

STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-23

March 2018

*In January 2016, NIACE and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion
merged to form Learning and Work Institute*

Learning and Work Institute

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A company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales
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Our vision is for a prosperous and fair society in which learning and work provide opportunities for everyone to realise their potential and ambitions throughout life

Context and challenges

We live in a country of great strengths: one of the richest in the world, with high rates of employment, world-leading industries, and some of the best universities.

However, too many people do not share in this prosperity, partly due to unequal access to opportunities to learn and work. Nine million adults have low literacy and / or numeracy; those from higher socio-economic groups are twice as likely to take part in learning; there are one million fewer adults taking part in publicly-funded learning compared to 2010; and employment rates vary across the country and by group; the employment rate of disabled people, for example, is 30 percentage points below that of non-disabled people.

Tackling these inequalities is vital: learning leads to more learning and has a wide range of economic & social benefits for people, employers and society. Key challenges now make it even more crucial to build a lifelong learning society with fair access to high quality work:

- **Generating prosperity.** Productivity is the engine of growth and a necessity for rising living standards. But UK productivity is one third lower than in the US, France and Germany. Productivity growth has been weak since 2008 and is forecast to remain so. Real incomes are likely to take an unprecedented 20 years to return to their 2008 peak. ***Learning and work can help build a high productivity, high living standards economy. The links between skills and productivity, as well as living standards, are proven: on average the more you learn, the more you earn. Employment is the main source of income for most and rises in employment boost growth;***
- **A fair & inclusive society.** Life chances are closely linked to family background – where you're from can limit what you're able to achieve, partly due to the close link between the educational attainment of parents and their children. Income inequality, stable for the last decade at historically high levels, is forecast to rise. Labour market flexibility enables more people to work but can feel like a one-way street if it benefits employers and creates insecurity for people. ***Learning and work can help people go as far as their talents and effort will take them, and learning through life can boost social mobility and inclusion. We need to support the development of high quality work, help people to progress and build their careers, and effectively combine flexibility with security.***
- **Health, wellbeing & social inclusion.** The prevalence of long-term health conditions has risen, related to an aging population. A rise in loneliness and isolation affects

people's wellbeing. Participation in society, from voting to engaging in local communities, varies across the country and by demographic group.

Learning, including family and community learning, and work benefit health and wellbeing, and promotes social inclusion and active citizenship.

Three seismic shifts are further increasing the importance of learning and work:

- **Global economic change.** Technology is rapidly advancing and the world is increasingly connected. Learning helps people adapt to & benefit from these changes. Technology are also changing the ways in which people learn and connect to work;
- **Demographic change.** We live in an aging society, bringing increased demand for health services and a rise in caring responsibilities. People will need to update their skills throughout careers lasting up to 50 years, along with a more flexible approach to work. Learning can support health by improving wellbeing and social inclusion; and
- **Britain's place in the world.** These changes, along with the UK leaving the European Union, make it essential to develop homegrown talent through learning, skills and employment. We will also need to ensure a migration system that meets our skills needs, and design new investment and approaches to replace EU Funds.

These are big challenges and big changes. Ultimately, they are about how we create and share prosperity, and help people to adapt to change and participate fully in society. Better access to learning and work opportunities are at the heart of building an inclusive, prosperous and fair society where people can be active citizens and lead fulfilling lives.

How we make a difference

Our Mission

- We are an independent policy, research and development organisation dedicated to promoting lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion.
- We research what works, influence policy, develop new ways of thinking, and help implement new approaches.
- Working with partners, we inspire people to learn and help transform people's experiences of learning and employment.
- What we do benefits individuals, families, communities and the wider economy.

Our ambition is for:

- **Active citizens and healthy communities:** helping to build more vibrant, tolerant, safe and healthy communities through participation in learning and work.

- **Equality & inclusion for social justice and life chances:** a society where everyone has the opportunity to learn, build skills and work regardless of their background.
- **Full employment and high-quality work:** ensuring everyone who can work has the opportunity to do so and to progress at work, with good support for everyone.
- **Higher productivity for a stronger economy:** driving economic growth, productivity and successful businesses through improvements in learning and employment support.

Our work is organised into the following priorities, focused on developing policy and practice that work for people and communities:

- **Lifelong learning.** Learning through life, for any reason and none, improves work, health, wellbeing and active citizenship. There are many ways for people to learn, with family and community learning vital for many. Yet participation in learning is unequal and has fallen. ***We will focus on making the case for participation in learning for adults, including through the Festival of Learning in England and Adult Learners' Week in Wales, and developing policy and practice to achieve this.***
- **Employment and social security.** Everyone who can work should have the chance to do so, yet too many groups and areas have lower employment. People need support from a range of services to help them into work, and the social security system should assist those that need it. ***We will focus on support for groups, such as people with disabilities, and areas that have lower employment. We will also look at how to ensure adequate support from social security, including Universal Credit, and the role of a range of services in assisting people.***
- **Essential & life skills.** Capabilities like literacy, language, numeracy, digital, health literacy, citizenship and financial skills, are fundamental to life and work. Yet nine million adults lack functional skills and participation in such learning has fallen 25% in five years. ***We will focus on building support for all adults to gain these capabilities and developing new ways to engage people and deliver learning.***
- **Pay, progression and security.** Work should be good quality and provide progression and development opportunities. Yet five million people are low paid, and three of every four people low paid ten years ago are still low paid today. ***We will focus on support for people in low pay to progress, including careers advice and skills improvements, and developing & spreading best practice on the quality of work.***
- **Apprenticeships and technical education.** Everyone who can benefit should be able to access a high-quality apprenticeship and world-class technical education. Yet access to apprenticeships is unequal and the quality of apprenticeships and technical education variable. ***We will focus on the quality of and access to apprenticeships, and how technical education can work for adults as well as young people.***

- **Social justice and inclusion.** Everyone should have the chance to go as far as their efforts will take them - life chances should not be constrained by background. Yet today social mobility is lower than in other countries and some groups have fewer chances than others. ***We will focus on advocating for better support for groups that often miss out and trying new ways of delivering this with partners.***

We will deliver our strategic priorities through:

- **A fundamental commitment to equality and diversity:** we will seek to understand, challenge and address inequalities in access to and achievement in learning and work.
- **Strong leadership:** Our Trustees and senior staff need a wide spread of skills and experience as well as allowing for the diversity of voices that our work encompasses.
- **Professional and skilled staff team and associates:** We need a strong team of staff and associates with experience, credibility and relationships across all of our priorities.
- **Partnership:** We will build strong relationships with a wide range of supporters and partners, including working with international networks, to inform our work.
- **Secure and diverse funding:** We will be clear about the work we want to carry out, the costs involved and the funders and partners we will work with.
- **Clear measurement of impact:** We will build clear measurements of the impact we want to achieve into all of our work, aiming to maximise its collective impact.

Our values are:

- **Ambition:** the leading and powerful voice for lifelong learning and economic inclusion.
- **Expertise:** using evidence-based thinking to deliver real-world change in learning, skills and employment.
- **Independence:** an unshakeable commitment to being open-minded, honest and fair.
- **Collaboration:** putting partnership and networking at the heart of what we do.

The things we do include:

- Research and evaluation
- Policy advice and guidance
- Statistics and analysis
- Product development, piloting new approaches and innovation
- Campaigns and advocacy
- Conferences, events and training