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East Lothian Council

Additional information:

This is a response to a request from Education Scotland for feedback on the draft Statement of Ambition for Adult Learning (also attached for ease of reference).

Authorised By	Angela Leitch
Designation	Chief Executive
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Adult Learning in Scotland

Statement of Ambition

Contents

1. **Foreword – Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning**
(to be completed before final publication)
2. **Background**
3. **Our Ambitions for Adult Learning in Scotland**
4. **The Key Features of future Adult Learning in Scotland**
5. **Connecting policy to practice for adult learners**
6. **Transforming Adult Learning in Scotland**
7. **Conditions for Success**
8. **Moving towards a framework for adult learning (actions)**

Appendices

1. National Strategic Forum for Adult Learning – membership and remit
2. Overview of the definition and scope of adult learning in Scotland including range of learning opportunities and partners involved in delivery
3. Policy Landscape

2. Background

In March 2013 Newbattle Abbey College hosted a national adult learning conference to celebrate innovative practice, discuss challenges and agree priorities for the development of adult learning, including Gaelic. Newbattle Abbey College planned the conference in partnership with Education Scotland, WEA, Scotland's Learning Partnership and Learning Link. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning gave the keynote address at the event, which was attended by 80 delegates from a wide range of sectors and national agencies.

A key conference aim was the production of an action plan, detailing priorities for the development of adult learning in Scotland. These included the need to:

- establish a National Adult Learning Forum to oversee an outcome-based framework for adult learning and monitor developments
- establish a cross-sectorial Task Group with a 2 year plan, designed to implement the priorities agreed by the Forum
- organise a follow up National Adult Learning Conference in spring 2014.

A National Forum for Adult Learning was established in August 2013. This cross-sectorial forum is chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning.

One of the first tasks undertaken by the Forum was the production of this Statement of Ambition for Adult Learning in Scotland.

3. Our Ambitions for Adult Learning in Scotland

Our ambitions are that:

Scotland becomes the most creative and engaged learning society in the world. A society where people develop through **life-wide** learning from the multiple contexts of home, work and their social lives and **lifelong** learning often described as from cradle to grave. A society that recognises the importance of adult learning in the development of the individual, the community and the country as a whole.

Every adult in Scotland will have the right to access learning to meet their educational needs and their aspirations. Barriers to participation, learning and achievement will be removed and inclusion and equality promoted. In planning, developing and evaluating provision, adult learners will be at the centre of the process and participate fully in decision-making about their future learning.

Adult learning in Scotland and the outcomes that learners achieve will be world-leading. Adult learning in Scotland will support the development of personal, family, work and community life.

4. The Key Features of Future Adult Learning in Scotland

4.1 Adults in Scotland will be empowered and supported to:

- develop social capital and the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to make positive life choices, support economic growth, participate in their local communities and take social action
- develop improved communication - including Gaelic language, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy
- demonstrate an inclusive adult learning ethos that encourages team work and problem solving,
- access and take advantage of flexible learning opportunities (including on-line learning) within their own communities and workplaces
- participate in the digital civic society as it develops.

4.2 Learning opportunities will be designed with, and for, learners based on their interests and the skills they bring in the context of both local and national economic and social drivers. Learners will be supported to take advantage of these opportunities within an adult learning support framework in which:

- partners from voluntary, public and private sectors work and learn together to provide the highest quality, and widest range, of learning experiences for adults
- priority is given to those who are marginalised or who require additional support to engage in learning activities
- adult learning builds on the principles of Curriculum for Excellence and promotes ethical and critical thinking, self-determination and active civic participation
- adult learning has a key role to play in making potentially difficult transitions across the lifespan?
- adult learning within communities builds capacity and further develops existing strengths
- adult learning has a key role in leading and influencing change and promoting a more equitable Scotland
- adult learning revitalises Gaelic culture and extends language acquisition and use.
- adult learning supports creativity and problem solving in all aspects of personal, family, work and community life
- adult learning will take account of the demands of our ageing society
- adult learning in communities and in the workplace offers progression through Scotland's further and higher education institutions and to employment and volunteering opportunities
- adult learning programmes continually improve through research, self-evaluation, inspection and review
- adult learning programmes both respect and reflect cultural diversity
- adult learning practitioners have the skills, knowledge and experience to maximise learning experiences for those furthest away from formal education and employment

- adult learning practitioners develop creative and innovative practices through commitment to their own development as reflective and inquiring professionals.

5. Connecting policy to practice for adult learners

- 5.1 Adult learning takes place in a variety of contexts, some formal and some informal. The learning is not linear or sequential but is determined by the current needs of an individual. It is therefore important that policy development always involves adult learners. Any national policy should ensure that there is appropriate advice, guidance and support and should address barriers encountered by adults.
- 5.2 The [Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: Community Learning and Development](#) clarifies our expectations of Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), within the broad framework of public service reform, and in line with the Review of Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs). The Guidance states the aim of Community Learning and Development:

*'is to empower people, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and in their communities, through **learning**'.*

The Guidance expects local authorities to provide clear leadership and direction, and to drive the action needed to ensure we maximise the contribution of CLD partners in the reform of public services. This reform emphasises prevention, more effective partnerships, enhanced workforce development and improving performance through innovation and use of digital technology.

- 5.3 [The Requirements for Community Learning and Development \(Scotland\) Regulations 2013](#) place a duty on local authorities to work with voluntary sector partners, learners and communities to audit needs, strengths and opportunities and to build programmes of community learning and development which lead to the development of democratic citizenship.
- 5.4 Empowered adults are the keystone of a civic society. As such, many different policies will contribute to the development of and opportunities for adult learning.

For the purposes of this Statement of Ambition we have grouped the policy context into the following four categories:

Personal Life Adult learning contributes to well-being and health. Learning helps individuals to navigate life transitions and develop resilience and confidence.

Family Life Our first place of learning is within our family. This experience can provide a strong foundation for future learning or create a barrier to further engagement in wider learning. Adult learning within the context of the family can challenge educational disadvantage, promote socio-economic resilience and foster positive attitudes towards lifelong learning.

Working Life The importance of work and a positive work environment cannot be underestimated. It contributes to well-being and health for individuals and their families. Adult learning enables people to progress towards, move into, or stay in employment and to move on within the workplace.

Community Life Adult learning contributes to the social cohesion of neighbourhoods and helps create strong vibrant communities.

It is acknowledged that these are not mutually exclusive and the confidence, skills and understanding gained in one of the areas will often impact on the others. Key policies are outlined under these categories in Appendix 3

5.5 Scotland in the 21st century is a partner in global educational initiatives which recognise the importance of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

Culture is about ways of being, knowing and relating to others; it is through culture that we give meaning to our lives and develop a sense of who we are.

Within Europe minority languages are respected. Gaelic and Scots are recognised as significant to Scottish Culture.

The [National Plan for Gaelic 2012-17](#) is the principal policy document for Gaelic and its overall purpose is to secure an increase in the number of people learning, speaking and using Gaelic in Scotland.

6. Transforming Adult Learning in Scotland

- 6.1** Adult learning is essential to enable and encourage adults in Scotland to acquire the knowledge, skills and confidence necessary to play an active and productive role, both personally and societally. The learning opportunities may be formal, non-formal or informal but they must be accessible according to needs and aspirations of the individual or group.
- 6.2** Change in personal life, family life, working life or community life is can be a stimulus to new learning. These changes can occur at any age where former patterns of life are no longer sustainable. Successful and relevant learning at transition points will reduce stress, conflict and, potentially, the need for greater state intervention and provide a means to negotiate life's transitions.
- 6.3** Effective adult learning is at the core of a Scottish knowledge based society. It drives the development of an improved personal skills base, increases the focus on achieving better outcomes for communities, and provides improved life chances.
- 6.4** Adult learning provides the foundation for initiatives to improve health and social care, establish a more open and inclusive society, and build the capacity of individuals and groups to meet the challenges necessary for the development of a socially just and responsible Scotland.
- 6.5** Building on the assets and potential of the individual, the family, the workplace and the community is fundamental to our ambition. As communities realise their own strengths or assets they develop resilience and the capacity to contribute significantly to their own economic and social development.
- 6.6** Adult learning providers should involve learners and communities as active partners in planning and delivering adult learning and help communities to influence, shape and co-produce services more generally.
- 6.7** Working together to negotiate and develop effective learning is a two way process that involves significant learning for both specialist providers and for adult learners. This mutual relationship is supported by the Scottish social practice model, where adults' life experiences are acknowledged and built on, to create a successful learning experience. The social practice approach is one which recognises values and validates the range of experiences and skills that people bring to their learning. This approach starts from people's strengths and aspirations, not their weaknesses, nor their perceived 'needs' and recognises and builds on the ways that people learn. Learning is provided that develops from, and is embedded in, contexts which are relevant to the learner. Those using this approach recognise the different values, emotions and perspectives that are embedded in learning. They are open about the

power dimensions of learning and enable learners to exercise power themselves.

The social practice approach aims to develop both the learner's critical capacities and their ability to use their learning in other contexts. Creating these effective learning experiences requires skilled adult learning practitioners who are themselves lifelong learners.

6.8 Adult learning in Scotland will be recognised as a central element of personal and community empowerment.

It will be informed by **three core** principles.

- Learning should be **lifelong**, beginning in the Early Years, supported by the Curriculum for Excellence and covering the whole age span of post-compulsory education. It should take into account the specific difficulties that some adults have in accessing learning opportunities because of their age, abilities, cultural or social backgrounds.
- Adult learning should be **life-wide**. It should cover the personal, work, family and community aspects of living which gives the scope for building a wide and open curriculum and creates a learning continuum which is not restricted by vocational imperatives.
- Adult learning should be **learner-centred**. The educational process must build around the interests and motives of the learner and seek to fulfil the purposes and goals he or she sees as relevant and important.

7. Conditions for Success

7.1 The hallmark of a genuine learning society is the availability of learning facilities within easy reach of where people live and work. We have a legacy of offering learning to people in their neighbourhood and in the workplace and online learning will enhance this. Accessibility is a critical factor in facilitating participation in learning across the life span. Provision should be accessible to all and provide the spaces where people from different walks of life and different backgrounds have the opportunity to meet, share experiences and interests and contribute towards building a common culture. Civic institutions such as libraries, parks, museums and galleries have a role to play here as do the open spaces of our natural environment. Scotland's future will be built not simply on its economic success but on the creation of an open, creative and inclusive society where people learn together and live together and in which adult learning plays a central role.

- 7.2 Adult learning provision in Scotland must improve outcomes for people and provide strong evidence of personal impact as a result of learning. For Scotland to successfully and fully embrace adult learning all learning providers and funders must play a full, integrated and active role in ensuring equal opportunities throughout Scotland.
- 7.3 The people of Scotland have high expectations for themselves their families and their communities and adult learning has a key role to play in helping to shape and produce better outcomes. If adult learning is to unlock that potential, the foundations must be built on a strong understanding of learner needs and provide genuine opportunities to consult, engage and involve learners in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the learning.
- 7.4 The provision of community based adult learning now has a clearer legislative basis through the Scottish Statutory Instrument [The Requirements for Community Learning and Development \(Scotland\) Regulations 2013](#). Development of adult learning across Scotland will reflect locally agreed outcomes.
- 7.5 Adult learning in Scotland will be a model of excellence that is recognised across the world as an exemplar in terms of inclusion, learner focus and its role in empowering individuals, families and communities to develop, grow and prosper both socially and economically.
- 7.6 There will be a framework of professional development learning opportunities available for practitioners involved in delivering adult learning. Practitioners will be encouraged to improve their skills through this framework in order to provide high-quality learning experiences for adult learners.

8. Moving towards a framework for adult learning (actions)

Our aim is to have an ambitious statement that encourages innovation and leads the way globally for adult learners. An Implementation Plan will be an appendix to this document and outline the key actions that will be taken forward in partnership and delivered over the coming years; ensuring adult learners receive the best opportunities to improve their life chances in Scotland and beyond.

Policy Context

Adult learning takes place in the context of a range of policy initiatives.

[National Performance Framework](#) sets out the purpose of Scottish Government.

[National Plan for Gaelic 2012-17](#) seeks to secure the status of Gaelic as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language.

1. Personal Life

- [National Outcome](#)
We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation
- [Curriculum for Excellence](#) Supporting learning throughout our lives from the pre-birth to three framework, 3-18 curriculum, and the national guidance and frameworks which support adult learning and community learning and development, which together form the curriculum in Scotland.
- [Adult Literacies in Scotland \(ALIS\) 2020: strategic guidance](#)
Outlines more detailed plans to improve the literacies capabilities of Scotland's adults over the next 10 years.
- [Financial Capability](#)
Financial capability poverty and employability are interlinked. Financial capability is a skill which contributes to personal resilience and health, reducing days lost to stress and depression and improving peoples' chances of moving out of poverty.
- [The Adult ESOL \(English for Speakers of Other Languages\) Strategy for Scotland](#)
- [The keys to life - Improving Quality of Life for people with Learning Disabilities](#)
- [Offender Learning](#)

2. Family Life

- [Family Learning](#) Family learning is a powerful tool which can challenge educational disadvantage, promote socio-economic resilience and foster positive attitudes towards life-long learning
- [Early Years Collaborative](#)
The objective of the Early Years Collaborative (EYC) is to accelerate the conversion of the high level principles set out in GIRFEC and the Early Years Framework into practical action.
- [GIRFEC](#)

Getting it right for every child and young person - sets out a consistent way for people to work with all children and young people. Getting it right for every child is threaded through all existing policy, practice, strategy and legislation affecting children, young people and their families.

- [Early Years Framework](#)
The Early Years Framework is about giving all our children the best start in life breaking negative cycles of inequality through early and effective intervention.
- [Equally Well – Scotland’s Framework on Health Inequalities](#)
Report of the Ministerial Task Force on Health Inequalities

3. Working Life

- [Scottish Policy context for employability](#)
- [Working for Growth](#): a Refresh of the Employability Framework for Scotland
- [Achieving our potential: A framework to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland](#)
- [Post-16 reform](#)
- [More Choices More Chances](#)
- [Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth](#) (2010)
- [Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy](#) (2007)

4. Community Life

- [National Outcome](#)
We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
- [Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: Community Learning and Development](#)
- [Community Empowerment](#)
- [All Our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population: Volume One: Summary and action plan. March 2007](#)
- [Learning for Sustainability](#)
- [Cultural Policy](#)

5. International

- [Europe 2020](#)
- [UNESCO Institute for Lifelong learning](#)
- [European Association for the Education of Adults](#)
- [European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages](#)
- [UNESCO A new cultural policy agenda for development and mutual understanding](#)
- [EU High level report on literacy](#)

DRAFT

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19 January 2014

Dear colleague

ADULT LEARNING IN SCOTLAND: DRAFT STATEMENT OF AMBITION

In August 2013 Mike Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning formed and now Chairs a cross-sectoral National Strategic Forum for Adult Learning. The key aim of the National Forum is to promote and develop adult learning, including Gaelic, in Scotland.

The first task undertaken by the Forum has been the production of a Statement of Ambition for adult learning in Scotland. I now attach a draft of this Statement and am very interested in your views on it as a framework that will help to support and drive the quality and diversity of adult learning to achieve our challenging ambition. For example, we wish to see a Scotland where our society recognises the importance of adult learning in supporting the development of personal, family, work and community life.

In early April the draft Statement of Ambition will be discussed further at a National Adult Learning Conference in Newbattle College, building on a similar event in spring last year. The Cabinet Secretary will again give the keynote speech. To assist in the planning for the Conference I would appreciate your feedback on the attached draft Statement which we will use to develop it further and shape workshops. Discussions at the Conference will then help in finalising the Statement and in identifying the main elements of an action plan for implementation.

I attach a proforma with four questions and would be very grateful for your brief views. Please return the proforma to Cath Hamilton (cath.hamilton@educationscotland.gov.uk) by Friday 14 March 2014.

I look forward to your support in this important development for the adult learning sector.

Yours faithfully



Alan Armstrong
Strategic Director – Lifelong Learning

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**ADULT LEARNING IN SCOTLAND: DRAFT STATEMENT OF AMBITION
Feedback Questions**

Does the draft Statement cover all the key elements to be considered?
What are the benefits and opportunities in setting out the ambitious Statement?
What key priority would you wish to see within an Action Plan for the final Statement?
How might your organisation play a key role in implementing the final Statement?

Please return to Cath Hamilton (cath.hamilton@educationscotland.gov.uk tel: 07900 161972) by Friday 14 March 2014.

Email 14/03/14 : 12.10

From: Christine Dora

To: cath.hamilton@educationscotland.gov.uk

C.C.

Subject: Adult Learning in Scotland – Draft Statement of Ambition

Dear Cath

I refer to Alan Armstrong's letter dated 19 January seeking comments on the draft Statement of Ambition. Please see comments below from officers of East Lothian Council.

**ADULT LEARNING IN SCOTLAND: DRAFT STATEMENT OF AMBITION
Feedback Questions**

Does the draft Statement cover all the key elements to be considered?

The draft statement provides a robust framework that will help to support and drive the quality and diversity of adult learning to facilitate the achievement of challenging ambitions for communities across Scotland. The statement clearly states our ambitions in life-wide and lifelong contexts and that demonstrates learners as integral and equal participants in the overall process.

It would be useful if the draft Statement could cover the issue of resources. As the recession continues to bite funding across all streams, local community groups are finding it increasingly difficult to access funding. This is also hampering the growth in the voluntary sector who are finding it increasingly difficult to access funding to provide learning opportunities.

It is important that the voluntary sector and other community planning partners continue to plan together and work collaboratively to ensure limited resources are targeted effectively. (The growth in University of the Third Age (U3A) is encouraging across East Lothian with more adult learners joining opportunities and creating new ones.)

What are the benefits and opportunities in setting out the ambitious Statement?

The promotion and development of adult learning across Scotland through the setting out of the ambitious statement will help support and drive strategies at both local and national levels, securing positive impacts for learners and communities. The four policy context categories contexts of personal life, family life, working life and community life provide a clear combination of reasons to facilitate the achievement of world leading outcomes for learners.

What key priority would you wish to see within an Action Plan for the final Statement?

A key priority highlighting and promoting the importance of improving skills that help lead to employment, career progression and fulfilling lifestyles.

How might your organisation play a key role in implementing the final Statement?

East Lothian Council and Community Planning Partners will actively contribute and work towards achieving the ambitions as set out in the statement. The statement will provide an important reference to inform local strategies and plans with intentions of engaging increasing numbers of learners to meet their individual educational needs and aspirations.

Thanks for the opportunity to contribute to thinking in this area.

Kind regards

Christine

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