

**BIS** | Department for Business  
Innovation & Skills

**NEW CHALLENGES, NEW  
CHANCES: NEXT STEPS IN  
IMPLEMENTING THE FURTHER  
EDUCATION REFORM  
PROGRAMME**

Review of Informal Adult and  
Community Learning

AUGUST 2011

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# Review of Informal Adult and Community Learning

## Introduction

1. This Government recognises the vital role that informal adult and community learning (IACL) plays in our society. That is why the 2010 spending review protected the £210 million invested each year to support informal, mostly unaccredited, adult and community learning in England through the Adult Safeguarded Learning budget.
2. We want IACL to continue to contribute to people's quality of life, health and well-being. So we are reviewing the use of the Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) budget to:
  - maximise its contribution to wider policy objectives, such as building the Big Society
  - deliver value for money by focusing public funding on people who would not otherwise have access to learning and maximising income from learners who can afford to pay
  - support progression, including to further learning, training and employment.
3. Since the publication of *Skills for Sustainable Growth*, we have been working with a range of partners to review our BIS investment in this kind of learning. We have also met with policy officials across Government in order to identify important linkages with other initiatives. Now we invite all those organisations with an interest in IACL to respond to the questions set out in this consultation.
4. Following the consultation we will publish details of key implementation milestones in the skills investment statement for 2012/13, planned for publication autumn 2011. There will be ongoing communication and implementation activity that we will develop jointly with stakeholders up to the planned start date.
5. You may also be interested in an additional survey which is part of this review. The survey is gathering the views of **individuals** who have an interest in IACL. We want to hear their views about the kinds of learning they would like to see in their local area, how learning should be planned and reviewed and how they might get involved in making decisions about what's on offer. You can find the survey at <http://www.niace.org.uk/current-work/the-iacl-review>.

**Issued:** 16 August 2011  
**Respond by:** 21 October 2011

This consultation is relevant to: Further education colleges and their governing bodies; Local Authority Adult Education Services, Specialist Designated Institutions, other providers of further education and skills and adult learning; sixth-form colleges; higher education institutions; college principals, teaching staff and their representative organisations; voluntary and community organisations; Government Departments; organisations representing the interests of past, current and prospective adult learners.

## Executive Summary

1. Informal adult and community learning (IACL) has a critical role in providing learning opportunities for everyone, regardless of age or background. It enables people to interact with family, friends and neighbours, and in doing so makes our society a happier, healthier, better informed place - and this country a better one to live in. Its broad and stimulating offer encourages us to meet new people and widen our experience of the society around us. It can offer life-changing experiences and help to develop new interests and new skills that can in time turn into new careers.
2. IACL offers personal choice, personal responsibility and personal empowerment. It takes place in accessible community venues and takes account of individual needs and learning styles. It engages people through their interests in relaxed and welcoming classes that contribute to community wellbeing and social inclusion. Without this kind of learning, many people would never get started in learning or realise their full potential.
3. IACL is a vital element of the lifelong learning continuum. By developing people's self-esteem and confidence, it has a proven track record in transforming attitudes and abilities to prepare them for further learning or to take an active role in their communities. It can make a real difference to people's job prospects, especially for those who have had few chances in life or who come from the most deprived and excluded sections of society.
4. Accordingly, the Government's 2010 spending review protected the £210 million currently invested each year to support informal, unaccredited adult and community learning in England through the Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) budget. Quite rightly in the current fiscal circumstances, we were challenged to ensure that this investment delivers value for money. This includes:
  - being able to demonstrate that public funding is focused on people who would not otherwise have access to learning
  - maximising fee income from those who can afford to pay
  - providing the conditions to enable wider learning opportunities, not funded by Government, to thrive.
5. But this is not just about delivering equity and value for money. That has always been a core principle for the use of public funds. We also want IACL to support the development of the Big Society, in the way it is planned and delivered as well as through the activity it funds. One of the fundamental principles of the Big Society is the need to put more power into people's hands – to give citizens, communities, businesses and voluntary organisations the tools and opportunities to come together and build the Britain they want. By its very nature, IACL already makes a powerful contribution to the Big Society, for example by helping people develop the confidence and skills to influence decision-making in public services. We want to build on this.

6. Since the publication of *Skills for Sustainable Growth* (November, 2010) we have been working with a range of partners to review BIS investment in informal adult and community learning. Working closely with front-line practitioners and partner organisations in a series of stakeholder meetings, we have identified six key challenges for BIS-funded IACL. The proposals set out in this document seek to respond to these challenges. We now need to test them more widely.

### CHALLENGES

1. The need to clarify Government objectives for spend on IACL and its role in supporting wider Government policy objectives, including the Big Society, localism, wellbeing, social inclusion and digital inclusion.
2. The need to ensure that Government funding is sufficiently focused on the most disadvantaged. Comfortably-off, educated learners are currently over-represented. However they pay fees which can cross-subsidise those who cannot afford to pay.
3. The need to provide robust evidence for IACL. Social and economic impact measures for BIS-funded IACL are under-developed and Government does not collect data on non-government funded IACL.
4. The need to address funding anomalies and make funding fairer. Funding is currently based on an historical, and in many cases inequitable, distribution.
5. The need to create the conditions that will enable a much wider range of informal learning to thrive, whether this is supported by Government, self-organised in local communities, delivered in the private sector or enabled through harnessing the power of the internet.
6. The need to ensure that workforce training and quality assurance arrangements support the new vision for BIS-funded IACL.

### CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree that BIS-funded IACL contributes to the development of the Big Society and complements the delivery of other Government policies, and if yes, which policies and how might IACL's contribution be measured?
2. Should BIS funded IACL be aimed solely at supporting specific outcomes such as progression to training and employment, or enable progression in a broader sense?
3. If the latter, what other types of progression are relevant and how could they be measured?
4. What should be the respective national and local roles in relation to IACL?
5. What (if any) steps could facilitate the changing role of central Government in IACL?
6. What are the implications of seeking a wider local provider base?

**CONSULTATION QUESTIONS (Continued)**

7. What would a localised IACL offer mean for providers, such as the Workers' Educational Association, delivering learning across localities?
8. Should BIS-funded IACL be targeted or universal, and why?
9. What are the key challenges to generating fee income and what associated solutions would encourage more sophisticated approaches to income generation?
10. In a localised model, what are the key challenges and associated solutions that would secure accountability for tax payers' investment?
11. Which, if any, of options a) b) and c) on page 13 present a proportionate approach to measuring impact? Are there any alternatives?
12. What core information should recipients of BIS investment have to provide in relation to learner characteristics and learning activity?
13. How can administrative data be used effectively to map fee income and learner disadvantage?
14. What factors should be taken into account in the distribution of BIS funding for IACL?
15. Which, if any, of options a), b) and c) on page 15 would best secure more localised delivery and are there alternatives that could be considered
16. Should BIS IACL funding be used to fund capacity building and innovation?
17. If yes, how should funding be balanced and what type of activity should be funded?
18. Is there a need for quality assurance arrangements to be changed in light of the potential changes to BIS funded IACL? If yes, in what way?
19. What adjustments to current workforce development arrangements in England would best support the new vision for IACL?

## How to respond

1. When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation.
2. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.
3. You can respond to this consultation through the comments boxes on the website: <https://iacl.bis.gov.uk/>.
4. Alternatively, you may send an electronic response to [iaclconsultation@opm.co.uk](mailto:iaclconsultation@opm.co.uk) or via hard copy to:

Lucy Smith  
OPM  
252b Gray's Inn Road  
London  
WC1X 8XG

Responses must be received by 21 October 2011.

5. A list of those organisations and individuals consulted as part of our stakeholder meetings is in Annex 1. We would welcome suggestions of others who may wish to be involved in this consultation process.

## Additional copies

6. You may make copies of this document without seeking permission. Printed copies of the consultation document can be obtained from:

BIS Publications Orderline  
ADMAIL 528  
London SW1W 8YT  
Tel: 0845-015 0010  
Fax: 0845-015 0020  
Minicom: 0845-015 0030  
[www.bis.gov.uk/publications](http://www.bis.gov.uk/publications)

7. An electronic version can be found at [www.bis.gov.uk/newchallenges](http://www.bis.gov.uk/newchallenges). Other versions of the document in Braille, other languages or audio-cassette are available on request.

## Confidentiality & Data Protection

8. Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or release to other parties or to disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004). If you want information, including personal data that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.
9. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

## Help with queries

10. Any enquiries regarding the policy issues raised in this publication should be sent to [BIS.Correspondence@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:BIS.Correspondence@bis.gsi.gov.uk) or to:

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills  
1 Victoria Street  
London SW1H 0ET  
Tel: 020 7215 5000

11. A copy of the Code of Practice on Consultation is in Annex 1.

## The proposals and consultation questions

1. Since the publication of *Skills for Sustainable Growth* (November 2010) we have been working with a range of partners to review BIS investment in informal adult and community learning (IACL). Working closely with front-line practitioners and partner organisations in a series of stakeholder meetings, we have identified six key challenges for BIS-funded IACL. The proposals set out in this document seek to respond to these challenges. We now need to test them more widely.

### CHALLENGES

1. The need to clarify Government objectives for spend on IACL and its role in supporting wider Government policy objectives, including the Big Society, localism, wellbeing, social inclusion and digital inclusion.
2. The need to ensure that Government funding is sufficiently focused on the most disadvantaged. Comfortably-off, educated learners are currently over-represented. However they pay fees which can cross-subsidise those who cannot afford to pay.
3. The need to provide robust evidence for IACL. Social and economic impact measures for BIS-funded IACL are underdeveloped and Government does not collect data on non-government funded IACL.
4. The need to address funding anomalies and make funding fairer. Funding is currently based on an historical, and in many cases inequitable, distribution.
5. The need to create the conditions that will enable a much wider range of informal learning to thrive, whether this is supported by Government, self-organised in local communities, delivered in the private sector or enabled through harnessing the power of the internet.
6. The need to ensure that workforce training and quality assurance arrangements support the new vision for BIS-funded IACL.

2. We recognise that there are some tensions inherent in these challenges, for example:
  - prioritising public funding for disadvantaged people without introducing complex eligibility criteria and a return to central planning
  - demonstrating the benefits of investment in IACL without creating additional burdens for learners and providers
  - reconciling the need to increase the accountability of BIS-funded IACL commissioners/deliverers to local communities with the need to continue delivering central Government's overall responsibilities for public spend.

### CHALLENGE 1:

**The need to clarify Government objectives for spend on IACL and its role in supporting wider Government policy objectives on the Big Society, localism,**

**wellbeing, and social and digital inclusion.**

### **Building the Big Society and supporting wider Government agendas**

3. IACL already plays an integral role in developing social and economic capital at the individual, family and community levels. There is significant potential to maximise this role to support the development of the Big Society - in terms of the learning activities offered and the way provision is commissioned and delivered – to reflect the following Big Society principles:
  - empowering communities by involving local people so that they have a direct say in decisions about IACL content and IACL providers
  - opening-up public services by developing people’s confidence and skills to get involved in mentoring, starting social enterprises or taking a more active role in improving and/or delivering local services
  - supporting social action by encouraging and enabling people to become volunteer learning champions and play a more active part in local communities.
4. IACL engages people through their needs and interests and is rooted strongly in communities. It widens people’s interests and has proven benefits for individual, family and community wellbeing, as well as bringing demonstrable improvements in mental and physical health. If parents have good physical and mental health, there are positive impacts for children during their important early foundation years.
5. IACL can also bring together people from diverse backgrounds and communities, contributing to social integration and helping people who are isolated and vulnerable to build new social networks and play a fuller part in society. It has an important role to play in helping people who are digitally excluded to take their first steps to get online.

Q1: Do you agree that BIS-funded IACL contributes to the development of the Big Society and complements the delivery of other Government policies. If yes, which policies and how might IACL’s contribution be measured?

### **Supporting progression**

6. Engagement in IACL can develop the motivation, confidence and skills to progress. Progression can take many forms and is different for different people, so we do not currently specify the kind of progression that ‘counts’. For example, informal learning can help people to access further learning and employment. It can also reduce isolation, help people manage depression and support people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to live independently. People are often attracted to this kind of learning because it offers an activity they enjoy, rather than because they are aiming to progress to a pre-determined outcome.
7. We could be more specific about the contribution of BIS investment by defining progression more narrowly, for example by focusing on its role in providing a route into further learning and/or employment. This would make clearer links between BIS investment in IACL and

the broader objective of increasing progression to learning, skills and employment. Rather than trying to achieve a broad range of outcomes, this approach would enable providers to design the content of learning and associated support and guidance in a more targeted way.

Q2: Should BIS-funded IACL be aimed solely at supporting specific outcomes such as progression to training and employment, or should it enable progression in a broader sense?

Q3: If the latter, what other types of progression are relevant and how could they be measured?

### **National versus local approaches to planning and delivering IACL**

8. The benefit of the current approach to BIS-funded IACL is that it is flexible rather than prescriptive, with opportunities for significant variations in content and delivery according to local needs. We want to build on this flexibility by creating the conditions that enable policy objectives to be met locally rather than issuing national prescriptions.
9. In the context of the localism and Big Society agendas, central Government's role is changing. Building on the current approach to BIS-funded IACL, the future role of Government could be to:
  - define the parameters for BIS investment in IACL through a clear set of aims and objectives
  - facilitate local decision making by removing barriers and building capacity so that local people can make decisions about where Government funding should be focused
  - strengthen accountability to local communities
  - enable provider diversification where demanded locally, for example by increasing opportunities for social enterprises, charitable bodies and voluntary sector organisations to become providers.
10. This would mean that the use of IACL funding would be determined according to local priorities, within broad parameters setting out what BIS investment can support.

Q4: What should be the respective national and local roles in relation to IACL?

Q5: What (if any) steps could facilitate the changing role of central Government in IACL?

Q6: What are the implications of seeking a wider local provider base?

Q7: What would a localised IACL offer mean for providers, such as the Workers' Educational Association, delivering learning across localities?

**CHALLENGE 2:**

**The need to ensure that Government funding is sufficiently focussed on the most disadvantaged. Comfortably off, educated learners are currently over-represented. However they pay fees which can cross-subsidise those who can't afford to pay.**

**Access to BIS-funded Informal Adult and Community Learning**

11. To ensure that Government funding reaches the most disadvantaged communities and people, local commissioners and providers could target BIS-funded IACL solely at particular communities, such as the poorest urban and rural areas, and/or at the most disadvantaged local people, such as those who are unemployed or experiencing particular challenges such as homelessness. This would mean that there would be no publicly-supported offer for learners who are able to pay.
12. However, one of the benefits of IACL is that it attracts people from different classes and cultural backgrounds who, through learning together, can share experiences, offer mutual support, learn new skills from one another and become more active locally. Focusing investment on learning that only supports disadvantaged learners may risk marginalising those learners, narrowing the range of provision on offer and losing the wider benefits of interaction between different groups in society.

Q8: Should BIS-funded IACL be targeted or universal, and why?

13. If a universal approach is taken and IACL provision includes people who can afford to pay full fees, there are likely to be significant opportunities for cross-subsidising to support access for the people who cannot afford to pay. Some providers are already highly successful at using fee income to subsidise targeted provision. However, if these potential benefits are to be more widely realised, providers will need to develop more sophisticated fees policies.

Q9: What are the key challenges to generating fee income and what associated solutions would encourage more sophisticated approaches to income generation?

**Accountability***Propriety and use of public funds*

14. Government has a responsibility to ensure that public funds are spent properly and in line with the purpose for which they are intended. It is clear that BIS investment in IACL will continue to require proper auditing and suitable arrangements to oversee this. Commissioners and/or providers receiving public funding will therefore need to have the capability and capacity to manage and account for the use of BIS funds.

*Supporting the objectives for BIS investment in IACL*

15. If a localised model is adopted there will need to be strong local leadership to enable it to work effectively, with clear accountability and opportunity for challenge. Organisations in receipt of BIS funding could be expected to set out publicly how they commission and/or

deliver activity and how provision reflects local needs. They would also need to demonstrate how IACL is linked with other relevant local services such as health, leisure, employment and environment. In this model, the organisation in receipt of funding would be responsible for stating publicly at the end of each funding period how it has met these aims. This approach would encourage involvement, and potentially challenge, from IACL learners, local stakeholders and the broader community. In a locally driven model, central Government would impose no requirements beyond assurance that funding is being used properly.

Q10: In a localised model, what are the key challenges and associated solutions that would secure accountability for taxpayers' investment?

### CHALLENGE 3:

**The need to provide robust evidence for IACL. Social and economic impact measures for BIS-funded IACL are under-developed and Government does not collect data on non-Government funded IACL.**

### Impact

16. Even in a highly localised delivery model, the impact of BIS investment in IACL would need to be captured. We need to consider who should be responsible for this. There are potentially three options:
- a) responsibility for measuring impact is left to the recipient of funding and there is no attempt to capture a national picture – this would enable providers to develop an appropriate local approach. However, the absence of national impact data could leave IACL highly vulnerable in future spending review discussions
  - b) responsibility for measuring impact is left to the recipient of funding and this information is aggregated to present a national picture. As set out above this would enable providers to develop an appropriate local approach and would offer the added benefit of capturing impact at a national level. The risk is that simply aggregating data from a range of different sources would not provide a coherent national picture
  - c) in addition to the recipient of funding taking responsibility for measuring the impact of IACL investment, there could be a national learner survey that captures learners' views on BIS-funded IACL activity shortly after they have completed their learning. The survey could subsequently be re-run with the same learners to capture information on whether the perceived outcomes from the learning were realised. The survey could be supplemented by data from national surveys such as the Integrated Household Survey<sup>1</sup> or monthly Opinions Surveys, together with case studies which capture the benefits of targeted learning activity, linked to national work on identifying social returns on investment.

<sup>1</sup> From April 2011, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Integrated Household Survey (IHS), which interviews 200,000 people annually, will include subjective questions on wellbeing in the UK

Q11: Which, if any, of options a) b) and c) above presents a proportionate approach to measuring impact? Are there any alternatives?

### Management Information

17. Recipients of BIS funding for IACL are currently required to submit learner and learning aim information. This provides data on the types of learners undertaking BIS-funded IACL, the level of fee income collected in respect of their learning and, in broad terms, the type of learning they are undertaking.
18. In considering alternative delivery models for BIS-funded IACL we need to consider what administrative information should be collected, and for what purpose. As a minimum we would expect to continue to collect core learner-level information, building on information collected by organisations as part of their business planning. Taken together, this information could then be used to report on overall participation in BIS-funded IACL, including participation of people from groups protected under equality legislation and data on fee income which would measure to what extent fees are being collected from those who can pay. It would also inform the sampling of the national learner survey described above.

Q12: What core information should recipients of BIS investment have to provide in relation to learner characteristics and learning activity?

Q13: How can administrative data be used effectively to map fee income and learner disadvantage?

### CHALLENGE 4:

**The need to address funding anomalies. Funding is currently based on an historical, and in many cases inequitable, distribution.**

### Securing a more equitable distribution of funding across areas

19. Currently funding is allocated to providers on an historical basis. This determines the BIS-funded IACL offer, though this provision is only part of a wider, non BIS-funded IACL landscape. The key question is whether investment in BIS-funded IACL should be allocated across the country to secure a BIS-funded offer in every locality, or whether it should be targeted to specific localities where there is an overall lack of access to IACL (whether BIS-funded or non BIS-funded).
20. A targeted approach would mean that areas receiving less BIS funding for IACL and whose residents have less access to non BIS-funded learning could receive additional BIS investment, rather than this funding going to those areas that already enjoy a wide range of informal learning opportunities. However, allocating funding on deprivation criteria would need to be carefully thought through if deprived people living in more affluent areas were not to be inadvertently excluded. This approach would also require a sophisticated approach to allocating funding and significant investment would be required to fund the mapping of both BIS-funded and non-BIS-funded IACL provision against local need. It could also be seen to create perverse incentives by rewarding areas that have not invested previously. An alternative solution would be to allocate an amount of BIS funding across each local area, based on local demographics and other specific criteria such as

deprivation. It could then be for the locality to determine where this funding should be prioritised and which providers would be best suited to deliver learning in line with local needs.

Q14: What factors should be taken into account in the distribution of BIS funding for IACL?

### Re-thinking the overall approach to IACL funding allocations

21. Funding is currently allocated by the Skills Funding Agency directly to providers (Local Authorities, FE colleges, Specialist Designated Institutions and other providers). In addition to addressing historical funding anomalies, the IACL review presents an opportunity to rethink the way that funding is allocated in order to reflect the Big Society and localism objectives by:

- giving local people more say in decisions about content and providers
- opening up public services by enabling charities, social enterprises, private companies and co-operatives to compete to offer people quality services.

The following funding allocation options have been identified for consideration.

#### Options

a) Funding allocated directly to providers	This would maintain the status quo and leave the responsibility for making links with other providers with the individual provider.
b) Single local commissioning body (or commissioning partnership)	<p>This body would be responsible for identifying suitable providers to deliver in the local area they are responsible for – they could deliver provision themselves. The funding would flow to this body and they would be responsible for managing the funding through those they subcontract with.</p> <p>Directly funding a single body in a locality that is best placed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work with any devolved neighbourhood arrangements arising from the Open Public Services White Paper published in July 2011</li> <li>- make the links with other services that are commissioned locally could secure better value for money. However, there is a risk that it could be seen as creating an additional layer to local arrangements.</li> </ul> <p>It will be necessary to work through what this would mean for providers that have a national coverage.</p>
c) Tender out a few large contracts across England	This option could attract, but would not be exclusive to, large voluntary organisations. These organisations would then be responsible for contracting out delivery. It would need to ensure England-wide coverage, so each organisation would have to set out in their tender their plans for securing local “buy-in” for the providers they commission. This is a similar approach to that used by DWP for the Work Programme.

Q15: Which, if any, of options a), b) and c) above would best secure more localised delivery and are there alternatives that could be considered?

### CHALLENGE 5:

**The need to create the conditions that will enable a much wider range of informal adult and community learning to thrive, whether this is supported by Government, self-organised in local communities, delivered in the private sector or enabled by harnessing the power of the internet.**

### Securing an appropriate balance between direct participation and investment in capacity building and innovation

22. Although the Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) budget is very flexible, the primary focus of BIS investment in IACL has been on meeting the costs of direct delivery. In some specific programmes, such as Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities, investment has been used to develop the capacity of voluntary organisations in order to maximise the reach of provision to people who are furthest from learning. We need to consider what the 'right' balance is between funding participation directly and investing in capacity building and the innovative approaches to outreach/delivery that maximise participation among people from disadvantaged groups. This should include exploring how to make more of the potential of digital technology to open up new learning opportunities.
23. A proportion of the ASL budget could be used to improve social capital, learning capital and the wider conditions for learning, by supporting a range of capacity building activities relevant to the specific needs of the local area, for example:
  - supporting digital inclusion through IACL, by encouraging people to get online and stimulating the desire to learn by engaging people through on-line communities
  - supporting the development of self-organised groups, learning co-operatives, clubs and societies and incentivising the opening-up of local places, eg business premises, vacant shops, unused community centres and other spaces, for learning
  - piloting innovative outreach and learning approaches designed to attract the people who are hardest to reach, for example by using trusted intermediaries such as community learning champions
  - working with a partnership comprising The Open University (OU), the BBC, UK Online and the British Library to: support further development of free online IACL resources; raise awareness of these resources among staff and learners and improve their availability by developing additional access routes to them; alert local providers to online learning opportunities and resources such as The OU's [OpenLearn](#)<sup>2</sup> website, Citizens' University<sup>3</sup> and iTunes U<sup>4</sup>; encourage the development of networks of e-reading rooms.

<sup>2</sup> OpenLearn, The Open University's free online learning website releases course materials for free to the public. Launched in 2006, the site has seen over 17 million visitors, and contains over 6,000 hours of learning material. Users can study independently at their own pace or join a group and use the free learning tools to work with others

<sup>3</sup> The Citizens' University has been developed by the Young Foundation in partnership with NESTA. It aims to build citizens' skills, competence and inclination to engage in positive action in their communities. Courses will be accessible, short enough to be completed in an evening or a weekend and delivered in high street pop-up shops and community spaces

<sup>4</sup> HE institutions can share all kinds of video and audio content from museums, universities, cultural institutions, radio and TV stations via iTunes U; iTunes U content can be made available only to members of a specific educational community (internal access) or to the general

- encouraging employers to support IACL via their social corporate responsibility policies, eg through sponsorship, use of workplace spaces, employee volunteer time, the sharing of expertise or the co-production of learning content.

Q16: Should BIS IACL funding be used to fund capacity building and innovation?

Q17: If yes, how should funding be balanced and what type of activity should be funded?

## **CHALLENGE 6:**

### **Ensuring that workforce training and quality assurance arrangements support the new vision for BIS-funded IACL**

#### **Quality**

24. If we are to maximise the impact of Government spend on informal adult and community learning in the context of new IACL objectives and closer links with other Government policy objectives, the new focus will need to be reflected in internal and external quality assurance arrangements.
25. We need to consider the implications of these new objectives for Ofsted's remit, as well as for internal quality assurance systems. For example, how should we secure proportionate quality assurance arrangements and best value for the taxpayer? Should Ofsted inspections and surveys be refocused to assess the quality of local plans, infrastructure, innovation, local linkages, outreach and/or guidance rather than inspection of individual classes?

Q18: Is there a need for quality assurance arrangements to be changed in light of the potential changes to BIS-funded IACL? If yes, in what way?

#### **Workforce training and development**

26. All providers funded by the Skills Funding Agency in England are required to ensure that their workforce is qualified to comply with the FE Teachers' Qualifications (England) Regulations 2007. New IACL objectives are likely to increase the focus on engaging and motivating people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds who may have chaotic lives and challenging personal circumstances. The IACL workforce may need new skills to enable teachers and other staff to meet the needs of these learners and support wider community development activities in disadvantaged settings. Some providers and teachers have also made a strong case for making workforce qualifications more staged and flexible for IACL teachers, within the current framework.

Q19: What adjustments to current workforce development arrangements in England would best support the new vision for IACL?

## **What happens next?**

Responses to this consultation will be considered closely and will inform the development of informal adult and community learning policy. The outcomes of the review, incorporating a timetable for implementation, will be published in late autumn 2011.

## Annex 1: The Consultation Code of Practice Criteria

1. Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence policy outcome.
2. Consultation should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.
3. Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.
4. Consultation exercise should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.
5. Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.
6. Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.
7. Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

### Comments or complaints

If you wish to comment on the conduct of this consultation or make a complaint about the way this consultation has been conducted, please write to:

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Telephone Sophia on 020 7215 5350  
or e-mail to: [sophia.wellington@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sophia.wellington@bis.gsi.gov.uk)

## Annex 2: List of organisations to be consulted

157 Group  
Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)  
Age UK  
Association of Colleges (AoC)  
Association for Education and Ageing  
Association of Learning Providers  
Association for Learning Technology  
Arts Council  
BBC  
BTCV  
Business in the Community (BITC)  
Campaign for Learning (CfL)  
Channel 4  
Church of England  
City Lit  
Community Learning Champions Support Programme  
Continyou  
CRISIS  
Digital Unite  
Enable  
English Heritage  
Family Learning Network  
FE Colleges  
Federation for Community Development Learning (FCDL)  
Fircroft College  
Government Departments  
Hillcroft College  
HOLEX  
Institute for Learning (IfL)  
JISC  
Keystone Development Trust  
Learning and Skills Employment Network (LSEN)  
Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)  
LLU+  
Local Authorities  
Local Education Authorities Forum on the Education of Adults (LEAFEA)  
Local Government Association (LGA)  
Local Learning Partnerships  
London Development Agency  
Marine Society College of the Sea  
Mary Ward Centre  
Morley College  
Museums Libraries & Archives Council (MLA)  
National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)  
National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)  
National Federation of Women's Institutes  
National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)  
National Literacy Trust  
National Offender Management Service (NOMS)

National Open College Network (NOCN)  
National Trust  
National Union of Students  
Northern College  
Novas Scarman  
Office for Disability Issues  
Office for National Statistics (ONS)  
Ofsted  
Open University  
Participatory Budgeting Unit  
Princes Trust  
Prisoners' Educational Trust  
Race Online  
RNIB  
Royal Horticultural Society  
Royal Society of Arts  
Ruskin College  
School of Everything  
SCOPE  
Skilled for Health  
Skills Funding Agency (SFA)  
Sport England  
St Giles Trust  
St Mungo's  
The Age and Employment Network  
The Big Lottery  
The Learning Trust  
The Reading Agency  
Third Age Trust  
Third Sector National Learning Alliance  
TUC  
U3A  
University for Industry/Learndirect  
UK online  
Unionlearn  
UNISON  
Universities Association for Lifelong Learning  
University and College Union (UCU)  
Voluntary Arts England  
Volunteering England  
Women's Institute  
Workers' Educational Association (WEA)  
Working Men's College  
YMCA

## **Annex 3: Impact Assessment of the Review of Informal Adult and Community Learning**

An Initial Screening document has been completed in anticipation of the full Equality Impact Assessment which will be undertaken towards the end of the consultation stage when policy proposals become evident.

You can view an electronic copy of the Initial Screening document via:  
[www.bis.gov.uk/newchallenges](http://www.bis.gov.uk/newchallenges).

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**URN 11/1215**