



**What is informal  
adult learning?**

# Informal adult learning – what it means for Community Learning Champions

## What is informal adult learning?

Informal adult learning is learning for its own sake rather than to get a qualification. The term covers a variety of activities, from foreign language classes to local history clubs, reading groups, online research projects, amateur dramatic societies or self-help bicycle maintenance groups.

This kind of learning makes a big contribution to the health

and well-being of individuals, families and communities. And learning that starts off informally, or on a small scale, may well lead to other things.

Many people across the country get together to form a learning group, society or club. Examples of self-organised groups include gardening clubs, community choirs, reading circles, University of the Third Age groups, bereavement support groups, knitting circles – and lots more.



*photo courtesy of Positive Negatives*



*photo courtesy of Caters Photographic*

## Who is involved?

All sorts of individuals and organisations are actively involved in helping to make informal adult learning happen. Some of these people are paid but many others are volunteers. Some organisations are funded by the taxpayer and many are not.

## What does this mean for Community Learning Champions?

Community Learning Champions (CLCs) often know just the sorts of things that will get others involved in learning and where these learning opportunities take place. With their local knowledge, CLCs can open up these opportunities to others and help develop new ones.

## Resources that can help

### Learning in clubs and groups

There is a new source of advice and information to help people set up their own learning clubs or groups. It is a toolkit that has been designed to cater to the huge range of different types of learning groups. It is full of helpful tips and materials, dealing with all aspects of setting up, running and keeping a group going. And it is free. You can print off a copy of the toolkit or find out more at [www.selforganisedlearning.com](http://www.selforganisedlearning.com).

### Spaces for learning

Finding places for groups to meet can be a challenge. CLCs are often well placed to help. A new resource, *Making space for learning: how you can make it happen* provides advice and information and is available on the School of Everything website (see over).

## Where you can find the resources

You can find many useful resources on the School of Everything website, including:

- information about informal adult learning classes, events and groups;
- low-cost venues for self-organised learning courses; and
- videos, guidance materials and links to other websites.

The School of Everything is bringing together thousands of

people with different interests and encouraging even more people to learn. Find out more at [www.schoolofeverything.com](http://www.schoolofeverything.com).

## The Learning Revolution

These resources arise from The Learning Revolution White Paper which was published in March 2009 and describes a new joined-up vision for informal adult learning. Find out more at [www.dius.gov.uk/Policies/further-education-skills/engaginglearners/informal-adult-learning/white-paper](http://www.dius.gov.uk/Policies/further-education-skills/engaginglearners/informal-adult-learning/white-paper).

## Contact us:

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## THE LEARNING REVOLUTION COMMUNITY LEARNING CHAMPIONS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

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