



Lead Times

April 2015

Keeping you up to date with the latest developments
in learning & disability



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News from Lead

Lead's 4th national conference: 'Can We Make Things Better? YES WE CAN!!'

This year's annual conference will take place on 11th June at Queen Margaret University Edinburgh. The key theme will be around delivering positive outcomes for disabled and disadvantaged learners, and will be relevant for staff in:

- colleges, universities and adult learning
- careers/guidance
- employers and work placement providers
- local authorities
- voluntary sector support organisations
- NHS boards

Please note: We've had a lot of interest from parents about this event, but unfortunately we are unable to offer any reduced price places. We may hold a separate event for parents/carers later in the year which will be more relevant for this group (this conference is primarily aimed at staff).

[You can read more information about the conference and book your place here.](#)

Research into disabled learners' progression through college

Lead Scotland was recently commissioned to carry out research to find out why disabled college learners are not progressing through learning levels as well as non-disabled learners. We carried out 2 separate surveys with learners and parents, as well as some follow-up interviews, and found that:

- 40% of learners didn't move up to the next SCQF level when moving between learning levels
- the majority of learners (43%) didn't progress to the next level for reasons relating to their impairment
- the majority of learners (65%) who left college early did so for reasons relating to their impairment

[You can read the full report and our recommendations for both colleges and the government here.](#)

LEADing the way on transitions

In our last newsletter, we reported on our national transitions project where we ran a series of focus groups to discuss issues around transitions for learners with additional support needs. We submitted our recommendations to the Scottish Government in March, including:

- there should be a statutory requirement to set up a Transitions Forum in each local authority
- there should be a national 'Transitions Coordinator' to coordinate developments in this area, and ensure that national policy and guidance is joined-up
- the Scottish Government's review of its 'Partnership Matters' guidance should be fit for purpose in relation to transitions.

[You can read the full report of the project and our briefing paper to the Scottish Government here.](#)

Lead urges for more provision for disabled learners: BBC Scotland interview

Lead recently took part in an interview for BBC Scotland, where we highlighted recent cuts in provision for learners with complex needs / learning disabilities. Many families have been telling us that their children have been unable to access supported programmes at college (such as 'Life Skills' and 'Independent Living')

as a result of recent cuts. This is an issue we hope to work on throughout our policy work. The interview is likely to be aired in the next few weeks.

Lead Scotland vacancies

Learning Coordinator, Dundee

Part-time (£21,004 pro-rata), initially fixed term to 21 March 2016
Closing date: 13 April

We are seeking a Learning Coordinator to market and deliver Lead's project in the Dundee area. You will be responsible for providing educational guidance and learning support to disabled adults and carers, and for recruiting and supporting a network of volunteers.

[Further information on this vacancy is available from our website.](#)

Senior Policy & Information Officer (full-time)

This exciting opportunity offers the chance to advise and support disabled learners, carers and staff, coordinate our policy and campaigning work, and deliver a varied range of consultancy projects. Further details will be available on our website shortly, or you can contact [Rita Capaldi](#) if you would like to receive more information when it becomes available.

Learning with Lead: Achieving success

Lead's person-centred approach towards supporting learners offers a flexible and supportive approach towards helping learners achieve success. Every newsletter highlights learners' successes, and this edition focuses on learners who took part in our Employability Fund project.





This is Olivia and David from Fife. Both have just completed a 20 week course in Community Action & Leadership at SCQF level 3. They have gained valuable skills and strengths both personally and within a team. They had lots of fun visiting venues and helping to make change within their local area. David and Olivia have now successfully moved on to further their own development.

18 learners have now completed the programme in Fife, Moray, Aberdeenshire and Glasgow. In 2015/16 Lead has secured Employability Funding to support learners in Angus and Fife. [You can find out more about our Community Action and Leadership award here.](#)

Other news

Progress on widening access in colleges and universities

At the end of March, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) published its 9th update to the 'Learning for All' report - SFC's national strategy for widening access. The report provides data on colleges' and universities' progress on widening access and participation in relation to protected characteristics, school attainment and leaver details, socio-economic access, and articulation. The report noted a 0.5% increase in the number of disabled students at Scottish universities in 2013-14 and a 0.8% decrease in colleges.

[You can read the full report here.](#)

Review of Partnership Matters: working in partnership to support disabled learners

'Partnership Matters' is the Scottish Government's guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the different agencies involved in supporting disabled learners. The Government recently conducted a survey with stakeholders to help them inform their revision of the guidance to improve the way in which agencies work together to effectively support disabled learners. [You can find out more about the guidance and details of the ongoing revisions here.](#)

Scottish Parliament Inquiry into attainment of school pupils with a sensory impairment

The Scottish Parliament's Education and Culture Committee is currently holding an Inquiry to consider how the attainment levels of school pupils with a hearing and/or visual impairment can be improved. If you'd like to submit any comments to the Committee, the deadline for responses is **29th April**. [You can get more information here.](#)

Changes to Access to Work scheme

A number of changes to Access to Work will come into effect from 2015/16, including:

- introduction of personal budgets to give users more freedom over how they use the money allocated to them
- a new cap on payments set at one and a half times of average salary
- work to begin on a translation framework and a review of BSL interpretation provision to explore long-term improvements
- a contracted taxi services pilot

[You can read further information here.](#)

Will you be moving from DLA to PIP?

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) has recently been extended to existing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claimants in several new postcode areas. Update have recently produced a guide to [help you find if your postcode area is affected.](#)

[You can read the latest timetable for PIP replacing DLA here.](#)

Events, training & information materials

'Learning for All' Conference

'Learning for All' is the Scottish Funding Council's national conference on progress in widening access to further and higher education. The conference will take place on 30th April in Perth, and is relevant for staff in colleges, universities, school, local authorities, and adult learning. [You can get more information about the conference here.](#)

Action for ME - information for students & staff

Action for ME have recently developed a series of [information materials](#) for students with ME / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), including:

- ME/CFS and higher education (for students)
- How might ME/CFS affect studying? (for staff)
- Welfare benefits for students

Citizens Advice Direct

Citizens Advice Direct offers free, impartial and confidential advice any information to anyone in Scotland. They are an entirely telephone and web-based advice service, offering advice on a range of issues such as:

- debt
- employment
- housing
- welfare
- consumer advice

You can contact Citizens Advice by phone on 0808 800 9060 (9am - 8pm Mondays to Fridays, and 10am - 2pm on Saturdays) or on their [website](#).

RNIB Pre-Employment Programme

RNIB Scotland are offering a pre-employment programme for blind and partially sighted people in Edinburgh and the Lothians who are looking for work. The programme is designed to increase motivation, boost confidence and improve communication and job-searching skills. Each course will last 8 days and cover topics such as vocational assessment, CV and cover letter writing, and interview and presentation skills. For more information, contact Kasia Czarnecka by [e-mail](#) or phone on 0131 657 8200.

European Funding Guide for university students

A new student finance portal is now available to help students in 16 European Union countries access a range of scholarship programmes. The European Funding Guide helps eligible students access more than 12,000 scholarship programmes and other forms of financial aid. The guide helps students in all

academic fields and all semesters, and includes financial support for the cost of living, an internship, a language course abroad, or support for an academic research project.

[You can access the guide here.](#)

Empowering individuals with autism through coding

LiveCode have launched a new project which will help develop employment skills for people with autism. LiveCode are working with the National Autistic Society and Specialisterne to teach 3000 people on the autism spectrum to code. The 6-month programme will enable them to learn something new and give them the opportunity to gain employment skills, or become self-employed through the app industry. Participants will learn how to code apps, even if they have no previous coding experience, and will have both a mentor to help support them as well as specialist support from LiveCode.

[You can find out more about the project here.](#)

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