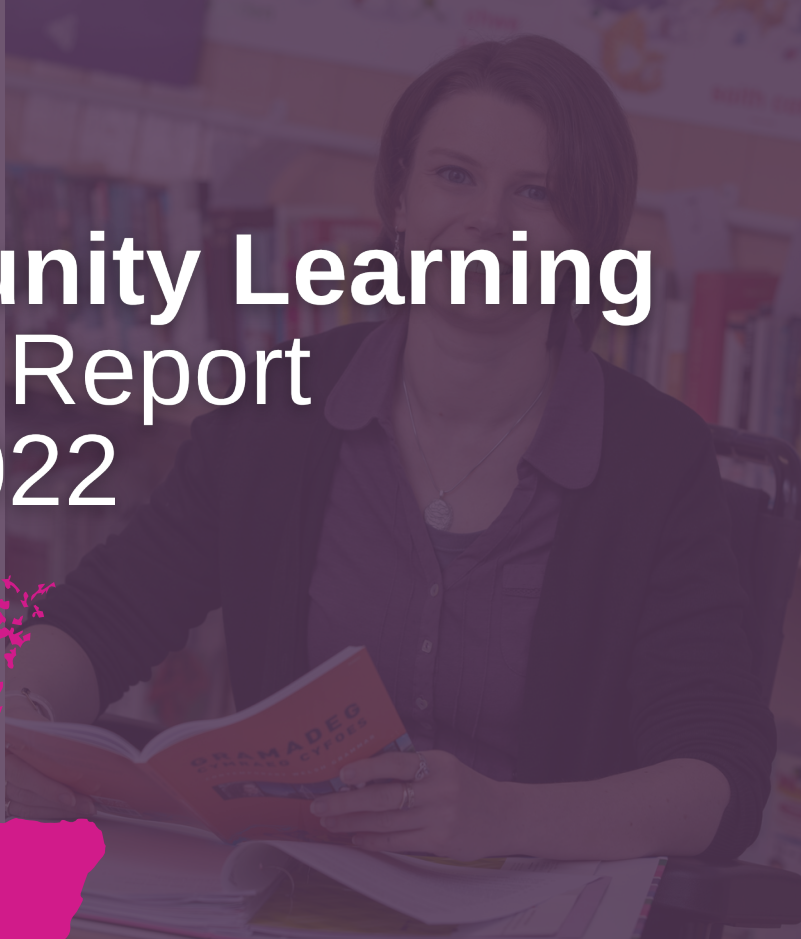


Adult Community Learning Impact Report 2022



PARTNERIAETH CYMRU
DYSGU OEDOLION
ADULT LEARNING
PARTNERSHIP WALES



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Adult Community Learning for Adults in Wales

Opportunities for adults to learn at all stages and phases of their lives are needed now more than ever before. In 1919, the Ministry of Reconstruction's Adult Education committee published a 'Report on Adult Education', arguing that a population educated throughout life was vital for the future of the country.

"Adult education must not be regarded as a luxury for a few exceptional persons here and there... it is a permanent national necessity, an inseparable aspect of citizenship, and therefore should be both universal and lifelong."

This report set the groundwork for a liberal approach to adult education for the rest of the 20th century. Its centenary is a vital opportunity to reflect on the needs and possibilities for adult education today and into the century ahead. Back then the report was a response to post-war recovery – our focus now is on recovering from a global pandemic – the ability to access good jobs, protecting our mental health, access to digital technologies and the skills to function online.

We are adjusting to the impacts of leaving the European Union, seismic shifts in the way that work is organised, changes in the way in which our children learn, making sense of a world where we need to have the skills to understand how we get and use news and information.

Our values in Adult Community Learning are driven by a desire to work with communities to enable people not only to function with day-to-day living and build the skills to access good jobs – but also to ensure that people can live life well and become active citizens. Our learners build social networks, find friends and mentors, develop confidence in their abilities and have a second chance at learning in a safe space. Our purpose in Adult Community Learning is to bring learning into the heart of communities and to open the door to learning that may have closed since school days.

We have an ambition to create lifelong learners, to see our learners progress but also to see them become role models within their families, to be leaders in their communities, to have the tools to be happier and healthier in their own lives.

Phil Southard & Martin Walker
Co-chairs, Adult Learning Partnership in Wales

What is Adult Community Learning?

Building a second chance nation and giving everyone a fair chance in life

There are a number of Adult Learning Partnerships delivering community based adult learning across Wales, including Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales.

Courses and learning opportunities are delivered through a diverse network of providers, including local authority adult education services, colleges, and the third sector. Delivery works by creating partnerships with higher education, Job Centre Plus, health boards, schools and wider support services for mental health, housing, debt, and addiction.

Adult Community Learning (ACL) delivers essential skills; reading, writing, maths, digital skills, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) qualifications, as well as learning for employability, and improving well-being, family learning programmes, and learning for general interest and leisure.

Our partnerships work with our communities to respond to local need, alongside other key agencies and community groups to tackle wider social issues in a holistic way.

We know from our work that adult learning in the community transforms lives. Playing a vital role in employability, building essential and digital skills, wellbeing; supporting families, promoting integration, and helping people of all ages to live more independent, fulfilling lives.

For some, community learning is a safety net catching those who may have missed out on their education first time around. Reaching people “close to home” in settings they know and working with partners who have trusted roles to support wider issues around debt, addiction, housing, and health.

Community learning has a vital role to play in tackling health inequalities, where it works best rooted in communities providing second chances to learn, reducing loneliness, and growing the resilience of people to enable them to live happier, healthier, and more confident lives.

The benefits of Adult Community Learning

Estyn's 2016 Thematic Report on Adult Community Learning highlighted:

"Partnerships maintain a strong commitment to providing learning for hard-to-reach learners, such as the long-term unemployed, single parents, minority ethnic groups, people with physical and mental health needs, the isolated and the elderly, and those who have had poor experiences of statutory education."

"Adult Community Learning is wider than the provision of essential skills courses, but one of the strengths of ACL has been its success in supporting adults who have missed out on basic education with expertise in adult literacy, numeracy, digital skills and ESOL."

"In many cases ACL catches those whose formal education has been disrupted, or who go through some transition in their lives or careers that calls for new skills or understanding. Young people leaving school without basic skills, new arrivals in the country who need support in becoming fully integrated citizens, those whose jobs are insecure or disappearing, those leaving prison or care."

People in communities must be able to shape what happens, what they learn, and how they learn. Sustained outreach, peer support, community support and access to resources are key. Adult education plays a profoundly important part in helping people understand, deal with, and take some control of life's transitions, new experiences and situations. There is a need to support a broad provision of adult education, covering all aspects of personal, community, and work life. All these kinds of learning bring a wide range of benefits to individuals and communities.

The UNESCO 3rd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 3) recognised the impact of adult learning across all aspects life.

"Countries reported a positive impact on health and well-being, employment and the labour market, and social, civic and community life. Adult learning and education led to improved health behaviours and attitudes, higher life expectancy and a reduction in lifestyle diseases, with a commensurate reduction in health care costs."



Economic

Achieving a full level 2 qualification can increase an individual's earnings by 11% and their chance of being in employment by 2 percentage points compared to those that do not achieve that level. (Independent Panel Report to Review of Post-18 Education, May 2019).

Health and Wellbeing

The 2019 WEA survey found that participants had fewer trips to GPs than the general population and respondents reported that they felt that learning was good for their mental and physical health.

Community Learning Mental Health Research Project found that 52% of learners with symptoms of anxiety and/or depression no longer had clinically significant symptoms by the end of their course (Ipsos Mori et al., 2018, cited in House of Commons Education Committee, 2020).

Social and Community

Estyn's 2016 thematic report on Adult Community Learning identified that there are a wide range of social benefits associated with learning through longitudinal and cross-sectional studies such as higher levels of social capital, including trust and social networks, higher levels of community involvement and political engagement as well as increased social integration and cohesion.

Intergenerational learning

66% of survey respondents with children from the 2019 WEA report said they encouraged their children to learn more and 64% said that they could now help their children with reading, writing and maths.

What is delivered by Adult Community Learning?

Essential Skills

The coronavirus pandemic highlights that people who have low levels of essential skills are likely to face difficulties in finding and sustaining jobs. They are also at risk of exclusion from essential public services and social interactions which now take place online, including everyday tasks such as grocery shopping, catching up with friends and family, and accessing non-emergency healthcare such as GP appointments. **The 2010 Adult Skills Survey**, the latest data for Wales, found that 12% of working-age people, had entry level literacy or below. Around 50% of adults, some 918,000, had numeracy skills below level 1. Digital Communities Wales suggests that 33% of adults in Wales lack digital skills, with 10% of adults not online. They are missing out on opportunities to save money, find work, learn online, and access important services.

The broader impact that essential skills in adults has on society has been noted in other reports in other countries. In the Netherlands, a report commissioned by the **Dutch Literacy Foundation** found that the total social cost for low literacy amounts to 1.12 billion euro per annum, approximately 50% of which is “borne by the government and society.” In Ireland, the government has recognised the importance of improving adult literacy and numeracy publishing a **new cross government plan** to tackle unmet needs.

Family Learning

Adult Community Learning providers have built expertise and evidenced learning interventions to support families in schools and in the wider community. Family Learning programmes provide an engagement tool to reach parents who may have low levels of essential skills, those from migrant communities for whom English is not a first language and those who have been out of the labour market. Family Learning delivers literacy, numeracy and digital skills for parents in addition to ESOL and Employability skills. In many cases, it is the first step back into education for some who may have left school themselves without any qualifications. For some it is the start of their learning journey which sees them progress onto further learning in the community or beyond to further and higher education.

It is clear that whilst investing in developing the skills and confidence of parents, this approach has benefits for their children in terms of attendance and attainment at school and raising aspirations for future learning. We know that parents who have confidence in learning, see the benefits of education, and have positive experiences of learning are able to provide more active support for their children as they move through education. For some it builds confidence to read and write with their family and support learning at home, as well as interacting with teaching staff and increased engagement in the life of the school community. Family learning provides a positive contribution for creating a culture of lifelong learning.

Health and Wellbeing

A broad curriculum can contribute to tackling health inequalities and support the NHS in Wales with a preventative approach.

The **UNESCO 3rd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE III)** revealed that people with low levels of education were more likely to report “overall poor general health and functional limitations.” The report also found that adult learning led to improved health behaviours and attitudes, higher life expectancy and a reduction in lifestyle diseases, with a commensurate reduction in health care costs.

A study by the Mental Health Foundation found that key indicators of distress among UK adults, including loneliness, suicidal thoughts and feelings, and not coping well with stress, have worsened since the start of the pandemic.

In contrast, higher levels of literacy lead to higher life expectancy rates, reduction in disease, improved mental health and overall healthier behaviours and attitudes.

The **Marmot Review of Health Inequalities** has highlighted the role of education in the life chances of those most at risk of poor health and suggests a refocus of effort to address the wider social determinates of health – including access to education.

It is well evidenced that adult learning fosters: a sense of identity, an ability to cope and a feeling of purpose in life, a greater level of wellbeing, positive changes in mental wellbeing and a sense of purpose. Research also suggests that learning new skills and continuing education throughout life can delay the onset of dementia.

Evidence from the Health Foundation:

"Targeting lifelong learning opportunities, as well as information and financial support to access these opportunities at adults with little to no educational attainment therefore has the potential to improve health and reduce health inequalities within the population."

Healthy, Wealthy and Wise, L&W, 2016:

"Both good quality learning and good quality employment are, to use Marmot's phrase, 'protective of health', whereas being learning-poor and being out of work is harmful to health. Learning and fair work are protective because they improve wellbeing and give us agency. Their absence is harmful because it contributes to poor mental health, social isolation, and poor self-management of health."

Employability Skills

We are facing significant shifts in the way we work, the future of work and the skills needed to ensure that the Welsh economy flourishes. We know that having good levels of essential skills provides pathways into rewarding work. Continuing to have access to learning in the workplace is vital for people to progress and gain the skills needed to adapt and sustain employment. Many people who now seek new employment may need to upskill and this may include brushing up on their literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

Adult Community Learning is a key part of the lifelong learning ecosystem in Wales – provision builds confidence, creates learners who want to progress and once they've started their journey they want to continue to learn. We support learners who in many cases are furthest from employment; our provision ensures they develop and improve skills to provide the transition into the workplace.

The **new plan for employability and skills** sets out a vision for a fairer and more equal Wales – the plan unveiled five priority areas: Future Generations, tackling economic inequality, promoting fair work for all, more support for people with long term health conditions, and learning for life.

Adult Community Learning will work with Welsh Government and other partners to ensure that the lifelong learning priorities set out in the **Programme for Government** are met. This includes reforming the post-compulsory education and training sector (PCET), expanding the Personal Learning Accounts offer, introducing mid-career reviews, increasing the number of adults in learning and setting up a **Commission for Tertiary Education and Research** (CTER).

ESOL and WSOL

Access to learning is key to promoting integration, and to helping those who migrate to Wales to participate fully in the communities which become their homes. Being able to communicate with confidence is essential if they are to utilise the skillset which they bring with them.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is an essential part of Adult Community Learning provision and is key to supporting and settling migrants and refugees.

Providers are also now developing Welsh for Speakers of Other Languages (WSOL) to build into their delivery.

Learning for general interest and leisure

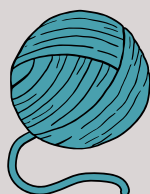
Many adult learning providers also run 'Learning for Leisure' programmes that provide leisure and wellbeing classes for their communities on a cost recovery basis. These learning programmes typically include classes in - watercolours, life drawing, upholstery, cake decorating, pottery, creative writing, dressmaking, family history, mindfulness, languages, photography, floristry, fused glass, mosaics, jewellery making, cookery, yoga and counselling . In one local authority the leisure programme had over almost 3,000 enrolments in (pre Covid) academic years.

Adult Community Learning continues to build on the existing foundation to deliver a range of learning programmes through the Welsh Government funding and effective collaboration across the partnership. The Learning for Leisure programmes are observed during Estyn inspections of providers to help ensure quality of provision.

3,000 learners had taken up learning for general interest in the Vale Learning Partnership during 2018



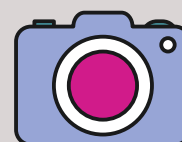
Art
739 learners



Crafts & Textiles
766 learners



General Interests
246 learners



Computers and
Photography
163 learners



Health and Wellbeing
316 learners

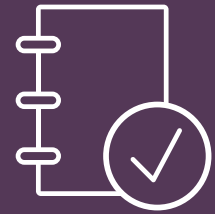


Personal
Development
35 learners



Languages
703 learners

Policy priorities addressed



Adult Community Learning services across Wales are making important contributions across a range of policy areas and priorities. The partnerships are committed to removing barriers in education and widening access for all individuals to gain equal opportunities, that will enable and empower more people to participate in learning and receive individual support. This also includes the promotion and representation of equality, diversity and inclusion across partnership activity and engagement.

A bi-lingual nation



Across communities in Wales, Adult Community Learning is supporting work to help build a bi-lingual nation. ACL services work with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to deliver Welsh for Adults provision. They help to support learning at all levels, including beginners and those studying at more advanced levels. It is a vital part of helping to deliver the Welsh Government commitment of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.



"Learning the Welsh language has been a complete joy for me, I finally feel like I'm home."

Supporting employability and skills



Adult Community Learning is a frontline service helping to tackle inequalities such as poverty, unemployment, and educational disadvantage. An important priority area for Adult Community Learning is supporting learners with few or no qualifications. These are often individuals facing the most disadvantage and for whom community education is a first step back into learning. For many it is about gaining new skills for work and for life, including Essential Skills qualifications in literacy and numeracy.



"It's been tough at times but I'm incredibly glad that I did it. My experience has been fantastic, I'd really recommend it. I'm closer now than ever before to achieving my dream of becoming a social worker."

Connections, health and well-being



As well as the benefits of gaining formal, accredited qualifications Adult Community Learning also helps individuals to stay connected with one another and to help people improve their health and well-being. It supports local, informal learning clubs and groups, including for older people. Learner feedback has reported the benefits to them of staying in touch with others, developing friendships, being active and engaged in the community, and improving their mental and physical well-being. Adult Community Learning is more than just about qualifications gained. It is a lifeline for thousands of learners across Wales, helping them stay connected with others, preventing loneliness, and improving health.

"I was told I wouldn't live past 30 if I continued to live my life like I did. Yet I know so many people who have been through worse. If I can inspire at least one person or show someone who is struggling, that you can change your life through education, then it's all worth it."



A Nation of Sanctuary



Adult Community Learning Partnerships deliver programmes of ESOL and WSOL for refugees and migrants. Delivery provides opportunities for those settling in Wales to build language and employability skills. Partnerships link to voluntary networks and higher education to ensure learners are settled and can progress.

"From a time when all I could say was one-word answers to talking at the Senedd - I have found my voice. I am now safe and supported. I continue to work hard to be the strong woman for my family. When people hear my story, I want to tell them to never give up."



Digital inequalities

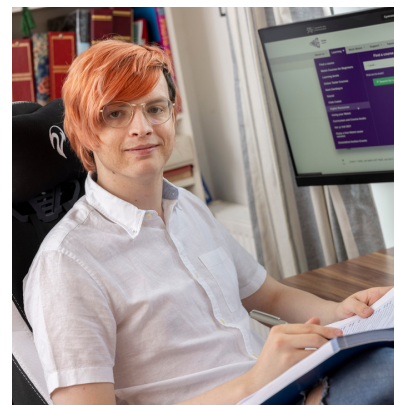


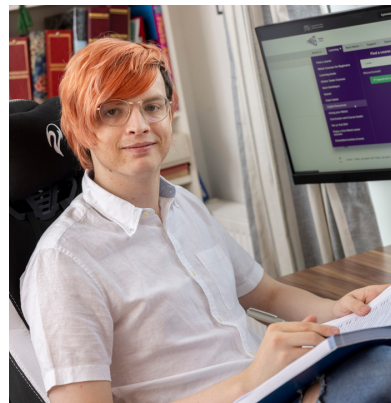
Alongside literacy and numeracy, digital skills are recognised as vital tools for the labour market and in being able to access services in wider life. Adult Community Learning services help to equip people with the skills they need and will play an important role in meeting the ambitions of digital inclusion in the new Welsh Government Digital Strategy.

"The world is changing. Shops are closing and more things are moving online. It's quite daunting for someone my age. I worried about trying to use a computer and doing the wrong thing. I decided the best thing to do would be to learn how to use a computer properly."



Adult Community Learning Case studies





Fatma Al Nahdy

Different Past: Shared Futures



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the full story](#)



When Fatma Al Nahdy made the journey to the UK from Yemen in 2015, she didn't speak any English and due to the ongoing wars and turbulent situation in Yemen she had never attended school. Fatma could speak two languages fluently but didn't know how to read or write. Her son was born not long after she arrived, and she was determined to build a better life for him. So, when she was offered the chance to enrol on an English as a Second Language (ESOL) course at Coleg Cambria, she was nervous but excited to take on a new challenge. Just five years later, Fatma has completed ESOL as well as a Level 2 Diploma in Skills for Further Study and a Level 3 Access to Higher Education course. She passed her GCSE maths and English and has continued to broaden her knowledge by enrolling on ECDL, beginner's Welsh and interpretation courses. Fatma's goal has always been to become a nurse.

For Fatma, learning English was an essential part of getting settled and starting her new life in Wales, she said: "I was nervous for the first class. I knew I would be meeting lots of new people, and I was very shy at first, but it was a lovely class, my tutors helped me to see the fun in learning and after a couple of months I started to feel more comfortable and more confident. Learning English meant I was able to get out and build links with the community. My son is my motivation and inspiration. Learning during the pandemic was challenging because I was also home-schooling and caring for him. Remote learning is not my preferred way of learning, but I am doing okay."

"I've always wanted to be a nurse, all the courses I've taken up to this point are to help me reach that goal. It hasn't been easy, but now I'm closer than ever before to achieving my dream. When I arrived in Wales, I didn't know about any of the help that was available for me. I stayed in touch with the women who helped me and they're like family now, my son has two 'forever grandmas'. My advice to anyone else thinking of taking up a course as an adult is to manage your time and focus on your goals – education is the key to life."

Clare Palmer

Essential Skills for Life



[Watch / Read
the full story](#)



Clare Palmer left school at 14 with no qualifications. Clare was passionate about helping others and dreamed of a career where she could give something back. But, by the age of 18, she was a mum with a baby son to care for. She worked as a hairdresser for the next 14 years to support her young family. When she moved back to Wales with her son in 2013, she decided to use her passion for helping others to become a care assistant. Knowing she would need maths and English qualifications to get accepted onto a social work university course, she joined the Vale Learning Centre and went on to complete her Level 1 Application of Number and Level 2 in Communication.

Clare discovered she would still need to gain an additional maths qualification to get into her first-choice university, so, a year after securing her first qualifications, she returned to the Vale Learning Centre to begin studying her Level 2 Application of Number. This came as she was working in the hard-hit care sector during the pandemic.

In 2019, after completing a Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care, Clare gained more self-belief about how far she could take her career. She decided she wanted to take her passion for care a step further and apply to university to become a social worker. By the time the pandemic hit in March 2020, she had achieved Level 2 in Communication and Level 1 Application of Number. Clare said: "From the age of 14 to 41 I'd done no maths or English. I was apprehensive at first and, honestly, I was terrible at it. But I threw myself into it and I knew after just a few weeks that I'd had made the right decision."

"At one point I was working up to 60 hours a week, sometimes working seven days in a row. I was exhausted. On top of that, I was trying to balance my own learning with looking after my son and keeping our house in order. I'm still not sure how, but we got through it." Reflecting on her experience of adult learning, Clare said: "It's been tough at times but I'm incredibly glad that I did it. My experience has been fantastic, I'd really recommend it. I'm closer now than ever before to achieving my dream of becoming a social worker."

Jamie Evans

Health and Wellbeing



Jamie Evans' depression and anxiety saw him isolate himself from others, to a point where he would go weeks without human contact and was using prescribed drugs to medicate himself from the pain. He said: "I started suffering with anxiety when I was a teenager. I had health problems that were affecting me daily, which meant I was missing school, and that's where it all began."

Jamie was diagnosed with Chron's disease and his anxiety became a huge barrier, stopping him from working, socialising and seeing anyone outside of his home. "At my lowest, I wouldn't get out of bed, I wouldn't wash, I wouldn't eat. I wouldn't answer my phone when my family called, and I would make excuses when friends invited me out, so eventually they stopped asking. I had been out of work for 10 years because of my anxiety, depression and my health problems, and I had no aspirations or plans for the future – I was just surviving day to day. I had been prescribed painkillers for the pain I was feeling but began relying on them more and more, eventually, when they weren't enough, I turned to stronger drugs and my problems really started to spiral. I was assigned a peer mentor through my substance misuse support worker." There, he was given a leaflet about a 12-week Psychology course with Adult Learning Wales, run in partnership with New Horizons mental health charity, and he signed up.

"On the first day, I stood outside the class for about 20 minutes looking at the door, terrified to go in. My anxiety was through the roof, I felt sick and I almost turned around. But something inside of me had clicked and I forced myself into the class. My first class was amazing. I immediately felt at home and the classes couldn't come quick enough – I just wanted to learn more." When the course was coming to an end, Jamie didn't feel ready to stop, and enrolled on a Criminology class with the same tutor, despite it being a 40-minute drive away. After a few weeks, he was on a third course in confidence building, attending three courses a week, before eventually enrolling onto an Access course in humanities and social science at Coleg y Cymoedd.

"I used to have the fear of the unknown, but now going into class, I meet new people and know that everyone is going through their own things and dealing with problems of their own, and no one is judging me. I've got so much more out of learning that I ever could have expected. Not just the subject knowledge from the classes, but valuable skills, self-belief, resilience, friendship and better mental health".

Rhiannon Norfolk

Starting Out - Welsh Beginner



Having the opportunity to learn Welsh again was a key factor in Rhiannon Norfolk's decision to move back to Wales. She inherited her love of 'Welshness' from her mum and dad, who are originally from South Wales, and used to take her on holidays every summer to Gwynedd. These family holidays inspired her to study at Bangor University where she planned to become proficient in the language, but her busy university schedule meant she had to drop her Welsh lessons. "I got on with life, as you do, but Wales has always felt like home and I had this yearning for the language."

It wasn't until she was living in Wiltshire years later that a chance encounter would see Rhiannon return to Welsh. "I saw a poster for a folk band called Calan, who were playing at the town hall in Chippenham," she said. "I went along on my own and loved it. I felt a huge connection to the beautiful sounds of the Welsh language with the moving music, and it brought back some of what I had learned."

When she saw a job advertised in her field of health service evaluation, she applied, got the job and moved to Wales. A year later, she has almost completed a fast-track foundation-level Welsh course at Penarth Learning Community. She said "I worried I'd be so far behind everyone else with my very basic Welsh and that I hadn't learned for 13 years, but it was brilliant. Everyone was so welcoming and it's amazing how much you remember." Rhiannon attends the class for two hours every week alongside Saturday schools. She joins a reading group at Palmerston Adult Community Learning Centre in Barry and has attended a Welsh residential weekend with her mum, Gill, who is also learning at classes near her home in Monmouth. After receiving outstanding results for her entry exam, Rhiannon is now getting ready to sit her foundation assessment. "Learning Welsh has been a complete joy for me, I finally feel like I'm home."

Rhiannon suffers with depression, anxiety and Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, which requires the use of walking sticks or a wheelchair and causes her constant pain and fatigue. She said: "Coming to Welsh classes has made a great difference to my mental health and I take it at my own pace, taking a break in class if I need to. Learning gives me structure and a place to make friends. It's helped me to keep my brain active and given me a sense of purpose and achievement. Giving up on Welsh was always a regret and I wanted to sort that out, and I feel so fulfilled now that I have."

Springboard Family Learning in the community



Springboard is a Learning Pembrokeshire community project committed to providing a wide range of high quality, life changing family learning opportunities in schools and community settings across some of the poorest communities of Pembrokeshire. Springboard's mission is to 'make a positive difference in the lives of all learners we engage with'.

Springboard worked closely with Gelliswick School to put Family and Community Engagement at the heart of the school's life. Family activities take place at the school every day of the week and the community room is the very first thing you can access when you enter the building. When the local authority took the decision to close the two schools serving the communities of Hakin and Hubberston there was some resistance and uncertainty. Before the new school's official opening, the Headteacher secured funding to support projects to build bridges between the communities, who were anxious about their children moving to a new school.

Headteacher Nick Dyer says, "The challenge for the school was to reach out to parents in a way that would bring the community together, and to do this in a way that would mean not just a smooth transition to the new school, but would be transformative in terms of skills, ambition and future prospects." The community includes one of the most economically deprived wards in Wales, where many children are living in poverty. Since September 2017 more than 70 different courses have been delivered at the school, engaging 187 adults aged between 18-81.

Courses help adults develop their essential skills and their capacity to support their children in English and maths. The school has also funded a range of courses that embed essential skills in a creative way – through photography, coding, art, pottery and Ukele playing. In preparation for the launch of the new school, the community came together to produce stained glass windows, a photographic legacy book and a community choir also emerged.

Community engagement at the school is now so strong that parents have helped to raise over £16k to support family activities. Parents are volunteering their time as creche workers to support other families to access family learning, others are qualifying to become Learning Support Assistants in the school. The impact is being felt in the wider community – parents are now taking an active role in the regeneration of Hakin and Hubberston. Adult learners are now helping to shape the future of the area, some have taken up positions on the Invest Local committee and one parent has been voted in as the Mayor of Milford Haven.

Cathays High School Parents Learning Group



[Watch / Read
the full story](#)



Cathays High School has been developing work with the community over the last couple of years. In 2014, a small group started with three parents to develop reading sessions in collaboration with the local library. Their aim was to encourage reading among the community, to develop confidence in reading and to help their own children at home. The parent-learning group was created to build a link between the school and the community.

The group has grown and developed Basic Literacy skills with ESOL sessions to encourage reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. The group has developed a close working relationship with the school and has helped with fund-raising and community development activities.

As more learners have joined the session, the school decided to provide them with an accredited ESOL course. So far, four learners have qualified for entry level 1 and 2 and seven learners are waiting for their qualification.

Noreen, a parent on the course says, " I stayed in the house for twenty years looking after my children. I want to do something new for myself, learn some new skills so that I can communicate and socialise with other people and then I can look for a job to help the community."

The school has now developed a partnership with Adult Community Learning and has developed the range of courses for the parents and the local community. Ten-week courses include Agored Cymru accredited courses in confidence-building, child-care and digital skills. All group members are enthusiastic and would like to progress into further learning.

Daxa, is a parent of a former pupil and she started the courses two years ago. She had no English language skills and she says, "I improved my English communication through ESOL lessons and I built up my confidence."

Cathays High School is committed to further develop their work with learner families to build up the community bonding. Christina Roy, a tutor for Adult Community Learning and a member of staff at Cathays High School says, "If the parents feel confident and qualified then they can pass on similar values to their children".

Jade Miles

Growing your literacy, numeracy and communication skills



Jade Miles began learning with Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales (AOC|ALW) in January 2021. She felt that she was lacking in literacy, numeracy and communication skills. Jade explained she would never interact in school classes and had trouble communicating with people.

In the five months since starting her course, Jade's confidence has grown, and she has developed an interest in learning and feels her communication skills have improved. She is now determined to meet her future goals in supporting her children with school work, and one day would like to become a nurse.

Jade has said she was attracted to (AOC|ALW) courses as they offered the flexibility to her needs. Jade is a single parent to three children under the age of 5, and her parents help look after them whilst she is doing her course work. Jade highlights, "My children have motivated me. They have started school and bring work home and I want to be able to help them."

Jade says her family members have now been enquiring about the courses and she has motivated others to want to learn. Notably, her confidence and communication skills have increased so much that she was able to volunteer to take part in the Adult Literacy Campaign for Radio 5 Live, where she discussed her learning journey live on the radio. Her tutor shares, "We are very proud of Jade. Her appearance on BBC Radio 5 Live will undoubtedly impact on the wider community across Wales and inspire others to learn."

Jade also volunteers for her local community and delivers food parcels to local people. This too has been made possible through her increased confidence and acquired skills.

Jade is now keen to build her CV where her eventual goal is achieving a level C in literacy and enrolling onto a nursing course and her advice to potential learners is, "Find the right course for you and try your best. The tutor will support you to do the rest!"

Adult Community Learning Swansea as a Learning City



Adult Community Learning (ACL) in Swansea has strong links across Council Departments and other learning providers within the City. These links were strengthened during the celebration of Swansea as a Learning City in 2019 with the Swansea Learning Festival when providers worked together to offer over 300 learning opportunities resulting in over 9,000 participants. The Lifelong Learning Service is working with partners to build on Swansea's status as a UNESCO Learning City through the development of an online directory of all learning opportunities across the city.

Partnership work has been at the fore recently with a number of summer community events to promote services and learning opportunities straight to the heart of local communities. New partnerships formed via these events have resulted in the planning of exciting initiatives focussing on increasing the number, mix and background of ACL learners. Interaction at community level is the key to widening the range of learners attending adult learning classes and provide an accessible entry point.

This fact has long been recognised in Swansea with the Family Learning programme. The programme attracts many hard to reach learners into adult learning through the provision of free, friendly, accessible community learning opportunities. The draw of supporting their children through school is the carrot that prompts many parents or carers to attend. The positive and supportive learning experience within the programme entuses many to continue on a learning journey of their own. Strong links with other providers, clear signposting options and informed staff combine to make Family Learning the top engagement route to adult learning classes. Consistency and support of tutors within community venues builds confidence for learners who may have had poor learning experiences previously.

ACL in Swansea works closely with employability partners to support those wishing to progress to further training or job opportunities. Close partnership working has resulted in opportunities to improve skills, gain accreditation, access support and work experience for ACL learners and employability clients. ACL has developed and delivered bespoke contextualised courses for partners to meet the interests of their clients. ACL recognises the importance of accredited and non-accredited learning and our offer in both areas has been increased and widened. These classes have essential skills embedded and are designed to raise confidence, increase social inclusion and improve skills and language. The courses are offered to individuals and closed groups from across Swansea with the aim of increasing engagement and widening the range of ACL learners.

Luke Tomkins

From Student to Teacher



Luke Tomkins was first introduced to Adult Learning and Digital Support through attending a 'Get Into Call Centres' course run by Adult Learning Cardiff in partnership with BT in January 2020. However, Luke discovered that working within a call centre environment was not the employment route he wanted to go down.

During the course, the tutor and Luke spoke about other options and Luke signed up to be an Adult Learning Volunteer with Volunteering Cardiff. He engaged with the digital support services to assist during Digital Surgery and BT Skills for Tomorrow sessions across Cardiff.

As the pandemic struck, Luke continued to assist adult learning students online, as a volunteer, as their sessions moved to the online learning platform Google Classrooms. Luke continued to deliver online code clubs for adult learning and youth service groups.

It was clear that Luke was passionate about helping others and he had a real enthusiasm for teaching, so Luke was referred to an Into Work mentor to progress his skills and work towards teaching qualifications necessary to secure employment.

Luke now works as a Cardiff Works Digital tutor within the Cardiff Council Digital Support Services delivering a range of online and face to face training such as BT Skills for Tomorrow, Digital Surgeries, Let's Talk Code Live and Code Club. Luke is keen to work with a range of internal and external departments to boost the programming and computing offer in Cardiff.

Guy and Emma Garbett

You don't have to do it alone



Guy and Emma regularly attended a Lifelong Learning Essential Skills class in Swansea but when lockdown happened, classes moved to remote learning. Despite only having access to mobile phones, they were keen to continue. They were able to join the Lifelong Learning Service scheme to borrow a laptop with portable Wi-Fi access. This has had huge benefits for them. Neither had used email before, so with some practice and careful instruction, they were delighted when they managed to send their first email - it was a landmark achievement. This opened up more learning possibilities and they were able to email the tutor and keep in touch.

Their achievements continued to grow. They were able to join Google Classrooms and begin to use G-Suite to access work and activities, then by the end of the summer term, in 2020, they had even managed to complete and achieve an Agored Cymru Entry Level Qualification. Their confidence in digital learning has grown and they have joined an online IT course called – Learn My Way, to further improve their skills. They intend to continue with their Essential Skills classes too.

“We enjoy being part of a class and it gives us the motivation we need to improve our skills. Sometimes learning isn’t easy for either of us, but because we work at our own pace and at our own level, we’ve made progress. When lockdown hit, we were really shocked and very anxious, not knowing what to expect. The classes were cancelled and we felt very alone. Thankfully our tutor kept in touch and before long, classes continued remotely. It was a relief to know we weren’t on our own. Carrying on meant we had something to focus on each week.

We have learnt so much. I never dreamt that I would be able to send emails and access work online. Our skills on the computer are improving all the time and we’re much more confident. We’ve even joined a computer class to learn more. I would certainly recommend that people join a class or learn a new skill. It will change your life. It certainly has ours.”

Ffion Mon Roberts

British Sign Language



Ffion Roberts has been learning Sign Language with Coleg Llandrillo for the last six years, her studies eventually led her to pursue a degree in British Sign Language (BSL) and Deaf Studies, she has also recently completed her level 4 in British Sign Language. Ffion is currently in her third year and hopes to graduate in 2023. Before embarking on her studies Ffion was working full-time until she was made redundant in her role, however Ffion immediately saw this as an opportunity to take up part-time employment and to enrol onto a formal qualification. Ffion's interest in learning Sign Language began in the home.

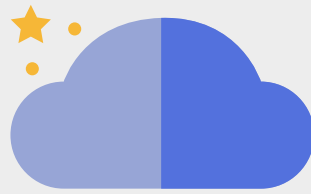
Ffion said "I was brought up around deaf family which inspired me to do sign language. My uncle is Deaf including two of his children, his son also has a Deaf daughter who is currently aged ten. Therefore, Sign Language was introduced to me at a very young age, me and one of my cousins were at a similar age, we often played together, and I seemed to have grasped the language quite quickly which inspired me to do more, and to learn more".

Learning BSL led Ffion to meet her current partner who is profoundly deaf and on a day-to-day basis she uses sign language skills to communicate. Ffion's success with learning has opened up a new pathway as she recently secured a new role at the Centre of Sign-Sight-Sound in Colwyn Bay as a Communications Support Worker, she will be working alongside deaf individuals to provide accessible information advice and assistance.

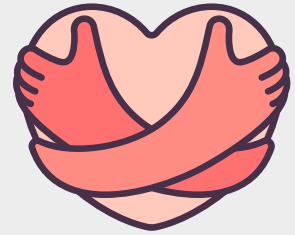
Ffion said "My hope for the future is to become a British Sign Language interpreter, I know that's a long way away, but this job will allow me to practice daily and the fact that I am enjoying it is a bonus. I was badly bullied in school. I left school at the age of 16 with GCSE's and decided to go to college to study childcare. After qualifying, I worked in different schools in Anglesey as a teaching assistant and decided on a new career path in 2015. This is when my BSL journey began. If you are thinking of doing something similar, I would advise you to do so! It is fun, you will learn something different. It's not every day you get to learn British Sign Language, so go for it."



Obtaining a qualification during mid-life is associated with lower coronary heart disease risk



76% of adults in the UK still want to achieve their childhood dream



Participation in adult learning can increase optimism and self worth by 8%



Learning a new physical activity such as table tennis improves muscle coordination and strength which can actually make your brain grow

It's good to learn



Increasing education can help reduce the risk of depression by 15% among female adult learners



Adult learning can improve mental wellbeing



It's never too late! 24% of adults in the UK have switched careers later in life



Learning a second language can delay the onset of Alzheimer's by 2.5 times

The role of Adult Community Learning in the recovery

Wales is committed to building a fairer and greener economy and society after the pandemic. Adult Community Learning has a vital role to play in building our recovery.

Connecting again



We have all missed the connection of being able to see other people and to be active in our communities during lockdown. Adult Community Learning can provide a lifeline by helping people and communities come together to learn. Well-funded adult learning that is rooted in the needs of local communities is one way that we can help all of us to connect with each other again to rebuild our communities.

Closing the digital divide

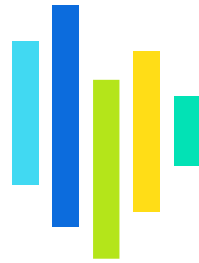


The pandemic has exposed the digital inequalities in our society, with many families and adults having to adapt to new ways of working, learning, and accessing services. Now more than ever Adult Community Learning has an important role to play in helping people gain new digital skills and ensuring everyone can access the services they need.

Gaining skills for a new world of work



Those with the fewest qualifications are amongst those that have been hardest hit by the economic impact of the pandemic. Adult Community Learning will be crucial to offering opportunities for those with the fewest qualifications to upskill or to begin a path to retrain for a new career.



Future Generations



Adult Community Learning is integral to each theme within the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

"The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act gives us the ambition, permission and legal obligation to improve our social, cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing."

Estyn has reported on concerns about the links between poverty and widening gaps in rates of mental health difficulties and educational attainment, including the risk that such inequalities will be magnified as a result of the pandemic.

"All forms of education should be a priority for Wales to move forward to tackle the challenges that exist and those that lie ahead."

"Access to learning in the community will be significant in helping people who have suffered as a result of the pandemic. There are many whose education has been disrupted and will need help and guidance moving forward, others who are in need of upskilling due to redundancies, and those whose mental health has suffered due to lockdowns and will be looking for ways to engage with others through community-based learning."

Adult Community Learning delivers formal and informal educational opportunities, with venues located within communities but it has also made a significant effort to switch to delivering learning online and continues to explore a blended form of learning as a future priority.



Delivering a second chance nation in Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



"When it comes to education, our lives should not, must not, depend on one shot, one chance, one pathway, one decision.

It must never be too late to learn, or to become more democratically and critically engaged through education. To learn that new skill, acquire that new qualification.

To become personally, culturally and academically fulfilled.

I am determined that Wales should be a nation of second chances, and that we can realise that ambition together.

A true nation of second chances is one where we work together, build our shared citizenship, tackle the impact of poverty on aspiration, opportunity and education."

**Jeremy Miles MS,
Minister for Education
and Welsh Language**

[The full speech is available here](#)

Ambitions for the Adult Community Learning Partnership



A broader curriculum

Building back a broad offer of adult learning in our communities. We will co-produce opportunities that offer social connection and wellbeing. We want to continue to tackle loneliness, build social capital and enable people to live well.

More opportunities for older people

Participation in learning in adults declines significantly with age. Only a third of adults aged 55-64 and a fifth of 65-74 year-olds participate in learning. Community based adult learning can provide opportunities to age well, keep bodies and minds active and maintain links to social networks.

Building resilience, wellbeing and connecting adult learning to the NHS

There is potential to connect adult learning to the NHS and Public Health in Wales more strategically. The benefits of adult learning on health and wellbeing are well evidenced - we want to secure more cross sector, cross governmental partnership, development and research to make this happen nationally and with local health boards across Wales and to ensure ACL plays a role in social prescribing and other public health initiatives.

Developing a green economy

The Adult Community Learning sector is committed to strengthening its partnerships across Wales and strengthening its ties with the Regional Skills Partnerships. Ensuring that learners are able to access the training and develop the skills required to build a greener and fairer economy.

Strengthen learner voice

Learners are our most valuable resource. By providing feedback on their experiences they help us shape and continually improve delivery and access. They are also the best advocates for learning and provide a valuable role in encouraging others in their community to take part. Reviewing how we involve and engage learners and what support they need in this role will be a priority.

Workforce development needs

The last few years have been a challenge for all in education, and our tutors have taken the opportunity to learn; improving their own digital literacy to keep up with their learners, and utilising new technology to ensure that learners continued to stay connected and feel supported. Adult Community Learning tutors play a vital role in helping learners to overcome previous negative experiences, build their confidence, and support their health and wellbeing. Adult Community Learning Partnerships will work together to secure more opportunities for workforce development, work with the Education Workforce Council, and collaborate with Educators Wales to inspire more people to become adult educators.



PARTNERIAETH CYMRU
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PARTNERSHIP WALES