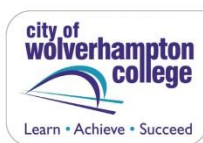


Wolverhampton City Learning Region Pilot Learning Festival 2019 Stakeholders Evaluation Report

Report prepared by Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Wolverhampton



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Summary

Wolverhampton City Learning Region (WCLR) has brought together a range of partners to enable a highly successful two day *Love Learning* pilot learning festival that was held in the City of Wolverhampton's Mander Centre on Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd March 2019, 10am – 3pm. This festival was coordinated by the University of Wolverhampton, co-developed by WCLR partners and provided an integrated range of activities and cross-referrals. Over 900 participants engaged in a range of free tasters and activities that profiled learning opportunities on offer across the lifespan. This pilot involved consultation with the City's Education, Skills, Employment Board and Inclusion Board and took place during the City's Residents Programme. This evaluation report draws upon data collected through: a stakeholder evaluation survey completed by 29 stakeholders involved in the pilot learning festival planning and delivery; stakeholders' feedback gathered at a post-event evaluation meeting held by the Learning Festival Task and Finish Group; and, a range of other informal data collected by the Learning Region Coordinator on participation, marketing activities and in-kind contributions.

Why a Pilot Learning Festival?

The festival is a core component of the WCLR Priority 1 Realising Aspirations and aimed to draw attention to the formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities available locally in order to increase a culture of learning and its importance across the city. The rationale for the festival links to the learning city plan encapsulated in *The Vision for Education 2030: Shaping a City of Learning (2017)*, which states that the City of Wolverhampton has the following aspiration - *Access to learning is available for all levels and to all ages with increased participation from hard to reach/disadvantaged communities*. UNESCO promotes that learning festivals are a key approach to nurturing a culture of learning throughout life within a City, can bring a sense of joy to learning with hands-on activities to encourage all citizens to get involved, celebrates learning and connects citizens to the learning city concept (UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, Guidelines for Building Learning Cities).

Key Objectives of the Learning Festival

- To pilot and promote a learning festival to celebrate and showcase the benefits, value and relevance of learning in everyday life and actively grow a culture for lifelong learning.
- To celebrate learning and share *Love Learning* messages with residents through showcasing of a range of formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities available city-wide including free tasters and hands-on activities.
- To attract and engage with the target audience - the general public and people of all ages.
- To share the *Love Learning* message across communities through media channels and word of mouth.

Key Outputs / Outcomes

These relate to the process of planning, building and running the festival as well as the creation of partnerships to create an integrated and successful all-age programme. The festival was created very rapidly and all partners understood that it was vital to learn the key lessons in this pilot year. Photographs are included in this report to show aspects of the festival. (Note: these show only partners as consent was not sought for images of the general public).

Growth of WCLR partnerships and collaboration:

Key to the success of the pilot learning festival was the strength of the WCLR initiative to bring together a range of partners to work together collaboratively.

- Formal learning provider partners included; University of Wolverhampton, City of Wolverhampton Council, City of Wolverhampton College, Adult Education Wolverhampton and Wolverhampton Learning Platform.

- A range of new partnerships have developed as a result of the pilot learning festival through input from; Kingswood Trust, U3A, Townswomen’s Guild (TWG), Alzheimer’s Society, Wolverhampton Wanderers Foundation, WEA, Central Youth Theatre and University of Wolverhampton Children's University.
- Evaluation feedback from stakeholders indicated that they consider one of the most successful aspects of the pilot learning festival to be working together in partnership. It provided a new and valuable opportunity for smaller organisations, in particular, to network with other professionals and connect across all the levels of provision to enable effective signposting and cross-referrals. Some stakeholders reported they have developed new partnership relationships as a result of being part of the WCLR pilot learning festival.
- 82% of the stakeholder evaluation survey respondents rated the overall experience of the pilot learning festival as very good or good. The majority stated they would be prepared to be part of future learning festivals.

Engagement of people of all ages

- Participants: the festival achieved over 900 participants (children, young people and adults) with reach to residents from all 20 wards across Wolverhampton. There were also participants from further afield including Birmingham, Shropshire, Telford, Dudley, Sedgley and Stafford.
- Stakeholders: 19 partner organisations collaborated to plan and deliver the festival.

Location of a central shopping centre

- The majority of stakeholders said they would want to use the Mander Centre as the venue again if a future learning festival was organised. Some identified a key strength of this location being the regular footfall of people passing by throughout the day. However it was felt that more consideration needs to be given to time of year e.g. whether to schedule during a half-term or school holidays to capture a wider audience and to ensure that it did not clash with a football match.
- Some stakeholders suggested it would be good to consider the idea of partner learning festival events in wards with high levels of deprivation to coincide with learning festival activities held in the city centre.

Ambassadors key to engagement in the Mander Centre location

University of Wolverhampton Ambassadors, *Learning Super Heroes and Heroines* and Wolves FC Mascot *Wolfie* were used to draw the attention of people passing by to stop and engage with the festival and what was on offer. This proved very successful in capturing the interest of people through informal and fun approaches.



Diverse range of activities offered

- A broad range of free drop-in taster activities (over 15) were showcased with the *Love Learning* message. Appendix 1 provides the programme of activities on offer over the two days. Due to the broad range of partners involved, participants were able to move around from one activity to another to experience different ways of engaging with learning and to discover that learning can be fun.
- Signposting was a feature to show formal / non-formal / informal learning opportunities city-wide including information, advice and guidance being offered by all partners. A low number of the stakeholder evaluation survey respondents stated that they had participants across the 2 days who booked a place or signed up for promoted courses, activities, memberships or opportunities. However, just over half of the survey respondents stated that they did have participants register their details to be sent future information about the promoted activities, courses, memberships and opportunities.





Broad reach achieved through communication / marketing

- Creation of the *Love Learning* logo for marketing of the festival was co-developed by WCLR partners. This included a dedicated URL being set up through the WCLR webpages www.wlv.ac.uk/lovelearning and keyrings produced as giveaways to festival participants with the *Love Learning* URL.



Communication and marketing activities relating to the pilot learning festival have been quantified in terms of the reach and response they returned to the event:

- *Love Learning* WCLR webpage www.wlv.ac.uk/lovelearning achieved 677 page views
- Dudley Street banners displayed for the month of March provided ongoing communication about the event: As a guide for reach - over approx. 10,000 weekly visitors walk through Dudley Street.
- During the festival pull up banners were located in the Mander Centre to promote the WCLR and the benefits of learning: As a guide for reach - footfall counters on entrances to Mander Centre give daily data record as Fri 1st March - 28,043 visitors and Sat 2nd March - 35,936 visitors
- The Signal 107 radio presenter provided live publicity between Tues 26.2.19 – Fri 1.3.19 am: As a guide for reach - weekly listenership is 58,000.
- Social media and websites posts and profiling by WCLR stakeholders: As a guide for reach - available WCLR Twitter account analytics show some pilot learning festival tweets reached approx. 2,791 people.
- Featured in the listings on the City's Resident's programme website www.livelearnworkwolves.com : The residents programme website had 2,755 unique visits. The activities for the Better Health page which hosted the *Love Learning* Festival page and the Support into Work page had 438 page views.
- A digital email which included the *Love Learning* event was sent to 7,750 email addresses on 28 Feb 2019 with a 32% open rate.
- The visit by local MP Pat McFadden and social media post on *Wolverhampton Today*: As a guide for reach - *Wolverhampton Today* Facebook page has 52,680 followers.



The Love Learning event in the Mander Centre today welcomed visitors to come and try a host of fun, free learning activities for all the family. If you missed us, drop by tomorrow (Saturday 2 March) for information from local organisations on jobs, training and more! Pictured are local MP Pat McFadden with Access to Business and Bilston Resource Centre.

Total reach figure for the marketing and communications activity as a combination of digital and non-digital is estimated at **298,315**. This figure allows for the 'opportunity to see' ratio calculation on non-digital media.

Co-created community art piece - Artist Suzie Lavender

- During the pilot learning festival, glass artist, Suzie Lavender, co-created a community art piece with over 20 participants. The artist then displayed this for a 2 week period in her shop, *Made in Wolves*, within the Mander Centre with the names of the participants acknowledged.



WCLR partners effectively mobilised resources

- 19 partner organisations mobilised resources through in-kind contributions to the value of approximately £11,000 to plan, deliver, resource and evaluate the pilot learning festival. Support and in-kind contributions included staff / tutors' time, resources for activities, printed promotional materials and giveaways.

- The organisation coordinating the pilot learning festival, the University of Wolverhampton through the Centre for Lifelong Learning, contributed approx. £1,000 to cover direct costs incurred for marketing, promotional materials and employing University Ambassadors.
- The total investment by WCLR partners in the pilot learning festival was therefore over £12,000 with approximately 90% of this achieved through mobilising resources through support in-kind.
- The Mander Centre provided use of the centre as support in-kind for the 2 day event to the value of approximately £720.
- Signal Radio provided presenter live reads for promotion of the event across 4 days as support in-kind.

Total for mobilised resources is around the value of **£12,720** with approximately 90% of this achieved through support in-kind for the pilot learning festival.

Contribution to UN Sustainable Development Goals

The pilot festival focused on two of the goals:

- **SDG Goal 3** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- **SDG Goal 4** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Key lessons learnt

Building coalitions: The Guiding Documents of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, state that in learning cities *all citizens, regardless of ability, gender and sexuality, social background, language, ethnicity, religion or culture should have equal access to learning opportunities*. Based on the experiences of planning and running the first WCLR Learning Festival, it is clear that an effective coalition of organisations came together in a new context, to achieve this inclusivity goal.

- The success of this pilot and the positive feedback received from stakeholders indicates that future events are likely to be as successful and the number of stakeholders can grow year on year to expand opportunity for residents.

Public manifestation: Cork Learning City describes a learning festival as the tangible public manifestation of the larger learning city initiatives and its activities which are often less visible to the public and key constituencies. Cork's annual learning festival, now in its 15th year, has come to be recognised by UNESCO as a best practice model of celebration of learning. Cork has provided expert input into the development of WCLR.

- The pilot festival was highly effective in engaging with residents and achieving a volume of publicity through the stakeholders which attracted citizens and publicised the initiative. It provided a city-wide celebration of learning which made the learning city concept visible to residents.

Mobilising resources: UNESCO considers learning cities to be those that can effectively mobilise resources in every sector to promote inclusive learning of all kinds and at all levels.

- The pilot festival showed that this occurred with an estimated contribution of £12,720 in cash and in-kind support, achieving a potential reach of 298,315 residents (direct or indirect) and over 900 participants from across all wards.

Next steps

Building on the momentum of the pilot learning festival, it is recommended that:

- A second festival be run in 2020.
- Broaden within the festival the number of stakeholder organisations operating across the city in communities, inviting them to more closely together to expand and strengthen inclusion and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all including marginalised and vulnerable groups.
- Based on the success of 2019, consideration be given to creating a model for resource mobilised to achieve longer-term sustainability for an annual festival and to learn lessons from other learning cities on how they achieve this.
- The number and range of hands-on activities provided during the festival be expanded to celebrate the diversity of learning opportunities available for all ages
- The link with the *Wolverhampton for Everyone* movement be explored for its potential to contribute. (This is an initiative between the Council, the Wolverhampton VSC and the University and a number of other partners, to focus on engaging people who live and work in the city to co-produce and co-design local solutions to foster cultural change and future resilience within communities).
- An additional strand of activity focused on higher skills be included which showcases opportunities and pathways for people to realise their ambitions and engage businesses with a strong focus on the role of learning in work in the city.
- The second festival align more closely with the city's vision for everyone working together to be a City of Opportunity, which is proud of its history, celebrates diversity and is ambitious for the future. Consideration can be given to the way that the festival can support the achievement of components of these.
- Consideration be given to alignment of the 2 days event with a series of activities run after the festival in key locations to keep the momentum for learning and engaging going. This will include building better connections with schools to encourage parents/carers to participate in activities on offer with their children.
- Ensure sustainability by strengthening the operational running of the festival and in particular:
 - Set a minimum of a 4 – 6 month lead in time for planning the next festival. Feedback from stakeholders identified that a longer lead in time is essential for more effective planning, communications and marketing activities. Rename the Learning Festival task and finish group to be Learning Festival task and action group due to the ongoing nature of the festival planning activities.
 - Review which is the best month in which to hold the festival to maximise engagement. As the location of the City's Mander Centre enabled engagement with residents city-wide across the 20 wards, review with the Centre Management, the footfall data to identify whether half-term or school holidays usually produces higher footfall than non-school holiday periods.
 - To explore opportunities for using digital methods for determining reach and engagement of people of all ages as part of how the festival is set-up and run.
- UNESCO's Institute for Statistics recommends that measuring the impact of festivals should involve evaluation on multiple levels and the best practice guidance will inform development of the evaluation and monitoring for the next festival. One example is that data shows that the City has 26.2% of people with degree qualifications compared to the England national average of 38.3%. A priority of the City's Strategic Economic Plan 2019 - 2024 involves actions linked to increasing the number of people with degrees. The inclusion of a strand in the festival that links to or supports these priorities would ensure alignment with transformation.

Appendix 1: Pilot Learning Festival diverse range of activities list



Friday 1st March 2019 (All activities are drop in)

- Find about a range of opportunities to pursue your interests, keep active and make new friends.
- Take part in a Virtual Reality experience
- Have a go at speaking Spanish
- Get your photo taken with the Wolves FC Mascot Wolfie!
- Kids can get crafty with a hands on activity inspired by nature
- Take part in an interactive quiz – what animal are you?! Find out about your characteristics and what types of careers might suit you.
- Pick up a free gym pass to try out WLV Sport.
- Find out more about WLV Sport activities.
- Play a game with your friends on our large ‘Connect 4’ or ‘Spike ball’ activities
- Meet a contemporary glass artist and take part in a glass art activity (suitable for all ages)
- Come and meet our learning superhero / heroine
- Find out about self-employment
- Find out about digital skills
- Come and find out about opportunities for work, training or learning new skills
- Have a go at a careers interview
- Have fun taking a selfie photo – strike a pose!
- Have fun creating music (12pm – 3pm)
- Make a Fascinator (a decorative headpiece) for that special occasion (1pm – 3pm)
- Discover your artistic streak! Experiment with watercolours to create your own piece of pop art in the style of famous artists. (10.30am – 3pm)
- Worried about your memory? Pop along for an individual discussion about dementia, the support available and get all your questions answered.

Saturday 2nd March 2019 (All activities are drop in)

- Find about a range of opportunities to pursue your interests, keep active and make new friends.
- Try out British Sign Language (10am – 12pm)
- Learn the basics of first aid – an activity suitable for all the family (10.30am – 2.30pm)
- Kids can get crafty and make a takeaway fingerprint keyring or windmill
- Make a decorative pendant to takeaway and wear. Learn about the art of making paper beads, a traditional craft that goes back to the Victorian era.
- Take part in an interactive quiz – what animal are you?! Find out about your characteristics and what types of careers might suit you.
- Pick up a free gym pass to try out WLV Sport.
- Find out more about WLV Sport activities.
- Come and meet our learning superhero / heroine
- Find out about self-employment
- Find out about digital skills
- Come and find out about opportunities for work, training or learning new skills
- Have a go at a careers interview
- Have fun taking a selfie photo – strike a pose!
- Discover your artistic streak! Experiment with watercolours to create your own piece of pop art in the style of famous artists. (10.30am – 3pm)