# Attendance Monitoring Policy

## 1. Background

Medway Adult Education (MAE) is committed to maintaining levels of attendance to a minimum of 85% and retention to a minimum of 94%, ideally higher. This policy is designed to work in conjunction with other policies including:

- The observation of teaching and learning policy
- The quality review processes
- Learner support provision

## 2. Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To safeguard our learners.
- To raise attendance levels to service targets and thereby raise success rates through greater participation.
- To ensure that mechanisms are in place to effectively monitor attendance at all levels and take appropriate actions to address issues.
- To ensure that the service listens to its learners and takes appropriate action to ensure maximum attendance.
- To ensure that through consultation, equality and diversity issues are addressed.
- To ensure that learners needs are met in terms of curriculum planning and differentiation
- To commit the appropriate level of resources needed to ensure attendance meets the desired levels and attendance issues are acted upon.
- To ensure the learners understand the benefits in both the long and short term of achieving at least satisfactory attendance levels and the impact this will have on their learning experience.
- To meet the needs of partner organisations such as Job Centre Plus and employers, by providing information on attendance at intervals and in a format suitable for both their needs and that of the service.

## 3. Scope and purpose

All staff directly and indirectly associated with the wider learning experience will need to be aware of the principles and ethos of this policy.

All activities associated with the quality cycle, including the monitoring of performance, must involve attendance statistics and the actions taken to address poor attendance.

## 4. Responsibilities

- Quality and Curriculum Manager has the responsibility for the implementation and promotion of this policy in respect of curriculum staff.
- The Data and Funding Manager has responsibility to ensure that attendance is accurately recorded on the Service data systems and that reports are generated in a timely manner.
- The Programme Managers have responsibility for ensuring they monitor attendance within their prescribed areas, taking appropriate action to address issues and documenting said actions.
- The Quality and Curriculum Manager and The Data and Funding Manager have responsibility for monitoring the performance of the service against the policy and reporting discrepancies to the senior leadership team.
- Each member of staff and the marketing team, as appropriate are responsible for publicising the outcomes and success associated with this policy.

## 5. Expectations

1. Attendance Expectations: All learners are expected to attend all scheduled classes, workshops, and other educational activities as part of their course or apprenticeship programme. Regular attendance is essential for success, and non-attendance may result in an inability to meet learning objectives or progression through the programme.
2. Authorised Absences: All learners are expected to provide advance notice of any planned absences and must communicate the reason for the absence to their tutors or assessors. Authorised absences include illness, family emergencies, and other extenuating circumstances. Learners may be required to provide evidence for any authorised absence.
3. Unauthorised Absences: Unauthorised absences include any absence without prior notice or explanation, or for reasons that are not acceptable as excused absences. If a learner accumulates four unauthorised absences, MAE are entitled to withdraw them from the course or programme.
4. Lateness: Late attendance will also be monitored. Learners will be expected to arrive on time and this will also be included in the ground rules. An 'L' will be included for register completion – this will count as 'present' for EBS.  Monitoring of lateness will form part of the quality review process.
5. Make-up Work: If a learner misses a class or workshop due to an absence, they are responsible for making up any missed work or assignments. Learners should work with their tutors or assessors to determine how they can catch up on any missed material.
6. Breaks in Learning: Occasionally in extenuating circumstances learners may need to take a break from their learning activity. Extenuating circumstances can include, longer term illnesses, longer term caring commitments or bereavement. Breaks in

learning can only take place if the learner is able to restart at the point in which the break was necessary, for example an apprenticeship programme. To start a break in learning, the learner needs to agree that they will return to learning and maintain communication with MAE when appropriate. If an apprentice returns to work after a break from employment the line manager should inform MAE of the return date. Contact with the learner should take place within 4 weeks of return to work to arrange a return to learning. If MAE is unable to contact a learner after a break in learning for more than a third of the planned course or programme length, or the agreed return date, MAE has a right to withdraw the learner from the course or programme.

7. Flexible E-Learning: If MAE is unable to contact a learner studying a flexible, e-learning course for four weeks or more then MAE has a right to withdraw the learner from the course.

8. Attendance Records: Attendance records will be kept for each learner. Learners can request a copy of their attendance records at any time.

9. Policy Enforcement: MAE reserves the right to enforce this attendance policy at its discretion. Any action taken because of a violation of this policy will be documented on the learners EBS record.

## 6. Mechanisms.

The process for monitoring attendance will where appropriate become standardised across the service to ensure rigour and consistency.  Comparisons to the previous year will be made monthly and will be a standing agenda item at the monthly quality review and apprenticeship meetings. From this monitoring and action planning, expectations will be set for each Programme manager and the improvements noted at the following review meeting.

At the start of each course learners should be informed as part of the induction process that if they are unable to attend lessons they must phone in advance and inform the tutor so that any catch-up work can be sent thus preventing the learner from falling behind.

### Absences:

### First week of non-attendance:
Tutor to phone and or email the learner and record details on learner absence log or in notes if using e-register. This should be done within two days of the class. This should be done in a supportive manner.

### Second week of non-attendance:
A letter to be sent to the learner (letter number 1) requesting that the learner contact the service so that support can be put in place to facilitate their return ensuring that they do not fall behind. Details to be recorded on learner absence log or in notes if using e-register.

**Third week of non-attendance:**
A more formal letter to be sent (letter number 2) stating that after 4 weeks of absence learners will be automatically withdrawn and a note placed on the system to be referred to should there be any subsequent enrolments. Data Processors will withdraw the learner and send the letter.

**Authorised Absences – For courses longer than 45 guided learning hours (glh):**

Occasionally learners may need to take some time away from face-to-face sessions due to personal circumstances but don't qualify for a break in learning. MAE does not promote the use of extended authorised absences, we do however understand that for some of our learners, particularly those that work shifts it can be difficult to maintain attendance. Furthermore, the learner is regularly engaging with their tutor, still committed to their learning, is keeping up to date with work and is likely to achieve. For learners that fulfil the above requirements a six-week period of authorised absence will be permitted after following this procedure.

**Third week of non-attendance – after informing MAE of absence reason before each session:**
Tutor to post or email absence letter 3 to gain confirmation learner is committed to learning. Details to be recorded on learner absence log or in notes if using e-register. Response to letter to be returned to Data Processors to be uploaded to the learner record and forwarded to IAG team if required.

**Sixth week of non-attendance**
Learner is withdrawn and absence letter 2 is sent by Data Processors.

All learners signing up for a course will be asked to sign a data check form stating the responsibility to attend all lessons.  This information will also be found on the course information sheets and conditions of enrolment. Tutors should ensure that learners have read the expectations contained within and establish an agreement with them on consistent attendance – including this requirement in the ground rules. At the beginning of each course the learners will be given a welcome pack detailing all relevant contact details.

Delivery staff will be responsible for ensuring that all learners that have missed a session receive appropriate handouts and assignments to ensure that are able to keep up with the course requirements. Letter templates will be included in the register for the tutor to add the learners' details to. Compliance with this will be monitored through lesson observations and random phone calls to learners that have been absent. Documents should be included within the register for posting to the learner.

Tracking and reporting of absence to partners such as Job Centre Plus and employers will be negotiated at the start of the tailored provision, and then reviewed for effectiveness on a regular basis through scheduled partnership meetings.  Details of

the agreed process should be passed to the Quality and Curriculum Manager so that accurate monitoring can take place.

## 7   Supporting learners to attend

MAE will adopt a culture where all staff recognise the importance of maintaining the highest levels of learner attendance, and that all obstacles to attendance will be reviewed and where possible taken away.  Teaching staff in particular will have a core duty to actively engage with learners and where possible address barriers to attendance, thereby utilising learner feedback to improve the quality of the learning experience.

Examples of such practice may include adjusting lesson times to suit travel or childcare needs.  Any such adjustment should be done with the agreement of the whole class so as to ensure no individuals are disadvantaged.

## 8   Course review and evaluation

Attendance statistics will be taken into account through the services quality assurance processes at programme, area and whole service level and will be fed into the services SAR process.

## 9   Staff training

Staff development need identified through the monitoring actions involved with attendance will be addressed through the programme and team review process.

## 10  Monitoring and review

The Quality and Curriculum Manager has ultimate responsibility for this policy and to this end will keep this policy under review, however, given the complexity of the issues contained within this policy, it is to be expected that those managers responsible for individual procedures and aspects of the policy will also monitor relevant aspects of its implementation, and advise the Quality and Curriculum Manager if changes need to be made to the policy as a result.  Regardless of this the policy will be reviewed every year.

## Answers to potential questions

- There are no Data Protection issues with the system – learners give their details to the service and are aware they can be contacted for reasons relevant to their course.

- It is essential that registers are completed correctly to avoid unnecessary and possibly upsetting phone calls.

- Messages from learners will be included with registers – tutors should action as necessary and then update the absence log or add a note on the online register.

- If a learner has informed a tutor that they will be absent the following week – the tutor must make sure that this information is recorded in the absence log or as a note on the online register and then ensure that the register is marked accordingly.

- If a learner cannot be reached by telephone a standard letter will be sent out asking learner to contact service to discuss absence.

- All absence calls will be made by tutors in the first instance with line managers kept informed of any difficulties that may arise.

- Registers from outreach classes should be returned to service at least weekly for attendance monitoring purposes – tutors should be made aware that failure to comply could be considered a disciplinary issue.

- Although letters are sent out with details of start date and time - attendance has been noted as poor at the start of courses with reasons such as 'thought it started next week'. This will be addressed by the Programme Area in whatever way is deemed most effective.
  Examples may include letters or phone calls.

- Where registers are completed incorrectly – tutors to receive refresher training. If a tutor fails to comply with necessary procedures, it could be considered a disciplinary issue.

- It is acknowledged that the process is time consuming, but it is considered to be a very valuable and necessary piece of work and as such is an essential and much appreciated contribution to the success of the service.

Documents to accompany this policy:

- Learner absence log - QA98 Learner Absence Log.
- Letters to learners note - Learner Absence Letter 1, Learner Absence Letter 2 and Learner Absence Letter 3
- How to complete a register guidance note - Completing your Register