

Lead Scotland: Annual Review 2016-2017

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Who We Are

Lead Scotland (Specialists in Linking Education and Disability) is a charity that empowers disabled people and carers and those who experience exclusion to improve their lives through learning.

Our Vision

Lead Scotland's vision is of an inclusive Scotland where disabled people, carers, and those who experience exclusion can connect with their ambition to move forward in life through learning.

Our Mission

To lead positive social change by empowering disabled people and carers to learn.

Our Strategic Aims for 2016-2019

- Increase the number of people who can benefit from our services
- Extend our national coverage
- Increase sustainable revenue streams

Our Values

- Empowerment
- Equality
- Integrity
- Involvement
- Mutual respect

Highlights from 2016/2017

- 307 learners empowered to improve their lives through education and volunteering, which is a ten per cent increase from last year.
- When tracked six months after closure, 75 per cent of respondents still felt confident to continue with their learning.

- When tracked six months after closure, 70 per cent of respondents were still in learning, employment, or volunteering.
- 260 courses were undertaken by disabled people and carers.
- We recorded 1993 hours of impartial educational guidance, which calculates to 6.5 hours per learner on average. This is an increase of 58 per cent from last year.
- We received 193 calls to our helpline. This exceeds our target by 29 per cent.
- We were a Finalist for Charity Champions' 2016 Disability Charity of the Year Award!
- We had over 100 attendees at our national conference.
- We now have over 1700 followers on social media.

Foreword from the Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive Officer

2016-17 has been a successful year for learner achievement and for moving towards our 2016-19 strategic goals!

We are delighted to report that the number of people who took a leap of faith to start a learning journey with Lead rose by 10% to 307 last year and we delivered 82 digital training courses to staff in partner agencies. Helpline and information service calls increased by 26% to 193, from 22 local authority areas, up from 17 last year as we strive to increase our national coverage.

We are incredibly grateful to our all supporters, funders and partners including the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, Lloyds TSB, local authorities and many others thanked elsewhere within the report. We continue to advocate for the transformative power of adult and family learning for individuals, families and communities through our policy work informed by learner's voices.

We give heartfelt thanks for the legacy we have received from the estate of James Hill, some of which will match fund our new Moray project beginning in August 2017.

We have an excellent team of staff, interns, volunteers and board members who are a quite simply a positive force for good, inspiring people to engage and succeed!

We moved our main office to Edinburgh Napier University and were delighted that Daniel Johnson MSP opened it for us. We used this opportunity to become more paperlight and cyber resilient. We are very excited about new developments on the horizon, which include our new Engagement and Development Officer leading on volunteering and fundraising and Lead becoming an SQA centre to offer more accredited courses.

We look positively forward to the year ahead as we strive to reach even more people who can benefit from our services and build new partnerships as we continue to expand our national coverage to deliver the best services we possibly can with disabled people and carers at the helm.

Onwards and upwards!

James Hill Learner of the Year 2016 recipient: Emma Sinkins!

About Emma

Through learning with Lead and other support, Emma's confidence has grown enormously over the last couple of years and she has blossomed. Her achievements include attending three different work placements in the local community, including one in a charity shop where she has moved from the back room to dealing with customers and using the till out front. Emma was also one of Lead's first learners to achieve the adult Achievement Award, which is really something to be proud of. Her ambition now is to get paid employment, which those who know her agree she is more than capable of doing. Watch this space... Very well done, Emma!

[Read more about Emma and the James Hill Learner of the Year Award on our website.](#)

Our Learners

Lead Scotland supports disabled people, carers, and those affected by a disadvantage to pursue their ambitions through learning.

Age range of learners

< 25	10%
25 – 34	11%
35 – 44	10%
45 – 54	17%
55 – 64	20%
65 +	25%
Unknown	8%

Learner background

Disabled	71%
Carer	7%
Disabled and carer	1%
Disadvantaged	10%
Unknown	11%

Types of learner impairment

Mental health	21%
Physical / mobility	19%

Other	14%
Learning disability	13%
Visual	10%
Dyslexia / dyspraxia	7%
Deaf / hard of hearing	6%
Autistic spectrum	4%
Brain injury	3%
Unknown	2%
Alcohol / drugs	1%

Highlights

- We supported 307 learners, which is a ten per cent increase from last year.
- We recorded 1993 hours of impartial educational guidance, which is a 58 per cent increase from last year.
- 219 of our learners were disabled, which is a 107 per cent increase from last year.
- 25 of our learners were carers, which is a 130 per cent increase from last year.
- 96 assistive technology self-assessments were completed by learners to personalise technology to meet their needs. This is a 37 per cent increase from last year.

Our Support

Lead Scotland empowers learners to meet their individually tailored learning goals through the support of local Learning Co-ordinators and Lead volunteers. Learning opportunities are facilitated either on a one-to-one or group basis, in both home and community settings.

Courses undertaken by learners

Computing and IT	50%
Literacy and numeracy	22%
Active citizenship	7%
Education and personal development	5%
Adult Achievement Award	5%
Guidance and practical support	4%
Health and wellbeing	2%
Agriculture, horticulture, animal care, and environment	2%
History	1%
Jobseeker skills	1%
Performing arts, languages, engineering and construction	1%

Types of barriers to learning overcome with Lead support

Learned skills I feel I'll keep using	12%
Feel more confident about learning new things	12%
Experience of learning was positive	11%
Motivated to keep learning	11%
Got support needed to start	10%
Can now use computer	10%
Have support to keep learning	9%
Feel more involved in the community	8%
Found out choices available	7%
Got support with reading/writing/numbers	7%
Other and unknown	3%
Overcame worries about costs	1%
Tried new activities and/or met new people	1%
Overcame transport difficulties and/or confident leaving home	1%

Learner exit paths

Self-directed learning	35%
Community learning	15%
Other	14%
Volunteering	10%
Ill health	8%
Unknown	6%
Training programme	5%
New employment or self-employment	3%
Retained in work	2%
Increased community participation, family involvement, and/or social contact	1%
Further education	1%

Highlights

- 45% of learners were supported by Learning Co-ordinators either one-to-one or in groups
- 28% of learners were supported by volunteers

Our Lasting Impact

At Lead Scotland we are committed to ensuring that our support has significant and long-lasting positive effects in the lives of our learners. To assess the effectiveness of our approaches, we track learners six months after they have left Lead. This year, 54 per cent of all learners responded to tracking, which is a significant return!

Highlights

- 77 per cent of respondents said they were still using the skills they had learned with Lead.
- 76 per cent of respondents felt confident and still motivated to keep learning.
- 70 per cent of respondents were still in learning, volunteering, or employment.
- 58 per cent of respondents still felt involved in their communities.

Learner comments

“Lead has been brilliant, my volunteer was great! She never made me feel bad for not understanding things, she was so patient and just wonderfully explained things

to me. I couldn't even switch my laptop on before Lead's help!" – Dundee learner

"I have really enjoyed being with Lead and I felt that I have learned to be more open about what I need in my life." – Aberdeenshire Adult Learning learner

"Thank you for all your help. What a great thing to be able to get support when I need it in my own home!"
– Perth and Kinross learner

Our Volunteers

Lead Scotland relies on a fantastic team of dedicated volunteers across Scotland who partake in a variety of volunteer roles — from supporting learners in local projects to fundraising for the wider organisation. Lead has continuously held the quality standard ‘Investing in Volunteers’ since 2005.

Statistics

- 24 per cent of our volunteers are disabled.
- Our volunteers are 54 per cent female and 46 per cent male.
- 64 per cent of our volunteers joined because they want to “share their skills”.
- 63 per cent of our volunteers joined because they want to “give something back”.
- 28 per cent of our volunteers are employed.
- 35 per cent of our volunteers joined because they want experience for their CV.

Dr Ethel Gray Volunteer of the Year Award 2016 recipient David Leather

David was nominated by both his Learning Co-ordinator, Donna, and a fellow volunteer. David has been volunteering with Lead for a staggering 17 years! Over this time David has supported many learners both individually and in groups. David is also a founder member of the North Lanarkshire Friends of Lead group. Donna described David as a “fantastic ambassador for Lead Scotland” and says that he “stands out in so many ways as an exemplary volunteer, who gives so much to the organisation.” The volunteer says that David’s “attitude and level of commitment is above and beyond”.

[Read more about David and the Volunteer of the Year Award on our website.](#)

Thank you to Donna and Stephen!

There was excitement and cake at the team meeting in September when both Stephen Fernand and Donna Morley celebrated 15 years of working at Lead! A huge thank you to both of them for their dedication and hard work over the last 15 years.

National Outcomes 2016-2017

Lead Scotland receives core funding from the Scottish Government via the ALEC fund. This year we performed well and exceeded many of our core funding targets.

Outcome one

Outcome:

Disabled people, carers, and families lives are improved by increased attainment and sustained positive outcomes.

Achieved:

- 307 learners registered with Lead, representing a 10% increase on the number of learners in 2015/2016.
- 77 per cent of all learners tracked said they were still using the skills they learned with Lead.
- 79% of all learners across all projects report improved confidence during their engagement with Lead (average taken across engagement from start to finish, with figures understandably lower at the beginning and higher at the end).

Outcome two

Outcome:

Communities are strengthened and more inclusive by the increased participation of disabled people, carers, and volunteers.

Achieved:

- 58% of all learners tracked felt involved in their communities six months after leaving Lead (this amounts to 96 learners, exceeding our target by 20%).
- 90 disabled learners are taking steps to becoming active citizens e.g. are registered on active citizenship courses with a volunteering element or are being supported to volunteer.

Outcome three

Outcome:

More effective engagement and participation of disabled people and carers in influencing national policy, strategy, and practice.

Achieved:

- 48 disabled people were directly and actively involved in influencing national policy and strategy through our services.
- 11 disabled people contributed to the development of Lead's new strategic plan for 2016-2019.

Outcome four

Outcome:

Increased numbers of disabled people, supporters, and practitioners access and benefit from information, advice, and guidance.

Achieved:

- 193 helpline calls, exceeding our target by 29% and an increase of 26% from last year.
- Queries came from 22 council areas, an increase of 29% from last year.
- 100% of callers tracked after 9 months reported positive impact benefits from accessing the Information Service.

Scottish Government Outcomes

We fit with at least 5 of the Scottish Government's national outcomes...

1. Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
2. We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
3. We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
4. Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it.
5. Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

Highlighted Learners: Aberdeenshire

During October to December last year, Barbara, our Aberdeenshire Learning Co-ordinator, has been working in partnership with the Co-ordinator from The Bridge Project in Fraserburgh to arrange for two groups of 4 learners to work towards an Adult Achievement Award. The Bridge Project is a partnership between Day Services and Employability in Aberdeenshire Council. It's a project for one year for disabled adults within Day Services to further develop independent living skills, communication and employability skills, gain experience in leisure, and partake in volunteering opportunities to become more active citizens in their community.

[You can read more about the project and the learners' successes on our Facebook page.](#)

Learner Comment

"I think that working towards an Adult Achievement Award has been excellent. It turned out to be therapeutic for me as I finally admitted who I am and I am glad this course made me reflect. I used skills I knew I had but had not used for a long time and it made me reflect about what I want in life. I found that through studying on this course I am going on to future learning at College."

Regional Development North

Foreword from the Regional Development Manager North: Sarah Burton

Reflecting, and then reporting, on a year of Lead activity in the North of Scotland has been both a pleasure and a challenge as I settle into my new role as Regional Development Manager North. Three months in and with no direct involvement in 2016/17, I wondered how I would characterise the year! The answer is simple – an excellent delivery of diverse outcomes for a broad range of learners and volunteers against a background of significant change.

During 2016/17, Barbara Taylor, Mags Joseph, Gayle Kaufmann, Amy Browne, Suzi Hughes and Kirsty D'Ambrosio have between them supported learning and development across a broad range of Lead's products including Adult Achievement Awards (AAA), Community Action and Leadership Awards (CALA), Thinking Digitally courses, literacy and numeracy skills, confidence-building activities and Activity Agreements (AA). They delivered this support in a range of settings including one-to-one work, community groups, and groups already in learning environments.

Highlights for 2016/17 include:

Delivery of the CALA programme to a group of learners at Cantraybridge College. This group was a highly engaged, creative and active cohort who embraced the syllabus producing some excellent outcomes including an informative video on the subject of inclusion that they scripted and performed themselves. It is entirely fitting that, as a group, this team was presented the North Area Learner of the Year Award.

A group from the Moray Wellbeing Hub took part in our pilot AAA award programme and each achieved the award at SCQF level 6. This serves as an excellent example of the value added by Lead's approach to supporting learning for people who have experienced a range of barriers throughout life. At SCQF level 6, further opportunities for learning and development become available and we will, of course, track the sustained outcomes with this group, and all of our participants, at six and 12 months following completion.

We started an exciting project, supported by Investing in Ideas, to deliver our CALA programme to learners in HMP & YOI Grampian. Working with the support of Fife College and HMP Grampian, Gayle worked to successfully attract four learners to our course and to set in place the specific arrangements required to ensure delivery of this teaching to the required specification in a more restrictive environment than usual. This project is ongoing in 2017/18 as we seek to

demonstrate the benefits of our approach through this pilot project with a view to extending the work in future.

Towards the end of 2016/17 my predecessor, Norman MacAskill, moved on to a new role away from Lead Scotland and I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks for his invaluable support and encouragement for the team during 2016/17. Finally, in terms of review, after many years our funded contract with Moray Council and Moray College UHI ended on 31st March 2017, which brings me to looking forward.

For 2017/18, our contracts in Aberdeenshire have both been renewed, our contract in Highland has been renewed with additional funding provided by the National Third Sector Fund, and we have secured new funding from the Robertson Trust to allow us to continue to work in Moray. We continue to actively participate in ongoing strategic CLD/AL groups across the north including the North Alliance. In addition we are exploring new partnerships and pursuing new funding sources to extend the reach of our activities in the North of Scotland consistent with our national strategic objectives.

Sarah Burton

Aberdeenshire Activity Agreements

Lead Scotland supports disabled young people between the ages of 16 and 19 through Activity Agreements (AA) via one-to-one contact with the Learning Co-ordinator. This work takes forward the Scottish Government's national indicator, "to increase the proportion of young people in Learning, Training, and Work." Courses undertaken by learners have a particular focus on attainment, citizenship, and employability, and include accreditation such as the Saltire Award.

Highlights

- 100 per cent of learners receive home visits from the Learning Co-ordinator.
- 18 courses were undertaken by 10 learners – an average of 1.8 courses per learner.

The Learner Experience

Martin from Aberdeenshire started his Activity Agreement on Stage 1 of the employability programme in January this year, gaining his NC 4 Core Skills in Numeracy on his journey to become a car mechanic. Travelling regularly to meet with his tutor for Core Skills

has given Martin a routine that he didn't have before. He says, "I actually want to get a job and don't want to be sitting around the house."

With regards to learning more about himself, Martin has learnt some assertiveness skills, self-confidence, and self-belief. He now knows what he wants and has the persistence to achieve his goals. Martin says the biggest change is in his motivation and confidence. He says, 'I feel more confident and can go out now and not worry about anxiety'.

Now that the Activity Agreement is coming to an end, it is the start of a new stage for Martin: to focus on job ready skills and to keep up his learning, whether at college or with an apprenticeship. Martin will be moving onto Stage 3 with the Employment Support Team.

Moving Forward

- We are increasing the number of accreditation opportunities available to learners on Activity Agreements, including the Adult Achievement Award.
- We will be jointly delivering a Preparing Parents for Transition workshop in Aberdeenshire in partnership with Contact a Family.

- We will be delivering family learning opportunities, striving to close the attainment gap, in partnership with Learning Link Scotland and schools.

Learner Comment

“I feel a lot more confident since I’ve been here.”

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our Lead Aberdeenshire AA partners: Employability Partnership, Aberdeenshire Council, and Skills Development Scotland.

Aberdeenshire Activity Agreements Learning Co-ordinator

Mags Joseph

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Aberdeenshire Literacies Partnership

Lead Scotland is funded by Aberdeenshire Literacies Partnership (ALP) to provide high-quality literacies learning opportunities for disabled adults and their carers in Aberdeenshire. Supporting literacies learning enables our learners to achieve their goals in their family, social, and working lives. This service is currently provided two days per week.

Highlights

- 100 per cent of learners were still in learning, employment, or volunteering six when tracked six months after moving on from Lead.
- 100 per cent of learners still felt involved in their communities when tracked six months after moving on from Lead.
- 85 per cent of learners received one-to-one support from the Learning Co-ordinator.

Celebrating Success

- 100 per cent of learners reached six months after closure said they would recommend learning with Lead.
- 83 per cent of learners were still using the skills they learned with Lead six months after closure.
- 83 per cent of learners felt motivated to keep learning when tracked six months after closure.
- Eight learners gained an Adult Achievement Award (SCQF Level 3) and will continue their volunteering activities through The Bridge Project.
- Three learners have achieved or are working towards SVQ Core Skills Units in Communication. One learner also achieved a Numeracy Unit in Measuring at Level 2, helping with his volunteering at Can-Do Recycling and at a local farm.
- Seven learners were supported to improve their literacy, reading, money handling, and/or employability skills. One of these learners was a young father who wished to improve his reading skills to be able to read stories to his young

daughter. Improving their money handling skills enabled two learners to volunteer at a local café in Fraserburgh.

Moving Forward

We are delighted that Aberdeenshire Council will continue to fund our Service in Aberdeenshire in 2017-2018, enabling us to support existing and new learners to achieve Core Literacy, Communication, and Numeracy skills, gain SQA Core Skills qualifications or Adult Achievement Awards through delivery of group or individual learning and by maintaining our flexible approach to meet the needs of learners.

Learner Comment

“They’ve given me the confidence to show that I can do it and I did.”

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our Lead Aberdeenshire ALP partners: Aberdeenshire Literacies Partnership, Community Learning and Development, and the various Resource Centres throughout North Aberdeenshire.

Aberdeenshire Literacies Partnership Learning Co-ordinator

Barbara Taylor

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Moray

Lead Moray supports disabled adults and carers two days a week to access bespoke learning opportunities tailored to the needs of the individual. Learning is facilitated at Moray College and Moray Resource Centre, while one-to-one home learning support is also provided for learners in Elgin, Findhorn, Forres, Keith, Kingston, and Hopeman. Referrals are received from a diverse range of public and third sector organisations, including the Moray Council Adult Disability Team.

Highlights

- 100 per cent of learners who wanted to find out what choices they had overcame this barrier and did so.

- 93 per cent of learners reported increased confidence at closure.
- 22 learners undertook 27 courses with support from volunteers and the Learning Co-ordinator. The majority of courses were in 'Literacy and Numeracy'.

Celebrating Success

- 13 learners received home loan computers and assistive technology, increasing the percentage of learning receiving this technology by 28 per cent from last year.
- 4 learners worked to achieve the Adult Achievement Award at SCQF Level 6 with support from Moray Wellbeing Hub. They were involved as members, volunteers, or Community Champions to become leaders and activists who will play a role in stopping mental health stigma and discrimination in their communities.
- 45 per cent of all learners worked towards a formal qualification.

- Three learners took part in the Reading Ahead Challenge, reading six books each and completing reading diaries to comment on and review the books they read.
- Volunteer Sheila received a Highly Commended Volunteer Award in Lead's 2016 Dr Ethel Gray Volunteer of the Year Awards. Volunteer Hilary completed an Adult Achievement Award at SCQF Level 3 based on her continued passion for learning through volunteering.

Moving Forward

The Moray Adult Learning Project will restart in August 2017 initially for a year thanks to funding from The Robertson Trust. It is our intention to reach those who have not previously accessed our Service to develop their Computer, Digital, and Core Skills whilst also improving their confidence and personal development, and will do so partly through offering the SCQF accredited Adult Achievement Award.

Learner Comments

“I am more confident with my reading and I don't think twice now about opening up my mail and trying to read it. I learned that I can do it if I put my mind to it and take my time.”

“I now know how much I spend and what I spend it on. Before I didn't know what I spent my money on. This is going to help me when I start college in Aberdeen at the end of August.”

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our Lead Moray partners: Moray Council and Moray College UHI.

Moray Learning Co-ordinator

Barbara Taylor

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Highland

Lead Scotland facilitates a range of learning opportunities for disabled adults and carers in Highland. With funding from Highland Council and Highlife Highland, Lead delivers a customised award at SCQF Level 3 and Level 5 Community Action and Leadership (CALA) to groups of young people.

Highlights

- 20 learners supported by Lead Scotland in Highland.
- 75 per cent of learners in Highland exited into positive destinations, including employment, volunteering, and further education.

Celebrating Success

- Five young carers achieved the SCQF level 5 Community Action and Leadership Award plus their Soltaire Volunteering Award. Two young carers were finalists in the Highland Adult Learner of the Year Awards. For one young carer this was the first

qualification they had ever received. We are grateful to Connecting Carers for funding this work and for their support throughout the course.

- 100% of the learners registered with Highland CALA exited into the positive destinations of employment, volunteering, and/or training programmes.
- Five of the Cantraybridge CALA learners went on to do a creative writing course and they were so determined and motivated that they wrote and published a book, “Reptiles to the Rescue,” the first copy of which was presented to HRH Princess Anne. One of the other learners went on to do training with the Libertie Project and is now in permanent employment with them.
- 6 practitioners undertook our Thinking Digitally module: “Honestly, I used to be a bit suspicious and dismissive of 'cloud' based apps. I am now a convert!” ~CLD worker

Moving Forward

Going forward funding from Highlife Highland, Highland Council, and Skills Development Scotland ESF will enable us to offer one to one support as well as small group delivery of to meet the demand for employability skills and qualifications.

Learner Comment

“I really enjoyed working with Lucy and Ally and I think I would have been stuck if it wasn't for you both.”

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our Lead Highland partners: Highland Council, Highlife Highland, and Connecting Carers.

Highland Learning Co-ordinator

We are currently recruiting!

Regional Development South

Foreword from the Regional Development Manager South: Stephen Fernand

It was another great year in the south area of Scotland and as a result many thanks are due to our Co-ordinators for their support, dedication and continued hard work. Our projects have achieved year on year outstanding results and impacts for our learners, which have made a difference to the lives of disabled people, carers and disadvantaged people.

The secret of our success is our dedicated staff team and our continued work with a range of local, regional and national level delivery partners (including our funders) on our projects, where we have worked closely with our existing partners as well as developing new partnerships, where appropriate, for the benefit of our learners.

Some key highlights, as follows:

Perth - Digital Skills

Having increased the post to 35 hours per week, we delivered significant volumes in Perth, with 94 active learners supported to develop their digital skills via

group work or one-to-one support. Additionally, as part of a Perth project development and successful new contract, 62 P&K Council workers undertook our digitally agile upskilling sessions, which were designed and delivered by our very own Co-ordinators Amy Browne and Gail Phillips to a resounding success, with 3 learners achieving our Thinking Digitally qualification.

Fife – Befriending Project

Our newest project continues to go from strength to strength. Many of our forms/processes were made fit for purpose initially to accommodate the new service. Our successful EoY evaluation by Fife Council showed that the project was making a difference, having a real impact in Fife, and was supporting a wide range of people to gain confidence, access their community and improve their lives. Our case studies collated absolutely demonstrate this and show superb examples of the service achieving impact.

Dundee Partnership project

Our 2016/17 highlight for the Dundee project has to be supporting a small group of five learners, some of whom had never held qualifications before, to obtain their Adult Achievement Award SCQF Level 3. This received excellent media exposure via an article celebrating the achievements in the Evening Telegraph.

North Lanarkshire Project

A successful EoY evaluation by our funder demonstrated the value of our North Lanarkshire service, which showed that we had excelled against a number of our funded targets/outcomes once again. The service also has excellent partnership links with a range of organisations and in fact participated in the NLC's CL&D HMle review with overall results of the CL&D as "very good" or "excellent" across a range of quality indicators. David Leather, our North Lanarkshire volunteer, won our Volunteer of the Year Award this year.

Fife Project

Last and certainly by no means least, our core Fife project continues to provide exemplary case studies which show the difference the service makes to disabled people every day by developing their core literacy, numeracy and communication skills. Another successful evaluation this year by our SLA funder Fife Council showed that we had met and/or exceeded all our funded outcomes and targets.

Finally, despite a challenging funding environment, all our projects have successfully secured continued funding, expanded contract work, or developed new contracts, which is testament to the hard work our individual staff and volunteers have put into our various

projects. Additionally, there are some very exciting project developments coming in the very near future and hopefully some new and innovative developments so watch this space!

Stephen Fernand

Dundee

Lead Scotland receives funding from the Dundee Partnership to provide accessible learning opportunities for disabled people in Dundee three days a week. Using a person-centred approach, the Learning Co-ordinator and volunteers support learners to establish and work towards individual learning goals in both group settings and on a one-to-one basis.

Highlights

- 100 per cent of learners tracked six months after closure said they would recommend learning with Lead to others.
- 80 per cent of learners tracked six months after closure said they were still using the skills they learned with Lead.
- 80 per cent of learners exited into positive destinations, including employment, volunteering, and further education.

Celebrating Success

- 83 per cent of learners reached six months after closure still felt confident about learning new things.
- 80 per cent of learners reached six months after closure said they felt motivated to keep learning.
- 48 learners undertook 37 courses with support from volunteers and the Learning Co-ordinator.
- 773 hours of impartial educational guidance were recorded.

Moving Forward

In the coming year, Lead's Dundee project would like to continue to grow so we can support as many learners as possible to achieve their learning goals. We aim to do this by continuing to grow our volunteer numbers and provide classes in useful subjects that learners will benefit from, as well as offering one on one support to learners who require it. We are also looking forward to offering the Adult Achievement Award to more learners to allow them to achieve accreditation for their hard work and dedication to their informal learning opportunities.

Learner Comment

“I found the process helpful, interesting, and so useful. Lead has made a real difference to my life.”

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our Lead Dundee partner: The Dundee Partnership.

Dundee Learning Co-ordinator

Amy Browne

abrowne@lead.org.uk

Fife Befriending Project

Fife Befriending Project supports people who are socially isolated by matching them with befriending volunteers. Every befriender receives an initial home visit to assess their eligibility and to gather information about their interests, needs, and current social contacts. They are then matched with a volunteer who supports them for between four and six months, helping them to build stronger relationships with family and to connect with their communities.

Highlights

- 158 enquiries throughout the year.
- 16 matches made throughout the year.
- 100 per cent of befriended receive home visits from the Co-ordinator and volunteers.

Celebrating Success

- The project has attracted many initial enquiries so the next step is to raise awareness of what befriending is, what support a befriender can offer, and who can benefit from the support to ensure that

those who most need befriending are able to access the support.

- Louise, the Co-ordinator, has started the 'Vital Skills in Befriending' course run by Befriending Networks, attended a course in 'Inclusive Communication' run by Fife Centre for Equalities, and attended numerous meetings and conferences tackling loneliness, inequality, and mental health with a focus on suicide prevention.
- Good relationships have been built up with appropriate referral agencies, such as Social Work, NHS Staff, and third sector organisations such as Fife Forum and Enable Scotland, as well as ten other funded befriending groups. These relationships are continually being developed.

Moving Forward

- A focus on recruiting volunteers in order to match befriendees with a befriender and manage the growing waiting list.

- Opportunities will be created for volunteers and befriendees to connect with one another and with people from other Lead projects. The volunteers from Fife Befriending project and Fife Learning Project met on 6th March 2017 to get to know each other and learn more about Lead. They launched a volunteer Facebook page to enable volunteers to share their experiences with each other.

The Befriender Experience

Abbey was referred by a member of staff at Ward 2 Queen Margaret Hospital (Under 65 Psychiatry) as they felt she would benefit from ‘activity and company away from the ward environment’ to build links with her local community before transitioning from the ward to living in her own flat. Abbey really appreciated getting out of the ward, saying, “It is the only chance I have to get out of here. My family doesn’t have time. It’s a wee bit like a prison in here. It is a bit frightening to go out by yourself.” Abbey and her befriender, Cathy, spent time together going for coffee and shopping for Abbey’s new flat. Abbey was quiet and hesitant at first, but after only a few meetings she felt “perkier” and would talk to Cathy about her family. Cathy noticed, “Now she is ready to go when I arrive.” Cathy no longer supports Abbey

because she has a full support package in place with support workers that take her into the community, but Abbey and Cathy remain friends and Cathy still visits Abbey at times.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our Lead Fife Befriending partners: Fife Council, Fife Forum, and the Health and Social Care Integration Fund.

Co-ordinator

Louise Andree

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Fife Learning Project

Fife Learning Co-ordinator and volunteers facilitate person-centred learning in both home and community settings to enable learners to develop literacy, numeracy, IT, active citizenship, and personal development skills. Learners are referred by a variety of organisations, including NHS Fife and Fife Council Social Work, and are supported by Lead for up to six months.

Highlights

- 96 per cent of learners reached six months after closure said they would recommend learning with Lead to others.
- 86 per cent of learners received one-to-one and/or group support with the Learning Co-ordinator and/or volunteers.
- 78 per cent of learners reached six months after closure said they felt confident to continue with their learning.

Celebrating Success

- 66 per cent of Fife Learning Project learners responded to tracking — a significant return!
- 74 per cent of learners reached six months after closure said they felt motivated to keep learning.
- 67 per cent of learners reached six months after closure said they were still using the skills they learned with Lead.
- 59 per cent of learners exited into positive destinations, including employment, volunteering, and further education.

Moving Forward

In the past, the majority of learners have received one-to-one support with their learning, as this best suits their needs. We have also supported a few learner groups with literacies and ICT learning, and we hope to develop this further by offering courses such as the Adult Achievement Award. The project will aim to recruit a Sessional Worker to deliver group training and to potentially increase our capacity to support more learners.

Learner Comments

“Using a computer has opened up a new world. I think George (volunteer) has been very helpful and considerate.”

“My quality of life is much improved.”

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our Lead Fife partners: Fife Council and Fife Adult Literacies Partnership.

Learning Co-ordinator

Dawn Robb

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North Lanarkshire

The Learning Co-ordinator works with Lead volunteers to facilitate person-centred learning opportunities for disabled adults and cares in North Lanarkshire.

Learners are referred by a variety of public and third sector organisations and are either supported in groups or on a one-to-one basis. Learning support is delivered either in learners' homes or in community settings, including at public libraries and local churches, depending on the needs of the individual learner.

Highlights

- 100 per cent of learners reached six months after closure said they would recommend learning with Lead to others.
- 85 per cent of learners exited into positive destinations, including employment, volunteering, and further education.
- 85 per cent of learners reached six months after closure said they were using the skills they learned with Lead.

Celebrating Success

- 77 per cent of learners reached six months after closure said they felt confident to continue with their learning.
- 69 per cent of learners reached six months after closure said they felt involved and included in their communities.
- Lead received the Volunteer Friendly Award from Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire for our work in North Lanarkshire!
- We are grateful to Friends of Lead North Lanarkshire for raising awareness and much needed funds which have enabled us to buy tablets for loaning to learners.

Moving Forward

In responding to the volume of referrals, and lack of capacity, we are developing a role for a Sessional Tutor to deliver the Adult Achievement Award in group settings within North Lanarkshire. This will provide the opportunity for learners to stay engaged with learning and to gain a qualification.

Learner Comment

“Support and motivation has kept me going. I was not able to switch on the computer but I am now using it on my own.”

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our Lead North Lanarkshire partners: North Lanarkshire Council and Friends of Lead North Lanarkshire.

Learning Co-ordinator

Donna Morley

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Perth and Kinross

The Learning Co-ordinator teaches digital skills to disabled people and carers throughout Perth and Kinross. Five week Tablet for Beginners classes are run in local libraries, community centres, and in the facilities of local partner organisations. Depending on the individual needs of learners, digital skills training sessions are also delivered on a one-to-one basis. Learners devise their own learning plans and are supported to meet their individual goals, including getting online, using apps, and doing online shopping.

Highlights

- 94 learners were supported, which is an increase of 11 per cent from last year.
- 100 per cent of learners reached six months after closure said they would recommend learning with Lead Perth to others.
- 79 per cent of learners six months after closure said they were still using the skills they had learned with Lead.

Celebrating Success

- 69% of Perth and Kinross learners responded to tracking – a significant return!
- 65 per cent of learners exited into positive destinations, including employment, volunteering, and further education.
- Over 400 hours of impartial educational guidance by the Learning Co-ordinator and volunteers, which calculates at an average of 4.3 hours per learner.
- 62 Perth and Kinross council staff benefitted from Digitally Agile awareness training.

Moving Forward

Moving forward Lead Scotland plans to carry on with the popular tablet for beginners courses and drop in classes for all types of devices that connect to the internet from laptops to tablets to mobile phones. Lead Scotland has always worked in partnership and we will be forming new relationships with organisations in the area this year, so we can deliver our service to those who need it most. We plan to support as many disabled people and carers as possible one to one and in their own home,

and are recruiting more dedicated volunteers at the moment to achieve this goal.

The project has a new learning coordinator, Amulree Welch, who started on 10th July 2017. Amulree has been getting to know the existing learners within the project and building networks in the area. Amulree is looking forward to carrying on with this very successful digital inclusion project.

Learner Comment

“Very enlightening, can now use my kindle, got more confidence. Really useful course.”

Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our Lead Perth and Kinross partner: Perth and Kinross Council.

Learning Co-ordinator

Amulree Welch

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Information Service

We provide information and advice on a range of issues including applying for courses, sources of funding for disabled learners, and information regarding equality and discrimination.

Highlights

- We received 193 calls to our helpline, exceeding our target by 29 per cent. This is also a 26 per cent increase from last year.
- These calls were from 22 different council areas, which is a 29 per cent increase from last year.
- 100 per cent of callers tracked after nine months reported positive impact benefits from accessing the Information Service.

Callers tracked at three months reported multiple positive outcomes after contacting the Information Service including:

Applied for/obtained student funding/benefits	14%
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Able to access advocate/legal professional	14%
Able to access/apply for a course/learning opportunity	14%
Made more aware of suitable learning options/courses	21%
Passed an exam/progressed on a course/to next level	14%
Made more aware of what support was available on course	46%
Made more aware of entitlement to student funding/benefits	46%
Able to resolve an issue at college/university/learning provider	25%
Able to take forward complaint/appeal	21%

Caller comment

“No other organisation I spoke to was as helpful as Lead. It was a great relief to me to get the help during a very stressful time.”

Annual Conference

Lead Scotland's 2016 National Conference: Are We There Yet?

Attended by over 100 cross sector delegates and contributors from as far as the Western Isles and the Midlands, Lead Scotland's fifth national conference was held on the 9th of June 2016 at Perth UHI and chaired by Dame Anne Begg. We were delighted to have our conference opened by Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, the minister for Further and Higher Education. The theme of our annual conference was improving lifelong learning and life wide learning opportunities for disabled people, which was brought to life by a range of thought-provoking speakers, including Frankie McLean from Deaf Action, Professor Keith Smyth from the University of the Highlands and Islands, and Vonnie Sandlan, the National Union of Students' first female President for ten years.

Workshops covered a wide range of topics, including how best to support students with specific learning impairments to succeed in education and post-school learning, supporting disabled learners' transition into work, and the themes of open learning, digital resources, student mental health, and how to make learning accessible and inclusive.

You can read more about our national conference through ['storified' tweets](#) from the day or see the full [2016 conference report](#) on our website.

Highlights

- Over 100 delegates and contributors from the education, public, private, and third sectors attended.
- 87 per cent of attendees contacted after the conference had learned something new.
- 64 per cent of attendees contacted after the conference had made at least one new contact.

Attendee comment

“A really great day. I came away re-energised and raring to go having spent a day with like-minded passionate people across every sector.”

Influencing Change

Our policy work allows us to put forward the voice of disabled learners and those who support/care for them in issues which affect them in post-16 learning, training, and employment across Scotland.

Working with disabled people and carers

All our policy work directly involves disabled learners and those who support them:

- 48 disabled people were directly and actively involved in influencing national policy and strategy through our front-line services.
- 15 disabled people were directly involved with our national policy work through consultations, testing the national transitions survey, and contributing to calls for evidence.
- 11 disabled people contributed to the development of Lead's new strategic plan for 2016-2019.
- Five learners contributed to the development of Young Scots' 5Rights campaign by sharing their experience of using IT.

Influencing national policy

Lead submitted evidence to 13 parliamentary committees and government consultations in 2016-2017. These included:

- Written response submitted to Scottish Government's consultation on Social Security in Scotland.
- Written evidence submitted to Scottish Government for the Education Governance Review.
- Written and oral submission on widening access to Scottish universities for disabled people to the Equalities & Human Rights Committee, Scottish Parliament.
- Written submission to Scottish Government on their Skills and Enterprise Review.

UNESCO 2016

Lead's CEO at 2016 UNESCO conference, Paris.

In December our CEO, Emma Whitelock, gave a presentation and was part of a panel on the subject of, "Does e-learning address challenges of education systems worldwide?" at the 2016 UNESCO conference in Paris.

One of UNESCO's core functions is to serve as an international forum of ideas to guide the global debate on international education. Lifelong learning and improving literacy are at the heart of UNESCO's Education strategy.

In 2015/16 Lead Scotland supported 199 learners to learn to use enabling technology.

Unfortunately one in five people in Scotland still lack basic digital skills. Douglas White, head of Advocacy at Carnegie Trust, says, "Digital technology – the great enabling force of the 21st century – is actually exacerbating rather than bridging long-standing inequalities in our society."

[Click here to read more about Emma's trip and the inequalities facing disabled people getting online.](#)

Finance and Administration Manager: Doreen O'Donnell

2016/17 brought a year of change for the admin team at Head Office with a change of structure and an office move.

In June, together with the Senior Policy and Information Officer, we organised the fifth Lead Scotland National Conference “Are we there yet?”

This took place at Perth College UHI. This event was a huge success with the admin team, along with support from Learning Co-ordinators who were instrumental in making the day such a triumph.

We organised another successful AGM in October which was held at PKAVS in Perth. We heard a number of inspiring stories from both learners and volunteers.

The Summer months were spent preparing for the move to our new offices in Edinburgh Napier's Merchiston Campus. This meant downsizing from four large rooms to one and a half. We took this opportunity to rationalise the equipment that we could take with us. We donated excess IT to a mental health project and recycled anything that we couldn't find a new home for. We also decided that this was an ideal time to move forward with our aim to become a paper-light organisation; we avoid printing whenever possible, using IT to support the storage of documents. October 28th brought the big day, it went so smoothly, and we were all set up within a few hours. We have settled in well here on the campus,

making use of the surrounding café culture, and have been made welcome by the staff here at Napier.

We have now gone through a year of using our cloud based financial software. This has made our financial procedures more efficient, data easier to collate and present, and a smoother annual external audit process.

The Admin team went through a period of refocussing as part of the overall strategic aims of Lead. As part of this process the post of Senior Administrator was deleted from the structure and my post was revised.

Who's Who

Members of the Board

Don Jarvie (Chair)

Tricia Illsley (Vice-Chair)

Ronnie Jack (Treasurer)

Colin Anderson (Company Secretary)

Gillian Brown

Andy McMahon

Kevin Mallon

Pamela Maxwell

Bev Smith

Sandra Wilson

Ahmed Yousaf

Chief Executive Officer

Emma Whitelock

Head Office Staff

Doreen O'Donnell (Finance and Administration
Manager)

Rebecca Scarlett (Senior Policy and Information Officer)

Gail Phillips (Engagement and Development Officer)

Regional Staff North

Sarah Burton (Regional Development Manager)

Barbara Taylor (Aberdeenshire ALP and Moray Learning Co-ordinator)

Mags Joseph (Aberdeenshire AA Learning Co-ordinator)

Regional Staff South

Stephen Fernand (Regional Development Manager)

Amy Browne (Dundee Learning Co-ordinator)

Dawn Robb (Fife Learning Co-ordinator)

Donna Morley (North Lanarkshire Learning Co-ordinator)

Amulree Welch (Perth and Kinross Learning Co-ordinator)

Louise Andrée (Fife Befriending Co-ordinator)

Please get in touch with us!

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Thank you!

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Aberdeenshire Council

Big Lottery Fund

Connecting Carers

Dundee Council

Education Scotland

Edinburgh University

Heineken First Point, Livingston

Fife Council & NHS Fife

Fife Literacies Challenge Fund

Highland Council

Highlife Highland

Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland

Perth and Kinross Council

Queen Margaret University

Scottish Government

Moray Council

Moray College UHI

North Lanarkshire Council

The Hugh and Mary Miller Foundation

The estate of James Hill

The Tay Charitable Trust

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