

# IMPACT REPORT 2020-2021

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



# INTRODUCTION

**The year has been dominated by the coronavirus pandemic. Economic support, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, helped to limit the economic damage and protected millions of jobs. Nonetheless, unemployment has risen significantly and young people, lone parents, areas of already-high unemployment, and people from ethnic minorities have all been among those harder hit.**

We have worked tirelessly to analyse and highlight the economic effects of the pandemic and propose solutions. We are proud to have played a role in shining a light on the social and economic impacts of the pandemic, highlighting people's experiences, identifying future challenges, and having an influence on the policy response with the Government's Plan for Jobs picking up many of the changes we had called for.

Thoughts are now turning to recovery and renewal and how we grasp the opportunity to forge a brighter future. The context includes issues we faced before the crisis: the UK's future now we have left the EU; the combination of longer working lives and economic change; the transition to a net zero economy; and the imperative to narrow inequalities between groups and areas. With vacancies back above pre-pandemic levels, we need to help people find these roles, increasing employment and meeting employers' needs.

Widening access to learning and work are central to all of these. Throughout the year,

we have tried to make the case for this, build the evidence base, shape policy, and test new ways of working.

This included: celebrating the best in adult learning through [Festival of Learning](#) and [Adult Learners' Week](#); developing projections for the likely rise in long-term unemployment to make the case for more support; identifying and analysing an explosion of interest in online lockdown learning; and continuing to evaluate what works.

We work across a wide range of issues. Our thanks go to our staff and Trustees for making a real difference, especially at a time when they have also been adapting to life in a world shaped by a pandemic. Our work has never been more important and, even as we change our own ways of working, we are determined to do all we can to fulfil our mission.

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

**Maggie Galliers 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 many measures of learning and work compared to other countries. The pandemic has created new challenges, and recovery will present new opportunities.

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



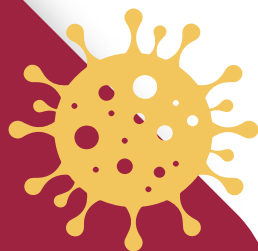


The pandemic  
had stark impacts

2 in 5



people took part in  
lockdown learning in  
spring 2020 but with  
large inequalities.



900,000

fewer people in work than at the start  
of the pandemic.



10%

lone parents said they lost their jobs,  
higher than many other groups.

## KEY STATISTICS

The UK has  
longstanding underlying  
challenges to tackle



27%



point gap between the employment rate of  
disabled and non-disabled people

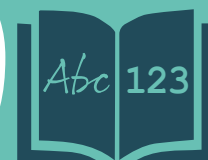


17<sup>th</sup>

UK ranking on intermediate  
skills out of 36 OECD countries

9  
MILLION

adults who have low  
literacy or numeracy skills



5.5  
MILLION

employees are paid less  
than the Living Wage



# 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.

## OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

 **2,100**

pieces of media coverage, up 75% on the previous year, including: Financial Times, The Mirror, Independent, The Times, LBC Radio, BBC Radio 4, BBC Wales, Evening Standard, Yorkshire Post, City AM, FE Week, FE News, Tes and People Management.

THE  TIMES **B B C** The  INDEPENDENT

 **17,800**

@learnworkUK Twitter followers

Up by 1,200 on last year.



**280,803**

page views of our website, **up 28%**, with spikes around the adult participation in learning survey, Raymond Williams lecture, and reports on digital skills and youth employment.



 **YouTube**

**43,600**


minutes of footage viewed on our Youtube channel, **up 40%**, with our Festival of Learning award winners the most viewed.

*Festival of Learning*

# SHAPING POLICY

To understand the economic impacts of **coronavirus** and developing policy solutions we:

- established a cross-sector group to share and develop thinking, and work with Government officials in building solutions
- identified the differential impact of the crisis on groups including young people, older workers, lone parents and people from ethnic minorities
- our chief executive gave evidence to the Lords Economic Affairs Committee on employment and coronavirus, and to the Work and Pensions Select Committee on the Government's Restart programme for people who are long-term unemployed
- worked with others to call for an Opportunity Guarantee so all young people are offered a job, training place or apprenticeship, and successfully argued for more retraining support and increased support for those out of work.



"Stephen, I am much impressed by the work your think tank does. Your research is very good. You do not write in the education jargon and you have radical ideas."

Lord Baker, Economic Affairs Committee





## Young people

Our Youth Commission looked at how to improve education and employment outcomes for 16-24 year olds in England. Its final report made recommendations for delivering a new higher ambition for young people by 2030, following five analytical reports to understand the challenge and develop new ideas. We will continue to analyse life chances for young people, and work for improvements in policy and practice.



# Learning and skills in Wales

We continued to work with the Welsh Government on development and implementation of the Personal Learning Account pilot and supported them to respond to rising youth unemployment during the pandemic. We supported the community learning sector through the Adult Learning Partnership and the ESOL sector through providing ongoing training and development opportunities for practitioners.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



## Higher technical skills

A shortfall of people qualified at levels 4 and 5 holds back productivity. Our work, supported by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, looked at how to increase employer demand for higher technical skills and develop provision to meet employer needs. This work helped shape the pilots featured in the Government's Skills for Jobs White Paper.



## Events and Conferences

Our July 2020 Employment and Skills Convention focused on the impacts of the pandemic on the labour market and how to respond. More than 1,200 delegates heard from Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Gillian Keegan MP, Skills Minister, and Mims Davies MP, Employment Minister. Our November 2020 Wales Employability and Skills Convention saw 160 attendees discuss employability challenges, including hearing from Ken Skates MS, the Minister for Economy and Transport. Our Housing, Learning and Work conference, held jointly with Communities that Work, attracted more than 360 delegates with speakers including Welfare Delivery Minister Will Quince MP.

1,200  
DELEGATES





## Local leadership

Our chief executive was a member of the Greater Manchester Employment and Skills Advisory Panel, and West Yorkshire Combined Authority Future Skills Commission. We developed projections for how long-term unemployment may grow in different parts of the country following the pandemic, gaining national media coverage and making recommendations for a partnership between national and local government to tackle this.

West Yorkshire  
Combined Authority  
Future Skills  
Commission

Greater Manchester  
Employment & Skills  
Advisory Panel



## Skills in Northern Ireland

We produced projections showing that on current trends Northern Ireland's skills profile would improve by 2030 but remain significantly behind other countries. Supported by OCN NI, the work was launched at a webinar attended by 200 people and aims to help inform Northern Ireland's skills strategy.



# 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, Festival of Learning sponsors include NOCN, WEA, City Lit, Education and Training Foundation and Skills and Education Group, and our partners included HOLEX, Association of Colleges, Association for Education and Learning Providers, Department for Education, World Skills UK and Open University. We announced award winners during our inaugural Lifelong Learning Week in November. Award winner stories received widespread sector and local press coverage. Our Lifelong Learning Week hashtag achieved over six million impressions.

Festival of Learning



200

Nominations

12

Winners

6

Finalists

Awards ceremony viewed by

1,400



1.1

MILLION

Twitter hashtag impressions

# 200

partners including;



Wales  
**TUC**  
Cymru



10,000  
people took part in online  
courses and tasters



Adult Learners' Week platform had

# 139,000

page views

In Wales, Adult Learners' Week co-created a bank of online learning resources working with 200 partners, including BT, the Open University in Wales, Wales TUC, Sport Wales and the network of community learning, further and higher education and training providers. Over 550 courses and resources were registered, combined with a week of live online events and taster sessions. Advertising for the campaign, supported by Welsh Government, generated over 15 million opportunities to see promotional messages. Alongside this, the Inspire! Awards recognised the achievements of individuals and community projects, gaining national and local coverage.



# DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS

## Understanding what works

Our What Works Unit published analysis for the Social Mobility Commission looking at the impact of training and adult learning on progression from low pay. Supported by Nesta, we published a toolkit for evaluating adult learning and career change programmes and explored the role of data-driven information, advice and guidance in helping people navigate a changing labour market as part of the CareerTech Challenge Prize.

## Lifelong learning

Our long running survey identified significant interest in learning during lockdown, with people finding new ways to access learning including online. However, there are still significant inequalities between demographic groups to tackle. The survey's findings on people's motivations for learning are helping to inform the National Skills Fund in England 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

Good English, maths and digital skills are fundamental for life and work, but nine million adults in England lack these skills and adult participation in learning is falling. Over 440 people attended our annual [English, Maths and ESOL conference](#), hearing from Skills Minister Gillian Keegan MP and exploring the role of essential and life skills in recovering from the pandemic. Working with Learning Unlimited, we developed [Volunteers, English Language Learners and Conversation Clubs](#), a substantial national resource commissioned by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to support delivery of informal English language provision. Over 300 participants attended the launch webinars, with over 4,500 unique views of the webpage. We also advised the Department for Education on the national standards for adult basic skills, the role of public services in referrals to adult basic skills provision, and providers' management of supply and demand for ESOL.

## Apprenticeships and technical education

We helped to deliver the Government's T level employer support programme, developing resources, case studies, events and one to one support for employers. 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. We researched how employers are using their apprenticeship levy, how apprenticeship progression can be supported, and the extent to which apprenticeships at Level 4 and above are supporting social mobility. We also evaluated the Department for Education's Opportunities Through Apprenticeships programme, which aimed to increase the supply and take up of high-value apprenticeships in disadvantaged areas.





## Career learning

The pandemic has likely increased the need for people to change careers and update their skills. We launched a flagship [New Futures programme](#), funded by the insurance and long-term saving industry's Covid-19 Support Fund, to test ways of helping people change career. We published the final report of our [Cost and Outreach pilots](#), working with the Department for Education to test how to engage adults in learning in five Local Enterprise Partnership or Combined Authority areas in England.



## Employment and skills opportunities

Employment rate and skills profiles vary by group and area, with the pandemic intensifying many inequalities. We are evaluating the health-led employment trials for the Work and Health Unit, the Work and Health Accelerator Programme for the Health London Partnership, and Future Workforce Programme for the Prince's Trust. We also published evaluations of [Crisis UK's Tackling Multiple Disadvantage programme](#) and [Commonweal Housing's Move On Up project](#).



## Good work and progression

Around five million people are paid below the Living Wage and too many people become stuck in low pay. Our [Better Work Network](#), which shares good practice and develops policy ideas to tackle low pay, underemployment and job insecurity in London and across the UK, has over 460 members. It published analysis on the impact of coronavirus on employment and job quality in London and held events on the challenges facing low paid workers and the role flexible work can play. We evaluated Wakefield's Step-up progression pilot, informing the roll-out of a city-wide programme. We partnered with Carnegie Trust to explore the [impact of increasing the minimum wage](#).

**5 million**  
paid below the Living Wage





## Young adult carers

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. Our [Driving Change project](#) is working with colleges across the UK to review and improve the support they have in place for young adult carers, so that they can achieve good outcomes.



**300,000**  
young adult carers provide  
**£5 billion**  
of unpaid care

## Supporting under-represented groups

We have grown our ESOL Network in Wales by offering online development workshops during the pandemic and helping practitioners to come together with policymakers to understand the challenges facing the sector. We have supported the Welsh Government with their policy response to the challenge of tackling the skills and employment challenge of different minority ethnic communities.







## International work

As UK National Coordinator for the European Agenda for Adult Learning we hosted Impact Forums in each UK nation, focusing on participation in learning and essential skills. In partnership with Belfast Learning City, the Northern Ireland Impact Forum published a report on adult learning, health and wellbeing. We continued to play an active role in the European Association for the Education of Adults and the European Basic Skills Network.





## OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

Black Stork

British Army

Carnegie Trust

Central London Forward

Centre for Ageing Better

Charities Aid Foundation

Department for Education

Department for Work and Pensions

Education and Training Foundation

European Union

EY Foundation

Gatsby Charitable Foundation

Greater London Authority

Guy's and St Thomas' Charity

Healthy London Partnership

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

JP Morgan Chase Foundation

Local Government Association

Ministry of Housing, Communities and  
Local Government

National Lottery Community Fund

NESTA

The Prince's Trust

RSA

South East Strategic Partnership for  
Migration

Trust for London

Wakefield Council

Welsh Government

WorldSkills UK



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