

Informal Adult Learning – *Shaping the Way Ahead*

Consultation Response Analysis Report

Department for
**Innovation,
Universities &
Skills**

**Prepared for the Department of Innovation,
Universities and Skills (DIUS) by the
Central Office of Information (COI)**

October 2008

Table of Contents

1 Introduction	3
1.1 Consultation aims and objectives	3
1.2 Consultation methodology.....	3
1.3 Key messages from the consultation.....	4
2 Key discussion points	7
2.1 Suggestions for raising the profile and take-up: developing a shared vision of the benefits	7
2.2 Suggestions for improving access: putting the learner at the centre.....	9
2.3 Suggestions for building on the best of what already exists.....	17
2.4 Suggestions for benefiting from the information revolution: making the best use of technology	22
2.5 Ensuring the strength and sustainability of vibrant informal learning: the role of Government.....	25
Appendix A: Definition and discussion points.....	29
Defining informal adult learning	29
Discussion points	29
Appendix B: Breakdown of consultation responses	33
Appendix C: Responding Organisations	35

1 Introduction

1.1 Consultation aims and objectives

The overarching aim of the Informal Adult Learning (IAL) consultation *Informal Adult Learning – Shaping the Way Ahead*, was to start a discussion that will lead to a new vision for informal adult learning for the 21st century. Informal adult learning is structured or unstructured activity that embraces all sorts of activity ranging from family learning, healthy living and financial literacy to sports, arts, humanities and foreign languages. It can be a lifeline, an engagement mechanism, a progression route or simply a pleasurable and stimulating learning experience – sometimes all four. It can be self-organised or publicly or privately funded.

The consultation was launched 15th January 2008 and ran until 12th June 2008. It explored the following themes:

- How can we better understand and connect informal learning, whether available through the public, private or third sector, or self-organised?
- How can Government as a whole best support informal adult learning, and as part of that, how can we make the most of DIUS funding?
- How can we improve equality of access to informal learning?
- How can we make the most of new technologies?

The full list of discussion points and a working definition of ‘informal adult learning’ are set out in Appendix A. The consultation questions aimed to stimulate a wide-ranging and challenging debate which would not limit or constrain responses from organisations and individuals.

1.2 Consultation methodology

The consultation used a wide range of evidence-gathering approaches in order to reflect the diversity and complexity of the informal adult learning landscape. They included:

- A consultation document aimed at a wide range of stakeholder organisations, who were invited to respond on-line (www.adultlearningconsultation.org.uk) or in writing.

- A version of the consultation document aimed at individual learners and a version to support organisations in holding focused discussion groups with learners.
- A series of six themed stakeholder ‘round-table’ meetings to engage a broad range of partners in fuller reflection and discussion of the issues and opportunities, with Ministers attending the final session of each meeting to listen to proposals. A seventh cross-cutting meeting brought together representatives from each of the previous roundtables.
- A citizens’ forum aimed at members of the general public. Ninety-three citizens and 15 grass-roots stakeholder organisations spent a day in structured discussion of the consultation issues.

In total over 5,500 responses were received in a variety of forms. A breakdown of responses is provided in Appendix B.

1.3 Key messages from the consultation

1.3.1 Context

The consultation’s aim to develop the best possible arrangements for securing vibrant and fulfilling informal learning fit for the 21st century meet with wide approval. Most respondents welcome the consultation as a vitally important and timely opportunity to contribute to shaping this new vision. Established players welcome the opportunity for a renewed discussion on informal learning, while many others, asked to take part in discussions on this area for the first time, are delighted with the opportunity to have their say.

“Like DIUS we recognise that adult education has a wide significance in contemporary society; it has a strong appeal to many groups and is central to important government agendas.” (WEA)

“We welcome the consultation’s wide scope and its recognition of the diversity and importance of adult learning.” (Community Sector Coalition)

“It is positive that [the Government] has opened up a wide-ranging debate on this particular policy area in order to forge a new way forward.” (TUC)

In their responses, learners and stakeholders alike strongly emphasise the benefits to individuals, families and wider communities arising from participation in informal learning. Many feel the consultation signals a revived and increased interest from

Government in the contribution of informal learning to the health and well-being of society.

“A new approach should have at its heart a coherent and comprehensive outreach strategy offering the highest quality of provision to those with the greatest educational need.” (NIACE)

Most respondents are keen to suggest ideas to help deliver the aim of a vibrant and fulfilling informal learning offer. In particular, the round table discussion groups endorse many of the aspirations set out in the consultation. Propositions to:

- Join up this type of activity across Government
- Clarify Government’s role as facilitator and enabler of local decision-making and innovation
- Increase connectivity across self-organised, public, private and third sector provision
- Put learners from all backgrounds at the heart of planning and funding informal learning

receive support from a wide range of stakeholders.

Some responses inevitably reflect the immediate concerns of the individual respondent. Some learners are concerned that existing classes may no longer be available in the future and some stakeholders feel that the strong focus on vocational skills and qualifications has reduced the availability and increased the cost of non-vocational learning, impacting disproportionately on those who need extra support to participate. Many stakeholders and learners want assurance that Government will uphold and strengthen the principle of enabling greatest access to public funding for those who have benefited least from informal adult learning in the past and are in most financial need. They also seek assurance that the vision of a broad informal learning landscape, incorporating a diverse range of activity, will add to the mix of informal learning opportunities on offer and not replace traditional methods of delivery.

1.3.2 Key Themes

Responses to the consultation questions focus on five key areas of action to secure a flourishing informal learning environment. These are:

Raising the profile and take-up of informal learning: Respondents want the core principles and benefits of informal learning to be widely shared, understood and valued. Some contributors, particularly stakeholders, see the consultation as an important step towards this aim.

Improving access: Respondents welcome the recognition by Government that learners must be at the heart of informal learning policy, with planning and funding arrangements aimed at securing a broad offer that is adaptable to meet specific local needs.

Building on the best of what is already in place: Respondents see a strong continued role for a revitalised local adult education service, working in conjunction with a broad range of private sector and voluntary sector organisations, as well as self-organised learning groups, under a shared informal learning umbrella.

Making the most of the information revolution: Many respondents are excited about the opportunities presented by technology; others request more clarity from Government about the likely future role of technology, alongside assurances that technology will enhance, not replace, other forms of delivery.

Ensuring the strength and sustainability of informal learning: Respondents want DIUS to:

- Maintain a key role in supporting and improving informal learning opportunities
- Work with other parts of Government to open up public spaces and facilities for learning
- Align funding, policies and initiatives wherever appropriate, to make provision at the local level easier to navigate, thus improving access for learners.

2 Key discussion points

This section provides a more detailed analysis of the key messages and suggestions set out in responses to the consultation.

2.1 Suggestions for raising the profile and take-up: developing a shared vision of the benefits

Respondents from all backgrounds write passionately about the current need to raise the perceived value and status of informal learning.

“The consultation exercise indicates a burgeoning awareness by Government Ministers of the importance [of informal adult learning] to the general health and well-being, as well as social cohesion, of older men and women having some positive engagement with learning.” (U3A Trust)

Many respondents feel the Government’s recent focus on vocational education and training has detracted from this.

Contributors suggest that:

- A shared set of principles or values would promote a better understanding of this kind of learning than one all-encompassing definition or a rigorous typology
- A shared set of principles or values would promote a better understanding of this kind of learning than one all-encompassing definition or a rigorous typology
- Government, working alongside the full range of providers and other stakeholders, could improve awareness of informal learning by ‘shouting loudly’ about the many ways that people can pursue their personal and community interests and the benefits that informal learning brings to individuals, families and neighbourhoods.

2.1.1 Shared core values

Informal learning means many different things to many different people and consultation responses highlight the difficulty in defining it effectively:

- There is no clear consensus among respondents on the scope of informal learning
 - some say that the definition outlined in the consultation is too broad to be meaningful, while others make the case for it to be broader still

- Expert and academic respondents suggest that ‘non-formal’ learning is a more accurate term than ‘informal learning’
- Other contributors feel that any definition should incorporate additional terms such as *well-being, fulfilment, personal development, self-improvement* and/or *community development*.

Participants in round table discussions felt that a framework of core values would help overcome the difficulty of pinning down a precise definition for informal learning, and suggested that DIUS should lead the development of this, in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders. This overarching framework could then be customised and adapted at the local level to reflect local needs.

Roundtable participants also felt that the process of agreeing these values in partnership with stakeholders could help identify opportunities for cross-sectoral and cross-departmental collaboration, which would in turn develop better understanding and co-operation across stakeholder groups who may not have had previous opportunities to work together.

2.1.2 ‘Shouting loudly’ about the benefits

Contributors across the board emphasise throughout their responses the benefits that informal learning can bring to individuals, families and wider society in terms of better health and well-being, improved social cohesion and increased awareness of the environment. They believe these benefits should be widely researched, disseminated and considered in policy development.

They call for existing research evidence to be harvested and additional targeted research to be commissioned in order to develop a robust evidence base about the benefits of informal learning. They all agree that research should incorporate the views of learners, potential learners and providers.

“Create a climate where adult learning is the norm - stress the social and personal benefits and then offer routes to these benefits by promoting a variety of channels for learning. Publicity and promotion is in very short supply at present.” (WEA Learner)

*“There should be far **more effective communication and promotion** of informal adult learning. Both the profile and benefits of informal adult learning should be highlighted by local and central government as well as the sector. The **appointment of a high profile learning champion** from*

the relevant sector (in this case sport) could be a way of raising the profile of informal learning.”
(Sport England - Emphasis in original)

2.2 Suggestions for improving access: putting the learner at the centre

Contributors agree that the vision of an informal learning offer that is learner-led and engages people from all backgrounds is a good one.

Although it is widely understood that a great deal of the funding available for informal learning comes from central Government, through a range of departments, contributors agree with the consultation's suggestion that developing funding or planning strategies at the level of central Government is unlikely to be able to address the variety of specific needs within local communities and would reduce local ownership. In particular, the diversity of Local Authorities' organisational models means that a centralised, 'one size fits all' approach would be inappropriate.

Instead, respondents emphasise that listening to and acting on what local people want should be the hallmark of informal learning strategy and delivery. To achieve this, respondents call for public funding to be linked closely to local needs. Consultation responses suggest a number of ways in which this might be achieved.

2.2.1 The central role of Local Authorities and local communities in local decision-making

There is general consensus among respondents that to ensure learners are prioritised at the heart of the system, Local Authorities should play the key role in the funding and planning of adaptable, coherent and responsive informal learning provision that gives local people a relevant and comprehensive range of learning choices. In particular, many stakeholder participants suggest that in order to ensure the full participation of local partners, much stronger links should be established between local informal learning strategies and other local level initiatives, including those aimed at improving health, well-being and community cohesion.

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are seen by many as offering an effective vehicle for securing this coherence, harnessing key levers such as Local Area Agreements,

Multi Area Agreements and specific Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets. Several PSA targets are supported by informal learning activity, including those which aim to:

- Tackle poverty and promote greater independence in later life (PSA 17)
- Promote better health and well-being for all (PSA 18)
- Build more cohesive, active and empowered communities (PSA 21)
- Secure a healthy natural environment for today and the future (PSA 28).

Many indicators in the National Indicator Set also relate to informal learning activity, including use of public libraries (NI9), visits to museums and galleries (NI10), engagement in the Arts (NI11), adult participation in sports and active recreation (NI18). Some respondents also suggest that LSPs could play a useful part, alongside Government departments, in building on the current role of colleges, universities, libraries, museums and galleries by increasing community access to their premises for learning (see 2.5.2).

Contributors also call for sustainable, long-term strategies for engaging the broadest possible range of stakeholders in the planning of locally focused informal learning opportunities. In many places, successful partnerships are already engaging with the local stakeholders who are best at developing activities and initiatives that meet local needs. These local partnerships are also helping self-organised groups become established and extend their reach and provision, particularly through securing access to public spaces and places for learning.

“Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES) has created several autonomous learning groups called ‘Classes to Clubs’. These are essentially groups of ‘leisure’ learners who have returned year after year to take part in mainly arts based classes with no interest in progressing to other learning. We have supported them to develop as autonomous learning groups...we maintain a supportive link by offering low cost or free premises at existing MAES centres.” (Manchester City Council)

Finally, contributors suggest that these wider partnerships would make a fundamental difference to the ability of Local Authorities and others to gather information about the impact of informal learning on different audiences and target groups, information which is essential to effective local planning (see 2.1.2).

2.2.2 The importance of flexible and locally driven strategies for increasing participation and tackling barriers to participation

Respondents emphasise that local solutions, based on local knowledge and relationships, are likely to be most effective in tackling barriers to participation.

Barriers to participating in learning identified by respondents include:

- Practical barriers, including cost, transport, childcare and time pressures
- Personal and emotional barriers, including low self-esteem, previous negative experiences of learning and poor basic skills
- Lack of information about what's available and/or lack of skills to find out
- Inflexibility in the providers' current offer and/or variability in its quality.

They believe that coherent, locally devised and executed plans could help find solutions, including:

- Using 'hooks' such as family learning to increase participation
- Securing better co-ordination between local transport and education services
- Expanding the use of learning champions and mentors
- Improving access to relevant and accurate information
- Providing specific support for priority groups and people on low incomes.

"Barriers can be addressed through the provision of flexible, learner centred learning opportunities at neighbourhood level and the provision of an infrastructure which supports outreach / development work, learner support staff / mentors and low cost / no cost childcare. The community learning service in Trafford allocates a proportion of its funding to this infrastructure as we believe learner support is a crucial aspect of our service. The provision of a dedicated learner support fund for adults engaging in informal adult learning would go a long way to ensure greater equality. This could be administered locally through genuine partnership working through the PCDL partnerships as they develop." (Community Learning Trafford)

2.2.3 Empowering the learner: the role of intermediaries

People want to have more say in what, where and how they learn. However for some potential learners this may be a challenging prospect, and respondents emphasise the importance of intermediaries who are able to support vulnerable individuals and

groups by guiding them through the difficult initial stages of a learning journey, and acting as their advocates in dealing with different local services.

“One factor that has helped to increase participation, trust and progression has been the use of learning champions, often people from the target communities that recruit, encourage, support and mentor the least confident learners.” (Sheffield City Council / Lifelong Learning and Skills Service)

Contributors particularly value the work of community learning champions in this area, and many suggest that the learning champion role should be supported and their numbers expanded. These local volunteers, who promote learning in their neighbourhood, are seen as a very effective way of helping people to begin and continue their learning through local adult education services, or through a wide range of other public, private or voluntary sector provision. Champions are also seen as able to play an important part in helping to set up and support self-organised learning.

“Experience has shown that having learning champions, and people to support new learners onto courses, at venues they are comfortable with, delivered by people they trust, makes it easier for people to enter or re-enter learning.” (West Berkshire Council Adult and Family Learning Team)

Similarly, contributors also identify union learning representatives as a proven resource for championing learning in the workplace, one of the biggest perceived opportunities for broadening engagement in informal learning. Stakeholders suggest that union learning representatives could play a vital role in overcoming some of the barriers that restrict participation in informal learning in the workplace by offering support to employees who are lacking in the confidence needed to take the first steps.

“This sense of purpose has been re-invigorated in the 21st Century through the pivotal role that union learning representatives (ULRs) are playing in engaging and supporting individuals to take up learning in the workplace, often for the first time since they left formal education.” (TUC)

2.2.4 Supporting Innovation and Sharing Effective Practice

Some respondents identify examples of local partnerships developing responsive, collaborative and innovative local learning opportunities through supporting cross-sector working. They suggest that an innovation fund, perhaps along the lines of the previous Adult and Community Learning Fund, would increase this trend by providing support to smaller organisations and new consortia to try out innovative ways of

delivering learning. It is felt that even quite small grants are likely to make a significant impact, providing they are easy to apply for and report on.

“The way ACL has been funded in recent years, i.e. by grant, has allowed different models to emerge. The exponential growth and success of family learning is an excellent example of trusting providers to pick up an issue and run with it, adapting it to local need, engaging lots of new learners and encouraging their progression. Innovation has worked effectively where there is local autonomy, less central direction, stable funding, and a clear strategic direction with a framework for people to respond at a local level. What is required is this diversity not being stifled by over-regulation whilst at the same time being captured through research and disseminated. And innovation should be targeted at getting more and different learners into learning.”

(Lancashire Adult Learning)

*“**Community Learning Awards** (or Grants) of up to £3,000 a year should be made available on a discretionary basis through intermediary agencies... to provide flexible support for community-orientated learning, including learning by doing, childcare, books, course fees, fares and other expenses, based on principles of individual budgeting developed in social care by In Control”*

(Novas Scarman Group)

“NIACE also recommends the creation of an Informal Learning Innovation Fund (similar to the previous Adult and Community Learning Fund - ACLF), to stimulate participation and allow best practice to flourish.” (NIACE)

Respondents also suggest that sharing good practice continues to be a very cost-effective way of improving the quality of provision. Some contributors propose that sharing lessons learnt could be made a criterion for receiving grants from any potential innovation fund.

“Share current best practice and encourage innovation with maximum publicity.” (Derbyshire County Council)

Some providers and other stakeholder organisations, especially smaller voluntary sector stakeholders, also report that the requirements for becoming a Learning and Skills Council approved provider can be a barrier to innovation. Similar issues are raised by other respondents, who feel strongly that removing the ‘red tape’ that accompanies public funding would increase the dynamism of the informal learning offer at the local level.

In order to achieve this, contributors propose that:

- All Government departments should use the same criteria, objectives and terminology

- Increased flexibility should be built into the Learning and Skills Council's funding methodology, to promote and reward innovative local solutions
- Grant application processes should be streamlined.

Some learners also feel there is too much bureaucracy attached to publicly funded informal learning; for example, in relation to enrolment and learner records. In this context learners seek assurance that any proposed new schemes, including promoting join-up across Government departments, or the introduction of vouchers, would mean less and not more bureaucracy.

Reducing the bureaucratic burden is also seen as likely to encourage more self-organised learners to expand their activities through seeking external support. These groups are not seen as likely to seek this support at present, fearing that increased bureaucracy will negate any positives that the support could bring.

"[Self organised] models [of learning] thrive with little external support. It may be argued that they thrive because they are able to be self-directed and self-governing. If financial support was to be provided, then the accompanying audit trail would negate the benefits." (Learning and Skills Network)

A key element of many contributor proposals aimed at reducing bureaucracy is the suggestion that DIUS and other Government departments should review how success in informal learning is recognised and measured. In particular, contributors strongly feel that it should be recognised that quantifiable targets and outputs are generally less, or in some cases not at all, appropriate for this kind of learning.

"Innovation can only be achieved if providers of adult learning are released from target driven strategies. There are too many examples of targets being reached without needs being met." (Derby City Partnership)

2.2.6 Raising awareness and sharing information

Contributors argue that a central source of information about informal learning would help widen access and participation, particularly for people who have not engaged in learning activity in their adult lives, and are uncertain about where to go for information.

Contributors feel that historically it has been difficult to gather and update information about the full range and diversity of informal learning activity, particularly where that

included one-off and spontaneous learning experiences. However, they believe that technology, in particular new developments in user-generated web-based content, now offers opportunities for capturing the information to help individuals and intermediaries find out about local learning opportunities.

In this context, many participants suggest that Government could support the development of a flexible, easy to use, user-generated information source to enable providers to publicise classes and other informal learning activities:

“Provide a free (moderated) website along the lines of Wikipedia encouraging local interest groups and tutors of AE classes to list themselves.” (Practitioner)

Many additional uses for this kind of user-generated comprehensive information portal are also identified. For example, many providers ask for a space where they can share information about effective practice, funding sources and collaborative initiatives (see 2.2.4). Others suggest that learners could also use this space to provide information for other learners, for example by rating their learning experiences or suggesting follow-on learning activities that they found useful or interesting.

However, respondents also make it clear that information should not be available solely through the internet, because this would prevent universal access. Not everyone has a computer or the necessary IT skills, so contributors make it clear that any web-based information sources need to be backed-up by information channels such as the telephone, printed material or human intermediaries.

2.2.7 Older learners

Older learners are among the most numerous contributors to the consultation, and are particularly passionate about the importance of learning in their lives. Their responses strongly emphasise the beneficial effects they attribute to informal learning, including improved mental and physical health, better financial literacy, ability to use new technologies, improved general well-being, and a vital opportunity for social interaction. For many older people the social benefits are just as important as the knowledge or skills they are acquiring:

“Classes such as those run by the WEA keep my mind alert and at the same time offer companionship and pleasure which are much needed and appreciated as we are living longer and on our own” (Learner)

Providers and learners report that some older people are unable to participate because many providers have removed fee concessions, citing this as a requirement of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.¹ Respondents believe that these factors have contributed to making courses too expensive for many pensioners who may not be eligible for income-related benefits.

“A few years ago, learning was charged at a price that most elderly people could afford, now it is way beyond what most pensioners can afford. The limited state pension would be worth a lot more if more concessions were available.” (Learner)

Older respondents want local strategies to tackle these and other difficulties they face (such as poor local transport) that make it harder to access learning opportunities.

Older learners argue strongly that in many cases they could make a significant contribution to the development of these local strategies, if given an opportunity to do so in a systematic way, by participating in local discussions on planning and funding arrangements, either directly or through their representative organisations.

2.2.8 Strategies for learning in the workplace

Contributors across the board see the workplace as offering one of the best opportunities for broadening and deepening engagement in informal learning opportunities. Increased efforts to better engage with employers and unions are therefore seen as vital.

“Informal skills could be described as silent skills, which largely go unnoticed and unrewarded by employers.” (Unite)

In particular, contributors want employers to recognise the benefits that informal learning can bring to the workplace and to understand that supporting, or even just allowing, employees to participate in informal learning need not be costly.

Contributors ask Government and unions to do more to encourage employers to support informal workplace learning activities. As discussed above (see 2.2.3), union learning representatives in particular are seen as well placed to help both employers and employees appreciate the value and benefits of informal as well as accredited learning.

¹ In fact the Regulations do not bar fee concessions, provided they can be justified as appropriate.

Other support identified as likely to improve opportunities for workplace informal learning might include:

- The identification or provision of a suitable space for employees or local community groups to learn
- The provision of learning noticeboards
- Helping a group of employees to find a good local teacher
- Giving employees a regular period of time-off for learning, either on or off the premises.

Contributors also suggest that if unions, employer organisations and others were able to share informal learning case studies and learner success stories, misconceptions about informal learning would be effectively challenged, and employers would be better able to understand the benefits that informal learning can bring to their business (see 2.2.4 and 2.2.6).

2.3 Suggestions for building on the best of what already exists

Despite the difficulties and concerns they report, contributors to the consultation are clear that there is much to be positive about. The passion with which learners call for their learning activities to be protected or expanded is testament to the importance they attribute to it, and the many benefits they feel they already gain from participation. The full range of stakeholder organisations participating in the consultation feel that they are already contributing a great deal and, given the right conditions, would be able to contribute even more in future.

For this to happen, the strong message from contributors across the board is that any new strategy should build on the best of what is already in place.

2.3.1 *The role of local adult education services*

Most contributors want local adult education services - for many a symbol of much that is good about informal learning - to remain at the heart of the informal learning offer.

With adequate investment, contributors across the board feel that the local adult education service model can remain relevant and effective for the future.

"The adult education service is something we should be proud of and should seek to build upon."
(Learner)

Through capitalising and building on its existing successes, contributors are convinced that this model can continue to evolve to meet the changing external context. To enable this to happen, they suggest that stronger links are needed between adult education services and other local providers from the private, voluntary and self-organised sectors. In particular, they argue that better co-ordination of provision across the adult education service and all other local providers will ensure that funding, expertise and experience across the full range of local stakeholders will be utilised as effectively as possible to meet diverse local demand.

2.3.2 Local planning and funding partnerships

In this context, significant support is expressed for the idea of strengthening local partnerships between informal adult learning providers and extending their role in working with Local Authority adult education services to co-ordinate local funding and planning processes. Local partnerships responding to the consultation believe that they are already beginning to demonstrate their potential to improve the quality and range of provision, a feeling strongly echoed by contributors from Local Authorities and other sectors. A degree of caution is also expressed, however, with some arguing that it is not yet possible to fully assess the effectiveness of these partnerships.

"The 'right mix' is best determined at local level through collaborative planning that involved key stakeholders, providing the flexibility to respond to particular local context and needs." (City College, Brighton & Hove)

Overall, respondents feel that providing local planning and funding partnerships with even modest amounts of structural and financial support would be the most effective way of facilitating the long-term and robust engagement with local audiences that contributors see as essential to make local planning and provision successful.

For example, although it is generally felt that the creation of local Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) partnerships has had a positive impact at the local level, it is almost universally agreed that they currently lack the resources

needed to ensure the buy-in of the full range of local stakeholders that would make them as effective as they could be. Some propose that if Local Authorities are to be mandated with the role of planning and funding local provision, they should be required to work with - and support - local partnerships of voluntary and private sector organisations, and self-organised groups.

2.3.3 Closer working relationships between players at the local and national levels

Participants in the roundtable discussions felt that a key step in building on current success and ensuring that partnerships can play a more significant role will be forging closer relationships with and between players outside the remit of local adult education services. The same is true for building relationships between local providers and national organisations, including broadcasters.

At the local level, contributors make a number of suggestions:

- Libraries are seen as having a key role to play in facilitating, signposting and connecting informal adult learning activities and providers, and could also play an important co-ordinating role if given the necessary financial and strategic support.
- Other local public sector institutions such as GP surgeries and schools could be more closely involved, for example as hubs for gathering and sharing information about local adult learning opportunities.
- Providing opportunities for local voluntary and private sector organisations to meet and share their views and experiences is also seen as a positive step. In particular, this is seen as a good opportunity for organisations working with different disadvantaged audiences to form partnerships with learning providers.
- It is widely agreed that mechanisms for including self-organised groups in local partnerships would be very useful, although the design of any such mechanism would need to take into account the often temporary and ephemeral nature of these groups, as well as their desire for independence.

Suggestions relating to partnerships beyond the local level include:

- Facilitate links between those delivering informal adult learning at the local level and national level broadcasters and technology companies, to ensure that relevant educational content and material is available to local providers.

“To improve on the connectivity between episodes of learning, we need to build on established good practice. For example, the links between BBC output and libraries are very effective in capturing public enthusiasm, generating interest and providing a wealth of learning opportunities” (Birmingham Library and Archive Service)

“Work with learning sources e.g. museums, libraries, heritage, specific course groups to encourage signposting progressive learning opportunities i.e. create relevant RSS feeds from a central online portal (if created) that could provide continuous, relevant learning opportunities for their area.” (British Sky Broadcasting)

- Support local organisations in establishing links with national and regional cultural, heritage and sports bodies and organisations. Many of these organisations report that they are developing, or have developed, informal learning strategies. Respondents see an opportunity to help local people and organisations get involved, either as partners in delivery or as local ‘experts.’

“The Trust has learning embedded in its core purpose. In 2002 the NT adopted a Vision for Learning. Since then we have been progressing the vision [...] and embedding [it] into our Strategy. This has allowed us to begin to focus and improve the quality of the learning offer at our 300+ properties.” (National Trust)

- Support easier access to public buildings and facilities by joining up national policy between Government departments to support local partnerships in making it happen on the ground (see 2.5.2).

2.3.4 Teachers and volunteers

Learner respondents to the consultation strongly value the opportunity to engage in informal learning led by professional teachers. They emphasise that their teachers provide essential motivation and feedback that contributes to the learning experience, and see a clear continued role for trained and experienced teachers within the informal learning offer.

“The interaction between the students and lecturer is irreplaceable. As well as being informative, it spurs on further efforts, which would soon fade away if one were left to one’s own devices.” (Learner)

“What is critical to the success of learning in communities where prior educational attainment is low is well qualified and skilled tutors who can apply the most appropriate pedagogy and approaches to both challenge and support people to fulfil their potential.” (Sheffield City Council/Lifelong learning and Skills Service)

Some learners therefore interpret the consultation’s questions on the role of volunteers with suspicion, expressing concern that they should not be seen as a like-for-like replacement for trained teachers.

However, respondents across the board are also quick to recognise the very significant contribution that volunteers already make to informal learning. Volunteers are often experts in their chosen field, and their contribution as leaders or mentors is vital in those activities where learning is less of an explicit goal in comparison to the enjoyment of participation, for example in sports, or in heritage activity such as walks or tours.

“...volunteers have the opportunity to share their skills and knowledge with specific client groups or the general public. For instance, volunteers give talks to local schools or community groups to raise awareness of the social or political issues with which their organisation works, while others may art or creative writing sessions or drop-ins or as part of a programme of social activity for mental health service users.” (Volunteering England)

Contributors to the consultation make three key suggestions about the role of teachers and volunteers in informal learning:

- Make a clear statement about the value of trained and qualified teachers in informal adult learning, and about the significant role played by volunteers in supporting it.
- Develop the culture of volunteering in adult learning by providing more support and training opportunities. Support voluntary sector organisations to train volunteers themselves, possibly through the provision of training materials that can be adapted to suit a range of settings.
- Improve information and communication networks to ensure that people are more aware of training and volunteering opportunities and the benefits these will bring.

“It is essential that there is created a pool of knowledgeable people willing and able to take on the task of volunteering to facilitate the formation of informal interest groups. This will require a properly funded training programme to be established and widely available throughout the country.” (U3A Trust)

2.4 Suggestions for benefiting from the information revolution: making the best use of technology

Contributors recognise that rapid technological development, demographic change and the increasing numbers of people who are becoming IT-literate will make the use of ICT increasingly relevant and necessary in all walks of life.

In the realm of informal learning, although many learners seek assurance that on-line delivery will not replace face-to-face learning, many contributors believe that technology has an important role to play, both as a stand-alone delivery mechanism and as a complement to more traditional learning methods.

“The internet is an immensely valuable source of information. It is also an immense supply of wrong, biased and potentially destructive information. It is essential, in encouraging its greater use in learning, to combine it with the guidance, development of critical faculties and group interaction provided by classes taught by imaginative and skilful tutors.” (Learner)

2.4.1 The use of technology to support and enhance informal learning

Contributors suggest that technology could be used to support informal learning in a number of different ways. It could:

- Be **blended** with taught classes, for example by introducing TV, film or we-based resources into the classroom or making it easy to search for supplementary web pages to expand and enhance an informal learning experience.
- **Provide a first step** into learning by signposting information about learning opportunities and educational resources; for example the BBC signposts Read and Write (RaW) in relevant BBC programmes, while Sky alerts people to its links with the National Trust and the Open University on the Sky Learning Explorer web pages.
- **Put learners in control** by enabling potential learners to find out about learning activities, for example through a searchable internet portal / gateway providing comprehensive information. This could also enable learners to rate and review the quality of their learning experience, which could benefit other learners and help to drive up quality and responsiveness among providers.
- **Deliver on-line learning and bring people together.** Some respondents recognise that on-line learning offers real benefits for those who prefer to learn this way, and

can also help to tackle access problems, for example for those in rural areas, home-bound people, people with mental health difficulties, people who work unsociable hours and those who have transport or mobility problems. Technology is seen as enabling these people to learn at their own convenience, and respondents make some suggestions for improvements:

- 2-way communication through digital interactive TV (using a 'two-way' set top box) could be potentially useful for many groups who are less confident with using computers
- Wikis, blogs and other popular internet-based tools provide an easy, cheap way to share content with large numbers of people

"We need to make more effective use of web-cams and video conferencing and more resources could be provided to those in rural areas for this provision. The use of the Internet is important in enhancing learning particularly in the provision of information. There needs to be a balance in the methods of delivering learning so that learners have a choice in the type of provision they access whether that be through the internet, distance learning or through group sessions." (North Yorkshire County Council)

The Government is seen as having an important role in engaging in a systematic dialogue with users, content developers, learning providers and technology and broadcasting companies to:

- Make a clear statement on the perceived role of technology in informal learning, and work towards a coherent learning technology strategy
- Identify relevant developments and horizon scan for future developments
- Promote sustainable ICT policies
- Clarify digital intellectual property issues.

Roundtable discussions also identified real potential for Government and learning providers to work with private and public broadcasters to explore how they can further support informal adult learning and help tackle any barriers to the use of technology. For example, participants highlighted that there is currently a lack of guidance for, and communication between, developers of educational content to create materials that are flexible enough to be used on different platforms and via different media.

“The Government could encourage informal learning programmes that use the structure and platform of the emerging technologies but as much as possible leave learners and learning supporters to create their own content.” (UK Online)

2.4.2 Technology as one of a range of delivery mechanisms

While contributors believe that online learning is a very useful - and in some cases essential - tool, they send a strong message that this should be seen as one part of a broader and more diverse offer including a range of delivery mechanisms to meet the needs of different people:

- Many learners emphasise the importance of having direct access to professional teachers and instructors, particularly in practical skills such as metalwork or painting where the availability of a ‘real person’ to demonstrate techniques and answer questions is very highly valued.
- Many learners also want to preserve the opportunity to meet people and learn in a sociable environment.

Participants say that the Government’s response to the consultation must clarify the intention of the consultation questions relating to technology, to counteract any misunderstandings that may have arisen.

“A major barrier for teachers and learners lies in the suspicion that technology is touted as a substitute for classroom teaching. Affirmation of technology as an adjunct to learning not a replacement for it would allay fears.” (Association for Language Learning)

2.4.3 The importance of addressing barriers to using technology

Contributors are clear that the barriers to using technology must be recognised and addressed so that people can fully enjoy its benefits in their learning and their everyday lives. Respondents identify specific barriers including:

- Cost of purchasing, maintaining and updating ICT equipment
- Lack of broadband and bandwidth availability
- Lack of ICT skills among learners, leaders and teachers

- Lack of ICT teaching skill and shortage of continuing professional development opportunities.

A further barrier, highlighted in particular by older learners, is a fear or reluctance about using ICT. As well as addressing the barriers outlined above, concerted action is seen as necessary in order to help people understand why technology is important to informal learning, and what it might contribute in future.

"Many older people do not understand why they need IT having managed without it all their lives."
(Individual)

2.5 Ensuring the strength and sustainability of vibrant informal learning: the role of Government

Contributors to the consultation are unanimous in their belief that Government support is vital if informal learning is to flourish in the 21st century.

Previous paragraphs have set out respondents' clear preference for local planning and decision-making. However, many also suggest that central Government departments can play a vital enabling role by developing a shared vision, securing alignment between national policies in this territory and providing secure funding from a range of departments for this kind of learning.

"The role of Government should be mainly an enabling one, and focus on the provision of information and sharing of best practice. This will enable socially innovative individuals and groups (whether in civil society, workplaces or training providers) to take the lead in developing and expanding informal learning opportunities." (City and Guilds Centre for Skills Development)

2.5.1 Government support for Informal Adult Learning

Contributors call for DIUS to take steps to 'level the playing field' in terms of perceived inequalities in the current allocation of Adult Safeguarded Funding for informal learning. They argue that the current allocation does not adequately reflect disadvantaged or rural communities, where there is less opportunity to support the costs of provision through income generated from fee-paying learners.

In order to facilitate effective decision-making at the local level, and the ability of local organisations to secure best value for the money they receive, participants argue that

effective infrastructure support is required. This support would include the provision of an effective information portal, low cost access to spaces and facilities for informal learning activity, and increased use of learning champions to help engage and support learners. They believe that the most important role for Government is to help develop this infrastructure and make sure that it is appropriate to support all aspects of informal learning at local, regional and national levels.

However, all respondents are clear that any infrastructure support should not divert resources away from provision. For example, while some support a voucher system, they express serious concerns about the creation of a bureaucratic structure that could divert funds away from supporting provision.

"Government could do more to remove barriers by funding access programmes and audience development schemes that bring deprived, excluded, hard-to-reach people to zoos."

(British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums)

2.5.2 Access to places and spaces: the Government's role

An essential part of any infrastructure would be improvements in the access to public and private spaces and facilities for learning.

Access to low cost and accessible learning venues is one of the most frequent requests from contributors to the consultation. Stakeholders taking part in the roundtable discussions suggested that this is the single biggest challenge faced by providers, leaders and organisers of all kinds. It particularly affects self-organised learning groups.

"In U3A we value our independence and the success we have had in building a successful network of adult learners...The biggest problem we face is finding affordable premises in which to meet. A way forward might be to stimulate more partnerships with libraries, schools universities etc...We believe that Government at national and local level should do more to stimulate such partnerships." (Sheffield U3A)

"The one thing that all of these types of groups require is access to free and flexible learning space." (Learning and Skills Network)

Respondents suggest that:

- Local Authorities, Government departments, their non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), employer organisations and other stakeholders could be asked to consider how access can be encouraged and supported.
- Provision of space for informal learning activity could be a requirement of buildings and premises receiving central Government funding.
- Businesses could be encouraged to contribute by allowing their space to be used free, subsidised or at cost price.
- PFI contracts should not complicate or preclude the use of public spaces for learning activity.
- Information on available and accessible space for learning activity could be made available on a national information portal.

2.5.3 Creating better linkages across Government

Participants are generally supportive of the proposal to create better alignment across relevant Government policies. In particular, voluntary sector providers and self-organised groups find the 'terrain' of informal learning very complex, with varied and sometimes contradictory messages from different departments.

This is seen as having a fragmentary effect at the local level, in terms of provider and other stakeholder organisations' ability to:

- Champion informal learning in a coherent and joined-up way
- Work closely with each other in their day-to-day activities.

This can sometimes cause organisations in the same area to duplicate each other's work because they are stakeholders of different Government departments that are not communicating properly. More importantly, respondents report that a lack of joined-up policy across departments can lead to some groups falling through the cracks and missing out altogether.

Responses set out specific benefits to be gained from increasing join-up across Government departments, including:

- Raising awareness of informal adult learning among wider groups of stakeholders

- Encouraging inter-agency communication and joined-up working to help remove the 'glass walls' between different kinds of learning activity
- Building on experience across different Government departments - and their stakeholder organisations on the ground - in order to reach a wider range of people, including those who are harder to reach.

"This strategy, in particular, should be shared and developed across the many Government departments providing informal learning opportunities as part of their operations and activities and should see widening participation in learning as a priority." (NIACE)

2.5.4 Creating better linkages across Government – funding

In their responses contributors discuss the possibility of aligning funding across Government departments for this kind of learning. There was less consensus about the benefits of this approach. On the one hand, responses from stakeholder organisations were generally supportive, perhaps because they were able to identify potential benefits for their own work. Written responses, often from learners, tended to be more qualified, expressing the concern that join-up across departments could lead to increased Government intervention and more bureaucracy, while doing little to improve the situation on the ground.

Despite these reservations, overall a small majority of contributors would welcome a joined-up approach to funding across Government, providing decisions about funding were taken at local level. Potential benefits are identified as:

- Simplifying the landscape for voluntary and private sector organisations who want to apply for funding
- Reducing wastage by aligning funding for complementary agendas such as learning about health, sustainability or community cohesion
- Making it easier for self-organised and other small groups to access places, spaces and networks, for example libraries, museums, universities, health centres, hostels or local community facilities (see point 2.5.3, above).

Appendix A: Definition and discussion points

Defining informal adult learning

In the consultation document, DIUS acknowledged that there is currently no widely agreed definition of the term ‘informal adult learning.’ The broad definition outlined by the department was as follows:

“Structured or unstructured part time, non-vocational learning which does not lead to qualifications, or at least where qualifications are incidental to the learning. This kind of learning activity can take place anywhere – in a local college, community centre, pub or on the North Yorkshire moors. It embraces all kinds of activity ranging from family learning, sports and recreation to the arts, humanities and foreign languages.”

Discussion points

The discussion points the consultation document aimed to explore and debate, grouped under five subheadings, were as follows:

Understanding and improving on current provision

- How can we understand more about the factors that are driving this diversity of activity?
- What are the conditions which make it easier for learners to learn? How can we support people to be more instrumental in their own learning?
- How can we support and develop models of self-organised adult education, learning from (for example) the U3A model?
- How can we improve the connectivity between different kinds of learning episodes, for example by helping people move from watching a TV programme to using the web, to joining a group and then pro-actively teaching or sharing information with others?
- How can we further develop the culture of volunteering to support adult learning?

- What are the conditions more likely to foster innovative approaches to adult learning?

The Government contribution

- Whether, and if so how, Government support for information adult learning can be improved?
- Whether you agree, given the diversity of demand, need and type of provision that is made, it would be inappropriate to aim for a common funding system across Government, or a centralised strategy?
- How can we ensure there is proper recognition and understanding of the wide variety of ways in which Government is supporting informal adult learning?
- How can we make better use of Government resources, for example better use of premises?
- Are there areas where Government should be actively removing barriers of creating new flexibilities in order to improve the use of resources?

DIUS-funded informal adult education

- Is the adult education service basically a 1970s model, now overtaken by the developments summarised in Chapter 1? Or is it a successful service that has the potential, with the reforms currently in train, to develop and thrive in the 21st century?
- How are Local Authorities now organising their adult education services? What are their visions for the future and what are their experiences of different models of delivery today?
- Have we taken partnership working as far as we can? The scale of support from other Government departments is important for each partnership to grasp and take advantage of.
- In terms of using the DIUS safeguarded budget, would it be better in future to focus spend on infrastructure and on the organisation of an effective service rather than through direct subsidies to providers for putting on courses?

- Do we need the service to become more learner-led? Would a way of doing that be to explore the possible use of real or virtual vouchers, taking advantage of new technologies? These might build on the Skills Account mechanism being phased in, starting in 2010.

Equality of Access

- How can we do better in ensuring that no one is excluded from the benefits of learning? Or from the same opportunities that others enjoy?
- How well do we understand the barriers to learning as they exist at present, and how they affect particular parts of society? To what extent are the barriers financial? What action would address each of the barriers?
- What further actions could Government most usefully take to ensure more equal access to informal learning?
- What further actions could others most usefully take?
- What more can Government do to overcome the 'digital divide' where the people who could most benefit from new ways of participating in adult learning are the least equipped to take advantage of them?

Broadcasting and Technology

- What are the barriers to making the most of technology for learners? How can these be overcome?
- What do we know about the learning opportunities that will become available utilising new technology over the next ten to 15 years? What is the best way of identifying these opportunities?
- What opportunities, if any, are there to make learning a more central consideration in the future of broadband and the digital switchover? And in the development of mobile phone applications?
- How can we make greater use of interactive television?

- How can the connectivity between broadcast, physical and virtual resources and informal learning be further enhanced?
- How can we bring new Information and Communications Technology together with more established teaching and learning models so that there are integrated opportunities to learn.

Appendix B: Breakdown of consultation responses

A total of 1379 formal consultation responses were received. Of these, 964 were received as hard copy responses to the consultation document, with a further 415 responses received online.

Out of this total, 884 responses were received from individuals. It is also possible to identify 495 different organisations among respondents, although several have responded multiple times, while a number of others have chosen to remain anonymous.

A questionnaire version of the consultation document aimed at learners was also produced. In this version the consultation questions were simplified and re-structured in order to make them more directly relevant to learners. 3270 learner questionnaires were received.

A toolkit was also provided to support organisations in holding discussion groups with their learners. Ten learner discussion guides were returned, and over 197 learners participated in the associated discussions (One organisation did not specify the number of participants).

A further 388 signed template letters were also received from learners at the Sutton College of Learning for Adults. Some discussion participations or formal respondents also returned an individual version of the learner questionnaire.

See Appendix C, below, for a list of contributing organisations.

A series of six stakeholder 'round-table' meetings

These were interactive meetings with Ministerial involvement. Each meeting was attended by between ten and 20 stakeholders, with a total of 86 stakeholder participants. A seventh cross-cutting meeting was held with 25 participants who had previously attended one of the other meetings.

A citizens' forum

93 members of the general public and 15 stakeholder representatives spent a day in structured discussion and voting on the issues raised in the consultation document.

The public sample was organised to include participants with differing levels of involvement in informal adult learning, ranging on a continuum from those with no involvement, to those involved in informal activities, those involved in more formal, class-based learning, and finally those who organised learning for others. The sample also included people involved in a range of types of learning activity including in the areas of health and well-being, art and creativity, nature and gardening, and history and heritage. The sample was drawn from the nine Government regions in England and included a spread of demographic characteristics, including age, gender, social grade, ethnicity and educational attainment.

The stakeholders were drawn from a range of areas of activity, sectors and level of involvement/formality of learning.

Further responses

Many contributors carried out surveys or other research as part of their response. At least a further 3500 other responses to the consultation were received, including:

- A survey of 1300 adults by UK Online Centres
- 643 questionnaires from Help the Aged (these were analysed and summarised as part of Help the Aged's official consultation response)
- 120 questionnaires designed and analysed by Open Age
- 112 completed copies of a questionnaire produced by Portslade Community College, East Sussex
- 47 completed copies of a questionnaire produced by Manchester Adult Education Service
- 68 completed copies of questionnaires produced by Swarthmore Education Centre, Leeds, summarised in Swarthmore's official response
- 976 signatures on a NIACE "Save Lost Classes" petition

Appendix C: Responding Organisations

157 Group

1st Framework Theatre

ACL Strategic Group / Greater Nottingham Partnership

ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England)

Action for Pensioners

Action for Prisoners' Families

Adult College of Barking & Dagenham

Adult Community Learning, Shropshire County Council and local PCDL partners

Adult Education College Bexley

Adult Learning, Chester County Council

Age Concern (Southborough and High Brooms)

Age Concern England

Anglican Adult Education Network

AOSEC (Association of South East Colleges)

Arts Council England

Association for Education and Ageing

Association for Language Learning

ALT (Association for Learning Technology)

Association of Colleges

Bassac

Bath & North East Somerset Older Learners' Forum

BBC

BECTA

Better Government for Older People

BIAZA (British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums)

BIG Lottery fund

Birmingham Library & Archive Services

Black History Month (Well Placed Consultancy)

Blackpool Council

Bolton Adult Learners Week Group

Book Trust

Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Brighton & Hove Learning Partnership Adult Learning Group

Brighton and Hove City Council

Brighton and Hove's Older People's Council

Bristol Community Learning Board

Bromley Adult Education College

Bromley Cross Area Community Group

BSkyB

BT

BTCV

Buckinghamshire County Council

Channel 4

Cabinet Office

Cambridgeshire County Council

Campaign for Learning

National Workplace Learning Network

Careers England

CCPR

CFE (Centre for Enterprise)

Centre for Research into the Older Workforce

Cheshire County Council

Chipping Barnet Constituency

Church of England Education Council

CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals)

CILT (National Centre for Languages)

CISCO

City & Guilds, Centre for Skills Development

City and Islington College

City Library Sunderland

City Lit

City of York Council, Adult and Community Education

Civil Service Pensioners Alliance / Unite

Colchester Adult Education Continuing Access Group

College of Continuing Education Walsall

Communication Workers Union

Community Connections

Community Learning Trafford, Trafford Council

Community Sector Coalition

ContinYou

Cornerstone Benwell Christian Shop

Council for British Archaeology

Crisis

CRWBL (Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning)

Cumbria Adult Education Service

DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)

Department of Health

Derby Adult Learning Service

Derby City Partnership

Derbyshire County Council

Derbyshire County Council (Adult Community Education Service)

Derbyshire Learning & Development Consortium

Devon Community Learning (PCDL) Partnership

Digital Unite

Dorset Adult Learning

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Adult & Community Learning Team

East Riding of Yorkshire Adult Education Service

East Sussex Adult Learning and Skills Partnership Board

Educational Centres Association

Elcena Jeffers Foundation

enCompass Culture

English Heritage

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

Essex Adult Community Learning

ETEC

U3A (Evesham & District)

Executive Committee of East Kent Federation of WI's

Family Learning Network

Federation for Community Development Learning

Fircroft College

First Taste

Friends Centre

Friends of Putney School of Art and Design

Galatea Trust

Genesis Community/ Genesis Housing

Grove Park User Group Committee

Guildhall / Hull Branch, British Labour Party

Hampshire County Federation of Women's Institutes

Hampshire Libraries

Harrow PCDL Partnership

Help the Aged

Heritage Link

Heritage Lottery Fund

Hertfordshire County Council

Housebound Learners

Improvement & Development Agency for Local Government

Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning

Institute of Historical Research

Intel

Inverteign Family Learning Centre

Investors in People UK

Jazz Services

JISC

Kent Adult Education Service

Kickstart TV

Kirklees Council

Knowsley Family & Community Education Learning Platform

Lancashire Adult Learning

LEAFEA (Local Education Authorities Forum for the Education of Adults)

Learner Generated Contexts Research Group

Learning and Skills Network

Learning for the Fourth Age

Learning Links

Learning Together Cheshire and Warrington

Learning, Skills and Employment Network (LSEN) Manchester

Leeds Thomas Danby

Leicester College

Leicester Libraries

Libraries and Information East Midlands

Libraries, Learning and Inclusion, Lincolnshire County Council

Lifelong Learning UK

Lincolnshire Accessibility Partnership

Liverpool Senior Citizens Forum

London Borough of Lewisham

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Lifelong Learning Service

London LEA FEA

London Wildlife Trust

LSC (Learning and Skills Council)

Manchester City Council

Mary Ward Centre

MCIN (Manchester Community Information Network)

Medway Adult Learning Service

Metropolitan Borough of Bury Council, Arts, Libraries and Adult Learning

Microsoft

MLA (Museums Libraries Archives) Council

Morley College

Museums Association

Muswell High & Highgate Pensioners Action Group

NAFAS (The National Association of Flower Arranging Societies)

National Association of Writers in Education

National Campaign for the Arts

National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement

National Federation of Women's Institutes

National Literacy Trust

National Open College Network

National Trust

National Union of Students

National Year of Reading

National Year of Reading

Natural England

NCT (National Childbirth Trust)

NIACE

NIACE (learner responses

NIACE / LSC Yorkshire and Humber Learner Panel

Norfolk Learning Partnership

North Prospect Community Learning Ltd. a partner of The Neighbourhood Learning Consortium Ltd.

North Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire Learning Partnership

Northamptonshire County Council

Northern College

Northumberland Strategic Partnership, Northumberland County Council

Nottinghamshire County Council

Novas Scarman Group

Oaklands College

Ofsted

Open Age

Open College of the Arts

Open University

Oxfordshire Learning Network

PCDL Partnership Suffolk

Prisoners' Education Trust

Prospect

Public and Commercial Services Union

Regional Skills Partnership (Yorkshire & Humber)

Retired & Senior Volunteer Programme

Right to Learn

Riverside Community Health Project

RNIB

ROWA!

Royal Horticultural Society

Rural Needs Initiative

RYA (Royal Yachting Association)

Save Adult Education

Save Adult Further Education (SAFE), Liverpool

SCOLA (Sutton College of Learning for Adults)

SCOPE

Scout Association

Share the Vision (STV)

Sheffield City Council / Lifelong learning and Skills Service

Skill - National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

Skills Active

Slough Borough Council

Social Market Foundation

Socialist Educational Association

Somerset Association of Secondary Headteachers

Somerset Skills and Learning (including responses from Somerset County Council,
Somerset Strategic Partnership and Somerset County Adult Learning Forum)

South Devon College

South West Opportunities for Older People

South Western Regional Library System

SSAT (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust)

Sport England

St.Helens Council Adult and Community Learning

Standish Lipreading Society

Student Representative Group, Centre for Lifelong Learning. Uni of Sunderland

Suffolk County Council

Surrey County Council / Adult and Community Learning

Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership

Sussex Downs College

Swarthmore Education Centre

TAEN (The Age and Employment Network)

Tate

The Reading Agency

TUC (Trades Union Congress)

U Can Do I.T.

U3A (0086277)

U3A (0089281)

U3A (Alcester)

U3A (Andover)

U3A (Anonymous)

U3A (Anonymous)

U3A (Anonymous)

U3A (Anonymous)

U3A (Anonymous)

U3A (Arden)

U3A (Arun Valley)

U3A (Ash)

U3A (Aughton and Ormskirk)

U3A (Aylesbury Vale)

U3A (Banbury)

U3A (Barnstaple)

U3A (Basildon and Billericay)

U3A (Bedworth, Nuneaton and Bulkington)

U3A (Blandford and District)

U3A (Bolton)

U3A (Bournemouth)

U3A (Brent)

U3A (Brentwood)

U3A (Bridgenorth)
U3A (Bristol)
U3A (Bromborough)
U3A (Bude & District)
U3A (Burgess Hill)
U3A (Burnham on Crouch)
U3A (Burnley and District)
U3A (Canterbury and District)
U3A (Central Surrey)
U3A (Chandlers Ford)
U3A (Cheadle)
U3A (Cheadle, Staffs)
U3A (Chelmsford)
U3A (Chester)
U3A (Chilterns)
U3A (Chinnor and District)
U3A (Cirencester)
U3A (Clitheroe)
U3A (Cottingham)
U3A (Coventry Spires)
U3A (Cowtons and the Countryside)
U3A (Crawley)
U3A (Derby)
U3A (Diss)
U3A (Dorridge)
U3A (Dunstable)

U3A (Easingwold and District Branch)

U3A (East Devon)

U3A (East Suffolk)

U3A (Ems Valley)

U3A (Enfield)

U3A (Exeter)

U3A (Fawley and Holbury)

U3A (Fetcham)

U3A (Fleet and District)

U3A (Flitwick and District)

U3A (Forest of Dean)

U3A (Halesowen)

U3A (Hammersmith and Fulham)

U3A (Handsworth Wood)

U3A (Harbourne and Edgbaston)

U3A (Harwich Peninsula)

U3A (Haslemere)

U3A (Hayling Island)

U3A (Headington)

U3A (Horley and District Branch)

U3A (Horley, Surrey)

U3A (Horsham)

U3A (Isle of Wight)

U3A (Kettering)

U3A (Kingswinford and District)

U3A (Lancaster and Morecambe)

U3A (Lea Valley)

U3A (Leeds)

U3A (Leek)

U3A (Leighton Linlade)

U3A (Leominster)

U3A (Lewes)

U3A (Lichfield)

U3A (Lincoln)

U3A (Litchfield)

U3A (Liverpool)

U3A (Long Eaton)

U3A (Ludlow)

U3A (Lutterworth)

U3A (Lymington, Hamps)

U3A (Macclesfield Rural)

U3A (Maghull and Lydiate)

U3A (Maidstone)

U3A (Malling District)

U3A (Malvern)

U3A (Mansfield)

U3A (March)

U3A (Market Harborough)

U3A (Mawdesley and neighbouring villages)

U3A (Mayfield and District)

U3A (Meon Valley)

U3A (Mid Bucks)

U3A (Midhurst)
U3A (Milton Keynes Branch)
U3A (Monks Brook)
U3A (Morpeth and District)
U3A (Neston)
U3A (New Mills and District)
U3A (Newcastle upon Tyne)
U3A (North London)
U3A (North Walsham)
U3A (Northwich)
U3A (NW London)
U3A (Oadby and Wigston)
U3A (Oswestry)
U3A (Oxford)
U3A (Pembury)
U3A (Penrith and North Lakes)
U3A (Peterborough)
U3A (Petersfield)
U3A (Portsmouth)
U3A (Preston Park)
U3A (Reading)
U3A (Ross and District)
U3A (Rutland)
U3A (Ryedale)
U3A (Rye & District)
U3A (Salisbury)

U3A (Sandwell)

U3A (Settle and District)

U3A (Sheffield)

U3A (Sherbourne)

U3A (Shrewsbury)

U3A (Sidmouth)

U3A (Skegness)

U3A (Sleaford, Lincs)

U3A (South Bucks)

U3A (South London)

U3A (South Molton)

U3A (Southampton)

U3A (Spire)

U3A (St Albans)

U3A (Stamford)

U3A (Stockton)

U3A (Stour Valley)

U3A (Stroud and District)

U3A (Tewkesbury and District)

U3A (Thirsk)

U3A (Toddington)

U3A (Tonbridge)

U3A (Totton)

U3A (Tunbridge Wells)

U3A (Uckfield)

U3A (Anonymous)

U3A (Anonymous)

U3A (Uttoxeter)

U3A (Waltham Forest)

U3A (Washington)

U3A (Wearside)

U3A (Wells)

U3A (West Wiltshire)

U3A (Weston Super Mare)

U3A (Weymouth and Portland)

U3A (Whickham and District)

U3A (Whitchurch and District)

U3A (White Cliffs Country)

U3A (Wiskeard District and Cornwall)

U3A (Witham and Braintree)

U3A (Witney, Oxfordshire)

U3A (Wolds - Driffield East Yorks)

U3A (Womersley)

U3A (Wooler)

U3A (Wooler)

U3A (Wymondham)

U3A (Yealm, Devon)

U3A (York)

U3A Trust

Ubuntu Network for Black Community Development Workers and Activists

Ufi (University for Industry) / Learndirect

UK Online Centres

Unionlearn

Unison

Unison / TGWU (Transport and General Workers' Union)

Unite (the union group representing staff groups in the WEA)

Unite / University College Union

Unite the Union

Universities Association for Lifelong Learning

University and College Union

University of Bristol, Faculty of Arts

University of Cambridge

University of Manchester, Teaching Learning & Assessment Office

University of the Third Age / Third Age Trust

University of York Centre for Medieval Studies

UnLtd

Vodafone

Voluntary Arts Network

Volunteering England

Wandsworth Borough Council

Warrington Borough Council

WEA

WEA (Benfleet)

WEA (Blofield)

WEA (Brightlingsea)

WEA (Brighton and Hove)

WEA (Chichester)

WEA (Dereham Branch)

WEA (Disley)

WEA (Dunstable)

WEA (Ferndown Branch)

WEA (Godmanchester)

WEA (Harrogate)

WEA (Hatfield Peverey Branch)

WEA (Hemingford Branch) / Hemingford Grey Parish Council

WEA (Hemingfords Branch (Cambs))

WEA (Hertford)

WEA (Hurst House Chesterfield)

WEA (Leigh-on-Sea Branch)

WEA (Level Branch)

WEA (Loddon)

WEA (Loughton & Epping)

WEA (Maldon Branch)

WEA (Mid-Cornwall Branch)

WEA (Mill Hill & Edgware)

WEA (Milton Keynes)

WEA (Nidderdale Branch)

WEA (North West Region)

WEA (Petersfield)

WEA (Sanderstead and Seldon)

WEA (Sevenoaks)

WEA (Sheffield)

WEA (Southern Region)

WEA (St Neots)

WEA (Tonbridge Branch)
WEA (Tunbridge Wells)
WEA (Wells-next-the-Sea Branch)
WEA (West Midlands Region)
WEA (Willingham)
WEA (Wirksworth)
WEA (York)
WEA (Yorkshire and Humber Region)
WEA Active Citizenship Active Education Project, South Yorkshire
WEA Organisations from Yorkshire and Humberside Region
WEA (St Albans)
WEA (Unite)
WEA (Walthamstow)
WEA (Winchester)
West Berkshire Council Adult & Community Learning Team
West Sussex County Council
West Sussex Learning Network
WI (Ceredigion)
WI (Chrishall)
WI (Kinnerton)
WI (Llanfair Waterdine)
WI (Orwell)
WI (Thriplow & Fowlmere)
WI (Wiltshire Federation)
Wikipedia
Winchester Community Learning Forum

Windsor and Maidenhead PCDL Partnership

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

WMC (Working Men's College)

Wolverhampton Adult Education Service

YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association)

Yorkshire & Humber Regional VCS Forum

Yorkshire and Humber Local Authorities Adult Learning Services