

Scottish Government

ALSFS Member Feedback on the Draft Adult Learning Strategy

The Adult Learning Strategy (ALS) seeks to create the conditions to empower adults and improve life chances across Scotland. The development of the Adult Learning Strategy is overseen by the Adult Learning Strategic Forum for Scotland (ALSFS) whose role, in relation to the ALS, is to help co-produce it by developing strategic aims and guiding its implementation and evaluation.

The draft ALS has been developed based on ALSFS members' contributions, consultation and evidence. As part of the next stage in the process, the Chair is asking members to feedback a collective view from the organisation/network they represent to help inform and further shape the strategy.

Please submit your response to SGCLD@gov.scot by **30 June 2021**

Please only provide ONE response per organisation/network.

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| Name: | Rebecca Scarlett |
| Organisation/Network: | Lead Scotland |

Please provide any high-level comments on the content (pages 7 - 15), for example, are there any key pieces of information or important considerations missing?

Clear and well explained rationale, including relevant and connected ambitions. 'Lack of understanding of value & impact of adult learning.' – is there action within the strategy to address this within the lifetime of the strategy?

Scotland Census link on page 14 not working. Presuming this is 2011 stats? With the changing population demographics, e.g. increasing diversity across the population, are there any more up to date figures on 'English speaking' etc available? Worth drawing out some of the benefits of online learning too, more accessible and inclusive for some? Something around the connection to employment & volunteering? Where is the voice of the learners or would-be learners?

Some stronger examples of the systemic barriers to learning would be useful here in the feedback quotes for policy makers, as transport cuts are not specific to adult learning as this is something we hear about on Lead's disabled students' helpline in relation to other forms of learning.

Digital exclusion is amplified for disabled people requiring assistive technology or human support to access digital learning.

'Deliver better outcomes' - what and how will they be measured?

Why not aim to 'remove' instead of 'reduce' the barriers, can the strategy be more ambitious?

With the list of areas community-based adult learning can have an impact on, will appropriate KPI's be developed as part of the strategy? In this list of statistics around literacy levels etc, are all adult learners represented? For example, disabled people? It would be useful to drill down into specific demographics to understand where the persistent inequality is and to understand how the strategy will aim to address this.

Theme 1: Expanding and Extending Adult Learning

Do you have any comments on the recommendations within this theme?

Mapping of diversity of staff and volunteers within CLD environment to identify how well can meet the emerging needs for all learners.

As well as analysing how well needs are being met it would be helpful to look at how well projects are collecting evidence and evaluating their impact to see what support the sector needs in evidencing outcomes to feed into the data measurement piece.

Increase access to and support for accredited learning for community-based adult learning - can we add on "across the whole of Scotland" here?

Does your organisation/network currently have any planned or ongoing work that would contribute to the implementation of these recommendations?

Corra Foundation a) continues to evolve its grant making practices, current examples are strengthening our data collection and also involving those with 'lived experience' in both programme development and decision making and b) their People in Place programme works alongside communities to help them identify what they would like to achieve; quite often this includes how to create community based adult learning opportunities.

Lead regularly works with local authorities to plan and evaluate our work and how it makes a difference. For our recurring local authority annual grants as well as for new funders there is an expectation of up to date evidence of need.

Lead produces a [regularly updated guide to charitable trusts](#) providing individual grants for educational purposes (available on our website). We also have a free national disabled students' helpline where we signpost learners to sources of funding and support.

Lead has a peripatetic SQA centre offering one to one or small group SQA accredited courses for those who can't otherwise access them, in communities and in their own homes.

Lead has written an [everyday computer skills online course](#) in partnership with the Open University, co-produced with disabled people and tailored specifically for disabled people and those with additional barriers to online learning. This course is freely available on the OpenLearnCreate site.

What specific actions could your organisation/network make, or contribute, to implement these recommendations?

CORRA can involve those with 'lived experience' in both grant programme development and decision-making processes. Through their People in Place programme they support the progress of a number of the recommendations.

Lead's cyber resilience project in this coming year and the digital training we will be offering through the new Transition Training Fund we have been awarded up until the end of March. We will also continue to work with local authorities.

From your organisation's/network's point of view, who would the key partners be to ensure the success of these recommendations?

Local Authorities; Lead Scotland, OU; WEA; Colleges; Education Scotland; Public and Third Sector Funders; Adult learning organisations; Youthwork organisations & workers; communities and individuals.

| Theme 2 - Connecting the Adult Learning Journey |
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| Do you have any comments on the recommendations within this theme? |
| <p>Although not always about employment, it may be appropriate to include, as may be part of the journey. A clear need for the support of workers / volunteers at grassroots community level to help engage and signpost potential learners. With the ongoing reduction of CLD workforce within local authorities this would appear to be something that will become increasingly important in the years ahead.</p> <p>Go further than strengthening partnership arrangements to meet advice and guidance needs of adult learners. The idea of an online national portal is vital to better connect learners to appropriate opportunities and to also support services to better signpost to these opportunities. Consider connecting with the existing 'Learn and Train' search tool on My World of Work.</p> |
| Does your organisation/network currently have any planned or ongoing work that would contribute to the implementation of these recommendations? |
| <p>Corra's People in Place / other place based work</p> <p>Lead Scotland runs Scotland's only national disabled students' helpline, which is also open to carers and practitioners, and we support callers to find learning opportunities that best suit their needs, so we already carry out research to help link learners up with local CLD, FE and HE opportunities, but searching for CLD/adult learning opportunities in particular can often be very resource intensive and the information is difficult to find.</p> <p>Lead Scotland notionally benchmarks the non formal one to one and small group learning we deliver by using professional judgement and the SCQF level descriptors, so that learners can see their progress in the increased knowledge, skills and understanding they have acquired. This creates a bridge to levelled learning opportunities, particularly useful for people who don't know what level of academic difficulty will suit them.</p> |
| What specific actions could your organisation/network make, or contribute, to implement these recommendations? |
| <p>Corra's People in Place programme could feed into relevant partnerships</p> <p>Lead could ensure they are signposting callers to any new portals or sources of information and guidance around adult learning via their national helpline. It would also be useful for a reciprocal link to be set up to our helpline for disabled learners.</p> |
| From your organisation's/network's point of view, who would the key partners be to ensure the success of these recommendations? |
| <p>Skills Development Scotland – if their language was widened beyond career and employability then it would be more inclusive of people who might be daunted by employment language at the point of entry and therefore not engage. The language and messaging between learning</p> |

and employability/careers needs to be joined up and accessible so that it will engage everyone.

Theme 3 - Communication

Do you have any comments on the recommendations within this theme?

Local communication also needed at grassroots community level. Accessible communication essential, eg availability of community language speakers; formats to meet different needs; etc.

Showing the impact of adult learning is key for cross policy support.

Does your organisation/network currently have any planned or ongoing work that would contribute to the implementation of these recommendations?

People in Place programme, eg annual progress reports

Social media campaigns around adult learning opportunities.

What specific actions could your organisation/network make, or contribute, to implement these recommendations?

People in Place programme, eg annual progress reports.

We can support with messaging through our social media channels and broad network of followers. We can share our own learner's stories.

From your organisation's/network's point of view, who would the key partners be to ensure the success of these recommendations?

Equalities Unit, Scottish Government, COSLA, Education Scotland, SFC, NHS,

Theme 4 – Access and Inclusion

Do you have any comments on the recommendations within this theme?

To create more opportunities for people from within the communities identified to deliver / lead the learning.

Again can the strategy aim to remove, not reduce the barriers? Perhaps break the sentence down a bit to make it flow better, stopping after adult learners, then "Assess how well partners provide accessible routes into learning".

These recommendations are very broad, Lead Scotland advocates for specific kpi's which benefit disabled students as they are disproportionately disadvantaged when compared with non disabled people.

The strategy needs to consider equitable access to funding for additional support to learn for people with protected characteristics. Sometimes, but not all of the time, reasonable adjustments cost money. The Scottish Government make provisions for this in FE and HE by providing colleges and universities with extra funding, so it is vital adult learning has parity of esteem.

Does your organisation/network currently have any planned or ongoing work that would contribute to the implementation of these recommendations?

Corra is improving their data collection practices affording better evidence of who they are and are not reaching. Working with other funders, etc to better understand the needs of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. Both of these are elements of their Diversity, Equity & Inclusion plan.

Lead's helpline is the only specialist helpline in Scotland providing information and advice on disabled people's rights and entitlements in post-school learning settings. We also produce free guides and factsheets including a guide to the Equality Act for disabled learners.

Lead Scotland is a specialist provider offering one to one and small group accessible community based and online adult learning. Lead Scotland also facilitates assistive technology assessments and operates a home loan scheme.

What specific actions could your organisation/network make, or contribute, to implement these recommendations?

CORRA - share our learning

Lead could work with other adult learning providers, the forum and Scottish Government and learners on making clear their rights as disabled learners under the Equality Act.

From your organisation's/network's point of view, who would the key partners be to ensure the success of these recommendations?

Equalities Unit, Third Sector intermediary and delivery organisations with a focus on access & inclusion, Lead Scotland, SFC, Scottish Government, EHRC

Theme 5 – Workforce Development

Do you have any comments on the recommendations within this theme?

Needs to connect effectively with other Themes, particularly Access & Inclusion. Analysis of the diversity of the adult learner workforce, paid and volunteers, to be done. With this information map against the needs of adult learners in Scotland.

The narrative and recommendations don't seem to correlate, if there is concern about over reliance on volunteers then why is there focus on developing an improved framework of support for them? Is the core issue not that there should a be more paid staff than volunteers?

Refresh mapping of qualifications for adult learning practitioners **and volunteers**.

Inclusive learning needs to be included in looking at the uptake of specialist adult learning qualifications if this was raised consistently as a concern in the consultation.

Does your organisation/network currently have any planned or ongoing work that would contribute to the implementation of these recommendations?

We offer digital skills training for practitioners – both non formal and credit bearing

What specific actions could your organisation/network make, or contribute, to implement these recommendations?

With funding we could offer more digital skills training, both non formal and credit bearing. We have a track record of engaging people from all 32 local authorities to attend our digital skills learning opportunities including staff and volunteers.

From your organisation's/network's point of view, who would the key partners be to ensure the success of these recommendations?

All parties connected to adult learning to better understand the adequate & increased investment, people and financial, that is needed to make delivery of the strategy and change within learners & society possible.

Lead Scotland, Volunteer Scotland, Local Authorities, WEA, Colleges and Universities, SDS, Scottish Union Learning, OU

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