# Lead Scotland Annual Impact Report 2017-18

Lead Scotland supports disabled people and carers to move positively forward with learning, befriending and helpline services.

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## Welcome from our Chair and CEO

Our 2017-18 impact report demonstrates that we have had a very successful year, positively performing against our three strategic goals: to increase the number of people who can benefit from using our services, extend our national coverage and increase sustainable revenue streams.   With increasing demands and constraints on Local Authority spending, it is of utmost importance that we demonstrate substantial value add to services offered to disabled people and carers. It pleasing to note that this has been recognised in feedback received. We have sustained activity in all eight local authority areas in which we operate and have attracted new funding to expand our services in Fife, Aberdeenshire, Perth and Moray.  We are very grateful to all Local Authority and third sector partners who invest in our services enabling people to affect positive change across Scotland. We continue to improve. By deploying some of our resources differently for example, we were able to take on sessional staff in Fife, Highland and North Lanarkshire to support small groups of learners, which enabled us to reach an extra 26 learners.  By restructuring the organisation, we created a new Engagement and Development

Office post making it possible to increase the number of volunteers, supporters and donors, who are crucially adding value to our local services. Our social media presence has almost doubled since last year growing to around 3,000 followers who support us by creating a ripple effect helping us celebrate and raise awareness of campaigns which enable people to have a voice on local and national issues. There is a strong appetite for developing literacy, numeracy, citizenship and digital skills but we are also experiencing changing demand for the new skills needed for 21st century living, working and volunteering. As a Learning Organisation, we continue to invest in staff. Many Lead Coordinators are now fully qualified Assessors. This enables us to deliver higher volumes of accredited qualifications, geared to customer requirements in a cost effective manner. A new “Test for Change” project has also started in Perth to see if older learners can improve their independence, health and wellbeing by using technology to self-manage certain aspects of care.  We are in the vanguard of a journey to fully utilise new technology to the benefit of staff and Learners alike. This is helping with organisational efficiencies, communication and resilience.

We are grateful to our excellent staff, board, intern and volunteer team who are not only passionate and determined but who also embrace continuous learning and change in a positive way to enable us to be as effective as we can. We are also incredibly grateful to the growing number of partners and supporters who provide a catalyst for people to improve their own lives and the resilience of their families and build more inclusive communities across Scotland.

Chief Executive Officer, Emma Whitelock

Chair Person,  Donald Jarvie

## Our strategic performance

Since 2015 we have continued to exceed our strategic targets reaching more people and by increasing our national footprint.

An increase in numbers is only one part of the jigsaw and we consistently use information about the impact of our services to make improvements. When we followed up with learners, three and six months after they leave: 86% said they were still using the skills they learned with Lead, 77% still felt confident, 70% still felt motivated and 55% felt more involved in their community (40% of learners responded to tracking last year).

## Learner trends over time

Home visits are vital for building trusted relationships with people who lack confidence or who experience barriers. 57% of all learners received at least one home visit (45% received two or more). In many areas we are the only organisation able to provide a home visit and one to one support to get started.

## Type of Impairment

We are a pan impairment service and our statistics show that we are continuing to reach people with a broad range of self-disclosed impairment(s).

Mental Health 33%

Physical/Mobility 29%

Learning Disability 21%

Brain Injury 15%

Health condition 14%

Visual 12%

Deaf/Hard of Hearing 10%

Specific Learning difficulty 8%

Autism 6%

Unknown 3%

Alcohol and Drugs 1%

### Disability disclosure

 76% of people identified as disabled, up from 71% last year. The other 24% of people are either a carer (5%), a disabled person and carer (2%), identify as disadvantaged (5%) or prefer not to say (12%).   Carer numbers have dropped from 25 to 17, after having been stable for several years so we will investigate this.

### Gender

We are pleased to continue to have a good spread across gender. 54% of learners were female, 45% were male and 1% (3 learners) were transgender (22 learners preferred not to say and weren’t counted in these stats).

### Ethnic Origin

We are matching the national average in terms of diversity. 75% of learners identified as White Scottish, 8% identified as other white, 2% Asian, African or Arab. 15% preferred not to say.

## National Helpline and Information Service 0800 999 5868

“It is a great service & I was given advice in a really clear and positive way that gave me the confidence to progress things.”

We received 217 calls to our helpline from 27 local authority areas of Scotland, up from 193 callers from 22 areas last year. 34% of all calls related to 16-24 year olds. 17% of helpline callers responded to tracking via survey monkey, 100% of whom reported positive impact benefits from accessing the Information Service. Thanks to SCVO and Inclusion Scotland’s disabled graduate intern programme we were able to recruit an excellent Communication Intern who helped us market the service more widely through stories of people’s experiences such as Pat’s story and Sarah’s story.  The extra capacity allowed us to refreshed our most popular downloadable guides and produce a new Disabled Students Allowance factsheet in partnership with disabled people and the Student Awards Agency for Scotland.   Our Senior Policy and Information Officer has been working with Contact who have delivered workshops to 200 parents of disabled children through the Preparing Parents for Transition Project, producing Local Area Transition Handbooks packed with local information to support the transition from school in Alloa, Ayrshire, Inverness, Fife, Perth and Aberdeenshire. We have created blogs to raise awareness about positive disability disclosure in order that people get the right support such as tick the box.  We responded to 5 policy responses last year and brought over 100 people together face to face to have their say: Student Finance consultation, Autism Strategy Review, Student Support review, British Sign Language Draft Plan and the Scottish Government’s draft Social Isolation Strategy.

MOVING FORWARD

We are working with the Scottish Funding Council and a group of stakeholders to take the strategic lead on addressing the policy gaps facing disabled students and to improve people’s experiences of being at further and higher education. We are listening to callers and are exploring ways by which we can address gaps in the landscape. We are involving more people in our policy work year on year.

“It's brilliant. I wish it could extend to include advocacy, as my experience of what's existing elsewhere is that it is limited in scope and availability.”

## Our Volunteers

“Volunteering with Lead Scotland has helped me get more confident. I like to see others achieve their ambitions and this makes me feel like I am doing something worthwhile”. Volunteer.

We are delighted to see volunteer and supporter numbers growing in part due to the new post of our Engagement and Development Officer, Gail Phillips, raising the profile of our work and of the opportunities to support us. Volunteers add such tremendous value and we are extremely grateful for their immense contribution.  Gail is leading us through the reaccreditation process for Investing in Volunteers, held since 2005.

73% of volunteers who responded to our impact survey said they had “an improved understanding of barriers faced by disabled people” as a result of volunteering with Lead. 23% of all our volunteers identified as disabled in 2017-18.

Our Dr Ethel Gray Volunteer of the Year 2018, Kay Mitchell, had supported 27 learners as well as supporting the wider work of the organisation, a very worthy winner!

This year as part of celebrating Volunteer Week, Volunteering for all, and Lead Scotland Volunteer Val was invited to speak at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh at a cross party group set up to promote volunteering in Scotland. Val gave a very confident speech on the importance of befriending services in Scotland and her experience of volunteering as a Befriender with Lead Scotland’s Fife Befriending Project.

## Aberdeenshire Learning and Activity Agreement Projects

‘I actually want to get a job and don’t want to be sitting around the house. I feel more confident and can go out now and not worry about anxiety’.  Aberdeenshire Activity Agreement Project learner

Four projects were run by two staff in Aberdeenshire in 2017-18 reaching 53 learners who have made positive changes to their lives and their communities.  Aberdeenshire Council fund both our Adult learning project which supported 23 adult learners and our Activity Agreement project which engaged 12 young people. In partnership with Learning Link Scotland and two schools in Aberdeenshire we worked with 10 parents of disabled children to connect parents with schools.  Eight prisoners within HMP Grampian achieved our SCQF level 3 Community Action and Leadership Award, or completed units towards this.

“I’m happy I have decided what course I want to do and am excited about volunteering at the local community allotment.”  Adult Learning Project learner

Moving forward

Our adult learning and activity agreement projects are going from strength to strength with many referrals and we are increasing the number of accreditation pathways available to people in response to demand.

"There is definitely a positive change in Jane with an increase in her confidence since she started seeing you and we cannot thank you enough.    We also appreciate the trusting relationship you built up with Jane and giving her confidence and motivation to attend the Library and also Shelter. Without your help this would not have been possible.”  Name changed, parent comment, Activity Agreement Project

## Dundee Learning Project

“Lead’s help is invaluable to me, I fear without the support I would be doing nothing, becoming more and more reclusive. I so enjoy my new learning class and I am very much looking forward to going to college. I am nervous but I know Amy will be there to help me if I need it. I want to be a role model to my grandchildren and to be a person they can be proud of. I think with Leads help I can make this happen, I feel I’m already on my way!”  Learner 2018

The Coordinator worked with 73 learners one to one and in groups to achieve positive outcomes matching their motivation to learn.  Understandably the main challenge has been managing a large learner volume on a part-time project whilst also recruiting, training and matching new volunteers.  One third of learners also became a volunteer or more active citizen whilst with the project.

Eight learners responded to tracking phone calls by main office staff 3 and 6 months after moving on from Lead and 100% were still using the skills they learned with Lead.

Moving Forward Many learners are keen to increase their IT skills but find that tablets offer a simpler user interface than a laptop so we are changing the stock in our home loan scheme, supported by £2,000 from Tesco Bags for Help. We often choose ipads for their superior accessibility and cyber resilience features but some learners have asked us to also provide android operating systems which match their smart phones.

Year two of the Learning Link Scotland, Home School Links project, will be in Dundee, providing extra hours for our Coordinator to engage ten parents of disabled children building their confidence to connect with schools to improve the education of their child.

“Next year I would like to offer more to Lead volunteers in the form of training and gratitude. I fear volunteers are often underappreciated and though I am always verbally very grateful I would like to be able to offer more than this to my volunteers.”  Dundee Learning Coordinator.

## Fife Learning Project

42 learners took up literacy, numeracy and adult learning opportunities with the project, of whom 87% reported increased confidence, eight learners pursued a qualification and 15 learners were supported to use enabling technology as part of their learning journey. Four learners were supported to become volunteers and 32 additional enquirers were signposted to other services in Fife.  A learner from 14 years ago with the project got in touch to say she has just had a book published which has already sold over 3,000 copies on Amazon!   64% of all first visits took place within the learners’ own home

59% received two or more visits) and most work is undertaken on a one to one basis, enabling learners to build confidence through a trusted relationship with staff and volunteer support. MOVING FORWARD The Learning Coordinator is undertaking an assessing qualification to expand the range of learning opportunities we can offer learners and working in partnership with many other local organisations.

##  Fife Befriending Projects

24 befriendees were matched one to one with volunteers and all reported impact benefits.  This figure is up 33% from last year.   The Befriending project volunteers are a team of incredibly passionate and resilient people who encourage people to leave their home and become more active once again within their communities.  “It is great, when you meet someone that is lacking in confidence and skills and you see them as a person blossoming, you can't beat it!” (Volunteer)

They inspire hope and recognise that small steps are the crucial achievements through which people start to build confidence and motivation. Many befrienders also report gains for themselves, “I have learned some great skills and it has given me confidence to follow on into employment.”

MOVING FORWARD

There were a further 69 initial enquiries in 2017-18 for befriending. As the numbers and waiting list grows, consideration is being given to how more experienced volunteers may be able to help support the project in other ways, e.g. telephone befriending, or acting as ’buddies’ with new volunteers.

“I feel meeting with Dawn has been useful and I wouldn’t have applied to do the course at college without her support”.  A quote from a Learner with Lead Scotland FIfe

“You should have seen peoples’ faces when I walked in. She’s done well with me. It’s been worth it”, a quote from a Befriendee who is active in her community once again.

## Moray Learning Project

“I was very under-confident when I started with Lead. I now have an Adult Achievement Award which feels great as I took on learning, completed and passed. I feel comfortable in College now and anything I have struggled with or worried about I’ve had the support for. I don’t think I’d be going to Uni without the help I’ve had to build confidence. I can do it!”  Learner comment

The Moray Project met targets, exceeded outcomes and learners gained added benefits from new productive partnerships with other organisations.   For example, working in partnership with Earth for Life, Lead Scotland provided the opportunity for four participants of the Ecotherapy “Branching Out” course to gain nationally accredited Adult Achievement Awards.  The Ecotherapy courses were offered to those experiencing long-term mental health issues and all four of the participants who have gone on to work towards an Adult Achievement Award said that getting to know Barbara and building a relationship through her participation in the Branching Out course was an important factor for them to feel confident and supported to engage with this learning opportunity.  Two learners of have also gone onto become volunteers with the Moray project which is brilliant!

MOVING FORWARD

We are delighted that the Robertson Trust and Lottery Awards for all are funding next year’s work in Moray and that we were chosen by the public for a Tesco Bags for Help Award for £4,000 which will buy the IT equipment needed.  Onwards and upwards!

## Highland Learning Project

“I feel so much happier since I was introduced to Lead Scotland. Gayle the worker would come to my house because I felt more comfortable and at ease in the house and she didn’t pressurise me, I’ve learned to articulate all the work I’ve done as a volunteer and look at all my achievements and done a lot more valuable work - I feel after these weeks working with Gayle that she’d helped me to release all my memories of work that I’ve done be it in paid or voluntary capacity and to look at how much I have actually achieved, and that gives me great confidence to look for permitted work.”   Learner who gained her Adult Achievement Award

We are grateful to Highlife Highland, Skills Development Scotland’s National Third Sector Fund and a Lead Scotland legacy which formed the funding package needed to support this work. As it was a short term contract we involved a sessional member of staff to undertake the work.

The target of fourteen learners was met and every learner gained a qualification, exceeding the expected outcomes. Nine learners gained an Adult Achievement Award at SCQF level 3 or 4 and five learners worked as a group to achieve their SCQF level 3 Community Action and Leadership Award

The CALA group made a short video about their experience of connecting with Young Scot to give them feedback on their Digi Aye website, which counted towards unit 4 of their qualification. They also made videos about identity and challenging discrimination.

“Thanks to Lead I made lots of friends, I gained confidence to keep learning and meeting new people. I am much more involved in my community than before.” Learner, 6 months after moving on from Lead.

MOVING FORWARD

As this project was so successful we were invited to bid for more NTSF funding so fingers crossed we will have a new contract to work with more learners between April 2018 and June 2019.

## North Lanarkshire Learning Projects

“Donna was very helpful, she made learning new things fun.  She took her time with me and did not rush me.”  Learner tracked 6 months after moving on from the service.

We are grateful to North Lanarkshire council who fund the Learning Project which has exceeded all targets and expected outcomes. Corra Project funding combined with Friends of Lead North Lanarkshire funding is enabling us to involve a sessional worker to deliver Adult Achievement Awards to 18 learners, helping to reduce the our perennial waiting list. One of the North Lanarkshire learners spoke at our 2017 AGM about how challenging it was to finding an organisation which could support him to learn very specific and complex software, Jaws and Kurzweil, to get back to work and into community life until he started with us.  “Lead is flexible and I can go at my own pace. My volunteer is an unsung hero. Before you know it we were talking Star Trek! There was a social side to learning too. It’s made a great difference, I am more involved and independent. I take an active role now when I volunteer.” 100% of learners tracked 6 months later said they would recommend learning with Lead (four learners). Six learners also became volunteers as part of their learning journey.

MOVING FORWARD

The addition of a sessional worker is building capacity to offer more accredited opportunities in groups and we will apply for more funding for that work to continue post December 2019.  Project staff are also looking at targeted recruitment campaigns to engage volunteers for one to one support.   We gratefully work in positive partnership with our committed Friends of Lead North Lanarkshire group who raise awareness and funds.

## Perth Health and Wellbeing Project

“I find it awful interesting and it’s just amazing. I’m really enjoying it”  “I’m doing so well, I’m finding lots of things”  “There’s so much on it, it opens up a whole new world”

The project engaged an amazing 82 learners last year, one to one and in groups.  The project has benefited from the recruitment of excellent volunteers who build our capacity to reach more people. All learners are keen to develop their digital skills in a way that matches their motivation to learn, improving communication, access to services and communities and building confidence. This project has many partnerships, for example one with the Learning Curve, in the AK Bell Library has worked really well this year. “The Learning Curve hosts my tablet class, and previously used it to a host a general computing class. The space they have is perfect for a group of up to ten people, and is nice and quiet. They have plenty of laptops that I could make use of for my computing class, as well as free WiFi.” Learning Coordinator.

MOVING FORWARD

The project continues to diversify partnerships to reach more people, often on a one off basis or for more in-depth support.  More volunteers would be welcomed and we are looking at ways to streamline the paperwork for people who have short term support to make the process less bureaucratic.

A 12 month pilot project, funded by the council so see if some disabled and older people improve their health and wellbeing through the use of technology.  Could this also prevent and/ or delay the need for them to use complex health and social care services?  The project model is based around the loan of a device and support to learn to use the simplified interface on My Home Reach App and other apps to manage care, access services and communicate with people.  The project also offers training to Social Care staff to feel more confident to see the benefits and sustain the learning.

The project is in the early stages of gaining referrals and we have widened the geographical area in order to reach more people who can benefit.

 “I cannot live without the iPad, it is now my main form of communication and I depend upon it every day.  It means I will never find myself in a situation where I am completely unable to communicate, even if I don’t have the iPad with me.”

## Moving forward into 2018-19

In April 2018 we became an SQA centre so that we can offer more accreditation routes to individuals and small groups of learners. We are extremely grateful to our supportive partnership with ARC Scotland, who previously accredited our Customised Awards.  We will continue our partnership with Newbattle Abbey College, building on the success of 80 Adult Achievement Awards already gained. We will be co-hosting the first national conference for parents of disabled people on 13 March, 2019, in Glasgow, led by Contact.  The conference will build on the success of the Scotland wide ‘Preparing Parents for Transition’ project. In 2018-19 we will be putting more time and resource into working more directly with disabled people and carers from our membership and with partner organisations to actively campaign on issues which affect disabled students. Lead Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council are bringing stakeholders together to address the policy gaps affecting the experience of disabled students in further and higher education. We are committed to playing our part to implement the national Cyber Resilience learning and Skills Action plan across our work and are using technology to make it easier to access our service, phasing out paper forms.  In the summer of 2018 we were delighted to be awarded two years of funding from the Social Economy Growth Fund to set up our Digital Progression Project. This is a very exciting development building upon nearly 40 years of experience of using technology and offering learning opportunities to tackle poverty and inequality. Digital skills are now absolutely crucial and we are delighted to expand our team with five extra staff in the north of Scotland to drive this project forward. Next year Lead Scotland will be 40 years old and we are taking the opportunity to modernise our branding. It’s a big year for us and we hope you will help us celebrate. We are incredibly grateful to the growing number of partners and supporters who enable us to provide a catalyst for people to improve their own lives and family resilience, whilst building communities across Scotland which are proudly equal and inclusive.

Thank you to all our supporters

Scottish Government Corra Foundation Aberdeenshire Council North Lanarkshire Council Skills Development Scotland NTSF Fife Council Highlife Highland Perth & Kinross Council Dundee Council The Robertson Trust

Big Lottery, Investing in Ideas Hugh and Mary Miller Trust Tay Charitable Trust  Tough Construction Asda The Kiltwalk  The Hunter Foundation  The Co-op WHSmith  Insights Persimmon Tesco

## Our Board

Donald Jarvie (Chair) Ahmed Yousaf Tricia Illsley (Vice Chair) Pamela Maxwell Paul Smith (Treasurer) Kevin Mallon Colin Anderson (Company Secretary) Sandra Wilson Andy McMahon Bev Smith

Check out [www.lead.org.uk](http://www.lead.org.uk) to find our current staff team. Thank you to Chris Purnell, Communiation Assistant intern and to Gayle Kaufmann, Sarah Warnock and David Leathar who worked on a sessional basis in Highland, HMP Grampian, Fife and North Lanarkshire in 2017-18

End