

APPENDIX 2

Developing a Framework to Evidence the Outcomes of Learning Funded Through the Adult Skills Fund in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

Report of Phase 2

Helen Plant and Mark Ravenhall

August 2024

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	How the Framework has been developed.....	3
2.1	Phase 1: Scoping.....	3
2.2	Phase 2: Framework development	3
3	Key features of the Framework.....	4
3.1	The Framework model	4
3.2	Benefits of the approach	5
4	Implementing the Framework.....	5

1 Introduction

This report summarises work undertaken on behalf of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to develop a Framework to evidence the wider outcomes of learning funded through the Adult Skills Fund (ASF), formerly the Adult Education Budget.

From September 2024, the Framework will introduce a consistent approach for CPCA and education and training providers to work together to collect, analyse, report and use evidence on the wider outcomes of learning. The resulting data will provide insights into the impact of ASF-funded learning for residents and businesses in the combined authority area.

The full Framework can be found in the Annex to this report.

2 How the Framework has been developed

2.1 Phase 1: Scoping

Between November 2023 and March 2024, we delivered Phase 1 of the project. This consisted of a literature review and stakeholder interviews to:

- identify scope and strategic context
- review existing approaches and models
- understand stakeholder perspectives and priorities.

The Phase 1 report made a series of recommendations to guide framework development during Phase 2, which were reviewed and approved by Elected Members via the Employment and Skills Committee in June 2024

2.2 Phase 2: Framework development

Phase 2 of the project was delivered from April to August 2024. It involved developing and drafting a bespoke outcomes Framework for use by CPCA and its commissioned providers and their sub-contractors.

Central to the approach was a commitment on the part of CPCA to working collaboratively, with the aim of positioning the Framework as a shared endeavour and securing buy-in from providers. Accordingly, the development work was informed both by the findings and recommendations from Phase 1, and by evidence and insights from the following stakeholder engagement activities:

- Three online meetings of an external reference group (ERG) providing strategic perspectives from national and regional experts in adult education policy, research and practice, including participants from the skills policy teams in other devolved areas.
- Two online meetings and an in-person workshop of an internal working group (IWG) comprising CPCA officers and managers of commissioned providers, which focused on operational and technical aspects of Framework design and implementation.
- Two focus groups with current Community Learning learners, to understand the wider outcomes that are most relevant and meaningful for learners in the CPCA area.
- A provider consultation session to review approaches to data collection and identify implementation support needs.

3 Key features of the Framework

An initial version of the Framework has been agreed by CPCA and providers. It will be piloted with ASF-funded Community Learning, including that delivered by sub-contractors, in the academic year 2024/25, and rolled out across all ASF-funded provision in 2025/26. The Framework is jointly owned by CPCA and its commissioned providers of adult learning, and implementation is their shared responsibility.

3.1 The Framework model

The CPCA Framework structure is based on a **logic chain**. This approach is widely accepted as providing a rigorous model for measuring and demonstrating the outcomes and impact of policy interventions. It looks at the relationship between funding, the type of learning that is commissioned, and its outputs, outcomes and benefits, in order to establish a sense of longer-term impact on residents.

The table below summarises how the logic chain model applies to the ASF in the CPCA area.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Benefits	Impact
<i>What financial resource will we commit in the region?</i>	<i>How will we achieve change?</i>	<i>What do we expect from our provision?</i>	<i>What are the general outcomes learners will get?</i>	<i>What are the benefits to learners' health, working life, and community participation?</i>	<i>How will the CPCA region and wider community benefit?</i>

For each element in the logic chain, the Framework identifies indicators and evidence sources. It also sets out the process for data collection, collation, analysis and reporting, and identifies timescales and lead responsibilities for each activity.

The **evidence base** defined in the Framework draws on two sources:

- 'naturally occurring data' which providers are already required to collect and report to CPCA,
- evidence collected through a new online learner survey coordinated by CPCA with a specific focus on the wider benefits of learning.

The **wider benefits of learning** are categorised within the Framework using the evidence-based model of overlapping outcomes across the three domains of health, work and communities. These are derived from international and national research and align with key CPCA strategic priorities.

- **Health**

Health and wellbeing is a broad concept, embracing our bodies, our minds, our feelings about ourselves and where we live, as well as our ability to help ourselves and others. Outcomes often address the 'causes of the causes' of ill-health and poor well-being.

- **Work.**

'Work', in this context, is a term that encompasses employment, self-employment, and volunteering. Work benefits include levels of remuneration, work-life balance, the motivation to start a new business, gain new employment, or progress at work.

- **Communities.**

Community is a broad and inclusive term that encompasses: place, interest, identity and need. Increasingly communities are global, virtual or involve a combination of physical engagement and online interaction. Community also relates to family life. How individuals engage with their communities is a key outcome of adult learning.

The model of overlapping outcomes recognises the ways in which learning simultaneously produces outcomes across different but connected policy areas. For example, improvements in health and wellbeing intersect with increased levels of economic activity.

3.2 Benefits of the approach

For CPCA, the Framework will:

- strengthen understanding across the combined authority of the ways in which the devolved ASF supports delivery of its wider strategic priorities.
- contribute to the development of a robust evidence base to inform and underpin future commissioning decisions.
- help to show the value of place-based approaches to the funding and planning of adult education and skills.
- enable performance to be benchmarked against national data and potentially against that of other MCAs.

For education and training providers, the Framework sets out what outcomes data needs to be collected and reported to CPCA, and when and how that is to be done. The evidence collected can also feed into and enhance providers' existing planning and quality improvement processes.

For learners the Framework encompasses a range of data collection methods that will support them to recognise and articulate how learning has helped them in different aspects of their lives.

4 Implementing the Framework

Pilot implementation will begin with Community Learning providers in September 2024. CPCA is currently considering options for a Phase 3 package of support, including learner survey development, on-going stakeholder engagement and formative and summative evaluation.