

At the heart of learning: promoting literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills development



The Regional Achievement Programme
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It was edited by Mavis Zutshi, NIACE South West Regional Development Officer (RAP). For reason of space, it has not been possible to acknowledge individually all those who have contributed to the development of this resource. Particular thanks are owed to:

Gwen Blake and Sandi Wales – South West *Skills for Life* Unit

Jan Eldred – NIACE Literacy, Language and Numeracy Team

David Ewens, Sue Gardener, Judy Gawn, Mandy Lindsay, Julie McManus, Sue O’Gorman, Carolyn Newlove, Patricia Whaley and Jenny Williams – NIACE Regional Development Officers

Karen Kendall – Exeter CVS

Raksha Mistry – NIACE Regions Team

Martin Norfield – Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit

Jacqueline Quemades – The Learning Curve, Wiltshire

Cheryl Turner – NIACE VCS Team

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Introduction

The idea for this information pack arose from consultations held across the English regions as part of the NIACE Regional Achievement Programme between January and March 2004. When we asked voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations what might assist them to become more involved in the *Skills for Life* agenda, the unequivocal response was “information”. At one such consultation workshop, some participants from the VCS commented that they had so little information at present that they didn’t know “what the gaps are or what our needs are”.

This is clearly not the case for the whole sector – many VCS organisations are engaged with the *Skills for Life* agenda and are involved, at a range of levels, in encouraging and supporting service users and their own staff/volunteers to develop their literacy, language (ESOL) or numeracy skills. Many demonstrate exciting and creative ways of involving in learning those who are often excluded from educational opportunities. But many are not off the starting blocks and are unconvinced that involvement in supporting or delivering literacy, language (ESOL) or numeracy provision will necessarily benefit their users or their organisation. The reason for this varies from region to region, depending partly on the level of engagement that the educational funding and planning agencies have with the VCS, as well as with regional and local priorities. NIACE and the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (ABSSU) saw a clear case for a pack for VCS organisations that could be adapted to suit regional needs and the infrastructure of the VCS in each region. It has been designed as a ‘stand-alone pack’ and one that can be used locally as part of capacity-building activities.

This pack aims to provide clear, practical information and guidance for VCS organisations,

whatever their size, to enable them to make decisions about how they might become involved in the *Skills for Life* agenda. The pack does not cover all aspects in detail – for example, ICT (now defined as the ‘fourth basic skill’) is not included, but readers are referred to sources of further information on this topic. In recognition of swiftly paced development in the field, readers are advised to check for the most recent information on key policy areas such as funding.

Experience from NIACE’s long involvement with VCS organisations indicates that there are significant barriers and challenges for the VCS in engaging with government agendas such as *Skills for Life*, not least because of the complexities of funding and the quality assurance standards that government agencies expect on behalf of learners. Information is one critical element in addressing these barriers. However, if the VCS is to play a full and meaningful role as an equal partner in the Government’s *Skills for Life* strategy, this will need to be complemented by sustained capacity-building and workforce development activity within the VCS to encourage and support its valuable contribution.

Notes:

Section one

SKILLS FOR LIFE - WHOSE STRATEGY IS IT ANYWAY?

This information pack has been produced to provide information and advice for voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) that want to understand the relevance of *Skills for Life* (the Government's strategy for improving adult literacy, language and numeracy skills)¹ to their own mission. Many of these organisations may already be working with adults who could benefit from improving their reading, writing, maths or English language skills, and could assist them as part of the *Skills for Life* strategy.

The pack takes account of the different starting points of voluntary and community organisations in relation to the *Skills for Life* strategy. It also recognises that many of these organisations will bring a distinctive approach to their work – an approach that emphasises empowerment and capacity-building – and thus can offer examples of innovative practice and excellence for the benefit of the wider adult education sector. This section introduces and summarises the *Skills for Life* strategy and shows how it links to other strategies addressing broader social inclusion issues which are also of relevance to the voluntary and community sector.

What do you already know about *Skills for Life*?

Those who are not teachers and have no previous experience of working with literacy, language and numeracy, or 'basic skills' as it is still sometimes referred to, may find that some of the language used by those in the field is unfamiliar. This can prove a major barrier for organisations in understanding and participating in this area of work.

Below is a quick exercise designed to explore how language and terminology have different meanings in different professional contexts and to ensure a common understanding of some of the key terms that will be used throughout this information pack.

Activity: take a few moments to define the following terms, then check them against the glossary provided in **Appendix 2**. Some of the terms will be familiar to you but may well have a different meaning in an educational context. Preferred terminology changes all the time. For example, the term 'basic skills' is now recognised as having negative associations which is why

literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills is now more commonly used. Differentiating between the skills in this way illustrates that these are

distinct areas of learning which need different approaches and represent different challenges for education providers in terms of scale.

Term	Your definition
Achievement	
Capacity building	
Curriculum	
Embedded literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy	
Engagement	
ICT	
Individual Learning Plan	
Initial assessment	
Language	
Learning outcomes	
Learning provider	
Literacy	
Numeracy	
Progression	
Signposting	
Social inclusion	

The Skills for Life strategy

The national strategy, *Skills for Life*, was launched in 2001 to address the needs of adults wishing to improve their reading, writing, maths and English language skills in order to succeed and progress both at work and in everyday life. The strategy was developed following the publication of the Moser report² which investigated the extent of these needs among adults in England.

The report, *A Fresh Start*, published in March 1999 following the review chaired by Sir Claus Moser, identified up to 7 million adults in England who cannot read or write at the level we would expect of an 11 year old. An even larger group was identified as having trouble with numbers.

Other key findings included:

- Approximately half a million people struggle with English because it is not their first language. They are often referred to as English for Speakers of Other Languages or ESOL learners.
- People with lower level literacy, language and numeracy skills tend to be on lower incomes or unemployed.
- People with lower level literacy, language and numeracy skills are more prone to ill health (including mental health problems) and social exclusion.
- The children of adults who have literacy and numeracy needs are less likely to succeed at school, although this is not necessarily the case for children who acquire English as a second language through mainstream education.

These findings have been widely publicised, and have informed the government targets for improving the skills of adults. The key targets are:

- 750,000 adults to improve their literacy, language and numeracy (ESOL) skills by 2004;
- 1.5 million adults to improve their skills by 2007;
- 2.25 million adults to improve their skills by 2010.

The skills referred to are defined in the Government’s strategy as:

‘the ability to read, write and speak in English and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general’.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has subsequently been defined as a ‘basic skill’ or skill for life, although national standards and a core curriculum have not yet been fully developed. ICT is not explored in this pack and readers are recommended to read *ICT – the new basic skill* (NIACE, 2003) for a detailed exploration of the issues.

The government definition of improvement is that adults should improve their skills by **one level**. This is expected to be demonstrated primarily by passing national tests in literacy, numeracy and English language which lead to a national qualification, designed specifically for adults. More information on these qualifications can be found in Section 6.

The chart below gives some idea of how the *Skills for Life* levels compare to the key stages in schools, and to vocational qualifications. Although this chart may appear over-simplistic, the main point is that *Skills for Life* is not just about those adults who have very limited literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills (although they are included), but goes right up to Level 2 which is equivalent in level to a GCSE pass at grade C or above.

Adult Literacy and Numeracy Standards	Vocational and academic equivalents	National Curriculum
Entry 1 Entry 2 Entry 3	No equivalent	Key Stage 1
Level 1	NVQ Level 1 GCSE grades D – G	Key Stage 2
Level 2	NVQ Level 2 GCSE grades A* - C	Key Stage ___

It should be stressed that the use of national curriculum stages in the table above is not meant to suggest that adults and children at these levels are at similar stages of development. All adults have a range of skills, abilities, and experience to bring to learning and all learners may excel in some areas but not in others. The levels refer only to the literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills listed in the adult and early years' curricula (see Appendix 2) at each level.

The broadening of the strategy to include adults at Level 2 who need to 'brush-up' their literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills has resulted in a real change in the image and marketing of *Skills for Life* courses. Previously there was a reliance on the identification of adults through what has been perceived as a 'deficit' model – that is, the lack of skills was seen as somehow the individual's fault and an embarrassing problem which could be difficult to raise with adults. The inclusion of adults with skills up to Level 2 means that free provision under the banner of *Skills for Life* is available to those adults who may have left school with skills which are adequate for everyday life and work, but with no qualifications to evidence those skills. This information pack includes advice and strategies for targeting adults right across the spectrum of need. It applies to the workforce and individual development needs of staff and volunteers in voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations as well as to the needs of beneficiaries of those organisations.

Widening adult participation⁴

From the start, the government recognised that the extent of need meant that potential new learners would not be reached by existing providers of adult education working alone. The government clearly saw that partnerships were essential to ensure that literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy needs were identified and addressed in all kinds of relevant settings and contexts, and within a broader package of support offered by those professionals with whom adults with skills needs are already familiar. Five priority groups were identified as being in need of support

in relation to literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy as well as in respect of broader strategies aimed at promoting social inclusion and widening participation in learning. They include:

- unemployed people and benefit claimants;
- prisoners and those supervised in the community;
- public sector staff;
- low-skilled people in employment;
- other groups at risk of exclusion.

The fifth category 'other groups at risk of exclusion' includes those who are most regularly reached by many thousands of organisations and individuals in the voluntary and community sector⁵ and who may be more at risk of social exclusion due to the complexity and diversity of their needs. Groups within this category include:

- homeless people or those in temporary accommodation;
- adults with learning disabilities or difficulties;
- families living in disadvantaged communities;
- minority ethnic groups (including travellers);
- drug or alcohol abusers;
- mental health service users.

Working Together: A Strategy for the Voluntary and Community Sector and the Learning and Skills Council⁶

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) recently published its sector-specific strategy for the voluntary and community sector, which draws together the themes of social inclusion, personal skills development, widening participation and workforce development.

***Working Together* identifies three key roles that define the voluntary and community sector's relationship with the LSC. They are:**

- as providers of learning opportunities;
- as a major group of employers;
- as a source of intelligence and expertise and a channel for networking.

The strategy aims to:

- help the LSC achieve its objectives and key targets, such as those for adult literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy;
- raise demand and widen participation in learning within communities served by voluntary and community organisations;
- make special efforts to engage and meet the needs of disengaged or under-represented learners and socially excluded groups, including those with literacy and numeracy needs;
- raise demand for learning within the VCS and meet the learning needs of individual staff, volunteers and trustees, and VCS organisations as employers⁷.

Skills Strategy for the Voluntary and Community sector⁸

The Voluntary Sector National Training Organisation (VSNTO) has worked closely with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) on a skills strategy for workforce development. Skills identified are similar to those identified by employers in general, and include communication, management skills, computer literacy and personal skills.

A key proposal is to focus on the particular needs of voluntary and community sector organisations involved in supporting, developing and delivering learning. This clearly aligns with the aims of other strategies outlined in this document.

Some regions have also produced regional and/or local compacts between the LSCs and the regional voluntary and community sector to provide a framework for developing more effective relationships between them, for the benefit of learners, potential learners and communities.⁹

Key points to think about

Funding – the Government has committed £1.6 billion (to 2007) to the *Skills for Life* strategy and the achievement of its targets. This includes resources for training teachers and for developing a whole range of materials to support teaching and learning, as well as funding free provision. It may be possible for VCS organisations to access some of this support directly, or through working in partnership with local colleges or other providers of adult education.

Many of the aims of individual organisations overlap with those of others and are ‘joined-up’ by national strategies. Benefits to service users can be maximised by working in partnership with other organisations to maximise access to resources and expertise.

A fuller description of the *Skills for Life* strategy infrastructure, including the materials and systems developed to provide organisations and individuals with the tools and skills they need, can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Notes:

Where to find out more

- 1** *Skills for Life: the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills* (2001), DfEE
- 2** *Improving literacy and numeracy: A Fresh Start*, The report of a working group chaired by Sir Claus Moser (1999), DfEE
- 3** *ICT – the new basic skill* (2003), Alan Clarke and Lisa Englebright, NIACE
- 4** *Successful Participation for All: Widening Adult Participation* (2003), LSC
- 5** *Skills for Life: the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills* (2001), DfEE
- 6** *Working Together: A Strategy for the Voluntary and Community Sector and the Learning and Skills Council* (2004), LSC
- 7** As above, p8, paragraphs 8 and 9
- 8** *Skills Strategy for the Voluntary and Community Sector* (2004), DfES (download at www.voluntarysectorskills.org.uk)
- 9** South East Regional Compact on Learning and Skills. RAISE and SE LLSC. March 2004 (available at www.lsc.gov.uk)



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Section two

SKILLS FOR LIFE AND THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

This section will help you see how the *Skills for Life* strategy links with the broader aims of your organisation, and identify some of the benefits of addressing the literacy, language (ESOL) and

numeracy needs of your service users, staff and volunteers. It also gives examples of how organisations like yours are already working with this agenda.

- ✓ Do you work directly with adults in voluntary or community settings?
- ✓ Do you gather information about the skills and qualifications of these adults?
- ✓ Do you have a role in identifying other support for adults – outside that which your organisation already offers?
- ✓ Do you believe in the power of education to change lives?
- ✓ Do you have a role in helping adults back to paid or voluntary work or education?
- ✓ Do you work in an area of financial disadvantage or in a Neighbourhood Renewal area?
- ✓ Do you have a commitment to community development?
- ✓ Does your organisation have funding outputs relating to the progress made by your service users?
- ✓ Do you identify staff training needs as part of workforce development?
- ✓ Do you offer training to your staff, or those of other organisations?

How does *Skills for Life* link with the aims of voluntary and community sector organisations?

The checklist on page 9 asks key questions about the broader remit of your organisation. If you can answer 'yes' to any of these questions, you will find that supporting the literacy, language and numeracy development of service users and those who work for the organisation will enhance the overall service you provide.

What are the benefits to service users, staff and organisations?

The *Skills for Life* strategy emphasises the impact of improved literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills on **the ability of adults to succeed and progress both at work and in everyday life**. This focus on developing relevant skills can have a direct and long-term impact on adults' confidence and abilities to grasp opportunities and reach their potential at home, at leisure and in the workplace. Whatever the size and scope of your organisation, it is worth thinking about how you are best placed to support your service users and staff in this respect.

Benefits to service users include:

- increased confidence/self-esteem;
- free training to improve literacy, language (ESOL) numeracy and English language skills;
- initial and ongoing assessment to ensure literacy, language (ESOL) numeracy and English language needs link to longer-term aims of individuals;
- opportunity to gain national qualifications;
- greater participation in community and voluntary activities;
- an increased interest in learning;
- access to information, advice and guidance to take the 'next step'.

At best, VCS organisations can offer accessible steps into learning, connect and explain disjointed routes for progression, and support people in choosing their own learning journeys.

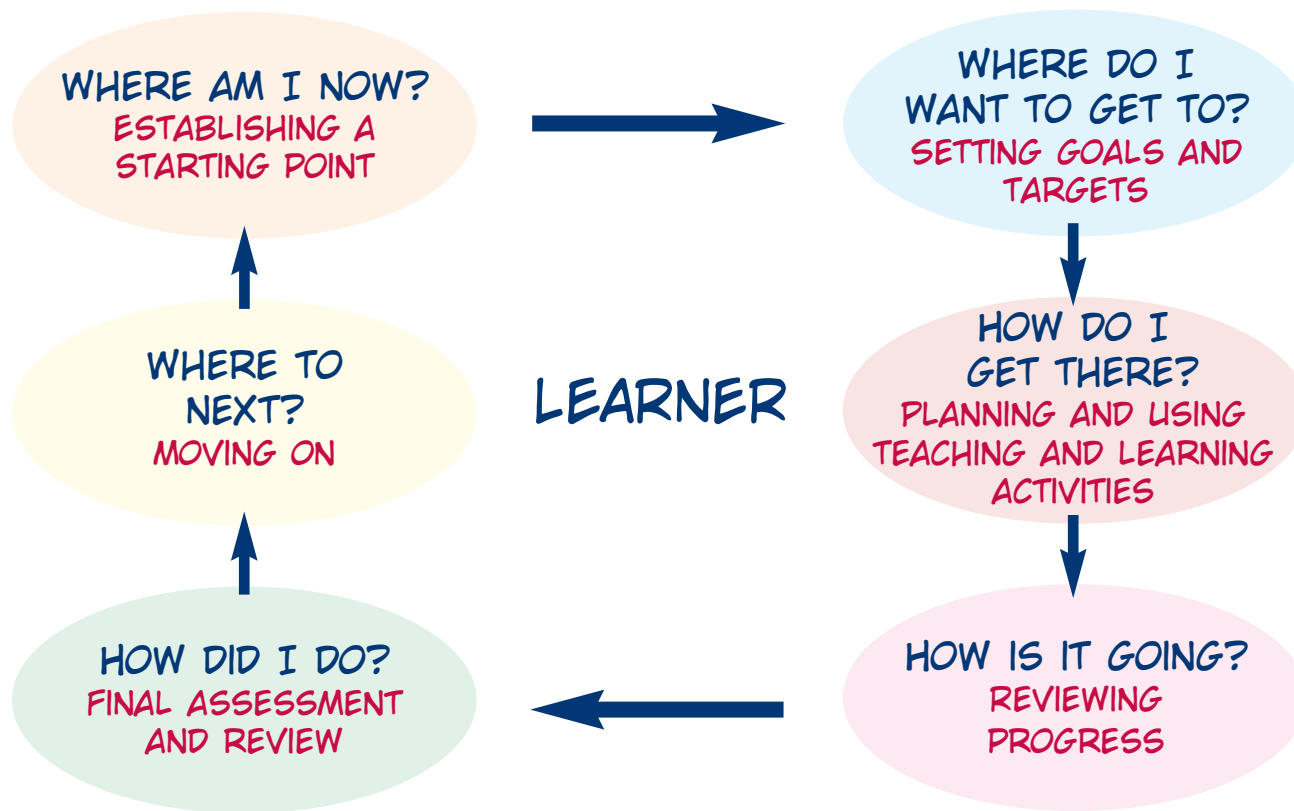
How are these benefits to learners achieved?

The *Skills for Life* strategy recognised that a range of systems and resources need to be developed to strengthen organisations' ability to give the best possible support to learners. These systems and resources are generally known as the '*Skills for Life* infrastructure' and include:

- National Standards;
- Curricula for adults in Literacy, language (ESOL) and Numeracy;
- Materials to support teaching and learning;
- Assessment materials;
- Tests and qualifications.

Adults enrolled on literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy courses are entitled to a free skills assessment. This is based on the national standards and will include a discussion of the longer-term aims, interests and concerns of the individual as well as assessing the level of existing literacy, language or numeracy skills. This assessment is used to draw up an **Individual Learning Plan** based on the individual's existing skills, interests and goals as well as their literacy, language (ESOL) or numeracy skills needs.

THE LEARNING CYCLE²



Benefits to voluntary and community staff include:

- Improved literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills;
- Improved promotion prospects;
- Opportunity to gain national qualifications;
- Better understanding of the literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy needs of service users;
- Improved understanding of local support service users;
- Increased ability to meet bureaucratic and management information demands of organisation;
- Potential professional development route as learner supporter or teacher.

How are these benefits to staff achieved?

Staff wishing to improve their own skills up to Level 2 can benefit from the assessment process as described above. Additional benefits can be gained from accessing professional development opportunities relating to offering literacy, language (ESOL) numeracy or language provision – see Section 5 for more on training programmes and routes.

Benefits to organisations include:

- a more highly-skilled workforce;
- a more highly-qualified workforce;
- enhanced services;

- the potential to meet organisational targets in a flexible way by responding creatively to the needs of service users;
- increased understanding between professional groups through working together;
- increased access to resources (skills, funds, networks) through broadening the scope of work.

How are these benefits to organisations achieved?

Section 3 presents a staged framework to show how work on literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills can be integrated in order to meet the needs of organisations in the voluntary and community sector. The case study below describes one way in which a Council for Voluntary Service meets the skills needs of its volunteers.

Case study

Exeter Council for Voluntary Service and its Volunteer Bureau department strive to stay needs-led and believe strongly in individual choice and inclusion. This ethos means that people's motivation to volunteer, to give something back or to make a difference in their local community leads naturally into skills and personal development. The individual's right to choose whether to engage in learning, and to determine their own timescale means that learning is often imperceptible from their point of view. By providing a fun, informal, friendly and relaxed learning experience, learner motivation was assured. The increased confidence gained also meant that individuals were more likely to progress onto further courses and into mainstream. This was borne out through the statistics of the EVA (Exeter

Volunteer Action) Project, with 116 volunteers enrolled, 103 completing, five still on course and 101 achieving of which 46 were accredited programmes including national qualifications.

Adapted from *Skills for Life in Devon: Roles for the Voluntary Sector*¹

Key points to think about

- If your organisation is not primarily concerned with educational purposes, you will want to ensure that involvement in educational strategies such as *Skills for Life* enhances your main purpose or vision. Ensuring that staff and volunteers understand how literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy needs can impinge on the other issues that affect your service users – such as unemployment, poor mental health or social exclusion – is one important way of doing this. Awareness-raising sessions about literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy issues can have valuable organisational benefits.
- How can your organisation benefit from working with others to identify and support adults with literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy needs? What might be the impact on workforce development?
- How do you assess the needs of your service users at present?

Where to find out more

- 1 *Skills for Life in Devon: Roles for the Voluntary Sector*, Karen Kendall (Exeter CVS, 2004)
- 2 www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus - learning journey

Useful publications

The role of the voluntary and community sector in service delivery: a cross cutting review, H.M Treasury (Sept. 2002)



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Section three

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY: WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU AND YOUR ORGANISATION?

Section 3 provides a staged framework for assessing where your organisation “fits” with the strategies outlined in Section 1. The stages are described as

Stage 1: signposting

Stage 2: hosting and brokering

Stage 3: provision of learning

Stage 4: acting as a consortium

The framework broadly identifies roles, activities and support your staff might need at each stage. The issues identified will be further explored in the rest of this pack.

Now you have an idea of the breadth of the strategy and the potential benefits to your service users and organisation, you may feel overwhelmed at the complexity of the strategy, bemused by some of the language, yet still aware that you do work with people who could benefit from improving their literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills – including staff within your organisation who may not have qualifications in English or Maths at Level 2.

In fact, you are probably already supporting them in a number of ways.

Do you already:

- a) provide information about local learning opportunities to service users? If yes, you are engaged in **Stage 1:** signposting.
- b) encourage your staff to undertake training as learning supporters for adults with literacy, numeracy or language needs? If yes, you are engaged in **Stage 2:** hosting and brokering.
- c) offer literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy courses ‘in-house’ in partnership with your local adult learning providers (these might include FE colleges, adult and community learning centres, private training providers, etc)? If yes, you are engaged in **Stage 3:** provision of learning.

All of these are valid ways of working with those people who (from the perspective of many adult learning providers) can be regarded as 'hard-to-reach'. For some organisations, signposting service users to local provision will be achievable, but their capacity to deliver courses 'in-house' may be limited by lack of resources – such as staff, space, expertise and management time. The framework provided in this section can guide you to make the right choices for your organisation. It enables you to see where you are, identify where you can realistically get to, and plan where you want to go next. Potential support, and links to successful initiatives are identified at each stage.

The framework can be used initially to identify to what extent you already support the development of your service users' literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills. Look at the activities and identify what your organisation already does. Do you clearly sit within any of the three stages? If not, which stage could your organisation be involved in?

Don't worry if some of the language is unfamiliar at first glance – the rest of this section will explore the key points and explain terms that may be new to you. You may wish to refer back to this framework at the end of each section as you think through the implications for your organisation.

The key point is to be able to make an informed choice about your organisational involvement and to be aware of the costs and benefits of this.

A source of general support and information is your NIACE Regional Achievement Programme. See the Regional Contacts List for further details of your NIACE Regional Development Officer.

Organisations may be confident about engaging in the activities described at Stage 3, but unable, or unwilling to register as a mainstream provider for funding. For these organisations, a mutually beneficial option may be accessing funding through VCS training consortia.

Stage 4 describes a consortium approach where an organisation is registered as a learning provider and draws down funding on behalf of its members. This approach is particularly suitable for smaller organisations that may not have the capacity to meet the management and financial information demands of mainstream funders, but are able to deliver learning with support from the consortium. The consortium could carry out Stage 3 functions on behalf of its members and additionally:

- draw down and provide access to mainstream funding;
- set up and manage Management Information Systems;
- set up and manage Quality Assurance systems;
- provide staff training and support.

You may already be aware of the increasing emphasis being given to the idea of general regional VCS consortia in the Changeup proposals. These are different from the specialist VCS consortia described here, which are specifically designed for the more limited purpose of learning delivery.

A staged framework for mapping engagement and identifying capacity needs

Stage 1 can be seen as a 'start-up' stage for those beginning to be engaged in the *Skills for Life* agenda and for organisations that do not currently have the capacity to offer more than signposting activities.

Stage and role	Activities	Support and training needs	Sources of help/key resources
<p>Stage 1: Signposting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Screening – identification of potential literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy needs of service users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Skills for Life</i> awareness training ● Training in use of screening tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact local adult learning providers to arrange awareness training. (See regional contacts list) ● Fast Track 20 questions¹ ● ABSSU and other screening tools are also used
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identification of appropriate provision for service users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Current knowledge about local provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local adult learning provider or IAG (Information and Guidance) (see regional contacts list) ● Connexions and JobCentre+ workers (see regional contacts list) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local adult learning provider ● Move On project (see regional contacts list) ● IAG Service (see regional contacts list)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sensitive referral to provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Named contact within local FE or ACL providers ● Accredited signposter training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local adult learning provider ● Move On project (see regional contacts list) ● IAG Service (see regional contacts list) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local adult learning provider ● Move On project (see regional contacts list) ● IAG Service (see regional contacts list)

Stage 2 can be seen as a 'development' stage where *Skills for Life* has a higher profile, and staffing capacity is sufficient for staff to become involved in the delivery of literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy courses in a supporting role.

Stage and role	Activities	Support and training needs	Sources of help/key resources
<p>Stage 2: Hosting and brokering</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Signposting ● Recruitment of learners for course 'hosted' by organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As Stage 1 ● Management commitment ● Staff working in direct support role, trained to Level 2 in Certificate in Adult Learner Support (Link Up or similar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As Stage 1 ● Awareness-raising resources e.g. Employers' Toolkit ● Local adult learning providers should be able to provide Level 2 training. ● See Section 4 of this pack ● The Link Up model has been developed specifically for the voluntary and community sector and is being mainstreamed'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Close working links with providers and other networks to plan provision and identify needs of learner users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Management commitment and links to networks (e.g. Local Learning Partnerships; adult learning networks; <i>Skills for Life</i> steering groups) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local Learning Partnerships and LSC can be a useful source of information about local priorities and provision 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support for progression to other learning or opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some staff trained to Level 2 (Unit 1) learner support 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local adult learning providers

Stage 3 can be seen as the ‘consolidation’ stage where organisational capacity is such that *Skills for Life* needs are addressed throughout the organisation, and staff access Professional Development opportunities up to Level 4.

Stage and role	Activities	Support and training needs	Sources of help/key resources
<p>Stage 3: Provision of learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hosting and brokering ● Active involvement in course design and delivery with CVS staff co-teaching on courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As Stage 2 ● Volunteer, Learning Support Assistants and “learning champions” trained to Levels 2 and 3 ● Funding to cover costs/resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As Stage 2 ● See Section 5 for more on teaching qualifications³ ● See Sections 6, 7 and 8 for more information on course delivery models ● See Section 9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Level 4 member of staff oversees programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to professional support at Level 4 (may be based within voluntary or community organisation or partner-provider) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As above 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensuring quality of provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Choosing a model of engagement which meets funders’ and inspection requirements – and suits your organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See Sections 8 and 9 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of own <i>Skills for Life</i> strategy/plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Management training ● Dedicated staff with responsibility for <i>Skills for Life</i> activity ● Own staff have Level 2 qualifications in English and Maths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The <i>LSC Skills for Life Quality Initiative</i> provides support and materials for organisational development.⁴ ● Move On is a national project supporting learners to gain qualifications at Levels 1 and 2.⁵ 	

Key points to think about

- **Staff development** – It is clear from this framework that staff development needs will vary between organisations. For many organisations, members of staff trained at Level 2 in order to support and signpost service users into learning will be sufficient. Other organisations may wish to draw down funding and deliver their own courses, and will need to employ staff with teaching qualifications, or train staff up to this level. **Section 5** deals more fully with the teaching qualification framework.
- **Networking** – Links need to be made with existing local providers and initiatives to improve the information given to service users and maximise resources across organisations.
- **Partnership** – At every stage potential partners are identified to add value to provision through sharing expertise and resources. There is not room within this pack to explore partnership issues in depth, but this is an area worth exploring to ensure that the benefits of working in partnership are maximised.
- **Organisational capacity** – The framework gives a realistic picture of the staff, skills and resources needed at each stage, in order to give VCS managers adequate information to make choices.
- **VCS consortia** – This approach is proving successful where consortia have been set up and can support organisations in developing their capacity, by meeting training needs and providing systems support. An initiative that is exploring success factors and different approaches to developing consortia and producing good practice resources is the Learning from Experience project.⁶ It is also important to understand the developing interest in VCS consortia in the context of ChangeUp – the massive Home Office Active Communities Unit investment programme in the voluntary and community sector.⁷
- **Funding** – Much of the training identified within this framework will be provided locally and may be fundable through mainstream LSC funding. Skills for Life funding issues are more complex and are dealt with more fully in section 9.

Where to find out more

- 1 See www.linkup-supporters.org for more information on the mainstreaming process.
 - 2 See www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/llp/ for more information and details of your local learning partnerships.
 - 3 *Skills for Life Teaching Qualifications Framework: A User's Guide* (DfES 2003) ref SFLTQG (free) or download at www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/teachingandlearning
 - 4 See <http://sflqi.corous.com//LandM/materials/index.htm> for more information on this initiative and to download organisational development materials.
 - 5 See www.move-on.org.uk/ for more information on this approach and supporting materials.
- A useful general text for partnership working is *Working in Partnership*, Lyn Tett (Lifeline Series, NIACE, 2003)
- 6 For more information on Learning from Experience, visit www.niace.org.uk/learningfromexperience
 - 7 For more information on ChangeUp, visit www.homeoffice.gov.uk - Active communities - Developing the voluntary and community sector



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Section four

REACHING OUT TO NEW LEARNERS

Since the publication of the *Skills for Life* strategy, there has been a range of innovative programmes and projects aimed at finding ways of making literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills provision attractive to adults who have not accessed learning opportunities since leaving school. This section summarises some of the ways in which organisations have widened participation by encouraging adults from disadvantaged communities or backgrounds to take a chance with learning. The VCS has recognised expertise in this area, building learning into activities such as creative arts, health and social care, advocacy and community activism. Many of the examples here draw on VCS experience.

The Adult and Community Learning Fund (ACLF), a £30 million fund set up by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 1998, was designed to support community-based organisations in developing new learning opportunities for adults. The report on the work done through the fund demonstrates that interesting, motivational

and ‘high risk ‘ approaches can attract new and different people into learning.

*Taken from ‘On the Case –studies from the ACLF’
(NIACE 2004)*

Engagement or recruitment?

Engagement does not just mean enrolling learners on courses; in fact, there is an increasing recognition of the development time necessary to bring adults to the point where they are motivated to enrol on programmes of learning. Engagement is a developmental process, which starts with the trust created between service users and experienced staff in an organisation. This is especially true of some service user groups in the voluntary and community sector where other more pressing needs (poverty, homelessness, mental health or substance misuse, for example) may take priority. However, as service users, these groups are already engaged with professionals offering support and literacy, language (ESOL) numeracy courses can be offered as part of the

broader package of support. For other users, such provision may sit far more comfortably if it is integrated or embedded in other activities designed to develop other personal or practical skills and to build confidence.

The Pyramid Project in North Tyneside, part of the YMCA, works with people with traumatic lifestyles who have experienced disadvantage of many kinds. As part of its Literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy provision, the Access to Learning course uses group work and fun activities to encourage students to feel a sense of belonging and a desire to learn. The coordinator says “It is much easier to learn in a safe and supportive environment like the Pyramid and many adults realise that to achieve their potential they need to improve their basic skills.”

Provided by Patricia Whaley, NIACE Regional Development Officer

As the case studies above and below illustrate, engagement can cover a range of activities which introduce potential learners to learning in ways which:

- are non-threatening;
- are linked to their interests and other needs;
- take place in a familiar setting.

In Tyne and Wear, the WEA worked with community organisations (who were not primarily education providers) and leaders of BME groups (Bangladeshi, Sikh, Chinese) to introduce people from these communities, some of the most disadvantaged in the area, to courses which combined their particular interests with embedded literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy. The partnership meant

that there could be extensive development, support and encouragement, as well as appropriate curriculum and flexible delivery. The provision was promoted in friendly, informal face-to-face meetings with individuals and small groups, suggesting what it might offer in terms of personal fulfilment, employment and participation in social life.

Provided by Patricia Whaley; NIACE Regional Development Officer

Successful strategies for promoting learning

These can include activities ranging from direct contact with individuals and groups, consultation and taster events and marketing in the form of posters or other publicity.

1. **Consultation** events offer the opportunity to meet face-to-face with voluntary and community service users and promote your activities while also consulting informally or formally on local needs and priorities.

One organisation organised an Open Day for the whole local community in a park. It did this in partnership with other community groups and arranged attractions for all ages, including games and bouncy castles for the children. They and the other community groups had stands there to publicise their activities. The organisation took advantage of the large community attendance to conduct a survey of residents' need as a basis for the learning provision they hoped to develop.

From “I think I can do that now” – an evaluation of Round 5 of the ACLF¹

2. **Partnership working** allows information to be shared and collaborative work to take place to meet the needs of particular groups.

A trustee of the Exeter Islamic Centre approached Exeter CVS with an identified and unmet need for ESOL provision for the Islamic community locally. He had not approached the local college directly because of his perception that it only delivered courses to 16 to 19 year olds on a campus. Exeter CVS was able to act as a broker, bringing together the other partners to facilitate outreach sessions held at the Mosque.

Provided by Karen Kendall, Exeter CVS

3. **Personal contact** via word-of-mouth recommendation or face-to-face contact is always more effective than posters, flyers and press releases when offering information. One idea is to encourage successful learners to train as Learning Champions to act as advocates and promote a culture of learning.

There are a number of successful Learning Champion schemes in Yorkshire and Humberside, which provide ambassadors and advocates for the community and workplace. These include the Humberside Learning Consortium with its Voluntary Sector Skills brokerage; Link Up in Sheffield working with local communities; Doncaster Learning Advocates whose remit is to engage with all adults in their area and help them articulate their learning requests so that these can be grouped and projects developed; and Calderdale Community Learning Champions who are local people who talk to local groups and individuals about learning and generate interest in local first rung provision.

Provided by Carolyn Newlove, NIACE Regional Development Officer

The celebration of achievements through inviting friends and families of learners to award ceremonies or displaying the achievements of learners is a positive way of encouraging others to 'have a go', as the example below indicates.

We spent out on an advert in the local paper and sent flyers home with all the pupils in the school, but there were no takers. So we put together some examples of what people could produce on the course and we've taken them to show to local groups and invited them in for a taster session. Ten people have enrolled and we've got two on the waiting list for the next course.

*Taken from "Reaching out with Basic Skills"*²

4. **'Embedded' activities** – adults are far more likely to be motivated to develop their literacy, language (ESOL) or numeracy skills within a context that they see as useful or interesting.

Integrating or embedding literacy, numeracy and English language teaching with other learning activities (cooking, budgeting, motorcycle maintenance, photography) can therefore be more successful at attracting adults who may not be interested in courses advertised as improving literacy, numeracy or language skills. In keeping with a move away from a deficit model, publicity should be open about content but expressed in such a way that it enhances the main programme.

Basic skills courses should be marketed in an appropriate and balanced way to attract the (targeted) learner group. The inclusion of other activities in the overall programme can attract hard-to-reach groups, but the basic skills element should always be explicit ... so that learners are not recruited under false pretences.

From "I think I can do that now" – an Evaluation of Round 5 of the ACLF, BSA, 2002

One of the key messages resulting from the evaluation of the ACLF programmes is that it is best to be clear about the literacy, language (ESOL) or numeracy elements of these courses from the outset.

Embedded activities are covered in more depth in **Section 8**.

5. National initiatives – look out for national promotional campaigns and take advantage of free resources and publicity to promote what you do. Some of the key initiatives are:

- **Adult Learners' Week**³ – a nationwide opportunity to celebrate, promote and advance all forms of adult learning, co-ordinated by NIACE.
- **Family Learning Week**⁴ – a national awareness campaign run by the Campaign for Learning that aims to strengthen communities and to create more opportunities for the family to learn together by encouraging organisations to offer a special family learning event in October each year.
- **Sign Up Now Campaign**⁵ – a yearly campaign managed by NIACE which aims to reach new and different learners. Promotional materials are provided for organisations' use, and the campaign is linked to the **learndirect** helpline.
- **Get On**⁶ – the national promotion campaign managed by the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (ABSSU) uses the 'gremlins' to bring to life the feelings of frustration, fear and isolation that adults can face in everyday situations that most of us take for granted, like telling the time or writing an address.

- **Move On**⁷ – national ABSSU-funded project providing support to organisations to increase achievement of *Skills for Life* qualifications. Move On deserves special mention as an innovative and targeted approach emphasising positive messages about achievement. The following extract is taken from the Move On website and describes the approach.

The case study below shows how the Move On approach can extend opportunities to a broader group of learners:

Move On is a national project aiming to share the success of a pilot project in Somerset and developing its approach further. It offers Level 1 and 2 learners the new national Certificate in Adult Literacy and numeracy with a free brush-up course, aiming to reach new learners who don't see themselves as needing help with their basic skills.

Why was it developed?

Traditional basic skills provision focuses on entry-level learners and their problems with reading, writing and/or maths. But the *Skills for Life* strategy is broad and inclusive, from people with learning difficulties and disabilities to L2. The brush-up group at levels 1 and 2 is not well served by the current offer from most providers. Research shows that the majority of those we need to reach to cover the whole range of learners are in this brush up group.

What does Move On look like?

The Move On approach is a positive sell. It trains recruiters, anyone in touch with this brush-up group - IAG, JobCentre+ Advisers, teachers of any subject, Union Learning Reps, other learners, playgroup leaders, prison officers.

Move On offers learners:

- a free skills check or test taster;
- a free brush-up course that covers literacy and numeracy skills needed to pass the National Test and wider skills for individual needs;
- entry to the National Test that results in the Certificate in Adult Literacy or Adult Numeracy, the new national qualification in English and maths;
- advice on opportunities to build on their success and progress to other courses.

Barnsley Metropolitan District Council Adult Education Service linked with locally based learning net managers to recruit and refer learners to Move On courses across the community, including using a pub quiz which mixed English and Maths questions with

those on sport and history. It has used the Move On approach to help broaden the ability of its Skills for Life service to meet the needs of a wider range of learners.

Provided by Carolyn Newlove, NIACE Regional Development Officer

Key points to think about

- Avoid the deficit model – a positive approach that emphasises skills enhancement and the fact that we all need to update our skills in a rapidly changing world may help to overcome individual's anxieties about putting themselves forward. For example, linking literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills with computer-based courses or what children are doing at school often proves popular.

Notes:**Where to find out more**

- 1 *On the case –Studies from the ACLF, NIACE (2004)*
available from [NIACE enquiries@niace.org.uk](mailto:NIACE.enquiries@niace.org.uk)
- 1 *I think I can do that now – an Evaluation of Round 5 of the Adult and Community Learning Fund, BSA (2002)*
- 2 *Reaching out with Basic Skills: A practical guide to community-focused basic skills work with socially excluded groups BSA (2003)*
- 3 www.niace.org.uk/ALW/2004/ provides up-to-date information about current and planned Adult Learners Week activities.
- 4 www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk provides information and resources for promoting Family learning and Learning at Work
- 5 www.niace.org.uk/signupnow provides more information and links to resources to support this campaign.
- 6 www.dfes.gov.uk/get-on/ provides resources and updates on national promotion campaigns
- 7 www.move-on.org.uk provides information and free downloadable resources for organisations using the Move On approach

Other useful publications

Reaching other parts: Final Report of the Basic Skills Community Fund, NIACE, BSA (May 2001)

*Evaluation of the Basic Skills and ESOL in Local Communities: Final Report
LSDA, NIACE, LSC (April 2002)*



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Section five

SKILLS FOR LIFE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

This section gives you an overview of the *Skills for Life* teaching qualifications framework, helps you identify the potential training needs of staff in your organisation, and gives suggestions for how you can access *Skills for Life* training and what it might cost.

All new teachers working in the post-16 sector are now encouraged and expected to work towards qualifications that meet the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) Teaching and Learning Standards. Teachers of adult literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy are additionally expected to gain specialist qualifications in teaching these subjects.

So a key part of the Government's *Skills for Life* strategy has been to upskill existing teachers/tutors of literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy as well as to develop a range of new qualifications for all staff working or planning to work in this field. The intention is to raise the

quality of teaching and learning in this area and to raise the general status of the profession. However the rapid pace of developments has led to a degree of confusion as to what the appropriate qualification requirements are for tutoring or supporting literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy activity and to cause difficulties in some areas in accessing the available opportunities for training and professional development.

It is important for all organisations to consider the training and development needs of their staff, as this is one of the areas the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) will focus on. In addition, where small organisations are contracted to larger organisations, such as local authorities or FE colleges, the expectation is likely to be that staff will have, or be working towards, the appropriate nationally recognised qualifications for their role. This will apply particularly to staff working in a teaching role as adult literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy tutors.

The *Skills for Life* professional development framework

Skills for Life teaching qualifications are available at three levels, with roles and activities as outlined in the table below.

Qualification and level	Role title	Activities
Level 4 Certificate for Adult Literacy, Numeracy or ESOL Subject Specialists	Teacher/subject specialist	Leads learning; designs learning programmes and carries out diagnostic assessment; guides and supports teaching and learner support assistants
Level 3 Certificate in Adult Literacy, Numeracy or ESOL support	Subject support/Teaching Assistant	Supports the teaching process; contributes to screening and Initial Assessment; contributes to teaching
Level 2 Certificate for Adult Learner Support	Adult Learner Support	Supports the learner; identifies and screens potential learner; signposts to provision; supports learner under supervision of level 4 teacher

Adapted from the Skills for life Teaching Qualifications Framework: A User's Guide' (DfES, 2003)

Level 2 – Certificate for Adult Learner Support

The Level 2 Certificate for Adult Learner Support is particularly relevant if your prime purpose is supporting (rather than teaching) adults. The certificate is accredited by City and Guilds² and is divided into 5 units:

- Unit 1 – Working in the sector
- Unit 2 – Supporting individuals
- Unit 3 – Literacy
- Unit 4 – Numeracy
- Unit 5 – ESOL

You would need to complete units 1 and 2 and one of the optional units 3, 4 or 5 to gain the full certificate in Adult Learner Support.

Unit 1 has been designed to:

- increase awareness of the *Skills for Life* agenda;
- provide the skills to screen for literacy, language and numeracy needs;
- provide skills to signpost individuals to appropriate provision.

For some, Unit 1 will be enough to carry out the signposting duties that fit within their work role. Others may wish to support learners more directly

(by accompanying them to sessions, offering one-to-one support within a group) or may wish to become qualified teachers. If this is the case, you will need to complete Unit 2 and one of the optional units to gain the full certificate.

In order to complete the whole certificate you must have Level 2 qualifications in literacy and numeracy before progressing to Units 2 and 3. Although this may appear as a barrier to progression, it is also an opportunity to motivate staff to improve their own skills in order to improve the service they can provide to others. Staff without qualifications at Level 2 can be signposted to Move On provision (described more fully in **Section 4**) before completing Units 2 and 3.

Level 3 – Certificate in Adult Literacy Subject Support, Certificate in Adult Numeracy Subject Support and Certificate in ESOL Subject Support

At Level 3, you will choose to study in one of the three specialist areas. The qualification is aimed at two main groups of staff in post-16 education:

- learning support assistants;
- non-specialist teachers.

It would be suitable for learning support assistants working in a class or a workshop or for people whose primary job is supporting people with specific learning difficulties or disabilities. The qualification is also intended for teachers of other subjects who provide embedded literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy support for their learners.

Level 4 – Certificate in Adult Literacy Subject Specialists, Certificate in Adult Numeracy Subject Specialists and Certificate in ESOL Subject Specialists

The Level 4 qualifications become rather more complex depending upon whether or not you already have a recognised teaching qualification (Certificate in Education or Post-Graduate Certificate in Education). If this is the case, you will usually only need to complete the units offered within the Subject Specialist Certificate. If you do not have a recognised teaching qualification, you will need to gain one alongside the specialist Certificate. A number of different models for gaining the qualification exist in different parts of the country. For those with no teaching qualifications for example, it can be offered in three stages, with the specialist area studied alongside a City & Guilds 7407 (Stages 1 and 2), followed by a one-year combined Cert.Ed. These courses can be time consuming and Professional Development Centres (PDC) and Teacher Training Units are looking at ways in which the qualifications can be offered on a modular basis or flexibly in the evenings and at weekends. Your local PDC or training adviser should be able to provide you with the information you need.

Entry requirements for courses

To get on to a Level 2 course, you may not need any formal qualifications but you will need to be educated up to CSE/GCSE level or equivalent. A Level 3 course will probably require GCSEs, especially in English and/or Maths. A Level 4 course will require you to be educated up to

A Level and have the potential to succeed on a university level course. Qualifications required may vary but most courses have fairly rigorous recruitment and selection procedures, which entail group discussions, writing or maths tasks and one-to-one interviews. An understanding of the needs and lives of adult learners, an open mind and willingness to learn are all important, as well as the appropriate qualifications.

Don't be put off from applying if you don't have the qualifications asked for. Most providers of courses will be keen to offer applicants the chance to undertake 'brush up' or 'bridging' courses to enable them to get to the required level.

Other sources of training:

Link Up³

Link Up is a national project managed by the Basic Skills Agency and funded by the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit and the Active Community Unit, specifically to meet the needs of a wide range of supporters in a number of settings including the voluntary and community sector. The key aim of the project was to recruit 6,000 Link Up supporters in frontline organisations to identify and support adults with poor literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills. In the course of the project, Link Up produced some excellent materials to explain and support the Level 2 Supporter training.

Although this phase of the project is now over, materials designed for and used in the project are downloadable for use in planning and delivering Level 2 courses – see **Where to find out more** at the end of this section for a link to these resources and for other qualifications appropriate for volunteers.

Step in to Learning⁴

The Step in to Learning Training and Development programme is designed for staff in Sure Start local programmes and children's centres. The two-day training programme helps staff to identify parents and carers who have literacy, language and/or numeracy needs. It supports staff with ways to build up partnerships with local colleges, course providers and advice services so that they can sign-post parents and carers on to the appropriate course, service or learning opportunity to improve their skills. Originally, the programme was designed for staff in Neighbourhood Nurseries. This programme finished in March 2004 but, due to its success, it was developed and rolled out to Sure Start local programmes and children's centres.

RETRO⁴

The RETRO project, which will run until March 2005, is working on good models of regional infrastructures for supporting teacher training in adult literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy in three UK regions: the North East, the East of England and Birmingham and the West Midlands. NIACE manages and leads on the project in partnership with Cambridge Training and Development (CTAD), Making Training Work and each of the three regions. Although the key focus of the project is on new teachers, RETRO is also focusing on the retraining and recruitment of experienced but inactive teachers, such as retired primary school teachers.

The table overleaf shows how *Skills for Life* training opportunities relate to Stages 1 and 2 of the staged framework provided in **Section 3**. If your organisation is operating at Stage 3, you will need to follow the guidance as set out in the *Skills for Life Teaching Qualifications Framework: A User's Guide*.⁵

Stage	Training needs	For:	Enables staff to:
1: Signposting	<i>Skills for Life</i> awareness raising	All staff	Understand relevance of <i>Skills for Life</i> strategy to working practice
	Level 2 certificate for adult learner support (Unit 1)	Frontline staff who identify service users' support needs	Identify needs and signpost adults to learning
	Full Level 2 certificate (Link Up model)	Members of staff who support individuals within a learning situation	Give support to learners (often in voluntary capacity)
	Move On taster sessions and short courses	Any staff who don't have Level 2 qualifications in literacy or numeracy	Improve own skills to Level 2 and acquire national qualification
	Move On recruiter training	Frontline staff who identify service users' support needs	Promote new qualifications in literacy and numeracy
2: Hosting and brokering	As Stage 1, plus:		
	Level 3 certificate in subject support	Staff who support teaching under the guidance of a fully qualified specialist teacher (for instance, staff who wish to embed <i>Skills for Life</i> within other responsibilities)	Assist in teaching and assessment activities
	Core curriculum training		Use the adult core curricula to plan learning
	Access for All training		Improve support for learners with different needs

Finding out about local training opportunities

The way *Skills for Life* training is managed locally varies, but you should be able to access any of the training identified in the table above by contacting one of the following and asking to speak to the *Skills for Life* co-ordinator.

- Local Further Education College or Adult and Community Learning unit – many colleges and ACL units provide training for their own staff and staff from other organisations. Costs will vary, but some courses may be free, or offer concessions to organisations or individuals. If you are involved in partnership work with a *Skills for Life* provider, you may be able to negotiate access to free training in your partnership agreement.

- **Voluntary and Community sector training consortia** – This approach is becoming more common, and allows infrastructure organisations to draw down funding and provide training on behalf of its member organisations. This minimises paperwork and overheads for smaller organisations, and keeps costs low. See **Section 3** for more detail.
- **Local Learning Partnership** – Some areas organise central training through *Skills for Life* sub-groups of Local learning Partnerships. This enables training to respond to local needs, with staff from different organisations coming together for training. Some of this work has been subsidised in the past through LSC capacity-building funding, although this is becoming less common.
- **Learning and Skills Council** – See Regional Contact list for details of your local LSC *Skills for Life* contact.
- **Professional Development Centres/ Units (PDC or PDU)** – Some areas have PDCs with a specific *Skills for Life* focus. See Regional Contact list for details.
- **Regional training resources** – Some regions may have a regional resource offering information; advice and support about initial training and professional development opportunities in *Skills for Life* e.g. TALENT ⁶
- **National initiatives** – Check the websites or email to find out about planned programmes.
- **SfL Quality Initiative Regional Facilitator** – See Regional Contact list for details.

Other training programmes

Some awarding bodies offer other qualifications that may be of interest to your staff, although they may not necessarily attract achievement funding.

- **The National Open College Network (NOCN)** offers a range of programmes and qualifications developed for voluntary and community contexts. There are currently over 50 National Programmes available to OCN members. The list ranges from Basic Skills Broker Training to Community Mediation Skills, to Working with Older People. A full list of National Programmes available to members can be found on the NOCN website.⁷
- **TUC Union Learning Representatives⁸** – A new type of union activist, the Union Learning Representative (ULR), has been instrumental in raising interest in training and development, especially among the lowest skilled workers and those with literacy and numeracy needs. The Union Learning Representative (ULR) course has been updated and is now available as both a 5-day 'classroom' programme and as a 30-hour online course.
- **UNISON Lifelong Learning Advisers⁹** – The Learning And Organising Services (LAOS) section of UNISON works closely with the Open College and outside partners to develop a network of lifelong learning advisers and learning reps who can:
 - encourage members and potential members into learning for their personal development;
 - work with the branch to negotiate learning partnerships with employers covering issues such as time off for learning;
 - encourage new learners to get involved in UNISON and help branches develop and organise.

- ASDAN awards¹⁰ - ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) is an approved awarding body offering a number of programmes and qualifications to develop life skills, from Key Stage 3 through to adult life, from preparatory to Entry Level through to Key Skills at level 4. ASDAN offer a variety of awards that may meet the needs of staff in your organisations, such as the Certificate in Community Volunteering at Levels 1 and 2.

Key points to think about

- For the purposes of most voluntary and community organisations, the Level 2 certificate for Adult Learner Support is the key qualification for staff whose role is supporting individuals.
- The Level 3 Certificate in Adult Literacy, Numeracy or ESOL support is a useful qualification for staff in organisations building capacity beyond stage 1 (signposting) activities.
- The Level 4 Certificate for Adult Literacy, Numeracy or ESOL subject specialists is a specialist qualification and will be relevant to staff wishing to become fully qualified teachers, and organisations who deliver learning.

Notes:**Where to find out more**

- 1 *Skills for Life Teaching Qualifications Framework: A User's Guide*, (DfES, 2003)
- 2 For more information about City and Guilds qualifications, visit www.city-and-guilds.co.uk or email enquiry@city-and-guilds.co.uk
- 3 Link Up: more information and downloadable training resources at linkup-supporters.org
- 4 For more information about Step in to Learning, visit www.stepintolearning.org
- 5 RETRO Project: www.niace.org.uk/projects/RETRO/
- 6 *Skills for Life Teaching Qualifications Framework: A User's Guide*, (DfES, 2003)
- 6 For more information, visit www.talent.ac.uk
- 7 For a list of OCN national programmes, visit www.nocn.org.uk/members/national-progs.html
- 8 For more information about ULR training courses in your area, visit <http://www.learningservices.org.uk/national/learning-3768-fo.cfm>
- 9 Find out more about UNISON Lifelong Learning services at www.unison.org.uk/active/laos/laos.asp#lifelong
- 10 Find out more about ASDAN at www.asdan.co.uk.



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Section six

ACCREDITED PROVISION

The next three sections cover different types of literacy, language and numeracy provision falling under three headings:

- accredited – where learners work towards a recognised qualification
- non-accredited – where learners improve their skills and demonstrate achievement through an Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- embedded – where learners work towards two sets of learning aims relating to literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills, and another subject.

This section covers: accredited provision; the national qualifications that are available for learners on *Skills for Life* courses; and how organisations can write and accredit their own courses.

Why offer accreditation?

For many learners, progress will be measured through working towards and achieving national qualifications at entry level, Level 1 and Level 2.

Adult literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy qualifications approved by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) are the only ones recognised as eligible for achievement funding by the LSC.¹ They are offered by a range of awarding bodies and contact details for these are provided at the end of this section. If you are already working with, or plan to set up a partnership with a *Skills for Life* provider, you should check that they are registered with one of these bodies, and can offer the qualifications to your service users.

There are some instances in which accreditation may not be appropriate for learners – for example, where you are working with groups for whom the fear of failure may outweigh the benefits of success, or where learners are just starting on a learning journey. The next section covers how progress can be measured for these learners. However, for many adults, the new range of adult qualifications in literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy are relevant and achievable and can make a real difference to their lives. In line with the ethos of the VCS, it is important to offer information, guidance and support to enable individuals to make the choice for themselves.

Accreditation can benefit:

The learner – qualifications that make a difference to employability can motivate adults to take up opportunities; successful achievement motivates adults to continue to further learning opportunities.

Organisations – achieving a qualification is a very real measure of progress and added value that can help meet funding targets and outputs – and may be of benefit to staff as well as service users.

What do the qualifications look like?

All the new initiatives in *Skills for Life* are linked to the National Standards as described in the *Skills for Life* infrastructure as set out in **Appendix 1**. This means that qualifications at a specified level test the same range of skills against these standards, even though the layout and content may look different. Learners at entry level are assessed in a different way to those at Level 2, as described below.

Entry level qualifications (literacy and numeracy)

In order to recognise the achievements of learners, Entry level is divided into three stages: Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3. This is because learners at this level may make progress in small steps that should be recognised and acknowledged. Entry level accreditation is generally carried out by a combination of:

- portfolio building (collecting together work which demonstrates learners' skills in a context of interest to them). This can be particularly successful where learning is taking place within groups with a common interest which can form the context for learning e.g. a campaign group.
- completion of sets of short tasks from everyday contexts, set by the awarding body and marked by the literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy teacher.

Some awarding bodies provide assignments as an alternative to portfolio-building and short tasks.

National Numeracy and Literacy Tests at Level 1 and 2

The new national tests in literacy and numeracy provide adult learners with a clear and reliable measure of their achievement and skills. They are available at Level 1 and Level 2 of the national qualifications framework.

Key features of the tests

- The tests consist of 40 multiple-choice questions worth one mark each – similar to those used in the driving test;
- The literacy test lasts one hour and the numeracy test one and a quarter hours;
- They are available in paper-based versions and on-line;

- The pass mark may vary slightly to ensure consistent standards from test to test. This is normal test procedure;
- Tests are machine-marked, so that candidates receive their results as quickly as possible. Candidates are awarded a pass or fail grade and those who are successful receive the appropriate certificate;
- Tests can be re-taken if necessary;
- These qualifications are currently available through a range of awarding bodies. For the most up-to-date list of accredited awarding bodies, visit the Qualification and Curriculum

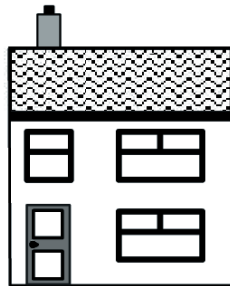
Authority website.² Availability varies – some awarding bodies offer tests ‘on demand’; others offer monthly tests;

- You can try out practice tests yourself – see **References and resources** at the end of this section for links.

On-line testing is proving successful with some learners – although it is important that people taking the tests feel confident using IT and have opportunities to do practice tests. Sample test questions at Level 1 are provided in the box below to give you an idea of their look, level and content.

The picture shows the front view of a house, drawn to scale. On the drawing the house is 3cm wide. The scale of the drawing is 1cm to 2m.

How wide is the house in metres?



- A. 1.5m
- B. 3m
- C. 5m
- D. 6m

Which of the following sentences is spelt correctly?

- A. Shazia and Kate tried to return there books to the library.
- B. When Shazia and Kate took their books to the library it was closed.
- C. The opening hours at the library where from 9am until 4pm.
- D. Shazia could not remember were she had left her books.

A very useful source of information about the National Tests is the National Test Toolkit³, which includes CDs with practice tests, promotional material and information about the Move On approach, as described in Section 4.

What about ESOL learners?

From August 2004 new ESOL qualifications for learners based on the national standards for adult literacy and the ESOL core curriculum replaced all existing ESOL qualifications (known as legacy qualifications). The new qualifications are known as Certificates in ESOL *Skills for Life* and cover speaking and listening, reading and writing. The 'legacy' qualifications will no longer be recognised for funding purposes or count towards the government's national targets after 31 December 2004. Information about these new ESOL qualifications is available at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/bank/ACF2562.pdf> and covers accreditation at all levels. This list is constantly updated.

To gain a Certificate in ESOL *Skills for Life*, learners must be assessed in all three modes: Speaking and Listening, Reading, Writing. At Level 1 and Level 2, Reading is assessed by the national tests used for the Certificate in Adult Literacy. *For further information see the LSC Fact Sheet No. 4 – Changes to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision: new Certificates in ESOL Skills for Life and funding arrangements from 1 August 2004.*

Key questions when choosing an awarding body (or looking for a partner who is registered with an awarding body)

Although the skills tested will be the same regardless of the awarding body, each awarding body has different arrangements for registering and testing learners. You can access a complete list of awarding bodies and their requirements for entry level qualifications at:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/bank.cfm?section=447> (literacy)

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/bank.cfm?section=448> (numeracy)

You need to choose the awarding body that best fits the need of your service users and organisation. You should think about the following aspects as these may vary from one awarding body to another:

- cost of scheme registration;
- ease of registration;
- cost per registration (this is the cost to the organisation and should never be passed on to learners – mainstream funding takes registration costs into account);
- length of time from registration that learners can complete;
- is assessment available on demand or do the awarding bodies set times?
- what routes do they offer for Entry level accreditation?
- do they offer online testing?

Funding these qualifications

All literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy provision is completely free to the learner. Literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy providers and consortia are charged normal certification fees by awarding bodies, and can draw down funding to cover the costs of accreditation. See **Section 9** for general information on funding.

Other accreditation

You can also write your own programmes and submit them for accreditation through your local OCN - check their website⁴ for details of programmes written and delivered by organisations like yours. This is a particularly useful route if you have some experience in developing training programmes around service users' needs, and can work with a literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy teacher to plan how literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy needs can be addressed within this other context. See **Section 8** for more information about writing

contextualised, or embedded, programmes. You do need to be aware that this work can be time-consuming and it is not easy to find external funding to support the development time required. It's always worth checking what has already been produced first through the NOCN website.

Key points to think about

Organisations engaged mainly in signposting activities (Stage 1)

- You may not be delivering these qualifications yourself, but a working knowledge of the qualifications will be useful for discussing opportunities with service users.
- Provide information about qualifications to all service users – many adults are not aware of their entitlement to new qualifications.
- Provide access to practice tests on computers or laptops for service users to try out.
- Staff development needs may include gaining Level 1 and 2 qualifications – encourage staff to look at Move On website or arrange Move On awareness sessions with local providers or via your Move On Regional Adviser.

Organisations engaged in hosting and brokering (Stage 2)

If you are offering courses in partnership with another *Skills for Life* provider, they will take responsibility for quality assurance aspects and registration.

Quality assurance will cover aspects such as:

- ensuring learners progress is assessed and learners achieve;
- ensuring that teaching and learning is effective;
- ensuring resources support learning;
- ensuring programmes meet the needs of learners.

You should:

- Find out which awarding bodies your partner providers is registered with. Do they offer *Skills for Life* qualifications? Can they make arrangements for learners to take these qualifications off-site?
- Discuss the prospect of setting up as a satellite test centre with your local or partner provider – your service users may be more comfortable taking tests in a familiar setting.
- Look carefully at all the training your organisation provides. If this training is at Level 1 or 2, could the National Tests be offered as an additional qualification? If at Entry level, can work produced be used to evidence learning towards the Entry level certificate?

Notes:**Where to find out more**

- 1** The full list of recognised qualifications for adults post-19 is available at: www.dfes.gov.uk/section97.
- 2** A complete list of accredited awarding bodies is available at www.qca.org.uk/nq/bs/adultlit_numqual.asp
- 3** National Test Toolkit (DFES, 2003) ref: SFL NTT (free)
- 4** For details of your local OCN, visit www.nocn.org.uk/contact/map.html

For information on national training opportunities:

Literacy and numeracy core curriculum training E-mail: teachertraining@basic-skills.co.uk

ESOL core curriculum training E-mail:

Pre-entry curriculum and Access for All training E-mail: joyce.black@niace.org.uk



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Section seven

NON-ACCREDITED PROVISION

Non-accredited provision – i.e. courses which do not lead toward a qualification – can still receive achievement funding from the LSC, provided that they are mapped to the National Standards and evidence is kept to show learners' progress. This section summarises how progress can be recorded.

Why offer non-accredited learning?

Many VCS organisations have an established track record in providing informal learning in literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy that successfully draws in those who may have been wary of education in the past, by providing learning experiences that enhance confidence and self-esteem. While it is important to ensure that all learners are given the opportunity and support to take national qualifications, there are times when accreditation may not be appropriate for learners.

This may be because they:

- need to build their confidence as learners;
- are attending a 'taster' course;
- find it difficult to attend regularly;
- may not see the relevance of qualifications at this time and do not wish to be under pressure;
- the current emphasis by Government on achieving challenging national qualification targets under the *Skills for Life* strategy has meant that funding for non-accredited literacy, language and numeracy provision is becoming more difficult to access.

How is progress measured?

In order to continue to offer non-accredited literacy, language (ESOL) or numeracy provision and receive the enhanced elements of the funding to do so, VCS organisations need to understand

how to provide evidence of learning and progress in a way that satisfies audit requirements.

The DfES has recently published a free guidance pack to help organisations with planning learning and recording progress and achievement.¹ This guide, *Planning Learning and Recording Progress and Achievement* (PLRA), is a key tool for organisations offering non-accredited learning, and provides advice about recording progress at each stage. It explains clearly what organisations need to do in order to claim funding for non-accredited basic skills courses, including the ‘uplift’ (programme weighting factor of 1.4).

The PLRA guide employs the metaphor of the learning journey, a useful way of thinking about the development of learning skills and attitudes. It also contains examples and case studies to illustrate how the processes of planning learning and recording progress and achievement are managed in different context.

The processes described below can apply to all literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy teaching and learning and indeed would be good practice in any context.

Key principles to remember are:

- The learner is at the heart of the planning process.
- The purpose is to improve learning and achievement.
- It is important for learners in all contexts.

In simple terms, measuring progress for non-accredited learning involves a process of:

- **assessment** (to establish a starting point, plan learning and demonstrate achievement) and
- **review** (one-to-one or group sessions with learners to look back and reflect on the journey taken and progress made in order to plan the next stage.)

Assessment

As adult learning providers, you may well have your own assessment materials that have been developed to meet the particular needs of the groups you are working with. Often these can be adapted to integrate the assessment of literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills with assessment of other needs. There are also a range of resources and tools, which have been produced by the DfES and other organisations, which are mentioned in the box below and at the end of this section. However, tools are only part of the process and on-going assessment takes place throughout the teaching and learning process. This can include observation, discussion and review sessions – all of which help to establish individuals’ abilities and their wider concerns and aspirations.

Who carries out assessment?

Non-teaching support staff can carry out some screening activities, but qualified teachers should carry out other forms of assessment.

Type of assessment	When is it carried out?	What is its purpose?	Who carries it out?	Some of the resources available
Screening	Before enrolling on a learning programme	To identify people who could benefit from literacy, language (ESOL) or numeracy teaching/support	Non-specialists (e.g. brokers/ frontline staff in voluntary and community organisations)	Fast Track Assessment pack ² ESOL screening Move On screening ³ for at levels 1 and 2.
Initial assessment	At start of learning programme	To assess starting level and identify suitable course	Specialist teachers	Initial Assessment pack ⁴ Target Skills – Initial Assessment (ICT package) ⁵ West Nott’s Basic and Key Skills Builder ⁶ Inform ILP
Diagnostic assessment	After initial assessment and ongoing	To identify skills and weaknesses and develop learning plan	Specialist teachers	Diagnostic assessment materials ⁷ (paper-based or ICT) Inform ILP
Formative assessment	Ongoing throughout the course	To identify stages of progress and ongoing needs when the learner is enrolled on a programme	Specialist teachers and Level 2 and 3	Progress identified through on-course tasks/activities and matched to goals and targets on ILP
Summative assessment	At end of module or course	To demonstrate achievement through gaining a qualification or recording progress against the national standards.	Specialist teachers	Recording achievement against targets/goals in ILP (non-accredited) Assessments set by external awarding bodies (accredited)

Adapted from Planning Learning and Recording Achievement, DfES.

Recording progress

In order to claim funding for non-accredited learning, it is essential that records are kept following each stage of assessment and review, and that these are referenced to the National Standards. Most *Skills for Life* providers use an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) to record progress and achievement. ILPs can be adapted to meet the needs of learners in different contexts – and where possible could be integrated within your own paperwork – e.g. Individual Action Plans or Personal Development Plans. Samples of ILPs are provided in the DfES guide listed in **Where to find out more** at the end of this section.

What this means in practice

Finding the starting point – through a process of talking with the learner and using information from advice and guidance activities, screening and initial assessment you can record initial aims and starting point on an Individual Learning Plan.

Setting goals and targets – develop the ILP to allow learners, teachers and organisations to recognise and record progress towards learning aims. You can draw on early pieces of work to help agree goals and targets and express these in a language and form that is understandable and meaningful for learners. There are a variety of examples of ILPs for use in different contexts in the PLRA guide listed in **Where to find out more** at the end of this section.

However, there is no one format that works for everyone. Think about what will work best for you and your learners. Drawing up an ILP should be part of an active process of planning learning and recording progress and not just a piece of paper that is filed away.

Planning teaching and learning activities – teachers design and choose activities and resources that:

- are at the correct level for learners;⁸
- come from a context relevant to learners' skills and interests;
- suit learners' preferred ways of working.

It is always good practice to involve learners in the negotiation of topics of interest and contexts for learning .

Cross reference course and session plans to the core curriculum. Build on skills and knowledge learnt from session to session and check with learners that they understand what they have learnt and why.

Reviewing

Reviewing progress – make time during each session to review what has been covered and consider what has been learned during that session. Provide regular reviews to consider progress made since the start of programme and identify new skills and knowledge learnt against the targets on the learner's ILP. This process is time-consuming and volunteers or additional support staff can provide invaluable support.

Final assessment and review – for learners in non-accredited provision, achievement can be evidenced by providing a certificate of completion showing the key learning aims achieved against the National Standards. It is important that there is agreement within an organisation about what counts as achievement. It is a good idea to put in place a moderation process to ensure consistent standards.

Planning the next step – the end of one learning experience should be the beginning of another. At this point, the learner needs information, advice and signposting to other opportunities. This is especially relevant to voluntary and community organisations as staff can be instrumental in identifying potential opportunities including paid and voluntary employment.

Key points to think about

- Many of your service users may already undergo assessment or reviews as part of your organisations' offer of support. Integrate skills assessment and reviews within these procedures where possible.
- If your organisation is mainly involved in signposting activities (Stage 1) you will probably not be involved in the detail of this planning process. However, an understanding of the processes can help you in guiding and signposting activities.
- If you are involved in hosting and brokering activities (Stage 2) with staff supporting teaching and learning in the classroom, they will be involved in collecting some of this evidence, and will need to be very familiar with the systems used by the partner provider, particularly the core curriculum and assessment tools.
- If you are planning to offer non-accredited courses through a training consortium (Stage 2/3), you will need to be familiar with the systems they use to record progress as your organisation will need to keep records for audit purposes. You will also need to have made arrangements for internal moderation and verification (procedures to check that assessments are fair and valid).
- If Core Curriculum training is available in your area, nominate a member of staff to attend; it will give them a clearer insight into the planning of learning.
- Although non-accredited learning plays a key role in engaging new learners, the emphasis at present is on achievement of qualifications – funding for non-accredited provision is not a priority for the Learning and Skills Council. VCS organisations value non-accredited learning highly because of the evident benefits to learners. Evidence to use in making the case for supporting non-accredited learning can be drawn from your own work as well as from the work of national bodies such as the Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning⁹ and the NRDC (National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy.¹⁰
- Contact your regional NIACE RAP Development Officer to find out about possibilities of training events locally around using the PLRA guide. For a list of NIACE Regional Development Officers, see your Regional Contacts list.

Notes:**Where to find out more**

- 1** *Planning Learning and Recording Achievement* (DfES, 2003) Available from 0845 60 222 60 ref: PLRA1 (free). An interactive version will be available on www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus.
- 2** Fast Track Assessment pack available from Basic Skills Agency ref A1244, (£5.50)
- 3** ABSSU ESOL assessment materials have recently been developed. Visit: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/LearningInfrastructureScreening>
- 4** Initial Assessment pack available from Basic Skills Agency ref 328 (£17.00)
- 5** Target Skills available from Cambridge Training and Development – please contact for cost of licence
- 6** Find out more about West Notts Basic and Key Skills Builder from West Nottinghamshire College, Derby Road, Mansfield, Notts NG18 5BH. Tel: 01623 627191
- 7** Diagnostic Assessment materials in Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL available free from DfES on 0845 60 222 60.
- 8** Video on ESOL teaching and differentiation, London Language and Literacy Unit. (ref:PLRAV1) Available from DfES 0845 60 222 60 or email: dfes@prolog.uk.com
- 9** Find out more about the Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning at www.learningbenefits.net
- 10** Find out more about the NRDC at www.nrdc.org.uk



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Section eight

EMBEDDING SKILLS FOR LIFE IN OTHER TYPES OF LEARNING

'Embedded' or 'integrated' provision has been mentioned several times already in this pack. This section explains what 'embedding' means, provides models that have been used successfully in this approach and gives examples of good practice for setting up and running 'embedded' courses including funding implications.

What does 'embedded' mean?

The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit has recently published its definition of embedded learning:

In the context of the *Skills for Life* strategy, embedded teaching and learning combines the development of literacy, language and numeracy with vocational and other skills. The skills acquired provide learners with the confidence, competence and motivation necessary for them to progress, gain qualifications and to succeed in life and at work.

This type of provision has been explored within the new Skills for Life infrastructure (see **Appendix 1**). It is seen as a way of providing learning which is particularly suitable when potential learners are primarily interested in developing their personal, practical or vocational skills and are more likely to see the relevance of improving their literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills as a part of that process. Current and developing practice has been informed by the work of two key projects. These are:

The Adult and Community Learning Fund (ACLF)¹

The Adult and Community Learning Fund was a programme of small and major grants managed by NIACE and the Basic Skills Agency (BSA) to promote and develop community-based learning for adults. It sought to:

- encourage more people and organisations to get involved in community-based learning activities of all kinds;

- reach those adults rarely involved in learning activities;
- open up access to learning;
- improve the literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy of adults;
- build the capacity of community-based organisations to deliver learning;
- develop partnerships in order to add value.

The BSA oversaw ACLF projects that are funded to deliver literacy, language and numeracy provision. These projects looked for hooks to learning that would attract adults in the community that are the most excluded and would benefit from literacy, numeracy and ESOL support.

The Developing Embedded Basic Skills project (DEBS)²

NIACE supported a project, Developing Embedded Literacy, Language (ESOL) and Numeracy, that researched courses that incorporated literacy, language and numeracy skills development and identified examples of good practice. These included aromatherapy, motor vehicle maintenance, photography, sport, vehicle maintenance, cooking on a budget, local history, tourism, catering, work skills and ESOL, hairdressing, adult rural skills and living skills. Following this case study work, NIACE research should be available in the near future.

Examples of embedded courses from ACLF case studies

Kick Off with Literacy

One way of getting people back into learning is to exploit learners' interests and motivation in a host subject. For example, football. A literacy, language (ESOL) or numeracy activity, which is both attractive and motivating, is embedded into the host subject demonstrating its relevance, purpose and use.

Every Wednesday morning at a Birmingham college, between eight and 11 young unemployed people gathered to work on a magazine. And in the afternoon, they go to Birmingham City football ground where the club provides coaching. This provides the material that they write about in the magazine.

'If you talk about literacy and numeracy, they turn off,' says the organiser. 'But working on the magazine, they are using literacy skills.'

Guidance for delivering embedded courses is still in development. The National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy³ is researching good practice and different approaches. However, the case studies and reports from the national projects have already produced some useful models for delivering embedded courses described below, and some criteria for good practice.

Models for embedding

The three models below illustrate different ways of setting up courses to combine teaching expertise and choosing the staffing arrangement that works best for the organisations involved.

Model 1: ‘Integrated’ model

Example: ESOL for Women’s Health



- Opportunities to address literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy are identified in all teaching and learning activities are mapped to the relevant core curriculum.
- The curriculum can be delivered by one member of staff with *Skills for Life* expertise and knowledge of other context.
- Learners have one ILP combining both sets of learning outcomes.

Model 2: ‘Sandwich’ model

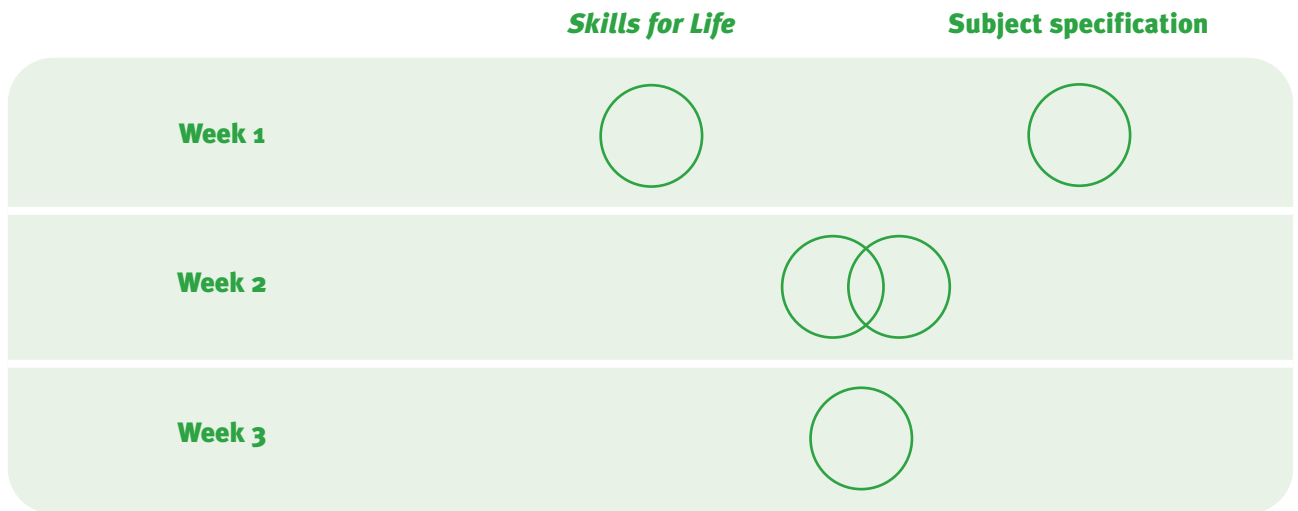
Example: Developing literacy and numeracy skills, healthy eating

	Morning sessions	Afternoon sessions
Week 1	General principles of healthy eating	Literacy, language and numeracy
Week 2	Basic cooking techniques	Literacy, language and numeracy
Week 3	Illness	Literacy, language and numeracy

- Literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy needs are mapped to and drawn out of the context, but support for these skills is given in separate sessions.
- Each session is staffed by a different member of staff as double staffing (having both present throughout the course) is not practical for staffing and funding reasons.
- Learners have two ILPs – one for each strand of learning.

Model 2: 'Sandwich' model

Example: Developing literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills, healthy eating



- Combines aspects of the other models, and allows single or double staffing as appropriate.
- Gives flexibility and choice for organisations with service users with a range of needs.

Good practice criteria

Although the literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills are embedded, the learners should still benefit from the full range of support available. The previous section on non-accredited learning describes how you can measure the progress of learners on non-accredited courses and this can apply equally well to embedded courses.

This means that:

- Literacy, language and numeracy content must be made clear in recruiting for the course;
- Literacy, language and numeracy content must be identified through screening and assessment;
- Learning outcomes must be set for both strands of the course;

- Tasks and activities must be linked to National Standards;
- Literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills must be explicitly taught.

Additional desirable criteria include:

- Production of materials that are grounded in the subject area for use;
- Qualification aims for both strands where possible (learners can work towards a qualification in context – for example, certificate in Basic Food hygiene, and one of the qualifications in adult literacy, numeracy or ESOL).

Materials development

To support and promote embedded teaching and learning, the ABSSU has commissioned a range of materials. These materials have been developed as a resource, not a course, and are designed to supplement and support existing materials. The first five files are now available to order.⁴ The materials on Social Care, Horticulture and Family Health may be particularly useful to VCS organisations.

Additional materials and resources are under development in workplace and community contexts by a number of organisations, both national and regional. You can find out about these from your local LSC, your ABSSU Regional Director, or from the DfES ABSSU website.⁵

Funding embedded provision

This is a complex area and you will only need to be concerned with the detail of this if you are drawing down funding directly from the LSC as a learning provider. See **Section 9** for further details.

Key points to think about

- Learners' ILPs should include aims relating to both sets of learning outcomes. This can be recorded on one plan, although some organisations use separate ILPs for each strand of learning. If this is the case good communication between the tutors is essential.
- If you are offering embedded provision through another funding route using non-LSC funding you should still ensure progress is measured and recorded to demonstrate benefits to learners, and to give a starting point for future learning.
- Embedded activities are a useful way of building capacity within the organisation to move from hosting/brokering (Stage 2) to offering provision (Stage 3) particularly where courses are double-staffed and skills are shared between literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy specialists and community development specialists.

Notes:**Where to find out more**

- 1** More information about the ACLF projects is available on <http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/aclf/>
- 2** Look for updates on DEBS on the NIACE website at www.niace.org.uk
- 3** Look for updates on the progress of the embedded project on <http://www.nrdc.org.uk/>
- 4** If you wish to order a free paper-based version of a teacher reference file for your organisation, contact DfES publications on 0845 60 222 60, dfes@prolog.uk.com quoting the following codes:
Trowel occupations (order ref: embedded/TR)
Social care (order ref: embedded/SC)
Effective communication for international nurses (order ref: embedded /NU)
Horticulture (order ref: embedded/HO)
Family Health (order ref: embedded/FH)

- 5** Visit the ABSSU website on www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus

Other useful publications

On the case – case studies from the Adult and Community Learning Fund, NIACE (2004)

A contextual Guide to Support Success in Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL Provision: Embedded Learning. The Raising Standards series. Ref SFLembedded DfES Order from dfes@prolog.uk.com

Titles on ESOL, Embedded Provision, Literacy and Numeracy will shortly be published as part of the NIACE Lifelines Series.



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Section nine

FUNDING ISSUES

This section covers a variety of options for funding the work described in this pack. The most appropriate option for your organisation will depend on the core activities you carry out as described in the staged framework in **Section 3** (signposting; hosting; provision of learning). At present, there is limited availability of sustainable mainstream LSC funding to new organisations wishing to become approved providers (who contract with the LSC to deliver learning). However, mainstream funding can be accessed through VCS consortia, or by entering into partnerships with approved providers. The Government's current emphasis is on provision that leads to nationally recognised qualifications and funding is more readily available for this type of provision.

1. Mainstream LSC funding¹ – available to approved providers

The LSC codes these courses as basic skills and they earn additional payments in the form of 'weighting' and 'uplift' to reflect the additional support needed by these learners. Only approved providers can obtain or 'draw down' this funding. For most voluntary and community organisations this may not be a realistic option as the procedures for approval are rigorous. However, smaller organisations can benefit from working in partnership with approved providers or in consortia (see **Section 3**) to host LSC-funded courses in voluntary and community settings. The benefits to all must be clear when setting up a partnership for delivery, particularly where one partner makes no financial gain.

Detailed guidance is available from the LSC about the correct codes to use to categorise courses as Basic Skills and hence to obtain the appropriate level of funding.

2. LSC discretionary funding – available to a range of organisations, often working in partnership to provide learning.

A number of funding streams are available for which organisations can apply or be invited to tender. Some of these have been set up specifically to support smaller organisations that may not have approved provider status but are involved in the engagement and support of learners. This makes these funds particularly suitable for organisations operating at Stages 1 and 2 of the framework set out in **Section 3**. The way these funds are allocated varies according to the priorities and needs of local LSCs – look at your LLSC website for details of local priorities and procedures or talk to the local LSC Skills for Life Co-ordinator. It is also the case that the pressure on LSC funds has resulted in significant reductions in these funds for 2004-05.

Current relevant streams include:

LSC Widening Adult Participation Action Fund (WAPAF)

This is one of the measures introduced to support regional implementation of the LSC ‘widening adult participation’ strategy launched last year. The aims of the Action Fund are to:

- distribute funds for developmental projects in order to discover what works in widening adult participation, with a particular focus on teaching, learning, and learner progression;
- support the LSC regionally and locally in developing, evaluating and embedding approaches to widening participation;
- identify effective practice and make best use of its impact locally, regionally and nationally by sharing ideas through activities that will increase the scope and volume of provision.

The Action Fund is run through the LSC, with each region agreeing its own overarching theme and

commissioning local activity to deliver objectives. Any organisation wanting to know what is planned in its area should contact its local LSC.

Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities Fund

This fund is primarily for VCS capacity-building in deprived communities and is intended for organisations which *either* directly deliver learning in deprived communities or work in partnership with others to deliver that learning, for example by outreach, or by hosting community learning.

Projects or partnerships seeking this funding should:

- involve local people. The emphasis should be on working with people rather than providing *for* them, so the more your learners participate in planning and managing their learning the better. Learners may be from specific deprived localities or groups, or be volunteers, staff working in voluntary or community organisations, or community tutors or potential tutors;
- *either* deliver learning directly, including informal learning which might not be eligible for mainstream funding; *or* facilitate direct delivery of learning, for example by outreach work, developing your organisation, or improvements to resources used for learning;
- succeed in engaging people who are disadvantaged or marginalised, for whom mainstream provision has not succeeded;
- help participants plan and move on to further learning, community activity or paid work in the future.

Contact your local LSC for more information (see Regional Contacts list).

Local Intervention and Development Fund

The purpose of this funding is to support local voluntary and community sector organisations to develop their capacity to deliver learning

opportunities for residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Local LSCs may choose to use this funding for activities such as:

- improving networks between adult and community learning providers;
- providing support for local organisations, particularly voluntary and community sector providers, to become established as 'new' LSC providers;
- providing staff development and capacity building in the delivery of literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy.

Contact your local LSC for more information (see Regional Contacts list).

Capacity Building Funding for VCS Organisations 2004-05

Although LSC capacity-building funding has been under pressure recently, the LSC Working Together Strategy acknowledges the need to support capacity building, particularly among black and minority ethnic (BME) VCS organisations. A one-off funding allocation of £200,000 will be made available to each local LSC to prioritise capacity building activity among BME-led organisations. The funding must be used by March 2005. Contact your local LSC for more information (see Regional Contacts list).

3. Voluntary sector funding

There are other sources of funding open to the voluntary sector that may enable you to fund activity that falls outside LSC funding. Information about these can be found via:

- fundraising publications²;
- grant directories;
- voluntary and community sector umbrella organisations that can support regional networks and groups in planning to meet

organisational needs and funding applications³;

- newsletters and websites for organisations which support voluntary and community organisation⁴.

NIACE has recently published a guide for small voluntary and community groups that provides detailed information about funding neighbourhood learning and contains a reference section of useful contacts⁵.

4. Collaborative approaches to funding⁶

Funding has been used over recent years to develop models for building capacity in the voluntary and community sector. Work in Devon through the ESOL Pathfinder has resulted in the development of a range of models that are suitable for organisations at different stages of development. These models are provided below; similar models operate in most regions of the country, and can be adapted to meet the needs of most organisations.

A. The Broker model

Most suitable for organisations at Stage 1 (signposting) and building capacity towards Stage 2 (hosting/brokering) who want to offer some services but need support to do so.

Many voluntary and community sector organisations are aware that members of their communities have literacy, language and numeracy skills needs. Most of these organisations do not have the ability to meet those needs or the knowledge of how to access suitable provision. An intermediary organisation such as a Council of Voluntary Service is ideally placed to assist because it can act as 'broker', bringing together the voluntary organisation and

the provider.

Case study

In the example quoted in Section 4 of the Exeter Islamic Centre and its relationship with Exeter CVS (ECVS), the value of the ‘broker’ is well illustrated. The Training Manager at ECVS invited the College and the Islamic Centre to discuss a way forward.

Funding was secured from NIACE/NACVS for a nine-month-long project to explore the viability of outreach sessions at the mosque. Due to its success, further funding was obtained from the Learning and Skills Council Devon and Cornwall for a further year’s funding to:

- *develop the capacity of partner organisations;*
- *make sessions more structured and map them*

- to the new core curriculum;*
- *move learners on into mainstream;*
- *meet the increased demand and widen provision to other minority communities in Exeter.*

Following the Pathfinder, Exeter CVS was no longer required as a project partner and the College and Islamic Centre have secured funding in a joint bid to the Learning and Skills Council to further develop outreach provision through ICT. A member of staff is now based full time at the Islamic Centre supporting a computer suite, which the men have found of particular interest. The Islamic Centre staff are funded to provide outreach and support citizenship curriculum development.

The Broker Model: what the different partners brought to the table

Role	Organisation	Key factors leading to success
Broker	Exeter CVS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trusted by voluntary and community organisations ● Knowledge of further education and basic skills (and funding) ● Established relationship with Exeter College as franchise partner ● Track record in securing funding ● Experience in project management ● Capacity to manage project and cope with financial requirements of funders ● Ability to support capacity building e.g. develop policies and procedures ● Volunteer Bureau to advise on good practice around recruiting and supporting volunteers
Provider	Exeter College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Willingness to work in a ‘genuine partnership’ ● Willingness to try something new ● Relationship with broker ● Basic skills expertise ● Staff and volunteer tutor training ● Mainstream funding

Role	Organisation	Key factors leading to success
Voluntary/ community organisation	Islamic Centre of the South West	<p>Community champions, trusted by their community and Management Committee, and able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● recruit learners ● advertise sessions ● support learners with sometimes complex issues ● liaise around venue arrangements ● with training, assist in initial assessment ● obtain independent learner feedback ● provide venue that is safe and accessible ● provide crèche facility ● network giving access to other BME groups
The funder	Devon & Cornwall LSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognition of the need to support development and capacity building ● Adequate levels of funding to support the work ● Permission for outreach model with volunteers ● Recognition of added value provided by VCOs ● Links to other planning organisations such as the Devon and Torbay Learning Partnership ● Advice and support from staff team

B The Partnership Delivery Model

Most suitable for organisations at Stage 2 who are involved in some aspects of delivery of learning but do not have the capacity to draw down mainstream funding.

Case study

An ESOL tutor who had been working for the local College recognised that there were ESOL learners who were not accessing mainstream provision. Through her Church she helped to set up Open Doors International Language School and recruited volunteer tutors, in the first instance, to deliver ESOL sessions. At that time provision was small-scale as funding was required to pay for rent and overheads. The Centre Manager was not successful in securing mainstream funding for the

classes from the LSC or through franchise arrangements. The regional WEA stepped in and offered to pay for the tutors and a contribution towards administration and rent, provided that numbers of learners made the classes viable.

The classes went from strength to strength as numbers grew. A range of language qualifications were offered and these proved popular. The location and a dedicated centre for ESOL classes helped to attract new learners and word got around. The ESOL tutors were encouraged to take up the new Level 4 Basic Skills qualification and the Basic Skills for Inclusive Learning (Basil) training. The difficulty remained though, that significant development, in terms of larger premises and more classes, was restricted because LSC mainstream funding was not available to support the organisation's infrastructure.

The Partnership Model: what the different partners brought to the table

Role	Organisation	Key factors leading to success
The basic skills provider	The WEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employing tutors ● Quality assurance systems ● Accessing mainstream funding ● Paying a contribution to rent and administration ● Management Information Systems ● Audit trail
The voluntary and community organisation	Open Doors International Language School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ethos of organisation helped in recruiting and supporting tutors ● Single focus site attractive to learners ● Able to help with learner support & initial assessment ● Administrative support ● Good communication through staff meetings ● Obtaining additional funding for crèche etc ● Outreach work to identify development opportunities ● Linking into other agencies

C The Voluntary Sector Consortium Delivery Model

Accessing mainstream funding through a consortium can support organisations developing their capacity from Stage 2 (hosting/brokering) to Stage 3 (delivery). This is a particularly useful model for providing access to mainstream funding while keeping costs down for smaller organisations.

The Consortium Franchise model emerged out of the ‘Partnership model’ and resulted from the following:

- The need by VCO to access mainstream funding more directly to support development and to pay towards some of the ‘added value’ (overheads are relatively low);

- The need for VCO to gain recognition for the work in their own right;
- Recent establishment of a Voluntary Sector Consortium that obtained a contract to deliver mainstream funding in literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy meant an alternative was available.

Case study

As a result of its Pathfinder involvement, Open Doors International Language School managed to access mainstream funding more directly to enable expansion of provision. The opportunity arose when the Voluntary Sector Consortium for Devon and Cornwall (Learning Plus) obtained a contract for mainstream funding from the Devon and Cornwall LSC.

The Consortium Delivery Model: what the different partners brought to the table

Role	Organisation	Key factors leading to success
Franchisee and consortium member organisation	Open Doors International Language School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provider of ESOL ● Additional funding to pay for crèche etc ● Registered Centre for delivering national qualifications ● Employer of teachers and administration staff ● Provider of venue
Consortium Support Unit	Voluntary Sector Consortium (LearningPlus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mainstream funding ● Quality assurance systems ● Management information systems ● Staff training and support

Key points to think about

- Funding embedded literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy is a complex area. The LSC has recently issued a guidance note to try to clarify the position. For further information, access the guidance note on the LSC website⁷.
- Partnership working is a necessity for voluntary and community organisations wanting to develop their capacity to engage in this agenda. It is worth reflecting on your key purpose when entering into a partnership. Lynn Tett⁸ identifies the following partnership models. The ‘synergy’ and ‘transformational’ models describe the relationship between organisations and their partners working at Stages 1 (signposting) and 2 (hosting/brokering) particularly well, where the gains are measured in terms of benefits to organisations and individuals, rather than financial gain.

The Budget Enlargement model – by working together partners will gain access to additional funds that they could not access on their own.

The Synergy model – by combining knowledge, resources, and approaches, partner organisations will be able to achieve more together than they could on their own.

The Transformational model – by exposing the different partners to the assumptions and working methods of the others, their usual ways of working will be transformed to the benefit of the communities.

Notes:**Where to find out more**

- 1** For more information about becoming an approved provider, and how the funding formula works, visit the LSC website – www.lsc.gov.uk
- 2** The Directory of Social Change is a particularly useful source – more information at www.dsc.org.uk
- 3** The National Association of Councils for Voluntary Services website provides a directory of all CVS and other organisations at www.nacvs.org.uk.
- 4** Funderfinder is a useful source of information about charitable trusts – www.funderfinder.org.uk
- 5** NIACE, *Funding Neighbourhood Learning – A guide for small voluntary and community groups*, Bryan L and Turner C, 2004.
- 6** Case studies and models are reproduced from *Skills for Life in Devon: Roles for the Voluntary Sector*, Karen Kendall, Exeter CVS, April 2004 with thanks to the Devon Association of Councils of Voluntary Services
- 7** For an electronic version of the document, visit the LSC website at www.lsc.gov.uk Briefing Note on Embedded Basic Skills Ref: LSC/AA000/119104 or contact Publication Enquiries: 0870 900 6800
- 8** NIACE has published a range of booklets under the umbrella title “Lifelines in adult learning” including *Working in Partnership*, Tett, L., NIACE, 2003.

Other useful publications include

LSC Evidence Digest and Report on Responses to Consultation on Working Together - A Strategy for the Voluntary and Community Sector and the LSC (LSC, 20004)

Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail – a Toolkit for the Black VCS (NIACE 2004) to order a copy call 0116 2044200 or visit www.niace.org.uk/publications



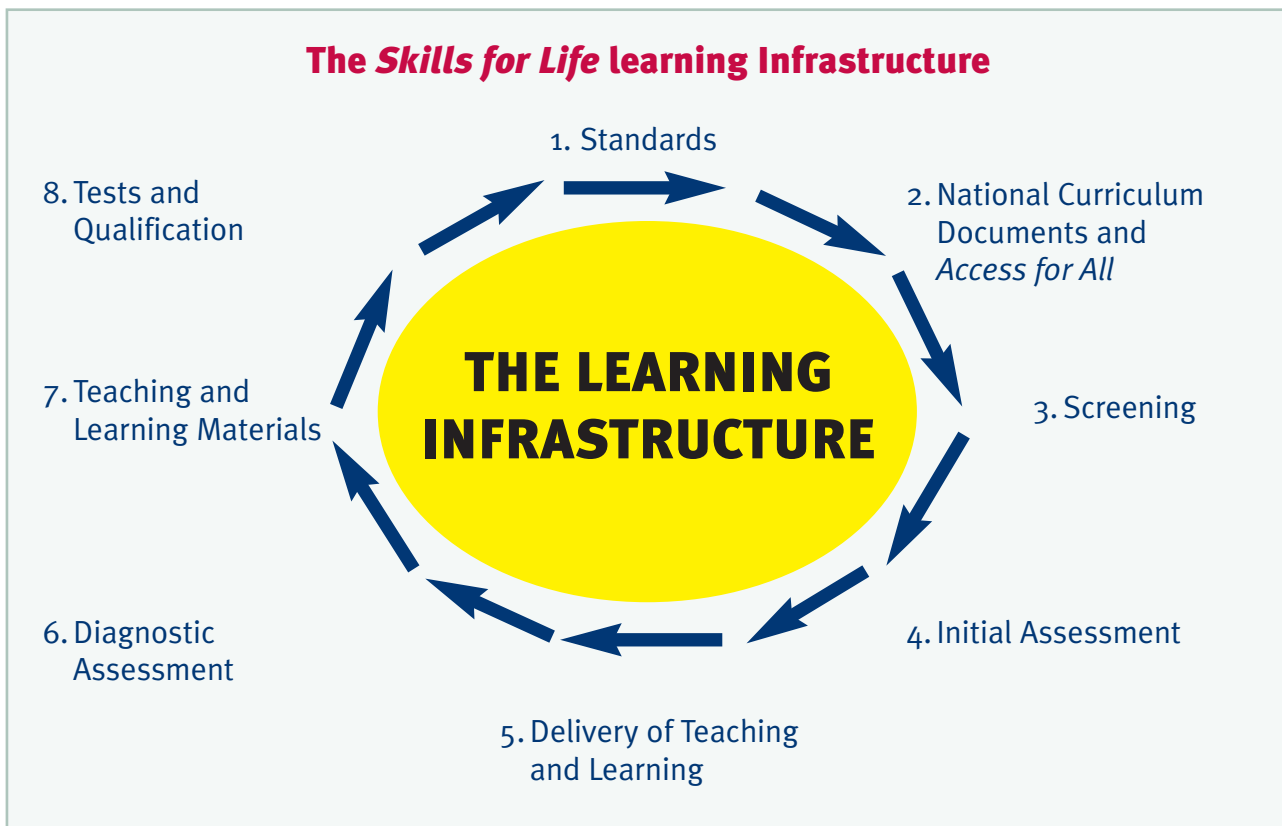
The Regional Achievement Programme
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Appendix one

SKILLS FOR LIFE INFRASTRUCTURE

This appendix has been provided to give an overview of the key features of the *Skills for Life* infrastructure, which are mentioned throughout this pack.

In order to carry out the *Skills for Life* strategy effectively, a new infrastructure has been developed for adult literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy. It has the following elements that are briefly described below:



1. Standards

The National Standards

The National Standards for Adult Literacy and Numeracy provide the basis for the whole learning infrastructure. The literacy standards cover the skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing. The numeracy standards cover the skills of interpreting, calculating and communicating mathematical information. The standards:

- are set at Entry level and Levels 1 and 2 of the national qualifications framework;
- describe three sub-levels of achievement within Entry level: Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3;
- provide nationally agreed benchmarks against which the literacy, language and numeracy skills of the adult population can be assessed through national tests and national qualifications.

2. Curricula for Literacy, Numeracy, ESOL, Pre-entry and Access for All

National curriculum documents set out the skills and knowledge that learners need at each level, and provide guidance for teachers working with adults to develop their literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills. Access for All guidance has been developed for teachers of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

3. Screening

Screening tools are used to find out whether or not someone might have a literacy, language or numeracy need. Several screening tools are available for use. The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit has commissioned the Basic Skills Agency (BSA) to update the 'Fast Track' for literacy and numeracy, and to develop additional versions of the tool for use in particular contexts.

A new ESOL screening tool is due for release soon.

4. Initial assessment

Initial assessment helps identify a learner's skills against the national standards. Learners may have different levels of reading, writing, numeracy and language skills. Several initial assessment materials for literacy and numeracy are available.

5. Delivery of teaching and learning

A number of projects have been developed and delivered to increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning – these include:

- Family Literacy, Language (ESOL) and Numeracy
- Learning Styles project
- Dyslexia project
- Embedded Basic Skills
- Planning Learning and Recording Achievement project

6. Diagnostic assessment

Diagnostic Assessment materials provide a detailed assessment of a learner's skills and abilities and the results are used as the basis for the development of the learner's individual learning plan (ILP) and learning programme.

7. Teaching and learning materials

Skills for Life learning materials for literacy, numeracy and ESOL have been developed that cover a range of adult contexts at each level. They are referenced to the national curriculum documents, and are available in paper format and on CD-ROM.

8. Qualifications, accreditation and National Tests

New qualifications have been developed which are cross-referenced to the National Standards. These include:

- National Tests in Adult Literacy and Numeracy;
- Accredited qualifications for adult learners of literacy and numeracy at Entry level;
- Accredited qualifications for adult ESOL learners;
- Accreditation for pre-entry level learners.

Support for these new qualifications include:

- The Move On project – promoting the National Tests with a free short course;
- The National Test Toolkit – a publication providing information about the National Tests and also the Move On approach.

Appendix two

Achievement	Gaining a qualification or learning goal as set out in an Individual Learning Programme
Capacity-building	Developing the resources and skills available to organisations to increase and improve services
Curriculum	Documents setting out the skills and knowledge that should be taught at each level for literacy, numeracy and ESOL
Embedded Literacy, Language (ESOL) and Numeracy	Courses where skills development is directly taught alongside other types of learning – for example, numeracy and garden design
Engagement	Used to describe activities and processes which stimulate interest in <i>Skills for Life</i> – this term is used to describe work with learners and with organisations
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
Individual Learning Plan	Learner's record of their learning journey from start to finish
Initial assessment	Activities carried out to assess a learner's existing skills to find a starting point
Language	English language skills – used here to describe the needs and provision for speakers of other languages
Learning outcomes	Statements about what a learner will be able to do at the end of a learning programme
Learning provider	An organisation which organises and runs programmes of learning (such as FE Colleges and adult learning providers)
Literacy	Reading, writing, speaking and listening skills
Numeracy	Maths skills
Progression	Next step for learners at the end of a learning programme
Signposting	Giving adults information and support to find out about appropriate courses or direction
Social inclusion	Processes by which excluded or marginalised individuals and groups can be enabled to participate in the economic, social, political and cultural life of mainstream society

Notes:

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NIACE has a broad remit to promote lifelong learning opportunities for adults. NIACE works to develop increased participation in education and training, particularly for those who do not have easy access because of barriers of class, gender, age, race, language and culture, learning difficulties and disabilities, or insufficient financial resources.

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NIACE, 21 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE, UK
Tel: +44 (0)116 204 4215; Fax: +44 (0)116 204 4276;
website: www.niace.org.uk