

## Glasgow Women's Library Learning Policy #3<sup>i</sup> Created October 2014



GWL Film Screening, February 2014



21 Revolutions Publication Launch, 2014



GWL Poetry Workshop, 2014



Women's Heritage Bike Ride Launch, 2014

# Glasgow Women's Library Learning Policy<sup>1</sup>

This Learning Policy was developed by the GWL Lifelong Learning Team:

## Why is a Learning Policy useful to Glasgow Women's Library?

To:

- Inform the development of all new projects
- Facilitate and encourage recruitment of learners, volunteers and staff
- Encourage and facilitate GWL Lifelong Learning team working
- Provide a guidance checklist for new projects
- Help in the induction processes for learners, volunteers and staff
- Be an evaluation tool
- Ensure we remain open to change and are not perceived as an "exclusive club"
- Ensure that all have knowledge
- Motivate
- Form an essential part of the induction of all new staff
- Give core information to funding and other key partners
- Make our rationale visible to all
- Enable us to focus on our collective and agreed direction

## Access and use

This Learning policy should be used. Where possible we have made this document easy to read and use and, where possible, we aim to make subsequent versions and excerpts from them to be accessible.

When taking excerpts from the Policy please use bullet points, key concepts and clear language.

## Our definition of learning

Learning at Glasgow Women's Library is about increasing women's confidence, skills, knowledge and understanding and through this nurturing their desire to learn more, widening horizons and increasing social, cultural, economic, political and human capital.

## **GWL Learning Team Mission**

**The GWL Learning team's mission is to make the library, archive collection and programmes meaningful and relevant to all women. In our learning environment women share experiences and learn from each other and are encouraged to view their own and other women's lives and achievements as historic and of importance.**

Learning is at the core of the Library's work. Our learning programmes and resources specialise in and celebrate the histories, creativity and lives of women. We emphasise Lifelong Learning, the process of understanding that your learning continues, and we provide support to women at every stage of their learning journeys. GWL learners are encouraged to share experiences and learn from each other and the other women that visit the Library to share their skills and knowledge. We work from the basis that learning can take place through the close identification with the experience of other women, past and present.

Our work, like the Library itself, is built upon feminist principles, focuses on, and specialises in working with women, understanding and appreciating the richness of women's lives and the impact of inequalities on them. We provide a safe learning space where even the most vulnerable women can have their learning nurtured. We recognise and respect diversity in all its senses.

We value each learner as an individual, working with them to tailor learning to meet their needs and improve their confidence and aspirations.

**In addition our mission is to:**

*Be continually engaged in a process of foregrounding equality and addressing the past and current significant inequalities impacting on women's lives and histories.*

- (1) Through the policies we adopt and implement.
- (2) Through the Learning programmes, (content and) use of collections and related activities.
- (3) In our work with current and future learners, volunteers and each other as staff team members.
- (7) Work towards mainstreaming equalities in relation to the learning environment, resources and equipment linked to relevant staff training.

## Our ethos

The Campaign for Learning definition was helpful to us in the development of our ethos. It defines learning as, “*to reflect.*” And that “*Effective learning leads to change, development and a desire to learn more... a process of active engagement with experience. It is what people do to make sense of the world. It may involve an increase in skills, knowledge or understanding, a deepening of values or the capacity to reflect.*”

Linked closely with our mission, our ethos is to:

- Increase personal potential
- Unlock ambition and improve aspirations
- Work using processes of active engagement
- Facilitate women making sense of the world
- Encourage women to take responsibility for their learning
- Build the capacity for reflection by staff, volunteers, our Board and learners
- Ensure that our learning programmes will lead learners to make positive changes, and give the confidence to make decisions and a desire to learn more
- Excite imagination
- Ensure the collection, the programme and the users reflect the fullest diversity of women
- Be fully accessible, always striving to remove or minimise physical, sensory, intellectual, cultural, attitudinal or financial barriers
- Encourage partnership working
- Develop a unique, high quality individualised service
- Deliver learning programmes that are innovative and exciting
- Be learner centred
- Promote our programmes widely and to new audiences
- Meaningfully monitor, evaluate, consult and reflect on our work
- Ensure that learner’s views and needs are part of the interpretation process of the library, archive, exhibitions and other relevant learning opportunities and settings.<sup>2</sup>

Our definition of a learner:

All those who contact, visit, engage with, work or volunteer at GWL are learners. We have ambitions for all learners and take the widest view of

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the learning journeys that could start or be supported by the Learning team, collections and resources at GWL.

## **Aims**

1. To promote and raise awareness of the services of Glasgow Women's Library by encouraging existing and new learners to access GWL and by forging links within our local neighbourhood.
2. Use a learner centred approach to develop and enhance learning opportunities.
3. To work in productive, positive partnership with Glasgow Life.
4. Design and develop methods of tracking the learning journeys of specific learners and service users across the programmes, to identify the qualitative and learning milestones in their lives, in particular the ways that their experiences relate to our mission.
5. Encourage the ownership and use of the library resources, including the archive, through lifelong learning programme development and delivery and link borrowers, enquirers and visitors to our learning programmes.
6. Continuous development of accessibility to ensure the fullest diversity of engagement
7. Increase the capacity of our team.
8. To be continually engaged in a process of foregrounding equality and addressing the past and current significant inequalities impacting on women's lives and histories.
9. To develop ways of generating income through enterprising activities linked to GWL collections and learning.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **Objective 1**

*Aim: To promote and raise awareness of the services of Glasgow Women's Library by encouraging existing and new learners to access GWL and by forging links locally, across Glasgow, Scotland and internationally.*

(1) Within our neighbourhood, using a One Mile Radius strategy (connecting with business, statutory, voluntary and community organisations, educational establishments, faith groups, residents etc.), the Lifelong Learning team working with other staff will aim to meet and forge partnerships with specific groups and organisations.

(2) Target new women and gatekeepers to women in our local area who are currently not using groups or organisations.

(3) Sustain and develop links with organisations and groups at national (Scotland-wide) and international levels.

(4) Using creative methods and tools to discover what people want to learn develop events, launches, and consultation sessions with existing learners.

(5) Produce information for all learners on our location and who we are in accessible formats, including information on the website in different (European) languages.

## **Objective 2**

*Aim: Use a learner centred approach to develop and enhance learning opportunities.*

(1) Sustaining and developing the ongoing communication and consultation strategy for working with learners. Explore new and creative methods and tools to discover what and how people want to learn. Use discussions with learners to direct women to exciting options for their learning at GWL and beyond.

(4) Promote and involve through our website and environment (and with groups of and regular learners) participation in demonstrating and shaping our ethos and core values.

## **Objective 3**

*Aim: To work in productive, positive partnership with educational, cultural, statutory and voluntary organisations.*

(1) Through liaison, between GWL Lifelong Learning team and partner organisations colleagues work in synergy re. programming and resources where possible.

(2) Find out about all learning environments, venues and resources available to GWL learning team and procedures for booking in the sector and offering our spaces to our partners and other organisations.

(3) Share GWL learning resources, opportunities and programmes with partnership organisation colleagues.

(6) Identify and use publicity and promotion routes where these opportunities are available to us within our partnership networks, festivals and programmes.

#### **Objective 4**

*Aim: Design and develop new methods of tracking the learning journeys of specific learners across the programmes, to identify the qualitative milestones in their lives, in particular the ways that their experiences relate to our mission.*

*This information will play a critical role in reflecting our outcomes and the difference we are making in a range of ways; e.g. to funders, to promote opportunities to other learners and to spotlight achievements...*

(1) Implement a range of evaluation tools for the team to use in different learning settings.

(2) Use our Library Out Loud learning evaluation framework, using qualitative and quantitative methods, involving staff, volunteers, learners and research options towards this aim.

(3) Pool and make accessible evaluation tools and methods for gathering information and train and support each other in using and developing these until they are thoroughly mainstreamed.

(4) Identify case studies (learning journeys) and capture these in LOL. We aim for each project to capture 2 case studies each year.

(5) Develop system(s) for longitudinal tracking of our impact on learner's lives.

#### **Objective 5**

*Aim: Encourage the ownership and use of the archive, museum and library resources through lifelong learning programme development and delivery.*

(1) Research, including training and visits is ongoing by staff on good models in the heritage, library and learning sectors.

(2) Encourage the development of thematic and community groups to work on specific archive collections, towards ownership and inclusivity in interpretation

activities. Work with learners towards them gaining 'ownership' of the library collection and participate in identifying key materials for future learning and display

(3) Themed events, programmes, encouraging learners to connect the library collection to their learning and vice versa and encourage reader development through Library activities and learning programmes.

(4) Encourage diverse learners to value and contribute to the library collections, develop new accessible resources and promote the library's history and current policies and the nurturing of the 'special ingredients' to help the development and future of the Library.

(5) Document and archive the learning in the library "We're always making history in the library".

(7) Develop the library's national and international profile and national and international access to GWL collections and resources.

(8) Develop online resources and ensure accessible online links to the library's existing collections and resources.

## **Objective 6**

*Aim: Continuous development of accessibility to ensure the fullest diversity of engagement*

(1) Our website and social media will encourage the widest participation in the Lifelong Learning Programmes and the Library for future and existing diverse learners and visitors.

(2) Groups of learners, staff, library users and our 'creative clusters' will be involved in developing and testing the website and library and archive management systems to make them more accessible.[Stuck: Tech and Collections cluster]

(4) Develop annually targeted partnership working to ensure diversity in learners and users.

(8) Versions of this policy to be reproduced in community languages and other accessible forms, and produce a glossary of terms that relates to the Policy and Learning at GWL.



(10) Annual targeting and auditing of accessibility improvements to the library environment, website, communications and resources.

### **Objective 7**

*Aim: Increase the capacity of our team.*

- (1) Offer work experience and internship opportunities.
- (2) Work based learning opportunities for staff team and volunteers and their experiences and achievements recorded and shared across the team.
- (3) Communicate information on courses and events that are available for staff, volunteers and learners.
- (4) Review and develop our Learning Team communication methods and strategy on at Learning Programme Review and planning meetings.
- (6) Identify exchange and visit opportunities in Europe and elsewhere.
- (7) Pool good practice across the GWL learning team through the Creative Cluster feedback mechanism. (E.g. writing up and sharing of workshop models, consultation techniques etc.)

### **Objective 8**

*Aim: Develop ways of generating income by enterprising activities linked to GWL collections and learning.*

- (1) Develop our Inspired Palette
- (2) Promote a range of high quality services and learning targeted at women and organisations who are able to support us financially.
- (3) Develop high quality ethically produced products to sell linked to GWL collections and learning in our online and in house shop and elsewhere.
- (4) Develop and make provision for appropriate and high quality training and upskilling opportunities for staff, learners and volunteers linked to enterprise, customer care and marketing to 'mainstream' enterprise across the GWL team. Develop monitoring of quality control.

### **The Definition of a Learner at GWL**

All those visiting GWL its website and outreach activities and events are learners. Staff, volunteers and Board members and all those in our networks are learners and our shared responsibility is to facilitate (our own and) others'

learning is a positive way. Learning is a continual state. It is lifelong and lifewide.

## Our Learners

Glasgow Women's Library's learning programme is a service that specialises in delivering learning to women. Its current funding is focussed on developing programmes for women from a range of backgrounds. We will target specific groups in our Policy (note to ref earlier)

The following is a list of the women we aim to recruit as learners:

- Culturally and socially diverse, and diverse in terms of confidence
- Literacy Learners including those 'brushing up' on learning
- BME women, migrant women, asylum seekers and refugee women.
- Women from our local community (One-Mile Radius)
- Older women
- Women who use other services (including 'referrals')
- Women survivors and those 'in recovery'
- Women 'dropping in'
- Young women
- Women with addictions
- Students including interns and those on work placement
- Tourists
- Those interested in local and family history
- Academics and researchers
- Women with a wide range of cultural, social and economic capital.
- GWL staff
- Outreach learners including national learners
- Women with mental health needs
- Women with addictions
- Women in criminal justice system
- Volunteers
- Women with additional needs/disabilities
- Those coming to GWL for training
- Individuals and groups participating in group activities that GWL is hosting
- Women using the lending library and archive
- New migrants
- Women with diverse sexualities and gender identities
- Those contacting us by email, visiting our website, social media and via telephone

- Volunteers
- Women in the criminal justice system
- Women with mental health issues
- Women with disabilities and additional needs

## **Our team**

Our learning team currently includes:

- Volunteers
- Placements and interns
- Paid sessional workers delivering learning opportunities
- Advisors, trainers and consultants
- Paid GWL learning staff
- Board Members
- Occasional invited speakers, writers, storytellers and other guests
- Partner groups and organisations

**What we want from our learning team staff and volunteers:**

- Those who share GWL and the Learning Team's vision and values
- Culturally diverse women and women with different talents and backgrounds
- Women who are flexible, friendly and fun
- An understanding of the GWL team structure and function as well as relevant (realistic) expectations
- Positive outlooks and optimism
- Those who value others contributions and views
- Supportive team members
- 'Nurturers'
- Women who are keen to develop ownership and who can engage learners
- Engaged in CPD

They should be working to develop:

- Communication skills
- An understanding of feminism, the importance of 'women's space' and the history and uniqueness of GWL
- A willingness to learn
- Clear motives and motivation for working with this team
- A desire to make their own and the team's experiences of working as enjoyable as possible

- An awareness of equalities issues: racism, homophobia, disability issues, mental health issues, the impact of violence against women etc.

It is important that all learning team members respect themselves, the learners, GWL and its staff team.

### Human Resources: what permanent staff do we have?

- Lifelong Learning and Creative Development Manager
- ALN Development Worker (full time)
- ALN Tutor (part time)
- ALN Admin Support (part time)
- BME Development Worker (full time)
- LLL Development Worker (part time)
- National Lifelong Learning Development Worker (full time)
- National Lifelong Learning project administrator (part-time)
- Women and sectarianism (Mixing the Colours) Development Worker (full time)
- Women and Sectarianism (Mixing the Colours) Admin Worker (Part time)
- LLL Assistant (full time)
- Librarian (full time)
- Archivist (full time)
- Volunteer Coordinator (full time)

#### Temporary project HR

- Volunteers
- Placements
- Interns
- Sessional Workers

### What are some of the current needs of the Learning team?

- Enhanced Librarian/Archivist and museum professional support to link learners with materials
- Enhanced distribution and marketing resources
- A larger catalogued collection
- More computers for the LLL staff team volunteers and learners

- Development of further policies that impact on learning e.g. Childcare, Sessional workers at GWL etc.
- More admin capacity
- Enhanced design capacity
- Enhanced web and IT capacity
- Enhanced Office management and environment
- Strategy for developing and growing sessional staff

### Uses for Learning Policy

- By Lifelong Learning Team in programme planning sessions
- In Development meetings
- In publicity
- In strategic development
- Creative clusters
- In talks and presentations and outreach
- (Linked to 'Working with GWL') on website
- Partnership working and partnership agreements
- Board meetings
- In recruitment and induction
- In training sessions
- With funders
- In consultation sessions with learners
- When inducting all volunteers
- For Annual Report and AGM reporting purposes
- With groups and regular learners
- In the Library environment

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<sup>i</sup> Learning Policy#1 created Autumn, 2007

Number of meetings held to create/review/progress objectives of Learning Policy #3: 1

Last Learning Policy Group meeting: 9<sup>th</sup> October 2014

This Policy launched January 2015