An evaluation of adult literacy provision delivered by **colleges**, **local authority community learning and development services** and **prisons** in Scotland.

Improving adult literacy
in Scotland

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improving Scottish education
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"I have learned a lot in class. My reading is a lot better. **I can read magazines and send text messages to my friends from my mobile phone.**"

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Foreword
HMSCI

The national strategy for Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland was outlined in the *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* (ALNIS)[1] report published in 2001. At that time, it was estimated that 800,000 (23%) of adult Scots had low levels of literacy and numeracy. Since 2001, over 180,000 adult literacy and numeracy learners have received support. This report evaluates the quality and impact of that support.

Literacy is increasingly important to success in learning, life and work in modern Scotland. The range of literacy skills needed is widening as new forms of technology and communication are used routinely in our daily lives. Those who lack literacy skills spoke movingly to inspectors working on this report about the impact of limited literacy skills on their lives. They cited examples of their inability to carry out day to day transactions and the problems that they faced when new expectations of literacy were introduced to their workplace. They told of their embarrassment about their literacy skills and their attempts to hide their weaknesses from friends, family and colleagues. Supporting their literacy development is a vital area of work in developing an inclusive society in which everyone can contribute effectively.

The literacy needs of learners are diverse. Some learners had strong vocational and interpersonal skills but did not have sufficient literacy skills to enable them to progress in their work, sustain or re-enter employment. Many learners had experienced interruption to their school learning, through for example health or family reasons and had been unable to catch up sufficiently to be able to engage in classes and had lost their skills over time. More than a few had previously had good or very good levels of literacy skills but had suffered medical trauma which resulted in them having to learn to read and write again. Assessing their needs and matching provision to meet their needs is an important feature of quality provision.

1   http://www.hmie.gov.uk/
documents/publication/
clalns.html

The range of providers, types of approaches and roles of individuals involved in helping people to improve their skills are also wide and diverse. They include education professionals and volunteers of all ages, those who have run businesses and people who have never worked. Some bring experience of teaching in nurseries, schools, colleges or universities; others draw on expertise from different occupations such as nurses, welders, shopkeepers and carers. This results in a very rich and challenging landscape which aims to meet the needs of learners in different contexts and communities.

Most learners make good progress and achieve their individual goals. Staff are highly committed and motivated and establish very positive relationships with learners which encourage and motivate their success. Most providers take good account of individual and community needs in planning provision and reach out well to encourage learners to get the support that they need. These are important strengths but provision must aim to be of the highest quality. Better planning and partnership working, improved assessment of individual needs, more effective use of ICT, better recognition of achievement and progression pathways to new learning are some of the aspects for development identified in this report. I commend the report to you to support further improvements in this important area of work.

Graham Donaldson
HM Inspector of Education

"I can now write and use the computer with confidence. I write and send emails, add on attachments and send photos. **This really helps me keep in touch with my family and my friends.**"

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1.1

Introduction **overview**

The national strategy for Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland was outlined in the *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* (ALNIS)[2] report published in 2001. ALNIS set out the challenges for Scotland, proposed solutions, made recommendations and set targets. Resources were routed through local authorities to the 32 Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN) partnerships within community planning structures to fund local action. In 2003 the national 'development engine' for Adult Literacy and Numeracy was established in Learning Connections, then part of Communities Scotland and transferring to the Lifelong Directorate of Scottish Government in 2007. Until March 2007, Partnerships reported to Government on their annual activities and progress in meeting the aims and objectives set out in local ALN action plans.

In June 2005, HMIE published *Changing Lives: Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland*[3] which presented a picture of diverse provision responding to learners' needs in relevant and appropriate ways. It also identified the need to quantify the extent to which learners were actually raising their literacy levels. It highlighted the need for a more strategic approach to planning and partnership working in some areas; more professional development opportunities for tutors; and more rigorous and effective self-evaluation across sectors.

In 2007, the Scottish Government introduced the National Performance Framework, which sets out 15 National Outcomes for achieving the Government's Purpose of sustainable economic growth. These Outcomes are underpinned by National Indicators, one of which is to, **'Reduce the number of working age people with severe literacy and numeracy problems'**. In November 2007, a Concordat between central and local government committed local government to working towards National Outcomes reflected in the National Indicator.

2   http://www.hmie.gov.uk/
documents/publication/
clalns.html

3   www.hmie.gov.uk

The Scottish Government also set out the next steps for those involved in offender learning in prisons. These steps are incorporated within *The Skills Strategy for Scotland*[4] and the *Offender Learning Strategy*[5] which seek to help offenders to obtain fulfilling and sustainable employment and develop skills for learning. A progress report is due to be published in June 2009.

Since the ALNIS report, over 180,000 adult literacy and numeracy learners have received support. Learning Connections within the Lifelong Learning Directorate of the Scottish Government has developed a national curriculum framework and worked in partnership with other organisations including Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and Scotland's Colleges to improve the training and qualifications of professional staff engaged in delivery of literacy and numeracy programmes. It has produced annual progress reports[6] against the recommendations within the ALNIS (2001) report. The reports are available through Learning Connections.

This report evaluates adult literacy learning within three sectors: community learning and development (CLD) within local authorities, HM prisons, and colleges. It does not cover provision relating to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). The task focused on reading and writing capabilities.

A cross-sectoral team of HM Inspectors carried out the fieldwork across a broad sample of services and establishments in the three sectors. The team also took account of inspections and reviews of local authority CLD provision, prisons and colleges.

Although there are similarities in provision, each of the sectors has responded to improving adult literacy skills in different ways. This results in differences in the types of provision, arrangements with partner agencies and funding sources, and the arrangements and approaches of individual organisations to meet local needs.

4   Skills for Scotland –
    Scotland's Lifelong Skills
    Strategy March 2009
    http://www.scotland.gov.uk/
    Topics/Education/skills-
    strategy/progress.sg

5   Offender Learning Strategy,
    March 2009
    http://www.scotland.gov.uk/
    Topics/Education/skills-
    strategy/progress/sg/
    supportingindividuals/
    offenderlearner

6   http://www.scotland.gov.uk/
    Publications/2008/09/
    03100049/0

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In most local authority areas, there are Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnerships (ALNPs)[7] which organise and deliver services and provision and often, but not always, include representation from all of the three sectors, included in this report.

Community learning and development
"Community learning and development (CLD) is learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their communities using a range of formal and informal methods. A common defining feature is that programmes and activities are developed in dialogue with communities and participants…[CLD's] main aim is to help individuals and communities tackle real issues in their lives through community action and community-based learning."[8]

In this report, CLD mainly refers to the adult literacy service delivered by local authorities. Other community providers include library services and voluntary organisations. Most are part of CLD or ALN Partnerships which have a range of delivery partners including local authorities, voluntary organisations and colleges.

Prisons
The prison sector provides literacy support for offenders, predominantly in partnership with colleges, local authorities, Community Justice Authorities (CJAs) and other agencies. There are thirteen prisons in Scotland operated by the Scottish Prison Service (SPS). Since April 2005, the SPS has contracted with two colleges to deliver learning within individual prisons. In addition, the SPS has a number of collaborative arrangements with local ALN Partnerships and community justice authority staff to deliver provision within prisons and co-ordinate access to literacy provision on release. Addiewell and Kilmarnock Prisons are privately operated and are not included in these arrangements.

7   The report uses the generic term CLD/ALNP to describe a local partnership responsible for literacy provision. This is to take account of the various terms used by different partnership areas. These terms include, community learning partnerships, adult literacy and numeracy partnerships and adult learning partnerships.

8   Working and Learning Together (WALT)
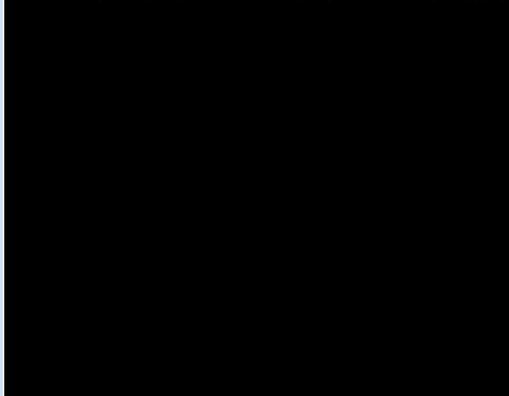
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Colleges

Scotland's 43 colleges deliver a wide range of programmes and qualifications in over 4,000 locations. Ninety per cent of the population live within 30 minutes of college provision. Colleges work in partnership with local authorities and voluntary organisations through CLD or ALN Partnerships to help individuals improve their literacy. Colleges use a wide range of approaches to help individuals and groups of learners within community based and college based programmes.

The findings in this report are clustered under themes to encourage the sharing of good practice by the various providers across the sectors. The themes are:

• Planning of provision and services

• Access and support

• Learning and teaching

• Resources to support and enhance learning

• Learner progress and achievement

• Evaluation and quality improvement

• Partnership working

During the fieldwork period, work on literacy was taking place within the development of *Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE). *Curriculum for Excellence* stresses the continuing and growing importance of literacy for personal, social and economic development. CfE adopts a wide definition of literacy which places emphasis on those skills used regularly by everyone in their everyday lives. It embraces the range of media used for communication in modern society and highlights the close links between listening and talking, reading and writing and the development of the important skill of critical literacy. Although the fieldwork for this task preceded this new definition, the CfE definition is just as appropriate to adult literacy. This reflects an increasing congruence between literacy work in the school and adult sectors which should enhance the better partnership and cross-sector working recommended in the report. This is further supported in a recent report by the Literacy Commission entitled *Vision for Scotland* (December 2009) which comments on the issue of low achievement of youngsters at school for whom there is no apparent barrier to gaining adequate literacy skills, and the consequence of this failure in the number of adults in Scotland without such skills.

An important development which will also stimulate and support a common approach to literacy for all learners is the introduction of national literacy awards which will be available to adult learners. In June 2009, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning announced the development of these new national literacy awards to be based on the experiences and outcomes for literacy in *Curriculum for Excellence*. She also **"recognised the need to improve literacy and numeracy skills among the wider adult population"** and advocated that the use of the new qualifications by adult learners should be a **"key focus of education and skills policy in the future"**.

This development will support this report's recommendation on improving recognition of learners' achievements in literacy. The development of literacy within CfE and the introduction of these new awards should influence the future direction and planning of adult literacy provision across the three sectors of this report.
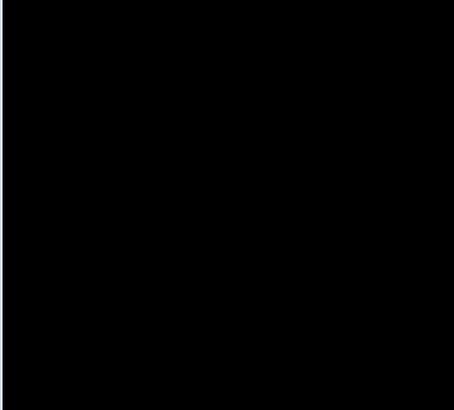
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1.2

Summary of key findings **planning of provision and services**

Planning of provision and services

- At strategic level, almost all providers took good or very good account of national policy drivers. However, this was not always reflected at operational levels.

- Most providers took good or very good account of individual and community needs in planning provision and applied proactive and inclusive approaches to reach out to new and hard-to-reach learners.

- In prisons, the absence of overarching learning strategies and lack of systematic arrangements to identify the literacy and skills levels of offenders within individual prisons inhibited effective planning of literacy provision.

- There were good examples of providers working together to harness and maximise the contribution of different organisations in the planning of provision and services.

- In some areas, local CLD/ALNP funding arrangements in relation to bidding for and allocation of funds were cumbersome and slow which diminished partners' ability to plan provision effectively. In some areas, restrictions on the number of consecutive annual allocations a partner could receive for a particular initiative prevented providers from sustaining literacy provision which had been very successful.

- The uncertainty of funding available to CLD/ALNPs to continue the delivery and development of literacy provision reduced their confidence and ability to plan ahead.

- In the majority of areas, there was insufficient mapping of provision across different agencies and inadequate planning of progression routes from one level and type of programme to another. This was particularly apparent in the transition from one-to-one learning to learning in groups.

"I find shopping easier.
I can understand the
offers displayed in shops.
**I can read recipes and
work out ingredients
and cooking times.**"

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1.3

Summary of key findings **access and support**

Access and support

- In CLD and colleges there were very effective arrangements to promote and encourage participation. However, in prisons these arrangements were less effective and, in general, prison staff did not actively, or effectively enough, promote opportunities for offenders to develop their literacy skills.

- CLD services and colleges took very good account of lifestyles and family and work commitments when scheduling programmes.

- CLD and prison staff did not make sufficient use of ICT and online learning to enable learners to access provision.

- In a few community venues, teaching facilities did not provide full access for people with disabilities or restricted mobility.

- All colleges had good arrangements and resources to help learners with disabilities and additional barriers to learning. However, in CLD and prisons arrangements to support learners with additional barriers to learning were not consistently effective.

- There were some good examples of local CLD/ALNPs making effective use of locally-available resources to assist learners with specific learning needs. However, this was not widespread.

- Most learners had very good and regular access to literacy programmes. However, in prisons other prison priorities often militated against providing an uninterrupted and reliable service.

- College preparation programmes were very helpful in enabling learners to address and improve their literacy skills prior to starting mainstream programmes.

- Overall, CLD and prisons did not make sufficient use of assessment tools to identify initial learner skill levels and match learners to appropriate levels and types of provision.

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1.4

Summary of key findings **learning and teaching**

Learning and teaching

- The very diverse range of practitioners working in literacy development shared a genuine and high commitment to helping learners to develop their literacy skills in order to improve their lives.

- In all cases, staff and volunteer tutors had established very positive and productive relationships with learners.

- Delivery staff took very good account of learner needs. They planned learning activities effectively and tailored activities to meet the individual needs and aspirations of learners.

- There were many good examples of staff applying creative and innovative approaches to engage learners in learning activities, but there were also examples of staff using outdated and less engaging approaches. In CLD most staff did not make sufficient use of ICT to enhance the learning process and extend learners' skills.

- In prisons, a wide range of projects and initiatives had been very effective in encouraging and engaging offenders in developing their literacy skills and engaging in learning, often for the first time in many years and often since primary school. However, offenders did not have sufficient opportunities to improve their literacy skills within wider prison activities.

- Learning Connections and Scotland's Colleges had played an important and effective role in developing and supporting practitioners in sharing good practice and extending their skills.

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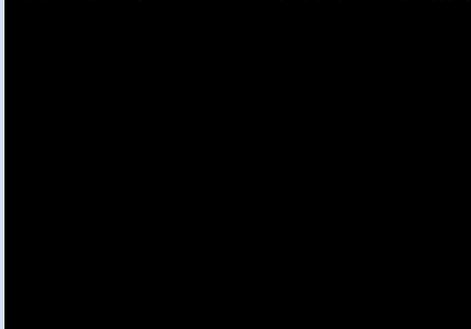
1.5

Summary of key findings **resources to support and enhance learning**

Resources to support and enhance learning

- In prisons and colleges, accommodation and facilities for learning were good or very good.

- In CLD, although some venues provided good facilities for learners, in more than a few cases accommodation and ICT equipment were not of a sufficient standard to meet learner needs.

- In CLD and prisons, access to specialist resources, including assistive technologies was inconsistent which resulted in learners not always having access to the specialist types of resources they required or from which they would benefit.

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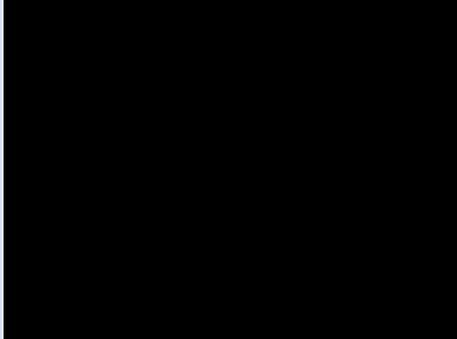
1.6

Summary of key findings learner progress and achievement

Learner progress and achievement

- Most learners made good progress in their learning and achieved their individual goals.

- Most staff made good use of individual learning plans to involve and engage learners in planning and reviewing their learning.

- The diversity of learner needs and aspirations and the lack of appropriate initial and formative assessment instruments made it difficult for many providers to formally assess and provide evidence of the progress of learners.

- All providers promoted and celebrated learners' achievements.

- Overall, there were insufficient opportunities for learners to gain formal recognition of their achievement in literacy.

- In CLD, in too many cases staff delivering one-to-one provision did not give learners enough encouragement to progress to other types of learning.

- Overall, providers did not have effective systems in place to track learner transitions into and out of provision and end destinations.

- In prisons, staff did not make sufficient or effective use of the Prisoner Tracker System to assist learners to continue their learning on transfer to other prisons or on release.

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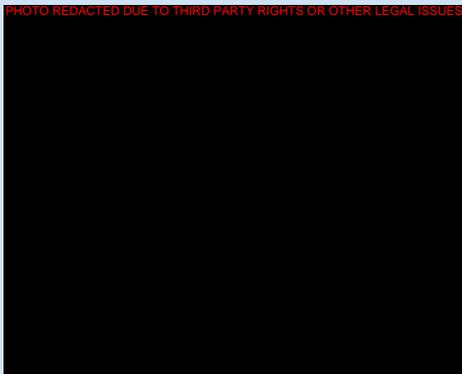
1.7

Summary of key findings **evaluation and quality improvement**

Evaluation and quality improvement

- All providers used their own internal quality assurance processes to evaluate provision and inform improvements.

- There were a few good examples of partners engaging in cross-sectoral evaluation of provision and using this process to improve services and transition arrangements for learners. However, this was not widespread.

- In prisons, the lack of reliable information about the initial literacy levels of offenders prevented partners from planning provision and services effectively, setting targets for improvements and measuring progress made in meeting these targets.

- Most providers did not involve learners sufficiently in evaluation and quality improvement processes.

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1.8

Summary of key findings **partnership working**

Partnership working

- In some CLD/ALNP areas a wide and diverse range of partners worked cohesively and productively towards a common purpose. However, in other areas, partners did not contribute actively or effectively enough to maximise opportunities for learners in their area.

- There were some good examples of partnership staff providing high quality guidance to learners about the range and types of provision available in their area. However, in too many cases providers were not sufficiently well-informed about other types and levels of provision and progression opportunities.

- Contractual arrangements between the Scottish Prison Service and colleges militated against delivering one-to-one and small group provision, which many learners would have benefited from.

- More than a few colleges considered their partners did not make sufficient use of college facilities and resources.

- In a few local authority areas, colleges were not represented on strategic community planning partnerships. This impeded effective partnership working and restricted the ability of colleges to contribute fully to providing well-coordinated services for learners. Colleges working across a number of local authorities' adult literacy partnerships found it difficult to meet the needs of all partnerships, particularly where authority areas had different priorities and structures.

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2.1

Planning of provision and services **in community learning and development**

At strategic level, all of the services took good or very good account of national policy drivers, including the *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland 2001* (ALNIS) report, *Skills for Scotland: A lifelong skills strategy, More Choices More Chances and Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities 2004* (WALT). Strategic managers were well informed about key directives and national strategies and planned their literacy provision to meet these priorities. However, they did not always convey key strategies effectively to operational managers. In more than a few cases, delivery managers were not sufficiently familiar with key strategies to enable them to take account of national drivers when planning programmes. As a result, overall planning was less effective at operational level.

In each of the geographic areas, CLD/ALNPs had played an important and largely successful role in promoting and engendering a community approach to improving the literacy skills of adults. Community planning processes had extended and built on this. The introduction of the *Concordat* is encouraging more collaborative working between partner agencies to realise and report on the wider outcomes of literacy support on, for example, individuals' personal, social and working lives. *Single Outcome Agreements* (SOAs) are beginning to influence local authorities to capture the contribution of other adult literacy providers in their areas. The majority of local authorities have set targets for the proportion of adult learners undertaking literacy provision. This has encouraged local authority CLD services to take better account of the opportunities offered by other agencies in planning, integrating and delivering services locally. Although there are a few examples of effective practice, most CLD services do not yet have effective processes in place to capture and demonstrate the impact of literacy development on wider community outcomes.

A few authorities were taking good account of local employment and career opportunities when planning provision and programmes. In some areas, service providers had linked provision to the needs of the local job market and planned programmes to encourage and enable learners to gain sufficient confidence and literacy

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skill levels to undertake Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs). There were good examples of providers engaging with employers and employment services to identify the literacy development needs of employees and planning provision around learners' work patterns to meet these needs.

All local authority services took good account of individual and community needs in planning provision. Service managers applied proactive and inclusive approaches to reach out to new and hard-to-reach learners, particularly those who had previous negative experiences of learning, and adults and young people at risk of social exclusion. Planning of one-to-one provision[9] was strong and generally provided very good initial opportunities for new learners to take their first steps to addressing and improving their literacy skills.

There were good examples of local authority CLD staff working with partner agencies to harness and maximise the contribution of different organisations in the planning of provision and services. One council had established a *Strategic Learning Alliance* which brought key partners together to discuss and plan locally-based provision across the local authority area. Members of the group drew on locally available skills, expertise and resources to plan learning pathways. However, in a few other areas, local literacy providers were not sufficiently aware of what each other's organisations offered to support and enhance development of literacy skills. This constrained significantly the ability of partnership members to plan coherent local provision for learners. In more than a few cases, this resulted in duplication or gaps in provision being overlooked. The uncertainty of future funding available to partnerships to continue the delivery and development of literacy provision reduced their confidence and ability to plan ahead.

In the majority of areas, there was insufficient mapping of provision across different agencies and inadequate planning of progression routes from one level and type of programme to another. The resulting disjointed or fragmented provision hindered progression to further learning. This was particularly apparent in learners' transition from one-to-one learning to learning in groups.

9 Learners being allocated and receiving individual support from a literacy tutor.

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2.2

Planning of provision and services **in prisons**

The planning of literacy provision within prisons did not generally take sufficient account of national learning strategies and priorities. In almost all cases, staff involved in the planning and delivery of *Learning, Skills and Employability* (LSE) provision did not take account of these priorities when planning provision to improve the literacy skills of offenders. This was beginning to be addressed through a national *Management of Offenders Strategy* which aims to improve the literacy levels of offenders.

None of the prisons had learning strategies to direct and assist their key providers of learning in the planning of literacy provision. These providers included the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), contracted colleges and local authority CLD/ALNPs. As a result, they planned and delivered literacy provision in isolation from each other. This led to missed opportunities for providers to work together systematically to plan and integrate different types of activities to engage offenders in addressing and improving their levels of literacy. However, there were a few very good examples of different providers collaborating informally to link learning experiences and draw learners into developing their literacy skills. Local CLD/ALNP staff were proactive in identifying gaps between prison and college provision for offenders, including those preparing for release, and provided well-judged interventions to bridge access to different types of provision within the prison and in the community.

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The SPS had contracts with two colleges to deliver a specific number of hours of learning within each prison. The contracts stipulated a range of performance targets for the colleges to achieve. However, the contracts did not require providers to establish the existing skill levels of the prison population and use this information to plan provision. The SPS had introduced a process to identify the individual literacy levels of new offenders coming into custody. However, in most cases this process was ineffective. In a few prisons, staff used successful approaches to engage recently admitted offenders in assessing their own levels of literacy. These included *learning champions* and *peer mentors* working alongside college staff to encourage and support learners in recognising and addressing their individual literacy development needs. Staff were beginning to draw on this process to plan future provision and services.

Despite the lack of strategic direction, staff in all prisons did the best they could to plan useful learning experiences. There were good examples of staff planning innovative and meaningful learning experiences to encourage offenders in discussing and addressing their literacy skills. This was particularly successful where staff planned non traditional, interest-based projects to engage offenders with previous negative experiences of learning. In a few cases CLD/ALNP staff collaborated effectively with prison staff in planning and implementing provision to help offenders develop their literacy skills in prison work sheds.

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2.3

Planning of provision and services **in colleges**

Almost all colleges took very good account of national learning strategies and priorities when planning their approaches to improve the literacy skills of learners. The *Skills for Scotland* strategy had helped colleges to highlight and refine the way they related literacy skills to employability and wider learning outcomes. College learning strategies and programme planning processes assisted curriculum planners, support staff and vocational specialists to take account of literacy skills when planning programmes and services. For instance, one college had embedded the essential skills[10] identified in *Skills for Scotland* within its curriculum planning framework.

All colleges took good account of the needs of individuals, their communities and employers. In most areas, colleges worked productively with partner agencies to plan and provide different types of programmes and interventions to improve the literacy skills of adults in their communities. There were many very good examples where colleges identified different types of learner groups and planned provision to meet their specific needs. These included a college identifying a need to provide more focused literacy support for cared-for young people and another identifying a need to improve the literacy skills of 16 to 18 year olds undertaking full-time college programmes. However, colleges working across a number of local authority areas, in some cases three or four, found it difficult to contribute evenly and effectively to the planning of provision across each of the areas.

Colleges used a range of information, including performance indicators and programme evaluations, to inform their planning. Most colleges profiled the literacy skills of learners at the outset and used the findings to place learners on appropriate levels of programmes and arrange additional support for individuals or class groups. These arrangements were effective in helping staff to plan and target provision where it was most needed.

10 Literacy, numeracy, personal and learning skills, the five core skills, skills for employability and other transferable skills.

Most colleges took very good account of the wide range of circumstances, needs and aspirations of learners when planning provision to help them improve their literacy skills. In most colleges, staff planned different types of approaches and services around the identified needs of individuals or groups, which resulted in a wide and often well-judged range of practices and approaches. Within mainstream vocational programmes, most colleges planned opportunities for learners to develop their literacy skills in the context of the vocational area to help prepare them for employment. The majority of colleges planned introductory interest-based programmes around overarching topics and themes to help learners develop their literacy skills and prepare them for mainstream vocational programmes or employment. Some colleges planned summer schools and *return to learn* programmes to help learners assess and improve their literacy skills in preparation for starting vocational programmes.

Most colleges valued and had made good use of CLD/ALNP funding to plan and develop provision around identified needs. However, in some cases local partnership bidding and allocation processes were cumbersome and slow and did not fit well with colleges' planning cycles. This diminished the colleges' ability to plan provision effectively. In some areas, restrictions on the number of consecutive annual allocations a partner could receive for a particular initiative prevented colleges from sustaining literacy provision which had been very successful. Colleges considered that the uncertainty of future funding levels available to partners made it difficult for them to plan ahead. This affected developing new provision and continuing existing provision which had been effective in improving the literacy skills of learners in the partnership area.
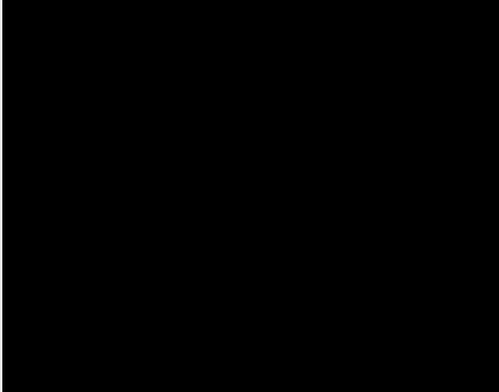
"Coming to the class has helped me write properly and I make very few mistakes. **People can read the notes that I leave at work.**"

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3.1

Access and support **in community learning and development**

There were very effective arrangements across all services to promote and encourage participation.

The *Big Plus* campaign, funded and managed by Learning Connections, had been very successful in raising public awareness and helping to reduce stigma associated with having literacy needs. Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnerships had been very effective in promoting opportunities within local areas and building inter-agency cooperation to improve initial access to literacy support.

Most services took very good account of lifestyles and family and work commitments when scheduling programmes. This included providing childcare and timing programmes to meet specific needs. However, in more than a few cases, access to provision was limited by the provider to a few hours or less a week, which resulted in learners taking longer to learn and consolidate their new skills. Overall, services did not make sufficient use of ICT and online learning to enable students to continue learning and receiving support when they were unable to access provision for a variety of reasons. These reasons included work patterns, rurality and personal circumstances. This was particularly evident in rural areas where better use of ICT would have improved access for learners.

Overall, services were very successful in targeting and engaging hard to reach groups, particularly 14 to 25 year olds and older learners, to help them address and overcome literacy issues. Some services had been very proactive in developing relationships with employers to promote and provide work-based literacy for employees. In a few areas staff worked in partnership with JobcentrePlus staff to help job seekers improve their literacy skills to obtain employment. However, this was not yet widespread.

In a few venues, teaching facilities did not provide full access for people with disabilities or restricted mobility and local CLD/ALNPs were not taking sufficient action to improve access. Arrangements to support learners with additional barriers to learning varied across different venues and providers. In a few cases, staff had experience and expertise in this area and applied their knowledge and skills to provide advice and support to both *tutors* and learners. However, overall arrangements for staff to access specialist support and resources to assist learners requiring additional support were inconsistent across different venues and sites. The majority of services had identified a need to address this and some offered staff access to professional development opportunities supported by Learning Connections and other agencies to improve the skills of their staff and enable them to meet a wider range of learner needs. In areas which did not have such arrangements, learners with additional needs did not always have access to the specialist types of support or resources they required.

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There were a few good examples of local authorities making effective use of locally available resources to assist learners with specific learning needs. For instance, in one area a specialist facility provided community access to trained staff and technologies to help learners with dyslexia develop their literacy skills. However, in more than a few areas, partners were not sufficiently aware of the range and types of expertise and resources available locally to support learners with additional needs. This resulted in missed opportunities for partners to share and maximise these resources and thereby provide better services to support learners.

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3.2

Access and support **in prisons**

Promotion of literacy provision within the prisons was generally poor. Many offenders had previous negative experiences of learning but in most cases prison literature and arrangements to promote learning, including literacy programmes, were unimaginative and not presented in a style to attract and encourage participation. In general, prison staff did not actively, or effectively enough, promote opportunities for offenders to develop their literacy skills. Two prisons had identified this issue and were in the early stages of delivering training programmes to prison staff on the promotion of learning opportunities. In some prisons, offenders were paid more for undertaking work-based activities than they were for engaging in learning activities. However, there were some very good examples of literacy, prison and college staff applying innovative approaches to promote learning and literacy development more positively. This included devising induction programmes for new offenders to explain the range of provision and styles of learning and teaching approaches, and deploying offenders to act as *learning champions* or *peer tutors*.

Access to literacy provision ranged from good to very poor. In some cases, learners had very good and regular access to literacy programmes. However, in too many cases arrangements for moving offenders within the prison environment, prison staff absence, and administering of methadone programmes militated against providing an uninterrupted and reliable service. Waiting lists usually prevented short term prisoners from being able to access provision. There was little or no access for remand prisoners and only limited access for protected prisoners.

In many cases, access to literacy provision was limited to three or four hours a week and arrangements for learners to receive support and practise their skills outside timetabled class times were very poor. As a result, learners took longer to learn and did not have sufficient opportunities to consolidate their learning or develop the confidence to further develop their skills outwith their classes.

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The SPS had identified the need for prisons to gain better information about the literacy skills of offenders. The service had devised and implemented an *alerting tool* to help staff identify the literacy skills of new offenders. However, the timescales and materials prescribed for this process did not allow sufficient account to be taken of the circumstances and previous learning experiences of the offenders. As a result, the process was often ineffective and not conducive to engaging potential learners.

College and CLD/ALNP staff had good access to specialist support services and used them well to support learners. A few college and almost all CLD/ALNP staff had undertaken training to help them support adults with dyslexia. Arrangements for prison staff to assist learners with additional support needs were poor. Prison staff did not know how many offenders had additional barriers to learning and had little or no awareness of how to support those who did. However, in some cases college and ALNP staff were beginning to address this by offering training to prison staff.

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3.3

Access
and support
in colleges

Colleges used a range of strategies to promote the different types of literacy provision they offered and, in most cases, these strategies were effective. Overall, colleges tried to promote access to individual and group literacy support as positive and empowering as opposed to a remediation service. In most cases, this had been successful in engaging substantial numbers of learners in accessing support.

Colleges took good account of learner needs and commitments when scheduling discrete programmes and access to individualised support. Most programmes delivered in outreach settings were well planned around transport and childcare issues.

Colleges provided very good access for learners with restricted mobility. All colleges had good arrangements and resources to help learners with disabilities and additional barriers to learning.

In all colleges, investment in specialist training and resources had developed college capacity to respond effectively to making adjustments and arrangements for learners. As a result, learners had very good access to specialised support and equipment. In several colleges, a centralised unit provided very good and flexible access to assistive technologies to support learning.

Most colleges applied a range of user-friendly diagnostic tools very effectively to engage learners in identifying their literacy levels at the start of their programmes. Most learners valued this process and found it helped them to pinpoint their strengths as well as their development needs. In almost all cases, staff used the feedback from these processes effectively to place learners on appropriate levels of programmes and core skill units, and arranged literacy support appropriate to individual or group needs. Very good communication and referral arrangements between subject and literacy support staff ensured that most learners received timely and appropriate support.

Almost all colleges assessed between forty and sixty per cent of learners on full time further-education programmes as having a literacy level, which, without intervention, could impede their ability to attain the full award. The proportion was higher, up to seventy per cent, in some vocational areas, particularly hospitality, social care and construction, and in programmes for learners requiring *More Choices, More Chances*.[11] In these cases, most colleges arranged additional support or integrated support within vocational classes. There were many very good examples of these approaches having a positive impact on helping learners engage more fully in class activities and developing their literacy skills. All colleges identified that learners in some HN level programmes had literacy development needs. This was particularly apparent in HN computing programmes.

The range of provision available enabled learners to access different types of literacy support to meet their specific needs and circumstances. This included access to short, intensive individual and group support, and regular weekly sessions timed around individual needs. Most learners considered they had good access to support which helped them progress faster. However, more than a few colleges were not always able to meet the demand from learners to access individual and small group support. This was usually at specific points of the year when learners on mainstream programmes required additional support to meet course requirements.

11 Provision for learners at risk of not having positive destinations in terms of employment, training or further learning.

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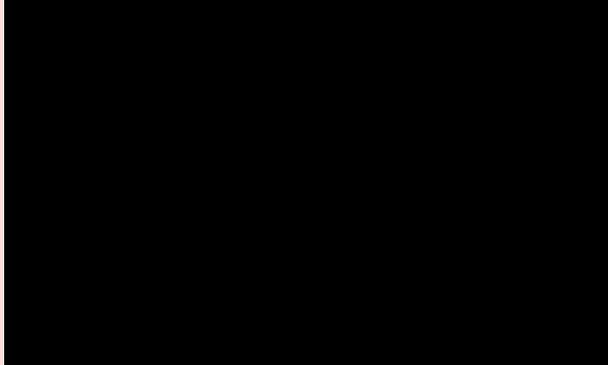
"Since starting to develop
my skills I have found that,
after all these years,
I *am* able to learn."

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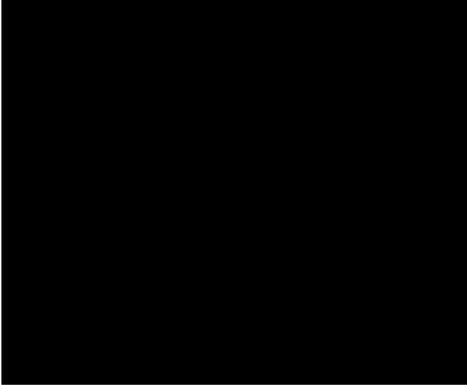
4.1

Learning and teaching **in community learning and development**

12 The social practice model is a learning and teaching approach which recognises that learning for adults is most effective when it is positioned in real life contexts.

13 http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/clalns.html

Staff tutors and volunteer tutor assistants had established very positive and productive relationships with their learners. They were welcoming, friendly and supportive and took very good account of the needs of all learners, particularly those who had low confidence and self-esteem and were nervous about engaging in learning.

All staff took very good account of learner needs. They applied effectively the social practice model[12] advocated by Learning Connections in the *Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework for Scotland* (May 2005)[13] to provide relevant learning activities tailored to meet individual interests and aspirations. Staff contextualised lessons well and took care in planning activities, often gathering and using different types of resources based on the individual interests of their learners.

Most staff used creative and innovative teaching approaches to engage learners in learning activities. A few tutors also provided very good opportunities for learners to experience different types of learning. This approach was very effective in helping learners to develop confidence and recognise their individual learning preferences. In the majority of classes, groups of learners discussed their learning and designed and planned activities with staff. Most tutors made good use of project-based activities to involve learners in negotiating and setting short and longer term class goals and agreeing the content and format of learning activities to meet these goals. In one-to-one programmes, there were many good examples of tutors working with employed learners, relating activities to learners' workplaces. However, in some cases staff used outdated and less engaging approaches, some of which were insufficiently focused on empowering learners to make progress within a social practice context.

Although all staff planned their activities well, they were often impeded by the poor quality and availability of resources, particularly ICT. As a result, in most cases, staff did not make sufficient use of ICT to enhance the learning process.

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The majority of staff had participated in appropriate development activities to broaden and deepen their teaching skills.

An online community of practice for adult literacies (COPAL), co-hosted by Learning Connections and Scotland's Colleges, provided good opportunities for practitioners working across different sectors to share practice and resources. Learning Connection's national practitioner networks helped to increase staff expertise by focusing on specific areas of literacies, including *Youth literacies* and *Using ICT to support literacy learning*. Almost all tutors had undertaken training or attended professional development events provided by Learning Connections or other agencies. Some tutors had undertaken Professional Development Awards (PDAs) related to adult literacy, for example the PDA *Working with adults with dyslexia*.

Most tutors had undertaken the PDA Introduction to *Tutoring Adult Literacies Learning* (ITALL) either before or soon after starting to work with learners. However, most tutors did not have sufficient, regular opportunities to discuss and identify their individual training needs. In most cases, tutors did not have sufficient opportunities to share practices and approaches to help them learn from each other. It was too early to gauge the impact of the recently-introduced Teaching Qualification in Adult Literacies (TQAL) on the quality of learning and teaching.
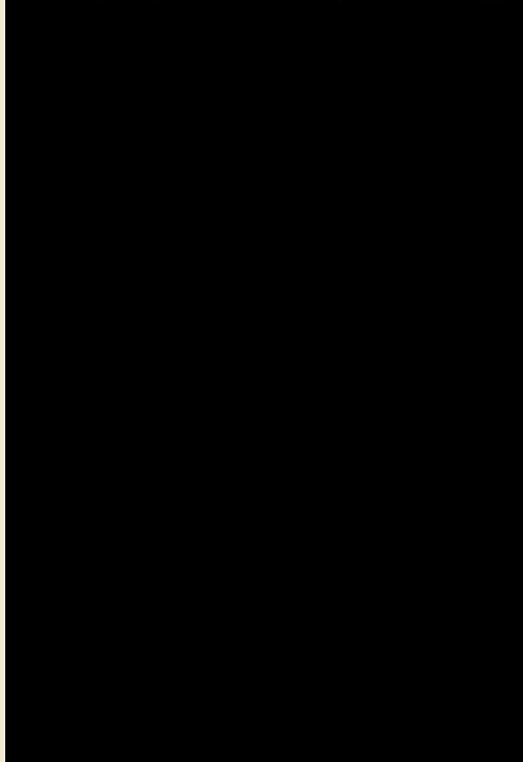
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4.2

Learning and teaching **in prisons**

Learning centre managers and delivery staff had established very positive relationships with their learners. Teaching staff were approachable and attentive and took care and time to meet the needs of their individual learners. They planned their learning activities well and contextualised learning to engage, motivate and encourage learners. They took very good account of the interests of individual learners and groups and gathered resources and tailored content to extend these interests. Learners, particularly those with previous negative experiences of learning, valued greatly the approaches and level of support they received from staff.

A wide range of innovative projects and initiatives, including theatrical events, writer in-residence projects, programmes for families and parents and peer tutoring schemes, had been very effective in encouraging and helping many learners to take part in learning. In many cases, offenders were engaging in learning for the first time in many years, and in some cases for the first time since primary school. *Story sacks, Home from Home, Storybook Dads* and other family learning initiatives had been very successful in engaging learners in literacy development activities directly linked to family needs. Several such initiatives are highlighted in the HMIE/HMIP publication *Learning, Skills and Employability: A review of good practice in Scottish prisons* (June 2008).[14] In one prison, a project based on the life of Mary, Queen of Scots had been highly successful in engaging learners in different types of learning to develop their literacy skills.

However, insufficient links among the various providers often prevented staff from being able to incorporate literacy development within wider prison projects and activities. Most staff found this frustrating and considered they were unable to reach those most in need. However, there were a few good examples of staff beginning to take steps to overcome this through providing literacy support in work sheds and vocational training areas, such as within the painting and decorating work stream. These developments had been very successful in destigmatising literacy support and had helped learners to develop their literacy and vocational skills simultaneously.

14 http://www.hmie.gov.uk/ documents/publication/ lsergpsp.html
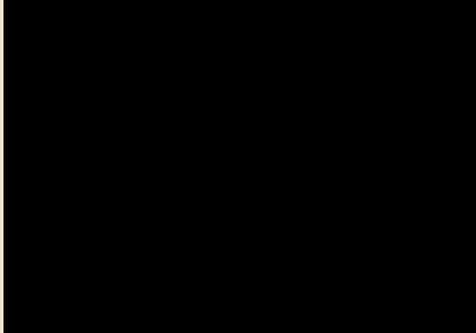
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In prison learning centres, most staff made very good use of resources, including computers, to enhance the learning process. Learners did not have access to the Internet. However, the SPS planned to provide learners with access to a prison-wide intranet later in the year, to enable them to access wider e-learning opportunities. There were some instances of literacy and library staff working together to improve services for offenders. In one prison, proactive library and adult literacy partnership staff had established effective literacy support referral arrangements and jointly planned resources to enable individual learners to further their interests and extend their reading skills.

Most staff had participated in training events to help them improve and develop their learning and teaching approaches. At national level, Learning Connections and Scotland's Colleges provided useful forums and events for staff to discuss and share their approaches to helping offenders develop their literacy skills. However, at local level there were insufficient arrangements for staff working within individual prisons to share and adopt effective practice.

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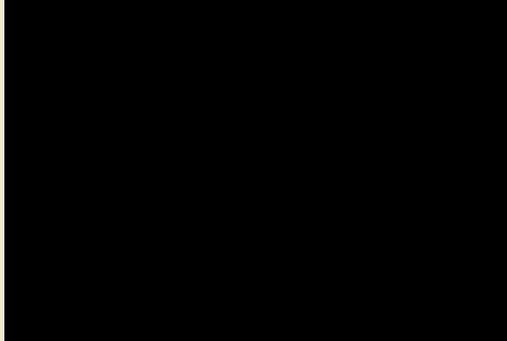
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4.3

Learning
and teaching
in colleges

Staff had established very positive and productive relationships with their learners. They were approachable, helpful and responsive to learners' individual needs and aspirations. Staff took very good account of learners' previous experiences of learning and helped them to explore different types of learning and to discuss and identify their preferred learning styles. Learners enjoyed and valued their relationships with staff and the level of support they received to help them achieve their individual goals.

Staff planned learning activities well. They drew on learners' interests and life and work experiences to contextualise learning. In most colleges, staff supporting learners on vocational programmes worked closely with subject specialists to plan activities and make them vocationally relevant. There were very good examples of staff devising resources to meet the needs of specific groups of learners, including creating wordbooks of terms used in different industries to help learners develop spelling skills. More than a few staff took good account of the types of assessments used in vocational programmes and simulated situations to help learners practice organising their thoughts and approaches to applying their literacy skills.

College staff worked well together to plan and deliver literacy support for specific groups of learners. In some colleges, literacy staff worked alongside vocational staff in classrooms and workshops to help learners develop and consolidate their skills. In others, core skills and vocational staff worked together to contextualise unit materials. These approaches were very effective in helping learners to develop their literacy skills and improved the overall learning experience.

Most college staff made effective use of ICT to enhance the learning process and enable learners to develop wider knowledge and skills. Learners had very good access to centralised college facilities and resources and most of them enjoyed and valued their access to libraries and drop-in learning centres outwith class times to extend their learning. Most college staff were very good at incorporating small episodes of independent learning, often including use of ICT, to help learners gain practice and confidence in working on their own.

In most colleges, staff had good opportunities to identify their training needs and access support to help them develop and extend their skills. Staff development programmes provided by Scotland's Colleges and Learning Connections had enabled staff to learn from each other and their partnership colleagues. Overall, staff made good use of these opportunities to share and adopt good practice, extend their skills and develop new teaching approaches.

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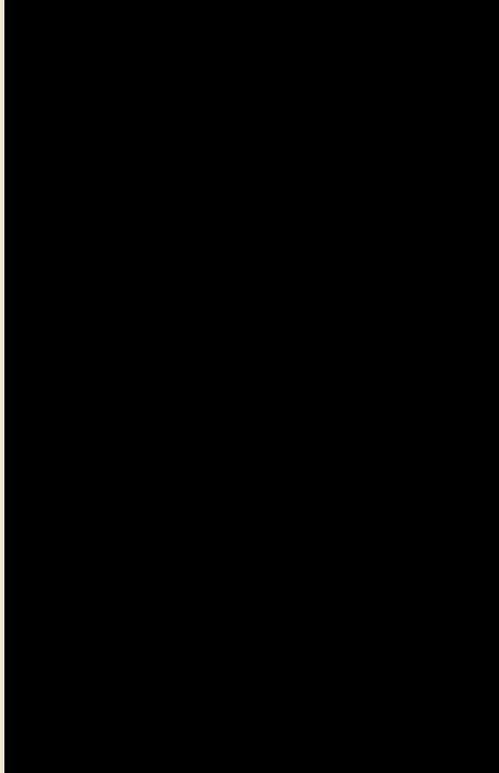
"My literacy class has helped me improve my skills for writing job applications. **I am looking for a job now, where before I wouldn't have cared.**"

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5.1

Resources to support and enhance learning **in community learning and development**

Overall planning of resources within local authority CLD services was not linked sufficiently to delivery requirements. In more than a few cases, facilities and equipment were not of a sufficient standard to meet learner needs. In some venues, the quality of accommodation was not conducive to providing a good quality learning experience. In a few cases, the accommodation was not fit for purpose. However, in other community venues, learning accommodation and resources were of a high standard and provided very good facilities for learners.

Overall, the standards applied by staff and service managers in relation to the quality of resources for learners were too low. In most areas, service managers and staff did not take sufficient account of the appropriateness or availability of resources when reviewing provision and planning for improvement. In more than a few venues, obsolete ICT equipment created barriers for staff and hindered learner progress.

Most tutors made effective use of paper-based materials and more than few used software to engage learners in developing their literacy skills through ICT. Some staff made effective use of the national online resource bank, provided by Learning Connections, *Adult Literacies Online* (**www.aloscotland.com**) to access and share learning and teaching materials and ideas for learning activities. However, use of ICT was not widespread. In most cases, staff did not use resources and materials sufficiently to actively promote equality and diversity.

Access to specialist resources, including assistive technologies, was inconsistent across different venues and sites. In some areas, staff had access to specialist equipment but most did not know how to use it effectively, and in others staff did not know what was available or how to access it. Accordingly, learners with additional support needs did not always have access to the specialist types of resources they required or would benefit from.

However, in all cases, highly committed, resourceful and motivated staff worked hard to maximise the resources available and minimise the effect of poor-quality facilities and inadequate resources.

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5.2

Resources to support and enhance learning **in prisons**

Accommodation and resources to support learning were of a good standard. Learning facilities were generally welcoming and provided good access to computers. In most cases, the learning centres provided comfortable and flexible opportunities for different types of learning activities.

Some prison learning centres and library facilities had recently been updated to take better account of learner needs. In two prisons, staff had involved learners in the redesign of the library and selection of materials and this had significantly increased and improved access to resources. Another prison had recently refurbished its library to provide a modern and welcoming environment with good access to various types and levels of resources.

Materials and resources were generally well pitched and appropriate to learner needs. However, in general, materials and resources did not promote awareness of equality and cultural diversity or encourage learners to explore these issues.

Local Authority CLD/ALNP and college staff had arrangements with their individual agencies to enable them to access specialist equipment, including assistive technologies, for use within the prisons. However, these arrangements were not always effective and resources were not always made available. Overall, there were insufficient resources to assist learners with additional barriers to learning. Learning centres did not have sufficient specialist equipment to meet the needs of learners with additional support needs.

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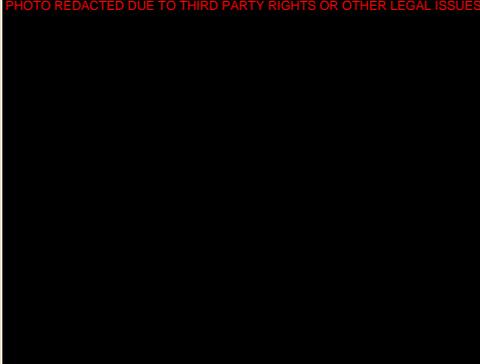
5.3

Resources to support and enhance learning **in colleges**

In all main college buildings and most outreach sites, accommodation, facilities and equipment were of a high standard. The standard and availability of resources took good account of learner needs. Learners had good access to a wide range of centralised facilities and resources including ICT and were able to access them outside their class times.

The majority of colleges had systems in place to promote equality and cultural diversity. Some colleges audited their learning materials and resources and had amended existing materials or devised new ones to reflect diversity and involve learners in exploring equality issues. However, this was not consistent across all colleges.

Colleges had a very good range of resources to help learners with additional barriers to learning. In all colleges, assistive technologies were readily available and accessible to learners and these resources were often available across a number of college sites. There were good examples of colleges sharing resources, including assistive technologies, with their CLD/ALNP and within the wider community.

One urban college had worked closely with its community partners to improve the standard of local learning environments and provide consistency of resources across the local catchment area. This had resulted in high quality and vibrant community learning environments which encouraged participation and eased progression.

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6.0

Learner progress and achievement

Due to the diverse starting points of learners and their complex and specific development needs, it is difficult to define and quantify learner progress. As a result, references to progress are most often founded on learners' satisfaction with their programmes and the impact their learning has had on their personal and working lives. Since the Concordat in 2007, there has been no national data gathering to quantify the extent to which literacy initiatives have resulted in the 800,000 people identified in ALNIS achieving functional literacy. A Scottish Government report on literacy and numeracy levels of the working age population is scheduled for spring in 2010 and is intended to provide a fresh baseline against which to measure future progress.

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6.1

Learner progress and achievement **in community learning and development**

Most learners made good progress in their learning, in terms of achieving their individual learning goals. All learners considered that their acquisition and development of literacy skills had improved their lives and relationships and in many cases the effects had been transformational.

Staff engaged new learners in discussing and identifying their individual needs and aspirations and drew on this process to identify their starting points and help them plan their learning. Most staff made good use of these plans to help learners identify achievable individual goals, set realistic targets to meet them, reflect on progress and reassess their goals. Learners found this process helpful, motivating and affirming. However, in more than a few cases staff did not make sufficient or effective use of individual learning plans to involve learners in reviewing their learning and planning for progression.

The diversity of learner needs and aspirations, and the lack of appropriate formative assessment tools, made it difficult for service managers and tutors to formally assess and provide evidence of the progress of learners. However, most service areas used a range of informal processes to capture and report on learner progress. There were some good examples of staff using software to profile the existing skills of learners at point of entry. Some staff made good use of tools within the Curriculum Framework devised by Learning Connections, such as *The Wheel*, to help them plan and review learning and gauge progress. All providers made good use of learners' individual learning plans to assess progress towards individual learning goals. In a few cases service managers were proactive and systematic in discussing and reviewing the progress of learners with individual tutors. However, in the absence of formal data, informal and anecdotal evidence provided by staff and supported by field visit findings, indicated that most learners achieved skill levels roughly equivalent to Access 3 (SCQF level 3) and Intermediate1 (SCQF level 4). One partnership is currently refining a *Learning Outcome Tracking Information System* (LOTIS) to help monitor and measure learner progression. The system records individual learner progress against hard and soft indicators, including wider outcomes related to

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personal, work, family and community life, and the four capacities identified in *Curriculum for Excellence*.

In all areas, staff promoted and celebrated achievement. Several partnership areas arranged community events to recognise and reward learners for their achievements. Some providers made good use of accredited learning programmes, such as ASDAN, to provide learners with formally recognised qualifications. However, in most areas, providers did not provide sufficient opportunities for learners to gain formal certification in recognition of their achievements and attainments. In other areas, good partnership working with a local SQA-approved centre, such as a local college, provided opportunities for learners to attain formal recognition of their learning. However, the new literacy qualifications, to be introduced from 2012-13, which are to be levelled at SCQF levels 3, 4, and 5, should go some way towards enabling all providers of literacy to provide accreditation.

In most areas, staff worked very effectively with other providers to plan, provide and promote opportunities for learners to progress to different types and levels of learning. In these areas, staff drew on their understanding of the nature and content of other locally based provision to help learners plan and prepare for progression. However, in a few areas staff did not have sufficient knowledge of, or did not take sufficient account of, the opportunities afforded by other providers to encourage and enable learners to further develop and extend their skills. In these cases staff did not promote progression effectively. In too many cases, staff delivering one-to-one provision did not give learners enough encouragement to progress to other types of learning. As a result, there were instances where learners, particularly vulnerable learners, undertook the same level and type of provision for several years with no awareness of other opportunities or plans for progression.
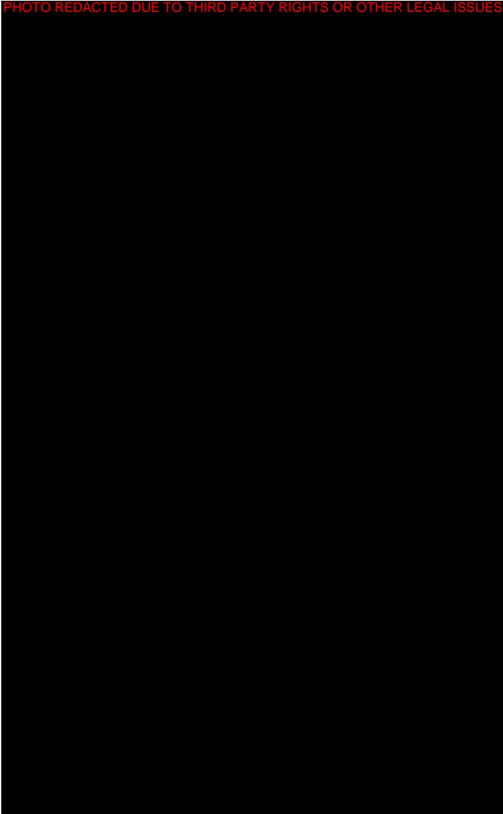
The quality of support given to learners to ease their transition to other types and levels of provision to further develop and extend their skills ranged from very good to poor. In some areas high-quality inter-agency working and effective referral arrangements took good account of the circumstances and needs of learners. In these cases, staff responded to individual and group needs and took time and care to introduce learners to their new staff and learning environments. However, in more than a few areas, staff did not take sufficient account of the needs and anxieties of learners progressing to further learning. In these cases, staff did not provide appropriate levels of support to enable learners to prepare effectively for transition.

Overall, service managers did not place sufficient importance on recording learner progress and progression into or within employment, further learning, volunteering or other contexts. In all areas, there were insufficient arrangements for capturing and tracking the progress of learners and demonstrating the impacts and outcomes of learning.

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6.2

Learner progress and achievement **in prisons**

Learning centre staff promoted and encouraged progression within the opportunities available. Staff took care to help learners identify their individual needs and goals at the start of their programmes and drew on this process to initiate individual learning plans. However, in too many cases staff did not use these plans effectively or involve learners sufficiently in discussing and reflecting on their progress. In some cases learners were unaware that they had an individual learning plan. Nevertheless, most learners made good progress in developing new or existing literacy skills.

There were good examples of learners receiving both informal and formal recognition of their achievements. In many cases, learners were attaining nationally recognised qualifications for the first time. Some learners were developing their literacy skills to enable them to progress to and achieve SQA units in various subject or vocational areas. Staff promoted and celebrated learners' achievements well and held a range of events to celebrate their success.

In general, staff did not take sufficient account of the opportunities offered by awarding bodies to enable learners to attain formal recognition of their achievements and improve their employability prospects. Insufficient links between prison, college and CLD/ALNP staff resulted in missed opportunities for learners to gain certification for the literacy and wider skills they developed in conjunction with other prison activities.

Arrangements to enable learners to continue their learning on transfer to other prisons or release were often not effective. The SPS had recognised that its arrangements to support transition were weak and had devised and implemented a prison-wide prisoner tracker system to improve this. The system enabled staff to record and share information on the learning activities and achievements of individual offenders in order to aid transition between prisons. In some cases, staff made good use of this facility to make arrangements for learners to continue their learning in other prisons. However, it was not used widely enough and in too many cases information on learners was not kept up to date. In more than a few cases, CLD/ALNP and CJA staff were making effective arrangements for pre-release learners to continue their literacy development in the community.

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6.3

Learner progress and achievement **in colleges**

Most learners made good progress. In most cases college staff identified and set various criteria for success and used this to assess progress. For example, one criterion involved achieving sufficient confidence and skills to enable progress to paired or group learning, and others related to attaining accredited units and group awards. Almost all learners had individual learning plans and in most cases these were well matched to learners needs. Most staff made good use of these plans to engage learners in discussing, negotiating and planning their own learning. There were good arrangements for learners to review and discuss their progress with staff. Learners valued and applied the feedback they received from staff to amend and update their individual learning plans.

There were some good examples of learners undertaking access and preparatory programmes, receiving formal recognition of their literacy achievements. However, this was not sufficiently widespread. Overall, programme planning did not take sufficient account of the opportunities offered through SCQF and awarding bodies to provide learners with more formal recognition of their levels of achievements in literacy.

In almost all cases, colleges provided very good progression opportunities for learners to further develop, extend and apply their literacy skills. Progression routes to other types and levels of college provision were clear and well understood by staff and learners. Staff encouraged their learners to progress to further learning. However, in more than a few cases, progression routes into college programmes from other types of locally based provision were not clear. Overall, colleges did not have sufficient arrangements in place to identify and track learners progressing onto college programmes from other locally-delivered provision.

Most learners gained confidence and developed independence in their learning. Many part-time learners, particularly older learners and those with no, or very low levels of literacy skills (generally at or below SCQF level 2) on average took two years to achieve sufficient confidence and levels of literacy skills to be able to learn on their own. In most cases, these learners achieved literacy skills broadly equivalent to SCQF level 4 prior to progressing to mainstream programmes. There were very good examples of colleges adjusting and increasing the length of their full-time FE programmes to give learners enough time to achieve sufficient levels of literacy skills to undertake the award and progress to further learning or employment.

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Learner Story
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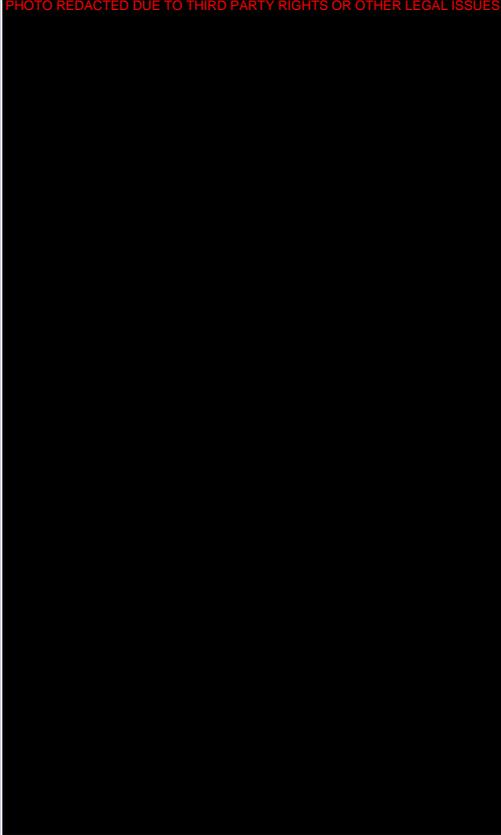
"My new skills have helped me perform better at work. I am now more able to take on additional responsibilities. **My boss says my written reports are much better.**"

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7.1

Evaluation and quality improvement **in community learning and development**
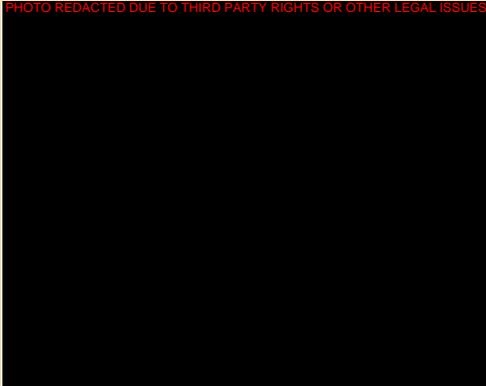
Most organisations used their own internal quality assurance and improvement processes, including *How Good is our Community Learning and Development? 2* (HGIOCLD? 2) and *Literacies in the Community* (LIC) to evaluate provision and inform improvement. However, the effectiveness of these processes ranged from poor to good. In almost all areas, lack of formal data on learner progress and different methods applied by different partners to record learner achievement resulted in staff having insufficiently robust information to enable them to analyse and evaluate provision effectively. In most cases, staff did not evaluate learning and teaching sufficiently and did not take enough account of wider issues which impacted on learning.

Some partnerships worked well and effectively together to evaluate the quality of provision available locally. In a few areas, staff from different agencies carried out inter-agency peer evaluation. This had been very effective in helping staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of the different types and levels of provision offered by other partnership organisations. It had also supported inter-agency cooperation and enabled staff to share and adopt effective learning and teaching approaches. A particularly effective approach was the use of Quality Evaluation Strategy Tool (QuEST) which combines indicators from HGIOCLD? 2, LIC and HMIE college sector quality framework. This enabled all providers to carry out one self-evaluation process, instead of different processes for different audiences.

There were insufficient systems and arrangements for partners to evaluate jointly the effectiveness of their provision in relation to preparing learners for transition and progression to further levels of learning.

Although most staff engaged learners well in discussing and planning their learning, most services did not engage learners sufficiently in evaluating provision and planning improvements.

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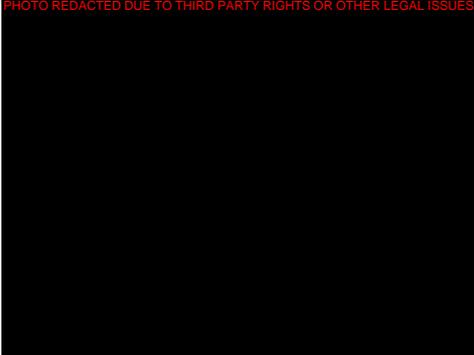
7.2
Evaluation and quality improvement **in prisons**

Most providers used their own internal quality assurance processes to evaluate their provision and inform improvements. However, these processes were carried out in isolation and not shared with the other providers. No prison had an individual strategy to direct and assist all partners in improving the literacy skills of offenders. This resulted in providers being unable to ascertain the impact their provision was having across other prisoner activities. The lack of reliable information about the literacy levels of offenders prevented partners from planning provision and services effectively, setting targets for improvements and measuring progress made in meeting these targets. Overall, partners did not involve learners sufficiently in evaluation and planning processes. As a result, there were significant missed opportunities for providers to evaluate the effectiveness of their provision in preparing learners for progression to further levels of learning, transfer to other prisons or release.

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7.3

Evaluation and quality improvement **in colleges**

All colleges applied their internal quality assurance and improvement processes to evaluate literacy provision and identify areas for improvement. In most cases, these processes were effective. Staff took good account of learner views and made good use of college surveys, focus groups and discussions with learners to inform evaluation processes and plan for improvement. Most staff involved and engaged learners well in evaluation and future planning of provision and services.

The different terminologies used by the three sectors in relation to literacy work often presented college staff with difficulties in responding meaningfully to partnership reporting systems.

There were some good examples of college staff working effectively with their partner agencies, particularly CLD services and CLD/ALNPs to carry out cross-sectoral joint evaluation of locally-based provision. This had established a joined-up approach to planning and delivery of provision and services. However, the colleges and their partners did not work effectively together in reviewing and evaluating progression opportunities and arrangements to support transition.

Self-evaluation activities carried out by college staff led to improvements to programmes and wider facilities and services for learners.

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8.1

Partnership working **in community learning and development**

In almost all partnership areas, partnership working was strong and productive at the strategic planning level. However, this was not always the case at operational and delivery levels. In most partnership areas, a wide and diverse range of partners worked cohesively and productively towards a common purpose. In these cases, literacy outcomes were well linked to broader community aspirations. In other areas, partners did not contribute actively or effectively enough to maximise opportunities for learners in their area.

The availability of local challenge funds had enabled a broad range of community partners to contribute to addressing literacy issues. This had been useful in creating localised momentum and building capacity. However, the systems for partners to access these funds were often cumbersome and placed significant additional administrative burdens on providers. The approval, allocation and monitoring processes often constrained the ability of providers to respond quickly to identified needs and inhibited forward planning. In the worst cases, this created competition between providers which reduced inter-agency cooperation. Uncertainty as to the level and availability of future funds to partnerships limited the ability of service managers to plan provision effectively.

There were some good examples of partnership staff providing high quality guidance to learners about the range and types of provision available in their area. However, in too many instances providers and key influencers were not sufficiently well informed about other types and levels of provision and progression opportunities to be able to provide learners with comprehensive information.

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8.2

Partnership
working
in prisons
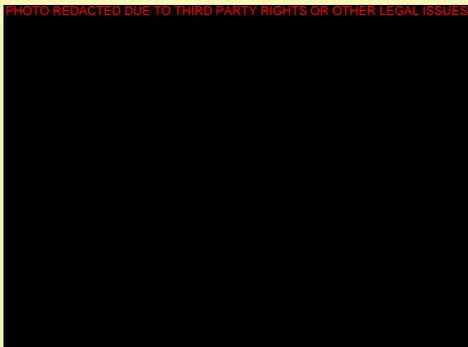
Prisons worked in partnership with a wide range of agencies. However, there were inadequate arrangements for prison, college and CLD/ALNP staff to work together, and with other agencies to maximise opportunities for offenders.

Contractual arrangements between the SPS and colleges were mechanistic and restraining. The contracts were based on colleges delivering a specific number of hours of learning a year. This requirement militated against delivering one-to-one and small group provision, which many learners would have benefited from.

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8.3

Partnership working **in colleges**

In a few local authority areas, colleges were not represented on strategic community planning partnerships. This impeded effective partnership working and restricted the ability of colleges to contribute fully to providing well-coordinated services for learners. Colleges working across a number of local authority CLD/ALNPs found it difficult to meet the needs of all partnerships, particularly where authority areas had different priorities and structures.

The majority of colleges had good relationships with their partnership agencies. In some cases, these relationships were highly productive and resulted in significant benefit to the development of literacy skills and the community. However, almost half of the colleges experienced difficulties in partnership working. In some cases, this was due to partner organisations not having sufficient or current knowledge of what colleges offered and could provide for individual learners and the community. In other cases, colleges were insufficiently proactive in communicating the context and nature of their provision to other organisations. In more than a few cases, community-based careers guidance providers did not always have current knowledge of the content and delivery styles of college programmes in relation to the development of core and literacy skills.

More than a few colleges considered their partners did not make sufficient use of college facilities and resources. Learning Connections has been working to build relationships at national level with Scotland's Colleges in order to support literacy practitioners within colleges. However, there is scope for Learning Connections staff to strengthen their relationships with colleges at local level to support literacy provision and progression to further learning.

"Being able to read and write has opened up a whole new world for me. **I now have a thirst for learning that I never had before.**"

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All sectors should:

- work in partnership to coordinate and plan locally based provision and pathways for learner progression;

- ensure there are effective arrangements and resources in place to support learners with additional barriers to learning and to positively promote equality and diversity;

- make effective use of ICT to increase access to learning and extend learners' skills;

- use appropriate assessment instruments to identify learners' initial skill levels and assess progress;

- maximise and make effective use of locally available resources and expertise;

- work together to increase opportunities for learners to gain formal recognition of achievement;

- establish systems to track learner transitions into and out of provision and end destinations;

- engage in cross-sectoral evaluation of provision and use this process to improve services and transition arrangements for learners;

- involve learners more effectively in evaluation and quality improvement processes;

- ensure they have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of each other's provision and services and apply this to plan appropriate and effective services for learners; and

- take good account of *Curriculum for Excellence* when planning programmes and provision.

Local authority community learning and development services should:

- ensure that strategic community planning partnerships involve all key partners, including colleges;

- ensure that they have effective processes in place to capture and demonstrate the contribution of CLD/ALNPs and the impact of literacy provision on wider community outcomes;

- take action to improve the quality and accessibility of accommodation for learning to individuals with disabilities; and

- ensure that ICT equipment is up to date and meets current learner needs.

Prisons should:

- establish and implement processes to identify the literacy levels of offenders and use this information to develop and implement a learning strategy to inform and direct providers in planning and delivering literacy provision;

- improve access to literacy support for all offenders;

- ensure offenders have opportunities to improve their literacy skills within wider prison activities including work sheds;

- ensure the Prisoner Tracker System is used and maintained effectively by staff; and

- review and amend the contractual arrangements with colleges to provide more responsive and flexible learning opportunities for offenders.

Colleges should:

- ensure that their partner organisations, including guidance providers, have sufficient and current knowledge of what they offer and could provide for individual learners and the community; and

- work closely with and assist CLD staff and CLD/ALNP agencies to increase opportunities for providing formal recognition of learner achievements.

Learning Connections should:

- continue to develop stronger working relationships with Scotland's Colleges at national level and strengthen relationships with colleges at local levels to encourage inter-agency working and progression to further learning; and

- continue to take a lead role in national literacy developments, including supporting national and local partners.

Scottish Government should:

- further encourage and ensure that all sectors work together to provide a coherent approach to improving the literacy skills of adults in Scotland.

ALNIS	Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland
ALNP	Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnership
ASDAN	Approved awarding body offering programmes and qualifications to develop key skills and life skills
CJA	Community Justice Authority
CLD	Community learning and development
CLD/ALNP	A generic term used to describe a local partnership responsible for literacy provision.
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FE	Further Education
HGIOCLD?2	How Good is our Learning and Development? 2
HMSCI	Her Majesty's Senior Chief Inspector
HMIE	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
HN	Higher National
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LIC	Literacies in the Community
LOTIS	Learning Outcome Tracking System
LSE	Learning, Skills and Employability
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SOA	Single Outcome Agreements
SPS	Scottish Prison Service
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
WALT	Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities

"I know more about what is going on locally because I can read leaflets at the library and the local newspaper. **I can get involved in school and community activities.**"

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What does it look like when it works well?

A toolkit for adult literacy[15] providers

Introduction

Adults undertake literacy programmes for a wide range of reasons. For most learners such a programme offers a new opportunity or second chance to gain skills, knowledge and understanding that will help them in their personal life, improve their employment options and/or enable them to undertake qualifications.

The needs of literacy learners are diverse and complex. Many have had negative experiences of previous learning situations and as a result are hesitant and under confident about re-engaging in learning. A significant number are unfamiliar with current teaching approaches and learning environments, including the use of technologies and on-line learning. Almost all have other factors or commitments which can constrain their participation.

In *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy* (Scottish Government 2007) there is a strong emphasis on supporting the individual and providing cohesive structures to deliver learning. The strategy states that learning and training providers need to:

- play to their specific strengths;

- consider themselves as part of one system geared towards helping people develop the skills they need, where articulation, integration and working with other providers are the norm; and

- develop strong partnerships and communication links to ensure that information about an individual's support needs, learning styles and achievements are shared.

15 The HMIE report focused on literacy, however, this toolkit can also be applied to numeracy.

It is therefore important that local adult literacy providers work together productively to remove as many barriers as possible and maximise the opportunities available to learners. To achieve this, all providers of locally based literacy provision need to be familiar with the range of programmes, services and resources each partner can offer. They then need to draw on their collective knowledge to plan and improve adult literacy provision in their area.

It is also important that local providers keep abreast of national developments and take advantage of professional development to enable them to provide services which best meet learners' needs and meet national priorities including Curriculum for Excellence and ALNIS.

The purpose of the toolkit
As a result of the fieldwork carried out in this task, HMIE developed key principles derived from the findings. These key principles have been collated to form a toolkit to assist local literacy partners to discuss and plan their programmes and activities.

It should be noted, that this toolkit does not seek to replace existing evaluation frameworks, such as HGIOCLD? 2, LIC, LEAP and the HMIE Quality framework for Scotland's colleges.

It is intended that the toolkit will be helpful in:

• stimulating wider dialogue between practitioners, managers and support departments on how their roles and activities impact on the quality of literacy provision and the learning experience;

• providing a basis for discussion between partner agencies in the planning of provision, progression opportunities and arrangements for supporting transition;

• encouraging partnership approaches to tracking learner progress; and

• assisting with quality assurance and enhancement activities.

Staff may wish to identify and chart where their activities contribute to *Curriculum for Excellence* and *An Adult Literacy and Numeracy Framework for Scotland*.[16]

16 http://www.aloscotland.com/alo/101.html

Using the toolkit

The toolkit can be used in different ways. For example, it could be used to look at provision for specific groups of learners such as:

• young people who may require more choices, more chances

• unemployed/employed learners

• older learners

across specific levels or modes of learning such as:

• one-to-one

• small groups

• distance learning

• preparatory college programmes

at macro- and micro-levels including:

• across a local area

• within individual organisations

• across similar types of organisations

A specific example of how the toolkit could be used would be a local literacy and numeracy partnership using it to review, discuss and plan progression routes from one to one to group-based learning, and from there to college programmes. Another example would be literacy tutors from a number of partner agencies using the toolkit to discuss and plan approaches to improving access and support for literacy learners.

The lists of key prompts and key staff who could be involved are not exhaustive or prescriptive and represent suggestions to help shape discussion, self-evaluation and quality enhancement activities.

HMIE hopes that all literacy providers will find the toolkit helpful and looks forward to hearing about ways you have used it to help shape and enhance services to improve the literacy abilities of adults.

01
Introduction

Summary of
key findings

02
Planning
of provision
and services

03
Access
and support

04
Learning
and teaching

Improving
adult literacy
in Scotland

05
Resources
to enhance
and support
learning

06
Learner
progress and
achievement

07
Evaluation
and quality
improvement

08
Partnership
working

Key principles	Key prompts	
1 Providers take good account of national drivers and educational developments when planning programmes.	• Skills for Scotland • Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) • ALN Curriculum Framework • ALNIS • More Choices, More Chances (MCMC)	
	Key staff involved Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
2 Providers take good account of individual, community and employment needs and draw on this to plan relevant programmes and services.	• Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) • Community planning processes • Local audits, market research • Community surveys • Employer needs and projections • Job recruitment services • Learner feedback • Partner agency feedback	
	Key staff involved Senior and operational managers responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Planning ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
3 Providers are familiar with, and take good account of, the range of programmes and services offered by partner agencies and draw on this to plan and schedule local provision.	• Partner agency information • Community planning processes • Local guidance services	
	Key staff involved Senior and operational managers responsible for: ○ Planning ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
4 Providers maximise the use of locally available resources, skills and expertise when planning programmes and services.	• Partner agency information • Community planning processes • Local guidance services	
	Key staff involved Senior and operational managers responsible for: ○ Planning ○ Resources ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	

	Strengths	Areas for development

Key principles	Key prompts	
1 **Providers take good account of the lifestyles and circumstances of learners and provide accessible and flexible learning opportunities to meet these needs.**	• **ALN Curriculum Framework** • **Learner feedback** • **Partner agency feedback** • **Employer feedback** • **Community feedback**	
	Key staff involved Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Childcare and financial support ○ Planning ○ Quality ○ Resources ○ Partnership/External liaison	
2 **Providers promote literacy services effectively and apply appropriate differentiated approaches to target and engage different groups of learners.**	• **Equalities legislation** • **Publicity and promotional materials** • **Press and media arrangements** • **Learner feedback** • **Employer and community feedback** • **Job recruitment services feedback**	
	Key staff involved Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Marketing and publicity ○ Planning ○ Guidance and support ○ Equalities ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
3 **Providers have effective arrangements in place to support learners with additional barriers to learning.**	• **Disability discrimination legislation** • **Local and national resources and CPD opportunities** • **Disability audits** • **Health and safety audits** • **Learner feedback** • **Partner agency feedback**	
	Key staff involved Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Guidance and support ○ Resources ○ Quality ○ Equalities ○ Partnership/External liaison	
4 **Providers make good use of diagnostic tools to engage learners in identifying their literacy skills at the start of programmes.**	• **Range of diagnostic tools** • **ALN Curriculum Wheel** • **Partner agency feedback** • **Learner feedback**	
	Key staff involved Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Resources ○ Guidance and support ○ Quality	

	Strengths	Areas for development

Table C
04 Learning and teaching
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Key principles	Key prompts	
1 Providers take good account of individual and group needs and plan and contextualise learning activities to meet these needs.	• ALN Curriculum Framework • Learner feedback • Evaluation processes • Peer and interagency review and staff development activities • Learner retention, achievement and progression data • Partner agency feedback • Employer and job recruitment services feedback	
	Key staff involved Operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Guidance and support ○ Resources ○ Quality	
2 Providers offer good opportunities for learners to experience and discuss different types of learning and teaching approaches.	• ALN Curriculum Framework • Programme and lesson planning • Arrangements for learners to explore and discuss their preferred styles of learning • Learner feedback • Evaluation processes	
	Key staff involved Operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Guidance and support ○ Resources ○ Quality	
3 Providers make good use of resources, including ICT to enhance and extend learning.	• Lesson and programme planning • Range, quality and accessibility of resources • Learner feedback • Levels of staff skills in use of ICT • Access to local and national resources including Adult Literacies Online • Evaluation processes	
	Key staff involved Operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Resources ○ Quality	
4 Providers deliver learning activities which develop learner confidence and independence in learning and prepare them for progression.	• ALN Curriculum Framework • Lesson and programme planning • Range of learning and teaching approaches • Learner feedback • Arrangements for learners to access local resources and support outwith class times • Partner agency feedback • Evaluation processes	
	Key staff involved Operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Resources ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
5 Providers have effective arrangements in place for identifying and addressing the continuing professional development needs of staff.	• Arrangements for staff to review and discuss their training needs • Local and national development CPD opportunities • Evaluation processes	
	Key staff involved Operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Quality ○ Staff development ○ Partnership/External liaison	

	Strengths		Areas for development

Key principles	Key prompts	
1 Providers ensure that the standard of accommodation and resources, particularly the specification and availability of ICT, is appropriate to current learner needs.	• Estate and accommodation audits • ICT strategy • Feedback from learners and staff • Interagency collaboration in the planning and specification of resources • Evaluation processes **Key staff involved** Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Resources ○ Estates ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
2 Providers work effectively with their partner agencies to provide learners with access to other local learning facilities and resources to enhance and extend learning.	• Community planning processes • Local partnership arrangements • Learner, staff and partner agency feedback • Evaluation processes **Key staff involved** Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Planning ○ Resources ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
3 Providers ensure that accommodation is accessible to all learners, including those with restricted mobility, and there are appropriate resources available to assist learners with additional barriers to learning.	• Equalities legislation • Accommodation and disability audits • Learner and staff feedback • Support and partner agency feedback • Evaluation processes **Key staff involved** Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Resources ○ Planning ○ Guidance and support services ○ Estates ○ Quality	
4 Providers ensure that learning materials and resources promote awareness of equality and cultural diversity.	• Arrangements for reviewing and auditing materials and resources • Learner and staff feedback • Evaluation processes **Key staff involved** Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Resources ○ Equalities ○ Quality	

	Strengths	Areas for development

Key principles	Key prompts	
1 Providers have effective arrangements in place to assess the starting levels of learners, measure progress and track progression to further learning or other outcomes.	• Arrangements and systems for identifying learner starting levels, measuring progress and tracking progression to further learning or other outcomes. • Interagency referral and reporting systems	
	Key staff involved Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
2 Providers engage learners regularly in reflecting on their progress and identifying next steps. They use this process effectively to develop confidence and independence in learning.	• Arrangements for learners to plan and reflect on learning • Learner and staff feedback • Evaluation processes	
	Key staff involved Operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Quality ○ Guidance and support ○ Partnership/External liaison	
3 Providers actively encourage and promote progression to further learning effectively.	• Programme planning • Arrangements and approaches employed by staff and partner agencies to promote progression to further learning opportunities • Feedback from learners, staff and partner agencies • Data on learner progression to further learning.	
	Key staff involved Operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
4 Providers offer good opportunities for learners to achieve formal recognition of their literacy skills and wider achievements.	• Programme planning • Range of opportunities for learners to receive formal recognition • Internal and/or partnership arrangements for providing accreditation • Feedback from learners, staff and partner agencies • Evaluation processes	
	Key staff involved Operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
5 Providers work effectively with partner agencies to encourage, support and ease transition to other types and levels of learning.	• Programme planning • Internal and interagency arrangements to ease transition and progression to other types and levels of learning • Induction arrangements for new learners • Data on learner progression and destinations • Feedback from learners, staff and partner agencies • Evaluation processes	
	Key staff involved Operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Quality ○ Planning ○ Partnership/External liaison	

	Strengths	Areas for development

Key principles	Key prompts	
1 Providers have robust procedures in place to record learner recruitment, retention, achievement and progression. They use this information systematically and effectively within evaluation activities and to set targets for improvement.	• **Systems for tracking learner participation, achievement and progression to further learning.** • **Evaluation processes** **Key staff involved** Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Planning ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
2 Providers work with their local partners to evaluate the impact of locally based provision on improving the literacy skills of adults. They make good use of this process to address gaps or duplication, provide appropriate pathways to progression and plan future activities.	• **Arrangements for interagency evaluation of local provision and services** • **Community planning processes** • **Partner agency feedback** **Key staff involved** Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Planning ○ Resources ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
3 Providers regularly and systematically engage learners in evaluating programmes and services and use learner feedback to inform improvements.	• **Arrangements for gaining learner feedback** • **Arrangements for engaging learners in evaluation processes** **Key staff involved** Operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Learner engagement ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
4 Providers work effectively with partner agencies to share effective practice and approaches.	• **Arrangements for partner agencies to share good practice locally and nationally** • **Staff and partner feedback** • **Evaluation processes** **Key staff involved** Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Planning ○ Resources ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	

	Strengths		Areas for development

Key principles	Key prompts	
1 Providers have established open and productive relationships with their local partners. These relationships are based on a shared purpose, play to specific strengths and result in a collective approach to providing high quality and appropriate opportunities and outcomes for learners.	• Community planning processes • Levels of knowledge and understanding of other types of provision • Arrangements for interagency communication and collaboration • Feedback from learners, staff and partner agencies	
	Key staff involved Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Planning ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
2 Providers work closely with their local partners to ensure staff have up to date knowledge and understanding of the different types and levels of provision and resources available. Staff draw on this process to provide learners with accurate, comprehensive information about other types and levels of learning.	• Arrangements for staff to update their knowledge of other types of learning opportunities • Arrangements for informing and updating local guidance and job recruitment services of the types of learning opportunities available • Learner, staff and partner agency feedback	
	Key staff involved Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Planning ○ Resources ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	
3 Providers collaborate with partner agencies to establish transparent and effective funding arrangements which take good account of learners needs and enable forward planning.	• Community planning processes • Arrangements for collaborating with partner agencies • Systems for interagency planning of provision and resources • Staff and partner agency feedback **Key staff involved** Senior and operational managers and staff responsible for: ○ Learning and teaching ○ Planning ○ Resources ○ Quality ○ Partnership/External liaison	

Strengths	Areas for development

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Annex A

Fieldwork was carried out in the following services and institutions:

Local authorities: Community Learning and Development

Shetland Islands Council

Dundee Council

Scottish Borders Council

Edinburgh Council

Stirling Council

HM Prisons

Castle Huntly

Aberdeen

Edinburgh

Cornton Vale

Colleges

Ayr College

Orkney College

North Highland College

Motherwell College

Reid Kerr College

Edinburgh's Telford College

Borders College

Inverness College

Forth Valley College

John Wheatley College

Annex B

Quotes from learners

- *My class is friendly and relaxed. I tell my tutors what I want to work on and what I need, and they help me to do that … I have learned new skills and made a lot of progress. I now have choices that I didn't have before and I am looking forward to new adventures in my life.*

- *Being able to read and write has opened up a whole new world for me. I now have the confidence and the skills to learn about other things … and a thirst for learning that I never had before.*

- *I now take a lot more of an interest in things at home. I check my own bills … I am more confident about dealing with trades people ... and making improvements around the house. Now that I can read instruction leaflets I can buy flat pack furniture and put it together myself.*

- *My new skills have helped me perform better at work … I am now more able to take on additional responsibilities … My spelling has really improved and my boss says my written reports are much better.*

- *I find shopping easier. I can understand the offers displayed in shops … I can read recipes and work out ingredients and cooking times.*

- *Now that I can read, I can use the internet to find out about things which is good fun and very useful … I go to the library and also buy books to read at home.*
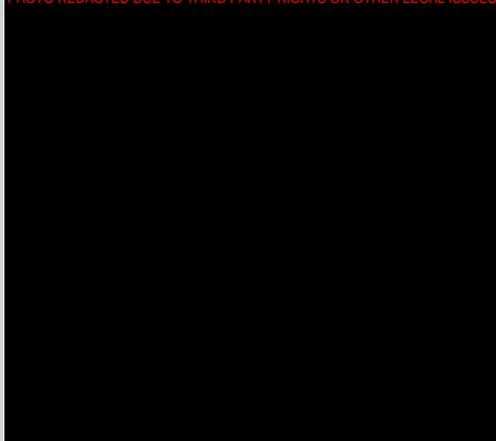
- *Now that I have improved my spelling and grammar I can now work towards getting qualifications … Being able to get help with my writing and spelling has helped me to pass my exams.*

- *I can now write and use computers with confidence. I write and send e-mails, add on attachments and send photos. This really helps me keep in touch with my family and my friends.*

- *I have learned a lot in class. My reading is a lot better. I can read TV magazines and send text messages to my friends from my mobile phone.*

- *As a result of working on my writing, I can now use more expressive words and have a better understanding of punctuation. I can structure my writing, produce better short stories and give my characters a voice … I have now written my autobiography. I am proud of myself because I could not have done it before.*

- *Coming to the class has helped me write properly and I now make very few mistakes … I can now proof-read and correct my own spelling … Now people can read the notes that I leave at work and at home …*

- *Since starting to develop my skills I have found that, after all these years, I am able to learn.*

- *Learning has helped me understand that having a learning difficulty does not mean I have to feel unconfident and that I should keep my head up.*

- *Coming to class has improved my skills and I can now help my wee brothers at home with their homework. I feel much more confident at home with my family.*

- *Learning to read and write properly has taught me that I am not stupid and has made me think more about what I want to do with my life … it has given me the confidence to search for jobs in areas I am interested in. I feel a lot more confident about my skills and myself.*

- *My literacy class has helped me improve my skills for writing job applications … I can now do CVs on the computer and feel more confident about attending job interviews. Learning has helped me focus on this. Now, I am looking for a job … whereas before I wouldn't have cared.*

- *I now feel less isolated … I know more about what is going on locally because I can now read leaflets at the library and the local newspaper … I can get involved in school and community activities.*

- *I can now read to my children and help them with their homework … I can write notes for my daughter to take to school, read her school reports and go parents' evenings without worrying about what to say.*

- *I can now fill in forms and write a letter on my own which makes me feel that I can look after myself and not have to rely on other people.*
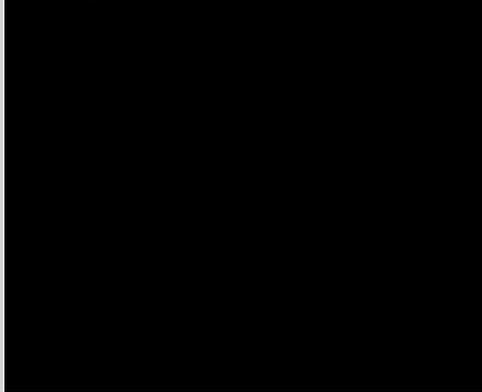
www.hmie.gov.uk

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POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE