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Introduction

1.1 Context

The strategic objectives of the Fife and Tayside Forum focus on addressing under-representation in higher education by:

- Identifying the wider access needs of the region
- Agreeing priorities to develop and deliver programmes of activity that support transitions in lifelong learning
- Raising the aspirations of those from under-represented groups and providing information about the educational opportunities available to them.

Partners work through the Forum to develop a programme of activities that promotes wider access and supports progression among the following groups in Fife and Tayside:

- School pupils
- College students following Access and HN programmes
- Adult returners

In practice, much of the activity has focussed on supporting learners as they make the transition from one part of the education system to another. Transition has emerged as a key theme in the Forum's plans for the next funding period. The aims laid out in the summary business plan (see Appendix 1) are to identify gaps, to complement existing provision and to provide strategic interventions at points of progression.

In the area of Pre-access, a project was launched in 2005 that aimed to promote collaborative activity to encourage increased participation in further learning by adults, especially those progressing from learning in the community. The key targets agreed as part of the planning process are:

- Working in deprived areas
- Engaging men
- Providing information, advice and guidance.

The Pre-access Scoping undertaken in Fife is intended to provide a background against which future activity may be planned and, specifically, to identify the potential for collaborative initiatives that could be supported by the Forum.

1.2 Remit

The Forum Pre-access project came about as a result of consultations with partners across the region that identified a need for support for progression from community learning to college or university. A working group was formed in December 2007, facilitated by the SWAP Project Officer, to consider collaborative activity involving SWAP East, the Fife colleges, Careers Scotland and a wide range of community organisations. The group agreed to a preliminary audit of current pre-access provision in Fife, to be funded by the Forum and with the following remit:

- To review the nature and scope of current Pre-access provision in Fife.
- To consult with partners to identify any gaps in provision.
- To research a range of possible models for partners to consider which takes into account the varied needs and circumstances of learners.
- To raise awareness of the Fife and Tayside Forum as a source of support for collaborative Pre-access activity in the community.
- To work with partners to identify other sources of funding to sustain and support further activity in Pre-access.
- To seek out potential for adding value to existing Pre-access activity in Fife.

1.3 Definition of Forum Pre-access Activity

The aim of the Pre-access Project is to develop and deliver collaborative provision for Forum target groups in the Fife and Tayside communities. Pre- Access activity in this context is defined as any type of educational provision that:

- raises aspirations and builds confidence
- prepares learners for more advanced formal learning

1.4 Fife Council CLD strategy

This is currently being refreshed and will feed into the single outcome agreement between Fife Council and the Scottish Government. Early indications are that the outcomes will include:

- improved employability of residents from areas with higher than average levels of unemployment
- improved personal confidence, self esteem, social networking, health and wellbeing
- improved retention and progression of learners
- improved participation in community planning and Community democratic process

It is clear that the promotion of Pre-access activity in Fife is in tune with these outcomes.

2 Review of Current Provision

2.1 Fife Learning Network

The Fife Learning Network is the main vehicle for collaborative activity, undertaking joint delivery and marketing of courses for adult learners in Fife.

This network is a partnership of Fife Council, local colleges and the voluntary sector which provides adults with flexible and accessible learning opportunities in the community. The Network has almost 50 local centres and offers a range of programmes including training targeted at local job market opportunities.

A guidance and support element is provided to help learners to make the choices that are right for them and through this the Network aims to expand opportunities for participation in personal development and motivational programmes to help learners to improve in confidence and set achievable goals. A “First Steps” course was designed to cater to those that may be considering

- Returning to work
- Finding a new job
- Returning to study
- Updating skills

This provision responds to priorities set by the Fife Community CLD planning partnerships and their subgroups. The partners in this are the Fife Colleges, Fife Council, Careers Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, The WEA and Youth 1st. The area-based planning partnerships are:

- East Fife
- Dunfermline
- Glenrothes
- Kirkcaldy
- Levenmouth
- West Fife

The extent and nature of provision by the partners in this network is outlined below.

2.2 CLD Provision

CLD Lifelong Learning provision in Fife is delivered through the Community services department of Fife Council. The Council’s first Community Learning Strategy entitled The Learning Kingdom was published in 2000. Community Learning and Development is currently under review.

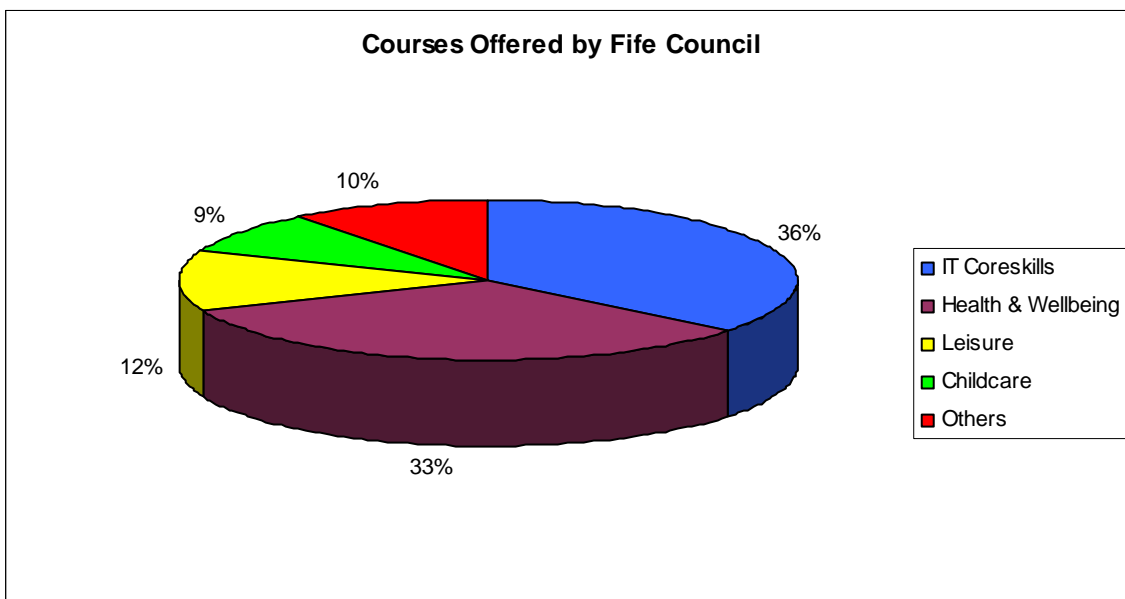
This decentralised strategy operates over 23 geographic localities and is refined and implemented by local learning and development partnerships and Locality Task groups to take account of a range of local circumstances such as:

- Population density
- Distance
- Historical linkages
- Staffing structures

These groups also include representation from user and community groups.

The first stage in this strategy is the provision of basic skills through the adult basic education services which provide free tuition for adults wanting to improve their skills in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic and maths. Classes are usually delivered in small informal groups during the day at local venues such as opportunity centres, community schools and community centres.

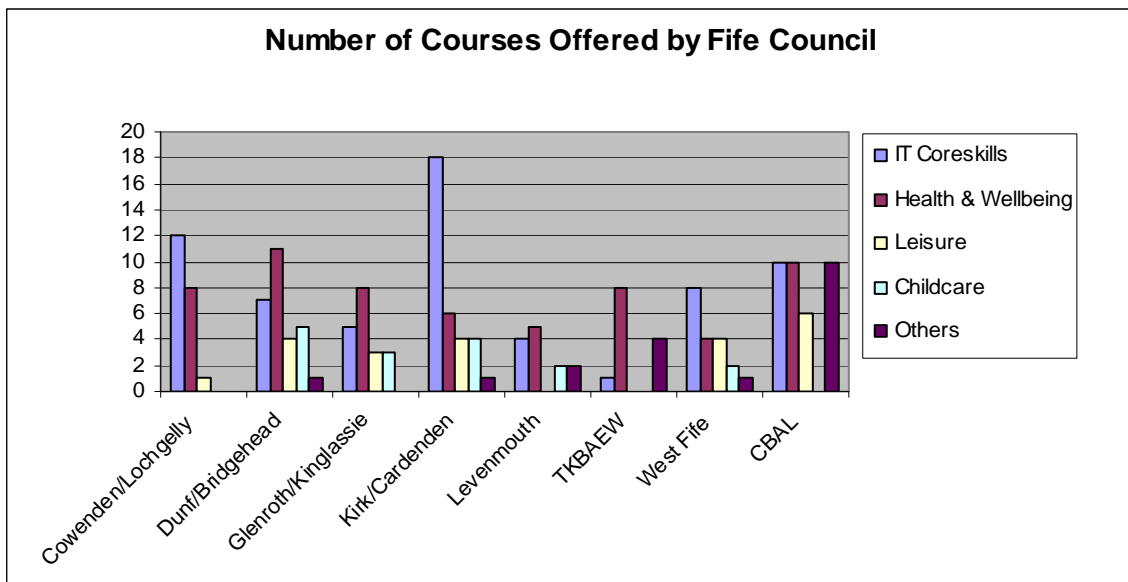
At the next stage, there is a range of provision which includes activity matching the Forum's definition of Pre-access.



A total of 182 such courses were delivered from January to December 2007 through a number of the council learning centres and other community facilities across Fife including the 6 council opportunity centres:

- Cowdenbeath/Lochgelly
- Dunfermline / Bridgehead
- Glenrothes / Kinglassie
- Kirkcaldy/Cardenden
- Levenmouth
- West Fife villages

	<u>IT Coreskills</u>	<u>Health & Wellbeing</u>	<u>Leisure</u>	<u>Childcare</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Total</u>
Cowendenbeath / Lochgelly	12	8	1	0	0	21
Dunfermline / Bridgehead	7	11	4	5	1	28
Glenrothes / Kinglassie	5	8	3	3	0	19
Kirkcaldy / Cardenden	18	6	4	4	1	33
Levenmouth	4	5	0	2	2	13
TKBAEW	1	8	0	0	4	13
West Fife	8	4	4	2	1	19
CBAL	10	10	6	0	10	36
Total	65	60	22	16	19	182



2.2.1. Community Use Schools

In promoting the CLD, Fife Council also utilises its network of community use schools. 36 courses were on offer in 13 schools in the earlier part of this year. Of the 36, 12 were on sport and sport coaching, 5 on sign language and language, 1 on mental health first aid and the other 18 were general interest (see leaflet).

2.2.2. Kirkland Community College

This is a council facility, located within Kirkland High School and Community College complex in Methil, offering a number of courses tailored to suit individual needs. Some courses are offered on an open learning basis. Courses available include:

- IT
- Business and Admin
- Art and Drama
- Personal and Social Development Employment skills
- Maths and Communications
- PE
- Confidence Building

Classes run from 2 to 16 hours a week. The college is opened from 9.00am to 9.00 pm and also delivers the ECDL and HNC in Administration and Technology.

Summary of Findings & Points for Consideration

- IT and Core Skills account for 36% of provision.
- 33% of provision is in the area of health, confidence building and employability.
- Included in Other, which accounts for 10% of provision, is Preparation for Work, Making Choices and Summer Schools.
- The Summer School option could be developed to create pathways into a Pre-access provision delivered in partnership with the colleges and council.
- There may be potential to build in to existing child care and child development courses an information and guidance element to support and encourage progression to an Access to Nursing or Access to Teaching programme.
- Given the Forum's priority of engaging more men as learners, there is the potential to develop specific pathways from community-based courses designed to attract men which link to existing college programmes, for example in the area of Sports or Technology.
- There may be the potential to develop some form of Pre-access provision through Fife's community use school network or Kirkland Community College.

2.3 Fife Colleges Community Provision

The three Fife colleges offer a wide range of learning opportunities in outreach and college settings.

2.3.1 Adam Smith College

There is an outreach presence in council centres in St Andrews, Anstruther, Cardenden, Bowhill and Kelty, in addition to the college campuses. It is also a key partner with CVS Fife in the European funded Training Project. The courses on offer are widely publicised within the college and community. Separate publications highlight the provision at Levenmouth, one of Fife's major regeneration and deprivation areas.

Community bridging courses on offer include:

- Skills for Life
- Key For work
- Step up to Success
- Flexit Programme designed for individuals wishing to develop IT skills before a return to work or study.

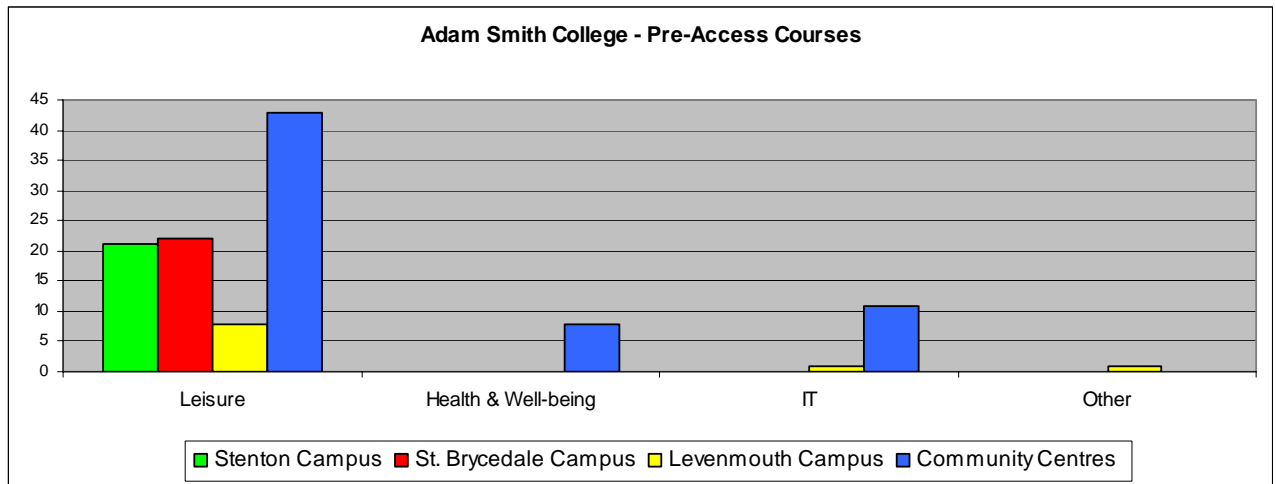
The college also delivers a range of introductory courses:

- Introduction to Business Skills
- SVQ in Using Information Technology
- FLU-Flexible Learning Unit in Information

Adam Smith College also delivers Fun and Hobby courses. There are 21 leisure courses available at the Stenton Campus and 22 at the St Brycedale Campus. The Levenmouth Campus offers 6 leisure, 1 IT and a flexible learning course.

In community settings in Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes, a total of 62 courses were identified: 43 leisure, 11 IT and 8 health and well-being. In Levenmouth, 3 courses were identified: 2 leisure and 1 IT course.

As a member of the local Learning Development Partnership, Adam Smith College has recently taken part in a Forum-supported Pre- access initiative entitled Moving On. Learners in community based core skills classes were offered tasters in a range of subjects at various campuses. One- to-one guidance was included as an integral element of the experience. 15 learners were involved.



2.3.2 Carnegie College

The college is involved in community outreach activity in a number of learning centres and training organisations in west and central Fife. These are:

- Rosyth Learning Centre
- Cowdenbeath Opportunity Centre
- Lochgelly Learning Centre
- Abbeyview Learning Centre , Dunfermline
- West Fife Villages / Valleyfield Learning Centre, Dunfermline
- West Fife Enterprise, Forthview Learning Centre , Dunfermline

The focus is on IT but other leisure, child care and care courses have been run. The New Cross Access Centre in Dunfermline assists young people into work.

Community outreach activity has centred on providing core skills and a Local Investigation option up to Intermediate 1 level. The college has also offered courses in childcare and a series of themed leisure, vocational and life skills courses through their extended network of outreach centres. Courses include:

- Baubles Bangles and Beads
- Media Madness
- Spruce Yir House
- Create Your Space

The have also been involved in the delivery of adult literacy projects such as Baby Memory.

Another new initiative, LEAP, is a 12 week part-time course that offers young people between the ages of 16 and 19 the opportunity to work on personal, social and vocational skills in the environment of a community college.

In central Fife, Carnegie operates outreach facilities in Methil and Levenmouth. The Access Centre at Thomson House works closely with employers and agencies such as Scottish Enterprise Fife, Job Centre Plus in an effort to provide opportunities to improve qualifications, take on training and receive support and advice whilst looking for employment.

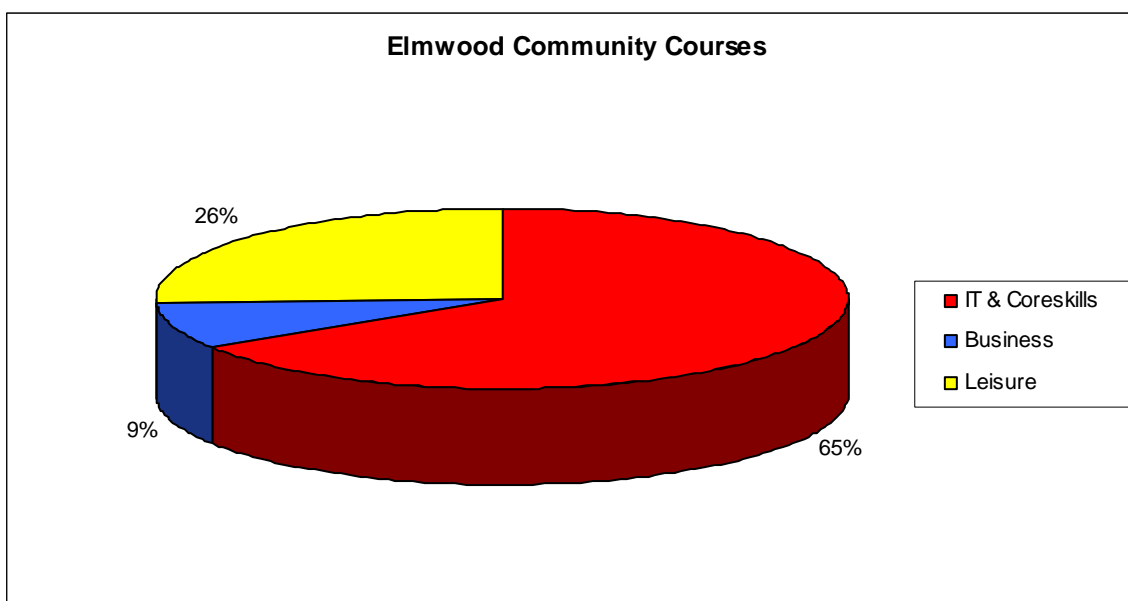
At the Kirkcaldy centre, the college delivers the Next Steps programme, designed to support individuals who are unemployed or have drug or alcohol problems by assisting them to build self-confidence and to investigate options in training, education and employment that suits their circumstances and aspirations. Carnegie also has centres in Levenmouth, North East Fife and West Fife.

2.3.3 Elmwood College

The college runs courses in Cupar, Tayport, Newport and Auchtermuchty, Newburgh, St Andrews, Anstruther and other rural areas. Since August 2005, the college has delivered a Forum-supported Pre-access course, Ready Study Go, which provides tasters in Care, Hospitality, IT, Art, Horticulture and Business Administration and Healthy Eating. Study Skills and information and guidance relating to progression are also available. This year a Ready Study Care course was delivered in partnership at the Cupar YMCA.

These Pre-access courses are only part of a much wider community provision with some 70 courses being delivered through the college's Community Learning programme marketed through the college prospectus and a local courses leaflet.

(For a break down of these see data included in at the end of this section).



Summary of Findings & Points for Consideration

- All the colleges have some form of community provision both focusing on their immediate areas of operation and beyond but specifically in the regeneration areas and concentrations of SIMD zone 5.
- There are already Forum-supported Pre-access courses run in North East Fife and in Central Fife with Elmwood and Adam Smith colleges involved.
- There may be an opportunity for the Forum to play a more active role in promoting and sustaining Pre-access partnerships in Fife that focus on the Forum's priority groups.
- There may be scope for partners to work through SWAP to develop Pre-access provision with clear links into SWAP access programmes in the colleges.

2.4 Training and Community Organisations

In addition to those being provided by the Forum's main partners, Fife Council and the Fife Colleges, courses are offered by a range of different training providers and organisations involved in the community.

These include:

- Brag Enterprises
- West Fife Enterprise
- Fife Employment Access Trust
- Apex
- Rathbone (training company)
- Support Training Limited Fife
- WEA
- Frontline Fife
- The Gilven Project
- CVS Fife

These organisations focus on employability skills or preparation for life skills.

Brag Enterprises Ltd.

This is a social enterprise which was formed in 1988 in response to the decline of the heavy engineering and mining industries of Fife. Its primary aim is the regeneration of communities through the creation and support of sustainable employment.

Brag Enterprises programmes:

ILA training packages

College@ Brag (18wks of training ECDL with work experience opportunities)

Flexible learning (ECDL) in partnership with Adam Smith College

Learn for Life (basic Numeracy and Literacy)

Volunteering

Call-centre training

West Fife Enterprise Ltd

Based in Viewforth Learning Centre in Newmills, this was set up in the early 1980's to help overcome financial and social exclusion barriers for those affected by the demise of coal mining in this part of Fife. The learning centre is resourced to provide training needs in information and communication technology, business administration, carpentry, light engineering/welding and a range of core/ key skills in off-the-job lecture rooms.

West Fife Enterprise learning programmes:

- Quest for Employment
- Modern Life Apprenticeship
- Welcome back to work
- Get Ready for work

Fife Employment Access Trust (FEAT)

Set up to tackle the lack of employment opportunities for people in Fife who had mental health problems. Their Journey to Work programme offers individuals specialist and tailored support back into work.

Apex

Based in Kirkcaldy, it provides guidance and assistance across Fife to individuals who have barriers to employment, education and/or training opportunities due to offending, drug, alcohol or homeless issues or a combination of these.

They offer 3 programmes to promote their goals:

- Progress 2 Work
- Progress 2 Work Linkup
- Breaking the Cycle

Rathbone (training) Fife

They are based in Glenrothes and work with learners of all ages though their main focus as an organisation is on learners aged between 16 and 18 years. Get Ready for Work has three strands: vocational skills, personal skills, and life skills. They also run a training for work scheme through their apprentice programmes aimed at young people aged 16-24.

Support Training Ltd Fife

A Kirkcaldy based group that was set up specifically to assist young people entering the working environment and both employed and unemployed people looking for new work skills. The programmes on offer from this organisation are aimed at those over 25 years old.

- Training for work
- Gateway to Work

These programmes focus on improving the clients' skills in communication, self presentation, team working, decision making and problem solving.

WEA

They offer a wide range of informal learning opportunities for adults in local communities throughout Fife and also provide workplace learning opportunities for Fife council staff. A key feature of the courses they provide is to value and make use of participants' life experience.

Courses include:

- Creative writing
- Cooking
- Local History
- Discursive debates on a wide range of topics

Frontlinefife

They are based in Kirkcaldy and works with clients who are experiencing addiction and mental health issues, associated with recurring homelessness and offending life styles. Through the Cornerstone Connexions project they seek to engage clients in a structured way using community development, informal learning approaches and 'soft' skills activities. The aim is to provide a basis for supporting transition to more formal learning. (See accompanying diagram.)

The Gilven Project

The project offers support to the homeless and other vulnerable people in Central Fife and Glenrothes to obtain and sustain their own tenancy. The project provides training in life skills and social skills, enabling individuals to develop their own potential and self-reliance. It also encourages progression to further educational opportunities.

CVS Fife - Council for Voluntary Service

They provide voluntary organisations and community groups with practical help and support on a range of corporate activity. The organisation aims to promote life long learning and be an effective partner in community planning.

CVS Fife runs a training project, financed through EU funding, in partnership with Adam Smith College. This delivers training to staff, volunteers and committee members of voluntary organisations on a broad range of topics including:

- Finance
- ITC
- Health and Safety
- Organisational Development
- Personal Development
- Working with Volunteers

A programme of short courses is issued every three months and they offer a number of other seminars, information sessions and events through out the year. From January to March this year, there were 58 courses on offer delivered in partnership with a wide rang of organisation including:

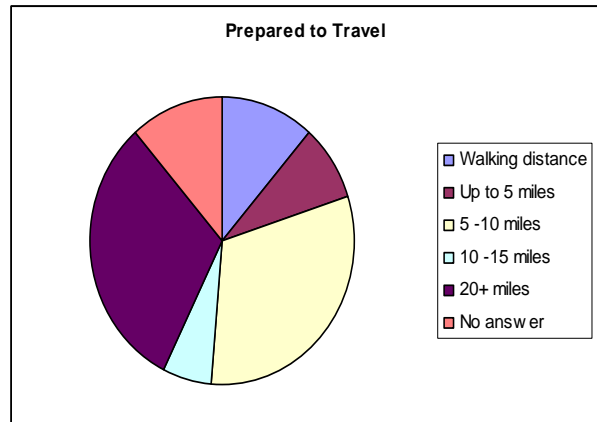
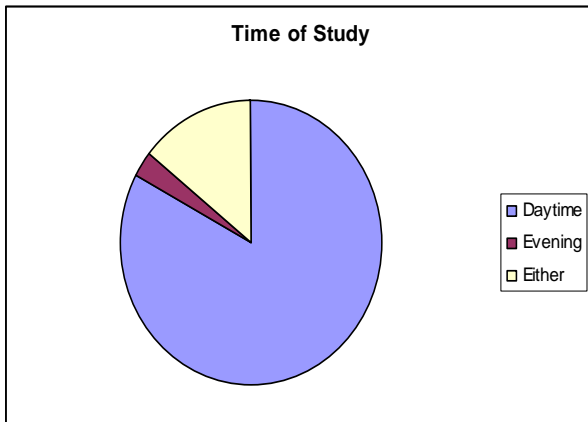
- The NHS
- Fife Council
- Volunteer Centre Fife
- Adam Smith College
- Brag Enterprises
- Learndirect Scotland
- Fife Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise

Summary of Findings & Points for Consideration

- There is a variety of client-focussed organisations catering for a wide range of groups and needs.
- The main activity is to promote employability.
- There may be opportunities to build stronger collaborative links with this sector to promote Pre-access courses specifically of a vocational nature.
- The Forum and SWAP could play a facilitating role in wider partnership collaboration between community and training groups and the colleges.
- The Adam Smith / CVS Fife training partnership could provide a very useful platform with possible Forum support to promote greater access to college and SWAP courses on offer in Fife.

3. Listening to Learners Questionnaire

Forty four students in current community based courses were asked to fill in a questionnaire relating to both their current and future learning. The answers can be summarised as follows: -



Previous course

Yes	22
No	13

Current course of study:

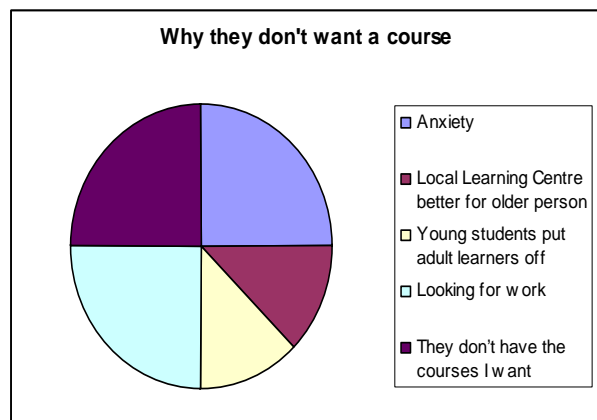
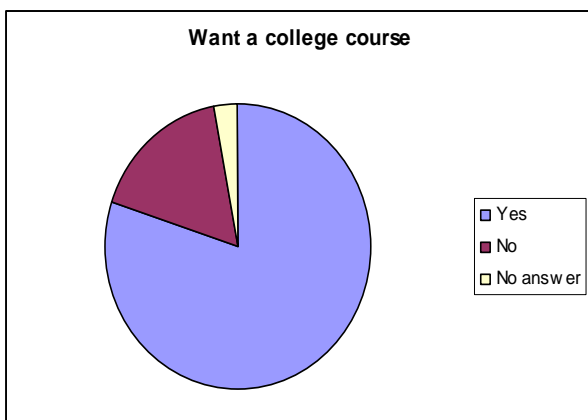
Core Skills (IT, Numeracy, Communications)	16
Employability	12

Preferred future courses /subjects

Social Sciences	1
Performing Arts	1
Flower Arranging	2
First Aid	2
Art and Design	2
Undertaking	1
Car maintenance	1
Computing	3
Creative Writing	2
Bookkeeping	1

Next Steps

Employment	6
Unsure	9
Word processing	1
College	6
Sign Language	1
Photography	1
Work Training	1
Self Employment	1
First Aid	3



Summary of Findings & Points for Consideration

- There is evidence of commitment to continuing learning among those questioned. More than half have attended a course previously and intend to move on to another course.
- While the majority of respondents express the wish to attend college (28), a much smaller number (8-10) indicate an academic course as their planned or preferred next step. However this result is likely to be distorted, given the number aspiring to enter employment.
- The main reason given for wanting to continue learning is self-improvement.
- A significant minority are looking for employment and see study as a means of improving their chances of finding work.
- With few exceptions, those questioned would like to take a college course, are available during the day and are prepared to travel more than 5 miles by public or private transport. However, respondents were not asked to consider the cost of travel or childcare.
- Awareness of the range of available courses is patchy and tends to be local.
- For some, anxiety and perceptions that college is for young people are barriers to progression.
- While the sample is limited, the range of individuals and groups involved was deliberately varied in an effort to make the results as representative as possible.
- Predictably, contradictions appear, notably between responses from those on Leisure courses and those on the Core Skills and Employability courses. **Clearly, the potential for progression to pre-access or directly to college is greater among the latter groups.**
- Across the board, responses show a positive attitude to learning and indicate no lack of awareness of the various benefits. **There is evidence of a high level of satisfaction with the local community learning service.**
- Two distinct groups of learners emerge: those who are content to move around the locally available courses and a larger group who see community learning as a stepping stone to college or to employment.
- The current system of benefits may be a disincentive to progression.

Given that most of those questioned would like to attend college, the question remains of why so few (6) have made firm plans to do so.

4. Models of Pre-access Delivery

The following models have been considered:

- Progress Through Learning, Midlothian
- Community Access to Mainstream Learning, Stirling University (CAML Project)
- World Development Movement
- Discover Learning Partnership
- Transitions Access Project, SWAP
- Targeted Summer School
- WEA-Unison Learning Provision

Progress through Learning, Midlothian

Delivered in partnership to provide community-based, accessible, relevant, supported and engaging educational and guidance opportunities for the residents of Midlothian. The partners in this are Midlothian Council Education and Communities department, Napier and Queen Margaret Universities, SWAP East, Jewel and Esk College.

Accredited courses include:

- Introduction to Sociology (QMU)
- Learning Strategies (NU)
- Local Investigations + embedded core skills (JEVC)
- Introduction to Psychology (JEVC)
- Health Issues in the community (PTLM) (Health Partnership Projects)
- Open University: Opening Courses

Non-Accredited courses include:

- Counselling skills (NU)
- Study Skills (PTLM)
- Introduction to Literature (Edinburgh University)
- Family matters (PTLM)

The project was originally ESF funded but is now supported by Working with Families. The Development Worker is a member of Midlothian's Adult Learning Team. There is support from all partners.

Community Access to Mainstream Learning, Stirling University (CAML Project)

This aims to prepare learners from disadvantaged communities for progression to SWAP programmes at the local college or to the University of Stirling's own access programme. The CAML courses run one day a week, from January through to June and are made up of three 2-hour sessions covering guidance, study skills and PDP in an academic setting.

The project targets specific groups with low rates of progression, including:

- Individuals with a history of drug abuse
- People with mental health problems
- The homeless

CAML is working with SWAP to develop some form of APL to encourage progression among students completing the course.

World Development Movement

This model is a programme designed by the World Development to foster active and global citizenship. It links issues faced by people in this country to the problems and issues being experienced by people in the developing world. It also aims to develop communication and interpersonal skills in those who take part in the activity whether that is do with the promotion of renewable energy, climate change, trade justice, third world debt or people tracking. This model of delivery has been used in Fife and in other areas of Scotland. The Charleston Worldwide Group has been in Dundee since 2007 under the auspices the Discover Learning banner.

Discover Learning Partnership

They work to provide community based adult learning opportunities in Dundee which meet the needs and aspirations of learners, support progression, widen access and promote participation in life long learning. The partnership includes Dundee City leisure and communities department, Dundee College, University of Dundee Continuing Education and the University of Abertay. The aims of this group are:

- To engage with traditional non-participants
- To remove barriers to lifelong learning
- To broaden participation
- To provide a positive learning experience
- To promote progression routes for learners

Over the last year the partnership has run 12 courses in a variety of settings:

- Health and Beauty
- Healthy Eating
- Local History
- Local History and Research Methods
- Psychology
- Psychology Taster
- Sociology Taster
- Local Investigations
- Digital Photography
- Understanding Care Skills
- Sports Coaching Taster

The courses which run for 8 weeks include a guidance element and information about progression opportunities.

The partnership has also offered Return to Study courses, in collaboration with SWAP, aimed at giving learners in the community and clients of Working with Families a taste of what is on offer at college and an idea of some of the issues they might face if they do enrol on a college course.

Transitions Access Project (TAP), SWAP

This takes access students from all the colleges in Fife and Tayside on a themed visit to all three local universities. Each 2-day programme includes study skills and guidance sessions delivered in partnership by staff of all the HEIs.

Targeted Summer School.

This event proposed for Easter 2009 aims to promote progression into tertiary education and ultimately into sustainable employment. The target group is learners from the priority local authority regeneration areas and SIMD zones. Tasters would be offered in a range of suitable college courses, along with university visits and other relevant visits that relate to Fife's employment priorities. Information and guidance on progression options would be included.

The partnership, co-ordinated by SWAP, comprises the three local universities, the Fife colleges, Fife Council, Skills Development Scotland, CVS Fife, Job Centre Plus, and local community organisations.

An alternative model may be to work with Fife Council to provide a wider range of tasters than is on offer at the Summer School events through their CLD provision.

WEA-Unison Learning Provision

The Skills Escalator approach adopted in the WEA-Unison learning provision is designed to facilitate frontline staff working in all areas of social care in Scotland to develop their learning skills and their promotion/employment potential.

Skill Escalator offers:

- A Starting Points course of 45 hours that focuses on basic skills, offering learners the option of SQA accreditation in Communications at Int1/ Access 3
- Return to Study – a study skills and communications course which assists the development of skills and confidence to move into more advanced areas of learning. Return to Study provides an important stepping stone for many care staff before taking on their SVQ in care at levels 2 or 3.
- Improve Your Study Skills is a course aimed at staff that are intending to undertake higher and professional level study.

Openings for Progression, The Open University

Openings – the core model is designed for individuals returning to learning at Level 7 SCQF. It runs for 16-20 weeks and has four start dates throughout the year. There is a high level of individual support and feedback from personal tutor, with a strong focus on skills development.

Modules available include: -

- Y156 - Understanding Children
- Y157 - Understanding Society
- Y158 - Understanding Health
- Y159 - Understanding Management
- Y160 - Making sense of the Arts
- Y161 - Understanding Environment
- Y162 - Starting with Maths
- Y163 - Starting with Psychology
- Y164 - Exploring Sport On-line
- Y165 – Learning to Change

5. Conclusions

- There is a wide range of community learning available in Fife and evidence of user satisfaction with the provision.
- All the colleges offer some form of community outreach and there are examples of effective partnership working, including Forum-supported initiatives.
- While some of the available community learning courses present clear progression opportunities, most appear to be free-standing. Those with obvious next-step options are more likely to be courses devised by the colleges or those focussed on employability.
- There may be potential to develop the information and guidance provision to community learners in Fife in a way that would promote progression more effectively.
- There is potential for further collaboration between the various learning providers in Fife, assisted by SWAP and the Forum, to link up or build on existing pre-access provision or to develop new provision with clear progression pathways.
- There is potential to develop a collaborative programme of support for transition from community to college.

6. Recommendations

- The formation of the Pre-Access Group, with representation from the colleges, Fife Council, the Forum, SWAP-East and a range of training and community organisations, is an important new development. This initiative has created a network from which ideas and partnerships can emerge to benefit community learners in Fife. The Forum and SWAP-East should continue to facilitate the Group and lend support and leadership where required.
- The potential for further links between colleges and training providers should be explored.
- It is clear from the Scoping Exercise that information, advice and guidance are available to community learners. However, the results of the questionnaire seem to indicate that it is not always effective in supporting progression. The nature of the information, advice and guidance offered to learners should be investigated. There may be a need for a purpose-designed information resource and for staff development opportunities for professionals who provide advice and guidance to learners at pre-access level.
- The potential to link up and build on existing provision to create clear progression pathways should be scoped. Developing the Summer School to include tasters and visits to colleges, or constructing practical bridges between community courses and college courses in linked subject areas, is a way forward which gives added value to current resources and encourages progression.
- There is the option to roll out models of pre-access which have been successful elsewhere. The models under consideration consist of courses with built-in core-skills, guidance and bridging. In each case, the programmes are designed collaboratively but delivered and/or co-ordinated by a dedicated worker who acts as a vital point of contact for learners from recruitment through to progression and beyond. This makes it a resource-intensive option but nevertheless worth considering due to a purposeful focus on progression. This option also lends itself to work with particular groups of learners and potential learners. The subject of the course or taster could be selected to attract priority target groups, such as men.
- Linkage between community and college courses that is supported by some form of RPL would give learners a further incentive to progress, as would a recognised pre-access qualification.
- Financial issues, including the current benefits system, affect progression from community learning. Pre-access provision, information and guidance as well as courses, should take account of these issues. It may be possible to work with Job Centre Plus to design provision around the benefit rules and to explore ways of reducing disincentives to progress.