

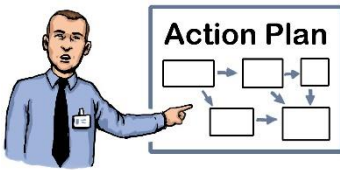
# Adult Learning Strategy for Scotland

2022-2027

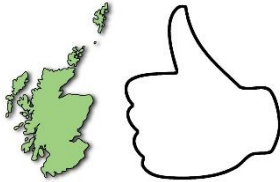
Easy Read Version



## Our vision



The Adult Learning Strategy is a plan. It says how the Scottish Government aims to create new and better opportunities for community-based adult learning.



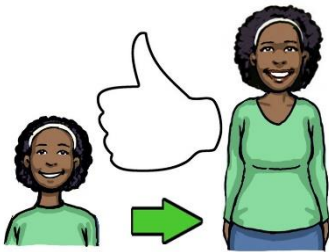
Adult learning in Scotland will mean better skilled, educated and confident people. This will make more inclusive communities.

## Our aims



- Better life chances for adult learners across Scotland.
- Communities, councils, voluntary organisations, colleges and universities will work together. This will connect learning opportunities. They will offer learning for adults. Mostly those who are left out and disadvantaged.
- Make sure that there are accessible opportunities for adults to learn in their lives.

## Our principles



The plan is based on 3 main principles:

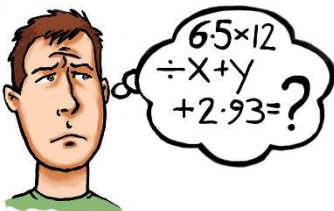
- Learning is lifelong
- Adult learning covers all areas of life
- Adult learning is centred around the learner.



## Why we want things to change



In 2020 many adults in Scotland had low or no qualifications. Some people did not speak English at all or not very well.



In Scotland half of all adults have low number skills. This is better than the rest of the UK.

Many people in Scottish prisons find it hard to use a computer. Many have difficulties with writing and numbers.



Scotland has an older society. Adult learning is very important.



In 2014 we set a goal that every adult had the right to learning. This was to meet their needs and hopes. Adult learners have told us that barriers still exist. These include finance and accessibility.



More work needs to be done to close the learning gap caused by poverty. Inequalities have been made worse by Covid.



Covid has had a serious effect on mental health. Lower income groups are at more risk of depression, anxiety and loneliness. Many disabled people said they were worried about isolation during the pandemic.



Taking part in lifelong learning can be good for well-being. It can help improve mental health. It can help people be less socially isolated.



Many groups face challenges when trying to find jobs. Employees from minority ethnic groups are more likely to have lost their jobs because of Covid.



Disabled people experience more effects from Covid than non-disabled people. This could impact getting a job longer term. Adult learning can link with employment services to help.



During the Covid most learning was online. This may continue. This has made challenges for some vulnerable adult learners. These include access to equipment, computer skills and being able to read.



Many people do not have good access to the internet or do not have good computer skills. This can have a negative impact. This includes health, education, money and employment. Adult learning staff need new skills to give digital learning.

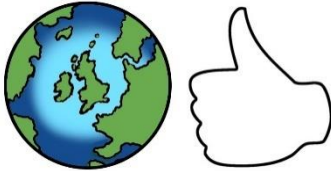


The mainstream education system in Scotland is well understood.

Many people do not know the value and impact of community-based adult learning. It is not clear how adult learning works. It can be hard for learners to access.



There needs to be better links between colleges, universities and community-based adult learning.



We need to make sure that education and lifelong learning opportunities are available for all.



The number of minority ethnic groups is low in the Community Learning and development staff.



Staff are older and some staff plan to leave in the next few years.



There is a gender pay gap among staff which means women are paid less than men.



## Our actions



We need to take action so we have better skilled, educated and confident people in Scotland. We need the education system and other services to work together. We need new ways of doing things.



We want to improve the life chances of all adult learners. We need to make sure there is a strong and understood system of adult learning in Scotland.



To do this all organisations must play an active role to meet the aims of this plan.

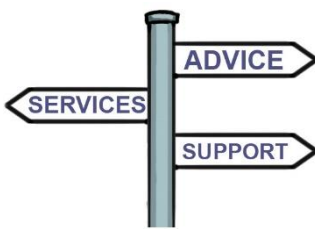


We have 4 themes to change and improve adult learning.



### **Expanding Adult Learning**

We want adult learning to be available, accessible and meaningful. We want more people to understand the value and impact of adult learning.



### **The Adult Learning Journey**

We want adults to have access to the right information, advice and guidance. This should be at all stages of learning. It should be accessible and fair to everyone.



### **Inclusion**

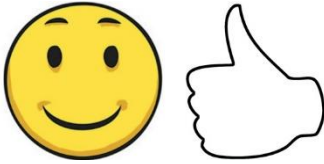
We want to remove barriers to make sure support can be accessed. We want to make sure that adults are aware of learning opportunities.



### **Staff Development**

We want adult learners to have learning opportunities provided by skilled staff.





Opportunities for adult learners should be based around needs. They include:



- Developing relationships and networks
- Improving mental wellbeing



- Improving health and wellbeing
- Helping people to be aware of other cultures

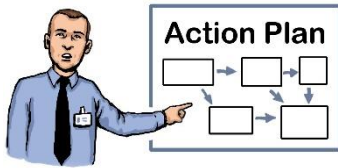


- Improving communication skills
- Improving language skills
- Developing creative skills



- Improving confidence
- Improving financial literacy.

# Action Plan



Our action plan says what important steps are needed. This will link adult learning opportunities.



The plan will change as we go along and find out more. We will work on how community- based adult learning can help in areas. This includes education, employability, health and poverty.

The Action plan supports Scotland's recovery from Covid by:



- Tackling inequalities that were made worse by Covid

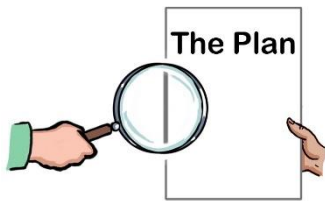


- Giving more opportunities to adults with no or low qualifications. Linking community- based adult learners with job services



- Making public services more inclusive. This is by involving community-based adult learners.

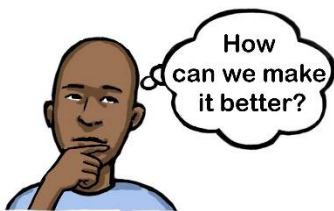
## Checking the Progress of the Plan



There is an Adult Learning Strategic Forum for Scotland. This is a group that includes professionals and organisations.



It will check how the plan is moving forward. The Forum will advise the Scottish Government on adult learning.



The Forum will make sure that that the plan is being done. They will look for problems and advise how to fix them.



The Forum will update the plan as it goes along. The Forum will review the action plan every year. Regular forum meetings will give a chance to learn what is working and how to do things better.

## Adult Learners Advisory Group



We want the voice and experiences of adult learners to be at the centre of what we do.



A national Adult Learners Advisory Group will work with the Forum. This will make sure the plan meets the needs of adult learners.

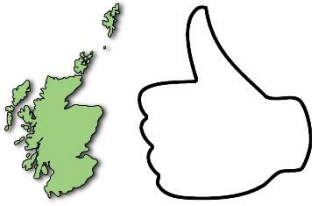


The Group will represent the range of community-based adult learners. They will support the work of the plan.



We will make accessible materials to help people be involved.

# The National Performance Framework



The National Performance Framework says what we need for wellbeing for Scotland. There are 4 outcomes:



- We are well educated, skilled and able to add to society



- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power



- We are healthy and active



- We live in communities that are inclusive and supportive.

## Understanding Community-Based Learning

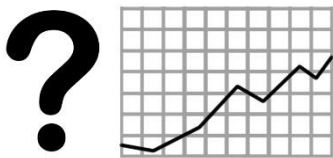


Community-based adult learning does more than education. It has benefits for the learner, their family and the community.

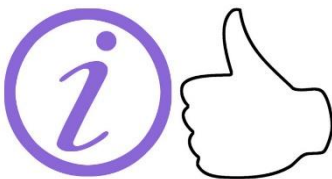


Adult learners say it has improved their physical and mental health. It has helped them support their families. It has improved their chances of getting jobs and helped them make links in their community.

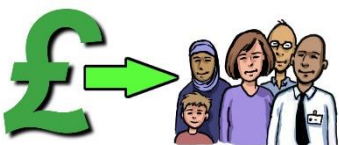
## Measuring the Impact of Community-Based Learning



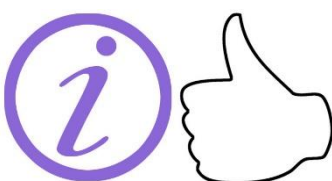
People have told us about the positive impact of community-based adult learning. But there is no way to measure this. We do not know the good it is doing.



We will find a way to get this information. This will help show that more money and resources should be spent.



Community-based adult learning should be looked at as part of the wider education system. This would give more ways of learning.



We will make the public aware of adult learning. We will work together to make this information accessible.



## Better Results through Family Learning



Family learning lets families to learn together. Adults supporting children's learning can help reduce poverty.

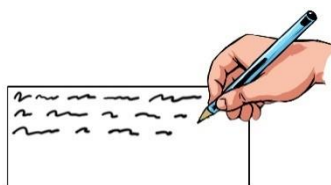


We will make sure there are more opportunities for family learning.

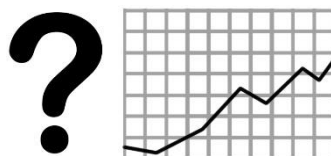
## English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Plan



An ESOL plan was made so everyone living in Scotland could take part in Scottish life. This was for people whose first language was not English.



A review said that by 2020, more adults would be able to read, write and use numbers well. This would help them use information and communicate.



We will use this to review how other plans have worked. We will see how we could do better.

## A Linked System



Community-based adult learning is for adults in their communities. Learners build on their own skills and experiences. It is not part of the main education system.



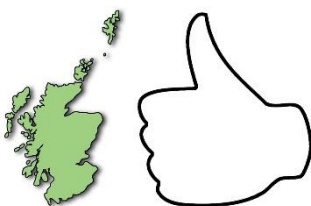
Community-based adult learning is part of Community Learning and Development (CLD) services. It is run by councils, colleges and voluntary organisations.



Community-based adult learning is often the first step back into education.

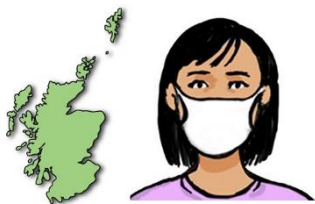


We need to make better links between community-based adult learning and mainstream education. We need stronger links with jobs and volunteering opportunities.



These links would help Scotland build a strong and self-supporting economy.

## Supporting Communities and Learners



During Covid, Community Learning and Development (CLD) services were flexible. They gave support to adults, families and communities.



Services knew their local communities. They had good relationships with vulnerable people. They were able to help with things like food emergencies and delivering medicines.



The shift to online learning means staff need support and training to improve their digital skills.

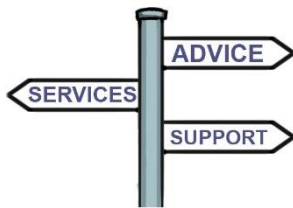


Volunteers also bring important skills and are a huge part of the Community Learning and Development staff. We will make more opportunities for volunteers and those who support them.

## Lifelong and Life-wide Learning



Many people told us they did not know how to access community learning. They did not know how to move from one service to another.

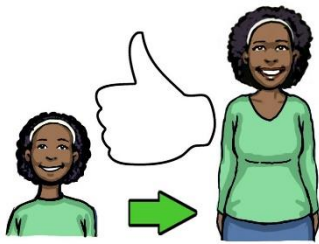


We want information, advice and guidance to be accessible. It will support access to learning.



Adults come to learning with a wide range of skills and qualifications. This includes asylum seekers and refugees who have come to Scotland. We will look at how our systems use people's other learning.

## Creating Positive Pathways



We have made this plan by listening to adult learners and those who work with them. The lifelong adult learning journey is complicated. It has to change with personal life, family, work and the communities they live in.



Learners want to get qualifications. This can improve their work life and opportunities. We will give more access to community-based adult learning.



Covid has meant more adult learning is online. Many adult learners lost access to adult learning. Many were unable to have face-to-face contact. We will make more options available for adult learners.

# Removing Barriers



There are a lot of barriers. There are more barriers for people who live in poverty or are excluded. Covid has had a big impact.

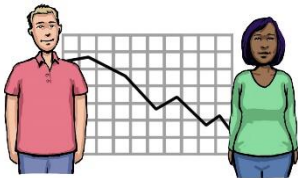


Adult learners also have work and care responsibilities. A lack of good childcare can be a serious problem. Where a person lives can also make a difference.



Some of the biggest barriers include:

- Transport costs
- Health
- Past experiences of learning
- Confidence
- Digital skills and unable to use online
- Food poverty
- Language.



We will work with adult learners to remove the barriers to learning. We will reduce inequalities for learners. We will improve diversity among staff.











Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

© Crown copyright 2022

**OGL**

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3) or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80435-371-4 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, May 2022

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA  
PPDAS1057230 (05/22)

W W W . g o v . s c o t