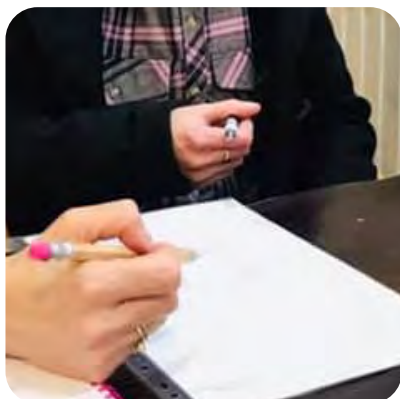


Lead Scotland Annual Report

2018/19



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Should you require this report in any other format such as plain text or braille please email us at enquiries@lead.org.uk or call 0131 228 9441.



Lead Scotland is a registered charity SC003949, 525 Ferry Road, Edinburgh, EH5 2FF
email enquiries@lead.org.uk or check out www.lead.org.uk

2018/19 At a glance

LEARNING

332

learners
supported this
year

147

assistive technology
assessments
completed

120

learners achieved
an Adult
Achievement Award

BEFRIENDING

50

befriendees
matched this
year

1

new Young
Carers Befriending
Project

94%

of those supported
report no longer
feeling lonely

HELPLINE

275

callers to our
helpline this
year

100%

of callers report
positive
benefits

18

downloadable
guides
on our website

POLICY WORK

97

people supported
to influence change
this year

20

policy groups
attended regularly
throughout the year

6

policy consultation
responses

Chair and CEO welcome

We are delighted to present our 2018-19 Annual Report celebrating a good year and our 40th anniversary! Many aspects of our services have evolved over the last 40 years but a personalised one to one approach is still the jewel in our crown. 54% of all learning services and 100% of all befriending services last year started with a home visit. Our bespoke approach was highlighted in the first ever annual report back in 1979: “Our great advantage is our flexibility, our ability to adapt to individual situations and provide the tailor-made tutorial help”.

We performed well against all three of our strategic goals last year: increasing the number of people who can benefit from using our services up by 32% since 2016, extending our national coverage for frontline and helpline services and we have attracted more funding in a very harsh financial climate, income up 7% since 2016.

We have reached more people because our growth has been focused on adding capacity to our frontline services, expanding our staff team from 14 to 21. At the same time we have become an accredited living wage employer.

In 2018 we were delighted to become an SQA centre which strengthens our learning offer by providing greater choice to learners who want to undertake qualifications with one to one home or community based support.

We are incredibly grateful to our Scottish Government, Local Authority and Third Sector partners who invest and support us to deliver impactful services. Last year we worked with over one hundred partners providing catalysts for disabled people and carers to build confidence, skills and reduce feelings of isolation. We assisted Contact, MacAndrew Gillespie, ARC Scotland and parents to host the first national conference for parents of disabled children preparing for the transition from school supported by a website full of useful resources.

There is still a strong appetite for core adult learning services: literacy, numeracy and digital skills with a growing number of people wanting to participate more fully within communities and have a say about the decisions which affect their lives. Over the last year we have been bringing more people together celebrating Lead Scotland’s birthday with afternoon tea and learning something new including cyber resilience skills and understanding participatory budgeting processes.

Lastly, a HUGE shout out and heartfelt THANK YOU to the amazing team of staff, board, interns and volunteers who are proud, passionate, can-do people who work incredibly hard to do things well and make things happen.

Emma Whitelock
CEO

Don Jarvie
Chair



Lead Scotland Services



In 2019

We are learner centred

More disabled people and carers have taken up personalised one to one adult learning opportunities leading to progression. People told us that they couldn't get home based, one to one or small group support to undertake qualifications so we decided to become an SQA centre so that we could meet this need. Our Coordinators are fast becoming trained assessors and internal verifiers and we have already delivered our first 10 SQA qualifications.

“ I found it hard at times but I learned through it. I learned that I am able to make changes in my life and I now have moved into my own flat. There were things I learned about myself . I'm not used to talking or writing about myself but I found the reflective process useful. I learned about the strengths I have and a few others I didn't know I had! ”

“ Just thought I'd get in touch to let you know how I was getting on - without you I wouldn't have made it to uni for a start. I passed all my assessments in the first semester so was really chuffed and very relieved! I just wanted to say thank you for all your help. I'm loving uni but know I wouldn't have been able to without your help. ”



Learning

Lead Scotland acts as a bridge supporting people to overcome barriers, building confidence and skills. Last year we had adult learners aged from 16 through to mid 90s! Every learner who registered with us took a leap of faith by trusting that we could take them a step closer to their ambition by providing the right support and learning environment. One in three learners was supported by a volunteer and many borrowed tablets to keep practicing between sessions.

- We supported 332 disabled people and carers from 9 local authority areas up from 318 last year.
- 82% of learners tracked at 3 and 6 months said they were still using the skills they learned with Lead (24% responded to tracking).
- 120 learners have gained Adult Achievement Awards at SCQF levels 3, 4 and 6, thanks to our partnership with Newbattle Abbey College and Lead Scotland learners piloted SCQF level 2 which will widen access to accreditation further.
- 147 assistive technology assessments were undertaken enabling learners to personalise technology to meet their needs. 174 learners were supported to use enabling technology.

45%

of all our learners were men



We reduce social isolation

Our Befriending services are able to reduce isolation and loneliness because of the magic that happens when you bring people together and you get a match that works well. There has been a great synergy between our befriending and our learning projects this year with joint volunteer forums and new volunteering opportunities. Some learners have taken up befriending services and some befriendees have been keen to learn as a result of becoming more active within their communities.

“It speaks for itself that Fred called me the other day for a chat.” Fred and Bill became friends and so he has now moved on from the project. As well as supporting Fred to become more active Bill also showed him how to use ‘Alexa’, an unused Christmas gift, because as well as being a befriender he is also a learning project volunteer.

“We have some laugh. She just makes herself at home (volunteer). It lifts you up (to have someone to chat to).’ After eight months of meeting regularly Claudia (befriendeed) said she didn’t need the support anymore as she now regularly gets out and about. “I could feel the difference. Sometimes I feel empty. It was good to go out.”



Befriending

We are delighted to have set up a new Young Carers Project in partnership with Fife Young Carers, building on the success of our Adult Befriending Project. Both projects are funded by Fife Council Health and Social Care.

“The companionship has been a great thing – sharing, and somebody coming to the house.”

- 50 befriendees were matched last year, up from 24 the previous year.
- New Fife Young Carers project for children and young people aged 12-18.
- Fife learning and befriending volunteers have enjoyed joint get togethers and have set up a brand new Friends of Lead Fife community group to raise funds and awareness.

“In the winter I was clinically depressed. This project and Link Living (carers) support made a difference. It gave me a reason to leave the house.”

Some new ideas in the pipeline:

Telephone Befriending: There have been so many referrals to the project (last year 65 on the waiting list) that volunteers came up with the idea of developing some telephone befriending services for people on the waiting list.

New Drop in Service: We are exploring working with the Fife Learning Project to investigate demand for a new weekly drop in service in Fife to offer digital, literacy & numeracy and befriending support –combining our projects in a unique way. We are testing the idea that people of any age would be welcome to drop-in for support such as form filling, how to use their laptop/tablet/mobile phone, reading a bus timetable, understanding a utility bill. There will also be a social area with refreshments so that people can pop in for a chat and meet people from their local area.



We have a helpline

Our specialist helpline and information service focuses on disabled people becoming informed and advocating for themselves to overcome barriers which are preventing them accessing, staying in or progressing on from college or university. Our impartial service enables students to feel confident in making a timely and effective complaint or discrimination claim without fear of repercussions or stigma. Helpline callers and data support our policy work to remove institutional level barriers.

"Outstanding service with empathy, sensitivity and understanding throughout, backed up with knowledge, experience and commitment. When it's impossible to find a solicitor in this area and the institution is putting up even more barriers, this service is essential. The relief I experienced from my interaction, is immeasurable . Thank you."

"Your services and support was very much needed and helped me take a complaint further. I was unsupported and was contemplating leaving my course. The advice given made me see a clearer way forward. To be signposted to the relevant legislation helped cement my argument and got my case investigated."

0800 999 2568



National Disabled Students' Helpline

Through our helpline and information service more disabled people, supporters and practitioners are empowered, informed and confident to access education, funding, support and to challenge discrimination.

- We received 275 calls to our helpline from 25 local authority areas of Scotland.
- 51% from people aged 16 to 24 years.
- Over the last 3 years there has been 691 calls, representing a 28% rise since 2016.
- 21% of helpline callers responded to tracking via survey monkey, 100% of whom reported positive impact benefits from accessing the Information Service, such as getting the right funding or support or confidently appealing a decision.

We received 33 survey responses in 2019 to help us improve our helpline service. The overarching message was deep satisfaction with the quality of our service. People found the way we deliver the service appropriate and flexible enough but they would like to see increased hours and more awareness raising of the service.

Three of our downloadable guides were refreshed this year: Higher Education in Scotland guide, update of Charitable Trusts guide and the Disabled Students' Allowance Factsheet.

We are delighted to be involving volunteers to help us refresh more guides in 2019-20.

"I got in touch with Lead Scotland after a recommendation from a disability advisor at the university I was applying to for advice on my rights, it was really helpful and it was a turning point for me."

**Suley
Helpline Caller 2019**

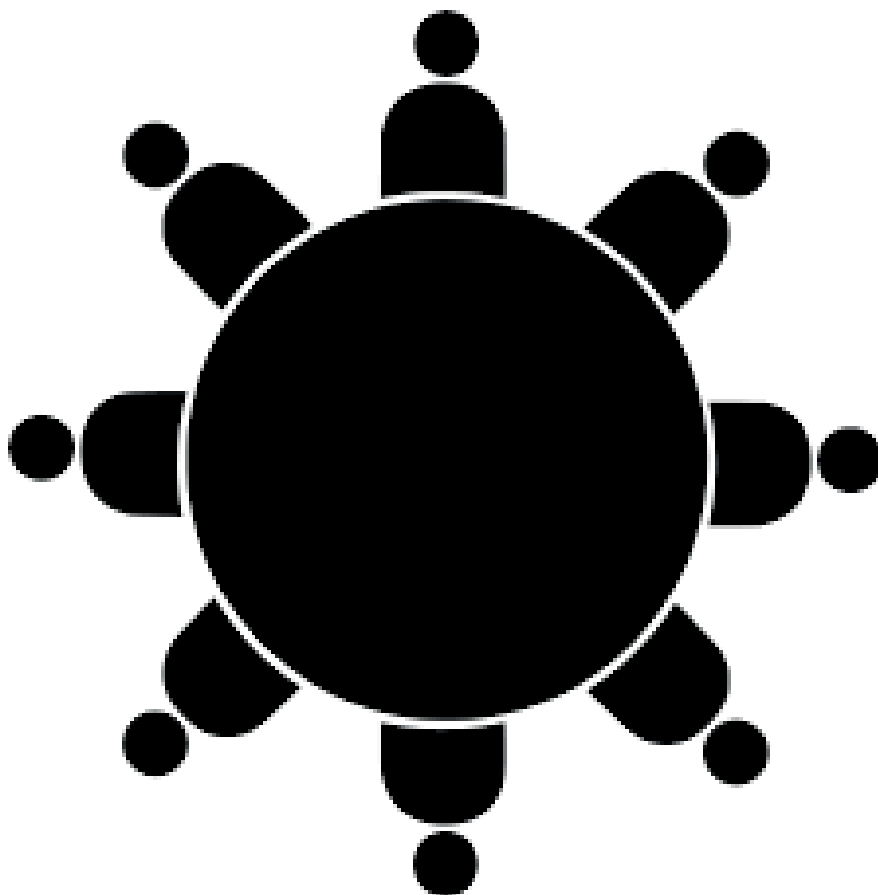


You can influence change

Our policy work makes a positive difference to key areas related to our vision: increasing access and provision of high quality lifelong; life-wide and learner-centred adult and community learning opportunities; the further and higher education widening access agenda, digital participation; halving the disability employment gap; reducing isolation; post school transitions and Fairer Scotland for disabled people action plan ambitions.

Whilst we work closely with government colleagues, we are impartial and independent from the Scottish Government. We add value as a specialist organisation and worked on 20 policy groups the last year, harnessing the direct voices of people with lived experience to overcome barriers to learning and sharing those voices with those who make policy.

Our Senior Policy Officer was on the STV News at Six in March! She took part in a televised interview for STV in response to the Fair Access Commissioner's discussion paper on disabled students at university. She also wrote an accompanying blog. The story highlighted the difficulties students with mental health issues are facing when trying to sustain their place at university.



Policy Work

Last year we supported 97 disabled people and carers to speak up to decision makers about things they'd like to change. We were involved on six policy consultations last year striving to improve outcomes for disabled people and carers.

We submitted a response to the Scottish Government's consultation on their draft resource for Supporting Disabled Children, Young People and their Families. We highlighted the lack of information in relation to post-school education and included suggestions for improvements to make the resource more accessible and practical for families to use.

We strongly advocated for changes to the Disabled Students' Allowance, a fund that supports disabled people to participate in higher education. We worked closely with the Scottish Government around what those changes might look like and as a result we were invited to be part of a small steering group to help design an upcoming public consultation. We will also support disabled students to respond to the consultation.

We responded to the Equality & Human Rights Commission Draft Strategic Plan, to advocate the importance of the Commission prioritising improving access to justice for disabled people experiencing discrimination in education. We also responded to their research on legal aid for victims of discrimination and took part in a follow up telephone interview, where we raised awareness of the issues disabled people face in accessing legal aid or appropriate legal counsel to take forward a case.

We were selected to provide a response to the Scottish Government's Equality Impact Assessment for the Care Experienced Bursary with a focus on how the increase to the award may impact disabled people in particular.

We were also asked to take part in a telephone interview as part of the ILF's research into how well their new Transition Fund is working. We made some suggestions of how the criteria for funding could be clarified for families and raised awareness of some issues with accessing the fund that families have told us about.



Moving forward 2020 to 2023

Policy Work - Adult Learning: We will be supporting the work of the Strategic Forum for Adult Learning as it writes the new Adult Learning Strategy.

Further and Higher Education: We are chairing and co-hosting the national Improving Outcomes for Disabled Students group alongside the Scottish Funding Council. We have identified common themes and issues and are moving on the actions arising from these themes, such as making recommendations about changes to the Disabled Students' Allowance to reduce the delays.

Promoting Cyber Resilience: We are committed to playing our part to implement the national Cyber Resilience Learning and Skills Action Plan across our work to bridge the digital divide which exists for disabled and older people.

Contextualised Admissions Campaign: In late 2019 we are launching a campaign to ask universities in Scotland to consider a disabled person's circumstances during the admissions process. We delivered a workshop at this year's SFC Fair Access Conference to raise awareness of the issues that can impact on a disabled person's chances of getting in and getting on at university. We screened a video case study of our helpline caller Suley, who told her story of trying to access university after a long break in education.

Our new Strategic Plan 2020-2023: thanks to the stakeholders who helped shape our new strategic plan for 2020-2023. The new plan will be on our website from November 2019, here's a headline summary:

- We will deliver more personalised adult learning and befriending opportunities, doubling our current provision by 2023.
- Extend our local and national coverage so that we reach more people across Scotland.
- We will capitalise our SQA centre status by increasing the range of qualifications we offer, filling gaps left by other providers.
- Enable more disabled people and carers to actively participate within communities
- Extend the reach of our helpline and information service to 32 local authority areas.
- We will strengthen our branding and marketing to drive greater visibility and positioning of our services to make it easier for people to find us and the support they need.



Thank you to all our supporters

Aberdeenshire Council

Scottish Government

North Lanarkshire Council

Skills Development Scotland NTSF

Fife Council

Highlife Highland

Perth & Kinross Council

Dundee Council

The Robertson Trust

Big Lottery Awards for All

Tesco

Persimmons

Hugh and Mary Miller Trust

Rotary Club of Perth St Johns

Faculty of Actuaries Student Society

Sight and Sound

The Open University

The Co-op



Our Staff and Board Team

Our Board 2018-19

Donald Jarvie (Chair)
Tricia Illsley (Vice Chair)
Paul Smith (Treasurer)
Colin Anderson
(Company Secretary)

Ahmed Yousaf
Pamela Maxwell
Kevin Mallon

Andy McMahon
Bev Smith
Sandra Wilson

Our Staff 2018-19

Main office

Emma Whitelock,
Chief Executive
Officer

Doreen O'Donnell,
Finance & Administration
Manager

Rebecca Scarlett,
Senior Policy & Information
Officer

Gail Phillips,
Engagement &
Development Officer

Sam Blair,
Administrator

North Team

Kate McArdle,
Project Administrator

Paul Jarvis
Highland Learning
Coordinator

Hayley Russell
Moray Learning
Coordinator

North Team cont.

Sarah Burton,
North Regional
Development Manager

Heather Gordon,
Highland Learning
Coordinator

Cath Findlay,
Highland Learning
Coordinator

Fiona Fraser,
Aberdeenshire Learning
Coordinator

Marie Law,
Aberdeenshire Learning
Coordinator

Barbara Taylor,
Aberdeenshire & Moray
Learning Coordinator

Pat Paterson,
Aberdeenshire Learning
Coordinator

Bridgitte Valance
Highland Learning
Coordinator

South Team

Stephen Fernand,
South Regional
Development Manager

Louise Andree,
Fife Befriending
Coordinator

Amy Browne,
Dundee Learning
Coordinator

Danielle Crighton,
Perth & Kinross
Learning Coordinator

Donna Morley,
North Lanarkshire
Learning Coordinator

Dawn Robb,
Fife Learning
Coordinator

Amulree Welch,
Perth & Kinross
Learning Coordinator