

IMPACT REPORT

2021-2022

learningandwork.org.uk



INTRODUCTION

The prevailing theme of the year has been uncertainty. New waves of coronavirus meant new waves of lockdowns and restrictions. The ending of restrictions has not meant the end of the virus, and countries around the world have been hit by supply chain issues and price rises as economies have moved out of deep freeze. Latterly this was exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

That has meant great uncertainty and challenges for many people. We have sought to highlight this and promote solutions. The furlough scheme did its job, protecting millions of jobs. But this hides a worrying rise in economic inactivity as many, particularly the over 50s, stopped looking for work altogether. We helped shine a light on the one million people missing from our labour market compared to if pre-pandemic trends had continued and argued for employment support to focus more on this group.

The first multi-year spending review for some time included welcome increases in funding for adult learning. But our analysis showed this would still leave funding in England some £1 billion lower in real terms by 2024-25 compared to 2010-11, showing how far there is still to go. Meanwhile, 63% fewer adults are improving their literacy and numeracy compared to a decade ago, despite nine million adults needing to do so. We set up a Skills for Life Alliance, backed by analysis and international case studies, to try to change this.

As restrictions have eased, attention has turned to the future. We developed an index to explore the need for and challenges of 'levelling up', continued to celebrate amazing adult learners in England and Wales, mapped a spike in lifelong learning through the pandemic, and helped the Welsh Government set ambitions for the qualifications of the population in 2050.

Our work is wide ranging. We work in complex sectors in partnership with a range of organisations. We must also work ever harder to gain funding for our work – the year saw dozens of funders supporting dozens of projects. And, of course, our staff have faced the same challenges as everyone else, affected by the pandemic and the rising cost of living. That makes our achievements even more remarkable, and we extend our thanks to all our brilliant staff and trustees.

We know that, whatever the policy challenge, widening access to learning and good work are central. We will continue our work to make the case for this, build the evidence base, shape policy, and test new ways of working.

Maggie Galliers CBE and Stephen Evans

OUR MISSION

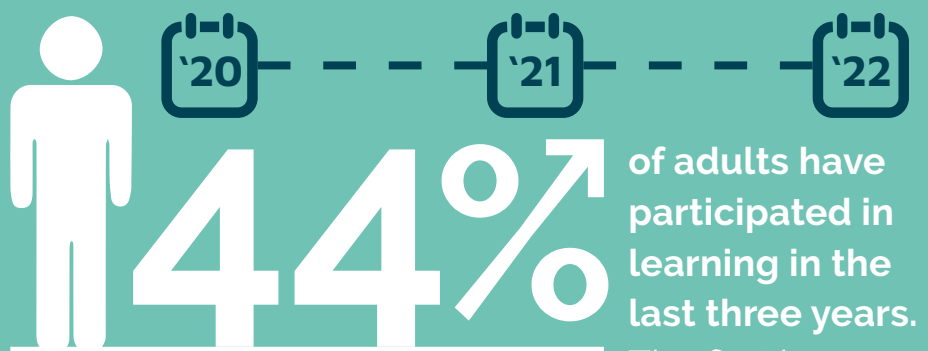
Our vision is for a prosperous and fair society in which learning and work provide opportunities for everyone to realise their potential and ambitions throughout life.

As we recover from the pandemic, we face new, urgent challenges to our society and economy. But there are opportunities to build a stronger future. We should aim for the UK not only to catch up with other comparable countries, but to be world-leading in terms of learning and work. Now is the time to work together to create a skills-led, growing economy, with good jobs and learning throughout life.

We want to make a difference by: researching what works and making the case for investment; celebrating the best in learning; helping to improve policy through evidence; and testing new approaches to delivering support.



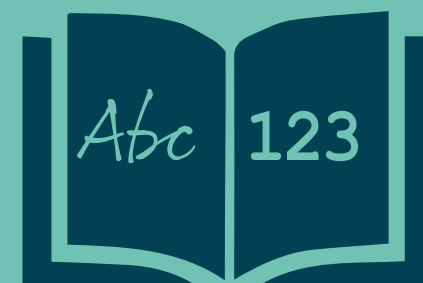
KEY STATISTICS



But inequalities based on age, social class and proximity to the labour market remain.

The first increase since 2015.

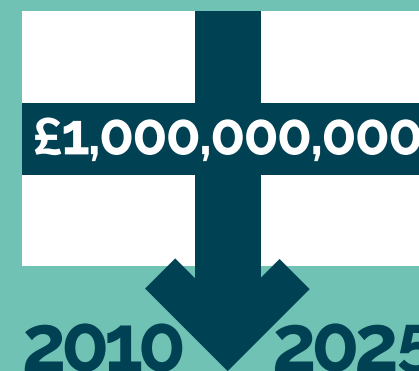
1 in 5 adults



have low essential skills like **literacy** and **NUMERACY** and fewer adults are in learning to improve these skills.




There are a **'missing million'** people from the UK workforce compared to pre-pandemic trends, driving by a rise in economic inactivity of the over-50s and people with long-term health problems.



Spending on adult skills in England could be around **£1 billion** lower in **2025** compared to **2010**, with higher inflation wiping out the value of some planned increases.

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

 **1,100**
press mentions

including: Financial Times, Telegraph, Times, Mail on Sunday, Mirror, Independent, Guardian, Big Issue, LBC Radio, BBC Radio 4, Evening Standard, FE Week, FE News, People Management, S4C Heno and Wales Online.

THE  TIMES  The  INDEPENDENT

 **18,200**

@learnworkUK Twitter followers

and 4,661 @LearnWorkCymru



OVER
310,000

page views of our websites,
up from the previous year.

We had spikes around report publications and our resources remain popular. Our campaign websites also received increased attention this year.



 YouTube
8,100

hours of footage viewed on our YouTube channel, with our event recordings, Festival of Learning and Inspire! award winners the most viewed.



Festival of Learning

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Our work is focused on six themes:



Lifelong learning can help with work and careers, active citizenships, community connections, and health and wellbeing. Our focus is 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. Our focus is on how employment opportunities vary for different groups and areas, and how things can 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.

SHAPING POLICY

We've been deepening understanding of the **economic impacts of coronavirus**, and **looking ahead to what's needed for renewal and recovery**. Highlights of our achievements include:

- helping to shape the Government's response to the labour market impacts of the pandemic through the Plan for Jobs;
- giving oral evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee, and to the Economy Committee of the London Assembly;
- analysing the one million gap in the UK's workforce compared to pre-pandemic trends as a result of rising economic inactivity;
- pre-empting the Levelling Up White Paper by setting out five measures of success in employment and skills, and published a map of how opportunity varies across the country;
- helping to secure new policy commitments in Wales, such as the Young Person's Guarantee, a review of adult literacy and numeracy levels, ongoing support for the adult community learning sector, and the introduction of Mid-Life Career Reviews.

In addition, we responded to **several inquiries and Government consultations**, and submitted evidence to the Education Committee on their major inquiries into the future of post 16 qualifications and Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG).



Local leadership

We supported the Local Government Association in updating their Work Local proposals, helping to model the potential scope of benefits to the economy and taxpayer if greater devolution of employment and skills services led to improved outcomes. Our Chief Executive also remained a member of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Employment and Skills Advisory Panel.



Towards the end of the year, we developed an offer to local government to support their investment plans for Multiply adult numeracy initiatives and UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocations, and scoped longer-term partnerships that support with the subsequent delivery of programmes.

Events and conferences

In July, Mims Davies MP, **Minister for Employment**, and Kate Green MP, **Shadow Secretary of State for Education** at the time, **headlined our Employment and Skills Convention**, with more than **1,300 delegates**. The annual **Employability and Skills Wales Convention** in November 2021 had keynote speakers including Vaughan Gething MS, **Minister for Economy** and secured over **380 attendees and viewers**. Our **Better Work Summit** brought together over **120 attendees**, and featured a keynote from Rajesh Agrawal, the **Deputy Mayor of London for Business**. Our **Youth Employment and Skills Summit** in October hosted **Metro Mayor for Liverpool City Region** Steve Rotheram and Minister Mims Davies MP as keynote speakers. Our annual **English, Maths and ESOL conference**, delivered online to **515 participants**. **Around 600 delegates** joined the **Housing, Learning and Work Conference**, held jointly with Communities that Work to explore the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

In-between conferences, we held webinars and shorter events, to mark the publications of reports and external events, and our senior team shared platforms at events hosted by other organisations.



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 three decades, inspiring similar celebrations around the world.

In England, Festival of Learning is supported by Department for Education, NOCN, WEA, City Lit, the Education and Training Foundation, and Skills and Education Group, and we worked with organisations such as HOLEX, Association of Colleges, AELP, World Skills UK and Open University. Award winner announcements took place in July, and the twelve winners and seven finalists were selected from over 200 nominations. The awards ceremony livestream was viewed by over 1,200 individuals and our Twitter hashtag achieved 1.1 million impressions. Award winner stories received widespread sector press coverage.

In Lifelong Learning Week in November, we welcomed our Patron, HRH The Princess Royal to our centenary celebration event. We saw an increase in social media activity from the previous year, with 4.7 million impressions on Twitter, and 1,100 tweets.

Festival of Learning



Over
200 Nominations

Awards ceremony viewed by
1,200

 **4.7** MILLION
Twitter impressions



200

partners including;



Wales
TUC
Cymru



10,000

people took part in online
courses and tasters



Adult Learners' Week platform had

167,000

page views

In Wales, for **Adult Learners' Week**, we worked with over 200 partners to provide a mix of 500 online courses, events and community-based outreach and taster activity, and **nearly 10,000 people engaged with learning activities**. We worked with Welsh Government to promote the campaign, and our **online platform** hosting course listings, special events, learner stories and links to further information, advice and support **had over 167,000 page views** and our **content generated over six million impressions on Twitter**.

Just ahead of Adult Learners' Week, Jeremy Miles the Welsh Government Minister for Education and the Welsh Language presented 13 **Inspire! Awards** to celebrate the achievements of adult learners, families, communities and workplace projects. Our **online award ceremony had an audience of 1,000**, and award winners **featured in print and broadcast media**, with two being interviewed on S4C.



DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS

Understanding what works

We worked with the Social Mobility Commission to explore the impact of the pandemic upon young people, with our findings contributing to their annual State of the Nation report 2022. Our review of EY Foundation's programmes enabled them to design an effective hybrid learning programme for disadvantaged young people. The interim findings of our three-year evaluation of The Prince's Trust's Future Workforce Fund helped to shape the way services are delivered for young people at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

Lifelong learning

On its 25th anniversary, our survey showed that 44% of adults have taken part in learning in the last three years – an increase on the record lows in 2019 and marking the first rise in participation since 2015. However, there are still significant inequalities between demographic groups to tackle. The survey and our wider work on engaging adults in learning have helped to inform the National Skills Fund in England, UK pilots being delivered as part of our New Futures programme, and Personal Learning Account pilot in Wales. We continued to help influence development of a right to lifelong learning in Wales, including holding a roundtable with partners from Europe to better understand international best practice to widening participation and discussion at our February 2021 Adult Learning Conference.





Improving literacy, numeracy and life skills

One in five adults have low essential skills like literacy and numeracy and fewer adults are in learning to improve these skills. Together with HOLEX, we convened the Skills for Life Alliance, bringing together key sector stakeholders, along with observers from the Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions, to argue for a greater focus and action on adult essential skills in skills policy and practice. To support the Alliance's work, we published *Getting the Basics Right*, a summary of the case for action on adult essential skills. We also worked with three Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) to understand the drivers of low participation in those areas. We advised the DfE on future delivery models for Essential Digital Skills and the Greater London Authority on social prescribing to adult education, to improve the health and wellbeing of Londoners.

Apprenticeships and technical education

Our work with DfE on occupational traineeships has supported providers to roll out the programme in priority sectors of the economy. We undertook research on behalf of World Skills UK on how young people can acquire the technical skills needed to support the UK's transition to a net zero economy. In partnership with JP Morgan, we worked with providers from different parts of the world to identify and share effective practice in the design and delivery of pre-apprenticeship programmes for young people. This has enabled providers to develop new programmes with young people who face barriers to employment.



Career learning

Our flagship programme, New Futures, is testing ways of helping people reskill and change career through five pilots across the UK. We have also undertaken research to inform National Skills Fund policy in England, including exploring how skills bootcamps can help to address green skills gaps, engaging adults in the Free Courses for Jobs offer, and how cost can be a barrier to adults learning at level 3.



Training at work

We published analysis showing that employer investment in skills had fallen by 28% per person since 2005, and that people qualified to degree level are four times more likely to get training at work than people with no qualifications. We highlighted the need for policy and employer practice to change this.

Good work and progression

Our Better Work Network, supported by Trust for London, has over 620 members. It published the first Better Work Audit for London, helping to inform the Greater London Authority's approach to economic development. We also worked with the Poverty and Inequality Commission to provide advice and recommendations on how the Scottish Government can support the creation of more 'good jobs' that reduce child poverty.

Improving skills and employment opportunities

Partnering with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, we're analysing emerging labour market trends for groups with different protected characteristics. We're also working with the National Foundation for Educational Research's on the major Nuffield Foundation-funded Skills Imperative 2035 research programme, to analyse the future of essential employment skills in our changing labour market. We undertook research for Department for Education into a new Academic Progression Pathway for young people, to inform the development of a future pilot. Our work with Association of Colleges focused on how a greater focus on outcomes could be built into the further education system in England, and our research with Open College Network Northern Ireland focused on building an inclusive labour market in Northern Ireland.





Supporting under-represented groups

The UK's 300,000 young adult carers provide £5 billion of unpaid care, but are five times more likely to drop out of college than their peers. In the first two years of our Driving Change project we have worked with 30 colleges across the UK to improve the support they have in place for young adult carers, so that they can achieve good outcomes.

International work

Our decade-long role as UK National Coordinator for the European Agenda for Adult Learning came to an end in December 2021. We continue to play an active role in the European Association for the Education of Adults and the European Basic Skills Network. Through the Regional Capacity for Adult Learning and Education (RegALE) project, we continue to collaborate with partners on a range of topical adult education issues.



OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

Catch 22

Centre for Ageing Better

British Army

Charities Aid Foundation (CAF)

Colegau Cymru Limited

Department for Education

Department for Work and Pensions

Equality and Human Rights Commission

EY Foundation

Greater London Authority

Impact on Urban Health

JP Morgan Chase Foundation

Local Government Association

Peabody

Scottish Government

Social Mobility Commission

Trades Union Congress

Trust for London

Welsh Government

World Skills UK

Youth Futures Foundation



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