



Section 6

In this section you will find the following information about **Everyday Skills**:

- ✘ What are **Everyday Skills**?
- ✘ Who benefits from **Everyday Skills**?
- ✘ How are **Everyday Skills** opportunities accessed?
- ✘ What can the Scottish Union Learning Everyday Skills Development Officer do to help you in your role as a ULR?
- ✘ What is Dyslexia and where can you find out more about the help and advice available to dyslexic adults?
- ✘ What is meant by the term ESOL and what English language learning may be available to your fellow work colleagues whose first language is not English?
- ✘ What support can Adult Basic Education offer you to assist your members with **Everyday Skills** needs in the Highland area and who do you contact in the Islands for **Everyday Skills** provision?
- ✘ What support can the Workers Educational Association (WEA) offer you in **Everyday Skills** workplace provision?



What are “Everyday Skills”?

“Everyday Skills” describes a wide range of skills required in the workplace and at home. Some examples include completing rotas and timesheets, reading customer orders, helping kids with their homework, understanding mortgage interest rates, writing letters, and understanding written and verbal job instructions.

Who benefits from Everyday Skills?

We can all benefit from improving our **everyday skills**. If we don't use our skills regularly we risk losing them. Many people have left school with various skills and qualifications but have not used them since; their skills have, therefore, become 'rusty' over a period of time and brushing up on their everyday skills would help them to become more confident in what they do at work and at home. There are also those who left school without obtaining these skills. This could be due to a variety of reasons; perhaps they had health or family issues and did not attend school regularly; maybe they have dyslexia or other learning difficulties which were not recognised at school. In addition, there are many migrant workers in Scotland who need to understand important information, like health and safety notices, and would benefit greatly from learning and/or improving their English language skills. Improved **Everyday Skills** may also motivate learners to take up other learning opportunities, which can lead to higher skilled and higher paid jobs. Giving people opportunities to learn as adults enables them to take greater control over their lives.

How are Everyday Skills opportunities accessed?

There are many ways to access **Everyday Skills** opportunities across Scotland. Trade unions can make use of a range of support, including Local Authority Community Learning & Development Partnerships (in Highland region this is Highland Adult Basic Education), Further Education Colleges and specialist organisations such as the Workers' Educational Association. In addition, unions can train their own workplace literacy tutor assistants. The Scottish Union Learning Everyday Skills Development Officer can put you in contact with your local providers and assist you in facilitating support for learners.



In what way can the Scottish Union Learning Everyday Skills Development Officer offer support to me as a Highlands & Islands ULR?

The Everyday Skills Development Officer can:

- ✘ Assist you in raising awareness of the needs and means of support for those who wish to improve their **Everyday Skills**.
- ✘ Provide you with training through attendance of an **Everyday Skills** awareness raising course.
- ✘ Support you in establishing the learning/delivery needs of your members.
- ✘ Assist you in developing relationships with delivery partners/ providers (for example, Local Authority Literacies Partnerships, Workers' Educational Association, further education colleges, etc.) and to arrange appropriate **Everyday Skills** provision for learners.
- ✘ Work with you and providers to arrange ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language) provision for migrant workers.
- ✘ Work with you to support learners with learning differences and/or disabilities through the relevant organisations, such as Dyslexia Scotland.
- ✘ Develop local responses to geographical difficulties (for example, outreach, online and blended learning).
- ✘ Support you in undertaking specialist training to enhance your skills as a ULR (for example, to support adult literacy learners in the workplace or become tutor assistants).
- ✘ Keep you up-to-date with local and national developments in **Everyday Skills** through the Scottish Union Learning News and website.
- ✘ Organise events for ULRs and opportunities for networking. For example, a National Everyday Skills Event was held in Perth in February 2009 and dyslexia awareness events are being arranged throughout Scotland.
- ✘ Provide you with information and learning opportunities from national initiatives like the Big Plus, BBC RaW, Sandstone Vista and Quick Reads.

What do former World Champion racing driver Sir Jackie Stewart, five times Olympic rowing gold medallist Sir Stephen Redgrave and entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson have in common? Yes, they have all received knighthoods for outstanding success and achievement in their particular fields. But did you know that all three are dyslexic, in common with many other very successful and well-known people? One person in ten is thought to be dyslexic to some degree. That's over 500,000 people in Scotland alone and one in four of these could be severely dyslexic. Dyslexia occurs at all levels of intellectual ability and difficulties can range from mild to severe, with individual strengths and weaknesses varying considerably from person to person.

So what is dyslexia? There is no single accepted definition but it can be described as a difficulty in processing language-based information. Dyslexic children and adults can have difficulty with short-term memory, concentration and co-ordination. Spelling can be a problem because poor short-term memory and sequencing skills mean that it is difficult to remember the order of the letters. It's not unusual to find the same word spelled in different ways in the same piece of work! Reading is sometimes hard work, either because of difficulty in actually reading the words or because of difficulty in processing the information. When it comes to writing it can be a struggle to get the ideas and sentences out of the head and onto the paper with the added difficulty of getting things in the right order. Occasionally mathematics can prove frustrating too with difficulties in holding calculations in the head for long enough to do what is required.

There is no 'cure' for dyslexia but early recognition followed by appropriate help and support can help a child to achieve success. There is now a far greater awareness in our schools, colleges and universities of the difficulties which dyslexia can bring and even in examinations the dyslexic student can be given support such as extra time, a reader, a scribe or the use of a computer. This hasn't always been the case, though, and some adult dyslexics will have memories of struggling at school and feeling the frustration of working very hard yet not achieving nearly as much as others who seemed to sail through the work with much greater success for far less effort!

Continued/

Continued from previous page

Out in the workplace it is again important for help and support to be in place. Sometimes all that is needed is a little extra time to allow for proofreading. Coloured filters over computer screens can make reading easier and nowadays voice recognition software is a useful option. Education and literacies initiatives are available in the workplace and an increasing awareness of dyslexia should mean that dyslexic employees are able to access support which will help them to achieve their full potential in their chosen field of employment. Dyslexia certainly brings its difficulties but many dyslexic people have tremendous natural talents. They are often very creative and excel in areas such as art, architecture, sport, music and drama. The business world also has its share of highly successful dyslexic people whose ability to think and plan creatively stands them in very good stead.

There is plenty of information available for those wanting to find out more about dyslexia and for those who want help or advice. Dyslexia Scotland, based in Stirling, runs a **National Helpline (0844 800 84 84)** which is manned by trained helpline advisors and which is available from 10.00 am till 4.00 pm Monday to Friday. The organisation also has a network of Branches which offer advice and support at local level. An Adult Network meets regularly and training sessions can be arranged for educational institutions and for employers. With the ever-increasing awareness of dyslexia in both education and the workplace and with all the help available through modern technology, dyslexia should not be seen as a barrier to achievement. From Leonardo da Vinci through Albert Einstein and Sir Winston Churchill to today's Bill Gates, Susan Hampshire and Keira Knightley, there are plenty of examples out there of highly successful dyslexic people!

Mary Evans

Dyslexia Scotland

Scottish Union Learning, together with Dyslexia Scotland, Dyslexia Scotwest and various affiliated unions, is currently supporting union members who may have dyslexia, and is developing a strategy for a 'dyslexia-friendly workplace'. If you would like further information about dyslexia, or the support available to union members with dyslexia, please contact Wendy Burton, Development Officer – Everyday Skills, Scottish Union Learning, Tel. 0141 337 8121 or by email wburton@stuc.org.uk.



English for Speakers of Other Languages

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is the term used most often to describe English language learning for those whose first language is not English, and it encompasses the knowledge and skills required by learners in order to take part fully in employment, education and community life. In Scotland, demographics have changed considerably during the last eight years due to the number of asylum seekers and refugees through the National Asylum Support Service since 2000; the increase in the number of migrant workers from EU accession states since 2004, particularly Poland; and the Scottish Executive's Fresh Talent Initiative that was launched in 2004 to encourage more people to live and work in Scotland.

The demand for ESOL provision has therefore increased, leading to a national research exercise which has resulted in the development of a new Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland, launched in March 2007. This new strategy has five guiding principles:

Inclusion: Provision which supports migrant and refugee settlement, and aids inclusion and full participation in Scottish society and the economy

Diversity: Provision which recognises and values the cultures of learners and the contribution that New Scots make to society and the economy

Quality: Provision which is high quality, easily accessible, cost-effective and uses best practice in the teaching and learning of languages

Achievement: Provision which contributes to wider national literacies targets and promotes attainment and personal and social achievement

Progression: Provision which supports and encourages routes into further learning, employment and in local community life"

(Source: The Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland, ETLLD, March 2007)



English for Speakers of Other Languages (Continued)

ESOL provision is delivered throughout Scotland by Further Education Colleges, Local Authority Community Learning and Development and Adult Literacies Partnerships, the Workers' Educational Association and the voluntary sector. Many of these classes are funded via local authorities and the Scottish Funding Council but others have costs attached. The Scottish Government has identified an additional £9m for 2008-11 to support a wide range of initiatives to improve the quantity and quality of ESOL provision, and it is estimated that the funding will equate to provision for up to 7,000 extra ESOL learners.

Trade unions can access ESOL provision for learners through the Scottish Union Learning Everyday Skills Development Officer, who can put you in contact with local providers and assist you in organising provision to suit the needs of your members.

The STUC is represented on the Scottish Government's National ESOL Panel and can keep unions up-to-date with national and local developments. The first National ESOL Conference is being planned for November 2009.

If you would like further information about ESOL please contact Wendy Burton, Development Officer - Everyday Skills, on 0141 337 8121 or by email wburton@stuc.org.uk.



Information on Adult Literacies for Union Learning Reps

“Adults who are fully literate have ‘the ability to read, write and use numeracy, to handle information, to express ideas and opinions, to make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners.’”
Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland Literacy Report, 2001

In Scotland 23% of adults have significant difficulties with reading, writing and numbers. This means that in Highland over 38,000 people may have low literacy skills.

How can you help?

In your role as Union Learning Rep you may become aware of colleagues who have literacies difficulties. Often people are reluctant to admit they have a literacy problem, but if you know a person well enough you may be able to let them know about the help available through Adult Basic Education (ABE). Having ABE leaflets openly on display also gives people the opportunity to pick one up and find out what is on offer.

Adult Basic Education is part of the Highland Council's Education, Culture and Sport Service. It provides free, confidential tuition on a one-to-one or small group basis. It helps people improve their literacy, numeracy and information literacy skills, and encourages personal confidence and lifelong learning. This includes working with people who speak English as an additional language. Referrals can be made directly to ABE. ABE also works with other agencies on integrated literacy projects.

How can you recognise literacies difficulties?

There is still a stigma attached to having low literacy skills and many adults have developed strategies to hide the fact that they have difficulty with words or numbers.

Some indicators of low literacies skills might include:

- Reluctance to look at written information
- Failure to understand written communication
- Reluctance to fill in forms
- Asking for help to fill in forms
- Excuses such as forgetting glasses
- Poor handwriting
- Erratic spelling and lack of punctuation
- Difficulty in telling the time
- Reluctance to attend professional development training courses
- Reluctance to take up career progression pathways

If a colleague approaches you about their literacies skills can let them know that:

- Adult Basic Education is a free, confidential service
- Learning options include one-to-one or small group tuition
- Learners decide what they want to learn and work at their own pace
- Literacy difficulties are very common



How does the referral system work?

There is an Adult Basic Education Co-ordinator based in every area of Highland.

Ask your colleague's permission to pass their details to the local ABE Co-ordinator or encourage them to phone the free helpline: **0800 02 88 111**. A meeting will then be arranged to discuss what they would like to learn and how this can happen.

For further information contact:

Julie Simmons

Adult Literacies Strategy Officer

01463 251 278

Julie.simmons@highland.gov.uk

ABE Co-ordinator Contact Details:

CAITHNESS

Libby Cook

Telephone: 01955 605 423 or 01847 895 782 / E-mail: libby.cook@highland.gov.uk

SUTHERLAND

Barbara Watson

Telephone: 01549 402050 / E-mail: barbara.watson@highland.gov.uk

BADENOCH & STRATHSPEY and NAIRN

Mohamed Hamada

Tel: 01479 811 589 or 01667 458 556 / E-mail: mohamed.hamada@highland.gov.uk

ROSS & COMARTY

Norma Christie

Telephone: 01349 864 579 / E-mail: norma.christie@highland.gov.uk

SKYE & LOCHALSH

Joey Graham

Telephone: 01478 614 050 / E-mail: joey.graham@highland.gov.uk

LOCHABER

Ann Marie Donoghue

Telephone: 01397 707 371 / E-mail: ann-marie.donoghue@highland.gov.uk

INVERNESS

Mark Richardson

Telephone: 01463 710 013 / E-mail: mark.richardson@highland.gov.uk



Everyday Skills provision in the Islands can be found in the following locations:

Western Isles

Western Isles Learning Shop, Town Hall, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis

Phone: 01851 707460 Email: learningshop@cne-siar.gov.uk

The Western isles Learning Shop offers and provides a comfortable environment for adults looking to learn and develop new skills. Subjects covered include: number work; reading, writing & spelling; driving theory and hazard; perception; form filling; communication skills; basic computing, internet & email and introductions to adult learning. The learning provided is free and confidential. Please see leaflet over the page for more information.

Shetland Islands

Adult Learning, The Old Library Centre, Lower Hillhead, Lerwick

Phone: 01595 743888 Email: Adult.learning@sic.shetland.gov.uk

For adults who want improve their reading and writing; want a better job but worry their skills are out of date; want to help their children or lack confidence in their skills, Adult Learning will discuss their personal learning needs, and give confidential information and guidance in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. The service is free and can be arranged to fit in with work or family commitments.

Orkney Islands

The Learning Link, 1 St Rognvald Street, Kirkwall

Phone: 01856 879200 Email: enquiries.learninglink@thelearninglink.org.uk

The Learning Link provides help for adults with filling in forms, writing and spelling, reading books and newspapers, coping with writing at work, helping children with homework, everyday maths, computer basics or learning to speak English. Their help is free, friendly and confidential.



What support can the Workers Educational Association (WEA) offer me in Everyday Skills workplace provision?

Scottish Union Learning in the Highlands & Islands works in partnership with Sheila Maher, WEA Highland Workplace Literacies Tutor Organiser to offer ULRs opportunities to develop **Everyday Skills** provision in their workplaces.

In very brief terms, the WEA can work with you in your workplace to help you identify everyday skills needs and then design and deliver a course specifically for your members in your workplace. For further information and contact details for Sheila please see the leaflets on the next page.

Information for ULRs on WEA Everyday Skills Provision

About the Workers' Educational Association

Founded in 1903 the Workers' Educational Association is a leading national voluntary sector provider of community and workplace based adult learning. The Association has a long history of working with the STUC and individual unions to develop worker education.

WEA and Literacies

The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) can support your union to put literacies on the agenda by

- Providing free, tailored literacies for members who have few or no formal qualifications
- Raising awareness about literacies amongst workers and management
- Analysing the literacy and numeracy content of particular jobs
- Carrying out training needs interviews and analysis with members
- Providing advice on building literacies learning into ongoing staff development and training programmes
- Providing advice on making your workplace documentation clearer and more accessible

WEA Courses

Our literacy and numeracy learning programmes offer your members a unique opportunity to review and improve their communications skills, enabling people to play a full part in family, community and working life. People can gain a national qualification and explore options for further learning and career development.

See our exemplar leaflet on the next page



For more information contact:

Sheila Maher, WEA Highland Workplace Literacies Tutor Organiser

David Whyte House, 57 Church Street, Inverness, IV1 1DR

Tel: 01463 710577

Fax: 01463 713671

Email: s.maher@weascotland.org.uk

Website: www.weascotland.org.uk



Communicating at Work

Starting Points/Learning Works

is a **45 hour course** to build confidence in communication skills – reading, writing, speaking, listening, using numbers and computers for work and life outside work.

It's FREE, FRIENDLY AND FUN!

Course covers:

- Using computers
- Filling out forms
- Writing reports
- Improving spelling & grammar
- Working with numbers
- A group research project
- Confidence building
-



Dates, Times & Venue:

To be negotiated with the learners

Want to know more?

If you have colleagues who have been out of learning for quite a while or have not got formal qualifications and are interested in the chance to gain SQA Communication at SCQF 3 or 4 then contact:

Sheila Maher, Workers' Educational Association, Inverness
Tel: 01463 710577 or email: s.maher@weascotland.org.uk