

## STAKEHOLDER COMMENT FORM

### Stakeholder Comments

Please use this form to submit comments or suggestions.

1. Please put each new comment in a new row.
  
2. Please do not paste other tables into this table, as your comments could get lost - type directly into this table.
  
3. **Please always refer to section numbers (and not page numbers.)** Insert the **section number** and paragraph (within each section) in the first column (see examples).
  
4. If your comment relates to the document as a whole, please put **'general'** in this column. (See examples).

**To be considered your completed form MUST be returned by 28 February 2008.**

<b>Name: Robert Bell</b>	
<b>Organisation: South Lanarkshire Community Learning, Hamilton/Clydesdale Team</b>	
<b>Section number General</b>  Indicate <b>section number</b> or <b>'general'</b> if your comment relates to the whole document	<b>Comments</b>  <b>Please insert each new comment in a new row.</b>
<p>1. <i>I attended a Working Group in Airdrie on 4<sup>th</sup> February and was involved in a Group response. However, I would like to take the present opportunity to emphasise one point that was to some extent eclipsed by other issues in the Group, which largely saw the causes of mental ill-health as lying in poverty and unemployment. While it is not possible to overemphasise the importance of these issues, I would like also to stress the value of <b>learning</b> and of the promotion of a <b>learning ethos</b> in community mental health.</i></p> <p><i>Adult achievement through learning is important because the low self esteem suffered by too many people in the population stems from unhappy experiences and underachievement at school. Many people have accepted other people's unjust and inaccurate estimation of them and believe this is something that is fixed for life. Too many people underestimate their potential and accept a</i></p>	

<p><i>very narrow definition of intelligence or ability or worth. I have no doubt that this leads to the kind of problems that can result in mental illness or lack of wellbeing.</i></p> <p><i>If learning – of any kind - can be socially valued for itself and seen as accessible and relevant to all, rather than an esoteric pursuit open to academics only, then a lot of people could benefit. Also learning for life should be seen as a value and pleasure in its own right, not simply a chore one goes through to get, dubious paper qualifications.</i></p> <p><i>This is a matter of changing ethos and expectations.</i></p>	
<p><i>2. Literature (fiction and poetry) offers an opportunity to enter the world of another person, or people, and can allow a person to see the world in a broader perspective. The study of poetry and short story lend themselves to this particularly well as these offer a concentrated experience in a short space - this is important for those whose reading stamina, or concentration, is limited.</i></p>	
<p><i>3. Writing, of any kind, offers a means of structuring the chaos of experience, and objectifying one’s anxieties, emotions and thoughts. If done thoughtfully it also obliges the individual to put himself/herself into the position of another person – the absent reader.</i></p> <p><i>Any creative activity allows the individual to experience things in a wider perspective and to move away from the pressures of the immediate moment. Creative activities also help to induce a relaxed state of mind and give a person the feeling of control over, or harmony with, his or her material and environment.</i></p>	
<p><i>4. The above can enhance a person’s zest and enthusiasm for life. Such activities allow a person to exercise and explore his/her faculties, both physical and mental, to the full.</i></p> <p><i>Learning and creative pursuits offer challenges that keep a person alert and help a people to become empowered, whether or not they lead directly to paid employment.</i></p> <p><i>These pursuits cannot of themselves remove the pressures and harm created by poverty or homelessness. However, there are many people who are materially comfortable but whose lives are lacking, imaginatively, intellectually and emotionally.</i></p> <p><i>If the psychological well-being of the population is considered important, then it is important that lifelong learning is seen as accessible and of value to all, by all.</i></p>	

<p>5. <i>There should be more awareness-raising in the population as a whole about the concept of “multiple intelligences” and the tendency of most people to underestimate their potential. Learning should also be seen as something which only starts at school, and school itself as only one stage on this journey.</i></p> <p><i>There is a lot of misery and a lot of wasted potential in our society, resulting from unhappy experiences at school. Lack of success at school should not be seen as a necessary indicator of lack of success in later learning, or in any way as failure in life. I say this as a former secondary school teacher. People can of their own resources achieve miracles. In some cases they may need support, but they should not be ashamed of using or asking for this – it is their right.</i></p>	
<p>6. <i>As an Adult Literacy and Numeracy Worker and Tutor, I have seen at first hand how people are able to come on. As a lifelong learner myself I am amazed at things that even I have been able to achieve that years before I would never have thought possible for me.</i></p> <p><i>My only regret in the job I am in is that more people do not come forward to engage with us. There is so much that can be done to help.</i></p> <p><i>The important thing is that people come to see that there is something in learning for them. The difficulty is getting this message across to enough people.</i></p>	

Please add extra rows if needed.

**Please return to:** Nicola Radley, Area 3ER, Mental Health Division, St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

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