

# Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020:

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## Strategic guidance

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## **Strategic guidance**

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ISBN: 978-0-7559-9904-0 (web only)

The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Produced for the Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland  
DPPAS11111

Published by the Scottish Government, December 2010

## Ministerial foreword



Literacy and numeracy affects people's lives. Strong literacies skills help people fulfil their potential, achieve their goals, and take advantage of opportunities. When individuals do well, so do their families, communities and employers.

Our recent **Literacy Action Plan** emphasised the Scottish Government's commitment to raising the literacy skills of Scotland's citizens. Within that overall framework, this strategic guidance, *Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020 (ALIS 2020)*, outlines more detailed plans to improve the literacies capabilities of Scotland's adults over the next 10 years.

Since the launch of the Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (2001) report, over 200,000 adults have improved their reading, writing and number skills. Public awareness of the importance of improving literacy and numeracy skills has increased thanks to our Big Plus campaign, and learning providers across many sectors continue to provide diverse learning opportunities.

And we've made improvements to the standards of delivery, ensuring adult learners get a high quality and flexible service. It is vital that we continue to build a professionalised workforce.

Our success in implementing these first stages of adult literacies development is a direct result of the hard work and commitment of learners, practitioners, learning providers and all our partners. I want to thank them for their efforts.

### *Next Steps*

However, there is more to do. That is why we have produced new, fresh guidance on the way forward, to build on our solid foundations to increase the number of adults with stronger literacies capabilities.

The *Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies in Scotland 2009* reminded us that low literacies are often linked to poverty and are likely to adversely affect people's health and well-being, financial status and ability to participate in society.

That is why we are reflecting these themes in this strategic guidance - family, health, justice and financial capability. We want every citizen in Scotland to have the literacies capabilities necessary to bridge the poverty gap; to understand; shape the world they live in; and to enjoy the rich knowledge and benefits that being able to read, write and use numbers can bring.

## *Partnerships*

In today's economic climate, it is vital that the deliverers of literacies learning, and those referring people to provision, work in partnership to maximise the resources available and to share best practice. Employers must also play their part in identifying and supporting employees who need help to improve their literacies skills. A strongly literate and numerate workforce is an essential component of a competitive business, the route to innovation, creativity and productivity.

Finally, it is a great pleasure to thank all stakeholders who contributed to this refreshed strategy. I welcome their, and others', commitment to achieving its aims. Together we must sustain our efforts to raise standards of literacies amongst all our citizens and continue to provide adults with access to learning opportunities when and where they're needed, allowing them to progress seamlessly to their next steps of further learning or into employment. In doing so, we all benefit.



**Angela Constance MSP**  
**Minister for Skills and Lifelong Learning**

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## OUR VISION

The Scottish Government's *Literacy Action Plan*<sup>1</sup> has established Scotland's overarching vision for all learners – **to raise standards of literacy for all from the early years through to adulthood.**

Specifically for adults, the Scottish Government's vision is:

*By 2020 Scotland's society and economy will be stronger because more of its adults are able to read, write and use numbers effectively in order to handle information, communicate with others, express ideas and opinions, make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners.*

To achieve this vision we will focus on four overarching outcomes:

- improved access to literacies<sup>2</sup> learning opportunities
- high quality learning and teaching
- improved infrastructure and,
- impact.

This document aims to promote equal access to and participation in literacies learning for all adults<sup>3</sup>. It is intended to promote equality of opportunity to those who face persistent disadvantage and to increase the numbers of people economically active across all groups within society.

Successful implementation of this guidance will significantly increase the numbers of adults with improved literacies capabilities in Scotland.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/10/27084039/0>

<sup>2</sup> The term "literacies" used throughout this document refers to the skills, knowledge and understanding required for certain literacy and numeracy practices for example to read and understand a bus timetable; to complete a betting slip or to create a CV

<sup>3</sup> The term adults refers to adults aged 16 years and above

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### *Policy Context*

The Scottish Government is committed to creating a smarter, wealthier, healthier, greener and fairer Scotland, with opportunities for all to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. Central to this Purpose<sup>4</sup> is the refreshed skills strategy *Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth*<sup>5</sup>. This strategy reaffirms that “improving levels of adult literacy and numeracy is crucial to securing a competitive economy, promoting education and lifelong learning, and tackling ill-health and improving well-being.”

Improving educational outcomes for all young people remains a priority for the Scottish Government and *Curriculum for Excellence*<sup>6</sup> has been implemented across Scotland to raise standards, improve knowledge and develop skills to help all young people to take their place in a modern society and economy. Curriculum for Excellence entitles every child and young person from ages 3-18 to the opportunity to develop their skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work, with a continuous focus on literacy and numeracy, *wherever* the learning takes place. Young people in their Senior Phase of education – broadly those aged 15-18 – may learn in a range of settings including in school or college; in the community (through youth literacies and youth work); through a training provider; through a volunteering organisation; in employment or a combination of these. Whatever the setting, their entitlement to continued development of their literacy and numeracy skills must be fulfilled, and it is the responsibility of every provider to support them.

This entitlement to a continuous focus on literacy and numeracy is echoed in our Literacy Action Plan. This plan provides a strategic commitment to improving standards of literacy across the continuum of learning. It also ensures there is better co-ordination and partnership across Government and our partners, to focus on learner priorities and encourage collaborative working.

Additionally, adult literacies work is aligned with the social practice principles that underpin community learning and development (CLD) as outlined in *Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities*<sup>7</sup>. Building on this, the *Joint statement on community learning and development, including adult literacy and numeracy (ALN)*<sup>8</sup>, by the Scottish Government and COSLA prompts those developing Single Outcome Agreements to maximise the contribution CLD makes to achieving outcomes and ultimately making the

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/purposes>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/10/04125111/0>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/buildingyourcurriculum/policycontext/btc/btc3.asp>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/02/18793/32168>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Life-Long-Learning/LearningConnections/cldjointstatement>



most of its potential to play a part in transforming the lives of all Scotland's people.

### ***Refreshing our policy***

In 2001, the Scottish Executive published the *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* (ALNIS) report<sup>9</sup>, which made 21 recommendations for building a world-class adult literacy and numeracy service for Scotland. This strategy has been internationally celebrated for its **learner-centred, social practice** approach. Indeed, there has been considerable success in the implementation of ALNIS, particularly in the collaborative working between local and national organisations and across sectors to provide a diverse delivery landscape in which learners can achieve their personal goals, make positive changes in their lives and progress into new opportunities. The national 'development engine' (formerly Learning Connections, now part of the Communities Team of Learning and Teaching Scotland) continues to work with service providers/deliverers, to improve practice, share knowledge, embed a curriculum framework<sup>10</sup> for adult literacies and raise awareness of literacies and reduce stigma. Since 2001 over 200,000 adults have accessed literacies learning opportunities across Scotland and across a range of settings – local authority, voluntary, college, prison and workplace.

Ten years since the publication of ALNIS, we live in a different world. Public services are adapting to reduced funding; the relationship between national and local government has fundamentally changed since the introduction of the Concordat<sup>11</sup> in 2007; the world is technologically different; and we have improved knowledge about literacies levels among Scotland's working age adults. We also have a clearer picture of the literacies work and interventions which need to happen across the life wide and lifelong stages of learning, and the connections between these through the Literacy Action Plan. It is now time to reflect and build on the achievements of ALNIS, to re-affirm the core elements that have contributed to progress so far, and to challenge ourselves to achieve more, often with fewer resources.

We have updated and enhanced our knowledge of the literacies levels of our working age population. The findings in the *Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies 2009* (SSAL 2009)<sup>12</sup> underline the importance of adult literacies to the Scottish Government's central Purpose, and to a range of National Outcomes in the National Performance Framework<sup>13</sup>. It is also recognised in the current National Indicator which aims to: 'Reduce the number of working age people with severe literacy and numeracy problems'.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/158952/0043191.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.aloscotland.com/alo/39.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/13092240/concordat>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/07/22091814/0>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/outcomes>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/indicators/literacyAndNumeracy>

In 2010, the Scottish Government convened a short life National Strategic Advisory Group<sup>15</sup> to identify priorities to support adults with literacies needs. Together with the Scottish Government, this Advisory Group developed the actions set out in this guidance document, which are structured around four overarching outcomes of – **improved access to learning opportunities, high quality learning and teaching, improved infrastructure and impact.**

The Scottish Government strongly encourages local partnerships, sectors and organisations to create their own adult literacies action plans based on this guidance and share their commitments with local and national partners,

### ***Understanding literacies in Scotland***

Literacies development extends beyond the acquisition of the skills of reading, writing and using numbers. It is most successfully taught using a “social practice” approach. This model of delivery emphasises the importance of a learner-centred approach and personal curriculum. The focus is on how the learner will use the skills, knowledge and understanding of reading, writing and numbers in their everyday lives: with their families, at work, gaining qualifications to progress towards a job, or a better job, and in their communities. However, the social practice approach is about more than contextualising learning to make it more relevant; it is about learners developing capabilities in making decisions, solving problems and expressing ideas and critical opinions about the world.

We may all face further challenges over the next ten years, some which we can anticipate, and some which we cannot. Technology advances at such a pace that it is a constant challenge to predict what skills will be required in the future. Adult literacies providers must ensure their services are adaptable as the use of literacies change and evolve. Online and blended learning should continue to be developed in order to reach more learners, offer alternative modes of learning and provide the learner with increased opportunities to access learning outwith face-to-face tuition. This is particularly important for those in remote and rural areas, shift workers and those who may face other physical or time barriers.

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<sup>15</sup> The National Strategic Advisory Group met four times from May to September 2010 to advise on the development of this policy guidance document. Representatives were from Adult Literacies Practitioners Scotland, Asset Skills (representing SSCs), Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland, COSLA, Higher Education, HMIE, Learning Link Scotland, Learning and Teaching Scotland, Scotland’s Colleges, STUC/Scottish Union Learning, Scottish Prison Service and Skills Development Scotland

### ***The level of literacies need among the working-age population in Scotland***

The key findings of SSAL 2009 are that:

- 73.3% of the Scottish working age population have a level of literacies that is recognised internationally as appropriate for a contemporary society;
- around one quarter of the Scottish population (26.7%) may face occasional challenges and constrained opportunities due to their literacies difficulties, but will generally cope with their day-to-day lives; and
- within this quarter of the population, 3.6% (one person in 28) face serious challenges in their literacies practices.

SSAL 2009 identifies that one of the key factors linked to lower literacies capabilities is poverty, with adults living in the 15% of the most deprived areas in Scotland being more likely to have literacies capabilities at the lower end of the scale. It is important that organisations keep this in mind when they are planning engagement strategies to reach prospective learners.

## ACHIEVING OUR VISION

### ***The importance of literacies for employability and work, financial capability, families, health and well-being***

With our new knowledge from SSAL 2009, plus information and advice from adult literacies stakeholders and national and international research, we recognise that not only does literacies development have positive benefits to the individual person, but it can also make a positive difference to families, the economy and society as a whole. In this guidance we draw attention to certain aspects of literacies, focusing on the themes of literacies for employability, literacies and financial capability, literacies and families and literacies and health. We also draw particular attention to literacies learning for particular groups: offenders and ex-offenders, and learners whose first language is not English.

#### *Literacies, employability and work*

There is a strong correlation between literacies capabilities and income. SSAL 2009 shows that 14% of people with an income of less than £9,500 scored at the lowest level of skills. This was in marked contrast to nearly 50% of the people scoring at the highest levels of quantitative literacy<sup>16</sup>, who reported an income of more than £29,501 per year.

Also, a considerably higher proportion of people who are unemployed and receiving state benefits, such as housing benefit or jobseekers allowance, were more likely to score at lower levels.

Literacies capabilities are fundamental to working life and for supporting people into, or back into, the labour market. They help employees develop vocational and wider employability skills and contribute to national economic success. Evidence from a range of sources suggests that employers value higher literacy skills e.g. communications. Improving adults' literacies capabilities is crucial to securing a competitive economy with more highly skilled and better paid jobs and higher productivity.

Additionally, the benefits of workers improving their literacies capabilities may include increases in productivity and efficiency; reductions in costs; improved staff loyalty and flexibility; lower wastage rates and reduced absenteeism. Employees who undertake literacies learning in the workplace gain confidence in their abilities so that they can sustain existing employment, apply for promotion, take up further learning opportunities/qualifications and participate in workplace activities.

It is important that the Scottish Government, community planning partnerships (CPPs), employers, representative bodies, unions, the Third Sector, learning

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<sup>16</sup> Quantitative literacy is the knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations to numbers embedded in printed materials

providers and others work closely together to promote the positive benefits of literacies learning for and within the workplace.

### *Literacies and financial capability*

Literacies capabilities underpin financial capability: the skills, knowledge and motivation to make the most of financial services and products such as bank accounts, insurance and loans are essential. Financial capability work<sup>17</sup> embedded in literacies support can help adults develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to manage their money effectively through everyday financial activities, such as reading and understanding written and numerical information and filling in forms. Many of the individuals and groups for whom financial capability can have a significant impact may also be those in need of literacies support. At the same time, money provides a context which is relevant to adults' lives, making their learning relevant and rooted in real, everyday contexts. Financial issues faced by consumers are becoming increasingly complex. Poor skills can make it difficult to keep track of day-to-day finances, to know where to go for advice when problems occur and how to cope with debt. It can also increase the chances of falling victim to fraud and penalties.

### *Literacies and family*

A child's parent or carer has a central role in early learning. Research shows that adults who have a higher level of education tend not only to become productive citizens with enhanced social and economic capacity, but their children are more likely to be successful in school. Also, many adults with the lowest levels of literacies reported that, as children, they received little support or encouragement in relation to education<sup>18</sup>.

Family learning is an investment in Scotland's future, as contributes towards equality of opportunity by changing learning patterns within families. Working with the family rather than with the child or the adult separately can often make a greater impact on the literacies development of both child and parent or carer. This can be achieved by combining early childhood interventions and early parenting strategies with adult literacies work, as well as providing literacies support for parents or carers so that they, in turn, can help their own children with their reading, writing and numbers.

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<sup>17</sup> In August 2010 the Scottish Government published a discussion paper and evidence review on financial capability as the starting point for development of a more co-ordinated policy. The aim is to achieve greater co-ordination and impact in the extensive financial capability work already under way by developing a consistent policy on financial capability to guide the Scottish Government's own activity and influencing and supporting Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) and Local Authorities to promote, integrate and coordinate financial capability work in their areas. The target group for this work is those at greatest risk from the impact of poor financial decisions, or at risk of financial crisis without some form of intervention

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.nrdc.org.uk/publications\\_details.asp?ID=143](http://www.nrdc.org.uk/publications_details.asp?ID=143)

## *Literacies and health and well-being*

Making sense of complex health environments and information can be challenging for us all; however, poor “health literacy”<sup>19</sup> affects a large part of the population. This could include elderly people, people from minority ethnic communities, those in lower socio-economic groups, people living with long-term conditions and disabilities, and people with lower educational attainment. The impacts of low health literacy on individuals can include greater risk of hospitalisation, higher emergency admissions, and more medication and treatment errors. It can also reduce a person’s ability to manage their own and their children’s health and wellbeing. Complex health information can also be challenging for some health care staff, who may have to deal with dosage, report writing and communicating with patients in a variety of ways.

SSAL 2009 shows that adults with lower literacies capabilities are also more likely to have health problems, including problems with sight, speech, hearing and learning, as well as other disabilities or health problems lasting more than six months.

The 26.7% of Scots who face “occasional challenges” are likely to manage reasonably well in familiar environments, and may have developed sophisticated coping strategies for daily living. However, they may face challenges in new situations, such as when they have unanticipated contact with the health service or when given a new diagnosis. This could result in confusion and lack of understanding which could present serious risks to personal safety and ability to protect and manage their health.

In *New Light on Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* (2008)<sup>20</sup>, Parsons and Bynner report that adults with low literacies levels are more likely to smoke, consume more units of alcohol and be more likely to experience symptoms of depression.

Literacies improvement and health goals have a better chance of success when pursued together. Partnerships between the health and adult education fields have great potential to make a difference. The Scottish Government’s planned Health Literacies Framework seeks to improve health and wellbeing outcomes through increased awareness among health professionals; making stronger links between literacies and health and well-being and improving healthcare workers’ own literacy and numeracy capabilities

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<sup>19</sup> There are no commonly agreed definitions for health literacy, however it can possibly be best summarised as a person’s ability to: maintain and enhance health by finding, understanding and using health information; safeguard individual or community health by reading and understanding information or participating in programmes; take preventative measures, understand importance of early detection and self-management of long term conditions; seek and form a partnership with health and social care providers to follow directions or discuss alternative treatments; understand and access health services.

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.nrdc.org.uk/publications\\_details.asp?ID=78](http://www.nrdc.org.uk/publications_details.asp?ID=78)

### *Offenders and ex-offenders*

The literacies capabilities of offenders, both in custody and in the community, and ex-offenders need particular attention. Their literacies needs are disproportionately higher than the rest of the adult population. Supporting and encouraging offenders and ex-offenders to improve their literacies capabilities can have a profound impact on their ability to re-integrate into society and their families, and also improve the likelihood of their becoming economically active.

Literacies workers in prisons, and those working in colleges and communities, need to work together to maximise the learning opportunities available to offenders and to facilitate the transition process so learners can continue with their literacies - and other learning – on return to their communities. The introduction of the Community Payback Order will also provide the opportunity to identify and assess offenders in the community to address literacies needs.

The Scottish Government recently published *Offender Learning: Options for Improvement*<sup>21</sup> which details the plans to progress offender learning in Scotland. Literacies is a particular focus for this work and we have asked all agencies – in particular the Scottish Prison Service – to ensure that a specific emphasis and targeted resource is placed on identifying and addressing the learning needs of individuals.

### *Adults whose first language is not English*

It is important to acknowledge that literacies learning is not solely concerned with meeting the needs of monolingual speakers of English. Some adults whose first language is not English may have reading, writing and number difficulties very similar to those encountered by 'traditional' literacies learners, due to limited schooling in their first language or because they come from a mainly oral culture.

It is important to support people whose first language is not English to become full and active citizens. These adults can make an important contribution to the economic success of Scotland, but to do so they must be able to read, write, speak and understand English. In 2007, the Scottish Government launched an Adult ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) Strategy for Scotland<sup>22</sup> for developing the English skills of speakers of other languages.

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/297489/0092539.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/esol/documents>

## ***Accreditation of learning***

Scottish Qualifications Authority's Core Skill Units provide an excellent opportunity for adult learners to gain national recognition through qualifications for the skills they have developed. The revised Core Skill Units, including the introduction of bite size Units in Communication and Numeracy at lower levels, offer a more flexible approach to assessment, particularly suited to the social practice approach to adult literacies.

The use of Core Skill Units and the new literacy and numeracy units by adult learners brings a range of benefits. They can: allow learners to develop and evidence their skills in a wide range of contexts; increase confidence and motivation; provide a focus for learning; help to identify skill gaps; improve and enhance a learner's CV; provide evidence to employers and others (including the learners themselves) of their skills and of their commitment to learning.

As part of Curriculum for Excellence<sup>23</sup>, new Units in Literacy at SCQF levels 3, 4 and 5 will be available from 2013/14 for learners in all settings. They will focus on the skills of reading, writing, talking and listening.

## ***Working collaboratively and productively***

No one sector or organisation alone can achieve our vision. We can only achieve our vision if organisations work together, share resources and make learning journeys as streamlined as possible, so that learners can achieve their goals and progress.

It is not the job of government to prescribe how policy strategic guidance of this nature is implemented at local level; however we would encourage Community Planning Partnerships to take a lead role in forming, driving and evaluating partnership activity. Membership of partnerships should include representation from all learning providers across CPP areas, together with representation from other partners such as voluntary organisations, businesses, health, libraries and social work. Many intermediary organisations, such as Jobcentre Plus, Citizen Advice Bureaux, drug rehabilitation centres, criminal justice social work services and homeless accommodation providers all have an important role to play as they are often already in contact with adults who may benefit from literacies support.

Local and national policy makers should highlight the importance and benefits of literacies development when forming new policies. They should outline the positive impact literacies development can have in enabling individuals to progress and participate in society. They should also encourage their stakeholders to address literacies issues with their client groups, either through direct provision, or referring to support.

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/understandingthecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/index.asp>



## EVALUATING PROGRESS

### *How will we know if adults are improving their literacies capabilities?*

Over the next ten years there will need to be a concerted effort from all partners - referral agencies, learning providers, national and local stakeholders - to implement the actions in this strategic guidance document, with the aim of increasing the number of adults with improved literacies capabilities they needed the changing demands of modern society, in their families, their workplaces and their communities.

We will know that we are on track for achieving our vision if we can demonstrate that we are contributing to National Outcomes and that our current National Indicator<sup>24</sup> improves, and that we are making progress against the four specific outcomes:

- 1. Scotland's adults have access to literacies learning opportunities in which they can achieve their goals and progress**
- 2. Adult literacies learners receive high quality learning and teaching so they can achieve their goals**
- 3. Scotland has a coherent and effective adult literacies infrastructure that enables and supports continuous enhancement of provision**
- 4. There is evidence of the impacts and the value of literacies learning for individuals and society**

On the following pages, these outcomes are broken down into aims and actions, setting out work that will be undertaken collaboratively by a range of organisations. The Scottish Government, and the Strategic Advisory Group which advised on the development of these outcomes and aims, would strongly encourage local partnerships, sectors and organisations to create their own adult literacies action plans based on this guidance.

We recognise that the challenge is complex and we would hope to see a proactive, reflective and ongoing response to the actions. Progress towards achieving these outcomes will be reviewed by the Scottish Government every three years, which in turn will feed into the proposed progress reporting to Parliament on the Literacy Action Plan.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/indicators/literacyAndNumeracy>

## **ADULT LITERACIES OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS**

### **Outcome 1: Scotland's adults have access to literacies learning opportunities in which they can achieve their goals and progress**

Adult literacies learners are not a homogenous group. They have a range of existing literacies capabilities and often complex needs. They are likely to have different personal circumstances and be motivated by different aspirations and pressures.

Continued diversity in learning programmes (including starter or bite-size courses, specific literacies learning or embedding the literacies within other types of learning, or within other community engagement work such as youth work) will help to meet the needs of Scotland's adult literacies learners, whether living in an urban or rural setting.

To reach the full range of learners, many of whom will not have engaged in any form of learning for a number of years, we must remove any barriers and stigma attached to literacies learning and continue to offer a variety of flexible and accessible learning opportunities. If we are to reach the most marginalised, we need to identify those places/services which are visited/used by those who may need literacies support and wherever possible, provide the support there – in addition to existing learning settings such as workplaces, colleges, community learning centres and prisons. Promotion alone is enough, although positive and wide-reaching marketing is required locally and nationally to continue to raise awareness, reduce stigma and motivate adults to engage in literacies learning.

We cannot underestimate the importance of pre-learning engagement for prospective learners and the time needed to develop relationships. Voluntary/third sector organisations, community-based learning, unions, employers and colleges can, through innovative and diverse outreach activities, reach new learners.

Also, encouraging adults who have been through the learning process to become champions and advocates of literacies learning can deliver a powerful message.

No-one should be uncertain about where to guide new learners. Local and national guidance networks need to be proactive in keeping information current and accessible. Ease of access to learning is especially important at transition times, such as leaving school, re-entering the community after being in prison, returning to work, dealing with new tasks following the death of partner or becoming a parent or migrating from another country.

Some employers do recognise the benefits that literacies development can bring to their organisation; others still have a long way to go. Literacies skills are often fundamental to employees progressing and taking on new responsibilities at work, and in a changing work environment, strong and adaptable literacies skills can be essential for sustaining employment.

Therefore, it is important that employers and employer organisations continue to demonstrate the benefits of supporting their workforce to develop their literacies skills. They should work in partnership with their staff and learning providers to identify literacies needs and to provide learning opportunities in workplaces or other appropriate settings.

For literacies learning to have maximum impact, it needs to be regular and come in sizeable chunks of time. In 2009, US research<sup>25</sup> found that adult learners require at least 100 hours of instruction to progress the equivalent of one US grade level. While we cannot directly correlate US grades with Scottish SCQF levels, this does show clearly the link between more regular and sustained study and progression. *Regular* and more *frequent* learning (i.e. more than a few hours, once a week) will help the learner to sustain new learning and progress more quickly. To increase learning time, learners could undertake a mix of learning including face-to-face contact with their tutor, or in contact with a tutor online, as well as learning on their own, wherever possible.

Of course, learning should always be negotiated between the learner and tutor, taking learner's lives and other issues, such as mental health, work and caring commitments into consideration. Our work should always be firmly rooted in the social practice model. This can often mean that learners move in and out of programmes intermittently as their priorities and circumstances allow. We, therefore, recommend that practitioners, where possible, continue to engage with learners to encourage their return to learning when circumstances permit.

Aim	Action
<p><b>1.1. Learning opportunities are accessible and inclusive</b></p>	<p>1.1.1 Increase effort to identify those places/services which are visited/used by those who may need literacies support and where possible, provide the support there</p> <p>1.1.2 Engage and develop good relationships with those furthest from learning through pre-learning engagement opportunities and working with intermediary/referral organisations</p> <p>1.1.3 Provide targeted, flexible and collaborative support services to minimise barriers to learning</p>
<p><b>1.2 Learners access appropriate provision relevant to their needs</b></p>	<p>1.2.1 Provide learners with appropriate information about and signposting to the range of available literacies learning opportunities</p> <p>1.2.2 Build the practitioners' skills to better identify and respond to individual learner needs</p>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.nelrc.org/persist/report09.pdf>

Aim	Action
	<p>1.2.3 Promote and provide access to resources and tools for identifying and measuring learner skills and learning needs, including specific learning difficulties</p> <p>1.2.4 Other adult educators receive training to ensure they are able to identify, support and refer adults with literacies needs</p>
<p><b>1.3 Learning opportunities are sufficiently flexible, regular and accessible to encourage persistence and progression</b></p>	<p>1.3.1 Encourage learners to undertake a minimum of 6 hours <i>learning activity</i> per week wherever possible, that reflects their needs, goals and circumstances. This is not only face-to-face tuition, but can be a mixture of tutor led, online and self-directed learning.</p> <p>1.3.2 Practitioners support learners to plan their own learning, develop a personalised learning plan, to identify and respond to specific needs and goals</p> <p>1.3.3 Enhance the range of blended, distance and intensive learning opportunities for learners</p>
<p><b>1.4 Learners become more autonomous and informed about how to progress into further learning, volunteering or employment</b></p>	<p>1.4.1 Encourage and support learners to reflect on their learning and plan effectively for progression</p> <p>1.4.2 Ensure learners are able to access up-to-date educational, employment and volunteering information, advice and guidance</p>
<p><b>1.5 Promotion of literacies provision is positive at national and local levels</b></p>	<p>1.5.1 Produce and implement local promotional plans to increase learner engagement</p> <p>1.5.2 Broaden efforts to support learners to become literacies champions/advocates</p> <p>1.5.3 Broaden efforts to support staff such as Trade Union Learning Representatives, training staff and volunteers to become literacies champions/advocates</p> <p>1.5.4 Review the impact of national awareness raising work to:  i) inform the next stages of a national campaign  ii) ensure that promotion is appropriate to local provision available, to ensure timeously response to learners, and  iii) include collaboration with information advice and guidance providers such as Skills Development Scotland</p> <p>1.5.5 Raise awareness of the benefits of literacies development and develop referral pathways with potential referral organisations</p> <p>1.5.6 Work together to promote and celebrate learner achievement at both local and national level</p>

Aim	Action
<b>1.6 Literacies learning increases learners' chances of obtaining employment or becoming a volunteer</b>	<p>1.6.1 Include review of literacies learning activity within relevant government policy and practice reviews</p> <p>1.6.2 Increase employers' and employer organisations' awareness of the benefits of literacies learning in the workplace</p> <p>1.6.3 Ensure integration of literacies within local employability partnerships</p> <p>1.6.4 Promote the use of Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) – and other funding - to encourage literacies participation within the workplace</p> <p>1.6.5 Increase the awareness of voluntary organisations, both nationally and locally, to the benefits of literacies within the volunteering role</p>

## **Outcome 2: Adult literacies learners receive high quality learning and teaching so they can achieve their goals**

All learners must be entitled to high quality and effective learning programmes. How learners are taught, what they learn, how the learning is assessed and what it leads to are important aspects in a successful learning journey.

E-learning (using a range of technologies including computer-based learning, web-based learning and virtual tuition) can help learners progress more quickly in their learning and extend the scope of learning. Learning can be customised to meet the needs of individuals in terms of time, place and pace. Many learners may also need support to develop their IT skills in order to successfully access these modes of learning.

Adult literacies practitioners are first and foremost facilitators of learning, applying learning and teaching approaches which place the learner at the centre of the learning process, and which go beyond a concentration on educational processes only. They require multiple skills, not only in learning and teaching but also in advice, guidance and assessment.

If Scotland is to have a skilled, competent and qualified adult literacies teaching workforce, practitioners must continually develop their skills and knowledge; and employers of literacies workers should enable their staff to undertake appropriate professional development opportunities and qualifications.

There needs to be clearer development pathways for literacies professionals, from volunteers undertaking the Professional Development Award (PDA): Introduction to Tutoring Adult Literacies Learning, to tutors who engage with employers undertaking the PDA: Developing Literacies Learning Programmes for the Workplace, through to experienced practitioners undertaking the Teaching Qualification: Adult Literacies.

We should also recognise the important contribution of other practitioners such as youth workers, family learner workers and college lecturers in improving literacies capabilities of adults. They too should have the opportunity, and be encouraged, to develop their understanding of, and skills in, supporting adults with literacies needs.

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>2.1 Learners have clear entitlements to learning</b>	2.1.1 Ensure learning environments are 'fit-for-purpose' for adults, and are accessible and appropriate for learners' needs  2.1.2 Ensure learners have access to high quality resources including e-learning technology

Aim	Action
	<p>2.1.3 Ensure learners with specific learning difficulties or disabilities have access to appropriate high quality assistive technology</p> <p>2.1.4 Ensure each learner is able to engage in learning activities at a level, mode and pace appropriate to his/her needs, goals and aspirations</p> <p>2.1.5 Provide opportunities for learners to gain formal recognition of their achievements in learning</p>
<p><b>2.2 Practitioners are confident and skilled at teaching literacies to adults, and other staff are skilled at coordinating and developing literacies programmes</b></p>	<p>2.2.1 Support practitioners to continue to develop professional skills in teaching adult literacies</p> <p>2.2.2 Support practitioners to continue to develop, enhance and extend the skills required to deliver flexible, embedded, integrated and specific literacies learning, including distance and technology-based learning opportunities</p> <p>2.2.3 Apply effective learning and teaching approaches using the social practice approach</p> <p>2.2.4 Embed the principles of the <i>Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework</i> and <i>Curriculum for Excellence</i> within literacies learning and practitioner training programmes</p> <p>2.2.5 Ensure practitioners are skilled in accrediting learning or in supporting learners to seek accreditation, when appropriate for the learner</p> <p>2.2.6 Reflect and evaluate teaching practice and engagement with learners</p> <p>2.2.7 Encourage and enable employers of literacies workers to promote and embed adult literacies professional development opportunities within staff training</p> <p>2.2.8 Support managers/coordinators to advance their skills in coordinating and developing successful literacies programmes</p>

Aim	Action
	<p>2.2.9 Establish a short-life, cross-sectoral professional development working group, including representation from the business, public and third sectors, to identify and respond to the professional development needs of the adult literacies workforce</p> <p>2.2.10 Promote and extend the sharing of practice and knowledge between practitioners, managers and sectors</p> <p>2.2.11 Promote and increase practitioner-led action research and peer evaluation processes to extend skills, broaden knowledge and improve practice across sectors</p> <p>2.2.12 Continue to develop the <i>Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework</i> to reflect changing policy and practice</p>



### **Outcome 3: Scotland has a coherent and effective adult literacies infrastructure that enables and supports continuous enhancement of provision**

Achieving a joined-up and effective adult literacies infrastructure will require national and local leadership and co-ordination. This means better communication and coordination at national and local level.

At national level, the Scottish Government must continue to connect literacies policy with other economic and social priorities.

National stakeholders should remain committed to this agenda and continue to recognise its importance to Scotland's future success.

Local partnerships should work together to co-ordinate services and maximise the sharing of resources. They should particularly address the needs of adult literacies learners at key transition periods of their lives, including learning transitions such as moving from school to college or work; from community based learning into college and university, and other life transitions such as becoming a parent, having to deal with new tasks after the death of a partner, retraining after a redundancy or re-entering the community after leaving prison.

Partnerships should establish processes to ensure learning opportunities are evaluated for quality and assessed for equality impact.

To ensure learners receive sufficient literacies support to advance at work and or gain and sustain employment, local partnerships should deliver literacies programmes for and within the workplace. To facilitate this, local employers, employment organisations such as Jobcentre Plus and unions should be an integral part of the local literacies planning process.

The involvement of learners to improve the learning infrastructure can be hugely beneficial. This can mean involving learners, by supporting them to act as partners and advocates with policy makers, providers, practitioners and other agencies. Learners' views, needs and concerns, can also ensure that organisations respond appropriately to the issues they raised.

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>3.1 National leadership and coordination is effective</b>	<p>3.1.1 Establish a national adult literacies strategic coordination group to drive collaboration and maximise resources within and across all sectors</p> <p>3.1.2 Ensure effective communication and collaboration between relevant Scottish Government and COSLA policy areas to address adult literacies in Scotland</p>

Aim	Action
	<p>3.1.3 Strengthen productive relationships and effective communication between national agencies, and between national agencies and delivery partners</p> <p>3.1.4 Ensure effective communication between national leadership and local action, and vice versa,</p> <p>3.1.5 Support adult literacies practitioners across Scotland to have a voice in national and local policy and practice developments</p> <p>3.1.6 Encourage and enable learners to influence national strategic developments</p>
<p><b>3.2 Local partnerships are strong and productive</b></p>	<p>3.2.1 Increase the effectiveness of local strategic and delivery partnerships to better evaluate, plan, coordinate and improve literacies services</p> <p>3.2.2 Employ approaches which maximise the use of resources (within community planning areas, and within and across local authority areas)</p> <p>3.2.3 Encourage partnerships to explore how they can engage with the most excluded and ensure compliance with equalities legislation</p> <p>3.2.4 Improve communication and collaboration between businesses, trade unions and literacies learning providers</p> <p>3.2.5 Involve learners in planning and improving local literacies services</p> <p>3.2.6 Increase communication and collaboration between local partnerships and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) offender services, including prisons to improve learning opportunities and transition for offenders</li> <li>b) schools and youth services</li> <li>c) information, advice and guidance providers</li> <li>d) the health service</li> <li>e) employment and employability agencies</li> <li>f) intermediary/referral organisations and individuals who are already in contact with adults who may benefit from literacies support</li> </ul>

## **Outcome 4: There is evidence of the impacts and the value of literacies learning on individuals and society**

If adult literacies providers and partnerships, as well as policymakers, are to predict and respond effectively to demand and challenges, we need to have better focused and more frequent analyses of learner progress, both locally and nationally.

We must pursue a coherent data and accountability framework for adult literacies programmes delivered in colleges, adult learning services in local authorities, workplaces and justice and voluntary sector settings. We must have robust evaluation processes in place so that we can continually improve the quality of Scotland's adult literacies programmes. We must demonstrate the impacts and outcomes that literacies can make on individual's lives, their families, their communities and the economy and be able to make improvements to services as a result of this knowledge. Also, it is important that policy makers, providers and employers recognise the value of literacies development for individuals and the country as a whole.

We must continue to expand our knowledge of effective literacies practice and research into issues through undertaking our own research (such as recent Scottish Government funded research on undetected visual problems in adults with literacy difficulties<sup>26</sup> and practitioner led action research such as the individual learning planning ( ILP) process <sup>27</sup>), as well as learning from research from other countries.

We must continue to evaluate our work by using a range of tools such as those provided by HMIE (How Good is our Community Learning and Development 2<sup>28</sup>), Let's Prove It<sup>29</sup> (Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland) and Literacies in the Community<sup>30</sup>.

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p><b>4.1. The impact and value of local literacies learning is demonstrated at local and national level</b></p>	<p>4.1.1 Establish systems, involving practitioners and learners, for capturing and measuring learner achievement and progression, for both local and national purposes</p> <p>4.1.2 Build upon establishing systems for capturing and recording the impacts and the value of adult literacies learning across all areas of life – private, family, community and work</p>

<sup>26</sup> [www.aloscotland.co.uk/alo/downloadresource.htm?id=3216](http://www.aloscotland.co.uk/alo/downloadresource.htm?id=3216)

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/12/15095637/0>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/hgio2cld.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/publications/l/publication\\_tcm4631885.asp](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/publications/l/publication_tcm4631885.asp)

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.aloscotland.com/alo/viewresource.htm?id=265>

Aim	Action
	4.1.3 Ensure effective collation and reporting of expected outcomes and impacts of literacies development to inform future planning
<b>4.2 Evaluation of provision contributes to continuous enhancement of adult literacies services</b>	<p>4.2.1 Use evaluation systems to evaluate the quality of adult literacies services</p> <p>4.2.2 Use evidence to identify challenges and improvements</p>
<b>4.3 Research informs developments in policy and practice</b>	<p>4.3.1 Demonstrate how social and economic goals are reached through developing the literacies capabilities of Scotland's adults, particularly making better use of existing evidence and knowledge, and undertaking new research where appropriate</p> <p>4.3.2 Improve ways of communicating the value of literacies development to policy makers, providers and employers.</p>



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ISBN: 978-0-7559-9904-0 (web only)

APS Group Scotland  
DPPAS11111 (12/10)

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