



Embracing Adult Learning Opportunities in East Suffolk Conference

Report

Event on 3rd October 2019
High Lodge
Darsham

1. Introduction

Following the jointly commissioned report by Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council titled East Suffolk Adult Learning published in 2017, it was subsequently agreed by the East Suffolk Partnership Board that adult learning was a priority for the area and recommendations were recorded. One of these was recommendation 5:

The potential in the creation of an Adult Learning Network in East Suffolk which would support training providers and avoid duplication. An additional benefit to such a network could be providers working together to apply for funding.

The Embracing Adult Learning Opportunities in East Suffolk Conference is the second cross county adult learning event to be funded by the East Suffolk Partnership. The event was a collaboration between East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council, and Community Action Suffolk. The theme was in response to recommendation 5 above and feedback from attendees at the previous event, where it was highlighted that funding a wide range of learning for adults was a growing challenge.

Since the last event there has been a number of changes across Suffolk, including the merging of Waveney District Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council, a new Head of VCSE Organisation Development at Community Action Suffolk and changes in management within the adult learning team at Suffolk County Council. Suffolk County Council has also introduced a new commissioning process to access adult learning funding.

A database was prepared to promote the event to over 123 organisations across East Suffolk. This database included a wide range of organisations including formal learning providers, charities, leisure trusts, health partners including mental health groups, community groups, training providers, Libraries, SEND providers, ESOL providers, private tuition bodies, societies and clubs. When compiling the database, we were careful to include all those organisations who had been recommended from the previous events feedback. Suffolk County Council and Community Action Suffolk also promoted the event to all their contacts and mailing lists. Promotion was in the form of an electronic leaflets/poster, regular reminder e-mails, social media and the Eventbrite online portal.

Eventbrite received 33 registrations for the event.

1.2 Overview of the day

The day was attended by almost 30 delegates from a diverse range of organisations.

The aim of the day was to bring together organisations to share experience, network and find about more about how to be prepared to make a funding application this predominantly focused on the Suffolk County Council funding opportunity and the process.

The programme

The event included guest speakers, a presentation from Andy Mawby the Adult Learning Service Manager at Suffolk County Council and two workshops. Guest speakers spoke passionately about their learners and demonstrated examples of the benefits of adult learning to both individuals and their communities.

The workshop leader for 'Fit to Bid' facilitated delegates to look at the information and policies needed before applying for funding. Workshop 2 based on the Suffolk County Council Dynamic Purchasing System to enable delegates to find out more about the application process and future opportunities. Both workshops encouraged open discussion and collaboration.

9.30	Coffee and registration	
9.45	Welcome and introduction to the day	Chris McGuinness
9.50	Messages from the Commissioning Body	Andy Mawby
10.15	Message from the Learning Providers, best practice, local provision and challenges Realise Futures Lapwing Inspire Suffolk	Sally Butcher Will Fletcher Garry Mills
10.45	Break	
11.00	Workshop 1 Fit to Bid The SCC adult funding system and how to register	Sabrina Ward – Community Action Suffolk Kathy Simpson – Suffolk County Council
11.45	Workshop 2 Fit to Bid The SCC adult funding system and how to register	Sabrina Ward – Community Action Suffolk Kathy Simpson – Suffolk County Council
12.30	Plenary and questions for the panel	Andy Mawby, Kathy Simpson, Sabrina Ward, Phil Aves, Chris McGuinness
1.00	Buffet lunch and Networking	

2. Workshop feedback

Feedback is taken from delegates either verbally, notes from workshops/discussions, notetakers information or via the questionnaire.

Workshop 1 'Fit to Bid' – Sabrina Ward, Business Support Officer, Community Action Suffolk

Points raised:

- Business plans known and shared by all in organisation. They need to be current with actions that with regular reviews
- Policies and procedures in place
- Criteria for making an application to bid for a project can look scary
- Concern organisations don't fit the eligibility – for SCC speak to Manager to investigate further
- Clarity of vision and how this will be achieved
- Accounts and finances in place for due diligence
- Workshop not always relevant to all in the room
- Look carefully to the criteria for a bid to ensure you understand cover what is needed in your application

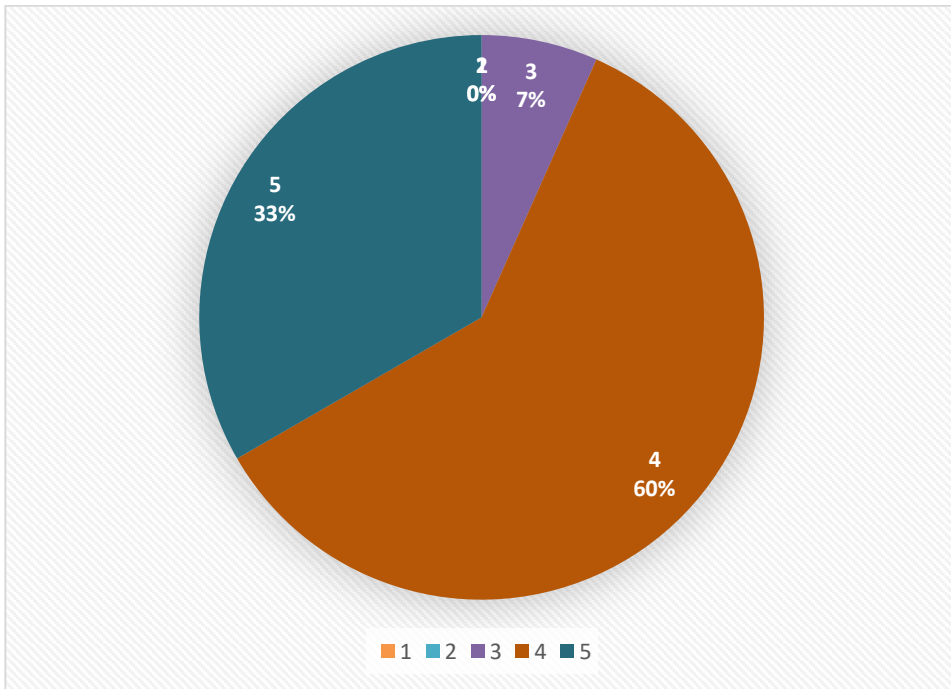
Workshop 2 - "The Suffolk County Council adult learning funding system and how to register – Kathy Simpson, Contracts Officer, Suffolk County Council

Points raised:

- Contracts only promoted on DPS, what about organisations who do not know about the change? – there will be a new website to promote service and networking events like this to increase awareness
- Best way to influence contracts is to join DPS. The Suffolk County Council team are here to listen to ideas for changes in providers needs
- Only 23 providers registered on DPS in 18/19 mostly Ipswich centred
- One provider commented that their bid had been rejected and no feedback given, contact SCC team as they are happy to give feedback
- Bureaucracy stated as a barrier – some organisations may be exempt from some areas. Speak to SCC about any barriers in applying for funding
- How does SCC identify where the gaps are? SCC wish to increase numbers on DPS to address these gaps
- SCC Adult Learning Team always happy to talk and support organisations, not just an electronic system
- Lots of delivery centred around Ipswich. East not as represented as it could be – contracts can only be awarded where organisations register on the DPS. Encourage more from East.
- Two tenders still open – feedback welcome on these
- Best to have a network of providers who can put though ideas

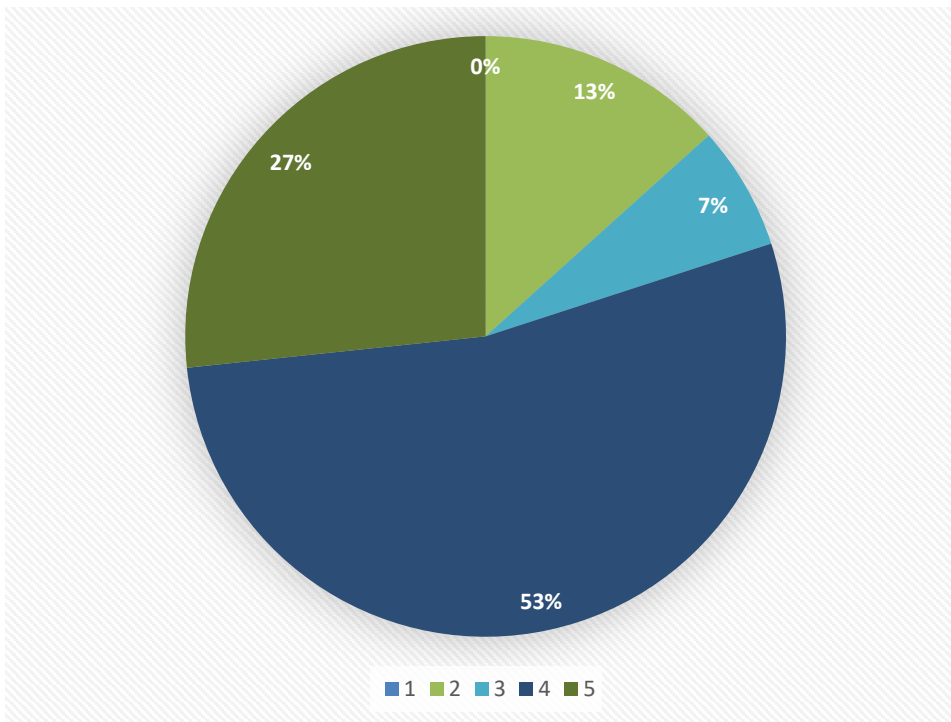
Feedback and evaluation forms

Question 1. The conference was relevant and useful to me/my organisation



- 1 - Strong disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Neither agree or disagree
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly Agree

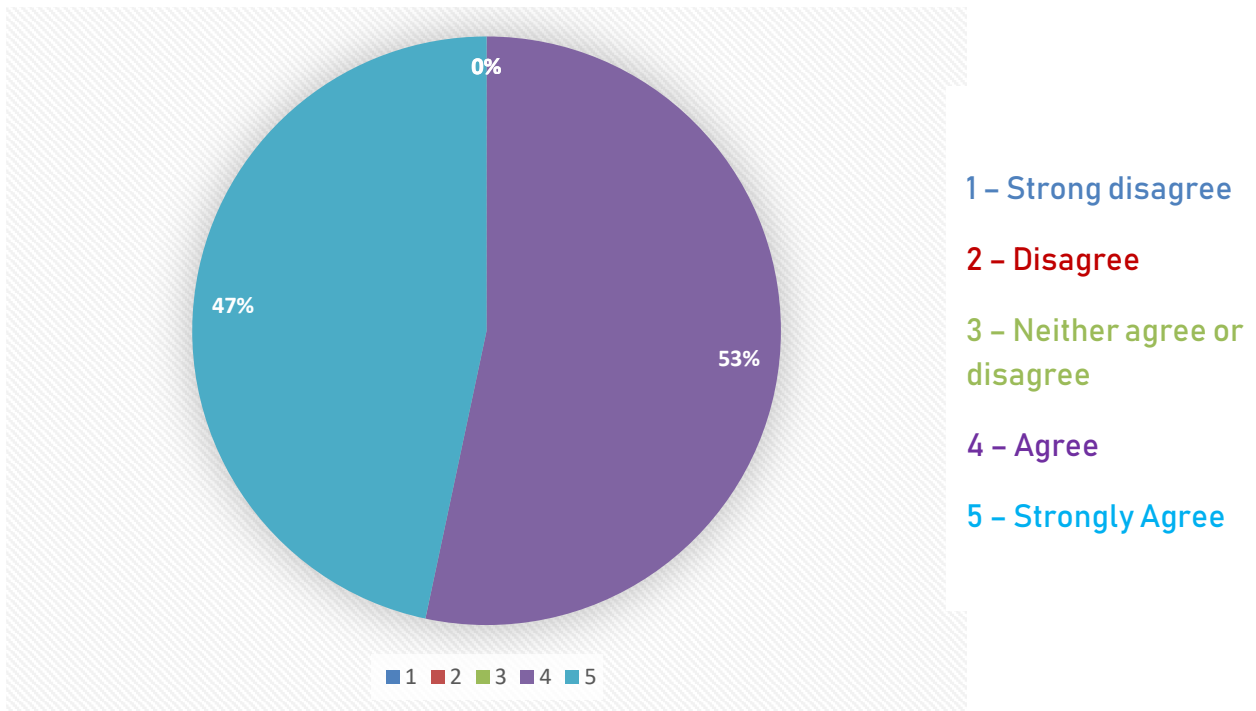
Question 2. The workshops increased my knowledge and skills on the bidding process



- 1 - Strong disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Neither agree or disagree
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly Agree

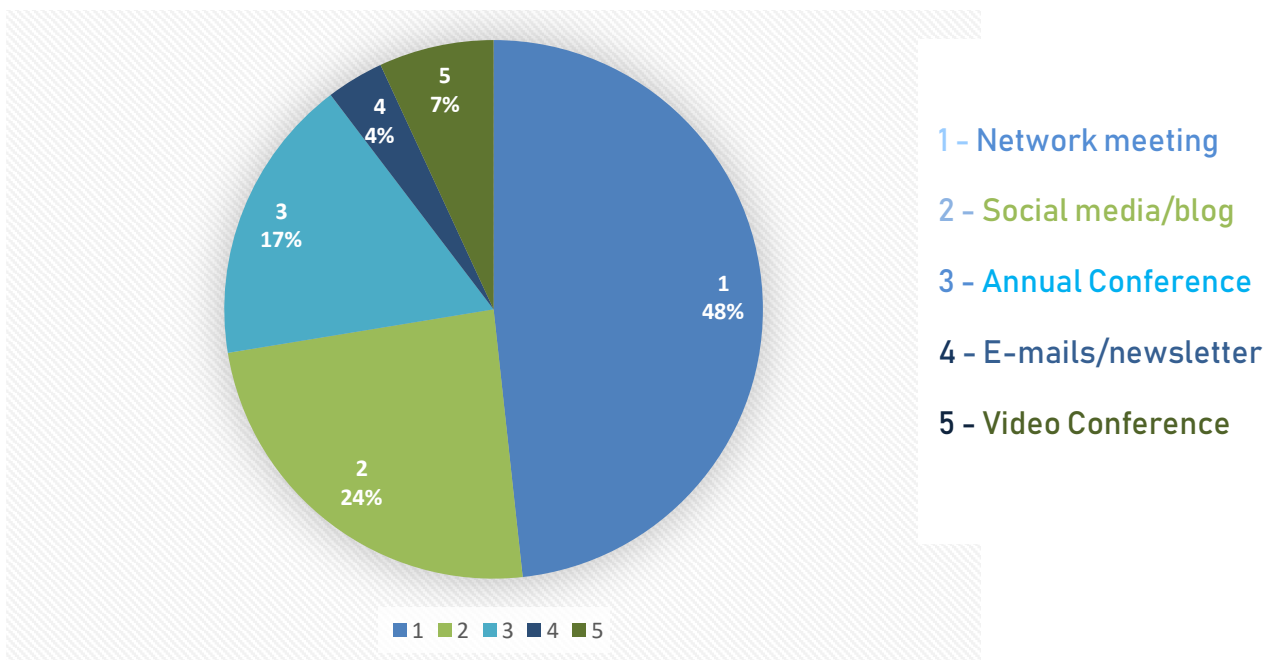
Please note - Those who graded this question 2 or 3 were already aware and accessing the system

Question 3. The guest speakers were knowledgeable and informative



Question 4. Do you think having regular East Suffolk Adult Learning Network communication would be useful to you/your organisation?

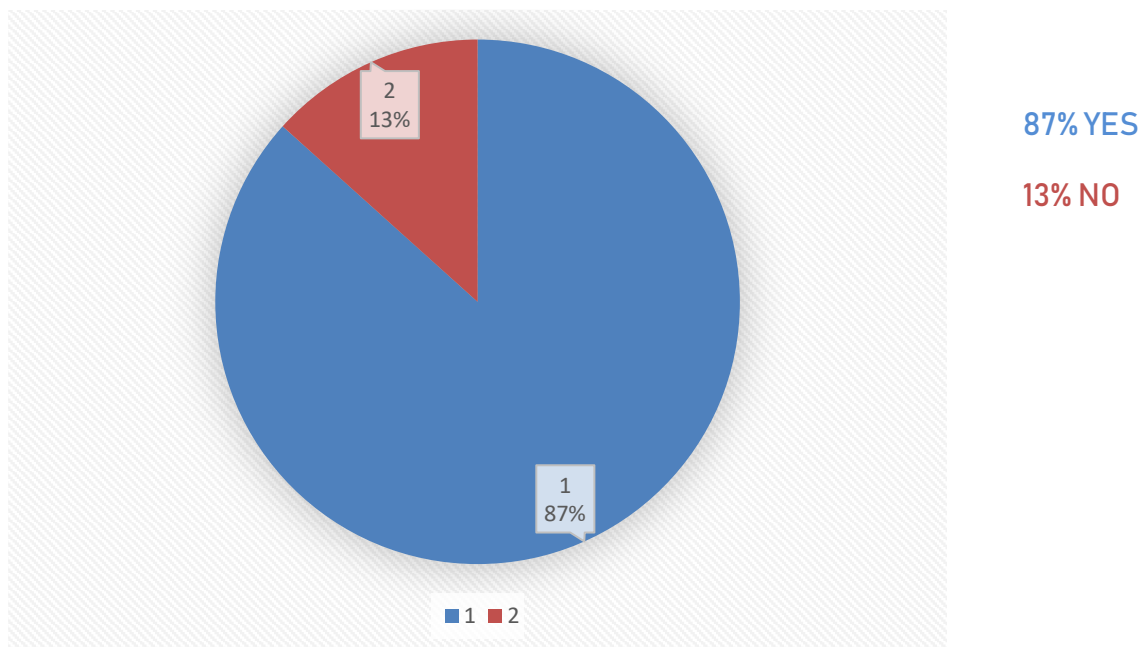
- All those attending agreed they wished to be part of an East Suffolk Network. The attendees were asked how best they would like to be communicated with:



Question 5. I would like to be kept informed about the East Suffolk Adult Learning Network

- All attendees wished to be kept informed

Question 6. I would like to know more about the Suffolk County Council funding opportunities



Question 7. Is there anything from today's conference you would like to know more about?

- I think there should be a wider interaction across the whole of Suffolk
- Examples of delivery as support for applications
- Other organisations delivering in our area to be able to signpost to and from
- The LIFT community grants

Question 8. Are there any organisations or individuals who are not here today who would be an important part of the East Suffolk Adult Learning Network?

- Suffolk Adult Learning Federation
- Suffolk Community Foundation
- Local Health Partnerships
- Organisations who are not providers – Suffolk Refugee Service, Mencap, Appleseed, Anglia Care Trust, Green Light Trust
- Cooperative Ipswich
- More from the northern area of East Suffolk
- Ipswich Community Media, Oasis, Phoebe Group
- Suffolk Chamber of Commerce

Question 9. Do you have any quotes from your organisation you would be happy for us to use in our press releases?

- ‘The speakers were informative, approachable and speaking about some really useful topics’
- Good for members share knowledge and talents with other members
- A useful event with opportunities for networking and collaboration – Thank you East Suffolk’
- ‘useful, food for thought, enlightening – Thank you
- Always good to connect with like-minded people who can - and do – make a difference to the social, economic and educational opportunities of citizens in the East of Suffolk in a productive and collaborative way
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Question 10. Comments and Suggestions

- Arrangement of seating would be good around circular tables to be less formal and to help facilitate networking
- Offers to share individual and organisation contact details
- Information and outline of U3A
- Support with an Equality and Diversity Policy check-up

3. Summary

The day offered a practical and informative way to not only introduce the new Suffolk County Council commissioning process but also to look at what information will be required to apply for any funding projects.

Feedback from those attending the conference was positive with the majority of delegates wishing to continue with a network to support adult learning within our community.

4. Recommendations:

- To share workshop information with organisations across East Suffolk
- To investigate further how we encourage participation from organisations within East Suffolk. How do we engage organisations who feel the network is not relevant to them?
- To offer further information and advice sessions to organisations including those requested above
- To discuss and decide what structure/s the network can take to move forward