

Learning Link Scotland Policy Briefing Paper The Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (ALNIS) Refresh

The ALNIS report (2001) is currently being refreshed by the Scottish Government to take account of recent research and developments since the original report was launched and will set out a new strategy to 2011. The update of ALNIS is taking place over the summer, with a consultation on the new ALNIS refresh due to be launched on 10th September 2010.

This briefing aims to provide Learning Link Scotland members with a summary of the timescale for the refresh, and the opportunities for the voluntary sector to contribute to and influence the shape of the new ALNIS strategy. One of these opportunities will be at Learning Link Scotland's National Conference on 30th September 2010 at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall.

Background

In 2001 the Scottish Government published the Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (ALNIS) report that started a major national initiative in adult literacy and numeracy teaching and learning. This led to:

- £65m of funding made available up to 2008 to help adults improve their literacies.
- Over 200,000 new learners helped since 2001.
- Funding provided through the 32 local authorities to Adult Literacies Partnerships.
- Strategic plans submitted by all the partnerships, indicating how the funding would be used.

ALNIS identified **four key principles** which the new ALN provision was to be built upon:

1. A lifelong learning approach
2. Free to learners
3. Targeting priority groups
4. Grounding change in research and learner consultation

ALNIS also established a new **definition** of literacies as:

"The ability to read, write and use numeracy, to handle information, to express ideas and opinions, to make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners,"

The Scottish approach to adult literacies adopts a **social practice model**, which sees literacies as part of the wider lifelong learning agenda. Such an approach recognises that:

- Literacy and numeracy are complex capabilities rather than a set of basic skills.
- Learners are more likely to develop and retain knowledge, skills and understanding if they see them as relevant to their own context and everyday literacies practices.
- Learning should be negotiated with the learner through an individual learning plan, selecting the knowledge and skills most relevant to the individual learner's goals.

Within ALNIS there was a recognition that the need for improved literacies skills would impact on people in **four areas of life**, which were identified as being in personal, family, work and community. ALNIS also included 21 key recommendations which can be found in the full report.

ALNIS refresh

The ALNIS report is currently being refreshed to take account of recent research and developments since the original report was launched and will set out a new strategy to 2011.

A National Strategic Advisory Group has been set up to advise the Scottish Government on the effective development of a refreshed adult literacy and numeracy (ALN) strategy. This short-life group is made up of representatives from different sectors and delivery partners affected and influenced by this strategy. The group will meet up to three times over the summer, after which the Scottish Government ALN policy team will prepare a draft refresh of ALNIS. A short consultation period will then be launched at UNESCO's International Literacy Day event on **10th September 2010** in Glasgow.

National Strategic Advisory Group:

Learning and Teaching Scotland, Learning Link Scotland, HMIE, COSLA, CLDMS, Scotland's Colleges, Sector Skills, Scottish Prison Service, Skills Development Scotland, University of Stirling, STUC

What next?

The Strategic Advisory Group is seeking initial feedback from the ALN field to inform and influence the content and structure of the ALNIS refresh document. Learning Link Scotland will set up a consultation with its members once the draft ALNIS refresh document has been launched in September. Leading up to then it would be helpful to have an indication of our members' views on five key questions currently being discussed by the advisory group.

1. What do you see as the priority target groups for your organisation in terms of ALN services, and how do you justify this? Do you think it is still helpful to have identified target groups?
2. What do you see as the priority areas for national and local development?
3. How can a step change be achieved in terms of outcomes, in a context of increasing resource constraints?
4. How does your organisation see how the strategy can influence Single Outcome Agreements and other organisations' agendas?
5. The Scottish approach to ALN delivery using the social practice model is unique in the UK. It is difficult to measure the impact of this approach in numerical terms. To what extent

do you see this approach as relevant / important to your ALN work? Can you provide any examples of the impact of this approach on the lives of your learners?

At this stage we are seeking initial thoughts and comments by Wednesday, the 7th July. Learning Link Scotland will input these to the strategic group's discussions over the summer. Please send comments and ideas to dbass@learninglinkscotland.org.uk.

The formal consultation process will take place at events in September.

| Timescale of the refresh process | Activity |
|---|---|
| June to mid-August 2010 | Strategic advisory group meets and at the same time seeks initial views and comments from the field. |
| Mid-August to early September 2010 | Scottish Government ALN policy team prepare a draft refresh Strategy. |
| 10 th September 2010 | Scottish Government consultation due to be launched of the draft ALNIS refresh strategy at UNESCO's International Literacy day event in Glasgow. |
| September to mid-October | Learning Link Scotland will co-ordinate a voluntary sector consultation of its members through: A) Electronic questionnaire B) Round table discussions at LLS National Conference on 30 th September 2010. The feedback will be collated and written up as a voluntary sector response to the ALNIS refresh paper. |
| By the end of 2010 | ALNIS refresh strategy launched. |

Useful Reading and links

- ALNIS report (2001) www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2001/07/9471/File-1
- Scottish Government Learning Communities website - where ALNIS refresh is reported www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/education/Life-Long-Learning/17551
- The Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland
- <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/02/16308/17750>
- Improving Adult Literacy in Scotland www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/ialis.html
- St Clair, R. (2009). The Dilemmas of Accountability: Exploring the issues of accountability in adult literacy through three case studies www.nald.ca/library/research/abc/dilemmas/cover.htm
- CREID (2010) *Lifelong Learning 2010: Subproject 1, National Report: Scotland*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh www.creid.ed.ac.uk/projects/LLL2010_Scottishreport.pdf

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