

Scotland briefing:

One of our key partners in Scotland is the Corra Foundation, which works with the Scottish Government to administer and manage the Adult Learning and Empowering Communities Fund (CYPFEIF & ALEC Fund).

As recipients of the funding we have committed to three specific outcomes.

- **Outcome 1:** Improve the skills profile of adults with low or no qualifications.
- **Outcome 2:** Reduce the number of adults from disadvantaged communities living in poverty.
- **Outcome 3:** Improve the health and wellbeing of adults from disadvantaged communities.

Below we have outlined how we are nationally and regionally supporting each of these outcomes. The areas are split as follows:

- National picture
 - Highlands
 - Aberdeen
 - Falkirk
 - Glasgow and Ayrshire
 - Edinburgh
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National picture

Outcome 1: Improve the skills profile of adults with low or no qualifications.

Across Scotland as a whole, there has been a near 100% growth in the volume of learners. This is in part due to our partnership with trade unions, which has allowed us to reach learner's digitally to be upskilled and potentially more productive in the future.

Outcome 2: Reduce the number of adults from disadvantaged communities living in poverty.

The successful outcomes from all our employability programmes move people from benefits or low paid work to a better standard of living.

A number of our learners who are facing the most challenging circumstances, have secured volunteering opportunities or college places that will take them one step closer to work.

Our upskilling work with trade unions across Scotland is creating better qualified and knowledgeable employees. These workers are now able to command higher salaries in their current workplace or have the skills, knowledge and confidence to look for higher paid work with another employer.

Outcome 3: Improve the health and wellbeing of adults from disadvantaged communities.

Across many of our learning programmes, learners report that beyond the knowledge and skills they also benefit from the socialisation and group interaction. This helps learners to avoid social isolation that might otherwise occur.

On our learning programmes the group interactions have helped prevent loneliness and isolation. In addition, the one to one interventions provided people with personalised pastoral support to prevent or address any emerging issues.

Learners have also reported improvements to their health and wellbeing through positive outcomes beyond the knowledge and skills acquired. These include passing their driving test, getting a college place or access to wider community opportunities.

And, on our ESOL courses learners frequently reported wider health benefits beyond the immediate learning. In one course 49 of 51 learners said their health had benefitted from learning during lockdown.

Highlands

Outcome 1: Improve the skills profile of adults with low or no qualifications.

In the Highland Employability Programme, learners are working towards accredited qualifications in communications and ICT and developing employability and digital skills.

Over a quarter of learners achieved a qualification in digital skills. In addition, in the Study Skills courses 100% of learner's reported improvements to their critical skills, report writing skills and essential skills.

Also in the north east and across Highland, we deliver progressive programmes of ESOL literacies training to migrants and refugees. This is to move them closer to the workplace. At the same time we also offer digital skills classes as part of our core ESOL provision across Highland.

In our Highland ESOL programmes, all learners report that their skills have improved and six learners have also achieved a National Level 3 ESOL SQA qualification.

In the Highland ESOL programme, 22 learners are undergoing assessments for SQA literacies accreditation. All learners are engaging with CANVAS and ZOOM improving their digital skills alongside their language training.

Outcome 2: Reduce the number of adults from disadvantaged communities living in poverty.

In the Highlands, we provide a one to one programme, where in the last quarter over 100 learners have been engaged in bespoke training to accelerate their job readiness. These one to one interventions has led to greater participation from previously marginalised groups.

Outcome 3: Improve the health and wellbeing of adults from disadvantaged communities.

Our Women in the Highlands Project aims to improve physical and mental health and wellbeing by enabling women across the Highlands to connect with one another and overcome rural isolation. Courses in art, yoga journaling creative writing, and mindfulness are examples of the breadth of choice available.

Of the 95% of learners who completed the Women in the Highlands evaluations, 100% of them reported positive impacts to their wellbeing and that the programme helped them overcome their social isolation at the start of COVID.

From April to September, 56 women across the Highland attended one or more of the courses on offer. A number of these groups are now self-sustaining making the community more resilient.

Partnerships:

The Women in Highland poetry project, which has resulted in great outcomes was a multi-agency activity across Highland with WEA Women in the Highlands, Nairn Book and Arts Festival as the lead partners.

We also partnered with Highlands Migrant and Refuge Advocacy and ADWAR [a women's group in Palestine] to connect women from different cultures and backgrounds.

Aberdeen

Outcome 1: Improve the skills profile of adults with low or no qualifications.

Reach Out in Aberdeen combines outdoor education for wellbeing with sessions on literacy, numeracy and digital skills for employability. Learners on the Reach Out Programme have achieved the John Muir Award or the Adult Achievement Award.

In Aberdeenshire we also run study skills courses for people in work preparing for their SVQ's in Care. On the Aberdeen Study Skills Courses, 100% of learners reported improvements in their study skills and increases in their confidence levels to complete their SVQ's.

Outcome 2: Reduce the number of adults from disadvantaged communities living in poverty.

In Aberdeen, our Financial First Aid course helps people better understand money, working to a budget and maximising their entitlements. 100% of all learner's on the financial first aid workshops reported more knowledge and confidence on money matters, and how to avoid getting into debt.

The financial first aid workshops are enabling people to live free from debt, manage their way out of debt, and balance income and expenditure to avoid poverty. It has also taught learners to manage their tenancy to avoid eviction.

Outcome 3: Improve the health and wellbeing of adults from disadvantaged communities.

On our Reach Out programme, 41 learners engaged with the health and wellbeing programmes with many welcoming the group interaction during lockdown.

Programmes in gardening, the arts, and walking groups have particularly been noted for contributing to the health and wellbeing of its participants.

In addition, the programme also provides environmental "clean ups" as part of their outdoor activity programmes. In the round, we are building and sustaining better and more resilient communities.

Falkirk

Outcome 1: Improve the skills profile of adults with low or no qualifications.

In the central belt, job clubs in Falkirk and Grangemouth provide literacy training and personal development support to learners facing particularly significant personal and life challenges.

In the job clubs, a number of learners have achieved awards at SQA level 3 writing, SQA level 3 speaking, and one learner has also achieved an Adult Achievement Award.

Learners are also supported with skills in employability, literacy and digital – as well as confidence building. For those with particular challenges such as dyslexia, learning difficulties or those suffering from historical abuse – additional support is also available.

The job clubs have provided support helping learners to progress into work or on to volunteering opportunities as an interim step.

Glasgow and Ayrshire

Outcome 1: Improve the skills profile of adults with low or no qualifications.

In Glasgow, we offer ESOL for everyday skills to a wide range of learners from the Glasgow ESOL Register. These learners have varying levels of capability and are from some of the most deprived communities and marginalised groups in the country.

To make sure each learner has the right support we carry out hundreds of initial language assessments. This ensures that all learners are placed on the level of course appropriate for their skills and capabilities.

A number of learners have progressed from WEA provision to college courses or enhanced provision via the National Transition Training Fund. In addition, 65 learners achieved one or more outcomes from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; and of those 18 progressed to a course at Glasgow College.

Outcome 2: Reduce the number of adults from disadvantaged communities living in poverty.

Our Ayrshire programmes in health and social care are leading to positive job destinations. Also in Ayrshire a more generic employability programme for Syrian new Scots combines group work with intensive one to one support to help people find work.

Of the 21 Syrian New Scots in Ayrshire, four have progressed to a positive destination.

Also in Ayrshire, our Personal Assistants Network has delivered provision and support to almost 300 Personal Assistants who have enhanced their skills. This has coincided with a campaign to secure the living wage for all Personal Assistants in partnership with the Living Wage Foundation.

In Glasgow, tenant learners have been engaged in the creation of an online digital archive to understand the struggles of past tenants and how they can engage with political stakeholders to improve their own conditions.

12 learners on the digital archiving project reported improvements to their financial literacy, as well as their ability to engage with landlords and to understand their rights.

Outcome 3: Improve the health and wellbeing of adults from disadvantaged communities.

In Glasgow, visual journaling for wellbeing courses have been delivered to families of those in prison. This Journaling for the Families Outside Group, created provision for people previously stigmatised and disconnected from learning. Now families are learning together.

Similar programmes have been delivered to NHS workers, along with journaling techniques to accompany programmes in arts.

On the journaling courses, all 15 learners on the Families Outside programme reported improvements to their mental wellbeing. The NHS course told a similar story with all 12 learners reporting similar benefits to their mental health, while 83% reported that the course helped them meet new people during lockdown.

In addition, our Personal assistants programme has helped 300 personal assistants to gain accredited qualifications and more knowledge on improving their job security, delivering a better service to their clients and meriting increases to their pay via the Living Wage.

Partnerships:

We continue to increase our referral partners for our ESOL work in Glasgow with a growing number of housing associations now referring learners to us.

We have also grown our accreditation activity through much closer work with SQA Newbattle Abbey College and the recruitment of Queen Margaret University as an academic research partner.

In West and South West Scotland there has also been a growth in the volume of partnership activity creating more new opportunities for learners.

For example Families Outside referred to earlier has created innovative new opportunities for the families of those who are in prison.

Edinburgh

Outcome 1: Improve the skills profile of adults with low or no qualifications.

Across Edinburgh, we have delivered Elementary ESOL and ESOL for Digital Skills courses. These have provided entry level provision and more advanced courses to enhance our learner's communication skills and provide them with the skills they need for employment.

Outcome 2: Reduce the number of adults from disadvantaged communities living in poverty.

In Edinburgh a range of ESOL classes are upskilling learners in work, helping them to become eligible for higher paid work. The courses are also equipping those out of work to access paid work.

Learners on the ESOL courses in Edinburgh reported more knowledge of the employability landscape and how to access better opportunities – both with their current employer or elsewhere.

Outcome 3: Improve the health and wellbeing of adults from disadvantaged communities.

In Fife and Edinburgh, there is a wide ranging wellbeing programme that includes book talks, creative writing, theatre studies, green issues, and history.

In many of our ESOL programmes learners report significant physical and mental health benefits and that beyond the formal learning, the group interaction is an essential element in their integration to a new community.

In the Fife and Edinburgh learning groups, many of the learners are older adults – they often report improved mental health, reduced loneliness and isolation in course evaluations. Learners in this bracket are remaining connected through improved digital skills.

And, in addition, NHS learners have described their creative writing classes as a "lifeline" during lockdown.