

2. Why we're campaigning

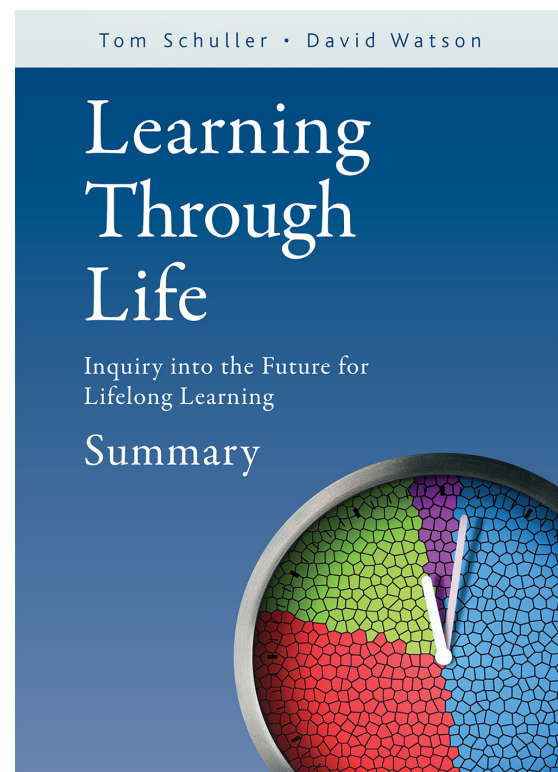
Number two in a series of nine campaigning factsheets

1. We want our local and national politicians to understand the importance of adult learning - and how much society gains from a relatively modest amount of public funding for this vital work.
2. We want to show that adult learning benefits many different aspects of people's lives and communities – and that it's relevant to the aims of a number of different government departments.
3. We want politicians to commit to rebalancing the existing amount of education funding around a four life-stages model, establishing learning entitlements and a 'citizen's curriculum'.
4. We want the adult education system to be improved so that there is more local responsibility and accountability for adult education, within a national framework.

Our campaign is built around an important report, recently published, which demonstrates the value of learning and makes recommendations for what the next government should do. The Learning Through Life report is the result of an independent two-year inquiry by education experts which considered over 250 evidence submissions.

The report begins with the premise that the right to learn throughout life is a human right. It argues that the UK's current system of lifelong learning has failed to respond to the major demographic challenges of an aging society and changing patterns of employment. The report's recommendations include:

- Basing lifelong learning policy on a 'four life-stage' model (up to 25, 25-50, 50-75 and 75+) with entitlements to learn for people in all the life stages
- Rebalancing existing resources invested in all learning for those aged over-18 more evenly across the four life-stages in recognition of the changing economic and social context we face
- Establishing a clear set of learning entitlements for people of all ages
- Building a framework of learning opportunities to enhance people's control over their own lives. This is called a 'citizen's curriculum' in the report, and would be built around digital, health, financial and civic aspects, together with employability.



Questions for your PPCs or MP

If you are meeting or writing to your prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs) or MP, here are some ideas for questions you might ask about lifelong learning policy. They are all based on the Learning Through Life summary, so make sure you have a copy of that with you!

As well as questions like these, which go into some detail about adult education policy, it's a good idea to have a few questions and comments in mind about local adult education issues – including to show the value of adult education to people in your area.

Protecting existing resources devoted to lifelong learning

1. Do you agree that the next Government should not reduce overall spending on lifelong learning?

Rebalancing those existing resources across the four life-stages

2. Do you support the four-stage model of the adult educational life-course (18-25, 25-50 50-75, 75+) proposed in the Learning Through Life report?
3. Do you agree that resources should be rebalanced over time, with a higher proportion going to the growing population of older adults in the UK?
4. What is your view on how this rebalancing could be achieved - bearing in mind public, private and voluntary (e.g. charity and 'third sector') investment? How might employers and individuals be encouraged to invest more?

The impact of lifelong learning – beyond just the education budget...

5. The four-stage model has public policy implications which go well beyond education and training. It links to employment, pensions, social services, health and well-being, community cohesion and beyond. Do you agree that lifelong learning has great value for the aims of many government departments – not just the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)?

6. What do you think is the best way for government to encourage providers of adult education to continue to provide courses that have benefits across the remits of different government departments?

Entitlements and the 'citizen's curriculum'

7. We propose a range of learning entitlements including legal entitlement to education to acquire basic skills; a financial entitlement to education towards a minimum level of qualification, and transitional entitlements as people move from one life stage to another. Do you support this principle?
8. Do you support the proposals for a 'citizen's curriculum' which encourages people to have control over their own lives? The report recommends developing four personal capabilities: digital, health, financial and civic (including employability) – are these the right ones?

Local or national?

9. Learning Through Life argues that local authorities should have a strategic role on lifelong learning. What is your view on this?
10. We believe that national leadership is also needed to deliver a coherent nationwide strategy. How do you think this can best be achieved?

There are nine Speak up for Lifelong Learning factsheets:

1. Your campaign pack
2. Why we're campaigning
3. Getting involved locally
4. Send a postcard!
5. How to call a meeting
6. Tips for running a meeting
7. Letting the media know
8. Making connections
9. Further Information

If you have a question...

You can contact us to ask about anything in this pack – or for more information: Maria Chica, email: mchica@wea.org.uk or call: 020 7426 3486.

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