entitlements?

5.1 ACE providers normally delivery a plan that has been generated and is based on local need together with an appraisal of what is on offer in their area by other providers. Therefore, the actual amounts differ but the entitlements are a priority for all community education providers. The basic skills entitlement is still very much needed - as the last OECD report highlighted, there are still 9 million adults with low literacy skills.

An example of a provider's activity is given below:

- 35% English and Maths entitlements up to/ including GCSE.
- 10% ESOL
- 30% on provision for adults with learning difficulties/ disabilities. This includes non-regulated English and Maths (not included in the English and Maths figure above), independent living skills and preparation for life and work programmes.
- 25% other adult skills programmes, including vocational courses, which for some (c. one-fifth) will either be their first full Level 2 or 3 qualification or fully funded through low-wage entitlement.

5.2 Do you have concerns about the introduction of the digital skills entitlement in 2020/21?

Yes, the concept of a digital entitlement is welcomed. However, providers already fully spend their Adult Education Budget allocation on existing entitlements and learners who are vulnerable or unemployed. Hence, without new funds, they will need to prioritise one entitlement over another. There is no slack in ACE budgets to accommodate this entitlement. Providers already have demand they are not able to meet and whilst the entitlement is, in our opinion, a positive and welcome change, it will mean that the available Adult Skills funding is likely to reach fewer individuals than need the learning and training on offer.

6. Has the low wage trial been successful in raising participation among learners who would otherwise be unable to afford the fees?

Yes, learners on Adult Skills provision have benefitted, however, as this was brought in without matching funds, the knock-on effect is that fewer individuals have participated in Adult Skills as the proportion of the budget spent on individuals eligible for full funding is increased. It also reduced fee income, and the result was less learners received education and the provider had a smaller budget to operate within.

The low wage trial has been very successful. However, we are not clear that it has raised participation significantly because over half of the people were ESOL learners and were paying the co-funded element previously.

Some centres and colleges lost 41% of their fee income due to losing the co-funding and used up 10% more drawdown, which was a double financial impact and reduced the number of learners being able to access provision.

If a provider was already over-achieving, this scheme led to them having an overall reduction in income. The only providers to benefit were underachieving GFE colleges who were underperforming and would have underspent their adult budget without this initiative.

The low wage trail should continue and be expanded to cover new COVID-19 related unemployed, but it should be matched by a compensating increase in funding to pay for it, which covers all costs. The funding rate does not cover other expenditure, eg, exam fees, LSF and/or additional learning support for those learners.

7. Is the National Careers Service working effectively as centralised source of information, advice and guidance for informing adults about learning opportunities and funding sources?

The National Careers Service could work well and it is right that it is centralised, but it does not have enough capacity to cover local need and many of the process are over bureaucratic, hard to manage and not locally prioritised. There should be a local presence with the expertise to understand the local job market and be a key contact point in supporting job searches. The NCS should have local arms based in Adult Community Services and these arms should be expanded to include a mentorship service as well as imparting information.

The NCS needs to become more inclusive, presently it is just focused on priority groups and does not have the flexibility to deliver information, advice and guidance to anybody who needs it, such as mothers returning to work who already hold a Level 2 qualification. In the post COVID-19 world it will need to be more flexible and have a different focus. Also, the approach of the NCS should be modified to fit with the quality standard MATRIX process, which promotes impartiality.

8. What do you expect the longer-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic consequences on adult education providers to be?

Adult Education and Skills training will be vital part of the country's recovery and ACE providers based in Local Authorities are best placed to organise that support and local recovery. They are able to work with other services to provide joint support to individuals and help them find retraining opportunities and get a job.

8.1 What further funding or non-financial support should the Government provide?

The following sets out what DfE and government should do to support the recovery. The first section covers practical changes that would support the provider base, who in turn will support learners. The second section details action government needs to take to ensure skills development and updating are a vital focus in the recovery process.

(a) DfE needs to implement the following practical delivery changes immediately:

1. Increase funding to provide equipment and infrastructure to enable tutors to continue to develop and deliver online/ blended learning and enable learners to participate. The move is to the development of blended learning which will make provision more flexible/ accessible. However, it is likely to significantly reduce participation, especially for Entry level and Level 1 learners. For example, some providers are currently only getting about 40% of current learners at these levels who are carrying on with their learning. Many have no or poor access to technology and lack confidence and the skills to access online learning. Some of providers' smaller centres will not be viable with the current social distancing measures. Also, many ACE providers recruit and deliver through partners in community locations, (eg, schools and children's centres) who had already cancelled classes before the lockdown and are now focussed on their plans for children, and not able to accommodate the risk of courses for adults.

2. Improve flexibility and continue to relax performance rules in the 2020-21 academic year. Lockdown easing - the 'new normal' will have an unknown impact on future delivery/ participation. Even with some form of easing and social distancing (from September for arguments sake) it will mean smaller class sizes and/or reduced face-face provision for those who feel safe enough to attend (attending alternate weeks with half the class at a time say) and different QA and assessment procedures that recognises the different learners groups and staff issues for instance:

- Many ACE learner groups are 'vulnerable' - ALD, older, health problems etc.
- Some staff/ tutors themselves will also be vulnerable - caring for/ in contact with others and may be uncomfortable in returning to the 'new normal'.

3. Postpone any planned systems changes. Government should not be risking destabilisation of funding to local authority areas while everyone is working through this crisis and its impact - the actual need for post-19 learning, skills and training will evolve, but most definitely will not go away and the infrastructure (including trained expert staff) have to be maintained.

(b) Government needs ambitious skills plans to aid for the recovery:

Action 1: Develop A Post-16 Education, Skills and Employment Plan

Ministers at the Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions should work together to develop a joint post-16 education, skills and employment plan for England be ready to promote opportunities from this September.

Action 2: Prevent Youth Unemployment Amongst 16-17 Year Olds

The Department for Education should analyse the extent to which, without appropriate policy action, 16-17 year olds could find themselves unemployed due to:

- a significant cut in the number in jobs with apprenticeships below the present level of 58,700.
- a significant cut in the number in jobs with non-apprenticeship training below the present level of 40,800.
- a significant cut in the number in jobs without training below the present level of 27,000.
- pressure on full-time education places in the state system as parents of some of the 88,000 in private schools can no longer afford to pay fees, and pressure on full-time education places in the state system due to a rise in the cohort of 16 and 17 year olds in England of 54,000 between 2019 and 2020.

DfE should seek to prevent youth unemployment rising amongst 16-17 olds who have a duty to participate in education and training until their 18th birthday by:

- expanding state-funded full-time further education
- introducing high quality, one-year, programme led Level 2 and 3 work-based learning,
- increasing the number of traineeships, and
- reintroducing means-tested Education Maintenance Allowance to support participation in full-time options.

The Department for Education should create a single, flexible, 16-18 education and apprenticeship participation budget to meet the needs of learners. Funding for 16-18 apprenticeships should be transferred from the Apprenticeship Programme Budget to the single 16-18 participation budget.

The Treasury should provide the extra resources necessary to expand the required number of full-time places and alternative forms of provision such as programme-led Level 2 and 3 work-based learning.

To support recruitment of 16-17 year old apprentices by employers from September, the government should:

- fully fund Level 2 and 3 apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds out of the single 16-18 budget to both levy and non-levy payers
- continue to offer wage subsidies of £1,000 to incentivise hard pressed levy and non-levy paying employers

- signal that the apprentice rate of £4.15 which applies to 16-17 year olds from 1st April 2020 will not be increased in April 2021, and
- maintain zero employer national insurance contributions rather than 13.8% on earnings of apprentices above the secondary threshold which has risen to £8,632 to £8,788 from April 6 2020.

A Policy Package for September

Action 3: Strengthen 16-18 Education and Skills

A lagged system of funding is fine for incremental growth but not for the level of activity we will see this autumn. A system of real-time funding is required for the 2020/21 academic year. The Department for Education should encourage providers to work together to give a coherent offer to an area and local authorities should be resourced adequately so they are able to do this for 16-18 year olds and 19-24 year olds alike.

Bearing in mind that employers will be in survival mode from September 2020 onwards and may be unable to supply work experience and mandatory work placements, the Department for Education should:

- suspend the requirement of two weeks work experience as part of 16-18 study programmes
- postpone the start of the T-Level Transition Programme in September (which requires two-week work experience placements) as well allowing more time to assess the scale of the programme in the context of rising youth unemployment, and
- relax the mandatory work placement requirement for the first wave of T-levels as there is no guarantee of their availability even in September 2021 with unemployment averaging 2m and employers being asked to provide similar opportunities for 18-24 year olds on future DWP labour market programmes.

Action 4: Prevent Youth Unemployment Amongst 18-24 Year Olds

The Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions should analyse the extent to which, without appropriate policy action, the number of 18-24 year olds who are unemployed and not in full-time education could rise due to:

- employers making a significant reduction in the proportion of the 2.1m 18-24 year olds in employment, and
- the 300,000 18-24 year olds in jobs with apprenticeships redundant,

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- and 450,000 18-24 year olds leaving full-time further and higher education and hunting for jobs in September.

To prevent youth unemployment from rising too rapidly, the Department for Education should:

- work with UCAS and higher education institutes to offer every 18,19 and 20 year old with appropriate academic and vocational Level 3 qualifications a place in full-time higher education from September, and
- extend eligibility for means-tested maintenance loans for 19-24 year olds seeking a first full Level 3 qualification in technical and STEM subjects through full-time study.

To protect employment for 18-24 year olds not in full-time education and prevent youth unemployment rising too rapidly, government should:

- extend zero employer national insurance contributions from employees aged under 21 to employees aged under 24, and
- signal there will be no increase in the 18-20 year old rate of the minimum wage above £6.45 and the 21-24 year old rate above £8.20 from April 2021.

To protect jobs for apprentices aged 19-24, government should:

- fully fund Level 2 and 3 apprenticeships for non-levy payers from the new Adult Apprenticeship Programme Budget
- offer wage subsidies of £1,000 to employers recruiting 19-24 year olds for Level 2 and Level 3 apprenticeships this September, and
- maintain the apprenticeship rate at £4.15 from April 2021 and continue zero employer national insurance contributions above £8,788 per year.

To minimise the period of short-term unemployment by 18-24 year olds, the Department for Work and Pensions should:

- extend jobs search provision and increase the number of back to work coaches and fully fund licenses to practice where required for employment, and
- permit participation on one year training and retraining courses in return for Universal Credit, with the cost of training met by the Department for Education.

Action 5: Support Adult-Led Training and Retraining

To support participation in adult-led training and retraining by employees and the self-employed who in these uncertain times must put earning before

learning, the Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions should work together and co-ordinate the following:

- bring forward funding for the National Skills Funding of £600m to the 2020/21 financial year; extend the entitlement to free training for a first full Level 2 and first full Level 3 qualification for 19-23 year olds to adults aged 24 and over
- remove the requirement for cash-based co-funding for all AEB funded provision
- introduce a national entitlement to maintenance grants to adult learners eligible for Working Tax Credits on Level 3 and below courses so that they can afford to learn; remove the equivalent or lower qualification rule for regulated Level 4-6 courses to support the re-skilling of workers and permit them to apply for part-time maintenance loans
- develop new programmes for the unemployed who have been out of work for less than 12 months in addition to the Work and Health Programme
- facilitate the co-ordination of AEB and Jobcentre Plus provision in areas without elected mayors and enable areas within them to streamline and coordinate more fully, and
- build on the new digital skills base and rethink the curriculum which learners will require in the future so they can be reliant, adaptive and agile to change.

Action 6: Reduce Business Labour Costs

As the CJRS is tapered away, the Chancellor should encourage businesses to retain existing employees and recruit more from the ranks of the unemployed, including adult apprentices by:

- reducing employers' national insurance from 13.8% to zero from 1st October until 31 March 2021
- continue with existing flexibilities with respect to contributions to workplace pensions so that payments can be made at the minimum of 3% even where employers have said they would pay more, and not extend (if it is currently under discussion) the UK Apprenticeship Levy to employers with pay-bills of lower than £3m which could bring medium-sized enterprises with 100-249 employees in scope of the levy.

Action 7: Systems Reviews

Government should re-start the UK Apprenticeship Levy Review from scratch to assess the long-term sustainability and appropriateness of employer funded digital accounts to purchase apprenticeships in a very deep recession.

Government should review the structure and underpinning organisation and the funding models for post-16 education and rebuild a system that is resilient and capable of handling future global threats whether they be pandemic viruses, extremist violence, the result of climate change or economic downturns.

These action were published in No Time to Lose

<https://www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk/news/no-time-to-lose-paper-urges-action-on-impact-of-covid-19-on-post-16-education-training-and-jobs>

9. Is there anything else you think it is important for the Committee to consider that hasn't been covered by the questions above?

An enhanced role for ACE providers, Local Authorities and MCAs.

ACE providers are currently recognised by Ofsted inspection results as being the highest quality providers in the FE system with 92% good or outstanding. There is community delivery in every local authority area in the country and, although not all have a large physical building called an "adult education centre", most have multiple outlets often sharing their physical environment with libraries and/or community groups and multi-use of employers' premises, and in response to COVID-19 now have an active digital presence with learners embracing online learning. Digital ACE is a growing initiative that will become part of the education/ training system.

Their business model allows them to be agile and move to where the community is. Local Authorities have the infrastructure and local accountability to ensure coordination of ASALL provision ensuring funding is directed at priorities. The ASALL provision supported by local authorities and combined authorities is closer to those adults in the most deprived areas of the community. LAs have already been given a co-ordination role by other government departments and often have the role of making best use of multiple funding routes. For example, ESOL funding may come from at least 3 government departments and it is the LAs who make sense of the funding and focus on real need. They also have unique access to deprived communities, often leading on programmes to support such communities (for example, vulnerable families) and they are already required to coordinate these functions.

New structural change should be considered whereby local authorities and combined authorities should be given:

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- An enhanced statutory role for assessing local need and mapping existing provision for all basic skills and wellbeing provision including: identifying the basic skills needs of all people in their community and assessing the adequacy of the provision to locally address these needs; identifying the ESOL needs of the local population and providing an integrated programme to address these; identifying specific enrichment programmes designed to meet the individual needs of people who are socially isolated, suffering from membership of low social/economic groups and/or experiencing poor physical or mental health.
- Determining the level of local need using a series of robust metrics in partnership with key organisations including Public Health England, the local LEP and MCA.
- Using the information that is gathered by undertaking the identification process outlined above to draft a local neighbourhood/ area plan for adult education and skills up to Level 2 for the area, ensuring it underpins the Skills Plan and the Industrial Strategy and identifies any gaps and who should fill them.
- Local authorities/ combined authorities should be supported to deliver provision to address the identified needs either directly or via commissioning local providers to meet the identified gaps.
- Local authorities/ combined authorities should build upon their existing governance arrangements and their democratic accountability to provide a new source of increased scrutiny of all local providers building upon the existing excellent systems that they have established to monitor the performance of their own Adult Education provision.

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