

# IMPACT REPORT 2019-2020

[learningandwork.org.uk](http://learningandwork.org.uk)



# INTRODUCTION

**The end of 2019-20 saw a global pandemic, leading to both a public health and economic crisis. Social distancing rules make the future of our economy uncertain and mean we have all had to find new ways to communicate and stay in touch both at work and socially.**

Meanwhile, the opportunities and challenges we faced before the crisis remain. As a nation we must: harness new technology to build prosperity; find a new path now we have left the EU; respond to demographic changes including an aging population; raise productivity, which remains too low; and level up access to good quality work and lifelong learning for all areas and groups.

Widening access to learning and work is central to our mission. Across the year, we have tried to make the case for this, build the evidence base, shape policy, and test new ways of working.

To give just a few examples, we have: celebrated the best in adult learning through Festival of Learning and Adult Learners' Week; worked with local government to understand skills needs and local employment support; made the case for lifelong learning in Parliament and through the media; evaluated employment programmes

to show what works; and further built a network to share best practice and identify challenges in supporting adults to progressing their careers.

This report shows the breadth, depth and range of work we do. Our impact can be seen in the shaping of policy debates, the range of organisations we work with, and the rollout of new approaches we have helped to develop and trial. We truly punch above our weight. This is only possible because of the skills, expertise and sheer hard work of our staff and Trustees.

The impact of the pandemic is stark and will shape our work for years to come. It has also changed the way we work, including a rapid shift to homeworking and greater use of technology.

We are proud of the impact we have had and look forward to continuing our important work in the year ahead.

**Maggie Galliers CBE and Stephen Evans**

## OUR MISSION

**Our vision is for a prosperous and fair society in which learning and work provide opportunities for everyone to realise their potential and ambitions throughout life.**

The UK has many strengths, but also shortfalls on too many measures of learning and work compared to other countries.

We want to change this: making the case for investment; celebrating the best in learning; helping to improve policy; and testing new approaches to delivering services.



## KEY STATISTICS

# 30%



**lowest** proportion of adults saying they were participating in learning since our survey began more than 20 years ago

# 3

percentage point gap between the employment rate of

disabled and non-disabled people



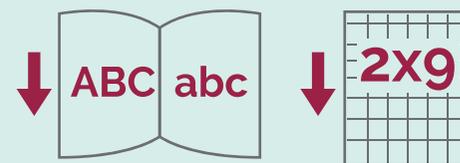
# 17<sup>th</sup>

UK ranking on intermediate skills out of 36 OECD countries



# 9 million

adults who have **low literacy or numeracy skills**



# 5 million

jobs **pay less** than the Living Wage



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Our work is focused on six themes:



**Lifelong learning** can help with work and careers, community engagement, and health and wellbeing. We focus on the case for learning and policy and practice to achieve this



**Employment and social security** so everyone who can work has the chance to do so and that people get help when they need it. We focus on how employment opportunities vary for different groups and areas and how these could be improved



**Essential and life skills** such as literacy, numeracy, digital and citizenship which are increasingly essential to life, work and social inclusion. We focus on developing new ways to engage people and deliver learning



**Good work and progression** can make work fulfilling and help people achieve a decent income and scope for development. We focus on what works in promoting good work and supporting progression



**Apprenticeships and technical education** can help people improve their career prospects and employers to meet their skills needs. We focus on ensuring they are high quality and accessible



**Social justice and inclusion** because everyone should have the chance to go as far as their talent and efforts can take them. We focus on better support for those that too often miss out

## OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

 **1,200**

Pieces of media coverage including: FE Week, TES, FE News, regional media, The Independent, The Guardian, The Times, The Huffington Post and Evening Standard.

THE  **TIMES**  **INDEPENDENT**  **theguardian**

**219,312**



Spikes around

Adult participation in learning survey

Apprenticeship levy report

Employment and Skills Convention



@learnworkUK

**16,674**

Twitter followers up by



Our account page is visited on average



times a month.

**31,000**

Minutes of footage viewed on our  **YouTube** channel with our

*Festival of Learning*

award winners the most viewed



# SHAPING POLICY

## Apprenticeship Levy

Our **Bridging the Gap report** showed the Apprenticeship Levy was on track to be overspent in England as employers spent more of their levy funds than the Government expected. This risked reducing opportunities for young people and small employers.

We proposed options for addressing this, including greater government investment and increased incentives for employers to support young people and new employees. The report was featured in the Times and TES.



17<sup>th</sup>

UK ranking on intermediate skills out of 36 OECD countries



## Employment and skills conventions

We held events in Wales and England, bringing together hundreds of people to debate policy with leading politicians and share best practice in helping people improve their employment and skills prospects. Our Housing, Learning and Work conference with Communities that Work looked at the role social housing providers can play in improving employment.

**E&S**  
**2019** | EMPLOYMENT  
AND SKILLS  
CONVENTION



HOUSING  
LEARNING  
AND WORK  
CONFERENCE

**C&S**  
**2019** | Confensiwn Cyflogadwyedd  
a Sgiliau Cymru  
Employability and Skills  
Wales Convention

**E&S**  
**2019**



## UK General Election

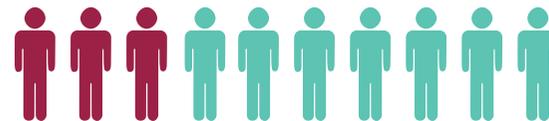
The major parties' manifestos included a number of commitments addressing pledges we had called for to increase living standards, access to work, and participation in learning. Our chief executive, Stephen Evans, was a member of both the Labour Lifelong Learning Commission and Liberal Democrat Lifelong Learning Commission.



## Lifelong learning

**Our survey** showed the lowest proportion of adults saying they were participating in learning or had done so recently on record. We also explored the reasons adults give for wanting or not wanting to learn, which can help to shape policy to widen access to lifelong learning. The report was featured in the Guardian. We supported plans for a right to lifelong learning in Wales.

30%



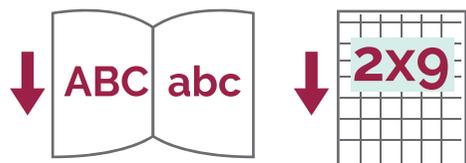
**lowest** proportion of adults saying they were participating in learning since our survey began more than 20 years ago

## Youth Commission

**Our Youth Commission** is looking at how to improve education and employment for 16-24 year olds in England. We published new reports looking at international best practice, future challenges and opportunities, and how current systems fall short of the ambition required.

9 million

adults who have **low literacy or numeracy skills**



## Local leadership

Local and Mayoral Combined Authorities play an increasing role in employment and skills in England. We produced a report, featured on Sky News, showing the potential economic growth to be gained locally through skills improvements. Our chief executive was a member of the Greater Manchester Employment and Skills Advisory Panel and West Yorkshire Combined Authority Future Skills Commission, and we produced a report for the Greater London Authority: report on the future of employment and skills devolution.

Greater Manchester  
Employment and Skills  
Advisory Panel

West Yorkshire Combined  
Authority Future Skills  
Commission

Greater London  
Authority: report  
on the future of  
employment and  
skills devolution

## Personal Learning Accounts

We supported the Welsh Government with the development and implementation of the **Personal Learning Account** pilot. We brought the sector together with Welsh Government to consider how to develop a new right to lifelong learning.



# INSPIRING ADULTS TO LEARN

**Festival of Learning in England and Adult Learners' Week in Wales** have celebrated the best in adult learning and inspired people to learn for more than a quarter of a century, inspiring similar celebrations around the world.

In England we worked with organisations including NOCN, Association of Colleges, HOLEX, AELP, WEA, City Lit, the Education and Training Foundation and Skills and Education Group.



Winners and six finalists were selected from over 200 nominations for Festival of Learning awards.

## Festival of Learning

The 2019 awards ceremony was attended by

**120** guests

and a further

**500** viewers online



Our Twitter hashtag achieved

**3.3** million impressions

Coverage of award winner stories included the Evening Standard, FE Week, TES, FE News, BBC Radio Wiltshire and BBC East Midlands. Over 150 guests attended our Festival of Learning parliamentary reception, with speakers including Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP and Rt Hon Gordon Marsden MP.



In Wales we worked with stakeholders including Welsh Government, the Open University in Wales, Agored Cymru, Adult Learning Wales, Colleges Wales, NTFW, National Museum of Wales and the Adult Learning Partnership.

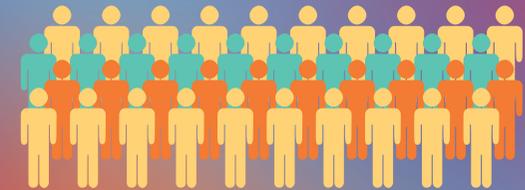


Emma Williams  
Inspire! Adult Learner  
of the Year, award winner.



More than

3,000 people



had a go at learning at over

400 outreach events and  
on-line tasters

Over 200  
nominations

were received for our Inspire! Awards, with 230 guests attending the awards ceremony which included keynote speech by Education Minister Kirsty Williams AM. Media coverage included ITV Wales News, WalesOnline, local media and Western Mail.



# DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS

## Literacy, numeracy and life skills

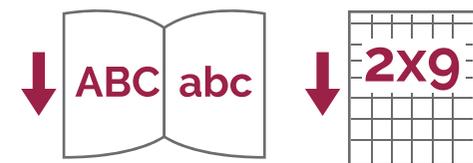
Good English, maths and digital skills are fundamental for life and work, but nine million adults lack these skills and adult participation in learning is falling. Our annual English, Maths and ESOL conference showcased our 'what works' evidence review of approaches to address this challenge. We held an event with our Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, to mark the 20th anniversary of the Moser Report. We are managing a new ESOL Network in Wales to support improvements in practice and policy.

Our research on the potential for an online basic skills screening tool and on EdTech in ESOL delivery helped inform policy on the use of technology to boost essential skills. We worked with the Education and Training Foundation and Learning Unlimited to launch **New to ESOL**, resources to support providers and practitioners working with learners who have the most limited language proficiency.



9 million

adults who have **low literacy or numeracy skills**





## High quality, accessible apprenticeships and technical education

To work for employers and people, apprenticeships and technical education need to be high quality and accessible. We are helping to deliver the Government's T level industry placement employer support package. We evaluated the Welsh Government's Traineeship programme and worked with the Department for Education in England to understand how progression from traineeships to apprenticeships could be improved and to inform policy in this area. We undertook research on how levy paying employers are using the apprenticeship levy, **how apprenticeship progression can be supported**, and how access to apprenticeships for people from BAME backgrounds and with learning difficulties can be improved.

## Good work and progression

Too many people are low paid or have limited opportunities to progress. We completed a three-year evaluation of **Step Up**, a programme focused on supporting low paid workers to progress in their careers, and developed guidance for commissioners based on the findings. We completed two projects for DWP on in-work progression; one focused on low paid workers to support good decision-making around job-switching and one focused on employers to support improvements in job quality and progression. Our Better Work Network – a policy and practice-based initiative dedicated to tackling low pay, underemployment and job insecurity in London and across the UK – has around 300 members. Its first conference brought together 100 stakeholders to explore how we support good work and progression.

**5 million**  
jobs pay less than the  
Living Wage



## Understanding what works

Our new **What Works Unit** published an evidence review conducted for the Social Mobility Commission, looking at what works to improve attainment in further education (FE) and adult learning. We also published an evidence review for the Department for Education looking at what works to support 15-24 year olds at risk of becoming NEET.

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## Career learning

An ageing workforce and global economic change mean people are likely to need to change careers and update their skills more often. We published the interim evaluation of pilots in five Local Enterprise Partnership areas in England. Working with the Department for Education, these tested outreach approaches to engage adults in learning and the impact of course fee subsidies on take up of learning.



## Employment for disabled people

The employment rate of disabled people remains significantly lower than that of non-disabled people. To build the evidence base on what works we are evaluating the health-led employment trials for the Work and Health Unit and the Work and Health Accelerator Programme for the Health London Partnership. We have also published evaluations of devolved employment programmes for disabled people in London.



disabled and non-disabled people



## International work

We looked at best practice in pre-apprenticeship provision in five European countries, drawing this together into case studies, resources and an event for practitioners to share experiences. As UK National Coordinator for the European Agenda for Adult Learning, we worked alongside 32 other countries, hosted Impact Forums in each of the UK nations reaching 600 people and an international conference for 100 professionals, and **published a report** looking at implications of future challenges for the adult learning workforce.

## Young adult carers

The UK's 300,000 young adult carers provide £5 billion of unpaid care, but are twice as likely to be unemployed and on average get worse educational outcomes. Our **Driving Change project**, in partnership with Carers Federation, is working with 25 colleges to give young adult carers better opportunities to fulfil their potential. We also evaluated Move On Up, Quaker Social Action's housing and support project for young adult carers.

## OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

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Bell Education Trust  
British Army  
Central London Forward  
Crisis UK  
Department for Education  
Department for Work and Pensions  
Disability Rights UK  
Education and Training Foundation  
European Commission  
Glasgow City Council  
Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Improvement and Development Agency  
JP Morgan Chase Foundation  
London Borough of Ealing  
London Borough of Hounslow  
NOCN  
Money Advice Service  
South East Strategic Partnership for Migration  
Trades Union Congress  
Trust for London  
WEA  
Welsh Government



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