

## Welcome

Welcome to the fourth edition of *Revolutions* from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). As well as bringing you the latest news on a selection of Learning Revolution projects, *Revolutions* helps make links between different projects to help create strong partnerships and signpost more learning choices for adults.

This edition looks back at how the Learning Revolution movement began and forward to what's coming next. There are new Learning Revolution resources available: a pledge pack for organisations that have taken the Learning Revolution Pledge and a new toolkit for Community Learning Champions, as well as the revamped School of Everything website – your one-stop resource for informal learning events, activities and classes across the country.

You can also read about new guidance on adult learning for co-ordinators of extended services in schools and Sure Start Children's Centres, as well as the right to request time to train that's now been enshrined in law.

We look at the informal learning offered on the site of the 2012 Olympics in east London, and how projects in Peterborough and Blackpool are setting a national standard for informal learning.

Remember: you can download *The Learning Revolution Pledge Pack* – full of ideas to help you on the way to informal adult learning success [HERE](#)

## The Learning Revolution: looking forward

A year on from the publication of *The Learning Revolution White Paper*, Liz Lawson, policy lead for the Learning Revolution at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), looks back to the start of the Learning Revolution movement and considers next steps.

### Where we started

The publication of the consultation paper *Informal Adult Learning – Shaping the Way Ahead* kick-started five months of debate and argument in spring / summer 2008....and produced an amazing 5,500 responses from organisations and individuals.

The consultation generated a wealth of ideas and demonstrated just how passionate people are about informal learning. Here in the Department we were very encouraged by the contributions of so many new stakeholders and by the widely-shared commitment that we could work together across sectors, departments and interest groups to develop a new vision for this kind of learning.

### The birth of a movement

We promised to work closely with a wide range of organisations to develop a **shared** vision. And after a series of roundtable policy discussions and lots of really interesting (and challenging) meetings with Ministers, the publication of *The Learning Revolution White Paper* signalled the beginning of an informal adult learning movement. BIS invested £30 million in 2009/10 to fund a festival of learning, community learning champion schemes, innovative Transformation Fund projects, an informal learning web portal, guidance on opening up new spaces for self organised learning and lots of other resources - all available soon through the School of Everything web portal.

## Where next?

That word 'movement' is critical to the successful implementation of the White Paper vision. It denotes dynamism, creativity, forward thinking and joint ownership rather than **just** a Government-owned strategy. If informal adult learning is to thrive during difficult economic times, we need to harness all the different resources that partners bring to the table, including time, energy, space, expertise, networks and volunteering activity as well as money.

That means good communication. The Transformation Fund, community learning champion projects and Learning Revolution stakeholder forums have brought together people from different sectors who've not previously had the chance to work together. The new Learning Revolution ambassadors network, the open spaces movement and the School of Everything web portal will continue to create great opportunities for partnership working over the coming year. And we're drawing together a robust evidence base so that everyone can find case studies, photos, video clips, top statistics and useful policy papers across Government to make the case for informal learning's role in supporting wellbeing, sustainability, creativity, good health, environmental awareness, strong families and social inclusion.

We said in the White Paper that local authorities are best placed to develop a creative, joined-up learning offer that reflects the vision in *The Learning Revolution*. From August 2011 most local authorities will have taken up a new role as Lead Accountable Bodies for informal adult learning. Each Lead Accountable Body will plan and shape the informal learning offer, with local partners from health, sport, culture, libraries, community development, family services and the environment helping to reflect each community's wider learning interests. The Lead Accountable Body will work with local partners to develop an annual delivery plan in return for funding from the new Skills Funding Agency. They'll have much more flexibility to decide how the funding is used and will be looking for ways of increasing learner numbers and getting really good value for money.

We passed an important milestone last week when the Learning and Skills Council and BIS sent out a joint letter inviting local authorities to agree in principle to become Lead Accountable Bodies for informal learning. Congratulations to Barking and Dagenham for being the first authority to sign up – and for sending back their response within a couple of hours! Authorities will work with the new Skills Funding Agency and BIS to further develop the model during 2010, making sure that it's flexible enough to accommodate a wide variety of local needs. In the coming months, we'll be looking closely at the teacher training and inspection arrangements for informal learning too, working with specialist bodies and stakeholders. More on that in early summer.

Finally, congratulations to everyone who's helped to bring the Learning Revolution to life. It's been an amazing achievement. Let's continue working together to take this movement from strength to strength.

## Major developments from the School of Everything

The School of Everything (SoE) has launched a range of new tools, making it even easier for informal adult learners to find everything they need to get started.

Courses, classes, workshops and learning based events can now be added to the site, and organisations as well as individual teachers can register as members.

New venues are also being added all the time; all UK libraries are now listed as learning spaces, and there have been some interesting individual venue registrations. A Warwickshire based pub has registered its snug as a free space for learning.

"Everyone signed up to The Learning Revolution should be making full use of the site, whether it's encouraging people to join as learners, registering your courses, events and workshops, or adding out search widget to your own site," says SoE's Paul Miller

To visit the School of Everything website, [click here](#)

## **New guidance to support informal adult learning in schools**

There's new guidance coming soon to support schools and children's centres to open up their spaces for informal adult learning.

BIS commissioned the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) to produce an online guidance pack for co-ordinators of extended services in schools and Sure Start Children's Centres. The pack, *Reaching Communities: Adult Learning in Schools and Children's Centres*, includes advice on:

- how to promote learning and use local learning champions
- working in partnership with other organisations to develop learning opportunities
- the different types of informal learning that might be offered in schools, such as workshops and drop-in sessions
- health and safety and how to access funding

The guidance draws on a questionnaire completed by schools and children's centres about their experiences of hosting adult learning groups as well as feedback from adult learners about their experiences of learning in these settings.

The guide will be online soon.

## **The right to request 'time to train'**

Employers and employees will soon be able to benefit from a new employment right designed to promote learning in the workplace. From 6 April this year, employees of organisations with more than 250 staff will have the legal right to request time for study or training. This right is known as 'time to train'. The training could include informal adult learning if it helps employees develop new or existing skills that benefit them and the organisation they work for. For more information, [click here](#)

## **Unionlearn provides a legacy for the Olympics**

A union-run learning centre that's encouraging workers based at the Olympic site to take part in informal learning has been recognised as an innovative and exceptional project.

The Community and Trade Union Learning Centre (CTU) in east London has been granted the Inspire Mark, the badge of the London 2012 Inspire programme.

The centre, open not just to workers on the site but also to members of the local community, is offering people help with basic computer skills and letter-writing as well as advice on the national minimum wage, the London living wage, Skills for Life diagnostics and signposting for people who are unemployed.

In the next few months the centre will also offer workshops on CV preparation, healthy eating, making a complaint, booking holidays online, safeguarding children's use of the internet and how to balance income and expenditure. There will be free literacy, numeracy and computer skills courses, as well as a course on supporting employees with dyslexia.

Tessa Jowell, the Olympics minister who recently opened the centre, said, "The centre adds to the range of training and development services available to workers on the Olympic site and local communities surrounding it since construction started. Together they are helping to create a legacy of skilled employees who are able to take on a variety of roles and support the economy. Union Learning Reps are also playing a vital role in making sure that all the workforce can have access to this learning."

For more information about the centre, email the centre manager Phil Spry at [pspry@tuc.org.uk](mailto:pspry@tuc.org.uk)

## Partners in Literacy

Of all the skills we can ever learn, speaking, listening, reading and writing are among the most important. Nothing excludes more than not being able to communicate and participate in society.

That's why the National Literacy Trust, funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, has developed a two-year *Partners in Literacy* project to help families with children aged 0-5 to create a language-rich environment at home.



The trust is working with local authorities to create partnerships across services, bringing together family learning, early years and library services as well as others, like housing and health, that work closely with the most disadvantaged families.



To do this, *Partners in Literacy* is funding a strategic co-ordinator in nine local authorities chosen as pilots for the trust – Coventry, Derbyshire, Gateshead, Kent, Knowsley, Lambeth, Sheffield, Suffolk and Wiltshire. Authorities receiving support but no funding include Barnet, Hackney, Halton, Luton, Oldham, Peterborough, Rochdale, Rotherham, Staffordshire, Stockport, Stoke-on-Trent, Suffolk and Tameside.

If your authority is interested in joining the *Partners in Literacy* network as an unfunded partner authority, please contact Emily Thorne, Manager, Partners in Literacy [emily.thorne@literacytrust.org.uk](mailto:emily.thorne@literacytrust.org.uk)

## Community Learning Champions update

More than 50 organisations will soon be receiving funding to run Community Learning Champions (CLCs) schemes across England.

The first 36 projects, started in 2009 and already well underway, are busy encouraging new learners to take up informal adult learning. In the second phase of the CLC Development Fund, a further 15 projects have heard that they'll receive funding for 2010/11.

The Community Learning Champions Support Programme Project Manager Liz Cousins explains, "We're delighted with the progress of the first 36 projects. They'll be able to apply for a further £10,000 to support activity in the next financial year. We received more than 100 bids for second phase funding and we're excited about all the new projects the programme is going to fund."

Blackpool Heritage Learning Champions is just one example of a project that's being funded through the Development Fund. It's encouraging people in the area to celebrate and share learning about the resort's proud heritage. Another example is a scheme run by Community Service Volunteers in Plymouth, where they've recruited a large pool of volunteer champions who are reaching out to vulnerable and socially isolated people in Plymouth.

The Development Fund is just one element of the BIS-funded national Community Learning Champions Support Programme being delivered by a consortium of Martin Yarnit Associates, NIACE, WEA and unionlearn. The other elements of the programme are:

- **a toolkit** for community learning champions (CLCs) and the people who support them
- **a website** offering advice and effective practice examples for CLCs and the people who support them, with opportunities to share practice and find out about regional networks and events. It will also host the CLC training programme, toolkit, branding guidelines and register

- **the new national brand** for Community Learning Champions which will help to raise their profile
- **the badge and registration scheme** offering national recognition for individual CLCs through a new badge
- **regional networks** across England offering networking , support and the opportunity for projects to share effective practice.

For more information, [click here](#)

## Project Spotlight

Greeniversity is an exciting Transformation Fund project providing free opportunities for adults in Peterborough to learn something new and environmentally friendly.



Very much a community project, Greeniversity encourages people to share green skills with other people. 'Green' is used in the broadest sense to mean anything that leads to a healthier, more active life with a low impact on the environment, from growing food and keeping bees, to re-fashioning clothes, knitting and tai chi.



More than 200 people in the area have now signed up to Greeniversity through its website. Courses, which can be browsed on the website, take place in various locations around the city. Karen Lawrence is the Greeniversity Project Officer from Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT), the green charity behind the scheme. She explains, "Our starting point for Greeniversity was the thought that we ought to be making more of the fantastic array of green skills in the city. After all, that's vitally important if Peterborough is to achieve its aspiration and become the UK's Environment Capital.

"This project builds confidence, raises aspirations and encourages people to learn new things even though the last time they attended a class may have been many years ago at school. The project develops skills that are useful in work and life and we've found that participants are more likely to seek out further opportunities for learning after they have taken the first step with a free, fun Greeniversity course."

For more information, [click here](#)

To make the Learning Revolution Pledge, [click here](#)

If you would like more information on any of the articles in this newsletter, or if you would like to add a name to our mailing list, email [revolutions@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:revolutions@bis.gsi.gov.uk). And please forward Revolutions on to anyone you think might be interested.



INFORMAL ADULT LEARNING IN THE 21ST CENTURY