

**Research on Adult Literacy and Numeracy
In Scotland**

EVIDENCE REPORT FOR ALNIS 'REFRESH'

**York Consulting
November 2006**

**Scottish Executive
Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong
Learning Department**

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RESEARCHERS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT
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Scottish Executive ETLLED
EVIDENCE REPORT FOR ALNIS ‘REFRESH’
Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland

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1 INTRODUCTION

Study Background

- 1.1 The Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (ALNIS) strategy, launched in 2001, contained 21 recommendations which aim to enhance the quality and quantity of literacies provision in response to individual learner needs. This evidence report forms a key information source in developing an ALNIS 'Refresh' strategy. This strategy update is intended to report on progress in achieving the original ALNIS objectives and in identifying priorities for future action.
- 1.2 The long term importance of the literacies strategy in achieving social justice and economic growth is well rehearsed. The forthcoming Leitch Review, for example, is expected to acknowledge that investment in the lower levels of educational attainment is every bit as valuable to wider aims as investment in the middle and higher levels.
- 1.3 In preparation for refreshing ALNIS, the Scottish Executive has undertaken a literature review and consulted widely with stakeholders, to obtain evidence on progress of the strategy and to gather views on future priorities.

The Evidence Report

- 1.4 This evidence report brings together information from these primary and secondary research sources to produce an evidence base from which the ALNIS Refresh Strategy will be devised.
- 1.5 Wider study objectives of the ALNIS 'Refresh' study are to:
 - analyse stakeholder perceptions with regard to ALNIS, focusing on perceptions of progress since 2001, challenges encountered and gaps in achieving the strategy's recommendations;
 - review the current strategy, proposing revised goals and targets to increase literacy and numeracy skills in Scotland, and associated recommendations to achieving this.
- 1.6 This evidence report relates to the first of the above objectives, and brings together the following four data sources:
 - **a literature review** – this document was produced by the Scottish Executive and is based on an overview of ALNIS-related activity and policy since 2001;

- **ALNIS stakeholder events** – four events took place in May and early June 2006 to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to express views on progress and to consider key priorities for the ALNIS Refresh Strategy. Each event covered eight themes. These themes were derived from an earlier postal exercise, whereby stakeholders were asked to identify three key priorities for the ALNIS agenda. From these priorities, the eight main themes which emerged were:
 - partnership roles;
 - quality of provision;
 - workforce / staffing;
 - partnership distribution of resources;
 - measuring progress;
 - engaging learners;
 - literacies in other contexts;
 - different environments.

1.7 The events also addressed the topics of ALNIS funding and future priorities:

- **ALNIS-related funding issues:** stakeholders' views on how funding processes have operated;
- **future priorities:** stakeholders' views of priority issues for the future of ALNIS. This information was derived from 'future forms' which were completed by event attendees towards the end of each event;
- **learner consultation** – an event in September 2006 ('Come All Ye') had an ALN workshop for learners who were able to give their opinions, share experiences and express their views on progress and future issues;
- **sub-group feedback** – two sub-groups (Workplace Literacies and Training and Development) provided evidence in these ALNIS sub-themes.

Draft Strategic Framework

1.8 Following completion and approval of the evidence report, a **Draft Consultation Framework** will be devised. A written consultation exercise will allow for further stakeholder views to be gathered, on the basis of this Framework. This will allow stakeholders to comment on early proposals and ideas for the direction and content of the ALNIS Refresh Strategy.

Methodology

- 1.9 The methodology underpinning this report has been a qualitative analysis of the above data sources. In order to summarise and analyse the large amount of data collected, an **Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)** has been applied to ensure that each source is reviewed consistently and rigorously. This Framework contains key prompt questions which are crucial to building the foundations for the development of the ALNIS Refresh Strategy (see section two). These relate to both progress issues and key themes which the ALNIS Refresh should consider.
- 1.10 Given the considerable evidence which was gathered in generating this evidence report, it cannot be assumed that every single issue has been detailed (although we do include a list of minority views). Rather, the evidence report is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the key issues and patterns which emerged.

Report Structure

- 1.11 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:
- **section two – the OF:** this section provides a summary of the evidence which is reported in sections three to six;
 - **section three – the literature review:** this section contains the complete literature review;
 - **section four – ALNIS stakeholder events:** of all evidence sources, this area generated the most information and has been reported comprehensively in this section;
 - **section five – learner consultation feedback:** based on evidence derived from the ‘Come All Ye’ learner event;
 - **section six – sub-group feedback:** evidence generated from the Workplace Literacies and Training and Development (T&D) sub-groups.
- 1.12 This approach to analysing the evidence sources will also ensure that information is evidence-based and reliable. The prompt questions in the OF act as a guiding tool to ensure that all key questions are applied across each evidence source. This does not mean that each evidence source contains information about all prompt questions. Indeed, some sources related more clearly to specific themes within the OF. However, across all evidence sources, most of the OF questions have been addressed.

- 1.13 It should be noted that, while this is an evidence report, it does not guarantee that the contents (e.g. expressed views of stakeholders) are factually accurate. Stakeholders from a wide range of roles, experiences and views attended these workshops, bringing a wide range of different perspectives and knowledge. As such, the report depicts key themes and patterns which emerged during consultation and / or information review.
- 1.14 In addition, the evidence presented does not include views / opinions of the report authors, nor might stakeholder views be wholly desirable and / or operational within a wider, national policy context.

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2 THE OVERARCHING ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

Development of the Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

- 2.1 The OF was designed to ensure that all evidence sources would be scrutinised in a coherent and systematic way. The key prompt questions guiding the OF were approved by the Scottish Executive policy team and deemed ‘fit for purpose’ in eliciting the key areas of evidence required to develop the evidence report.
- 2.2 This section provides a summarised overview of the key areas of evidence. The detail of the evidence is set out in sections three to six (and related to the separate evidence sources). As noted in section one, some evidence sources related only to particular themes of the OF. As such, not every evidence source generated evidence across every OF prompt question.
- 2.3 The populated OF has been developed as follows. The left hand column contains the core prompt questions which governed the evidence summarising and analysis exercise. These prompt questions fall into two categories:
- **ALNIS progress to date** – there are 11 key areas within this category;
 - **the way forward for ALNIS**- there are three key areas within this category.
- 2.4 There is likely to be some level of overlap between the evidence generated under the ‘progress’ and ‘way forward’ categories. This is due to how some of the evidence was reported. However, as far as possible, delineation between these has been developed to offer a clear overview of how current and past issues might differ from requested future developments.
- 2.5 The columns following the OF prompt questions relate to the sources of evidence, as follows:
- **column two: literature review;**
 - **column three: stakeholder events** – in order to distinguish between the evidence arising from the three separate sessions within each event, each point noted in the framework contains details in brackets related to the corresponding session – e.g. funding session – FS; workshop – W; future form – FF;
 - **column four: learner consultation feedback;**
 - **column five: sub-group feedback** (from both Workplace Literacies and T&D) – feedback from these two groups has been distinguished by WL for Workplace Literacies and T&D for Training and Development.

2.6 The populated OF, In **Table 2.1** below, offers a comprehensive overview of the key themes and issues which arose across all evidence sources.

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
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ALNIS PROGRESS TO DATE - What **progress** has been made since 2001, and examples of **effective practice** in the following areas:

a) **the four key goals** (national leadership and effective local action; quality learning experience; a system that learns; promoting awareness)?

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of Adult Literacies Team within Learning Connections at Communities Scotland; robust foundations; fostering strong collaborative local ALN partnerships; encouraged innovation via Pathfinder projects and national collaborative projects; development of innovative approaches to ICT and Literacies; developed and disseminated information and resources; encouraged research; explored and disseminated effective practice via practitioner events and the development of specialist networks; establishment of key contacts meetings; provision of training and new qualifications; flexibility and a high degree of partnership working at a local | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALN partnerships feel they would benefit from advice regarding funding negotiations with their respective LAs (FS); • Stronger national guidance required, to assist with local strategic planning of ALN provision (W); • National priorities require to be clarified and underpinned by the Social Practice model (W); | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource constraints (e.g. staffing and IT) impact upon the quality of the learning experience and can restrict learner choice; • Marketing and promotions are most effective when based locally and recommended by friends and family |
|---|--|---|

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
	<p>level;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacies in the Community - alignment of the LiC pack with other quality system; • development of an Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework for Scotland; • Strength of the Scottish approach rests with the learner – centred model and contextualising learning around learners lives and the commitment to partnership working; • Research by ETLLD showed that Learners were very positive about their learning experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Connections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clarity of role and support to ALN partnerships needed; - request for partnerships to invest in partnership development ; - act as broker to bring together the literacies agenda with ‘new’ 		

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutors gathered impact successfully through a variety of modes including exit interviews and focus groups • Tutors learning through the sharing of effective practice • The development of the Big Plus awareness raising campaigns through a range of media and local outreach activities • Learning Connections has targeted awareness raising at employers via the Big Plus for Business and the Big Plus in Libraries • Reducing stigma and promoting awareness through the Big Plus awareness raising campaigns 	<p>partners and contexts (W);</p>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good progress on The Big Plus but better alignment needed of local and national activity and marketing (W); • National guidance on pay needed – alignment and parity (W); • Successes – ALN partnership progress and growing sense of ‘community’ (W); • The short-term nature of funding 		

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase one Pathfinders increased awareness and capacity in different communities 	<p>has produced ‘project deficits’ (FF);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National promotion campaigns have tended towards the deficit model (FF). 		
<p>b) the four success factors (clear lines of accountability; learner-centred programmes; professionalism; maximising ICT potential)?</p>	<p>Development of an informed system capable of responding to and learning from developments in the field.</p> <p>Action Planning (now strategic planning) Monitored and evaluated at ALN partnership level and reporting to ETLLD.</p> <p>Partnerships increasing their learner-centred approach with the establishment of learner forums</p> <p>Research has highlighted learners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ‘routing’ and control of ALN funding – lack of clarity at a local level of the journey of funding to the ALN partnership, together with LA top-slicing have been felt to undermine the value of the ALN agenda and 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T&D – significant progress in first national qualifications

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
	positive perceptions of learning and teaching provision	hamper local capacity (FS);		
	An increase in tutor reflection and writing in academic journals, reports and through practitioner led research contributing to their field of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M&E – clarity of what information is needed for national reporting (W); 		
	Tutors and tutor assistants have also taken up professional development opportunities to enhance their professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT – lack of consistency regarding priority afforded to ICT across partnerships; differing quality and access to learners; infrastructure lacks consistency; Minimum specification required (W); 		
	Learning Connections developed Innovations in ICT and Literacies in conjunction with ALN partnerships			
	The development of Adult Literacies Online platform to share effective practice			
	www.aloscotland.com			
	The development of the Big Plus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce 		

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
	Website	<p>capacity: constraints due to on-going recruitment challenges. Lack of funding and training / CPD. Concerns with contractual arrangements (W);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers: few incentives to become or stay engaged in the ALN agenda. Sometimes used as a stop-gap for pressurised services (W); 		
c) the 21 ALNIS recommendations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recos 14 and 15 - Acknowledgement of continued national efforts to support the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reco 1 – communications at national and local 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reco 17 – promotions most effective when based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reco 14 – significant progress made though first

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
	professional resource base; • Reco 21 – strong start of LCs; • Reco 10 – challenges in M&E through social practice model;	levels (and all directions) require to be improved (FF); • Reco 1 – need for more feedback to partnerships on overall strategy progress (W); • Reco 2 – LC (the ‘development engine’) has made a strong start and significant in-roads (W); • Reco 3 – felt to require significant development, to address: awareness of ALN agenda with services who are in regular	locally and recommended by friends / family; • Reco 17 – continued emphasis of local marketing needed which encourages those with low self-esteem to get involved; • Reco 19 – staffing constraints felt to impact upon quality of learning and learner choice;	national qualifications (T&D);

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<p>contact with target learners; wider understanding of the social practice model also required (W);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reco 4 – national advice request from ALN partnerships regarding funding negotiations with LAs (FS); • Reco 4 – unrealised potential of involving other partners (e.g. health, social work) in the work of ALN partnerships (W); 		

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reco 4 – dispersal of ALN services: need to address local co-ordination and management (W); • Reco 5 – the goal of providing free services and courses has been achieved (W); • Reco 6 – awareness raising and screening processes felt to be lacking in ESOL provision (W); • Reco 7 – clearer guidance on use of ILPs requested by no unanimous 		

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<p>agreement of a standardised approach (W);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reco 8 – uncertainty as to whether a national databank exist; limited knowledge of dissemination of findings from pathfinders; curriculum framework noted as a significant development (W); • Reco 9 – ICT infrastructure lacks consistency. Minimum specification is required. Less stigma attached to 		

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<p>this learning medium and felt to act as a positive learner engagement tool. (W);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1184 715 1435 1082">• Reco 10 – alignment required of social practice model and M&E mechanisms, through the ‘4 areas of life’. Distance travelled and ILPs should be integral to this (W); <li data-bbox="1184 1118 1435 1251">• Reco 10 – re-commitment to a learner focus is required (W); <li data-bbox="1184 1289 1435 1350">• Reco 11 – lack of clarity concerning 		

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<p>the ‘key persons’ role. Key contacts role was felt to require review with a focus on quality of provision and monitoring the achievement of local targets;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reco 12 – a tailored approach to supporting learners – while strongly advocated – was deemed both time and resource intensive; • Reco 13 – focus on how LiC and / or HGIOCLD apply to all 		

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<p>practitioners (W);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reco 14 – new qualifications have been achieved (ITALL and TQAL) but more needed for specialist areas of ALN learning. T&D framework needed for professionalisation of the workforce. Training standards for local and national practice (W); • Reco 15 – meeting national standards remains outstanding, as this is linked to the creation of a T&D 		

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<p>framework (W);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reco 16 – more open dialogue with learners was felt to be missing and increased efforts were felt to be necessary to target harder-to-reach learners (W); • Reco 17 – good progress with The Big Plus but better alignment needed of local and national marketing (W); • Reco 17 – national campaigns have tended towards the 		

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<p>deficit model (FF);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reco 18 – greater efforts required to develop ALN learner progression routes (W); • Reco 19 – constraints due to recruitment challenges. Lack of funding for T&D / CPD or contracts (W); • Reco 19 – few incentives for volunteers, who are often used as a stop-gap for pressurised services (W); • Reco 20 – options 		

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<p>for group learning of ALN learners were felt to require further consideration. Challenges were noted in increasing learner numbers where demand outstrips supply (W);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reco 21 – setting up of LC has been achieved; perception that LC requires to take a lead role in supporting ALN partnerships to invest in partnership development (W); 		

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d) progress in doubling the number of learning opportunities?	100,000 new learners from 2001 – 2005 and strong impacts on learner self-esteem and health; ALNIS strategy has retained a learner-centred focus;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current disincentives to target hardest to reach learners (FF); 		
e) achieving consistency (e.g. teaching and learning; management; organisation; quality)?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LiC and HGIOCLD: how do they apply to all practitioners and what is their role in promoting continuous improvement? (W); 		
f) the wider infrastructure of delivery (e.g. local structures, staffing, tutor/practitioner qualifications and types of learning provision)?	Acknowledgement of continued national efforts to support the professional resource base;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale challenges to address pre-determined infrastructural 		

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
	<p>Widely recognised that achieving change takes time;</p>	<p>requirements evident for smaller and rural ALN partnerships (FS);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual funding felt to impede local forward planning and impact upon job security for ALN staff on short-term contracts (FS); • Constraints caused by the short-term nature of funding (W); • Spotters and referrers: wider engagement of partners needed but underpinned 		

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		by social practice model (W); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making wider use of existing mechanisms to engage other partners (e.g. engaging Health through JHIPs) (W); • Dispersal of ALN services: need to address local co-ordination and management. Rural issues affect capacity (W); 		
g) what evidence bases are used to determine supply?	Continued challenges in measuring ALNIS progress;			
	lack of robust learner tracking; need for more sophisticated qualitative data			

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
h) Where are the gaps , in terms of achievement of the strategy recommendations?	<p>to understand ‘distance travelled’;</p> <hr/> <p>The short-term nature of local funding constrains local forward planning;</p> <p>Areas for further development – numeracy; attracting hardest-to-reach learners; engaging those with significant learning difficulties; engaging employers;</p> <p>EYRs require more strategic orientation – accounting for spend, structural progress and achieving aims and objectives;</p> <p>Tensions exist between the responsibility placed on tutors and the current characteristics of the ALN teaching workforce which is disproportionately composed of part-time and voluntary tutors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General gaps in M&E: reconciling with social practice model, relevance of measures, distance travelled and embedding of ILPs (W); • Gaps exist in: numeracy provision, dissemination of good practice and M&E mechanisms (FF); 		

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
i) What lessons have been learned since 2001?	<p>Longitudinal tracking procedures are not in place and research similar to that by Reder may need to be carried out in Scotland http://www.lsal.pdx.edu/project.html</p> <p>Individual Learning Plans are not in place with many learners or they may not have ownership of them</p> <p>The language of spotters and referrers is out of sync with a social practice account of literacies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers and employees have different literacies expectations (W); • CLD and CP partnerships offer the route to achieving a robust ALN infrastructure (W); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners benefit from ALN learning mainly through heightened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That a traditional community learning focus to the delivery of workplace literacies learning is not always appropriate – need a distinct that links more strongly with the workplace setting and language (WL) • there is not yet a compelling enough message for employers to engage in ALN (WL)
<p>j) Evidencing the ALNIS ‘experience’ and ‘distance travelled’:</p> <p>- the learner view</p>	<p>Consideration should be given to aligning ILPs to allow information to be collated at a national level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity is required regarding the place of ESOL in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners benefit from ALN learning mainly through heightened 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the tutor/practitioner view - the manager view - the national stakeholder view 	<p>ALNIS recommended that a key person within ALN partnerships should co-ordinate support and guidance but such individuals are not in place</p> <p>The need for further research to evaluate the success of the strategy is also requiring further work</p> <p>Many of the of the recommendations within the ALNIS report (Scottish Exec. 2001) are aspirational and so may be achieved relatively slowly over a period of time</p> <p>Increases in professionalism of the workforce is related to the disproportionate part – time and voluntary nature of many adult literacies staff</p> <p>Research has highlighted the positive results of ALN learning including</p>	<p>ALNIS (FF);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALN workforce lacks awareness of more specialised forms of ALN learning (FF); 	<p>confidence which encourages the taking on of new life experiences and further learning opportunities;</p>	

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Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
	<p>increased confidence</p> <p>Focus on partnership approach as strategic mechanism.</p> <p>At a learner level progress is measured through the individual learning planning process.</p>			
	<p>k) To what extent has the social practice model influenced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an approach to literacies learning which is distinctly Scottish and learner-centred (in terms of process, outputs and outcomes)? - approaches to measuring progress? - the concept of lifelong learning? - working life; private life; public life; educational life? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social practice model: re-commit to learner focus. Partners are not sufficiently aware of the ethos. Expensive to deliver and time-consuming to record and track. Suggested alignment of the model and M&E through ‘four areas of life’ (W); 	

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- There is a need to re-commit to a learner-led focus in the Refresh (FF);
- The social practice model exists despite the short-term funding underpinning it (FF);

THE WAY FORWARD FOR ALNIS

a) What are the key issues that the ‘refresh’ strategy should consider?	<p>Retain and enhance focus on staff development – e.g. tutor guidance and support; part-time and volunteer staff;</p> <p>Emphasise importance of partnership working;</p> <p>Continue to develop approaches to learner tracking and progress and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ring-fenced funding is required for protection of ALN funding allocation and promoting longer-term planning (FS); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing ALN resources (such as staffing and IT) to allow for enhanced quality of learning experiences and tailored packages of support; • A continued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning of workplace literacies as distinct from community-based literacies (WL); • More strategic and coherent approach to professional
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Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
<p>longitudinal tracking procedures should be</p> <p>Explore the possibility of aligning the content of individual learning plans, in order to allow information to be collated at a national level</p> <p>Increased emphasis of employer engagement;</p> <p>Increased emphasis of numeracy;</p> <p>Concerns surrounding the sustainability of funding</p> <p>Complexity of reporting for partnerships</p> <p>Difficulties associated with maintaining partnership relations</p> <p>Aligning different sectoral frameworks</p> <p>The extent to which SE and other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National project funding to consider additional funding and / or proportionate top-slicing (FS); • Consider advantages and disadvantages of greater national level steer on local ALN funding (FS); • A strategic response at national and local levels needed regarding the routing of ALN funding (FS); • Flexible funding 	<p>emphasis on local marketing which encourages those with low self-esteem to take steps in seeking advice and support for ALN,</p>	<p>development required, reflecting differing needs and roles and sectoral needs (e.g. FE and LAs) (T&D);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T&D strategy to be led by LC and Scottish Adult Literacies Strategy Advisory Group (T&D); • Consider training needs of national partners and training organisations (T&D); • Specific areas to be addressed: systematic infrastructure for 	

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
	<p>public sector organisations have taken the lead in developing and retaining the ALN needs of employees is unclear</p> <p>The eligibility criteria for funding ESOL within ALN requires further development</p> <p>Attracting new learners may become increasingly difficult as they are from harder to reach groups</p> <p>Findings of the Leitch Review should be considered closely</p>	<p>mechanisms to account for in-year developments (FS);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of under-spend to allocate to future / on-going ALN development work (FS); • Strategy focus: longer-term vision and timescales; cut across wide range of national policy areas; national and local leadership (through strong partnerships); the on-going championing of the ALN agenda 		<p>planning, communication, development and roll-out; barriers to staff participation to T&D / CPD and mechanisms to address; evidence base of research and reflective practice; flexible models of delivery, accreditation and recognition of prior learning; offering accredited training (e.g. degree and post-graduate); articulation and progression routes with related qualifications and professions;</p>

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<p>(W);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding: ring-fence (W); • Partnerships: acknowledge the significant contributory role and contribution which the ALN partnerships make to the agenda; update Circular 101; redefine the ALN partner remit; contribution of other partners requires more emphasis (e.g. health, social work, education); more effective mechanisms to work with these 		<p>development of CPD training modules with optional accreditation mapped to SCQF; standards for staff and volunteers; mechanisms for M&E of T&D strategy (T&D)</p>

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<p>partners and referral agencies; role of key contacts – information exchange and communication (W);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LC role: articulating the ALN landscape; balancing visibility with national level co-ordination; strategic advice and direction; engaging national partners; consolidating strategic links to CPPs (W); 		

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<p>articulate and define the three levels of activity which exist in the ALN landscape; ILPs are part of tutor toolkit, they should be learner-led and owned and be transportable (W);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESOL: legitimacy in ALN? If so, capacity, training and partner roles need to be addressed; linkages to other policy required (W); • As ALN becomes part of mainstream 		

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<p>delivery, there will be less need for provision in the future (FF);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Refresh requires a long-term focus, with a preventative emphasis, based on early years to adult education provision (FF); • The Refresh should focus on long-term commitment to long-term funding, with ring-fenced funding clearly routed to ALN partnerships 		

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
<p>b) What challenges are these issues likely to pose and how might they be addressed?</p>				
<p>c) What are the key ‘refresh’ strategy recommendations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what should be <u>retained</u> from the original strategy? - are the 4 original targets still valid? - are the 21 recommendations still valid? - what targets might underpin these recommendations? 	<p>ALNIS recommends that a key person within partnerships co-ordinated support and guidance but such individuals are not in place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T&D: framework needed; welcomed professionalisation of the ALN workforce but not supportive of compulsory accreditation; consistent approach to ALN driven locally but co-ordinated nationally; flexible system which allows staff to work and learn (W); • Numeracy: 		<p>Change terminology to ‘literacies in the workplace’ (WL);</p> <p>To develop workplace literacies practitioner networks – to share experiences/ practice/materials (WL);</p> <p>LC to develop a workplace literacies toolkit, with support from front-line services (WL)</p> <p>To develop regional learning centres</p>

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<p>national level championing to demonstrate parity with literacy (W);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace: specific emphasis in the Refresh; more robust evidence of employer benefits; re-named as Big Plus in the Workplace (W); • There should be full integration of ALN into the national strategic agenda, to ensure cross-cutting responses (FF); • The social practice model should lie at 		<p>(WL)</p> <p>Addressing wage parity for those practitioners working across partnerships, which operate different pay scales; (WL)</p> <p>Building workplace literacies workforce capacity to address shift patterns / hours of learning outside of the norm; to address job security in the context of short-term contracts; recruitment campaigns to attract more staff; (WL)</p> <p>Develop a stronger rationale and evidence-base to</p>

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
		<p>the heart of the Refresh strategy (FF);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A T&D framework required (FF); • Communications should be improved at national and local levels in all directions (FF) 		<p>encourage employer engagement (WL).</p> <p>Develop a national adult literacies training strategy with targets for action and training standards for both local and national level stakeholders - lead by LC and the Scottish Adult Literacies Training Strategy Advisory Group (T&D)</p> <p>T&D strategy should focus on strategic and coherent approach to professional development, reflecting differing needs and roles, as</p>

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
				<p>well as sectoral needs. It should be rooted in research and reflective practice and develop a systematic planning infrastructure. (T&D)</p> <p>The strategy should offer flexible delivery, accredited/certificated training and professional development at certificate, degree and post-graduate levels, APL and CPD; clear progression routes; national training and occupational standards for ALN staff and volunteers and for monitoring and mechanism for</p>

Table 2.1: Overarching Analysis Framework (OF)

Themes	Literature Review	Stakeholder Events	Learner Consultation Feedback	Sub-Group Feedback: Workplace Literacies and T&D Sub-Groups
				evaluation of the T&D strategy, linking to strategic plans (local and national). (T&D)
				national and local approaches to funding training / CPD. (T&D)

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3 ALNIS LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

- 3.1 Appendices B, C and D are referred to throughout this section of the report. These can be found at the end of the report.

Executive Summary

Background

- 3.2 Historically low priority has been awarded to adult literacy and numeracy (ALN) learning in Scotland, with a lack of funding and limited guidance from national agencies or government (Hamilton, Macrae and Tett, 2001). However, the establishment of the task group, 'Literacy 2000', provided a focus for the development of national policy and strategy on ALN and was followed by the publication of the 2001 Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (ALNIS) report, which laid out 21 recommendations to be taken forward. Since these developments, considerable progress has been made in the field of adult literacy and numeracy, specifically towards the realisation of the recommendations provided by the 2001 ALNIS report (Scottish Executive).

Aims and Objectives

- 3.3 This report provides a review of the literature relating to Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland. The literature review aims to detail progress made since 2001, drawing out key points which may be considered during stakeholder events and identifying areas that require further action to be taken and gaps within the evidence base.

- 3.4 The report draws on a number of sources, including research commissioned on behalf of the Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department, information originating from Learning Connections and other relevant literature. Both the 2001 ALNIS goals and the available evidence have informed the structure of this report. After focusing on the four key goals (national leadership and effective local action; the quality of the learning experience; a system that learns; promoting awareness of adult literacy and numeracy), the review looks specifically at the provision of inclusive and effective learning for all and the availability/training of tutors, in order to develop an understanding of successes and progress within these areas. Numeracy and ICT were also identified by ALNIS as areas which should be paid greater attention within literacies learning and, as a result, literature will be referred to in order to document progress in these areas since 2001. The review will conclude with a discussion of how progress of learners may be accurately measured.

Social Practice Approach

- 3.5 Levels of literacy and numeracy are difficult to measure within Scotland because they have not typically been equated with qualification attainment. Rather than promoting adult literacy and numeracy (ALN) learning as a means of achieving economic goals alone, the social practice approach has been developed to ensure that individual benefits to the learner and social benefits to the community are also factored in. As a result, the model ascribed to in Scotland focuses on the individual and their ability to achieve their full potential within a contextual framework, which draws strong associations between literacy and numeracy and everyday life skills.

Baseline Data

- 3.6 Between 2001 and 2005 there have been over 100,000 new ALN learners. These figures are useful in establishing the number of new learners, but they provide no indication of actual demand for ALN learning in Scotland at a national level, although partnerships are beginning to collate such data at a local level. The International Adult Learning Survey (IALS) offers the most recent national indications of adults with low levels of literacy and numeracy skills (approximately 800,000), but the survey offers data from 1996 which is considerably out-of-date ten years on. The survey also pitches acceptable ALN levels at SCQF 6 and measures ability through testing; it is unclear whether SCQF 6 is the an appropriate benchmark for the adult literacies learner.

National Leadership and Local Action

- 3.7 Progress at the national level has been demonstrated through the setting up of Learning Connections within Communities Scotland, which has shown progress through its establishment of strong local and national partnerships and the development and support of the adult literacies infrastructure. Flexibility at the local level, with partnerships implementing local plans in response to local circumstances has been considered a strong characteristic of the Scottish approach. However, questions about the sustainability of funding have been raised, which have also been linked to problems of securing resources and retention of staff. Cross-partnership working has also been identified as a success of the Scottish approach, but the extent to which partnerships are working together is questionable (partnership working has sometimes been limited to a couple of providers, rather than large scale cross-partnership initiatives). Difficulties associated with cross-partnership working include the complexity of reporting, and sustaining partnerships relationships once they had been formed. The goal of achieving local action through national leadership is therefore regarded as a long term aspiration, as local learning experiences are filtered back up through the chain.

A Quality Learning Experience

- 3.8 The Literacies in the Community (LiC) (Scottish Executive, 2000) pack has been provided as a framework for quality that should be used when seeking to establish good practice at the local level. However, the extent to which the guidelines have been utilised within local partnerships and Further Education Colleges is unclear. Potential for conflict is also raised by the LiC pack, as colleges are all ready subject to another quality framework (HMIE Quality Framework); work to map these two frameworks is currently underway.
- 3.9 The Curriculum Framework for ALN was launched in May 2005 to meet the ALNIS (2001) goal of achieving a quality learning experience. The curriculum follows a social practice model, acting as a guide for tutors and allowing them to develop approaches to learning and teaching that are responsive to learners' needs. The onus has therefore been placed on tutors to utilise effective teaching methods and practices, stressing the importance of having suitably trained and developed staff. Although the curriculum provides that certification should be available where learners wish to be formally assessed, and provides advice on how assessment should be conducted, what is happening in practice is not entirely clear at the current time. The HMIE (2005), for example, has reported that where assessment takes place it has often not been as rigorous as is necessary, reducing the reliability of estimations of learner progress. If assessment as part of the individual learning planning process is to be used as a means of measuring learner progress in the future, it is important that ALN learning providers consider aligning their individual learning plans.

A System that Learns

- 3.10 A documented strength of the Scottish approach to ALN is that the system learns and develops in a way that is responsive to learners. This strength has been reinforced by the considerable research that has been undertaken in order to inform the Scottish approach to ALN. For example, the perceptions of learners with regards to the quality of learning and support they have received has also been sought, as well as the perceptions of tutors (Tett et al., 2006), in order to inform future developments. At partnership level, learners' voices have also been heard through the establishment of learner forums, focus groups and conferences, providing learners with the opportunity to inform local strategy. Since the publication of the 2001 ALNIS strategy, developments have also highlighted the learner-centred focus portrayed through the strategy with, for example, the establishment of the Curriculum Framework which is left open to cater for specific learners' needs.
- 3.11 Positive outcomes of learning include increased confidence and opportunities for personal development, and learners' perceptions of ALN learning provision have been reported in a positive light. To remain responsive to learners and upholding the ethos of learner centredness, it is arguable that consideration should be taken of those factors that were outlined by learners as leading to positive learning experiences. What was learned, the way in which it was learned, the tutor and the pace of learning have been identified as important factors contributing to a positive learning experience (Tett et al., 2006). As a result, attention should perhaps be paid to the ALN curriculum and the proficiency of tutors in facilitating these factors.

Promoting Awareness: Engaging Employers with Literacy and Numeracy

- 3.12 Pathfinder Projects have demonstrated that stigma is often associated with ALN learning, particularly within the employment setting. A significant challenge for ALNIS is therefore to engage employers with the ALN agenda, who are possibly unaware of the benefits of literacies learning among their employees. Learning Connections has contributed to developments with regards to this issue, targeting awareness-raising campaigns at employers and developing workplace focused resources for literacies learners. The 'Skills Towards Employability National Working Group' has also been established in order to target adults with low literacies skills who are seeking employment. Furthermore, the Big Plus and the Big Plus for Business awareness raising campaigns have been considered to play influential roles in reducing the stigma associated to ALN learning. Despite these developments, partnerships have continued to report their struggles in attaining employer engagement.

Inclusive and Effective Learning Provision for All

- 3.13 Attracting new learners is increasingly challenging as potential learners are more likely to be attached to non-traditional learning groups which are typically difficult to reach. Despite difficulties, partnerships and pathfinder projects are said to have successfully adopted the ‘spotters and referrers’ targeting approach. However, such an approach does not fall neatly into the social practice model, which may cause friction by providing conflicting advice to ALN learning providers and as a result, there has been a move towards ‘awareness raising training’ and embedding ideas of referral within this. Inclusion has also been promoted through Learning Connections, which has focused on targeting three key groups, namely youth literacies, learners with specific learning difficulties and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Focusing on these groups individually, Learning Connections has developed a number of strategies. Detailed analysis of these strategies is unavailable, making it difficult to measure the success of individual initiatives, but it is reassuring that focus is being directed towards particular areas.

Tutors and Training

- 3.14 Considerable responsibility is placed in the hands of tutors and their professionalism due to the flexible nature of the curriculum framework, and the organic model subscribed to in Scotland which learns from experience and is informed by learners’ needs. As a result of the current ALNIS backdrop, there is a need for effective training and professional development for tutors (a national qualification for tutors does not yet exist). Steps have nevertheless been taken to improve the training and development of tutors with, for example, the establishment of Benchmark Statements for the Teaching Qualification: Adult Literacies, the undertaking of continuous professional development seminars (e.g. the Dyslexia Curriculum Framework and Practitioner Action Research) and conferences at the local level (e.g. ICT and Literacies). This has been accompanied by the development of the Introductory Training in Adult Literacies Learning (ITALL) pack and Professional Development Award for tutor assistants. An evaluation of ITALL has also been undertaken, which provides useful reference for progression and also highlights the willingness of the Scottish system to learn from experience.

Numeracy

- 3.15 Low priority has traditionally been awarded to numeracy, which is often subsumed by a focus on literacy and according to Partnerships this is an ongoing issue. However, inroads have been made: for example, two national seminars on Adult Numeracy have been facilitated and a third is planned. A network of numeracy practitioners meets regularly to identify and disseminate effective practice and an action research project is investigating possibilities in links between ICT and numeracy. Continuous professional development for tutors has also taken place in the form of a 'Numeracy Energiser', and several grants for numeracy resources have been taken up by providers around Scotland. Coben (2005) has also provided a detailed discussion of numeracy provision and provides useful recommendations, several of which are being investigated by Learning Connections.

Supporting Literacy and Numeracy Through E-Learning

- 3.16 Supporting ALN learning through ICT was recommended by the 2001 ALNIS report (Scottish Executive) and as a result, Learning Connections have sought to realise this objective. ICT is recognised as attracting new ALN learners and as a means of widening the variety of literacies practices undertaken by learners. Through the 'Innovations in ICT and Literacies' project, Learning Connections have been able to disseminate a number of good practice examples using ICT to support ALN. However, appropriately trained and developed tutors and the provision of necessary resources were stressed as important to the success of joint ICT – ALN initiatives. (Learning Connections, 2005a)

Measuring Progress

- 3.17 Although partnerships are increasingly beginning to measure learner progress, this information has not been collated at a national level. There is an important need for partnerships to develop or adopt appropriate methods for monitoring progress, assessing achievement and tracking learners, which remain in line with the ALNIS recommendation that provides 'distance travelled' as the measurement tool. This will allow information from each individual learner and each partnership to be aligned to inform national progress. Ideally, information should be available regarding the softer outcomes of learning felt by the individual and the outcomes in terms of wider implications for the learners' family, workplace and community. Such a system does not appear to be in place, and although Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are a method of tracking distance travelled, their uptake by partnerships and learning providers has been varied, with reports of learners being unaware of the existence of ILPs (Tett et al., 2006). This may be associated with the lack of key points of contact within ALN provision who are responsible for co-ordinating support and guidance. The extent to which ILPs could produce information that could be collated at a national level to inform progress is also unclear.

Aims and Objectives

3.18 Historically low priority has been awarded to adult literacy and numeracy (ALN) learning in Scotland, which was compounded by a lack of funding and limited guidance from national agencies or government (Hamilton, Macrae and Tett, 2001). However, the establishment of the task group, ‘Literacy 2000’, provided a focus for the development of national policy and strategy on ALN and was followed by the publication of the 2001 Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (ALNIS) report, which outlined the Scottish Executive’s strategy for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN). The report set out the challenges for Scotland, made recommendations to overcome these, and set targets with the vision of exceeding world-class levels of adult literacy and numeracy. The ALNIS strategy aimed to double the number of learning opportunities for those with literacy and numeracy needs and improve the quality of local provision between the period of 2001-2005. During this period the ALN strategy has received positive commentary. Merrifield (2005: 20) argues, for example, that England should find inspiration from Scotland for the following three reasons:

- the strategy, which focuses on community learning, promotes learner involvement and adopts a social practice approach to adult literacy and numeracy;
- the curriculum, which adopts a conceptual framework and promotes dialogue between teachers and learners;
- the approach to support and training for practitioners.

3.19 ALNIS (2001) defines adult literacy and numeracy as “the ability to read, write and use numbers, to handle information, express ideas and opinions, make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners”. Leavey (2005: 22/23) recognises that this broad definition develops an inextricable link between ALN learning and all aspects of life.

It calls for a lifelong learning approach that focuses attention on the interplay between demands and opportunities that trigger and maintain voluntary participation, especially among those in greatest need. This in turn calls for collaboration and synergy of effort across all sectors and policy areas so that all adults with learning needs are systematically matched with the resources available.

3.20 Literature since 2001 offers a contemporary picture of adult literacy and numeracy in Scotland, providing evidence of the progress that has been made towards the achievement of the various recommendations laid out by the 2001 ALNIS report (Scottish Executive). Discussing the literature since 2001 will provide a picture of the progress made within the Scottish Adult Literacy and Numeracy landscape since 2001. In order to build a comprehensive picture, discussion will focus on the evidence of progress that has been documented through various sources, such as partnership action plans and end of year reports¹, research undertaken on behalf of the Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department (ETLLD), information from Learning Connections and research conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in Education (HMIE), as well as other relevant literature. The aims of the literature review are as follows:

- examine progress made since 2001;
- identify areas that require further action;
- identify any gaps in the evidence base;
- highlight key points which may be considered during stakeholder consultations.

3.21 After providing the context and policy background, the discussion of the literature will focus on the four key goals outlined by the ALNIS (2001) strategy of the current ALN landscape in Scotland:

- national leadership and effective local action;
- a quality learning experience;
- a system that learns;
- promoting awareness.

¹ Reference is made to the 2005 End of Year Reports and the 2004-2006 Action Plans; the more recent documentation from Partnerships was not available during the time this literature review was being conducted.

- 3.22 Discussion will then focus specifically on the provision of inclusive and effective learning for all, and the availability of professional development opportunities for those involved with adult literacies in order to develop an understanding of successes and progress. Learner-centred programmes and professionalism were identified by ALNIS as critical success factors and targeting priority groups and ensuring ‘inclusive and effective learning provision for all’ was also outlined as a key principle of ALNIS. Numeracy and ICT have often been highlighted as areas which should be paid greater attention within literacies learning and, as a result, literature will be referred to in order to document progress in these areas since 2001. Maximising the potential of ICT was recognised by ALNIS as a critical success factor and considerable debate has also focused towards numeracy within ALN provision, as it is often subsumed by literacy; developments with regards to these issues are therefore important reference points. The criteria for eligibility for ESOL learners under ALN funding will also be referred to as will the imminent national strategy for ESOL strategy in Scotland. The review will conclude with a discussion of the evidence base available with regards to the number of adults with low literacies levels, and how progress of learners may be accurately measured.

The Policy Perspective: Setting the Scene

- 3.23 The goals and recommendations of the ALNIS report (Scottish Executive, 2001) were founded upon a range of evidence, suggesting the need to adopt a coherent approach to adult literacy and numeracy in Scotland. Pre-ALNIS sources, such as the literature review conducted by John Lord Associates (2001) and consultation with learners (Merrifield, 2001) are useful references to establish why the ALNIS strategy was developed. Following the collection of evidence, ALNIS laid out a total of 21 recommendations under the following four key goals, with the underpinning aim of developing an infrastructure of supply for literacy and numeracy learning:
- national leadership and effective local action;
 - a quality learning experience;
 - a system that learns;
 - promoting awareness.
- 3.24 The impetus behind the strategy arose from the recognised importance of adult literacy and numeracy to the wide variety of Scottish Executive policies that promote social justice, health, economic development and lifelong learning. The Lifelong Learning strategy, published in February 2003, states that “investment in knowledge and skills brings direct economic returns to individuals and collective economic returns to society... [and] lifelong learning contributes to the development of society through the achievement of other social goals such as civic participation, sustainable development, improved health and wellbeing, reduced crime and greater social cohesion”.

Reasoning behind ALNIS

3.25 Prior to the 2001 ALNIS report (Scottish Executive), literacies learners were consulted in order to develop an understanding of the ALN landscape in Scotland. Merrifield (2001) detailed a number of findings from the consultation with learners:

- learners encountered difficulties when attempting to access learning opportunities; barriers included transport, childcare, time and finance;
- there was a perceived need for ALN provision to provide for diverse needs, offering options to progress, short and flexible courses and a wide variety of content;
- support from tutors as peers was regarded as essential, as was good quality facilities designed for adults;
- learners were concerned that their voices were not being listened to;
- there was a perceived need to change the culture of learning.

3.26 Prior to the development of the 2001 strategy, a literature review was also conducted; John Lord Associates (2001) highlight the importance of literacy and numeracy, explaining a link between low literacies skills and unemployment, low pay and insecure work. Low levels of literacy and numeracy have also been considered as a symptom of poverty and exclusion. Tett (2005), for instance, argues that literacy and numeracy can be both a cause of and a solution to social inclusion, explaining that being literate and numerate is generally synonymous with success in life. At the level of the individual, John Lord Associates (2001) suggest that the outcome of low literacy and numeracy will be an increased likelihood of unemployment, a lesser wage premium and reduced life expectancy. The review also provides evidence to suggest that low levels of literacy and numeracy can negatively affect the prospects of the next generation. This evidence is supported by recent preliminary finding results from longitudinal research using the 1958 and 1970 British cohort studies. This research carried out by Parsons and Bynner (2005) found substantial differences in life chances, quality of life and social inclusion, particularly amongst those with the poorest skills. The study showed that poor skills had a significant impact on people's social inclusion, working lives and health and that poor numeracy had a strong impact especially on women.

3.27 Qualifications are often used as a proxy for levels of literacy and numeracy (Felstead et al., 2004) and research has been conducted to suggest that higher qualifications are likely to result in economic benefit for the individual. Feinstein, Galindo-Rueda and Vignoles (2004) highlight that those who leave school without qualifications go on to be disadvantaged in the labour market, both in terms of earnings and employment prospects. As can be seen from **Table 3.1** which refers to the data from the 2004 Annual Scottish Labour Force Survey, the qualification level improves both employment rate and median earnings. Associated concerns are related to economic productivity. Lifelong learning has therefore been perceived as one way in which to raise the skills and qualifications of those who have left compulsory education at a disadvantaged position.

Table 3.1: Qualifications of Those Age 25 and Over in Employment, Scotland, 2004

Highest Qualification Level Obtained	Level in Employment	Employment Rate	Median Earnings (£ per hour)
Degree and above	435,000	89.2%	14.46
SVQ4 (SCQF 8 – HND)	317,000	86.9%	10.40
SVQ3 (SCQF 6 – Higher)	551,000	81.8%	8.64
SVQ2 (SCQF 5 – Credit SG)	284,000	77.8%	7.24
SVQ1 (SCQF 4 – General SG)	54,000	68.8%	6.54
No Qualification	247,000	54.9%	5.92

Source: Annual Scottish Labour Force Survey 2004

Notes:

1. Levels are rounded to the nearest thousand.
2. Proportions are calculated on unrounded figures.

- 3.28 Despite the association often made between low literacy and numeracy and low employment, the ALNIS report (Scottish Executive, 2001) suggests that of the 800,000 adults with low levels of literacy and numeracy approximately 500,000 were in employment, suggesting that low literacy and numeracy may not always result in unemployment. Nevertheless, it is not clear what types of jobs those with low literacy and numeracy hold; these may be low skilled, low paid or insecure roles for which literacies skills have not been considered necessary by employers.
- 3.29 Research conducted by Jenkins et al. (2002) uncovered that the attainment of qualifications in later life had no measurable impact upon individuals' income. One reason for the low return on qualifications for adult learners may be that employers assume that adult education is a signal of lower ability, or less focus and motivation (Jenkins et al., 2002). Furthermore, the development of work-based skills may not be the intended reason for participation in learning. The reasons may be of personal development and the impact may not, therefore, be considered in terms of economic benefits. According to the results of the NIACE (2002) survey, compared to the UK fewer Scottish respondents were aiming to achieve a qualification (56% compared to 49%). Older learners, in particular, were more likely to engage in learning that did not result in a qualification. The research reinforced the lesser importance of qualifications to learners in Scotland, reporting that just over one tenth of respondents mentioned the attainment of qualifications as a benefit of learning (compared to over one fifth of UK learners).
- 3.30 Using qualifications as a proxy for literacy and numeracy can also problematic as assumptions cannot be made that qualifications are necessarily indicative of literacy and numeracy capability,. This reasoning has been supported by the recent interim report "Skills in the UK: the long term challenge" referred to as the Leitch Review (HM Treasury, 2005, p20) favours the idea of looking at a wider definitions of skills.

Social Practice Model

- 3.31 The English/Welsh system of ALN learning is considerably different from the Scottish system and is, for example, underpinned by a focus on economic effectiveness (Hamilton et al., 2001). The aim of the English/Welsh approach is to add impetus to the creation of a skilled workforce by providing the learner with technical skills. The approach is essentially top-down, with literacies needs being defined on the behalf of the learner and emphasis being directed towards qualification attainment, outcome testing and the achievement of national targets. Importance is therefore placed on the scale of the problem, rather than the diversity of the issue and the contexts within which it operates; the underpinning assumption of the English model is that people with literacy needs have a deficit that needs to be remedied.
- 3.32 The Scottish approach to adult literacies adopts a social practice model, which considers literacies as a key dimension of community regeneration and part of the wider lifelong learning agenda. Although the Scottish approach to ALN associates improvements in ALN with economic benefits, the ALNIS (2001) reports wider associated benefits; Scotland's health and wellbeing are also considered to be influenced by improvements in ALN. Scotland's approach targets the individual, helping them to achieve personal goals and seeks to provide individuals with effective literacies skills to allow them to reach their full potential. (Tett, 2005). The social practice approach recognises that literacy and numeracy are complex capabilities rather than a simple set of basic skills or cognitive abilities, and that learners are more likely to develop and retain knowledge, skills and understanding if they perceive these to be relevant to their own context and everyday literacy practices (Hamilton et al., 2001). Social participation is perceived as one of the key processes of learning and knowing, encouraging individuals to understand learning as something that is of value to them. As a result, learning is grounded in life situations, enabling individuals to respond to their own circumstances and needs. Tett (2005) advises that instead of regarding literacy and numeracy as "the decontextualised, mechanical, manipulation of letters, words and figures", the social practice approach places literacies within the social, emotional and linguistic contexts, which provide literacy and numeracy with meaning. Such a model bodes well with the agenda espoused by the Lifelong Learning Strategy, as it provides opportunity to incorporate adult literacy and numeracy into the principles of social justice, equality and democracy. The focus is therefore directed to what people have, moving away from the deficit model's focus on what people lack.

- 3.33 Under the social practice model, the outcomes of learning are presumed to be much wider than academic achievement alone. Therefore, learners' goals may be linked to any aspect of life. There is also an understanding of the importance of developing 'soft' outcomes such as confidence. As the social practice model is intended to result in outcomes that are desired by the individual, it is sometimes difficult to link ALN provision with 'hard' outcomes, such as increased employment or a more qualified population, as the outcomes may be increased confidence or self-esteem (Tett et al., 2006). The outcomes of ALN learning may be at a personal level, such as increased confidence or self-esteem. These outcomes may contribute to an individual obtaining employment, but there may be additional factors that should also be considered as contributing to overall achievement. Merrifield (1998) reports that recent research on literacy within its social context has been conducted through observation of literacy events and activities, rather than measuring levels of literacy proficiency through testing. She suggests that it is important that such research developments are conveyed through policy.

Baseline of Evidence

- 3.34 The 2001 ALNIS report (Scottish Executive) highlighted that literacies based research in Scotland is "virtually non-existent". Since 2001, there has been a continued lack of research offering baseline data regarding the numbers of adults in Scotland who have low levels of literacy and numeracy. The 1996 International Adult Learning Survey (IALS) remains the most recent Scottish data regarding levels of ALN. The results of the prose testing provided by the 1996 survey found that approximately 800,000 of the Scottish population have significant reading, writing and maths problems. However, Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Level 6 (equivalent to a Higher grade) was regarded as the minimum level required to cope with work and social life; it is questionable whether the Scottish approach would agree to position literacy learners at this level. The current level targeted is now aimed up to SCQF level 4. Furthermore, the data from IALS is considerably out-of-date, ten years on.

Targets and Achievement

- 3.35 Under the Scottish approach, targets are not based on level of literacies or attainment, but rather numbers of adults to be assisted through the initiative. The initial target aimed at providing 80,000 people with literacies help between 2001 and 2004. 71,051 new learners undertook ALN learning within this period highlighting progress, and a revised target of obtaining 150,000 new learners by March 2006 has since been developed. Numbers of new learners do not, however, indicate how many learners are continuing within ALN provision, leaving a gap in the evidence of success in terms of learner numbers. The total funding for the period 2001 to 2006 stands at £51 million (including the resources provided to Learning Connections); of this figure £40 million has been routed specifically through Community Learning Strategy Partnerships to fund co-ordinated action by local authorities, FE colleges, the voluntary sector and other providers. Between 2001 and 2008 the Scottish Executive has committed over £65 million of new funding for adult literacy and numeracy work, which has been routed through the 32 local authority areas to the community learning and development strategy partnerships to fund local action.
- 3.36 The ALN End of Year Reports (2005) suggest that there is difficulty in working out capacity levels due to the absence of information regarding the progress of learners. However, data from local authorities provides an indication of the number of new ALN learners since 2001. Between 2001 and 2005 the number of new ALN learners within the 32 partnerships was reported to be over 100,000. These figures do not give any indication of the number of adults who have low literacy and numeracy who have not undertaken ALN provision (i.e. actual or latent demand) at a national level. IALS remains the main source of such data, but as previous discussion has suggested, the data is considerably out-of-date, despite this evidence obtained from the Leitch Review from the Skills for Life survey reports the UK's poor basic skills profile. At the local level, it is likely that Partnerships have a good knowledge of the groups in need, as the data collection needs careful design for collection and analysis at a national level. The 2004-06 Action Plans indicate that all but six of the partnerships' action plans provided evidence of more systematic and balanced processes for determining local need/demand than the original action plans. The provision of 'needs analysis' at the local level is currently being developed by Partnerships. Nevertheless, there was considerable variation in the range of systems and levels of activity, making it difficult to collate information on demand at a national level. Despite the development of more systematic processes for determining levels of demand, it is not possible to pass comment on how successful these have been in assessing or stimulating demand, nor is it possible to deduce how responsive provision actually is to articulated demand.

Gaps in evidence:

- Baseline evidence regarding need for adult literacy and numeracy learning at a national level is out-of-date.
- Examination of current data collection methods and analysis required.

National Leadership and Effective Local Action

- 3.37 National leadership accompanied by effective local action was outlined as one of the four key goals of ALNIS. Under this goal, the recommendations outlined requirements for co-ordinated structures and networks to support the ALNIS strategy, as well as the need for a national development engine to support quality ALN provision at the level of local partnerships.

National Leadership

- 3.38 Inroads towards the attainment of national leadership began in 2003 when Learning Connections within Communities Scotland was set up to support the implementation of the recommendations set out in ALNIS. Learning Connections is the development engine for adult literacy and numeracy in Scotland.
- 3.39 Support for the field is provided through Learning Connections Adult Literacies Team. Learning Connections is part of the Community Regeneration Division of Communities Scotland, a Scottish Executive Development Department agency with a wide range of responsibilities for housing and community provision; a location that suits the broad understanding of literacies espoused by ALNIS.
- 3.40 The national support for partnerships from the Learning Connections adult literacies team includes:
- encouraging innovative approaches to the provision of adult literacies, for example, through pathfinder projects;
 - making the best use of electronic information and technology to support adult literacies learners;
 - identifying, developing and disseminating information and resources about adult literacies;
 - engaging in and encouraging research into the provision of adult literacies;
 - exploring and disseminating good practice;
 - encouraging professional development through a curriculum framework, a national training framework and training programme;
 - providing training in response to the priorities identified by colleagues in the field;
 - liaising with practitioners and promoting the sharing of good practice.
 - contributing to awareness raising, particularly through the 'Big Plus' campaign.

- 3.41 The Scottish approach is made up of a number of elements, all of which necessary in order to achieve our goal. It requires partnership working on many levels and a high priority is given to communication with the adult literacies field in Scotland. For example, Learning Connections produces a regular email bulletin, a print newsletter LC News and there are regular national meetings with key personnel from the literacies field. In addition, the Development Coordinators maintain close contact with specific geographic areas. All of these contacts are seen as vital in maintaining an informed system that is capable of responding to and learning from developments in the field. A national online databank of resources, training and development, research and networking has also been developed. This databank is aimed at researchers, practitioners and volunteers, and is intended to provide a single point of access to necessary materials.
- 3.42 Progress has also been made through the establishment of two national collaborative projects set up by Learning Connections and working closely with the following bodies:
- 3.43 ‘To the Max’ is a collaborative project with YouthLink Scotland and focuses particularly upon youth literacies. The project has supported nine pilot projects with the aim of promoting the profile and understanding of the role of youth literacies practitioners. The project also aims to promote innovation and collaboration between learning providers by supporting the development of new approaches to practice. The nine pilot projects will be evaluated in order to inform a wider audience.
- 3.44 ‘Communities of Practice’ is a collaborative project between Learning Connections and the Scottish Further Education Unit, which joins practitioners from further education and community based setting together in order to share and develop good practice.
- 3.45 ‘The Big Plus in Libraries’ is also a national collaboration which aims to promote links between Library Services and literacies partnerships, ensuring these links are supported nationally and that good practice is widely distributed. This involves collaboration with the Scottish Library and Information Council and the Local Authority Library Services.

Resources and Funding

- 3.46 Despite these inroads, the HMIE (2005) reported concerns regarding the availability of resources at a local level, with some local adult literacy and numeracy partnerships providing high quality, easily accessible materials to tutors, and others having difficulty accessing the appropriate teaching materials (HMIE, 2005). The report however investigated a very small sample of partnerships and there may be a need to develop further research into this important area. Learning Connections have also developed specialist resource bases which are available to all ALN Partnerships. Tett et al (2006) have recommended however that there is a need to provide more resources in order to increase the flexibility of programmes with regards to their timing, location and content. Indeed, the ALNIS report (Scottish Executive, 2001) emphasised that “free learning should not be poorly resourced learning”.
- 3.47 ALN funding is directed to Community Learning and Development Strategy Partnerships through Local Authority Grant Aided Expenditure (LAGAE), in addition to the funds that are already directed to ALN by local authorities. However, the extent to which local authority funding has continued alongside LAGAE is unclear. The sustainability of funding has also been raised as a wide concern and is directly linked to the sustainability of the staffing infrastructure within partnerships (see ALN Partnership Action Plans 2006-08). Furthermore, the 2005 End of Year Reports highlight that Partnerships have not indicated how funding is distributed across partner organisations. The ALN Partnership End of Year Report (2005) suggests that a strategic approach to the development of ALN is currently missing, making it difficult to assess whether funding was spent efficiently, whether needs were being met and whether structures were working effectively. This is something that the 2006 End of Year Reports will take into account.

Partnership Working: Local Action

- 3.48 The ALN partnerships are monitored and evaluated annually through independent assessment, after providing action plans and end of year reports. The Action Plans require that partnerships subscribe to detailed forward planning. The 2004-06 summary report informs of the quantitative and qualitative changes apparent within partnerships’ Action Plans. While a small number of partnerships are thought to be still struggling at the implementation stage, the plans are considered to evidence clearer strategic visions that are supported by better targeted operational plans informed by past experience.

- 3.49 The Partnerships' End of Year Reports provide interesting and useful evidence of a diverse range of practice and progression in the implementation of Scotland's ALN strategy. Progress has been uneven between authorities, but this is likely to be a long-standing feature of adult literacy and numeracy in Scotland; due to the flexibility of the approach at local level it is likely that partnerships will progress at different rates, in line with local needs. The 2003/04 summary reported that 19 partnerships had achieved all or most of their target outputs for the year (13 had achieved all and 6 most). The ALN Partnership End of Year Reports (2005) indicate a consolidation of local partnerships and strategies, as well as the development of new initiatives. Nevertheless, concerns have also risen out of these strengths, specifically with regards to sustaining momentum in the long term and the impact of potential funding reductions. The reports also indicate that the struggles faced by a few authorities to develop their partnerships have negatively impacted the range and quality of the ALN services they are capable of delivering. Local authority re-structuring and underestimating the time required to establish partnership initiatives were difficulties encountered by partnerships.
- 3.50 The Scottish approach is strengthened by its versatility at the local level, where local cross-sectoral partnerships implement and co-ordinate local plans in response to local circumstances. Cooperative, cross-partnership initiatives were reported to have increased in the 2003/04 summary report. Included within this are marketing, training, awareness raising, resource sharing and exchange of good practice. However, nine ALN Partnership Action Plans (2004-2006) indicate that delivery is limited to either one or two providers, which tend to be the Local Authority and Further Education College. Evidence from the 2006-2008 Strategic Plans indicate, however, that Partnerships have demonstrated a significant increase in the number and diversity of partners, with around 500 partners being recognised within the 32 local authorities. Another concern was the level and complexity of reporting, which was sometimes viewed to have an adverse impact on the working relationships of partner organisations. A related concern was the inconsistency associated with compiling statistical data, and the difficulties encountered by some partnerships in obtaining the data on time. Furthermore, the 2005 End of Year reports suggest that many partnerships have failed to show evidence of effective partnership working. Also recognising the lack of effective partnership working, the HMIE (2005) reports the need for more systematic and effective strategic planning and partnership working in order to improve the decision making process.

3.51 Developing the literacies landscape at the local level has been challenging and time consuming; ensuring wide collaboration across partnerships and other stakeholders, and developing a strategic focus will take time. Maclachlan (2004) identifies effective partnership working as a short-term goal for ALNIS. Partnerships should aim to achieve a consensus regarding the way in which adult literacy and numeracy will be tackled within their local environment. However, Maclachlan maintains that there is a longer-term goal of maintaining effective partnership working and relations, as well as the support of all stakeholders (including learners) especially where they do not perceive education to be part of their remit. The localised approach developed in Scotland has implications at the National level. The bottom-up approach is accompanied by a long-term agenda, recognising that sustainable change cannot be delivered quickly but will develop overtime through the experiences and learning at the local level (Maclachlan, 2004).

Progress:

- The development of Learning Connections in Communities Scotland, which has promoted and supported ALN through support networks, geographic support, collaborative projects, providing resources, training and development, a curriculum framework, awareness raising and specialist advice and guidance.
- Key Contact meetings established as platform for sharing information and providing support.
- Flexibility and high degree of partnership working at a local level.

Areas in need for further action:

- Concerns surrounding the sustainability of funding.
- Complexity of reporting for partnerships.
- Difficulty of maintaining partnership relationships once they have been formed.

A Quality Learning Experience

Literacies in Community: Promoting a Structure for Development

- 3.52 The Literacies in the Community (LiC) pack (2000) provides guidance which supports the recommendations laid out in the 2001 ALNIS report (Scottish Executive), including a quality framework with good practice guidelines, plus guidelines on tutoring and guidance, and on staff development/training. The framework is built around seven guiding principles which are the values and beliefs that underpin good practice, supported by the social practice theoretical approach. This document has been aligned with other quality frameworks including *How good is our Community Learning and Development* and *The Quality Framework* which supports work within the Further Education Context. This collaborative work has been carried out by HMIE, SFEU and Learning Connections.
- 3.53 Both the ALN Partnership End of Year Reports (2005) and the HMIE (2005) suggest that the extent to which Local Authorities and Further Education Colleges incorporate use of LiC within existing arrangements for assuring quality and reviewing progress, and the extent to which practitioners are complying to LiC is unclear. Another concern raised by the End of Year Reports was the extent to which the process of self evaluation under LiC was used consistently and rigorously across partnerships.

Exceeding World Class Levels of Literacy and Numeracy

- 3.54 Exceeding ‘world class’ levels of literacy and numeracy is dependent upon quality provision. According to the ALN Partnership 2004-06 reports, in the majority of cases, the infrastructure required to maintain and develop a broad, quality service is in place, or almost in place. ALNIS recommended that local authorities, voluntary organisations, colleges and ALN providers in the workplace adopt integrated quality frameworks, allowing their existing quality frameworks to merge with LiC. However, only eighteen ALN Partnership Action Plans (2004-06) had produced clear specific quality development plans, despite the guidelines asking for this. Quality appraisal has been raised as a particular concern for FE colleges, which are already subject to an evaluation process common to further education institutions. Despite some overlaps, LiC contains different criteria and different procedures for measuring quality. Indeed, the colleges’ standards are both institutionally focused and are not specific to literacies learning. As a result, colleges are subject to two different quality processes, which have been met with a degree of reluctance. At the current time, the Scottish Further Education Unit has been asked to map the HMIE Quality Framework used in further education colleges with the Literacies in the Community pack. The HMIE Quality Framework (2004) is intended to ensure that people demand, and providers deliver a high quality learning experience. As a result, the framework focuses on curriculum resources, process and outcomes, as well as leadership and quality management. For each element, the framework provides quality indicators and provides key prompts and indicative sources of evidence to promote the achievement of each element.

The Curriculum Framework

- 3.55 The goal of establishing a quality learning experience has been tackled through the development of *An Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework for Scotland*, which was launched in May 2005 and was intended to provide support for practitioners to “develop and reflect on their work with adult literacies learners”. The curriculum advocates a social practice model to literacy and numeracy teaching and learning, which puts the learner at the centre of the learning process and uses the curriculum to target the individual’s uses and contexts for literacy and numeracy. It is designed for use within voluntary organisations, prisons, further education colleges, the community learning and development sector and workplaces and may be used during one-to-one tuition, drop in-centres, integrated literacy and numeracy and dedicated literacy and numeracy. The Curriculum Framework is being rolled out to learning providers during 2005-2006 and, as a result, there is limited information on practitioners’ perceptions of the framework.

- 3.56 The curriculum lays out a research and conceptual base to ensure that practitioners understand what they are doing. It also provides an outline of principles and approaches rather than a prescriptive account of what should be taught and learned. As the learner is placed at the centre, the curriculum is intended to support dialogue between the learner and tutor allowing the learner to voice their goals, while the tutor employs the learning wheel to identify the skills, knowledge and understanding required to achieve the individual's goal. The curriculum framework puts the onus on tutors to address the learning needs of learners with appropriate teaching. Tutors, therefore, face considerable challenges and, as a result, having suitably trained and developed staff is important. The curriculum also places importance on the ability of learners to identify their own learning goals. This may be challenging as learners may not know what learning is available to them and it may be a process of time which enables them to decide what learning they require.
- 3.57 Tutors and the curriculum framework must therefore support this diversity of learning, according to the needs of individuals and communities. According to Learning Connections (2005), rather than adopting a inflexible prescribed content, the curriculum framework embraces a process-based approach, leaving the curriculum content relatively open to ensure that it may be tailored to specific needs. The framework provides procedures that may be undertaken by learners, as well as the procedures required by tutors to identify, plan, carry out and review learning programmes.
- 3.58 There is a need to ensure quality assurance, while remaining flexible enough to conform to the social practice approach. At present, although the materials provide good practice examples, the framework places considerable emphasis on the curriculum being negotiated with learners, building creatively upon learners' previous knowledge, skills and life experiences. Generally, teaching has been considered in a positive light (Tett et al, 2006), but the HMIE (2005) reports both very good and unsatisfactory learning experiences. Learners with significant learning difficulties were found to make poor or inconsistent progress as a result of a lack of continuity and the poor availability of staff with special needs expertise. It may be useful to review the curriculum to ensure that it is working effectively in practice.

- 3.59 Formal assessment is not a focus of the curriculum framework. Rather, importance is directed towards the application of knowledge, understanding and skills in real life situations (see Appendix C for definition of knowledge, understanding and skills). The framework therefore suggests that assessment should be integrated into learning and teaching activities, with learners being responsible for setting their own goals. In addition, the framework advises that assessment should be transparent, with tutors, learners and programme co-ordinators being clear about what is assessed, how it is being assessed and what the results of the assessment entail for future learning and teaching. The curriculum also recommends that the activities used for assessment should be selected or designed by learners. Initially, learners are assessed in order to establish their baseline ability, allowing tutors and learners to work together to establish learning goals. However, the HMIE (2005) reported that where assessment takes place, the monitoring of progress and final assessment were often not as rigorous as required, thereby reducing the reliability of the evaluations made of individual learner's progress.
- 3.60 Where assessment is for certification purposes, the curriculum framework provides that assessment should be valid, fair and practical. The framework states that "many learners are interested solely in their own learning goals and regard certification as unnecessary. However, access to certification should be open to all those who want it at whatever stage they make that decision" (p. 91). The HMIE (2005) also suggest that opportunities should be available for learners to progress to certificated courses, and that learners should be encouraged to progress in this direction. Literacy and numeracy learning is accredited only when relevant to the learner and accreditation should be articulated in relation to the achievement of core skills, supporting progression towards further learning. Learning Connections has been working closely with the SQA to support this initiative rolling out SQA and Adult Literacies road shows aimed at practitioners in the field.

Progress:

- Development of the Curriculum Framework which upholds the social practice model and provides support for tutors to deliver a quality learning experience.

Gaps in Evidence:

- Extent of use of the LiC Pack is unclear (but reported on in end-year reports).
- Evidence of quality development plans is not evidenced within all partnerships.

Areas in need of further action:

- Further Education Colleges, Voluntary Sector and CLD are subject to two different quality frameworks.
- As the Curriculum acts as a guidance framework, much responsibility is given to a professional approach by tutors.

A System That Learns: Learner Centredness

- 3.61 The strength of the Scottish approach rests within the learner-centredness of the model. As a result of this focus, learners are provided with the space to articulate their own learning goals, and by taking into account their own lives they are able to engage in the appropriate learning which will help them attain their goals. Success is therefore inherent at the level of the individual. Learner-centredness has allowed for ALNIS to remain responsive to learners, and has contributed to developing ALNIS as a 'system that learns'. Since ALNIS, developments have suggested that the strategy remains informed by and responsive to learners. For example, the Curriculum Framework has been left deliberately flexible, allowing tutors to tailor their methods of teaching and learning for specific learners' needs. Likewise, the Professional Development Award: Introduction to Adult Literacies Learning, the support materials Introductory Training in Adult Literacies Learning as well as the PDA in ESOL Literacies emphasise the importance of developing literacy and numeracy in the context of learners' lives.
- 3.62 Growing learner-centredness was evident within partnerships' action plans. All but two of the partnerships had progressed from simplistic needs analysis to one that is grounded in their local contexts and circumstances (ALN Partnership Action Plans 2004-2006). Learner involvement has also been evidenced through ALN partnerships establishing learners' forums, focus groups and conferences, in order to attain the learners' input into local strategy. The HMIE (2005) research also found that literacy and numeracy programmes are predominantly constructed under a learner-centred approach, focusing on learners' needs and providing learners with control over what they learn and when they attend classes. However, Coben (2003) warns that research has so far been unable to provide an explanation of what makes for effective learner-centred practice in adult numeracy within an adult literacies context. Perhaps, it would be interesting to examine the extent to which the learner-centred approach is working effectively in practice.

Learners' Perceptions: Responsive to Learners

- 3.63 The 2005 HMIE report described learners' perceptions of their learning experiences and of the impact that their developing literacy and numeracy capabilities had made of their lives as "very positive". Previous learning experiences for many literacies learners were perceived to be negative and other factors such as ill-health, confidence levels, family instability and self-image were highlighted as barriers to learning (HMIE, 2005). However, the experience of literacies learning was considered in a positive light, with learners able to work at their own pace within a supportive environment. Furthermore, good practice was found across local authorities with regards to engaging learners. The HMIE report, for example, that "tutors gathered evidence of impact through focus groups discussions, self-evaluation, exit forms and learners' written contributions to case studies" (2005, p.7). The HMIE report also found that learners had made good progress in terms of their personal growth and development. Learners were identified as discussing their increased self-confidence and improvements in their life situation through the application of their literacy learning:

They recounted how they felt that through their literacy learning experience they had made a transition into lifestyles that were positive, meaningful and rewarding. Many now had a more active life with new interests, were contented and optimistic, and reported better family relationships because of their own feelings of self-worth. These learners no longer felt stigmatised but expressed feelings of joy and pride in their achievements. (HMIE, 2005, p.4)

- 3.64 Research recently undertaken by Tett et al (2006) also reports positive learner perceptions with regards to various aspects of ALN provision. The research reports on the views of 393 adult literacy and numeracy learners from within nine geographical locations in Scotland, as a mechanism to improve the understanding of the wider impact of ALN learning on the individual learner's life. In particular, the research sought to develop an understanding of the barriers and pathways facing ALN learners, learners' perceptions of the quality of learning and support, the outcomes and impact that learning has had on individual learners and the possible implications for the wider social benefit and economic activity. Overall, learners' perceptions of the quality of learning and teaching were positive; there was an over 90 per cent satisfaction rate with regards to the learning environment, the quality of tuition and the social environment (Tett et al., 2006). Tett et al. report that factors which contributed to a positive learning experience typically included what was learned, the way in which it was learned, the tutor and the pace of learning. From these findings, it is clear that much importance can be attributed to the Curriculum Framework for ALN and towards effective tutor training and development, as these initiatives are likely to determine (at least in part) the appropriateness of what is taught, how it is taught, the pace of teaching and how effective tutors' play their role in facilitating these factors. Building on the findings from Tett et al.'s research will also emphasise the commitment to learner-centredness which is laid out by the 2001 ALNIS report (Scottish Executive).

Tutors

- 3.65 There is also a great deal of evidence to support adult literacies tutors' development. The SQA has reported that there is still a demand for courses which have been developed by Learning Connections (SQA data, 2006). Evidence of Scottish tutors' professionalism and increased contribution to their field of knowledge can be found in Adult Literacies Journals such Research and Practice in Adult Literacy (RaPAL) and Reflect.
- 3.66 There has been useful evidence provided by tutors through the recent round of Practitioner Led Action Research (Learning Connections, 2006). The report highlighted the incentives to participate in this research related not only to their own personal development but also to the benefits they hoped it would bring to learners through improving their practice.

Progress:

- Partnerships are becoming increasing learner-centred with, for example, the establishment of learner forums.
- Research has highlighted learners' positive perceptions of ALN teaching and learning provision.
- The professionalism of tutors and their increased contribution to their field of knowledge.

Promoting Awareness: Engaging Employers with Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy and Numeracy in the Workplace

- 3.67 In their 2001 literature review, John Lord Associates (2001) focused on the demand for literacies skills, suggesting that the emergence of the knowledge economy places pressure on the demand for a skilled workforce. It is reported that even within employment positions that require low levels of skill, literacies remain important. However, this is based on the assumption that employers do in fact want a level of literacy and numeracy skill within their workforce (e.g. the Skills For Logistics Pathfinder Report found that employers sometimes seek to maintain a workforce with low literacies skills). A considerable challenge for the Scottish strategy on adult literacy and numeracy is engaging employers. Past and recent studies have confirmed that there is an adverse relationship between low levels of literacy and numeracy and the employment prospects of an individual, showing that those with good literacy and numeracy skills are more likely to be in employment and within better paid roles (Dearden et al., 2000; Machin et al., 2001 and Parsons and Bynner, 2005). However, there is a dearth of evidence reporting the benefits that employers would gain from investing in literacy and numeracy provision, adding to the challenge of selling ALN to industry (Ananiadou et al, 2004). Engaging employers is therefore likely to pose considerable challenges. This may become a challenging issue in the future, the Leitch report highlights that over 70% of 2020 working population are already over the age of 16. Of those more than 50% are already over the age of 25. This is highly significant as it means that they will have already left the traditional learning route and will be dependent on lifelong opportunities.

- 3.68 John Lord Associates (2001) stressed the importance of attaining the support of both public and private sector employers, business networks and organisations such as Investors in People. ALNIS (Scottish Executive, 2001) recommended that the Scottish Executive and other major public/private sector employers should take the lead in helping to retain and develop the ALN skills of employees. The literature does not document how this recommendation has been approached and as a result, it is unclear whether any progress has been made. In addition, ALNIS recommends that the development engine should work to disseminate good practice to a wide audience. Learning Connections has increasingly targeted awareness-raising campaigns at employers, and developed appropriate materials for the workplace context. The principal aim of this initiative is to support the development of literacies among employees and to raise the awareness of their own literacy and numeracy needs, which are often invisible and unacknowledged. Furthermore, the 'Skills Towards Employability National Working Group' was set up in order to target those adults who have low literacy and numeracy skills and are seeking employment. Being made up of representatives from across the partnerships, as well as Jobcentre Plus, the Scottish Executive and Learning Connections, the group has produced a Statement of Arrangements, but the work was ongoing over 2004/05. Despite attempts to promote awareness among employers, the 2005 End of Year Reports reinforce the difficulty in attaining the support of employers, with partnerships suggesting that often employers are reluctant to release staff to participate in ALN provision. Nevertheless, there are instances of best practice that may be cascaded throughout other Partnerships.

Promoting Awareness

- 3.69 The stigma attached to adult literacy and numeracy learning was recognised by Tett et al's (2006) research as a potential barrier to entering learning provision. Removing stigma therefore remains an important objective of the ALN strategy in Scotland. Tett et al. (2006) argue that the clearest pathway into ALN provision was improved publicity at both a local and national level, which was considered by learners to alter the negative public image often associated with ALN and reduce the stigma of being an ALN learner. The Big Plus awareness raising campaigns have been considered crucial to reducing the negative perceptions often associated with ALN learning. And have resulted in approximately 10,000 calls to the Big Plus national helpline between January 2004 and March 2006.
- 3.70 Employers' awareness of workplace literacies was also targeted through the Big Plus for Business, which encourages employers to support their staff in developing literacy and numeracy skills. The success of the Big Plus for Business has yet to be evaluated. ALNIS also recommended that provision should be made for the availability of informal advice, support and referral within workplaces. Progress towards this goal is uncertain.

Pathfinder Projects

Phase One

- 3.71 Promoting awareness was also sought through the establishment of two phases of pathfinder projects. The first phase of the pathfinder projects was completed in March 2005 and formed part of the Scottish Executive's aim to develop good practice in adult literacies provision. It is clear from the discussion regarding the first phase of the Pathfinder Projects that efforts were directed at promoting ALN within the workplace. For example, 'Skills for Logistics' was targeted at employers within the Road Haulage sector, where promoting and developing literacies had been outlined as a key priority and the STUC pathfinder project targeted employees who had low levels of literacy and numeracy through the provision of union-initiated assistance for literacies learning within the workplace.
- 3.72 The evaluation of phase 1 of the Adult Literacies Pathfinder Projects details the main types of literacies practice, along with the pathfinders' strengths, challenges and opportunities for future development. The evaluation affirmed that links at the local level were achieved through the pathfinder projects, which is a key goal of the ALNIS report (Scottish Executive, 2001). Another positive aspect of the projects was that capacity building was a common feature, with the projects each working with and developing staff/members of organisations to increase awareness of adult literacies, while also building on their expertise and understanding of their own local context.
- 3.73 Each of the pathfinder projects in the first phase came up against barriers to the management and delivery of their projects. The three which worked directly with employers found difficulty in meeting employer-specific targets and underestimated the time, awareness raising and relationship building required to engage employers and to maintain their commitment. Concerns were also raised suggesting that employers may, in some instances, wish to maintain a workforce with low literacy and numeracy; engaging these employers becomes increasingly difficult. Another significant challenge that was raised through the evaluation was the stigma attached to literacies, resulting in both employer and employee reluctance towards acknowledging literacies difficulties.
- 3.74 For each pathfinder project, the lack of appropriately experienced or qualified staff to deliver the literacies training was an issue of concern. Another important finding was the need for robust management information systems which track the progress of the project. The sustainability of projects was considered dependent upon securing necessary funding and developing a capacity building approach through the development of networks/partnerships, heightening awareness and producing tailored learning materials.

Recommendations From Phase One

3.75 The first phase of pathfinder projects (York Consulting, 2006) reinforces a number of the recommendations forwarded by ALNIS (Scottish Executive, 2001), but provide details of how these recommendations may be tackled. Common lessons learned were developed in order to inform future activities:

- there is a need for robust management information that tracks individual learner progress, allows for reflection on activities and identifies developments;
- in order to build relationships with local stakeholders there should be considerable thought about which partners should be involved, appropriate time to engage with partners and consideration of the relevant stage of involvement in the work;
- strategies to build awareness around literacies learning to employers should consider that sensitivities and lack of understanding that surrounds the issue;
- targets for employer and learner engagement should be set at a realistic level, taking into account time delays and the relative originality of literacies learning;
- incorporating literacies learning materials into wider workforce training programmes reduces the stigma associated with literacies learning.

Successes of Phase One

3.76 Success has been evidenced from the first phase of pathfinder projects. In particular, literacies learners are thought to have benefited from taking part in the pathfinder projects' activities, increased research activities have resulted from the projects and awareness of literacies issues has increased among employers, learners and those supporting learners (York Consulting, 2006). Despite recognition of overall success, for the majority of pathfinders the planned outputs were not attained. The evaluation report (York Consulting, 2006) explains that these failings are partly a result of the need for significant foundation work to be performed and partly a result of over ambitious targets that were originally set. However, the projects have provided useful points of reference and disseminated material that can be used to build towards future success.

- partnership working with key stakeholders has often been crucial to the success of projects;
- literacies training and screening tools have been developed through projects and may be disseminated to a wider audience;
- the models developed during the projects may be utilised elsewhere, which is likely to build further links with employers, providers and learners.

Phase Two

- 3.77 In April 2003 Communities Scotland launched an Adult Literacies Challenge Fund, under which the eight pathfinder projects of phase two were undertaken. The projects (Appendix D) are due to be completed by the end of March 2006. For the second stage of the pathfinder projects, Learning Connections have developed an evaluation framework and toolkit to support the effectiveness and impact of the projects. It is not yet clear what progress has been achieved by the second phase of projects.

Progress:

- Learning Connections has targeted awareness-raising campaigns at employers.
- The first phase of Pathfinder Projects was a success, encouraging learner involvement, research and the development and dissemination of learning/teaching materials.
- Promotion of ALN through the Big Plus and the Big Plus for Business awareness-raising campaigns.

Gaps in Evidence:

- The extent to which the Scottish Executive and other major private/public sector organisations have taken the lead in addressing the ALN needs of employees is unclear.

Areas in Need of Further Action:

- Engaging employers remains challenging.
- Need for robust management information to track learners' progress.
- Thought and time needs to be allocated to developing relationships with local stakeholders.

Adult Literacy and Numeracy Learners: Inclusive and Effective Learning Provision for All

Targeting Priority Groups

- 3.78 As more ALN learners undertake provision, it is important to recognise that new learners will be increasingly difficult to target and more innovative targeting strategies may be necessary to reach non-traditional learners. It is likely that a grassroots approach, which targets specific hard-to-reach groups or locations may be an effective way in which to further increase the number of ALN learners. ALNIS 2001 prioritised the following groups as in particular need of ALN provision:

- people with limited initial education, particularly young adults;
- unemployed people or those facing redundancy;
- people with English as a second or additional language;

- people who live in disadvantaged areas;
 - workers in low skill jobs;
 - people on low income;
 - people with a health problem or disability affecting learning, speech, sight or hearing.
- 3.79 The 2004-06 Action Plans highlighted the targeting of priority groups to be strong, with a number of partnerships establishing some form of challenge fund to make their provision responsive to local interests and demand. Overall, priority groups were considered to be well targeted, but this did not necessarily result in a balanced uptake of ALN amongst different groups. Likewise, the End of Year Reports for 2005 suggest that partnerships have been directing activity towards targeted groups.
- 3.80 A range of learners were identified by the HMIE (2005) as undertaking provision, including the following groups:
- adults with learning difficulties;
 - people with very low current levels of literacy or numeracy;
 - those in need of help with specific problems such as punctuation;
 - learners undertaking SQA core skills units.
- 3.81 However, the 2004-06 Action Plans highlight that the vast majority of partnerships are operating at or under capacity. Attracting new learners has become progressively difficult, as it is increasingly difficult to reach targeted learners. Furthermore, 2006-06 Action Plans indicate that eight authorities appear to be operating at over-capacity; seven of these are predominantly rural areas. This may be due to lack of resources or staff available to meet the level of ALN demand within the area.

3.82 According to the HMIE (2005), within local authorities effective use has been made of community learning and development workers as spotters and referrers. The HMIE also indicate that some authorities have also employed the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation in order to identify geographical areas and groups within the population that are likely to require literacy and numeracy provision. Using these strategies, local authorities seek to target resources towards specific groups and areas. Pathfinder Projects have also successfully embraced a spotters and referrers approach (e.g. STUC, Road Haulage and Scottish Prison Service). Although progress has been made under this recommendation, the spotters and referrers approach is arguably out of sync with the social practice model subscribed to in Scotland (i.e. the aims of the spotters and referrers approach is to locate individuals with literacy and numeracy needs and target action in a way which will remedy these needs). Confusion may result, as this provides conflicting advice to those providing ALN learning, who are encouraged to make learning opportunities available to all potential learners. Following the concerns raised in relation to the spotters and referrers approach, there has been a move towards ‘awareness raising training’ and embedding ideas of referral within this, whereby Partnerships are encouraged to develop effective outreach strategies to promote inclusion; this was a move by the National Training Project.

Specialist Information and Advice

3.83 Learning Connections has undertaken the recommendation which advises that “specialist information and advice should be provided to support inclusive and effective provision for all learners”. Under this aim, Learning Connections has focused on youth literacies, learners with specific learning difficulties and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and clear developments have been made with regards to this recommendation. Each of these areas will be discussed in further detail in the sections below.

Youth Literacies

3.84 The 2001 ALNIS report (Scottish Executive) placed emphasis on focusing upon priority groups, including “people with limited initial education especially young adults”, leading to attention being directed towards Youth Literacies. Youth Literacies is recognised as a relatively new area, which has required an exercise of information gathering to enhance knowledge of the field. Learning Connections (2005) note that the field includes both youth work and adult literacies organisations. The 2005 progress report identifies the following inroads made in terms of Youth Literacies:

- the establishment of a Youth Literacies Network, allowing practitioners to exchange experiences of good practice and share information regarding developments in Youth Literacies. For the purposes of this network, ‘young people’ are defined as anyone between the ages of 16-25;

- establishment of ‘To the Max’ – a national collaborative project with Youth Link;
- the research report ‘Youth Literacies in Scotland: An Initial Exploration’ was published in November 2004;
- the first Annual Youth Literacies Conference was held at the end of 2004;
- Learning Connections have also commissioned a film to promote literacy and numeracy learning to young people, which depicts young people engaging positively with literacy and numeracy courses, programmes or projects. The film is intended for use by a wide variety of agencies and organisations that work with young people.

3.85 Under the youth literacies heading, the ALNIS report (Scottish Executive, 2001) included ‘people with limited initial education, particularly young adults’ as a priority group. Wallace (2004) argues that there is considerable scope for the development of youth literacies within an assortment of youth work providers in Scotland. However, the potential for development is dependent on a number of factors:

- acknowledgment and support of youth literacies work already being undertaken within programmes;
- acknowledgement that competing priorities may work against literacies in some instances;
- the need to heighten the awareness of youth literacies among youth work providers and to promote literacies programme development within active youth work organisations;
- the development of a literacies toolkit for youth work as an information and guidance tool;
- the availability of incentive funding;
- the supply of training workshops on youth literacies for both youth work and adult literacies practitioners, which unites youth literacies;

Specific Learning Difficulties

3.86 Learning Connection’s (2005) progress report outlines a number of strategies developed in order to target learners with specific learning difficulties more effectively:

- a consultation forum focusing on specific learning difficulties in adult literacies work has met regularly with practitioners from 20 of the ALN partnerships;

- a dyslexia awareness training pack was produced and a training course for trainers was delivered to more than 70 literacies partnership staff across Scotland;
- in partnership with Dyslexia Scotland, the ‘Dyslexia Handbook for Adult Literacies in Scotland’ was produced.

3.87 There is currently a lack of detailed analysis regarding the success of these strategies.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

3.88 Provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in Scotland is increasingly important, especially in light of the First Minister’s Fresh Talent Initiative, which encourages people to live and work in Scotland, and the increase of migrant workers entering Scotland. Since 2000 the demographics of ESOL provision in Scotland have changed considerably. There have been two reasons for this: firstly GCC agreement with National Asylum Support Service (NASS) grew from 500 refugees in 2000 to 11,000 in 2004 (Scottish Executive, 2005). Secondly, the recent stage of EU enlargement has seen an increase in the number of migrant workers coming from EU accession states to work across Scotland. This has impacted on ALN partnerships who have found an increasing demand in ESOL. In January 2005 a scoping study in the scale and nature of existing ESOL provision across Scotland was published. The study found that 71 per cent of all ESOL students enrolled in learning provision had settled in Scotland, but needed English to participate effectively in the Scottish society or economy. Of the 814 types of provision analysed, 123 of them delivered literacies for learners whose mother-tongue was not English (University of Abertay, 2004).

3.89 The proposed national ESOL strategy for Scotland subscribes to the following five guiding principles: inclusion, diversity, quality, achievement and progression. These principles are intended to support migrant and refugee settlement, promoting inclusion and participation within Scottish society through recognition of a diverse set of values and cultures (Scottish Executive, 2005). As a result, the provision of learning needs to be high quality, easily accessible and follow best practice in terms of learning and teaching methods. In terms of achievement and progression, the principles suggest that provision for ESOL learning should contribute to wider national literacies targets and should also seek to encourage continued learning. For the purposes of the ESOL strategy for Scotland an adult ESOL learner is defined as “those for whom English is not a first language and who need spoken and written English for everyday life and to participate in the labour market, learning, their communities and wider society” (Scottish Executive, 2005, p.4).

3.90 Recognising the needs of the learner, ETLTD has provided criteria for eligibility for funding from ALN resources. This speaks of an ESOL learner as “A person who has little or no literacy in his/her own mother-tongue and who has little or no literacy in English and whose spoken English may range from basic to fluent”. Although there are practical difficulties in determining a learner’s capabilities in their own language, it does allow literacies support to be targeted on those who have literacies rather than language learning needs.

3.91 ESOL may fall between types of provision – English language and Adult Literacies. It is important to decide which kind of learning provision is most appropriate to the learner and to refer them onto the most suitable provision. There may be a broad range of literacy levels but learners will also vary widely in their levels of oral language competency as well as in their education experience. Challenges faced by adult ESOL Literacies learners may include:

- **no writing system in first (or other) language**, i.e. the learner may come from an oral culture whose language does not have a written form or has only acquired a written form recently. Some Somali and Ethiopian learners may have no written form in their first language;
- **no reading or writing skills in first (or other) language**, i.e. the learner may live in a literate society but have no reading or writing skills;
- **limited literacy skills in first (or other) language**, i.e. the learner may have some reading and writing skills in their native language, but is not functionally literate in their first language;
- **literacy in first language but not in Roman script**, i.e. their first language uses a non-Roman alphabet such as Arabic, Chinese and Punjabi. They therefore need to learn new writing system;
- **limited initial education in native country**, e.g. they may have attended school sporadically due to family responsibilities, ill health, war etc. They are therefore lacking “study skills” and need support in developing study skills in English media.

Progress, Challenges and Recommendations for ESOL

3.92 Learning Connections outlined a number of developments in their 2005 progress report:

- the establishment of a new network of ESOL practitioners working with ALN provision was set up to exchange good practice;
- Glasgow ESOL Forum and Learning Connections developed training for ESOL tutors and in March 2005 The Scottish Qualifications Authority accredited a new qualification ‘The Professional Development Award in ESOL Literacies: Teaching Adults Reading Writing and Numeracy’;

- 48 grants of £500 were provided to purchase ESOL literacy resources. The provision of grants was accompanied by a small-scale mapping study to ascertain which language communities were accessing ESOL support and which teaching materials were currently in use;
 - Learning Connections developed training for literacy tutors who may be working with learners whose first language is not English has been developed and “An Introduction to Working with ESOL learners” training is being rolled out at the beginning of June 2006.
- 3.93 Positive progress has been uncovered (Scottish Executive, 2005), with ESOL providers in the further education, community learning and development and voluntary sector being considered to have risen to the challenges presented by the increasing demand for ESOL provision. Further education colleges, in particular, were considered to be increasingly pressurised by heightened demand for ESOL provision and consequently an extra £5.3 million was injected into FE colleges to fund part-time ESOL and non-advanced/advanced vocational courses. Providers of ALN are encouraged to use Literacies in the Community to ensure the quality assurance provision for ESOL learners, but the extent to which this encouragement is followed by good practice is unclear.
- 3.94 ESOL demand is particularly difficult to quantify, presenting related difficulties in planning ESOL provision (Rice et al, 2005). Nevertheless, the Scottish Executive (2005) report that there is a significant latent and actual demand for ESOL that is not currently being supplied. Despite demand, the Scottish Executive (2005) report there to be a lack of promotion concerning ESOL provision and opportunities and recommended that a website should be a source of information and advertisement. Local level promotion of ESOL is considered particularly important, especially as the barriers for ESOL learners are particularly challenging (e.g. lack of childcare provision, the distance from ESOL classes and the associated lack of accessible and affordable transport) (Rice et al., 2005).
- 3.95 The Scottish Executive (2005) recommends that similar to the ALN curriculum framework, an Adult ESOL Curriculum would be beneficial. As a result, the 2005 consultation paper proposes that a national ESOL curriculum group be formed. Furthermore, the paper argues that while tools are available for measuring attainment in terms of formative assessments, the group should also consider softer outcomes for learners, such as greater confidence to participate in learning and in community life. Due to the fact that some learners will not wish formal accreditation to be the result of their learning, it is important that ESOL providers have mechanisms in place to adequately capture distance travelled by learners. The strategy document suggests that Individual Learning Plans may be an effective way of capturing distance travelled, but may not be appropriate for all learners.

- 3.96 The Scottish Executive (2005) advises that ESOL providers should ensure that all learners receive access to comprehensive guidance and support. In particular, the consultation document argues that Guidance tutors should be specialists with effective counselling skills. Opportunities are nevertheless available for ESOL teachers to undertake professional development programmes at a local level. For example, unaccredited courses developed by Stevenson College and the Glasgow ESOL Forum are available for volunteers, and the Professional Development Award in ESOL Literacies (SQA accredited) was developed for experienced ESOL teachers wishing to teach ESOL literacies. However, the strategy document advises that there is a need for a structured professional development pathway that is mapped out for ESOL practitioners.

Progress:

- Targeting priority groups has been strong.
- Awareness raising training has replaced the spotters and referrers approach which is out of sync with the social practice model.
- Learning Connections has focused on three key groups (Youth Literacies, specific learning difficulties and ESOL) and progress has been made for each.
- Professional development and qualifications have been progressed for practitioners engaging with these three key groups.

Areas in Need of Further Action:

- Attracting new learners is becoming increasingly difficult because they are more likely to come from hard to reach groups.
- The eligibility criteria for funding ESOL within ALN may need further development.

Tutors and Training

Availability of Suitable Tutors

3.97 As the Scottish approach depends on the professionalism of its staff, the system requires the support of suitably qualified and experienced tutors. Hamilton et al (2001) reason that there is need for a strong professional voice to moderate and inform the policy agenda for adult literacy and numeracy. In Scotland such an aspiration is severely hampered by the make-up of the teaching workforce for ALN, which is highly fragmented being made up of voluntary and part-time workers to whom a lack of accredited professional training opportunities have been available. An ongoing problem identified is the difficulty encountered by partnerships when trying to recruit and retain suitably experienced staff, which is intensified by both the short-term nature of posts and sustainability of funding. The 2006-08 Action Plans, for example, indicate that the sustainability of staff is an issue for ALN provision.

3.98 The figures regarding staffing within the Action Plans have been produced inconsistently between partnerships (the numbers of tutors is not always clearly stated within the Action Plans), making them difficult to compare. Nevertheless, it is clear that a heavy reliance remains on volunteer tutors (especially within rural partnerships), and the 2004-06 Action Plans indicate that within some authorities their numbers have increased disproportionately in relation to part-time staff. The report warns that the use of voluntary staff will potentially conflict with the vision of quality and professionalism for ALN provision in Scotland. Considerable tension remains between training/continued professional development and volunteering, having a negative impact on the goal of building a “world class service”, despite ALNIS recommending that staff and volunteers should meet national standards by 2005.

Tutors' Perceptions of ALN Provision

- 3.99 A sample of 78 tutors were also consulted during the course of Tett et al's (2006) research. Tutors perceived the ALN strategy to have had a positive impact, increasing the number and range of ALN learners, tutors' approaches to teaching and learning and the local and national profile of ALN. However, tutors also raised a number of issues that could be improved including guidance and support, fostering links with and encouraging transfer to other learning opportunities, exit management, access to good quality and appropriate staff development and support for part-time staff and volunteers.
- 3.100 Recognising that the social practice model requires that teachers embed an understanding of literacies with learners, supported by appropriately trained staff who have access to professional development and accreditation has been attributed importance by the ALNIS strategy. Swain (2005) argues, particularly with regards to teaching adult numeracy, that the teacher plays a crucial role in making numeracy as meaningful and as stimulating as possible for adult learners, and highlights that the quality of teaching is at least as important as the content of the lessons. Developing staff also ensures that the Scottish system progresses as a 'system that learns', where tutors are continually developing their abilities and learning from examples of best practice.

Introductory Training in Adult Literacies Learning (ITALL)

- 3.101 Leavey (2005) warns that due to the diversity of adult literacy and numeracy learning provision, a challenge lies developing the adequate degree of professionalism among ALN tutors. Learning Connections (2005), nevertheless, documents progression with regards to tutor training and development, including four national continuous professional development seminars which focused on the social practice approach and integrated literacies.

- 3.102 Progress is apparent with the development of benchmark statements for a new qualification, Teaching Qualification: Adult Literacies. Benchmark statements outlining the competences required of an adult literacies tutor were developed by Learning Connections in consultation with the field at 3 national seminars and published in association with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in July 2005. Subsequently Learning Connections invited tenders to develop and deliver a pilot TQAL course and the contract was awarded to the Scottish Consortium, led by Strathclyde University in November 2005. The consortium began work in January 2006 and the pilot course will be delivered at four centres from January 2007 to September 2008. The four centres are Aberdeen University, Strathclyde University, Dundee University and Forth Valley College. 50-55 tutors representing all sectors involved in Adult Literacies and geographical areas will be recruited to the pilot course, which will be a blend of face to face learning, online and distance learning. The Scottish Consortium are committed to developing a qualification which fits with the Social Practice approach and will consist of 'four sequential modules designed to build confidence through iterative processes of reflexivity, engagement with theory, experimentation in practice and professional enquiry.' (Ackland and Wallace, 2006). The Teaching Qualification: Adult Literacies (TQAL) course is substantial in level and volume, comprising 120 points at SCQF level 8/9, and seeks to create a professional qualification for adult literacies tutors. As the course is work based, there is also the requirement to recruit Practice Tutors in the workplace, who will adopt a coaching, mentoring role and these key staff will also undertake a module and gain accreditation at masters level (30 points at SCQF level 11). These opportunities are challenging for employers, requiring a significant investment of staff time to be released for study. However, this level of commitment is necessary to develop professionalism and expertise within Scotland, and employers may wish to capitalise on their investment by creating more substantive, permanent tutor posts.
- 3.103 The development of the Introductory Training in Adult Literacies Learning (ITALL) pack and the Professional Development Award: Introduction to Adult Literacies Learning emerged from recommendation 14 of the 2001 report: "a national training strategy should provide national training standards for all staff and volunteers whose roles relate to literacy and numeracy tuition and a new qualification for specialist literacy and numeracy practitioners". The training pack places importance on developing literacy and numeracy as a competence that allows people to engage in different contexts of life. According the 2003 evaluation conducted by Communities Scotland, ITALL is viewed as the first stage in a framework of accredited qualification for literacies practice, functioning as a Professional Development Award (SQA level 6). ITALL is a national training award that is intended for tutor assistants, allowing them to teach individuals and groups within their community with the support from experienced Adult Literacies tutors.

3.104 In 2003 Communities Scotland reported their evaluation of three pilot training programmes, which had applied the ITALL training pack prepared by the National Training project Literacies Team in Communities Scotland (Barr A and Jones J, 2003). The evaluation focused on Glasgow City, Aberdeen City and Dumfries and Galloway Councils during the first six months of 2006. Particular attention was directed towards the perceptions of course participants and facilitators regarding their experience of using the pack. The 2003 report found a high degree of consistency between the three areas in terms of content and sequence because each area was closely following the content and order of the pack. However, the format for delivery of the training was found to vary considerably. The Communities Scotland (Barr A and Jones J, 2003) report explains that in general, the training pack was well received by both facilitators and participants, being considered as both a useful and stimulating resource. However, the evaluation also uncovered a number of suggestions which Learning Connections has taken forward.

Progress:

- Development towards a qualification for tutors with benchmark statements for TQAL and a practice-based course is currently being developed.
- PDA and ITALL pack available for tutor assistants.
- Continuing Professional Development available for tutors.

Areas in Need of Further Action:

- The development of a professional workforce that is adequately qualified and experienced is hampered by the make-up of the ALN teaching workforce which is predominately part-time or voluntary.
- Partnerships are experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff, which is linked to concerns regarding the sustainability of funding.

Numeracy Provision

- 3.105 John Lord Associates (2001) reported that people with low or no numeracy skills suffer greater disadvantage within the employment setting than those without literacy skills. The term numeracy has been established to sit parallel to literacy. A definition of numeracy is provided by Coben:

To be numerate means to be competent, confident, and comfortable with one's judgements on whether to use mathematics in a particular situation and if so, what mathematics to use, how to do it, what degree of accuracy is appropriate, and what the answer means in relation to the context. (Coben, 2000, p. 35)

- 3.106 According to Tout (2003), for most adult numeracy learners, the term mathematics has negative connotations of failure, as many failed the subject during their time in formal education. While mathematics is often perceived as an abstract subject with little associations with real life, adult numeracy deliberately directs focus towards the application and use of mathematics in everyday situations.
- 3.107 Arguments specifically related to the basic skills approach adopted in England and Wales, have been forwarded contending that by combining literacy and numeracy, the latter is often overlooked in preference of the former (Chanda, 2003). Adult numeracy generally remains under-theorised and under-researched, with limited information regarding theory, policy, teaching and learning, teacher education and communication between stakeholders than is focused on literacy (Coben et al, 2003). Coben et al argue that the availability of reliable evidence on the impact of adult numeracy tuition is limited, arguing that detailed research and particularly longitudinal studies are required fill this gap.

3.108 Chanda argues that numeracy is often subsumed within literacy or basic skills, hindering the development of numeracy as important in its own right. Concerns have also been identified regarding the likelihood that literacy teachers are teaching numeracy (Chanda, 2003). In line with England and Wales, Scotland has also been subject to an over-emphasis on literacy to the detriment of numeracy.

... adult education has been the poor relation of its better-funded cousins school and university education, adult numeracy has been doubly marginalised: as adult numeracy is the poor relation of the poor relation.
(Coben, 2003, p.1)

3.109 Coben et al (2005, p.6) recommends in her report on Adult Numeracy in Scotland that there is “a need to raise the profile of numeracy within a learner-centred, research-informed approach to literacies that suits adults’ needs, rights and purposes of learning”. She suggests that this involves building awareness and developing capacity to undertake and review research amongst practitioners and learners, and also to reflect on practice. Coben notes that this is already encouraged in adult literacy tutor training in Scotland.

3.110 The ALNIS report (Scottish Executive, 2001) recognised the low priority that is often attached to numeracy and sought to rectify this. Learning Connections have outlined the steps they have taken in an attempt to promote numeracy:

- publication of the Learning Connections-commissioned research report ‘Adult Numeracy: Shifting the Focus’ (Coben D, 2005), launched at the First National Numeracy Seminar, Edinburgh, December 2004;
- the Second National Numeracy Seminar, Glasgow, December 2005, bringing together adult numeracy practitioners from across Scotland. (The seminar was over-subscribed. Also, many of the breakout workshops were delivered by practitioners, including many members of the Numeracy Network (see below));
- Learning Connections have also initiated an ICT and Numeracy Action Research Project for practitioners to investigate ICT and numeracy learning in Scotland. Findings of this project will form part of the Third National Numeracy Seminar, planned to take place December 2006 in Stirling;
- a network of numeracy practitioners meets regularly to promote, discuss and disseminate effective practice in numeracy learning. Practitioners come from a diverse range of background and practice areas. New members are encouraged to join;
- an online forum is being developed to promote communication between numeracy practitioners, with a focus on resources, use of resources, approaches to learning and research ideas;

- the Spring 2006 edition of RaPAL (Research and Practice in Adult Literacy) Journal focuses on aspects of numeracy learning, with contributions from Scottish practitioners;
- a Numeracy Energiser project delivered promoted approaches to numeracy learning to practitioners. It is planned that this training will recur, taking the form of training for trainers, so that its content can be further disseminated;
- over fifty numeracy resource grants of between £500 and £1000 have been paid to providers of numeracy learning around Scotland.

3.111 The HMIE (2005) also reinforce the importance of creating sufficient opportunities across all provision to meet numeracy needs. Despite these developments, the End of Year Reports (ALN Partnerships, 2005) highlight that numeracy work is often not distinguished from literacy, making it difficult to assess demand and progress. Furthermore, financial inclusion through ALN was highlighted to be undertaken within partnerships, but it is not clear what is covered within this.

Recommendations for Numeracy

3.112 Coben (2005) suggests a number of considerations in relation to adult numeracy under five headings: the curriculum; organisation and support; learning and teaching approaches; practitioner training and continuing professional development; and research. According to Coben, the emerging literacies curriculum should incorporate a clear focus on numeracy, which should remain open, ensuring that the onus is placed on tutors and learners to negotiate effective numeracy learning and teaching. However, she advises that the curriculum should answer questions regarding the level and scope of numeracy required. Coben (2005) argues that reporting procedures in adult literacies should attempt to identify numeracy provision and staffing more clearly. She also states that all providers in receipt of public funding should provide literacy and numeracy learning, allowing individuals choice and also following the recommendations raised by the ALNIS report (Scottish Executive, 2001). It may be useful to perform a mapping study, outlining the types of provision available as this is not entirely clear. Furthermore, Coben argues that adult numeracy provision should be linked with other policy contexts that seek to promote social inclusion, such as legal and debt advice, health and financial inclusion. The extent to which these links have been made is also unclear.

3.113 Coben (2005) forwards a number of recommendations which have the aim of promoting learner-centred research-informed practice in adult numeracy learning and teaching. For instance, she suggests that ‘connectionist’ teaching should be promoted. In other words, Coben recommends that numeracy teaching should make links between different aspects and representations of mathematics, as well as learners’ own methods. The author also places importance on the contextual appropriateness of the teaching; Coben suggests, for example, that critical numeracy offers a means of relating numeracy to adults’ lives, interests and purposes. The supply and retention of appropriately experienced and qualified staff is essential to the development of quality adult numeracy provision. Although Coben recognises that developments are currently underway with regards to tutor training, this is considered to remain under-developed for adult numeracy. The author suggests, for example, that material to support adult numeracy teaching, learner guidance, tutor training and Continued Professional Development should be developed and field-tested.

<p>Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 national seminars focusing on numeracy. • Publication of the research report ‘Adult Numeracy: Shifting the Focus’. <p>Gaps in Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numeracy remains under-researched; there is a particular need for longitudinal research. <p>Areas in Need of Further Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numeracy is often subsumed by a focus on literacy.

Supporting Literacy and Numeracy through E-Learning

3.114 ICT has been promoted as an important and beneficial method of raising adult literacy and numeracy, with the World Wide Web, computers and multimedia providing innovative ways of teaching and learning (Coben, 2005). ALNIS emphasised the need to maximise the potential of ICT in adult literacies provision (recommendation 9), and specifically the development of e-learning in support of literacy and numeracy. In particular, ALNIS set out the following areas for consideration by Learning Connections:

- to lead the development of e-learning in support of literacy and numeracy;
- to examine new ways of learning and new methods of communication (e.g. websites and electronic mail);
- to consider how to embrace the idea that some people learn more effectively online and how these learners may be best supported;
- to detect and disseminate information regarding online materials which develop literacies, including the development of new materials;
- to consider how ICT may be used to ensure learning plans are accessible and easy to use;
- to investigate the possibility of e-learning being used as a means of widening access;
- include awareness of tutoring in an on-line environment within the national training strategy.

3.115 As a result of these particulars, Learning Connections (2005) forwarded a variety of issues for consideration:

1. Access to ICT facilities is not consistent throughout the country
2. Staff skills in using computers and other technological devices vary
3. The quality of ICT software and resources vary
4. Cost and organisational factors can sometimes restrict the use of ICT

ICT and Progress

- 3.116 In March 2004 Learning Connections launched the 'Innovations in ICT and Literacies' (Learning Connections, 2005a) project to supply financial support for those working in adult literacies to identify, develop and pilot innovative and successful approaches of supporting literacies learning through ICT. A range of projects were undertaken, but Learning Connections have collated good practice approaches to disseminate to a wider audience. These include 'Creative e-writing' which is based in Stirling and has helped learners employ ICT to publish and share their writings, and 'PC Youth' based in Dalmarnock Learning Centre which engaged young people in adult literacies learning through the development of a website. Funding for further projects over the 2005-06 period has also been approved. For example, the 'Community Learning Forum' plans to lessen feelings of isolation for some learners through the creation of an on-line learning forum for learners, volunteers and staff involved in literacies and community learning throughout Shetland. 'Esol-ution' on the other hand, proposes to develop learning resources through the use of digital cameras to make films with ESOL learners of real life situations, such as opening a bank account or using public transport, which can be used to inform other learners.
- 3.117 Information from the projects undertaken in 2004-05 was used to answer some key questions on how ICT can be implemented effectively to support adult literacies learning. A report produced by Learning Connections (2005) provides a positive account of linking ICT with literacies learning. In particular, ICT can attract new literacies learners, providing them with the opportunity to undertake real life tasks such as writing an email or producing a video. Learners were also reported to find it easier to express an ICT objective rather than a literacies objective. However, some projects identified difficulties in attracting sufficient levels of new learners and although increased levels of learner motivation were reported outcomes of using new technologies (this allowed them to learn something new, to translate their work into a 'professional product' and to work as a team), these benefits were accompanied by de-motivation where the technology failed to work effectively.

3.118 The projects demonstrated that ICT can widen the variety of literacies practices undertaken by learners. Beyond the development of ICT skills, learners also undertook literacy tasks such as spell checking, editing their work and using cut and paste tools to structure their work (Learning Connections, 2005). Few projects concentrated specifically on numeracy development. As a result of the group work undertaken through the projects, verbal skills were also reported as a positive benefit of the projects, raising negotiation and discussion skills. Learner autonomy and choice was also perceived to be an outcome of ICT provision, as packages enabled learners to tailor, edit and create their work. Independence was also a result of learners' ability to access the Internet in search of information. Connected to increased levels of learner autonomy and independence, Learning Connections (2005) report a changed role for tutors, who moved towards facilitators of learning. Tutors also encourage more collaborative peer working as a result of ICT. Quality resources were highlighted to be important, giving learners the confidence to use ICT skills outwith the learning environment. Furthermore, Learning Connections recognises that tutors "can feel out of their depth and somewhat undermined by the lack of knowledge and experience of the new technologies". As a result, Learning Connections (2005) suggest that considerable time is required to allow tutors to develop the necessary resources and teaching methods to support ICT literacies learning. Tutors were also reported to be in need of improved technical skills to enable them to cope with and solve technical problems without inflicting any undue inconvenience upon learning. Tutor training would therefore benefit the integration of ICT with literacies learning. Furthermore, tutors reported a need for heightened awareness of how ICT may be used to support learners with health issues or disabilities.

Progress:

- Innovations in ICT and Literacies launched.
- Range of ICT projects undertaken, which has led to the dissemination of good practice.

Measuring Progress

Distance Travelled

3.119 According to the 2005 ALN Partnership End of Year Reports, partnerships do not tend to have tracking systems in place to measure learner progress, making it difficult to determine the progress made. The 2004-06 Action Plans also suggest that there is a need for Partnerships to develop appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure learners are tracked and learning outcomes are evidenced. As a result of this finding, the HMIE (2005) recommends that learning providers improve their methods of monitoring progress, assessing achievement and tracking learners. Due to the difficulties associated with measuring and tracking progress, it may be worthwhile to produce guidance on how this might be best facilitated.

- 3.120 ALNIS (Scottish Executive, 2001) recommends that progress should be measured around learner goals and distance travelled. Distance travelled by the learner at the end of the learning episode is the first element that is measured, taking into account the softer aspect of what the individual feels they have achieved with regards to their learning goals. Secondly, the outcomes of learning are measured, and specifically the difference that learning has made to the individual and his/her family, workplace and community. However, the evidence of progression in terms of distance travelled and outcomes is limited and seems anecdotal, without any substantive evidence of quantified progress, causing difficulties when measuring the success of ALNIS initiatives. Systems for the longitudinal tracking of learners, which would uncover both distance travelled and the outcomes of learning, are not in place. Few partnerships have a mechanism to provide evidence of change in the four areas of life over time; the 2004-06 report stresses that such evidence is essential to the national ALN policy.
- 3.121 Tett et al. (2006) performed a study using a repeated design method in order to capture the progress made by ALN learners. The research reports that the increased level of learners' self confidence as a result of the increased ability to learn led individuals to apply for better jobs or seek wage increases. Learning was also linked to respondents taking increased control over their lives, which reduced the likelihood of unemployment. Other positive outcomes of learning included increased esteem, positive effects upon psychological health, more comfortable with strangers, increased communication skills and feelings of empowerment which led to the ability to take advantage of opportunities. With reference to Tett et al.'s research, it is apparent that progress by learners has been made in terms of soft indicators, establishing the benefits and impact of learning on personal social and work life. Research conducted by the HMIE (2005) also found positive developments for learners since involvement in literacies learning; a majority of learners had moved onto further learning experiences, or were considering doing so. However, both reports have failed to record hard quantitative data regarding numbers progressing to employment or further learning opportunities. Despite the importance of soft indications of progress, it is difficult to inform future policy direction where there is a lack of hard evidence regarding progress.
- 3.122 Guidance directing Partnerships as to how they should track learner progress may be useful to ensure that a valid and consistent approach is developed to measure progress that can be consolidated to inform National progress. Merrifield (1998) argues that to ensure accountability, a means of tracking individuals' learning must be available, demonstrating what they have learned and allowing for comparison across programmes and to assess learning against external standards. Merrifield (1998) argues that there is an important need for external standards or criteria to ensure that methods of assessment meet policy needs. However, care should be taken to ensure that performance measures are not defined too narrowly or broadly. An overly-narrow definition may result in incompatibility between system and individual goals, whereas if defined too broadly a common mission will be difficult to develop (Merrifield, 1998).

Individual Learning Plans – An Appropriate Tool for Measuring Distance Travelled?

- 3.123 Progress is intended to be measured with reference to learner goals, meaning that Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are of considerable importance in understanding the successes of the strategy. Individual learning plans have been suggested as a possible means of measuring distance travelled by learners (ALN Partnerships End of Year Reports, 2005). Recognising this, the Curriculum Framework includes individual learning plans as a central activity in negotiated learning, allowing the learner to set realistic goals, negotiate a learning plan, undertake a learning plan, review and record learning and evaluate progress prior to setting new goals. However, Tett et al.'s (2006) research found that the quality of guidance and support received by learners was weak at entry and during the learning process, particularly with reference to learners' awareness of Individual Learning Plans. Learners were reported to be unaware of the existence of ILPs. Although this does not necessarily mean that ILPs are not being used, the fact that learners are unaware of them raises questions about the level of ownership learners feel towards ILPs and their resulting commitment to undertaking the planning process effectively.
- 3.124 The 2003/04 analysis of the End of Year Reports explained that although all authorities had Individual Learning Plans in place, some had not been aligned between partners. Each authority was also found to be tracking the impact that the initiative had on the four areas of life (work, private, public and educational life), but the focus beyond the learning experience itself was limited to only ten partnerships. The ALN Partnerships End of Year Reports (2005) also suggest that there is a lack of referral back to ILPs, particularly with regards to the quantitative outcomes of individual learning planning, which may be measured to identify progress. Due to the varied uptake of the plans and the likelihood of limited alignment between plans, there are likely to be resulting difficulties if attempts are made to collate progress at a national level. Due to the differences between learners it would be unwise to prescribe the content of plans in definite terms, but it would be useful to require that certain information is gathered through the plans, to enable this to be collated at a national level. To have documented goals and successes towards meeting these goals could, for example be requirements of undertaking the individual learning planning process. Providing guidance on what should constitute an Individual Learning Plan may also prove useful support for tutors, especially as some have been reported as unsure about what information should be recorded within ILPs (HMIE, 2005). It may be useful to establish the extent to which progress has been made towards the ALNIS (Scottish Executive, 2001) recommendation of having an accessible key person within ALN provision to co-ordinate support and guidance to recruit and retain learners. Such an individual may be the missing link between the local use of Individual Learning Plans and the ability to collate evidence of distance travelled at a national level.

Longitudinal Study: Lessons from Portland

3.125 The ambiguity surrounding distance travelled and more general questions regarding adult literacy and numeracy practices and processes may be informed by Reder and Strawn's (2001) research project titled, Longitudinal Study of Adult Learning (LSAL), which addresses four key research questions:

- to what extent do adults' literacy abilities continue to develop after they are out of school?;
- what are adult learners' patterns of participation over time in literacy training and education? In other learning contexts?;
- what life experiences are associated with adult literacy development? How do formally organised basic skills programmes contribute to these learning trajectories? Workplace training? Other contexts and activities?;
- what are the impacts of adult literacies development on social and economic outcomes?

3.126 The research has been conducted in five waves, from 1998 until 2005, with a high response rate being retained during each round. Multiple outcomes are tracked over this time, including basic skills, changing patterns of literacy and learning practices, and changes in a range of social and economic activities. In order to track these outcomes, both hard and soft indicators are being gathered; for example employment and earnings data are collected and improvement in skills is being measured through testing and qualitative questioning. Once fully reported, important lessons may be taken from this research, specifically with regards to how social and economic outcomes of ALN learning have been measured and it may be worth considering how this research could be replicated within the Scottish context.

Progress:

- Research has highlighted the positive results of ALN learning, such as increased self-confidence.

Gap in Evidence:

- Longitudinal learner progress is not being tracked and as a result, the outcomes of learning are not being evaluated and clear evidence of progress is not available.

Areas in Need of Further Action:

- Longitudinal tracking procedures are not in place.
- The level of ownership learners feel towards Individual Learning Plans is questionable.
- Consideration should be taken of the possibility of aligning the content of individual learning plans, in order to allow information to be collated at a national level.
- ALNIS recommended that a key person within Partnerships co-ordinated support and guidance, but such individuals are not yet in place.

Progress, Gaps and Further Action

Progress

- 3.127 Approximately 100,000 new learners have entered ALN provision between 2001 and 2005, highlighting significant achievement. Indeed, considering the low priority and lack of funding traditionally awarded to adult literacy and numeracy (prior to 2001), considerable progress has been made. Scotland has also been praised for adopting a social practice model which is learner-centred, operates as a system that learns (see Merrifield, 2005) and has been informed and developed through considerable research and consultation with learners/practitioners.
- 3.128 Developments have been made with regards to each of the four key goals laid out by the 2001 ALNIS report (Scottish Executive). Under the goal of achieving national leadership underpinned by local action, a crucial development has been the establishment of Learning Connections, which has forged partnerships to co-ordinate national projects, undertaken research to inform progress and developed a resource base for ALN teaching and learning. Flexibility has also been a distinguishing feature of the Scottish system, where the infrastructure has permitted local partnerships to be reflexive to local needs and develop strategies on the basis of these needs. Partnerships have been commended for their learner-centred approaches to ALN learning and the increase in cross-partnership working is another notable development.
- 3.129 The development of the Curriculum Framework has been recognised as a key success under the goal of developing a quality learning experience, providing tutors with support and examples of how ALN teaching may be approached. Significant developments have also been made towards the objective of developing staff towards national standards, with the establishment of the benchmark statements for the Teaching Qualification: Adult Literacies, much continuous professional development for tutors and the development of a PDA and ITALL guidance pack for tutor assistants. Promoting a system that learns with a learner-centred focus, the Curriculum Framework has also allowed adult literacy and numeracy provision to develop organically, catering for specific learners' needs. Furthermore, learners' voices have been heard through research and through the establishment of learner forums at partnership level, allowing them the opportunity to inform local strategy. Developing as a system that learns has also been reflected through the considerable research that has been undertaken and the dissemination of ALN learning and teaching materials that has originated primarily as a result of the Pathfinder Projects.

- 3.130 Despite the difficulties associated with engaging employers in ALN, a notable development has been the Big Plus for Business awareness-raising campaign. Targeting hard to reach groups has also been reported as strong, with Learning Connections focusing particularly on Youth Literacies, learners with specific learning difficulties and ESOL learners.

Gaps

- 3.131 Discussion suggests that although considerable developments have been made since 2001, a number of challenges have been presented which have often stifled the achievement of key goals. Challenges with regards to measuring demand and progress have, for example, left a gap in terms of baseline evidence and accurate reflections of achievement. The absence of appropriate longitudinal tracking systems, in particular, has raised difficulties in identifying the outcomes of ALN learning. Although Individual Learning Plans have been considered as a possible means of measuring learner progress, because the plans have not been aligned between individual learners it would be difficult to collate progress at a national level. This is perhaps made increasingly difficult by the absence of a key individual within partnerships who is responsible for co-ordinating support and guidance.
- 3.132 (Scottish Executive, 2001) also pointed towards a need for further research to evaluate the success of the strategy this is also an area requiring further work.

Further Action

- 3.133 Although developments have been made with regards to each of the four key goals laid out by the 2001 ALNIS report (Scottish Executive), disappointments are also distinguishable for each. Progress in terms of national leadership and local action, for example, has been accompanied by concerns regarding the sustainability of funding, availability of resources and the difficulties of cross-partnerships working. The success of establishing a Curriculum Framework under the goal of establishing a quality learning experience has also been accompanied by challenges. Tensions exist between the responsibility placed on tutors and the current characteristics of the ALN teaching workforce, which is disproportionately composed of part-time and voluntary tutors. The demand for effective training and professional development for tutors has therefore become a key determinant of the success of adult literacy and numeracy provision.

- 3.134 The goal of promoting awareness has been endorsed through the pathfinder projects, which demonstrated that stigma is often attached to ALN learning especially within the workplace. Although awareness-raising campaigns such as the Big Plus have been positive, securing and sustaining employer engagement has been reported as a considerable challenge for adult literacy and numeracy in Scotland. Furthermore, the extent to which the Scottish Executive and other major private/public organisations promote ALN learning among employees is uncertain, despite this being an ALNIS (Scottish Executive, 2001) recommendation. Another issue is the increasing difficulty that is associated with attracting new learners who are more likely to come from hard to reach groups.
- 3.135 Developments towards the promotion of numeracy and ICT within ALN learning are also recognisable, but considerable issues remain concerning the support mechanisms in place to facilitate such learning provision and the proficiency of tutors to teach these areas. Furthermore, numeracy remains an area that is under-researched and which is sometimes not considered in favour of a focus on literacy.
- 3.136 Many of the goals and recommendations proposed by the ALNIS report (Scottish Executive, 2001) are long-term aspirations which will be achieved relatively slowly over a period of time, particularly with regards to adopting longitudinal methods to measure learner progress. Other challenges have developed as a result of structural issues (e.g. the make-up of the ALN teaching workforce has had an impact on the development of a professional of the workforce). However, the discussion has highlighted that considerable progress has been achieved in a five year period, especially when reflecting on the nature of ALN provision prior to 2001 which was characterised by low levels of funding and guidance.

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4 EVIDENCE FROM ALNIS STAKEHOLDER EVENTS

Background to ALNIS Stakeholder Events

4.1 This Section of the report contains views expressed by stakeholders during facilitated workshops. It should be noted that, while this is an evidence report, it does not guarantee that the contents (e.g. expressed views of stakeholders) are factually accurate. Stakeholders from a wide range of roles, experiences and views attended these workshops, bringing a wide range of different perspectives and knowledge.

4.2 Stakeholders from ALN partnerships and other interested parties across Scotland were invited to attend four events. Attendance was as follows:

- Event One: Glasgow (12 May 2006) – 60 participants;
- Event Two: Perth (16 May 2006) – 26 participants;
- Event Three: Edinburgh (24 May 2006) – 54 participants;
- Event Four Glasgow (1 June 2006) – 67 participants.

4.3 In total, there were 207 participants across the four events. Each event followed the same format, to provide consistency. Events covered three key areas:

- an ALNIS funding session – each session commenced with an overview of current ALNIS funding mechanisms and processes, with the opportunity for questions and comments;
- facilitated workshops – pre-event consultation with ALN partnerships and other interested parties provided a framework for a range of topics to be explored. Topics selected were the most frequently mentioned and/or those which merited further stakeholder consultation. Participants chose two workshop sessions in which to take part, over the course of each event. Prior to the workshop sessions, participants were asked to consider sub-themes, areas for discussion, questions or particular view-points aligned to the workshops they had chosen to attend. These issues were noted by participants on post-it stickers and attached to flipchart papers with the headings below. These post-its offered an agenda and a range of prompts which were then used in the workshop sessions. The workshop topics were:
 - partnership roles – including the roles of national and local partners; colleges and other partners;
 - quality of provision – including frameworks; ICT and infrastructure;
 - workforce / staffing – including training, short-term contracts and the effectiveness of workforce development structures;

- partnership distribution of resources – including methodology, effectiveness and shared responsibility;
 - measuring progress – including distance travelled, individual learning plans (ILPs) and national targets;
 - engaging learners – including raising awareness, terminology and the ‘hardest-to-reach’ groups;
 - literacies in other contexts – including ESOL (English for speakers of other languages), workplace literacies and numeracy;
 - different environments – including additional support needs (ASN), youth literacies and family literacies;
- suggested future ALNIS issues – at the end of each event, participants were asked to complete a one-page pro-forma asking about the most important ALNIS issue and expressing a vision of how the ALNIS landscape might look by 2011.

Workshop Sessions

- 4.4 Each workshop session was facilitated with all key discussion themes captured and reviewed with workshop attendees before the end of each session. This ensured that all key points were noted for inclusion in this evidence report. These key points have been analysed and structured against the OF.
- 4.5 Given the qualitative nature of the event facilitation, it is not appropriate to highlight the key themes and priorities by quantifying their presence. This is because each workshop session was guided by the dynamic group interaction. This makes absolute comparisons across each group setting or each workshop inappropriate. Rather, core themes which were emphasised and which emerged as patterns across the workshop events have been highlighted in this section of the report.

Section Structure

- 4.6 This Section describes the key findings from the four stakeholder events which were held in May and early June 2006. In keeping with the structure of the OF, ALNIS ‘progress’ issues are detailed before ‘Way Forward’ issues.
- 4.7 Issues have been summarised according to whether they were noted in the funding session, the workshop sessions or the ‘future’ pro-forma session of each workshop.

Evidencing Progress: Funding Sessions

The Routing and Control of ALN Funding

- 4.8 The current process of routing and control of funding appears to work best when ALN partnerships are effectively positioned within a clearly articulated funding route from national to local levels. In these circumstances ALN priorities are embedded in Community Planning strategies that are understood and supported by all partners. This is a feature of maturing partnership structures and an established, effective community planning process.
- 4.9 However, despite some successful examples of routing and control, the funding process from national to local level was an area of particular concern to stakeholders. The Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) were considered the legitimate distributors of ALN funds, but it was noted that LAs were playing a decisive role in the transfer/distribution of funds. Where the ALN voice was less powerful and less embedded in the CPP strategy, there were concerns that LAs were diverting or top-slicing ALN funds for more general purposes.
- 4.10 While such diversions are permissible under the rules governing grant-aided expenditure (GAE), ALN stakeholders felt this undermined the value of the ALN agenda and impacted upon the ALN partnership's ability to address this agenda.
- 4.11 A clearly articulated and transparent routing of ALN funding was rarely evident across local areas (i.e. national funding transferred to the LA, then onto the CPP, then to the CLD (community learning and development) partnership, before arriving with the ALN partnership). Financial control decisions were made through this journey of funding, which were often not agreed beforehand with the ALN partnership.
- 4.12 Clearly, issues of routing and control of funding impact upon an ALN partnership's ability to either plan for the future or to address pre-planned aims and objectives, where actual funding differs from anticipated funding.
- 4.13 Mixed views were expressed on options for future funding routing. However, there was implicit recognition that LAs – with their statutory duty for co-ordinating and leading the CP process – offered the most appropriate funding route. Some partnerships noted that they would benefit from advice on how to address local level negotiations concerning ALN funding.

ALN Partnership ‘Scale’ Challenges

- 4.14 Smaller partnerships noted that scale issues often posed challenges in sustaining local structures. This is because core infrastructural requirements – in terms of staffing – are consistent across ALN partnerships. However, the resource available to deliver differs from smaller to larger partnerships. Rural partnerships also noted that they faced similar scale challenges, based on the size of the geographical areas they serve. It was generally felt that national funding decisions did not take into account the scale challenges faced by some partnerships.

The Challenges of a Short-Term Funding System

- 4.15 A common concern was the duration of national funding. It was generally felt that the annual funding system imposed a short-term approach to planning, staffing and delivery of ALN work. Partnerships felt constrained from making longer-term decisions in the absence of secure funding. The effects of this on capacity and effectiveness are magnified because change in the ALN sector is not rapid (as evidenced in Section 2). It is perceived that longer term funding would facilitate greater strategic planning whilst also enabling more secure staffing and better quality of delivery.

The Way Forward: Funding Sessions

Ring-Fenced Funding: National to Local

- 4.16 It was generally felt by stakeholders that longer-term planning and effective delivery of ALN services would be better protected through a ring-fenced funding approach. This would make clear the funds which ALN partnerships could expect to receive. A few ALN partnerships appeared to be operating already with this principle, based on clarity of funding and no undue top-slicing of ALN funds, to be diverted to other local areas.

Ring-Fenced Funding: For National Projects

- 4.17 There was no clear consensus among stakeholders concerning how nationally led projects / initiatives might be funded more effectively in the future. The option to ring-fence for the protection and assurance of delivery of such projects was not unanimously supported. While some stakeholders felt that such ring-fencing would provide the operational capacity to deliver on pre-determined national priorities, others felt that the choosing of such priorities was likely to generate a range of differing opinions and that local level flexibility in determining local priorities might be eroded.

- 4.18 If national project ring-fencing become a future feature of the ALNIS funding infrastructure, it was felt that this should impact on partnerships in a proportionate way - i.e. the same proportion of their overall funding should be allocated to national projects.
- 4.19 It was also suggested that national level priorities might be accompanied by separate and additional funding, in order not to place undue influence on local funding decisions and activity.
- 4.20 Key issues for future consideration were:
- **the various advantages and disadvantages of having a greater national steer of ALN funding** - the advantages include achieving greater consistency across the ALN landscape and building critical mass and strength of both ALN infrastructure and activity. The disadvantages include reduced scope for local flexibility to address national and local priorities, potential tensions with wider local planning mechanisms (such as CPP) and potential challenges in creating sufficient incentives for 'buy-in' from local stakeholders;
 - **the routing of funding from national to local levels** – this requires a strategic response at both national and partnership levels, with clear and accountable links to the CPP. The value placed on ALN activity should be articulated by the CPP, and the accountability mechanisms which underpin this should be widely communicated;
 - **the allocation and security of local ALN funding is based on early year plans** - this does not allow for any changes / developments which take place during the year and which might have financial implications. Therefore, flexibility to adjust plans in relation to local development needs to be less restricted;
 - **consideration should be given to how any under-spend at a local level might be allocated to longer-term, local ALN development work** – as opposed to removal of such under-spend.

Evidencing ALNIS Progress: Workshops

Overview

- 4.21 A great deal of evidence was gathered during the workshop sessions. From the eight topics which were covered in the facilitated workshop sessions, ten themes emerged. Under each of these themes, important progress areas were noted by participants, as were future development areas. These themes are:
- **Local Partnerships** – local operation and collaboration, as well as membership;

- **National Partners** – the roles of the Scottish Executive and Learning Connections;
- **Practice sharing** – how ALN partnerships and practitioners learn and develop from existing practice;
- **Workforce** – how staffing issues impact upon local planning and delivery;
- **Training and development** – the future needs of the ALN partnerships;
- **Monitoring and Evaluation** – addressing the on-going challenges of developing user-friendly and meaningful approaches;
- **Numeracy** – the on-going need to address supply and demand of numeracy learning;
- **Workplace** – engaging employers and developing joined-up approaches to delivery;
- **ESOL** – articulating the fit between ALN and ESOL and supporting local level delivery;
- **Other** – including renewed emphasis on the Social Practice model and ethos which underpins ALNIS; and, national policy positioning of the ALNIS Refresh.

4.22 The above themes have been cross-referenced against the OF. The key evidence findings below follow the structure of this Framework. In addition, a range of ‘effective practice’ examples have been reported. Since these were self-reported, it cannot be ascertained if these examples truly constitute effective practice. However, they do offer useful insights into a range of different project initiatives which are taking place across ALN partnerships.

4.23 This section also contains details of ‘minority views’. These are issues which were noted during the workshop sessions but were not prevalent across all workshops. These are reflected separately, at the end of Section 4 (page 162).

The Four Key Goals

National Leadership and Effective Local Action

- 4.24 Stakeholders called for stronger national guidance, to assist with local strategic planning. This guidance was felt necessary in order to address the current climate where there is perceived to be very different local ALN partnership interpretations of national priorities. This guidance should set out the priorities for local activity, in terms of the operation of ALN partnerships and priority target groups of learners. In addition, stakeholders called for dissemination of Learning Connection's strategic plans (i.e. those plans identifying the key priority areas for the forthcoming year) and work plans (i.e. specific details and timescales governing projects and activities) in advance of local planning timescales, in order to ensure appropriate alignment.
- 4.25 There was an expressed need for a clearer and more comprehensive approach to monitoring and evaluation, which would allow for better local planning of data collection. Guidance in this area was deemed crucial. Linked to this, stakeholders noted that the Scottish Executive needs to demonstrate a clearer purpose in data collection and show how data is being / will be used.
- 4.26 There was strong demand for a national overview of progress, following submission of local plans and progress. This was an area where stakeholders felt very little information existed.
- 4.27 Stakeholders also noted that the Scottish Executive should emphasise the national commitment to the Social Practice model and how this will continue to guide Scotland's ALN culture and ethos as well as local level practice. Implicit within this model is scope for local flexibility to address national priorities.
- 4.28 The short-term nature of funding was a key concern for stakeholders. This was felt to spill over into job security, affecting workforce stability, capacity, motivation and – ultimately – quality of delivery.
- 4.29 There was some confusion at a local level about the roles and responsibilities of Learning Connections and ETLLED, which could helpfully be clarified. The majority of stakeholders expressed support for the entity of Learning Connections, and the role this organisation is intended to play. Key priorities were felt to be: clarity and support to ALN partnerships; increased role in promoting partnership working; and emphasising the need for partnerships to invest in partnership development (e.g. reviewing effectiveness, valuing partner contributions and ensuring that the collective partnership adds more value than each individual partner might otherwise do).

- 4.30 Learning Connections should act as broker to bring together the literacies agenda with new partners and contexts, as these emerge through the evolving ALN landscape. The youth literacies example was cited as effective practice in this area.

System That Learns

- 4.31 The ‘Communities of Practice in Adult Literacies’ (COPAL) was cited as a good enabler of allowing partnerships to share information and learn from practice. However, there was some view expressed that this forum has taken a long time to set up and is a complex interactive tool.
- 4.32 The CLAN Edinburgh online forum was also cited as effective practice.

Quality Learning Experience

- 4.33 A strong quality infrastructure was felt to be a pre-requisite to achieving a quality learning experience. There was wide acknowledgement that the quality of tutoring has improved significantly over the last five years.
- 4.34 While the development of both LiC and HGIOCLD were welcomed, there was some concern that actual application of these frameworks – individually and collectively - was unclear. There was a call for greater clarity of how they apply to all practitioners (including volunteers and part-time staff), as well as application of these tools for on-going continuous improvement. Some partnerships appear to have tailored the LiC framework for local conditions.
- 4.35 There was felt to be a greater need to monitor quality of provision and a call for benchmarking, which would allow partnerships to review their quality mechanisms (and outcomes) in relation to the work of other partnerships. Dispersal of ALN provision was felt to be inevitable, given the breadth and scope of ALN partnerships. However, this was felt to have a detrimental effect on the monitoring of quality at a local level.
- 4.36 It was also noted that ALN courses and projects require more robust monitoring for their ALN content. Some examples were provided where local courses / projects had bid for ALN money to support their delivery but where the actual ALN content within these courses was negligible.

Promoting Awareness

- 4.37 Good progress has been made under the banner of the Big Plus campaigns but stakeholders felt that national and local campaigns need to be better aligned – e.g. more advance notice of when campaigns are taking place, tracking what actually happens at follow-up stage, and what this results in. This alignment includes campaign branding – i.e. ensuring that local and national branding are the same and / or complement each other. Where these were different, this was felt to be confusing for learners and practitioners, alike.
- 4.38 Word-of-mouth marketing was felt to offer the best route to awareness-raising and credible endorsement of the value of ALN learning.
- 4.39 There was some concern noted that effective marketing often leads to greater demand which cannot be satisfied due to supply-side factors.
- 4.40 In-roads have been made with wider engagement of associated partners (e.g. community development workers) in the spotter and referrer roles. While some stakeholders felt that this should be more widely promoted across a greater range of partners (e.g. social work, education), others felt that a poor grounding in the spotter and referrer role could often be counter-productive, with strong connotations of a deficit literacies model.
- 4.41 There was felt to be a need to make wider use of existing mechanisms to engage a wider range of practitioners in the literacies agenda. This needs to be under-pinned by clarity of where respective objectives and agendas meet (e.g. joint health improvement plans - JHIPs). Local mapping would identify where such links / mechanisms exist. Partnerships then need to forge links with such entities.

The 21 ALNIS Recommendations

- 4.42 We present below the link between workshop evidence and the 21 ALNIS recommendations. The evidence gathered did not align equally to all ALNIS recommendations.
- ***Recommendation 1: The national strategy should be actively overseen by Ministers and co-ordinated and monitored within the Scottish Executive*** – stakeholders called for greater feedback of strategy progress, following submission of partnership end year reports (EYRs);

- ***Recommendation 2: That the location of the 'development engine' to drive the creation of quality adult literacy and numeracy provision should be identified by International Literacy Day (8th September) 2001*** – clearly, this has already been achieved and – as previously noted – there was a general view among stakeholders that the ‘development engine’ – LC – had made a strong start in driving the ALN agenda and significant inroads to developing the agenda for the future;
- ***Recommendation 3: The Scottish Executive should develop guidance on literacy and numeracy for other national organisations that have a stake in the development of adult literacy and numeracy*** – this area was felt to require significant development. Some stakeholders noted that partners – who had limited knowledge of the ALNIS agenda or their potential role – often used ALN partnerships for signposting clients who had more complex needs and where literacies support was often not immediately appropriate. In addition, it was noted that HMIE inspections often lacked a strong sense of the ALN agenda – its ethos and approach to working with learners. It was perceived that not enough value was placed on the social practice model, probably due to a lack of understanding of how this works in practice. Some stakeholders noted that a significant opportunity cost was evident due to a current lack of joint working with partners who are ideally positioned to support the ALN agenda;
- ***Recommendation 4: Accountability for local development, funding, monitoring and targets across three sectors (community and the voluntary sector, further education and the workplace) be given to local authorities as co-ordinators of Community Learning Strategies*** – the following issues were noted in relation to this recommendation:
 - the LA could often over-rule the ALN partnership in determining priority groups for targeting services;
 - the relative balance of power within the ALN partnership – where this was skewed towards the LA, this caused tensions within the partnership;
 - despite the existence of local structures, some stakeholders felt that ALN partnerships were insufficiently linked to the wider work of CLD partnerships, thus reducing scope for generating a critical mass of support and sometimes duplicating services;
 - there was a call for an audit of ALN partnerships to review and share practice concerning funding arrangements, levels of joint working with CLD partnerships and CP partnerships, profile and accountability mechanisms.
- ***Recommendation 5: That all services and courses should be provided free to learners*** – this was not an area which was not widely discussed by stakeholders. However, there was clear agreement that this had been achieved;

- **Recommendation 6: Awareness training and screening processes should be developed to improve the identification of need within communities, workplaces and post school education** – such processes were felt to be lacking in ESOL provision;
- **Recommendation 7: Common approaches should be developed to specialised guidance and assessment and producing individual learning plans** – while clearer guidance was sought on the use of the ILP, there was no unanimous call for this to be standardised. Equally, there was a general request not to standardise forms and mechanisms for M&E;
- **Recommendation 8: That the quality of programmes should be improved through a new curriculum framework, a national on-line databank and resource system and by establishing four pathfinder projects on courses and programmes** – stakeholders were unclear about whether a national databank existed, but there was a perceived lack of ICT infrastructure developments. There was limited knowledge of dissemination of findings from pathfinders. Stakeholders noted that the curriculum framework was a significant development. It was also noted that a staff development framework was required, to underpin this;
- **Recommendation 9: That the 'development engine' should lead the development of e-learning in support of literacy and numeracy** – e-learning as a vehicle for engaging ALN learners was deemed positive since there was perceived to be less stigma attached to admitting learning needs in this area, which could engage those with literacies needs. However, it was also noted that e-learning should not be used to deliver literacies learning by stealth. There were some examples of effective practice in use of e-learning, for example, through embedding e-learning in libraries in Highland. There was a call for more national level resources to be produced through this medium, such as CD-Roms, as used by learndirect Scotland. Many stakeholders noted variability in local ICT infrastructure to support e-learning. However, where the ICT infrastructure was in place there were occasions when other barriers prevented e-learning (e.g. tutor confidence in using this medium and part-time, volunteer or sessional workers not having access to IT);
- **Recommendation 10: That the measurement of progress should be based around learner goals and distance travelled, building on the core skills framework and Progress File** – there was overwhelming support for the importance of this recommendation, despite the challenges for M&E which it poses;
- **Recommendation 11:** – there were some ambiguities concerning whether 'key contacts' play the same role as 'key persons'. It was felt that the key contact role required review and could operate more effectively. This role should be focused on quality of provision and on-going review of how local targets are being met;

- ***Recommendation 12: Specialist information and advice should be provided to support inclusive and effective provision for all learners*** – it was felt that this target can only be achieved where a strong understanding of local needs exists, which is achieved through effective local planning. In addition, it was noted that a tailored approach to supporting learners is both resource-intensive and time-intensive;
- ***Recommendation 13: Local authorities, colleges, voluntary organisations and workplace providers should all integrate the quality framework in 'Literacies in the Community: Resources for Practitioners and Managers' within their existing arrangements for reviewing progress and quality*** – the LiC framework was generally felt to provide a useful overarching framework. However, it was felt to be insufficiently detailed to address local needs. Partnerships had, in turn, produced local versions of these and there was now felt to be a patchwork emerging of different versions of LiC. It was unclear whether this was a good thing and could have negative effects on consistency and overall quality. Some stakeholders also expressed doubts over whether partnership staff would be able to apply the LiC framework and that part-time, sessional and volunteer staff were often removed from such mechanisms. It was suggested that a review of how the LiC is being applied should be undertaken, to determine if it is fit for purpose and being integrated across other existing partner mechanisms;
- ***Recommendation 14: National training strategy should provide national training standards for all staff and volunteers whose roles relate to literacy and numeracy tuition and a new qualification for specialist literacy and numeracy practitioners*** – new qualifications had been achieved (ITALL, TQAL) but it was felt that much more training was needed to support delivery of ALN in more specialised areas (such as ASN) which were not covered by ITALL. It was also noted that a streamlining of CPD routes was needed since both ALN partnerships and Learning Connections were developing these areas but with no apparent lead;
- ***Recommendation 15: Staff and volunteers in organisations providing literacy and numeracy tuition should meet the national standards by 2005*** – this recommendation remains outstanding;
- ***Recommendation 16: The national strategy, as it develops, be informed by and responsive to research and consultation with learners*** – stakeholders felt that a more open dialogue with learners was missing and that a national learner forum could address this. There was also felt to be a need to increase efforts to target harder-to-reach learners;
- ***Recommendation 17: Four pathfinder projects should be established to raise awareness and stimulate demand for literacy and numeracy*** – stakeholders were aware of the pathfinders but not of any dissemination activity of findings from the evaluation work or any wider awareness of the work of the pathfinders;

- ***Recommendation 18: The Scottish Executive and other major public and private sector employers should take the lead in helping individuals retain and develop their skills*** – there was felt to be a need for greater efforts in developing ALN learner progression routes, particularly through linkages with SQA for those wishing to pursue qualifications;
- ***Recommendation 19: Capacity should be more than doubled within three years, with the funding provided through local authorities, ensuring the expansion of capacity across all sectors and the targeting of priority groups*** – while it was noted that the skills and qualifications of the existing workforce has increased, there are deemed to be a range of factors which impinge upon increasing capacity:
 - there is an unclear national picture of the numbers of sessional, temporary, part-time and volunteer staff operating in the ALN environment – it is, therefore, difficult to ascertain their skills needs and to project how these might be met in the future;
 - community-based tutors were felt to be unfamiliar with the employer environment and would need significant support to be able to deliver learning in workplace settings;
 - local funding arrangements could help or hinder how staff build capacity – much of this depended on whether funding allocated for staff development and capacity building was core or partnership funding;
 - it was also noted that volunteers are often lost to the ALN field when they are not called upon or used effectively;
 - the dispersed nature of the workforce was also felt to be a significant barrier in building capacity and critical mass;
- ***Recommendation 20: £18.5m should be allocated through local authorities to Community Learning Strategy partnerships to complement existing capacity and assist around 80,000 learners over the next 3 years*** – stakeholder views in relation to this recommendation were predominantly focused on learner numbers. it was felt that options for group learning could be more readily exploited (e.g. targeting midwives and pregnant women). However, it was noted that offering one hour per week to a learner would be unlikely to support their ALN needs in any significant way, and that too much focus on quantity could affect quality. Further barriers to increasing learner numbers were noted where demand outstripped supply, particularly in relation to ESOL. Some stakeholders noted that the incentive to increase the number of learners needs to be balanced with prioritising groups of learners, otherwise the harder-to-reach would not be targeted;

- ***Recommendation 21: That priority is given in the allocation of funding to the establishment of a strong national development engine, a national training strategy and 8 pathfinder projects*** – the setting up of Learning Connections has been achieved and the training strategy is currently being addressed. As noted earlier, there was limited knowledge of the work of the pathfinders amongst individuals from the stakeholder events.

The Wider Infrastructure of Delivery

Dispersed Provision

- 4.43 Given the multi-faceted landscape of literacies provision, there was felt to be significant dispersal of services across local areas and delivery through many agencies. The co-ordination and management of these is an on-going challenge.
- 4.44 Rural partnerships were felt to have very specific needs which are often overlooked – e.g. geographical spread which poses challenges for learner access and generating a critical mass of provision.

National Guidance on Pay

- 4.45 This was felt to be necessary to provide some alignment and parity across partnerships, where considerable differences were felt to exist, in terms of remuneration for the same jobs.

ICT Infrastructure

- 4.46 Some general concerns were expressed about ICT infrastructure, and a general lack of consistency regarding the priority afforded to ICT across partnerships; differing quality; and differing access to learners. It was suggested that a ‘minimum specification’ should exist to achieve a more consistent ICT infrastructure at local levels. A gap analysis, thereafter, would evidence and highlight gaps.

Gaps

Measuring Progress

- 4.47 This was the area which was felt to merit the most focus for future development of ALNIS. Key elements were:

- **developing credible and uncomplicated measures for distance travelled** – this was a key concern expressed across all workshops. Partnerships noted that the measures used to record work with learners fail to capture the essence of genuine progress. There is felt to be an over-reliance on data capture which prioritises numbers of learners, time spent with learners and other quantitative measures. While these are useful, there is felt to be a need to prioritise the value of qualitative measures which detail the journey of learning and distance travelled. Such measures are likely to include confidence, self-esteem and the views of the learner. There is felt to be little current scope to capture or aggregate such information. A national commitment to investigate this area for future monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was deemed to be a priority;
- **achieving an acceptable balance of the use of hard and soft measures** – in line with the above, there was a recognised need for flexibility in how data might best be captured and there is still clearly a role for quantitative data collection and analysis;
- **guidance on the use of ILPs** – while there was broad consensus that ILPs are used in partnerships to guide and support learner progress, there were different versions of the tool and its wider uses. Stakeholders cautioned against an over-reliance on the ILP to dictate learning but there was felt to be need for national guidance to outline: 1) what ILPs should be used for; 2) how they can be used; 3) their general content; 4) the relationship between the ILP and partnership level M&E activity;
- **relevance of measures** – a lack of clarity exists concerning what can be ‘counted’ as an ALN learning experience. Some stakeholders noted that they would not count learners who took part in sessions of less than two hours, while others would count such episodes. There was also differing practice for taster sessions and how these might be accounted for in tutor time and resource. This lack of clarity, and different reporting practices, means that an inaccurate picture of learning activity is being reported across some partnerships;
- **lack of clarity concerning who asks for which types of monitoring and evaluation data and why it is needed** – many stakeholders were unclear about reporting requirements at the partnership level and how – if at all – these differed from national reporting requirements. In some cases, two different sets of data were being produced with no clear alignment between them, or understanding of what this reporting information was used for;
- **projecting learner figures** - stakeholders noted the challenge behind projecting learner figures. There appeared to be limited evidence of robust and on-going local activity which could evidence local need for ALN support and how this might be addressed through supply. As such, projections were deemed to be spurious and – in many cases – unreliable. Some stakeholders noted that they addressed this by under-estimating future targets, in an attempt to manage the risk behind unreliable projections;

- **lack of feedback concerning M&E data** – stakeholders noted that both local and national feedback (following M&E submissions) rarely took place. This was especially the case for national level data. It was suggested that mechanisms could be put into place which could offer feedback on the usefulness of the local data, a level of benchmarking against other partnerships and an aggregated, national picture of progress, concerning ALN learning activity, progress and successes.

4.48 There was a strong call for reconciling M&E with the social practice model. Stakeholders felt that this issue has been allowed to drift. Of particular importance, there is a need to demonstrate that effective and robust M&E mechanisms and the social practice model are not mutually exclusive concepts. There was a general fear that the social practice model would become lost in an endeavour to develop more robust M&E tools. This has, perhaps, prevented the development of M&E tools which are fit for purpose.

4.49 This has also impacted upon the ability of partnerships to produce a reliable overview of what they have achieved. Key barriers to achieving this have been an over-reliance on producing information which is not deemed to be truly comprehensive in demonstrating progress.

Workforce Capacity

4.50 General concerns were expressed about on-going recruitment, lack of funding and training / CPD, and contractual arrangements for ALN staff. These were all felt to impact negatively upon workforce capacity.

4.51 Lack of clarity existed concerning the future and / or the sustained role of volunteers. Concerns were expressed that there are few incentives to become a volunteer, when both status and access to T&D are often poor. In addition, the roles which volunteers play across different partnerships seem to vary quite significantly – e.g. tutors, development and support workers.

4.52 It was felt inappropriate to use volunteer staff as a ‘stop-gap’ in periods of high demand for learning services.

T&D

4.53 The gaps noted below are likely to be addressed through the forthcoming T&D strategy:

- **the difference between ITALL and TQAL** – it was felt by many stakeholders that the level of TQAL was too high to make this a smooth progression from ITALL. It was suggested that a practitioner network focused on reviewing national qualifications could assist in adapting this;
- **staff flexibility to work and train** – many stakeholders noted that current roles and remits, a lack of APL, and inflexible training provision offer little scope for staff to engage with T&D. This is a key barrier to career progression and can be addressed at a partnership level, through support and staff management and at a national policy level;
- **meeting the needs of staff with different roles**, including staff in related fields and recognising their different training/qualification needs.

Lessons Learned

Workplace Literacies

4.54 The key issues raised here were:

- recognition that employer needs and learner needs are not necessarily the same thing. Therefore, tailoring the ‘literacies offering’ to each has to be different;
- further clarity is needed of how the social practice model aligns with workplace literacies. There was suggestion that tutors operating within a workplace setting may be more inclined to adopt a deficit approach;
- learning engagement and continuity within the workplace has been found to be successful where the workplace is used to engage learners but the community is used as the location for learning to take place.

ESOL Learners

4.55 ESOL was noted as an area which required significant review, in light of perceived ambiguities, concerning eligibility criteria. The ESOL funding criteria were widely recognised as being difficult to apply. In practice, this has resulted in different interpretations of eligibility across the partnerships, and the emergence of the following issues:

- literacies support being provided to ESOL learners in English – most partnerships took the view that eligibility for learning was based on learners having literacies needs in their first language. However, proving that such needs exist was deemed to be virtually impossible due to tutors, themselves, not being fluent in these languages. In any case, learning support provided is restricted to English. As such, many stakeholders felt that the eligibility criteria (based on first language literacy needs) was unnecessary;

- others noted that the distinction between language difficulties and literacy needs should act as the acid test to determine whether literacies learning for ESOL students should take place. As noted above, tutors are generally unable to diagnose first language needs. This is a key reason why some partnerships offer a ‘free for all’ service to ESOL learners, as far as resources allow;
- partnership capacity to provide support to ESOL learners – this was often restricted, due to tutor numbers and / or foreign language skills. This was especially the case in partnership areas where there had been recent and considerable increases in the numbers of migrant workers;
- some stakeholders noted that more stringent application of the eligibility criteria would mean that some learners would be overlooked, who might benefit from such learning.

4.56 Most stakeholders noted that there is currently insufficient national priority attached to ESOL. In addition, general stakeholder awareness of plans for a forthcoming ESOL strategy was poor

4.57 It was noted that ALN funding should be supplemented by a wider range of policy area funding (e.g. social inclusion, citizenship, and employability) in order to prioritise ESOL support sufficiently. Other gaps for ESOL learners were felt to exist in the following areas:

- insufficient free provision – some partnerships noted that charging does take place;
- lack of employer engagement with ESOL agenda and the need to involve Sector Skills Councils (SSCs);
- more informal ESOL learning provision needed to support conversation classes;
- more consideration needed for progression routes for ESOL learners.

The ALNIS Stakeholder ‘Experience’

4.58 Stakeholders noted that ALN partnerships, themselves, have made very significant progress since 2001, with many strong and genuine examples of effective partnership working. This, however, is balanced with the on-going challenge of sustaining successful partnerships.

4.59 Practitioners tended to feel ‘part of something’, with an increasing sense of community. This has been generated over a long period of time but more so since the ALNIS strategy. Also more connectivity is felt to be taking place with other colleagues (e.g. CLD) and with other disciplines (e.g. education and health).

The Social Practice Model

- 4.60 Stakeholders saw the ALNIS ‘Refresh’ as an opportunity for the Scottish Executive to re-commit to learner-led learning and to define how the social practice model translates into delivery of ALN learning and measuring progress.
- 4.61 Stakeholders also felt that partners – within and beyond the ALN landscape - were not sufficiently aware of what the social practice model is. Further challenges exist where the objectives and targets of such partners seem more aligned to a deficit model.
- 4.62 There is a recognition that the social practice model can be resource-intensive and time-consuming to record and track. This is due to the highly tailored, learner-led ethos of this model.
- 4.63 It was suggested by a range of stakeholders that a route to aligning the social practice model and M&E mechanisms could be through a focus on the ‘four areas of life²’. This would provide the context for integrating M&E with the social practice model.

The Way Forward: Workshops

Key Issues noted by Stakeholders, which the Refresh Strategy should Consider

- 4.64 The following issues build on those identified above, under the theme of ‘progress’. While the ‘progress’ issues noted earlier in this section of the report tracked historical performance, the ‘way forward’ issues are focused on actions which are deemed necessary in driving forward the Refresh Strategy.

ALN Partnerships

- 4.65 Under this theme the following issues were noted for consideration:
- the ALNIS ‘Refresh’ should acknowledge the significant, contributory role and contribution which the ALN partnerships make to the ALN agenda. Updating Circular 101 would assist in recognising the progress made by partnerships, and outline where they need to get to;

² These are: family, work, citizenship and lifelong learning. Improvements in ability to: read, write, use numbers, handle information, express ideas, express opinions, make decisions and solve problems.

- the Strategy should redefine the ALN partner remit by expressing the principles of what it is to be an ALN partner. It was felt that this area has evolved but with no national guidance concerning effective practice in contributing to the local ALN partnership. Areas for consideration, here, include: time and resource commitments; balancing lead roles with other partner contributions and assessing how each partner adds value to the partnership;
- more effective mechanisms are needed to facilitate work with these partners and referral agencies. This could be partially addressed by seconding literacies tutors into other services / agencies to raise awareness and build capacity;
- re-define the role of key contacts within ALN partnerships – stakeholders were often unclear about the remit of key contacts and how they add value to the wider ALN agenda. The role should act as a mechanism for information exchange and communications upwards and downwards (from and to Learning Connections and the Scottish Executive), to ensure that partnerships inform, and remain informed by, new developments;
- Ambiguity concerning the terms ‘key persons’ and ‘key contacts’-stakeholders were generally unclear about the existence or role of key persons. However, some used this term inter-changeably with key contacts. Clarity of respective roles was requested;
- ALN partnerships need to ensure a more strategic approach to their own planning and to ensuring their voice is embedded within the Community Planning process, a process that needs to be reinforced by national messages confirming this expectation.

Practice Sharing

- 4.66 There was a clear request for ALN partnerships to share respective ALN plans. This would facilitate the sharing of effective practice and promote and enhance the work of regional fora. The contribution of the grass-roots practitioner was seen as crucial to making this happen, as was the role of the key contact in facilitating the exchange of practice.
- 4.67 There was a general request to increase the profile of the research evidence base underpinning the ALN landscape. Challenges which currently exist – such as evidencing how employees and employers benefit from ALN learning engagement, and how to engage the harder- to-reach learners – were felt likely to be addressed through enhancing the research evidence base.

- 4.68 Local practitioners felt that they were often unaware of the access points for engaging with practice exchange and accessing good practice examples. Findings from Pathfinder evaluations were not perceived to have been made widely available, and were difficult to access.
- 4.69 There was a tension expressed concerning whether practice sharing across ALN partnerships should be driven by national or local levels. There was a request to move away from sharing of practice which is solely reliant upon disseminating ‘top-down’ information, and an expressed need for this to be driven more by grass-roots activity. This also relates to the extent to which LC should direct, as opposed to facilitate, the sharing of effective practice.

Training and Development

- 4.70 A range of issues noted by stakeholders were expressed under this theme. Key issues were:
- while practitioners welcomed professionalisation of the ALN workforce, they were not supportive of compulsory accreditation. Some felt that minimum qualification/standards for different roles were a good idea, but this was not supported unanimously. Where this was welcomed, it was felt that this should be managed by an independent body. The need to acknowledge prior learning and qualifications, and to improve progression between qualifications, was keenly expressed.
 - stakeholders tended to welcome a consistent approach to ALN, which was driven locally but co-ordinated nationally (i.e. a ‘bottom-up’ approach, rooted in national guidance and priorities). Some small partnerships felt less comfortable with local delivery, given their lower level of training infrastructure;
 - a more strategic flexible delivery system would be welcomed, which would allow practitioners to work and learn effectively, and address the challenges posed by the need to plan for staff release (particularly for those on short – term/sessional contacts);
 - tracking ITALL participant destinations was requested, in order that an assessment could be made of the effectiveness of the investment in this area.

M&E

- 4.71 Most of the points made in this section reflect the issues identified earlier under M&E:

- For many stakeholders, commitment to embedding the social practice model was perceived to be threatened by a stronger drive for M&E. How these two concepts will operate in harmony was noted as a key area for clarification. A perceived, historic focus on a quantitative-driven approach to M&E has created some scepticism about the national commitment to the social practice model underpinning the ALNIS agenda;
- linked to the above, practitioners are sensitive to M&E terminology, particularly where this implies a predominantly numbers-driven approach to measuring ALN progress. Some practitioners felt that M&E terminology was also driving ALN practice – i.e. incentives to adopt a more deficit-driven model of ALN provision. The pressure felt by practitioners to quantify learning outcomes was felt to detract from tracking the true journey of learning, and the value of a distance travelled ethos;
- there was felt to be a need to commit to the principle of ‘Value what we measure and measure what we value’. Otherwise, there is a risk that measurement systems will produce data which is unhelpful and, potentially, inaccurate or misleading;
- there is a need to articulate and define the three levels of activity which exist in the ALN landscape and to devise and adopt M&E mechanisms for each, which are compatible and capable of aggregation. These levels are:
 - the learner (through ILPs and range of tools such as Rickter). It was suggested that the tracking of learners could take place through assigning them with a universal number which all agencies could then use. This is based on the principle that: ‘we share learners’;
 - the ALN partnership - what they do and what they deliver, down to individual partners (through the use of LiC and HGIOCLD), accountability to the CPP and development of the Performance Improvement Project (PIP);
 - national – it was felt by stakeholders that some form of national inspection of ALN partnerships should take place, in particular to assess quality of provision. ‘State of the nation’ reports should be produced which bring together the results of inspections and the aggregated picture from EYRs. This would offer an on-going national overview of ALN progress, and would detail specific progress against the original ALNIS recommendations. Stakeholders noted that this was a significant, current omission and prevented local partnerships from undertaking more informal benchmarking of their progress in relation to the national picture.

- the purpose of ILPs needs clarification (e.g. role as guidance / prompts for the learner; its place as part of an M&E toolkit; its use in aggregation for local and national overviews of progress). Further emphasis was felt necessary, of the need for ILPs to be learner-led and owned. It was generally felt that ILPs should be live documents with transportability across different learning settings. Some stakeholders felt that the ILP should contain regular ‘confidence’ measures for learners to track on-going progress;
- stakeholders were divided on whether a single, uniform ILP should exist for all learners to use, or whether the ILP should be tailored at a local level, yet guided by national principles. This was an area which was contested across all workshops. There was a clear request for further guidance and support on the rationale and application of the ILP and how it could be used for M&E purposes. However, there was no unanimous request for this to become a standardised tool, to be applied across all partnerships. Stakeholders generally favoured over-arching national guidance on purpose/broad content but local flexibility to adapt and apply the ILP in accordance with local needs;
- there was felt to be little current, value in the practice of requesting early projections of learner figures from ALN partnerships. In response to such requests, partnerships felt they produced spurious numbers, which were not derived from reliable evidence bases. In turn, targets which were derived thereafter were not always felt to be wholly credible or owned at a local level;
- a further repercussion of the above is that some local scepticism exists regarding national level data about learners. There was an expressed need to adopt more comprehensive, reliable and creative approaches to addressing M&E. Tutors felt that there was a need to promote and enhance mechanisms for partnership sharing of ideas about measurement and internal self-assessments. Underpinning this would be a databank of existing M&E tools, which have been tried and tested;
- some stakeholders noted that there is little, apparent incentive to retain learners and engage in new forms of learning since this activity is not counted or recognised in overall learner numbers;
- HMIE performance indicators (PIs) were felt to require review, to ensure clearer alignment with the social practice model. Some concerns were expressed that HMIE indicators were more aligned to the deficit model and could not be readily applied to ALN learning contexts. However, there was some sense of a growing recognition from HMIE of how these PIs differ from ALN practice. It was suggested that further awareness raising with HMIE about the social practice model and ethos would be useful.

Numeracy

- 4.72 Adult numeracy was felt to need national level championing to demonstrate parity with literacy. Expertise and guidance at the national level – through Learning Connections – was felt to be missing. In addition, training support was deemed to be necessary for effective tutoring in this area. Some stakeholders noted that tutor confidence in this area was significantly less than in literacy learning. Boosting tutor capacity was deemed to be essential since the stigma attached to numeracy needs was felt to be less prevalent than with literacy needs. Thus, attracting numeracy learners was felt to be less of a challenge.

Workplace Literacies

- 4.73 The following areas were noted under workplace literacies:
- **more robust evidence required of employer benefits** – it was noted by many stakeholders that a compelling case to engage employers in the workplace agenda remains outstanding. Employers remain sceptical of the benefits of engaging with workplace literacies and – in the absence of a robust rationale for this – tutors struggle to form effective relationships with businesses. There was a strong request for more evidence based research in this area and greater national, awareness-raising efforts to support this
 - **role of Trades Unions** – while the potential of ULRs (union learning representatives) was not felt to have been fully realised in their contribution to ALN, caution was noted concerning their reach across the workplace;
 - **Big Plus** - it was suggested that Big Plus for Business should be re-named as Big Plus in the Workplace – this would be more inclusive of all workplace settings;
 - **role of public agencies** - there was felt to be a need to remind public agencies that – as employers – they also have a role to play in contributing to workplace literacies. It was suggested that a ‘literacies audit’ might offer a solid starting point for such engagement.

ESOL

- 4.74 There were mixed views concerning whether ESOL has a legitimate place within the ALN agenda. Clarity is required concerning how – if at all - language needs fit with literacies learning.
- 4.75 Those in favour of the fit between ALN and ESOL called for a mapping exercise to establish different practices in how ESOL learners are identified across ALN partnerships. More generally, there was felt to be an absence of known practice concerning the planning and delivery of ALN learning for ESOL learners.

- 4.76 The ambiguity surrounding this agenda has been accompanied by a general lack of support and development in areas such as: tutor T&D / CPD; exchange of practice concerning what works and different teaching and learning methods; learner progression routes; additional funding and resources to address capacity, training and partner roles.

Other

- 4.77 Stakeholders noted the significant potential which exists for further development of the literacies agenda across a range of related policy areas, including family and youth. While this was welcomed, some concern was noted about workforce capacity to deliver across these areas, in terms of numbers and skills of staff. Again, exchange of practice was not prevalent and was felt to prevent partnerships from further developing family literacies and youth literacies.
- 4.78 Stakeholders felt that more specialised areas of ALN support (e.g. dyslexia and learning disabilities) lacked development due to an absence of research and evidence or the availability of appropriate T&D / CPD.
- 4.79 There was some evidence of practitioners delivering literacies learning by stealth (i.e. delivering literacies learning under the guise of, for example, e-learning). There is a need to make clear how acceptable this practice is.

Recommendations Suggested by Stakeholders for the Refresh Strategy

- 4.80 Suggested recommendations are noted under the headings of
- Strategy focus;
 - National partnership roles;
 - Training & Development;
 - Workplace Literacies;
 - ALN funding.

Strategy Focus

- 4.81 There was a general call for the ALNIS Refresh to offer a long-term vision and timescale, in order to act as a prompt for longer-term planning and more strategic thinking on the part of the ALN partnerships. It was also noted that the Strategy should cut across a wide range of national policy areas (such as health, social inclusion, lifelong learning and economic growth). National positioning and status were deemed to be significant to the strategy's future success.

4.82 The strategy should contain a positive, and forward-looking focus, with a key emphasis on national and local leadership (through strong partnerships), the on-going championing of the ALN agenda and a comprehensive training strategy. These ‘themes’ should be positioned as part of a mutually reinforcing agenda, rather than as parallel initiatives.

National Partnership Roles

4.83 Clarity is required of the focus of Learning Connections’ role. This should be guided by the following:

- a stronger message concerning how ALN is positioned within local community planning (CP) structures. The legitimacy of ALN within these structures was often felt to be overlooked at the local level. Greater championing of this through Learning Connection was felt to be needed to make this message clearer. There was a call for a stronger argument to be made concerning how the ALN agenda fits within wider CPP structures. This should be accompanied with on-going national championing of the ALN agenda, with greater clarity concerning the structures, processes and partners which accommodate ALN at local levels (strategic and operational);
- articulating ALN’s fit with the wider national policy agenda (e.g. social inclusion, employability, lifelong learning) – this was deemed to be a more appropriate role for ETLLD, in offering advice about how other government department agendas align with ALN;
- Learning Connections should play a greater role in relationship building and management at a national level to ensure that national partners (such as Careers Scotland, learndirect Scotland and the NHS) have a sound, national grasp of the ALN agenda and the benefits of working together to achieve mutual objectives. It was felt by some stakeholders that local relationship building was less effective in the absence of a national infrastructure which supported and championed the ALN agenda;
- Learning Connections should play a more analytical role in articulating the ALN landscape, in terms of activity and policy development in Scotland and other countries. Stakeholders were keen to know how Scotland can learn from other countries and their literacies practices. At an operational level, partnerships are often unable to take this strategic perspective and overview. The role played by Learning Connections, here, is about ‘predicting’ the future evolution of ALNIS; this goes beyond greater dissemination of practice / research and involves interpretation of evidence in a way that allows partnerships to understand how the ALN landscape may evolve;

- balancing local level visibility with national level co-ordination and facilitation of the ALN agenda – there was a call for Learning Connections to offer more local presence, vis-à-vis contact and communication with ALN partnerships, as well as providing a more strategic overview of the national ALN agenda;
- providing strategic advice and direction regarding the added value which the ALN partnership entity makes, and facilitating the exchange of practice across ALN partnerships – a particular concern of stakeholders was the issue of ensuring on-going and effective development of the partnership entity. While it was widely recognised that the ALN partnerships had made significant progress, there was felt to be a need, now, to reflect on that progress and to ensure that partnerships remain effective bodies for the delivery, co-ordination and planning of ALN activity. To achieve this, guidance was felt to be necessary which promotes the partnership role (as an entity and as individual partner contributors). Part of this should involve facilitating the exchange of practice concerning effective partnership working and what this can achieve for local level ALN activity. Specifically, stakeholders requested guidance and support in the following areas: how partnerships go about identifying local need for ALN services; what constitutes effective communication and co-ordination activity across the partnership; different partnership delivery mechanisms;
- facilitating the exchange of effective practice across local partnerships – while this role is already played by Learning Connections, stakeholders felt that a more co-ordinated and stream-lined approach should be developed. Examples of areas where practice sharing was lacking or not deemed wholly effective included: ESOL; a national databank of tools for use in literacies teaching and learning; Communities of Practice On-Line – this was felt to be unwieldy and did not deal with partnerships’ local concerns. Some stakeholders noted that Learning Connections probably do have mechanisms in place for sharing practice but that these are not getting to front-line service delivery in the way intended;

Training and Development

4.84 A T&D strategy is deemed essential. It should address the following areas:

- meeting the needs of staff with different roles, including staff in related fields
- need for standards/minimum qualifications for different roles;
- training available at different levels, including PDA:ITALL, additional provision between that and TQAL, certificate, degree and post-graduate;
- the need for flexible modes of delivery and recognition of prior learning;

- build on good generic skills with a pool of specialist national training modules
- need for articulation with and progression between other qualifications, e.g. Community Education/CLD, TQFE; embed in core qualifying programmes for CE/CLD and FE
- need for Professionalisation (but distinct from accreditation)
- respective roles of national and local. Co-ordination nationally but delivery on an area basis. (larger partnerships more comfortable with local delivery but smaller partnerships felt that they lacked the training infrastructure)
- Recognise the challenges of workforce capacity in attending T&D and encourage partnerships to plan strategically (and in the longer-term) for release of staff without undue disruptions to service delivery. The length of contracts related to funding issues also affects commitment to training

Workplace Literacies

4.85 The workplace literacies agenda is felt to need a specific focus in the ALNIS Refresh, perhaps through a specific strategy which addresses:

- how the workplace literacies agenda links to CP, in order that continuity of learning can take place beyond the workplace, in the local community;
- a stronger and more robust evidence base for employer benefits, linked to the enhanced profile of the workplace literacies agenda through the Big Plus in the Workplace. The challenges surrounding this agenda are known to be significant and requires a great deal of time and effort to address;
- greater strategic co-ordination with key players such as SSCs, STUC, CBI, FSB and Scottish Enterprise;
- review the structures which employers engage with at a local level – where an employer operates across more than one partnership area, they are currently dealing with several different structures. This is off-putting and requires a more stream-lined response, tailored to employers' needs;
- recognition of the challenge presented by the employer's needs often differing from the employee's needs

ALN Funding

- 4.86 There was a significant request for ring-fenced funding to protect future ALN activity. This should be supported by a longer-term approach and timeframe for funding, with clearer routing from national to local levels. This routing relates to the journey of funding from the national level (Scottish Executive) through to the LA (as grant-aided expenditure), and – thereafter – the allocation of funding to the ALN partnership.

Effective Practice Examples

- 4.87 The following examples were noted during the workshop sessions as evidence of local ALN activity which stakeholders deemed to be effective. It cannot be guaranteed that these constitute examples of effective practice or accuracy. However, they do offer useful insights into the breadth of activity taking place in local settings.

- 4.88 Examples have been grouped under the following headings:

- Local partnership activity;
- Quality;
- Practice sharing;
- Workforce;
- T&D;
- M&E;
- Numeracy;
- Workplace literacies;
- ESOL;
- Learning disabilities;
- Youth literacies;
- Family literacies;
- Other.

Local Partnership Activity

- 4.89 The following examples were cited by stakeholders:

- CLAN Edinburgh – working with a wide range of partners (such as homelessness services) to increase referrals to ALN services;
- Glasgow – strong engagement with health practitioners to increase referrals. In addition, all managers working for the LA are trained in spotting and referring.

Quality

4.90 Three examples, here, were:

- Inverclyde and Argyll and Bute ALN partnerships – cross-partnership working regarding approaches to self-assessment;
- Forth Valley ‘3-partner model’ – self-assessment and peer assessment across the 3 partnerships;
- Fife partnership has developed the LiC pack into 10 key areas covering delivery and organisation, and has changed the language to a simple English format. Highland has also developed the LiC pack for local use.

Practice Sharing

4.91 The following examples were offered under practice sharing:

- the ALN partnerships in Ayrshire meet regularly to share practice at a regional forum;
- a youth learning sub-group has been set-up in South Lanarkshire, to share practice in this area.

Workforce

4.92 Under workforce, the following evidence was noted:

- South Lanarkshire has invested in ITALL training for youth workers, to become spotters and referrers;
- in both Perth and Dundee, tutors have progressed from temporary to permanent contracts, and stronger alignment with colleagues operating in the lifelong learning field has been developed.

T&D

4.93 Examples of practice in this area are:

- significant T&D is taking place in Dundee for dyslexia, support for CPD and ‘Ability Net’ (IT support for people with disabilities);
- Curriculum Framework training in Perth and Kinross has been felt to have made an impact upon the quality of tutoring;
- in Aberdeen, PDA ITALL is being offered on an outreach basis in community organisations, in order to facilitate wider access to training.

M&E

4.94 Several examples were quoted in this area:

- Highland are exploring methods of qualitative approaches to measuring progress and are using the Rickter Scale to measure confidence;
- it was suggested that ALN partnerships should investigate what other organisations are doing to address the measurement of more qualitative areas of progress, such as Careers Scotland;
- it was suggested by one stakeholder that the ‘4 areas of life’ be used as a framework for measuring distance travelled by ALN learners;
- ‘Catching Confidence’ is used by SALP to measure distance travelled;
- SFEU is looking at core skills outcomes across a range of projects;
- Midlothian ALN partnership (MALANI) is working with a tracking system.

Numeracy

4.95 Three examples were noted from the workshop sessions:

- South Lanarkshire has developed an approach to home / school partnerships to raise awareness of the support available for numeracy. This has had some success;
- in Highland, ‘Fun With Figures’ has been developed as a numeracy project in a local sawmill, where it was identified that wastage was taking place due to measurement errors;
- Inverclyde has attracted new funding for numeracy under the financial inclusion agenda.

Workplace Literacies

4.96 A range of examples of practice were noted in this area:

- Dundee is having some success in engaging employers and has recommended that, at the outset of employer engagement, relationship building is paramount, prior to introducing any marketing materials (such as The Big Plus);
- ScotRail and Glasgow – engagement in literacies learning is widening beyond employees to families and friends. In addition, ScotRail pays for staff to learn outside of work hours, thereby offering flexibility in the timing of learning;

- in North Lanarkshire a worker is employed specifically to engage employers in workplace literacies;
- there was felt to be scope for ALN partnerships to learn from the general learning activity and awareness-raising of SULF (the Scottish Union Learning Fund), in increasing the profile of workplace literacies;
- In Fife, both SEnt Fife and the ALN partnership have provided joint funding for core skills.

ESOL

4.97 Two examples in this area are:

- ‘High Hopes’ in Highland places an emphasis on contextualised learning for ESOL learners;
- an ESOL forum has been established in South Lanarkshire.

Learning Disabilities

4.98 Examples, here, include:

- East Renfrewshire – key workers in the area of learning disabilities work with the literacies team to offer support to learners;
- in South Lanarkshire, tutors engage in support with those who have learning disabilities to promote transitions from literacies learning to community learning;
- a pathfinder project has been set-up in Stirling using a ‘board maker’ which acts as symbols for those with learning disabilities to engage with learning. This is called ‘Developing a Curriculum for Adults with Learning Disabilities’.

Youth Literacies

4.99 Examples of practice in this area were noted as:

- the way in which Youthlink Scotland has connected to the wider ALN agenda was noted by many stakeholders as an example of effective practice;
- in Glasgow, there is a screening procedure in place for young people taking part in the Skillseekers pilot. The majority move on to work with Glasgow City Council and the early screening is deemed helpful in identifying and addressing literacy needs;

- Perth and Kinross – there is a homelessness and sport project in place which addresses literacy learning with the aim of promoting coaching skills and transitions to employment in sports.

Family Literacies

4.100 Four examples were noted in this area:

- South Lanarkshire promotes parents and children learning together and has developed a ‘Brush Up Your Skills’ workshop for parents, delivered in school settings;
- North Lanarkshire has set-up a tracking mechanism to identify ‘family trends’ such as dyslexia;
- Highland has developed family packs based on books and videos for men in prison. The books are read by the men and recorded on video, for their children;
- East Renfrewshire has undertaken ‘school bag drops’ to raise awareness of literacies learning with parents of school children.

Other

4.101 A range of other practice examples were cited as effective:

- ICT – Glasgow has set-up an on-line SMART group which is free of charge and has no maintenance requirements;
- support for gypsy travellers – South Lanarkshire has set-up a wide range of tailored support services for gypsy traveller communities, including services for children, young people and mothers. East Renfrewshire has also set-up literacies support for gypsy traveller mothers;
- awareness-raising – James Watt College has committed to ensuring that all staff are aware of the potential role they can play in supporting the ALN agenda. Highland and Dundee have developed local marketing networks, aimed at increasing knowledge and awareness of literacies issues with local partners;
- increasing number of learners – Fife has developed a programme called ‘Learner Brings Learner’ which introduces new learners to ALN support in a non-threatening way;
- FE – Jewel and Esk College has developed linkage between core skills and literacies and is aiming to embed this learning across college programmes of learning.

Minority Views

4.102 The following views were raised during the workshop sessions but do not constitute key themes or areas which were significant. They do not form part of the key themes collated in this report but are reported here for reasons of completeness. They are noted under the following headings:

- local partnerships;
- national partner roles;
- practice sharing;
- Workforce;
- workplace literacies;
- T&D;
- M&E;
- numeracy;
- other.

Local Partnerships

4.103 Areas noted here were:

- a request for employment guidelines for those working in the ALN arena, which detail resources available for the job, role expectations, T&D opportunities and progression options and routes;
- partner and partnership roles (including guidance on how to maintain and develop the partnership) should be guided and directed from the centre and this should be achieved through the Scottish Executive, as opposed to Learning Connections;
- a specific example of lack of funding from the LA was felt to have had a direct impact upon the quality of ALN provision, in terms of staffing, the availability of ALN learning and future sustainability of provision;

National Partner roles

4.104 Issues for consideration here are:

- a lack of clarity exists concerning whether national partners are truly joined-up (Learning Connections and ETLLD) and some concern was expressed concerning the nature of the relationship between Learning Connections and learndirect Scotland;
- there is a need to update Circular 101 to demonstrate that local partnerships have made significant progress and now require new support and guidance;
- there is a need to involve the Scottish Funding Council in the ALN agenda;

- a more equitable service should be offered by Learning Connections across the country. There is a need to see more obvious evidence of how Learning Connections is leading the way in the ALN agenda;
- more national guidance is required concerning how specialist areas (e.g. dyslexia, learning disabilities) can offer progression routes to learners.

Practice Sharing

4.105 Areas noted under practice sharing were:

- need to learn from the good practice information on the HMIE web-site;
- ALN partnership action plans should be used to share practice instead of their current focus on local accountability.

Workforce

4.106 Workforce issues were:

- national parity on pay is required across partnership settings, which would allow for alignment of different roles. Job evaluation work should be considered;
- in one FE college, a full-time literacies post has been established which has allowed for the mainstreaming of literacies and a clear presence of the ALN agenda;
- the capacity of the workforce has become a serious worry with increasing evidence of lack of co-ordination and impacts on quality of provision.

Workplace Literacies

4.107 Two key areas were noted here:

- a separate funding stream was requested for the financing of workplace literacies, which would offer the area more priority and emphasis;
- sanctions should be in place for those employers unwilling to engage with workplace literacies.

T&D

4.108 Several issues were noted here:

- there should be more T&D delivered by external specialists;

- some concern expressed about training ‘re-invention’ and the need to retain the principles which already exist in, for example, community education;
- staff working in FE and CLD need T&D to become familiar with the basics of literacies learning.

M&E

4.109 The following areas were noted:

- the latest EYRs did not contain scope to demonstrate good practice. This was felt to be a key oversight. Also, EYRs should follow the academic year and not the financial year;
- there was a plea for no last minute national requests for changes to reporting requirements and timescales;
- the 23% figure from IALS required to be updated;
- funding cuts in the next financial year are likely to impact significantly on partnerships’ abilities to address the ALN agenda;
- an over-reliance on soft indicators for distance travelled is likely to provide a non-robust evidence base. Qualitative data can often mask where no real progress is being made, at the level of the learner;
- the Scottish Executive seems to have made funding dependent upon using ILPs.

Numeracy

4.110 Numeracy issues were:

- some tutors have problems with their own numeracy needs and will tend to avoid working in this area;
- more specialists at a national level, in Learning Connections, are required to drive this agenda

Other.

4.111 A range of other issues were identified:

- FE – not enough is being done to offer ALN provision through FE;
- risk-taking – there is not enough risk-taking in developing new ideas in the ALN agenda;

- accreditation for prior learning – there is not a consistent offering across partnerships.

Evidencing Progress: ‘Future’ Pro-Formas

Overview

- 4.112 The following issues point mainly to a forward picture of how stakeholders would like the ALN landscape to look by 2011. As such, most of these issues have been noted under the ‘Way Forward’ heading, towards the end of this Section.

The Four Key Goals

National Leadership and Effective Local Action

- 4.113 The short-term nature of funding is felt to have produced ‘project deficits’, due to staff on short-term contracts, and disincentives for partners to commit to longer-term work.
- 4.114 There was a re-iterated call for the Scottish Executive to re-commit to a learner-led focus through the ALNIS Refresh, by focusing on grass roots activity and learners.

Promoting Awareness

- 4.115 It was again perceived by some that national campaigns have tended towards a deficit model by projecting a negative image of ALN learning. There was a call for the Refresh Strategy to provide a national steer for marketing and promotions activity which focuses on the positive aspects of ALN learning, as opposed to a ‘remedial service’.

Wider Infrastructure of Delivery

- 4.116 Emphasis was placed on the need to clarify the position of ESOL, within ALN.
- 4.117 There was a general view that the ALN workforce lacks awareness of more specialised forms of ALN learning, such as for dyslexic learners or those with additional support needs.

Gaps

- 4.118 The ‘future’ forms noted that there are current disincentives to target hardest to reach learners, since the prime focus of local activity is on optimising the broad learner base (i.e. targeting those closest to learning).
- 4.119 Gaps were also felt to exist in numeracy provision, the identification and dissemination of good practice in literacies learning and deficits in M&E (e.g. lack of focus on the social practice model and ‘soft’ measures, as well as a lack of emphasis on monitoring and measuring learning outcomes).

The Social Practice Model

- 4.120 It was generally felt that the model exists *despite* the short-term funding which underpins ALN policy. It was reiterated that it is difficult to reconcile the social practice model with a target-driven approach to ALN.

The Way Forward: ‘Future’ Pro-Formas

Key Issues for Refresh Strategy to Consider

- 4.121 The following points echo those made in earlier sections of the report and serve to emphasise the relative importance placed on these issues, by stakeholders:
- a longer-term vision was painted by several stakeholders of a reduced need for ALN provision in the future, since the agenda will have become part of a greater mainstream delivery;
 - the ALNIS Refresh Strategy needs a long-term focus, with a preventative emphasis, through a framework from early years to adult education. This would entail more access points to take up learning and specialised provision (i.e. earlier engagement across a wider range of policy areas and with younger citizens, could serve to address ALN issues much more effectively than if they are left until learners are older);
 - full integration of ALN into the national strategic agenda – e.g. lifelong learning, community planning, youth literacies and health – would be welcomed. Stakeholders encouraged ‘bigger thinking’ around how partners such as housing, health and social work could become more effectively engaged. ALN should be viewed as an integral part of wider learning provision rather than a ‘mop-up’ service, for previous unsuccessful learning;

- the social practice model should lie at the heart of the Strategy. To support this, there is a need for training on what it means to deliver ALN through this model;
- a call for long-term commitment to long-term funding to signal a genuine commitment to the social practice model. This should be underpinned by a commitment to sustain the agenda beyond 2011, with a well-trained and supported workforce (with impacts on quality of provision);
- ring-fenced funding would end the practice of LA top-slicing;
- commitment to a training and development framework, through secured long-term ALN funding.

Suggested Recommendations for Refresh Strategy

4.122 Emanating from the above 'future' issues the following recommendations were advanced:

- the Refresh Strategy should have the social practice model at its core;
- there should be clearer alignment of ALNIS with a wide range of national policy objectives, which would then be mutually reinforcing (e.g. Closing the Opportunity Gap and Community Planning);
- National funding should be ring-fenced to protect local provision and generate sustainability;
- communications should be improved, facilitated through key contacts who work across partnerships and between partnerships and the Scottish Executive and Learning Connections.

Evidencing Progress: Summary of Stakeholder Events

4.123 Key issues noted by stakeholders during these events were:

- success in ALN partnership progress and a growing sense of community;
- issues with the routing and control of ALN funding, particularly the lack of clarity at a local level of the journey of funding to the ALN partnership, together with LA top-slicing, which is deemed to undermine the value of the ALN agenda and hamper local capacity;
- stronger national guidance is required, to assist with local strategic planning of ALN provision;
- professionalisation of the workforce has been helped by ITALL and TQAL, but key barriers to professionalisation remain.

- the Big Plus campaigns have been effective at raising awareness but better alignment is needed of local and national activity and marketing;
- ICT infrastructure lacks consistency. A minimum specification was requested in order to improve quality and drive up standards;
- general gaps in M&E – there is a need to reconcile M&E with the social practice model. The relevance of measures, distance travelled and embedding of ILPs are also areas which require further development.

The Way Forward: Summary of Stakeholder Events

4.124 A summary of the main areas identified by stakeholders were:

- strategy focus:
 - requires long-term vision and timescales and a clarification of roles and responsibilities of LC, ETLLD and ALN partnerships;
 - should cut across a wide range of national policy areas;
 - emphasis on national and local leadership (through strong partnerships);
 - the on-going ‘championing’ of the ALN agenda;
 - inclusion of a comprehensive training strategy;
- funding – a strong call for ring-fencing funding to ALN partnerships;
- partnerships:
 - acknowledge the significant, contributory role and contribution which the ALN partnerships make to the ALN agenda;
 - update Circular 101;
 - redefine the ALN partner remit;
 - the promotion of the contribution of other partners (e.g. health, social work education) requires more emphasis;
 - more effective mechanisms to work with these partners and referral agencies;
 - role of key contacts - information exchange and communications;
- Learning Connections role:
 - articulating the ALN landscape;

- balancing visibility with national level co-ordination;
- strategic advice and direction to ALN partnerships;
- engaging national partners and consolidating the strategic link to CPPs;
- practice sharing:
 - Learning Connections’ role in directing the exchange of effective practice (EP);
 - partnerships to share ALN plan;
 - increase research evidence base;

- T&D:
 - framework needed within the Refresh Strategy;
 - welcomed professionalisation of the ALN workforce, but not compulsory accreditation;
 - consistent approach to ALN, driven locally but co-ordinated nationally;
 - flexible system which allows staff to work and learn;
- M&E:
 - how the social practice model aligns with M&E of ALN;
 - release of pressure felt by ALN partnerships to quantify learning outcomes, by focusing on the tracking of the true journey of learning;
 - ‘Value what we measure and measure what we value’;
 - articulate and define the three levels of activity which exist in the ALN landscape (learner, partnership and national);
 - ILPs – part of tutor toolkit; learner-led and owned; live and transportable;
- numeracy - national level championing to demonstrate parity with literacy and recognition of need for, and value, of specialist numeracy teachers;
- Literacies in the Workplace:
 - should receive specific emphasis in strategy;
 - develop more robust evidence of employer benefits;
 - Big Plus for Business re-named as Big Plus in the Workplace;

- ESOL:
 - decide on its legitimacy in ALN agenda. If so, address workforce capacity, training needs, and partner roles, recognising unique needs and past experiences of ESOL learners. Ensure linkages with other relevant policy.

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5 LEARNER CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

‘Come All Ye’ Learner Feedback Event

- 5.1 In September 2006, a learner workshop took place as part of the Come All Ye learner event, to consider feedback from adult literacies learners concerning the ALNIS Refresh Strategy. The workshop was based on providing learners with the opportunity to reflect on their personal learning experiences and to provide suggestions and ideas for the ALNIS Refresh. In addition, evidence has been added from the notes of a learner forum which took place in South Ayrshire in early July 2006.
- 5.2 The following areas were identified as the key themes arising from this event. As with previous report sections, these issues have been separated into ‘Evidencing Progress’ and ‘The Way Forward’, and follow the key themes in the OF.

Evidencing Progress

Four Key ALNIS Goals

- 5.3 Unsurprisingly, most of the issues identified by learners related to the ‘quality learning experience’ goal. A few issues were also noted relating to promoting awareness:

Quality Learning Experience

- 5.4 Learners noted that high staff turnover was often caused by short-term contracts. More funding was felt to be necessary for more tutor hours and more options for the types of learning on offer. More IT equipment was felt to be needed. These restrictions were felt to impact upon the overall learning experience. Perhaps due to resource restrictions, some learners felt there was an over-emphasis on group work.

- 5.5 On the positive side, learners felt that their engagement with ALN had helped them to:
- support their children with homework;
 - open up choices for further study;
 - gain qualifications;
 - increase learner confidence on a general level and to take up new learning opportunities.
- 5.6 Learners also pointed to other benefits, such as greater people interaction, more likelihood of participating in events / activities; ALN learning which had identified and supported those with dyslexia.

Promoting Awareness

- 5.7 Learners called for clearer links between the ALN promotional message and specific learner needs (e.g. helping children with homework or medical conditions which might require support with re-learning). The Big Plus was viewed as a good prompt to seek further information about ALN. The power of word-of-mouth marketing and encouragement from friends and family were noted as very powerful promotional tools.
- 5.8 Local leaflets and posters were also felt to be effective, as was the role of intermediaries such as the Community Practice Nurse, who can offer strong encouragement and early support in making the ‘first move’.

Wider Infrastructure of ALN Delivery

- 5.9 The key issue which was noted by learners was the lack of childcare options and flexibility which would free up the time for adult learners to engage with ALN.

The Way Forward

- 5.10 The following areas were suggested by learners as requiring some consideration in the ALNIS Refresh:
- **ALN staff** – longer term contracts were deemed necessary to reduce staff turnover and provide a more stable and consistent base for learners. The building of trust with tutors was deemed to be very important, but difficult to achieve with high staff turnover;

- **one-to-one versus group learning** – learners noted that one-to-one support was often in short supply due to resource constraints. For some learners – especially new learners or those with specific needs – group learning could act as a deterrent to future learning engagement, due to levels of comfort in taking part in a group setting;
- **rural areas** – learners felt that more targeted resources were needed in these areas;
- **the spotter role and Jobcentre Plus staff** – it was felt that these staff can – and often do – provide invaluable help with form-filling. There was a call for this to become more of a mainstream offering;
- **dyslexia funding and support** – learners called for specific funds for dyslexia support and that all tutors should use coloured paper which is more user-friendly for many people with dyslexia;
- **marketing and promotions** – a range of practical tips were noted by learners:
 - the ALN message should seek to address poor self-esteem which many people suffer from. This often acts as a key deterrent in seeking help or further advice. In addition, the message should focus on personal accounts from other ALN learners;
 - marketing location – the importance of local marketing was noted (e.g. health centres, community centres, libraries, post offices, supermarkets)
 - marketing media – learners felt that newsletters and DVD are effective media routes;
 - an ALN logo as a signal of a supportive environment – learners noted that locations (e.g. supermarkets and restaurants) could be encouraged to display an ALN logo to indicate to the public that they are receptive to providing help to individuals who might need it (e.g. reading menus).

Summary of Learner Consultation Feedback

- 5.11 Learners noted that ALN resource constraints (e.g. staffing and IT) impacted negatively upon the general learning experience in a range of ways. High staff turnover impacted upon the extent to which trusting relationships could be formed. Learning options – such as the use of computers and the choices of group or individual work - matched to individual learner needs, were often reduced due to resource constraints.
- 5.12 Learners could point to a range of benefits from their ALN learning experiences. A heightened sense of confidence was usually incremental to these, leading to new options in engaging with others and taking on new forms of learning.

- 5.13 Marketing and promotional work for ALN was felt to be most effective when it was locally based, was recommended by friends and family and where the core message related to the specific concerns of those with ALN learning needs.
- 5.14 Ideas which the ALNIS Refresh should consider were mainly related to securing ALN staffing and resourcing, in order to enhance the quality of the learning experience, and ensure this is tailored to learner needs. Another key area of focus was future marketing and promotions. A continued emphasis on local marketing was requested, with an emphasis on addressing the self-esteem issues which often prevent potential learners from seeking ALN advice and support.

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6 SUBGROUP FEEDBACK: WORKPLACE LITERACIES AND NATIONAL TRAINING STRATEGY

Section Overview

- 6.1 This section provides an overview of the work of the subgroups on Workplace Literacies and Training Strategy Advisory Group, in relation to the ALNIS 'Refresh' strategy.
- 6.2 The following areas were identified by the sub-groups. As with previous report sections, these issues have been separated into 'Evidencing Progress' and 'The Way Forward', and follow the key themes in the OF

Workplace Literacies Sub-Group

- 6.3 The first part of this section draws on information from the work of the above sub-group. This information corresponds to a narrower set of themes from the OF, given the specific nature of workplace literacies:

Evidencing Progress

Lessons Learned

- 6.4 It was noted that a traditional community learning focus to the delivery of workplace literacies learning is not always appropriate. As the workplace literacies agenda evolves, it requires development of a distinct approach to teaching and learning that – while potentially rooted in community learning – links more strongly with the workplace setting and language. Currently, there is perceived to be a gap between the existing and required skills/experience of many tutors delivering workplace literacies learning.
- 6.5 Additionally, the sub-group noted that there is not yet a compelling enough message for employers concerning the relevance of workplace literacies to the needs of their employees. Workplace literacies is recognised as a fairly low level priority for employers, signalling the significance of the challenge in addressing this.

The Way Forward

- 6.6 The following issues were noted by the Workplace Literacies Sub-group.

Key Issues for ALNIS Refresh

- 6.7 The sub-group noted the following areas for consideration, for the ALNIS refresh:
- a strategic, lead role for the Scottish Executive in:
 - clarifying confusion by clearly defining workplace literacies as delivery in the workplace, as opposed to delivery in the community to those who are employed;
 - researching, identifying and championing workplace literacies practices;
 - championing the social practice model for workplace literacies and making this a condition of funding;
 - developing a customised workplace literacies strategy – the workplace agenda requires a specific, strategic approach for identifying and supporting learning needs, and which takes account of regional labour market differences. This should be under-pinned by specific objectives relating to target organisations and types (e.g. SMEs);
 - ensuring that the training and development (T&D) of workplace literacies staff is grounded in the social practice model and that the Scottish Executive / Learning Connections lead on a national, strategic approach to T&D. This should include partners beyond the immediate literacies agenda such as ULRs (union learning representatives);
 - identifying measurement mechanisms through working with leading workplace literacies providers;
 - encouraging the use of ‘Workplace Literacies Learning Agreements’ which recognise and record all partners’ roles and responsibilities in learning programmes;
 - promoting a more coherent approach to workplace literacies across the 32 partnerships;
 - dedicated and ring-fenced funding, with a focus on joined-up provision, including:
 - IAG (information, advice and guidance) services;
 - wider transfer of the spotter and referrer model;
 - wider engagement with relevant interest bodies and public service partners (such as the business development teams within LAs, FSB; CBI; SSCs). This should also include building marketing capacity across these bodies;

- support through a team of ‘workplace negotiators’ working across partnerships to promote and co-ordinate activity. Also, funding to support non-unionised workplaces to take part;
- funding to support national employers, with multiple business sites;
- funding to support new models and approaches;
- funding incentives for SME engagement;
- experimental funding for partnership development workers and tutor budgets for collaborative work;
- development of on-line resources for practitioners to include a discussion forum; teaching materials; and a virtual toolkit;
- a tailored, tutor CPD programme for workplace literacies;
- a clearer understanding of the ‘free’ offering to employers – does this de-value workplace literacies? Is it an incentive to engage? Could further value be derived from re-positioning workplace literacies within ILAs³ (individual learning accounts) and/or any forthcoming development derived from the piloted BLAs (business learning accounts)⁴?

Suggested ALNIS Refresh Recommendations

6.8 The sub-group also advanced the following recommendations for consideration in the ALNIS Refresh (to 2011 and beyond):

- change terminology to ‘literacies in the workplace’;
- the development of workplace literacies practitioner networks – to share experiences, practice and practical materials;
- a workplace literacies toolkit devised by Learning Connections, with support from front-line services. This would include DVD-accessed case study materials;
- development of regional learning centres – accessed by organisations, with possible charges for use;
- wage parity – for those practitioners working across partnerships, which operate different pay scales;
- building workplace literacies workforce capacity – to address shift patterns / hours of learning outside of the norm; to address job security in the context of short-term contracts; recruitment campaigns to attract more staff;

³ Currently, ILA policy excludes literacies provision.

⁴ BLAs have recently been disbanded.

- stronger rationale and evidence-base required to encourage employer engagement.

Training Strategy Advisory Group

- 6.9 The remainder of this section draws on information from the work of the Training Strategy Advisory Group. This information corresponds to a narrow set of themes from the OF, given the specific remit of the sub-group. All issues are reported under the heading of 'The Way Forward':

The Way Forward

Key 'Refresh' Strategy Recommendations

- 6.10 The sub-group called for a national adult literacies training strategy to be developed by 2007 and implemented by 2012, with targets for action and training standards for both local and national level stakeholders.
- 6.11 The national training strategy should detail a strategic and coherent approach to professional development, reflecting differing needs and roles, as well as sectoral needs. This strategy should be led by Learning Connections in conjunction with the Scottish Adult Literacies Training Strategy Advisory Group.
- 6.12 Specific areas which the national training strategy should address are:
- developing a systemic infrastructure to ensure effective planning, communication, development and roll-out;
 - identifying barriers to staff participation in training / CPD, with mechanisms for solutions;
 - developments based on research and reflective practice;
 - offering flexible modes of delivery, accreditation and recognition of prior learning;
 - offering certificated training and professional development at certificate, degree and post-graduate levels;
 - articulation with, and progression routes between related qualifications and professions;
 - development of CPD training modules with optional accreditation mapped to SCQF;

- national and local approaches to funding training / CPD;
- constructing national training and occupational standards for ALN staff and volunteers;
- mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the T&D strategy, linking to strategic plans (local and national).

Summary of Sub-Group Feedback

6.13 Across the two sub-groups, there was a focus on ‘The Way Forward’ and suggestions for the issues which the Refresh should consider. Key areas noted were:

- workplace literacies:
 - strategic positioning of the workplace literacies agenda as different from the community-based literacies agenda (e.g. location of learning; approach; tutor support);
 - the development of a customised workplace literacies strategy with specific resources to develop this essential component to the wider literacies agenda (e.g. researching and championing workplace literacies and developing practitioner networks);
 - the workplace literacies strategy should consider the development of a compelling rationale for employer engagement; specific T&D for staff, with a CPD programme and a more coherent approach across ALN partnerships;
- Training strategy advisory group:
 - the significant progress in the development of the first national qualifications;
 - a national training strategy is needed which includes addressing training standards; a more strategic and coherent approach to professional development; identifying and addressing barriers to staff engagement in T&D and addressing these barriers; flexible modes of delivery and recognition of prior learning; accredited training and professional development at certificate, degree and post-graduate levels and CPD modules with optional accreditation, articulation with, and progression routes between, related qualifications.

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APPENDIX A:
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ALNIS	Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland
ALN	Adult Literacy and Numeracy
ASN	Additional support needs
BLA	Business Learning Account
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CLD	Community Learning and Development
COPAL	Communities of Practice in Adult Literacies
CP	Community Planning
CPD	Continuing professional development
CPP	Community Planning Partnership
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETLLD	Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department
EYR	End Year Report
FE	Further Education
FSB	Federation of Small Businesses
GAE	Grant-Aided Expenditure
HGIOCLD	How Good Is Our Community Learning and Development
HMIE	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
ICT / IT	Information and Communication Technology / Information Technology
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
ILA	Individual Learning Account
ILP	Individual Learning Plan

ITALL	Introduction Training in Adult Literacies Learning
JHIP	Joint Health Improvement Plan
LA	Local Authority
LC	Learning Connections
LiC	Literacies in the Community
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
OF	Overarching analysis framework
PDA	Professional development award
PIP	Performance Improvement Project
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework
SALP	Scottish Adult Learning Partnership
SFEU	Scottish Further Education Unit
SME	Small to Medium Sized Enterprise
SP	Social Practice
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SSC	Sector Skills Council
STUC	Scottish Trade Union Congress
SULF	Scottish Union Learning Fund
T&D	Training and development
TQAL	Teaching Qualification in Adult Literacies
ULR	Union Learning Representative

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APPENDIX B:
LITERATURE REVIEW REFERENCES

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**APPENDIX C:
DEFINITIONS OF UNDERSTANDING, KNOWLEDGE
AND SKILLS**

The LiC Pack provides practitioners with definitions of understanding, knowledge and skills:

- understanding is defined as “the capacity to question and evaluate the conventions for literacy and numeracy in any situation so that conscious choices are made. The social and critical awareness is developed by looking at differences in practices and posing questions, investigating and evaluating”;
- knowledge is considered to be “the mental store of ‘ways of doing’ or conventions for using literacy and numeracy (i.e. genres, processes) and the capacity to select from this store for a specific context and purpose. This flexible competence is developed by relating knowledge to real contexts and by becoming aware of general principles through making generalisations, problem solving and contrasting and comparing”;
- skills are defined as “the mental and physical abilities involved in recalling basic rules and facts and recognising and reproducing letters, numbers, signs and symbols. The technical ability is developed by memorising and practising”.

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APPENDIX D:
INFORMATION ABOUT THE PATHFINDER PROJECTS

Learning Opportunities in Rural Areas: this project is developing literacies using radio and internet technology and focuses on rural learners, particularly farmers in Dumfries and Galloway. The project has provided internet access/computer hardware and video conferencing facilities to 25 farms and farm workers' homes, in the hope that these tools will become an alternative way to deliver learning opportunities.

Challenge Dad: this pathfinder project is based in Aberdeen and seeks to encourage male family members to participate in literacies learning for their own and their families' benefit. In pursuit of these aims, the project organises fun events for fathers/carers of children, which incorporate literacy-related activities in an attempt to build parents' skills to support their children's learning. It is intended that this project will positively impact the learning of the families involved and specifically the adult males. The project is also likely to have extended use for other projects. For example, training resources will be developed that may be utilised elsewhere.

Literacies Curriculum for Adults with Learning Disabilities: this project concentrates on curriculum development and training in adult literacies for adults with learning disabilities. The aim is that the curriculum will enable people with learning disabilities to develop the skills they need to participate and contribute actively in communities. The project hopes to develop a context based curriculum, which will inevitably provide a better service for people with learning difficulties, and help people with disabilities build increased confidence and encourage their participation in volunteering, education, leisure and employment.

The Welcoming: based in Edinburgh, this project focuses on literacies learning for speakers of other languages and specifically, asylum seekers and refugees. Aiming to address literacies issues for speakers of other languages, the project involves indigenous Scottish literacies students both as learners and as a source of information. As well as increasing literacies levels, the project also aims to increase confidence, build self-esteem, decrease isolation and develop knowledge and skills with reference to housing and health. The long-term intention of this project is to provide a model for integration of refugees/asylum seekers through participatory curriculum development.

Links to Literacies: this pathfinder project is based in Learning Link Scotland and aims to strengthen effective voluntary sector representation and participation in adult literacies action plan partnerships. Local and national voluntary organisations and clients involved with these organisations who have unmet literacies needs are therefore the target groups of this project. This pathfinder aims to strengthen effective voluntary sector participation in local literacies partnerships, with a worker in each of the piloted local authority areas acting as a link between local literacies partnerships and voluntary organisations. It is hoped that this project will provide demonstration models for network development, skills sharing and offer guidance on how to proceed with the models.

Countdown East End: Based in the East End of Glasgow, which has some of the highest levels of deprivation and the lowest levels of educational attainment. This project involves family literacies learning using a community development approach to devise a programme for recruiting and supporting peer educators. The project addresses issues of lifelong learning, social inclusion and social justice and aims to recruit twenty six peer

educators over the duration of the project.. Through Countdown East End a training programme for peer educators was devised and implemented. The intended impact of the pathfinder is to develop a method for community capacity building in order to inform the future development and delivery of adult literacies.

Literacy and Health: recognising the link between low literacy and health, this pathfinder aims to build the capacity of the health sector in identifying and responding to the needs of people with low literacy levels. The project targets a wide range of health staff and professionals including general practitioners and physiotherapists. The intention of the project is to produce guidelines on how to increase awareness of literacies and health and provide examples of accessible health information, which could be disseminated to a wide audience.

Homing in on Literacy: this pathfinder is based in Perth and focuses on people who are homeless, threatened with homelessness or living in temporary accommodation. The aim of the project is to develop the literacies skills necessary to sustain tenancies. As a result, the project will focus on literacies in relation to tenancy issues, such as form filling, budgeting, understanding bills and meters and accessing the benefits system. Learners involved in the project will also have access to health care resources and information on healthier lifestyles. It is intended that this project will provide a model of good practice for engaging with and providing literacies skills based around the issue of sustainable tenancies.

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