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Mapping Youth Literacies Practice with The 16 - 25 Age Group

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## Mapping Youth Literacies Practice With The 16 - 25 Age Group



# Mapping Youth Literacies Practice

## With The 16 - 25 Age Group

### Final report

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# Foreword

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Mapping Youth Literacies Practice in Scotland with the 16-25 Age Group.

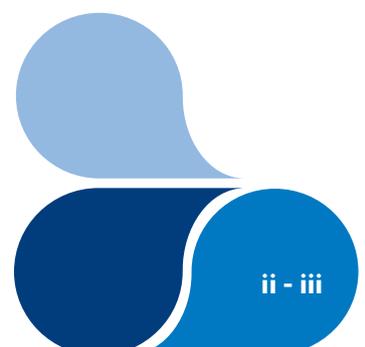
This report, commissioned by Learning Connections,<sup>1</sup> Lifelong Learning Division of the Scottish Government, provides an overall picture of youth literacies learning in Scotland together with case studies of effective practice. It complements the 2004 Learning Connections-funded report *Youth Literacies Practice in Scotland: an initial exploration* and 'To the Max', the 2006 national collaborative project with YouthLink Scotland.

The report paints a diverse picture of literacies learning and teaching with young people, across a variety of settings, while highlighting common principles. It also identifies some of the positive ways in which youth literacies services provide opportunities for young people to engage with literacies learning, and how this engagement supports them to make important life choices.

We hope that practitioners and managers will be inspired by the case studies to continue to explore new ways to engage and support young people in literacies learning.

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1. [www.scotland.gov.uk/learningconnections](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/learningconnections)





# Executive Summary

## Introduction

This report presents findings from a Learning Connections, Scottish Government, funded investigation into literacies practice in Scotland with young people aged 16-25, otherwise known as youth literacies practice. The research took place between October 2006 and May 2007.

## Research Aims

This research had three aims, which were to:

1. Carry out a mapping exercise of youth literacies provision across Scotland to identify the scope and diversity of practice and capture examples of effective practice.
2. Inform developments in youth literacies in Scotland and provide case studies to share effective practice.
3. Explore the lessons for Scotland from the recent NRDC<sup>2</sup> research project: '*Success factors in informal learning: young adults' experiences of literacy, language and numeracy*' by Bethia McNeil and Linda Dixon, NIACE/NYA (2005).

## Methodology

The project methodology comprised a combination of research approaches using postal/email survey and interviewing. This mixed methods approach was regarded as the most appropriate way to address the project aims and to provide a broad picture of youth literacies provision in Scotland (the questionnaire survey), and at the same time give an insight into the nature of specific types of youth literacies provision (the case studies).

Ninety-four survey questionnaires were returned. Although the total number of providers who completed the survey was relatively small, the overall quality of the responses was good. Indeed, most respondents took the time to provide answers, and in many cases quite lengthy answers, to most of the open questions.

## Findings from the questionnaire survey

### Understanding of the term 'youth literacies'

The responses relating to providers' understanding of youth literacies suggest that these include the development of a broad range of personal and communication skills (often through the 'hook' of activities that are of particular interest and relevance to young people), which will enable them to become active, confident participants in the different areas of life highlighted in *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* (ALNIS) report (2001).<sup>3</sup> Mention of the youth literacies component of a course may be 'hidden' (i.e. delayed until later in the programme). Respondents' experiences suggest that the *explicit* promotion of a youth literacies agenda is the least productive way of recruiting, engaging and retaining young people in learning. However, what was also apparent from the survey (and subsequent case study visits) is that a great deal of youth literacies provision combines a mix of undisclosed work with dedicated and one-to-one support.

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<sup>2</sup> NRDC: National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Life-Long-Learning/17551>

## The aims of provision

The main aims of providers of youth literacies work were to raise the self-esteem of the young people and to increase their engagement with society. Employment-related aims followed closely, with continuing study being the least cited of the key aims. These results match closely with providers' understanding of youth literacies as cited above, so there appears to be a close fit between how they understand the concept of youth literacies and what they hope to achieve through their work.

## The nature of provision

- Providers used a number of approaches in delivering literacies to young people. The majority used integrated and hidden approaches (94% and 54%, respectively), also 84% employed some form of dedicated/open or disclosed provision
- A majority of providers offered a mix of one-to-one and group provision
- The most popular types of dedicated provision were of no fixed length and offered no formal qualifications. Integrated provision was more likely to be of fixed length but still offered no formal qualifications.

## Staffing

- Almost two-thirds (63%) of youth literacies staff were female
- Thirty-four per cent of youth literacies staff were aged between 41 and 50; 27% were aged 31 to 40; 20% were 51 years or over; and the remaining 19% were 30 or younger
- The majority of staff engaged in youth literacies work were employed full-time (52%), though not necessarily employed full-time on youth literacies
- Just under half (46%) of the staff had been employed in literacies work for 5 years or less. 40% had experience of five years or more, while 14% had less than one year's experience
- The majority of staff working in youth literacies had some form of relevant qualification (for example, an adult literacies or youth work qualification). Only 5% were recorded as having 'no qualification'.



## The young people

- Young people aged 16 to 19 were more frequently engaged with than those aged 20-25. Young males were the most commonly engaged group
- Sixty-one per cent of providers targeted particular groups of young people: those in need of more choices and more chances,<sup>4</sup> single sex groups of 'young men' or 'young women' being the three most frequently cited
- Retention rates for fixed duration courses were high, with 36 providers recording a completion rate in the range of 76-100%, and 17 recording a completion rate in the range of 51-75%
- Providers who offered courses leading to a qualification typically expected young people to achieve the qualification: 72% reported that more than half of their young learners would secure the qualification
- The most successful recruitment methods appeared to be through word of mouth, referrals from other agencies, and working with other providers.

## What constitutes effective youth literacies practice?

Providers gave a wide range of responses concerning what constitutes effective youth literacies practice:

### *Content should:*

- be relevant and tap into youth culture, issues, interests and have a youth outlook
- build confidence and self-esteem
- emerge from listening and responding to young people
- be youth led, where young people can control their own learning.

### *Atmosphere should:*

- be positive, fun and enthusiastic
- echo young people's environments and 'comfort zones'
- offer equal relationships.

### *Learning and teaching approaches should:*

- be informal and experiential
- use a social practice (contextualised) approach
- incorporate ongoing reflection, recording and review of achievements, no matter how small
- integrate/embed literacies learning within youth activities.

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<sup>4</sup> Formerly known as young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)

*Staff should:*

- be good listeners
- be non-judgemental
- have an understanding of young people's issues
- be able to develop quality resource materials
- recognise very small progress steps
- be flexible.

*For young people to progress staff should:*

- encourage young people to think of progression very early in their programmes
- encourage ongoing reflection on how to further develop the skills they are currently building
- establish personal links with key staff in organisations offering opportunities for progression
- provide attainable, first steps certificates
- celebrate all progress steps, no matter how small.

*Learners' planned outcomes should include being able to:*

- perform at levels demanded in work
- apply their learning in their everyday lives
- have and use their voice
- communicate, negotiate, and live and work with others.



### Critical success factors

- Providers reported success in implementing a number of organisational aspects of their provision. These included:
  - having systems which allow tutors to influence the design and delivery of programmes
  - having staff with the appropriate expertise, experience and commitment, and
  - supporting and encouraging self-directed learning.
- Providers reported success in implementing a number of aspects of their *learning programmes*, including ensuring that learning is presented as a positive and enjoyable experience, that individual needs are recognised and responded to, that programmes offer choices and are negotiated, and that approaches are relevant to learners' chosen contexts and goals.

### Case study findings

Nine youth literacies initiatives across Scotland were selected as case studies for the project. These represented a geographical spread and reflected different types of youth literacies provision.

#### The organisations

Seven of the organisations specifically targeted vulnerable young people, many of whom were either homeless or had addiction and/or behavioural or health related issues. One was based in a college and of the eight remaining community-based initiatives, only one classified itself as primarily a literacies project. The remainder integrated their literacies work into the core work of the organisation.

#### Getting young people involved

Although all of the projects took referrals from partner agencies, the 'hooks' for getting young people involved were the activities they offered which had an appeal to the young people, or an end goal that articulated with their ambitions. Popular 'hooks' were ICT, media activities, visits to places of interest, and outdoor pursuits and activities.

#### Engaging and sustaining learner involvement

All providers offered a *flexible* choice of activities inside and outside the learning centre. These were negotiated with, and ultimately chosen by, the learners.

*Flexible methods of teaching and learning* also helped to engage the learners.

*Relationships* emerged as a third crucial factor in sustaining the engagement of the learners: primarily the relationships between staff and young people, but the quality of relationships between learners was also cited as an important factor.



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## Facilitating learning and achievement

All but one of the projects specifically mentioned the importance of learners' progress files in indicating achievement and developing learners' awareness of their own thinking and learning styles. The young people frequently referred to their progress files and to regular discussions using them.

Guidance during and at the end of the programmes was seen to be an important element of the work of most projects.

## Summary of the impact on areas of young people's lives as a result of undertaking literacies learning

### *Personal lives*

- Increase in self confidence and/or self esteem
- More structure in their life
- Better prepared for independent living.

### *Family lives*

- Improved relationships with family members
- Helping other family members improve their literacies skills.

### *Working lives*

- Improved job prospects
- More ideas for future employment.

### *Educational lives*

- Aspiring to go to college/university
- Aiming for apprenticeship.

### *Wider world*

- More aware of current issues
- Using library and other community facilities.

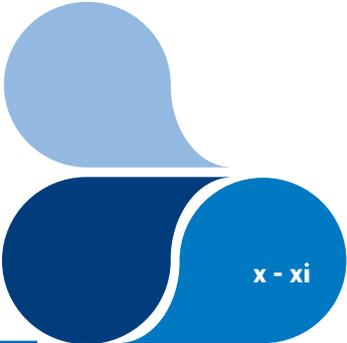


## Conclusions

This mapping exercise has revealed that there is a substantial variety and amount of youth literacies learning taking place across Scotland. From the research, we see that it can be exclusively aimed at young people, or can be provided as part of an adult literacies programme. It takes place in a range of community and college settings. It is provided by traditional youth services, by community learning and development services, voluntary providers and dedicated youth literacies services, including training for employment. It takes place in one-to-one and group work situations, and can take an integrated, dedicated or hidden (stealth) approach to literacies. Moreover, it can be explicitly set up to target particular groups of young people (for example, young people in need of more choices and more chances (MC/MC), or ex-offenders), or can be open to all young people. Further, it can include programmes offering formal qualifications and programmes of fixed duration or those which are open-ended. In short, youth literacies practice in Scotland is diverse in terms of learner need, setting and practice.

Time and again respondents indicated that the ability of providers to identify need and interest among young people was crucial in recruiting and engaging learners in literacies provision. Moreover, flexibility in provision was also felt to be of prime importance in allowing literacies provision to adapt and respond quickly enough to such interest.

Similarly, the importance of the relationship between young learners and tutors cannot be underestimated. Both parties stressed the need to build trusting relationships which recognise the worth, abilities and strengths of all involved in youth literacies work, and which do not replicate the negative experiences that many young people associated with their previous learning.





day she was looking  
where dry



**Introduction**



# Introduction

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## 1.1 Scope of the report

This report presents findings from a Learning Connections, Scottish Government-funded investigation which aimed to map youth literacies practice for young people aged 16–25. The research took place between October 2006 and May 2007.

The report comprises six sections, beginning with an Executive Summary. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the project aims and objectives; Chapter 2 describes the methodology and timescale; Chapter 3 presents findings from the national survey of providers; Chapter 4 presents findings from the case studies; and Chapter 5 discusses some of the key findings and draws some conclusions.

## 1.2 Aims and objectives of the study

This research had three major aims, which were to:

1. Carry out a mapping exercise of youth literacies across Scotland to identify the scope and diversity of provision and capture examples of effective practice.
2. Inform developments in youth literacies in Scotland by providing case studies to share effective practice.
3. Explore the lessons for Scotland from the recent NRDC research project: *'Success factors in informal learning: young adults' experiences of literacy, language and numeracy'* by Bethia McNeil and Linda Nixon, NIACE/NYA (2005).

Specific objectives were to identify:

- The providers of youth literacies in Scotland
  - The type of youth literacies provision offered by different providers, such as awareness raising, dedicated, integrated and hidden (stealth)
  - The key components of the provision (including length of literacies interaction) and critical success factors
  - Whether there is a common understanding of the term 'youth literacies' among providers
  - The range of partner organisations and agencies delivering youth literacies
  - The type of support young people prefer, for example, one-to-one, group support or a mixture of these
  - The most effective methods for engaging/recruiting young people with literacies issues
  - The most likely subjects/activities to engage young people with literacies
  - The main age group of young people currently participating in youth literacies provision (by sector)
  - The retention rate for youth literacies participants
  - Providers' views on what constitutes effective youth literacies practice.
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The research also set out to:

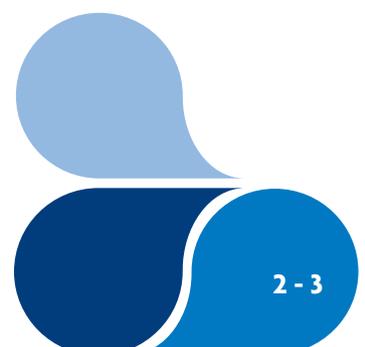
1. Compile a checklist for effective youth literacies practice, based on the information collected
2. Identify and compile nine effective practice case studies from a diverse range of providers
3. Explore common understanding of ‘youth literacies’.

### 1.3 Context of the research

The *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* report (ALNIS, 2001) identified ‘people with limited initial education, particularly young adults’ (p13) as one of seven priority groups. Since 2001 many high-profile and lesser-known youth literacies initiatives have flourished (for example, The Discovery Game, ‘Write n Rap’, football coaching, Her Majesty’s Young Offenders Institution (HMYOI) Polmont’s Peer Literacy Programme, ‘Positive Futures’ and ‘To the Max’). Nevertheless, Learning Connections’ report *Youth Literacies Practice in Scotland* (Wallace, 2004) recognised that, although there “appears to be an embryonic ‘community of practice’ in Scotland, there is a limited overview of this area of practice and limited literature on literacies work with young people generally” (p 12). This research aims to make a significant contribution to filling our knowledge gap in relation to this specific area of adult literacies work in Scotland, and complements the broader youth work consultation *Youthwork: Opportunities for all*, sponsored by the Scottish Executive (2006).

It builds upon the knowledge and understanding generated from Learning Connections’ *Youth Literacies Practice in Scotland* research (Wallace, 2004), ‘To the Max’ project, YouthLink Scotland’s collaborative project with Learning Connections and McNeil and Dixon’s National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)/National Research and Development Centre (NRDC) parallel research in England (McNeil & Dixon, 2005).

The research reports identify significant common principles between working with young people and Scotland’s social practices approach to adult literacies teaching and learning, which may help frame an understanding of what constitutes successful engagement and provision from the perspectives of young people and the providers of youth literacies opportunities. The reports also identify differences and difficulties in the merging of youth and adult literacies work, including: variation in the age range of the targeted population; the covert nature of some literacies elements; and the differing expertise/understanding of professionals working in this overlapping field (Wallace, 2004 p28–29; McNeil & Dixon, 2005 p52–54).







**Methodology and timescale**



# Methodology and timescale

## 2.1 Introduction

The project methodology comprised a combination of research approaches using postal/email survey and interviewing. This mixed methods approach was regarded as the most appropriate way to address the project aims and provide a broad picture of youth literacies provision in Scotland (the questionnaire survey) and, at the same time, give an insight into the nature of specific types of youth literacies provision (the case studies). The research comprised four main phases:

- Preparation of the inception report and instrument design
- Survey of providers
- Case studies
- Analysis, validation and reporting of findings.

## 2.2 Identifying youth literacies providers

The project team put considerable effort into identifying the relevant range of youth literacies providers across Scotland. By mid-October 2006, a project leaflet and covering letter had been emailed to ALN Partnerships informing them of the project, its aims and objectives, timescale and outputs. It requested that they provide contact details of youth literacies provision taking place in their area (a template was attached for ease of completion). Partnership responses were used to begin the construction of a database of youth literacies providers for the postal questionnaire. Email reminders were sent out to those Partnerships who did not respond by the end of October.

It was evident from early returns that responses from Partnerships varied, some included Scotland's Colleges and/or voluntary provision, whilst others did not. Some Partnerships did not identify individual projects, but referred the researchers to the ALN Co-ordinator. Partnerships were contacted again in early November to check that both college and voluntary sector provision had been considered in their return and to provide contact details for individual projects as required.

In addition to contacting ALN Partnership Co-ordinators, 29 national organisations, identified as potential youth literacies providers, were also approached. Communities of Practice in Adult Literacies (CoPAL) was also used to help ensure that the college coverage was as complete as possible. CoPAL provided assistance by identifying college contacts and also forwarding copies of the questionnaire to them.

## 2.3 Questionnaire survey

The research objectives were used as a basis for developing a questionnaire. In seeking to maximise the survey response rates and speed up the process of analysis it was decided that, wherever possible, questions should be closed. However, it was also recognised that the range of potential literacies providers and the complexity of the issues involved were better suited to open-ended questions. Therefore, the final questionnaire included a combination of closed and open questions.

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Draft copies of the questionnaire were distributed to members of the Advisory Group and Learning Connections for comment. Following suggested revisions, the questionnaire was piloted with literacies tutors in two local Glasgow projects before final revisions were made. The questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix 1 of this report.

## 2.4 Distributing the questionnaire

By 1st February 2007, 550 questionnaires had been mailed to potential youth literacies providers. In addition to completing a paper copy of the questionnaire providers could, if they so wished, complete an online version via The Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) website.

## 2.5 Questionnaire analysis

Returned questionnaires were processed and analysed using SPSS (Statistics Package for the Social Sciences). Since the overall number of responses was relatively small, analysis of the questionnaire data was primarily restricted to the production of frequencies for each question. However, in a number of instances 'cross-tabulations' were conducted to explore whether responses differed by, for example, organisational type.

Given that most respondents made additional, and in many case substantial, open comments it was decided to import this material into a separate database which would better allow responses to remain contextualised. *Due to the effects of rounding percentage totals may not add exactly to 100.*

## 2.6 Survey responses

Although the research team made a substantial effort to identify the full range of youth literacies providers across Scotland, we cannot be certain that all providers were contacted. Ninety-four completed questionnaires were returned, with just over half of these (48) completed online.

However, to calculate a response rate based on the number of questionnaires mailed (550) and the numbers (94) returned would be misleading since many of the contacts we ultimately approached were speculative and did not necessarily indicate that they actually provided youth literacies opportunities. Although the total number of providers who completed the survey was relatively small the overall quality of the responses was good. Indeed, most respondents took the time to provide answers, and in many cases quite lengthy answers, to the open questions. This in itself would suggest that the research had been successful in reaching many of those working with youth literacies. One added benefit of these fuller responses was in providing additional background material for the short-listing of providers as potential case studies, as discussed later in this report.

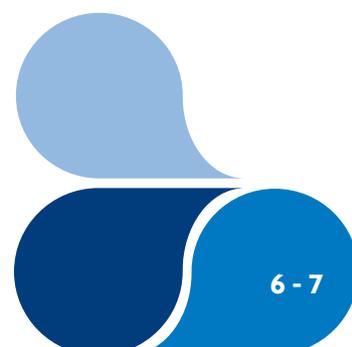


Table 2.1 Provides a summary of responses by ALN Partnership area.

ALN Partnership area	Questionnaires returned
Aberdeen	2
Aberdeenshire	6
Angus	2
Argyll & Bute	3
Clackmannanshire	–
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	1
Dumfries & Galloway	2
Dundee City	1
East Ayrshire	2
East Dunbartonshire	1
East Lothian	1
East Renfrewshire	3
Edinburgh City	3
Falkirk	6
Fife	6
Glasgow City	11
Highland	3
Inverclyde	4
Midlothian	–
Moray	3
North Ayrshire	1
North Lanarkshire	1
Orkney Islands	1
Perth & Kinross	1
Renfrewshire	4
Scottish Borders	5
Shetlands	–
South Ayrshire	2
South Lanarkshire	5
Stirling	2
West Dunbartonshire	2
West Lothian	6
Covers more than one authority	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>94</b>



### 2.6.1 Organisational responses

More than half of the responses (55%) were from individual projects, while just under a quarter (24%) were from ALN Partnerships. Table 2.2 give details of the organisations and projects that responded. While there were only two responses from national organisations, we were aware that a number of them had passed the questionnaire directly to relevant local groups, or provided the research team with local project contact details.

**Table 2.2 Responding organisations**

Responding organisation	Frequency	Percentage
Individual project	51	55
Partnership response	22	24
FE college	18	19
National organisation	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100</b>

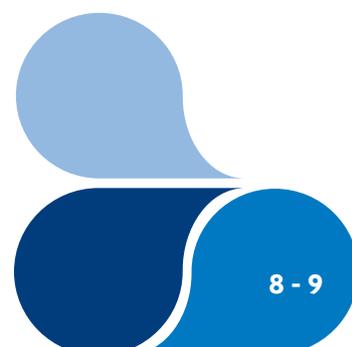
\* One anonymous response did not indicate organisation.

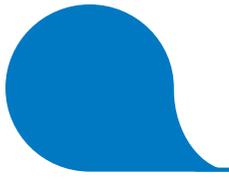
## 2.7

### Case studies

Informed by questionnaire returns and discussions with the Advisory Group, members of the research team carried out nine case studies of youth literacies practice, chosen to reflect the geographical spread and range of types of provision across the country.

In addition to allowing the research to look in more depth at issues emerging from the survey, the case studies provided an opportunity to gather the views and opinions of young people engaging with provision. To help maximise the data gathering potential from the case studies, the researchers mailed out project information leaflets and copies of the interview schedules prior to their visit. This was designed to give tutors and young people information about the research project, why their opinions mattered, and to allow them to consider their responses before the interviews. Table 2.3 gives selected details of the case studies.





**Table 2.3 Details of case studies**

1	North-eastern city	Community learning and development provision – youth work-based with a youth literacies element. 7 staff (2.5 FTE). 15 female and 9 male participants.
2	Eastern city	Community learning and development provision – adult literacies provision which includes young people. 4 tutors. 15 female and 1 male participant.
3	Western city	Voluntary provision offering a dedicated youth literacies project using Kolb’s learning cycle. 8 female and 26 male participants. Target groups include: young people in need of more choices and more chances, ex-offenders, with drug and/or alcohol problems, and young homeless.
4	Western city	College offering integrated provision – links to the Prince’s Trust. Offering skills development courses, English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL), Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) preparation, and core skills profiling.
5	Central city	Community learning and development provision; youth work-based with youth literacies element. Target groups include: ex-offenders, young people in need of more choices and more chances, young people with drug and/or alcohol problems, , learning difficulties, mental health problems and young homeless. 15 tutors (FTE). 15 female and 25 male participants.
6	Central town	Community learning and development provision – offering adult literacies provision which includes young people, and dedicated youth literacies provision. Matches young people to appropriate groups. 21 female and 26 male participants.
7	Southern town	Community learning and development provision – offering adult literacies provision which includes young people. Targets groups include young people in need of more choices and more chances, and those excluded from mainstream education. Large ICT component in work. 3 tutors. 7 female and 10 male participants.
8	Northern city with rural provision	Voluntary provision – offering integrated and dedicated literacies provision to young people experiencing homelessness. 2 literacies tutors.
9	Western city	Voluntary provision – offering dedicated and integrated literacies provision for young homeless. 1 literacies tutor.



In each case, the research team:

- i) Interviewed the project manager/organiser and up to three literacies tutors/group workers. Interviews took place in either individual or group settings, depending on local circumstances, and in some instances tutor interviews took place via telephone. Tutor interviews afforded the researchers the opportunity to collect examples from practice and explore in greater depth interviewees' views on, for example:
  - Their understanding of the term youth literacies
  - Effective engagement and recruitment methods
  - Effective youth literacies practices
  - Impact of youth literacies
  - Sustainability and barriers to development.
- ii) Conducted a focus group to interview up to 10 young people. Previous Scottish Centre for Research in Education (SCRE) experience of interviewing young people (for example, Wilson *et al*, 2004; Powney *et al*, 2000; Furlong *et al*, 1997) demonstrates that young people, including those with low self-confidence, generally respond well to a group interview setting (when supported by an able facilitator). These interviews focused on young people's engagement with the provision, their evaluations of it, and their views on the support they received there. In a few instances, individual interviews were conducted with young people receiving one-to-one support. Young people were reimbursed any 'out-of-pocket expenses' incurred by taking part in the research. Again previous research experience (for example, Tett *et al*, 2006; Powney *et al*, 2000) has shown this to be useful in encouraging participation in research.

## 2.8 Developing case study schedules

Case study schedules were initially derived from the project objectives and the LiC pack (*Literacies in the Community: The good practice framework*).<sup>5</sup> Draft schedules were distributed to Advisory Group members for comment and, following suggested revisions, piloted with a youth literacies project before final revisions were made. Interviews with tutors generally took between 45-60 minutes, while the group discussions with young people averaged 40 minutes.

## 2.9 Analysis of case studies

Discussions and interviews from the case study visits were recorded in note form and, in some cases, supplemented by electronic recordings. Interview material was analysed thematically from the notes, drawing on partial transcriptions for clarification and illustration.

## 2.10 Case study summaries

Summaries of individual case studies can be found in Appendix 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Literacies In The Community: resources for practitioners and managers* – City of Edinburgh Council 2000





**Findings from the survey of providers**

# Findings from the survey of providers

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the survey of providers. 94 providers returned questionnaires, either paper-based or electronically. Throughout this chapter findings are generally reported as percentages. This allows for easier comparison of data, especially where there is variation in the number of responses. However, where the total number of responses is below 100 (as in this survey) a degree of caution should be exercised in comparing findings, since a small variation in terms of individual responses can produce larger changes in percentage terms. *The results tables, due to the effects of rounding percentages total, may not add exactly to 100.*

The chapter is organised under the following headings:

- The nature of youth literacies provision
- Implementing the LiC pack
- Staffing
- The young people
- Providers' views on the nature of youth literacies.

## 3.2 The nature of youth literacies provision

Respondents provided information on the nature of their youth literacies provision.

### 3.2.1 Approaches to youth literacies

Providers used a number of approaches in delivering literacies to young people. The majority used integrated/'stealth' approaches to some extent (94% and 54%, respectively), while 84% offered some form of dedicated provision. See Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Approaches to youth literacies work

Approach	Percentage					N=
	Exclusively	Mainly	Partly	Planning to develop	Not at all	
Awareness raising	–	20	74	4	2	85
Dedicated	9	34	46	4	7	85
Integrated	6	52	35	6	2	89
Hidden	2	13	39	4	42	84



Responses to the use of ‘stealth’ approaches – where the literacies element is, to some extent, hidden from or not made explicit to the learner – were polarised, with just over half of the providers (54%) indicating that they used hidden approach in their delivery of literacies, while 42% reported never using this approach. It is important to note that the survey did not set out to explore providers’ understanding of what constituted ‘stealth’ so we cannot assume respondents shared the same understanding of stealth nor implemented it in similar ways.

A number of providers also made open comment on their approach to youth literacies work.

#### *Working in partnership*

Twenty or so respondents mentioned working in partnership with other agencies. For some this involved raising awareness of their services, for others it was about receiving referrals, and in some cases it was about delivering literacies work. For example:

*“Increasingly I work with other youth service providers to identify ‘literacies elements’ in their work and develop appropriate programmes around themes and issues.”*

Literacies worker (ID 40)

#### *Responding to perceived need and interest*

Literacies work that responded to the needs and interests of young people was highlighted by 26 providers. Their comments often made reference to the use of particular activities with young people or, in some instances, the importance of young people producing their own development/learning plan. For example:

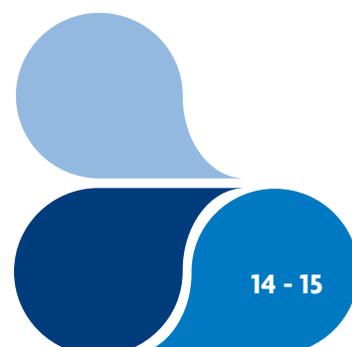
*“We conduct an initial discussion with learners to establish needs and identify strengths, and to get some idea of their particular interests to use as a ‘hook’ for learning. Thereafter comes a period of assessment leading to the negotiation of an individual learning plan. Assessment is continuous and the learning plan is organic.”*

Head of Education and Employability (ID 36)

A number of providers’ comments stressed the importance of approaches that used assessment, not only for identifying need but also for reviewing progress.

### **3.2.2 The format of youth literacies provision**

The majority of providers (77%) indicated that they offered a mixture of both group and one-to-one learning. 19% provided only group work and 4% provided only one-to-one working. Of the 70 respondents who provided a mixture of group and one-to-one learning, 64% indicated that young people preferred this combination.





### 3.2.3 The nature of literacies programmes offered to young people

Integrated literacies programmes were most likely to be of fixed length (53%), while dedicated literacies programmes were most likely to be of no fixed length (48%) (see Table 3.2). With both types of programme, only a minority of providers offered formal qualifications.

Table 3.2 Literacies programmes offered

Dedicated literacies programmes (N=90)		Integrated literacies programmes (N=90)	
of <u>no</u> fixed length	48%	of fixed length	53%
offering <u>no</u> formal qualification	38%	offering <u>no</u> formal qualification	48%
offering formal qualification	29%	of <u>no</u> fixed length	38%
of fixed length	24%	offering formal qualification	33%

### 3.2.4 Fixed duration courses and retention rates

Retention rates for fixed duration courses were high, with 36 providers recording a completion rate in the range of 76-100%, and 17 recording a completion rate in the range of 51-75%. However, 20 respondents were unable to provide an estimate of their completion rates. See Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Retention on fixed duration courses

Course length	Number offering	Frequency of young people typically completing course				Don't know
		Up to 25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	
Up to 4 weeks	16	1	2	2	8	3
Up to 3 months	38	3	1	12	13	9
Up to 6 months	13	2	1	1	5	4
More than 6 months	19	1	2	2	10	4

Moreover, there was little evidence to suggest that retention rates varied by course length; retention rates for shorter courses were similar to those of longer duration.

### 3.2.5 Courses leading to qualification

Providers who offered courses leading to a qualification typically expected young people to achieve the qualification. 72% of those offering courses leading to a qualification reported that more than half of their young learners would secure the qualification, and 37% of providers expected 80% or more of their young learners to achieve the qualification. See Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4 Percentage of young people working towards a qualification**

Working towards a qualification	Number of providers*	Working towards a qualification	Number of providers*
Up to 10%	8	61 to 70%	1
11 to 20%	2	71 to 80%	4
21 to 30%	–	81 to 90%	6
31 to 40%	–	91 to 100%	12
41 to 50%	–	Don't know	7
51 to 60%	3		

\* Total number of providers is 43, two providers gave incomplete information.

### 3.2.6 Aims of literacies work

The main aims of providers of youth literacies work were to raise the self-esteem of the young people and to increase their engagement with society. Employment-related aims followed closely, with continuing study being the least cited of the key aims. See Table 3.5.

**Table 3.5 Aims of literacies work with young people**

Aim	Percentage of providers				N=
	Key aim	Substantial aim	Minor aim	Not a formal aim	
To raise their self esteem	60	37	1	2	90
To support them into employment	41	43	10	7	91
To support them into training	38	43	10	9	90
To support them in undertaking further education	42	39	17	3	90
To increase their engagement with society	45	43	7	6	91



A considerable majority of providers regarded each of the pre-set aims as important in their literacies work. For example, 97% of respondents regarded the ‘raising of self-esteem’ as either a key or substantial aim, while 81% saw ‘supporting them in undertaking further education’ as similarly important.

*Other aims*

Thirty providers listed other formal aims in their literacies work. Nine mentioned helping to develop young people’s confidence, although others implicitly referred to this. Five providers noted young people becoming independent learners and developing more critical thinking skills as a key aim of their organisation, while five others highlighted developing young people’s social skills and their ability to work in a team.

A few providers had more specific aims to pursue. These included:

- Reducing re-offending
- Making progress on further education courses
- Increasing knowledge of health issues and access to health services
- Supporting young people to complete job applications.

**3.2.7 Recruitment methods**

The majority of providers used more than one method to recruit young people. Table 3.6 details the frequency of recruitment methods and gives an indication of their success.

**Table 3.6 Recruitment methods**

Method	Number of providers who tried method	Percentage success of recruitment method				
		High	Some	Little	None	Don't know
Word of mouth	79	41	48	9	–	3
Referrals from other agencies	76	37	45	13	1	4
Working through other providers	73	27	55	14	1	3
Through involvement with other non-literacies provision in the organisation	71	31	53	10	1	4
Circulating leaflets	70	6	31	47	11	4
Outreach work	50	22	36	28	4	10
Advertising in the media	50	4	22	48	10	16



The most successful recruitment methods appeared to be through word of mouth, referrals from other agencies and working with other providers. Media approaches seemed to have little impact at all and outreach work provided very mixed responses. 'Advertising in the media' was most likely to produce a 'don't know' response in relation to its success.

#### *Other recruitment methods*

Thirteen providers identified other methods of recruitment that they had tried. Four reported recruiting through partner agencies, while three recruited from taster sessions or open days. Two others mentioned recruiting through local employers.

### 3.3 Implementing the *Literacies in the Community (LiC)* pack

Overall, providers reported some achievement in implementing the elements for achieving a *successful youth literacies organisation* and a *successful learning programme*. Interestingly, the data suggests that providers were more likely to indicate achievement in developing a successful learning programme than they were in developing a successful *youth literacies organisation*.

#### 3.3.1 Developing successful youth literacies organisations

Providers reported success in implementing a number of organisational aspects of their provision. These included: (a) systems which allow tutors to influence the design and delivery of programmes; (b) staff remit matching their expertise, experience and commitment; and (c) supporting and encouraging self-directed learning. They reported least success in the category of having a policy informed by research, local information and national guidance.

**Table 3.7 Key elements in developing a successful youth literacies organisation**

Organisational elements	Percentage				N=
	Great success	Some success	Little success	No success	
Having an explicit policy on the nature and purpose of the literacies programme	25	55	16	4	76
Having a policy informed by research, local information and national guidance	18	53	25	4	73
Having resources which promote a positive image of literacies learning	43	48	10	–	80
Supporting and encouraging self-directed learning	48	43	10	–	80
Allocating resources in an equitable and inclusive fashion	33	55	10	1	78
Levels of staff based on analysis of need in your area	23	44	30	3	73
Systems which allow tutors to influence the design and delivery of the programme	54	38	7	–	81
The remit of all literacies staff matches their expertise, experience and commitment	53	35	13	–	80
Decision-making is based on consultation with learners, the community and partner agencies	42	51	5	3	81
Decision-making is informed by specialised experience and expertise	28	51	19	1	78
Action is taken to ensure that the range of learners matches local community aspirations and needs	15	53	28	5	76
Qualitative and quantitative information is gathered on learners' experiences in the programme	42	46	12	–	81
The difference learning is making in learners lives is evidenced and evaluated	43	49	9	–	80



### 3.3.2 The most important elements in developing a successful youth literacies organisation

Providers identified supporting and encouraging self-directed learning, evidencing the difference that learning makes to young people's lives, promoting a positive image of literacies and consultation-led decision-making as the most important elements in developing a successful youth literacies organisation, and decision-making informed by specialist experience and expertise as the least important. Table 3.8 summarises providers' views on the relative importance of LiC pack elements concerned with developing a successful youth literacies organisation.

**Table 3.8 Most important elements in developing a successful youth literacies organisation**

Organisational elements	Frequency
Supporting and encouraging self-directed learning	41
The difference learning is making in learners' lives is evidenced and evaluated	35
Having resources which promote a positive image of literacies learning	35
Decision-making is based on consultation with learners, the community and partner agencies	33
The remit of all literacies staff matches their expertise, experience and commitment	26
Systems which allow tutors to influence the design and delivery of the programme	21
Qualitative and quantitative information is gathered on learners' experiences in the programme	11
Having an explicit policy on the nature and purpose of the literacies programme	10
Having a policy informed by research, local information and national guidance	8
Allocating resources in an equitable and inclusive fashion	7
Levels of staff based on analysis of need in your area	7
Action is taken to ensure that the range of learners matches local community aspirations and needs	7
Decision-making is informed by specialised experience and expertise	3

### 3.3.3 Developing successful learning programmes

Providers reported success in implementing a number of aspects of their *learning programmes*, including ensuring that learning is presented as a positive and enjoyable experience, that individual needs are recognised and responded to, that programmes offer choices and are negotiated, and that approaches are relevant to learners' chosen contexts and goals. Some success was reported for efforts to contextualise knowledge and skills based on real life situations. Providers reported least success in developing critical competence, offering pro-active guidance, making access prompt and easy, and encouraging lifelong learning. See Table 3.9.

**Table 3.9 Key elements in developing a successful youth literacies programme**

Learning programme elements	Percentage				N=
	Great success	Some success	Little success	No success	
Access is prompt and easy	43	52	5	–	84
The programme is open to potential learners with needs and aspirations in any area of life	47	46	5	2	86
Perceived stigma attached to literacy and numeracy is challenged	45	48	7	–	83
Approaches are relevant to learners' chosen contexts and goals	62	36	2	–	84
Literacies programme is negotiated and offers choices to learners	63	25	12	–	85
Preferred learning styles are identified and respected	55	40	5	–	83
Interaction and dialogue between learners are actively promoted and purposeful	54	38	8	–	84
Learning options are responsive to diverse needs and aspirations	51	44	5	–	84
Literacies learning with young people is based on everyday real life situations	56	42	2	–	84
Knowledge, skills and understanding are developed in context	57	42	1	–	82
Learning is presented as a positive and enjoyable experience	70	29	1	–	84
Lifelong learning is promoted	49	43	7	–	83
Guidance is pro-active so learners reflect on learning, make informed choices and plan for progression	41	49	10	–	79
Competence and confidence as a lifelong learner are developed	43	47	10	–	83



**Table 3.9 Key elements in developing a successful youth literacies programme – cont'd**

Learning programme elements	Percentage				N=
	Great success	Some success	Little success	No success	
Support is inclusive, so individual strengths and needs are recognised and responded to	66	32	2	–	84
Feedback informs the design and delivery of programmes	55	36	9	–	86
Learning is presented as a self-directed lifelong process where participation in the programme is a stage	35	51	14	–	81
Confidence and competence as a critical user of literacies are developed	40	51	9	–	82
Confidence in transferring learning to new roles and contexts is developed	46	46	8	–	85

### 3.3.4 The most important elements in developing a successful learning programme

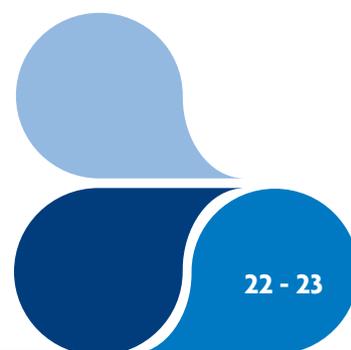
Providers identified the following factors as the most important elements in developing a successful youth literacies learning programme:

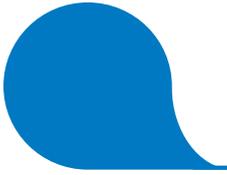
- Approaches that are relevant to learners' chosen goals and contexts
- Learning as a positive and enjoyable experience that is, based on everyday, real life situations
- Prompt and easy access
- De-stigmatising literacies
- Offering negotiated choices to learners.

The least successful elements were felt to be:

- Promoting lifelong learning
- Pormative feedback on programmes
- Pro-active guidance to enable learners to make informed choices.

Table 3.10 summarises providers' views on the relative importance of LiC pack elements concerned with developing a successful learning programme.





**Table 3.10 Most important elements in developing successful youth literacies provision**

<b>Learning programme elements</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Approaches are relevant to learners' chosen contexts and goals	32
Learning is presented as a positive and enjoyable experience	30
Access is prompt and easy	24
Literacies learning with young people is based on everyday real-life situations	20
Perceived stigma attached to literacies learning is challenged	17
Literacies programme is negotiated and offers choices to learners	17
Knowledge, skills and understanding are developed in context	11
Confidence in transferring learning to new roles and contexts is developed	11
Confidence and competence as a critical user of literacies are developed	8
Preferred learning styles are identified and respected	8
Learning options are responsive to diverse needs and aspirations	8
Interaction and dialogue between learners are actively promoted and purposeful	7
Support is inclusive so individual strengths and needs are recognised and responded to	7
Competence and confidence as a lifelong learner are developed	7
Learning is presented as a self-directed lifelong process where participation in the programme is a stage	6
The programme is open to potential learners with needs and aspirations in any area of life	6
Guidance is pro-active so learners reflect on learning, make informed choices and plan for progression	4
Feedback informs the design and delivery of programmes	4
Lifelong learning is promoted	3

Providers most frequently identified 'approaches which are relevant to learners' contexts and goals', 'the presentation of learning as a positive and enjoyable experience' and 'easy and prompt access' as the most important elements in developing a successful learning programme. On the other hand, 'pro-active guidance so learners can reflect on learning, make informed choices and plan for progression', 'having feedback which informs the design and delivery of programmes' and 'the promotion of lifelong learning' were reported as less important.



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## 3.4

### Staffing

#### 3.4.1 Numbers involved in youth literacies

Eighty-four providers gave details of the total number of staff working on youth literacies in their organisation – this ranged from 1 to 151. To some extent this range reflected the different status of respondents, some answered on behalf of small individual projects, while others represented ALN Partnership or national organisational responses. The most frequently reported scenario was one in which two staff members were employed to work on young people’s literacies.

#### 3.4.2 Full-time equivalence (FTE)

The number of staff involved in youth literacies does not reveal how much staff time is actually dedicated to the work. To provide some insights into this we asked respondents to calculate the FTE of staff engaged in youth literacies. On average, 2.5 FTE staff were engaged in youth literacies (based on 60 responses).

## 3.5

### The profile of staff working in youth literacies

Based on information from this survey the typical youth literacies worker is female, works full-time (though not necessarily full-time in youth literacies), is aged between 41 and 50, has an ALN qualification and has less than five years’ experience in literacies work.

#### 3.5.1 Sex

Almost two-thirds of youth literacies staff were female (63%) (based on 266 staff profiles).

#### 3.5.2 Age

Youth literacies staff were fairly evenly spread across age groups. Of 237 staff profiles, 34% were aged 41 to 50; 27% were aged 31 to 40; 20% were over 51; and the remaining 19% were 30 or younger.

#### 3.5.3 Capacity of employment

The majority of staff engaged in youth literacies work were employed full-time (52%) (though not necessarily employed full-time on youth literacies). 42% were part-time and the remaining 6% were employed on a voluntary basis (based on 262 staff profiles.)

#### 3.5.4 Length of experience in literacies work

Just under half (46%) of the staff had been employed in literacies work for 5 years or less. 40% had 5 years’ or more experience, while 14% had less than 1 year’s experience (based on 259 staff profiles).



### 3.5.5 Qualifications

Each electronic questionnaire allowed respondents to record information on up to six members of staff although those who completed paper based questionnaires could also provide data on any additional staff.

The majority of staff working in youth literacies had some form of relevant qualification only 5% were recorded as having 'no qualification'; 45% had an ALN qualification; 24% had a youth work qualification; and 45% had some other relevant qualification (based on 257 staff profiles).

## 3.6 The young people engaging in literacies learning

Young people aged 16 to 19 were more frequently engaged with than those aged 20-25. Young males were the most commonly engaged group, while older males were least frequently engaged. See Table 3.11.

**Table 3.11 Young people engaged with**

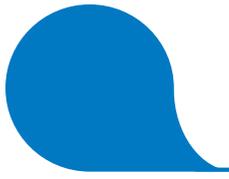
Sex and age of young people	Number engaged with	Number of providers
Males 16 to 19	1,167	74
Females 16 to 19	942	72
Females 20 to 25	532	72
Males 20 to 25	492	73

### 3.6.1 Target groups

61% of providers targeted particular groups of young people: those in need of more choices and more chances – 'young men' and 'young women' being the three most frequently cited. 78% of those targeting young people in need of more choices more chances indicated either great or partial success in their targeting. At the other end of the scale, there was less targeting and least success in engaging with ex-offenders, those with English as a second language, refugees/asylum seekers and LGBT. See Table 3.12.

Table 3.12 Youth target groups and success in engagement

Target group	Number of providers	Percentage success in engaging group				
		Great	Part	Little	None	Don't know
Young people in need of more choices and more chances	45	29	49	9	4	9
Young men	39	36	46	5	3	10
Young women	39	33	49	8	3	8
Youth at risk of offending	32	16	47	22	3	13
Excluded from mainstream education	31	23	48	19	–	10
Learners with learning difficulties or disabilities	30	33	30	10	10	17
Young people with drug/alcohol problems	29	21	45	17	3	14
Young homeless	28	18	43	21	11	7
Young people in training	28	32	25	25	7	11
Young parents	27	22	44	15	11	7
Young offenders	26	15	35	35	8	8
Mental health difficulties	25	32	32	8	16	12
Young people in employment	22	18	32	27	18	5
Ex-offenders	17	24	18	41	6	12
English not first language	14	14	21	21	29	14
Refugees/asylum seekers	13	8	8	15	46	23
Minority ethnic groups	12	8	25	33	17	17
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT)	11	9	46	–	9	36



### 3.7 Providers' views on the nature of youth literacies

This section summarises the findings from a number of open questions aimed at providing additional insights into the nature of youth literacies work in Scotland. Given the overlapping nature of many comments made by providers, we have grouped the material under the following questions:

- What are providers' understandings of youth literacies?
- What constitutes effective youth literacies practice?
- How do providers evaluate their practice?

In total, just under 400 comments were received regarding these questions.

#### 3.7.1 What are providers' understandings of the term 'youth literacies'?

The responses relating to providers' understanding of 'youth literacies' suggest that it encompasses the development of a broad range of personal and communicative skills through the 'hook' or medium of activities that are of particular interest and relevance to young people, so that they can become active, confident participants in the different areas of life as highlighted in *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (ALNIS) 2001*.

Respondents' definitions or understanding of the term 'youth literacies' clustered into four broad categories that focused on: 1) the age range; 2) skills; 3) the outcomes of provision; or 4) the particular processes that give youth literacies a distinctive character.

##### *Age range*

Sixteen responses offered explanations that defined provision primarily in relation to the age range of the participants, with the majority of these providers providing no further detail on literacies. They wrote of '*literacies that are relevant to young people*', '*literacies provision for people 16-25 years old*', and '*improving and building on literacies skills in those under 25*'. Although some mentioned the importance of provision being relevant to young people, this cluster of responses did not appear to offer any insight into the distinctive nature of the literacies work itself.

##### *Skills-related*

Sixty of the responses contained explanations relating to some aspect of skills development. They ranged from narrow, traditional versions of technical literacies skills, to more expansive notions of the broad range of communicative skills required to achieve goals and fulfil ambitions in life.



Twenty-three respondents spoke only of youth literacies being about the development of functional, core skills. They suggested *'developing reading, writing and numeracy skills'*, *'communication, numeracy, ESOL and ICT skills'*, *'support with reading, writing and numbers'*, and developing young people's core skills. 26 responses, however, offered a more expansive interpretation of the range of skills that they saw as defining youth literacies. These included:

- Confidence
- Self-esteem
- Openness to new experiences and the ability to reflect upon them
- Forming positive relationships with others
- Negotiating effectively
- Working together
- Developing 'transitional skills' outwith a classroom environment
- Decision-making
- Awareness of text and genre
- And the skill and desire to continue learning.

Most of these contributions defined youth literacies and hence literacies learners positively. They spoke of 'building on', 'enhancing', and 'developing'. However, a small number of participants framed their responses in terms of what young people lacked, which echoes the sort of deficit approach to adult literacies that the Scottish approach seeks to counter. A number of comments mentioned *'difficulties or needing support with reading and/or writing'*. Whilst these definitions will undoubtedly apply to some young literacies learners, the language used to describe them represents a limiting and somewhat negative description. Whilst it was encouraging that only 8 out of 76 understood this to be what 'youth literacies' means, it is worth noting that these responses were compiled by staff who have influential coordinating/management roles within their respective organisations.



#### *Outcome-related*

The third category of definitions focused on the purposes or outcomes of youth literacies learning. In other words, they perceived youth literacies as a tool or vehicle for the achievement of a range of outcomes that would enhance the lives of young people and of society in general. 25 providers defined 'youth literacies' as work with young people that would enhance their quality of life and their relationships within families and with the wider world, that would foster greater participation and inclusion in society. Several described it as helping young people to become 'effective citizens', to get 'the most from society', and to 'engage in society's opportunities without the need to feel undervalued or excluded'.

Others talked about enabling young people 'to have a voice', to 'express themselves [and their views] more clearly', 'to realise their potential', 'to share the resources and joy that are available', and to 'participate fully and happily in their families, communities, workplaces, places of learning and whatever'. So literacies learning here is a means to an end; the end point being engaged, articulate and confident young people.

#### *Process-related*

The final category, mentioned by 14 of the respondents, relates to specific processes that they saw as defining the distinctiveness of youth literacies. They felt that it should be informal, 'easy, realistic and fun', 'flexible and open', 'using innovative projects', using topics that are 'young people friendly, relevant to youth culture and issues, and therefore of interest to young people'. These, they suggested are the 'hooks to engage young people who are normally sceptical and disenfranchised from education'. Examples of such interests were: chat rooms, the internet, graffiti, texting, Bebo, cartoons, comics, fashion, piercing, skateboarding, drug culture, outdoor activities, sport in general and music.

### **3.7.2 What constitutes effective youth literacies practice?**

Providers' comments on what constitutes effective youth literacies practice loosely clustered into seven categories that focused on: 1) content of the programme; 2) programme atmosphere; 3) learning and teaching approaches; 4) staff characteristics; 5) progress; 6) outcomes; or 7) holistic definitions.



#### *Content of the programme*

Many providers' comments suggested that if the content of programmes is not appropriately geared to young people they will be unlikely to participate and gain the benefits that programmes offer. Respondents suggested that programme content should:

- be relevant and tap into youth culture, issues, interests and have a youth outlook
- build confidence and self-esteem
- emerge from listening and responding to young people
- be youth-led where they can control their own learning
- have clear, attainable goals
- arise from and feed into real-life contexts
- be flexible.

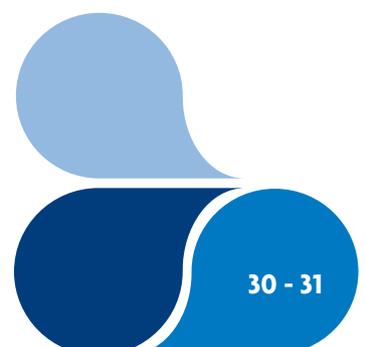
#### *Programme atmosphere*

According to many respondents, programmes should create a positive, fun experience; in contrast to the negative learning experiences that many will have had in the past. For example, a community learning officer (ID41) commented:

*"It must be delivered in a way that is as far removed as possible from school. Needs to address literacy needs in as fun a way as possible. Has to have immediacy and be informal to engage young people."*

Other provider comments suggested that programmes should:

- be positive, fun and enthusiastic
- be a contrast to formal schooling
- be positive and encouraging
- echo young people's environments and 'comfort zones'
- have equal relationships
- be celebratory.





### *Learning and teaching approaches*

Generally providers' comments stressed the importance of informal, experiential learning delivered by staff who approached young people on equal terms. Many comments suggested that learning and teaching approaches should:

- be informal and experiential
- be a slow, 'toe-dipping' into adult literacies
- be social practice (contextualised)
- incorporate ongoing reflection, recording and review of achievements, no matter how small
- integrate/embed literacies learning within youth activities.

A number of these respondents also gave details of how they incorporated ICT into their practice. It was evident that technology was being used in many different ways. For some, it was about recognising that applications of ICT such as mobile phones were a major part of young people's lives and could be used as a means for engaging young people with literacies. Others documented the use of computers and various software packages, and noted how these provided an interest for some young people.

### *Staff characteristics – An employment development advisor (ID2 commented )*

*“Committed staff who listen to learners and are non-judgemental – after all these young people are not in school anymore. Staff who can develop resources and materials to use. Staff who recognise the smallest things as progress.”*

According to providers, staff should:

- be committed and relate well to young people
- be good listeners
- be non-judgemental
- understand young people's issues
- be able to develop quality resource materials
- recognise very small progress steps
- be flexible
- be trained in youth work and/or specialist skills, including literacies.



### *Making progress*

A number of providers commented on the importance of progression in effective youth literacies practice. Effective practice should:

- encourage young people to think of progression very early in their programmes
- encourage ongoing reflection on how to further develop the skills they are currently building
- establish personal links with key staff in progression organisations
- provide attainable, first-steps certificates
- celebrate all progress steps, no matter how small.

### *Outcomes*

A number of comments were made regarding the relationship between outcomes and effective practice. Providers suggested that young people should be able to:

- perform at levels demanded in work
- apply their learning in their everyday lives
- have and use their voice
- actively participate in society
- communicate, negotiate, and live and work with others
- continue to learn.



### *Holistic definitions*

Several respondents gave broad definitions of what they saw as effective practice, the key elements of which are summarised below.

Effective practice:

- Involves a genuine partnership between learners and workers. This can be difficult to quantify, particularly if there is none of the usual tangible outcomes in terms of jobs and money, or entry into the formal education sector.
- Makes full use of cutting-edge resources such as ICT and digital technologies, music, art and sport – youth literacies has the potential to reach young people who may not be inclined to take up provision delivered using more traditional methods.
- Engages young adults in activities which increase their confidence in using words. It is very important that the activity brings about a development or progression in skills and confidence.
- Engages young people in learning that captures their interest and motivates them to learn more, recognises their progress, how their skills are developing and the potential of where this might lead them.

### **3.7.3 Evaluating youth literacies**

Providers gave details of the methods and/or approaches used in evaluating their work with young people. In many cases it was evident that they used a number of different approaches in their evaluations, although evaluations were normally carried out by providers themselves, rather than by a third party.

Most commonly, providers used Individual or Group Learning Plans (ILPs/GLPs) in their evaluations. Although ILPs were the most frequently cited evaluation approach, other evaluative tools were also used. A number of respondents noted the use of questionnaires/schedules and group discussion with young people, while others made reference to the use of a reflective diary (in a few cases this was recorded by video or audio recorder). In some instances, respondents also gave some indication of the stage and/or frequency of the use of such methods. Typically, respondents carried out their evaluations at the end of a course or session, although this was not always the case. A few respondents mentioned the use of general and or informal feedback from young people in their responses, while a few others noted the use of one-to-one interviews with young people.



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### 3.8

#### Concluding comments

Youth literacies provision in Scotland is provided by local authorities, the voluntary sector, Scotland's Colleges and by private providers. It takes place in formal education settings and in community settings. It is delivered in group and one-to-one settings and often involves some measure of hidden literacies work. However, it is organised and wherever it takes place there are a number of elements that providers consistently identify as important if it is to be successful. Chief among these is the need to recognise and meet the needs of young people, deliver literacies in an accessible and contextualised manner and involve staff who are positive and respectful towards the young people, as well as flexible in their approach.





**Case study findings**



## Case study findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents thematic findings from case study visits. Nine youth literacies initiatives across Scotland were selected as case studies for the project from those organisations which had indicated, in their questionnaire responses, a willingness to take part as a case study. Case studies were chosen to give both a geographical spread and to reflect different types of youth literacies provision. (Summaries of individual case studies are contained in Appendix 2.)

The case studies allowed for an exploration of some of the issues and findings which emerged -in the questionnaire survey. However, and perhaps of greater importance, they provided the opportunity to document young people's opinions on the provision they experienced and the impact of their involvement in other areas of their lives.

Cases were not selected because they necessarily exemplified effective practice, but rather because they represented examples of current youth literacies practice in Scotland. Although each project included learners within the relevant age range (16 to 25), several were not exclusively targeted at this age group. Therefore, it was not always possible to confine the focus group interviews to 16 to 25 year olds.

In each project the researcher sought to interview one or more staff members, and conduct a discussion group with young people involved in the literacies provision. In a few instances individual interviews were conducted with young people who had attended literacies learning. The research instruments were derived from the research objectives and structured around LiC. Interviews with tutors generally took between 45 and 60 minutes, while discussions with young people averaged 30 to 40 minutes.

### 4.2 The organisations

Seven of the organisations specifically targeted very vulnerable young people, many of whom were either homeless or had addiction and/or behavioural or health-related issues. They all took referrals from partner agencies such as social work, health or housing. One of the projects aimed at young people in need of more choices and more chances made attendance a compulsory part of its programme for those deemed to be in need, but for the rest enrolment was voluntary whether the young people had been referred or not. Only one was based in a college and of the eight remaining community-based initiatives, only one classified itself as primarily a literacies project. The remainder integrated their literacies work into the core work of the organisation, which for many concerned life and communication skills. Several were upfront about the literacies elements of their work, but the majority admitted to adopting a more hidden approach to literacies. Four worked exclusively in groups with the young people, whereas the others combined a mix of group and one-to-one provision which included learners outwith the age range of the research.



All of the projects spoke emphatically about the need to de-stigmatise adult literacies work, and the strategies they used to portray it in a positive manner. Three aspects of work emerged as critical de-stigmatising factors, they were:

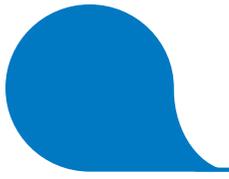
- the activities
- methods and modes of teaching and learning
- staff/learner relationships.

Each of these areas will be examined in the sections below.

Only one project did not employ staff with some level of ALN qualification. However, it provided all of its staff with initial training in working with, and developing the skills of, young people. Only one case had staff with any expertise in learning difficulties, the others referred young people on to other services if they had specific needs.

### 4.3 Getting young people involved

Although all of the projects took referrals from partner agencies, the 'hooks' for getting young people involved were the activities they offered which had an appeal to the young people, or an end goal that articulated with their ambitions. Popular 'hooks' were ICT, media activities, visits to places of interest, and outdoor pursuits and activities. Examples of these included digital photography, video-making, music, using MP3 players, creative arts, magazine-making, local visits to places of interest (for example, Science Centre and family history projects), and visits to the cinema. End-goal activities included those that would improve young people's health, employment, housing and educational prospects. All again stressed the importance of presenting a positive image of both the work and the young people, stressing their potential and their skills, not their deficits or needs, though two projects did refer to initial needs analysis sessions. Several talked about the importance of creating relaxed, informal settings that young people would feel comfortable in, and using 'bribes' of refreshments, activity visits, etc. Interestingly, the young people recognised them as 'bribes' and, at the same time, admitted to being coaxed in by them.



#### 4.4 Engaging and sustaining learner involvement

All providers offered a *flexible choice of activities* inside and outside the learning centre. These were negotiated with, and ultimately chosen by, the learners; although two providers offered absolute free choice in the light of their specific aims and the expertise of available staff. ICT, outdoor pursuits and visits appeared to be very popular choices, particularly when the young people selected them themselves.

*Flexible methods of teaching and learning* also helped to engage the learners, especially where there was the opportunity to pursue individualised learning alongside group work. The learners spoke highly of this flexibility in enabling them to work towards the attainment of their own goals, and to adapt the pace and style of the learning to suit their requirements. However, both staff and learners highlighted the importance of group and paired activities, with staff stressing the social, emotional and cognitive benefits that accrued from them. Discussion was not just seen as interesting, it was also recognised by staff as an effective tool in developing social, team and communicative skills, and one that had enabled the learners to see the world and others in it in a different light. Many of the projects used regular group discussion spaces as periods of critical reflection on progress and achievement. The learners spoke of their value in helping them to recognise everything they had accomplished, no matter how little or how much they had moved towards achieving their goals.

*Relationships* emerged as a third crucial factor in sustaining the engagement of the learners: relationships between staff and young people primarily; but the quality of relationships between learners was also cited as an important factor. In almost all of the case studies both staff and young people talked about the importance of establishing trust and respect. For some this was a matter of not being judgemental for others it was about being treated as equals, as adults not children; and for some, it was also about openness and honesty. For the majority identified the projects as being completely different from school, where most felt that these attributes had been missing and they had been judged negatively.

#### 4.5 Facilitating learning and achievement

In addition to the factors discussed above, all but one of the projects specifically mentioned the importance of learners' progress files in indicating achievement and developing learners' awareness of their own thinking and learning styles. The young people frequently referred to their progress and to regular discussions using them, which they said had helped them to realise what they have achieved and, therefore, could achieve in the future. As one young person said: "*I look at it and think, did I do all that?*". Nearly all providers presented the learners with their files at the end of their course of learning and many did this as part of a celebration event where, sometimes, the young people spoke publicly about their learning and achievements. Many also presented the learners with certificates of achievement that appeared to be highly prized by the young people. Only a few offered formally-accredited programmes and, of these, only one (college) did so with all the learners – the rest offered them only to selected learners who they felt were able to achieve them and who expressed an interest.

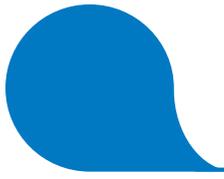


Guidance during and at the end of the programmes was seen to be an important element of the work of most projects. Because so many of the young people were vulnerable this guidance included not just educational progression but also next steps in helping them to take greater control of their lives. Some were encouraged and supported in joining schemes such as the *Duke of Edinburgh* or *New Futures*, some into taking on supported tenancies, some into employment schemes and others into college courses. All these cases demonstrate the crucial role of interagency partnership working in building on the achievements of learners, and of continuing to offer support through difficult transitional stages in their lives.

#### 4.6 The impact of learning

Because the young people interviewed were currently attending the courses, most of the differences that their learning had made to them related to immediate, personal changes, rather than to the longer-term impacts on community, employment or education, which may be more evident as time passes. Nearly all talked about the confidence they had gained in themselves, as individuals and as learners. They talked about improvements in their practical literacy and numeracy skills; about reading and writing more; about being able to deal with forms, CVs, bureaucracy, etc.; and about their newly-acquired confidence with ICT. In addition to these functional skills, many described feeling more motivated to do things (even getting up in the mornings), more able to communicate with family members and other adults, being less aggressive and more tolerant of others. Several cited seeing the world and people within it differently. The group working had enabled them to develop new friendships, which for some had helped sever their dependency on drugs or alcohol.

A few young people were able to cite very specific and tangible changes to their lives: some had obtained jobs or places at college, and one group spoke of how their employers had noticed improvements in their skills and attitudes at work. One young woman was engaged in community activities through taking play sacks to community 'Mother and Toddler' groups.



## 4.7 Respondents' perspectives on youth literacies provision

Until now this chapter has thematically presented tutors' and learners' experiences of youth literacies provision. Table 4.1 departs from this approach and details the perspectives of case study respondents on what constitute the key components of youth literacies provision.

**Table 4.1 Key elements of youth literacies provision**

Tutors highlighted	Young people highlighted
Promoting a positive image of literacies The need to respond to young people's interests Guiding rather than leading groups Starting where 'young people are at' The important role of other agencies in referring/recruiting young people to literacies provision The importance of other agencies referring young people for specialist support  The importance of adopting an opportunistic and flexible approach to their work The need to build on young people's existing skills Tailoring literacies curricula and developing materials as required The importance of supporting the development of young people's confidence The need for a range of skills and experience in the staff group Provision that is not like school Provision that is fun Building positive relationships with the young people The use of Individual and Group Learning Plans and regular evaluation activities Adopting a range of approaches: dedicated, integrated, and undisclosed (hidden) to suit particular client groups The importance of 'hooks', activities, methods of working that will attract young people – this would include ICT	The importance of staff being non-judgemental Being taken seriously  Having their ideas and input adopted Building on their interests Their growing self confidence  The importance of discussion groups in supporting the development of their self-confidence Some young people are unaware of 'doing' literacies The importance of being able to work at their own pace The importance of having friendly staff  Helping and supporting each other  Provision that is not like school  Having fun and enjoyment in activities The need for respect between tutors and young people



Significantly, the table clearly demonstrates a high level of agreement between the perspectives of tutors and those of the young people they engage with, regarding the important elements of provision.

#### 4.8 Concluding comments

The very positive work and enthusiastic commitment of both staff and young people has to be acknowledged. The vast majority of these case studies provided evidence that young people, even the most vulnerable and disaffected, can have positive learning experiences that give them the confidence to work towards their goals and continue to learn. The testimony from those involved does, however, indicate that certain factors have to be in place, and/or strategies adopted, to enable them to do so. We have categorised these as relating to the *activities*, methods of *teaching and learning*, and staff/learner *relationships*, each of which has to be highly attuned to the situations and dispositions of the young people. Equally evident as a success factor is the subtle embedding of the literacies within the activities, because it was the activities, especially ICT-related ones, which provided the successful 'hooks' to engagement, rather than the literacies themselves.

The projects also demonstrated the importance of close partnership working with other support organisations as a means of recruiting learners and providing specialist support. This was also important as a source of continuing support and learning for young people when they move on from their literacies programmes, especially important for those who were undergoing a difficult transitional period in their lives. Community-based projects appeared to be best able to develop such relationships.

Finally, the case studies highlighted the importance of regularly-used individual progress files that the learners compiled with the help of staff, and which they could keep on departure from the programme. These files appeared to be most effective when they recorded even the smallest progress steps, and were used as an ongoing reflective tool at individual and group levels. They also showed the value of combining group work activities with individualised work, as and when appropriate.





## **Conclusions**



# Conclusions

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses some of the key findings from this research and poses a number of questions. It also concerns itself with the lessons for Scotland from the recent NRDC research project, *'Success factors in informal learning: Young adults' experiences of literacy, language and numeracy'* by Bethia McNeil and Linda Dixon, NIACE/NYA (2005).

## 5.2 Mapping youth literacies

This survey attracted 94 respondents. However, we would expect the actual number of groups providing youth literacies to be greater than this. Youth literacies with the 16-25 age group, works to the definition of adult literacies from the Adult Literacies and Numeracy in Scotland report (ALNIS), however some practitioners may not be aware of this and may be working to a different definition (a fact verified by responses to the questionnaire survey itself, and reported in Chapter 3). Youth literacies practice has adopted the definition of adult literacies and adapted practice to suit young people. Although the research team, with the support of the Advisory Group, produced a questionnaire and covering documentation designed to appeal to as wide an audience of potential youth literacies providers as possible, we recognised that some practitioners might not reply as they did not see themselves as providers of youth literacies learning.

Given the range and variation in youth literacies providers across the country, it is clear that nine case studies could not fully encapsulate the full picture. However, what the case studies did provide was an indication of the processes, modes of working, and stakeholders' views on the benefits of youth literacies provision.

This mapping exercise has revealed that there is a substantial variety and amount of youth literacies work taking place in Scotland. It can be exclusively aimed at young people, or can be provided as part of a traditional adult literacies programme, and takes place in a range of community and further education settings. It is provided by traditional youth services, as well as by community learning and development services and voluntary providers. It takes place in one-to-one and group work situations, and can take an integrated, dedicated or hidden approach to literacies. It can be explicitly set up to target particular groups (for example, young people in need of more choices and more chances, or young ex-offenders), or can be open to all young people.

Further, it includes programmes which offer accreditation and those which do not, programmes of fixed duration and those which are open-ended. In short, youth literacies in Scotland is complex and features many different types of practice. Irrespective of the location and type of provision, the research underlines the importance of capitalising on young people's interests and delivering literacies to them in an appropriate setting, at a suitable pace and by the 'right' staff.

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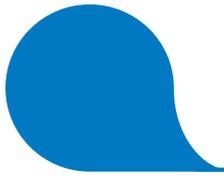
### 5.3 Youth literacies staff

Whether the literacies element of provision is made explicit (usually in dedicated or one-to-one provision), or is undisclosed/hidden (as is more often the case with integrated/embedded provision), what comes across very strongly from both the survey and case studies is that the work is supported by a large number of dedicated and committed tutors. Like the wide variety of *provision* discussed above, youth literacies practitioners work with many different approaches. Although most of the survey respondents worked full-time, we also identified a substantial number involved on a part-time or voluntary basis. Staff were from a range of age groups, but young people seemed to feel that tutors' attitudes towards them were more important than whether they were of a similar age to them. Age does not automatically confer acceptance and respect between young people and their tutors, but is seen as a key element in youth literacies and one more likely to be achieved when literacies staff are enthusiastic, sensitive, sympathetic and knowledgeable, and have an appropriate range of skills and resources at their disposal.

### 5.4 Recruiting and retaining young people

Many youth literacies workers recognised that the voluntary nature of their provision and the vulnerability of many of the young people they sought to engage with were important considerations when it came to the recruitment and retention of young learners. Tutors stressed the importance of recruitment and referral of young people via partner agencies who had already established relationships with them. Providers also stressed the need to have 'hooks' to initially attract young people through their doors; these often took the form of outdoor activities or accessing and using ICT.

Tutors suggested that successful engagement of young people required flexible and responsive approaches which can quickly recognise and adapt to the developing and changing interests and needs of young people. To this end, many of the tutors we encountered in the case studies could be regarded as innovators and pioneers, constantly seeking to identify and develop new resources and respond to any new interests expressed by young people. Indeed several tutors spoke of improvising work on a weekly basis to ensure the continued interest of young people.



## 5.5 Delivering youth literacies through non-disclosure

The survey suggested that a majority of literacies providers had used undisclosed (hidden) practice in some form and measure when delivering literacies to young people. Case study discussions revealed that some staff felt this approach was justified (at least initially) because of their perception that the young people were vulnerable and lacked confidence – a lack of confidence that would discourage attendance if the young people were aware of the literacies component. However, it was also apparent that tutors did not adopt a ‘one size fits all’ approach either. In several interviews, staff suggested that their initial impressions of young people had led them to decide whether to be more or less overt in their descriptions of the literacies element in the provision, and to make decisions about the point in the programme at which they should begin to let young people know that they were engaged in literacies learning. For these staff at least, undisclosed/hidden literacies was not used as a general rule, but was dependent on perceptions of the young people and their likelihood of engaging with the provision if the literacies element was explicit. A question for future investigation may be: *Do tutors’ perceptions of young people’s status and needs justify the use of undisclosed/hidden approaches?*

## 5.6 The role of ICT in youth literacies

ICT emerges from this research as an important factor in much youth literacies work and clearly has the potential to contribute to literacies in a number of different ways.

Both tutors and young people recognised that ICT can be an important ‘hook’ in encouraging participation in literacies provision. Many young people are very familiar with aspects of ICT in their everyday lives, for example, using mobile phones, cash machines, computers, DVD and video recorders, and accessing the Internet. Indeed a number of staff remarked that young people often had better ICT skills than they did. Importantly then, using ICT in literacies provision can provide a ‘leveller’ between staff and the young people. It can also support the growth of young people’s self-esteem (an important aim for 94% of survey respondents) by focusing on the use of familiar technology and acknowledging existing skills and abilities, without involving any element of stigma. Further, the use of ICT may reduce the reliance on the traditional tools of pen and paper: several young people indicated that they much preferred to use the computer for writing than a pen and paper.

For many staff the Internet was regarded as an important source of literacies materials – in a number of cases staff spoke of downloading and adapting ‘freeware’ material. Given staff perceptions of the need to respond quickly to young people’s initial and evolving interests, such a resource (with potentially minimal cost implications) could prove invaluable.

ICT can be a creative medium and a number of literacies providers reported using DVD, video-making equipment and digital stills photography to allow young people to realise their creative potential, while at the same time supporting their literacies needs. Moreover, using ICT in such a fashion was felt by staff and young people to help distance literacies provision from young people’s previous experiences of learning.



ICT was also recognised by some staff for its role in supporting young people with learning difficulties. For example, a predictive word-completion facility on word processing packages can reduce the difficulties experienced by those with dyslexia, while switch controls can allow computer access for those with limited mobility.

ICT can, as many have already discovered, be an important element of youth literacies provision. A question for future investigation may be: *if we are to realise the full potential of ICT in literacies provision what, if any, are the training and resourcing requirements?*

## 5.7 NRDC research

Finally, we turn our attention to the third aim of this research: exploring the lessons for Scotland from the recent NRDC research project, *'Success factors in informal learning: young adults' experiences of literacy, language and numeracy'* by Bethia McNeil and Linda Dixon, NIACE/NYA (2005).

In addressing this aim, the researchers firstly set out to determine the extent to which each of the major findings from the NRDC research were comparable with findings emerging from the Scottish research. In order to do this, a number of relevant questions were incorporated into the survey questionnaire and interview topic guides. Appendix 3 presents each of the NRDC findings alongside findings and comment from the Scottish research. This comparison clearly demonstrates that there are a number of important similarities and differences between the NRDC and Scottish research findings.

Similarities:

- There is broad agreement on the importance of engaging young people's interest with appropriate 'hooks' and rewards
- Both research studies highlight the greater likelihood of engaging with young people aged 16-19, rather than those aged 20-25
- Practitioners in both studies were more likely to concentrate on literacy rather than numeracy
- The notion of short-term fixed-period funding for literacies provision was recognised as a difficulty in both the NRDC and Scottish research. However, in Scotland staff generally felt that projects/programmes were adequately resourced over their life span. This was not the case in the NRDC research where access to resources was also regarded as problematic
- While both pieces of research highlighted the importance of engaging with young people in need of more choices and more chances, it is clear that the emphasis in Scotland is more generally focused on engaging with vulnerable young people than working towards formal employment or accreditation.



Strong differences emerged in a number of areas. These were generally in relation to accreditation, progression and assessment. This should come as no surprise given the greater emphasis placed on initial assessment and formal accreditation in England. The NRDC research offers a number of findings which are relevant to the Scottish situation, particularly in relation to tutor/student relationships and levels of engagement generally. However, the NRDC research becomes less relevant to Scotland in relation to structural and policy areas such as assessment, accreditation and tutor training. For example, the Scottish survey seems to indicate substantially higher levels of relevant qualifications among youth literacies workers than were found in the English research, but the two surveys may simply not be comparing like with like.

## 5.8 Concluding comments

By way of conclusion, it is worth highlighting again a few points identified by respondents, tutors and young people as being key in developing and promoting successful youth literacies provision. Time and again respondents indicated that the ability of providers to identify need and interest among young people was crucial in recruiting and engaging learners in literacies provision. Moreover, flexibility in provision was also felt to be of prime importance in allowing literacies provision to adapt and respond quickly enough to such interest.

Similarly the importance of the relationship between young learners and tutors cannot be underestimated. Both parties stressed the need to build trusting relationships which recognised the worth, abilities and strengths of all involved in literacies work, and avoided the negative experiences and relationships that many young people associated with their school lives.







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# Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

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## MAPPING YOUTH LITERACIES IN SCOTLAND

Questionnaire for providers

*Youth Literacies – Are you doing it?*

Scotland's Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (ALNIS, 2001) defined literacy and numeracy as:

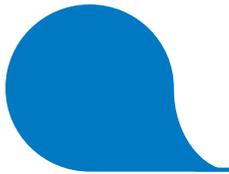
*'The ability to read, write and use numeracy, to handle information, to express ideas and opinions, to make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners.'* (p7)

If you work with young people between 16 and 25; and

If your provision explicitly helps to develop any of the above abilities within your programmes and/or activities, that is, you plan for their development and young people are aware that they are learning them;

Then:

- You are involved in youth literacies, and
- We want to find out more about you and your provision.



# Mapping Youth Literacies Practice in Scotland with the 16-25 Age Group

## Introduction

This questionnaire has been designed for quick completion, many of the questions require only that you tick a box or enter a few words. If you have any questions about the research please contact either Vivien Edwards on 0131 651 4192 or Stuart Hall on 0141 330 3492.

## General information

- Q1 Name of organisation? \_\_\_\_\_
- Q2 Name of literacies project/provision? \_\_\_\_\_
- Q3 Local authority/partnership area? \_\_\_\_\_
- Q4 Your name? \_\_\_\_\_
- Q5 Your job title? \_\_\_\_\_
- Q6 Your email address? \_\_\_\_\_

## About the provision

Q7a How would you characterise your approach to youth literacies work? *(Tick one box on each line)*

Approach	Exclusively	Mainly	Partly	Planning to develop in future	Not at all
a <u>Awareness</u> raising.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b <u>Dedicated</u> (that is, focuses exclusively and explicitly on literacy or numeracy goals).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c <u>Integrated</u> (that is, the literacy/numeracy is explicit complementary to the other activities).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d <u>Stealth</u> (that is, literacies element hidden and not made explicit to learner).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Q7b Please give a brief description of your approach.

Q8a How would you describe the format of literacies support you offer to young people?

One to one

Group

Mixture of both

Q8b Which format do the young people you work with prefer?

One to one

Group

Mixture of both

Don't know

Please say why.



Q9 Which of the following best describes the support offered? *(Tick as many as apply)*

**Dedicated literacies programmes....**

**Integrated literacies programmes....**

- |   |                                   |                          |   |                                   |                          |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a | of fixed length.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | e | of fixed length.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b | of no fixed length.               | <input type="checkbox"/> | f | of no fixed length.               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c | offering formal qualification.    | <input type="checkbox"/> | g | offering formal qualification.    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d | offering no formal qualification. | <input type="checkbox"/> | h | offering no formal qualification. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Answer Q10 only if you offer ALN courses of fixed duration**

Q10 What is the typical duration of the literacies programme(s) offered to young people? Please also give an estimate of the percentage of young people who complete the course(s).

**Duration of course**

**Percentage of young people typically completing course**

(tick as many as apply)

Up to 25%    26-50%    51-75%    76-100%    Don't know

- |   |                  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|---|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a | Up to 4 weeks    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b | Up to 3 mths     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c | Up to 6 mths     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d | More than 6 mths | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Answer Q11 and Q12 only if you offer courses leading to qualification**

Q11 What percentage of the young people you engage with typically work towards some form of qualification? This may or may not be a literacies qualification. *(Please tick one box)*

- Up to 10%  11-20%  21-30%  31-40%  41-50%  Don't know
- 51-60%  61-70%  71-80%  81-90%  91-100%

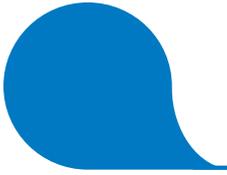
Q12 Of the young people working towards qualification what percentage would you typically expect to achieve it? *(Please tick one box)*

- Up to 10%  11-20%  21-30%  31-40%  41-50%  Don't know
- 51-60%  61-70%  71-80%  81-90%  91-100%



Q13 To what extent are the following regarded as formal aims in your literacies work with young people?  
(Please tick one box on each line)

	Key aim	Substantial aim	Minor aim	Not a formal aim
a To raise their self esteem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b To support them into employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c To support them into training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d To support them in undertaking further education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e To increase their engagement with society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f Others (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Q14 From your experience please rate the following recruitment methods for young literacies learners.  
(Please indicate methods tried and rate success)

	Recruitment method	Yes, tried method	Success of recruitment method				Don't know
			High	Some	Little	None	
a	Referrals from other agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Word of mouth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c	Circulating leaflets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d	Advertising in the media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e	Outreach work (for example, contact youth on the street)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f	Working through other providers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g	Through involvement with other non-literacies provision in the organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h	Others (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q15a Please indicate how successful your provision has been in implementing the following elements, derived from Literacies in the Community – the good practice framework, and aimed at developing a **successful youth literacies organisation**. (Please tick one box on each line)

		Key: 1 = great success	2 = some success	3 = little success	4 = no success
<b>Organisational elements</b>		1	2	3	4
a	Having an explicit policy on the nature and purpose of the literacies programme.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Having a policy informed by research, local information and national guidance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c	Having resources which promote a positive image of literacies learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d	Supporting and encouraging self-directed learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e	Allocating resources in an equitable and inclusive fashion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f	Levels of staff based on analysis of need in your area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g	Systems which allow tutors to influence the design and delivery of the programme.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h	The remit of all literacies' staff matches their expertise, experience and commitment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i	Decision making is based on consultation with learners, the community and partner agencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j	Decision making is informed by specialised experience and expertise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k	Action is taken to ensure that the range of learners matches local community aspirations and needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l	Qualitative and quantitative information is gathered on learners' experiences in the programme.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m	The difference learning is making in learners lives is evidenced and evaluated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Q15b From the above list, what do you regard as the **3** most important elements for developing **successful youth literacies provision**? *(Please insert the letter corresponding to the relevant statement)*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Q15c Why do you regard these as key?

Q15d Please indicate how successful your provision has been in implementing the following elements, derived from Literacies in the Community – the good practice framework, and aimed at developing a **successful learning programme for young people**. *(Please tick one box on each line)*

**Key: 1 = great success      2 = some success      3 = little success      4 = no success**

<b>Learning elements</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
a Access is prompt and easy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b The programme is open to potential learners with needs and aspirations in any area of life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c Perceived stigma attached to literacy and numeracy is challenged.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d Approaches are relevant to learners' chosen contexts and goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e Literacies programme is negotiated and offers choices to learners.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f Preferred learning styles are identified and respected.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g Interaction and dialogue between learners are actively promoted and purposeful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h Learning options are responsive to diverse needs and aspirations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

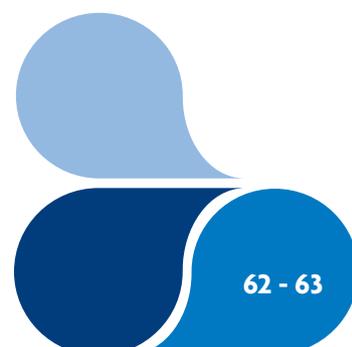


Learning elements	1	2	3	4
i Literacies learning with young people is based on everyday real life situations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j Knowledge, skills and understanding are developed in context.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k Learning is presented as a positive and enjoyable experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l Lifelong learning is promoted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m Guidance is pro-active so learners reflect on learning, make informed choices and plan for progression.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n Competence and confidence as a lifelong learner are developed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o Support is inclusive, so individual strengths and needs are recognised and responded to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p Feedback informs the design and delivery of programmes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q Learning is presented as a self directed lifelong process where participation in the programme is a stage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r Confidence and competence as a critical user of literacies are developed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
s Confidence in transferring learning to new roles and contexts is developed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q15e From the above list, what do you regard as the 3 most important elements for developing **successful learning programmes** for young people? *Please insert the letter corresponding to the relevant statement.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Q15f Why do you regard these as key?





Q16a Please complete the following table with details of the staff/tutors who engage in literacies work (as previously defined) with **young people**.

Please photocopy this page if you require additional space

NB \*: Includes Community Education and CLD qualifications

	Sex	Age	Capacity	Qualifications – in possession of or currently studying for (Tick as many as apply)	Length of experience in literacies work
1	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Up to 30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31 – 40 <input type="checkbox"/> 41 – 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary <input type="checkbox"/>	*Youth work qualification <input type="checkbox"/> ALN qualification <input type="checkbox"/> No qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Other relevant qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Specify:	Less than 1yr <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5yrs <input type="checkbox"/> 5yrs or more <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Up to 30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31 – 40 <input type="checkbox"/> 41 – 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary <input type="checkbox"/>	*Youth work qualification <input type="checkbox"/> ALN qualification <input type="checkbox"/> No qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Other relevant qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Specify:	Less than 1yr <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5yrs <input type="checkbox"/> 5yrs or more <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Up to 30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31 – 40 <input type="checkbox"/> 41 – 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary <input type="checkbox"/>	*Youth work qualification <input type="checkbox"/> ALN qualification <input type="checkbox"/> No qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Other relevant qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Specify:	Less than 1yr <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5yrs <input type="checkbox"/> 5yrs or more <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Up to 30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31 – 40 <input type="checkbox"/> 41 – 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary <input type="checkbox"/>	*Youth work qualification <input type="checkbox"/> ALN qualification <input type="checkbox"/> No qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Other relevant qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Specify:	Less than 1yr <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5yrs <input type="checkbox"/> 5yrs or more <input type="checkbox"/>



	Sex	Age	Capacity	Qualifications – in possession of or currently studying for (Tick as many as apply)	Length of experience in literacies work
5	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Up to 30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31 – 40 <input type="checkbox"/> 41 – 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary <input type="checkbox"/>	*Youth work qualification <input type="checkbox"/> ALN qualification <input type="checkbox"/> No qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Other relevant qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Specify:	Less than 1yr <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5yrs <input type="checkbox"/> 5yrs or more <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Up to 30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31 – 40 <input type="checkbox"/> 41 – 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary <input type="checkbox"/>	*Youth work qualification <input type="checkbox"/> ALN qualification <input type="checkbox"/> No qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Other relevant qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Specify:	Less than 1yr <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5yrs <input type="checkbox"/> 5yrs or more <input type="checkbox"/>

Q16b What is the total number of staff/tutors who work on literacies with young people?

\_\_\_\_\_

Q16c What is the Full Time Equivalence (FTE) of staff who work on literacies with young people?  
(Please divide the total number of hours engaged in with young people in the last week by 35)

\_\_\_\_\_



Q17a **In your experience** what are the best methods of engaging young people in literacies provision?  
*(Please say why)*

Q17b **In your experience** what are the best activities/subjects to engage young people in literacies provision?  
*(Please say why)*

Q18 **In your experience** what constitutes effective youth literacies practice? *(Please say why)*



And finally in this section...

Q19 What is your understanding of the term youth literacies?

**The young people you work with**

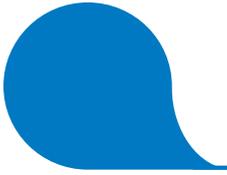
These questions are about the young people who engage with your literacies provision.

Q20 Please complete the following table with the numbers of young people in each age group that are **currently** (that is, within the last few weeks) engaged in literacies work.

Sex	Age groups		Totals
	16-19	20-25	
Female			
Male			
Totals			

Q21a Does your literacies provision 'target' particular groups of young people?

Yes  No  [Go to Q22](#)



Q21b Which of the following groups do you regard as 'target' groups for your literacies work? (Please also give an indication of how successful you have been in engaging with them)

Target group	Success in engaging with group					Don't know
	Yes	Great	Part	Little	None	
a Young women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b Young men	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c Young offenders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d Ex prisoners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e Youth at risk of offending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f Young people in employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g Young people in training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h Young adults not in education, employment or training (NEET)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i Young people with drug/alcohol problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j Young homeless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k Excluded from mainstream education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l Young parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m Refugees/asylum seekers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n Learners with learning difficulties or disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o English not first language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p Minority ethnic groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r Mental health difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
s Others (Please state below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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## Evaluating your literacies provision

Q22 Please give a short description of the methods used to evaluate your literacies provision for young people.  
(Please comment on how successful these methods are).

*E.g. use of learner questionnaire, discussion groups, ILP etc*

Q23 Please use this space to make any other relevant comments.



The second strand of this research involves conducting a small number of visits to youth literacies providers across Scotland and talking with staff and young people about their experiences.

If you would be willing to take part in such an exercise please tick the box and provide details of your preferred method of contact.

Contact details

If you have any questions or queries about this questionnaire or the research in general please contact either Vivien Edwards on 0131 651 4192 or Stuart Hall on 0141 330 3492.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

## Appendix 2: Case Studies

Case	Area	Description
1	North-eastern city	CLD provision – youth work based with youth literacies element. Project with 7 staff (2.5 FTE). 15 female and nine male participants.
2	Eastern city	CLD provision – adult literacies provision which included young people. Four tutors, 15 female and one male participant.
3	Western city	Voluntary provision offering dedicated youth literacies project using Kolb's cycle. Eight female and 26 male participants. Target groups: young people in need of more choices and more chances, young offenders, young people with drug and alcohol problems, and young homeless.
4	Western city	College offering integrated provision links to Princes Trust, offering skills development courses, ESOL, Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) preparation, core skills profiling.
5	Central city	CLD provision – youth work based with youth literacies element. 15 tutors, 15 female and 25 male participants. Target groups: young offenders, young people in need of more choices and more chances, young people with drug and alcohol problems, young homeless, young people with learning difficulties, young people with mental health issues.
6	Central town	CLD provision offering adult literacies provision which includes young people and dedicated youth literacies provision. Matches young people to appropriate groups. 21 female and 26 male participants.
7	Southern town	CLD provision offering adult literacies provision which includes young people. Three tutors and 7 female and 10 male participants. Target groups: young people in need of more choices and more chances, and young people excluded from mainstream education. Large IT component in work.
8	Northern city with rural provision	Voluntary provision offering integrated and dedicated literacies provision to young people experiencing homelessness. Two literacies tutors.
9	Western city	Voluntary provision offering dedicated and integrated literacies provision for young homeless. Employs one literacies tutor.



## Case 1

### The Organisation

The overall purpose of the literacies programme is to engage with the hard to reach 16-24 year age group as identified by ALNIS<sup>6</sup> and their local action plan, using innovative integrated literacies methods and creative approaches, to engage young people in learning. There was an absence of specific youth-focused literacies work going on prior to the establishment of this project within the relevant departments of the city council. Local research was undertaken with 30 young people in the 16-24 age group prior to setting up the project.

The project aims to promote a positive image of literacies learning by using as many youth relevant resources as possible, that is, Big Plus books and materials are accessed through Learning Connections' resource base. The project received funding from 'To the Max' to develop its own resource packs based on the tutors' own experiences with young people. A couple of books of learners' work have been published and these are used with other young people to show them that their work is valued. Learning is self-directed and 1:1, and group work is negotiated between the learner and the youth worker.

At the start of a session the tutor plans a 10 week programme based on the recommendations from previous groups. So, for example, if a group said that they wanted more input from health workers, the tutor would be responsible for making sure the suggestions were incorporated into the new programme. If a course is taken to an outreach group, the tutors do a taster workshop to find out what young people want in the course. The staff do the planning as a team and get input from everyone, even staff who are not directly delivering a course. Courses are also informed by the evaluations carried out with young people in previous groups. The project has a lot of flexibility and tutors are left to develop their own programmes. Project staff come from different backgrounds: arts worker, youth worker, specialist poetry worker and literacies tutors, all of whom bring in experience from their own fields.

Funding for the project is short term and is only guaranteed until 2008, many staff are on short-term contracts and so staffing is an issue. A significant part of staff time is spent looking for funding and for resources. Many group work courses are run in partnership with other agencies with negotiated, shared resources, that is, young mums' group runs in partnership with *Working for Families*.

Evaluation with students about their experience of the programme is carried out after 12-weeks. Staff use recording sheets each week for the group work. The project have developed their own innovative evaluation tools which are used with young people. Tutors use a bull's eye evaluation tool which generates a lot of information. Staff try to do several case studies a year and usually nominate a couple of their young people for *Young Adult Learner of the Year Awards*.

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6 Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (2001)



## Getting Involved

Most referrals come from youth agencies or homeless agencies working with young people who they have identified as having literacies needs. There are some self-referrals, some come through word of mouth and sometimes young people bring their friends along. The staff also try to target as large a range of young people as possible using an outreach programme. The project produces leaflets, and tutors go to information fairs, local festivals and events to promote what they do and to hopefully engage young people. Quarterly postcard-size timetables are sent out to other agencies and to previous and current learners. Experience of running this programme has demonstrated to staff that young people re-engage with literacies at different stages of their lives as their needs change.

Young people reported that they had heard about the project through tutors promoting it at their youth group, and one young person had heard about it through his Probation Officer. It was felt that outreach work is helpful in engaging young people.

## Engaging Learners

Staff inform young people straight away that it is a literacies project. They have found that “young people speak quite openly about their own literacies needs when you mention it”, “If you don’t see it as a stigma then hopefully you’re promoting that by being open about it”.

The young people have a choice in the activities they do – they can opt for group work or 1:1 provision, and they can also move between the two. Participants have an opportunity to choose the learning environment; some of the groups are in different venues but they will change venues if the young people really do not like a particular venue. 1:1s are very flexible and are held in a range of venues such as community centres, libraries and cafes. Young people have choice over the content of their provision as they are involved in negotiating this at the start. They can also decide what time they want to meet during the week.

Staff said that young people negotiate their own learning plans and are asked to identify their immediate goals, for example, to get a job or go to college. There is a guidance and support element to the provision so tutors support the learners on to whatever ‘their next step is’. A wide range of activities is offered so there should be something that is of interest to, and motivates, the young people. They started a motorbike group because of talking to young males about what they were interested in and what they would engage with. Encouraging lifelong learning is inherent in everything the project offers. Staff encourage young people to push themselves, get more involved or take the initiative. The staff seek opportunities to publish the young people’s work or encourage them to take part in events such as ‘open mike’ events where young people can read their work to an audience. Young people are not criticised if they turn up late or if they don’t turn up for a while and then come back. There is a relaxed atmosphere and the young people are offered coffee, tea, fruit and something to eat when they come in.





The young people particularly liked discussion groups. They spoke about the film review and how they all gave their views and were involved. They felt staff were nice to them, that there was a good atmosphere and that the different age groups mixed well. Young interviewees suggested that they were learning what they wanted to learn, for example, a motorbike course, writing CVs, poetry, reading and writing.

Young people spoke about feeling more confident in giving their opinion without the fear of 'feeling stupid'. They get a choice in what they do, at their own speed. They felt that staff gave them a lot of support and confidence, and were confidential about things shared with them.

### **Sustaining Learners' Involvement**

Most staff are youth work or community education trained and believe that they are sensitive and use a lot of praise and encouragement. Tutors are also support workers and as well as delivering literacies provision develop informal relationships with the young people. The young people who are involved with the project get to know other staff, to avoid over-reliance on one member of staff and lessen the impact of tutor turnover. They do paired activities to try to encourage learners to interact with each other in a safe environment.

Young people said that their skills were improving – one young person's writing skills had improved, another said that her concentration was better now. The young people felt that they had the opportunity to meet new people and one said that she used to be in 'bad company' but now she meets different kinds of people. They felt that learning to read, write and compile CVs was very relevant to them getting a job. They were enjoying the provision and it was a positive experience for them and they had an input into the activities on offer.

### **Facilitating Learning and Achievement**

Staff have attended seminars on different learning styles and they use multi-sensory approaches as often as possible to facilitate different learning styles. For example, for the film review, staff found that when they used spoken prompt questions for discussion some people just didn't contribute. They started also using some visual cues such as laminated cards with words and pictures that can be picked up and stuck on a board, and this seemed to get more people involved. All learning plans are negotiated and checked periodically with the learner to see if they have progressed. Staff notice when the young people are not taking part or are holding back, and adapt the programme to try to include them, building on their strengths. They record group sessions to help them with this. They also keep hold of young people's work and where possible get it published or put into a report.

The young people felt that their strengths were recognised; some spoke about writing their opinions into a book. They found it easy to ask for and receive help when they needed it. They said they could come in when they wanted and could come in for more sessions if they needed extra help.



## Reported impact on young people's lives

### Personal Life

- One spoke about being able to talk to adults rather than having to talk 'baby talk' all the time
- Increased confidence to give their opinions
- New friendships
- Handling his life better now.

### Family Life

One young person spoke of being able to express opinions and put a point of view across more effectively, and an improvement in communicating with her mother.

### Work

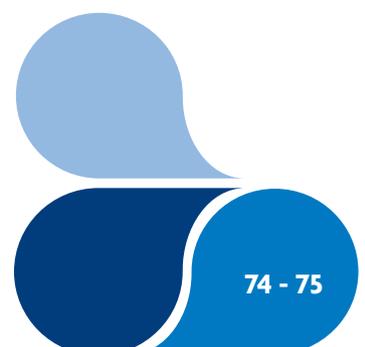
None of the young people had any opinions on this.

### Education

One young person was planning to study Social Care at college and felt the project had helped her confidence to do this. Another young person was also planning to go to college.

### Wider World

Some of the young people spoke about being more aware of what is going on now and of using the library.





## Case 2

### The Organisation

The overall purpose of the literacies programme is to try to engage hard to reach adults in socio-economically excluded areas in order to empower learners, build confidence and improve their prospects. The programme was established after discussions with health professionals, care teams and voluntary health organisations in the area suggesting that this would fill a gap in provision. Only a small proportion of the learners in the project are under 25 and these tend to be young mothers who have been referred by health visitors.

The project aims to promote a positive image of literacies learning by starting with what the learners want to do and then matching materials to their needs. One example is of helping young parents by adapting the booklet *'Ready, steady, baby'* to their needs and literacies levels so that it becomes accessible. An atmosphere is created in the project whereby participants will say if they do not find the resources appropriate. People are encouraged to do things for themselves and bring in materials that they are interested in. Learning materials are broken down into manageable chunks and introduced at a suitable pace.

The programme for particularly vulnerable learners who need extra support provides 1:1 provision and it is designed entirely around each individual's interests and needs. This is part of the Holistic Opportunities Programme (HOP) that gives additional support to, for example, very young parents, those with mental health or drug issues and those who have experienced domestic violence. Additional support for these groups is also available from specialists and there is close liaison between the project and these agencies.

Tutors build the curriculum by listening to what the learners want and building up good relationships with them. Some courses offer Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) Units including Communications, Local Investigation and Numeracy. The staff are very experienced in literacies work, with most having at least 10 years' experience. Some also have particular expertise in specific learning difficulties and scotopic sensitivity.<sup>7</sup> Learners lead decisions about learning and teaching on the programme, but it was built on staff expertise and experience. For example, a course in Creative Writing was devised by a tutor who was particularly interested in this area and was responsive to learners who had enjoyed the Communications Unit and wanted to do more writing. The health staff who refer people also make suggestions and an example of this was the healthy cooking course that was developed because of their concerns about the quality of the food that young parents were eating themselves and giving their children.

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<sup>7</sup> Scotopic sensitivity – visual perceptual problem. The problems lies in how the visual information is decoded



Information on learners' experiences is gathered through weekly discussion with participants around individual and group learning plans – learners are asked their feelings about what they did and what they would like to do next. An end of term evaluation for the set courses focuses on the meeting of goals and where learners want to go next. Gathering information from learners who are on roll-on-roll-off programmes is more difficult, but those who stop attending are followed up to find out why they left and see if they would like to come back. Programmes are evaluated overall through: case studies of learners and their achievements; retention rates; achievement of individual and group learning goals.

There is also an end of year celebration – all learners give a small talk on what they have achieved and are presented with a certificate and a book. The local press usually attend and it is a good opportunity for all the learners, their families and friends to get together and talk about their achievements.

### Getting Involved

The staff and young people reported that they had originally heard about the programme from health visitors. Staff reported that they were trying to develop more links with other agencies such as library staff and the local information centre to engage more people. Written publicity about the programme is mainly directed at agencies and health teams in the geographical area, but there is also some publicity in the local press – this is mainly about the end of year 'celebration'. Word-of-mouth from people who have attended the courses has proved to be a good source of publicity.

The young people all reported that it was very easy to join the programme and emphasised the importance to them of the responsiveness of the tutors to their interests. They suggested that leaflets about the programme should be available locally in doctors' surgeries, the library, schools and the Citizens Advice Bureau. They also thought that the Big Plus advertising was good and would like to see another campaign based on this that could include something from their programme.

### Engaging Learners

For the young people the most enjoyable thing about the programme was that "...no one judges you" and "you get to chose what you want to do". Some examples cited were: outings to the National Museum of Scotland that helped them to understand history better and gave them more interesting things to talk about; researching their own family history; learning how to cook healthy meals; gaining SQA qualifications such as Communications, Local Investigation, and ICT, so they could go on to further study.





There was a lot of emphasis on working together and all the courses had group activities built into them. For example, the local investigation activity involved two people working together to find out about an agency in their own area; this also meant “you got to know someone else on the course well and made friends”. They also reported that the staff “don’t judge you or boss you about” and that “you can speak to them about anything”. Some people had had problems with their children and found that “if you tell them [staff] about it they will help you sort it out” by, for example, “helping you to write a letter to the school”. The learners also reported that they “always got good feedback on what we do” and that the staff were really friendly and approachable.

Staff reported that the learners wanted to attend once they knew what the programme was about. When they first came along, someone they knew, such as their social worker or their health visitor, generally supported them so joining the group wasn’t a big barrier. Some people might say they were attending a computer class rather than a literacies class, but there generally wasn’t any stigma attached to literacy and numeracy.

The staff said that most of the participants were very motivated to learn so they [staff] tried to find out the individual’s barriers to learning and work through them. They created a positive atmosphere by being very respectful of each other and being prepared to listen. Access was made very easy for the young people informing them that if they are unable to attend every week they could still drop in whenever it was suitable. Great attention was paid to building up relationships of trust by staff, with and between learners so that people were very supportive of each other. Staff accept the learners for who they are and what they want to do and this builds up positive relationships. They created a positive learning environment by having coffee and tea-making facilities, a nice room and a crèche so that people did not feel pressurised. Not all the venues they used had all this available but they were working on achieving it.

### **Sustaining Learners’ Involvement**

Staff reported that they put a lot of emphasis on learners being able to choose what they wanted to do and build on what they already could do. Good quality relationships were developed through providing opportunities for people to go on outings so they could interact informally and build relationships. Outings also enabled learners to do things they might not have otherwise thought about so they had gone to art exhibitions, the botanical gardens and the circus, and an exchange with a group in Marseilles, France was planned.

There were opportunities for discussion in all classes and there were also informal chats over coffee and, in some groups, the opportunity to eat a meal together. Mixed-age groups made it easier for people to form friendships and many people had something in common, such as being a parent. Group activities were part of most courses, which included sharing issues – this built learners’ confidence and also positive ways of thinking about themselves and each other.



Feedback from learners has led to new courses being run, such as one on driving theory, but this can be restricted because of the funding that is available. Feedback has also influenced the content of programmes and one group is now making presentations to other groups of parents about their 'Play-sacks' project.

Learners reported that their knowledge, skills and understanding of literacies had definitely improved a lot, and they were also more confident and better able to concentrate and less stressed than they had been at the start of their programme. When they had started the course they had had a 1:1 session about what would be the best course for them and what they would like to concentrate on. They found everyone was very welcoming and they could come in and have a cup of tea – “it was more relaxed and you get to know the tutors really well”.

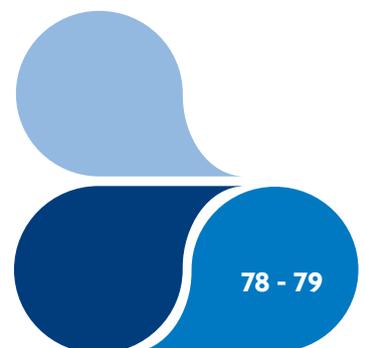
At the start of the course the learners had been encouraged to find out something about a person that they didn't know and that “got you speaking to people”. “People that have been on a course before come along at the beginning to talk to new people about what it's like” and that was encouraging. People “help each other a lot” and the “tutors encourage you to do that”.

They had also been asked for their views on the course and what they wanted to do next. This had led to a new course on Family History that two of the interviewees were currently attending, following on from a course in creative writing. All the learners had found that the project was very responsive to their ideas.

### Facilitating Learning and Achievement

The participants reported that the learning “built on what they could do” and they “got to choose the issues we want to discuss and find out about”, so their individual strengths and needs were responded to. Most of the courses had two tutors so “people could go at their own pace” and some could move faster if they were able to. All their work was recorded in folders and these are reviewed each week so they could “see what you've done and how you have progressed”. Their achievement was recognised by the tutors who “praise us for what we do and always support us to do what we want”. This was also acknowledged in the end of year presentation where the learners had to speak about what they had done and received a certificate detailing their achievements.

Staff reported that they provided “encouragement along the way”, for example, by sending learners' writing to a student magazine and encouraging learners to show what they could do – their IT skills to access eBay. The project responded to learners' interests and this has resulted in a number of new courses suggested by learners. Once people came in for one course they often continued on to others, but there was also guidance on moving on to the next step that might involve going on to college. At the end of a course there were formal guidance sessions from a Learning Advisor and individual sessions could also be arranged. The end of year celebration provided an opportunity to acknowledge learners' achievements publicly and also enabled “different groups to share their work and ideas, and get to know what is going on through show-casing their work” across the project.





## Reported impact on young people's lives

### Personal Life

They were able to “talk to people”, whereas before they had been “very shy and quiet”. They also found the programme had “helped to reduce stress and increase concentration”.

### Family Life

For those learners with children the crèche had helped their children to socialise more and outings with the children had “expanded their horizons”.

### Work

Getting qualifications would help them get a job but this was not very important at this stage in their lives. One had talked to an advisor at Careers Scotland about what type of job would suit them and found this very helpful.

### Education

Two hope to go on to college at the end of their course as they thought having the right qualifications would help them get a good job.

### Wider World

Two people who had been involved in the ‘Play-sacks group’ were now going to talk to other groups in their community about their project so they were now more involved in their local community.



## Case 3

### The Organisation

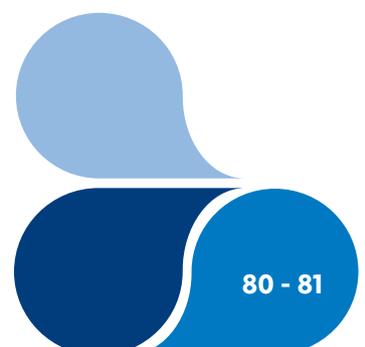
This national voluntary organisation was established around 25 years ago as a first step organisation that supports vulnerable and disaffected young people with current/recent experiences of a range of issues including drugs, offending, homelessness, truanting and anti-social behaviour. This branch has been in operation for 23 years and is based in the north of the city but supports young people from all parts of the city. The aim of the organisation is to provide young people with a supported route back into mainstream society through a combination of personal support and challenging physical and creative activities. There are four outreach workers and six delivery workers who generally work with approximately 200 young people each year. Although some of the work is core funded, provision and staffing levels may vary according to the organisation's success in attracting additional funding.

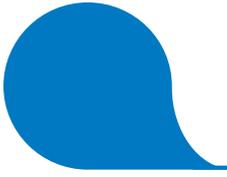
Most young people are referred from other agencies such as housing, schools, social work and careers, and the length of their stay at the project varies from 3 weeks to 3 years, according to need and pace of progress. All new entrants undertake an Access Course which is seen as the first vital step in their long-term personal development programme. During the course, staff identify each individual's personal development needs and young people have the opportunity to understand how they work.

There is always at least one development tutor for every four participants, and all activities, from caving to abseiling, are facilitated to enable young people to learn more about themselves and how their behaviour impacts on others. By ensuring that every young person experiences a sense of achievement, it enables them to develop the confidence and motivation to make the necessary commitment to more specific courses which they choose in negotiation with the staff.

During all the activities, young people are encouraged to think about the consequences of their behaviour, reflect upon their experiences and then consider how to apply the lessons they have learned to other situations in the rest of their life. Although the programmes fall into the age range covered by this research (26-25), some of the participants are under 16. However, as the courses do not make a strict delineation between under and over 16, it was not felt appropriate to exclude the younger learners from the focus group.

On completion of the Access Course, young people negotiate with project staff which other programmes they wish to participate in.





All staff are qualified in the activities they lead, for example, outdoor pursuits or creative arts, but they do not have any specific training in adult literacies. However, on joining the organisation, they all undertake a 'Rough Guide' course to development work which includes training and reviewing specific skills and group/1:1 work with young people. They are introduced to the Kolb cycle which all young people use as a planning/review tool on a regular basis, and all participants review their actions, interactions and progress on a daily basis within the group, and a regular individual basis with their allocated member of staff. Young people who have literacies difficulties are encouraged to opt for specific 1:1 support and are then referred to local adult literacies provision.

Visual tools – photographs and videos, all taken by the young people, are used as review tools, where participants are asked to describe, analyse and reflect on situations they were involved in; to identify where they have made progress in their personal development skills; to recognise what did not work out well, why, and what they can do about it. It appears quite Freirian in its methodology.

The youth literacies elements of the programme are part of the different mediums used for documenting actions reflections and progress, and though staff help the young people with their reading, writing and numeracy, this is not explicitly expressed as either literacies or writing skills etc. It is therefore an example of 'hidden/undisclosed' literacies, seamlessly embedded in young people's activities. All participants receive a certificate on completion of each course, and some are encouraged to work towards an Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) qualification.

### Getting Involved

Most participants are referred from other agencies, but actively choose to join the programme. The project uses a DVD illustrating its aims and activities which young people and their families can watch before they make the decision to attend or not. The young people's responses to the DVD were very positive and it is clearly a successful recruiting tool.

### Engaging Learners

After the compulsory Access Course, young people choose from a variety of physical and creative activities which can range from abseiling, gorge walking, football, sailing, drama, video production, to newsletter production, and staff help guide them to those activities which are most relevant to their goals, needs and personalities. The young people were exceptionally positive about the range of activities on offer – they were very active, exciting and enjoyable allowing them to experience things that they would otherwise not have been able to do so. The opportunities available to them were often different from their previous learning opportunities. Throughout the programmes an emphasis was continually placed on every small positive step the young people take, in order to build their confidence in themselves and their skills.



### Sustaining Involvement

Involvement is sustained through the activities; the open, informal relationships with the staff; the ongoing reflection on their individual attainments and the fact that the activities are enjoyable and fun. Young people also gain a clear sense of their own development and positive change.

### Facilitating Learning and Achievement

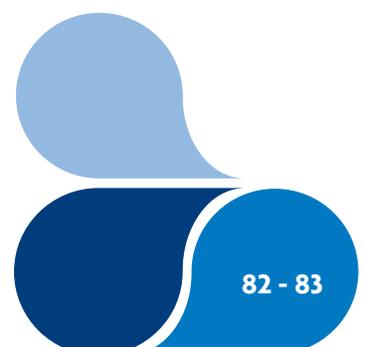
Learning and achievement is facilitated through personal development plans based around recreation and community skills; work-based skills and independent living skills, with personal and social skills permeating all three. These are set in the context of the Kolb cycle and are reviewed on a very regular basis in group and 1:1 contexts.

### Assessment

At a *formative* level, at the end of each activity there is informal reflection and feedback on each person's progress, aspects of their personal and communicative development that could (and should) be worked on, and their individual and group achievements. Reflections on these sessions are frequently stimulated through the use of photographs and videos of the sessions, and the Kolb cycle is used explicitly throughout. Responses from the participants indicated that they provided a powerful and effective tool in enabling them to critically assess their progress and areas for improvement.

All young people compile a daily development diary in which they are initially helped to identify their own interests, goals, strengths and weaknesses. These are used daily to reflect on progress towards the achievement of goals and each person is presented with the completed diary at the end of the course.

At a *summative* level, all young people receive certificates at the end of each course completed. Some also receive videos and photos charting their activities and progress. Some groups of young people, particularly those who have been identified as needing additional literacies support, also produce a newsletter that records individual and group achievements. Overall, there is a strong sense of the importance of regular, informal and very positively portrayed assessment of all achievements.





## Reported impact on young people's lives

- Some progress onto schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh, New Futures, and Millennium Volunteering
- Some enter colleges or are referred to other training organisations
- Outreach workers work with the young people throughout their involvement to help them identify what they might do, or where they might go, at the end of their time in the project. This is made explicit from the beginning and the outreach worker supports people in taking the next steps that will most appropriately help them to achieve their identified longer term goals
- The young people talked about being more confident; having changed in the way they think about the world and of others; being better at communicating their thoughts and ideas; being more able to work in a team with others; doing things rather than sitting around getting bored; wanting to do more courses and generally looking at things and life differently. Most of the group were too young to identify, at this stage, longer-term impacts on areas of life.



## Case 4

### The Organisation

This is a learning support unit within a college. The literacies programme was described as building core skills using a social practices model, leading to the next stage of learning which may involve accreditation. The team have been developing integrated literacies practices with departments across the college, for example, construction and catering. They also run dedicated skills development classes where learning is contextualised to young people's interests. A lot of the work is developed through the use of ICT. College tutors can also refer young people to the unit.

Resources were described as demand led. If the unit needed more staff then they would get more staff since they were regarded as developing innovative practice. As one lecturer reported, "we can usually argue for, and justify, additional resources".

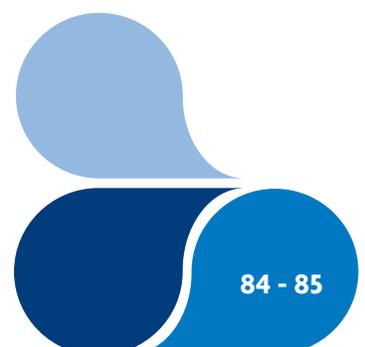
Literacies work tends to take place in small groups (smaller than usual college class sizes). A college class is normally around 15 to 20 learners however, skills development class has smaller numbers (approximately 10). Integrated literacies provision uses a team teaching approach, however, there is no set number for staff allocations, it is more needs led.

Positive images of literacies are promoted through the use of modern equipment including software and ICT. Tutors join in with what learners do, "they [learners] can help us". Team teaching allows resources to be used which have been developed from a literacies perspective

Staff provide guidance to support the young people and assist them in gaining accreditation. The learning support team recognise their own specialisms but also refer students for additional support if it is suspected that they are dyslexic. As one tutor said, "we have to end some journeys if students need extra support that we can't give. However, staff are 100% committed to literacies work, that's what we do".

Learners take the lead when making decisions about teaching and learning – "Staff supply the scaffolding to help them achieve qualifications".

Staff carry out an initial informal interview with learners. This is followed up by tutors with a class-based interview around individual learning plans (ILPs) Discussions also cover past experiences, hobbies and interests. This is seen as an ongoing process with learners which feeds back into the programme. At the end of each phase tutors carry out individual and group evaluations with learners. They also monitor confidence and attendance, and evaluations show student improvements in confidence and literacies. Tutors said that learners tended to stay the course.





Using ILPs, learners identify goals and work towards achieving them – “Learners know what they are doing, they have their own folders. We help set tasks and goals. We help keep them focused. We encourage them to take ownership”.

### Hooking Learners In

Students are referred by different organisations and employers; from Big Plus publicity, by word of mouth and by college lecturers. One young interviewee had been referred by his employer. He is an apprentice and had been experiencing difficulties with numeracy and writing. His employer contacted the college for help and the young learner now attends a skills class on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Tutors suggested that less stigma was attached to literacies learning than had been in the past. The team felt it was important to be honest with young people about literacies. As one tutor noted, “We are not good at many things as well, we have our own weaknesses”. Tutors also saw the challenging of myths about literacies across the college as part of their job. “We start learners on a journey, raise their confidence and help them to go elsewhere in the college”.

Staff relate positively to learners by providing friendly and relaxed classes with mutual respect, and by treating them as young adults.

### Sustaining Involvement

Involvement was sustained in a number of ways – by building on learners’ own experiences, by promoting interaction and dialogue, and by encouraging learners to work in small groups and in pairs.

ICT was also regarded as an important vehicle when working with young people – it takes away some of the worries associated with pens and paper. It also “Builds on their existing knowledge and practices. However, not all will be confident with ICT; this is important to remember”.

### Facilitating Learning and Achievement

Achievement was recognised through evaluation, review process and formal accreditation. The college has an awards ceremony and the team also organises parties and outings at the end of sessions.

## Reported impact on young people’s lives

### Personal Life

More confident and more able after attending college.

### Family Life

One young person said that family members have reported a positive change in him.

### Work Life

One young person said his employer had reported positively on changes he had seen in him. He also said he could see it helping his work.

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## Case 5

### The Organisation

The overall purpose of the literacies programme is to try to improve the employability and life skills of young people in need of more choices and more chances. A range of qualifications is available from SQA. Almost all the young people are referred by Careers Scotland, but some outreach and street work engages young people directly. Many of the young people have some behavioural issues and have had poor school attendance.

The projects aim to promote a positive image of literacies learning by being innovative in finding and using age appropriate resources that link to young people's interests. The young people are encouraged to bring in things that they are interested in – for example, books or forms. The programme uses a 'person-centred approach' which focuses on individual needs.

One example uses budgeting and shopping to cover literacy and numeracy and life skills as follows:

“Young people plan the menu, shop, cook and clean up on a rota. Staff support this activity which provides a good opportunity for informal discussion as well as making sure that the young people have a good meal.”

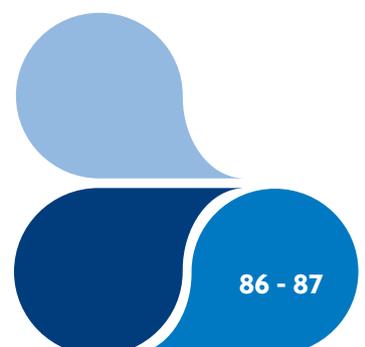
Tutors influence the programme through making suggestions about what would be suitable based on their knowledge of the learners, by using software and worksheets which are relevant to the vocational programmes and by using their own expertise, for example, in photography.

A lot of staff development and training is available. Some staff have expertise in specific learning difficulties, others have vocational knowledge and others are specialist youth workers.

Information on learners' experiences is gathered through discussion with them and programme changes are made as appropriate. In the 'Get Ready for Work' programme each tutor has a 1:1 session weekly for an hour or so where they discuss the issues that the participants raise. “The young people enjoy it and tell you things you might not know otherwise”.

Programmes are evaluated overall by monitoring the percentage of learners that move in to employment, into their own tenancy or on to work with another agency. In the vocational programmes, certificated learning such as First Aid, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, Skillseekers and Core Skills.

End of programme celebrations are held and when learners are given their folders they realise what they have achieved in terms of Life Skills. All learners have an Individual Training Programme with goals and progress towards their achievement is assessed.





## Getting Involved

Young people reported that they had heard about the programme from careers staff at school. Staff also reported that they were trying to develop more links with other agencies to engage more people. Publicity about the programme is mainly directed at other agencies, but there are press releases about the end of course celebrations and some publicity in the local press in order to promote what is done more widely. The emphasis in the programme is on gaining employment or being able to live more independently, so literacies work is integrated rather than being the main focus. The young people all reported that it was very easy to join the programme and emphasised the importance to them of the focus on getting a job.

## Engaging Learners

For the young people the most enjoyable part of the programme was “meeting new folk and finding new mates” and the way the programme built their skills was what they most valued, since it contributed to their employment prospects. Some examples they cited included: team teaching allows the:

- role playing that helped them relate better to their parents and control their anger
- playing football and other team games that helped them get on with each other
- passing tests such as First Aid and Manual Handling Skills, so they could get work.

There was a lot of emphasis on team building and these activities ranged from outdoor activities to taking turns to shop, cook and clear up a meal each day.

Staff reported that the young people were mainly interested in getting a job and earning money, but most of them had a lot of personal problems so it was important that staff were approachable, genuine, related well to young people and were easy to talk to.

The provision focused on the young people’s individual needs and built on what they had already achieved. Staff tried to create an atmosphere that was different from previous experiences of education and used their experience of working with young people to find ways of developing and responding to their interests. They were able to draw on people with specialist skills in, for example, drama or art and the learners usually enjoyed these activities. They also tried to identify and address the individual’s barriers to learning.

## Sustaining Learners’ Involvement

Staff reported that many young people had had negative experiences of formal education. The programme covered “the middle ground between school and the big bad world” outside. Some of the young people had issues with drugs, “but if they get the bit between their teeth it gives them a wee step up”. One effective intervention to promote peer interaction and learning was ‘Circle Time’ that operates as a means of involving young people and gives them ‘golden time’. It gives them respect and time for them as individuals. Staff received specific training in this.



The young people on the 'Get Ready for Work' programme reported that their literacies work was focused around job search skills and independent living. So, for example, they had been using the computers to do job searches; doing mock interviews to improve their communication skills; learning how to change plugs and light bulbs, and shopping and budgeting. They "helped each other out" if they "got stuck" and had learnt to be more "more reasonable and less confrontational" in their communications with the staff and with each other.

The young people on the 'construction' programme enjoyed their time in the community-based part of the programme, but were much less enthusiastic about the time spent in the college where they learnt the 'trade' skills. All the literacies work was based around construction so, for example, numeracy was based around mixing concrete and this was "Okay". All the learners passed their Communications team teaching allows the course, with most achieving accreditation at SQA Access 3. One learner achieved SQA Intermediate 2.

### Facilitating Learning and Achievement

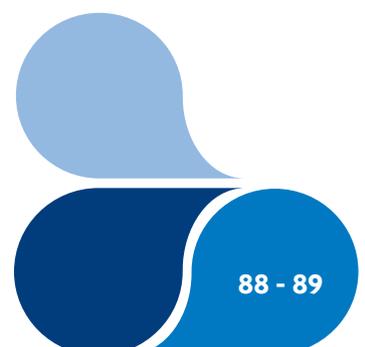
The young people reported that they "got help with what they wanted to do" so their individual strengths and needs were responded to. All their work was recorded in files and folders so they could "look back on what you did at the beginning and see how you had progressed". This included the work tasters they had participated in; their accredited courses plus additional information, to provide an accurate record. Their learning was acknowledged at the end of course celebration and through the work recorded in their portfolios.

Staff reported that every month there was a review of progress with each participant, based on their individual training programme. The young people come with an Action Plan, an Individual Training Plan is developed, identifying areas of work which are then prioritised. Examples of work include working in a group, help with literacy and numeracy and increasing confidence. Work is reviewed regularly in a 1:1 session with their support worker, with examples of work collected in their folder.

### Reported impact on young people's lives

#### Personal Life

- They were able to "get up in morning" because "there was a structure to their day"
- They were talking more and being confident
- They were able to cook better food and were better prepared for independent living.





### Family Life

Better relationships with family, including grandparents, parents and siblings. They were less aggressive and able to talk more to family.

### Work Life

Getting a job was the key thing for all the young people and all felt that their programmes were helping them to do that. They were now able to fill in job applications, and better relationships with their extended family meant that they were also helping them find out about jobs.

### Educational Life

Some hope to go on to study in college; others were hoping to get an apprenticeship, but knew it would be difficult. All reported that they had improved their skills and were more confident about doing things like reading.



## Case 6

### The Organisation

The purpose of the literacies programme is to support the core skills of young people on the local authority's 'Get Ready for Work' pre-employment programme, with a view to making employment easier. The course approach follows a literacies social practice model.

Tutors try to choose learning materials that are not intimidating to young people, and they [tutors] attempt to make the provision as different from previous experiences of education as possible. Staff make sure that any support the young people need is readily available to them. Tuition is carried out in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, and equality between the tutor and the young people is promoted. Resources that are relevant and engaging to young people are used. Every session starts with the tutor asking the young people what they want to do. They encourage verbal feedback from the young people on what they are doing throughout the session and, if possible, will incorporate suggestions into the programme. Tutors also have time at the end of each session where they receive verbal feedback from the young people.

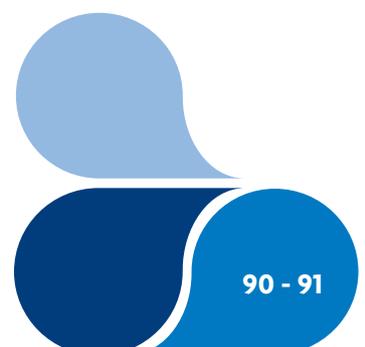
Decision-making is carried out by the tutor-organiser in consultation with colleagues in the literacies community and by listening to the learners. Employers are also asked about the relevance of the tuition and what they would like to see the course focus on.

The tutor organiser felt that, along with experience in literacies tutoring, it's important to have a rapport with, and the personality to engage, young people.

A course begins with an awareness-raising session and learning needs analysis session with the young people, where they decide for themselves what support they need. The programme framework is put together by the tutor-organiser and the young people have an input to this.

Reflection and evaluation is critical to the programme and staff keep a record of their experiences. Evaluation starts via the learning needs analysis day where they do exercises with the young people to evaluate their perception of their own literacy and numeracy needs. At the end of each session, the young people give written feedback on the core skills learning as a group and the tutors also put down their thoughts on how the session went. There are also 'mid-way' and 'end of course' evaluations by learners and tutors write down how they thought each young person did on the course.

The main evidence for the difference that participation has had on young people's lives is through a change in their employability. The unit also gets feedback from employers about core skill issues.





## Getting Involved

The learners are asked to attend the pre-employment programme run by the local authority Employment and Training Unit. Attendance at the programme is voluntary and flexible in its approach. The young people don't have to attend if they don't want to, but if they change their minds they can join the course later. Timing of the group is organised around the young people's needs and lifestyles as much as possible.

The young people reported that they found out about the course through their boss at work, and attended the course to improve their literacy and/or numeracy for their job. They suggested that having previous trainees speaking about their experiences would be the best way to encourage other young people to take part. Publicity posters might also help!

## Engaging Learners

Staff felt that awareness-raising sessions help to remove any perceived stigma attached to literacy and numeracy. Learners are also given the choice of 1:1 working until they feel confident enough to work in a group. Staff aim to treat young people with respect and as adults. The course provides learning in the 5 core skills of Communication, Numeracy, ICT, Problem Solving and Working With Others, and the young people can decide whether they want to do 1:1 or group sessions.

Staff try to make the course relevant and useful to the young people's working and wider social lives. The young people are made to feel welcome and relaxed, and are often quite self-motivated. Some may be sceptical to start with, but the tutor feels most engaged well with the course. Staff offer verbal encouragement at every opportunity saying things like "Well done" and "See you told me you couldn't do that and now you've done it yourself". Staff talk to young people about how they are getting on and give them support.

The young people said they were enjoying the programme and some of the activities they took part in were computer games, puzzles and work sheets. They were learning what they wanted, for example, fractions, spelling and maths and they were able to relate what they were learning to their own interests, for example, counting steps in dancing, and counting stock in Tesco. They felt that the pace was about right and got on well with staff. They said they got informal verbal feedback each week on how they were progressing, and that this was adequate. They liked working together in a group and felt that they could get help straightaway when they needed it. They also felt they had made new friends by attending the course.

## Sustaining Learners' Involvement

Staff have to work within the constraints of their remit, but within that they try to make the activities relevant to the young people. Tutors encourage young people to support each other. The young people work as individuals, but they come together at the end of the session to compare answers. They can come in and out of the sessions if they want to, for example, they can go to the shops as long as they say what time they are coming back.



The young people felt that the programme was relevant to them; they had all been sent by their employer to learn particular skills, and that they were progressing. They said that their skills had improved and that what they learned was will be useful, for example, weighing things and helping a brother with homework. They found the learning a positive and enjoyable experience, and some felt their opinion made a difference.

### **Facilitating Learning and Achievement**

The learning needs analysis at the start of the programme gives the young people an opportunity to choose their preferred learning style. For example, one group likes to have the radio on in the background.

When young people say that they can't do things, the tutor encourages them to believe they can achieve things and tries to help dispel their negative image of themselves. Tutors encourage those who do well to help other young people who are having difficulty. Staff try to make the language they use suitable for young people.

Young people reported that their strengths and needs were assessed at the beginning of the course. Each week the tutor fills in a sheet showing their progress and praises them if they do something well.

### **Reported impact on young people's lives**

#### **Personal Life**

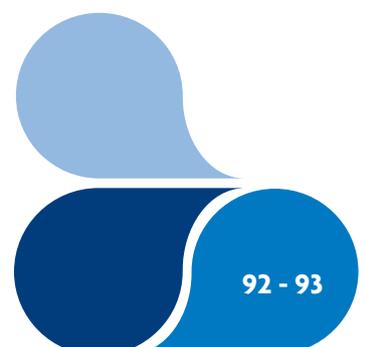
Some of the young people felt more confident.

#### **Family Life**

One young person spoke of being able to help her niece to spell. Another one helped her nephew with reading.

#### **Work Life**

One said it had helped her with invoices, and several said it helped with stock checking.





## Case 7

### The Organisation

The project was informed by existing national research/documentation, the 'To the Max' and YouthLink reports. The project was funded through Innovations monies but is now funded directly from the literacy and numeracy funding. There are two full-time development workers, one part-time development worker and one full-time tutor supervisor. The Prince's Trust group has the aim of integrating young people into the local community, colleges and employment

The overall purpose of the literacies programme is to engage young people (aged 16-24) in positive learning experiences. The project takes referrals from other organisations such as Quarriers, the Prince's Trust (the group interviewed for this case study), and also supports young people who self refer.

Staff are allocated to groups depending on the group size. For example, a group of 10 learners will be given two tutors, while five or less will have one tutor. However, this is flexible and group needs are taken into account when allocating staff.

Positive images are encouraged because the work focuses mainly on using ICT, and internet applications and resources. The development worker reported that you can do a collaborative learning plan using Blogger. ICT is a 'hook' for young people and young people see it as being fun and exciting. The project uses video cameras and purchased nine Smart phones and uses the free resources available on the Internet. The tutors have a non-stigmatising approach – they deliver programmes informally and are relaxed in their approach to young people.

The young people have a big say in what activities take place, and ICT is a medium that they are familiar with and competent in. They are encouraged to help and support each other, drawing on each others' strengths. Tutors tend not to ask young people to join existing groups as they believe it is better to set up new groups.

Self-directed learning is encouraged by giving young people the ICT tools and some project examples, and encouraging them to choose their own topics – *Moviemaker* is very popular. The tutor's job is to make sure literacies is a part of what the young people do. They help keep the young people's choices and work realistic, but the young people set their own pace. The work is relevant to their lives because they can choose what they want to do – for example, some have made movies about drugs or their own children.

Tutors guide rather than influence the programme. They respond when they see a need and opportunity for literacies work. They then help to embed and evidence the literacies work. About 25% of groups referred have literacies needs. The tutors generally don't highlight this need and, at least initially, literacies work would be 'hidden' or 'undisclosed'. With the self-referred young people the literacies is overt.



The project recruited literacies staff with ICT abilities, and initially looked for staff with degree level qualifications and innovative and literacies experience. Most staff recruited also had experience in working with young people. Decisions about teaching and learning are arrived at jointly. Staff are very enthusiastic and look for the 'opportunities' in the work with young people.

In terms of evaluation, self-referred young people have an initial interview and from this a learning plan is set up. All learning plans are electronic and can be accessed via Blogger or PowerPoint and can include photographs. Learning Plans are addressed as a part of the session and are not just given a few minutes at the end of the session.

Tutors did not mention the literacies element to the first group of young people who were referred. However, the project's approach has changed and they now talk about literacies to referred groups, but they are not highlighted during the course. The level of literacies discussion varies depending on the situation.

The local authority evaluation system is used for monitoring. This manages information through 'mid-course' and 'end of course' evaluations. A local authority research officer supports and guides the data interrogation.

### Getting Involved

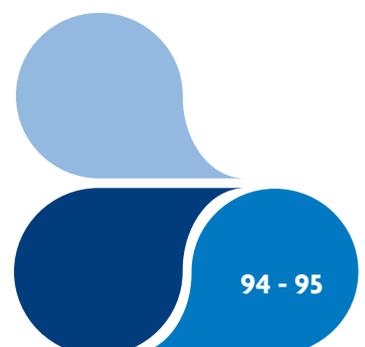
The young people had been referred by a potential employer; by the Princes Trust; by friends; by a 'New Deal' adviser and a community employment initiative.

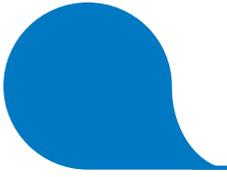
### Engaging Learners

The interviewed group didn't distinguish well between their involvement with the literacies project and their Prince's Trust involvement. They generally perceived the project was about building confidence and improving their communications – bringing people out of their shell.

However, an interviewee who had experienced 1:1 literacies support was clearer about the literacies element of the programme. He saw himself attending the group to promote his writing and was driven by the hope of becoming an author.

The group who experienced integrated literacies spoke more about getting involved in a range of activities: movie-making, abseiling, canoeing, and team building games. They did, however, comment on becoming more confident and motivated – one talked about cutting back on his alcohol consumption, while two suggested that the involvement had helped them apply for, and obtain, employment. Another was hoping to go on to college.





Both the group and 1:1 learner felt the tutor was very supportive, friendly and helpful, and they all said that they got on very well with the staff.

### **Sustaining Learners' Involvement**

Group members felt the work was relevant to their lives. They had just completed making a DVD about their Prince's Trust involvement. They were encouraged to talk and interact as a group, and were involved in a lot of situations which promoted their group discussions. They reported that the DVD had been their idea and that they had all taken on a range of roles to help get it made.

The learner receiving 1:1 support talked about working at his own pace without any real pressure, although he had noticed that the tutor support had become less intensive as his writing had improved. He also said that he received a lot of positive feedback. He felt his opinion mattered since it was his 'project' and the tutor was there to support him.

### **Facilitating Learning and Achievement**

Group members reported that they had been given responsibilities which helped to develop them as a group. They reported that the group had a 'Plan/Do/Review' system and that achievement was recognised through awards they had been given. The learner receiving 1:1 support said that the tutor had quickly understood his problem and began to help. He was very critical of his previous learning experience. He talked about his individual learning plan and how he wrote it up at the end of sessions (using the PC), and he could see, by looking at the text, how his grammar and spelling had improved.

## **Reported impact on young people's lives**

### **Personal Life**

All group members reported being more motivated, confident and tolerant.

The learner receiving 1:1 support reported being more focussed on his aspirations to become an author.

### **Family Life**

Several members of the group reported that parents had commented on seeing a difference in them. One young mum said she was better able to sit and talk with her own child, while another young person said his sister commented that he was "back to his old self" (off the drink).

### **Work Life**

Two group members said they were just about to start a new job and their increased confidence had helped.

### **Educational Life**

One female was hoping to go to college.



## Case 8

### The Organisation

This voluntary sector initiative began life in 1998 providing housing support for young people in a few areas of the North East. The work was developed further when a three year literacies officer was appointed, with funding from Highland adult literacies project. The programme is open to young people aged 16-25 and aims to build confidence and social skills. It takes referrals from the organisation's housing support officers, and also from the careers service and social work.

The organisation is developing towards an enterprise initiative which will involve young people. Provision is about 50% integrated group literacies work and 50% 1:1 dedicated literacies work. A decision was made by the literacies officer, based on the perceived vulnerable nature of the young people dedicated literacy and numeracy work would not be appropriate.

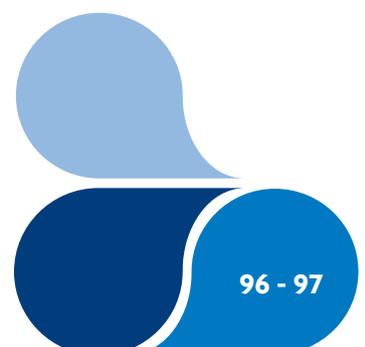
Staff acknowledged that some young people using the project (particularly group attendees) would not recognise that they were doing literacies work. If young people are referred to the tutor for additional literacies support then this is made explicit to them. Staff didn't feel that they used a complete 'hidden' approach – they tended to “sneak literacies in” and stressed learning rather than literacies.

The young people are often homeless and vulnerable and, in the organiser's opinion, would not want to join a literacies group (hence a more 'hidden' approach). She also believed that their young people would never approach adult basic education (ABE) tutors (provided through Highland Council) to take part in anything which had literacies in the title. The range of learners was not felt to be representative of the local community, but were felt to be representative of young homeless across Highland.

The project uses a lot of BBC Skillswise resources. These can be used on a computer or as worksheets. The young people are used to the format and seem to like them. They also use a lot of local resources, such as a local supermarket, to put budgeting into practice. They have a flexible approach to young people and will go with what works best for them.

With a lot of input from the learners, the tutor puts together an initial 6-week session/programme. Staff acknowledged that this programme changes “all the time” as the young people may come with different needs each week (for example, requiring a CV for a job application). It also changes due to the chaotic nature of some of the young people's lives.

Tutors stressed the need to have a flexible approach and they have a review process which helps them keep track of changes in the learning plan and the reasons for such changes.





Tutors write a report for every session, and use a learner's progress report which is modelled on a diary format. They involve the young people in a review process which uses an A4 sheet which documents their experiences since their last review, which the young people can write themselves if they wish. A lot of evaluation is done anecdotally – talking to the young people during the session was felt to provide a good atmosphere for collecting feedback.

The project also has to provide an evaluation for Highland Adult Literacies Partnership.

Resources were felt by tutors to be readily available, with a lot of the material available from the Internet. They also felt that the organisation leader was an 'expert' in identifying funding sources.

### Getting Involved

Most young people were referred from the organisation's housing officers. Tutors sit down with the young people and their housing officer (as part of the referral process) to develop a learning programme. The project also provides information leaflets to partner agencies and the housing department.

The literacies approach was described as very informal, which helps promote self-directed learning. Going to places like a supermarket allows tutors to provide a local supported environment. Tutors also reported developing a learning programme which would help support the college learning of a few individuals.

The project can only support a maximum of 6 young people in a 1:1 capacity, so others have to be referred to the Council's ABE service (who also has a waiting list). Group work is offered to young people, if one to one support is not available, to provide support for literacies. Young people who come along to groups tend to attend irregularly. This has resulted in groups fragmenting and tutors finding themselves working with smaller groups. Group work was felt to be less suitable for rough sleepers – most of the young people who attended the group learning were in temporary accommodation. Staff said that since many young people in temporary accommodation have to vacate between 10:00am and 4:00pm, it makes sense to run the groups during this time to give them something to do.

Stigma over literacy and numeracy was not felt to be an issue in the group work where it is integrated with other activities, such as producing a youth magazine and also a website for those in the Highlands who are leaving home. Being honest with young people was felt to be very important – "we all have different literacies needs, my spelling is not the best. Young people can see my shortcomings".

The young people who took part in the interview confirmed that they had been referred to the project by their housing support worker and had decided to come along to the group to give themselves something to do. The young people suggested that feeling at ease was key in encouraging them to join the group, and they felt that the tutors were good at this.



## Engaging Learners

Learning was described as relevant because it is based on practical ways of learning, for example, working with young mums on having a baby and helping children with their homework. One college student received support with their college maths learning. “Learning is grounded in where they see themselves going”.

Staff reported aiming to help young people see that learning is nothing to be afraid of and can be different from their previous experiences of learning and does not stop when they leave school. Tutors said that they had built on young people’s music and art interests – “If young people show an interest in something we will try to develop it”.

The setting is important – tutors used their own quiet office for 1:1 work and aimed to spend more time addressing 1:1 learners’ very low confidence. Learners could learn “anything they want”, for example, reading, writing, computer-based learning, typing and producing emails.

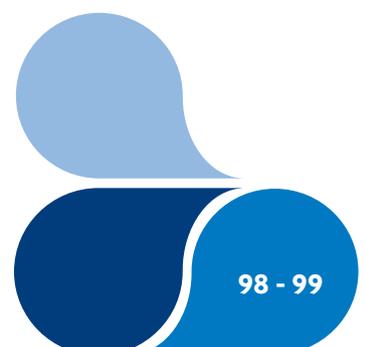
Group and individual activities were often organised over lunch or tea to encourage attendance, and staff noted that they regularly allow themselves to be sidetracked “to see where things may go”, potentially revealing another area of interest. “We don’t get hung up on timetables”.

Relationships with young people are important – “they have to know that you are friendly and able to joke”. The organisation was felt to have a good history in recruiting young people. Their experiences with the housing officers makes the literacies tutors job easier – “we are laid back”. Tutors suggested that the young people they encountered often had previous experiences of services for example, social work or ABE.

The young people interviewed mentioned that they regularly talked through what they were working on with tutors and received feedback. Feedback was felt to be positive. The young people agreed that the group was ‘good’ – “it made you think”, “it encouraged you to ‘create things’”. They described their involvement as helping to produce a magazine and/or website (involving reflecting on their own situation, interviewing, drafting, writing, and proof reading).

Young people also listed the following activities that they engaged in with the group work: cooking; computer skills, communication skills, writing skills and learning how to present information.

Young interviewees said that group members were very tolerant of each other’s different needs.





## Sustaining Involvement

Staff were acutely aware of the highly vulnerable nature of their target group. For them this meant tailoring approaches to pick up on the young people's goals and interests, and making them feel comfortable when they start with the group. Learning is positive and enjoyable because it is embedded in other things. Encouraging young people to speak up was felt to be very important.

Ongoing feedback from learners leads to changes in the programme; staff reported that activities had to be constantly changed to keep young people from becoming bored.

The project also provides a pick-up and drop-off transport service for young people, and covers their travelling expenses – this was felt to be very important in sustaining their involvement.

All the young people interviewed suggested that the work progressed at the right pace for them. They also felt that the staff were friendly and helpful and that learning was acknowledged as a positive experience. They all felt that their opinions mattered and that tutors listened to what they had to say. They all believed that the tutors were aware of their individual strengths and needs, and that programmes had been adapted to meet their changing needs or interests.

The project was described as being “really friendly with a laid back atmosphere; you are not told what to do, so you are more likely to want to be involved more”.

## Facilitating Learning and Achievement

The project has used a short quiz with young people which helps to identify how each of them best learns (visually, auditory etc). Progress was reviewed after working with young people for a few sessions.

The young people receive a certificate for their achievements. They are also given a lot of verbal feedback on their contribution, while the product of their endeavours – magazines and the website – allows them to see their contributions in print.

The majority of the young people interviewed identified improvements in themselves which they felt had come about because of their involvement in the group. This included improvements in writing and spelling ability. Two or three said that their confidence had grown, while another said he/she was better able to fill out application forms.

The young people were also aware that tutors kept notes on their progress and the activities they had been involved with. They also reported receiving certificates of achievement from tutors.



## Reported impact on young people's lives

### Personal Life

- More confident due to being involved in a range of activities
- Gaining confidence through meeting new people
- No longer sitting at home in isolation.

### Work Life

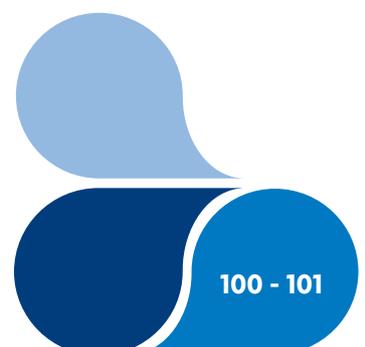
- Helping with job applications
- Building confidence which can help secure work.

### Educational Life

- Aiming to go to college to be a social worker – experience with the project has helped with this
- Not going back into education at moment
- Would like to go on to a degree in social sciences at the local college.

### Wider World

- I'm thinking of volunteering through 'New Start'. I'm keen to be involved in groups to fill my time.
- Would like to become more involved.
- Involvement here helps to form a link with other organisations
- It was primarily through partner agencies.





## Case 9

### The Organisation

This city-based project is a Quarriers' homes initiative, jointly supported by a housing association, and provides supported accommodation for up to 14 young homeless people aged from 16-25. It works intensively with young people and uses a key worker system which involves regular reviews and a structured support plan which details the steps involved in helping the young person to address any difficulties they may have. Key workers hold weekly sessions with the young people to review progress and make future action plans.

The housing association also prepares single homeless people for independence and its objectives as stated in its publicity brochure include:

- Offering a safe and secure environment for the period of time that a resident is living in the project
- Maximising the opportunities for the resident to develop both in terms of acquiring/consolidating skills and abilities and the building up of self-esteem
- Regularly monitoring resident's development
- Assessing, planning and assisting the process of securing appropriate follow-on accommodation for each resident.

One element of the support services offered to young people is literacies provision run by sessional tutors and funded through the City's Adult Literacies Partnership. The literacies classes are also open to young people at a nearby homeless unit offers long-term accommodation to those in need of it. Literacies provision usually lasts for a maximum of 12 weeks, however, young people who have moved to long-term accommodation continue for longer.

Literacies tutors are all at least ITALL<sup>8</sup> trained and have several years of experience and other continuous professional development opportunities are available to the tutors. The tutor interviewed was also a trained youth worker and held a postgraduate certificate in Post-16 education.

The literacies elements were integrated into other activities and the young people were comfortable talking about the literacies group. Some of these were general interest activities: for example, visiting sites of interest around the city and then discussing and writing about them, and others were more focussed on particular life tasks such as budgeting, constructing a CV and applying for a job or house – in other words, enabling the young people to live independently.

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8 Introductory Training in Adult Literacies Learning



### Getting Involved

All but one of the young people joined the group because of positive promotion by staff, word of mouth, bright posters in the centre and through duty staff phoning residents in their rooms to remind them of the classes. One male was referred through a college course that he had enrolled on. Some saw it as a positive step in helping them to gain life/work skills, whereas a few initially went along for something to do other than “hanging around”. None experienced any problems or barriers to involvement.

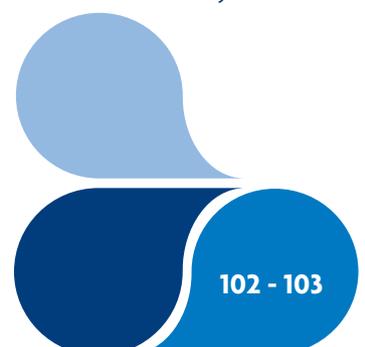
### Engaging Learners

The hooks for attracting learners were both the activities that the group engaged in, and the ‘bribe’ of refreshments (cans, cakes and crisps). Both the tutor and learners openly recognised that it was a ‘bribe’, but accepted that it worked successfully in engaging the young people. Some of the activities included outings to a local museum, Go-karting, cookery, and computing. The group also attended the conference held by *Glasgow’s Learning*.

The tutor regularly used quizzes after the activity. Small prizes were given to the quiz winner, and both tutor and learners attested to enjoying them very much. Any potential stigma attached to literacies learning is challenged through continually referring to successful, well-known adults – perhaps footballers or pop stars who have openly acknowledged not being very competent at reading, writing or numeracy. The tutors put a strong emphasis on building up positive relations with the young people and two-way trust, focusing, whenever possible, on what the learners can do – their strengths in different areas of their life, not what they cannot do or are struggling with. Quarriers has recently appointed a literacies link person in each of their residential sites who coordinates the literacies activities, watches for indicators of literacies issues in any of the residents, and generally promotes the work amongst staff and young people alike. This was recognised as sending positive messages about the importance of the classes to everyone in the building and is a clear signal about management’s support for the work. Two of the young people admitted they initially came to the group to alleviate the boredom of having little to do (so it started as a time-filler), but then they became interested in the activities.

### Sustaining Learner Involvement

The variety of activities helped to sustain the learners’ involvement, and announcements over the tannoy in the centre reminded them when the classes were due to start. Some of the activities were group-based, such as cookery, but there was also opportunities for 1:1 support that related to what the young people were interested in, or needed at the time. Examples of this were job/college applications, writing letters, ICT proficiency, housing application forms, CVs and mock job interviews. The learners appreciated this personal support and felt that they had benefited from it.





From the tutor's perspective, everything had to be flexible as some of the young people's attendance was often erratic, despite the reminders, publicity etc, so there could never be an assumption of building on from the learning in previous classes. This flexibility and mixed teaching modes allowed for was a pace that suited the abilities of all the learners.

### Facilitating Learning and Achievement

The literacies learning is done through the activities mentioned above. Each learner has a personal progress folder that they fill in at the end of each activity, and that is supplemented by comments from the tutor. The young people were very positive about it – some used it regularly to look back on what they had done. They spoke about it reminding them of their progress and seeing what they had achieved. One learner remarked that on looking back at everything she had achieved, she would often think “Did I do all that?”. Learners keep their folder when they move away from the centre.

Although some see the class as a first step towards gaining an employment-related qualification, none of the literacies learning was leading directly towards accreditation. The centre has issued its own certificates of achievement in the past because the learners have said that they wanted something on paper to show what they had achieved, but this particular group opted not to have certificates at the end of blocks of learning.

### Effect on Young People's Lives

Given that this was a homeless unit, and that none of the residents was in employment, this section focused predominantly on the difference that the learning had made in their personal and educational lives. The learners spoke quite animatedly about the difference in their self-confidence since going to classes, and how this had manifested itself in different ways. They mentioned that it had shown them that they could do things; had given them goals in their life that they felt they could achieve; had given them the motivation to get up and do something; and had opened up the possibility of going to college.

If the young people are interested in college, or have been offered a place on a course, the tutor accompanies them there for the first few times to minimise the stress and/or sense of alienation that some experience on re-entering a formal learning environment.

Most of the group talked about reading books, papers or magazines now that they did not previously do. One was spurred by the outings to read about Glasgow and Scotland and admitted to becoming hooked on learning more about them. They also spoke about the impact that they believed the learning would have on their future careers.

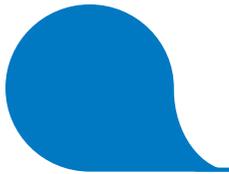
## Appendix 3: Comparison of Key Findings from the NRDC Research and the Scottish Research

Key findings/points for NRDC research carried out in England and Wales	Scottish research findings
Addressing the needs presented by young adults' attitudes, goals and life experiences was far more influential in guiding their learning programmes than environment, funding or accreditation related targets.	Providers regularly stressed the importance of understanding and addressing young people's needs and tailoring the approach to suit them. Providers devoted considerable attention to identifying young people's interests. Keeping young people engaged and motivated was seen as a key prerequisite to successful literacies work. If they are not engaged they will not attend. <i>Source: survey and case study interview</i>
Most provision had a target to engage with young adults not in employment, education or training. The priority for practitioners was learners' progression into employment or formal education.	Sixty-one percent of providers targeted particular groups of young people. The young People in Need of More Choices, More Chances group was the most commonly identified target group. However, in general the emphasis was on 'vulnerable' young people. Raising young people's self-esteem was more frequently identified as a goal than progression to employment, training and education. <i>Source: survey and case study interview</i>
Practitioners have insufficient information about sources of funding for informal and non-formal language, literacy and numeracy work with young adults.	Much literacies funding is fixed and short term. Practitioners regularly seek alternative sources of funding. <i>Source: case study interviews</i>
Most young adults fall into the 16–19 age group, and there is consequently less attention being paid to the contribution that informal learning can make to the learning needs of young adults aged 19–25.	Two-thirds (67%) of young people engaged with were in 16–19 age group. <i>Source: survey</i>
There was a higher proportion of young men than young women participating in programmes.	Just over half (53%) of the young people engaged with were male, 47% were female. The largest single group engaged with were males aged 16–19 (37% of total), and the smallest participating group were males aged 20–25 (16%). <i>Source: survey</i>



Key findings/points for NRDC research carried out in England and Wales	Scottish research findings
<p>Engaging young adults is an enduring issue of paramount importance to practitioners. This is often more pressing than the literacy, language and numeracy elements of provision.</p>	<p>Providers continually highlighted the difficulties in engaging young people (particularly those from groups identified as vulnerable – for example homeless young people). Several case interviewees stressed the advantages in working through already established groups/services or in using ICT as a ‘hook’.</p> <p><i>Source: survey and case study interviews</i></p>
<p>There is an ongoing debate among practitioners about the benefits of making literacy, language and numeracy explicit in learning programmes rather than ‘teaching by stealth’.</p>	<p>The majority of providers responding to the survey indicated that they use a ‘hidden’ (stealth) approach as part of their literacies practice.</p> <p>Case study interviewees suggested that ‘hidden’ approaches were justified in helping to engage vulnerable young people who they believed would not normally join projects where the literacies element was explicit.</p> <p><i>Source: survey and case study interviews</i></p>
<p>Balancing ‘hooks’ and ‘rewards’ with learning elements of provision was a constant struggle for practitioners.</p>	<p>There was an indication from some interviewees that keeping young people engaged ‘interferes’ with the learning element and longer-term aims of the programme. Providers were aware that they had to balance the methods they used to keep young people interested and engaged with what they have set out on their Individual Learning Plans (ILPs).</p> <p><i>Source: case study interviews</i></p>
<p>The use of <i>Skills for Life</i> initial and diagnostic assessment was closely related to the amount and level of literacy, language and numeracy training undertaken by practitioners.</p>	<p>Not applicable to Scotland.</p>

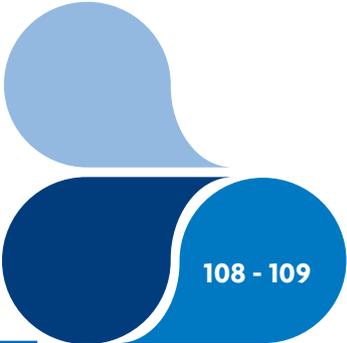
Key findings/points for NRDC research carried out in England and Wales	Scottish research findings
<p>Some form of initial or diagnostic assessment was widely agreed to be useful, whether specifically literacy, language and numeracy related, or informal and more holistic. Ongoing formative assessment was rarely mentioned.</p>	<p>Providers recognised that assessment and evaluation were important elements of provision. Initial assessment was likely to be informal and based on the use of ILPs. Formal assessment, if it happened, was most likely to take place in Scotland's colleges. Other than ILPs, evaluation was often based on the use of questionnaire/group discussion sessions. However, many providers relied on more ad hoc and anecdotal evaluation opportunities. <i>Source: survey and case study interviews</i></p>
<p>Across all sectors, embedding literacy, language and numeracy was widely believed to be the most effective approach in working with young adults.</p>	<p>Many providers used both dedicated and integrated approaches, although more providers opted to use 'mainly' or 'exclusively' integrated approaches. Interviewees stressed the importance of tailoring approaches to meet the differing needs of learners. In individual case settings, we encountered young people involved in integrated provision, while others were receiving dedicated one-to-one provision. Dedicated literacies was often offered as an addition to integrated provision. <i>Source: survey and case study interviews</i></p>
<p>There was a strong desire amongst practitioners to share experiences, but there was not necessarily a common understanding of terminology.</p>	<p>Respondents offered a range of definitions of youth literacies. <i>Source: survey</i></p>
<p>Practitioners concentrate mostly on literacy, with far less emphasis on numeracy. Oracy is often overlooked.</p>	<p>Literacy learning was more in evidence than numeracy learning. Oracy was mentioned by many of the young people as being important. <i>Source: case study interviews</i></p>



Key findings/points for NRDC research carried out in England and Wales	Scottish research findings
Very rarely were examples of provision found that shared the same definition of informal education or learning.	While respondents suggested a range of definitions for youth literacies there was some agreement around a number of broad themes. <i>Source: survey and case study interviews</i>
Practitioners reported a lack of materials to support their literacy, language and numeracy work with young adults. Consequently, the vast majority create their own resources, based on their learners' interests and the needs of the learning programme.	There was little in the survey or from case study interviews to suggest that resourcing was a serious problem. The Internet is an important source of resources and materials. Tailoring these to meet individual and group needs was commonly reported and generally regarded positively. <i>Source: case studies interviews</i>
There is not always an awareness of existing materials due to a lack of professional networks.	Not identified as an issue in survey or case interviews. <i>Source: survey and case studies interviews</i>
Responses to accreditation, assessment and qualifications were mixed, with some practitioners believing them to be a motivational force for learners; whereas a minority saw them as an intrusion into an otherwise informal programme.	College-based provision was more likely than community-based provision to offer formal accreditation/qualification. A few respondents saw accreditation as motivational. There was little to suggest that providers saw it as an intrusion. <i>Source: survey and case studies interviews</i>
The way in which accreditation is introduced to young adult learners, and the support offered to them, is central to its success.	Not identified as an issue in the survey or case studies. <i>Source: survey and case studies interviews</i>
Training and professional development for practitioners working to develop literacy, language and numeracy among young adults is an extremely emotive subject.	Not pursued as an issue in the survey or cases.
Most practitioners have very little specific training in the teaching of literacy, language and numeracy.	Forty-five percent of staff had an adult literacy and numeracy qualification and 24% had a youth work qualification. Only 5% of staff were recorded as having no relevant qualification. <i>Source: survey</i>



Key findings/points for NRDC research carried out in England and Wales	Scottish research findings
Personal qualities and attributes associated with effective youth work, such as patience and empathy, were considered essential; whereas literacy, language and numeracy training was seen as desirable but hard to access, and sometimes inappropriate to the cohort.	Providers and young people stressed the importance of personal qualities and attributes associated with effective youth literacies work. <i>Source: survey and case studies interviews.</i>





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