Introduction

This is an easy read report about the main findings in ‘Learning Through Life’.

‘Learning Through Life’ is a report about lifelong learning. The report was written by people who worked on the Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning.

Learning is what you do to find out new things and get new skills.

Lifelong learning is all the learning you do during your life from the time you are born to the time you die.

Learning can be good for people and communities.

- Learning can make people feel better about themselves
- Learning can help people to get jobs
- Learning can help build strong communities.
  It can help people in communities get on better with each other

We think everybody should have the right to learn all through their life.
Words you will find in this report

Commission
A commission is a group of people who meet to talk about something important.

A commissioner is somebody in this group.

Lifelong learning
Learning can be finding out new things and getting new skills.
Learning can happen
- in a school
- in a college
- in a university
- in a library
- at home
- at work

Lifelong learning is all the learning you do during your life from the time you are born to the time you die. You can learn by yourself and you can learn with others.

Inquiry
An inquiry is a project to find out something important. This Inquiry was set up to find out what was good and what could be better about lifelong learning in the UK.
IFLL
IFLL is the Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning. It was set up by NIACE.

NIACE
NIACE is the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education. NIACE tries to make adult learning better for more people.

UK
UK is the United Kingdom. It includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Communities
Communities are groups of people who live in the same place, or are interested in the same things.
What is IFLL? How did it work?

IFLL is the Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning.

The Inquiry began in 2007. NIACE set it up. NIACE paid for the work to be done. The Inquiry was separate from NIACE. We set up the Inquiry to find out what was good and what could be better about lifelong learning in the UK.

We wanted to make a plan for the future of lifelong learning. This plan will be for the next 15 years.

We asked people to tell us what they knew about lifelong learning and what they thought about lifelong learning. Over 250 people told us. We heard from lots of different people like:
- people that work for the government
- business people
- people who work in colleges or universities
- people who are learning
We asked some experts to write short reports for us. There are 33 short reports. If you would like to read them, go to the ‘Finding out more section’ to find out how.

‘Learning Through Life’ is the main report. We wrote it using all the information that we got from people.
Lifelong learning – what are things like now?

People living in the UK have good opportunities for lifelong learning. We have good schools, colleges, universities and libraries. These are better than in a lot of other countries.

But there are some things about lifelong learning in the UK that could be better. Some people have more opportunities to learn than other people. This is not fair or equal.

We found out which people took part in adult learning over the last 10 years.

We found that you are more likely to take part in adult learning if you
- have more money
- have a paid job
- are younger
- are not disabled
We found that you are less likely to take part in adult learning if you
- have less money
- do not have a paid job
- are older
- are disabled

We found out which organisations and which people spend money on adult learning. We found out that for every £55 that is spent on adult learning
- the government spends £26
- employers and charities spend £20
- learners spend £9

We have written some ideas and plans about how things can be made better. You can read about these ideas and plans over the next few pages.
How could things be better?

1. People of all ages should have the opportunity to learn

People are living longer.
So we have more older people in the UK than we did before.
People spend time differently depending on their age.
So we need learning that fits into people’s lives.

We need to organise learning for people of different age groups.
We need to do this to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to take part in lifelong learning that is right for them.
We think that the age groups should be
- Up to 25
- 25–50
- 50–75
- 75 and older

These groups could help us to see more clearly who is learning and who has the opportunity to learn.
It could help us to see what needs changing.

- **Up to 25**
Some people take longer than others to grow up and understand who they are and what they want to do in life.
Learning in this stage should help people grow.
25–50

People have lots of things to do and think about
- looking after children
- looking after parents
- going to work
- learning

People may not have much time.
Learning in this stage should help them to do all these things well and to be happy.

50–75

People in this stage are still active and they have more time.

We think people will need or want to work in this stage. So training and learning at work should carry on in this stage.

But people might work part time and might want to do other things as well.

Learning should help them do these things.

75 and older

Until now there have not been many opportunities for older people to learn.

Because there are more older people than there used to be it is even more important that they get the opportunity to learn to help them stay healthy.

People should be able to get extra help and support to learn each time they move into the next stage.
This is because your needs change as you get older.
2. Money spent on learning should be shared out fairly between all ages

We found out how many people there are in each age group and how many there will be in the year 2020. By 2020, there will be more older people and less younger people than there are now. We found how money for learning is shared between the 4 age groups now.

At the moment most money spent on learning is spent on learning for younger people. For every £55 that is spent on adult learning
- £47 goes towards learning for people 18–24 years old
- £6 goes towards learning for people 25–49 years old
- £1 goes towards learning for people 50–74 years old
- 29p goes towards learning for people 75 years old and older
We think that this should change.  
We think that by 2020 more money should be spent on learning for older people than it is now.  
This would make it fairer for all ages. 

When it comes to learning, we do not think people need to be split into these age groups.  
We think it is good when people of different ages learn together.  
One way of doing this is for families to learn together.  
Another way is to have a class with older people and younger people learning together. 

3. Entitlements 

Everyone should have a right to learn.  
This is called an ‘entitlement’.  
We think there should be 2 different types of entitlement 
- A general entitlement 
- A specific ‘transition’ entitlement.  
These are explained below. 

General entitlement 

We think 
- Everyone should have the right to learn basic skills.  
These are literacy and numeracy up to Level 1.  
(Level 1 is the same as getting a D, E, F or G in GCSEs.)  
This should be the law 
- Everyone should get learning up to Level 2 paid for by the government.  
(Level 2 is the same as getting an A, B or C in GCSEs)
Everyone should have the right to have time off work so they can learn. We would call this ‘learning leave’

Everyone should have these rights. It should not matter how old they are.

**Specific ‘transition’ entitlement**

A transition is a big change in your life. Here are some examples

- Moving from a care home to living on your own
- Moving out of prison
- Moving to the UK from a different country
- Stopping work when you are older. This is called ‘retiring’

A transition can be a difficult time. Learning can help people when they are going through a transition. We think everyone should have the right to learn when they are going through a transition.

People should be able to get help and information about learning. This should help them choose learning that is right for them. The adult advancement and careers service should give people help and information about learning.
Everybody should also get a ‘learning account’ for their 25th birthday. This would be like a bank account. The government would put money in. You could put money in. So could your family or your employer. You could then use this money to pay for learning. This would help people pay for learning that is right for them.

4. People should be able to learn in a way that is right for their life

The learning you do can be counted as points. This is called a credit system. The more learning you do, the more points you build up.

We think that colleges and learning centres should all use the credit system now. This would help make sure that everyone has the same opportunities to learn.

It should not matter how many hours in a week you want to learn.

It should not matter whether you want to learn at a university or college.
5. Learning should help people have better jobs

Employers should
- make better jobs that use the skills that their staff have
- give staff learning at work so they can get better at their jobs. Sometimes this is called training

People should learn more things that help them in their jobs.

The government should make employers say
- what training and learning their staff do
- how much they spend on training and learning for their staff
- how much ‘learning leave’ they let their staff have. ‘Learning leave’ is where people can have time off work to learn or study

This could be by making them pay less tax if they help staff learn.

6. There should be a citizens’ curriculum

A citizen is someone in a community.

A curriculum is a plan for what people could learn.
We think there should be a curriculum that helps people have more control over their lives and make their own decisions. This would help people feel part of their community and help them cope with changes happening in the world.

We think there are 4 areas that people should learn about.

These are

- **Digital information.**
  So much information is on the internet now. So people should be able to find the information and use it

- **Health.**
  People should be able to understand information so they can look after themselves and their health

- **Finance.**
  People should know how to keep in control of their money

- **Civic responsibilities.**
  People should feel part of their community and have their say
7. People who work in lifelong learning should get more support

Lots of people work in lifelong learning, for example
- teachers
- tutors
- trainers
- learning support assistants
- lecturers
All of these people should get more help and support to do their jobs well.

There are other people who help lifelong learning, for example
- union learning representatives
- community learning champions
- health workers
- probation workers
- citizens advice workers
All of these people can help other people learn. These people should get more help and support to do this well.
8. Decisions about learning should be made by people who live in the area...

Every local area is different. For example, London is very different from Cardiff. Glasgow is very different from Belfast. A city is very different from the countryside. At the moment national government decides what learning opportunities people should have. The government decides what courses they will pay for.

We think this should change. We think that local authorities, or local councils, should be able to make more decisions than they can now. They should decide with local people what learning opportunities are right for their local area.

Local authorities, or local councils, should work with lots of organisations to make sure learning opportunities are right for the area. They should work with

- further education colleges
- libraries
- museums
- theatres
- galleries
- local employers
- universities
- health providers
- sport and leisure centres
9. …but the government should make better plans about learning in the UK

There should be one department in the government who should do this. But they should work with other government departments.

So lots of government departments should work together to make lifelong learning better. Then they should find out if they can spend money on lifelong learning in a better way by working together.

A separate organisation should watch over lifelong learning in the UK. It should make sure each government in the UK is helping lifelong learning get better.
10. Lifelong learning should be the best it can be

To make sure that lifelong learning is as good as it can be we should keep trying to make it better. We think this can be done if we keep asking questions about it and see
- what is good
- what has changed
- how things could be made even better

We should look at other countries to see what they do well and what we could learn from them.

We should try different things to see if we could do things better.

We should ask lots of people what they think of lifelong learning. People like
- learners
- teachers
- people in charge of colleges and universities
- inspectors
- employers

We think a report should be written every 3 years about all the things that are found out. The report should suggest ways to make things better.
Finding out more

There are other things you can read about the Inquiry. They are not as easy to read as this report.

If you would like to read ‘Learning Through Life’, you can buy the book from the NIACE website

http://shop.niace.org.uk

If you would like to know more about IFLL, you can go to the website

www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry

If you would like to read the short reports written for IFLL, you can download them free from the website

www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry

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www.niace.org.uk
Learning Through Life

This is the easy read summary of Learning Through Life, the main report of the Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning.

The full report is available from:
Email: niaceorders@omsg.co.uk
Website: http://shop.niace.org.uk/
Phone: 0870 600 2400