
Report To:	Education & Lifelong Learning Committee	Date:	25 January 2011
Report By:	Corporate Director Education and Communities	Report No:	EDUC/11/11/MP
Contact Officer:	Maggie Paterson	Contact No:	01475 715450
Subject:	Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies 2009: Report of Findings		

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Share with elected members the main research findings from the Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies 2009 (SSAL2009) and their implications for Inverclyde
- Seek approval for the proposed priorities for future development in adult literacies in Inverclyde.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 The report summarises the Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies 2009, outlines the literacies provision delivered by Community Learning and Development's Adult Learning and Literacies (ALL) and Youth Work Teams from April 2009-March 2010 and proposes priorities for future development in adult literacies.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- Note the findings of the Scottish of Adult Literacies 2009
- Approve the proposed priorities for future development.

Albert Henderson
Corporate Director Education and Communities

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies

The Scottish Government defines adult literacy and numeracy as:

The ability to read, write and use numbers, to handle information, express ideas and opinions, make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners.
(Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland 2001)

This report explores adult literacies in Scotland using data from the 2009 Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies (SSAL2009). SSAL2009 is based on the International Adult Literacy Survey carried out in the mid-1990s as part of an international programme of surveys. The survey was conducted to:

1. provide a baseline estimate of adult literacies skills in Scotland
2. identify and explore patterns of social characteristics in literacies skills
3. allow some international comparison of these findings.

The report involved a sample of 1927 randomly selected 16-35 year olds in Scottish households. The aim of the report is to provide a picture of skills levels across Scotland. The report does not purport to tell us everything about the literacy skills of the Scottish population. It serves to provide clear indications regarding certain types of practices associated with valued forms of literacy and that limited or very limited skills are strongly related to several dimensions of disadvantage.

4.2 How the survey works and what it measures

Measurement of literacies, either in an individual or a population, is not a straightforward task and requires sophisticated techniques and the report acknowledges a number of limitations. The survey measured three dimensions of literacies:

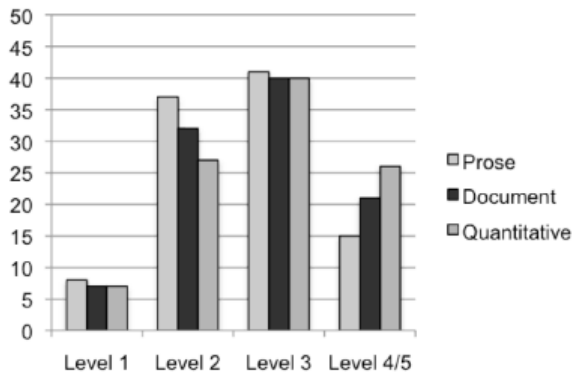
- **Prose literacy:** the knowledge/skills required to understand and to use information from texts such as newspaper articles and passages of fiction
- **Document literacy:** the knowledge/skills required to locate and to use information contained in various formats such as timetables, graphs, charts and forms
- **Quantitative literacy:** the knowledge/skills required to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, to numbers embedded in printed materials, such as calculating savings on items advertised in a sale or working out the interest required to achieve a desired return on an investment.

Scores were grouped into five levels; Level 1 represents the lowest ability range and Level 4/5 the highest.

4.3 The distribution of literacy skills across the population

On all three scales the majority of people in Scotland score at Level 2 or 3. Scoring at Level 3 and above is generally recognised as indicating that individuals have the literacy skills appropriate for a contemporary economy. The proportion of adults in Scotland scoring above these Levels is 55% for prose literacy, 61% for document literacy and 66% for quantitative literacy. These figures are similar to those of other advanced economies in the 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey.

Figure 1: Distribution of scores across the Scottish population



4.4 Defining People in Need of Literacies Support

From the report we would define the number of people most in need of literacies support to be 26.7% of the population i.e. those scoring below level 3.

Characteristics Associated with Lower Scores (below level 3)

- **Age:** People scoring at level 1 on all 3 scores are less likely to be below the age of 35 and considerably more likely to be 56-65
- **Highest Qualification:** This group are much less likely than average to have education beyond compulsory schooling.
- **Educational level:** This group are much more likely than average to have no qualifications and less likely to have gone beyond standard grade.
- **Occupation:** This group are more likely to have an unclassified occupation, meaning that they may not be in work. If working, they are more likely than average to be in a routine or semi-routine position and much less likely to be in a managerial/professional or intermediate occupation.
- **Income:** This group are more likely to have an income below £15,000 per year.
- **Area:** People in this group are more likely to live in an area in the 15% most deprived in Scotland.

Other factors associated with lower scores are:

- Health problems
- Receipt of benefits (not including child benefit or pensions)
- Less likely to have participated in adult education, but more likely to have wanted to
- Less engagement with texts in the home and more TV watching
- Fewer books in the home, never having used a library
- More likely to recognise that help is needed with everyday literacies practices.

5.0 WHAT DIFFERENCE ARE WE MAKING TO THE LIVES OF PEOPLE IN INVERCLYDE?

5.1 Impact on Learners' Lives

In 2009-2010 1,122 learners improved their literacy and numeracy skills, knowledge and understanding and reported significant impacts to their lives as a result of participating in literacies programmes. Many more adult learners took part in programmes with elements of literacy and numeracy embedded and also reported impacts in specific areas of their lives.

Community Learning and Development: Adult Literacies Provision	
April 2009-March 2010	
Programmes Delivered	No. of Participants
Dedicated Adult Literacies Provision Community provision in a range of venues across Inverclyde. Supports adults to increase their skills and confidence, including one to one or small group support, roll on/off provision.	496 42 participated in accredited learning opportunities.

<p>Job Skills Club Weekly drop in service provides intensive employability support, particularly focussed on enhancing literacy and numeracy skills in the context of job search, CV building, application forms and interview skills. Targets people on benefits and those with additional support needs. Ongoing support to take participate in further learning, training and employment.</p>	<p>72 completed course 15 into employment Referrals included 12 to SDS 19 further learning 8 dedicated literacy 4 Volunteer Centre</p>
<p>Family Learning programmes Increases the confidence of adult learners and their children and improves access to learning opportunities for adults and develops parenting skills and communication between parents and children. Supports parents to be more able to help with children's homework.</p>	<p>34 adults 32 children</p>
<p>Standard Entrance Test Support (SET) Prepares participants to undertake sector specific standardised entrance tests used by many employers to assess skills levels prior to interview. These tests can be a barrier to employment for otherwise strong candidates e.g. 40% of candidates (often graduates) fail the Strathclyde Police SET.</p>	<p>14 12 passed first time 10 accepted for training. 2 deferred. 2 accepted for other training/employment opportunities.</p>
<p>Workplace Literacies Tailored programmes developed with local employers. In-house training for low skilled employees and those seeking career progression opportunities. Delivery in local workplaces and training centres supporting participants to both gain and sustain employment.</p>	<p>46 16 on Social Work SVQ programme. 22 nurses at IRH qualification in dosage calculation 8 one to one support</p>
<p>Dyslexia Support Group Work with learners to establish what support they need, work with ALL team developing provision, with schools seeking dyslexia friendly accreditation, form links with dyslexic students in other settings, i.e. James Watt College The Dyslexia Factor - dyslexia awareness raising course for parents of dyslexic children. Focus was on supporting the child and identifying literacies related issues quickly in order to gain support from a range of professionals involved.</p>	<p>'Group of the year for the STV region' finalists in the SALP awards in September 2009 13 participants, 12 completed the course and attended every session.</p>
<p>Beginners BSL Training for staff and partners involved with the Deaf community. Tutors felt better equipped to support Deaf learners in our literacies groups.</p>	<p>28 18 working towards SQA accreditation.</p>
<p>Jericho House Work with adults who have drug/other addiction issues to improve their literacies skills whilst working towards SQA accredited core skills units.</p>	<p>44 28 achieved one or more core skills units</p>
<p>Prison Offenders Programme targets women and young male offenders who require additional support with literacy skills and confidence building to prepare them for liberation. Provides support and guidance and information on opportunities in their area.</p>	<p>32 female offenders 31 youth offenders 1 ESOL learner</p>
<p>First Steps Forward Funded by Fairer Scotland, this partnership project attracts adults back into learning and employability and creates an opportunity for many to gain qualifications for the first time. Outreach workers support partners to engage participants, for whom lack of confidence, knowledge and skills is a barrier. Personal development, general literacy and numeracy, family learning, financial learning and accredited basic skills programmes are provided in local communities and delivered by a pool of tutors.</p>	<p>604 278 received more focussed literacies support to gain a core skills qualification</p>
<p>16 + Activity Agreements Pilot Funded by Scottish Government, this partnership project targets young people aged 16-19 who are furthest from employment, including those from priority groups such as care leavers, young</p>	<p>61 10 have achieved core skills qualifications to date.</p>

parents and Winter leavers as well as young people who do not sustain an initial positive destination. The focus is on building confidence, employability skills, including literacies, interpersonal and communication skills.	
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5.2 The Way Forward

The results of the Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies 2009 (SSAL2009) will inform the Scottish Government's Literacy Action Plan, due for publication in Autumn 2010. This will outline the next steps to further raise standards of literacy from early years through to adult learning. The plan will build on the importance of literacy development within Curriculum for Excellence and the recent Big Plus campaign to improve skills across Scotland.

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning Michael Russell said:

"The Plan aims to raise standards of teaching and learning across the country so we can focus on ensuring children, young people, and adults have the right levels of literacy, for learning, life and work."

5.3 Inverclyde Literacy Framework

It is proposed to improve strategic leadership and joint planning by the development of an Inverclyde Literacy Framework involving partners across all sectors. This will fully consider the Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies 2009: Report of Findings and the Scottish Government's Literacy Action Plan and make an appropriate response for Inverclyde, addressing the main issues and challenges which face us beyond March 2011.

Key areas for development:

- Improve partnership working across the Council and its Partners and the joint development and delivery of literacies provision
- Deliver cross service/partnership staff training to support the improvement of approaches to learning and teaching
- Map all delivery of literacies to the Curriculum for Excellence from early years through to adult learning (with a focus for Community Learning and Development's Adult Learning and Literacies and Youth Work Teams on family learning/early years and senior phase/ 16+ and MCMC)
- Support the development and uptake of accredited learning for literacies learners
- Work towards embedding literacies more fully in employability provision, More Choices More Chances and family learning programmes
- Provide staff training for partnership staff to enable them to embed literacies in their provision and better support and respond to the needs of learners.

5.3 Priorities for development by the Adult Learning and Literacies Team

In addition to maintaining previous areas of support, new developments proposed for 2010-11 include:

- Roll out of short courses, including more intensive models of delivery for those who have the poorest literacy skills
- Literacies support embedded in employability provision
- Increased delivery of family literacies learning
- Youth literacies delivered as an option for S5 school pupils in two secondary schools and as a core underpinning element within the 16+ Activity Agreement Pilot
- Launch of Political Literacies Pilot and development of supporting activities with the Community Work Team to support Scottish Parliament elections in 2011.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance: None

Legal: None

Personnel: None

Equalities: None

7.0 CONSULTATION

This has been and will continue to be integral to all developments.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

A full paper based copy of the Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies 2009: Report of Findings will be available in the members' library.