

Informing the development of The Adult Learning and Skills Plan for Suffolk 2009-2011

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CONTENTS

	Page
1 INTRODUCTION	3
2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	4
3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
3.1 Overview	
3.2 Research Methodology	
3.3 Key findings	
4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	8
5 RESEARCH FINDINGS	11
5.1 Outcome 1 - Reduction in skills gaps	
5.2 Outcome 2 - High quality learning provision	
5.3 Outcome 3 - Resources and funding	
5.4 Outcome 4 - Access to opportunities	
5.5 Outcome 5 - Engagement and participation	
5.6 Outcome 6 - Awareness and profile	
6 FINDINGS BY PERSPECTIVE	14
6.1 Learners	16
6.2 Learning Providers	22
6.3 Stakeholders	28
6.4 Employers	35

1 INTRODUCTION

Suffolk County Council (SCC) and Suffolk Learning and Skills Council (LSC) have drafted an Adult Learning and Skills Plan for Suffolk on behalf of the Suffolk Strategic Partnership.

This plan is underpinned by two challenging and ambitious strategies for reform of learning and skills in Suffolk.

Firstly, in Suffolk's Community Strategy, Transforming Suffolk, the Strategic Partnership sets out a 20 year ambition for the county, and a vision for Suffolk:

“By 2028 we want Suffolk to be recognised for its outstanding environment and quality of life, to be a place where each person can realise their potential, benefit from, and contribute to, Suffolk's economic prosperity and be actively involved in their community.”

Secondly, the plan also dovetails with Suffolk's "Vision for Learning", that highlights the need to raise the proportion of young people progressing to higher education and the need to develop strategies to encourage life-long learning. This will increase the expectations and aspirations of employers and adult learners for the future.

Together, the Vision for Learning and this Adult Learning and Skills Plan will set out the ambitions for the whole community. SCC and LSC have recently held events, workshops and individual discussions with a range of stakeholders in the county to inform the proposed drivers for change, opportunities and the actions to inform development of the initial draft plan.

The overall aim for the plan has subsequently been agreed in the Community Strategy *Suffolk 2028 - Learning and Skills in the top quartile for the Country*.

The Adult Learning and Skills Plan for Suffolk needs to be future proof - not just focused upon the current situation - and is intended to propose innovative and creative solutions to a changing learning and skills environment.

Insight Track have conducted a wide ranging research programme upon the draft plan in order to ensure that all stakeholders, including learners and prospective learners, have an opportunity to get involved in influencing the factors that will shape learning and skills in Suffolk for the future. The findings of this consultation are reported here.

Through being involved in its development, it is hoped that stakeholders will be in a good position to support and take ownership of a delivery plan to ensure that Suffolk's adult learning and skills are fit for the future.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTATION

2.1 Overall objective

- ⇒ To inform the development of an effective plan for adult learning and skills which will deliver against the Transforming Suffolk Community Strategy target to achieve top-quartile adult learning and skills for the future.

2.2 Consultation objectives

- ⇒ Validate that the draft plan proposals have the engagement of relevant stakeholder parties
- ⇒ Understand the actions that stakeholders anticipate (and are capable of) performing in developing and delivering the plan for the future
- ⇒ Inform the plan development and refinement with regards to the key actions in identifying and delivering adult learning and skills development in Suffolk with regards to:
 - > actions and programmes to achieve outcomes
 - > needs/gaps
 - > obstacles
 - > enablers/solutions
 - > opportunities
 - > funding and resources
 - > promoting learning and skills

3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 Overview

This report is intended to inform the development of the Adult Learning and Skills Plan for Suffolk 2009-2011 by engaging with key stakeholder communities with respect to issues and actions relevant to delivering the key intended outcomes from that plan.

3.2 Consultation Methodology

A flexible and inclusive qualitative research approach has been adopted to provide the opportunity for all interested parties to participate - predominantly using facilitated workshops and one-to-one telephone interviews.

The key groups engaged within the consultation have been:

- ⇒ Learners
- ⇒ Learning providers
- ⇒ Community Stakeholders (VCS, local partnerships, statutory sector)
- ⇒ Employers

The feedback has been gathered during September and October 2008 with over 200 contributors representing all perspectives from the above clusters. Where appropriate and practical, respondents were given the opportunity to review the draft Adult Learning and Skills Plan for Suffolk 2009-2011 - and most notably the action plan and outcomes summary.

There was a very widespread interest in the plan and its successful delivery - prompting enthusiastic co-operation throughout the consultation programme; the only significant barrier to participation in telephone or one-to-one interviews, being the availability of individuals to contribute.

3.3 Key themes/findings

During the course of wide-ranging 'engagements' with respondents representing widely varying perspectives, a number of consistent and key themes emerged with respect to adult learning and skills provision - emerging either in relation to general discussions, or with respect to specific outcomes.

1. **Communication** - the critical importance of sharing/engaging/communicating with respect to adult learning and skills in every regard - whether on the supply (provider) or demand (employer/learner) side of the equation or, of course, communications between the two.
2. **Partnership working** - a much-used notion, and a widely anticipated and valued way of working amongst learning providers and employer organisations. There is support for development/enhancement of local community partnerships (between providers, businesses and other stakeholders, and including the "learner voice") that focus on the learning and skills needs relevant to local needs.

3. **Low aspiration levels** - are frequently cited as an issue requiring addressing, particularly amongst young people and school-age children as this impacts on adult learning and skills attainment and achievement. Plans to address adult aspirations, therefore, need to dovetail with plans to increase these for children and young people, through the 14-19 strategy.
4. **'Piggybacking'** - as a vehicle to maximising the available resources and funds there is a wide range of expectations and willingness to embrace the piggybacking of activities/infrastructure/resources available within the county e.g. VCS organisations being able to participate in Suffolk County Council workforce training.
5. **Performance and Benchmarking** - there is a widespread acknowledgement of the need to collect consistent data to be able to report Suffolk-wide performance on adult learning and skills attainment - particularly, for example, to be able to measure the impact of informal learning on achievement of Suffolk-wide adult learning and skills targets. This needs to be very carefully considered as there are currently widely varying measures and expectations as to what should and can be achieved.
6. **Suffolk County Council (SCC)** - as the flag-ship organisation in the county with respect to learning and skills development, there is a widespread expectation that SCC should be seen to be taking a lead through best practice as well as resource, funding and infrastructure provision.
7. **Individuality** - the need to recognise that adult learning and skills needs are profoundly personal and individual, reflective of the unique personal circumstances and characteristics of individuals (notably with respect to aspiration, motivation and ability to access).
8. **Definitions** - there is a need to establish a very clear and consistent set of terms of reference with respect to learning and skills, both to ensure that meaning and intent are clearly understood from stakeholder perspectives, and to ensure that the subject (and indeed language) is widely accessible, relevant and appealing to learners. For example, the terms literacy and numeracy used to market courses are not consistently understood by the target group learners.
9. **Segmentation** - understanding the needs and gaps in adult learning and skills needs to be through the perspectives of the different segments of stakeholders and learners. Current information on needs and gaps is mostly from the perspective of main stakeholders such as, for example, the LSC and Suffolk County Council.
10. **Early/school years engagement** - the journey into adult learning and skills clearly starts very early in life (indeed is just a phase in the journey of 'cradle-to-grave' learning) and this needs to be accommodated in ensuring that education doesn't stop after people leave school. The investment in schools and infrastructure for young people and adults, can enhance adult learning and skills development opportunities e.g. extended schools, learning packages, and vice versa, e.g. parents learning through school activities with their children.
11. **Seamless continuity** - from school into adulthood is seen to be an achievable and valuable ambition for adult learning and skills provision. There is an identified need for support to enable continued learning for vulnerable individuals who are most likely to fall out of learning and skills development after school or college.

12. **Champions** - there is a general enthusiasm for 'champion' roles in the adult learning and skills context; visible and empowered individuals with key roles in brokering relationships and sharing information and best practice - particularly for groups who otherwise cannot, or may not, engage e.g. travellers.
13. **"What's in it for me?"** - the 'what's in it for me?' syndrome is a wide-spread perspective that needs to be tackled. The benefits of learning and skills needs to be more explicitly articulated, in terms that are relevant to individuals, to engender sufficient motivation to participate/engage. This is predominantly applicable to groups with lower aspirations, but also applicable to employers, notably smaller businesses.
14. **Geography** - the dispersed population across a largely rural hinterland is widely recognised as a defining characteristic of Suffolk and presents particular challenges with respect to awareness of, and access to, adult learning and skills opportunities.
15. **ICT infrastructure** - the use of, and access to, ICT infrastructure is seen to be critical to the widely accessible and flexible delivery of adult learning and skills - though noting that this should not be pursued to the exclusion of those choosing not to engage in learning through this.
16. **Transport infrastructure** - is both enabler and barrier in equal measure, recognising the particular challenges of the rural nature of much of Suffolk; plans therefore need to make allowance for accessibility in environments where transport infrastructure may present difficulties - this means that providers need to apply more creativity and flexibility in how and where learning is delivered.
17. **Taking learning-to-the-people** (not vice versa) - noting that in many of the themes here, there is some desire, particularly for certain groups, to see a cultural shift by taking learning to the learner, rather than bringing the learner to the learning.
18. **Flexibility** - leading on directly from individuality is the expectation that learning and skills provision must be delivered flexibly to meet the widely divergent circumstances and expectations of the learner community. Flexibility needs also to be reflected in the development and marketing of opportunities e.g. modular learning, learning times linked to work shifts and in-take by providers that is not just linked to the academic year.
19. **Embedding** - there is enthusiasm to see 'learning and skills' routinely embedded in fund-raising, local partnership goals, and organisational missions and cultures.
20. **Creativity** - there is a strong groundswell of support for greater creativity and inventiveness to be applied throughout the learning and skills provision agenda - both in seeking engagement and in developing provision, e.g. through arts, sports and culture, particularly to engage learners who would otherwise not participate.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Overview

The consultation approach required was fundamentally qualitative to enable the gathering of rich and in-depth feedback upon an inevitably complex and wide-ranging consultation scope.

Further consideration was given to the following in developing the methodology:

- ⇒ Cost effectiveness on the assumption that the budget would be constrained and that the consultation must be pragmatically developed to deliver the greatest value for money
- ⇒ Requirement for inclusivity of potentially 'hard to access' audience segments
- ⇒ Requirement to engage with multi-layer audiences from many perspectives notably to reflect both the 'stakeholders' voice' and particularly the 'learners' voice'
- ⇒ The catchment scope as defined by the boundary of Suffolk
- ⇒ Flexibility to accommodate widely varying opportunities and channels 'to engage'

A multi-methodological, highly flexible and qualitative approach was therefore adopted combining:

- ⇒ **Facilitated workshops:** semi-structured and highly interactive sessions with groups of individuals representing particular/shared interests
- ⇒ **Telephone depth interviews:** semi-structured telephone interviews typically lasting 20-30 minutes, providing insight into perceptions quickly and cost-effectively
- ⇒ **Face-to-face interviews:** pre-booked face-to-face appointments typically lasting 45 minutes to one hour

4.2 Segmentation

Consultation respondents were clustered into two key groupings (or 'voices') of:

4.2.1 Stakeholders

The profile of stakeholders needed to be as inclusive as possible and included:

- ⇒ Suffolk Strategic Partnership Board Members
- ⇒ Suffolk Learning and Skills Council
- ⇒ Suffolk County Council
- ⇒ University Campus Suffolk
- ⇒ Learning And Education Providers
- ⇒ Extended Schools
- ⇒ Libraries and record offices
- ⇒ Children's Centres
- ⇒ Employers
- ⇒ Health services
- ⇒ Trades Unions
- ⇒ Small And Medium Businesses
- ⇒ Voluntary And Community Sector

4.2.2 Learners

The profile of current and potential individual learners was intended to focus upon hard-to-access groups taken to include the following throughout Suffolk by:

- ⇒ Geography (including rural, urban and coastal areas of Suffolk)
- ⇒ Social criteria
- ⇒ Demographics including:
 - BME
 - Travellers
 - Older people
 - People with disabilities/difficulties
 - Mental health
 - Family Carers

4.3 Sampling

The programme resulted in the following key engagements as below, with over 200 individuals representing widely varying perspectives having the opportunity to contribute directly.

The following stakeholder groups were engaged through attendance at facilitated workshop sessions:

- ⇒ Community Learning and Skills Development Service Extended Management
- ⇒ PCDL Partnership (Learning providers including Colleges, VCS, LSC, Suffolk CC and private providers)
- ⇒ Adult Learning & Skills Executive Group (LSC, Jobcentre Plus, Suffolk CC, VCS, UCS, private businesses)
- ⇒ West Suffolk LSP Skills Action Group
- ⇒ LEAP (Visioning workshop)
- ⇒ Suffolk VCS Learning Consortium
- ⇒ Suffolk Older People's Strategic Partnership Board
- ⇒ Family Carers Partnership
- ⇒ Libraries and Record Office Managers
- ⇒ SCC Assistant Directors Forum
- ⇒ Suffolk Chamber of Commerce (with representative employers)
- ⇒ SCC Extended Schools

The following stakeholder groups and 'learner voices' were engaged in one-to-one telephone or face-to-face depth interviews:

- ⇒ Migrant workers
- ⇒ BME communities
- ⇒ Travellers
- ⇒ Offenders
- ⇒ Older/retired people
- ⇒ Long-term unemployed
- ⇒ Disabled/long term sick
- ⇒ People with mental illness
- ⇒ People with learning difficulties
- ⇒ Sexuality
- ⇒ Prostitution
- ⇒ Young People (Male Youth)

Furthermore, invitations to participate were widely circulated offering the opportunity to contribute. As a consequence a significant number of respondents submitted detailed written contributions or contributed through informal feedback during the course of very many conversations and engagements.

These included:

- ⇒ Suffolk Sports Partnership
- ⇒ Children's Centres
- ⇒ Arts/cultural groups
- ⇒ Parish Council representatives
- ⇒ Healthy Ambitions

We are extremely grateful to all those, from every perspective, who kindly spared their time to participate in providing their views and opinions.

5. Overview of feedback upon each proposed Outcome

This section encapsulates the topline response to each of the six proposed outcomes in the draft Adult Learning and Skills Action Plan 2008-2011.

5.1 Outcome 1: *There is a reduction in skills gaps for employers in Suffolk*

There is a widespread recognition that there are indeed notable skills gaps in Suffolk - though perception and opinion varied according to perspective and interpretation.

The existence of skills gaps is widely recognised to be a national issue, not just a unique concern to Suffolk, though the particular characteristics affecting Suffolk were also widely recognised (confirming the premise of the Adult Learning and Skills Plan), notably:

- a. Low aspiration
- b. Sectoral dependencies (and opportunities) e.g. agriculture and energy
- c. Geographic disparities

The benchmarking of the current status of skills supply and gaps is seen to be of paramount importance in order to plan and evaluate learning and skills actions for the future.

Particular future skills impacts are anticipated from the

- a. Haven Gateway
- b. Greenest county ambition
- c. Low carbon economy

There appear to be particular concerns relating to:

- a. The learning needs of over 45s to retain employable skills (re-skilling if necessary) - especially in the context of developing transferable skills for the older cohort retiring ever later
- b. The changing skill sets demanded by globalisation and the prevalence of the internet
- c. Impact of London and/or post-university brain-drain of talent out of the county
- d. The need to balance 'basic literacy and numeracy' learning requirements of government agenda against 'higher level skills' requirements of the business community
- e. Understanding the particular needs of 'returners-to-work' (e.g. after maternity break) and the recently redundant
- f. The need for the business community to appreciate the value in greater collaborative and partnership working
- g. Encouraging businesses to allow employees to apply recently learned skills in the workplace (reinforcement and application)
- h. The need to provide a motivational answer to the fundamental question spoken by both those of low aspiration and employers too, of 'what's in it for me?'

5.2 Outcome 2: Adult learning and skills provision is coherent, high quality and based on a better understanding of learning and skills needs and gaps in the future

This outcome held a very strong resonance for all audiences, with a widespread recognition of the desirability of this outcome.

In order to achieve the outcome there is a consistent set of prerequisites notably:

- a. The need to define the expectations of coherency - noting what the benefits and obstacles are to partnership working between learning providers
- b. The need to establish a practical and credible benchmark for 'high quality'
- c. The need to establish process and protocols for on-going and inclusive need and gap identification from the perspective of the different segments of learners
- d. The need for collaborative and/or 'partnership' working in identifying and matching need with provision - particularly at a local level.

5.3 Outcome 3: Resources and funding for adult learning and skills are maximised, such that funding and resources are levered into Suffolk

Funding and resources are widely recognised as a key barrier and/or enabler of learning and skills provision and access, though encouragingly consideration was very pragmatic and realistic in context.

The most fundamental parameters for effective utilisation of funding are for stakeholders (and indeed learners):

- a. To clearly understand what funding is available
- b. How to access that funding
- c. Planning ahead to avoid short-termism

There is a groundswell of enthusiasm for collaborative working, and leverage of the professionalisation of bidding, to gain access to funding e.g. European Social Fund.

There is support for initiatives, such as local learning partnerships, to develop understanding between agencies and collaboration; joining up to avoid duplication; making the best use of resources; and attracting funding at a community level between learning providers e.g. between libraries, children centres, LEAPs, extended schools and Skills Centres.

5.4 Outcome 4: Access to opportunities for learning and skills for individuals and communities in Suffolk is improved and increased

Consideration of this outcome elicited very wide ranging discussion and feedback, though with encouraging levels of overlap and consistency.

Particular emphasis is placed upon:

- a. The development of a consistent set of terms of reference with respect to the language and terminology used (assuming that it is clear and consistent in application), particularly using language that avoids jargon and engages businesses and individual learners
- b. More consistent segmentation of the priority target groups to benefit from learning and skills development, particularly within communities
- c. The recognition that needs and accessibility are unique to each individual, even within clusters/groups, noting that 'one size does not fit all'
- d. The recognition that learning takes a multitude of forms in informal and formal settings (though perceptions may be at odds with this reality e.g. some learners associating learning just with schools)
- e. The need to recognise the value that individuals, the community and economy gain from the many alternative learning opportunities - from recreational to work-related, from informal to formal - and at every lifestage
- f. The need to recognise that learning is a life-long process, and to overcome prejudices that learning happens at certain (but not every) lifestages

5.5 Outcome 5: Wider engagement and participation of adults in a range of informal and formal learning, both for employability and personal development

Consideration of this outcome frequently merged into the consideration of Outcome 4 - there is a blurring of the distinction between access and engagement/participation; therefore there is a significant overlap in the emerging themes and actions.

This outcome found particular support amongst those stakeholder groups with an interest in inclusivity and accessibility - with notable emphasis on the need to:

- a. Think more broadly about what constitutes learning - recognising that people learn in a variety of situations, not just in buildings
- b. Open people's minds to the opportunities, as much for personal development as for employability
- c. Breakdown stigma and language barriers - e.g. use of jargon "NVQs" "ESOL" leaflets in other languages/formats" etc.
- d. Celebrate attainment and achievement - in both informal and formal learning
- e. Celebrate the value in non-accredited learning as much as accredited
- f. Recognise the distinction, yet equal value, in personal development as much as employment
- g. Recognise how important developing individuals' confidence is in accessing learning and getting them onto the ladder of learning.

5.6 Outcome 6: Improved awareness and profile of adult learning and skills

The need and value in increasing awareness and profile of adult learning and skills is widely recognised - with some suggestion that a greater and more sophisticated marketing effort would be appropriate, particularly to recognise the needs of individuals and groups and tailoring of product/services to the benefits sought.

There is a particular desire to ensure 'engagement', of employers and individuals, not just communication, actively working with them to design and develop opportunities rather than just providing information about what's available.

Signposting is widely recognised as an important dimension to the communications/promotion spectrum e.g. schools need to know where to go for support; individuals and businesses need to know where to go to get advice and information; noting that current support and communication is perceived to be fragmented.

Amongst the messages requiring to be disseminated two notable ones are:

- ⇒ That 19 is not the 'finish line' for learning and skills development
- ⇒ And that 'learning is more than training'

There is a recognition of the need to apply sound marketing principles in the context of promoting learning and skills opportunities - in terms of what is provided, where opportunities are delivered, where they are promoted and the benefits and costs. There is a need to use more community accessible and recognised channels. These might include - the internet, parish newsletters, post offices, GP surgeries, TV and radio, careers services, assessments, peer-to-peer promotion, directories, case studies and testimonials, events, consultations, schools, libraries, Children's Centres, supermarkets, voluntary organisations, interactive media (e.g. DVDs), Facebook, and the Connexions service.

6. Findings clustered by 'engagement' perspective

The following section provides a tabulation of the key findings from each of the key groupings of:

- 6.1 Learners
- 6.2 Learning Providers
- 6.3 Community Stakeholders
- 6.4 Employers

Each section comprises

- ⇒ Index - in order to enable swift referencing within the tables
- ⇒ Category - a classification to categorise the most frequent observations and actions into consistent areas for follow-up notably:
 - Learning Culture
 - Communication
 - Evaluation
 - Economic
 - Needs Analysis
 - Delivery
 - Definition
 - Access
 - Engagement
 - Funding
 - Learning Pathways
- ⇒ Observation - a brief statement of key issues and observations raised in considering the proposed outcomes
- ⇒ Needs/gaps - a brief statement of the needs and gaps with respect to each of the observations made
- ⇒ Deliverables: Actions proposed/recommended

It should be noted that:

- ⇒ The order of the listing does NOT infer any priority or relative significance
- ⇒ That not all observations were accompanied by related actions; and conversely not all actions were directly linked to a specific pre-existing issue/observation
- ⇒ The listings are not exhaustive in representing every single element of feedback, but represent an aggregation of consistent and/or strongly expressed opinion

6.1 Learners

Index	Category	Observation	Needs/gaps	Suggested deliverables
1	Needs analysis	Individual learner needs and expectations are unique to individual circumstances and prior experiences	Thoroughly and demonstrably understand and accommodate the unique needs of individual learner groups (e.g. carers, people with disabilities, older people, rural isolation)	<p>Develop the new Adult Advancement and Careers Service universal offer in Suffolk</p> <p>Pilot and develop personal budgets so that those with particular needs can choose learning that meets their circumstances</p> <p>Trial/implement Skills Accounts</p>
2	Needs Analysis	There is a significant lack of confidence with respect to learning amongst certain groups (appearing widespread in the more marginalised groups)	Recognise that a base-level of confidence is a prerequisite to take-up of learning opportunities	<p>Review use of funding streams for non-accredited “customer specialised” needs e.g. entry to learning level provision for particular learners, in particular geographical areas, with clearly identified pathways to more formal learning and qualifications</p> <p>Ensure that there is link-up between health and social care and learning providers</p>
3	Needs analysis	<p>Key barriers to learning take-up from learner perspectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Lack of time ⇒ Lack of information about learning opportunities ⇒ Lack of money ⇒ Lack of internet access 	Work with specific groups (e.g. offenders) to ensure that their unique needs are met, noting diverse requirements and expectations to ensure the appropriate timing and location of learning opportunities	<p>Set up specific projects for particular groups (e.g. people with learning disabilities, offenders) to develop more tailored learning opportunities</p> <p>Promote free or low cost provision in communities e.g. via LEAPs</p> <p>Target promotion of funding available more specifically at</p>

				<p>particular groups</p> <p>Offer more flexible “roll on roll off” courses so that people can join at times when it suits them</p> <p>Provide more flexible learning opportunities for particular individuals and groups e.g. in workplaces</p> <p>Engage with the national pilot for home access to computers project</p> <p>Promote internet access to learning and skills and resources available through LEAPs, Libraries, extended schools, children’s centres and skills centres</p> <p>Build upon the UCS research already established to develop more opportunities for e-learning</p>
4	Needs analysis	There is a need to recognise that people who are retired could retrain/reskill, particularly if there were flexible ways of working - many professions retire early and the skills of the retired workforce are being under-utilised		Promote contribution of older people to employers - as part of a Suffolk year of learning and skills
5	Needs analysis	The timing of ‘learning needs’ assessment requires consideration (e.g. for carers, assessment might not be the best time to consider learning needs - carers don’t always		Raise awareness of the information, guidance and support available - e.g. Adult Advancement and Careers Service, LEAPs so that people know where to go when they are able to engage, particularly

		know what they need at the outset)		working through relevant partnership groups
6	Needs analysis	<p>In order for action/engagement to be taken, there is a need for individuals/employers to recognise two fundamental situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ That there is an issue/problem ⇒ What the solution/outcome/ benefit might look like 		<p>Develop Training Needs analysis for businesses (e.g. through Business Link and provider led) and learning needs analysis for individuals (e.g. through Next Step) to focus on the benefits to the individual/business, from their perspective</p> <p>Set up a scheme to recruit business and learner champions throughout Suffolk to actively promote benefits of Learning/Training to peer groups, rather than via LSC/Suffolk County Council etc.</p>
7	Needs analysis	The Voluntary and Community Sector has specific learning needs with respect to career progression post-qualification		Joined up activity between sectors - e.g. SCC Adult and Community Care and VCS to address learning/skills needs
8	Needs analysis		Develop learning and skills opportunities that dovetail the needs of the workplace with individual well-being plans and life plans	<p>Engage providers, staff networks, trades unions, HR services in considering and developing learning in the workplace</p> <p>Engage employers in understanding the learning package with which young adults will be entering the workforce and how they can support employees' learning on a continuous basis</p>
9	Delivery	There is a need to recognise that informal learning is a life-long 'cradle-to-grave' activity	Leverage the opportunity of certain facilities (notably libraries) that are ideally placed to deliver learning	Exploit developing infrastructure for young people and young adults

			throughout life	e.g. skills centres, extended schools, SWISS, for adults Develop local learning 'campuses' - partnerships between infrastructure for young people and adults
10	Delivery	There appears to be a widespread assumption that learning happens at school/college (and in formal contexts)...and that this in turn risks excluding those for whom school is an unappealing context or environment	Develop and promote alternative learning opportunities outside of school contexts	Promote libraries and record offices, children's centres, VCS as outlets for learning and skills Promotion of community, arts, sports and culture as outlets/opportunities for learning, e.g. 2012 Olympics/Paralympics
11	Delivery		Develop ICT related learning opportunities focussing upon ⇒ Skills for Over 60s ⇒ Basic IT skills for entire workforce ⇒ Specific IT competencies to maximise workforce efficiency (e.g. Microsoft Excel)	Co-ordinate current activities relating to this e.g. pilot of computers into homes, into a programme across Suffolk and promote it as part of Suffolk Year of Skills and Learning
12	Access		Provide a clear overview of who is providing what training to enable easy navigation and access to desired learning	Develop and promote LEAPs to businesses and the public: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By March 2010, 48 children's centres will be LEAP points • All 44 Suffolk Libraries will be LEAP points or Centres • 3 Community Learning and Skills Development Centres will be LEAPs • W Suffolk College/UCS/Other providers' LEAP

				<p>development programme</p> <p>Local learning partnerships/locality partnerships/Personal and Community Development Learning “mapping” of needs and gaps to maintain an on-going picture to inform provision and funding</p>
13	Access	Language and cultural barriers present a real barrier to learning	Avoid risk of exclusion and stigma in language and approach	<p>Review marketing of learning and skills for particular groups - e.g. availability of materials in other languages, use of jargon in materials relating to PCDL, Neighbourhood and Foundation Tier learning in particular</p> <p>Promote diversity and inclusion through LEAP centres</p> <p>Recruit learning champions that represent diverse learner groups, via local organisations e.g. Polish community, Travellers etc</p>
14	Access	There are notable logistical obstacles to learning presented by rurality and the geography of Suffolk	Develop learning opportunities that minimise the need for and/or enable travel accordingly	<p>Develop and promote e-learning programmes, using the expertise of UCS, as appropriate, in this area</p> <p>Develop and co-ordinate adult outreach provision in communities e.g. local industrial estates, Skills Centres, LEAPs etc.</p>
15	Access	Workers with 9-to-5 schedules can find it hard to gain access to non-work related learning to meet their needs		Deliver a county-wide project to promote learning for leisure/pleasure in the engagement of Trades Unions and employers to encourage learning for

				leisure/pleasure as part of employee health and well-being
16	Access		Need to exploit the ICT and the expertise in local schools for older people's learning	Offer and promote ICT for older people through extended schools, skills centres and libraries
17	Access		Learning opportunities could be developed in day care centres and sheltered housing environments	Co-ordinate learning opportunities that are provided through various routes into a coherent programme for specific target groups e.g. Adult and Community Services' learning provision in day care centres, sheltered housing
18	Access		Maximise the opportunity to access learning by providing enablers such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ More crèches to enable parental access ⇒ Enable access at a lower level and in bite sized chunks ⇒ Providing 'taster sessions' 	Maximise the use of Children's Centres in communities to provide crèche support for learners Develop and promote taster sessions and modules to encourage people to get onto the ladder of learning
19	Evaluation	There is a need to recognise the intrinsic value of learning in all contexts and to all people without undue bias towards economic and employment-related value		Promote the value of learning for leisure, health and well-being through Suffolk Year of Skills and Learning
20	Communication		Establish specific champions for learning in key target groups e.g. traveller site learning champions	Establish a network of learning champions linked to communities

6.2 Learning Providers

Index	Category	Observation	Needs/Gaps	Deliverables
21	Needs analysis	Reflecting the learner perspective, there is a need to recognise the unique circumstances and needs of individuals		Set up learner reference groups for particular groups to reflect the 'learner voice'
22	Needs analysis	Consistent with the uniqueness of individual needs is the expectation of flexible learning opportunity delivery to match varying learning-style preferences	Understand and accommodate the individual learning style preferences - perhaps by adopting flexible delivery models (e.g. mentored, tutored, distance-learning, practical, theoretical, online/interactive, classroom)	Develop and promote the variety of delivery methods for key skills and learning provided under LSC funded streams
23	Needs analysis		Encourage and enable collaboration between employers (notably smaller) and the learning providers to identify training needs and demand levels	Develop links between business support and enterprise provision, employers and learning providers to develop training needs analysis for smaller employers
24	Needs analysis	Recognising the particular needs of population segments e.g. Carers - and provide tailored support that puts learning and skills as a priority (ensuring that people do not have to come out of employment to fulfil roles e.g. as carers)		Encourage more in-work learning opportunities through Trades Unions and employer groups
25	Delivery	There is a perceptions that courses are too frequently cancelled at short notice (owing to a lack of sufficient numbers of delegates)	Access to tutors should be made available at the point of developing courses with avoidance of formulaic solutions (avoiding premature cancellation of courses found to have a shortfall in delegates)	Provide information and advice and support to learners to continue/begin their studies if courses are unable to run e.g. through LEAP centres
26	Delivery	There is a perception of	Create a coherency between learning	

		inappropriate competition in the market for learning provision - with associated risk of wasted or duplicated resource	providers that negates the risk of 'inappropriate competition' between learning providers	Develop learning partnerships at community level which, informs needs and gaps and the providers that are best placed to meet particular demands
27	Delivery	There is no recognised quality control measure to provide assurance and enable comparison between learning providers	Establish a provider grading system in order to provide quality assurance in learning provider provision	Investigate how this can be addressed through promotion of existing standards e.g. OFSTED, Beacon status etc.
28	Delivery	There is a need to recognise the continuity of learning and skills development from school into adulthood by dovetailing the 14-to-19 agenda into the 19+ learning and skills agenda		<p>Make best use of the community infrastructure for education e.g. Skills centres, college developments and improvements, and extended schools for adults and young adults</p> <p>Develop learning partnerships for adults that link in with the learning consortia, schools clusters etc for 14-19 in local communities to improve co-ordination and planning of activities</p> <p>Promote the 14-19 Diploma and the other pathways to local employers</p> <p>Engage local employers to develop work-based learning</p> <p>Develop individual packages of learning for post 19 - through the IAG service, particularly at life transitions</p>

				<p>By 2010 all schools will be expected to provide the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community access to ICT, sports/arts facilities, including adult learning • parenting support including information sessions for parents
29	Delivery	There is some indication of a perception of a current bias towards 'female parent' learners (i.e. mothers) implying a need to redress the balance for male learners		Review the programme of learning to engage male learners in communities building on extended schools' experience e.g. Digging with Dads
30	Delivery		The structure of learning opportunities should allow for the lowest possible threshold number of delegates before consideration of course cancellation	Information, advice and support to learners on alternatives if courses are unable to run
31	Delivery		Develop linkages and relationships between FE colleges and employers, and indeed prospective learners	<p>Local learning partnerships</p> <p>Use enterprise hubs (OrbisEnergy and Innovation Martlesham) to develop interactive programmes with school children and adult learners to attract more people into engineering and science professions</p>
32	Delivery		Dovetail learning provision to deliver the greenest county agenda (e.g. relevant apprenticeships)	Make links between plans in other delivery partnerships
33	Delivery		Learning opportunities need to be flexibly provided to fit changing lifestyles and lifestages with flexible pathways for key areas	Develop individual Learning packages - particularly at life transitions

34	Delivery		Seizing the opportunity to leverage all access portals for learning e.g. libraries, children's centres	Make best use of community outlets
35	Delivery		Enable at-home learning (e.g. with PC-based learning) to match need for flexible time/place of learning	Engage with the national project to trial ICT in homes Increase access to schools' ICT for adults and communities Further develop e-learning Support and guidance for learning through LEAPs
36	Access	There is a perception that accessing learning is associated with obstructive layers of bureaucracy	Beware the risk of putting people off 'learning' due to excessive perceived bureaucracy along the path to access	Work to review procedures and processes for accessing learning, particularly for more vulnerable groups
37	Access	Physical accessibility of venues is important - particularly wheelchair users and for carers (even schools may not be suitable)	Explore opportunities that do not require physical attendance at colleges, such as taking learning opportunities to the people (e.g. mobile libraries)	Develop alternative learning methodology e.g. e-learning Pilot of computers in communities Use of outreach facilities e.g. mobile libraries
38	Access		Develop library services (being at the centre of communities) to act as a hub connecting people to learning resources	Develop libraries as LEAP centres/points
39	Access		Leverage schools as an opportunity for adult learning in the community (though noting that schools represent a barrier to some)	Develop schools and other 14-19 infrastructure to include facilities for adult learning
40	Access		Leverage the opportunity presented by the internet to open up access to learning opportunities	Develop computers in homes and access in communities Develop e-learning packages

				Increase ICT competence in key groups
41	Engagement	There is a widespread perception that a significant proportion of Suffolk's youth and adult population have markedly low aspirations	Raise aspirational horizon of youth and adults in Suffolk by employer engagements in schools	Engage employers in schools UCS and learning providers to continue to develop/co-ordinate work in schools LEAP centres Learning champions
42	Engagement	Courses shouldn't just be about qualifications but should be creatively scoped, e.g. to include dog training, reflexology, personal development, writing courses	Ensure that non-accredited learning opportunities are available to off-set the fear/intimidation that accredited courses can arouse in some potential learners	Review the community and personal offer to incorporate local needs and demands
43	Engagement		Make taster days and sessions available as a precursor to commitment to learning, and as a promotional opportunity	Promote learning opportunities consistently e.g. Through Suffolk Year of Skills and Learning
44	Engagement		Improving the perceptions of, and impressions given by, centres of learning to make them more welcoming and inviting	Develop LEAP centres in relevant communities Use learner reference groups to inform development of adult learning facilities
45	Engagement		Tutors should be empowered to recommend home study when appropriate to help people stay on the course	Learning providers to consider recommending home study and support this when appropriate
46	Communication	There is opportunity to interweave employer engagement with schools to widen scope/horizon for	Dovetail academic and business communities (matching supply of, and demand for, learning provision)	Develop and promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAPs • Student enterprise schemes in schools,

		employment opportunities		colleges and UCS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student placement schemes • Young apprentices • Enterprise hubs in Suffolk
47	Communication	Previous marketing activities promoting learning opportunities are criticised for being too indirect and non-specific in their targeting	Develop learning propositions based on sound marketing principles (meeting identified needs) with associated communications adopting a direct and targeted approach	Develop marketing of learning and skills aimed at specific groups and communities
48	Economic		Develop a compensation scheme that will off-set any bias in provision introduced by a need for Learning Providers to seek available income streams	
49	Qualification		Open up more Level 4 learning opportunities (perhaps through Train to Gain)	UCS - Short and modular Level 4 courses Train to Gain promotion of Level 4
50	Geography		Consider synergy with neighbouring opportunities at the boundaries of the county (Waveney)	Learning partnerships to determine community benefits of joining up with other areas
51	Pathway		Enable and smooth the path into learning with 'Prepare to learn' courses and identifying new routes to learning (e.g. mentoring through a buddy system)	Develop a programme of "Prepare to learn" courses

6.3 Stakeholders

Index	Category	Observations	Needs/Gaps	Suggested Deliverables
52	Needs analysis	As previously noted, there is a fundamental need to recognise the individuality of circumstances and needs		
53	Needs analysis			Leverage LEAPs and Children's Centres as places to gather feedback on learning requirements
54	Engagement	The prevalence of language and cultural barriers has significant bearing in the stakeholder community		
55	Engagement		Develop learner forums to share the positive experiences of learning; and develop relationships and work with community groups	Engage with EEDA to maximise opportunity in collaborative partnership and support Develop local Community Action Plans for learning opportunity with Community learning champions
56	Economic	There is a need to recognise the opportunity and impact of emergent technologies and industries as relevant specifically to Suffolk (e.g. green energy)		
57	Economic		Opportunity to leverage the 'greenest county' ambition through related apprenticeships	
58	Economic		Seize the opportunity to learn from 'best practice' in informal learning strategies demonstrated elsewhere	Promote best practice in informal learning strategies

			within (and beyond) the county e.g. Suffolk Choir, Suffolk Book Club	
59	Economic		Leverage the contribution that SCC can make to workforce up-skilling through training a workforce with transferable skills	<p>Suffolk CC to:</p> <p>Continue to develop workforce training through Suffolk CC Skills Pledge</p> <p>Consider UCS Internships</p> <p>Take on apprenticeships</p> <p>Promote the Skills Pledge to contractors and suppliers</p> <p>Widespread Promotion of Skills Pledge as part of Suffolk Year of Skills and Learning</p> <p>Suffolk County Council to act as champion and leader with respect to work-based learning and social enterprise jobs</p>
60	Evaluation	Recognise the inherent value of all (even indirect) skills	Exploit the motivational potential in celebrating the value of achievement at all levels	Sponsorship of Skills and learning awards and recognitions, particularly for communities/groups
61	Evaluation	There is a need to recognise the value of informal, as well as formal, learning	Develop a model to evaluate the value of 'informal' learning provision	
62	Evaluation	There is a need to recognise the value of all learning and skills opportunities (e.g. badging as such)	Develop a model to benchmark the value of skills and learning interventions with pre/post value measures	Use benchmarks e.g. LSC Statement of Need, to benchmark for learning and skills in communities
63	Evaluation	There is a need to recognise and celebrate the value in		Sponsor and support attainment and achievement e.g. through

		'recreational learning'		PCDL partnerships
64	Evaluation	Recognising the value in <i>learning by doing</i> - with a fundamental challenge to the commonly assumed definitions of learning. Learning is not necessarily associated with, or inextricably linked to, schools		
65	Evaluation		Use National Minimum Data datasets and/or other available resources for benchmarking skills levels and gaps in Suffolk	LSC/SCC/UCS collaboration to develop common data set for benchmarking
66	Evaluation		Recognition that a wide variety of activities (e.g. drama, reminiscence activities) can constitute valuable learning and that labelling as 'learning' may mis-represent or alienate	
67	Evaluation		Leverage pre-existing datasets (e.g. NMDS) with respect to identifying and benchmarking skills gaps identified in the region (and notably in the care context)	LSC/SCC/UCS collaboration on data
68	Evaluation		Share best practice supply and demand modelling as available within and beyond the sector, county and indeed country (e.g. within LSC)	LSC/SCC/UCS collaboration on data
69	Funding	Recognise the need for greater creativity in the process of funding sourcing and applications	Enable greater creativity in the process of funding sourcing and applications	
70	Funding	There is a widespread perception that the funding 'landscape' is intrinsically complex	Ensure that communications surrounding funding is efficiently managed - providing fundamental (and simple/clear) information on what funding is available and how to access	LSC to promote funding streams on infolink/relevant websites, to businesses, individuals/communities

			it	
71	Funding	There is a widespread perception of an increasing 'professionalisation' of funding bids with the increasing prevalence of professional bid writers and changing bidding processes	Take advantage of the opportunities presented by the professionalisation of bid writing	Collaboration between agencies on funding bids e.g., European funding
72	Funding	Funding constraints present particular difficulties to certain communities e.g. smaller business, older people		
73	Funding	There is a strong desire to take a longer term view on funding planning...and thereby avoid the inherent risks of short-termism		Identify and promote long-term funding streams
74	Funding		Leverage the opportunity presented by libraries as potential conduits to, and portals for, funds	Develop the potential of libraries to contribute to learning and skills through specific projects
75	Funding		Leverage funding to enable distance learning as well as 'place-based' learning	Explore funding available for distance learning, for particular groups
76	Funding		Optimise cost-effective utilisation of existing infrastructure e.g. schools, libraries, children's centres	
77	Funding		Avoid the risk of duplication of effort and resource in seeking and utilising funding	Local learning partnerships to identify opportunities to lever in funding through collaboration
78	Funding		Embed the value of learning in all funding bids (recognising the importance of learning within all agendas)	
79	Access		Strengthen voluntary and community sector learning and skills through making more SCC training open to voluntary sector	Explore opportunities for SCC training to be opened to VCS e.g. adult social care, CYP etc as part of Skills Pledge

				activities
80	Access		Promote libraries as learning hubs (and with appropriate signposting); and promote libraries as offering resources and venues/facilities NOT just for training	Set up LEAP centres and points in libraries
81	Access		Open up access to unused infrastructure for learning opportunities e.g. schools outside-of-hours; and through further outreach (not just libraries) opportunities	Use of extended schools, SWISS centre, skills centres etc
82	Access		Leverage the opportunities presented by sports specifically and the wider skills that are applicable to (and beyond) sports programmes	Promote learning and skills as part of 2012 promotion.
83	Delivery		Plans with respect to learning and skill development need to be drawn up to be aware of the risks of 'history repeating' with the resultant 'repetition of the same' - and this planning needs to be conducted in a spirit of inventiveness and creativity	Work to ensure that the work to raise aspirations and achievement through the 14-19 agenda is carried forward to young adults and beyond Learning partnerships to develop solutions more relevant to community/business needs, rather than what's currently on offer
84	Definition	There is a clear need for clarity of definition of intended recipients/beneficiaries of adult learning and skills provision (i.e. target audience)		Learning providers to target and market courses aimed at and suitable for, specific groups e.g. family carers, people with disabilities
85	Definition	There is a clear need for clarity and consistency in the terminology and language used surrounding the learning and skills agenda	Provide clear definitions of learning that may be clearly understood, recognised, used and shared by all	
86	Partnership		Linking Adult Learning and Skills plan	On-going involvement of

			with the partnership (e.g. Family Carers') strategies as they are developed and finalised	partnerships in identifying, developing and delivering learning and skills for particular groups, businesses, communities
87	Infrastructure		Develop a solid IT framework including high speed broadband and access for individuals to ICT (recognising that some in society don't earn enough to be able to afford a computer for themselves and/or can't use the internet to find out about courses)	Engage with the project to pilot ICT
88	Culture	There is a widespread perception that achieving the outcomes of the plan requires an intrinsically flexible and holistic approach		
89	Culture		Make learning central to the agenda of all strategic partnerships	Ensure that the learning and skills agenda is reflected in other aspects of Community Strategy delivery, particularly economic prosperity and health and well-being
90	Culture		Creating a 'want to learn' culture in the county that engenders a positive context for flexible learning though life	
91	Communication	The need to adopt greater sophistication in the marketing of learning and skills opportunities including consideration of segmentation of the target audiences (with associated understanding of each segments needs/gaps); and associated consideration of direct marketing activities and tailored product/service		Develop and implement a cross-sector marketing plan as part of the skills coalition

		development		
92	Communication		Ensure influence is applied in the most effective contexts e.g. boards, forums, groups as appropriate	Develop and enhance local learning partnerships that link in with locality consortia/schools clusters etc
93	Communication		Ensure that appropriate information is available on Suffolk County Council's mobile library - with associated access to the internet	Utilise community outlets such as mobile libraries, to promote learning and skills
94	Pathway		Engage support services in a timely manner (e.g. probation service engagement) - and most notably to intervene before situations become critical ("I had to get into trouble to get help")	Implement Integrated Employment and Skills, particularly for vulnerable groups
95	Pathway	There is a need to recognise the importance of a positive first learning opportunity/engagement as a precursor to future attitudes and propensity towards pursuing future skills and learning opportunities		
96	Pathway	Learning is a cradle-to-grave journey (up-skilling through life) - with opportunity for all in all situations and circumstances		

6.4 Employers

Index	Category	Observations	Action	
97	Needs analysis	Consistent throughout the 'engagement' is recognition of the individuality of circumstances and needs		Develop individualised packages of learning for young adults and those aged 19+
98	Needs analysis	In parallel with learner individuality is the need to recognise the different needs and opportunities of differing employer profiles (e.g. micro businesses vs. large employers)		Work with employers through Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses to match needs and demands with learning and skills provision
99	Needs analysis		Collaboration between employers (notably smaller) and the learning providers to identify training needs and demand levels	Develop local learning partnerships
100	Culture	There is a cultural reticence and/or ability amongst some small businesses to commit/invest resources in learning	Engender a culture of self-help within a supportive context (knowing where to get information and support)	Promote the support and assistance available to small businesses e.g. Skills Pledge and other incentives e.g. awards
101	Culture	There is some perception of the existence of certain obstructive employer attitudes in some instances: ⇒ (In)flexibility ⇒ Stigma (mental health)		
102	Culture	There is recognition that disruption is a barrier to training In a business context, and therefore commitment to learning requires commitment throughout a company not just from the top		Identify and promote best practice amongst employers for learning and training that is integrated throughout the business

		management		
103	Economic	There is a need to recognise the opportunity and impact of emergent technologies and industries as relevant specifically to Suffolk (e.g. green energy)		
104	Engagement	In order for action/engagement to be taken, there is a need for individuals (and indeed employers) to recognise two fundamental situations ⇒ That there is an issue/problem ⇒ What the solution/outcome ⇒ /benefit might look like		Engage learner and employers in on-going work through learning partnerships to identify and address issues at a community level
105	Delivery		Encourage work-based training as a flexible and highly valuable learning environment	Integrated Employment and Skills Pathfinder Trials - recruitment linked to on-going skills development and better identification of business needs
106	Delivery		Leverage the value of SCC learning resources by offering piggy-backs to VCS and small businesses based upon SCC statutory training	SCC to link with VCS to identify whether there are opportunities for piggy backing, particularly in Adult Care
107	Communication		The services and support of Suffolk TAP would benefit from being better known with greater emphasis on cross sectoral communications	Review marketing and promotion of Suffolk TAP

108	Communication		Raise awareness of the Skills Pledge and Train to Gain	<p>Promote what's available from whom as part of Suffolk Year of Skills and Learning</p> <p>Engage the media and specific groups e.g. Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses etc in communicating/promoting initiatives</p> <p>On-going communications, e.g. through websites, internet etc.</p> <p>Inter and across sector promotion e.g. Suffolk County Council signing and promoting the Skills Pledge to other employers</p>
109	Culture		Educate employers as to the value of non-work related learning and develop a business support programme to enable employees to access non-work specific learning opportunities	<p>Part of Suffolk Year of Skills and Learning activity</p> <p>LEAPs to develop links with local businesses to enable employees to gain information on and access to, informal learning</p>
110	Definition		Clarify the organisations engaged in supporting training/skills development for the business community (e.g. LSC); and clarify purpose and benefit of initiatives intended to support the business community (e.g. Skills Pledge and Train to Gain)	See 108
111	Economic		Develop learning and skills opportunities that enhance employee effectiveness and efficiency (e.g. specific IT skills, managing budgets etc.)	Learning providers to work with employers to develop packages of generic learning that support employer's needs, particularly for young adults entering the workforce/ carers, parents, other returners to work

112	Evaluation		Consideration needs to be given as to how to measure informal learning impacts to establish/demonstrate value to learners and employees	Learning providers to collect evidence of outcomes on learners to inform performance against “soft” targets such as increase in adult participation
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Appendix 1: Insight Track Ltd. overview

Insight Track is an independent marketing research and strategic planning consultancy offering qualitative and quantitative research, specialising in high-value and complex 'customer' relationships, with the aim of delivering actionable recommendations to enable organisations to successfully achieve their goals and ambitions.

Insight Track has extensive experience of research and consultancy assignments for a wide range of local, regional and national organisations across the public, not-for-profit and private sectors to address a multitude of organisational objectives.

The skill-set and research techniques commonly used include focus groups, face-to-face and telephone depth interviewing, hall tests, customer panels, self-completion surveys (off and online), street interviews, desk research, moderated workshops, customer satisfaction/experience audits, public consultations, combined with business and marketing consultancy.

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“A moment’s insight is sometimes worth a life’s experience” Oliver Wendell Holmes