

# Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: implications for workforce development

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sector that is valued and respected for:

- Innovating constantly to meet the needs of learners, communities  
and employers;
- Preparing for the long term as well as delivering in the short term; and
- Sharing fresh ideas generously and informing practice with knowledge.



# Foreword

It is perhaps a truism to say the world is changing fast. But however fast or slow change occurs, adult learning needs to respond to change and, in the words of Jacques Delors<sup>1</sup>, attempt to shape it.

How can leadership of thinking support this?  
How does the adult learning workforce need to change in order to support future generations?

In 2018, L&W and FETL started discussing these ideas with a range of practitioners across the UK's very different adult learning systems. We were conscious that the latest research from the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and the European Commission showed that adult learning has a positive impact on all areas of our lives.

Furthermore, L&W's report *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: the impact of adult learning across the UK* recommended a number of ways adult learning strategies could be improved to maximise this impact. This was a timely report: as the devolution of education and skills funding across the UK, has prompted administrations to look at how adult learning contributes to a range of policy agendas.

A number of key thinkers from across UK further and adult education were commissioned to write short thinkpieces on the implications for leadership and workforce development of *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: the impact of adult learning across the UK*.

During late 2018 the writers came together to discuss their work and emerging themes with colleagues from FETL and L&W. Helen Plant and Mark Ravenhall pulled together the principal themes from the discussion for section one of this report.

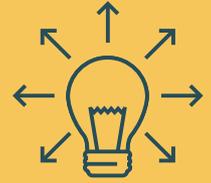
Section one and the nine thinkpieces were shared with UK forums during the Spring of 2019 and feedback was received from events in Cardiff, Birmingham, Belfast, and Edinburgh. We have summarised these responses in section four which includes a possible conceptual framework for future workforce development planning.

Just as adult learning is based on the concept of the learner journey—or many messy and complex journeys—the same notion should be applied to professional learning.

We have both been delighted to feed in our views at the expert seminar and UK forums, now we would be interested in your responses to this publication.

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**Jill Westerman, CBE.** - Further Education Trust for Leadership (FETL)

<sup>1</sup> Delors, J. (1996). "Learning: The treasure within". Unesco Publishing. Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001095/109590eo.pdf> (accessed October 2018).



## Rethinking workforce development

*Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: The impact of adult learning across the UK* identifies a range of economic and social policy challenges confronting the four nations today and argues that adult learning can make an important contribution to addressing these and promoting a fairer and more inclusive society. Published in 2017 by Learning and Work Institute (L&W) and its partners as part of their work for the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL), the report draws on a wide range of evidence from research and practice under the three broad themes of health, work, and community. *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* calls for innovative approaches to the funding, planning and delivery of learning, and for closer collaboration between the adult learning sector and other services.

Developing new ways of thinking about and doing adult learning inevitably presents challenges for the adult learning workforce. It asks them to step outside

what is familiar, to think differently about their roles and to be receptive to exploring and trying alternative ways of doing things. But unless the workforce understands the need for change and is enabled to embrace new approaches, the opportunities to strengthen the role of adult learning across policy areas will be missed.

It was in recognition of this need for change that L&W, as the UK National Coordinator<sup>3</sup>, and its partners agreed to focus on workforce development in the 2017-19 work programme. The activity has been intended to develop new models of workforce development that are focused on maximising the impact of adult learning in addressing some of the most pressing challenges of our time. To achieve this, L&W has worked alongside the Further Education Trust for Leadership (FETL), an independent think tank established to strengthen and develop the leadership of thinking from, in and about the UK further education system.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 1. Workforce development priorities**

The policy recommendations in *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* point to seven priorities which require decisive action in relation to workforce development.

<b>An integrated approach to health, adult learning and other services</b>	As adult learning increasingly 'joins up' with other services such as health, social care, community safety, and employability, in multi-agency teams, an enhanced skill set is required for practitioners and leaders.
<b>A careers advancement service</b>	Relatively low UK productivity, the changing labour market and skills mismatches present major challenges to which many businesses, employers and individuals remain poorly equipped to respond. New approaches to careers advice are required, in which support for progression in work is integrated with other services and underpinned by local strategies for inclusive growth.
<b>Person-centred curricula using an asset-based approach</b>	As demands on health and social services increase, it is clear that new approaches are needed. Closer partnerships between citizens and professionals from a wide range of organisations involved in service delivery must empower people to look after the health and wellbeing of themselves and their families, reducing dependency and fostering social capital. Education is key to creating the conditions to make this possible.
<b>Inclusive learning pathways</b>	As the structure of the labour market changes, new skills are needed and economic growth is pursued, it is vital that opportunities to enter and progress in work are accessible to those who have few qualifications or experience and face other barriers to work. This means creating diverse entry points and routes for development, from basic skills to HE.

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://fetl.org.uk> (Accessed 22.02.19).

<sup>3</sup> See [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/eu-policy-in-the-field-of-adult-learning\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/eu-policy-in-the-field-of-adult-learning_en)

<b>Dual professionalism</b>	To strengthen the capacity of leaders, managers and practitioners to work effectively across organisational and sectoral boundaries, adult learning professionals on the one hand and those in health, community and employment services on the other, must gain greater knowledge and understanding of one another's working practices, theories and traditions.
<b>Assessment of the outcomes and impact of learning in a systematic and comparable way</b>	Successfully integrating adult learning into initiatives to promote better health, work and communities requires the presentation of sound evidence on its value and benefits. Adult learning professionals at all levels have a role to play in developing and implementing consistent methods and ensuring emerging evidence informs the development of both strategy and practice in an on-going way.
<b>Sustainable development education for adults</b>	Learning and skills are integral to building the capacity of communities to respond effectively to the challenge of climate change. It is vital that adult educators forge links with experts and grass-roots organisations working for sustainable development, to strengthen the adult learning dimension to environmental protection.

## The project approach

A collaborative approach was adopted to understanding and defining new models of workforce development, involving experts with a wide range of experience and insights across different aspects of the subject. This included the following activities:

- Initial analysis of *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise*, to establish workforce development priorities, as shown in Figure 1
- Commissioning authors to write a short 'thinkpiece' on aspects of the priorities outlined above
- An expert symposium, co-chaired by FETL and L&W, where authors worked together on common themes in the draft papers and possible workforce development principles
- Further refinement of the papers based on these ideas and feedback
- The drafting of a summative introduction based on the symposium notes.

The next stage is to ask for feedback from UK stakeholders, and in particular the four Impact Forums in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. This is important as adult learning is a devolved matter in the UK and, therefore, so is how the workforces are defined and supported in the

different, and often divergent, policy contexts. We are particularly aware that the policy context is changing rapidly across the UK, so we have not attempted to summarise the current situation in each nation.

## The adult learning workforce

All participants were keen to stress the breadth and diversity of roles that are encompassed by the term 'adult learning workforce.' This perspective reflects an understanding of adult learning itself as a broad and inclusive discipline. Drawing on definitions developed by UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning<sup>4</sup> and the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE), *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* concludes that adult learning embraces 'a full spectrum of learning, in all forms and all levels for a diverse range of purposes'<sup>5</sup>. The term 'adult learning' is often conceptualised in using a three-part typology: formal, non-formal, and informal<sup>6</sup>. In reality these elements are a continuum, where a learning programme will include formal, non-formal, and informal elements.



4 Unesco Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2016, Third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education, Hamburg, Germany, UIL

5 L&W, 2017, *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: The impact of adult learning across the UK*, p.6.

6 For the EPALE definition see: <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/what-epale-definition-adult-learning> (Accessed 22.02.19).

It is also important to stress that adult learning embraces, in this definition, vocational education and training (VET), community learning (and development), online learning and broadcasting. From our perspective, learning is not defined solely by its primary institutional setting (such as a college, community centre, or workplace).

The above model is helpful in a number of ways for understanding the workforce:

- Different degrees of formality may require different roles of adult educators and involve professionals from different backgrounds and disciplines
- These three types of learning form a continuum and the boundaries between them are often fluid, and indeed may become more so as digital technologies continue to transform how we learn
- Most courses include a combination of formal, non-formal and informal learning
- The balance of approaches may be flexed to suit different target groups.

Much of our discussion has followed in the footsteps of great writers on the subject of adult education theory and practice. Particularly, we have found Richard Edwards' conceptualisation of adult learning as 'moorland' rather than a 'field' helpful in the context of the increasingly multi-agency world we live in today.<sup>7</sup> For Edwards, the moorland metaphor acknowledges that adult learning processes can be messy and appear in non-formal and informal adult learning processes, as well as more formal 'fields'.

Freirean thinking on learners as active agents and co-creators of knowledge has many implications for teachers trained in a tradition of 'knowledge transfer'. The interrelationship of adult educators' skills, knowledge, and attitudes is highlighted in the work of Peter Jarvis<sup>8</sup>. For Stephen Brookfield, there is a whole skillset around assessing the needs of a community and the creation of a relevant curriculum<sup>9</sup>.

The concept of curriculum is important in adult learning. The curriculum begins with promotion and outreach, both of which require adult education skillsets and an awareness of the adult learning context. Similarly, advice, guidance and counselling are closely aligned to the adult education curriculum and, in some cases, embedded within it.

While specialist tutors remain the primary point of contact for most learners, individuals in a range of other roles are also often key to a successful learning experience. These include:

- **Professionals in other sectors.** Increasingly, educating adults is a multidisciplinary endeavour which demands approaches that span professional boundaries. Professionals delivering services such as health, mental health and housing, and other community partners of 'mainstream' adult education, may in fact be doing a great deal to support adults to develop skills and capabilities which enable them to manage their situation more effectively, although practitioners themselves may not fully recognise the learning dimension of their role
- **Non-teaching staff working in the adult education sector.** These include not only those in roles such as learning support workers and career guidance practitioners, but also potentially cleaners, caretakers, reception staff, catering staff and carers. Health and wellbeing practitioners and other 'frontline' professionals in contact with adults who may face particular challenges in taking up learning can be key to supporting people to access and stay within provision
- **Para-professionals operating in diverse settings.** Especially for adults who have negative formative experiences of learning and face other complex barriers to educational participation and success, the support of para-professionals such as learning champions in the community and Union Learning Representatives in the workplace can be vital. These roles can be paid or voluntary, and their effectiveness is often based on the practitioner's closeness to the communities with which they work.

This broad scope of the workforce reflects two important, established features of adult learning:

- It operates across institutional boundaries and often relies on multi-agency delivery to be effective
- It has traditionally encouraged movement between the roles of 'learner', 'volunteer', 'teacher', and 'manager' and provided clear pathways to facilitate this.

7 Edwards R. 2006. 'Beyond the moorland? Contextualising lifelong learning' *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 38 (1), pp. 25-36.

8 Jarvis, P. 1995. *Adult Education Theory and Practice (Second Edition)*. Routledge. London.

9 Brookfield, S. 1983. *Adult Learners, Adult Education, and the Community*. OUP. Milton Keynes.

Recognising the multidisciplinary and multi-agency nature of adult learning also serves to highlight the critical and complex roles of senior leaders and managers within the sector workforce. Mary Stuart has written about the need to redefine management in terms of collaboration and partnership skills<sup>9</sup>.

Their responsibilities extend beyond their own organisations, to working across institutional and sector boundaries, creating the conditions in which collaborative approaches can flourish and taking adult education principles and practice into other leadership settings.

### Why 'business as usual' is not an option

In 2009, the UK Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning, identified the need for a 'broadening and strengthening of the capacity of the lifelong learning workforce'.<sup>11</sup> However, since then public spending has declined dramatically across the UK. This has resulted in a significant decline in participation in publicly-funded adult learning of all kinds. However, austerity has also given more impetus to collaborative ways of addressing what are increasingly seen as linked issues. These are most starkly evident in the UK's most impoverished communities, which suffer from multiple layers of deprivation: in health, in work, in community-engagement, and in education. Professionals in the 'fields' of health, employment, community safety, and adult learning need to work together to help address multiple needs in a coherent way. As **Helen Chicot** shows in her paper, the integration of adult learning across public service delivery can support the displacement of crisis demand.

If this kind of collaborative working is to become a reality, there is a pressing need for the workforce to cultivate and embody new skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. The following skills and capabilities are repeatedly highlighted across the papers as being essential for the future.

**Systems leadership** requires local leaders of learning to develop new skills around collaboration, cross-professional working and managing relationships. Fundamental to system leadership is the ability to lead outside of traditional organisational hierarchies – what **Kathryn James** notes has been described as 'leading when you're not in charge' – upwards to senior leaders and governing bodies, and, critically, outside one's own organisation to other agencies,

partners and stakeholders. Core system leadership skills therefore include influencing, building a shared vision and securing buy-in from diverse local stakeholders.

**Practitioner collaboration** is a key element of a systems approach. Adult learning practitioners and professionals working directly with adults accessing other public services need to have an appreciation of how their different services complement one another to achieve better outcomes for individuals and be able to work across institutional and professional boundaries to design innovative curricula and holistic interventions in an integrated way. **Paul Donaghy** describes this as the need to break out of the 'Bingo' mentality (eyes down, look in), and instead look upwards and outwards to explore ways of working together.

**Co-production with communities** is crucial. New approaches demand not only the skills to work across organisations, but also to build strong partnerships with local communities so that services are designed and delivered in ways that genuinely respond to need. Authors observed that this presents particular challenges because it demands that the professional adult learning workforce needs to 'learn to let go'. At the same time, this letting go needs to be done in a managed way so that it doesn't lead to poor practice and weak quality assurance.

Community Learning (and development) has an important role supporting learning within other community organisations. Several papers show that the ability to work in co-productive ways with learners and community partners is increasingly essential for adult educators. **Dragana Ramsden** points to a range of skills and attributes which are necessary to achieve this, including building relationships, using outcomes evidence and facilitating innovation.

**Outcomes and impact measurement** are key to building effective and sustainable partnerships. The ability to understand and use evidence to articulate outcomes and impact will be increasingly important in devolved policy contexts. **Helen Chicot** describes how this approach has been at the heart of work in Rochdale to embed learning in public service delivery.

9 Stuart, M. 2002. *Collaborating for Change: managing widening participation in further and higher education*. NIACE, Leicester.

10 Schuller, T. and Watson, D. 2009. *Learning Through Life*. NIACE, Leicester. (Recommendation 7)

### Barriers in the current system

The thinkpieces provide a powerful critique of the current context for workforce development in the UK, arguing that the system as it stands is incapable of promoting the kinds of collaborative, multidisciplinary and expansive attitudes and approaches that are essential for responding effectively to the complex needs of adults today. They highlight the following key areas of concern that act as barriers to change.

**Funding and accountability silos** fundamentally inhibit the joining up of service planning and delivery. Inevitably, this approach drives organisations and individuals within them to focus first on their own institutional interests. When coupled with the prevailing target culture, it results in unhelpful competition rather than productive collaboration, with duplication of effort and inefficient use of resources. However, despite awareness of the potential benefits of such place-based approaches, educational leadership and professional development is still institution-based and designed to deliver centralised curricula based largely on regulated qualifications.

Under such a model, adult learning is seen as something to be commodified as products to be sold to adults. Leadership development, initial teacher education, and continuing professional development, all currently operate within this model. Workforce development reflects the current configuration of the system rather than what will be required in the future.

As **Paul Donaghy** and **Kathryn James** both point out in their papers, practitioners and managers delivering learning 'on the ground' often recognise the need to work more collaboratively and want to create change. However, the system militates against it and they often do not receive the leadership within their own silo-led organisations that would enable more innovative and collaborative working. Time and again, services fail to deliver a coherent response. Siloed working inhibits the development of partnerships and networks that can develop a shared vision to promote change. Similarly, outdated governance mechanisms focus on individual organisational performance and measure the volume of activity delivered, rather than outcomes achieved. In the careers sector in England, **Deirdre Hughes** argues, a lack of coherence in policy



and funding leaves services under-prepared to support individuals to navigate the changing labour market.

**The economic imperative for adult education has been a brake on innovation.** Recent decades have seen an increasing orientation of adult education towards serving the skills needs of the economy. The prevailing policy narrative, reflected in the prioritisation of public funding and associated delivery targets, has positioned learning primarily in relation to the labour market. The employment and skills agenda is apparent in learning provision in what **Colin Forrest** terms the hegemony of employer-led curriculum.

**Vicky Duckworth and Rob Smith** suggest that this instrumentalist, skills-supply view of adult education has reached a critical point, with much provision failing to take account of what learning is important to local communities. Indeed, some authors argue that an environment of constant policy and funding reform has conditioned the workforce to become adept at delivering policy rather than responding to the genuine needs of learners. With some notable exceptions, scant attention is paid to reflecting the traditional social purpose role of adult education in fostering radical transformational change for individuals and communities. Too many of those involved in educating adults exhibit a lack of independence and creativity and little willingness to challenge the system they operate within and, as **Paul Donaghy** says, speak truth to power. **Dragana Ramsden** observes, risk aversion and lack of innovation appear to be the inevitable consequences of the prevailing culture of audit and compliance.

**Professional boundaries** that distinguish teachers, trainers and other adult learning practitioners can serve to inhibit collaboration and encourage exclusion from the workforce of individuals who may have much to contribute. Professionals in education, health and other sectors too often look inwards rather than outwards for solutions. But, as **Dafydd Rhys** argues, an influx of expertise, experiences and practice from other professional fields is needed to meet the learning needs of adults. The 'over-professionalisation' of teaching is seen as a key factor preventing this enrichment of the workforce and the learning opportunities and experiences of adults.

Similarly, the skills, knowledge and lived experience within communities is not sufficiently valued in developing and delivering solutions to complex social policy challenges. **Dragana Ramsden** argues that evidence from community-based learning demonstrates that when citizens and professionals collaborate as partners, outcomes improve for everyone and in a multiplicity of ways. However, the lack of mainstream recognition of the role that co-production can play means that most of those in the workforce are ill-equipped to facilitate the genuine involvement of communities in shaping local services.

## Enablers of change

Authors write of the need to 'rupture the barriers' to workforce development.<sup>1</sup> This language conveys a sense of the profound shift that their work suggests is needed in both outlook and approaches. At the same time as identifying significant obstacles to reform, a number of promising developments suggest that currents of change are apparent both in the wider policy context and in evolving practice.

- **Outcomes-based funding and shared accountability**

Reform of funding for public services towards a model of local commissioning based on outcomes is widely seen as offering a fundamental corrective to the perpetuation of funding, planning and accountability silos. This approach is being tested across the UK, including in the devolution areas of England, and represents nothing less than system change. It invites organisations to work together in the interests of making a difference to local communities, rather than rewarding activity undertaken by individual providers. **Paul Donaghy** observes that funding via outcomes-based commissioning presents a powerful driver to promote collaborative leadership and practice and envisages a future in which these new attitudes and behaviours are underpinned by pooled budgets, shared action plans and agreed key performance indicators. The local focus of outcomes-based commissioning is regarded as one of its key strengths because it foregrounds the needs and concerns of communities, as opposed to prioritising those

of provider institutions on the one hand or macro-economic considerations on the other.

As these reforms take shape, new collaborative governance mechanisms are needed to provide accountability for the implementation of co-designed and co-owned delivery plans. The project calls for 'altruistic governance' which operates beyond institutional self-interest for the wider local good and includes structures and processes such as learner forums for securing accountability directly to learners and communities.

- **Transformational leadership**

Throughout their work, authors refer repeatedly to the potential of system leadership to both model and foster new attitudes and behaviours which are rooted in an appreciation that working together can achieve more than the sum of the parts. New approaches to leadership embody a commitment to collaboration and cross-disciplinary, multi-agency working which can make integrated local delivery a reality. System leaders drive organisational change, break out of

established modes of planning and delivering learning and articulate a compelling rationale for doing things differently to ensure that colleagues and stakeholders are 'on board'.

Critically, as the authors of several of the papers note, leaders and managers that work in this way can set an alternative agenda which gives practitioners permission to take calculated risks. Drawing on the example of his own organisation, **Alan Sherry** shows how institutional commitment to providing inclusive learning opportunities that genuinely respond to what local communities want and need has encouraged innovative models of collaborative and flexible practice to flourish. Meanwhile, **Helen Chicot** describes the success of the Integrated Place Teams in Rochdale, where a radically different approach to delivery which integrates adult learning across public services has supported the displacement of crisis demand and transformed outcomes for citizens. Key to achieving this change has been a leadership approach which joins up services and communicates with the workforce in open and honest ways.



- **Rethinking professionalism**

Entrenched professional boundaries and identities that perpetuate silo working and exclusivity are being undermined by novel ways of thinking about the role of adult educators which better reflect the evolving context in which they are working. Authors offer a range of perspectives which point the way to broader and more open notions of professionalism and professional practice.

The primacy of specialist subject knowledge as the bedrock of professional identity is being challenged by the realities of learners' needs. When rapid economic and technological change mean that occupations can disappear almost overnight and the learning needs of the future are difficult to predict, it becomes increasingly important that practitioners can support adults to develop meta-cognitive skills (learning to learn) which will equip them to be lifelong learners, rather than simply transmitting knowledge which may soon become obsolete. **Alan Sherry** describes how his institution's focus on providing flexible, inclusive learning opportunities has prompted new approaches to professional development which place greater emphasis on developing the pedagogical skills of practitioners, alongside their subject knowledge.

As **Colin Forrest** shows, this approach reflects a growing interest in the concept of 'dual professionalism', in which practitioners combine occupational expertise with excellent teaching and learning practice. However, he argues, even dual professionalism may be insufficiently expansive to encompass the breadth of the expertise that practitioners need to demonstrate. When skills, knowledge and aptitudes to work in multi-agency teams, forge and sustain partnerships and span the boundaries between adult learning and other services such as mental health are added into the mix, describing adult educators as multi-professionals or inter-professionals may better reflect the complexity and richness of their roles.

While these concepts may be viewed with unease by some, it is vital that they are explored, tested and developed so that the adult education workforce meets the needs of our changing society while still retaining its professional integrity and distinctiveness.

## Innovative approaches to workforce development

The thinkpieces identify a range of approaches to developing the adult learning workforce which have the potential to nurture the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to meet the challenges set out in *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise*. Again, the watchwords are integration and collaboration, so that workforce development processes and practices mirror trends shaping the wider world of adult learning. The following are suggested as key features that need to be developed and strengthened through the relevant organisations across the UK.

- More flexible delivery is needed. This includes the provision of increased opportunities to undertake part time training and making greater use of digital delivery to create online as well as off-line spaces for collaboration.
- Collaboration, inclusion and diversity could be actively promoted through more open practices with regard to workforce participation. There is a need for a more flexible and 'common sense' approach, to enable those from other professions to enter the adult learning workforce, via fast track qualifications, accreditation of prior experience, team teaching, and other modes.
- Progression routes should be developed with appropriate linkages between different stages and levels, and opportunities for upskilling for those who want to progress. This includes support for the well-trodden path from adult learner to adult educator, particularly for those in community learning settings.
- Coaching, mentoring, action learning sets and other peer learning approaches use fellow managers and practitioners to support each other to take control of their own learning and are a powerful way to share knowledge and experience.
- Learning by doing together is a powerful way of achieving change. Cross-curriculum and multi-agency teams help to break down professional barriers and forge new relationships. **Helen Chicot** points to what have been termed 'polyvocal conversations' as a way of enabling managers, practitioners, volunteers and partners to communicate effectively, share and learn, to build understanding of each other's perspectives and move together towards finding solutions.
- Joint Practice Development (JPD) approaches stand in contrast to top-down, prescriptive Continuing Professional Development. JPD is a more egalitarian model, 'an anarchic response to CPD' and 'an antidote to the notion of mastery.'

# Thinkpieces 1

## Going beyond collaboration: a systems approach to ensuring learners achieve.



### KEY POINTS

Policy, such as the SEND Code of Practice requires providers to put the learner at the centre of their planning through inter-agency collaboration.

*Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* highlights collaboration as one of the approaches for Lifelong Learning to bring about the desired impact for learners' health, wealth and wellbeing.

Collaboration requires an alignment of shared vision between organisations, which may require organisations to change or shift in their behaviour and culture.

Changing behaviours and culture in our organisations, and particularly in organisations where we have no authority, requires a particular set of leadership skills which is often missing from leadership and management training.

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### Introduction

*Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* highlights how participation in learning impacts on health and wellbeing, our work and employment prospects and our role in civic, social and community life. This is true for initial education and for adult learning, and for all learners regardless of any learning needs they may have. The challenges in delivering good education and learning opportunities to adults and to learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are similar.

This thinkpiece suggests that there are lessons we should be learning about how a whole system just doesn't seem to work for learners with SEND, and indeed for many learners, despite the best efforts of many talented and hard-working professionals, and despite what we know about what works in delivering services. In exploring the thinking and evidence outlined in *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise*, I will make reference to the SEND Workforce Development Programme delivered by the Education and Training Foundation.

This programme of work, started in 2016 with funding from the Department for Education, has sought to improve the learning outcomes of young people aged 16-25 who have special educational needs and/or disabilities by taking a whole system approach to workforce development needs across the wider post-16 education and skills provision. These are early days, but it is right to ask what we are learning about how we tackle the barriers and inequalities faced by this group of young people.

### The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2014)

The SEND Code of Practice sets out the statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities<sup>12</sup>. One in five children and young people have a special educational need, which will mean that education providers will need to work across their own and other organisational boundaries to meet those needs.

The vision of the code is that children and young people 'achieve in education and lead happy and fulfilled lives', stating that 'this means that their experience will be of a system which is less confrontational and more efficient'. For that to happen for children and young people with higher levels of need, 'local education, health and social care should work together to ensure they [children and young people] get the right support' through the provision of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). While most Local Authorities have now transitioned over to EHCPs, research suggests that for learners aged 16-25 the system still remains difficult with little confidence that it will enable young people to realise their aspirations. A sector needs analysis shows that in the 16-25-year-old group only 49% of learners and parents/carers believed they will achieve their agreed outcomes to live independently (44%) or get paid employment (39%).<sup>13</sup>

12 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/398815/SEND\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_January\\_2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

13 Brown, S. Hutchinson. J, SEND FE workforce development programme. Refreshing the sector needs analysis – blog June 2017

The needs analysis also states that among the 19% of learners with SEND needs who do not have EHCP's, there is frustration with the low aspirations others have for them, which contrasts with their own high aspirations. Young people know that they face huge systemic barriers to fulfilling their potential exemplified with employment rates for disabled people at 46%, and as low as 7% for people with moderate to severe learning difficulties known to adult social care.

## The challenges

*Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* outlines challenges such as the continued squeeze on public finances and funding restrictions; short-termism of project funding; constant policy change; capacity of staff to meet the varied and diverse sets of learning needs; fragmented and often competitive nature of provision; and rapid changes happening in technology in the delivery of adult learning. A training needs analysis of the SEND workforce in post-16 education and skills highlighted other challenges, such the complexity of an English post-16 sector that is little understood by schools, parents/carers and young people. This lack of understanding impacts on transition, the sense of 'other' that some teachers and managers have about learners with SEND, and often means staff do not believe they have the expertise to work with this group of learners, and the multi-agency environment they have to work in.

However, with the exception of technological advances and the unprecedented austerity, such challenges have always been part of the prevailing climate of post-16 education and skills in England. If the challenges are largely the same across different parts of the English education and learning sector, and always have been, what are the possible approaches and solutions?

## The solution?

*Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* sets out a ten-point 'Lifelong Learning Approach'. All points are worthy of greater discussion and exploration as to how they would play out in the context of education for young people and adults with SEND. The point that this thinkpiece seeks to focus on is the one calling for greater collaboration:

*'There needs to be greater collaboration, not just at the government level, but between providers. Institutional leaders should take a collaborative approach in their local areas. Support agencies – such as the Education and Training Foundation in England – should prioritise this.'*<sup>14</sup>

But is collaboration enough—particularly for the most vulnerable groups? Adult education theorist Stephen Brookfield once said the word 'community' often led to a suspension of the critical faculty, could the same be said for 'collaboration'?<sup>15</sup> It is not enough to use exhort leaders to collaborate without giving them the skills and necessary behaviours to do so.

There is a need to look further afield to see if there are answers. The NHS Leadership Academy supporting health and social care managers have looked to systems leadership, defining it as 'leadership across organisational and geopolitical boundaries and beyond professional disciplines'<sup>16</sup>.

Closer to home the Virtual Staff College define systems leadership as 'an attempt to effect change for the social good across multiple interacting and intersecting systems, resting on the assumption that better and more efficient public services can result from more joined-up working across multiple sectors.'<sup>17</sup> Social good in this context for me means going beyond teaching and learning and the achievement of qualifications to enabling young people to contribute and benefit from the economic and social life of the communities in which they live.

With SEND provision, managers and practitioners have always worked with health, care, employment and other such services with the public and voluntary sectors, the same applies to any managers and practitioners working with learners who experience greater barriers to learning and who have contact from multiple, cross-sector agencies.

14 *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise*. The impact of adult learning across the UK. Learning and Work Institute 2017

15 Brookfield, S. 1983 *Adult Learners, Adults Education, and the Community*. Open University.

16 'Developing Systems Leadership. Interventions, Options and Opportunities' NHS Leadership Academy 2015

17 Ghate, D. Lewis, J. Welbourn, D. Systems Leadership: Exceptional leadership for exceptional times. [http://www.cevi.org.uk/docs/Systems\\_Leadership\\_Synthesis\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.cevi.org.uk/docs/Systems_Leadership_Synthesis_Paper.pdf)

Managers and practitioners see that they have to work in collaboration for the benefit of learners. Yet persistent problems of lack of aspiration for learners with SEND, low employment rates of disabled people still persist. What is the change for social good that we have made?

### Leading when you are not in charge: a systems approach

A systems leadership approach developed by the Leadership Centre states:

*'Systems Leadership describes the way people need to behave when they face large, complex and seemingly intractable problems; where they need to juggle multiple uncertainties; where no one person or organisation can find the solution on their own; where everyone is grappling with how to make resources meet growing demand; and where the way forward lies in involving as many people's energies, ideas, talents and expertise as possible.'*

*Systems Leadership is particularly relevant for people who are undertaking service integration, or who are looking at how they achieve long-term behavioural and cultural change.<sup>18</sup>*

It is this approach that has led the Education and Training Foundation to pilot a course in 2018-19 entitled 'Leading when you are not in charge' delivered by the Leadership Centre. The title alone seemed to strike a chord as one participant wrote in their feedback

*'...the title...it drew me in. It felt like somebody gets it!'<sup>19</sup>*

Aimed at managers in post-16 education and skills organisations that have responsibility for SEND it sought to meet the challenges that those managers faced when supporting the varied learning needs that learners with SEND have. Managers talked of having to 'manage up' to senior leaders and governing bodies who often had limited understanding and who often see SEND as 'over there'. They often had to 'manage across' their organisation to curriculum managers whose budgets and time is tight. Finally, they had to 'manage outside' of their organisations to employers and to local authorities.

SEND managers work with multiple local authorities, very often experiencing their own squeezed budgets, and all working to their own particular

decision-making processes and timescales. Previous professional development for managers of SEND focused on the so-called 'need to know': what makes good teaching and learning, the SEND Code of Practice as well as changing legal, funding, regulatory, and inspection environments. This still remains necessary. Staff need to have such knowledge in order to fulfil what is required of them in their particular organisation. It is when staff step outside of their institutional context, that things become more difficult and complex.

'Leading when you are not in charge' builds on the knowledge-based professional development by offering a systems leadership approach. It provides leaders at all levels with a skills set in how to think and behave. It provides them with strategies and techniques for thinking differently, for influencing people, getting buy-in to a shared vision, how to use multiple perspectives; how to work with complexity and to do this by putting the learner at the centre of any change to the system. Importantly, it provides the time and space to think about values and to reconnect with why they do what they do.

### Implications for the adult learning workforce

'Leading when you are not in charge' and similar programmes suggest that there are ways in which we need to adapt our leadership approaches as the FE and skills sector moves into increasingly collaborative ways of working. But there is also a context to consider, because this is about changing mindsets.

People have to want to make change. They have to see a challenge and sense that things could be done differently. To have a willingness to engage with an issue that may not have a known solution and a determination to bring other people into the problem-solving process. People have to be curious and prepared to 'disrupt the usual' and the accepted ways of doing things.

Making change takes time and effort to think and try things out. In a sector where time and money is tight, the provision of professional development has to be efficient and economical to be commercially viable. 'Leading when you are not in charge' is delivered over two one-day sessions, because realistically this is what most managers can afford in terms of cost and time away from the day job. The evaluation will show whether it is enough for people to really acquire the

18 'The revolution will be Improvised Part ii. Insights from places on transforming systems. A report by The Leadership Centre for The Systems Leadership Steering Group Nov 2015.

19 ETF End of course evaluation

knowledge and skills to make the deep and lasting changes in the way they work over a sustained period.

Immediate feedback tells us that the two days is enough to inspire and motivate people. Mindsets have been shifted enough to go back to organisations fired up to tackle the challenges faced and to change approaches. But as nobody else at their workplace will have experienced change, managers have to work with colleagues who may not see things in the same way - yet! Participants may seek to find ways to lead when they not in charge but their organisation may not be willing to 'allow' them to lead and make change. This is particularly the case when change needs to happen within senior leadership itself. Leading when you are not in charge can be lonely, and maybe even feel risky to career development. It has been suggested that mentoring or sponsorship may be necessary. Would that provide budding systems leaders with the right support to do this work on a more sustainable and safer basis?

## Summary

The work being done at the Education and Training Foundation is in its early days but it holds promise in enabling managers with responsibility for SEND provision to make changes to how the system works.

Such leadership development is not without its challenges, but there are wider opportunities here as well.

Working with other staff at a similar level and with a similar remit, I see a need for them to lead when they are not in charge. Examples are: staff leading on improvements in maths and English outcomes, or those leading on quality improvement, or employer engagement, or curriculum innovation. There are similar demands on staff supporting learners with mental health needs, too. In all cases there are common issues of changing culture, changing mindsets, influencing and nudging to change behaviour. There are opportunities for organisations to apply some systems to thinking how they support these managers to be systems leaders.

*Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* shows that learning impacts on our health and wellbeing, our working lives, and wider life opportunities. But all of these also impact on our chances in learning. If we are to really empower teachers and managers to support learners to be all they can be, we need to support them to see themselves as part of a bigger system and to have the skills to operate within it.



## PROVOCATIONS

- Managers of SEND need more than knowledge-based professional development. We need to acknowledge the higher level collaborative skills required for them to work effectively.
- This need for collaborative working and 'leading when you are not in charge' is evident

elsewhere in the post-16 sector. There is an opportunity to test out this kind of workforce development.

- There is a need for a comparative evaluation of systems leadership approaches and different models of delivery.

# Thinkpieces 2

## Understanding dual professionalism: boundaries and opportunities



### KEY POINTS

The *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* definition of 'dual professionalism' primarily relates to educators working with health and community professionals in multi-agency partnerships to fulfil the holistic needs of learners.

This is at variance with another, more vocational definition in which educators and local industry professionals work reciprocally to close skills gaps to match contemporary industrial practices.

The term 'dual professional' may be too limiting to encompass the kind of 'boundary spanning' that *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* intends, and 'interprofessional', 'multi-professional' or even 'triple professional' may be more appropriate.

In all cases there are significant positive and negative implications for the future of professional development and the notion of professional identity

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### Introduction

Promoting 'dual professionalism' emerged from *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* as one of the twelve priorities for strengthening the impact of adult learning in the UK. In this report, 'dual professionalism' is seen as supporting the development needs of adult learning professionals in understanding the domains of health, community, and employment for their teaching. The picture emerged of professionals who are comfortable working across boundaries in multi-agency contexts. How leadership creates conditions that foster high-quality professional development in such settings is likely to be a significant consideration. The term is also used in a reciprocal sense: to develop training for health and community professionals to explore the relevance of adult learning in their own contexts.

This contrasts with another definition of 'dual professionalism': one that is grounded in the need to address skills shortages in the four countries of the United Kingdom. In this context dual professionals are expert teachers who also have a high level of understanding of the demands of the workplace in their sector. The delivery of T-levels from 2020 as routes for 16-18-year olds cements this model of dual professionalism in the learning and skills sector.

I examine how a different positioning of 'dual professionalism' within *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* could provide an effective resolution of any deficits within the model. In undertaking this exploration

an attempt has been made to offer alternatives to a received concept of 'dual professionalism', ones that have potential to be empowering in a changing landscape for adult education.

### Dual professionalism in adult learning across the UK

The idea of dualism is not new but was reinvigorated in an English learning and skills context through the Commission for Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning report (2013)<sup>20</sup> where 'dual professionals' were defined as *teachers and trainers with occupational expertise and experience, who can combine this with excellent teaching and learning practice*. This contains the explicit expectation that dual professionals will seek to continually improve their teaching practice but also keep abreast of contemporary developments in their subject areas. The latter has an explicit functional purpose: to ensure that learners are exposed to current industry practice and resources to maximise their chances of employability.

This positioning of the 'dual professional' aligns closely with the rise of 'localism' in the UK where education providers and other locally-facing stakeholders are directed by national government and regional groups to focus skills activity on meeting local shortages and priorities. This has significant momentum in England which is replicated, to some extent, in other parts of the UK.

<sup>20</sup> *It's about work...Excellent adult vocational teaching and learning: the summary report of the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning* <https://api.excellencegateway.org.uk/resource/eg:5937> (accessed 24.9.18)

Gunson et al (2018)<sup>21</sup> undertook a wide-ranging analysis of the skills systems in Northern Ireland. The study exposes many aspects unique to the province as well as others that are shared with other parts of the UK. In doing so the authors reveal many opportunities for the growth of dual professionals and how such roles may be reconfigured, for example: *'there is a role for the leadership of employers, learners, third sector, and trades unions through social partnership to drive a new skills agenda'* (page 46).

The Welsh government wrote to college principals in late 2016 spelling out the priorities for the Further Education sector for 2017/18<sup>22,23</sup>. This brief communication advocated that: *'learners should be encouraged to become proactive and productive members of their communities, and by increasing your engagement with employers, and forging closer bonds with the communities you serve'*. The letter signposted the 2014 Skills Implementation Plan that highlighted regional and local skills delivery models. The plan is silent on the workforce development implications of this approach; however, it would seem impossible for providers to respond to the model without detailed consideration of how the functional model of dual professionalism may be fostered.

Weingarten (2018)<sup>24</sup>, with a brief to consider how the Post-Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) system in Wales could enhance its contribution to national goals, suggests collecting information at the organisational level. It is in the discussion document, in the appendix, that Weingarten begins to hint at the role that dual professionals might play in supporting PCET institutions in meeting the Welsh government's seven well-being goals<sup>25</sup>; many of which chime closely with those outlined within 'Healthy Wealthy and Wise'.

Gunson and Thomas (2017)<sup>26</sup>, looking at developments in Scotland's Skills System, identify the role of the system *'to equip learners with the skills they need to fulfil their potential; to get people into fulfilling work; and to meet the needs of the labour market and the wider economy'*. The analysis raises the notion of the significance of learning 'routes', echoed in

the Sainsbury Review for England, and goes on to highlight the role of the FE sector as fulfilling an 'adaptive' function in Scotland. This flexibility and adaptability in supporting learning in post-16 settings is likely to be grounded in an environment conducive to the development of the dual professional. This is reinforced by other priorities highlighted by Gunson and Thomas (2017 op.cit.), including the need to improve the flexibility and transferability of learning for adults.

*Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* invokes the term dual professional in a subtly different way from that described above. A sense develops that the concept is heavily grounded in the broadest needs of adult learners rather than the dual professionals themselves and their vocational expertise. In the report's context dual professionals are those who are and will become equipped with an understanding of, and contribute to meeting, the holistic needs of adult learners. Emphasis is less on vocational expertise but on developing broader professional perspectives that will draw on an understanding of education for a social purpose.

## Dual professionalism is problematic

*Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* provides an opportunity to re-examine dual professionalism and its usefulness as a concept that will hold true in supporting the recommendations of the report. Assumptions and definitions need to be explored here and this discussion will include the influence of professional standards, personal reflection, ethical considerations and capacity for 'boundary spanning'.

Defining professionalism as having dual aspects may be too reductionist for supporting the implementation of many aspects of the report. Oliver (2013)<sup>27</sup> highlights the need for professionals to be effective 'boundary spanners' in a North American social work context. She promotes the idea of an 'interprofessional' – one that chimes closely with how dual professionalism is positioned in *Healthy Wealthy and Wise*. Helen Gilbert's (2016)<sup>28</sup> perspectives on the importance of

21 Gunson R, Murray C, and Williamson J. (2018). The Skills System in Northern Ireland: Challenges and Opportunities, IPPR <https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/the-skills-system-in-northern-ireland> [accessed 3.10.18].

22 Letter from Kirsty Williams, Cabinet Secretary for Education <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-23/priorities-for-the-further-education-sector-2017-18.pdf> [accessed 6.10.18]

23 Harvey P. Weingarten (2018) Maximising the Contribution of the Post-Compulsory Education and Training System to the Achievement of Welsh National Goals. A review of systems for monitoring and improving the effectiveness of post-compulsory education in Wales. <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/maximising-the-contribution-of-the-postcompulsory-education-and-training-system-to-the-achievement-of-welsh-national-goals.pdf> [accessed 4.10.18]

24 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 <https://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/futuregenerations-act/?lang=en> [accessed 4.10.18]

25 Gunson R and Thomas R (2016) Equipping Scotland for the future: Key challenges for the Scottish skills system, IPPR. <http://www.ippr.org/publications/equipping-scotland-for-the-future>

26 Carolyn Oliver (2013) Social Workers as Boundary Spanners: Reframing our Professional Identity for Interprofessional Practice, *Social Work Education*, 32:6, 773-784, DOI: 10.1080/02615479.2013.765401

27 Helen Gilbert (2017) Supporting integration through new roles and working across boundaries. The Kings Fund

boundary spanning in providing integrated health care are also important here. She draws attention to the importance of the interplay between the organisational environment that influences how people work together, and how individuals define their own roles and how they are characterised by others. Other workforce development challenges include: professional identity, space and time for professional development and the hegemony of employer-led curricula. Peel's (2005, published 2011) perspective may be a useful basis for a more detailed scrutiny of the dual professional concept. Although she is writing from a private/public facing land-use context her analysis explores the notion of professionalism itself and this includes certain elements that relate well to *'Healthy, Wealthy and Wise'*, for example:

- An extensive training which comprises a significant intellectual component and involves theoretically as well as practically grounded expertise
- The provision of an important public service
- An organisation of members and a process of licensing and regulation of practice
- A distinct ethical dimension which calls for expression in a code of practice
- A high degree of professional autonomy in one's work.

Peel also highlights factors with potential to restrict the development of dual professionalism:

- Limited change by integrating new competencies
- Professional elitism
- The culling or merging of professions or 'implosion' of local government as (elite level) professionals are lost to a general managerial profession
- Professional flight (where professionals shift career path to the service-providing organisations).

Again, these are cautionary messages relevant to the implementation of the dual professionalism recommendation from *Healthy Wealthy and Wise*. Others also signpost problematical aspects to the concept. Esmond and Wood (2017)<sup>29</sup> explore dual professionalism from a Further Education teacher's perspective and present a picture of a model that, like Peel's analysis, presents a constraining potential, through dual professionals experiencing a 'substantial diminution into transmitters of routine workplace competences'.

This danger has recently been revisited by Simons and Mycroft (2018)<sup>30</sup> in a challenging exploration of professional identity. They examine the 'nooks and crannies' of Further Education and Adult Learning through a rich pedagogical lens and present a picture of multiple pressures negatively impacting on the self-esteem of practitioners in the sector. What professionalism means for adult educators is an important part of this narrative, especially where there is potential for teaching expertise to be overwhelmed by expectations for engaging in multi-agency brokerage.

### Implications for the adult learning workforce

'Multi-professionalism' may be a useful construct that complements Oliver's idea of an 'interprofessional'. *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* includes many examples of settings where multi-professionals will be located and these cases hint at the richness of such roles. In promoting the need for 'triple professionalism' Hodgson and Spours (2017)<sup>31</sup> advocate that an 'ecosystem' approach is central to resolving the systems problems touched on above. Hodgson (2016)<sup>32</sup> identifies such triple professionals as demonstrating the following attributes:

- Having an ethical concern for all young people and adults in the locality
- Understanding the role of the college within the community and the local area
- The capacity to research the community and local and regional needs in order to identify needs and bring about positive change
- The ability to undertake multi-agency working and to collaborate with other professionals
- Understanding of policy and how it translates in practice in the TVET (Technical, Vocational Education and Training) system
- Highly-developed communication and people skills.

Although Hodgson here is exploring college settings there are many attributes that will be important in implementing the recommendations within the European Agenda report. The blurring of professional identity may become important in exploring implications for professional development. Oliver's

29 Bill Esmond & Hayley Wood (2017) More morphostasis than morphogenesis? The 'dual professionalism' of English Further Education workshop tutors, *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 69:2, 229-245, DOI: 10.1080/13636820.2017.1309568.

30 Sarah Simons and Lou Mycroft TES FE Podcast (28 September 2018): Putting pedagogy centre stage <https://www.tes.com/news/tes-fe-podcast-putting-pedagogy-centre-stage> [accessed 10.10.18]

31 Ann Hodgson and Ken Spours FE and Skills across the UK: the case of England UCL Institute of Education Seminar briefing paper September 2017 [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-centres/centres/centre-for-post14-educationand-work/projects/fe-skills-four-countries-uk/pdf/FE\\_and\\_Skills\\_-\\_the\\_case\\_of\\_England\\_Final.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-centres/centres/centre-for-post14-educationand-work/projects/fe-skills-four-countries-uk/pdf/FE_and_Skills_-_the_case_of_England_Final.pdf) [accessed 20.9.18]

32 Ann Hodgson (2016) Why triple professionalism may be a more helpful concept than dual professionalism <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/news-events/events-pub/mar-2016/triple-professionalism-may-be-a-more-helpful-concept> [accessed 10.10.18]

emphasis on the importance of 'boundary spanning' may again be helpful here. In incorporating this ability within a professional identity, she supports the mediation aspect that underpins the definition of dual professionalism within *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise*.

It is too simplistic to suggest that such an evolution of professionalism will be a given. Professionalism is often defined through a licence to practice or chartered status. Non-mandatory professional standards exist for teachers and trainers in the learning and skills sector in England<sup>33</sup> and Wales,<sup>34</sup> These include the ethical aspects highlighted by Hodgson and reflect also the combination of vocational and pedagogical aspects that underpin one definition of a 'dual professional'. In the light of the above discussion such standards may seem somewhat limited when looking at developing professionalism in the multi-agency context in which the recommendations of *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* will flourish.

## Summary

In conclusion, it is clear that the concept of dual professionalism is too reductionist to provide an effective platform on which to build effective

workforce development for adult educators. Describing such teachers as multi-professionals or inter-professionals may better reflect the richness of the role. However, there is potential for these identities to also be contested as adult educators engage in boundary spanning to reflect their multi-agency engagement. In navigating this territory, it is important to recognise that the conditions that foster professional development and support professionalism in the broadest sense will need very careful consideration. Making these conditions explicit will expose the implications for organisational leaders, embracing the need for sense-making highlighted by Hodgson. Middle leaders, the mediators between practitioners and the leadership narrative, and also brokers between professional and organisational identities, are also a crucial audience. The workforce development needs of those that lead local and regional collaborations in the UK also need consideration.



## PROVOCATIONS

- Identify and celebrate the key attributes of high-quality adult educator professionals in evolving contexts.
- Consider the development implications of cross-disciplinary working and multi-agency engagement.
- Provide protected time and space for adult educators to co-construct professional development opportunities.
- Build management and leadership capacity to foster high quality professional development.
- Explore the professional development needs of leaders of the locality.

33 Education and Training Foundation Professional Standards for FE Teachers <https://www.etfoundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/professional-standards/> [accessed 10.10.18]

34 Professional standards for further education teachers and work-based learning practitioners in Wales (Nov2017) at <http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/171129-fe-wbl-professional-standards-en.pdf> [accessed 13.1.19]

# Thinkpieces 3

## Creating inclusive learner pathways



### KEY POINTS

Lifelong learning is inclusive and it enables progression.

Rapid technological and demographic change means that traditional 16-24 subject knowledge transfer models are obsolete.

Future adult learning is likely to be episodic and contextual, not linear and continual.

An ability to work collegially both internally and externally is now essential for education leaders.

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### Introduction

In my view, there were two key design principles of the proposed lifelong learning approach in *Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise*. Lifelong learning is inclusive, and it enables progression. As the report goes on to say, adult learning is at the heart of the inclusive growth agenda.

Dirk Van Damme, Head of CERI at OECD, contends that society needs diverse systems of learning, skills development and innovation<sup>35</sup>. Furthermore, Jeff Selingo contends that 'workers will likely consume this lifelong learning in short spurts when they need it rather than in lengthy blocks of time as they do now'<sup>36</sup>. In addition, Georgia Institute of Technology produced *The Deliberate Innovation Lifetime Education* report in April 2018 which concluded that institutions will need to 'provide educational opportunities that serve individuals' needs throughout their entire career...'<sup>37</sup>.

Participation in lifelong learning will not be dictated by an arbitrary date on a calendar, rather individuals will experience education episodically linked in the main to life experiences.

In order to make this a reality it is essential that all adults have the opportunity to participate in a non-linear form of post-compulsory education, not just those who have already benefited from Higher Education. Inclusive Learning Pathways must be available to all learners based on the development of both vocational and transferable skills which prepare individuals both for employment and citizenship.

To meet these challenges as learning professionals we must consider how we address the delivery of effective 21st century lifelong learning in a way that meets the needs of individuals, society and the economy.

### The challenges we face

In Scotland, the challenges facing adult learning in the 21st century are multi-dimensional. They range from engaging learners who have few skills and a poor schooling experience, through to employees who need to acquire new skills to sustain employment, particularly as digitisation reshapes our workplaces. This is happening at a time of rapid demographic change. As the 16-24-year-old cohort in Scotland declines by 9% over the next decade<sup>37</sup>, those aged 65-74 years will increase by approximately 17%<sup>39</sup>. Furthermore as 80% of the workforce in 2030 will already be employees a systemic approach to providing educational opportunities for this cohort will be required.

The combination of technological and demographic change poses a series of complex challenges for both schools and post-compulsory education providers. Lifelong learning must become a reality if societies are to ensure inclusive economic growth for the benefit of all. The structure of the learner journey will be substantially different from that which has underpinned existing approaches to the nature and provision of post-school education.

35 Keynote speech Eurashe Conference, Tallinn 2018, available at [www.eurashe.eu](http://www.eurashe.eu)

36 Inside Higher Education in World Where Graduates Never Graduate, Dellarcas, [www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/views/2018/08/01/role-university-world-where-students-never-graduate-opinion](http://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/views/2018/08/01/role-university-world-where-students-never-graduate-opinion) August 2018

37 <http://www.provost.gatech.edu/commission-creating-next-education> 2018

38 [www.gov.uk/national-records-of-scotland](http://www.gov.uk/national-records-of-scotland)

39 [www.gov.uk/national-records-of-scotland](http://www.gov.uk/national-records-of-scotland)

### Current approaches are not enough

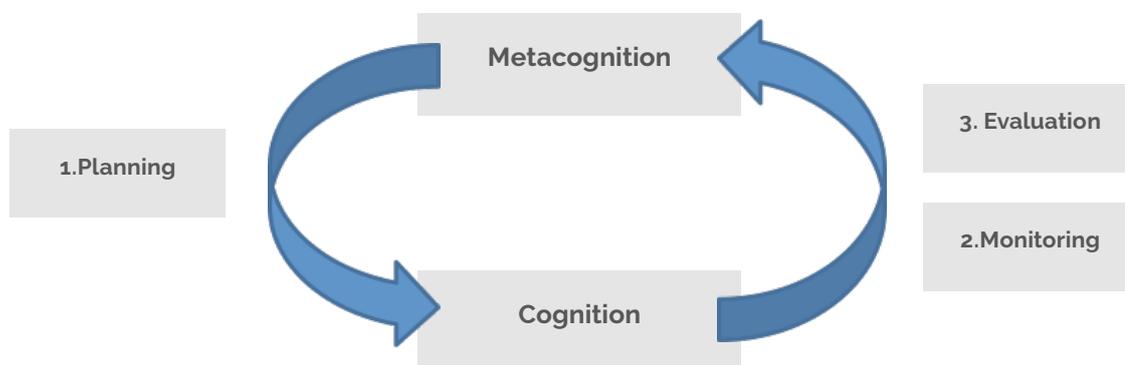
In May 2018, the Scottish Government published *The 15-24 Learner Journey Review*<sup>40</sup>. The report was intended to establish Scotland's ambition to become a world class education and skills system. However it also created the sense that there was an end point to learning at 24 years. The *Review* focused on linear progress from school to post-compulsory education. It sought to enable seamless learner journeys with the recognition of prior attainment as a means to create efficiencies by reducing the time spent acquiring degrees.

In addition, the *Review* focused on the importance of creating parity of esteem between vocational and traditional qualifications based on the Foundation and Modern Apprenticeship frameworks. Again the

emphasis was on young people in the 16-24-year-old cohort. In both areas, the report reinforced the notion of linear, hierarchical progression with an implicit assumption that skills acquisition was linked to prolonged periods of study.

The Scottish Government failed to consider the role of lifelong learning in supporting inclusive articulation and progression pathways. Nor did it place sufficient emphasis on the meta-cognitive skills needed by 21st century learners. In essence these involve thinking skills which promote an understanding of how a task is performed spanning multiple and divergent subject areas. Learners who develop these skills 'monitor their behaviour in terms of goals and self-reflect on their increasing effectiveness. This enhances their self-satisfaction and motivation to improve their methods of learning.'<sup>41</sup>

Figure 4: Developing meta-cognitive skills



To address the multitude of challenges and to support inclusive economic growth there is a need to create diverse systems of lifelong learning which develop key meta-cognitive skills, vocational skills and citizenship skills.

Current approaches as set out in Government policy are not enough.

### A community-based approach

At Glasgow Kelvin College we have sought to develop a curriculum offer which addresses the needs of the communities and stakeholders which we serve within the existing statutory and financial frameworks for

Scottish colleges providing the skills for life, learning and work.<sup>42</sup>

The John Wheatley Learning Network has forty-four community learning centres which are predominantly based in North East Glasgow. These centres are operated by partners with College-supplied digital infrastructure to enable local residents to access its on-line resources and support systems. Currently there are 8,000 users of Learning Network services developing a range of digital and meta-cognitive skills.

The College operates a Wider Access programme whereby it provides tutor support to requests from

40 [www.gov.scot/publications/2018/054774](http://www.gov.scot/publications/2018/054774)

41 Zimmerman, BJ (2010) *Becoming a self-Regulated Learner: An Overview, Theory into Practice* 41

42 Curriculum for Excellence, [www.education.gov.scot](http://www.education.gov.scot)

the community for structured learning programmes. It adopts a Freirean approach to the design of these programmes seeking to develop the skills identified as needed by individuals for both the world of work and active citizenship. Where appropriate Scottish

Qualification Authority units are used. If there is no such relevant qualification the College will deploy its Community Achievement Award Framework which operates within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework at levels 4-7. The SCQF is set out below.

Figure 5: The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

### The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

SCQF levels	SQA qualifications		Qualifications of higher education institutions	SVQs/MAAs
12	Some SQA qualifications are changing between 2013 and 2016. See <a href="http://www.sqa.org.uk/readyreckoner">www.sqa.org.uk/readyreckoner</a>		Doctoral Degree	Professional Apprenticeship
11			Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate	Professional Apprenticeship SVQ 5
10			Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Professional Apprenticeship
9			Professional Development Award	Bachelors / Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate
8	Higher National Diploma		Diploma of Higher Education	Technical Apprenticeship SVQ 4
7	Advanced Higher Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate	Certificate of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 3
6	Higher			Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 3
5	National 5 Intermediate 2			Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 2
4	National 4 Intermediate 1	National Certificate	National Progression Award	SVQ 1
3	National 3 Access 3			
2	National 2 Access 2			
1	National 1 Access 1			

Our community-based approach is focused on creating a positive learning environment which is designed to build the confidence and skills needed for lifelong learning. At the same time accrediting achievement in a manner which highlights progress and celebrates success, supports the transition to further study, with guaranteed articulation to college-based programmes, or progress to employment. This approach to micro-credentials creates more efficient and positive learning episodes which are based on experience and which recognise achievement.

### Project-based learning and co-creation

Project-based learning is central to the delivery of the totality of the College’s provision. Using this methodology teaching staff co-create with students’ learning activities which are based on the skills required by individuals for both the world of work and active citizenship. The approach enables ‘chunks’ or episodes of learning to be delivered at a pace appropriate for each learner and to build on the skills which they have developed previously working collaboratively with peers to produce a specific outcome.

The flexibility of this approach supports adult returners to use a variety of modes of attendance to accommodate their personal circumstances (such as caring responsibilities, work or ill-health). Structuring curriculum provision in this manner is intended to enable learners to study when they can rather than follow a fixed timetable to suit the institution, and to encourage teaching staff to utilise a wider range of pedagogical methods. In this way the College seeks to enable learners to progress successfully to employment or further study.

This approach is similar to the one which the Commission on Creating the Next in Education recommends for adoption by The Georgia Institute of Technology. Therefore, the challenges in providing effective lifelong learning opportunities are similar no matter the level of study.

## Implications for the adult learning workforce

As *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* acknowledges, working in new ways presents challenges for the adult learning workforce. The College ethos is focused on developing effective partnerships within the communities which we serve and to 'bending' resources to meet the needs of partners in order to assist them in meeting their priorities. All staff, not only senior managers, are required to work collaboratively within cross-curricular teams, with learners and stakeholders. As part of its strategic planning process the College produces an annual Context Statement<sup>43</sup> which provides all staff with a comprehensive overview of its operational environment. This document is designed to assist in ensuring that curriculum provision reflects the operational context.

To support our teaching staff, the College has a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy<sup>44</sup>. This document is the subject of annual consultation and provides a framework which is intended to promote a learning environment which supports the individual to develop skills which meet current needs and the transferable skills required in the 21st century. It encourages staff to use a blended-learning approach promoting the importance of ensuring that learners

experience and engage with a range of activities which support meta-cognitive skills development.

Greater emphasis is now being placed by the College on professional learning activities which develop the pedagogical skills of staff rather than subject knowledge.

However, it is not just front-line staff who need skills development. As the world changes rapidly, leaders and managers need to update their skills and knowledge too. An understanding and the ability to work collegiately both internally and externally is now an essential skill for all those leading educational organisations. Equally essential is a commitment to making best use of public funding by sharing resources in order to create the maximum benefit for the communities and stakeholders which we serve. The previous emphasis on command and control management approaches are no longer appropriate in the 21st century.

## Summary

The focus by the UK and Scottish Governments on linear progression has resulted in a failure to invest in post-school provision which in turn has undermined attempts to promote inclusive growth as there are limited opportunities for adults to acquire new skills. Furthermore the emphasis on subject knowledge transfer as the main output of education fails to take into account the pace of change brought about by digitisation which has reduced the lifespan of such specific knowledge. It is evident that the existing structures for post-school and adult education do not provide an appropriate means of ensuring that all citizens have the opportunity to develop the meta-cognitive skills required for the 21st century.

To meet the challenges which we face there is a need to focus on creating an inclusive learning framework which supports non-linear progression, which places the learner at the centre and develops the meta-cognitive skills required for lifelong learning. Partnership working between educational providers and stakeholders to co-create appropriate learning episodes will require a rethinking of how learning is delivered and attainment is accredited. However

43 [www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Context-Statement-2018-20.pdf](http://www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Context-Statement-2018-20.pdf)

44 Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy, [www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk](http://www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk)



systemic change can only be achieved if senior managers commit to effective partnership working and ensure that staff have appropriate pedagogical skills in order to create effective and engaging learning activities which meet the needs of learners, society and the economy.

The need for lifelong learning is critical as digitisation transforms both the economy and society. In order to meet these radical changes, post-school learning environments will need to support non-linear learning journeys, using subject-based learning to develop the meta-cognitive skills which will enable individuals to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

The co-creation of learning episodes designed to meet the needs of learners, of employers and society will require us to replace the current approach to provision of post-school learning. Prolonged periods of study are no longer viable for individuals seeking to maintain sustainable employment.

As currently this is not the case, consideration needs to be given to developing post-school learning environments which support non-linear learning journeys, develop the skills required for life-long learning, provide appropriate accreditation for work-based learning and learning episodes based not on institutional efficiencies but on the needs of individuals. Glasgow Kelvin College is taking steps to put this into place within the current structure of post-compulsory education in Scotland however more radical change is required to create an inclusive education system fit for the 21st century.



## PROVOCATIONS

- All adults must have the opportunity to participate in a non-linear form of post-school education.
- Scottish Government policy must rethink its emphasis on 16-24 year old linear, hierarchical learning journeys in favour of work-based, contextualised and episodic learning.
- It must also promote meta-cognitive skills which span diverse subject areas, as well as vocational and citizenship skills.

- Senior managers must commit to effective partnership working and ensure that staff have appropriate engagement skills.
- Learning delivery and accreditation must be based on the needs of individuals not on institutional efficiencies.

# Thinkpieces 4

## Personalising learning for health and well-being: citizens as partners



### KEY POINTS

Neither state nor citizen alone has the resources to solve complex social problems, so inclusive local and professional frameworks are called for.

Collaboration between professionals and citizens improves outcomes across many metrics, but this requires new mind-sets from professionals and citizens alike.

Academic literature currently gives limited guidance on co-production models.

Current education culture may be academically entrenched and risk-averse, and off-putting to citizens and would-be partners, while learning providers face an uphill task within a demotivating context of finance, audits and fast outcomes.

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### Introduction

The *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* report comes at a time of decreasing public budgets and the increasing needs of the aging population, with a number of complex problems facing our communities and impacting on their health and wellbeing. There is no one single solution to these problems. The best solutions are the ones that respond to individual choices and aspirations. What is more, on their own, neither the state nor citizens have all the necessary resources to provide best solutions. Complex challenges call for a blend of professional expertise and frameworks with citizens' contribution of their informal networks, personal time, experience and agency.

As a potential solution which links the current challenges and the impact of adult learning, *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise*<sup>45</sup> suggests that 'person-centred curricula, using an asset-based approach, to enhance capabilities and existing knowledge, should be adopted' in order to maximise the impact of adult learning.

### What are asset-based approaches?

Asset-based approaches treat the skills, knowledge and lived experience of citizens as a valuable resource for achieving positive change. This is a collective and community-orientated method of work where 'professionals and citizens share power to plan and deliver support together, recognising that both partners have vital contributions to make in order to improve quality of life for people and communities'.<sup>46</sup> The definition is underpinned by an expectation that this way of working can link assets across health, work and community life and that it can deliver more than the sum of the parts.

My extensive experience of delivering adult learning in the community, through collaboration with a wide range of organisations and local citizens, leads me to believe that collaboration between professionals and citizens improves outcomes. Research evidence points at this too.<sup>47</sup> The impact is multifaceted: services can be more relevant and value for money, the demand on services can decrease, professionals working in them may be more fulfilled, communities can be stronger and their health and wellbeing can

45 Learning and Work Institute. 2018. *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: the impact of adult learning across the UK*. Leicester, LWI. Available at: <https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/healthy-wealthy-and-wise-the-impact-of-adult-learning-across-the-uk/>. [Accessed on 29 Sept 2018]. Page 28.

46 Slay, N. and Stephens, L. (2013). Co-production in mental health: A literature review. London. new economics foundation (nef). Available at: [https://b3cdn.net/nefoundation/ca0975b7cd88125c3e\\_ywm6bp3l1.pdf](https://b3cdn.net/nefoundation/ca0975b7cd88125c3e_ywm6bp3l1.pdf). Page 3. [Accessed on 18 Oct 2018]

47 Cabinet Office (2009). Co-production in public services; a new partnership with citizens. Available at: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/207033/public\\_services\\_co-production.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/207033/public_services_co-production.pdf). Page 17 [Accessed on 5 Oct 2018]

be improved.<sup>48</sup> When learners are equal partners, they can feel greater ownership and take more responsibility for their learning. This may result in improved impact and achievement<sup>49</sup>.

### Changing power dynamics

In co-production, power dynamics change, requiring new mind-sets from both professionals and citizens. To share decisions and have equal power in planning, the knowledge that comes from the experience of citizens needs to be valued as a resource. At the same time, adult educators need to give up a role of sole-subject experts and take on a role of equal collaborative partners.

The curricula which are entirely based on personal experience of learners can run a risk of not being widely accessible and not providing enough evidence base. In this case, adult educators' role may be determined by their knowledge of what good teaching and learning looks like. Co-production does not stop when a curriculum is produced, otherwise it can become stifled and outdated. However, keeping the process active and sustainable may be a challenge in itself. Other challenges include: the need to suitably complement the expertise of adult educators with local knowledge; balance external quality criteria and funding targets with local demands and match nationally approved qualification assessment criteria with local demands.<sup>50</sup> Creating new relationships may take a long time, demanding additional time and resources.

While roles are being defined, a collaborative space can be uncertain and ambiguous. A task of facilitating these relationships is not easy as it involves investing in learners to take on a new role, while negotiating new power dynamics with them as well as with other partners. At the same time, more empowered learners can become more demanding learners. Are adult educators ready for this?

### Background

In adult learning, co-productive working usually refers to curriculum co-design, in which partners, including learners, have a role in designing and

delivering learning programmes, through reciprocal relationships. My research shows that the literature does not define a specific model of co-production and it does not usually focus on practice and processes where learners and partners exercise shared leadership over how the curriculum budget is spent. Neither does it cite examples where learners are involved in partners' and educators' performance management, or the recruitment and training of staff. The impact of co-production on educators is also not widely considered. However, some research within recovery-orientated curricula in mental health implies that this model of work can positively impact on educators' use of language, collaborative practice or the design of their professional development programme.<sup>51</sup>

### Challenges for adult learning

Apart from a shared vision and clear rationale, there are three key curriculum design principles for co-producing with adult learning.<sup>52</sup> Where does adult learning stand against these principles?

#### 1. Organisational cultures which integrate co-design approaches

While grappling with Ofsted<sup>53</sup>, ESFA<sup>54</sup> or LEP<sup>55</sup> priorities, decreasing budgets and reduced learner participation, how ready are adult educators to take brave risks in order to develop and sustain organisational cultures that integrate co-design approaches? It is likely that the culture among many adult learning providers is not conducive to innovation, risk taking and building equal relationships with learners and other partners. A current education culture may also be too off-putting and unappealing for citizens and partners unaccustomed to the acronym-laden world of education.

#### 2. Measuring shared outcomes

Adult learning providers tend to use different outcome tools to measure impact of their work on meeting different local needs. Using measures that capture the changes brought about by co-designed curricula may involve cross-organisational negotiation and agreement. This in itself requires a whole-systems

48 Dineen, R. (2015) 'Co-production... 'no more throw-away people'' [PowerPoint Presentation]. Available at: <https://www.cdhn.org/sites/default/files/Ruth%20Dineen%20-%20Co-Production%2027th%20May%202015.pdf> [Accessed on 3 Oct 2018]

49 National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) (2014) Curriculum Development – co-designing learning with disadvantaged groups. Available at: <http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/gridhosted.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/curriculum-co-design-guide-FINAL.pdf> [Accessed on 3 Oct 2018]

50 NIACE (2014) *ibid*

51 Dalgarno, M. and Oates, J. (2018) 'The meaning of co-production for clinicians: An exploratory case study of Practitioner Trainers in one Recovery College Recovery College'. DOI: 10.1111/jpm.12469 Available at: [https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/101890149/JOates\\_Recovery\\_College\\_2018\\_preprint.pdf](https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/101890149/JOates_Recovery_College_2018_preprint.pdf) [Accessed on 20 Oct 2018]

52 NIACE (2014) *ibid*

53 Office for Standards in Education

54 Education and Skills Funding Agency

55 Local Enterprise Partnership

thinking where citizens alongside voluntary, education and health sectors work together on sharing solutions, practices and outcome measures. Does the initiation of this process lie with adult educators or with everyone across local providers and communities?

### 3. Inclusive practices that value different types of knowledge

Across different sectors and community groups, there is already a learning system with approaches that allow for different types of knowledge and experiences to co-exist. For example, the space includes both formal and informal learning activities offered by a range of providers from health and voluntary sectors. There are also many non-formal learning activities in libraries, gyms, cafés, people's houses and community centres. Citizens are already organising themselves to co-produce 'knit and natter' groups or create community gardens. Do they recognise that as learning? What role does adult learning occupy in this whole space? Could a process of co-design begin with adult learning working with others to understand how it can complement the existing practice? What can adult learning learn from colleagues in health and community services? What can other professionals learn from adult learning?

### Implications for the adult learning workforce

Developing a curriculum which is negotiated and driven by citizens, educators and other providers is a complex process. It requires each party to complement the assets of others and have clearly defined roles in the process. In order to facilitate a co-productive process, adult educators need to show competence and confidence in relation to four key areas of their professional practice.

#### 1. Adult educators' professional identity and scope of the role

Adult educators need the ability to deal with challenges of shifting their role from educators to collaborative partners. This also entails managing or changing the expectations of other stakeholders about a traditional role of adult educators. These can be the expectations of local communities, partners or national regulatory bodies.

Recognising what their role should be at different stages of a co-productive process and sharing the responsibility for outcomes may be a significant challenge for the sector. This is because adult learning providers are accustomed to taking on a key responsibility for curriculum design. At the same time, they are not accustomed to regular reflection because of the pressures brought about by the pace of their practice.

#### 2. Building and maintaining relationships across organisational boundaries

Co-production requires flexible administrative structures and a focus on nurturing relationships. Therefore, it becomes particularly important for adult educators to have the skills to build and maintain relationships with formal and informal groups, while managing possible challenging behaviours. This also involves the skills necessary to articulate key messages in a way which is understandable to potential partners outside of the education sector. It also involves the ability to work with uncertainty and ambiguity across organisational boundaries. These skills include the ability to inspire others into whole-system thinking and recognition of shared problems. How can adult educators mobilise and facilitate the input from various partners ensuring that no one has a monopolistic role?

#### 3. Agreeing, collating, analysing and using robust outcome measures

Co-productive process involves scoping and building the shared vision. In order to recognise its impact, adult educators need to be able to agree, collate, embed and analyse shared outcomes measures. They also need to learn that some outcomes are about long-term achievements and may need to be monitored over a longer course of time.

#### 4. Facilitating innovation and risk taking

A truly co-produced curriculum involves a different mind-set and the ability to take and share risks. Adult educators need to be able to create a safe space within their own organisations and across partnerships, which is conducive to risk taking and innovative thinking. This will also imply the ability to embed the principles of progressive curricula across partnership boundaries.

The above four areas of professional practice apply to the adult education workforce as a whole. Dependent on their roles in a co-productive space, different parts of the workforce will have additional and specific training needs. Leaders may need to develop systems leadership values and skills, while teachers may need to refine their ability to expertly draw learning points from citizens' contributions. Further needs analysis will be required to determine a skills set in different segments of the adult education workforce.

### Summary

Health services, which have a long tradition of working closely with patients on co-designing services, believe that the development of co-productive relationships is underpinned by reflection which needs to be purposefully built in. Yes, adult educators may be well-versed in self-assessment processes, but regular reflection may still seem like a big challenge. Deliberately putting the time aside to look, interpret and analyse your experiences and responses so that

you can learn from them, requires discipline, time and courage. This may be a difficult and painful process too, as it is not assisted by a prepared framework to aid your thinking. No wonder regular reflection is a challenge for the sector.

Besides, in a culture driven by audits and reporting systems, accompanied by adult educators' concerns related to finance, sustainability and rates of participation, the capacity for innovation may be somewhat endangered. There is also a great pressure to demonstrate outcomes quickly. Perhaps, one of the key things that educators may need to work on is their confidence to invest in reflection, nurturing relationships and innovation, while exploring the extent to which they can embed co-productive principles in their organisational cultures and structures.



### PROVOCATIONS

- Co-production must be continuous, otherwise it becomes stifled and outdated.
- Citizens must be prepared to take on power-sharing roles, while educators must give up sole-subject delivery roles.
- Devising outcome measures for co-designed curricula requires a system-wide rethink with cross-organisational input.
- There is already a formal and informal learning ecosystem which co-designed processes can learn from and complement.
- Adult educators and leaders need specific training to manage the co-design process.

# Thinkpieces 5

## Enabling social change through adult learning: a place, people and partnership approach



### KEY POINTS

Devolution in Northern Ireland has created threats as well as opportunities for adult learning. Education spend is squeezed into siloed 'activity' instead of progressive 'outcomes'.

Success is not to be found in any single profession, but rather in looking up and across, to our partners and other professions.

Practitioners want a joined-up approach but the systemic and leadership mechanisms and permissions are still lacking.

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### Introduction

*Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* sets out how we can achieve a better life for all by making adult learning an explicit enabler for social change. During Northern Ireland's troubled history and more recently, as we stagger towards self-government, I have had the opportunity to work alongside other progressive forces to help build a fairer and more inclusive society, but we still leave too many behind. Within our disadvantaged communities, education spend is continually squeezed with siloed 'activity' rather than 'progress' targets. A hallmark of our shared future in Northern Ireland needs to be a fairer distribution of education spend across society and the life-course. As a part of our peace stabilisation work, we need to ensure that learning becomes once again a ladder out of social and economic disadvantage, poor health & wellbeing, staying out of the criminal justice system and gaining fair employment.

### Devolution: challenges and opportunities

The devolution of adult learning and skills in Northern Ireland is welcome but it has created both opportunities and threats. On the one hand we are a small nation of 1.5 million people with a single Health/Wellbeing and Education/Skills economy,

which should enable us to better join up services, but we also suffer from a legacy of siloed thinking and funding, alongside outdated governance and accountability mechanisms. Initiatives including our Public Health<sup>57</sup> strategy, public service reform, the designation of Belfast as a UNESCO Learning City<sup>58/59</sup> and local authority community planning create the potential to commission for outcomes rather than activity alone. Our draft *Programme for Government* (2016)<sup>60</sup> was seen by many as an opportunity to break out of traditional silos, but new system leadership and practitioner collaboration is required to deliver sustainable change, so these dynamics have profound implications for workforce development.

Without a new model of system leadership and inter-professional collaboration we will surely fail. What is needed is a more collegiate system of civic, political and organisational leadership operationalised in a way that liberates our skilled professionals and trusts our practitioners to lead and learn together. My 30+ years' experience leading workplace equality strongly suggests however that voluntarism alone is unlikely to succeed, so incentives need to be put in place. Within our divided Northern Ireland society, equality of opportunity for all has become a cornerstone of our peace process. Being a catholic or protestant today is seldom a determining factor in job success. I remain convinced that mainstreaming adult learning as an

57 Health Inequalities – Annual Report 2018. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety N. I. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/health-inequalities-annual-report-2018> (accessed October 2018).

58 Belfast Strategic Partnership. (2015). Belfast a Learning City: A Learning City Charter. Available at: <http://www.makinglifebettertogether.com/wp-content/themes/makinglifebetter/resources/lifelong-learning/Belfast%20A%20Learning%20City%20A4%20WEB.pdf> (accessed October 2018).

59 Pascal Observatory. (2014). Why learning is central to city futures – A policy briefing from PASCAL International Observatory. Available at: <http://s/news/why-learning-central-city-futures-policy-briefing-pascal-international> (accessed October 2018).

60 NI Executive Office. (2018). Programme for Government – Working Draft Framework. Available at: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/pfg-framework-working%20draft.pdf>

explicit enabler of social change has the potential to help cement our faltering peace process. Many years have been wasted trying to ensure that those in power take the sometimes-bold decisions needed to deliver a better life for all and often, well-intentioned leaders/professionals struggle because the system and collaborative leadership has been absent. We then fail to achieve a coherent response to the key social issues we face, including those around obesity, alcohol misuse or mental health. Different agency planning cycles, funding and commissioning priorities/models and siloed accountability mechanisms disperse the potential for progress and often lead to duplication instead of coherence. Most front-line practitioners want to work in a more joined-up way as they know this will deliver better outcomes, but they fail to be given permission and provided with appropriate leadership.

### Implications for the adult learning workforce

An increasing body of evidence<sup>61</sup> shows leaders and frontline professionals that the challenges around health/wellbeing, education, community safety, economic prosperity and growing a learning society are intertwined, not separate. However practitioners often have difficulty breaking out of the silos they have been boxed into without leaders making the same commitment. The necessary joined-up approaches are prevented by outdated governance mechanisms, which strangle rather than empower, as well as a reluctance to challenge a status quo bound up in politics and power dynamics which protect vested interests. We need a new skillset for civic, organisation and system leaders built around shared vision and we need practitioners and leaders to learn and work together, supported through coaching approaches<sup>62</sup>.

The future is about coherent, integrated approaches. This must become the starting point and core learning for all leaders and practitioners upon entering professional/leadership training, but crucially also, as a core part of professional development. Such training needs to move away from a 'Bingo' mentality (eyes down, look in) and understand that success is not to be found in any single profession, but rather in looking up and across, to our partners and other professions. System leadership means working together and

responding to the shared challenges within and across organisational boundaries, empowering all to exercise their collective lungs to breathe deeper and increase capacity to do more, together. Outcomes-based commissioning has the potential to deliver just that. It will be scaffolded alongside service users in a way that co-designs action plans to deliver shared outcomes. Peer learning, coaching and 360-degree feedback loops, with appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) will support this transition in a way that benefits those who are traditionally left behind.

As leaders and practitioners exhibit these behaviours and attitudes, they become 'the way we do things around here' (the culture) and others will model these behaviours. The leadership qualities required include skills of advocacy, long-term planning, shared vision, learning by doing together and an understanding of the transformational nature of collaborative gain. This moves many beyond their safety zones, but my experience is that when they are won over they become champions for this approach, regain their passion and resist any attempt to go back to old ways. This liberates practitioners to deliver the change they came into the profession for. Openness to share and learn (rather than blame), build confidence, show empathy, acknowledge success or endeavour and crucially help people to help themselves helps all to grow to be the best they can be and unlock the talent of people around them. Growing social and human capital alongside skills and economic capital when done right unleashes the talent of all to the benefit of all.

But if you can't see or imagine it you can't build it. Leaders and practitioners need to learn the evidence from the many place-based budget initiatives: that when tackling community safety, social and health care disadvantage and benefit dependency in a coherent, joined-up way, public purse costs are reduced, and social benefit improves. Front-loading investment through early intervention works, turning off the 'increasing demand' tap. Transformational leaders and practitioners combine passion and vision with endurance and managing expectation. They are skilled advocates and bring partners along and engage them to join in the transformation of systems, processes and organisational structures.

61 Benington, J. and Hartley, J (2009). "Whole Systems Go!" *Improving leadership across the whole public service system*. Sunningdale Institute. National School of Government: London.

62 Hamby, L. (2014). "Creative Career Coaching". Accessed at <http://creativecareercoaching.org> (accessed October 2018). Health Inequalities – Annual Report 2018. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety N. 1. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/health-inequalities-annual-report-2018> (accessed October 2018).

The three key leadership and practitioner skills therefore need to be:

- 1) a focus on future outcomes
- 2) expertise at engagement, and
- 3) an ability to deliver continual improvement.

## Learning as the dynamic for change

Transformational leaders and practitioners understand that in this messy world 'learning' is the only sustainable way to motivate and change behaviour, attitudes and mind-sets and so they explicitly value and promote learning in all its intertwined dimensions<sup>63</sup>. In this world of the learning rich and the learning poor many of those left behind had poor previous experiences of education and so make few demands for more<sup>64</sup>. Leaders mainstream effective models of learning that turn people on to learning and provide progression opportunities. They recognise learning as the ultimate continual improvement process which must become a lifelong activity for all.

## Innovation and creativity as transformational practitioner traits

Our existing governance and accountability mechanisms so often strangle organisational and practitioner creativity and innovation. All too often

practitioners are forced to deliver organisational activity targets when they know success is to be found through collaboration. Unlocking talent by treating partners as volunteers rather than outdated command and control approaches motivates all to be creative in the co-design and delivery of outcome-based agreed action plans. Progress measures are then no longer consigned to the 'too difficult' box and are measured on distance travelled rather than on activity alone. Instead of managers obsessing about the 'number of bums on seats' they find ways to measure the more difficult and important issue of how an intervention has transformed the life and life-chances of an individual and/or family and/or community. Those who can deliver the best outcomes for the best return on investment see their place and pooled budgets and resources and jointly-commissioned product and process become normal. System leaders and practitioners drive collaboration and new robust cross-cutting governance mechanisms with newly-agreed KPIs. Leaders exhibit courage and determination and give permission to practitioners and stakeholders to take calculated risks to deliver wins. Success comes through continual improvement. Setting new, appropriate management structures and effectively managing relationships become explicit leadership and practitioner traits. Managing the inevitable conflict with vested interests requires new skills and building alliances for positive change.



*The Forum for Adult Learning Northern Ireland conference, Belfast, October 2017*

63 Delors, J. (1996). "Learning: The treasure within". Unesco Publishing. Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001095/109590eo.pdf> (accessed October 2018).

64 Hyde, M. and Phillipson, C. (2014). *How can lifelong learning, including continuous training within the labour market, be enabled and who will pay for this? Looking forward to 2025 and 2040 how this might evolve?* Foresight, Government Office for Science: London.

## Summary

Joined-up, evidence-based approaches are required to tackle the wicked social and economic challenges we face as a society. Making learning an explicit enabler and working together in a transformational way liberates all involved and empowers citizens and communities. My experience of leading change has taught me that what works is collegiate leadership at all levels, aligned to empowered practitioners working together on agreed outcomes based on the assets of place, people and partnership. It also provides the best opportunity to grow 'communities of leaders'. This is the only sustainable way to tackle the challenges of obesity, alcohol/drugs misuse, mental and physical ill health, community safety,

educational underachievement and joblessness. Transformational leaders create spaces to have challenging conversations and speak truth to power, despite the difficulties this entails in the current world of short termism and pursuit of overnight return on investment.

As with Equality and Fair Employment in Northern Ireland, voluntarism alone is unlikely to bring about coherent, joined-up working so incentives will be needed, but upskilling our leaders and professionals is an essential prerequisite for success. A more supportive legislative backcloth within Northern Ireland to empower leaders and practitioners to deliver a place, people and partnership approach would also add real value.



## PROVOCATIONS

- Sustainable change depends on a new model of evidence-based transformational leadership and practitioner collaboration which enables instead of stifles integrated delivery.
- The new leadership model must be able to challenge the political status quo and existing power dynamics.
- Key leadership skills must include a focus on outcomes rather than just activity, expertise in engagement and ability to deliver continual improvement.
- A coherent and joined-up approach must be based on the assets of place, people and partnership.
- The 'bingo mentality' (eyes down, look in) must give way to a broader cross-cutting perspective (eyes up, look out).
- Front-line practitioners mostly want to work together, but need permission to do so, and incentives will also be needed.

# Thinkpieces 6

## Learning in three dimensions: the impact, outcomes and relevance of adult learning to transforming public services



### KEY POINTS

Adult learning reduces demand at the crisis end of the system.

Adult learning increases positive social, economic and health outcomes.

Adult learning is not seen as the obvious solution except where there is an immediate and measurable output.

Learning creates hope and hope is what motivates people.

**HELEN CHICOT** is Place Integration Lead, working in Rochdale Borough Council's neighbourhood teams.

She works with a small multi-agency team in small neighbourhoods to develop and test ways of working that reduce vulnerability and crisis.

A passionate advocate of the benefits of education, Helen considers access to learning to be a right.

### Introduction

*Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* drew attention to the importance of learning providers getting better at measuring the impact of their work in all domains: health, work, community life. My view, based on the evidence generated in Rochdale Borough and in other areas across Greater Manchester, is that this probably doesn't go far enough. Adult learning impacts on all public services. When it's part of an offer which targets those who will benefit the most and that offer brings together the major local public services, it reduces demand at the crisis end of the system for services such as police and health and reduces the unnecessary and frustrating responses the public sector has to make when things go wrong. Things like arrears, enforcements and evictions; costly failures to 'engage' with the system; care costs and waste in the health system. That is why, in Greater Manchester we have worked to bring together, 'on the ground,' the work of these services. Such an approach requires us all to work in radically different ways, to better capture, and therefore understand, the impact of what we do across the whole system.

I will describe some of the evidence we see in our microcosm and explore the challenges for a diverse workforce of educators in a system such as this.

### On the ground

The Integrated Place Teams in Rochdale borough work in the neighbourhoods with the highest level of vulnerability for crisis. For example, in two of the neighbourhoods in which we work, the spend is an average of £2,718 per head and £4,851 per head

respectively, compared to a borough-wide average of £1,499 (source: New Economy). Within those neighbourhoods we target the work towards the 10% of people who are at most risk of crisis demand, which involves workforce (from across the public sector: police, housing, health, children's or adults' services) reaching out to the people by developing an individualised offer. Our model has education at its heart, because we've learned that learning is usually key to success. Why? Because our evidence indicates that when people are given the space and support to lead changes in their lives as a learning pathway, they are able to learn things they may have never learned before – the things that protect them from crisis which, along with the social and wellbeing outcomes of learning that are well documented, serve to produce the hope people need to move forward.

### Costs and benefits

It's clear that the crisis or failure demand which is so evident in the neighbourhoods we target results in huge costs for our public services. The cost of a call out to the emergency services is around £150-£200. For a child or a vulnerable adult in residential care the costs can be around £52,000 a year. Reducing the volume of this crisis demand by dealing with the underlying cause can save both money and capacity in the system.

In the last few years, in our teams, we've three times had the highest caller of the police across Greater Manchester referred to us. They weren't immediately obvious as candidates to start an adult learning class. And yet they now hardly call the emergency services, if at all. These are complex cases for which

the system, for years, has been at a loss what to do. What's the critical factor? In all three cases it's about participation in something useful whilst someone trustworthy and practical helps them to work methodically through the sheer complexity of their situation. This is not at all about teaching but about learning – developing insight, breaking down tasks, critical thinking and learning to feel safe.

Up to  
**23%**  
of the benefits realised have been through reduced demand on the health system.

What is it about adult learning that we can call on to make the difference? First, adult learning is an important contributor to health because it supports the known 'wider determinants' of health. The evidence for this is clear: in case after case we can show a direct

Up to  
**13%**

of the benefits realised have been through reduced crisis demand on the housing system.

impact of learning on mental health or substance misuse. In others there's a clear attribution between this work and an early death prevented.

Adult learning impacts positively on housing and communities. Again, we can evidence this – reduced evictions and enforcements can clearly be attributed to the things people have learned in our programmes: whether

that's been due to financial capabilities; improved ability to keep up rental payments or clear debts or social skills; learning how to disagree and get along with each other.

Adult learning impacts on the economy. In our first pilot, the economic impacts were, by far, the highest of all of the indicators we measured. We've continued to measure the impacts in that same neighbourhood and they're way higher than expected. In 25 years of working in the skills and work sector I've never seen anything as successful for getting the people with more complex challenges into employment.

Adult learning impacts on families and relationships. From the very first pilot of a Citizens' Curriculum in a neighbourhood in Rochdale, that's been obvious. One of the first things a participant will tell you is that they feel better about who they are and are able to be a better family member or friend as a result of that.

### Integrate or fail

We have achieved this through integrating adult learning so it can support the displacement of crisis demand. We must also integrate recognising that it means coming together with our communities who

also cleave to what they know, using the methods they have tried and tested over the years. They may feel mistrust or scorn towards a system they see as having failed them and theirs. And we must integrate with a front-line workforce that is being asked to do more for less: increasing demand and decreasing resources. They may feel that this is just another way to squeeze them and if they're burned out, they may feel that there's no possibility for change and we're all doomed. So to succeed at this we need to speak with everyone, in their language, understanding how they may feel, addressing their priorities, assumptions and values. No wonder it's so difficult!

Add to that the dazzling array of different humans with different individual traits, ideologies and abilities: just thinking about this baffles me. It's a three-dimensional space full of themes and priorities, service areas and methods; different levels and hierarchies and different people to add to the mix. Achieving change has to speak and listen to all of that at once. Team member Dr Katy Goldstraw describes this as our need for a polyvocal conversation.

### 'JACOB'S' STORY

Not many months ago, 'Jacob' was homeless and on the streets. The only bed available left him on the streets between 9am and 9pm. He was self-conscious about how he might look and so was reluctant to visit the places he might go to try and improve his prospects. Friends brought him to a neighbourhood drop-in with a Citizens' Curriculum where he was able to get help, connect with people and feel like a human being. He learned and explored things he'd like to do and realised he had a lot to offer. He was able to volunteer in a safe environment, still getting the housing and other support he needed but feeling valued and not like a drain. Now, via volunteering for another organisation he's moved into work. He still comes to the drop-ins, often helping others while he's there but he's also doing his own things and building a career.

### Polyvocal conversations

In terms of getting all people engaged with this work (whether they're potential participants, learners, citizens or volunteers, front-line workers or system leaders), the need for the story to resonate with all the different parts of our spectrum is clear. It's obvious when it fails to do this. A member of the team might say 'Oh them. They just don't get it!' That may well be true and, as such, it says much about our failure to communicate.

What is it that we're trying to communicate? Through countless conversations and interactions over about four years, I think it's about learning. It's become very clear that our professional practice and development needs to mirror exactly the same approaches that work so well with our learners: why? Because they generate hope and that's what motivates people.

Is it that we need to make a strong case that adult learning is crucial to achieving positive change? It's hard to do this because it's not always the most obvious solution: Though no-one would ever argue that learning is good, in a world of austerity it can feel like a 'nice to have' unless it's directly causing a measurable output - a qualification that leads to a job, for example. When you can see it as part of an integrated offer however, it's clear that it is a huge part of the solution. It is the very thing that shores up people's progress.

### Implications for the adult learning workforce

Our workforce includes front line workers, volunteers with an array of diverse skills, values and backgrounds. Training needs to be differentiated to enable people to feel confident as educators

and enablers. We use a Citizens' Curriculum for this too: telling stories, working through problems methodically, seeking and sharing the learning along the way; calling out the barriers, positively reinforcing and looking for hope.

This method of working calls for a different supervisory relationship – one based on understanding, at an individual level, the motivations and risks of working like this. What are the things most likely to cause this person to burn out? What's going to annoy them? How do they communicate? How do we capture and feedback what they do in a way that is meaningful to them?

When we stop and think about this stuff and talk to each other, it blows our minds. In our sessions with citizens, our workers and our system leaders we try to understand the work, the outcomes and evidence, the changes we need and our priorities. The facets of this work multiply with each 'polyvocal' conversation we have. But they also bring out some very different priorities. Our challenge has started to shift from counting beans to measuring improving hope and trust through taking action together (Goldstraw, 2018)<sup>65</sup>.



<sup>65</sup> Goldstraw, K (2018): Co-Produced Participatory Approaches to Working with Citizens in Rochdale, Edge Hill University Institute for Public Policy and Professional Practice

## Summary

Our evidence indicates that adult learning as part of an integrated place team approach in neighbourhoods in Rochdale Borough can:

- Reduce crisis demand (crime, antisocial behaviour, drug, alcohol, evictions, mental health crisis)
- Increase positive outcomes (skills, relationships, stable housing, wellbeing, employment).

The leadership implications of this are:

- Devolving decision making (involving citizens) into smaller neighbourhoods
- Distributing leadership so that decisions can be made close to the need and the work
- Making space which is conducive to polyvocal conversations that can help everybody to understand and articulate the change as it happens.

The workforce implications of this require:

- A diverse workforce from many sectoral backgrounds working together

- A workforce which is neighbourhood based
- Individual workers identify as educators regardless of professional background
- A worker-led approach to learning and development which addresses identity and values as much as 'how to'
- A personalised supervisory relationship.

We are working hard to keep hold of the important things as we go through monumental changes in Greater Manchester. It's important that the message that comes from our tiny neighbourhoods where we are making a difference by working together keeps coming through. We have a focus on the power of the voice of our citizens, which is all about a message of hope and trust. There is also power in the voice of a spreadsheet! A huge (and sometimes baffling) cost-benefit analysis reminds us of the value of the work we do which is important both for decision makers and for the people on the ground doing the work: for the spreadsheet captures the hope too.



## PROVOCATIONS

- Adult learning needs to be perceived as crucial for positive change, not merely optional or 'nice to have'.
- Individual workers must identify as educators regardless of professional background.
- Professional practice and development needs to mirror the approaches that work with learners.

- Decision-making needs to devolve into smaller neighbourhoods to include citizens.
- A worker-led approach to learning and development must address identity and values as much as hard skills.

# Thinkpieces 7

## Realising a Careers Advancement Service: where next?



### KEY POINTS

The definition of Careers Advancement is contested, but it involves people having access and support to career development activities on a lifelong basis.

Careers Advancement services for people of all-ages should be tailored to their specific needs, with emphasis on equipping people to develop resilience and career management skills throughout the life-course.

The marketisation of careers provision in England is a unique careers experiment, compared to arrangements in other parts of the UK. It is timely to consider future possible models, including a National Retraining Scheme.

In developing new approaches to career learning, we have discovered that creating

spaces is not enough. We need to answer the contextual question as to how offline and online spaces can be fully exploited to support rich interactions that enable individuals to make sense of their changing world and actively engage in meaningful learning and work.

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### Introduction

*Career is the evolving sequence of life and work experiences over time*<sup>66</sup>

We all need good careers advice. But, if the government continues to cut as savagely as it has been doing in England, fewer and fewer of us will get it. Having a clear definition of Careers Advancement is contested territory, but overall this involves people having access and support to career development activities on a lifelong basis. In looking at challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, *'Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: The impact of adult learning across the UK'* (L&W, 2017) proposes a "new Careers Advancement service should be established, which helps people to progress in work, building on lessons learned from initiatives from across the UK" (p. 28). This article considers the concept, careers eco-system, key principles and skills needed by the workforce responsible for future design and delivery.

Across the UK as Brexit uncertainty unfolds an accelerating wave of economic, social and technological change is impacting on the economy and people's lives. In many sectors companies face

major skills shortages and skills gaps<sup>67</sup>. Three in five companies report the UK's skills shortage has worsened in the last year and more than half expect the situation to further deteriorate (Open University, 2018)<sup>68</sup>. There are concerns that skills gaps in sectoral areas which rely heavily on overseas workers will be hard hit, such as agriculture, teaching, construction, health and social care.

A survey of 1,000 managers in UK firms (October 2018)<sup>69</sup> highlighted more than seven in ten (71%) think that Brexit will make it harder to acquire the skills they need. In contrast, under-utilised employees are more likely to report their job "offers poor prospects for career advancement, training and skills development than individuals who are able to use their skills fully" (CIPD, 2018: op.cit).

Many individuals in today's society have growing concerns about the actual value added-returns of investing in formal or non-formal education and training. Human Capital Theory suggests that education and training are investments that: (i) increase the productivity of the learners (Becker, 2002)<sup>70</sup>, (ii) offer better occupational skills that yield returns for employers (Dearden, Reed, & Van

66 Adaptation from the original works of Arthur, M.B. & Rousseau, D. (Eds.) (1996). *The boundaryless career*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

67 CIPD (2018). *Investigating the untapped potential of UK skills*, London: CIPD. Retrieved from: <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/work/skills/untapped-potential-uk-skills>

68 The Open University Business Barometer, 2018 – Retrieved from: <http://www.open.ac.uk/business/apprenticeships/blog/uk-skills-shortage-costing-organisations-%C2%A363-billion>

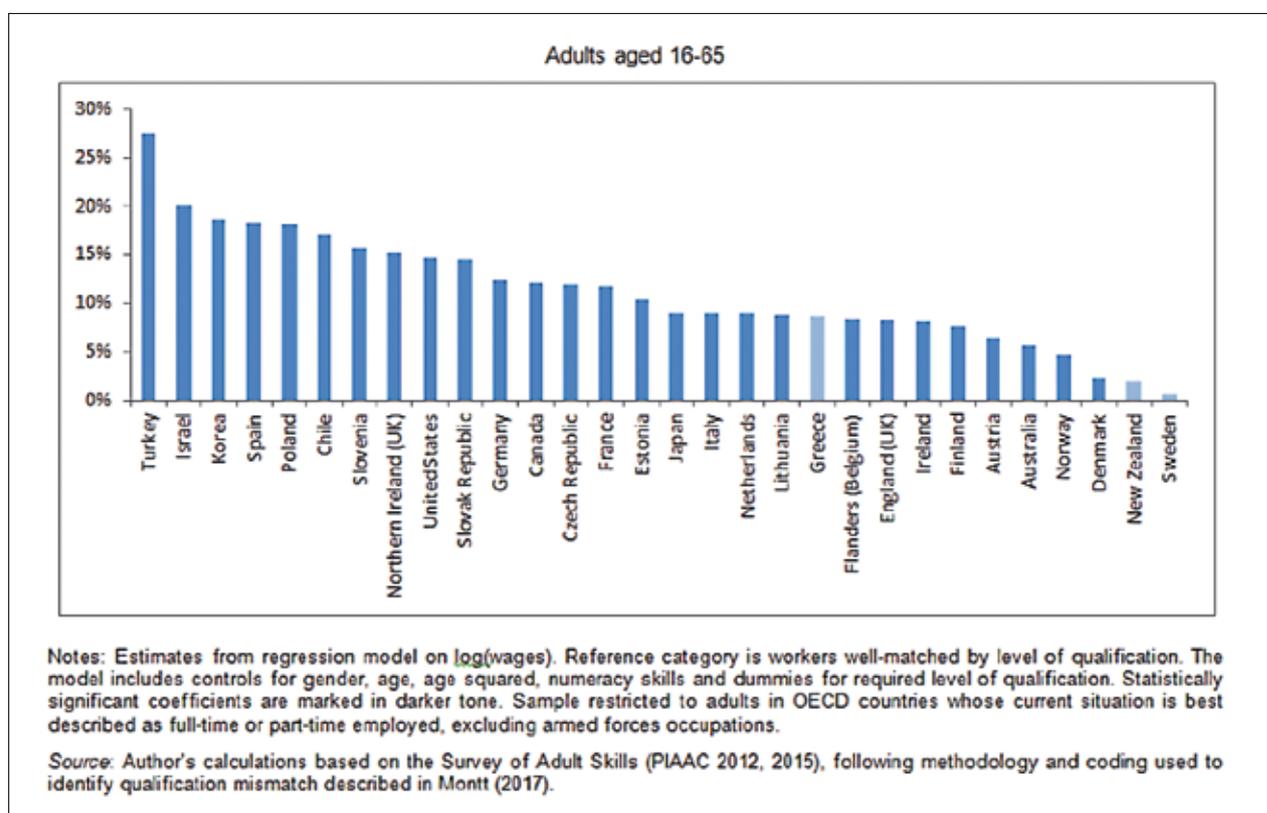
69 The Adecco Group (2018). *Brexit retraining talent through change*, London – Retrieved from: [http://adecogroup.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Brexit-retaining-talent-through-change\\_web.pdf](http://adecogroup.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Brexit-retaining-talent-through-change_web.pdf)

70 Becker, G. S. (2002). Human capital. *Revista de Ciencias Empresariales Y Economía*, (1), 12–23. Retrieved from: <http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=2539041&orden=149073&info-link>

Reenen, 2000<sup>71</sup>; (iii) improve a nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and (iv) lowers inequality (Patrinos & Psacharopoulos, 2018).<sup>72</sup> Yet, latest figures show a serious decline in adult education participation<sup>73</sup>. Figure 6 below shows the ranking of England (UK) compared to other OECD countries when it comes to

the wage penalty associated with under-qualification. In this regard, as a nation there are good reasons to be concerned particularly with the uncertainty of Brexit. Therefore, greater investment in a lifelong careers support (advancement) service merits greater policy attention.

Figure 6: The wage penalty associated with underqualification



Source: OECD - Viktória Kis and Hendrickje Windisch (forthcoming), Making skills transparent: recognising vocational skills acquired through work-based learning. OECD Publishing.

This is necessary given distribution of knowledge and wealth is critical, and this is intrinsically tied to the distribution of educational and employment opportunities. For those who are insufficiently prepared, this can mean vulnerable and insecure work, and a life without good prospects.

Some megatrends are emerging in the UK (and across Europe) as illustrated in Figure 7 below. Firstly, more jobs are at risk of automation with workers being

potentially displaced from the labour market e.g. retail, media and banking industries. Secondly, new forms of work are emerging within the gig economy, for example, companies like Uber, Fiverr, YouTube, ggDesigns, and TaskRabbit allow people from all over the world to provide on-demand services in a wide range of areas, from 3D animation to website design. Thirdly, Salvatori (2018)<sup>74</sup> argues the main feature of the polarisation process in the UK has been a shift of employment towards high-paid occupations, which

71 Dearden, L., Reed, H., & Van Reenen, J. (2000). Who gains when workers train? Training and corporate productivity in a panel of British industries. London: Institute for Fiscal Studies

72 Psacharopoulos, G. & Patrinos, H.A (2018). Returns to investment in education: a decennial review of the global literature, Education Economics, 26:5, 445-458, DOI: 10.1080/09645292.2018.1484426

73 tes, 6 December 2018 – Retrieved from: <https://www.tes.com/news/numbers-decline-adult-education>

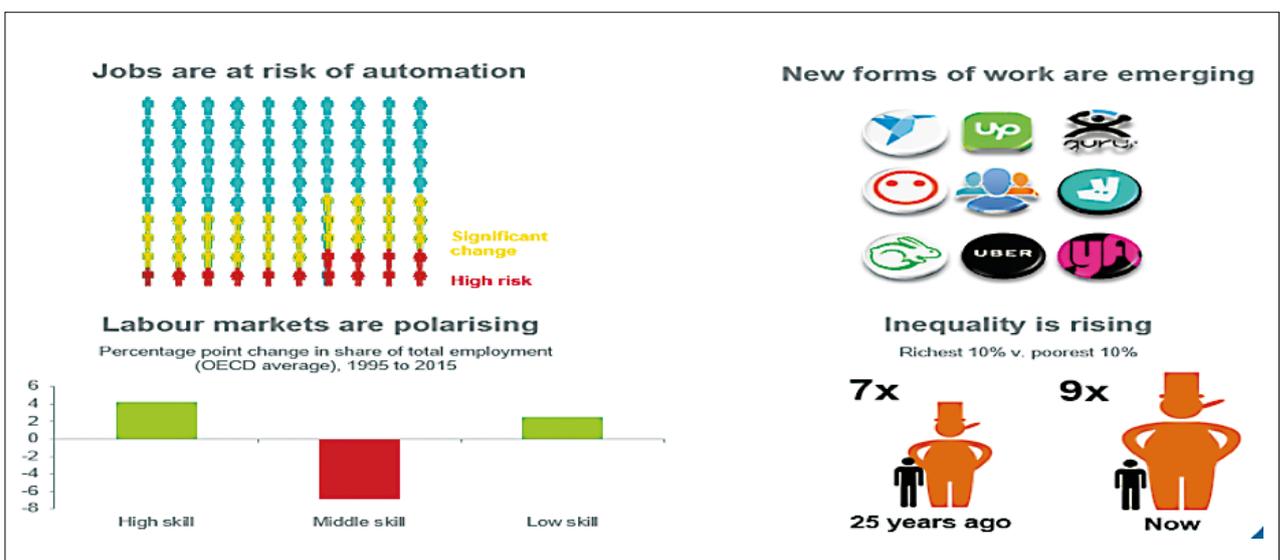
74 Salvatori, A. (2018). The anatomy of job polarization in the UK. *Journal for Labour Market Research* 2018. Vol. 52:8, July 2018. Retrieved from: <https://labourmarketresearch.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s12651-018-0242-z>

have gained 80% of the employment shares lost by middling occupations. He states:

*'When occupations are ranked by education, it becomes apparent that it is those in the lowest level of initial education that have lost most employment shares' (op.cit).*

But despite rising employment levels, economic growth and pockets of enormous wealth, a fifth of Britons remain in poverty (United Nations, 2018).<sup>75</sup>

Figure 7: The effects of automation



Source: OECD, Paris, January 2019

In work poverty is a significant challenge for those in low paid occupations (IFS, 2018)<sup>76</sup> and there is a need to raise the profile of level 2 jobs as a stepping stone into higher level work. For those trapped in poverty, low-paid or precarious work, returners to the workplace and/or those needing to reskill or upskill 'careers advancement' may seem nebulous or even unobtainable.

In the case of incomplete information or constraints faced by the individuals, there exists market failure and potential under-investment in career support (advancement) services for young people and adults. Theory suggests that government investment can be "targeted to enable individuals to stay longer in education, up to a point where the rate of return on the last pound invested in education equals the return that the pound could have earned if it were

invested elsewhere." (Bhutoria, 2016)<sup>77</sup>. For example, a study by Hughes & Hogg (2018)<sup>78</sup> highlights return on investment (RoI) for a National Careers Service area-based contract. But overall there is a dearth of statistically robust data to draw upon.

### Careers Advancement: the concept

Acquiring the right skills can empower people and communities to take charge of their future. Both employers and governments have a key role in helping citizens understand the world of work and the jobs of the future. This should not be left simply to chance. Careers support (advancement) services are a public good as well as a private one.

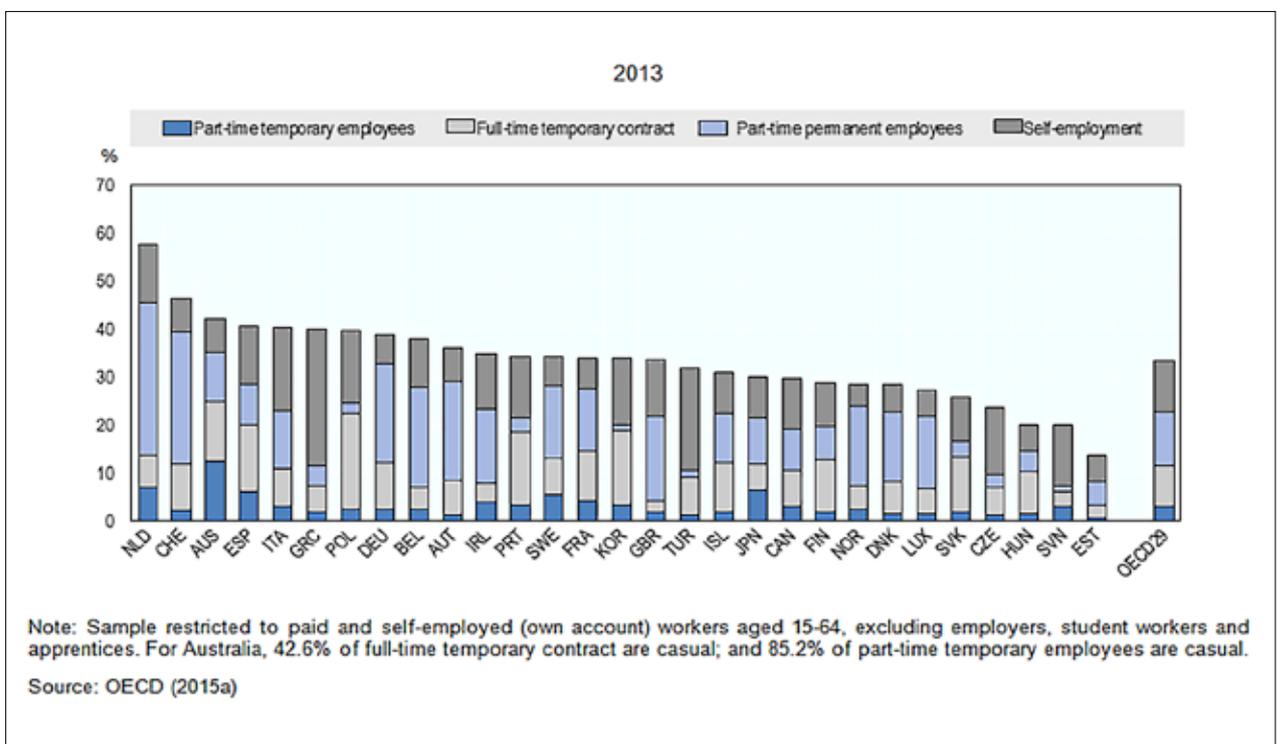
Jobs, skills and personal growth are inextricably linked to the concept of careers advancement - often characterised as 'career development'. This can range

75 Retrieved from: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/11/united-nations-investigating-poverty-united-kingdom/>  
 76 Institute for Fiscal Studies (2018). *Poverty and low pay in the UK: The state of play and the challenges ahead*. London. Retrieved from: <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/11696>  
 77 Bhutoria, A. (2016). *Economic returns to education in the United Kingdom*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge, Foresight Government Office for Science, September 2016. Retrieved from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/593895/Economic>Returns\\_To\\_Education\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/593895/Economic>Returns_To_Education_-_final.pdf)  
 78 Hughes, D. & Hogg, R. (2018). *Productivity and the Economic Benefits: National Careers Service – Careers Yorkshire and the Humber*. Exeter: DMH Associates. Retrieved from: <http://dmhassociates.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Productivity-and-Economic-Benefits-Report-140918.pdf>

from setting personal goals to negotiating a job offer, with many steps in between. Supporting people to progress in education, work and/or unemployment or under-employment has a range of benefits including improved income, greater longevity, better physical

health and improved mental well-being (*Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* report, 2017)<sup>78</sup>. Clearly, job security is not what it used to be. Non-standard forms of employment are, in some cases, becoming the 'norm', as illustrated below.

Figure 8: Non-standard forms of employment as a percentage of total employment



Careers Advancement services for people of all-ages should be tailored to their specific needs, with emphasis on equipping people to develop resilience and career management skills throughout the life-course. This provides benefits for the individual and families, employers and the economy. However, the language of 'careers advancement' infers a guaranteed promise of progression for all. Theories of career development have existed since the early 1900s (Parsons, 1909)<sup>80</sup> and many continue to evolve. Lifelong guidance and career development has become a significant component of policy development in many countries, because of its potential impact on the labour market (Cedefop, 2018)<sup>81</sup>. Fundamentally, the latter term is widely recognisable within and across a broad range of

professions and sectors. *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise (op.cit)* provides an opportunity to re-examine the most desirable language for stimulating policy levers and informing practice. By opening up the debate, this reinforces the need for urgent improvements in careers information, advice and guidance/coaching for people of all ages.

Careers support services are essential to:

- keep people switched on to learning
- broaden horizons and raise aspirations
- challenge inequalities and inaccurate assumptions
- inspire and nurture talent, and
- increase levels of exposure to and experiences of work throughout the life-course.

80 Parsons, F. (1909). *Choosing a vocation*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston  
81 <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/careersnet>

## A careers eco-system

England has a highly fragmented careers eco-system compared to other careers support service arrangements in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The marketisation of education<sup>82</sup> dominates and this has impacted on career support services for both young people and adults. By 2020, local councils, for example, will have witnessed central funding fall by a staggering 77%.<sup>83</sup> A well-articulated national Careers Strategy<sup>84</sup> disguises major cuts in budgets and direct service delivery. For example, the

government's £104.6m budget (2012-2013) for National Careers Service area-based services for adults in England has been reduced significantly to circa £45m (2018-2021)<sup>85</sup>. In contrast, a Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) with a £70m investment from government provides strategic rather than careers service delivery for schools and colleges. A national telephone helpline service operates, alongside a National Careers Service website. Overall, the adult target group focus has changed within the last year as shown below.

Figure 9: Overview of Priority Groups 2014-2019 (England).

2014 Priority Target Group	2015-16 Priority Target Group <sup>1</sup>	2018-2019 Priority Target Group
Young adults below level 3	Low-skilled adults without a level 3 qualification, employment or training	Low skilled adults without a level 2 qualification
	Young adults aged 18-24 not in education, employment or training	Adults aged 18-24 not in education, employment or training
Redundancy/Distance from the labour market	Adults facing redundancy, newly redundant or distant from the labour market (that is the customer has not been in any type of work for two years or more)	Adults aged 50 and over who are unemployed or at demonstrable risk of redundancy
Low-skilled employed	Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and in the work-related activity group (WRAG) who are unemployed	Single parents
Black, Minority, Ethnic (BME)	Adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	People with special educational needs and/or disabilities
Carers	Jobcentre Plus customers on DWP Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)	Adults unemployed for over 12 months
50-year olds +	People who are claiming Universal Credit who are looking for work and are at least 18 years old	
Offenders	Adults in custody aged 18 years or over, or an ex-offender	

Source: ESFA, 2018

82 Mc Caig, C., Bowl, M., and Hughes, J. (2018). Conceptualising equality, equity and differentiation in marketised higher education: fractures and fault-lines in the neoliberal imaginary. In: Bowl, M., Mc Caig, C., and Hughes, J. (eds.). *Equality and differentiation in marketised higher education: a new level playing field?* Palgrave Studies in Excellence and Equity in Global Education. London, Palgrave, 195-210. (In Press)

83 Retrieved from: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/england-council-budget-cuts-government-austerity-social-services-essential-care-safety-a8559486.html>

84 DfE (2017). *Careers strategy: making the most of everyone's skills and talents*, London: Department for Education. Retrieved from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/664319/Careers\\_strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664319/Careers_strategy.pdf)

85 ESFA (2018). *National Careers Service: Area-Based Contracts 2018-2019*, Coventry.

Devolution brings the transfer of central government decision-making into the regions with greater emphasis on fair employment, social inclusion, and better health outcomes. For example, the Greater London Authority (GLA) recently published its all-age careers offer<sup>86</sup> and will take control of the Adult Education Budget with greater emphasis on adult's learning, employment and social outcomes. National Careers Service providers, Jobcentre Plus, combined/ local authorities, local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and a plethora of other private and third sector providers in the 'marketplace' also have a direct interest in careers provision.

There are seeds of promise in the form of regional careers strategies emerging such as: Career Hubs, Career Learning Pilots and an evolving National Retraining Scheme. The latter is designed to give adult learners opportunities to upskill and retrain. This was promised by government 18 months ago, but details of how it will operate, who will be eligible and how much it will cost have yet to be revealed. Pember (2019) argues that within this scheme there should be "an entitlement up to and including level 2 for certain categories of individuals - for example, those at risk of losing their job to automation, the unemployed and regional priorities".<sup>87</sup> A key issue will be how to best strategically position the National Retraining Scheme and entitlements for citizens going forward.

In Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, an all-age National Careers Service acts as a major conduit with 'a careers offer' free to anyone at the point of need. Three contrasting examples of up-skilling and re-skilling people in work include the:

- Scottish *Flexible Workforce Development Fund*<sup>88</sup> to support employers to better provide and support in-work training. This gives Further Education providers an opportunity to participate more in adult learning. Also, the recently published *No One Left Behind – Review of Employability Services (Scottish Government, December 2018)*<sup>89</sup> focuses on supporting the end-user through more integration and alignment of services
- Working Advice Wales<sup>90</sup>, led by Careers Wales, will provide an assessment and brokerage service involving individuals, employers and community partners, and

- Belfast partnership with 15 organisations coming together from health, housing, social care, education, sport, libraries, tourism and Invest NI, to develop a four-year plan including 'Conversations about learning and work'.<sup>91</sup>

Beyond the UK, there are further examples. In France, the 'career interview' (*Entretien professionnel*)<sup>92</sup> is enshrined in government legislation. All employees are entitled to a 'career interview' at least every two years. It allows employees to consider their career development in terms of qualifications and jobs. Every six years, the employer has to produce a written appraisal of all employees' careers and in enterprises with 50 or more employees, this document is used to check whether the employee has benefited from sufficient training. The document is sent to the bipartite body in charge of managing the professional training at sectoral level (OPCA); if not, a bonus of 100 hours (130 hours for part-time employees) will be automatically added by the OPCA to their individual training account. Interviews draw on *training passports and compte personnel de formation* (free tuition on government approved programmes with paid leave from work).

The Singaporean Government is taking action to extend the working lives of older workers through its re-employment policy and job re-design grants. "Rather than increase the retirement age, the Government's re-employment policy aims to create the opportunity for employers and employees to think about how work may be re-designed to enable older workers to continue working, supported by a job re-design grant of up to 80% of the project costs or S\$20,000, whichever is the lower, with an employer able to make multiple submissions. The National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) in Singapore has also been taking steps to widen the support to would-be returners beyond women to so-called PMETs (professionals, managers, executives and technicians). The programme is designed to help skilled workers who have been out of the workforce for two years or more to care for family members or focus on a personal health issue. Employers must train the worker, supported by a subsidy from the Singaporean Government. Employers also receive a retention bonus if the worker is retained for at least three months after a trial period of six months comes to an end".<sup>93</sup>

86 Retrieved from: [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/careers\\_for\\_londoners\\_action\\_plan.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/careers_for_londoners_action_plan.pdf)

87 Pember, S. (2019). *Improving Adult Basic Skills*, London: Hoxley

88 Retrieved from: <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/news-events/2017/september/employers-offered-training-support-as-10million-fund-is-launched/>

89 Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/one-left-behind-next-steps-integration-alignment-employability-support-scotland/>

90 This is part of a forthcoming Welsh Government Working Wales initiative to be launched in Summer 2019.

91 Retrieved from: <https://www.ief.org.uk/2018/11/06/toolkit-enable-community-conversation-launched-belfast/>

92 Retrieved from: <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F32040>

93 Retrieved from: [http://adeccogroup.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Brexit-retaining-talent-through-change\\_web.pdf](http://adeccogroup.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Brexit-retaining-talent-through-change_web.pdf) (p.5)

Clearly, across the UK, the careers eco-system is in need of a serious audit of government-funded provision and greater cross-fertilisation of common policies and practices. For example, schools, local authorities, further education (FE), higher education (HE), adult education providers and National Careers Services each deliver some form of careers support (advancement) services. For citizens, there is very limited continuity in these services, including common approaches to career management skills. It is therefore timely to consider new forms of co-design and more integrated career support services in local communities.

## Key principles

- 1. Lifelong coherent careers advancement services** – Recognisable and accessible to individuals on a lifelong basis with 'blended' online and offline careers information, advice, guidance/coaching activities
- 2. Clear governance and delivery arrangements** – Transparency within a national and regional/local **careers eco-system 'free at the point of need'**, guided by strategic careers fora that use intelligence on supply and demand and keep the spotlight on careers advancement for all citizens
- 3. Start early in primary schools** – Aspirations first develop from a young age in childhood.<sup>94</sup> Parents and carers transmit cultural capital, values, and gender-role attitudes to their children. By focusing on career-related learning in primary schools this can also support family and intergenerational learning
- 4. Inclusive and responsive career learning** – An entitlement for all citizens to have a career health check and the right to access career support services at any point in their lives. Simultaneously, employers' targeted purposefully to make optimal skills' utilisation and provide more inclusive access to the world of work
- 5. Skills utilisation awareness raising** – Employers can be encouraged to think creatively about harnessing people's talents and skills. Embedded guidance through social partnerships, career and peer coaching hubs (online and offline), particularly

for small to medium-sized companies, can improve productivity, mental health, and well-being at work

- 6. Digital and labour market intelligence / information (LMI)** – Real-time data and artificial intelligence (AI) created by digitally innovative and creative individuals and businesses. This should be embedded within careers, education, health, and social inclusion plans to increase individuals' access to the labour market and enhance their digital literacy skills
- 7. Building the capacity of others** – Those responsible for delivery should have nationally recognised accredited competences and credentials to provide impartial and independent career information, advice and guidance/coaching, working closely with highly skilled intermediaries, including those from business and the third sector.

## Implications for the adult learning workforce

In developing new approaches to careers support (advancement) services, a four-year (2014-2018) EU funded ICT innovation in Public Employment Services study<sup>95</sup> discovered that creating spaces is not enough. We need to answer the contextual question as to how offline and online spaces can be fully exploited. This necessitates rich interactions that enable individuals to make sense of and tell stories about their changing world and how best to deliver high quality services. It also requires new forms of social learning both online and offline between and across professionals in employment, education, health and wellbeing. Some argue, professional identity transformation (Brown & Bimrose, 2018)<sup>96</sup> is now required whereby learning in shared communities of practice is a vital aspect of service co-design and development.

Technology, collaborative learning and facilitated continuing professional development can act as a place for practitioners to co-construct and give shared meaning to their work. This can help address individual and collaborative challenges that occur in daily work. Skills such as peer coaching to support mutual learning, motivational interviewing, cognitive behaviour therapy, solution-focused and coaching skills are needed to provide empathy and

<sup>94</sup> Kashfepakel et al. (2019). *Career-related learning in primary schools: The role of primary schools and teachers in preparing children for the future*. London: Education and Employers Research, commissioned by TeachFirst, January 2019, Retrieved from: <https://www.educationandemployers.org/research/teach-first-career-related-learning-in-primary/>

<sup>95</sup> EmployID 2018 final report - <https://employid.eu/sites/default/files/y4book.pdf>

<sup>96</sup> Brown A., & Bimrose J. (2018). *Learning and Identity Development at Work*. In: Milana M., Webb S., Holford J., Waller R., Jarvis P. (eds) The Palgrave International Handbook on Adult and Lifelong Education and Learning. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

support in helping individuals take action. Most importantly, organisations have a wealth of labour market intelligence/information (LMI) that is seldom shared between and across agencies. The time has come to think creatively how about complementary professions in local communities can come together to harness data and to use this to good effect.

### Summary

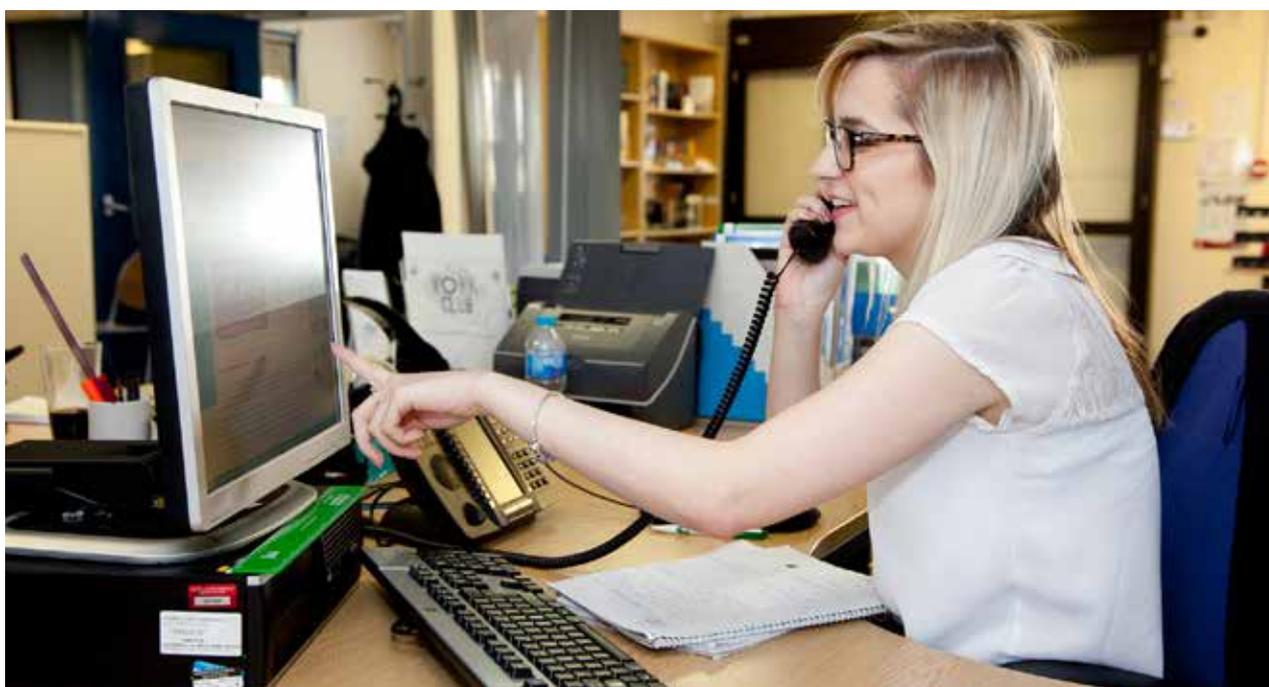
The marketisation of career development policy in England has a general tendency to produce twin effects: an increase in inequality and a postcode lottery when it comes to people accessing local careers support services, and a decrease in public sector investment. More public, private and third sector initiatives working together locally

can potentially bring greater prosperity for all. Practitioners from across sectors can be empowered to support and learn from each other using technology and facilitated learning. The careers advancement conversation needs to continue to shed light on the 'art of the possible' when it comes to better careers support for individuals. Should some form of careers entitlement be compulsory? The OECD findings indicate those who need education and training most – the low-skilled – currently receive it least. It is time for a rethink on how best to incentivise people to invest in learning, underpinned by more accessible careers support services both within and outside of the workplace.



### PROVOCATIONS

- We should all work towards creating a more joined-up approach to careers support services at a national, regional and local level.
- The careers advancement concept merits greater attention by policymakers, employers and individuals.
- Embrace tried and tested ideas for lifelong guidance and career development from both within and outside of the UK.
- Create more local opportunities for practitioners to co-construct and give meaning to their work.
- Harness technology and online collaborative learning to bring practitioners together in exploring their professional identities and areas of complementarity.



# Thinkpieces 8

## Making the case for a new 'Democratic Engagement Curriculum' for adult learning



### KEY POINTS

Democratic engagement is a key factor in sustainable development, and life-long learning is conducive to community democracy.

The potentially critical importance of education in the Welsh post-devolution democratic deficit has not been fully explored.

Essential and vocational skills on their own will not secure sustainable, resilient and prosperous communities and workplaces.

A bureaucratic over-professionalisation of teaching, based solely on assessment and

teaching qualifications is deterring inspirational personnel from other professions.

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Currently, he works for Addysg Oedolion Cymru / Adult Learning Wales as its Democratic Engagement and Welsh Medium Co-ordinator.

### Introduction

*Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* notes that 'there has been very little curriculum-based activity on sustainable development in adult learning.'<sup>97</sup> It does however evidence many positive links between adult learning and community engagement, the building of social capital, an awareness of current affairs and the likelihood to vote. It concludes that 'Adult learning certainly does appear to foster an increase in active citizenship'.

I would argue that, central to the sustainable development of communities, nations and the wider world and its environment is the empowerment of citizens to engage democratically.

Westall (2015)<sup>98</sup> notes that there is much evidence of the importance of increasing participation in sustainable development strategies and implementation and refers to the democratic challenges. Lafferty (2012)<sup>99</sup> also explores the 'impasse of dysfunctional democracy' in the context of sustainable development.

The aim of this thinkpiece is, firstly, to put in context why, in the 'post-truth era', a post-devolution, bilingual and diverse Wales desperately needs a new 'Democratic Engagement Curriculum' for adult learning; and secondly, to explore what the nature of this curriculum might be and outline its implications

for the adult learning workforce and others who facilitate learning.

### Context

Having cut my teeth as a teacher in Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni in the aftermath of the 1980s' demolition of the coal mining industry and its communities, the relevance of the 'new geography' I was aspiring to teach at the time was all too obvious.<sup>100</sup> The philosophy of this new radical geography was not just to 'map man's patent inhumanity to man' factually but to empower students to seek answers and solve problems.<sup>101</sup> These educational values travelled with me on my journey through Further Education institutions and their vocational courses and ultimately into Adult Community Learning. However, they often clashed with centrally prescribed and funding-driven curricula, a narrowly-defined skills agenda and stagnant teaching techniques.

Recently, my present employers, Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales, in conjunction with Co-operatives and Mutuals Wales, have organised a series of events to promote a democratic engagement and co-operative curriculum.<sup>102</sup> The intention was not only to persuade the Welsh Government to include such elements in the new school curriculum and its evolving Adult Learning policy but also to initiate collaboration on the ground.

97 Learning and Work Institute (2017): *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: The impact of adult learning across the UK 2015-17*, p21-24.

98 Westall, Andrea (2015): *The Relationship between Democracy and Sustainable Development*. Foundation for Democracy and Sustainable Development.

99 Lafferty, William (2012): *Governance for sustainable development: the impasse of dysfunctional democracy*. Chapter 14: Governance, Democracy and Sustainable Development - Moving Beyond the Impasse. Ed. James Meadowcroft, Oluf Langhelle and Audun Ruud. ISBN978 1 84980 756 2

100 Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni is a Welsh Medium Comprehensive School which in the 1980's served the Rhymney Valley and Gwent.

101 Harvey, David (1973): *Social Justice and the City*, p144-145. London: Edward Arnold.

102 Addysg Oedolion Cymru / Adult Learning Wales is a National Community College and Movement for Adult Learning. It was established in 2016 following a series of mergers involving Coleg Harlech, the WEA's in Wales and YMCA Cymru Community College.

It was, therefore, encouraging when Kirsty Williams proclaimed her radical plans and visions for education in Wales at the annual Raymond Williams memorial lecture on 10 October 2018.<sup>103</sup> Not often do you hear a Liberal Democrat Minister of Education, in a Welsh Labour Government administration, passionately embrace the concepts of a Marxist philosopher who, later in life, switched his political allegiance to Plaid Cymru. Raymond Williams, the most influential and internationally acclaimed Welsh philosopher of recent times, strongly advocated that life-long learning should be seen as conducive to creating a community democracy and developing the skills to challenge and shape culture.

During the lecture, the Education Secretary made the case that the Welsh Government's 'national mission of education reform' was 'stepping forward in the spirit of Raymond Williams's long revolution'.<sup>104</sup> From the new schools curriculum through to adult education, she calls for a common culture and a shared citizenship that questions and challenges the established way of thinking and organising, providing the knowledge and skills to enable people to become part of the process of social change. Kirsty Williams also argues that, in the age of populism, without such a role for education, Wales's fragile democracy could be under threat.

The democratic deficit within Wales's young and developing post-devolution democracy has also been highlighted by other politicians, academics and political commentators alike.<sup>105/106</sup> In most cases it is argued that confusion about the devolution settlement and the lack of a powerful Welsh press and media (both traditional and modern) has led to a low level of political engagement. What has not been fully explored and defined is the potentially critical role that our education system, including the Lifelong Learning sector, could have in oiling the wheels of democratic engagement.

Daniel Evans (2016) discusses what he calls the 'information deficit' in an article published on the Open Democracy website.<sup>107</sup> He sees a role for education:

*'It is about political participation and the belief that the public can be a check against the state and abuses of power. This requires a politically educated public facilitated by an accessible and open flow of information... The public sphere goes beyond just 'the media' but also depends on the contribution of universities, schools and civil society, and... ultimately we all have a part to play in creating it.'*

In the aftermath of the Brexit debate and the American presidential election, 'post-truth politics' has become a much-debated phenomenon, where politicians blatantly promote unfounded facts and promises to voters. As Jonathan Friedland said in 2016, 'the rise of social media and... TV channels and radio stations defined by political hue, means voters... get the entirety of their information from sources tailored to reflect their own views back to them'.<sup>108</sup> What has taken hold according to Marty Barton (2016), editor of the *Washington Post* is '... an alternate reality, a virtual reality, where lies are accepted as truth and where conspiracy theories take root in the fertile soil of falsehoods'.<sup>109</sup>

Youval Harari (2018), the Israeli historian, notes that fake news is not a new phenomenon but warns that the merger of biotech and infotech with its algorithms could soon push billions of humans out of the job market and undermine free-will, liberty, equality and truth.<sup>110</sup>

## Implications for the adult learning workforce

Empowering democratic engagement has always been enshrined in adult community education's vision as articulated by Graystone (2016):

*'The provision of learning, skills and prosperity... will... require a commitment to democratic citizenship, inclusiveness, cultural enrichment, health and wellbeing, equalities and social justice... giving us the cutting edge that we need for our communities to be resilient, for our*

103 Williams, Kirsty (2018): Raymond Williams Memorial Lecture, sponsored by the Learning and Work Institute and Open University in Wales  
104 Williams, Raymond (1961): *The Long Revolution*. London: Chatto & Windus.

The 'long revolution' of the title is a revolution in culture, which Raymond Williams sees as having unfolded alongside the democratic revolution and the industrial revolution. Williams led the way in recognising the importance and the growth of the reading public in Western culture as a whole. His concept of revolution was not a one off event but the long term development of diverse processes in a complex world.

105 Andrews, Leighton (2017). Facebook, the media and democracy', RTS Annual Lecture, Y Senedd, Cardiff October 19, 2017.

106 Price, Adam (2018): Chapter 10, 'Democratic deficit' in Wales, the First and Final Colony. Y Lolfa.

107 Evans, Daniel, Cardiff University (2017): *The BBC and Wales's Information Deficit*. Open Democracy <https://www.opendemocracy.net/daniel-evans/bbc-and-wales-information-deficit>.

108 Friedland, Jonathan (2016): <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/may/13/boris-johnson-donald-trump-post-truth-politician?CMP>

109 Barton, Marty (2016): Address to Temple University graduates [http://cc.bingj.com/cache.aspx?q=marty+baron+speech+may+2016&d=4557245571537608&mkt=en-GB&setlang=en-GB&w-lw5xLsamejoYZUHQSKt84KZHFC\\_NGDPI](http://cc.bingj.com/cache.aspx?q=marty+baron+speech+may+2016&d=4557245571537608&mkt=en-GB&setlang=en-GB&w-lw5xLsamejoYZUHQSKt84KZHFC_NGDPI)

110 Harari, Youval (2018): *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*

*economy to adapt and for our democracy to thrive*.<sup>111</sup>

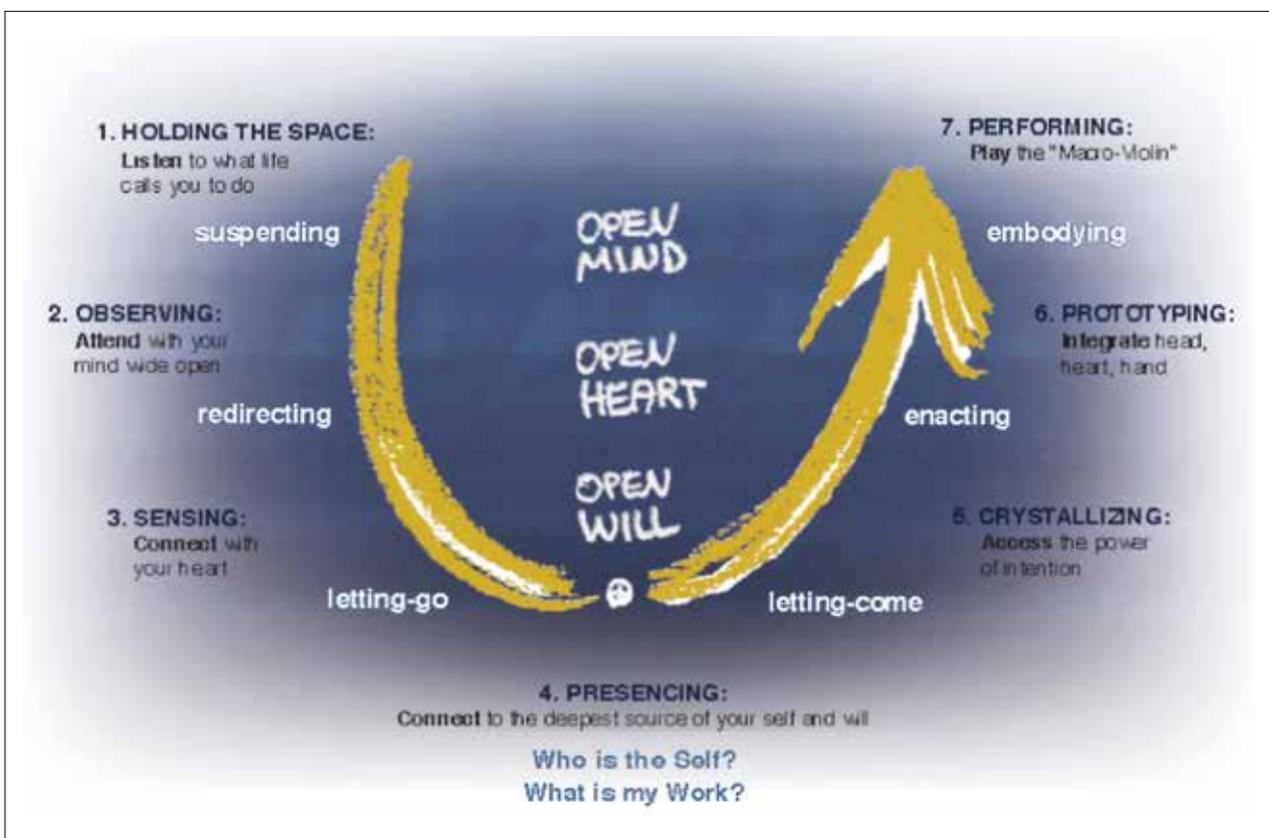
The question arises to what extent the present workforce is fully in tune with the above vision and are equipped with the current contextual, pedagogic, linguistic and technological skill-set needed to deliver what is now needed. A skills audit could be considered, linked to a programme of staff development and revised employment and induction policies.

Before this takes place, the case needs to be made for a new 'Democratic Engagement Curriculum' and a strategy developed for its delivery. Tutors would ultimately deliver this new curriculum in the classroom, digitally or in the field. However, the involvement of others would be needed to make a strong case and support its development.

Not only would this involve curriculum leaders, quality managers and governors but also community leaders, partner organisations,<sup>112</sup> senior educators and politicians. Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales's 'Democratic Engagement Curriculum' was developed by its members including input from governors, learners, branches and partner organisations'. At a minimum this strategy suggested that groups could set up learner forums or branches, giving them a voice, votes and ownership of the organisation. To maximise its success, a new institutional or national strategy would benefit the involvement of all concerned in its development. It would be 'communicative' (Habermas 1970).<sup>113</sup> A 'shared vision' (Senge 1990) would need to be developed.<sup>114</sup>

Sharmer's 'Theory U' could be a useful tool to secure total commitment and its brisk implementation.<sup>115</sup>

Figure 10: Sharmer's 'Theory U'



111 Graystone, John (2016): Addysg Oedolion Cymru / Adult Learning Wales Strategic Plan.

112 Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales (2017): Democratic Engagement Curriculum.

113 Habermas, Jürgen (1984) [1981]. Theory of Communicative Action, Volume One: Reason and the Rationalisation of Society (Book). Translated by Thomas A. McCarthy. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press.

114 Senge, P (1990). The Fifth Discipline. The art and practice of the learning organisation. Random House.

115 Scharmer, O (2007): Theory U. SoL, The Society for Organisational Learning.

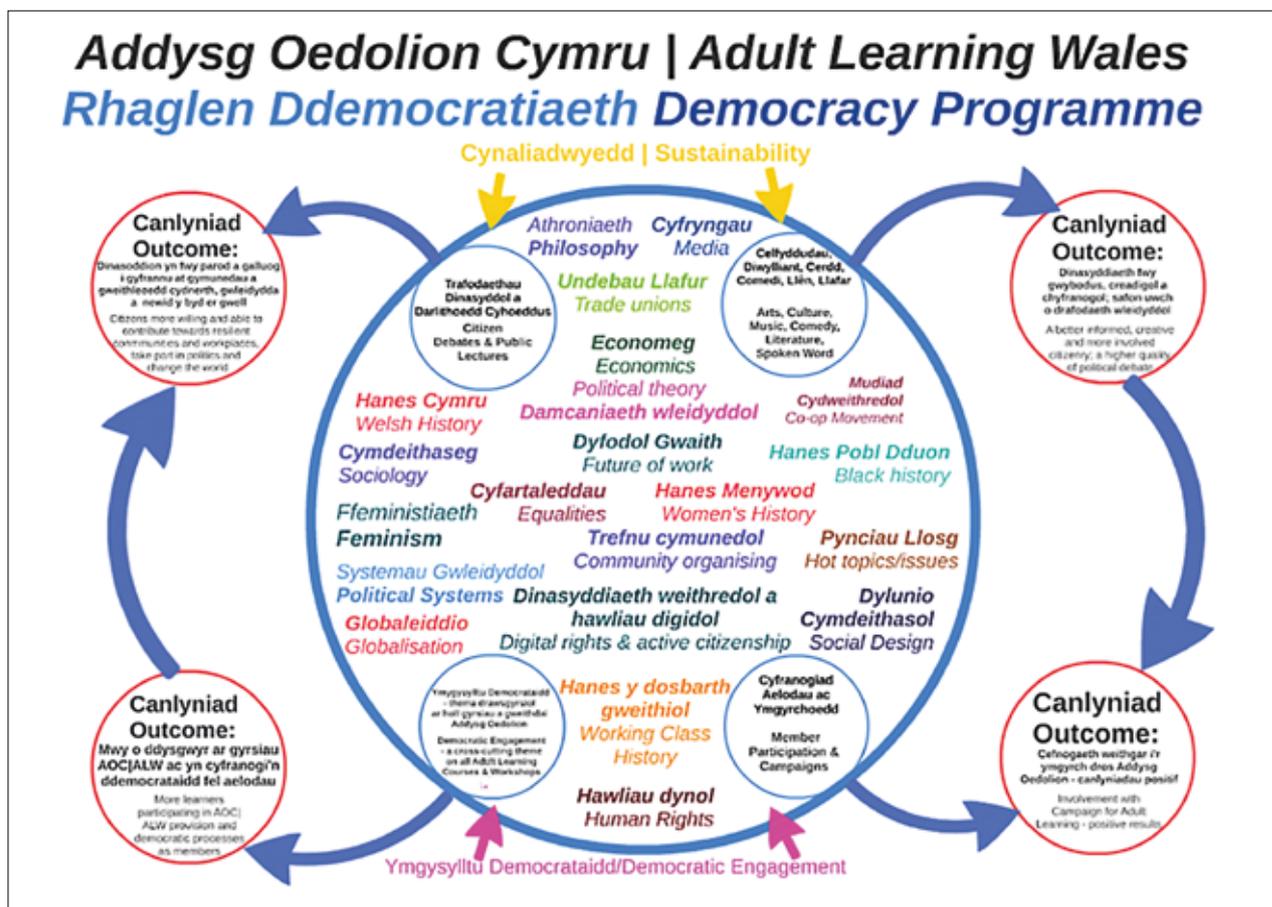
Our definition of democratic engagement, in the spirit of the above, must be much more than understanding new political structures and taking part in 'representative' democratic processes and official consultations. Ultimately, the success of a devolved Wales will depend on a foundation of 'participatory' democratic activity – individuals collaborating in their communities and taking control of their futures.

In the light of the democratic deficit and the challenges facing communities, there is a strong case not only to adequately fund a broader curriculum but to support all learners with an element of democratic engagement. All tutors, supporting staff and facilitators would therefore need to be familiar with the strategy and competent to deliver it. Democratic literacy is as important as other skills. With the cuts to part-time adult learning, it is the most underprivileged who have been most affected and effectively disenfranchised.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out a framework that instructs public bodies to involve communities, with the goal of improving their social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being.<sup>116</sup> For this to work effectively, public awareness needs to be increased, and the voices of the disadvantaged sharpened. Essential and vocational skills on their own will not secure sustainable communities – do they not also need context, well-being, creativity and culture?

There should always be a place for specialist tutors and standalone political education classes, from community development and philosophy to feminism, the Welsh political tradition, black history and globalisation etc. (see diagram below).<sup>117</sup>

Figure 11: Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales Democracy Programme Integrating democratic engagement with other essential and vocational skills



116 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

117 Addysg Oedolion Cymru / Adult Learning Wales (2017), *Democratic Engagement Curriculum* by Richard Speight, Dafydd Rhys et al.

With the changing face of Welsh, European and international politics and the influence of new media and technology new priorities and teaching methodologies are required. Adult learning practitioners need to be acquainted with the range of new technologies and software packages that can empower citizens to engage democratically and campaign. Also, there is a need for tutors to creatively and impartially integrate democratic engagement with other essential and vocational skills, from information technology to the creative arts. We need to give our learners the communication, organisational and scrutiny skills to question and verify facts, challenge opinions, lobby, campaign, solve problems and engage in positive solutions. These non-partisan political courses and cross-cutting themes would encourage tolerance, exchange of views and co-operation. They would nurture the development and articulation of values and views along with an understanding of how to actively promote them locally, nationally or internationally to improve the learners' communities and environment.

In order to enrich and develop the curriculum in these ways, a further influx of expertise, experiences and current practice from other fields and professions is needed. There is a danger however that the bureaucratic over-professionalisation of part-time teaching based solely on assessment and teaching qualifications is deterring many inspirational and first-rate personnel from other professions from sharing their much-needed contribution with Adult Community and Further Education learners. Teaching standards and the quality of the provision must obviously be safeguarded but there needs to be flexibility and common sense in finding a way forward. Accreditation of prior experiences, fast tracking teaching qualifications, team teaching and allowing unqualified tutors to teach up to a certain threshold of hours could be considered. Otherwise, it is the learners who will suffer the consequences as providers have to compromise in the choice of available tutors and sometimes fail to provide courses. Fields such as information technology, basic skills, Welsh medium education and specialist vocational or community courses are particularly vulnerable.

Co-operative Education is a concept that many involved with education do not fully appreciate and would support the Welsh Government's ambitions

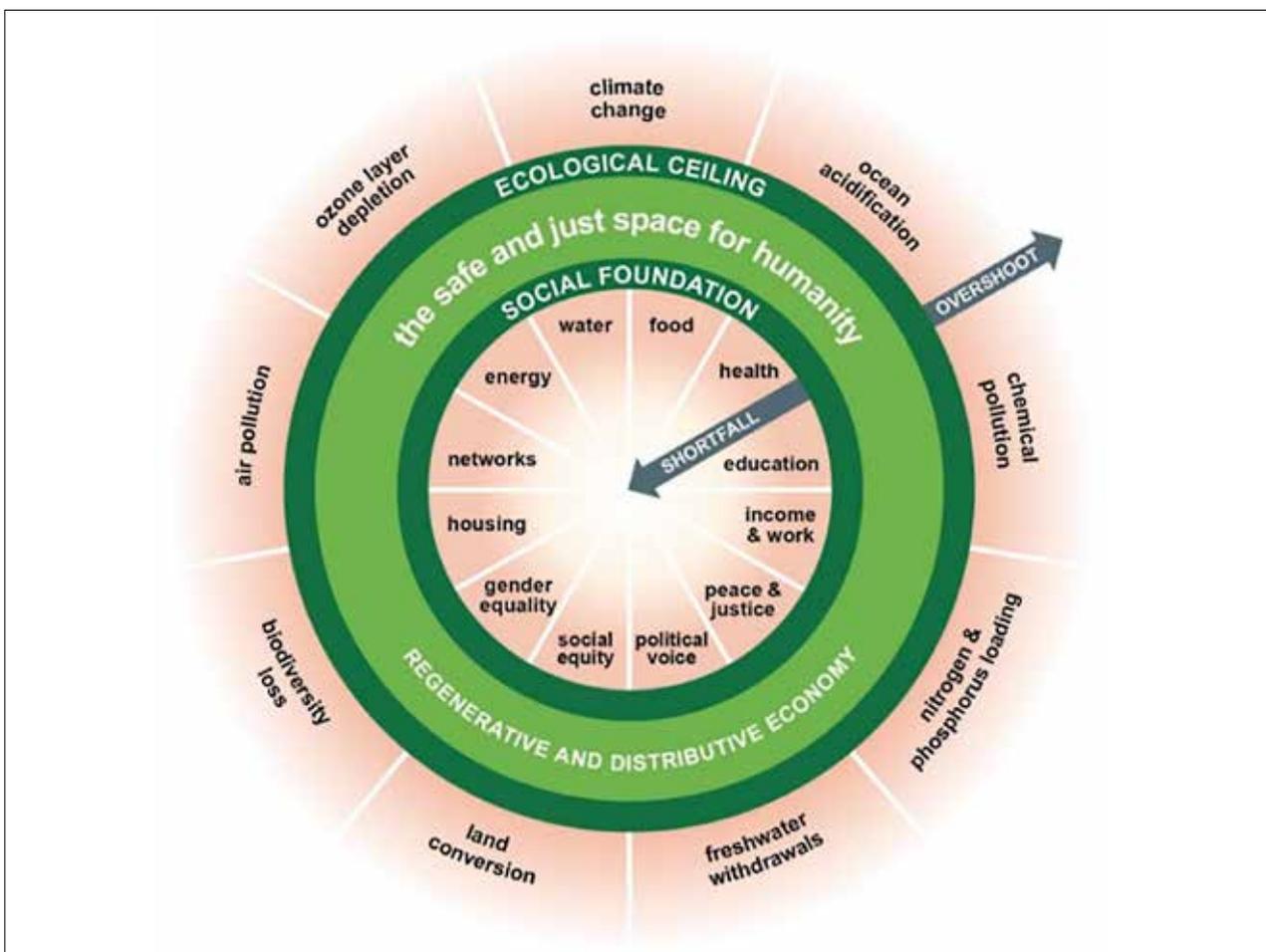
to achieve a Co-operative Wales. Euros Lewis (2018) from Radio Beca, emphasises the power of local creative co-operative solutions and the inherent nature of the concept in the 'mind set' of the Welsh language and culture.<sup>118</sup> 'Decolonising yourself' from often sub-conscious historical, commercial and globalising influences is the first step in facilitating this. A positive, creative, compensating and forward-looking post-colonial framework could well be useful for education strategists.<sup>119</sup> Kate Raworth's 'Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries' (2017) could also be a useful compass to facilitate movement towards an environmentally safe and socially just space in which humanity can thrive (Figure 12).<sup>120</sup>



118 **Radio Beca** is a media channel for the voice and voices of the 400+ Welsh speaking communities in the three West Wales counties. They use FM Digital, social media and any other possible media. In practical terms, that means linking people and their communities and securing that the passion of their creativity and politics is widely diffused. The aim is to support and strengthen our ability to shape the future of our communities and also, to inspire us to turn our backs on an attitude of 'there is nothing to do' towards a dialogue on: 'What shall we do', 'When shall we do it?' and 'How shall we do it?'

119 Rhys, D (2011): Arfarniad o Arweinyddiaeth a Rheolaeth Strategol Addysg Gymraeg a Brodorol gan Ddefnyddio'r Dull Rhwystro-cymell  
120 Raworth, Kate(2017): Exploring Doughnut Economics. kateraworth.com

Figure 12: Doughnut of planetary boundaries



Educators, politicians and civil servants could learn a lot from international models such as the Native American model of Community Colleges whose nations are also re-discovering histories and traditions, reviving languages and developing new democracies. Their leaders, educators and learners also have a very strong awareness of their identity and purpose. They value research, have their own publication and celebrate their mission, culture and achievements collectively.<sup>121</sup> Developing leadership traits that are based on their traditions and culture is important to them. The Basque Country also has many progressive practices in terms of co-operative enterprise (Mondragon University)<sup>122</sup>, Basque medium education and Basque for adults.<sup>123</sup>

Welsh medium education, Welsh for Adults and cultural and language awareness is not only key in securing the Welsh Government's target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 but can be seen in the same light as programmes such as ESOL in facilitating an inclusive bilingual democracy.<sup>124</sup>

In practical terms, implementing the above vision means directing and enabling all involved to prioritise democratic engagement (within the over-arching concept of sustainability) as a cross-cutting theme for all provision with specialised standalone courses providing further support. Active engagement and the practical skills involved should feature as prominently as passive academic study. Utilising communication, campaigning and other technologies that facilitate

121 TCJ, 2007, Our Story, Our Way, Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education, Vol 19, No 2.

122 Welsh Government Audit Office Basque 'Sharing good practice event', Cardiff, 4 December 2018.

123 Rhys, D (2008): Cymhariaeth o Addysg Oedolion yng Nghymru a Gwlad y Basg yn defnyddio'r Dull Marchnata Pwysigrwydd Perfformiad. (Unpublished paper)

124 Rhys, D (2011): Arfarniad o Arweinyddiaeth a Rheolaeth Strategol Addysg Gymraeg a Brodorol gan Ddefnyddio'r Dull Rhwystro-cymell (MA Thesis)

engagement should be key. New resources need to be developed, effective teaching methodologies identified and good practice documented and shared. Relevant accreditation units and qualifications need to be identified and composed. Developing a model of accountable community curriculums was recently discussed at an event focusing on learning for co-operative and associational development.<sup>125</sup>

It would also be timely to assess whether the mostly appointed governing bodies of Further Education institutions offer the best model in terms of engagement, ownership and accountability. Membership models in the WEA tradition or even co-operative education organisations could be considered. Gerry Hassan (2015), the keynote speaker at the WEA Scotland AGM advocated that such organisations were also crucial 'vessels' in modern democracies to develop 'values' and channel 'voices' to avoid frustration and alienation from the democratic process.<sup>126</sup>

## Summary

We must challenge any movement towards the kind of politics practised by many populist politicians and secure Wales as a 'post-truth-politics-free zone'! We owe it not only to our citizens, the health of our

democracy and quest for sustainability, but also out of respect for our nation's political tradition: from Hywel Dda's pre-medieval egalitarian laws and Robert Owen's Co-operative vision to our influential liberal non-conformist tradition, and Keir Hardy, Aneurin Bevan and Raymond Williams's socialism, Gwynfor Evans's pacifism and cultural nationalism and inspirational and principled groups and campaigns from the Chartists and Welsh suffragettes to Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg and women's support groups during the 1980s Miners' Strike.

It was Aneurin Bevan who advocated the vital importance of truth in politics and his famous quote 'This is my truth – tell me yours' was also the title of a Manic Street Preachers album.<sup>127</sup> What he encouraged was for politicians to speak passionately from their experiences and to avoid conceited and calculated politics. Learners from different backgrounds will also have many 'truths' of their own derived from their personal life experiences and communities. Our challenge is to give them the tools, encouragement and confidence to articulate their 'truths', shape our future and further unfold the 'long revolution'.



## PROVOCATIONS

- The need for a new 'Democratic Engagement Curriculum' and a strategy developed for its delivery.
- Democratic engagement should feature as a cross-cutting theme for all provision together with specialised standalone courses.
- The need for a forward-looking post-colonial framework for education strategists.
- The need for accreditation of prior experiences, fast tracking teaching qualifications, team teaching and allowing unqualified tutors to teach up to a certain threshold of hours.
- Practitioners and policy-makers should learn from the WEA and from other post-colonial, co-operative and international models.

125 Adult and Community Learning for co-operative and associational development, 23 October 2018

126 Hassan, Gerry (2015): Caledonian Dreaming

127 Aneurin Bevan, & Manic Street Preachers (1998): Virgin

# Thinkpieces 9

## Promoting education for sustainable development for adults



### KEY POINTS

The traditional skills-supply approach for greater productivity is obsolete and a more holistic view is required.

The market-orientated education system traps learners into a triple lock of objectification.

Transformative teaching and learning is not about creating social mobility but social change.

Education for sustainable development cannot be delivered by insulated, free-standing and self-interested institutions.

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### Introduction

The *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* report presents the challenge of achieving a healthy, clean and safe environment through an integrated approach which empowers communities and individuals to take positive action. New curricula and delivery methods are required, including the embedding of education for sustainable development in other subjects.

The instrumentalist skills-supply way of viewing adult education seems to have reached a critical point. The need to move on from this reductive perspective is pressing as many of us who work within further and adult education have known for many years that it isn't working. Or rather, it does work for some, but that appears to be down to the herculean efforts of teachers battling against demoralising structures and funding-driven cultures that morph and twist in response to the policy whims of the latest government. Ever since (Labour) Prime Minister Jim Callaghan's Ruskin College speech of 1976<sup>128</sup>, teachers and others, not least in adult and further education, have become habituated to marshalling energies and orientating our action to harness education to meet the needs of 'industry'. Alongside this has been a concern that in future there will be 'fewer jobs for those without skill' (Callaghan 1976). Economy now looms so large in our world view that it is no exaggeration to say that a background

awareness of economic considerations is an integral aspect of modern western rational consciousness. But at the time of the Ruskin Hall speech, the formula was straightforward: supply the skills that industry needs and the economy will flourish.

### The holistic view

Today though, in our post-lapsarian, post-Lehman Brothers era, we are beginning to develop a more nuanced view of the relationship between economy and education. *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise* provides a good starting point<sup>129</sup> in its insistence that the interdependence of economy, health, education and employment requires a holistic approach in policy-making. This insight fractures the assumptions that position education as some kind of production line for 'skills' that then benefits the national economy through increased productivity<sup>130</sup>. The comparatively recent premise: that the purpose of education is to service the economy, has also been affected by the financial collapse of 2008/9 which provided irrefutable evidence that while education may or may not affect the economy, the economy does have a powerful (and negative) effect on educational provision. Nowhere has austerity been more keenly felt than in adult education; recently the Institute of Fiscal Studies report<sup>131</sup> on education spending exposed a massive inadequacy of investment.

128 Callaghan, J. 1976. A rational debate based on the facts. Available at: <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/speeches/1976ruskin.html> accessed: 6.10.18

129 <https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/LW-EU-Report-April-2018.pdf>

130 Wolf, A. 2004. Education Education and Economic Performance: Simplistic Theories and their Policy Consequences. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 20(2): 315–333.

131 <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/13306>

There is another argument that undoes the idea of a seamless relationship between education and employment. The need for educational experiences to be orientated towards helping individuals become independent, critically minded and active shapers of their lives is more relevant than ever in a world in which we can only guess roughly what future jobs will be.

### Transforming Lives

Research we have carried out over the last two years as part of the *Transforming Lives* project<sup>132</sup> reveals the power of further and adult education in: i) tapping into people's potential for personal and professional development in ways that lead them to improve their lives; ii) addressing the needs of adults who have felt marginalised and discarded to believe in themselves again and to take an active and successful role as learners; iii) helping people break out of cycles of despair and mental ill health enabling them to hope once more and move forward in their lives; iv) impacting on the families and communities of learners in a positive ripple effect that yields broader social benefits; v) facilitating a broadening of learners' perspectives on the world and their place in it – an aspect that connects to political consciousness but also and, importantly, to issues of the environment and global sustainability.

### The triple lock

These are some of the positive effects of transformative teaching and learning (TTL) as we have conceptualised it; but they are currently realised by teachers despite a further education polycscape that undermines their efforts through a systematic objectification of learners. Our research exposes how a common-sense economised consciousness in the current marketised system objectifies learners in three ways – a triple lock<sup>133</sup> of objectification. The first layer of objectification arises from the 'skills' discourse which provides a conceptual framework for understanding further education as (mainly or only) important for the purpose of human capital production. The second layer of objectification is structural and is reified by the current qualifications

framework and the expectations, categorisations and student learning pathways that these give rise to. The current qualification framework enforces a binary perception of young people as being either 'academic' or 'vocational'<sup>134</sup>. In this, adult and further education are viewed as primarily focused on vocational learning and in this way further and adult education is 'classed' and structurally disadvantages some learners.

The third layer of objectification in the current system is a direct consequence of tightened budgets and the consequent need for 'efficiency'. The problem that has dogged every funding model since incorporation, exacerbated by an annual funding cycle, is that the recruitment of students has become incentivised as a 'bums on seats' exercise.

### Growing your own

TTL then is a contextualised theory of transformative learning in further education. As a starting point, rather than taking learners' schooling as a foundation, TTL of necessity often has to remedy the damage done by schooling to the learner identities of some students. This healing aspect necessarily incorporates a foregrounding of learners' biographies within the curriculum. For TTL to flourish, leadership at every level of the institution needs to be engaged. For senior leaders this might involve fostering distributed leadership and (while ensuring quality through creating institutional space for teachers' ongoing dialogical reflection), cushioning staff from the deleterious impact of market regulation (e.g. Ofsted). For curriculum leaders, it might mean ensuring that a critical notion of citizenship is worked into the curriculum alongside space for learners to share their biographies. For teachers the key area might involve working on the learning environment, the 'differential space'<sup>135</sup> – a space in which new understandings about the self and the world can be reached – that is such a distinctive feature of the TTL classroom. A shared aim across every level should be the nurturing of learners towards routes that can take them into the classroom as teachers: an ethic around 'growing your own'.

132 <http://transforminglives.web.ucu.org.uk/>

133 Duckworth, V and Smith, R. (2018) 'Breaking the triple lock: further education and transformative teaching and learning', *Education + Training*, 60 (6), pp.529-543

134 <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.602.4761&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

135 Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.

## Education for Sustainable Development

The impact of TTL resonates powerfully with the UNESCO agenda of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD):

*'Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity'.<sup>136</sup>*

UNESCO's conceptualisation of ESD clearly extends on the transformative potential our research has identified but it also provides further insights into the inadequacy of current structures and systems. Its ultimate aim is societal transformation. The Transforming Lives research project provided rich narrative evidence for the impact of holistic and transformative approaches to teaching and learning. Many of the ingredients are present but education for sustainable development suggests further enrichment and joined-upness is not only necessary but essential in rupturing, crossing and linking traditional disciplinary boundaries which position education in a silo.

Transformation for sustainable development in the classroom is a driver for collective awareness, the aim being for it to bring learners together to think, reflect and act. If adult education is to fulfil its potential for providing transformative educational experiences, to realise these priorities, then the triple lock of objectification that currently shackles adult education providers has to be broken.

### Implications for the adult learning workforce

What then is required to undermine this triple lock of objectification and thereby enable transformative

teaching and learning to flourish? To address the layered objectification detailed above suggests that shifting the focus away from macro considerations to local provides a first step. Our research identified how local contexts: e.g. the decline of traditional industries, the history of local housing, continue to have a huge impact on the educational achievement of learners and notions of choice. Those with compromised health may find their education interrupted and further educational opportunities limited due to physical, financial or mental health barriers, the timing of courses, or the relevance of provision to their needs.

It's only by taking full account of the broader landscape that transformative teaching and learning can help bring about change. TTL is not about creating social mobility – in which learners can escape from their communities and local and familial history. Instead it is about re-energising from the inside to re-stimulate hope, development and growth. Indeed, for this to connect to Education for Sustainable Development it would require a paradigm shift: the establishment of greater links between further and adult education and other local services: health, housing and social services.

A re-localised focus, a shift away from the centralised policy prescription that has created the conditions for the triple lock would be necessary to bring this about. Joined-up approaches to teacher education that promote holistic models and transformation would also be necessary. Importantly, a re-think on how marketisation has undermined joined-up thinking would be vital: education for sustainable development simply cannot be delivered by insulated, free-standing and self-interested institutions.

## Summary

The drive for Education for Sustainable Development needs to be thought out from a strategic position as a catalyst for systemic change in adult education and associated fields. There needs to be a holistic approach to engaging with questions of Sustainable Development that involves all stakeholders in educational systems: students, staff across colleges and the local communities they serve. Local pedagogy and praxis is well positioned to respond to the lived experiences of these communities.

Transformative teaching and learning can promote sustainable development because it is catalysed by self-reflection leading to different worldviews and a change in behaviour orientated towards social justice. To do this, dynamic curricula are necessary where students and teachers are actively engaged with the world around them, their life and communities and in doing so develop capacity, knowledge and skills to contribute to their own well-being, the well-being of others – including their local and wider community – and to promote an environment based on care that sustains and nourishes us all.



## PROVOCATIONS

- Uncouple economy from education in its existing form and re-think the relationship.
- Joint training between health professionals, social workers and teachers to share expertise. Encourage students to foster holistic approaches to education, care and well-being in collaborative cross-disciplinary settings.
- Teacher Education curricula to offer ways for new and experienced teachers to learn about and apply a meaningful approach to sustainable development in what and how they teach.
- Professional bodies to take the lead in incorporating the issue of sustainability into professional standards – to feed through into teacher education.
- Adult education providers to nurture cross-disciplinary working across and within institutional boundaries in order to facilitate the joined-up generation of powerful knowledge that reaches into and empowers people and communities.

# Responses to the thinkpieces: towards new models of workforce development

During April and May 2019, the thinkpieces were shared with Impact Forums across the UK. Eighty researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers attended forums in Cardiff, Birmingham, Belfast, and Edinburgh to discuss possible lessons for workforce development.

Increasingly divergent UK policy contexts and the pace of change calls for fresh thinking and new approaches. What's more, in all parts of the UK, new adult learning plans and strategies were in the process of being developed at the time of the forums.

We started by looking at the current workforce development context in each nation and discussed, with input from thinkpiece authors, what should be done in future.

In this section, we present the outcomes of those discussions through looking at:

- Current UK policy contexts that affect the adult learning workforce
- The professional learner journey
- A framework for a new conceptual model, and how the framework could be implemented

## Current UK policy contexts: themes from our discussions

The policy context for workforce development looks different in each of the four nations. However, there were a number of common themes across the UK. Our starting points were the strategies for adult learning and skills. It is worth reminding non-UK readers that the UK Government devolves most education and skills provision to its four nations: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. This has resulted in different (some would say 'divergent') strategies intended to plan, prioritise, fund, and support adult learning. Unlike some other European countries, neither the UK as a whole nor its four nations have an overarching strategy for lifelong learning. National strategies support adult learning in a number of ways—with many laudable initiatives—but the dominant discourse is that adult learning exists primarily to serve the needs of the economy. There is no evidence that says this is a view shared by the adult learning workforce.

### Overarching strategies for adult learning have a little detail

Where they exist, adult learning strategies do not have the workforce development plans to support their delivery. There are no overarching frameworks that link entry pathways into the profession with continuing professional development and leadership

and management. This is partly due to the unique position of the sector as providing the majority of training for the UK workforce in general. The risk is that the workforce development for adult learning reflects the market-led nature of the sector itself.

In **England**, there is no overarching strategy for adult learning and skills. There is, however, a clear strategic direction dictated by a range of documents from the UK *Industrial Strategy* downwards. Until recently, there has been a heavy emphasis on a market-led approach which is based on a technocratic funding system (of rates and entitlements) and the belief that the best institutions will flourish. Alongside this, a series of national priorities dominate the spending on workforce developments such as apprenticeships, the introductions of T-Levels, and a number of curriculum issues (digital skills, English and maths). Funding for workforce development is partly seen as the responsibility of institutions and partly the Education and Training Foundation (ETF). The ETF receives an annual grant letter from Department for Education which outlines its priorities.

The recent report of the Independent Panel on Post-18 Education and Funding in England, (Augur, May 2019), devotes some of its recommendations to the needs of the workforce. This is welcome—and unusual—but the focus remains narrow and not reflective of the whole workforce.



## REVIEW OF POST-18 EDUCATION AND FUNDING IN ENGLAND

Without using the word, the Augur Review points to something of a workforce crisis in English further education. Although the scope of the review is very much focused on vocational education and the needs of employers, most of its findings apply across all adult learning.

### Evidence

The review takes as its primary evidence base, the 2018 survey of college staff, which showed:

- teacher recruitment is 'difficult' for most colleges, with 20 per cent of principals describing it as 'very difficult', and the level of challenge varying significantly by sector or subject taught
- higher levels of skills shortages (as measured by teacher vacancy rates) than in schools
- 42 per cent of tutors and 33 per cent of leaders planning to leave the sector in the next 12 months
- for those tutors planning on leaving, the most common reasons are workload, poor management, and pay.

The decision in 2013 to revoke regulations relating to Further Education teachers' qualifications was designed to make it easier to

recruit industry professionals (part-time or full-time). There are currently no prescribed levels of qualification or professional status required to teach in the sector unlike other parts of the UK.

However, this has had some negative consequences: there is a lack of clarity about what level and type of training is appropriate for new teachers, and significant variation in the quality of teacher training. The fragmentation of teacher training also makes it extremely difficult to articulate a clear 'value proposition' for those who might be attracted to teaching in the sector.

The review argues that the further education sector in England requires 'a greatly enlarged and professionalised FE workforce with clear progression routes and development opportunities.'

### Augur's recommendation

Investment in the FE workforce should be a priority, allowing improvements in recruitment and retention, drawing in more expertise from industry, and strengthening professional development. (4.8)

*Independent Panel on Post-18 Education and Funding in England, (May 2019).*

New adult learning and skills strategies are in the process of development in **Northern Ireland**—the *Skills for Success* refresh—and in **Scotland**. Strategy documents are likely to be published in 2020 but it is not clear, at this stage, whether these strategies will have workforce plans. Signs are more promising in **Scotland**, where a Professional Learning Working Group has been established by the Strategic Forum. This should help address some of the siloed thinking that separates the roles of practitioners in colleges, community learning, and the employment sector.

In **Wales**, the concept of the 'post-16 sector' is broader—embracing colleges, work-based learning providers, local authorities, and one designated institution—and the current workforce scoping study should provide some useful material for strategy development. However, there are currently different

arrangements within the sector around regulation and registration of practitioners.

### Devolution has risks as well as potential benefits.

Devolution creates opportunities for cross-silo working that provide closer links between education, work, and health. This reflects much of the theory and practice of community-based adult learning—with the added ingredient of how adult learning supports 'shaping' change—to use the words of Jacques Delors --as well as 'understanding' and 'responding to' it. If adult learning is a 'moorland' rather than a 'field' as Richard Edwards argues (see section 1), then perhaps its workforce needs to have fluid boundaries. Across the UK, workforce development tends to be institutionally based, rather than based on skills ecosystems. It is unclear how this space will be governed and regulated in future.

The strategic devolution of half of the £1.3 billion Adult Education Budget for **England** does not include a workforce element. Emerging strategies at the sub-national level such as *Skills for Londoners* do not have a workforce plan. There is currently a disconnect between the devolution of funding and support for the a workforce that would deliver a devolved skills system, including the commissioners who will be responsible for making local funding decisions.

With increasing devolution to local areas, planners are seeking to combine budgets to deliver cross-cutting outcomes. A good example is emerging work in Greater Manchester on combined employment, health and skills initiatives. This has begged questions about what sort of workforce most effectively enables locality-based working. Public service reform has major leadership implications—not just in terms of how existing leaders with a range of professions, but

new and aspiring leaders at all levels. Such city-regional wide approaches have also been instigated in London, Merseyside, the Bristol area, Cambridge-Peterborough, North of Tyne, Tees Valley, Sheffield, the south Wales valleys, Cardiff, Glasgow, and Belfast. As one might expect in a devolved system, there is no one approach to skills strategies or the workforce that supports them.

In **Scotland**, policies like the Community Empowerment Act which promotes a participatory budgeting approach, has implications for adult learning and its workforce. In **Wales**, the *Well-being of Future Generations Act*<sup>137</sup> aims to improve the social, economic and cultural well-being of Wales by placing a duty on public bodies to think in a more sustainable and long-term way. The implication is, like **Scotland** and **Northern Ireland**, that planners commission outcomes as well as the outputs that lead to them.



### FURTHER EDUCATION WORKFORCE PLANNING FOR WALES

In 2019, Welsh Government commissioned a scoping study to inform the development of a professional learning framework for the post-16 learning sector.

The aim is to develop an initial evidence base on professional learning requirements for the post-16 sector. This includes mapping existing post-16 practitioner qualifications and evaluating their relevance. The review will provide detailed recommendations on the content and scope of a professional learning strategy and framework in the future, including how post-16 practitioner qualifications should be accredited and quality assured.

Elements to be covered:

- Ensuring an adequate supply of qualified practitioners, particularly in technical education, digital learning, Essential Skills including blending literacy, numeracy and digital literacy seamlessly into curriculum delivery.
- Considering the feasibility and practicalities of 'converting' existing practitioners to deliver qualifications at higher levels.
- Updating for post-16 practitioners to develop their pedagogical skills
- Developing a distinctive, shared vision for what constitutes 'excellence' in post-16 learning delivery, particularly in vocational settings
- Integrating 'on the job' and 'off the job' training, including accreditation of prior learning
- Using self-reflection, action research and peer support to enhance post-16 learning delivery and build up an evidence base on effective practice
- Instilling a culture of research-informed practice on post-16 pedagogy
- Embedding a Professional Learning Passport as an effective tool to plan, record and reflect on professional learning across the post-16 sector.
- Upskilling practitioners to use differentiated learning techniques to meet the diverse needs of post-16 learners at all levels and of all abilities
- Upskilling practitioners to support learners to develop the attitudes and capabilities that they need to succeed and progress in their learning
- Developing practitioners' skills to deliver Welsh-medium and bilingual learning in all types of settings.

<sup>137</sup>Legislation, UK Government. The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/contents/enacted>.

**Workforce planning for post-16 education is evolving**

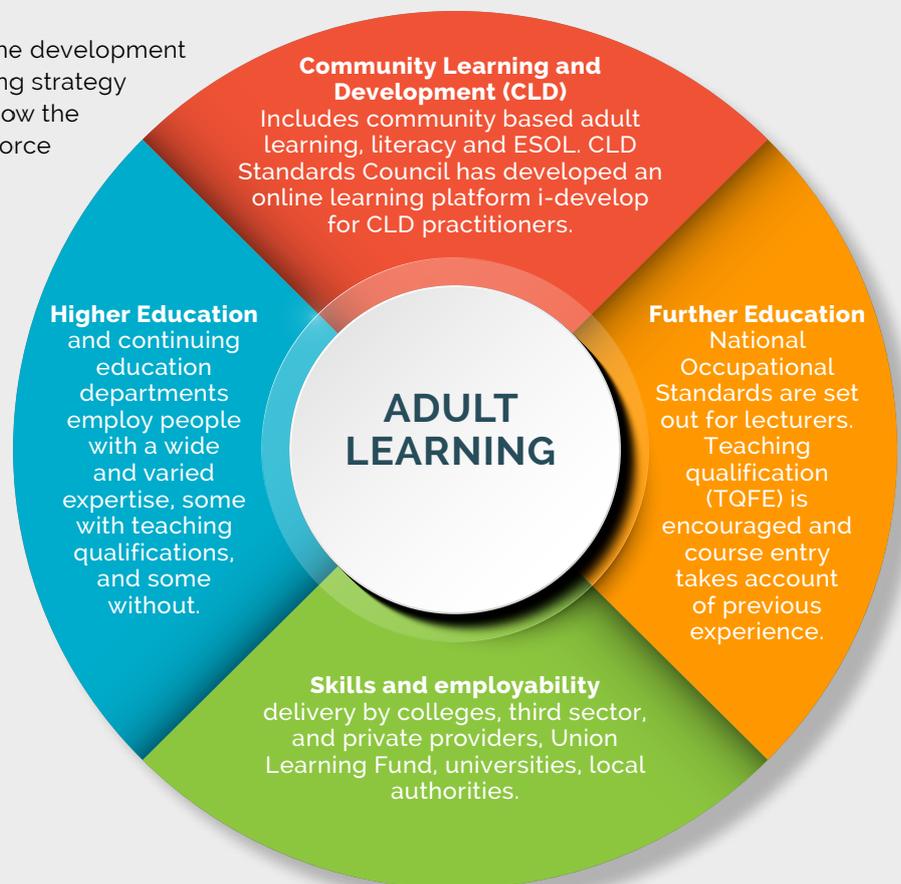
Support for the adult learning workforce still lags behind that for professionals working in schools. Looking at policy documents across the UK it is interesting to note how much less emphasis is placed on workforce planning for non-school education. Part

of this issue is access to research for the workforce in-service or supported by higher education institutions. For schools and universities there is a closer articulation between the workforce and creation of knowledge (through research) about that workforce and what it delivers.



**WORKFORCE LINKS IN SCOTLAND**

Current thinking around the development of a renewed adult learning strategy for Scotland focuses on how the various parts of the workforce can be brought together.



Much good work is happening in each part of the sector, but more needs to be done to promote a holistic approach to workforce development For example:

- Initial degree programmes must be aligned, to ensure that all those working with adults have a greater understanding of the inter-connectivity across community based learning and that delivered in institutions.
- A shared understanding of the role of meta-cognitive skills in supporting learners is essential if the workforce is to deliver effective Lifelong Learning opportunities.
- Partnership working across the adult education sector needs to be strengthened to provide clear articulation of provision and progression routes for learners which are not only based on formal agreements. This will require the workforce to consider their current approaches to collaboration and partnership.

For example, in **Wales** the government is introducing a new national approach to professional learning in schools, fulfilling a commitment made in *Education in Wales: Our National Mission*<sup>138</sup>. This is closely linked to curriculum reform and sets out entitlements for staff; design criteria for professional learning activities, resources and processes; and the Welsh Government's expectations to make policy and funding transparent. The ambition is that post-16 processes would mirror this and thus achieve some sort of parity of esteem. Part of the ambition in **Wales** is to promote a research-based culture to support workforce development.

Further education in **England** has been presented as the 'doing' sector<sup>139</sup>—with less emphasis on theory and research—a sector that gets on with the job set by government. But that can lead to a culture of compliance and 'just delivering' a curriculum designed by politicians. It is not a workforce that researches and challenges the status quo. Where

it exists, in-service research in post-16 education is often closely aligned to current practice and, for those that take part, a key element of their professional development.

In **Scotland**, the workforce that supports adult learning is divided due to the Scottish Government's tripartite approach to adult learning: further education; employment training; and, community learning and development (CLD). Much good work has been done in separate sub-sectors, particularly CLD. However, they remain separate in policy terms despite the fact some providers deliver in all three sub-sectors.

In **Northern Ireland** in common with most of the UK, staff development is part of the requirements for College Development Plans, but it is seen as an institutional issue and not regulated. As we have seen earlier, there are evolving plans for more devolved skills delivery such as the Belfast Learning City initiative.



## BELFAST: A LEARNING CITY CHARTER THAT INCLUDES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### 1 Creating a learning culture for the city of Belfast that recognises and values all forms of learning

- Ensuring learning is for all citizens of all age groups, with equality of access and availability across the city
- Creating and adopting a common brand and messaging around learning in the city
- Recognising and promoting all forms of learning within our organisations
- Developing and supporting local learning ambassadors
- Disseminating information and good practice case studies to increase effective learning
- Developing a set of shared frameworks on pathways to learning
- Promoting resilience through Lifelong Learning.

### 2 Developing an inclusive, innovative and strategic approach to Lifelong Learning through partnership working which maximises the reach and impact of all available resources

- Developing and participating in a Belfast Learning City Forum which values mutual respect and meaningful collaboration
- Developing and updating website information on Lifelong Learning opportunities in Belfast
- Using available research and highlighting any gaps
- Promoting where technology can enhance Lifelong Learning
- Sharing research and other evidence in a central e-library for Belfast.

138 Welsh Government, 2017. *Education in Wales: Our National Mission* <https://beta.gov.wales/education-our-national-mission>

139 Further Education Trust for Leadership, 2015. *Remembered Thinking*.

### 3 Promoting collaborative working between key stakeholders that ensures equality of access to Lifelong Learning opportunities and informs excellence in the design and development of Lifelong Learning provision

- Identifying, developing and working towards shared quality standards
- Increasing diversity among learners, promoting inclusion
- Ensuring that support for transition stages for learners is built into learning provision
- Creating listening and reflection loops with learners to shape and enhance our services
- Engaging with learners to increase and refine responses to their needs
- Promoting best practice in Lifelong Learning
- Fostering connectivity, debate and knowledge sharing.

*Excerpt from Belfast: A Learning City. A Learning Charter for Belfast, 2015<sup>140</sup>*

### 4 Realigning current and future skills with Northern Ireland's economic needs

- Contributing effectively to the economic and social success of the city
- Listening to employers on their needs for recruitment and in work support
- Addressing the needs of those with no or low skills or qualifications
- Assisting the under-employed to achieve their potential
- Sharing targets and outcomes
- Connecting with and influencing government and the private sector on the specific needs of Belfast
- Promoting continued workplace learning and upskilling
- Connecting with and influencing educators on current and future northern Ireland economic needs
- Advocating for the Living Wage and the creation of real jobs.

**Workforce development is seen as a quality assurance issue** that reinforces and supports current paradigms; for example, in the Europe context, the 2015 conceptual framework sees support for the adult learning workforce as a 'building block' within the theme of 'high quality learning'.

In **England**, the new inspection framework from September 2019 will make judgements on the quality of leadership and management based on 'whether continuing professional development for teachers, trainers and other staff is aligned with the curriculum, and the extent to which this develops teachers' subject expertise and pedagogical knowledge over time, so that they deliver high-quality education and training.'

Estyn, HM Inspectorate for education and training in **Wales**, has reported the relationship with reduction of middle management posts having an impact on quality assurance. Both capacity and capability impact on the quality of provision; workforce development is in a dynamic relationship with quality.

**Professional standards** for the adult learning workforce vary across the UK, with differing levels of regulation and entry requirements. There is an argument for creating a common space for workforce development and standards that was formerly within the footprint for the sector skills council, Lifelong

Learning UK. In England much of this work has subsequently been supported by the Education and Training Foundation, but there is no equivalent body in the other nations.

**The adult learning workforce faces the same challenges as the wider UK workforce.** From the overarching UK *Industrial Strategy* downwards, there are any number of reports that analyse the characteristics of the UK workforce. Growth industries face skills shortages and gaps affected by demographic (ageing) and technological changes (the need for digital skills).

The adult learning workforce reflects this wider trend: it is ageing, with many current leaders in sight of retirement; faces recruitment issues (particularly in STEM subjects); has digital skills needs right across the curriculum.

Responses to this situation also mirror how other employers train their staff. The ETF's training needs analysis undertaken in 2016 showed a sector that focused its training on compliance, narrow curriculum needs, and the needs of senior managers over part-time tutors. The 'hourglass' of the UK economy at large characterised by huge pay differentials, insecure and part-time work, and unequal access to training, could be said to reflect what happens in adult learning.<sup>141</sup>

140 *Belfast Strategic Partnership, 2015. Belfast: A Learning City. A Learning Charter for Belfast.* <https://www.makinglifebettertogether.com/wp-content/themes/makinglifebetter/resources/lifelong-learning/Belfast%20A%20Learning%20City%20A4%20WEB.pdf>

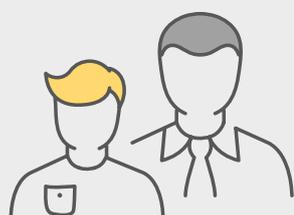
141 BMG Research, 2016. Training Needs of the Further Education Sector. Education and Training Foundation.



## FURTHER EDUCATION WORKFORCE DATA FOR ENGLAND

The analysis published by the Education and Training Foundation is based on data from just under 200 organisations—colleges, local authorities, and independent providers—across

England. Although not comprehensive in coverage, the most recent snapshot, published in April 2019, provides a useful insight into the composition of the current workforce in England.



Total workforce is estimated at:

**231,000 staff**

of whom 42% are teaching staff, 16% providing learner support, and 15% in administrative roles

**Around 5%**

of all staff are on zero-hours contracts, and 40% of local authority staff are contracted on a 'casual' basis

Part-time working is normal averaging at

**46%:**

77% of local authority staff; 46% of college employees; and 35-40% of the rest of the sector

Staff spend around

**30 hours**

a year on continuing professional development

*FRONTIER ECONOMICS, APRIL 2019. WORKFORCE DATA FOR ENGLAND:*

*Analysis of the 2017-2018 Staff Individualised Record (SIR) data. Education and Training Foundation.*

The ETF's presentation to the England Impact Forum highlighted the importance of taking information and intelligence from a range of sources. Their three-pronged approach included the uses of training needs analyses alongside analysis of 'drivers of change' and 'systems intelligence'. Each approach has its strengths and weaknesses. Training needs analysis may yield robust data, but focuses on individual and institutional

perspectives. Analysis of drivers of change can be more strategic but tend to tell planners less about unmet needs. The use of systems intelligence can provide more insight into the detail, but also risks cognitive bias. Using all three approaches together is regarded as more effective than any one approach alone.

### The professional learner journey

Discussions right across the UK have shown that a strategic approach to workforce development is needed. Although the three elements of the initial analysis— initial teacher education, continuing professional development, leadership and management—were useful, it was felt a more complex model was required that better reflects the aspiration in *Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise* (2017).

What's more, current terminology was often seen as inadequate in reflecting the fluid boundaries of the adult learning workforce. To see progression as 'linear' from trainee to teacher to manager and leader was seen as over-simplistic. People join the profession at a range of stages in their lives and often combine their role in adult learning with another 'profession'.

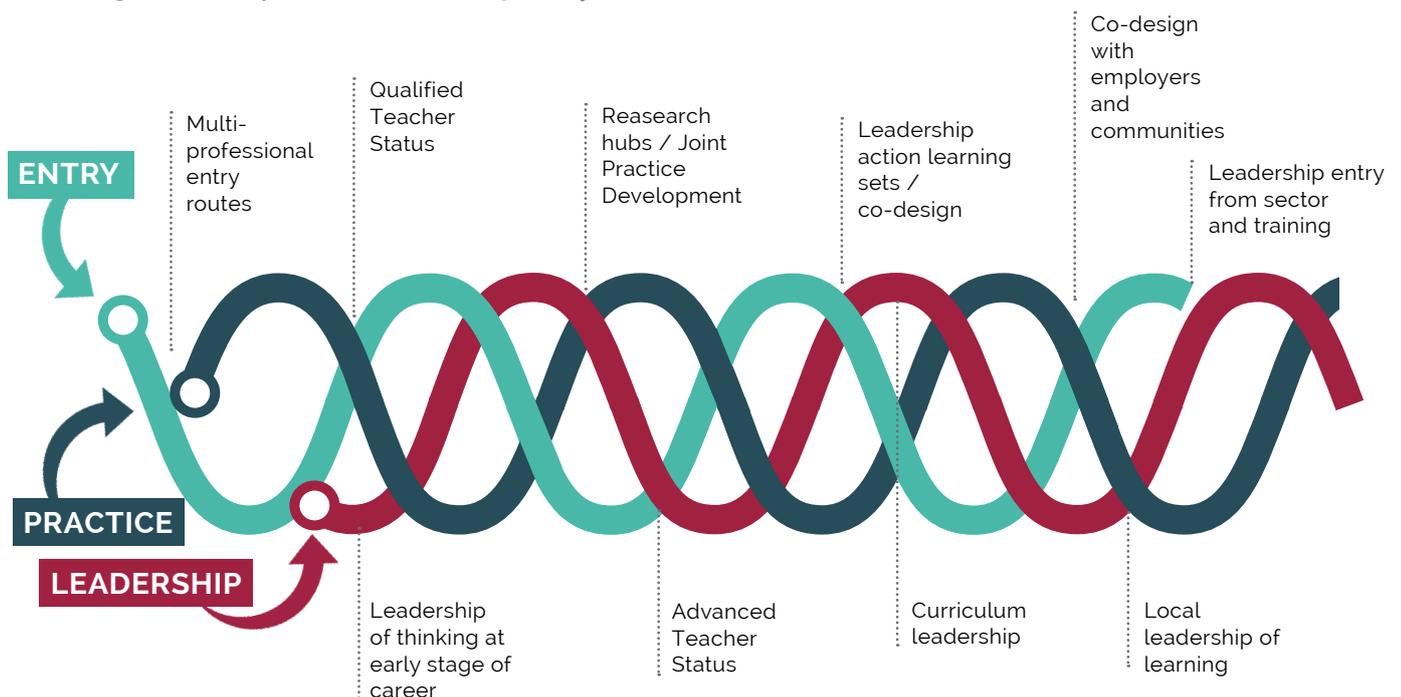
The concept of a 'professional learner journey' was advocated as a means of understanding the workforce and how it should develop. This should not be much of a 'stretch' for a workforce that values and supports lifelong learning. After all, there will be few current practitioners in further education and adult learning in general who do not sign up to the concept of the 'learner journey'.

Practitioners have daily experience of the multiple routes into and within adult learning; they are aware that some of these pathways are 'messy' and cross occupational boundaries. There are as many motivations for learning as individual learners. To this end, practice is moving towards more bespoke and individualised provision, dictated by the needs of adults and employers rather than those perceived by policy-makers and intermediaries.

It was felt that if we support the notion of the learner journey, surely the same notion should be applied to our professional learning. Just as we are in favour of multiple entry points to provision, supported by high-quality advice and guidance, so should we expect the same for learning professionals.

In this way, figure 13 recognises the multiple **entry points** into the adult learning workforce, for both practitioners and leaders. People may have a range of roles within their careers, and sometimes while undertaking a single 'job'. There are **leadership** roles right across the workforce and at different 'levels' within organisations. **Practice** is a concept that embraces a range of roles that intersect with leadership, management, and new entrants.

Figure 13. The professional learner journey



### Entry pathways

Impact forum members across the UK were keen to stress that diverse entry points to the adult education workforce should be supported, including opportunities to enter teaching for those who are not yet qualified but have other relevant skills and experience. Recognition of prior experience, from the workplace and volunteering, would expedite this and should be supported within teacher training qualifications

It was agreed that career progression pathways should be mapped to provide a clear line of sight for new entrants. This should be done at a spatial level, to encompass not only the breadth and range of opportunities across the whole adult education sector but also the potential for spanning sectoral boundaries to develop educational specialisms linked to areas such as health and wellbeing.

Professional standards and teacher training qualifications should include the cross-disciplinary skills that are required to work across sectors and professional boundaries.

Teacher training organisations and universities should map the training needs of teacher educators and ensure that they can access appropriate development and support to build the skills of trainees to work across disciplines. To facilitate this staff development, institutions should build links to practitioner training bodies in other sectors.

The values and social purpose that underpin adult education theory should be reflected and supported through the practical experience that trainees receive on work placement. Too often, new entrants go on placement to be told that pragmatism and compliance rule, which can be at odds with theoretical training.

Careers guidance should be embedded in teacher training programmes to help build practitioners' professional capacity, flexibility and resilience. Such guidance would show the range of roles and opportunities available within adult education learning and related professional areas.

Communities should be better supported to 'grow their own' professionals with clearer progression pathways—from learner to volunteer to teaching assistant to tutor—promoted through community learning providers.

### Practice pathways

A coherent and strategic approach is needed, facilitated through area-based networks and partnerships ('hubs'), including adult education providers, third sector and partners in other sectors such as health and mental health and employers. This should promote the joining up of planning and funding and create opportunities for mentoring and joint practice development.

Short packages of training should be developed to raise awareness of the theory and practice of teaching, learning and assessment, aimed at practitioners and volunteers in other sectors—for example in health, housing, and welfare—who are supporting adults with learning activities in the widest sense.

Accreditation of prior learning routes should be developed to enable those from outside the adult education sector to enter the workforce. Collaborative professionalism should be promoted for practitioners from different fields who work across sectoral boundaries. Training in collaborative working should be a core part of professional development within adult education. Professional associations should promote the development of these skills, for example through mentoring and sharing of exemplary practice.

Professional development opportunities should build the digital skills and confidence of the adult education workforce in relation to evolving delivery models including blended learning and the use of artificial intelligence. Greater attention should be paid to equipping the workforce to meet the expectations of adult learners of the future about how they learn.

Practitioners stressed the need to build capacity to understand and articulate the value and wider impact of adult learning, including how it contributes to outcomes for other policy areas. Research hubs should be valued by leaders not as 'an extra-curricular' activity, but as a key part of being a professional in adult learning.

### Leadership pathways

It was interesting that most of the provocations made by thinkpiece writers focused on changes that needed to be made to the 'leadership and management' of the system. So much of workforce development is dependent on the skills of leaders—in provider

institutions, in sector support bodies, in policy and funding agencies—to understand the needs of the workforce. Leaders usually make the funding decisions—and decide to prioritise support for other leaders.

It was also felt important to encourage the view that leadership is 'dispersed' and happens at all levels within an organisation. The term is too often coupled with 'management' as if formal management roles were the only means of leading. The future will demand much more leading beyond the boundaries of organisations, which will require wider skill sets.

There was concern that most leadership training was institutionally based—how to be the captain of a ship, rather than the admiral of a flotilla of craft—and system leadership skills were less well-developed. If the future will demand more collaboration, at all levels collaborative leadership skills must be at the heart of workforce planning. Such a programme would develop the skills to influence, collaborate, and lead without being in charge. It will build on the current strengths of leadership programmes on how to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity, as well developing an awareness of leaders' own values and culture. Leaders support in creating time and space for critical reflection, which can be developed formally through increased mentoring and action learning sets with other leaders.

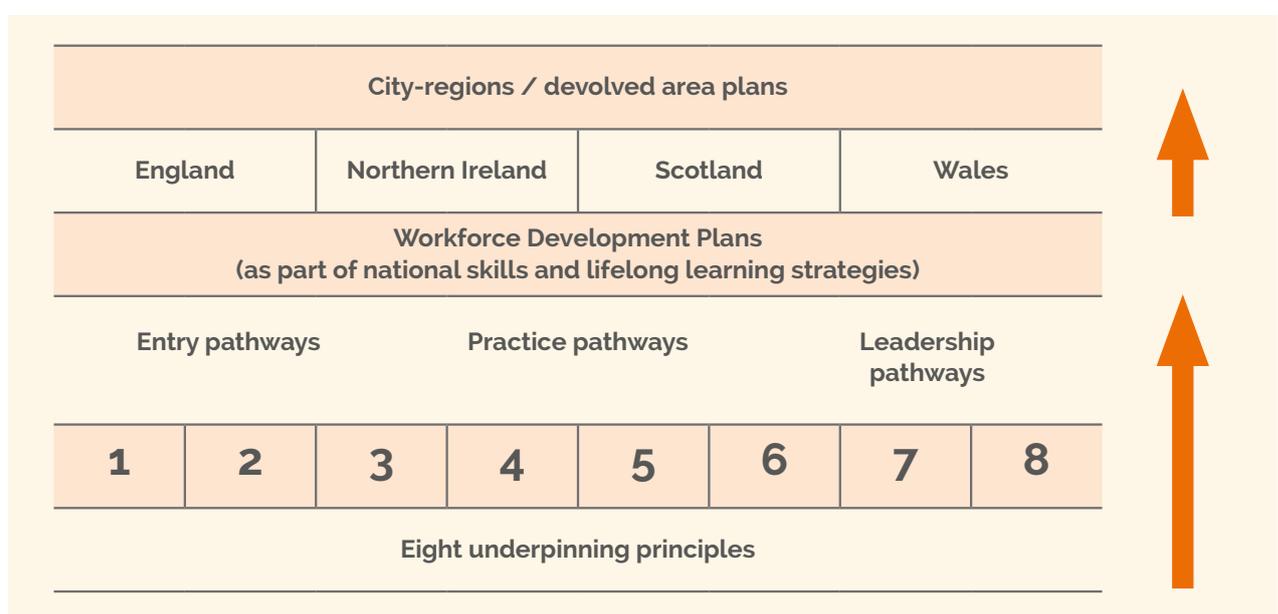
### A framework for the new conceptual model

In proposing a framework for new models of workforce development, we have indicated what our work suggests needs to be done. It points to the need for thoroughgoing reform of workforce development within the adult learning sector across the UK. From government and its agencies down to provider level, workforce development is too often treated in a way that is patchy, disjointed and reactive, or simply not addressed at all. Fundamentally, we contend that **all adult learning strategies and plans - national, local and organisational - must include a strategy for workforce development**. As the evidence we have heard consistently confirms, maximising the impact of adult learning on public policy demands the effective training and development of all those who will be responsible for delivering it, at whatever level they operate and whether paid or unpaid.

It is not enough to create a new model without looking at the system it sits within. The work also highlights a number of core, cross-cutting concepts, in terms of both the principles that will need to underpin the development of future theory and practice, and the kinds of approaches to workforce development that are most likely to achieve change.

Our findings show that any system needs to be based on a set of principles that can be applied across a range of policy contexts

Figure 14: Conceptual framework in the devolved context



## EIGHT UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES

**1** The adult learning workforce supports the education and training of all adults, using the full range of learning types (formal, non-formal, informal).

**2** Approaches to workforce development are future focused and dynamic in order to respond to evolving evidence about the anticipated future needs and composition of the workforce.

**3** Workforce development embraces all those who support adult learning: volunteers, support staff, counsellors, administrators, teachers, managers, assessors, brokers, and leaders at all levels.

**4** Occupational entry and progression pathways actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion, including by fostering progression for learners from community learning to volunteering and employment in the adult learning workforce.

**5** Professional practice and workforce development embody socially just approaches which reflect the values and practice of adult learning (democratic, inclusive, co-designed, asset-based, meta-cognitive).

**6** Professional practice is in a dynamic relationship with provision, as it becomes more based on meta-skills such as learning to learn, and collaborative leadership.

**7** Professional practice and workforce development are based on multi-agency working and polyvocal conversations with other agencies, communities, and learners.

**8** Approaches to professional development should be designed to be sustainable and make use of the most environmentally-friendly delivery models as appropriate.



Our work also identifies a range of approaches to developing the adult learning workforce which have the potential to nurture the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to meet the challenges set out in *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise*. These proposals help to move from considering what needs to happen to defining how it might be achieved. The watchwords are flexibility, integration and collaboration, so that workforce development processes and practices mirror trends shaping the wider world of adult learning.

The following are suggested as **key features of effective approaches to workforce development** that should be promoted and strengthened through the strategies and plans of stakeholders across the UK. They include measures that will improve both the overall structure and composition of the workforce and the delivery of workforce development opportunities. The aim is to embed these approaches across the policies and practices of funders, strategic stakeholders and delivery partners.



## MAKING IT HAPPEN ...

- **Collaboration, inclusion and diversity should be more actively promoted** by opening up the workforce. A more flexible and 'common sense' approach will enable those from other professions to enter the adult learning workforce, via fast track qualifications, accreditation of prior experience, team teaching, and other modes.
- **Progression routes should be developed that link stages and levels**, and opportunities for upskilling for those who want to progress. This includes support for pursuing the historically well-trodden path from adult learner or volunteer to adult educator, particularly for those in community learning settings. Support for career planning and development should be available throughout the "professional learner journey."
- **More flexible delivery is needed.** This includes the provision of increased opportunities to undertake part time training and greater use of digital methods through blended and online delivery. Integrated use of digital delivery models will foster the digital skills of the workforce and create online as well as off-line spaces for collaboration.
- **Coaching, mentoring, action learning sets and peer learning approaches** use fellow managers, practitioners and volunteers to support each other to take control of their own learning and are a powerful way of sharing knowledge and experience. These approaches should be embedded across the delivery of training and development for professionals and volunteers. Opportunities for cross-curriculum, cross-organisational and cross-sector peer support and development should be encouraged and promoted.
- **Learning by doing together is a powerful way of achieving change.** Cross-curriculum and multi-agency teams help to break down professional barriers and forge new relationships. 'Polyvocal conversations' are a way of enabling managers, practitioners, volunteers and partners to communicate effectively, share and learn, to build understanding of each other's perspectives and move together towards finding solutions. Joint Practice Development (JPD) approaches stand in contrast to top-down, prescriptive Continuing Professional Development. JPD is a more egalitarian model, 'an anarchic response to CPD' and 'an antidote to the notion of mastery.'

## CALL TO ACTION

**We hope you have found this publication engaging and thought-provoking. It aims to contribute towards setting a new agenda for adult learning workforce development across the UK.**

Now we would like to hear your views. This report and accompanying blogs will be published on EPALE (the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe), which is the go-to site for anyone working in the adult learning sector. Funded by the European Commission EPALE is a free multilingual community for adult learning professionals across Europe.

You can respond to the ideas set out here and help to shape the debate by commenting on the publication and joining in the discussion.

**You can join EPALE by going to <http://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/user/register>**





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