



## Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

**Making it work together**

# literacy report

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# literacy report

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## Executive summary and key recommendations

### 1.1 This report

- explains why the raising of adult literacy and numeracy levels is acutely important to the wide variety of Scottish Executive policies that promote social justice, health, economic development and lifelong learning
- considers the scale and nature of the problem:
  - the majority of the population are satisfied with their skills for the uses they encounter
  - up to 800,000 adults appear to have very low skills
  - 500,000 assess their own skills as poor or moderate
  - the importance of literacy and numeracy as underpinning skills is invisible to employers
  - many unemployed people do not know if they have the literacy and numeracy skills for their choice of job

The evidence suggests a high proportion of those with low levels of literacy and numeracy are to be found among:

- people who live in disadvantaged areas
- workers in low skill jobs
- people on low incomes
- people with health problems and disabilities

- identifies three types of individuals and acknowledges that the success of the strategy will depend on its match with the economic, social and demographic characteristics of those in need:

**Expressed need** – people who are actually dissatisfied with their skills

**Latent need** – people who recognise that their skills are low but still say that they are satisfied with them

**Invisible need** – people who appear to rate their skills as stronger than they actually are

- explains why previous efforts to

raise literacy and numeracy in Scotland withered

- suggests countrywide action at all levels of society to promote recognition of the importance of literacy and numeracy
- sets a goal to exceed world class levels of literacy and numeracy
  - assists around 80,000 people over the next 3 years
  - more than doubles annual capacity within 3 years
  - develops an enabling framework for a world class literacy and numeracy service
- targets priority groups:
  - people with limited initial education, particularly young adults
  - unemployed people and workers facing redundancy
  - people with English as a second or additional language
- sets out clear lines of accountability for leadership, delivery and monitoring

■ **identifies four key principles:**

- 1 *a lifelong learning approach*
- 2 *free to learners*
- 3 *targeting priority groups*
- 4 *grounding change in research and learner consultation*

■ **outlines four critical success factors:**

- 1 *clear lines of accountability*
- 2 *learner-centred programmes*
- 3 *professionalism*
- 4 *maximising the potential of Information and Communications Technology (ICT)*

■ **sets out a new strategy that aims for consistency:**

- *in approaches to teaching and learning, management and organisation of delivery in all sectors and*
- *a rigorous and shared approach to quality improvement.*

**Four goals are set:**

**1. National leadership and effective local action with:**

- *a national strategy overseen by Ministers and co-ordinated within the Scottish Executive*
- *a new ‘development engine’*
- *a lead role for Community Learning Strategies.*

**2. A quality learning experience with:**

- *a major effort to engage a broad range of people in workplaces and communities as ‘spotters’, ‘referrers’ and ‘supporters’*
- *a commitment to individual learning plans and specialised guidance and assessment*
- *a new adult literacy and numeracy curriculum framework*
- *the development of Progress File and the core skills framework to recognise and accredit progress*
- *strong emphasis on the role of ICT*
- *a commitment to develop provision that is relevant to learners’ lives.*

**3. A system that learns with:**

- *the application of the ‘Literacies in the Community: Good Practice Framework’ to all provision*
- *a national training programme to raise expertise*
- *continuous research and development of the strategy*
- *a Research Advisory Group.*

**4. Promoting awareness through:**

- *pathfinder projects to test new ways of delivering the strategy*
- *exploring the relationship with health and justice*
- *maintaining and developing the skills of learners.*

## 1.2 Funding implications

The funding implications are:

### 1. £24m in the first 3 years to:

- provide over 33,000 new learning opportunities
- more than double annual capacity to reach around 34,000 learners each year by 2004
- fund the ‘development engine’ and eight pathfinder projects
- fund a national training strategy for specialist adult literacy and numeracy practitioners and provide national training standards for all staff and volunteers whose roles relate to tuition in adult literacy and numeracy.

### 2. The need to continue funding after the first 3 years to maintain momentum with this crucial initiative.

## 1.3 Key recommendations

The full list of recommendations is:

*Recommendation 1: that the national strategy should be actively overseen by Ministers and co-ordinated and monitored within the Scottish Executive.*

*Recommendation 2: that the location of the ‘development engine’ to drive the creation of quality adult literacy and numeracy provision should be identified by International Literacy Day (8th September) 2001*

*Recommendation 3: that the Scottish Executive should develop guidance on literacy and numeracy for other national organisations that have a stake in the development of adult literacy and numeracy.*

*Recommendation 4: that accountability for local development, funding, monitoring and targets across three sectors (community and the voluntary sector, further education and the workplace) be given to local authorities as co-ordinators of Community Learning Strategies.*

*Recommendation 5: that all services and courses should be provided free to learners.*

*Recommendation 6: that awareness training and screening processes should be developed to improve the identification of need within communities, workplaces and post school education.*

*Recommendation 7: that common approaches should be developed to specialised guidance and assessment and producing individual learning plans.*

*Recommendation 8: that the quality of programmes should be improved through a new curriculum framework, a national on-line databank and resource system and by establishing four pathfinder projects on courses and programmes.*

*Recommendation 9: that the ‘development engine’ should lead the development of e-learning in support of literacy and numeracy.*

*Recommendation 10: that the measurement of progress should be based around learner goals and distance travelled, building on the core skills framework and Progress File.*

*Recommendation 11: that all education and training providers should nominate an accessible key person who will co-ordinate the guidance and support required to recruit and sustain learners.*

*Recommendation 12: that specialist information and advice should be provided to support inclusive and effective provision for all learners.*

*Recommendation 13: that local authorities, colleges, voluntary organisations and workplace providers should all integrate the quality framework in 'Literacies in the Community: Resources for Practitioners and Managers' within their existing arrangements for reviewing progress and quality.*

*Recommendation 14: that a national training strategy should provide national training standards for all staff and volunteers whose roles relate to literacy and numeracy tuition and a new qualification for specialist literacy and numeracy practitioners.*

*Recommendation 15: that staff and volunteers in organisations providing literacy and numeracy tuition should meet the national standards by 2005.*

*Recommendation 16: that the national strategy, as it develops, be informed by and responsive to research and consultation with learners.*

*Recommendation 17: that four pathfinder projects should be established to raise awareness and stimulate demand for literacy and numeracy.*

*Recommendation 18: that the Scottish Executive and other major public and private sector employers should take the lead in helping individuals retain and develop their skills.*

*Recommendation 19: that capacity should be more than doubled within three years, with the funding provided through local authorities, ensuring the expansion of capacity across all sectors and the targeting of priority groups.*

*Recommendation 20: that £18.5m should be allocated through local authorities to Community Learning Strategy partnerships to complement existing capacity and assist around 80,000 learners over the next 3 years.*

*Recommendation 21: that priority is given in the allocation of funding to the establishment of a strong national development engine, a national training strategy and 8 pathfinder projects.*



## Responding to our remit

### 2.1 Our remit

In June 2000 Henry McLeish, then Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, appointed the Adult Literacy Team (annex 6.4) with a remit **‘to provide a focus for the development of national policy and strategy on adult literacy and numeracy’** and:

- establish an audit of need
- prepare a comprehensive audit of provision
- identify the key issues that require to be addressed
- identify and initiate the key actions that require to be taken
- engage with the main provider and customer groups
- suggest performance indicators to ensure effective provision
- suggest targets to drive improvements forward
- detail resources
- indicate how resources should best be applied.

The Team was asked to report by the end of 2000 and this deadline was subsequently extended due to the need to commission, conduct and take account of new research.

### 2.2 How we responded to the remit

Our report has been informed by over 100 responses to our consultation letter and website, and a series of fact-finding visits and meetings with the most relevant organisations in Scotland and England. Seven research projects were commissioned to add to our understanding of adult literacy in Scotland.

A Research Advisory Group provided informal advice and guidance on four of these projects (section 3.2) and advice on UK and international sources of research and practice. One project has still to be completed examining the views of individuals about their learning experience.

The other two pieces of research examined:

- the capacity of the learning system to respond – the audit of provision (section 3.3.1)

- the use of progress profiling and core skills units, in recognising and accrediting learner progress (section 4.2.6).

In developing this strategy we examined a variety of UK and international adult literacy programmes, including those in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Ireland, the USA, Canada, Australia and France. A field visit to Maine, USA provided an opportunity to examine progress on the US National Institute for Literacy 10 year strategy, ‘Equipped for the Future’, as well as literacy and numeracy in the context of skills for life, training and development, the



Adult Literacy Team



role of volunteers and performance accountability. This report seeks to adapt the best elements of these different international approaches to fit Scottish circumstances.

We are grateful to the many individuals and organisations who responded to our enquiries, often at very short notice, and assisted in the preparation of this report. We would also like to thank the Adult Education Branch within the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department who supported our work tirelessly and the Scottish Executive's Central Research Unit who managed our research programme.

Any strategy must recognise the base from which it starts and acknowledge the time needed to build infrastructure and capacity. Recognition of these limiting factors is important if we are to set realistic targets as we fulfil our remit to identify and initiate key actions. Since it has been estimated that we are currently only providing learning opportunities for about 2% of the 800,000 adults with very low skills we could not ignore the importance of taking immediate

steps to develop and increase the pool of expert literacy practitioners in Scotland. We have therefore recruited a national training team to run a series of local training events from early 2001 to address some immediate training needs of literacy practitioners while conducting a training needs analysis to prepare for the development of a national training programme.

## Understanding the Challenges

### 3.1 Why literacy and numeracy are important

What constitutes an adequate standard of literacy and numeracy has not remained static throughout history. Literacy and numeracy are skills whose sufficiency may only be judged within a specific social, cultural, economic or political context. Our own definition, which received strong support in the consultation process, tries to take account of this:

**The ability to read, write and use numeracy, to handle information, to express ideas and opinions, to make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners.**

Daily life increasingly requires us all to understand how to use these complex skills and knowledge. Our definition is rooted in the context of people's lives – what they need to know and be able to do, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners. Helping children with their

schoolwork, following doctors' instructions and carrying out many other tasks in life demand well-developed and regularly updated literacy and numeracy skills. The digital age brings further challenges, in new ways of learning and new modes of communication such as electronic mail, websites and interactive television.

Ministers have articulated a vision of a modern vibrant Scotland, all of whose citizens are equipped to fulfil their potential. Improving literacy and numeracy will be crucial to that process, so that everyone has the skills to lead fulfilling lives and play a full part in family and community life. Raising literacy and numeracy levels will help promote a wide range of Government policies and priorities such as social justice, health, lifelong learning and economic development. In an increasingly globalised economy, Scotland's future prosperity and competitiveness depends on building up the skills of her existing workforce and improving the employability of those seeking work. But improving literacy skills can also provide the first steps to learning

other languages, promoting understanding in a multi-cultural society, and accessing a whole range of life opportunities. An inclusive society is also a literate society.

*I left school at 16 when I became pregnant with my son who is five in July. He goes to school after the summer and I am now in a position to find a job. I am really excited by the progress I have made. I now feel able to carry out the computer training I need to go for a secretarial position. It has also given me the confidence to help my son with his homework when he starts school in August.'*

*Sharon (Buddies for Learning Project)*

*'ABE has increased my confidence so much I'm doing a flexi course at college in information technology.'*

*Stella age 37 (Fife Council ABE)*

I like the relaxed atmosphere at the group and I'm much more confident now, especially at work when I have to write notes.'

*Ian age 34 (Fife Council ABE)*

### 3.2 What evidence is there to inform policy?

Assembling the available evidence on adult literacy and numeracy into a clear picture is not easy. Scottish-based research is virtually non-existent. Nevertheless, one finding is that a complete absence of reading or writing ability is not a major issue, but that low or insufficient literacy and numeracy abilities are more widespread than previously thought.

A significant piece of research that has influenced policy in many countries is 'The International Adult Literacy Survey' (IALS). It concludes that 23% of adults in Scotland may have low skills and another 30% may find their skills inadequate to meet the demands of the 'knowledge society' and the 'information age'. In comparison with

other countries, Scotland and Great Britain are well down the league of OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries participating in IALS, with a greater proportion of their population at the lowest of the five levels of performance.

The IALS tests for assessing an individual level of skill have been the subject of some criticism but the survey does give data on an area where there has been little research in Scotland. In the time available to us we could not have undertaken a new Scottish survey to measure literacy and numeracy skills. Designing and carrying out such a survey could have taken up to two years and cost around £2million, money which might be more effectively spent on increasing learning opportunities. Therefore four research projects were commissioned to complement the picture provided by IALS:

- further analysis of the Scottish IALS (1996) data (Office for National Statistics, forthcoming)

- The Workforce Survey - a household survey of the workforce (MORI, forthcoming)
- The Employers Survey - Scottish employers' views of literacy and numeracy in the workplace (British Market Research Bureau, forthcoming)
- a literature review (Lord J., forthcoming).

The evidence available suggests that around 800,000 adults in Scotland have very low literacy and numeracy skills. Analysis of the **Scottish cohort of IALS** identifies three factors as strongly associated with low literacy and numeracy skills:

- having left education at 16 or earlier
- being on a low income
- being in a manual social class group.

(In Britain as a whole having English as a second or additional language and being born outside the UK emerge as factors but further research would be required to understand their influence in Scotland.)

Other characteristics include:

- living in an economically disadvantaged area
- being over the age of 55
- having a health problem or disability affecting learning, speech, sight or hearing
- gender – women performed less well than men on numeracy tasks.

The detailed analysis of the Scottish IALS data identifies findings that are important for designing appropriate responses and merit further investigation:

- significant numbers of those performing at the lowest level rate their own skills as poor or moderate (almost 60% of those at Level 1 rate their mathematics skills low and over 40% their writing skills).
- although the great majority (93%) of the population are generally satisfied with their skills, 1 in 4 of those who rate their reading or writing skills low say they are dissatisfied.
- of the three skills (reading, writing and mathematics), more of those performing at Level 2 say their mathematics skills limit job

opportunities. Among those performing at Level 1, as many as 1 in 5 say their reading skills limit job opportunities.

- those with low skills rate them differently in relation to work. 17% of those at Level 2 rate their writing skills as poor or moderate, yet 48% assess them as poor or moderate for work. 58% of those at Level 1 rate their mathematics skills as poor or moderate but 44% rate them as poor or moderate for work.
- although women perform less well than men on numeracy tasks (55% of those performing at the lowest levels were women) women rate their mathematics skills in a similar way to men.
- although men and women perform similarly on the prose reading tasks, more men rate their reading and writing skills poorly than women (24% of men and 11% of women rate their writing as poor or moderate).
- those with low skills are less likely to use a computer or a library and those who read and write frequently are more likely

to be satisfied with their skills.

These findings highlight that people with low skills are not a homogeneous group. Different outreach strategies and learning options will require to be designed for different target groups.

The Workforce Survey (MORI, 2000) points to potentially significant differences in the ways people use their skills at work. The pattern can be seen as a positive spiral, where those with good educational attainment are in more skilled jobs, making greater use of their literacy and numeracy skills. Whilst few jobs have no literacy or numeracy demands, there is a negative spiral where those with low educational attainment are in low skilled jobs, making much less use of literacy and numeracy:

- many of those in low skill jobs have limited opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills at work
- those with no qualifications were less likely to have taken part in education and training opportunities
- those out of work are more likely to rate their skills as poor or moderate than those in work (although the

evidence in the Scottish IALS data does not identify being unemployed as a particular characteristic of those with poor skills)

- over two-fifths of those out of work are unclear about the literacy and numeracy skills required for the job of their choice.

There is further evidence of the levels of perceived need from the Employer Survey. Literacy and numeracy skills do not appear at the forefront of employers' minds in recruitment or when considering the skills of their workforce. Employers identify job specific, communication and IT skills as key issues. However:

- nearly a third of employers report that increasing demands have been made on employees' literacy and numeracy skills over the last 5 years
- nearly a third expect increasing demands to be made on employees' literacy and numeracy skills over the next 5 years
- a fifth believe poor or moderate literacy and numeracy skills have been a barrier to productivity

- half of employers say staff are given enough opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills
- there is greater employer dissatisfaction with the skills of their own employees when compared with employees' perceptions of their skills in the Workforce Survey.

Tackling literacy and numeracy in the workforce both improves the employability of the individual and raises productivity and earning levels. It is not possible to measure precisely the connection between learning and economic growth. However a study by the Centre for Economics in Education (McIntosh and Vignoles, 2000) suggests positive labour market outcomes for those above the lowest level of literacy and numeracy skills. Based on earlier research using tasks at a level broadly corresponding to the International Adult Literacy Survey's Level 2, the study found adults succeeding as follows:

- a 6-7% increase in earnings compared with those below Level 2 for numeracy
- a 1-11% increase in earnings

compared with those below Level 2 for literacy

- a 2-3% increase in employment compared with those below Level 2 for numeracy
- a 0-10% increase in employment compared with those below Level 2 for literacy.

International evidence suggests several reasons why an adult may experience a literacy or numeracy problem. Not everyone sees themselves as having failed at school. Schools lay the foundations but they are unable to encompass or anticipate all future uses of literacy and numeracy and the effects of increasing demands on adults' skills. Some people experience problems because they did not acquire the initial literacy and numeracy skills at school to build upon in adult life. Others will have problems because:

- they left school with literacy and numeracy skills, but have lost them because of a lack of opportunity to use and develop their skills
- their skills degenerate when they become dependent on others

- a specific change makes new demands on their skills e.g. a new job or promotion, leaving care, parenthood, retirement or simply the pace of organisational, social or technological change.

Because our remit was to consider adult literacy and numeracy, we have not considered literacy and numeracy issues within schools. Improving school leavers' levels of literacy and numeracy will be vital to the success of our strategy however and we welcome the recent announcement on the national priority for literacy and numeracy in schools.

### 3.3 What is our capacity to respond?

#### 3.3.1 Audit of Provision

The Audit of Provision shows that further education colleges, local authorities and voluntary organisations accommodate approximately 15,000 learners each year (other than those delivering literacy and numeracy programmes as an element of national training programmes such as

Skillseekers, The New Deal and Training for Work). The Audit demonstrates the wide variation in delivery models:

- further education colleges provide for around 6,000 learners, mainly in broader courses within which there is an element of literacy and numeracy tuition - for example Return to Learn.
- local authorities provide for around 6,500 learners, the majority receiving dedicated literacy and numeracy tuition.
- voluntary organisations provide for around 2,500 learners mainly in broader courses within which there is an element of literacy and numeracy tuition but rely heavily on other providers for this teaching. Voluntary organisations are significant in providing personal support, for example in helping people to write letters.

The Audit of Provision showed some degree of confusion between core skills and literacy and numeracy skills. At present confusion is caused by the use of terms

such as basic skills, core skills, key skills, personal development and employability to refer to literacy and numeracy (often when bidding for funding) when these terms refer to a broader range of skills. Terms such as support and tuition, or guidance and assessment, are not always used consistently. This has made it difficult to be absolutely clear about who is doing what.

#### 3.3.2 Support for the national development of literacy and numeracy

Efforts to raise literacy and numeracy levels within the post-school education and training system have been handicapped historically by the lack of priority attached to the issue, declining resources and the gradual decline in central co-ordination and support. As already noted we are currently providing learning opportunities for about 2% of the 800,000 adults with very low skills.

There appears to be a lack of diversity of learning options in most areas, a lack of any learning options in some areas and uncertain quality. The consultation responses offer a number of explanations:

- a lack of dedicated funding
- a lack of consensus regarding standards of teacher competence
- insufficient opportunities for focused training, staff development and support for teachers of adult literacy and numeracy or volunteers
- an absence of guidance on what materials are helpful and where to find them
- no curricular framework to guide practitioners, or common approaches to recognising achievement
- no clear line of accountability for the development and implementation of a national strategy

‘... and though many examples of good collaborative practice were cited in the responses, there was a strong feeling that they were patchy, frequently excluding of relevant agencies, and too often embroiled in issues of power and/or funding.’

*Adult Literacy 2000 National Consultation Exercise*

### 3.4 Policy issues

#### 3.4.1 The scale of need and a limited capacity to respond

Literacy and numeracy skills are critical for adults to achieve the goals they set themselves at work, at home, in the community and as learners. The personal consequences of low literacy and numeracy skills can be serious. The national consequences for a modern, multicultural, competitive Scotland, and efforts to achieve social justice, are far reaching.

Further work is required to identify the literacy, numeracy and oracy needs of adults whose first language is not English and the needs of fluent Gaelic speakers who have not developed their literacy skills in that language. In addition the need for specialist provision for learners with disabilities and specific learning difficulties (including dyslexia) needs further development.

Scotland lacks a clear focus of responsibility for the development and implementation of a national strategy for literacy and

numeracy. Action is needed to improve the nature, extent, quality and range of services offered to literacy and numeracy learners. In addition we need a dramatic increase in the status of literacy and numeracy provision from its current status as stigmatised, remedial and the ‘poor relation’ to one where it is recognised alongside other types of learning and one whose learners are afforded a higher status. Providers and practitioners lack the advice, support and training to develop the quality of the learning opportunities necessary to eradicate the problem. The problem is twofold. Quality of existing provision is patchy, although there are examples of excellent practice in Scotland, but the overriding failure to date has been the inability of the system to provide the capacity for a substantial increase in the number of learners. Specifically we need to understand:

- what strategies are most successful in attracting learners
- what works in raising literacy and numeracy levels



- what are the most appropriate teaching and learning methods
- how we recognise and accredit individual progress

The scale of need must be considered against a general background of low participation in lifelong learning. The personal, cultural and structural barriers to increasing participation in lifelong learning will be critical in any literacy and numeracy strategy.

The strategy must support the Scottish Executive's vision of a '*Smart, Successful, Scotland*' and an inclusive and socially just society. In particular the strategy must fit with wider efforts to stimulate demand for learning from individuals and groups currently under-represented within post-16 education and training, including the following:

- Community Learning Strategies and Plans
- learndirect scotland
- Careers Scotland proposals
- Future Skills Scotland

- expansion in further and higher education and changes to student support
- national training programmes
- Individual Learning Accounts
- community capacity building
- Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIP)
- New Community Schools
- National Training Organisations
- the Trade Union Learning Fund
- the Beattie recommendations

Nurturing a national commitment to lifelong learning is essential to attempts to raise literacy and numeracy levels. Partnerships will be vital between public, private and voluntary sector organisations, going beyond those who are education and training providers, e.g. prisons, health agencies and social work. Literacy and numeracy programmes must be targeted according to the social, economic and demographic characteristics of the adult population with low literacy and numeracy skills. An important consideration is how the necessary services and opportunities are to be provided in rural areas.

'A common theme was the need to raise awareness of the problem among a wider range of professionals, not only those with direct contact with potential or existing learners. Examples of key individuals well placed to identify literacy and numeracy needs included union representatives, health care professionals and social workers.'

*Adult Literacy 2000 National Consultation Exercise*

**A key principle is that action should focus on the priority groups indicated by the evidence:**

- people with limited initial education, particularly young adults
- unemployed people and workers facing redundancy
- people with English as a second or additional language
- people who live in disadvantaged areas
- workers in low skill jobs

- **people on low incomes**
- **people with health problems and disabilities**

‘... for groups such as disabled people, other language groups, lone parents, young people and those with health problems, provision would have to be carefully considered to maximise participation among otherwise excluded groups.’

*Adult Literacy 2000 National Consultation Exercise*

### **3.4.2 A key principle – commitment to a lifelong learning approach**

Two hard truths emerge from national and international evidence: learning programmes for adults with low literacy and numeracy do not easily attract those in need and many learners drop out before making real progress

One approach to the problem can be described as the ‘deficit approach’ where the individual is encouraged to take a test that will demonstrate a failure to meet a set standard. Countries that have adopted a deficit approach focus on getting adults to

accept that their skills are poor and then require their participation in programmes until they achieve a minimum standard. On a practical level, a deficit approach is at odds with perceptions of the great majority of those with low skills who are satisfied that their skills are adequate – and would see no reason to take a test. It also skews programme providers’ efforts towards those closest to the minimum standard rather than encouraging providers to reach out to and motivate all adults with significant needs. More fundamentally, a deficit approach is limited by its reliance on improving only the skills specified in the minimum standard. Context and the wider purpose can be lost.

In contrast, a ‘lifelong learning approach’ focuses more attention on the interplay between demands and opportunities that trigger and maintain voluntary participation, especially among those in greatest need. It is less concerned with determining the specific threshold for joining learning programmes than with achieving collaboration and synergy of effort across sectors and policy areas so that all adults with learning needs are systematically matched with the resources

available. Rather than focusing on a minimum standard, it is concerned more with establishing what the learner’s goals are. This can be more demanding for both the individual and the policy maker. The aim is to assess learners’ ability to apply their learning to real contexts and to measure the economic, personal and social gains that they make, including their willingness to continue to learn in the future. This makes significant demands on providers’ accountability and professionalism. Although this approach is challenging, experience elsewhere shows that it has greater likelihood of achieving long-term success and therefore makes a greater return on investment.

‘Marketing strategies have to make provision attractive enough to interest people who do not necessarily value learning and be presented in appropriate ways to target those most in need. The key messages in any marketing strategy should strenuously avoid association with a stigmatised provision. It should convince adults that it’s about learning not ability.’

*Adult Literacy 2000 National Consultation Exercise*

Family literacy is an excellent example of effective lifelong learning. Parents learn how to help their children to develop their skills, while extending their own abilities. Lifelong learning initiatives such as this are vital to grounding literacy and numeracy programmes in the life situations of adults and communities. Learning opportunities should be available to adults at times and situations in their lives when it is important to them to expand their skills and literacy practices.

### 3.4.3 Awareness raising

#### Individuals

An important issue to consider in addressing low levels of literacy and numeracy is whether people recognise that they have poor literacy and numeracy skills, and whether they see this as a problem.

The evidence suggests those with low skills fall into three groups:

***Expressed need* - people who are actually dissatisfied with their low skills**

***Latent need* - people who recognise that their skills are low but still say they are satisfied with them**

***Invisible Need* - people who appear to rate their skills as stronger than they actually are**

People with low literacy skills often adapt their lives to avoid situations where they need to exceed their skill level and therefore remain satisfied with it.

In addition when they do need to carry

out tasks at a higher level, they may ask others for help. It is also likely that people with low skills encounter few situations that expose any pressing need for higher skills and so remain unclear about how good or bad their skills are.

Reaching and involving those with low literacy and numeracy skills presents an enormous challenge. We must develop creative ways of reaching those who see no hope of or need to extend their present skills, who feel alienated by their previous experience of learning, or fear declaring their need for help.



Family Literacy, St Brides Centre, Glasgow

## Employers

Employers do not readily identify literacy and numeracy as a key employee issue. However they do identify communication, thinking, team working and IT skills as top priorities and see weaknesses in all these areas. As good literacy and numeracy skills underpin effective performance in these areas, their role in explaining poor performance may often be invisible and other personal or behavioural attributes may be blamed. The research evidence (Felstead et al, 2000) demonstrates that the increasing sophistication of work practices, such as the introduction of quality circles, appraisal systems, team-working, Investors in People and advances in technology, demand greater skills. The Scottish Executive's strategy to promote progressive organisations, outlined in '*A Smart Successful Scotland: Ambitions for the Enterprise Networks*', must recognise these stimuli to improving literacy and numeracy and must incorporate measures to ensure that those with low skills are not left behind.

## Communities

There is a high correlation between living in a disadvantaged area and having poorly developed literacy and numeracy skills. For people living in these communities and for people in low skill jobs, being active in community groups and engaging in voluntary work can provide the opportunity to use their literacy and numeracy skills to the full while highlighting the need to improve them. It is clear that SIPs (area and thematic) are a priority for targeting and that the allocation of funding for programmes should be weighted in their favour. The Scottish Executive's strategy for social justice should also encourage wider action to sustain and develop literacy and numeracy skills.

### 3.4.4 It's about more than courses and programmes

A balance must be struck between formal and informal learning opportunities. Attending literacy and numeracy tuition is only one way of acquiring literacy and numeracy skills. Adults learn and help each

other with literacy and numeracy in the workplace, home and their community and the strategy must take advantage of these opportunities. Courses and programmes will help people improve and make use of literacy and numeracy skills. However unless we provide improved opportunities and support to maintain and develop these skills, new learners, and those using their skills only rarely (e.g. in low skill jobs), may lose them. This is particularly important for young adults with limited educational achievement as they begin to transfer skills learned in school into adult life.

### 3.4.5 Understanding how adults learn

Some of the general barriers to increasing participation in lifelong learning include:

- people's preference to make other use of their free time
- pressures on time at home and work
- inconvenient location of learning opportunities
- financial barriers
- conflict with domestic and caring responsibilities

- lack of information and absence of opportunity
- a belief amongst many that learning has little to offer them
- unhappy memories of school

But this simple catalogue of familiar barriers to learning only takes us so far.

There is a growing body of research about how adults learn (Claxton, 2000). Adults do not learn in the same way as children. Adults bring to learning the ability to analyse and reflect on learning as it applies to their experience of the world. Adults' ability to integrate new skills and knowledge with what they can do already and their need to transfer learning to different contexts should be treated as a strength to draw out and build on. This means paying attention to multiple intelligences, preferred learning styles, memory strategies and also developing awareness of different methods, so learners can broaden out from reliance on one method in isolation. Some prefer self study; some want direct teaching; others learn best on-line at times to suit them; others

want to mix distance learning with a series of tutorials.

Adults also learn by making links with previous learning and experience. They transfer knowledge and skills and they need opportunities for reflection and review as well as discussion with tutors and peers. There is also evidence to show that they need continual support on an individual basis to sustain them in their learning and to build confidence. Finally, not only do adults require this interactive model of learning that includes guidance and support but they need opportunities built into the learning experience which allows for the trialling and testing of their newly acquired skills.

## The Solutions

Overcoming the legacy of neglect and achieving the necessary leap in national literacy and numeracy levels will require a radical strategy, with increased priority, significant new investment in capacity building and more effective partnership activity between all sectors. Improvements in national skill levels cannot be achieved quickly or easily.

The long-term goal of the strategy will be to exceed the literacy and numeracy levels of Scotland's main competitors within the global economy. Our definition of literacy and numeracy (section 3.1) is challenging. We see no point in setting minimal standards which would be readily achievable but in the longer term would prove inadequate for the world we face.

This report identifies four key principles:

- **a lifelong learning approach (section 3.4.2)**
- **free to learners (section 4.2.1)**
- **targeting priority groups (section 3.4.1)**

- **grounding change in research and learner consultation (section 4.3.3)**

This section outlines:

- **four goals:**
  - national leadership and effective local action*
  - a quality learning experience*
  - a system that learns*
  - promoting awareness*

A series of recommendations is made under each goal.

At the end of the section we set out:

- **four critical factors for an enduringly successful strategy:**
  - clear lines of accountability*
  - learner-centred programmes*
  - professionalism*
  - maximising the potential of ICT*

### 4.1 National leadership and effective local action

#### 4.1.1 A long term strategy with clear leadership and national development

Experience in other parts of the UK and internationally, including in Ireland, Australia, the United States and Canada demonstrates the importance of both a high level of commitment from Central Government to literacy and numeracy and a strong, pro-active 'development engine'.

The national roles and responsibilities undertaken include:

- national training programmes for practitioners, volunteers and intermediaries (those who help with 'spotting' and 'referring')
- providing advice on policy and strategy, including assistance with 'literacy proofing' of wider policies
- developing curriculum, teaching and learning methods and quality
- commissioning and/or conducting research, including practitioner research

- developing access, physical and on-line, to resources, research and good practice
- networking practitioners
- targeting awareness raising campaigns
- supporting local participation in national initiatives.

Examples include: The National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) in Canada (<http://www.abc-canada.org>); The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) in the USA (<http://novel.nifl.gov>); The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) in Ireland (<http://www.nala.ie/>); and the Basic Skills Agency (BSA) in England and Wales (<http://www.basic-skills.co.uk>).

***Recommendation 1: that the national strategy should be actively overseen by Ministers and co-ordinated and monitored within the Scottish Executive.***

Building the capacity to provide quality literacy and numeracy provision from such a low base will take 3 to 5 years. Making a significant impact on Scotland's literacy

and numeracy levels will require a sustained effort, over a longer period, even with the substantial new resources announced for the next 3 years. Issues of funding are addressed in section 5 of the report.

In view of the importance of quickly implementing the recommendations in this report and the implications for many other Scottish Executive policies and initiatives, it is essential that the national strategy is co-ordinated and monitored by the Scottish Executive. The Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department (ELLD) should secure appropriate professional advice to enable it to carry out the following functions:

- agreeing national goals and targets
- identifying appropriate resources and the pattern of disbursement, including the priorities for pathfinder projects
- agreeing an action plan to implement our recommendations
- providing new guidance on Community Learning Strategies, consistent with the broader role

outlined in recommendation 3

- assessing the literacy and numeracy components of Community Learning Strategies and providing and monitoring funding allocated
- agreeing with the providers of professional education the content of training as it relates to literacy and numeracy
- providing guidance to the Enterprise Networks, Scottish Further Education Funding Council, Community Learning Scotland and the Scottish University for Industry on their role and contribution to achieving the national goals and targets
- ensuring that Scottish Executive departments reflect the priority accorded by Ministers to literacy and numeracy in their own planning, employment and training practices. This could involve cross-departmental working groups and/or short term secondments between departments. Areas for action include health and prisons.
- reviewing and adjusting the national strategy



- ensuring fit and synergy between reserved and devolved approaches.

***Recommendation 2: that the location of the ‘development engine’ to drive the creation of quality adult literacy and numeracy provision should be identified by International Literacy Day (8th September) 2001***

Those who responded to the consultation overwhelmingly identified the lack of a focused ‘development engine’ as a major barrier to the quick and effective development of literacy and numeracy provision. The literacy and numeracy vision outlined in this report does not suggest a single clear home and we have considered allocating the tasks and responsibility across a number of organisations. Whilst partnership working is vital we believe that there would be a considerable loss of drive and coherence if accountability for the key functions outlined below were not vested in a single organisation. Currently a Ministerial review of Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) is ongoing and we

therefore ask that Ministers consider the most appropriate location for the ‘development engine’ within that review. We have recommended below the features and functions of the ‘development engine’ and of the national organisations with a contribution to make in achieving the national goals and targets. Interim arrangements to maintain the momentum of action we have started should be put in place.

The ‘development engine’ must offer national coverage and transcend sectoral differences. Its goal is to drive the creation of quality adult literacy and numeracy provision in partnership with the Community Learning Strategy partners and national organisations.

The main responsibilities will be:

- the development and implementation of a national training and development programme for all categories of staff and volunteers, which articulates with the professional education of literacy and numeracy specialists

- the development of curriculum and innovative approaches
- the commissioning, management and monitoring of pathfinder projects. This should include a continuing dialogue with the stakeholders involved.
- the development of performance measures and quality improvement processes
- enabling practitioners to network and exchange good practice
- the creation of a national on-line databank that provides researchers, practitioners and volunteers with a single point of access for available resources, training and development, research and networking
- supporting, and engaging directly in, consultation with learners
- the development of e-learning options and other knowledge and tools in response to the needs of the field
- a national research programme including action research by practitioners
- raising public awareness of literacy and numeracy issues

- co-ordinating an annual progress report on literacy and numeracy in Scotland
- co-ordinating a national event on International Literacy Day annually.

‘The idea of a national body, not merely for the overseeing of standards, but for the co-ordination and development of all aspects of adult literacies work in Scotland was frequently suggested in the responses. They suggested that it could combine not only promotional, developmental, and quality control remits, but that it could also serve to embed an adult literacies perspective into a range of other political agendas.’

*Adult Literacy 2000 National Consultation Exercise*

#### 4.1.2 Stakeholders

**Recommendation 3:** *that the Scottish Executive should develop guidance on literacy and numeracy for other national organisations that have a stake in the development of adult literacy and numeracy.*

**This guidance will cover the following national organisations:**

- The Enterprise Networks in support of the vision in ‘A Smart Successful Scotland’
- The Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC)
- Community Learning Scotland (CLS)
- The Scottish University for Industry
- National Training Organisations

**Guidance should be developed covering**

- collaboration with the ‘development engine’
- active participation in Community Learning Strategies.

#### 4.1.3 Local action

**Recommendation 4:** *that accountability for local development, funding, monitoring and targets across three sectors (community and the voluntary sector, further education and the workplace) be given to local authorities as co-ordinators of Community Learning Strategies.*

Translating the new funding into learning opportunities will require considerable local co-ordination and co-operation to avoid wasteful competition and misunderstandings between sectors. To avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and an additional planning burden we recommend that local action be developed through Community Learning Strategies. The Scottish Executive, in Circular 4/99 has made it a priority for local authorities to focus on literacy and numeracy in their role as co-ordinators of Community Learning Strategies. New guidance on Community Learning Strategies will be required from the Scottish Executive to ensure coherent development at a local level. This guidance must also take account

of the role of national organisations such as trade unions, Workbase, The Workers' Educational Association and the Prince's Trust.

The Community Learning Strategy should clearly:

- benchmark current provision against the *'Literacies in the Community: Good Practice Framework'* and include an action plan to improve quality
- outline how the diversity of available learning options and pathways between options will be co-ordinated and developed
- identify how participation by priority groups will be increased
- identify the distribution of funds, targets and accountability between the three sectors identified – community and voluntary sector, further education and the workplace.
- identify how mainstream literacy and numeracy provision will be developed and supported

'Any new policy, it is suggested, should be co-ordinated through the Community

Learning Strategy of each local authority as this provides an opportunity to dovetail with key lifelong learning targets in Community Learning Plans. The overall message was that there must be a collective effort that integrates services and provision and is representative of the range of organisations with a legitimate interest in this area.

There appears to be overwhelming support for the utilisation of Community Learning Plans as the principal vehicle for the implementation of national strategy. This, it was suggested, would allow locally adapted solutions that are unconstrained from a nationally prescribed model. Further, that it would build on work that is already in progress and encourage established local partnerships to develop.'

*Adult Literacy 2000 National Consultation Exercise*

### Case Study

North Lanarkshire Community Education Service is co-ordinating the development of a community learning plan focused on adult literacies and core skills. Organisations working within the partnership include the local authority community education service and other local authority services, four further education colleges, Scottish Enterprise Lanarkshire, Motherwell Social Inclusion Partnership, Lanarkshire Adult Guidance Network, the local careers service, LEAD Scotland and a range of other voluntary organisations. Representatives of approximately 25 groups attend planning meetings. The partners have jointly applied for European Union funding to establish a literacies and core skills project. In addition a marketing strategy is being developed which will give priority to those most at risk of social exclusion.

## 4.2 A quality learning experience

### 4.2.1 Free to learners

***Recommendation 5: that all services and courses should be provided free to learners.***

This section covers the elements that must be available to build a system responsive to those with literacy and numeracy needs. We recommend that all the services in this section including general and course screening, specialised guidance and assessment, individual learning plans, courses and programmes, ongoing guidance and support be provided free to learners. All the learning opportunities must be listed on the learndirect scotland database.

Few skills are more fundamental than the ability to read, write and do maths. We recommend making provision free to learners to underline the importance of developing these skills in order to help people into work and into better paid, more skilled jobs and to achieve a socially inclusive Scotland. On a practical level, there is a strong correlation between weak

skills and low income so charges would skew the profile of those participating and prevent learners from choosing the options most appropriate to their needs. More significantly, fees would weigh heavily as a disincentive alongside the many barriers to participating in learning that those with literacy and numeracy difficulties face. Research shows that, unlike adults with a positive prior experience of education, they do not expect to enjoy or benefit from learning. They anticipate that adult learning will, perhaps like their own experience of school, be a negative or even humiliating experience. They expect to have to juggle their course with care responsibilities, long working hours and poor public transport even though they have limited expectations of success. It is only after joining programmes that learners become more positive about learning and the benefits they can gain (Bailey and Coleman, 1998). Removing costs as an obstacle enables providers to be pro active in engaging and responding to the priority groups and to achieve the widest possible access.

Free learning should not be poorly resourced learning. We believe providers must capitalise on the opportunities provided by new communication technologies. These provide an attractive reason for adults to want to improve and extend literacy skills; new ways to learn that will be particularly important for rural and disabled learners; and new ways for learners to maintain and develop their skills when they have successfully completed the programme (section 4.2.5).



Buddies for Learning Project

'I enjoy coming here. You are not made to feel stupid because you don't understand as an adult. I feel I have learned a lot. I enjoyed the full stops, capitals and commas. That was a big thing. It meant a lot. I now write letters to the school with ease.'

*Jeanette (Buddies for Learning Project)*

'ABE is nothing like school; you get to work at your own speed and you don't get into trouble if you forget to do something. I have more confidence in myself now.'

*Marie age 31 (Fife Council ABE)*

#### 4.2.2 Improved screening

***Recommendation 6: that awareness training and screening processes should be developed to improve the identification of need within communities, workplaces and post school education.***

### 1. General screening

Many people with low skills do not recognise these as limited and, even if they do, they are not clear how formal learning could benefit them. Informal advice, support and referral should be readily available in workplaces, communities and from education and training providers. There is already some good practice in Scotland where there is partnership and networking across sectors to draw in and support learners, such as the Adult Guidance Networks already supported by the Scottish Executive. Such good practice needs to be extended and strengthened. There is a need for innovative thinking in opening up new opportunities for specialised guidance, advice and screening which builds on models of effective partnership and which is based on a multi-agency approach. There is also a need to ensure that both informal and non-formal programmes articulate and create pathways to formal and accredited learning. The 'development engine' should take a lead in developing awareness training and 'indicator' type screening tools for use in workplaces and communities.

Groups to involve include:

- community workers
- criminal justice workers, prison officers
- legal profession
- health workers
- social workers
- trade union representatives
- Employment Service and New Deal personal advisers
- Careers Scotland advisers
- National Training Organisations
- home school link workers
- learndirect scotland advisers and learning centre co-ordinators
- Investors in People advisers
- employers

A broad range of people should be provided with training to help them to spot those who need assistance and then to know where to refer them for specialised assessment and guidance. It is also important to expand the range of individuals and groups who should be able to answer the question 'where can I get help?'

Consideration should be given in the national training strategy to how building awareness of literacy and numeracy into continuing professional development training can best be achieved.

## 2. Course screening

Adults with literacy and numeracy needs entering further and higher education and national training programmes need to be offered appropriate help at the earliest possible stage. Screening against the literacy and numeracy requirements of courses should be available to those who ask for help and those in the priority groups identified earlier (section 3.4.1). Education and training providers will need to be proactive in devising screening materials and strategies for supporting the growing numbers of new learners from priority groups as efforts to widen access to further and higher education succeed. The ‘development engine’ should produce guidance on the design of screening tools to support education providers in screening learners against the literacy and numeracy requirements of their courses.

### 4.2.3 The learning gateway

To enter the learning process we can conceptualise the individual passing through a gateway that evaluates his needs and the level of resources to be directed for his advantage. This learning gateway involves a two-stage process – specialised guidance or assessment, then the drawing up of individual learning plans.

**Recommendation 7:** *that common approaches should be developed to specialised guidance and assessment and producing individual learning plans.*

#### 1. Specialised guidance and assessment

Specialised guidance and assessment should be available free of charge to any adult whether referred or asking for help themselves. The process should:

- provide an assessment of needs and identification of appropriate learning goals
- present potential learners with options and impartial advice

- establish a starting point against which to review learner’s progress.

Initial assessment should be sensitive and comprehensive. It should reliably identify individual learners’ abilities and particular strengths and weaknesses in relation to relevant contexts. Assessment tools are required that avoid the diagnostic limitations of standardised initial tests and provide practitioners working in different sectors with a common language to describe learners’ starting points. On the basis of the assessment, specialised guidance should provide potential learners with a realistic idea of what they can set out to achieve given their needs, aspirations and circumstances and the options open to them. Both assessment and guidance should consider numeracy along with literacy. Specialised initial guidance and assessment should be offered as a package, not as separate events, and must be of a consistent standard for all potential learners. The ‘development engine’ should lead the development of common approaches.



We believe that materials and strategies in current use to provide specialist guidance, screening and assessment are not appropriate for learners who have had unhappy learning experiences in the past and who are tentative in their attitudes to learning, for example New Deal clients. The screening materials themselves do not provide accurate information about levels of competence in literacy or numeracy for adults in the context of the Scottish education and training system. Nor can they adequately quantify any future



Learner & Tutor's Forum, Muirfield Centre, Cumbernauld

difficulties of potential learners within formal programmes.

There is also currently a lack of understanding and expertise in the design of strategies to elicit this information. Much of the screening and assessment activity consists of a paper and pencil approach, rather than being part of a wider face-to-face interaction which focuses on the total situation, context and needs of individual learners and which requires learner evaluation as part of the process.

While we recognise that thinking in these areas has developed, there is much to be done to:

- create on-line materials which develop literacy and numeracy
- create materials which develop new technological and business related skills as well as building on existing literacy and numeracy skills
- develop screening and assessment materials which take account of the way adults learn and apply their knowledge and which are relevant to their individual contexts

- develop appropriate strategies through training to assess the needs of learners who are lacking in confidence or whose experience before has been negative.

## 2. Individual learning plans

Individual learning plans should become the standard means of recognising needs and goals and developing learning pathways. There is currently no requirement for providers to produce individual learning plans or use any mutually recognised core content. This prevents learners from taking responsibility for their own learning and limits their ability to move on from courses and between programmes. It means that those who are unable to join a course immediately after assessment or who defer learning to a later stage (due to unforeseen circumstances), in effect re-enter the learning system from scratch. In addition to the benefits for learners, analysis of learning plans will greatly improve providers' ability to tailor courses and programmes to recognised needs and to co-ordinate their efforts with others in their area.



The development work needed should include looking at how ICT can be used to make learning plans accessible, informative and easy to update for learners, practitioners and providers. The 'development engine' should develop a framework for learning plans to ensure consistency across and within sectors.

*'For almost all of the respondents appropriate learning was equated with:*

- *learner-centredness*
- *being aware of the learner's needs and circumstances*
- *using materials and delivery techniques appropriate to those needs.'*

*Adult Literacy 2000 National Consultation Exercise*

#### 4.2.4 Improved courses and programmes

***Recommendation 8:*** *that the quality of programmes should be improved through a new curriculum framework, a national on-line databank and resource system and by*

*establishing four pathfinder projects on courses and programmes.*

Adults with literacy and numeracy needs do not comprise a homogeneous group. There is a difference in the way that adults and children learn and so approaches to teaching and learning, as well as an adult curriculum, must take account of these various needs and differences.

Adults from different cultures, backgrounds and sets of circumstances need and want literacy and numeracy skills for different reasons. It is important to provide a wide learning gateway which will both attract and raise public awareness and which meets all the needs both cultural and individual. Such a framework should link directly to the core skills framework and other formal learning in order to open up the pathway to education, training and employment.

Our aim is that every adult joining programmes will be offered a curriculum that closely matches his or her needs and goals, recognising and respecting difference and diversity. This requires a different approach to the curriculum than that used in

formal education. Learners should not be required to fit their needs and priorities into a 'one size fits all' curriculum based on a prescriptive 'ladder' of skills. Equally, practitioners should not be expected to design a curriculum for learners in a vacuum or in an 'ad hoc' way. A non-formal curriculum is required that is both learner-centred and structured to focus explicitly on the uses of literacy and numeracy that adults encounter in real life and the actual skills they require to meet these. To assist practitioners, a curriculum framework needs to be developed setting out the knowledge and skills required by adults to use literacy and numeracy effectively in the four key contexts of private/family life, working life, public/community life and education or training. This framework will guide those working in different sectors, providing a common language and theory for the design and delivery of a variety of courses and programmes. Taken together with improvements in specialised assessment and guidance, the framework should begin to put right the low priority given to numeracy in programmes. The framework should be

informed by the *'Literacies in the Community: Good Practice Framework'*.

Matching the resources for delivery to well-designed, learner-centred curricula will require considerable improvements in access to learning and teaching materials for practitioners and learners. There has been a huge expansion in learning tools, both paper and IT based, for adult literacy and numeracy in recent years. It would be inefficient for every provider to maintain a comprehensive resource centre and we therefore recommend the 'development



Drop in Learning, Mitchell Street Adult Learning Centre, Dundee

engine' set up a national on-line databank and a system for enabling practitioners, volunteers and intermediaries to preview and borrow resources. The databank would provide a single point of access for available resources, training and development, research and networking.

In addition, the 'development engine' should establish four pathfinder projects to identify innovative ways of working with learners from priority groups to inform programme design and delivery. The voluntary sector has important roles both in reaching potential learners through its extensive community networks and in responding to groups and needs within the community which otherwise would not be met. The sector has a proven record of pioneering work in adult learning, an obvious example being the role of the university settlements which led to the *'On the Move'* national literacy campaign in 1975. We envisage a role for the voluntary sector consistent with their record as innovators and so recommend that at least two of these pathfinders should be focused on the voluntary sector.

#### 4.2.5 The potential of e-learning

**Recommendation 9:** that the 'development engine' should lead the development of e-learning in support of literacy and numeracy.

National developments such as the Scottish University for Industry (SUfi), the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) and The People's Network illustrate the Scottish Executive's commitment to using digital technology in the creation and distribution of learning.

The Digital Scotland Task Force was set up in 1999 to advise Scottish Ministers on actions necessary to ensure that Scotland achieves lasting economic and social advantage from digital technologies. This has provided a clear agenda arising from the implications of globalisation through technology resulting in e-business opportunities, e-inclusion and e-learning.

E-learning refers to a wide range of applications and processes including computer-based learning, web-based learning, virtual classrooms and digital

collaboration. Learning can be customised to meet the needs of individuals in terms of a time, place and pace, and individual learning journeys can be built on popular interest subjects such as cooking, cars, sport, or mass entertainment such as *'Eastenders'* or *'Brookside'*.

Digital learning is still in the early stages and cannot yet be regarded as a means of social inclusion for those who are hard to reach. However the Digital Scotland Task Force report emphasised the potential of e-learning as a means of widening access, expanding the base line workforce and raising the skills levels within the labour market. E-business creates the need for a new set of technical, business and client skills with major implications for providers at all stages in school and post-secondary education.

The potential of e-learning as self-supported and mediated learning within adult literacy and numeracy is largely untapped. While literacy skills in themselves provide access to education and training through Internet access, the potential of technology itself as a means of

developing literacy skills, and maintaining them, is also an area which requires further exploration.

Although there have been developments within SUfI, the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), the Colleges' Open Learning Exchange Group (COLEG) and the Real Partnership in Glasgow as well as other further and higher education consortia to:

- produce e-learning packages for literacy and numeracy
- provide on-line initial guidance and assessment in literacy and numeracy

Further development of these processes of entry to learning is required.

We recommend that the 'development engine' should co-ordinate and lead the development of e-learning in support of literacy and numeracy and the acquisition of technological and vocationally related skills acquired through literacy.

The 'development engine' should:

- consider the appropriateness of materials developed elsewhere for Scottish circumstances

- commission experts to develop initial screening and assessment materials which are appropriate
- develop fuller understanding of the best approaches to screening and assessment of the full range of learners.

The national training team has already begun to examine e-learning products. It will be important to ensure that all e-learning meets with existing national as well as international quality standards and the work of the e-skills NTO.

In addition, the national training strategy should include tutoring in an on-line environment as well as building on the NGfL pilot 'Connecting Communities' which provides training to community workers through technology.

Learning centres in communities and workplaces should act as catalysts in opening up exciting opportunities for local partnerships to create real exchanges as part of the learning experience.

#### 4.2.6 Recognising real progress

***Recommendation 10: that the measurement of progress should be based around learner goals and distance travelled, building on the core skills framework and Progress File.***

Many people see literacy and numeracy as a very sensitive issue. It has to be treated as such. Any attempt to enforce formal accreditation for skills that are normally acquired during compulsory schooling is likely to stigmatise and deter individuals from participating. Not all learners therefore will want formal accreditation even though it is the responsibility of adult educators to both provide and encourage such accreditation. Nevertheless it is important to find a way of rewarding those that pass through the learning gateway and strive for improvement in their skills. We undertook a cross-sectoral, action research project to examine the usefulness of progress profiling approaches and the core skills framework in recognising and accrediting the progress of literacy and numeracy learners. The project was commissioned in collaboration with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

The principle of broad-based qualifications to create a more flexible workforce has been in existence for some time and has been a consistent theme in the requirements of government and employers. Consequently, since the early nineties, many advanced and non-advanced programmes contain core units in Communication, Numeracy and Information Technology for example. Furthermore, changes to the post-sixteen curriculum arising from Higher Still have led to the automatic certification of embedded core skills through the achievement of Standard Grade and National Qualifications awards. Core skills are therefore increasingly, either embedded or discrete components of the formal curriculum in Scotland from Standard Grade onwards. They are part of the design of new Higher National programmes as well as Scottish Vocational Qualifications and Modern Apprenticeships; they are moreover, steadily being built into many degree and higher education courses leading to professional qualifications.

The SQA core skills framework developed as part of the Higher Still initiative, has five core skills: Communication, Numeracy, Information technology, Working with Others and Problem Solving. They can be certificated at Access 2 and 3, Intermediate 1 and 2 and Higher.

The Scottish Qualifications Certificate which records learner attainment, automatically provides information about the level of core skills resulting from the achievement of any National Qualification and provides a core skills profile for every individual.

*‘... definitions of success should therefore recognise progress at all levels, should be personal to the individual and should measure the learning distance travelled, which implies a recognition of very different starting points and rates of progress.’*

*Adult Literacy 2000 National Consultation Exercise*

### Case Study

Gail always wanted to do something about her literacy but was put off by embarrassment. Gail's tutor was not only sympathetic but skilled, and put together a programme based on Gail's needs to write out shopping lists, short notes and do some personal writing. Her confidence in her ability to learn is growing, and when her daughters are older Gail would like to try for some qualifications.

The research project concluded:

- that practitioners in all three sectors of post-secondary education were committed to recognising learner progress in one form or another and that there was a need to recognise achievement based on distance travelled as well as the attainment of formal qualifications
- that the core skills framework provided a solid basis for recording individual attainment in literacy and numeracy and a range of resources supported this for practitioners preparing students for the attainment of awards
- progress profiling was time consuming, and still relatively untested. However, through encouraging dialogue and the review of targets between tutor and learners, it was a suitable basis on which to construct a system of recognising the achievement of personal goals.

Evidence from the project also showed that there are a number of different models of progress profiling being used and that there is a widespread willingness to explore further the potential of progress profiling.

Finally, the project found that the overwhelming view of practitioners was that both approaches could be used alongside each other, but that progress profiling required further development. Further work is required to develop guidance on using the core skills framework and progress profiling for literacy and numeracy learners. The detail of our recommendation is contained in the research report. (Davies et al, forthcoming)

### 4.2.7 Ongoing guidance and support

**Recommendation 11:** *that all education and training providers should nominate an accessible key person who will co-ordinate the guidance and support required to recruit and sustain learners.*

A growing body of research shows that there are complex reasons why some adults do not participate in post-school education and training or are likely to discontinue their involvement prematurely. Institutions need to consider the personal, institutional and practical difficulties encountered by these prospective learners, and to put in place support mechanisms to address these difficulties.

To sustain attendance, it is vital that well-publicised opportunities to access information, advice, counselling and support are available, as each learner requires. Providers should ensure that specialist advice on careers, finance and other personal issues is provided within the institution or through a local guidance network, in order to address the issues that are negatively affecting the learner. It is

important that each learner has access to a nominated member of staff who can co-ordinate the guidance and support required to enable him/her to successfully achieve his/her learning outcomes. Providers should consider supporting learners by pairing them with a voluntary mentor from the local community who has successfully overcome the sort of problems being experienced by learners from the same peer group. We commend Progress File as an effective tool for documenting the guidance received by the learner and also for the learner to quantify and evaluate the quality of the support received. It is essential that providers develop a welcoming and supportive attitude to their literacy and numeracy learners and to the community at large, to attract and retain learners who may be inhibited by the institution and indeed by the notion of learning itself.

#### 4.2.8 Specialist information and advice

***Recommendation 12: that specialist information and advice should be provided to support inclusive and effective provision for all learners.***

The overall adult learner focused approach to programme design and delivery should provide a strong basis for effective inclusion of learners with disabilities, specific learning difficulties (including dyslexia) and speakers of English as an additional or second language. Providers should avoid labelling these groups of learners and limiting the options open to them through creative use of learning group size, appropriate materials and learning tools, specialist and additional staffing, inter agency collaboration and cross sector provision. Initial and continuous professional development should enable practitioners to recognise and respond to specific needs but their knowledge and skills should also be backed up by easy access to specialist information and expertise via formalised networks at a local and national level. We recommend that specialist information and advice is

provided to support inclusive and effective provision for learners with disabilities, specific learning difficulties (including dyslexia) and speakers of English as a second or additional language.

#### Case Study

Margaret and Douglas are both visually impaired. Douglas decided to improve his English skills, because he was becoming increasingly involved with voluntary groups, taking on PR and secretarial functions. Margaret decided to do the same although she was unsure about her ability to cope. They both needed support from Learning Support staff, because of their visual impairment, but Margaret also required some help with her basic skills, such as spelling and structuring her writing.

As Margaret says, 'I never thought I would be able to complete the class; I really just went along to keep Douglas company. But the staff were very helpful. They got me to write about things I knew, so that I could get comfortable and build up my confidence. I began to feel as if I could do it.'



Both Margaret and Douglas achieved Communication levels 3 and 4 and wanted to carry on learning. Margaret said, 'Before I started studying, I didn't have much to say for myself – all my interest was the house and my family. Now I feel I've got much more to offer.'

### 4.3 A system that learns

#### 4.3.1 Quality improvements

**Recommendation 13:** *that local authorities, colleges, voluntary organisations and workplace providers should all integrate the quality framework in 'Literacies in the Community: Resources for Practitioners and Managers' within their existing arrangements for reviewing progress and quality.*

'Literacies in the Community: Resources for Practitioners and Managers' provides a cross-sectoral set of standards in:

- teaching and learning
- management and co-ordination
- policy and planning
- staffing and deployment of resources
- specialised and general guidance and support

which can be applied in local authority provision, the voluntary sector, FE colleges and training organisations. The Framework should be used both in embedding a culture of self-evaluation and reflective practice within organisations. The evaluation process for both managers and teachers should be informed principally through consultation with learners on the teaching and support they have received and clear evidence of the progress learners have made.

We recommend that all education and training providers be subject to the same quality assurance processes, based on the good practice framework in 'Literacies in the Community: Resources for Practitioners and

Managers'. The 'development engine' should lead the development of performance indicators and have overall responsibility for co-ordinating quality assurance of provision including processes that apply to national training programmes.

It will be necessary to build on the good practice framework to devise performance indicators that evidence the progress learners are making. Progress should be measured in relation to the benefits they are gaining from their learning, in relation



Adults with learning difficulties, Southbridge Resource Centre, Edinburgh



to growth in confidence, behaviours and attitudes, as well as applied skill in and outwith the classroom. For example, further work will be necessary to evidence:

- new knowledge and skills that are acquired as an adult learner
- new knowledge and skills acquired as a literacy learner
- gains in learner confidence and self-esteem
- changes in the ways the learner uses literacy or numeracy
- changes in the learner to indicate he/she is becoming a lifelong learner.

A key indicator will be the level of completion, currently averaging 70% in the further education sector overall. We aim that by 2003, 70% of learners will achieve their individual learning plan goals and that another 20% will make some progress. In addition it will be important to monitor the reasons, positive and negative, why learners do not complete their individual learning plans. Some learners pause for legitimate personal reasons and may re-engage at a later stage. Others may leave for employment opportunities and may

continue with workplace learning or return at a later stage. However, there are those who leave their programmes and who have no wish to return. Contributing factors may well be a lack of sustained guidance and support, dissatisfaction with the programme because it does not meet their aspirations or a style of teaching that makes learning inaccessible to them. The 'development engine' should collate this feedback and ensure that relevant lessons are learned.

The existing quality frameworks and procedures for the inspection of the local authority contribution to community learning, and reviews of colleges of further education and voluntary providers of literacy and numeracy, should be developed to take full account of the 'Literacies in the Community: Good Practice Framework'. In this way all providers would be subject to appropriate and equivalent quality assurance and improvement processes. A rigorous system of quality assurance should be promoted by making available a set of performance and progress indicators applicable to all sectors.

The Scottish Executive should ensure that progress by local partnerships is carefully reviewed annually, and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) should include a specific focus on literacy and numeracy in its on-going programme of inspections and reviews of relevant providers. A comprehensive review of progress by local partnerships and nationally against overall targets should be carried out after 3 years to inform on-going development of the strategy and future funding decisions.

#### **4.3.2 Raising expertise through improved training and development**

***Recommendation 14: that a national training strategy should provide national training standards for all staff and volunteers whose roles relate to literacy and numeracy tuition and a new qualification for specialist literacy and numeracy practitioners.***

***Recommendation 15: that staff and volunteers in organisations providing literacy and numeracy tuition should meet the national standards by 2005.***

Volunteers or paid classroom assistants have an important role to play in offering learners appropriate individual attention and support. Both volunteers and paid classroom assistants can be deployed in a range of situations: supported study centres, short courses, learning groups etc. Volunteers and paid classroom assistants should be recognised as playing a key role in assisting with learning while not replacing the need for specialist practitioners. Long term 1:1 learning using volunteers in isolation from others needs to be avoided where possible. Where 1:1 learning is necessary in rural areas, a specialist practitioner should put together the 1:1 learner's learning plan and then closely supervise and resource the 1:1 pair as a special form of supported distance learning.

*'I decided to volunteer because I really enjoyed reading and thought I would enjoy introducing others to books and reading. The training was relaxed, useful and full of good ideas about things to do with the learner. The support from the tutors was excellent and continues to be ongoing when working with your learner. Before my first meeting with my learner I felt very nervous and apprehensive but the atmosphere becomes more relaxed the more you meet with your learner and is enjoyable and rewarding to both the learner and the volunteer.'*

*Susan (Volunteer with the Buddies for Learning Project)*

There is a need however to improve the training and developmental opportunities available to volunteers and specialist practitioners alike. Developmental opportunities for staff engaged in supporting, delivering and managing literacy and numeracy programmes vary

widely in content, approach and effectiveness both within and across sectors. A minority of providers have effective, ongoing training and development systems for all staff with roles relating to tuition. Others provide very limited opportunities, mainly in initial training for volunteer tutors, with a few offering some SQA or City and Guilds accreditation at this initial level. Some providers offer no training or staff development in adult literacy or numeracy at all. With the exception of a minority of providers, with a programme of mainly in-



Some members of the National Training Team

house, in-service training, there are few opportunities for paid professional staff to develop and update their practice.

Development of a professional qualification in teaching adult literacy and numeracy and accredited options for staff involved in supporting, developing and managing programmes is required to create a high quality professional level of service delivery across all sectors.

*‘The issue of a standard accreditation pathway for staff working in the area of literacy and numeracy was raised on many occasions and there was a call for greater consistency of staff development and the need to raise the profile of the profession.’*

#### *Adult Literacy 2000 National Consultation Exercise*

As training and staff development are central to national and local development, we established a short-term project to conduct a training needs analysis across the spectrum of providers and for all categories of staff that have roles relating to the

delivery of tuition. In addition, the project is delivering immediate training opportunities to practitioners in all sectors across the country including piloting on-line training, developing pilot training units and making recommendations about how these should be delivered and accredited.

The project is unique in that it is the first national training needs analysis to have been carried out in this area of education, covering providers in all sectors. The project will provide the basis for the national training strategy to be developed and implemented by the ‘development engine’.

Specifically the national training strategy should create and promote:

- a teaching qualification for specialist adult literacy and numeracy practitioners at certificate, degree and postgraduate level. This will map with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and include options at all three levels which articulate with the Teaching Qualification in Further Education and professional training in Community Education, as well as

offering continuing professional development options for staff in other related sectors

- national training standards for all staff and volunteers whose roles relate to tuition in adult literacy and numeracy: tuition, guidance including pre-course, initial screening and assessment, on course and exit guidance, programme management and development work
- opportunities for the development of e-learning alongside taught courses and workplace based training, to facilitate and maximise access to training for practitioners in different settings and in all parts of the country.

Discussions should be initiated with the appropriate Higher Education institutions about the development of an accredited professional qualification at all three levels. The bodies responsible for the professional training of further education lecturers and community education workers and NTOs for staff in related sectors should be consulted on the inclusion of adult literacy and numeracy units as part of, or in addition to, their training courses.

Education and training providers must be actively encouraged to ensure that staff are trained to the appropriate national training standard for the roles they are performing relating to tuition.

#### 4.3.3 Grounding change in research and learner consultation

**Recommendation 16:** *that the national strategy, as it develops, be informed by and responsive to research and consultation with learners.*

As the national strategy develops, we will need comprehensive information on ‘what works’ in Scotland and to what extent the answers are different for different groups of learners. Although we can learn from other countries, we need to understand the experience of Scottish learners and gather findings where evidence is particularly thin. (For example, there is very little reliable, national research on the factors contributing to learner progress. A new

study in England and Wales (Brooks et al, 2001 Progress in Adult Literacy) indicates these factors include staff development and training, the use of paid or volunteer assistants alongside teachers and the duration and intensity of programmes.) Rather than one off, stand-alone projects, we need an ongoing programme of research and consultation with learners to:

- identify gaps in our knowledge
- develop new and useful concepts
- develop research methods
- take into account the reality of adults’ lives
- identify weaknesses or contradictions in policy and strategy.

The ‘development engine’ should manage the programme and invite the Research Advisory Group set up by the Adult Literacy Team to advise on this work. Specifically research is required in the following areas:

- the factors that have the greatest influence on attracting learners and successful initial contact

- the factors that have the greatest influence on improving literacy and numeracy levels (e.g. programme design, teaching and learning methods, approaches to recognising and accrediting individual progress etc.)
- the impact on learners’ lives of different types of literacy and numeracy programmes
- adult uses of literacy and numeracy in different contexts and the changing demands on skills
- the types of individuals and groups experiencing greatest disadvantage as a result of low literacy and numeracy
- the factors influencing people’s ability to maintain, develop and transfer their skills to new contexts over their lifetime.

The research programme should provide opportunities for practitioners as well as professional researchers.

In view of the importance of learner consultation, the Team commissioned a project which provides useful insights into learners’ experiences and a basis for further work (Merrifield, forthcoming).

## 4.4 Promoting awareness

The strategy focuses on doubling the number of learning places and understanding what works in raising literacy and numeracy levels. However, other action outside the learning system needs to underpin these efforts. Public, private and voluntary sector organisations, employers and trade unions, all need to play a part in a broader aim of shifting cultural, social and economic attitudes to literacy and numeracy. Acknowledging the importance of getting, keeping and developing these skills on a lifelong basis should become the norm. Actions to achieve this include:

- raising awareness and removing stigma (section 4.4.1)
- providing opportunities to use skills to the full (section 4.4.2)

### 4.4.1 Raising awareness and removing stigma

***Recommendation 17: that four pathfinder projects should be established to raise awareness and stimulate demand for literacy and numeracy.***

There are many good examples of awareness raising efforts in the UK and internationally. Rather than heavyweight marketing the countries reviewed have developed a broad spectrum of promotion and awareness building. Not all of this has been publicly funded, with strong civic responsibility and corporate sponsorship being a feature in the USA and Canada. In the first year we suggest pathfinder projects in the areas of health, prisons, the legal system and workplace. Examples of initiatives include:

- activities coinciding with International Literacy Day (8th September) and Number Day (5th December)
- specific campaigns such as ABC Canada's Campaign *'When you struggle to read and write you can't describe it'*.

In the USA the National Institute for Literacy has been running an extensive targeted national public awareness campaign *'Literacy: It's A Whole New World'*. Currently it is encouraging young people in 15 cities to volunteer in local literacy programmes. Earlier phases targeted the general public, policy makers, business and industry leaders.

- use of TV drama, *'Brookside'* in the UK and *'Penny's Odyssey'* in Canada
- high profile stars from the music, film and sports industries to attract the interest of specific sections of the population
- encouraging the joy of reading e.g. in Ireland popular writers such as Roddy Doyle and Patricia Scanlon have written special versions of their books for new and 'returning' adult readers
- reading and writing circles.

Literacy is more than an educational issue and must not be addressed in isolation from other policy areas. There is much to be learned from other countries in terms of the innovation and priority accorded outwith the education and training system to literacy and numeracy as an issue.

Pathfinder projects will test out approaches outwith the education and training system making links with social justice issues. Due regard must be given in agreeing pathfinders to the sustainability of approaches and the ease with which these approaches can be scaled up to cover Scotland. The legal and health systems present significant opportunities to reach those needing help as the following two case studies demonstrate.

### Case Study

The legal system can be intimidating to adults who cannot use written legal materials. In Canada, Lawyers for Literacy, an initiative of the Canadian Bar Association (British Columbia Branch [www.cle.bc.ca](http://www.cle.bc.ca)) has produced 'Communicating Clearly: How Client Literacy Affects Your Law Practice and What You Can Do About It'. Further guidance is available through:

- Lawyers for Literacy Awareness Kit
- Literacy Audit

- a logo identifying the practice as 'Literacy Aware'
- staff training.

### Case Study

Poor readers are at risk of poor health for a number of reasons:

- health information is given and received in complex written formats
- poor readers are more reluctant to question care and are less likely to understand what health professionals say
- they will be unable to read safety instructions and may be overlooked for retraining
- the poverty and associated stresses of poor readers lead to higher morbidity and mortality
- lower education is associated with poorer nutrition, smoking, inactivity and higher stress
- homelessness.

The Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA [www.cpha.ca](http://www.cpha.ca)) is committed to maintaining and improving personal and community health according to the public

health principles of prevention, promotion, protection and effective public policy'. CPHA's National Literacy and Health Programme promotes awareness among health professionals of the links between literacy and health. The programme focuses on health information in plain language, and clear verbal communication between health professionals and the clients that they serve (Directory of Plain Language Health Information [www.pls.cpha.ca/](http://www.pls.cpha.ca/))

#### 4.4.2 Providing opportunities to use skills to the full

***Recommendation 18: that the Scottish Executive and other major public and private sector employers should take the lead in helping individuals retain and develop their skills.***

The Scottish Executive as a major Scottish employer, along with other major public and private sector employers, should take the lead in providing opportunities for their own employees to use their literacy and numeracy skills to the full.

Community and voluntary organisations should also look creatively at how their work can give people the chance to use and develop their skills. In many cases, all that may be required is to provide an interesting purpose for using reading, writing or numeracy, and some basic resources. Examples include setting up book clubs or writing circles, putting free newspapers and writing materials in community cafes, giving people the chance to volunteer in a kids' homework club or helping a community group keep its accounts. As a result of such opportunities, some people will want to 'brush up' their skills through informal learning, perhaps with the help of friends, relatives or colleagues. Already there are books, videos and software that can be used but often they are not easy to find and not available to borrow. The huge growth of local learning centres in workplaces, libraries and community venues has the potential to make this kind of informal activity much more widespread. In the next few years the, as yet untapped, potential of the revolution in e-learning will start to blur the

boundary between informal learning and more formal courses and programmes.

The 'development engine' should ensure that good practice and 'what works' in this area is disseminated, and provide information and advice.



Learning in the Workplace  
McVitie's, Glasgow



#### 4.5 Four critical success factors

Many of these recommendations work together with others to create the basis for an integrated learning system. Four factors will be critical to success:

- **clear lines of accountability** – it is intended that clear lines of accountability be established at the implementation stage between the Scottish Executive, the ‘development engine’ and Community Learning Strategies through local authorities
- **learner-centred programmes** – it is expected that developments in screening, assessment, learning planning, guidance, progress profiling and accreditation will form a coherent package securing genuinely learner-centred programmes
- **professionalism** – the professionalism of providers is to be increased by action on several levels: training and professional development,

the new curriculum framework, research and pathfinder projects, quality improvement processes and access to specialist advice and information

- **maximising the potential of ICT** – ICT has the potential to speed the pace and extend the scope of change. Our recommendations for an online databank for providers and e-learning developments are specific ways to tap this potential by linking practitioners with learners.

## TARGETS AND FUNDING

**Recommendation 19:** *that capacity should be more than doubled within three years, with the funding provided through local authorities, ensuring the expansion of capacity across all sectors and the targeting of priority groups.*

### 5.1 Targets

If we are to address the needs of the 23% or 800,000 adults in Scotland with very limited literacy and numeracy abilities we must significantly increase the number of literacy and numeracy learners from the low numbers currently receiving help. Our research suggested that at present about 15,000 receive some form of structured learning each year from colleges, local authorities or the voluntary sector, although even that may be an over-estimate.

A huge expansion in learning provision is required, but it must be gradual because:

- the quality of provision needs to be approved and assured at the same time

as expanding capacity to ensure we attract and retain learners

- it is not practical to seek to engage too many learners too quickly, especially when 90% express themselves as satisfied with their skills for the uses they encounter.

In Table 1 below we set a target for more than doubling capacity within 3 years to the point where we engage with almost 34,000 learners or 4.25% of our target population each year. Several other countries lay on provision to meet 5% of overall need, but we have had to take account of the very low base from which

Scotland must build. Although the targets will be challenging in the early years, our calculations take account of the time and costs of gearing up to the new challenge. Our calculations on targets and funding assume that the average learner requires 80 hours of tuition; some learners of course will require much more than that and some much less.

The main targets will be:

- more than doubling annual capacity within 3 years to help almost 34,000 people each year by 2004
- helping almost 80,000 people in total over the next 3 years (with some

**Table 1: Learners supported by national strategy**

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	Total number supported over next 3 years
Learners currently supported by Local Authorities, Colleges and the Voluntary sector	15,000	15,000	15,000	45,000
New learners helped with new funding	4,800	9,700	18,700	33,200
Total number of learners	19,800	24,700	33,700	78,200

further additional places in national training programmes, New Deal and Employment Zone)

But other targets are required to improve the quality of provision and drive forward progress in a range of related activities:

- submission of all literacy and numeracy action plans within the context of Community Learning Strategies by December 2001
- initiation of four pathfinder projects by December 2001 and the remaining four by April 2002 to inform the on-going development of the strategy
- development of a new adult curriculum framework by March 2002
- design and pilot training for 'spotters', 'referrers' and 'supporters' by April 2002
- establishment of an on-line database by April 2002
- development of e-learning options by June 2002
- development of a fully accredited national training programme for

practitioners by 2003

- 70% of learners achieve their individual learning plan goals by 2003, with an additional 20% making some progress.

Progress should be reviewed at the end of the third year of the strategy to assess if changes should be made to the strategy, funding and targets, particularly if further expansion in capacity is required.

**Our goal is that at the end of the first three years of the strategy, Scotland exceeds world class levels of provision.**

The cost of providing these additional learning opportunities is discussed below and set out in Table 2.

## 5.2 Funding

*Recommendation 20: that £18.5m should be allocated through local authorities to Community Learning Strategy partnerships to complement existing capacity and assist around 80,000 learners over the next 3 years.*

Ministers announced in September 2000 that £16.5m would be allocated to FE colleges for the new initiative on adult literacy and numeracy. While colleges undoubtedly have a crucial role to play in the new drive, we believe it would be more effective if the funding was channelled through local authorities to the partners involved in Community Learning Strategies where it could be used to stimulate a wider range of learning opportunities in the community and workplace. The Enterprise networks would be expected to engage fully in the development of local learning opportunities, particularly in the workplace setting, and should therefore also have access to the new funding, along with local authorities, FE colleges, the voluntary sector and other providers. Funding should be linked to outcome agreements (with match funding secured wherever possible) which ensure the new funding does not simply replace existing funding commitments from partner organisations.

We have assumed 70% of the £18.5m going on direct help for learners with 30% on additional local co-ordination and outreach work to stimulate demand directly with the community and through the voluntary sector. Our calculations are based on £1m being required to help 2565 people for 80 hours in an average group size of 9 people, and takes account of the time needed for planning, guidance, assessment and administration.

***Recommendation 21:** that priority is given in the allocation of funding to the establishment of a strong national development engine, a national training strategy and 8 pathfinder projects.*

A **national development engine or unit** has a crucial role in developing and supporting a system that learns and must be properly funded to be effective. On-going research, the establishment of a national database, development of new learning materials and on-line delivery options, the promotion of innovation in outreach and learning methods as well as a measure of support for local action will require an

annual budget of not less than £1.5m. A developmental engine will take time to set up and become fully operational, and start-up costs of £0.2m are envisaged, therefore, in the first year.

We indicated in section 4 the importance of eight developmental **pathfinder projects** (four in recommendation 8 and four in recommendation 17) primarily to examine innovative ways of engaging with key target groups. These will need start up funding of £0.2m this year and funding of £0.4m thereafter to be effective.

**National training strategy** - increasing the number of trained practitioners has also been highlighted as a crucial task needing adequate funding and we recommend £1.4m over the next three years.

**Table 2: Cost of new programme**

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	Total cost over next 3 years
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Cost of additional new learners in local authority, voluntary sector and workplace</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>18.5</b>
<b>National development engine/unit</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>8 Pathfinder projects</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Training programme</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>24.1</b>

## ANNEXES

### 6.1 Select bibliography

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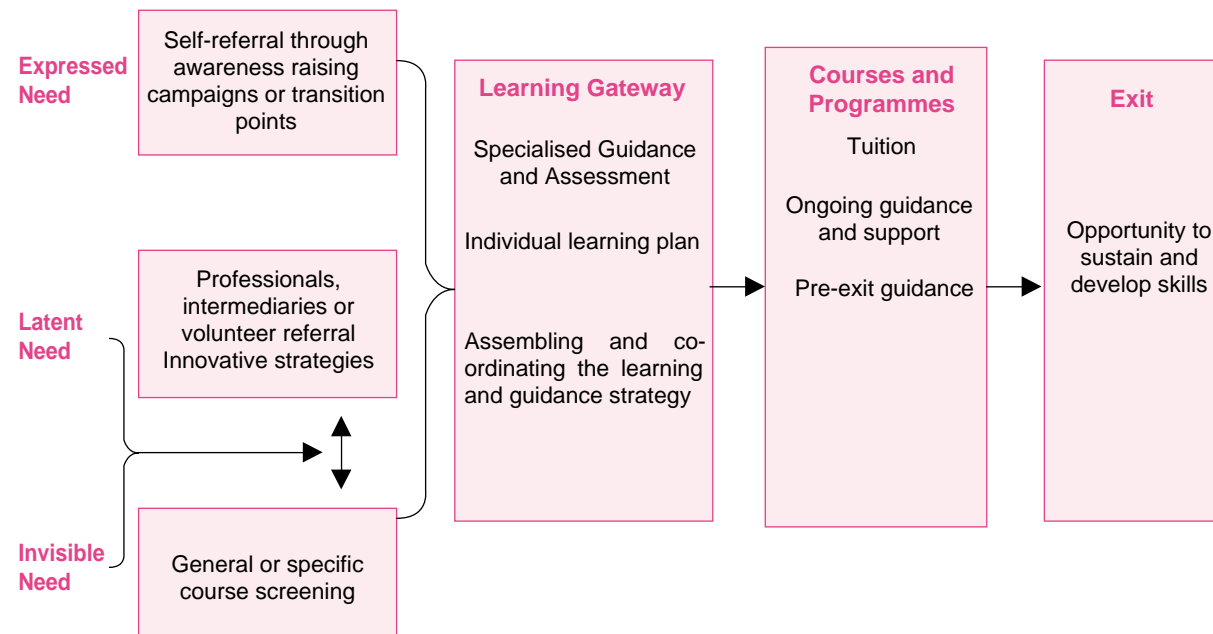
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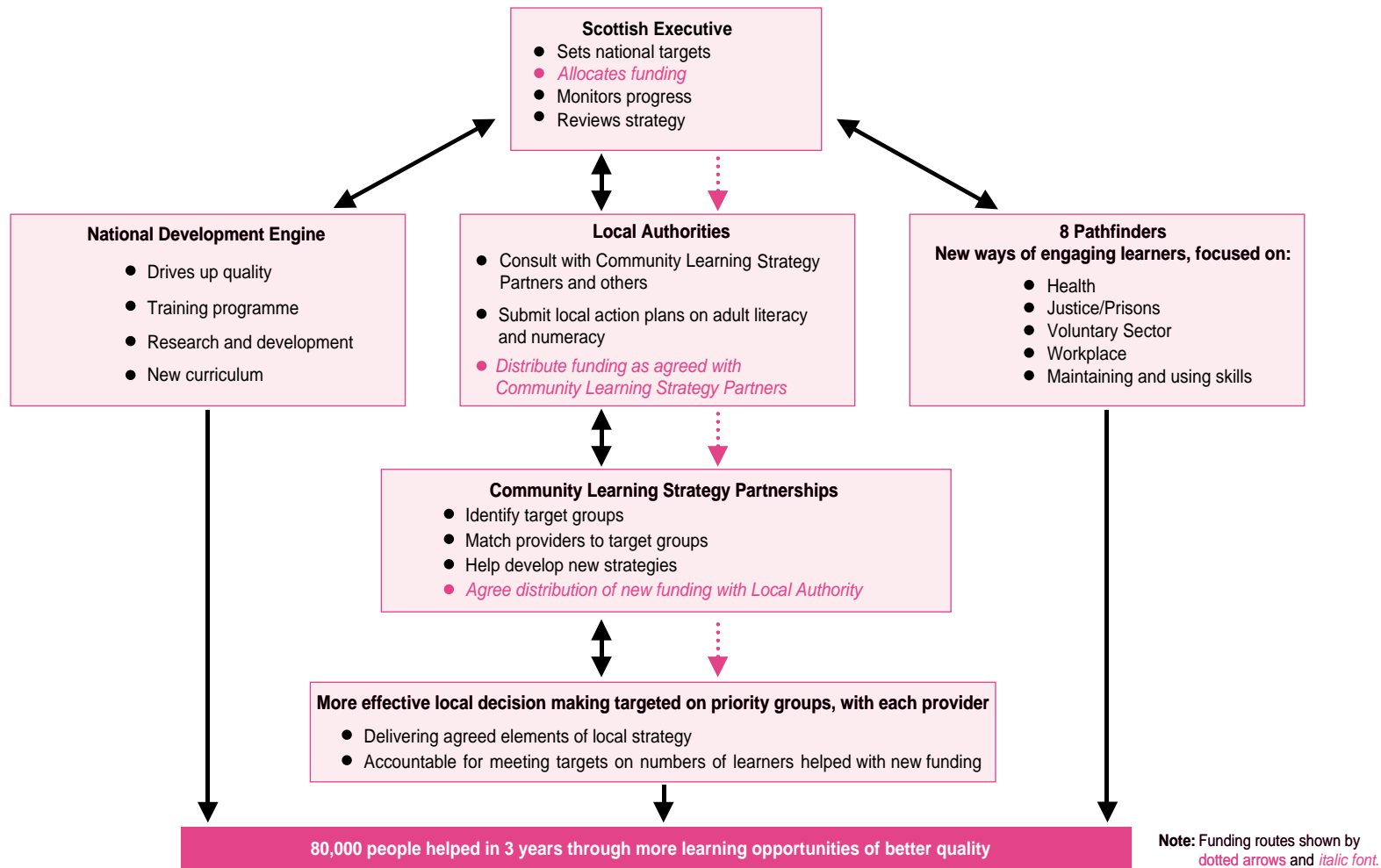
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## 6.2 The learning experience



### 6.3 The new system



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