



Adult Education Matters

*A Framework for Community Based
Adult Learning in Edinburgh*

Learning for Life



Foreword

Adult Education in Edinburgh has a long and proud history dating back to the 19th century and continues to play an important role in our city today.

Adult Education has changed hugely over the years and it is important that it continues to evolve and adapt to the needs of learners in the twenty-first century.

As a voluntary sector/City of Edinburgh Council partnership of learners and adult educators working together, the Edinburgh Adult Education Group is ideally placed to advise on improving the quality, range and status of learner-centred adult education in the city.

This framework sets out the vision, purpose, ethos and ways of working, and demonstrates the value of community-based adult learning in the city of Edinburgh.

It is, therefore, an important reference point for all those working in the adult education sector. I would like to thank the group for putting together this framework, and wish adult learning every success for the future in Edinburgh.

Cllr Paul Godzik

Convener, Education,
Children & Families Committee
The City of Edinburgh Council



Our vision

Adult education meets a wide range of needs. As society is constantly changing, learning has to keep pace with the changing needs of individuals and groups. Our vision is of a community of adult learners who can access educational opportunities at all stages of their lives.

We aim to achieve this through high quality provision which is:

- accessible, affordable and inclusive
- relevant to individuals and communities and takes into account people's aspirations, experiences and circumstances
- provided professionally and through partnerships where appropriate
- Informed by a commitment to social justice and equity.

Adult education contributes to the achievement of the following National Outcomes:

- We are better educated, more skilled and more successfully renowned for our research and innovation.
- Our people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective and responsible citizens.
- We live longer and healthier lives.

Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

Our outcomes

1. Universal and targeted adult education

Adults of all ages and at all stages of their lives have access to universal and targeted adult learning provision where they can achieve their goals and progress.

2. Co-operation and collaboration

Partnership working plays a key part in delivering adult learning, to maximise skills and knowledge, share resources, add value and reach the most disadvantaged learners.

3. Evidence of the impacts of adult learning

There is a commitment to continuous improvement of adult learning services to meet learners' needs and aspirations.

4. Addressing inequalities

Adult learning is accessible, affordable and inclusive, assisting people develop the skills necessary to progress.

5. Quality learning and teaching

Professional staff and tutors are supported to deliver quality adult learning provision.

Part time tutors are valued, motivated, skilled and appropriately trained.

Community Learning and Development (CLD) National Strategic Guidance

In Edinburgh, adult education contributes to the implementation of the CLD Strategic Guidance by empowering people, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and in their communities through learning. It also embraces the outcomes of the **Curriculum for Excellence** by creating opportunities for people to develop skills for learning, work and life, to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. This in turn has a positive impact on the lives of children, young people and families.

Who are the providers?

- The City of Edinburgh Council – City Libraries, Community Learning and Development and Community High Schools
- Voluntary sector organisations
- Further and Higher Education Partnerships
- NHS Lothian

Partnership working

Partnerships play a crucial part in the delivery of adult education in Edinburgh. They are pivotal in developing a strategic and co-ordinated citywide approach to the development and delivery of community-based adult learning. Partners include careers services, galleries, archives and museums, employers and trades unions, information and guidance services, criminal justice organisations and many others.

Who benefits from community based adult learning?

Around 30,000 individual learning opportunities are taken up each year, through targeted and universal provision.

Universal provision

Some provision, such as adult education programmes of day, evening and weekend classes in schools and community venues, are open to all and offer a wide range of learning opportunities for people of all ages.

Targeted provision

Some adult education provision is specially organised to suit particular groups of learners including:

- people seeking to improve their literacies
- parents and carers who want to support their children's learning
- young adults seeking skills for employment
- workers in low paid, low status employment
- people with few or no formal educational qualifications
- people with physical or learning disabilities
- people who use Mental Health Services
- people whose first language is not English
- members of minority ethnic communities
- people who are carers
- communities of interest.

What is distinctive about community based adult learning?

- People choose to take part.
- It is relevant to learners' interests, goals and experience.
- It takes place in local communities and in workplaces.
- It values learning equally across the 4 areas of life: personal, family, work and community.
- The curriculum is flexible and negotiated with learners as equal partners.
- Learning is planned and evaluated against agreed outcomes.
- There is a range of entry points and support is provided to promote inclusion and access for people from all backgrounds and abilities.
- Partners work together to plan and deliver programmes, share resources and develop and deliver opportunities which enable learners to move within provision and progress on to other learning.
- A high quality learning experience is provided by committed full time, part-time and voluntary staff who receive support and training in the values and practice of community based adult education.

Why do people take part?

The outcomes for those taking part in learning opportunities include the following:

- Increased confidence.
- Acquiring new skills, and expanding knowledge.
- Improved job prospects.

- Gaining a qualification.
- Reduced isolation.
- Improved opportunities and support for children and families.
- Being more mentally and physically active.
- Becoming more involved in communities.

The range of learning opportunities includes:

- Subject based day, evening and weekend classes and workshops.
- Adult literacy, numeracy and digital technology.
- Family learning.
- Supporting young adults into employment, education or training.
- ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages).
- Courses leading to a qualification.
- Workplace learning.
- Issue based adult learning groups and seminars.

Adult guidance

Adult guidance is an integral part of the services offered to adult learners, giving people the information they need to make informed decisions about their future learning.

Local information points also offer guidance on education, employment, volunteering, health, housing and related services.



The wider benefits of community based adult learning

The importance of learning for its own sake and the wider benefits to participants are generally acknowledged. Recent research* shows that people engaged in Lifelong Learning are more likely to be employed, remain in work and have improved occupationally based social status, and are more likely to be involved in social, community and voluntary activities. It therefore brings benefits to individuals, communities and society.

Based on the* 'Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning', published as the 'Learning Through Life'

Report in 2009, which used current research from the National Institute of Adult & Continuing Education

Community based adult learning in Edinburgh promotes the following outcomes

1. Universal and targeted

Adults of all ages and at all stages of their lives have access to universal and targeted adult learning provision where they can achieve their goals and progress.

- Targeted provision is developed for disadvantaged groups and communities.
- High quality, accessible and affordable adult education programmes are in place and open to all.
- There are opportunities for people to get guidance to help them access education.
- There are opportunities for accredited provision.

2. Co-operation and collaboration

Partnership working plays a key part in delivering adult learning, to maximise skills and knowledge, add value and reach the most disadvantaged learners

- Providers work together to complement each others' provision through strategic and informal partnerships.
- Partners continue to work in collaboration to maximise opportunities for learners.
- There are clear progression routes within and beyond community based provision.

3. There is evidence of the impacts of adult learning

There is a commitment to continuous improvement of adult learning services to meet learners' needs and aspirations

- Systems are in place for capturing and measuring learner achievement and progression in relation to qualifications, life skills, health, confidence and ability to progress.





- Information collected is widely disseminated among policy makers, practitioners and learners.
- Evaluation informs future planning and service improvements.
- There is continual improvement through evaluation and impact assessment.

4. Addressing inequalities

Adult learning is accessible, affordable and inclusive, assisting people develop the skills necessary to progress

- Adult learning is proactive in addressing equalities issues.
- Every effort is made to ensure programmes are delivered in accessible venues. Appropriate support to enable people to take part will be in place.
- Adult education provision is low cost or free.
- Learning opportunities attract people from a diverse range of communities.

5. Quality learning and teaching

Professional staff and tutors are supported to deliver quality adult learning provision. Part time tutors are valued, motivated, skilled and appropriately trained.

- Tutors' training needs are assessed regularly and inform training provision.
- Tutors and volunteers have access to relevant training programmes and appropriate support.
- Practice is informed by a learner centred approach and the social practice model.
- Opportunities are available for adult learning staff to come together to discuss and share practice.
- Staff are supported to participate in national and local networks and forums.

'Raising the overall level of skills of the adult population, by offering more and better learning opportunities throughout adult life, is important for both efficiency and equity reasons ... not only does adult learning help make adults more efficient workers and better-informed and more active citizens, it also contributes to personal well being.'

European Union Communication (2006)

Pregnancy Café

The Bump Start Pregnancy Café is an NHS Lothian/ City of Edinburgh Council initiative for pregnant women and their partners. Community educators provide antenatal information in a relaxed setting at Dr Bell's Family Centre, Leith and together the group plan which topics to cover in sessions.

The group offers mums to be a chance to meet other pregnant women and to share their experiences and their thoughts on being a parent. As well as finding out what's available for parents and babies in their local area, there's also the opportunity to make friends and to support each other.

In the two years since the Pregnancy Café began, around fifty parents have attended sessions. Some have got the learning bug now and ten mums are currently completing 'Making the Most of Children's Development' an SCQF level 4 qualification.



What the participants said about the course...

What was the most useful part of the workshop?

'I really enjoyed the pregnancy café and learned loads about what's going on in Leith'

'I never realised that new born babies can recognise their mums voice'

Glamping on a Budget

Achievement Award: Community Life

'Glamping on a budget' is a community camping cooperative, social enterprise, non-profit organisation. It is run by young people to help the local community get out of the city for a break including people who are on a tight budget. The group aim to make camping more affordable and to also help reduce waste and raise environmental issues.

The Glamping team held an event in the Kirkgate Shopping Centre in Leith to promote their tent hire project, which was attended by Mark

Lazarowicz, MP for North & Leith. To make the event a success the team generated local interest by asking shops to put up their posters, creating flyers and managing a successful social media network. The group have excellent followings on Facebook and Twitter, with many followers showing their support including local agencies, camping related organisations, youth enterprise associations, MPs and other media such as STV; they even received a product sponsorship from 'Bog in a bag' which featured on Dragon's Den!

Learner quotes

'If we work as a team we can be sort of an inspiration to other young people our age who can feel frustrated in their lives about money and other challenges they face.'

'It was good doing something that was creative and constructive.'

'Doing this has made me realise I want to be a youth worker.'



Workplace learning



The 1000 strong workforce at Edinburgh's Royal Mail Centre has access to learning in their workplace through the Communications Workers Union (CWU). A range of courses including Communications Skills, Computing, English at Work and Languages have been organised for staff by the CWU.

'We provide a workplace facility that our staff can feel comfortable in and a learning environment that is aimed at fulfilling their specific learning needs. With our partners in the Workers' Educational Association and through the Trade Union Movement we aim each year to provide opportunities for all our staff to gain confidence and qualifications by undertaking a variety of courses which have been requested by the employees. The work done in Edinburgh Mail Centre's Key Learning Centre is extremely valuable to those taking part and has seen a number of staff start their learning journey on such courses.'

Davy Moody

Communications Workers Union Learning Representative at the Key Learning Centre, Royal Mail

Cultural Peer Project

Drummond Community High School's Cultural Peer Project is an informal conversation class where native speakers of English and ESOL learners learn and talk together, sharing their cultures and languages through a jointly decided programme of activities.

Members of the group share their knowledge and skills with each other. Migrants tell the group why they came to live in Scotland and share their experiences of making this country their home. In turn group members from the UK are able to share their views of what it means to be Scottish or English.

Not only have group members increased their learning with regards to their English, arts, culture, local life and politics and appreciated the wide age range of participants but they also have become friends, opening their homes to each other.



What our learners said...

'I had a good chance to communicate with local people and the people from other countries, through that communication, I could learn many cultural things and political issues in Edinburgh, Scotland, UK, Europe and other areas which I cannot hear in the classroom in the university.'

Social and Political Studies

The Workplace Communications 6 Group, part of the WEA's Workplace Literacies Programme, are all care workers in the City of Edinburgh Council Department of Health and Social Care. The world of work has changed so much in recent years. In our information and technology driven age most jobs now require workers to be confident handling information, writing reports, making calculations, using computers, to be good at problem solving and to be able to study for and achieve vocational qualifications.

The Group, who were awarded the 2013 EAEG Special Achievement Award for Impact on Working Life, all successfully completed an advanced study skills course and achieved a higher level communications qualification - SCQF Level 6, in May 2013. The course is an introduction to studying at academic level in preparation for working towards an HNC or degree in Care, for example. The Group were supported to take part in the course by their employer and Unison.

Their achievements are all the more remarkable because a number of group members returned to learning only recently through taking part in a workplace literacies learning programme with WEA.



Studying at this level required great commitment from all the group members. For some it was a significant challenge: 6 of the 10 members have dyslexia, and one is a non-native speaker of English.

'I have learned to spell better and gained confidence in my ability to learn. I have also taken an interest in reading the Times newspaper. I've learned to spell diarrhoea!!!'

'I feel more able to do my job. I have more confidence in writing. I would like to go on and learn more.'

Muirhouse Women's Group

The group started looking at health issues which affected themselves, their families and their community. They realised the biggest cause of ill health is poverty – which the NHS can't deal with - and became very angry. They wrote to the Prime Minister and wrote articles in the North Edinburgh News and Edinburgh Evening News.

They met with their local councillors to find out their opinions on poverty. The group and their children took part in their first ever demonstration in Glasgow to challenge the cuts facing communities like Muirhouse, and then helped to organise a national conference on poverty, along with North Edinburgh Fights Back and the STUC.

Members of the group, despite lacking confidence, facilitated a workshop at this conference and launched their report: 'Poverty – A Report by Muirhouse Women's Group'

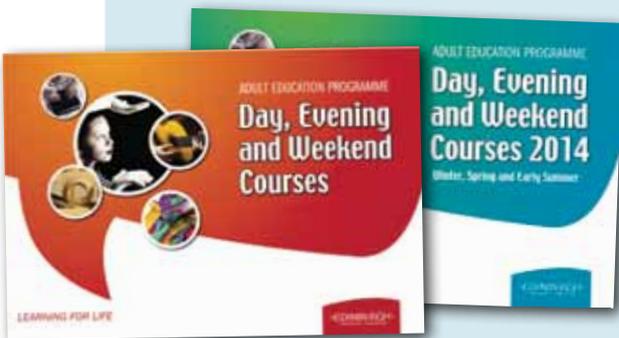
In amongst all this political activity (none of the women had even voted before), the group organised a Family Fun Day which attracted over 240 people, and Christmas and Halloween parties for their children!

Learning methods included group discussion, dvds, tutor inputs, drama sessions, research etc.

The group feel that actually doing PRACTICAL activities improved their confidence more than any confidence building course could. Women in the group have gone on to become classroom helpers, started child care and Health & Social Care college courses, started literacy classes, joined North Edinburgh Fights Back, taken part in a community drama project, organised a national conference, met local politicians, spoken at demonstrations, written a report and joined the steering group of the local community healthy lifestyles project.



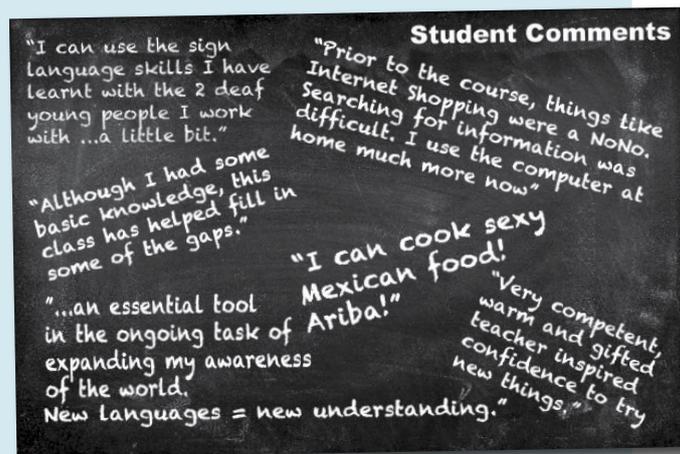
City wide adult education classes



Community Learning and Development and the Community High Schools run an extensive programme of adult classes during the day, evening and weekends in venues across the city with over 20,000 enrolments each year, including languages, ICT, arts and crafts, health and fitness, history, music, dance and cooking.

These are open to all and contribute to the City of Edinburgh Council's objective of supporting people to fulfil their learning potential. People of all ages join our classes to learn a new skill, keep mentally and physically active, improve job prospects and meet other people.

What our students say...



Learning at your local library

Edinburgh's 29 community libraries are vital to adult learning, offering a wide range of learning opportunities and resources, in informal venues across the city. Reading Groups allow individuals to expand their reading habit, or develop one for the first time. They offer an informal space to gain confidence in sharing ideas and communicating with others.

ESOL Chatabout especially enables English language learners to practise reading, listening and speaking skills as well as opportunities for finding out about about Edinburgh, Scotland and other cultures. Busy parents of young children find 'quick reads' a wonderful way to engage with reading sometimes for the first time, at weekly 'Baby and Me' sessions whilst the CARE group offers precious time for carers to focus on a shared novel, support and learn from each other.

Over 50 reading groups meet regularly, providing just what's needed to those who choose to attend.



Sonia, who attended at the Central Library, says:

'I feel more confident in speaking English, I love the new expressions I learn and I can communicate better with people I meet. So I look forward to coming to Chatabout and the next book we are reading!'

Case Study

Outlook Adult Education Project

Outlook enables people who use mental health services to take up a variety of educational opportunities, through offering individual guidance and support.

Outlook also offers a range of free, short adult education courses, providing a space for people to regain the confidence and skills they need to access wider options.

‘Attending Outlook and other Adult Education classes helped me get back on my feet after I developed mental health problems. It all helped me gain confidence, make friends and become more positive. I think Outlook and Adult Education fills a huge gap in services.’

‘An opportunity to meet new people, expand a knowledge and venture into new areas, learn new skills, give structure to week, which all serve to increase confidence, self esteem and lay the foundations of some future and purpose and much much more... its importance is beyond words...’



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