This report reflects the point of view of literacy professionals assembled in this network. It is still a work in progress since we continue to gather and update information on literacy in Romania up to the year 2015. The contents of this publication may be reproduced in part, except for commercial purposes, provided the extract is preceded by a reference to “ELINET”, followed by the date of publication of the document.

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A PERFORMANCE IN LITERACY
This section of the report draws on data from PIAAC the OECD’s Survey of Adult Skills, to describe the reading performance of adults in the United Kingdom. In the United Kingdom, education is a devolved policy area and so education systems in the four countries, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are separate. Accordingly, the policy section of the report focuses entirely on England (there is no ELINET member from Northern Ireland). However, as PIAAC presented combined data for England and Northern Ireland, this data has been used here. Due to the comparative size of the populations in England and Northern Ireland, as well as their many similarities, we believe that the combined data provides an accurate picture of adult literacy performance in England.

Our focus here is on low achievers, those who scored on the lower levels of the survey: Level 1 (scores from 176 points to fewer than 226 points) and below Level 1 (scores below 176 points).

At Level 1, adults can read relatively short digital or print continuous, non-continuous, or mixed texts to locate a single piece of information, which is identical to or synonymous with the information given in the question or directive. These texts contain little competing information. Adults performing at this level can complete simple forms, understand basic vocabulary, determine the meaning of sentences, and read continuous texts with a degree of fluency.

Below Level 1, individuals can read brief texts on familiar topics and locate a single piece of specific information identical in form to information in the question or directive. They are not required to understand the structure of sentences or paragraphs and only basic vocabulary knowledge is required.

In this report, results are compared to the average of the 17 EU countries which took part in PIAAC.

1 Average Performance in Literacy

The United Kingdom performs similar to the EU-17 average of 271, scoring an average of 272.

Table 1.1 Average Literacy Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK (England / N. Ireland*)</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-17</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*We report about England/N. Ireland here as closest to United Kingdom in Elinet.

The lowest 10 percent of participants in the United Kingdom perform similar to the lowest 10 percent of the EU-17 average. On the other side, the best 10 percent of participants in the United Kingdom perform significantly better than the best of the EU-17 average. Accordingly, the gap between top and bottom performers is 124 points in the United Kingdom, wider than the EU-17 average of 117.
Table 1.2 presents the spread of literacy achievement of adults in the United Kingdom and EU-17 countries.

Table 1.2 Spread of Literacy Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Percentile</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>90&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Percentile</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Gap 10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-90&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-17</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant differences between the country and EU-17 in **bold**

2 Gaps - Low Literate Population

In the United Kingdom, 27% of the unemployed participants perform at or below Level 1. The proportions of adults performing at Level 1 or below do not differ between men and women. The proportion is far smaller among those who live with a spouse or partner than among those living alone. A very similar proportion of non-native speakers perform at or below Level 1 than on average across EU-17 countries, while age seems to matter very differently than on average of EU-17 countries.

2.1 Language

Migration has no causal relation with literacy. What is significant, however, is the oral language competence of the migrant. As part of the survey, participants were asked if their native language is the same as the test language. 32% of those with a different native language scored at or below Level 1, compared to nearly 15% whose native language was the same as the test language. The comparable figures for the EU-17 average are 34% and 14%.

Table 2.1 Test language and Native Language at Level 1 or below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test language not same as native language</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Test language same as native language</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>32.2 %</td>
<td>14.8 %</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-17</td>
<td>33.6 %</td>
<td>14.3 %</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant differences between the country and EU-17 in **bold**

2.2 Age

The percentage of adults in the United Kingdom scoring at or below Level 1 first decreases and then increases with age: from 19% among young adults (16-24 years old) to 14% among adults aged 35-44 years old, to again 19% among those aged 55 plus. The overall impression of these data show that in the United Kingdom, age seems to matter quite differently than in other countries. In the age groups of adults (25-44 years old), the share of Level 1 or below performers is lowest (14%).
Table 2.2 Age at Level 1 or below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>EU-17</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 or less</td>
<td>19 %</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>14 %</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>14 %</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>14 %</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>18 %</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>18 %</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 plus</td>
<td>19 %</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant differences between the country and EU-17 in **bold**

2.3 Gender

In the EU-17 average the sexes show nearly no significant differences, in the United Kingdom there is no significant difference, either. 16.9% of men and 16.4% of women scored at or below Level 1. The comparable figures for the EU-17 average are very similar with 16.6% of men and 16.3% of women.

Table 2.3 Gender at Level 1 or below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>16.9 %</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>16.4 %</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-17</td>
<td>16.6 %</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>16.3 %</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant differences between the country and EU-17 in **bold**

2.4 Family

In the United Kingdom, 14% of those living with a spouse or partner scored at or below Level 1, compared to 19% of those living alone. The comparable figures for the EU-17 average are 16% and 15%.

Table 2.4 Living with spouse or partner among those who scored at Level 1 or below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living with spouse or partner</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14 %</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>19 %</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16 %</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant differences between the country and EU-17 in **bold**
2.5 Employment

13% of the employed in the United Kingdom perform at or below Level 1, as do 27% of the unemployed, and 25% who are out of the labour force. The international comparison reveals that in the United Kingdom, the unemployed participants are significantly less literate than the EU-17 average (27% vs. 22%).

Table 2.5 Employment at Level 1 or below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Out of the labor force</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>13 %</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>27 %</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-17</td>
<td>13 %</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>22 %</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>24 %</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant differences between the country and EU-17 in bold

3 Skills Use

Participants in the Survey of Adult Skills were asked about their writing and reading at home, and at work, if employed. In the table below, a higher score shows more frequent use.

Table 3 Literacy Skills Used At Home and At Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Writing Skills</th>
<th>Reading Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at Home</td>
<td>at Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index of Use</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-17</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant differences between the country and EU-17 in bold

Adults in the United Kingdom perform significantly better with regard to their use of reading skills at home than the EU-17 average, and also differ significantly and positively from the EU-17 average index of use of reading skills at work. Use of writing skills at home and at work also differs significantly and positively from the corresponding indexes of the EU-17 average. These indexes reveal that adults in the United Kingdom use their literacy skills more often than on average across EU-17 countries, especially their reading skills at home and their writing skills at work.
4 Literacy Gaps

4.1 Parental Education

Table 4.1 presents the spread of literacy achievement by adults reporting their parents’ highest education level. Parental level of education is a significant factor in the United Kingdom, as in the rest of the EU countries that took part in PIAAC.

In the United Kingdom, there is a significant difference of 29 points between those reporting that neither parent attained upper secondary education and those reporting that at least one parent attained secondary education (252 vs. 281). Furthermore, those reporting that at least one parent completed tertiary level education perform significantly better than those whose parents attained secondary education (296 vs. 281). The gap between those reporting lower parental education and those reporting higher parental education is similar to the EU-17 gap of 41, scoring a gap of 44. Across the EU-17 average, it is the same pattern on a significantly lower level for the last two groups (252 vs. 253; 281 vs. 277; 296 vs. 284).

The overall impression of these data is that, the higher the parental level of education, the better the literacy performance.

Table 4.1 Literacy Proficiency by Parents’ Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower Secondary or Below</th>
<th>At least one parent secondary/post-secondary</th>
<th>At least one parent Tertiary</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>252 1.66</td>
<td>281 1.39</td>
<td>296 1.71</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-17</td>
<td>253 0.38</td>
<td>277 0.32</td>
<td>294 0.44</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant differences between the country and EU-17 in **bold**

4.2 Books at Home

Table 4.2 shows the spread of achievement of adults by reported number of books at home. This is a common measure of cultural capital. In the United Kingdom, 62% of adults report having fewer than 100 books at home. On average, these achieve 262 points in PIAAC, 30 points worse than the adults reporting that they have more than 100 books at home (262 vs. 292). This gap is similar to the categories across the EU-17 average (30 vs. 31). Distribution on average across the EU-17 countries is similar, too. However, those having fewer than 100 books perform significantly better than the comparable EU-17 group (262 vs. 259) as do the ones with more than 100 books (292 vs. 290).
### Table 4.2 Books at Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average score of those with less than 100 books</th>
<th>Percent of Population</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Average score of those with more than 100 books</th>
<th>Percent of Population</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-17</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant differences between the country and EU-17 in **bold**

### 4.3 Language

In the United Kingdom, there is one percent point more adults reporting that the test language is *not* their native language than on average across EU-17 countries. These adults, who do not speak English as their native language, achieve significantly fewer points in the PIAAC test than those who report that their native language is the same as the test language (248 vs. 275).

Table 4.3 shows the spread of literacy achievement referring to the test language and adults’ native language.

### Table 4.3 Native Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language of the Test and Native Language</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>275</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>248</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-17</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>274</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>246</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant differences between the country and EU-17 in **bold**

The distribution in the United Kingdom of native-speaking and non-native-speaking participants is similar to the EU-17 average. Those participants whose native language is the same as the test language perform nearly the same as the EU-17 average (274 vs. 275). Those whose native language is *not the same* scored also very similar to the average across EU-17 countries (248 vs. 246). Accordingly, the gap in the United Kingdom between the native and non-native speakers is 27 points, similar to the comparable EU-17 average (28 points).
5 Participation in Adult Education - Low Literate Population

In the United Kingdom, the rate of participation in formal or non-formal adult education by adults on Level 1 or below is significantly better than on average across the OECD-Countries (38% vs. 31%).

Table 5.1 Participation Rates in Formal and Non-Formal Adult Education on Level 1 or below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participation Rate</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>38 %</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD-Average*</td>
<td>31 %</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For technical reasons we report the OECD average here.

The non-formal education index incorporates participation in seminars and workshops, private lessons and open or e-learning formats. Table 5.2 shows the percentage of low literate and high literate adults participating in all four types of non-formal education.

Table 5.2 Percentages of Low and High Literate Adults Participating in Non-Formal Education and Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Open or distance education</th>
<th>Seminars or workshops</th>
<th>Private lessons</th>
<th>On the job training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 1 or Below</td>
<td>Level 4/5</td>
<td>Level 1 or Below</td>
<td>Level 4/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>47 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD-Average*</td>
<td>6 %</td>
<td>16 %</td>
<td>9 %</td>
<td>37 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*see above

Adults in the United Kingdom are most likely to participate in on the job training (organised by supervisors or similar facilitators) reaching 21% of those who perform at Level 1 or below and 50% of those performing at Level 4/5. Second frequently, adults in the United Kingdom attend seminars or workshops, with 10% of those performing at Level 1 or below and 47% of adults performing at Level 4/5. For private lessons and open or distance education, the figures are similar to the pattern of the OECD average for adults at or below Level 1 and lower for the ones on Level 4/5.
B  LITERACY POLICY
1 Provision

1.1 What types of adult literacy provision are there? What do you consider to be adult literacy provision in your country?

Recent policy initiatives have highlighted the importance of adult literacy, which in English policy is now referred to as adult English. This shift in policy discourse was introduced by the current coalition government and is gradually taking hold amongst providers.

“In April 2013, the Coalition Government published Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills, setting out six areas of change to improve the vocational skills system, including the need to develop relevant, rigorous and recognised qualifications. Leading on from this, Getting the Job Done: The Government’s Reform Plan for Vocational Qualifications, proposed reforms to English and maths qualifications, stating that “our ambition is that once the new GCSEs are available they will replace other qualifications as the single gold-standard measuring achievement at Level 2 for all ages and ability levels”.

The national inspectorate OFSTED defines English in the following way:

‘English is a general term that applies to all learning that aims primarily to improve a learner’s skills in this core subject. For some learners this will be entry level literacy; for others it will be the application of this core skill in a vocational context. For others, it might be achieving a GCSE in English.’

Adult literacy/English provision can be:

- discrete / stand-alone provision
- part of vocational education and training (VET) – particularly apprenticeships
- tailored to support for job seekers receiving government benefits

There is not a clear distinction between literacy provision for young people (post-16) and for adults. Such classes often have a mix of younger and older adults, pursuing the same qualification aims. In some types of provision, young adults are the majority.

Adult literacy provision is delivered in three main areas.

- **Further Education and Skills** includes: learners who are studying a course in a FE College, with a training provider or within their local community, and employees undertaking an Apprenticeship or other qualification in the workplace.

- **Workplace Learning** covers a broad range of training, including basic skills, Level 2, Level 3 and higher-level skills. This training is mainly delivered through the workplace (but excludes Apprenticeships). Between 2008/09 and 2010/11 this included the Train to Gain programme, Employability Skills Pilot and other programmes such as Programmes for the Unemployed. From 2011/12 this includes all training mainly delivered through the workplace (excluding Apprenticeships).

---

• **Community Learning** funds a wide range of informal courses, ranging from personal development through to older people’s learning, IT courses, employability skills, family learning and activities to promote civic engagement and community development. Courses may be offered by local authorities, colleges, and voluntary and community groups, and include activities specifically targeted at deprived areas and disadvantaged groups.

### Qualifications

Adult learning in England is focused on the achievement of qualifications. For adult literacy, there are two main qualifications:

**General Certificate of Secondary Education: English (GCSE)**

GCSEs are qualifications taken by 15-year-olds in school and are seen as the academic ‘gold standard’. Currently there is a policy initiative to increase the number of adults taking GCSEs, rather than other qualifications, such as Functional Skills. This is despite the fact that GCSEs are not designed for adults.

**Functional Skills in English**

Functional skills were introduced to address concerns about standards of English, mathematics and ICT for learners of all ages. They were developed to replace the existing adult English and maths qualifications which were introduced as part of the Skills for Life strategy. The qualifications have been designed to equip people to apply English in practical situations, choosing appropriate skills and techniques. They assess how well learners are able to apply skills in English to solving everyday problems at work, home and in society.

**QCF² units**

These are also smaller units of learning, designed to develop the underpinning skills and knowledge required for learners to progress onto Functional Skills or GCSE qualifications. These units are based on the Adult Core Curriculum and are generally between 10 and 30 guided learning hours. They are assessed by an end test or a portfolio³.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of qualification</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GCSE English Language (A* to C)</td>
<td>level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional skills qualification in English</td>
<td>entry level, level 1 and level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QCF English and maths qualifications and units</td>
<td>entry level, level 1 and level 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Apprenticeships

From 2014/15, all new Apprentices that have already achieved Level 1 standard in English and/or maths prior to starting their Apprenticeship will be required to take up the offer of training to Level 2 standard. All Intermediate level Apprentices will still be required to achieve a minimum of Level 1 in English and maths. Apprentices will not be required to have achieved the higher level in order to complete their Apprenticeship unless this is a requirement of the framework. Individuals who do not already have a Level 1 in English and maths prior to starting their Intermediate-level Apprenticeship must study at that level. This will ensure that Apprenticeships can still be accessed by those with lower

² Qualifications and Credit Framework.
³ For example: http://www.ascentis.co.uk/provision.asp?qualcats_id=45, accessed on 07.10.2015.
initial attainment in English and maths, including Apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

1.2 **How is adult literacy provision funded?**

Adult literacy provision is funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

1.3 **Is there a statutory entitlement to literacy provision up to a certain level?**

The government is committed to fully funding English provision up to and including Level 2 - both GCSE and other qualifications at Level 2 - for all adults who have not yet achieved at this standard.

1.4 **What is the rate of participation in adult learning, workplace training, liberal adult education?**

Adult learning provision is recorded on a data set called the Individualised Learner Record. However, there is no regular reporting of participation rates in adult literacy provision, with figures often conflated with those for adult numeracy (maths). The most recent available data\(^4\) shows that after a fall in adult learner participation in English and maths courses in 2009/10, participation increased for two successive years, but then fell by 3.1 per cent in 2012/13. Achievement remained broadly flat over the period.

1.5 **Are studies available on factors that inhibit or prevent participation in literacy education and in using literacy outside educational contexts? If yes, what are the factors?**

No.

1.6 **What progression routes are there from adult basic education courses to VET/HE courses?**

There is no official policy on progression routes from adult literacy to VET. Instead, English is embedded within VET, requiring participants to improve their skills while completing their vocational qualification.

Access into Higher Education - progression routes are available from a variety of Level 3 qualifications (A-levels, 14-19 diplomas, BTEC national certificates and diplomas, apprenticeships and work-based learning qualifications such as NVQs). So progression to HE from adult basic skills would involve an intermediate step of gaining the appropriate Level 3 qualifications.

There may be more information available on progression from vocational learning to HE\(^5\).

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\(^5\) See, for example, http://www.bbk.ac.uk/linkinglondon/resources/iag-and-progression-1/report_June2010_Progression%20from%20Voc%20Quals%20to%20HE%20Review_UKCES-1.pdf. This report outlines a study undertaken by UVAC and commissioned by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills to analyse the progression of vocational and applied learners to higher education and higher level learning programmes in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and to draw comparisons with approaches adopted in England, accessed on 07.10.2015.
1.7 Does a right to advice and guidance regarding educational opportunities exist? If yes, who provides this advice?

While it is certainly effective practice to offer IAG, there is no ‘right to advice’ in England. IAG is provided by FE Colleges and other providers, local authorities and voluntary organisations using a mixture of their own systems and the National Careers Service\(^6\). There is also the Government funded (?) Career Advice Online\(^7\). The most common standard for IAG providers to follow is the Matrix Standard\(^8\).

2 Quality monitoring

2.1 Is there an inspection service to monitor the quality of adult literacy providers (including classroom practice)?

Adult literacy falls under the remit of Ofsted\(^9\), the national inspection authority. The overall aim of Ofsted inspections is to evaluate how efficiently and effectively the education and training provision meets learners’ needs with a view to speeding up improvement in the quality of the further education and skills sector. Inspections also provide users with information about the quality of provision in England; to help inform them about the providers they use, or about the providers they may use in the future\(^10\). They help bring about improvement by identifying strengths and areas for improvement, highlighting good practice and judging what steps need to be taken to improve provision further. Finally, they provide the relevant secretaries of state and other stakeholders with an independent public account of the quality of education and training, the standards achieved, and how efficiently the provision is led and managed\(^11\).

Literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) are referred to as English and ESOL in the revised Common Inspection Framework for further education and skills. Each is inspected as a discrete subject in learning and skills post 16 provision.

Learners’ English and mathematics skills are also evaluated as part of the inspection of foundation learning, provision designed to get learners ready for level 2, a standard equivalent to GCSE. On prison inspections, inspectors evaluate how well prisoners’ English skills are assessed initially, and the progress they subsequently make in developing these skills and their plans for further training in prison and/or resettlement.

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\(^6\) https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/Pages/default.aspx, accessed on 07.10.2015.
\(^7\) http://www.careeradviceonline.co.uk/finding-a-job/nextstep.html, accessed on 07.10.2015.
\(^8\) http://matrixstandard.com, accessed on 07.10.2015.
\(^9\) http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/, accessed on 07.10.2015.
\(^10\) As defined in the Ofsted user and stakeholder strategy and deriving from section 117(4) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006: ‘those who benefit, either directly or indirectly, from the services that Ofsted inspects or regulates: children and young people, parents and carers, adult learners and employers.’
Ofsted produce regular thematic reports commenting on the quality of education provision, including adult literacy\textsuperscript{12}.

2.2 Are there national quality standards for the quality of adult literacy providers?
Ofsted fulfils this function.

2.3 Are there national benchmarks / standards for adult literacy performance? How are adults’ progress in reading and writing assessed / monitored?
Once again, Ofsted is the prime organisation ensuring standards.
Progress during courses is monitored by practitioners through initial assessment, formative assessment and summative assessment.

2.4 What accountability measures are in place for adult education institutions?
OFSTED again, as well as institutional QA systems.

3 Literacy curricula/reading instruction

3.1 Is there a national literacy curriculum for adults? How is this linked to school curricula?
The adult literacy standards\textsuperscript{13} define the range of literacy skills and capabilities that adults need to function and progress at work and in society. The adult literacy and numeracy core curriculum\textsuperscript{14} gives specific detail about what skills should be taught. The adult literacy and numeracy core curriculum was developed in 2001 to reflect the newly developed national standards and give specific detail about what skills should be taught.

Both the Standards and the Curriculum are organised into levels. These can be mapped from school to adult provision, but there is no direct link between the two and the national qualifications framework.

The national standards for adult literacy and numeracy are specified at three levels: Entry level, Level 1 and Level 2. Levels 1 and 2 are aligned to the key skills of communication and application of number (this alignment is signposted on the left-hand page of the curriculum document at these levels). Entry level is further divided into three sub-levels: Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3. Entry level has been set out in this way to describe in detail the small steps required for adults to make progress. This sub-division also signals a clear alignment of the skill levels with levels 1, 2 and 3 of the National Curriculum. The three levels of the national standards for adult literacy and numeracy correspond to the levels of demand of qualifications in the national qualifications framework for schools and the OECD PIAAC, illustrated in the table below.

\textsuperscript{13}http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/20518 accessed on 07.10.2015.
\textsuperscript{14}http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/sflcurriculum, accessed on 07.10.2015.
The Adult Literacy Core Curriculum describes the content of what should be taught in literacy programmes and sets out a clear set of skills required to meet national standards. It is divided into five levels and focuses on the following skills:

**Speaking and Listening**
- Listen and respond
- Speak to communicate
- Engage in discussion

**Reading**
- Read and understand
- Read and obtain information

**Writing**
- Write to communicate

The curriculum, with detailed criteria, exemplars and guidance, is available online, with extensive detail of skills, guidance and a huge number of printable documents. The curriculum describes in detail the content of what should be taught in literacy and numeracy (as well as ESOL and pre-entry) programmes, and sets out a clear set of skills required to meet the national standards.

There is also a curriculum for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and a pre-entry curriculum framework, Access for All15, which gives detailed guidance on making the curriculum accessible to learners with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities, such as being blind or partially sighted or having dyslexia. Adult literacy and numeracy standards range from Entry 1 to Level 2, mirroring the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework. They are assessed by national adult literacy and numeracy qualifications.

### 3.2 What is the accepted methodology for the teaching of literacy to adults? Skills vs Social Practice conflict

Individual teachers, curriculum managers and professionals within providers are free to use whatever methods and materials they think work best for individual learners or learner cohorts. For a comprehensive description of adult literacy teaching methodology see: Hughes, N. and Schwab, I. (2010) *Teaching Adult Literacy: Principles and Practice*. Oxford: OUP.

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15 http://rwp.excellencegateway.org.uk/Access%20for%20All/, accessed on 07.10.2015.
3.3 How do curricula and learning materials cater for diversity of learner groups and learning needs?


3.4 Is there a specific focus on literacy in VET provision for adults?

There is a renewed policy focus on English as an integral part of VET within post-compulsory education. It is required for all those enrolling on apprenticeship programmes:

“...all new Apprentices that have already achieved Level 1 standard in English and/or maths prior to starting their Apprenticeship will be required to take up the offer of training to Level 2 standard. All Intermediate level Apprentices will still be required to achieve a minimum of Level 1 in English and maths."

A recent commission into Vocational Education (It’s about work... Excellent adult vocational teaching and learning. The summary report of the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning) highlighted the importance of English and maths. The Commission noted that vocational teachers lacked the confidence to teach English and maths as part of their vocational teaching and saw this as a very serious problem.

“It is time for a concerted effort to ensure everyone involved in publicly-funded VET programmes can achieve the level of English and maths they need to progress within their occupational fields and to change jobs in the future. In order to achieve this, we need to create a cadre of specialist English and maths tutors in every college to be available as a resource shared between all vocational education and training providers within a given locality.”

4 Screenings/assessments/support

4.1 How are adults with literacy needs identified?

Most adults are self identified and then have to find provision. Small numbers may be identified through the workplace, through jobcentre plus or other interventions.

The latest funding guidance from the ministry responsible for adult skills (Business, Innovation and Skills – BIS) states clearly the importance of accurately identifying adults’ skills to ensure that they are placed on an appropriate learning programme:

We will also continue to require learners to be enrolled on a course at a level above that at which they have been initially assessed. We expect initial and diagnostic assessments to be robust and thorough. The Skills Funding Agency has strengthened its assurance arrangements and from


17 http://repository.excellencegateway.org.uk/fedora/objects/eg:5937/datastreams/DOC/content, accessed on 07.10.2015.

18 http://repository.excellencegateway.org.uk/fedora/objects/eg:5937/datastreams/DOC/content, accessed on 07.10.2015.
2013/14 expect to see evidence of learners having been effectively assessed at the beginnning of their learning and then placed on a higher level course.¹⁹

Unemployed adults are screened by job centres and those with poor spoken English are sent to providers for initial assessment and, if necessary, training.

4.2 How are adults’ prior literacy knowledge and skills recognised and validated?

Prior literacy knowledge is recognised and validated largely through initial and or diagnostic assessments and through interview when they enrol for a course. Recognition of Prior Learning is a method of assessment (leading to the award of credit) that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through the knowledge, understanding or skills that they already possess and so do not need to develop these through a course of learning.

4.3 Are there any standard tests to assess literacy needs or learning progress in literacy programmes?

There are a range of Initial Assessment (IA) processes, both commercially available and custom designed for use by individual providers. They all have various strengths and weaknesses, but there is no ‘quality kitemark’ attached to them. The most widely used IAs are: Forskills (Skills builder), Move on, P-metrics, Tools library, Mindset 2000, BKSB, Guroo and Tribal Target Skills Gold.

4.4 How are adults with dyslexia identified and supported?

Generally through self-referral or as a by-product of enrolling in a class.

5 Special support for second-language learners/migrants

5.1 Is there provision for adult migrants whose home language is not the official language of the host country?

Provision for adults who do not have English as a first language is termed ESOL in England. ESOL refers to English language provision for anyone who has come to the UK to settle and live permanently, who speaks a language or languages other than English. ESOL courses usually lead to a qualification and are described by levels: Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, Level 1 and Level 2. The courses at Entry level may include elements of citizenship, so that learners may use the qualification to apply for UK settlement and naturalisation/citizenship. ESOL may also be embedded as part of another course.

ESOL learners do not usually come to the UK primarily in order to improve their English, but for a range of other reasons - political, economic or personal. They may be refugees or economic migrants; they may have arrived recently, or have been living in the UK for a long period; they may have a high level of previous education, or have never been to school.

Most ESOL learners are not learning English as an end in itself, but because they want to do other things which require an improved knowledge of English; such as work, study, participate more fully in UK life, and support their children’s learning.

English language skills are essential in the community and for success in the job market. Learners who do not use English as their first language are expected to undertake ESOL learning which improves their prospects of getting a job and enables them to progress to Functional Skills in English and GCSE in English language.

5.2 **Who pays for this provision?**

ESOL learners in general have to pay for their provision unless they qualify for free funding in specific circumstances e.g. for those who are on employment related benefit, have been in the UK for 3+ years, and have less than a level 2 qualification.

5.3 **Does this provision employ specialist teachers?**

There are separate ITE courses for ESOL teachers as well as specific CPD programmes. However, there is no requirement on providers to use ESOL trained teachers, and in reality ESOL learners are often taught alongside literacy learners by literacy teachers.

5.4 **Is there specialist provision for those who have poor literacy skills?**

There have been attempts to recognise and meet the needs of learners who lack literacy in their mother tongue and therefore require more time to progress than those who are already literate in their mother tongue. Training for teachers was developed and a small number of teachers were trained.

When the national adult curriculum was updated in 2010, the Entry level 1 Reading and Entry level 1 Writing sections were split into two parts, one for learners who read and write in other languages, including other scripts, and the other for basic literacy learners who do not read and write in any language. This was in recognition of the distinct needs of such learners.

5.5 **Is there a separate curriculum for this type of provision?**

The Adult ESOL Core Curriculum describes the content of what should be taught in ESOL programmes and sets out a clear set of skills required to meet national standards. It is divided into five levels and focuses on the following skills:

- Speaking and Listening
  - Listen and respond
  - Speak to communicate
  - Engage in discussion

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21 http://www.amazon.co.uk/Teaching-Basic-Literacy-ESOL-Learners/dp/1872972608, accessed on 07.10.2015
Reading
- Read and understand
- Read and obtain information

Writing
- Write to communicate

6 Reading environments to stimulate reading motivation

6.1 Are there schemes to promote reading for pleasure among adults?
There are no formal government programmes to incentivise and support reading for pleasure. However, there are organisations which promote adult literacy and reading for pleasure, such as National Literacy Trust, NIACE, the Reading Agency and Booktrust.

Examples of current promotions include Quick Reads23 and the Six Book Challenge24 and the Find a Read database of recommended reads for emergent readers25.

NRDC carried out an evaluation of reading for pleasure for adults at the lowest literacy levels for The Reading Agency in 201126.

There are a small number of specialist publishers which focus on producing books for beginner or reluctant readers. A notable example if Gatehouse Books27 which publishes and distributes books and resources for use in post-14 and adult basic education.

6.2 Is there systematic cooperation with civil society – e.g. libraries, bookstores, literature institutions, theatres, media, newspapers, publishers etc. in reading promotion for adults?
Cooperation with libraries by the above organisations is key to many of the initiatives cited above.

6.3 Are there family literacy programmes with a focus on supporting adult literacy?
Family literacy programmes are provided by local authorities and in general are located in schools. Although originally designed to help progress the skills of both parents and children, family provision currently tends to focus on the child’s literacy skills. However, for parents with low skills, the programmes do assist adults with their literacy skills and practice as well. NRDC has carried out a number of research projects in this area28.

27 http://www.gatehousebooks.co.uk/, accessed on 07.10.2015.
7 Digital environments/use of technology in education

7.1 Is there a digital gap? How are adults supported in acquiring digital skills / digital literacy?

Martha Lane Fox (the Government’s Digital Champion) said in a speech to the House of Lords in January 2014 that “There are 11 million adults who lack four basic online skills – the ability to communicate, search and share information and to do these things safely. 50% are over 65 but 50% are of working age in a country where 90% of new jobs require basic online skills and many vacancies are only advertised online.”

A higher figure of 16 million is used in a 2013 report from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport – Connectivity, Content and Consumers: Britain’s Digital Platform for Growth.

In England, the government’s position is to make the country become ‘digital by default’ by offering many public services online.

These figures come from Go On UK, the charity which aims to make the UK the world’s most digitally skilled nation. Go On works in partnership with the government and is part of the UK’s Digital Skills Alliance. A website, digitalskills.com will launch in autumn 2014 offering online tools and resources.

The Tinder Foundation is a not-for-profit, staff-owned mutual that is working hard at bridging the digital divide in Britain. It has a learning platform called Learn My Way, where individuals can start learning about how to get online, how to go about getting an email address, as well as receiving advice on what devices to buy and much more. In February 2014, the Tinder Foundation published a report about the investment that is needed to get everyone in the UK using the internet regularly with Basic Online Skills.

Funding from the Big Lottery is being used to fund initiatives to increase digital skills.

BBC webwise offers a range of video and written guides to help people get connected and develop online skills.

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32 http://www.go-on.co.uk/, accessed on 07.10.2015.
7.2 Which population groups are excluded from access to ICTs?

A breakdown of statistics on basic online skills comes from the BBC Digital Capabilities Update, 6th-15th September 2013\textsuperscript{36}. (Sample size of all respondents: 2,083. BBC Digital Capabilities Update, 7th-13th March 2014 Sample size of all respondents: 2,057 in research conducted by Ipsos MORI).

7.3 Who is more likely to be excluded?

- Older people
- People with low SES
- Unemployed people
- People who live in social housing

Further information can be found in a 2009 report from British Telecom, \textit{An Insight into Closing the Digital Divide}\textsuperscript{37}, and, for a focus on older people and digital inclusion see a 2013 report from Age UK – Digital inclusion evidence review\textsuperscript{38}.

7.4 Are there any web-based programmes for adults to improve their literacy & numeracy skills?

Learndirect is the UK’s largest provider of skills, training and employment services. It provides

- qualifications in everyday skills like maths, English and IT;
- vocational qualifications and Apprenticeships in lots of industries\textsuperscript{39}.

The government is launching a pilot initiative to offer young job-seekers (aged 18-21), where mandatory training using the latest online technologies will be provided to those who lack qualifications in English and in Maths.

The BBC Skillswise\textsuperscript{40} site is designed to help all adults below level 2 with materials adults can use themselves, or which can be used with a teacher in a group.

7.5 What classroom resources (E-books, notebooks, internet, mobile phones…) are used to support the development of adults’ literacy?

There is no centralised approach to using learning technologies in the delivery of adult literacy provision. The implementation of these resources will take place at the individual classroom or institutional level.

A 2011 NIACE report\textsuperscript{41} gives some information on the use of technology

- There is widespread use of familiar technologies such as Microsoft Office, the Internet and video and still cameras. Much of this linked to existing teaching methods.

\textsuperscript{36} http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/overview/assets/digital_capabilities_2014.pdf, accessed on 07.10.2015.
\textsuperscript{38} http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/For-professionals/Research/Age%20UK%20Digital%20Inclusion%20Evidence%20Review%202013.pdf?dtrk=true, accessed on 07.10.2015.
\textsuperscript{39} See also: http://www.elearnuk.co.uk/course/literacy-adult-basic-skills, accessed on 07.10.2015.
\textsuperscript{40} http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise, accessed on 07.10.2015.
\textsuperscript{41} http://www.niace.org.uk/sites/default/files/project-docs/LitTechNum-NIACE_2.pdf, accessed on 07.10.2015.
Roughly a third of practitioners are using technologies which have potential to change classroom practices such as Interactive Whiteboards and Classroom response voting systems.

A relatively small proportion of practice involves really innovative technologies and methods, but the pioneering practitioners and providers do have leading edge approaches, which should be more widely adopted.

Three nationally provided online resources stand out as being most frequently used. These are BBC Skillswise, Skills Workshop and Move On.

Examples of online delivery were identified from the UK and abroad. There are good examples of both professionally developed materials, as well as locally tutor-created content. These resources give greatest value where they are designed to be used both as a stand-alone distance course and also as activities within a taught course.

Games are not used widely, with the exception of those which are incorporated in specific sites such as BBC Skillswise.

There is surprisingly little use so far of e-book readers, but practitioners told us they expect that this may change.

Technology is used widely for initial and diagnostic assessment, usually using assessment products.

Technology it is also widely used to deliver the summative national tests, but these have been in place for some time and should now be reviewed.

Where technology is used for formative assessment, it is most effective when technology is combined with verbal or face to face feedback, and the setting of new learning goals.

8 Teachers

8.1 What are the professional roles within adult education?

The terms teacher and tutor are both used, depending on the institution.

8.2 What is the status / reputation of teachers and other professionals who work in adult education?

In general, teaching in the adult or FE sector is considered to be of lower status than teaching in schools. This is partly because so many teachers in the sector work part time (sessional) or do the job alongside other work or roles. It is also seen as offering less good working conditions and pay rates than the schools sector.

8.3 What are their working conditions?

Working conditions vary greatly, reflecting the diverse nature of adult education providers in England. While some teachers have full time contracts, others are hourly paid and have to prepare their classes and mark work in their own time.

8.4 How do salaries compare to the national average?

Each provider is its own business and is free to set their own rates of pay, working hours, provision of training etc. Teachers also work a wide range of sessional hours which again will be treated in different
ways by different employers. A fully qualified teacher in the adult sector in a full time role in London would expect to earn around £30,000 - £35,000 a year. The inner London median wage in 2012 was £34,500.

9 Teacher education

9.1 What are the statutory qualification requirements for adult literacy teachers?

From September 2013, new qualifications became available for teaching in the FE sector. The new qualifications are:

**Generic qualifications**
- Level 3 Award in Education and Training 12 credits
- Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training 36 credits
- Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training 120 credits

**Specialist qualifications**

There are 3 types of specialist qualification, all at Level 5 for those teaching, or aspiring to teach, disabled learners, English (literacy), English (ESOL), English (literacy and ESOL) and Mathematics (numeracy)

a. **Generic qualifications including a specialist pathway**

These are diploma qualifications of 120 credits, where part of the qualification and practice is taken in the context of one of the specialist areas.

- Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training including a specialist pathway 120 credits

b. **Integrated specialist qualifications**

These are diploma qualifications of 120 credits (135 for English: literacy and ESOL), where all of the qualification and practice is taken in the context of one of the specialist areas.

- Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (English: Literacy)
- Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (English: ESOL)
- Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (English: Literacy and ESOL)
- Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (Mathematics: Numeracy)
- Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (Disabled Learners)

c. Standalone specialist diplomas

In these 45 credit diplomas (60 credits for ESOL and literacy combined) the qualification and practice is taken in the context of one of the specialist areas. The titles differ from the 'full' qualifications to differentiate between them.

- Level 5 Diploma in Teaching English: Literacy
- Level 5 Diploma in Teaching English: ESOL
- Level 5 Diploma in Teaching English: Literacy and ESOL
- Level 5 Diploma in Teaching Mathematics: Numeracy
- Level 5 Diploma in Teaching Disabled Learners

9.2 Are there specialist qualification routes for adult literacy teachers?

Teachers of literacy, numeracy or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), as well as those working with learners with learning difficulties, needed to complete a Level 5 subject-specific qualification in the subject they want to teach, as well as the generic teaching award. This can be achieved through an integrated programme, which gives both the teaching qualification and the subject specialism, such as:

- Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (English: Literacy)
- Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (Disabled Learners)

(NB: Teachers of other subjects can complete a generic Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training. In addition to a generic teaching qualification, all teachers were also required to hold at least a Level 3 qualification in the area they wish to teach e.g. an 'A' Level or equivalent e.g. extensive professional experience.)

- Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (English: ESOL)
- Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (English: Literacy and ESOL)

9.3 What are the entry requirements for ITE?

Entry Criteria for English (Literacy and ESOL)

Potential trainees must be able to:

- apply English language skills to complex and non-routine contexts
- transfer their English language skills from familiar contexts to new situations that may require the adaptation and extension of these skills in order to attempt the task
- make appropriate choices, independently, concerning the most effective communication methods and language skills to be used in any given situation
- exercise autonomy and judgement in completing tasks and procedures
- reflect on and evaluate language use in a range of situations.

Potential teacher trainees must demonstrate content knowledge in English. They must evidence each of the elements and all the associated extent.

Use of content knowledge in English (speaking, listening, reading and writing) should be evidenced through tasks which require the application of that content knowledge, rather than through discrete
item testing. These should provide evidence of content knowledge beyond the requirement of study in all existing level 2 English qualifications.

Having appropriate content knowledge in English will enable trainees not only to benefit from their teacher training programme, but also to build on and develop their skills in English throughout their programme of study.

9.4 Who pays for training?

The trainee teacher pays for the training, but there are bursaries available from central government to encourage uptake of teachers with qualifications or experience, seen as in high demand. Currently, bursaries are available for those with very good degrees in English or related subjects.

9.5 Is there a curriculum for initial teacher training?

There is no national adult ITT curriculum in England. There are a number of awarding bodies, each of which design their award within certain constraints. So there will be publicly available curricula for ITT courses rather than a single one.

9.6 Are there compulsory (or optional) language and literacy modules in all adult education ITE?

There is considerable input about literacy and numeracy in all generic adult teaching courses, and there may be optional modules available, but there is no requirement for a module in adult literacy or numeracy.

9.7 What is the length of the required training?

For the Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training with a specialist pathway, there is a minimum practice requirement of 100 hours teaching, 50 of which must be in the specialist area, 8 assessed observations of teaching, 4 in the specialist area, as well as the academic criteria.

For the Level 5 integrated specialist diplomas, there is a minimum practice requirement of 100 hours teaching in the specialist area, and 8 assessed observations of teaching, all in the specialist area.

9.8 Is there a curriculum/quality standards?

There is no nationally agreed curriculum or set of quality standards. Each awarding body and provider is free to create their own qualifications within strict guidelines. Adult teacher training is, however, inspected by OFSTED, the national quality assurance organisation.

9.9 Is there continuous professional development (in-service training) for teachers which focuses on literacy development

There is CPD available for teachers of adult literacy, but no requirement to undertake such training. The Institute for Learning has been set up to act as a professional body for adult teachers, and it is a requirement of membership of this body that teachers undertake a minimum of 30 hours CPD per year, but that does not have to be in their specialised subject area. Membership of IfL is not a requirement for teaching in the sector.
9.10 What is the take-up among teachers?

CPD programmes are generally over-subscribed. The main barriers to teachers accessing CPD are finance and cover.

9.11 Who delivers this training?

CPD is provided by a large range of organisations, but most is done by the providers themselves, HEIs such as the Institute of Education, specialist subject groups such as NCETM for maths and numeracy, and a range of small private training providers.

9.12 How is it quality assured?

Unless the provision falls under the remit of OFSTED, then there is no formal QA process.

10 Policy-making

(NB: Answers provided by the department for Business, Innovation and Skills)

10.1 Does government promote adult literacy in its lifelong learning policy?

Yes, enabling people with poor literacy to improve their skills up to and including NQF level 2 is a priority for Government.

10.2 Which policies promote for the provision of broad and varied access to adult literacy education?

We provide, fully subsidised, the cost of English courses (but not English for Speakers of Other Languages) for any adult at all levels up to and including level 2, where these have not already been achieved. We also provide (fully funded) the cost of GCSE English Language for those who have not previously attained a grade C or above in this subject.

We support a range of qualifications, designed to meet the different needs of the adult learner population: GCSE, Functional Skills and QCF English Certificates and Awards.

A wide range of organisations are able to, and do, access public support for adult literacy education. This includes FE colleges, independent training providers, third sector organisations, and prisons and local authorities, providing for a wide range of learners including apprentices, unemployed people, offenders, and simply those who want to improve their skills. Some literacy courses are stand alone; many are built into wider programmes designed to meet the needs of the learners, including programmes which involve interventions and support other than training. Training organisations must be registered and approved to offer courses supported by public funding, but we have significantly simplified the registration, reporting and audit arrangements in recent years to reduce bureaucracy and maximise the amount of public money that goes into the training. Providers have flexible budgets, which enable them to direct their funding towards the provision which they think is most in demand and in which they specialise.

English (and maths) are a requirement within Apprenticeship frameworks and traineeships to ensure that people on those programmes attain at least the expected minimum standard. Employers are able
to set higher requirements if that is appropriate in their sector, e.g. as happens in some of the Engineering frameworks.

We encourage the FE sector to identify and build on best practice in teaching and learning through the Education and Training Foundation, and provide some public support for this. This year, we have introduced a range of initiatives to upskill the adult literacy teaching workforce and increase the number of well-qualified people (i.e. those with directly relevant degrees) training as FE teachers through programmes of CPD (continuing professional development) and bursaries for initial teacher training.

We support an extensive research programme to assess the impact of Government initiatives, develop new approaches and understand the implications of poor skills, and what makes for effective interventions to improve adult literacy.

10.3 How are the motivation, interests and needs of adults taken into account in the policy-making processes?

We regularly conduct surveys with learners to understand their attitudes to and requirements from education. We also consult, formally and informally, with a range of stakeholders who themselves have direct links to adults or close links to organisations that do.

10.4 Who is involved in policy-making for adult literacy education?

In relation to Government policy: Government ministers; MPs (especially through Select Committees and All Party Groups); officials in government departments and agencies; stakeholders.

10.5 How is inter-sectoral and interministerial cooperation promoted and coordinated?

Through the Cabinet Committee structure and through regular bilateral arrangements between education ministers and other ministerial colleagues.

10.6 What financing mechanisms exist that facilitate inter-sectoral cooperation?

The majority of funding for adult literacy training goes directly from the central funding agency to individual training providers. These organisations can, and often do, draw on a range of funding streams to support services for their customers. We believe that enabling individual organisations to tailor support, rather than Government agencies, is the better way of ensuring that funding is well targeted to the needs of learners. Some public funding for skills training – the European Social Fund and capital funding – is devolved to Local Enterprise Partnerships, for them to determine how it should be used in their areas. Some is provided directly to employers through the Employer Ownership Pilots.