

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADULT CONTINUING EDUCATION  
(ENGLAND & WALES)**

(Registered Company No. 2603322, Registered Charity No. 1002775)

**More, Different and Better**

**NIACE Strategic Plan 2009–14**

**1. NIACE**

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is the national non-governmental organisation for England and Wales, which represents the interests of adult learners and potential learners, and all those who make provision for them. NIACE is a membership organisation, with the legal status of a registered charity (No. 1002775) and company limited by guarantee (No. 2603322).

NIACE Dysgu Cymru conducts work in Wales under the umbrella of NIACE supported by an elected Management Group.

NIACE is a membership organisation that both represents and advances the interests of all adult learners and potential learners – especially those who have benefited least from initial education and training.

**2. Objects**

The objects of NIACE as described in its Articles of Association are outlined in the appendix to this plan. They outline the range of work and the contexts in which NIACE will pursue the interests of adult learners focusing on England and Wales but drawing on, and benefiting from, wider international experience.

**3. Purpose and Value**

Our mission is to secure **more** opportunities for adult learners; to extend opportunities to **different** adult learners; and to promote **better** quality support for their learning. We aim to be the organisation of choice for opinion, innovation, partnership, development and research in adult learning.

Among the core values informing our work are:

- the celebration and promotion of active learning as a key factor to secure personal growth, social change and economic development;
- equality of opportunity, and respect for diversity for learners and those working on their behalf, thus securing a platform for learners' voices in policies affecting them;
- professional reliability, quality, openness, honesty and leadership;
- participatory democracy and social justice, including the opposition to discrimination and oppression;

- policies and practices which reflected consideration for the environment and for sustainable development; and
- international solidarity with those who share our commitment to adult learning in the wider world.

#### 4. **More, Different, Better**

The strategic objectives within the plan have been organised under the headings of **More, Different** and **Better** adult learning. As these headings are not mutually exclusive, objectives have been placed under the most obvious area where a particular activity straddles these categories. Where objectives have the potential to cut across all the categories of more, different, better, such as promoting the findings of the Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning, these have been shown under the heading **Strategic Developments**.

##### 4.1 **More**

**Key Objective 1: To reverse the overall decline in participation in publicly funded provision.**

We will do this by:

- re-asserting the value of community-based adult learning through our campaigns, development and advocacy work;
- promoting the case for high quality, affordable learning opportunities for adults that offer breadth of choice, effective outreach strategies and opportunities for progression;
- developing policy and supporting best practice in offering opportunities to develop skills for employability for people at work, securing work, and currently at a distance from the labour market;
- to develop policy and support best practice for the effective engagement of adults; and
- campaigning for improved part-time learning opportunities.

**Key Objective 2: To promote and support the development of provision funded from sources other than the public purse.**

We will do this by:

- strengthening support for provision in the voluntary and community sector through our development work;
- encouraging the development of informal adult learning; and
- supporting the development of expansive learning workplaces, and the development of adult learning opportunities at work.

##### 4.2 **Different**

**Key Objective 3: To widen participation amongst groups of adults who are currently under-represented in education and training.**

We will do this by:

- securing sufficient high quality ESOL, literacy and numeracy provision to meet need, particularly for those with the poorest skills (below Entry Level 3);
- continuing to develop strategies to overcome the digital divide to foster adult friendly, e-learning programmes and to strengthen tutors', teachers' and intermediaries' skills in the use of ICT;
- securing improved financial capability for adults, and, in particular for poorer, older and younger adults;
- developing programmes to improve employability amongst under-represented groups;
- strengthening provision fostering agency and self-advocacy among individuals and groups returning to learning; and
- maintaining and strengthening equality and diversity work for learners, potential learners, and those who make provision for them.

Throughout our work we will have a particular focus on the following groups of individuals:

- disadvantaged adults aged 50 and above;
- young adults not in education, training or employment;
- adults with disabilities, including learning and mental health difficulties;
- refugees and migrants;
- unemployed adults;
- offenders and ex-offenders;
- carers; and
- people outside the labour market.

#### 4.3 Better

**Key Objective 4: to improve the quality of provision for adults.**

We will do this by:

- securing the implementation of a high quality qualifications and credit framework which benefits adult learners;
- working across government to improve the range and quality of learning opportunities for adults, including promotion of inter-departmental coherence in the development of family learning;
- working across sectors to improve collaboration, coherence and the sharing of best practice;
- working with partners, supporting workforce development within the lifelong learning sector through advocacy, research, development, publications, conferences, training and information work;
- securing support for quality enhancement in self-organised opportunities for adult learning;
- assisting providers in the field to improve the quality of their provision for adult learners;
- strengthening initiatives to secure effective learner representation in the governance and planning of adult learning opportunities; and

- contributing, through our development and advocacy work, to the provision of effective information and guidance on learning opportunities for adults.

## 5 **Strategic developments**

Working across the boundaries of more, different and better adult learning, NIACE will pursue the following key objectives:

**Key Objective 5: build on the range of existing partnerships and strengthen alliances and advocacy work with civil society organisations, with trusts and other charities.**

We will do this by:

- monitoring the impact of the Memoranda of Understanding NIACE has established with key partners;
- sharing resources which help to promote the value of adult learning; and
- increasing the number of funding applications made to charitable trusts.

**Key Objective 6: respond to changes in the institutional and fiscal structure affecting adult learning and influence the implementation of adult learning related Government strategies across England and Wales.**

We will do this by:

- proactively assisting Government develop policy and strategy and responding to relevant consultations; and
- raising awareness of the overall pattern and balance of funding for lifelong learning amongst policy and professional communities, and with the public.

**Key Objective 7: develop NIACE's international work as a self-sustaining area of activity in order to ensure the work of the organisation is informed by best practice from around the world.**

We will do this by:

- Promoting Learning Through Life as a model of a national strategic framework for lifelong learning and exploring international comparisons.

**Key Objective 8: ensure that the findings of the Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning underpin all of NIACE's work, promote the findings externally and secure serious policy responses to its proposals.**

We will do this by:

- creating opportunities to work with key policy makers and opinion formers to encourage the take up of proposals from Learning Through Life in new policies and plans for adult learning;
- further research and development of three systemic proposals in Learning Through Life (the development of proposals for the four elements on the Citizens' Curriculum, across the four lifecourse stages; the revival of local responsibility for lifelong learning through a coherent framework for local strategic planning; and a closer understanding of the benefits and costs of lifelong learning in public policy terms through a model of public value assessments); and
- embedding the outcomes from Learning Through Life in NIACE's business plans for 2010/11

## 6 Ways of Working

**Key Objective 9: NIACE will maintain and improve the position and authority of NIACE as the major educational organisation representing the interests of adult learners across all sectors.**

In pursuit of this objective NIACE will:

- exploit its new organisational structure and work across the clusters of: Chief Executives' Office; Places & Structures; People & Curriculum; Resources; and NIACE Dysgu Cymru;
- strengthen and develop NIACE's cross-cutting work in the English regions, and across Wales;
- foster equality and diversity in all its work and reflect its equal opportunities policies in its practices;
- develop and maintain a motivated, skilled and prepared workforce, reflecting the diversity of the communities the Institute serves, and able to deliver across its range of programmes;
- review its business processes to contain costs, whilst maintaining value for money, and to maximise income to maintain a financially robust, entrepreneurial and cost-effective organisation;
- pursue high quality in all of its work, maintain its status as an Investor in People and as an organisation 'committed to excellence' under the European Foundation for Quality Management, and work towards 'recognition for excellence';
- review and revitalise the engagement of members and users in its work;
- increase the number of organisations in membership;
- maintain standards of governance that secure a proper focus on the charity's priorities;
- continue the implementation of the e-strategy adopted in 2007;
- review the organisation's branding and market position and improve internal and external communications;
- diversify income streams and work programmes across government departments, and secure work with the public sector workforce;
- develop the effectiveness of the organisation in winning new work through competitive tenders; and
- secure accommodation facilities and equipment to meet its needs.

## **Appendix 1.**

### **The Objects of the Institute as defined in its Articles of Association**

The object of the Institute, as defined in its constitution, is the study and the general advancement of adult continuing education. In pursuit of this object, a number of functions are identified:

- a. convening conferences, seminars and meetings;
- b. collecting and disseminating information;
- c. conducting enquiries and research;
- d. [publishing and distributing publications;
- e. undertaking special projects, and administering special agencies set up by the NIACE Board;
- f. Developing co-operative relations with organisations, institutions and individuals promoting adult continuing education in other countries and with appropriate international organisations;
- g. representing the interests of adult learners and the bodies that serve them; and
- h. renting, leasing, buying or selling property to facilitate its work or that of agencies for which it is responsible.