

Learning and Work Institute Innovation Fund activity

Adult Learners' Week overview:

Adult Learners' Week was delivered between 15 – 21 September 2025, with promotional activity throughout the month. For a more in-depth look, access [our campaign summary and results here](#).

About the Innovation Fund:

[The Innovation Fund](#) offers support for providers of adult learning to deliver community outreach, promotional activity or tasters throughout the campaign month, as well as the focus week. Organisations are invited to apply for grants of up to £750 to deliver activity which is managed and awarded by Learning and Work Institute (L&W).

Click the link below to download a copy of the [Innovation Fund Guidance and Application form](#).

2025 activity:

In 2025, L&W received **54** applications for the Innovation Fund and awarded grants to **34** organisations. Of these, two projects were not claimed.

The total expenditure for the Innovation Fund was **£21,424.25** - provider evaluation reported a total of **4,376 participants**.

The following organisations were awarded funding for their Adult Learners' Week activities.

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| Cardiff University | Newport ACL |
| The Little Learning Company | Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili |
| Swansea MAD | Coleg Cambria |
| GoConnect Ltd | Panda Education and Training Ltd |
| Cardiff and Vale College | Bridgend College |
| Monmouthshire Adult Community Learning | Neath Port Talbot Adult Community Learning |
| Gwynedd & Mon Community Learning | NFWI - Women's Institute Learning Hub |
| Dysgu Bro Ceredigion | |
| Torfaen Adult Community Learning | |
| Llanover Arts Centre - Cardiff Council | |

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| Compass Community Hub - Merthyr CC Aneurin Leisure Trust Aberystwyth University Lifelong Learning Swansea Lifelong Learning Cathays High School - Parent Learning Group Vale of Glamorgan ACL RCT Lifelong Learning Centre Gower College Swansea | Taff Housing Association Seren in the Community POA Trade Union Wulf Project Fairer Future / The Menopause DOVE Workshop Learning Pembrokeshire Springboard Carmarthenshire Libraries |
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A snapshot of Innovation Grant recipient feedback is outlined below:

Bridgend College / Adult Community Learning



Activity:

September 4: Year 7 Year Ahead Transition Evening at Bryn Tirion Comprehensive.
 September 6: Fostering Festival Stall.
 September 9: PGCE talk at Bridgend Campus (replacing the student fair).
 September 10: PGCE talk at Pencoed Campus (replacing the student fair).
 September 11: Leafleting at Litchard Primary School.
 September 16: Presentation at Halo Gym Bridgend.
 September 16: "Maths for Parents" Presentation at Porthcawl Comprehensive.
 September 18: BCBC Jobs Fair at Halo Life Centre.
 September 20: Discovery Event at Bridgend Bus Station.
 September 27: Oldcastle Primary School Summer Fayre (*Cancelled*)

Highlights:

In total roughly 900 people attended events.

The following collaborations have emerged as a result of the funding:

Foster Wales: Collaboration regarding future events.

PGCE Learners: An initiative to enable learners to progress while simultaneously teaching others.

Litchard primary school: Maths and IT courses held directly at the school.

Porthcawl comp: An ongoing partnership for parents specifically for Maths.

BCBC: A partnership and future events focused on enabling further adult learning.

Bridgend bus station: Direct advertising targeting adult learners at the station location.

Partner feedback:

We have immensely valued our partnership as this has given us a platform to enable us to communicate with many more learners along with helping us establish closer ties with other partners to help deliver Adult Community Learning throughout the Bridgend area.

We are very grateful for this opportunity and support and hope to continue this partnership in the future to help promote Adult Community Learning.

Learner feedback:

"I'm now able to help my child with her maths homework."

"I am keen to support my children with their schoolwork, so very pleased to find resources to achieve this. The first sessions have been informative and enjoyable."

"I have since thought about participating in a class myself, not just teaching. I have also since given the information to my partner, family members and friends on the type of classes you provide. Since a friend has signed up to your creative writing class in January."

Cardiff and Vale College (CAVC)



Activity:

During Adult Learners Week 2025, we delivered a vibrant series of Engagement Workshops across the Cardiff and the Vale region, aimed at recruiting and inspiring new adult learners. These workshops were designed to:

- Promote Family Learning in schools and community settings.
- Encourage adult participation in education through hands-on, inclusive activities.
- Showcase the range of learning opportunities available through Cardiff and Vale College (CAVC) and wider partners.

Our aim was to engage 120 individuals during the week:

OUTCOMES:

- 558 individuals engaged in workshops
- 39 workshops delivered

Highlights:

- Over 500 adult learners participated, with the majority expressing interest in pursuing further learning.
- Learners reported increased confidence in supporting their children's education, especially in maths, emotional development, and literacy.
- Many participants shared that the workshops were fun, practical, and inspiring, with several stating they now plan to enrol in ESOL, teaching assistant, or OpenLearn courses with OU.
- Workshops were attended by a wide range of families, including those with additional learning needs, non-English speaking households, and male caregivers.
- Bilingual sessions supported Welsh language development, helping families engage with their children's Welsh-medium education.

Provider feedback:

"Adult Learners Week is a pivotal initiative that we are proud to support and truly value the celebrations, the promotion and most importantly the opportunities it creates for adult learners to grow, connect, and thrive.

It reminds us that it is a powerful reminder of the impact lifelong learning can have on individuals, families, and communities."

Learner feedback:

"I would definitely like to take up further learning in the future to help support my child's education." "Participating in family learning has been a rewarding experience and a great way to connect with my child."

"I learned how to help children with maths and I am interested in doing teaching assistant course in the future."

DOVE Workshop



Activity:

A Community Engagement Event was held at DOVE Workshop on September 23rd. The event was attended by partners in the Powys Neath Port Talbot Adult Learning in the Community partnership, Adult Learning Wales, Neath Port Talbot College Group, Neath Port Talbot Adult Community Learning team, and DOVE Workshop.

The partners delivered a range of taster activities:

- Pyrography
- Sewing
- Embroidery
- Maths
- Art / Crafts
- Digital Skills

There were opportunities provided for families also, students from Neath Port Talbot Group of Colleges Early Years courses attended to provide activities for children whilst parents engaged in taster sessions. We also hired a face painter for the day, this again provided an opportunity for parents to engage with providers and taster sessions.

Highlights:

There were approximately 70 people attended the event over the course of the day (10AM – 3PM). The learning providers took the information from prospective students, some of which were for classes / prospective classes not based at DOVE Workshop. However, Adult Learning Wales recruited 14 new students to attend classes in sewing and embroidery. The classes commenced on, 13th October.

The event was a great success, with a higher than anticipated footfall. The engagement with learners and potential learners was positive, with providers having a high engagement. Adult Learning Wales has produced an article about their attendance at the event, it can be accessed here <https://www.adultlearning.wales/news/discover-learn-connect-dove-workshop-engagement-event/>.

It is hoped we can facilitate more community engagement opportunities with the learning partnership in the coming year.

The event was organised and delivered collaboratively with the Powys Neath Port Talbot Adult Learning in the Community partnership. Despite, the partnership already being in existence the event would not have been possible were it not for the Innovation Fund, which greatly assisted in covering the overheads which arose from delivering the event.

Provider feedback:

We are incredibly grateful to the Learning and Work Institute for providing us with the opportunity to deliver a successful community engagement event.

The funding allowed for us to showcase the wealth of opportunities available for adults who wish to engage in community-based learning. The turnout for the event highlighted that there is still an appetite for lifelong learning, and that where opportunities are provided people will access them. DOVE Workshop is in a geographically complicated area, with challenging access to public transportation.

It is vitally important that we as an organisation are able to continue working in partnership to highlight the needs of our communities and constantly strive to meet these needs. Events such as the one on September 23rd are just one part of this work and would not have been possible without assistance from the Innovation Fund. Thank you.

Learner feedback:

The event was great. Fantastic to see learning opportunities in the community, makes a difference to those of us who cannot travel. It means we still have the opportunity to learn and develop skills. Thank you DOVE for organising.

It helped me learn what classes are going on at DOVE. I have now signed up for the sewing classes.

National Federation of Women's Institutes – WI Learning Hub



Activity:

Unfinished: The Great WI Sewing Project Round-Up with Gill – 42 booked live course, 18 attended live and 68 requested and accessed the recording.

Untangled: Your Crochet Questions Answered by Felicity – 35 booked live course, 20 attended live and 85 requested and accessed the recording.

Highlights:

During Adult Learners' Week we saw a 5.9% increase on website clicks.

The craft courses were advertised on separate occasions in our newsletter and attracted:

- Craft: Unfinished: The Great WI Sewing Project Round-Up with Gill - 137 link clicks (5.6% of total clicks)
- Craft: Untangled: Your Crochet Questions Answered by Felicity - 129 link clicks (5.1% of total clicks)

Provider feedback:

Key learnings from Adult Learners Week include the need for extended lead times in our promotional activities to maximise participation. We also identified the need to strengthen our internal processes, particularly when managing initiatives that coincide with our August closure period within the WI and general staffing schedules. Additionally, enhanced data feedback mechanisms, both internally and from ALW organisers, would provide valuable insights to measure impact and inform future planning. To maximise the campaign's effectiveness, we would be keen to understand and support strategies to sustain Adult Learners Week messaging and activities throughout the year, rather than limiting engagement to a single week.

Taking part in Adult Learners Week was a fantastic opportunity for the WJ Learning Hub. It allowed us to showcase the breadth of learning opportunities we offer and connect with new audiences who might not otherwise have discovered us.

The campaign gave us valuable visibility, highlighted the importance of lifelong learning, and reinforced our mission to make education inclusive and accessible for everyone. Adult Learners Week is a brilliant way to celebrate learners, share best practice, and be part of a wider movement that champions the power of learning.

The communication throughout was excellent, the team were supportive at every step, and the systems were simple and easy to use, making the whole experience smooth and enjoyable.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to be a part of this year's Adult Learners Week. This is the first time we've been a part of the campaign and have found it an invaluable learning opportunity, both for us as an organisation but also understanding what is happening in education on a local and national scale.

Vale of Glamorgan Council – Adult Community Learning



Activity:

1. Learning and Employability Fair – Barry Library 17/09/25
2. Digital Drop-in and Sign-Up Day – Palmerston Centre 16/09/25
3. Digital ALS Drop-in ~ Info and Coffee – Palmerston Centre 17/09/25
4. Course Drop-in Coffee Morning – Flying Start Family Centre 18/09/25
5. Art and Craft Taster and Drop In – St Athan 17/09/25
6. ALS Life skills Drop In ~ Info and Coffee – Palmerston Centre 18/09/25
7. Wellbeing Craft Session – The Pod 19/09/25

Highlights:

890 participants took part in events organised by Vale of Glamorgan Council – Adult Community Learning.

The Learning and Employability Fair was again very well attended with over 800 visitors on the day. There were 40 organisations in attendance. The majority of those reported that they engaged with 25 plus attendees each. Feedback included that it was 'a great way to engage with the local community'. Although attendance was around the same level as last year, I would say that those in attendance seemed more positive and motivated to explore training and career opportunities than in previous years.

We had so much interest in the wellbeing craft session that we had to run 2 sessions – one in the morning and one in the afternoon in order to accommodate all the interested learners.

The Learning and Employability Fair sees us collaborate with multiple partners to ensure that the event is a success. This includes Job Centre Plus, Communities for Work Plus, Careers Wales, Libraries and Flying Start. Although we already work with these organisations, organising the event together really strengthens our ties, additionally, the event also allows us to network with wider organisations who attend. So many organisations wanted to attend we probably reached capacity this year but the library is such a popular and central venue that it would be a shame to move it elsewhere.

Provider feedback:

We are grateful for the opportunity to run Adult Learners' Week activities that we wouldn't be able to fund without the financial support of the Innovation Fund. (funding budgets are just too tight right now)

Swansea MAD



Activity:

The events provided people with the opportunity to participate in a range of bitesize taster activities, developing people's skills and building confidence and engagement with future learning opportunities. We offered a variety of digital activities, equipment and software for people to explore and try, including Blender (animation), DJing and music production, Arduino (electronics), online safety and scams, searching for jobs online, Google Workspace and Learn My Way digital skills. It was important that people knew they were welcome to drop in and participate on their own terms and at their own pace with no obligation to commit to a whole programme or course. People also had access to a range

of support and resources at our Warm Welcome Hub (including free clothing, toiletries, charging points and SIM cards), helping to engage people who are furthest away from education and employment.

We provided information about future learning opportunities at Swansea MAD (and opportunities in the wider community), building connections and confidence to help re-engage people with learning.

Open Day & Learning Event (Wednesday 10th September)

Open Day & Learning Event (Wednesday 17th September)

Ongoing promotion of Adult Learners' Week and learning opportunities during this period, including through face-to-face engagement and via social media

Highlights:

50 people attended events organised by Swansea MAD.

Attendees shared positive feedback verbally and via Learner Feedback Forms - including about new activities they had tried, new skills developed and appreciation for the welcoming and supportive environment.

54% of people immediately expressed an interest in learning more and future opportunities.

We are exploring opportunities with Community Workshops Swansea to support future learning opportunities.

Provider feedback:

Thank you very much for your support and the opportunity to participate in this year's Adult Learners' Week. The information and communication from Learning and Work Institute was clear and helpful and the excellent campaign resources supported us to promote our events.

Learner feedback:

"A day without learning, is a day wasted."

"I've learnt more about staying safe online, very nice environment to learn - the staff were very friendly."

"Swansea MAD will help you find your path."

"I'm glad I attended, I learned a lot in a lovely environment."

Torfaen Adult Community Learning



Adult & Community Learning
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Activity:

Pottery
Woodturning
Cake decorating
British sign language
Make your own clothes
Italian language
Astronomy
Psychology
Egyptology
Wonders of the world
Wire Jewellery
Indian cookery
Photography
Introduction to Canva
C.V writing
Confidence building
Interview techniques
Literacy
Creative writing
Numeracy
Digital skills
Health and Wellbeing
Mental Wellbeing

Highlights:

248 attendees

Learners who booked on a future course: 370

Total Enquiries received in-Centre / via email / on social media / on website:
878

All activities went well, some were ran as drop-in sessions where more people expressed an interest than actually came into the centre to engage. Going forward we will look at holding these drop-in sessions in other locations within the community and online.

We have recently started to collaborate more with the local Libraries but due to the Innovation fund and discusses following Adult Learner week we have now started to run some sessions and drop-ins in the Libraries. These include IT drop-ins, Find my past, Create writing.

Provider feedback:

We call our Adult learner's week - Achieve, Create, Learn. Achieve, Create, Learn is more than a campaign—it's a movement that empowers adults to unlock their potential and embrace lifelong learning. Every year, it inspires confidence, creativity, and growth, proving that it's never too late to achieve your goals and transform your future.

We greatly appreciate the support provided by the Learning and Work Institute and look forward each year to participating in this valuable initiative that offers meaningful learning opportunities to our local community.

Learner feedback:

"Tutor was very helpful and encouraging. Made it fun and easy to understand."

"I learned a bit of BSL, I'd love to learn more"

"Learning is for life, stay curious."

"Really enlightening, nice pace, it was inspirational."

Gower College Swansea



Coleg Gŵyr Abertawe
Gower College Swansea

Activity:

Budgeting Skills
Online Safety x 2 sessions
Helping with form filling
Shopping Online x 2 sessions
Get to know your tablet/mobile x 3 sessions
Intro to Sashiko x 4 sessions
Intro to Crochet x 2 sessions
Intro to Patchwork x 3 sessions
Intro to Knitting x 1 session

Highlights:

112 learners signed up and attended sessions.

As a result of ALW activity two additional part time courses were added to the annual programme for art and design to accommodate the learners who wanted to continue learning.

A number of learners who signed up for the ABE digital literacy classes have continued onto courses – approx. 15.

36,601 impressions measured for social media interactions with the online promotion of the ALW activity.

Collaborations have grown through some libraries that we were not previously working with. Providing more of the craft activities in community settings, which we have only done in a small way in the past, has identified a clear demand which we will act on moving forward.

Provider feedback:

Adult Learners' Week is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the power of lifelong learning and the achievements of adult learners across our community. It allows us to showcase the wide range of learning opportunities available here in Swansea and to welcome new learners through engaging introductory tasters. Whether you're looking to develop new skills, change career paths, or simply explore a new passion, Adult Learners' Week offers the perfect gateway to discover what further study at the college can offer.

The timing of Adult Learners' Week is challenging at the start of the academic year with so much else happening during this period. The timing of the awards would be better in term 3 when learners are still studying.

It also is better from a recruitment point of view; learners can do tasters which lead onto signing up for courses which start in September.

Learner feedback:

"Really enjoyed the session, it gave me the confidence to try out more at home."

"I wasn't sure what to expect, when I signed up, however I feel accomplished in my new skills."

"Learning new skills is fun."

"Very friendly group loved learning new skills. Looking forward to starting a course in the future."

Cathays High School: Parent Learning Group



CATHAYS HIGH SCHOOL
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OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL
CYFLEOEDD I BAWB

Activity:

Jewellery making
Driving Theory
ESOL for families
Numeracy skills : bank workshop
Cookery and food safety
Creative skills
FAN club
Cultural exchange day at St Fagans museum
Childcare taster
Confidence building
Digital skills
Yoga and dance
Immunisation awareness

Many of the sessions went on a weekly basis for the full month of September but some of the sessions were on awareness or as a workshop as an one-off session.

Highlights:

Altogether 68 engaged people in our sessions.

Many learners joined a full 10-week course after joining the first taster session which was good as this can lead to a further qualification which can then enable them to get work.

The St Fagans cultural exchange day was most popular as most learners could share their culture with others and learn about the Welsh culture and co relate it with the Bengali culture to compare and contrast.

We have a lot of collaboration work this year with Cardiff Metropolitan university, ACL, ALW, NHS, Cathays community centre, EYST, Hayaat women's Trust, Cardiff Libraries, St Fagans Museum and Viswa Bharati university in West Bengal. We even had visiting retired teacher from Jadavpur University to understand our teaching and learning styles here.

The Parent Learning Group also won the Hywel Francis Award for Community Impact – and were recognised at the Inspire! Awards ceremony in Swansea, Brangwyn Hall in September.

Provider feedback:

Adult Learners' week is a great way of celebrating learning and recognising the importance of learning and education.

Learner feedback:

"I joined a creative class and got more information about other courses. Then I joined ESOL and Food Safety to be able to get back to work."

"I came to one class and want to join other classes as well!"

"You can get a job after learning, and help your family."

Activity:

How to use your tablet device taster session, Gresford
English & Maths Essential Skills, the Parc Community Hub
Introduction to using computers, laptops & Chromebooks, Acton and Llay
Community Resource Centres.

Highlights:

In total throughout the week, we had around 60 potential learners attending our activities, with around 30 of these now attending our courses regularly.

We've seen a significant increase in participation this academic year, supported in large part by our preparations for and involvement in Adult Learners' Week. Many of our community classes are now fully subscribed, reflecting the strong interest generated through the campaign.

Several articles were published to highlight our Adult Learners' Week activity and wider community learning offer, helping us reach new audiences and showcase local success stories. You can read one of the features here:

<https://wrexham.com/news/community-hubs-welcome-record-numbers-of-learners-across-wrexham-277558.html>.

We had planned to host an 'Inclusion Roadshow' at our main Wrexham campus to further promote learning opportunities and community engagement. Unfortunately, we needed to postpone this event due to venue and staff availability challenges during the busy start-of-term period. However, we plan to revisit the idea later in the year, as we're confident it will provide a valuable platform to build on the momentum from this year's campaign.

We have launched 4 classes since ALW

Provider feedback:

Adult Learners' Week continues to be an invaluable campaign for us. The financial support provided through the Learning & Work Institute's Innovation Fund has been crucial at a time of increasing budgetary pressures, enabling us to promote adult learning opportunities more widely and engage new learners

across our communities. The campaign plays an important role in raising awareness of lifelong learning and supporting our mission to make education accessible for all.

We'd like to express our sincere thanks for the support and resources provided throughout this year's campaign. The live training sessions and promotional materials were particularly helpful in shaping our local activity and strengthening our engagement strategy.

Learner feedback:

"I'm still learning from the course, but it's helping me become more confident with my maths."

"Currently still learning i am improving on my maths skills, Digital Skills course i am learning how to navigate the internet and skills on the chrome book."

"This course is more help now since everything is online (bills, bank account, payments."

Filled in a lot of gaps in my knowledge. Good starting point to carry on learning.