

A photograph of two women in a library setting. The woman on the left has blonde hair, wears glasses, and a yellow cardigan over a black top. The woman on the right has dark hair and is wearing a dark blue top with a white patterned scarf. They are both looking down at something out of frame. Bookshelves filled with books are visible in the background.

Learn more
about

Lead 
Scotland

Linking education and disability

www.lead.org.uk

Please let us know if you require this leaflet in any other format.

Scottish Charity No. 003949. Company Ltd.by guarantee, registered in Scotland, 110186.

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Who we are:

National charity supporting disabled people and carers by providing:

- personalised learning
- befriending
- advice and information services about learning and education



What we do:

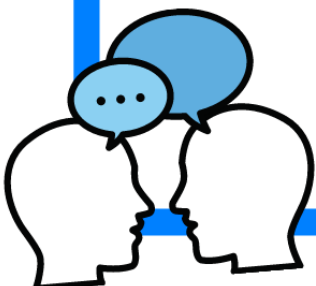
Our vision is a fair society where disabled people and carers have an equal opportunity to learn, participate, and achieve their potential.

We aim to enable and support disabled people and carers to become volunteers, workers and change-makers within communities, reducing the significant learning, health, social, and employment inequalities that exist when compared with the general population.



We align with the following Scottish Government National Performance Framework Outcome areas:

- Education
- Communities
- Children/Young people
- Health



Our range of services

- Adult learning opportunities
 - ⇒ 1-to-1 and small group adult learning opportunities
 - ⇒ Dedicated volunteer support and IT loan scheme
 - ⇒ SQA centre delivering qualifications
- Befriending projects (currently Fife only)
- Helpline and information service providing impartial advice to disabled students and carers
- Policy work
 - ⇒ Connecting disabled people and carers with opportunities to influence change in the areas related to post-16 learning, training, and employment across Scotland.
- Training and research consultancy
 - ⇒ Affordable Continuous Professional Development in digital skills and website accessibility via short courses and our credit rated '[Thinking Digitally](#)' module.
 - ⇒ Research related to our specialist areas of work, including widening access and retention in Further Education and Higher Education.

Our reach

- Local learning projects in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Dundee, Fife, Highland, Moray, North Lanarkshire, and Perth and Kinross, and Befriending projects in Fife.
- Scotland-wide [Helpline and Information Service](#).
- Scotland-wide online learning opportunities.

Service delivered 2020-21	Number of people supported
Community-based adult learning projects in 9 local authority areas	330
National remote learning services across 32 local authority areas	981
2 Befriending Projects in Fife	85
In depth helpline enquiries across 24 local authority areas	122 (305 calls/emails)
Dedicated, trained volunteers	156

Education Outcome

Unique

We are the only organisation which offers 1-to-1 home and community based non-formal learning opportunities and qualifications. This allows us to engage people who would otherwise lack confidence or access to engage in lifelong learning.

Flexible, bespoke, holistic

We work with people in a holistic way from their own starting point and context, always with progression and sustainability in mind. Our person-centred approach supports each learner to follow an individualised learning plan structured around their goals.

Act as a bridge into further learning, volunteering, and work

We act as a bridge for learners, including into formal education like college or university. 89% of Lead Scotland learners move into further learning, volunteering and work.

Encourage volunteering and development of core employability skills

We support learners to gain the qualifications, core skills, and confidence which employers are looking for.



Communities Outcome

Our services are free at point of delivery

We are inclusive. People who use our services are less likely to work and are more likely to live in poverty. Our services can provide opportunities which can lead to a route out of poverty.

We develop Digital Skills and Cyber Resilience

Our course 'Everyday computer skills: a beginner's guide to computers, tablets, mobile phones and accessibility' was designed with and for disabled learners in partnership with the Open University in Scotland.

We host free public webinars

Using our specialist knowledge and experience in accessibility, we host free webinars about online safety for members of the public, practitioners, and organisations. We contribute to Cyber Scotland Week each year with webinars, blog posts, booklets and videos.

We supported our communities through the challenges of Covid-19

We adapted our services in line with government advice to ensure our beneficiaries stayed safe, well connected and engaged with their learning/befriending. We offered extra befriending support for our learners and extra public webinars about online safety.

Children and Young People Outcome

We support young carers to feel less isolated and connect with their communities.

- Our befriending service in Fife enables young carers aged 12 - 18 to experience the same social and developmental opportunities as their peers.



Our helpline and learning services provide options and supported transitions from school.

- Our helpline and information service is Scotland's only national helpline for disabled people, who tend to be mostly young people, seeking guidance on accessing further and higher education.

Our specialist helpline empowers young people to self-advocate for a positive resolution.

- We support young people to self-advocate in these circumstances with specialist advice so they can achieve their goals.



"The Young Carer is lonely and socially isolated. They have received the Young Carers Tool Kit, received weekly befriending calls from a volunteer, accessed an iPad through Connecting Scotland as well as received funding from Creative Breaks to go shopping for new clothes. The young person is also keen to volunteer and we're currently looking for opportunities." - Befriending Coordinator

Health Outcome

We tackle social isolation and loneliness through learning and befriending.

- 50% of disabled people say they are lonely, and one in four report feeling lonely every day. Our befriending services mitigate loneliness and social isolation and support individuals to connect with and contribute to their local community.
- Our learning services improve people's mental health and well being through confidence building, increased participation, and support to become active citizens.

Human Rights Outcome

We influence change through policy work to further our vision of a fair society where disabled people and carers have equal access to education.

- We chair and co-host the 'Improving outcomes for Disabled Students' group with the Scottish Funding Council and are key members of the Scottish Government and SAAS 'Disability related student support review' steering group.
- We are currently active, contributory members of 22 national or regional strategic groups including the Adult Learning Forum for Scotland.

Key Partnerships

- We are core funded by **the Scottish Government** via a grant administered by **the Corra Foundation**. Most of our local projects receive grants from **Local Authority Councils**. We have also received funding support from trusts and foundations, including **the Agnes Hunter Trust, Wolfson Foundation, and the National Lottery Community Fund**.
- We contribute to strategic groups in the policy areas of adult learning, community learning and development (CLD), cyber resilience, employability, Further Education and Higher Education funding, national qualifications, and inclusive practice and transitions, including **the SQA Equality and Inclusion group, Disabled People's Outcomes group, and CLD Strategic Partnership groups in Moray and Highland**.
- We work with third sector partners to develop our work and harness effective collaboration, including partnerships with **Learning Link Scotland, Befriending Networks, Enable Scotland, Key Scotland, Enquire, Volunteer Scotland, Remploy, Inclusion Scotland, and Youthlink Scotland**.
- We work closely with post-school education organisations and further and higher education providers, including **the Open University in Scotland, Cantraybridge College, Newbattle Abbey College, and College Development Network**.
- To support our local area projects, we collaborate with local organisations and intermediaries including **Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service, North Lanarkshire Voluntary Action, Dundee Hillcrest Futures, Fife Young Carers, and Highlife Highland**.
- Our accessibility and cyber resilience work is supported by partnerships with **Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Cyber Scotland, and the Scottish Business Resilience Centre**.

Contact us

We are always keen to talk to people and organisations who share our vision. Please get in touch!

Email us at CEO@lead.org.uk or call us on 0131 228 9441