

Learning and Work Wales
Sefydliad Dysgu A Gwaith

Wales Case Study Collection

The Impact of Adult Learning



Scotland's Learning Partnership



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The following case studies were collected this summer from Impact Forum members and speakers. They are chosen to illustrate the impact that adult learning, in various offerings, has on the three core themes of work, health and community - sometimes separately and sometimes cumulatively.

We know that these are a very small sample of the excellent work that goes on in Wales across all sectors of provision. We believe that more work needs to happen to pull together quantitative and qualitative data so that the full impact of adult learning can be understood and valued.

Our thanks to: Vale Parent and Child Homework and Support Club; 3Gs Only Men and North Merthyr Tydfil Communities First; Monkton Priory Community Primary School; Michaelston Neighbourhood Learning Centre; AerFin in Caerphilly and Admiral Group plc.



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Wales Case Studies

Case Study 1

Theme: Community

The Vale Parent and Child Homework and Support Club

Established by volunteers, the Vale Parent and Child Homework and Support Club provides a weekly homework club for children, many with multiple physical and learning difficulties. Created in 2012 by a group of parents and individuals it has grown from just two children to over one hundred, with a team of volunteers now offering a series of pioneering support services for families as well as additional qualifications for the children, young people and wider community who attend.

The project works closely with Adult Community Learning to upskill participants by offering a series of courses such as craft confidence, stress management, counselling, customer service, first aid, fire safety, food hygiene, ICT and moneywise.

Some younger learners have left school with few formal qualifications but through the project they have been able to achieve vocational qualifications and take part in volunteering right on their doorstep. Through this they have been encouraged to join the Essentials Skills course and improve their English and Maths. Many of those involved in the project have developed the confidence to go on to further education and training.

Developing further partnerships with Cardiff Metropolitan University and the Open University has resulted in 17 people currently completing degree courses including Law, Psychology and Maths.

The project has no significant funding and depends solely on partnerships and the volunteers who work tirelessly, striving to make learning fun for everyone involved. It has benefited so many individuals and families within the local community who would never have considered further education or training previously.

Founder, Catherine Watkins said, "When I first launched the club I never imagined that it would grow so quickly and have such an impact on the lives of so many people. I am so proud of what we have achieved to date and it's so great to watch some of our members really flourish and become determined to go on to make a success of themselves and accomplish their dreams."

Watch their story: [Vale Parent Group Film](#)

Case Study 2

Theme: Community

3Gs Only Men Allowed (the Men's Project)

The 3Gs Only Men Allowed project was set up three years ago, to give long-term unemployed men in the North Merthyr Tydfil Communities First area the opportunity to get together and take part in activities to help improve the community, and develop their own skills and learning.

The project partnered with outdoor activities initiative Come Outside and environmental charity, Keep Wales Tidy, to provide a range of activities for men. At that time, more than 90% of people engaged with the North Merthyr Tydfil Communities First were women, so there was a clear lack of provision and support for men.

Project members say, "We've become positive role models within our community. The project has brought us together, many of us were experiencing social isolation and depression. We are now a family that looks after each other and we continue to encourage new members so that they can benefit too". The group is open to all but the majority are long term unemployed. The work they have carried out has improved their confidence and basic skills, providing them with paths to employment. The group meets most week days for a variety of structured activities and learning ranging from basic skills classes, outdoor leaders' awards, dry stone walling and child protection. Group member Jeremy Davies says, "When I became the sole carer for my child, I started to suffer from depression, the project helped me gain qualifications, got me into voluntary work and gave me the chance to put the skills I was taught to good use."

The project has developed links with Cardiff University and a range of other partners including the National Museum Wales. Lee Davies, Community Engagement Officer who oversees the project, says: "We've helped around 40 men. We're all about getting people active and out in the community. We get them working on the community garden at Cyfarthfa Park, doing carpentry with mental health charity Hafal and community clear-ups." The group also developed the Trek to Connect Geocaching history trail from Cyfarthfa Park to Abercynon.

Carol Martin talks about the difference it has made to her husband, "Karl has dementia, and if it wasn't for the project I don't know what I would be doing. He had been an active member in the local community and all of this came crashing down when he was diagnosed. This group is his life line."

Watch their story: [3G's Only Men Allowed Film](#)

Case Study 3

Theme: Community

Launch Learning at Monkton Priory Community Primary School

Monkton Village, Pembrokeshire, West Wales

The Launch adult learning project was developed by the Headteacher of Monkton Priory Community Primary School, Shelley Morris, in September 2012. It evolved from the previous “Springboard” project based in the school and delivered by the local authority. The mission states that:

‘Launch learning provides adult education in the community for the community. Accredited and non-accredited courses are available and designed to remove barriers so that people in the community gain the confidence and skills to find employment.’

The level of need is clear:

Monkton CP School where Launch is based is unique:

- 56% of children are entitled to free school meals
- 40% of children have additional learning needs
- There are two additional learning needs units
- 30% of children are Gypsy/Traveller
- Gypsy Traveller unit for secondary pupils and 20 children are in the Priory Project

Despite various interventions in school, some children failed to reach their full potential. The School believed that more could be done to reach out to parents and the wider community, to develop their skills and aspirations, which would impact on their children.

Launch consulted parents and the community to find out what courses they wanted and reviewed local employers and their requirements. One of the largest employers locally is Valero Oil Refinery who require a Site Safety Card from all job applicants (CCNSG card), costing around £160. This requirement can make a big impact if claiming benefits, and this is one of the first courses Launch offered.

Launch also wanted to offer progression to learners, and feedback reflected that this was also something the community wanted. Positive partnership has been central to the development of the project and a hugely successful with the University of Wales Trinity St David has emerged. Since 2012, participants can study for a Foundation degree in Inclusive Education delivered through outreach at Monkton School. This has been so successful that students can now study for 1 year further and gain a BA Degree in Inclusive Education.

One of the main barriers to learning for the learners was child care. Launch now offer a free crèche with every course. This highlighted a shortage of quality crèche workers



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available. Launch applied to become a learning centre with Open Awards which enabled them to write and deliver accredited courses, tailor made for the community's needs. There were no crèche worker courses available in the UK apart from one provider in Scotland. The Launch Adult Learning co-ordinator gained the qualifications required to become a tutor and wrote an accredited crèche worker course, which included the Local Authorities safeguarding qualification. The Headteacher has also qualified to be the Internal Verifier for Open Awards, assuring the quality of the courses.

Impact:

Evidence shows that over 70% of participants found employment as a direct result of this course, as the card is recognised nationally and lasts for 3 years, participants can also apply for jobs anywhere in the UK. Due to the impact on employment, Launch tries to offer one of these courses as a minimum every term.

Launch now has 4 year groups running in the evenings and over 200 students studying in the evenings for a Foundation Degree, with over 60 students gaining a full BA degree since 2012.

Seven Learning Support Assistants working in the school are now graduates and this has had a massive impact on up-skilling the workforce of the School. The degree programme has been so successful that Launch was approached at the end of 2016 by UWTSO, who want to offer another BA Degree programme in Youth and Community Work at Monkton School.

Launch has now delivered 5 Creche Worker courses, since September 2016, and has been able to build a pool of qualified crèche workers. This has led directly to 5 participants gaining crèche work employment including with other partner organisations.

One of the participants is an adult Gypsy/Traveller man who could not write his name or read at all. After 121 sessions since September he announced last week that he has been reading his 3 and 7 year old children bedtime stories. His employer is also considering promotion for him.

Data from the School is illustrating how Launch has positively impacted on both attendance and attainment and closed the gap between children with Free School Meals and those without. The HMI reported positively on the School's activities in 2016.

Case study: Lisa W

"I am a lone parent to eight children aged between 4 years and 24 years. I am also a Grandmother to three children. All my children have been or still are at Monkton CP School. Two years ago, I was contacted by the adult learning coordinator for Launch and the Head Teacher both at Monkton School, they advised me to start a foundation degree at the school that was being provided by University of Wales Trinity Saint David. I could not even turn on a computer but Kellie booked me on a First Steps course (paid for by Monkton CP School). The computer course is provided at the school by Learning Pembrokeshire. I took the follow up course as well to improve my IT skills. I have not studied since leaving school but felt it was time that I did something for myself and to be a positive role model to my children and grandchildren. My confidence was quite low but I was persuaded by Kellie and Shelley (Head teacher). Launch also provided a crèche so there were no excuses for me not to give it a go. I have really enjoyed the course and I have received excellent marks so



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far and I have now graduated with a 2:1. UWTSO and especially Jean Williams have been fantastic support and I was diagnosed with Dyslexia and ADHD by college staff. Because of my diagnosis, I have been provided with equipment to help with my disability. After I graduate from the foundation degree, I feel that I am now capable to study for the full BA honours degree next year. My computer skills have increased and so has my confidence. With my new-found confidence, I decided it was also time to learn to drive. Launch and Monkton CP School helped and provided me with the revision disk and the computer room to study for the theory side of the test. I passed and this has given me more freedom and independence. I volunteered to be a mentor for people with drug and alcohol problems and I passed many courses as a support worker. I now also volunteer three days at Monkton School as a Teaching Assistant in order to help with my degree course. I have now applied to be a parent governor, as I feel confident enough to give my voice on behalf of all the parents here at Monkton School. My life has changed for the better and I would like to give special thanks to all at Launch and University of Wales Trinity St David for having the confidence in me and the belief that I can reach my full potential and literally change my life."

Case Study 4

Theme: Health

Individual

Lynda Sullivan was suffering from agoraphobia and depression in 2001 when an advertising leaflet for adult classes in Michaelston Neighbourhood Learning Centre was delivered to her home. Lynda was determined to do something with her life rather than sit at home terrified to go out.

'For 3 years I barely left the house.' says Lynda, 'I found it hard to be around people and crowded places caused me to have panic attacks. The booklet was advertising courses for adult learning. I remember reading it and started to cry. I thought to myself that I could never do any of them. I kept the booklet for about 2 months and one day I got dressed and by myself I walked to Michaelston Adult Learning Centre. I was shaking so much I could barely talk to the staff. However, the staff were very understanding about my illness. I wasn't sure what course to take so the staff helped me decide. I then signed up for Computers for Beginners.'

It was at this time that Cardiff Council were going to build houses on the area known as the Rec where Lynda had spent many happy years as a child, particularly in the summer when she did not go on holiday.

'When our only field was due to be built on I could not sit back and do nothing.' says Lynda, 'I had to take action. I emailed people, got a petition going, wrote many letters using my computer to check for spelling mistakes. I took my camera over to the field and took many pictures of things that needed repairing. This meant getting out of the house more, which wasn't always easy. However I was not going to give up my fight. I held

meetings with residents, protested outside City Hall with many residents and after 2 long years we won our fight to save our field.'

Lynda wanted the people of Ely to have a pride in their young people and so she advertised for coaches and young people to form football teams.

'We then formed a ground called Ely Garden Villagers and became active within the community. I now run 9 football teams starting from 8 -18 year olds, each month fixtures are sent to me and with my computer skills I learned at the Adult Learning Centre I have to copy and paste and send them to our website.

I have also applied for many funding applications and been very successful in getting funding for many events in my area.'

In 2010 Richard North was looking for a project as a secret millionaire in areas of poverty and deprivation. On arriving in Ely and asking about people involved with making their community a better place to live, he was directed to Lynda and Peter Sullivan. He went undercover and was overwhelmed by the amount of work Lynda and Peter were doing and provided the finance for football facilities at the Rec. When he visited five months later, he was delighted to see the improvement in the area and the greater number of young people taking part in sport.

'Going to adult learning changed my life,' says Lynda 'everything I have achieved since then is down to doing all the courses. The day the booklet came through my door from the Adult Learning Centre my life changed and I have so many new friends to share my new life with.'

Lynda now works full-time and continues to volunteer and take an active role in her community. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wo4POQmUv6A>

Case Study 5

Theme: Work

AerFin Limited

Caerphilly-based engineering company, AerFin, is committed to supporting staff with their training needs. The company prides itself on quality. It commits itself to exceeding customer expectations, meeting regulatory compliance requirements and most of all fostering employee professionalism.

AerFin has ensured that all of its employees, with no aviation background, are properly trained. The company works alongside Cardiff and Vale College to provide NVQ Level 3 assessments; and training for management to be their qualified Assessors and Verifiers. Staff are offered flexible learning, giving them time to travel to study, have regular assessments and feedback; these benefits are also offered to their apprentices.

Despite significant changes in the company structure and heavy workloads, AerFin has continued to support employees. The company believes that up-skilling and re-training staff is a top priority; it wants staff to progress and continue to grow at the same rate as



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the business. Investing in training and development is felt to be of huge benefit to the company. Its Quality Management System is enhanced and continuously improving to deliver on time, innovative strategic solutions to technically challenging asset programs.

Apprentice Ryan Clift said: “Starting as an apprentice at AerFin has given me a genuine alternative to academic study and a real path to a career. Not only will I gain technical expertise but I will build those transferable skills that are essential to getting ahead in my chosen career.”

HR Manager Liz Cridland said: “With a mixture of training, coaching and development options, staff are able to grow within the organisation and achieve their fullest potential. Opportunities are endless for those whose work ethic and attitude is aligned with that of the company – Collaboration, Focus, Integrity and Discipline.”

Case Study 6

Theme: Work

Admiral Group plc

In 2015, Admiral Academy trained nearly 6,000 employees on courses and workshops of their choice. The team of 20 specialist learning and development professionals are on hand to offer support, guidance and career opportunities for staff, helping them to pursue qualifications that complement their development within the company. Admiral Group plc is one of the leading car insurers in the UK.

Admiral Academy is an approved Institute of Leadership and Management Centre, providing nationally recognised management qualifications. Courses are bespoke to the businesses involved, and employees can tailor their learning to their own needs. Since its accreditation, more than 800 staff have gained ILM qualifications.

As well as a prospectus of courses, learners from across the business have the opportunity to study towards an in-house post-graduate qualification, accredited by the University of South Wales.

Admiral Academy also boasts 400 courses which employees can enjoy online, through Admiral’s eLearning platform, iLearn. In 2015, there were 52,683 completions, ranging from Essential Maths and English, to Body Language and Time Management.

Self-directed learning is also encouraged through a scheme called “Henry’s Buy a Book”. Admiral Academy will fund the purchase of any book, eBook or DVD if it helps employees with their career development. Last year alone, more than 2,500 were ordered.

Admiral Academy Manager Liz James-Mahoney said: “It is so important to us that the huge amount of talented people that we see around the business, receive every opportunity to shine and reach their full potential.”



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Central Quality Team Manager, Dave Wynn, recently completed an industry recognised qualification delivered by the Admiral Academy and accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM). He said: “There are many things I have learned over my years with Admiral through experience. However, I have very few qualifications that relate specifically to leadership. I felt gaining the ILM 5 certificate would add further credibility to my skills as a team manager, which could only improve my résumé.”

