The Skills for Life Strategy
A story of investment in adult literacy and numeracy

World Literacy Day, Berlin 2012
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History

- 1972  A Right to Read; On the Move
- 1993  Wordpower, Numberpower
- 1999  A Fresh Start
- 2001  The Skills for Life Strategy
The Strategy (1)

- 10 year strategic commitment
- £9bn funding
- 2.25m adults to improve
- Definition of literacy
- National standards
- Promotion and awareness raising
- Capacity building for teachers
The Strategy (2)

- Research and development
- Curricula development
- Qualifications and assessment
- Numeracy and ESOL
- Family learning
- Health and Financial literacies
- Learning on-line
The Strategy (3)

- Dyslexia and learning difficulties and disabilities
- Embedded approaches
- Unionlearn
- Voluntary and Community organisations
Achievements

- Central place in government policies
- 5.7m learners
- 2.8m adults gained first qualification
- 25k teachers trained
- Resources and materials
- National research base
- High levels of awareness and understanding
Comments, challenges and questions

- What understanding of literacy as social practice?
- National tests did not cover all 4 skills of literacy
- Target-driven approach can prioritise shorter learning journeys
- How measure progress? Qualifications are part of the answer
- ESOL
Comments, challenges and questions (2)

- Economic/employability focus can deny social and community purposes
- Some loss of volunteer and teacher contributions
- Diversion of resources from other forms of adult learning
- Quality and supply of teachers
- Numeracy remains a challenge
Studies, surveys and inquiries

- Study of impact of Skills for Life strategy, 2009
- Surveys in 2003 and 2011
- Independent inquiries: 2006 ESOL; 2010 Numeracy and Literacy
The story goes on

- Social returns and outcomes – measuring what really counts
- Quality of teaching and learning
- Attracting those with the longest learning journeys
- Functional Skills from 2012
Thank you

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