

Literacy Action Plan

Interim Progress Report, September 2012

The Scottish Government's Literacy Action Plan – Interim Progress Report, September 2012

Section 1 Chair's Foreword



The development of good literacy skills is of vital importance to the people of Scotland, of all ages. We recognise without question that a strong, successful country requires strong and secure literacy skills. Literacy supports, indeed unlocks, learning in all other areas, is crucial for developing employability skills and is a prerequisite for full, informed and responsible participation in social, economic, cultural and political life. Without literacy skills, health and wellbeing can be seriously impaired, or even negated.

We know, from research carried out as part of the 2009 Literacy Commission's report, that the literacy skills of a good majority of Scotland's inhabitants compare well with other advanced nations. However, we also know that if a person has low levels of literacy, they are more likely to suffer poor health; they are more likely to be living in poverty and deprivation; and they are more likely to be out of work or in unstable and low-paid employment. We know as well that people with poor literacy skills are over-represented in our prison population.

Developing good literacy skills should be a seamless journey through a series of rich, well-planned, relevant and engaging learning experiences, aimed at achieving high levels of literacy for everyone, whatever their learning journey's destination may be.

This interim progress report on the [Scottish Government's Literacy Action Plan](#) (LAP) reports on key elements of progress with implementation of the plan since publication on 27 October 2010. Implementation of the LAP is being overseen by the Standing Literacy Commission, which I have the privilege of chairing (see membership at **Annex A**). The progress we have made since publication demonstrates, in my view, the impact of prioritising literacy and concentrating our efforts through the plan. This progress report highlights the more joined up nature of our work now to improve literacy through effective partnership working across sectors and boundaries, through better use of resources and through adopting and sharing approaches that we know, from our evidence and intelligence, really work.

It's important that we continue to explore synergies and make links between distinctive but related areas of Government policy in order to work smarter, improve delivery and avoid unnecessary duplication. The current financial climate makes this goal all the more imperative.

A fuller report on progress with implementation of the LAP will be produced before the end of 2013. In the meantime this interim progress report captures some of the very good, broad-based work that has been or is being done by a range of policy and delivery partners to improve literacy levels in Scotland, in line with the Government's vision to raise standards of literacy for all and break the link between deprivation and low levels of literacy.

Sir Harry Burns

Scottish Government Chief Medical Officer & Chair, Standing Literacy Commission
12 September 2012

Section 2/ Introduction and Wider Policy Context

"Language and literacy are of huge personal, social and economic importance. Our ability to use language lies at the centre of the development and expression of our emotions, our thinking, our learning and our sense of personal identity. Language is itself a key aspect of our culture."

([Literacy across Learning](#) curriculum guidance for teachers and curriculum planners, Scottish Government, 2 April 2009).

In October 2010 the Scottish Government published a Literacy Action Plan (LAP) to signal its "commitment to a heightened, more targeted focus for improving literacy skills in Scotland through better co-ordination and partnership working" and with an "overarching vision...to raise standards of literacy for all from the early years to adulthood" with "a particular focus on those with the lowest levels of literacy".

The LAP contained a commitment to establish a **Standing Literacy Commission** (SLC) "to facilitate and oversee the delivery of the actions contained within this plan (LAP, page 16)." A list of members of the SLC can be found in Annex A. The SLC has now met five times, the last three under the chairmanship of Sir Harry Burns, the Scottish Government's Chief Medical Officer. A sub-group of the full SLC (members also given in Annex A) were responsible for drafting this progress report.

The Literacy Action Plan has undoubtedly raised the profile of the importance of good literacy skills for **improving life chances and employment prospects**, and for unlocking learning in all other areas. In accordance with its vision, the LAP has encouraged more joined up working across different sectors and organisations, and has helped ensure that literacy plays a central and continuing focus in education and related Government policy development in areas such as early years and children's services, justice and health and well-being.

We can see its impact across a range of current policies, including the **Early Years Framework** and **new Children's legislation** currently going through Parliament, and in the work of the **Universal 24-30 Month Child Health Review Working Group**.

The LAP is also evident in the high profile **PlayTalkRead** and **Bookbug** programmes, both currently enjoying further phases of Scottish Government support; and similarly within **Curriculum for Excellence** (CfE), the 3-18 curriculum in Scotland, and the renewed focus within the wider CfE programme and accompanying new National Qualifications on raising young people's attainment. The LAP also greatly influenced the refreshed adult literacies strategy, and exciting related developments such as the **adult literacies "hot spots" capacity-building projects** in a number of areas of multiple deprivation around the country, and work by the Scottish Prison Service and others on improving the **literacy skills of inmates**.

To support the implementation of the LAP, Education Scotland has provided an extensive range of **high quality professional learning opportunities and support materials** for education providers, practitioners and families. These have included planning and coordinating local and national learning events; professional discussion during inspections and other visits to establishments and services; facilitating

national networks; producing online materials and publications; organising Glow groups; and exemplifying aspects of good practice across a wide range of education sectors and partner agencies through digital online resources such as [Journey to Excellence](#)¹. In addition, through inspection and review, HM Inspectors evaluate and report on the literacy skills of learners; make recommendations where improvements are needed; and identify and disseminate good practice.

Libraries in Scotland have a key role to play in improving literacy, as well as promoting a love of reading and books. There are over 30 million visits each year to Scotland's 600 public and mobile libraries, with 60% of the population using public library services for free books, information and learning as well as the wide range of additional services libraries provide e.g. free broadband internet access, job clubs, Government and health information and local, family and Scottish history resources, plus links to community groups, local education providers and access to trained staff.

There are also **National programmes** to encourage children and young people to **read for pleasure**, including Readathon, Chatterbooks (run by the Reading Agency), The Summer Reading Challenge and the Children's (formerly Royal Mail) Book Awards. Additionally, many local authority library services run their own book awards and festivals, including Falkirk's RED (Read, Enjoy, Debate) Book Award, West Dunbartonshire's Booked! Festival, which is aimed specifically at teenagers, and North Lanarkshire's Catalyst Book Award.

Many of these specific policies and programmes join up with current developments and thinking within key policy areas where literacy also matters, such as **health & wellbeing and justice**. All are of central importance in delivering the Scottish Government's vision for a literate, reading nation where people have the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to succeed in learning, life and work in the modern world.

Finally², as part of this vision for a literate, reading nation, [Book Week Scotland](#) is being held for the first time this year (26 November to 2 December 2012) as one of a number of key reading promotion events in 2012. Book Week Scotland is being funded by £150,000 from Creative Scotland's [Year of Creative Scotland](#) programme and will be delivered by the Scottish Book Trust and a wide range of national partners. People will be encouraged to engage in the first ever national celebration of books and reading, and to participate in a range of free events to be held throughout the week. The programme will be launched by the Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop in October.

¹ Click [here](#) for a selection of good practice videos from the *Literacy across Learning* area of the Journey to Excellence web site.

² Literacy also has a clear relevance to the Gaelic and Scots language, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Modern Languages contexts, with a body of evidence highlighting the benefits that bilingualism brings to literacy development. However, these areas are not included within the scope of the LAP.

Section 3/ Key Developments on the Journey

Early Years & Family Literacies

"The OECD is pleased to present its report, [Let's Read Them a Story! The Parent Factor in Education](#). The report examines whether and how parents' involvement is related to their child's proficiency in and enjoyment of reading – and it also offers comfort to parents who are concerned that they don't have enough time or the requisite academic knowledge to help their children succeed in school. Many types of parental involvement that are associated with better student performance in PISA³ require relatively little time and no specialised knowledge. What counts is genuine interest and active engagement."

(Michael Davidson, Acting Head of Early Childhood and Schools Division, OECD Directorate for Education, 14 May 2012)

What the action plan said – key elements

The LAP emphasised the importance of early learning experiences and cognitive development in providing solid foundations from which more formal literacy learning can be developed. The importance of rich home learning environments was also emphasised, as was the need for early and co-ordinated intervention by agencies where and when required to meet the needs of children and their families.

The plan contained a number of specific commitments (LAP, pages 7 & 8) which centred on the already well-established Early Years Framework and Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), the national framework for all who work with children and young people. Specific commitments included working with the Scottish Book Trust in order to target more vulnerable families through the third phase of the PlayTalkRead campaign; strengthening connections with health partnerships; and supporting early years' practitioners through developing their professional learning opportunities and qualifications, through Curriculum for Excellence Early Level curriculum guidance and through developing and supporting their assessment approaches and practices.

Progress to date

"Most children are making good progress in early language and literacy development. Where this is most effective, staff provide well-planned experiences for children both inside and out-of-doors. Where this is not positive, activities are often too easy for children and they need more extension and challenge...there are still centres where literacy...is not well embedded into meaningful, real life contexts for children."

([Quality and Improvement in Scottish Education, Trends in Inspection Findings 2008-2011](#))

Education Scotland, 13 June 2012 – from summary of key findings in Pre-school section, pages 9 and 10)

³ Programme for International Student Assessment – an OECD survey of 15 year olds in OECD and partner countries in reading, maths and science which takes place every three years.

- New Universal 24-30 Month Child Health Reviews recommended to include, as core review topics, a child's language and cognitive development and the availability of books and reading within the home environment, following recommendations made by the dedicated short-life working group established by the Scottish Government in autumn 2011.

- [The Early Years Task Force](#) published a paper outlining their key priorities in spring 2012. These priorities included the development of a new national parenting strategy, plus continuing support for a third phase of the [PlayTalkRead programme](#) - bringing the total funding so far to around £1.65m - and an extra £450,000 of Scottish Government support for an extension of the [Bookbug programme](#) in 2012/13 to widen access and participation for vulnerable and harder to reach families. In total, 14,385 Bookbug Sessions were held in financial year 2011-12, attended by nearly 400,000 parents/carers and children (up by 21% from 2010-11).

- £1.5 million p.a. invested for 3 years from April 2012 to increase early learning and childcare provision for looked after 2 year olds.

- [Every Day's a Learning Day](#) resource produced by Education Scotland to help parents support their child's development in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The books are distributed through the Scottish Book Trust's Bookbug programme. Parents and carers of new babies receive a copy of the birth to 3 book and those with children aged 3 to 6 receive the second book when their child starts nursery.

- The [Write at Home](#) and [Scots for Tots](#) projects encourage parents to support their children's learning and literacy skills' development in early years education and childcare settings, plus schools. Support materials have been published on the Education Scotland website.

- [The Imagination Library for Looked after Children in Scotland](#) - a joint initiative between Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Book Trust – is providing one book per month to each of the country's 3,455 looked after children under the age of five. 21 out of 32 Local Authorities have signed up to the programme and around half of all Scottish looked after children under five are now receiving free books.

Next steps

- The Scottish Government will publish an overarching parenting strategy vision document in early October.

- Publication of new Universal 24-30 Month Child Health Review guidance in the autumn, once Ministerial approval has been secured.

- Expansion of free early learning and childcare provision from 475 to a minimum of 600 hours per annum for 3 and 4 year olds, and 2 year olds who are looked after, as part of the Children and Young People Bill to be introduced in 2013.

- Continued development and expansion of the Bookbug programme, including extending the assertive outreach programme to all areas in the country; Bookbug ante-natal gifting pilot activity; and a new partnership with NHS Health Scotland to look at delivering [play@home](#) resources alongside Bookbug packs.
- Continuation of existing PlayTalkRead commitments and expansion of the Scotland-wide tour by the PlayTalkRead bus through a second smaller vehicle to focus on the highlands and islands.
- Distribution, promotion and evaluation of [Every Day's a Learning Day](#) *Birth to 3 years* and *3 to 6 years* booklets. Education Scotland will pursue the development of further related resources for parents, including a phone app.
- Resources to be added to the [Parentzone](#) website for parents to support literacy development of their children at home. Additionally, Education Scotland will offer support to parents through early years conferences and events on literacy and reading.
- Education Scotland will provide continuing professional development and support to practitioners in understanding and embedding literacy in learning through, for example, 'Glow Meets' (online staff development sessions delivered through [Glow](#), the national intranet for schools) and exemplifying good practice online.

School-aged Literacy

"Every teacher in each area of the curriculum needs to find opportunities to encourage young people to explain their thinking, debate their ideas and read and write at a level which will help them to develop their language skills further." ([Literacy across Learning](#) curriculum guidance for teachers and curriculum planners, Scottish Government, 2 April 2009)

Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. Being literate increases opportunities for the individual in all aspects of life, lays the foundations for lifelong learning and work, and contributes strongly to the development of all four capacities of [Curriculum for Excellence](#)⁴.

Competence and confidence in literacy, including competence in grammar, spelling and the spoken word, are essential for progress in all areas of the curriculum. Because of this, under Curriculum for Excellence all teachers have a specific responsibility to promote the language and literacy development of all children and young people with whom they work.

What the action plan said – key elements

The LAP emphasised the key role of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) to drive up literacy standards for all learners. The new curriculum aims to provide more and better targeted support to those children and young people who need it so that all can reach their potential, and emphasises the importance of developing more advanced (higher order) literacy skills such as understanding, interpreting and analysing complex texts.

Specific commitments (LAP, pages 9 & 10) centred around early identification of literacy (and learning) difficulties and additional support needs, and supporting effective implementation of CfE, plus development of the new CfE qualifications, and CfE's role in promoting literacy development and inclusion, both during the broad general education (ages 3-15) and senior phase (ages 16-18). The LAP also highlighted the key role that local authorities have in raising literacy standards through having effective literacy strategies in place which are suited to local circumstances.

Progress to date

"In almost all schools, children continue to achieve well. The number of schools where outcomes for children are very good or better has increased since our 2009 report (31% to 38%). Children's achievement and progress in English language and literacy remains variable. While children are benefiting increasingly from planned opportunities to apply and develop literacy ... skills across learning, their ability to

⁴ Curriculum for Excellence aims to enable all young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. These four capacities underpin all learning and teaching under Curriculum for Excellence.

use literacy skills to help them learn in different curricular areas is not well enough developed."

([Quality and Improvement in Scottish Education, Trends in Inspection Findings 2008-2011](#), Education Scotland, 13 June 2012 – from summary of key findings in Primary section, page 13).

- Developing and improving literacy skills are central to CfE. Examples of literacy's key position within CfE include the following elements:

- literacy is an integral part of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)'s work on developing the new National Qualifications, featuring prominently in their [Skills Framework](#) which underpins the development of skills within the new qualifications;
- new National Literacy Units have been created by SQA to confirm standards and recognise literacy achievements. National Literacy Units are designed to be available for a range of learners, no matter what context – for example, adults or young people; school, college or prison - and are accompanied by context-based support.
- literacy also features very prominently in the new arrangements for [profiling](#) young people's achievements and reporting on their progress to parents;
- the [Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy \(SSLN\)](#)⁵, a new sample-based survey, focused on literacy for the first time in May this year, with the survey outcomes to be published in spring 2013; and
- high quality learning and teaching resources for literacy have been created by Education Scotland, matched to the Experiences and Outcomes (curriculum national guidance) of Curriculum for Excellence.

- The [final specifications](#) for the new National Qualifications (to be certificated for the first time in 2014) were published by SQA on 30 April 2012. These feature literacy (and numeracy) as key skills across the new qualifications. Distinct literacy units have also been developed at SCQF⁶ levels 3, 4 and 5 for young people and adult learners - at levels 3 and 4 they will form part of new National 3 and 4 English courses; at level 5 they will be embedded within the new National 5 English courses and will not be certificated separately.

- [2012 examination results](#) published by SQA on 7 August 2012 showed that pupils continue to perform well in English qualifications. Of the 49,089 entries for Standard Grade English in 2012, 47,415 passed at level SCQF⁶ 4 or above. Grades 1-6 in English were up slightly from those of 2011. Pass rates at Intermediate 1 and 2 also rose with Higher English, the most popular Higher (29,683 entries, accounting for 16.3% of total entries this year), rising 1.7% to 73.2%.

- [Summary Statistics for Attainment, Leaver Destinations and Healthy Living](#) published by the Scottish Government on 28 June 2012, reported that in S4 nine out of ten pupils gained an award at SCQF level 3 (Standard Grade foundation level) or above in both English and Maths in 2010/11. This figure has been consistent over a

⁵ SSLN is a joint venture between the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), who work together to design and deliver the survey.

⁶ [Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework](#)

number of years. Additionally, attainment (based on average tariff scores) of the lowest performing 20% of pupils in S4 in 2010/11 was slightly up on 2009/10, as was attainment of the remaining 80% and all S4 pupils.

- Key findings from Education Scotland's inspections from 2008 to 2011 show that a good start has been made by teacher educators to improving the ability of all newly-qualified teachers to teach literacy ([Quality and Improvement in Scottish Education, Trends in Inspection Findings 2008-2011](#) Education Scotland, 13 June 2012 – from summary of key findings in Teacher Education section, page 37).

- The Scottish Government has been supporting five local authorities - Edinburgh, Fife, Highland, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire - recognised for sustaining particularly proactive and authority-wide approaches to raising literacy levels. They showcased their work at a national event on 'Enhancing Local Authority Literacy Strategies' held on 18 April 2012 aimed at driving the development of literacy 'hubs' forward. The event was attended by senior literacy and educational psychology personnel from 30 local authorities. Now work is ongoing with these five literacy hub authorities to support sharing of successful approaches and resources across other local authorities in Scotland in a more systematic manner in order to improve literacy outcomes for young people.

The key success criteria upon which the literacy hubs work is based includes the following components:

- a sustained approach to improving literacy from early years through to the senior phase, and beyond;
- a focus on constantly striving to raise the bar in terms of what young people can achieve;
- early identification, monitoring/tracking and interventions where and when any literacy difficulties become apparent, with educational psychology services having a key role in this area;
- more personalisation and targeted support for individual and small groups of children in danger of under-achieving;
- an approach to CPD/professional learning & development which focuses on sharing innovative practice, and achieving a shared understanding of standards;
- evaluation, including effective self-evaluation practices; and
- leadership and commitment at every level, including through distributed models of leadership that encourage and nurture effective leadership qualities at all levels.

- A short [Raising Attainment](#) publication, based on the outcomes of the short life Attainment Working Group of head teachers and complementary research work by the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES), was sent to all teachers and other key education community personnel in March 2012. The publication contained a specific reference to the importance of "focusing on literacy as a platform on which to build future learning" as one of the six key approaches to raising young people's attainment levels highlighted in the publication. The guide also contained reflective questions for practitioners on how to ensure essential literacy skills run through all aspects of learning and how to work with colleagues to encourage literacy development.

- The above publication sits within wider work involving ADES and Education Scotland, plus the [Engage for Education website](#), to encourage a sustained focus within the education system on raising attainment, and the key role literacy plays within this.
- The [English Excellence Group report](#) was published on 11 March 2011 along with [16 other reports](#) commissioned by the Scottish Government on what makes for excellence in subjects, and in skills development (including higher order, advanced skills), across learning and the curriculum. The *English Excellence Group Report* emphasised the need for a rich diet and range of reading, including Scottish and heritage texts. It reasserted the place of grammatical understanding as a fundamental set of skills without which young people will limit their success. The report highlighted the value of enrichment through libraries, theatres and other media contexts, including film, and the need to be more creative in classroom access to and use of information and communications technology.
- 29 case studies from 27 Education Authorities highlighted quality assurance and moderation practice, including some on the specific moderation of literacy within and across local authorities, were uploaded onto the [National Assessment Resource](#) (NAR) at the end of March 2012. A 'Glow Meet' (online staff development session) was held on 21 May 2012 and an Innovation Summit will be held in September 2012 to help disseminate these exemplars and other good practice.
- A [Dyslexia Toolkit](#) for teachers and other practitioners has been developed by Dyslexia Scotland, with support from Education Scotland. Launched in June 2010, the resource has been promoted across Scotland with a programme of events. Dyslexia Scotland are currently updating and enhancing the toolkit with a grant from the Scottish Government.
- Education Scotland has held ongoing professional learning opportunities and support events, and created literacy resources, for teachers and other practitioners on literacy, including:
 - support for English practitioners to develop learning and teaching approaches for the new National Qualifications;
 - promotion and development of resources to support media and digital literacy;
 - creation and promotion of the online literacy community and National Literacy Network;
 - creation and distribution of literacy newsletters to early years, primary and secondary establishments;
 - development of an online resource to support the literacy skills of those aspiring to become teachers; and
 - continuing to work with the Scottish Book Trust to promote reading via [Glow](#) through a wide range of national initiatives such as the popular 'Authors Live' online events, World Book Day celebrations and a family pack for primary one pupils.
- SQA has published new guidance to support teachers and other practitioners in learning, teaching and assessment approaches for English, in addition to hosting

national support events for practitioners on the new National Qualifications in all curriculum areas, including English and Literacy.

- Education Scotland also offer support to parents via nationwide conferences on literacy/reading and literacy advice provided on [Parentzone](#).

Next steps

The Scottish Government and its partners will:

- Use the information and outcomes from the 2012 [Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy](#) (SSLN) to develop tailored literacy materials and resources for teachers and others, based on practitioner and learner needs as identified in the survey. The final tranche of resources and support materials will be made available through Education Scotland's various channels by September 2013.

- As part of supporting the implementation of *Teaching Scotland's Future*, lead the development of diagnostic assessment and self-supported study materials to enable aspiring teachers and newly-qualified teachers to develop their knowledge and skills to teach literacy.

- Continue to support hub and consortia based approaches within local authorities towards improving literacy outcomes. The five hub authorities will report to the Scottish Government on progress with collaborating and sharing their literacy approaches with other local authorities by the end of March 2013. Another national enhancing literacy strategies event will be held in April 2013 to look at progress with this development.

- Continue to work with the educational psychology professional bodies to support the development of the literacy hubs, particularly supporting local authorities with early and robust identification, monitoring and tracking of any literacy difficulties and taking swift and appropriate actions to resolve these. Work is just beginning to create a new literacy early intervention online resource to support local authorities in this key area. The initial focus of the new resource will be the transition from pre-school to Primary 1, in keeping with the priority transition point identified in the LAP. The intention is to make the resource available by June 2013.

- Develop a replacement for the existing [Standard Tables and Charts](#) (STACs), a benchmarking and self-evaluation resource which allows internal and external benchmarking/comparison of SQA attainment data across schools and local authorities. The new system will present a number of national measures on a 'dashboard', with one of the planned national measures covering the attainment of literacy qualifications and awards at [SCQF](#) level 4 or better and SCQF level 5 or better. This will include SQA qualifications in English and Maths plus a wider range of awards considered to include literacy at the required level. The new resource will be available in summer 2014.

- Continue to provide a wide range of professional learning opportunities for practitioners relating to literacy. As part of Education Scotland's school inspections there will remain a key focus on evaluating the literacy skills of learners, and making recommendations where improvements are needed. Additionally, SQA will provide increased practical support for practitioners through a programme of 145 support events between September 2012 and March 2013, including practical advice and guidance on introducing the National Literacy Units and new National Courses in English. SQA will also create assessment exemplars for the National Literacy Units, ready for practitioners to use, from October 2012 onwards.

- *Jordan's New Jaiket*, a new book in Scots by Matthew Fitt illustrated by Ross Collins, will be distributed by the Scottish Book Trust to all c.60,000 Primary 1 pupils in Scotland in November.

Adult Literacies

"By 2020 Scotland's society and economy will be stronger because more of its adults are able to read, write and use numbers effectively in order to handle information, communicate with others, express ideas and opinions, make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners."

([Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020: strategic guidance](#), Scottish Government, January 2011)

What the action plan said – key elements

The Literacy Action Plan emphasised that adult learners are a diverse group so there needs to be a variety of learning opportunities with flexible delivery methods and learning programmes which are relevant to learners' lives. Adult literacy learning can take place in formal e.g. colleges, workplaces and more informal settings e.g. community-based provision. The plan committed us to refreshing the [Adult Literacy & Numeracy Strategy](#) with the aim of challenging ourselves to achieve more, particularly in areas of deprivation.

Specific commitments (LAP, page 12) centred around working with a range of service providers and delivery partners to improve the quality, range and infrastructure of learning opportunities available to adult learners, and improving professional development for the range of practitioners involved in delivering adult literacy learning, including professionals and volunteers.

Education Scotland now has the policy remit for Adult Literacies and is leading on policy implementation and practice development for the [Adult Literacies in Scotland \(ALIS\) 2020 strategy](#).

Progress to date (*towards the ALIS2020 outcomes*)

- National leadership and co-ordination for ALIS 2020 has been improved through the setting up of the Strategic Implementation Group (SIG).
- Literacy Commitments Tables have been established with six national organisations and 18 local partnerships sharing plans to work towards ALIS 2020 commitments. The tables have improved national and local commitment to and communication on adult literacies. Stakeholders who completed the tables identified 60 individual actions that would contribute to achieving the strategy's outcomes.
- A new Professional Development Framework for adult literacies' practitioners and employers has been developed by the ALIS 2020 Professional Development Working Group.
- SQA and Education Scotland have worked together to create new Professional Development Awards in literacies at SCQF level 8 which have increased continual professional development opportunities for practitioners.

- Education Scotland has developed the [Big Book of Literacies Training](#), a resource bank for supporting young people with their literacy learning.
- A business case has now been agreed for a research project to examine local, national and international adult literacies measurement systems from the Measuring Impact Working Group.
- The [Glasgow Life Project](#) has increased the engagement of hard to reach adult learners in literacy “hotspots”.
- Literacy and Numeracy Alerting Questions, developed by Education Scotland, Job Centre Plus and key literacies partners, has improved the referral process for learners so that they are directed to appropriate literacies support.
- Opportunities for improved communication and sharing practice for practitioners in literacies and community learning & development (CLD) are now available through the [Connect](#) online communities of practice resource.
- Skills Development Scotland (SDS) continued to promote [The Big Plus](#) campaign, conducting two waves of activity in February/March 2011 and March 2012. This national coverage included a mix of online, radio, press and outdoor poster advertising. People who contact SDS as a result of the activity are directed to their local authority based Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnership.
- The Big Plus Challenge, a screening tool for assessing the literacy (and numeracy) levels of those in custody, was rolled out across the prison estate – work is now ongoing with SQA to develop a computerised version and provide greater coherence across the education system through aligning with Core Skills.
- Education Scotland, Dyslexia Scotland, the Scottish Prison Service and Motherwell and Carnegie Colleges developed a DVD aimed at prisoners to raise awareness of Dyslexia. The DVD, *Dyslexia, Learning and You*, was launched by Dr Alasdair Allan, Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland’s Languages, at HMP Perth⁷.
- The Scottish Library & Information Council (SLIC) has worked with Learning Connections on the Big Plus In Libraries over a four year period to encourage those with low literacy skills and low confidence with reading to improve their skills. Thirty-two reader development co-ordinators have worked with local literacy workers to

⁷ Education Scotland inspects Learning, Skills and Employability (LSE) in Scottish prisons as part of the institutional inspections carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons. Education Scotland’s *Quality and Improvement in Scottish Education, Trends in Inspection Findings 2008-2011* report found that in most prisons inspected significant numbers of learners attained individual units of study for programmes undertaken in literacy. However, the report also found that there are limited opportunities for prisoners to progress to higher levels of provision. Prison library facilities vary from the majority of prisons which have no library or a poor reading stock, to a few establishments which employ professional librarians with strong partnerships with local authorities and an up-to-date collection of reading materials. ([Quality and Improvement in Scottish Education, Trends in Inspection Findings 2008-2011](#), Education Scotland, 13 June 2012 – from summary of key findings in prison learning, skills and employability section, pages 39 and 40)

develop programmes and place over 200,000 items suitable for those with lower literacy skills in libraries. SLIC, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and Learning Connections also ran two national programmes with the Scottish Premier League (SPL) to encourage family reading, including the *Reading Stars* programme which involved SPL players promoting adult and children's books.

- The Scottish Book Trust, in partnership with the Scottish Government and Standard Life, has developed [Skint!](#), an interactive book for use within facilitated groups of 16-to-26-year-olds. *Skint!* consists of two illustrated storylines that explore issues around money management and responsibility. The stories have been created to engage reluctant readers and focus on realistic, financial circumstances where they must think through making choices and the consequences of their actions. The Scottish Book Trust's [learning web-pages](#) contain a downloadable version of *Skint!*, extensive tutor support notes and a fully accessible digital edition of the resource.

- Colleges across Scotland also make a significant contribution to local literacies development and delivery through Community Planning Partnerships and other local partnerships. In particular, colleges contribute to local [More Choices, More Chances](#) (MCMC) work and to [Opportunities for All](#), the Scottish Government's guaranteed offer of a place in education or training for every 16 to 19-year-old in Scotland, announced in April 2012. Colleges have a key role to play in delivering adult literacies, in working with young people within the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence and in having a positive impact on family life through developing confidence and skills in all learners.

Next Steps

- The ALIS2020 Strategic Implementation Group (SIG) will continue to oversee the implementation of the ALIS2020 Strategy.

- A report to be published on the ALIS2020 commitments to be delivered by local and national partners in 2012/13. Additionally, develop the communication, planning and evidencing of adult literacies work gathered through the Commitment Tables and increase the number of local partnerships and national delivery organisations submitting commitments.

- A report on the Glasgow Life 'Hotspots' project to be published by December 2012, with roll out of the hotspots model to take place in Renfrewshire, Dundee and Fife.

- Establish an Offenders' Learning working group and Adult Literacies Curriculum Framework working group for 2012/13.

- Roll out the new Professional Development Framework and make it available on the i-develop CLD Standards Council online platform.

- Procure and deliver a research project to examine local, national and international Adult Literacy & Numeracy (ALN) measurement systems.

- Skills Development Scotland will continue to promote The Big Plus and work with partners to ensure a coordinated approach to awareness raising of this service.

Section 4/ Conclusion

The expectations placed upon young people are increasing all the time. We all want Scotland to be the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up in and the Scottish Government places a great emphasis on the importance, and the economic, social and personal value, of developing good literacy skills in our society.

We must all take responsibility for laying the foundations to ensure our children have the best possible start in life and a fulfilling and prosperous future. We owe it to children, young people and adults alike to do everything we can to help them develop their literacy skills as these are the cornerstone of their learning from birth to 18 and beyond, and fundamental to the Scottish Government's vision of Scotland as a learning nation.

As this interim progress report on the 2010 Literacy Action Plan demonstrates, much good work is currently being done to improve literacy levels from the early years through to adult literacies. However, even more concerted and joined up action is needed, by all partners, to meet Government commitments to raise literacy standards for all, with a focus on those who particularly need support with their literacy skills, and to break the link between poverty and poor literacy skills.

We hope to be able to report on the positive impact of much of this work in the next progress report, due for publication in late 2013, although we know that there are no silver bullets or quick fixes in this area. Sustaining our commitment towards raising literacy levels and improving literacy skills for all is vital for the success of our individual, community and national learning journeys.

The Standing Literacy Commission
12 September 2012

Section 5/ Annex A

Standing Literacy Commission members, plus interim progress report sub-group members

| Name & Designation | Organisation |
|---|---|
| Sir Harry Burns , Chief Medical Officer (SLC Chair) | Scottish Government Health Directorate |
| *Christine Pollock , Director of Education & Leisure Services, North Lanarkshire Council | Association of Directors of Education Scotland |
| Paul Murphy , The Big Plus Manager | Skills Development Scotland |
| Janet Gardner , Director of Next Practice | Scotland's Colleges |
| Janie McManus , Her Majesty's Inspector | Education Scotland |
| Lena Gray , Head of Policy & New Products | Scottish Qualifications Authority |
| *Hilary Bombart , Literacy Team Leader | Education Scotland |
| Cath Hamilton , Adult Literacies Team Leader | Education Scotland |
| *Judith Gillespie , Chair | 2009 Literacy Commission |
| Iain McMillan , Director | Confederation of Business and Industry Scotland |
| *Kathy Cameron , Policy Manager | Convention of Scottish Local Authorities |
| *Marc Lambert , Chief Executive | Scottish Book Trust |
| Susan Walls , Acting Director | Learning Link |
| Thekla Garland , Early Years and Social Services Workforce Division | Scottish Government Children & Families Directorate |
| John Rice | National Parent Forum of Scotland |
| Elaine Fulton , Director | Scottish Library and Information Council |
| Tim Simons , Head of Curriculum Unit | Scottish Government Learning Directorate |
| *Jeff Maguire , Curriculum Unit - Literacy Policy Lead (SLC Secretary) | Scottish Government Learning Directorate |

* denotes interim progress report sub-group member

For further information on the Scottish Government's [Literacy Action Plan](#) and Standing Literacy Commission visit www.scotland.gov.uk/literacy.



The Scottish
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