

Dear Colleague

INVITATION: EUROPEAN AGENDA FOR ADULT LEARNING: NORTHERN IRELAND IMPACT FORUM, 11 FEBRUARY 2016, OCNNI

I am pleased to announce that our work programme for the 2016/17 has been approved and that Impact Forums will form a key part of this.

I am writing to invite you to be a member of the forum for the next two years. During the six meetings over this period the Forum will:

- Identify the impact that it wishes to achieve overall and in terms of the three themes that will form the basis of the central meetings
- Consider evidence on the impact of adult learning in three broad areas (health, work, and communities) in order to complement and supplement it for the policy context in Northern Ireland, and add case studies where helpful.
- Produce and disseminate evidence to other networks.
- Enable greater policy coherence through sharing existing research, looking for regional and local case studies, and disseminating these
- Contribute to the creation of an interim report.
- Contribute to the development of the UK summative conference in the autumn of 2017.

The NI Impact Forum will determine its regional goals and as part of the UK-wide project will contribute to the publication of a 'State of the Nation' report on the impact of adult learning to be published in September 2017. As a forum member you will have the opportunity to hear this research first hand, and comment on it.

The Learning & Work Institute (formerly NIACE) has commissioned the research that will be shared at the thematic meetings.

Indicative Schedule -

Meeting 1: Agreement on an overall NI programme of work, and relationship to the wider project

Meeting 2: Presentation on the research into the impact of adult learning on **health**, discussion and presentation of case studies.

Meeting 3: Presentation on the research into the impact of adult learning on **work**, discussion and presentation of case studies.



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Meeting 4: Presentation on the research into the impact of adult learning on **communities**, discussion and presentation of case studies.

(N.B. If members wish the order of the themes can be changed.)

Agendas for meetings 5 & 6 will evolve in response to our agreed goals, but in terms of the UK-project will include: presentation and feedback on the interim report and then the preparation for the final report.

In addition, the Forum will hear feedback from the programme's three development projects on the Citizens' Curriculum, young adult employability, and digital inclusion, and consider these developments in light of the three key themes of health, work and communities.

Forum members will play an active part in setting the agenda for meetings.

As chair, I will ensure you receive copies of all papers under consideration at least one working week in advance of each meeting. Notes of the meeting will be distributed within three weeks of the meeting.

We do hope you are able to be involved in this initiative during 2016/17. We think the Impact Forum offers an exciting opportunity to come together as parties interested in improving the provision of adult learning opportunities in Northern Ireland – while also linking with colleagues in other parts of the UK.

Please do consider your participation and, if unable to attend yourself, please nominate another from your organisation if possible.

To confirm your participation in the Forum and attendance at the first meeting please contact us via colin.neilands@communitus.co.uk

Yours sincerely

Trevor Neilands
Independent Chair
Northern Ireland Impact Forum

Background

Established in 2014, the work of the Impact Forums in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, supports the UK's contribution to the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL).

The EAAL defines the focus of European cooperation in adult education policies for the period 2012 to 2020. It builds on the 2006 *Communication on Adult Learning* and on the subsequent *Action Plan on Adult Learning 2008–10*.



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Although 'adult learning' in this context is usually associated with non-formal education and non-accredited courses, it is also closely linked into the wider policy framework that includes vocational education and training, the *Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training* (or ET2020).

To support this work, the European Commission asked member states and other countries involved in the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme to designate a National Coordinator. The UK government asked the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, now the Learning and Work Institute, to take forward this work.

The next stage is to contextualise the findings and discuss them within the context of devolved decision-making. Each Impact Forum will receive up-to-date, expert inputs that summarise the current research base in the UK and the rest of Europe (including follow up work on the OECD Survey of Adult Skills) with the aim of facilitating dialogue between stakeholders in adult learning across the sectors, to strengthen relationships between these stakeholders and to allow the exchange of experience and policy across the nations.

For a summary report on the work in 2014/15, please follow this link:
[http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/sites/niace_en/files/files/Final%20European%20Report%202014-15%20Final%20LR\(1\).pdf](http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/sites/niace_en/files/files/Final%20European%20Report%202014-15%20Final%20LR(1).pdf)

