

Progress in Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland

2008/2009

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National leadership | Effective local action |
Quality learning experience | System that learns | Promoting awareness

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For more information about adult literacies, please visit:
www.scotland.gov.uk/learningconnections

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Foreword from the Minister for Schools and Skills



Learning opens the door to opportunity and lays the foundation for growth – for individuals, businesses and communities – and its role has never been more important than it is today. The Scottish Government is clear that lifelong learning, guided by the priorities set out in *Skills for Scotland: a lifelong skills strategy*, must take its place at the forefront of our efforts to overcome the economic challenges we currently face. Employers must make effective and efficient use of their employees’ abilities and skills; individuals must identify the skills they need to develop to maximise their chances in employment and learning providers must ensure that they offer the appropriate learning opportunities and support that employers and individuals need. These actions will help to ensure that we emerge from the current situation, ready to flourish in the upturn.

Skills for Scotland recognises that the ability to read, write and use numbers underpins everything we do in our everyday lives – at home, at work and in our communities. This report, *Progress in Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland 2008/2009*, provides evidence of the true difference adult literacy and numeracy work makes to Scotland. The personal stories demonstrate how achieving literacy and numeracy in learning boosts confidence and heightens aspirations; how it improves family lives and how it opens doors into employment and community life.

Difficult economic times mean that resources are tighter and that priorities might need to be reassessed. However, the Scottish Government calls on its partners to continue to value the difference that adult literacy and numeracy support for adults can make to economic recovery and social cohesion. By doing this we ensure that the door to opportunity remains open for all of Scotland’s adults and we can then all look forward to a smarter Scotland that is healthier, wealthier and fairer, with a stronger and safer society, and a greener environment.

I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who has supported Scotland’s adults to improve their literacy and numeracy skills during the past year, and to congratulate those adults who took that important first step back into learning.

I wish you all well for the coming year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Brown'.

Keith Brown MSP, Minister for Schools and Skills

Introduction

Scotland's adult literacy and numeracy policy

The *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (2001)* report (ALNIS)¹ laid the foundations necessary to build a world-class adult literacy and numeracy service for Scotland. Since its publication, progress and achievements have been recorded in annual reports published by Learning Connections² (Lifelong Learning Directorate of the Scottish Government). Until 2007 end-of-year reports from the 32 regional adult literacy and numeracy partnerships also reported to Government on local achievements. Up to 2007 almost 200,000 of Scotland's adults were supported to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

In November 2007, a Concordat³ was signed between the Scottish Government and local government, setting out the terms of a new relationship based on mutual respect and partnership. While the Scottish Government will set the direction of policy and the overarching outcomes, under the terms of the new relationship it will stand back from micro-managing service delivery, thus reducing bureaucracy and freeing up local authorities and their partners to meet varying local needs and circumstances across Scotland. As a result of the Concordat, adult literacy and numeracy partnerships are no longer required to submit end-of-year reports.

Most funding for local authorities is now provided by means of a block grant. It is for each local authority to allocate financial resources to local adult literacy and numeracy provision on the basis of local needs and priorities, having first fulfilled its statutory obligations and the jointly agreed set of national and local priorities.

Adult literacy and numeracy provision is important to the Scottish Government's central purpose of "creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth". This is recognised in the *National Performance Framework*⁴ where one of the National Indicators is to "reduce the number of working age people with severe literacy and numeracy problems". This Indicator is used in many of the Single Outcome Agreements produced by local authorities.

¹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/158952/0043191.pdf>

² For reports, visit: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Life-Long-Learning/17551>

³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/923/0054147.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/13092240/9>

Adult literacy and numeracy work contributes to several of the 15 National Outcomes, primarily:

- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society and
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.

In November 2008, the Scottish Government and COSLA launched *Building on Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities – a joint statement on community learning and development, including adult literacy and numeracy*. This joint statement emphasises the importance of adult literacy and numeracy in achieving National Outcomes and advocates continued strengthening of partnership working to further develop adult literacy and numeracy services across the country.

Characteristics of adult literacy and numeracy practice in Scotland

Scotland's approach to adult literacy and numeracy learning and teaching is internationally recognised, attracting interest most recently from Belgium, Switzerland and New Zealand.

It has two distinctive characteristics:

- In Scotland we use the term “literacies”, advocated in *Literacies in the Community*⁵ to reflect the “dynamic and diverse ways in which adults encounter and use words and numbers in their written form” (this term will be used throughout the rest of this report).
- Learning is based on a “social practice” approach, which recognises that effective adult literacies learning acknowledges and takes account of its social, cultural, economic and political contexts. The emphasis is on how individuals and groups use literacy and numeracy in their everyday lives.

Scottish Government research⁶ shows that adults learn most effectively when the learning has direct relevance to their lives. *An Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework for Scotland*⁷ (the *Curriculum Framework*) shows how a curriculum negotiated between the learner and tutor builds on the learner's existing skills, knowledge and understanding.

⁵ City of Edinburgh Council, 2000, <http://www.aloscotland.com/alo/viewresource.htm?id=265>.

⁶ Practitioner-Led Action Research (see page 26)

⁷ Scottish Executive, 2005; <http://www.aloscotland.com/alo/files/ALNcurriculumframework.pdf>

Furthermore, adult literacies work is aligned with the principles that underpin community learning and development as set out in *Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities*⁸. It promotes:

- empowerment of individuals and groups to influence factors that affect their lives
- participation in decision-making
- inclusion, equal opportunity and anti-discrimination
- self-determination in life choices and
- partnership working between agencies to maximise the effectiveness of provision.

These principles are demonstrated in the *Curriculum Framework*.

The *Curriculum Framework* does not limit the outcomes of literacies learning solely to the improvement of reading, writing and using numbers, but also recognises the difference learning can make to people's lives in terms of their confidence, self-esteem and awareness of their own learning possibilities. *The Wheel*, which encapsulates the principles outlined in the *Curriculum Framework*, is a tool which demonstrates visually the overarching principle that the learner is at the heart of the learning process.



These principles are also in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*⁹, Scotland's 3-18 curriculum, which aims to create successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. We need to take particular account of current developments in learning for children and young people. The *Curriculum for Excellence* is intended to change Scotland's learning landscape: literacies learning will thread through all learning at all levels and parents and carers will need to understand changes in how children are learning.

Adult literacies provision across Scotland

Adult literacies work in Scotland takes place across sectors. It is delivered by colleges, local authorities, voluntary organisations, unions and private training providers. The range of settings for delivery is diverse and includes local communities, colleges, voluntary organisations, prisons and workplaces. Partnership working between providers across different sectors is essential in order to maximise the impact of literacies learning opportunities and to enable learners to progress into further learning where appropriate.

⁸ Scottish Executive, 2004: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/47021/0025615.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/index.asp>

Providers value and build on the knowledge and experience adults bring with them to literacies learning. The individual learning planning process ensures that the learning – and assessment for learning – is focused on individuals’ goals. While measuring the overall impact of adult literacies work can be difficult (because learners’ capabilities and achievements vary), it is important to recognise the positive impact this individual focus can have on adults’ confidence as they begin to see what they can achieve as learners.

The impact of adult literacies learning

Literacies learning can boost individuals’ self-esteem, confidence and belief in their capacity to learn and achieve. This can lead them to value education more, not just for themselves but also for their children. Literacies learning can improve workers’ ability to do their jobs, increase their chances of promotion and of staying in employment. For those not in work, it can improve their chances of gaining employment. For employers, it can mean increased productivity, competitiveness and a more motivated workforce. Also, literacies learning can make a contribution to strengthening communities: whether by increasing the skills of members of community groups involved in environmental or social projects, or by being integrated into work with young people. Ultimately, adult literacies learning can have strong, positive impacts on Scotland’s success and on its social, political, economic and cultural wellbeing.

This report

This report describes the difference that literacies learning has made during 2008/2009 by using the four areas of life as set out in ALNIS and the *Curriculum Framework*. The report will focus on:

- individual life
- family life
- working life and
- community life.

This report features statements about the difference literacies learning has made to adult learners, their tutors and stakeholders in adult literacies work, together with updates on national and local developments.

The report ends by outlining how we will build on our knowledge and understanding of adult literacies to guide future developments in Scotland.

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Section 1:

**The difference adult
literacies learning has
made to individual lives**

7

Learners talk about the difference ...

8

Learners from Dundee

"I've been coming for about a year now and I gained more confidence in my ability to write something someone would like to read, my spelling has improved and I can go towards something that I thought had passed me by as I left school with nothing more than bad memories."

"I would say I have gained in my self-esteem as a person and now have something more to say for myself with just being here."

"I have to nip myself to believe this is me really doing these subjects. I now walk in class with my head held high."

Learners from East Ayrshire

"I am less scared of being short changed and I can do some budgeting to see what I can afford."

"I am getting on better at maths at college, in fact I love maths now, I look forward to getting it once a week now I know what to do."

Learners from Glasgow

"My wellbeing improved and now I'm volunteering!"

"I won't have to ask my husband for help so much. I want to get on and do this by myself."

Learner from Aberdeenshire

"I'm glad I went to the class - it gave me a boost with my numbers and built up my confidence meeting other people."

Adults take up literacies learning opportunities for any number of reasons: sometimes to complete specific tasks such as budgeting or writing emails, or with a broader goal such as preparing for college or re-entering the workforce.

The following quotations from learners across Scotland illustrate the diversity of reasons why individuals embark on literacies learning and some of the positive differences that literacies learning can make to people's lives as they gain belief in their own capacity to progress and succeed.

Learners from Perth & Kinross

"I wanted to bring back cigarettes and tobacco from my holiday in Kos. Grams and kilograms came in very handy."

"Every one of us is capable of achieving more than we think we can."

"I've made brilliant progress . . . I can read by myself and I can write by myself now."

Learners from Scottish Borders

"I am blossoming!"

"After a problem that made me ill, I decided to take control of the problems. Now I am enjoying learning, and improving my reading, writing, and literacy skills."

"I see more of a future."

"I want to keep on writing and hopefully take some qualification, I would like to work with learners as a volunteer."

Learner from Highland

"This time I'm not going to be back into prison. If I can work on my reading and writing on the outside I'll have more of a chance of getting a job."

National leadership and effective local action to maximise the difference adult literacies learning has made to individuals' lives

We need to value learners' achievements so that they can see the progress they are making. The individual learning planning process should ensure that achievements in learning can be demonstrated against each learner's goals. Much adult literacies work is about removing barriers that individuals face, often by using innovative approaches to learning and teaching and using new technologies to engage disaffected learners.

Valuing learners' achievements

→ Valuing progress with assessment and accreditation

We can value learners' achievements in a number of ways. We know that formative assessment is a powerful process for supporting effective learning. We also know that summative assessment, in particular the accreditation of work, can boost learners' confidence and their belief in their own capacity to achieve.

Scotland's approach is recognised world-wide as exemplifying good practice in formative assessment, as demonstrated by case studies in *Teaching, Learning and Assessment for Adults: Improving Foundation Skills OECD 2008*¹⁰. Sometimes known as "assessment for learning", formative assessment is an integral part of the learning process, which develops the learner's skills, knowledge and understanding. Techniques of feedback, questioning and "scaffolding" enable learner and tutor to understand progress, identify needs and shape teaching and learning. Formative assessment helps to embed learning, encourages learners to recognise what they have learned and promotes reflective learning.

Learning Connections' Worth Doing Conference in October 2008, and its associated publications, showed some practical examples of the debate around the benefits and challenges of using the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) for levelling learning or delivering qualifications.

Learning Connections funded 26 partnerships across the country to raise awareness of assessment for learning. Some partnerships used this opportunity to introduce SQA 10-hour units in Communication and Numeracy at SCQF levels 2 and 3 which provide an accessible introduction in community settings to qualifications. Mary Rhind, Highland ALN Partnership (HALP) Co-ordinator said, "This initiative has been key to moving practitioners in HALP over the perceived hurdle of accreditation for literacies learners while maintaining a social practice approach."



Bite-size success in the Borders

In Scottish Borders the new SQA 10-hour Core Skills Units were favourably received by literacies practitioners and during 2008/2009 there was an increase in the uptake of accreditation by learners as a result of their introduction. Scottish Borders' Community Learning and Development service is an SQA Approved Centre and the literacies co-ordinator's role has been broadened to include co-ordination of the SQA Centre.

¹⁰ <http://www.adultliteraciesonline.com/alo/viewresource.htm?id=311>

→ Valuing learners' work

At the International Literacy Day Conference in 2008, the Scottish Book Trust and Learning Connections launched a new partnership initiative. The aim of the partnership was to support the development of a range of publications by adult literacies learners for adult literacies learners across Scotland. Many groups will have their writing published whilst others will receive practical support in relation to using publishing software or dealing with printing companies. The publications will be launched at Learning Connections' International Literacy Day Conference 2009. They will then be distributed to literacies learning providers across Scotland.

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Removing barriers to learning

Removing barriers to learning might mean anything from supporting learners who have a specific learning difficulty to enabling those who live in isolated communities to access learning.

→ A new pair of eyes

Learning Connections' research into visual difficulties is due to be completed in 2009. While the main aim of the research was to establish the extent of previously undetected visual problems in adults with literacy difficulties, the project also included treatment of conditions which would affect reading ability. The impact of the treatment for many of those involved in the study has been profound and, in some cases, life changing.

Comments from learners in Angus whose lives have been changed by this project speak for themselves:

"I was doing SVQ level 3 when I started with the visual research project. I was writing my piece and I had a scribe. Then I got my glasses – by the time I was half way through the SVQ I didn't need the scribe anymore."

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"It was like getting a new pair of eyes! I can read easily now."

"At school, the teachers make you read out in class, even if they know you can't read. Why would they do that? I've had a terrible time and all for a pair of glasses!"

A full collection of Angus learners' comments and a short film of learners describing their experiences are available on Adult Literacies Online, the national online resource bank.

Words in hand: developing deaf literacies

In 2008/2009 Learning Connections hosted its first ever national seminar on deaf literacies¹¹, in collaboration with CLAN Edinburgh¹². Learning Connections also supported the development of learning resources and a renewed awareness-raising training, both now available on Adult Literacies Online¹³.

Effective learning for adults with learning difficulties

Working with Lead Scotland¹⁴, Learning Connections held two seminars to synthesise recent research and developments in training to enhance opportunities for independence for literacies learners with learning difficulties, by engaging carers and supporters in the learning process¹⁵.

Adult learners persisting with literacies learning

Learning Connections commissioned research¹⁶ to investigate how literacies programmes can support learners to persist with their learning despite complex life challenges. A subsequent seminar encouraged providers to take up the lessons learned. This research illustrates the fragile nature of provision for vulnerable adults who most need support, and the difficulties they face in persisting with learning and achieving their goals.

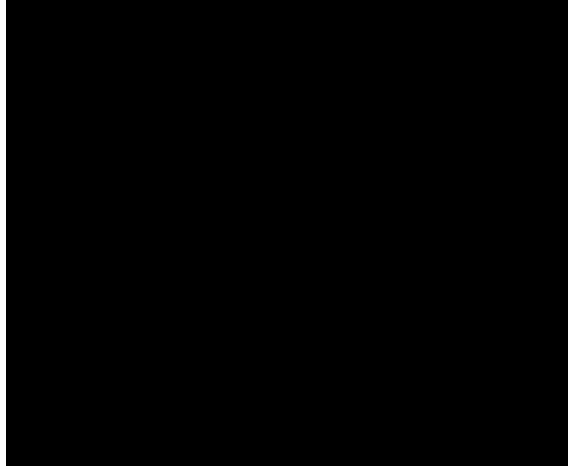
Literacies learning goes online

Online blended learning was the focus of Learning Connections' ICT development work during 2008/2009, with a support contract and funding that stimulated new opportunities for learners to access learning online. Blended learning is about supplementing face-to-face support with access to online learning available any time, any where, via the Internet, to enhance the learning experience. Sixteen areas across Scotland developed online options and introduce these to their learners.

Games technology supporting literacies learning

The use of games technology was explored through projects using *Neverwinter Nights*, a quest-based interactive computer game, adapted by West Nottinghamshire College to include literacy and numeracy learning activities. The game was used successfully to engage disaffected young adults in literacies learning.

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¹¹ <http://www.adultliteraciesonline.com/alo/viewresource.htm?id=1059>

¹² <http://www.clanedinburgh.org>

¹³ <http://www.adultliteraciesonline.com/alo/viewresource.htm?id=1379>

¹⁴ <http://www.lead.org.uk>

¹⁵ <http://www.adultliteraciesonline.com/alo/viewresource.htm?id=310>

¹⁶ <http://www.adultliteraciesonline.com/alo/viewresource.htm?id=1199>

The Learner Web

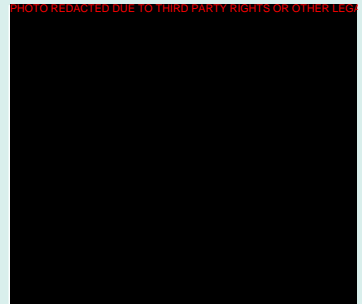
Learning Connections is working in partnership with Portland University, Oregon, and 10 states of the USA to create a *Learner Web*¹⁷. This blended approach to adult literacies learning encourages individuals to use interactive learning and to link with local tutors and other learners online or over the phone. The *Learner Web* aims to reduce the isolation of learners in remote areas and to improve access to learning for those who have many demands on their time. At this early stage in the development, a pilot is to take place with Glasgow City Council and with learners in more rural areas.

Innovating to engage learners

Across Scotland tutors are developing new ways to engage learners in literacies learning. Learning Connections encourages everyone in the adult literacies “community of practice” to share resources and innovative approaches on CoPAL, the online community¹⁸.

Falkirk measures up

In Falkirk *Measuring up to DIY* has been developed around the accreditation outcomes for Numeracy (Measuring) at SCQF level 3. The course involves practical measuring and calculating activities, a visit to a local DIY superstore to discuss purchase options with store staff. An end of course task is to measure a room, calculate how much wallpaper, paint and floor covering are required, then to calculate the total cost.



Working with gypsy travellers in Perth and Kinross

Perth and Kinross’s Adult Literacy and Numeracy Team has been working with the local Traveller community over the last four years. Recently a project marked the opening of the upgraded Travellers’ site. An exhibition of stories and photographs about the Traveller culture was displayed at events to mark International Literacy Day 2008.

Specifically, the project highlighted the use of storytelling to inform younger members of the community about their history and heritage, a practice that is threatened by their current, more settled, way of life.

Oral storytelling also formed the basis for the development of story writing skills, introducing participants to a wide variety of literacy skills. The use of Dictaphones as well as pen and paper allowed everyone to participate without feeling embarrassed by their inability to read or write being made public in a small tight-knit community.

The project also encouraged the Travellers to run their own traditional craft workshops, fitting within their culture of sharing stories as they work. This approach was successful in engaging with members of the community who had not previously made any contact with adult literacy or community capacity building staff.

¹⁷ www.learnerweb.org

¹⁸ For more about CoPAL see page 25

So much to celebrate ...

“Improving literacies has changed my life,” said Jim Cranston to an audience of over 300 gathered to celebrate the 12th year of the Fife Adult Learners’ Awards, after proudly winning the Fife Literacies Learner of the Year Award.

Although he worked on building sites for many years to support his young family, Jim’s ambition was to work in the catering industry. At the age of 46 he took the plunge and made enquiries about catering courses but found out that he would need to do something about his reading and writing skills to cope with the coursework.

Jim has since made huge strides in numeracy, communication and information technology skills at Adam Smith College and has set his sights higher in the job market. His success at learning has also inspired his daughter who has started on her own learning programme.

Jim said the time he has spent at college has changed his life and encouraged him to continue to improve his education with further learning planned for the future.

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John Bennett, Fife Literacies Co-ordinator, congratulates Jim Cranston on his achievements

Section 2:

The difference adult literacies learning has made to family lives

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Talking about the difference ...

Keeping in touch with relatives, helping children with homework, or reading a story to a grandchild are among the reasons given by literacies learners for taking the first step back into learning. The impact of one family member's learning on their relatives, especially their children or grandchildren, can be significant.

The following quotations from learners illustrate how literacies learning can make a difference to people's experience of family life.

"I enjoy working as part of a group of like minded women. It helps me with my grand-daughter's homework."

Aberdeen learner

"I know I am not the best speller or the fastest reader, but I'll give it a go. I am even reading to my son. It might take an hour, but I get there in the end."

Dundee learner

"I have noticed a big difference and I am now not embarrassed with my kids and their homework. Before I would have come up with excuses and said that the dog was needing a walk."

Dumfries & Galloway learner

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Extract from an interview with a family in Dumfries & Galloway:

Dad: *There was this man there and he told stories, the kids had to draw the pictures and we had to write a story and edit it all.*

Son: *(Showing a storybook they had made.) We all wrote it together, my dad and my wee sister and me.*

Dad: *I worked on the farm at the time so that was how we got the animal idea.*

Son: *It was my dad's idea. We'd watched this programme about this sheep dog puppy, the puppy was actually telling the story, so my dad said why don't we try that and it worked out - so it's the calf telling the story. My wee sister did the pictures and me and my dad did the story.*

Mum: *It's a lovely thing to keep.*

"I can do things by myself sometimes, especially e-mailing. Now I can keep in contact with family and friends."

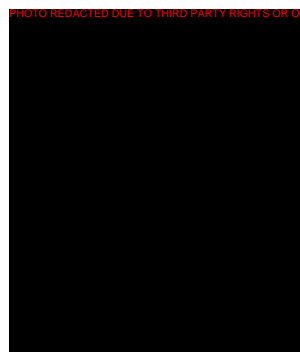
Aberdeen learner

National leadership and effective local action to maximise the difference adult literacies learning has made to family life

“The idea that parents need to be literate and that through the intergenerational transfer of skills and attitudes the parent’s education can influence the subsequent educational achievement of their children, is a foundational belief of contemporary family literacy programs.”

Dr Tom Sticht *Toward a Multiple Life Cycles Education Policy*

This idea was clearly illustrated by international educational consultant Dr Tom Sticht in his speech at *The Best Start: a conference about family learning*, hosted by Learning Connections in March 2009 to raise the profile and importance of literacies learning for families in Scotland. Referring to educational theories and research from the past century, Dr Sticht provided compelling evidence that education for parents leads to improved educational outcomes for children. His ideas about the importance of oracy¹⁹ were further expanded in his presentations to delegates at seminars held in Glasgow and Edinburgh.



Dr Sticht

Feedback from the conference and the seminars showed the benefit of inviting Dr Sticht to Scotland:

“The use of researched data to support arguments was very useful and a timely reminder to us all on the importance of family learning. I liked the international context ...”

“I’ve disseminated information and discussed with section leaders in my faculty regarding steps we can take towards implementing family learning in areas where this does not feature.”

“I will certainly be advocating that learners use newly acquired confidence in their literacy skills at home, and will encourage my learners to introduce their children to stories and books from an early age, stressing the importance of oracy. I am looking forward to getting new ideas from the links suggested.”

Other national developments in family literacies include the setting up of a family literacies practitioners’ network which will meet two or three times a year, a family literacies page on CoPAL and further partnership working between Learning Connections, Bookstart Scotland and the Scottish Network for Parental Involvement in Children’s Learning.

Family literacies learning in Scotland benefits from a diversity of approaches, with provision developed to suit local contexts and, of course, individuals. Across Scotland, partnership working plays a key part in the success of most family literacies projects.

¹⁹ oracy is “... the ability to express oneself fluently and grammatically in speech” Oxford English Dictionary Online

The best start – with Bookstart

Bookstart is the leading agency for the promotion of literature in Scotland, developing innovative projects to encourage adults and children to read, write and be inspired by books. One of their projects is Bookstart, Scotland's national book "gifting" programme, that encourages all parents to enjoy books with their children from as early an age as possible.

The Bookstart programme is universal, and Bookstart co-ordinators and their gifting partners sometimes encounter adults who may not feel confident about sharing books with their child. Learning Connections supports Bookstart in engaging with these adults and a Learning Connections representative attends the Bookstart Steering Group and Co-ordinator training meetings to provide advice about approaches used in adult literacies delivery. Local links have also been made between Bookstart and adult literacies practitioners.

Frances turns a corner

Frances joined East Ayrshire's Essential Skills project after attending Women's Aid. She had health problems, very low self esteem and had to face interviews and reviews in relation to regaining access to her two children. She had learned to read at school but avoided writing whenever possible. Frances worked with her tutor for a year and in that time became a confident writer. She found that she could express herself through story-writing and write about things she found difficult to talk about. She now feels able to support her children with homework and has taken up a computing course at a local community centre.

Mum's own mag!

I'm a Mum – Now What? was created by a group of learners in West Lothian thanks to a Learning Connections learner publication grant. The project started when a Sure Start Development Worker identified a literacy need in a group of her clients. In particular, they were struggling to understand some of the written information they received on parenting. Sure Start co-delivered a group with West Lothian's Adult Basic Education to look at the parenting issues most important to the mums involved. The group then presented their ideas in a "magazine-style" booklet that they hoped would appeal to other parents. It features parenting tips but emphasises the importance of new parents keeping their own identity. Indeed, being in the group helped the writers to think about their own learning potential for the future. The booklet has been well received with some very positive feedback from parents, both locally and nationally.

Family literacies learning gets a kick-start!

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Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, with (left to right) Mark Reynolds (Motherwell Football Club); Lex Gold, Executive Chairman, Scottish Premier League; Danny Invincible (Kilmarnock Football Club); and Tomáš Černý (Hamilton Academical Football Club).

Learning Connections manages and funds The Big Plus²⁰ adult literacy and numeracy awareness-raising campaign, and has worked with the National Literacy Trust on one of their projects: the *Premier League Reading Stars*. This initiative uses the motivational power of football personalities to encourage families who might potentially be literacies learners into a structured reading programme within libraries. Twelve projects across Scotland were allocated funding and these ran until the end of July 2009. A player from each football club chose a favourite children's book and an adult book and provided quotes around his book choice. Two libraries within the catchment area of each of the Scottish Premier League clubs were used as the venue for teaching sessions which were co-delivered by library staff and adult literacies workers.

Participants were recruited from local schools in the catchment areas of the football clubs. In addition to the community-based libraries, one prison library (HMP Edinburgh) also took part in the project. Twenty-five libraries took part in this initiative.

²⁰ www.thebigplus.com

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Section 3:

The difference adult literacies learning has made to working lives

*Skills For Scotland: a lifelong skills strategy*²¹ highlights the importance of learning in and for the workplace. Literacy and numeracy skills underpin many of the tasks we need to carry out in our workplaces, whether they involve completing forms and reports, understanding health and safety notices, or calculating accounts. Employees who undertake literacies learning in the workplace gain confidence in their abilities so that they can carry out their jobs more effectively, apply for promotion, take up further learning opportunities, participate in workplace activities and pursue qualifications.

Below learners and their employers describe the impact literacies learning has had on working life in Scotland:



²¹ www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2007/09/06091114/0

²² www.weascotland.org.uk

These quotations are from adult literacies workers, talking about the impact that continuing professional development (CPD) has had on their ability to support learners:

"The national seminars hosted by Learning Connections are informative, thought provoking and good for networking."

Feedback on a national event

"CoPAL is a very convenient way of sharing best practice and hearing about useful resources from other practitioners."

CoPAL member

"I enjoy the enthusiasm of the contributors. I am the right audience - a new tutor who wants to find out more and more."

Feedback on a numeracy seminar

"I've found CoPAL very helpful for sharing resources. I posted a message asking for information and got some very helpful replies. I also like the variety of different resources I've found there. I've used them myself and passed them on to colleagues who would not normally look online. I've enjoyed playing the games as well!"

CoPAL member

"Personally I find this very motivating as it gives me ideas."

Feedback on Learning Connections' Reading Seminars

"This training has given me a great insight into using really effective and adult friendly tools for tutoring numeracy."

Making Numeracy Count course participant

"... the firming of values and the confidence to voice opinions and suggest ways forward for the development of the strategic planning within the local authority. This has been apparent and evident in not only my change of approach towards my job but my confidence that what I am doing is valuable. This has, with no doubt, contributed to my promotion."

TQAL²³ participant

"The levelling session was very good. I now feel confident in assessing learners' work and deciding the level the student is at. Assessing pieces of work students had done in the past and working out which level they were at was a good exercise."

Edinburgh tutor

"In essence, TQAL has made a huge impact on the way I see my job, how it fits in to the whole, certainly HOW I do my job."

TQAL participant



²³ Teaching Qualification: Adult Literacies

National leadership and effective local action to maximise the difference adult literacies learning has made to working lives

This section illustrates learning programmes developed and delivered in partnership between literacies learning providers and employers.

Developing literacies skills for work

Flat-packed literacies?

Midlothian Adult Literacy and Numeracy Initiative (MALANI) has worked with Edinburgh IKEA over the last year, supporting mainly young people on their supported employment programme. This programme offers supported work placements that may lead to part-time or full-time contracts, with organisations such as Capability Scotland, Thistle Foundation and Remploy. One of the agencies involved in the local scheme is Services in Training for Employment in Midlothian which MALANI has supported for a number of years.

Over the last year MALANI has begun to support workers at IKEA, including Richard who has joined one of the literacies classes there and is thriving. Richard said, *“My MALANI class at IKEA has helped to increase my confidence, upped my speed at work and given me a better understanding of what I have to do at my job.”*



Social enterprise and literacies

Haven Products is a social enterprise firm, with approximately 139 employees, 80% of whom have a disability. Working in partnership with Adult Literacies Renfrewshire, Haven opened a Learning Centre in the factory in 2008.

Haven employee Martin decided to take advantage of the literacies sessions offered at the Learning Centre to improve his writing and communication skills. He worked on, and developed, his writing and other areas such as budgeting, form filling and numeracy.

Martin said, *“The literacy course has had a massive impact on my life. Since taking part in the literacy classes, my communication and concentration have really improved. Basically, now I do things that I should’ve been able to do when I was fourteen – like buy my own clothes!”*

Sasha bites off as much as she can chew!

Sasha, from East Ayrshire, wanted help as she prepared for her dental nurse exams. Her confidence grew as she worked with her tutor on a one-to-one basis. Among her goals was one to improve her numeracy, and in particular handling money so that she could work on the front desk at her dental practice. Good news came in the form of a thank you card from Sasha's dental practice, saying, "Sasha is now a qualified dental nurse!"

Developing the adult literacies workforce in Scotland

This section illustrates some of the many professional development opportunities that adult literacies workers have taken part in across Scotland during 2008/2009.

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→ A "Community of practice"

Learning Connections continues to facilitate a number of practitioner networks and to host national seminars and conferences. This year saw Learning Connections, in partnership with Scotland's Colleges, focus its efforts on promoting the use of its online Community of Practice, CoPAL²⁴.

CoPAL was set up in 2005 to support networking and sharing of practice. It was relaunched at the beginning of 2009, and within the first three months the online forum saw an increase in activity with over 1000 practitioners visiting the site, including 101 first time users. New discussion threads were developed on working with young people; e-learning; numeracy; workplace; health and literacies; and work with offenders. The changing content is now highlighted to practitioners through monthly newsletters. CoPAL is *the* place to find out the latest adult literacies news.

→ Professional Development Award (PDA): Developing literacies learning programmes for the workplace

The first candidates in Scotland to complete this new PDA were presented with their certificates by Keith Brown MSP, Minister for Schools and Skills, and Dr Janet Brown, Chief Executive SQA, at a ceremony at the Scottish Parliament. The qualification equips adult literacies workers in colleges, local authorities and voluntary organisations with the skills they need to engage with local employers, raise managers' awareness of the importance of literacy and numeracy in work tasks, and to plan and deliver programmes of learning that will benefit both employers and employees. The four successful candidates have delivered literacies learning for employees in the construction, care, retail and public sectors.

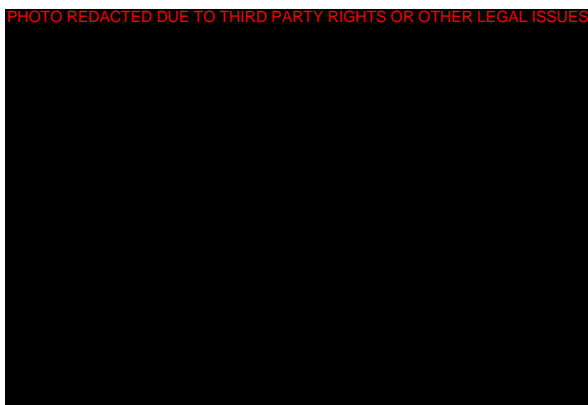
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Keith Brown MSP, Minister for Schools and Skills, and Dr Janet Brown, Chief Executive SQA, congratulate Nicki Brown, Lorna McNeil, Jayne Gray and Jim Maguire.

²⁴ www.copal.org.uk

→ TQAL and Practice Tutor Award

The *Teaching Qualification: Adult Literacies* (TQAL) entered a new phase of development in 2008 with 52 adult literacies tutors from across Scotland accessing either the *Diploma in Higher Education (Adult Literacies)* at Forth Valley College or the *Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (Adult Literacies)* at Dundee, Aberdeen or Strathclyde Universities. This second pilot of the qualification is fully funded by Learning Connections and has taken on board recommendations from the evaluation of the first pilot. An end of course conference in Stirling in September 2008 celebrated the achievements of the first cohort of TQAL students and Practice Tutors. Individuals who undertake a support and mentoring role in the workplace to those on TQAL can also access a Masters level qualification, the *Practice Tutor Award*, at Aberdeen University. This suite of qualifications has contributed significantly to the professionalisation of the adult literacies workforce in Scotland.



The first cohort of TQAL students, staff and practice tutors, Stirling, September 2008

→ Making Numeracy Count

This pilot programme of professional development in teaching numeracy was offered to paid and volunteer tutors over a four-month period ending in March 2009. It was funded by Learning Connections and managed and co-ordinated by Learning Link Scotland, the national intermediary for the voluntary adult learning sector. The project aimed to develop adult literacies workers' numeracy teaching skills so that they could better support their learners. Learning Link Scotland supported the development of tailor-made training sessions to meet the specific needs of practitioners from across the country.

The evaluation showed that the project had more than achieved its outcomes; 83% of the 161 tutors trained said their confidence and teaching skills were greatly improved by the training. A full report of the project and its findings will be available on Adult Literacies Online.

→ Practitioner-Led Action Research (PLAR) – the individual planning process

This project, led by the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh for Learning Connections, aimed to support adult literacies practitioners in research projects about the individual learning planning process, including the use of the *Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework* and the online Curriculum Wheel. It also aimed to provide practitioners with knowledge and support that would allow them to continue their involvement in research. This in turn will increase the research capacity and confidence of the adult literacies teaching community in Scotland.

A pack has been developed and will be available on Adult Literacies Online and in hard copy. It will include a "how to" guide, a final report and case studies from practitioners.

Practitioners are doing it for themselves!

During the past two years, four adult literacies workers in Scottish Borders (including the Literacies Co-ordinator), have been involved in action research, either through the TQAL or through the PLAR project. Their experiences have led the Co-ordinator to champion the development of a more integrated, reflective approach to training. As a result, a development worker has incorporated the role of Practice Tutor into their job, and now supports a local practitioner network, peer observation and delivery of the PDA:ITALL²⁵.

→ Professional Practice Seminars: teaching reading to adults

A series of three seminars was funded by Learning Connections and delivered by BlueSky Learning Limited, in collaboration with the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) and teacher trainers from the Institute of Education, University of London. Around 35 practitioners from across Scotland attended the seminars.

Practitioners identified specific issues they wanted to work on and planned an investigation into more effective teaching of reading. Over three months they carried out their investigations in their own work settings. There was also expert input on working with beginner readers, working with mixed ability groups and effective teaching and learning.

As the programme progressed, participants were able to share their experiences and refine their activity, completing the investigative process by producing reflective reports.

→ PDA: Supporting individuals with dyslexia in learning and workplace settings

During 2008, Learning Connections funded a pilot course of this PDA in Stirling. Feedback from course participants was extremely positive and, in most cases, participants have become the main contact person for dyslexia in their area. In order to accommodate demand from practitioners in the Highlands and Islands, a second pilot will be offered.

²⁵ Professional Development Award: Introduction to Tutoring in Adult Literacies Learning

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Section 4:

The difference adult literacies learning has made to Scotland's communities

National leadership and effective local action to maximise the difference adult literacies learning has made to Scotland's communities

The impact of literacies learning can often reach beyond the individual and their immediate family into their local community. The examples that follow remind us of the important links between literacies capabilities and other social issues, such as financial inclusion, health and wellbeing, the environment and local and national politics.

Money is a minefield!

Communities across West Lothian are benefiting from a partnership between West Lothian Adult Basic Education and West Lothian Credit Union Forum. A jointly-run course, DOSH, initially aimed at young people, has been extended and is being used in schools, Early Years Centres and on Get Ready for Work programmes. The project has been included in the Scottish Government's set of case studies, *Sharing a Wealth of Experience*, and filmed for a DVD²⁶.

Elaine Nisbet, literacies co-ordinator, says, "We have produced our own board game to go alongside this course called *Money Minefield*, and this has generated a great deal of interest from agencies and organisations working directly with clients. In the autumn we will be hosting a series of workshops to explain the game and participants will receive a copy of the game to take back to their organisation."

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Dynamic literacies

During 2008/2009, Learning Connections funded the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) to develop its work at the Glasgow Science Centre with two other similar venues: Our Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh and Satrosphere in Aberdeen.

The Science Centre project had worked with disadvantaged groups in the local community, bringing them into the Centre to work on numeracy skills in the context of climate change and the environment. The WEA ensured that progress opportunities were available by arranging for a progression course to be delivered by Glasgow College of Nautical Studies.

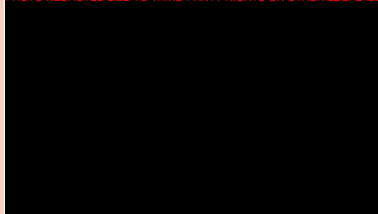
Over 30 learners and tutors in Edinburgh and Aberdeen were supported by the WEA to identify how they might use their local venues to develop courses around numeracy and community concerns relating to climate and the environment.

²⁶ Watch the video at Financial Learning Online (<http://money.aloscotland.com>)

Communities coming together

Members of Moray Adult Learners' Forum were invited to attend the Western Isles Learners' Conference, *Community Voices*, which took place in South Uist as part of 2008 International Literacy Day celebrations.

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Learners from Moray having their say

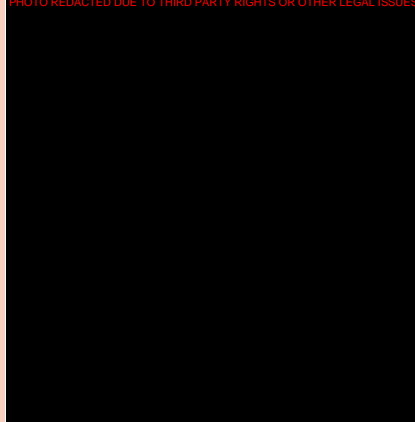
Three Moray learners benefited from taking part in the conference. They had the opportunity to try a range of new activities, speak to the local MSP and learn about what life is like on the island. Sharing experiences with learners from a different background was a great experience. At the conference they took on tasks such as feeding back to the conference from small groups, taking a turn in asking the MSP questions and giving a thank you speech.

The learners shared their experiences at their next Learners' Forum meeting. They were enthusiastic when they reported back on the facilities available to learners in South Uist and the visit has inspired ideas for improving learning facilities in Moray.

Literacies giving communities a voice

Literacies learning can develop individuals' capacity to change their communities – and their society. The Political Literacy pack²⁷ is a resource designed to give adults a deeper understanding of the way our political system works. During 2008/2009, it was updated to reflect political changes, with new sections reflecting on one hundred years of Women's Suffrage, Child Poverty, Asylum Seekers and Refugees.

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²⁷ <http://www.aloscotland.com/alo/viewresource.htm?id=519>

→ Literacies awareness raising for the health sector

*New Light on Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland*²⁸ highlighted the link between low literacy and numeracy skills and poor health in communities.

The health sector has an important role to play in supporting people to consider how learning can develop their skills and confidence, and improve their health and wellbeing.

During 2008/2009, on behalf of Learning Connections, CLAN Edinburgh developed a pack of awareness-raising training materials for adult literacies workers to use with local health sector employees. There is a useful guide to NHS structures and how to forge links with front-line health staff. The awareness-raising activities include general information about adult literacies in Scotland, the Big Plus campaign, literacies links to health, how to recognise when someone has literacies difficulties and how to refer them for support. The pack will be available on Adult Literacies Online later in 2009.

→ Literacies learning to support safer and stronger communities

Designed to help offenders and ex-offenders to improve their literacies skills, Learning Connections' Offender Literacies Learning Challenge Fund was launched in the summer of 2008. Twenty awards were made to a range of projects across Scotland, from Shetland to Dumfries & Galloway.

All the projects involve a range of partners and will take place within prisons and in communities, alongside criminal justice social work colleagues. The projects will also relate to the transition from prison back into the community in collaboration with Community Justice Authorities.

Shaun's choice

Shaun was referred to Shetland Island Council Adult Learning by his probation officer. He had been in prison before and was prepared to go again. His view was that going to prison would get his punishment over with quickly. However, on this occasion, the sheriff suggested he do 110 hours of adult learning instead of prison and Shaun decided to give it a go.

Shaun's previous experience of learning had been terrible. He hadn't enjoyed school; he came from a family of 13 and had to find his own way in life and turned to crime.

At first, Shaun was reluctant to take up the adult learning option. However, after the first session his attitude changed. He felt the tutors were very good at explaining things and they made it enjoyable. He could answer the questions and this gave him a boost. He felt motivated to continue.

Shaun felt this learning experience was different because he had choices. The Communications course was relevant to him and he now wants to keep attending.

In Shaun's opinion, the impact of his adult learning experience includes new self-belief. He no longer views prison as the best option and he will stop and think before getting into crime again. He can now help his children with their homework and they help him too – they enjoy learning together. He now views education differently and very much wants to learn.

²⁸ January 2008: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/01/22131652/0>

Section 5:

Determining future action from emerging knowledge and understanding

Determining future action from emerging knowledge and understanding

This report has demonstrated the difference that literacies learning can make to individuals' ability to undertake everyday tasks; to make changes in their lives; to gain, and progress, in employment; to support their families; and to play a more active role in their communities.

So that we can maximise these impacts, everyone involved in developing and delivering adult literacies provision must respond to new knowledge provided by research, whether that knowledge is about teaching methods that *really* work, technology that *really* makes a difference to learning, or the *extent* of literacies need in Scotland.

This section describes plans for a baseline survey to assess current levels of adult literacies need. It summarises a new investigation into our understanding of the term “health literacy”; and it includes a case study into how one local authority has worked with its partners to identify the impacts of literacies learning – information they will use to consolidate their service in future local planning, particularly in the development of future Single Outcome Agreements.

→ The baseline survey

A national survey on adult literacy and numeracy need was launched by the Scottish Government in December 2008. A consortium, led by the University of Glasgow, has been commissioned to undertake the survey which aims to:

- estimate literacy and numeracy levels among 16 to 65 year olds
- provide comparisons with the International Adult Literacy Survey²⁹ which found that 23% of the adult population in Scotland had literacy and numeracy issues
- explore the social characteristics of those with adult literacy and numeracy issues to ensure better targeting of interventions and
- enable comparisons of Scottish levels of literacy and numeracy capabilities with other countries, to see how Scotland is performing internationally.

The survey will report initial findings to Government towards the end of 2009.

→ Health literacy scoping paper

The Scottish Government has commissioned a scoping study to examine the concept of “health literacy” and its application to health policy and practice. This study presents a useful definition for health literacy as:

“the wide range of skills and competencies that people develop to seek out, comprehend, evaluate and use health information and concepts to make informed choices, reduce health risks, and increase quality of life”

The scoping study considers the available evidence and suggests that significant numbers in the population have poor health literacy and that this impacts on health and wellbeing, the quality and safety of services and that it also has important financial implications.

Developments to improve health literacy are clearly linked to current policy and practice in adult literacies and an improvement in skills has been shown to improve social capital and mental health and wellbeing. Learning Connections will continue to work with colleagues in the Scottish Government's Directorate General: Health and Wellbeing, to co-ordinate and build on current health literacy initiatives.

²⁹ Published by OECD in 1996

Measuring local outcomes to provide better literacies provision

The Glasgow Learner Outcome Tracking Information System (LOTIS) provides data on the goals and outcomes of literacies learning, providing information on:

→ *seven key areas of life:*

- personal
- family
- work
- community
- mental wellbeing
- physical health
- financial situation

→ *literacies skills development*

→ *progression and movement, including further learning, training, volunteering and employment opportunities.*

Learner participation in LOTIS is voluntary, with the forms being available in both electronic and paper versions. The system gives learning providers and strategic partners quantitative data on goals and outcomes from the learner's perspective. *Glasgow's Learning*³⁰ adult literacies initiative monitors LOTIS quarterly and supports its use across sectors through ongoing guidance and training. It has been useful in informing Glasgow's Single Outcome Agreement.

The system comprises five short forms which have been designed to be used flexibly:

1. registration (to identify learners who agree to future contact for longer-term tracking and research)
2. entry (to provide information on goals and anticipated outcomes – seven key areas of life, desired literacies skills development and progression goals)
3. equalities (provides profiles of learners)
4. interim (designed to be used in tandem with learning plans to gather data on actual outcomes achieved before a learner exits the learning programme)
5. exit (designed to gather data on actual outcomes at point of exit).

In 2008/2009 over 14,100 adults participated in literacies learning programmes in Glasgow. Of those learners, 7,270 engaged in provision funded through *Glasgow's Learning*. In addition:

- over 3,700 learners registered with LOTIS (representing a 300% increase since 2007/2008)
- over 3,100 learner goals were recorded
- over 43% provided information at the entry stage
- over 40% provided equalities information and
- approximately 25% provided information on the outcomes of their literacies learning.

³⁰ <http://www.glasgowlearning.org.uk/>

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Links with national and international organisations

Partnership working at national and international level is crucial for reaching learners, developing our knowledge and sharing practice. During 2008/2009 Learning Connections, Lifelong Learning Directorate of the Scottish Government, worked with many national and international organisations, including:

APEX Scotland

BBC

Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland (CLDMS)

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)

Dyslexia Scotland

Dyslexia Scotwest

European Commission (EC)

Grundtvig

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE)

Lead Scotland

Learning Link Scotland

Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA), Northern Ireland

Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS)

Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK)

Local authorities

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), Republic of Ireland

National Health Service Education for Scotland (NES)

National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE), England and Wales

National Literacy Trust

National Research and Development Centre (NRDC)

Portland State University, Oregon, USA

Scotland's Colleges

Scottish Book Trust (including Bookstart)

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC)

Scottish Network for Parental Involvement in Children's Learning (SNIPCL)

Scottish Premier League (SPL)

Scottish Prison Service (SPS)

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)

Scottish universities

Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)

Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

Standards Council for Community Learning and Development

Trade unions

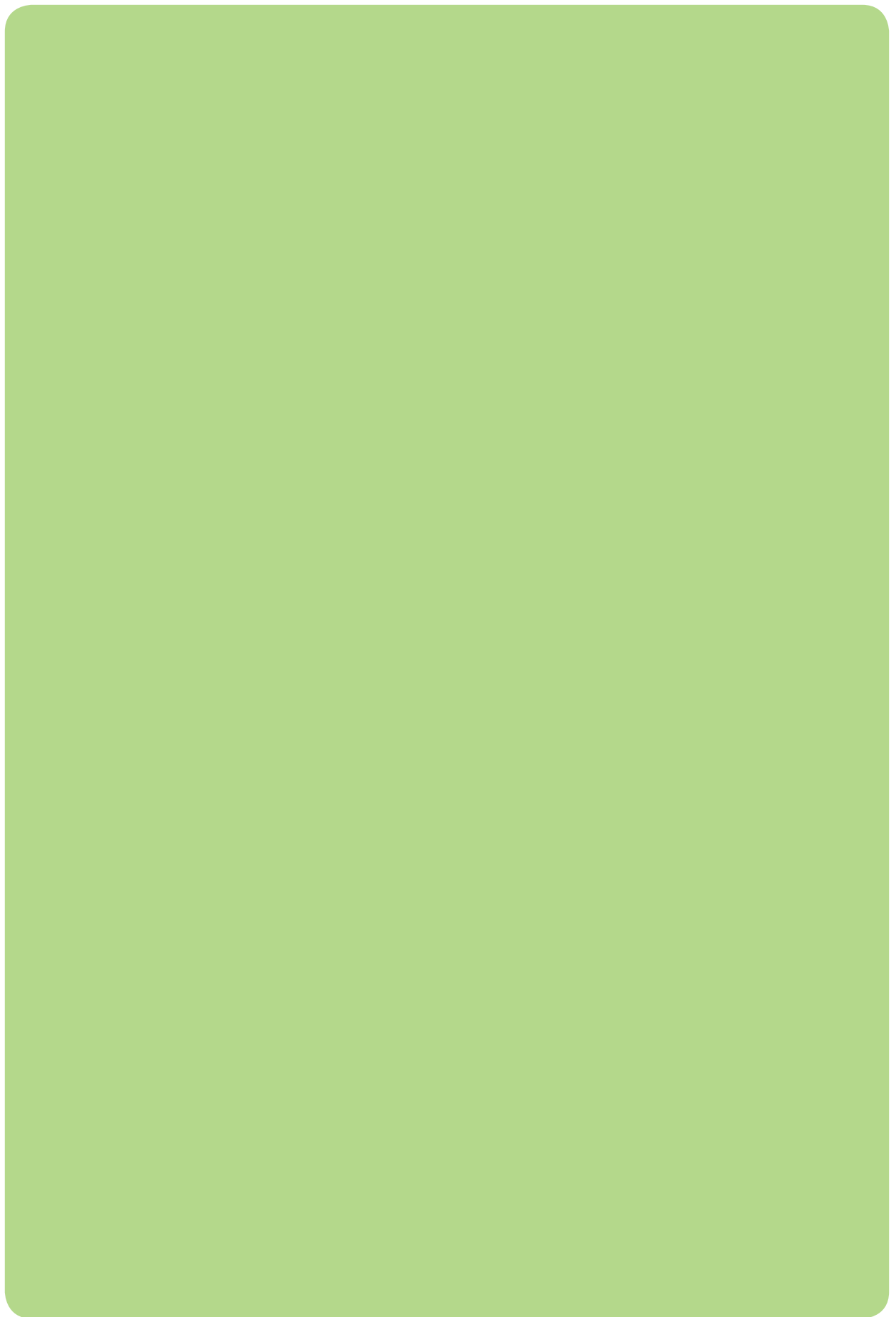
Workers' Educational Association (WEA)

Young Scot

YouthLink Scotland

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