



Building skills and confidence for all ages

2020 LifeSkills impact report

 **BARCLAYS** | LifeSkills



Stepping up to support young people and adults

In a year like no other, people of all ages faced unprecedented challenges – in education, at work, and at home.

From students dealing with exam cancellations to adults finding themselves unemployed or on furlough, the disruption to learning and working life has been enormous. People and businesses were forced to adapt to an uncertain future virtually overnight.

Research we carried out among young people and adult learners during 2020 showed the impact of the disruption on employability skills and careers education. For many, lockdown meant a pause of all careers and employability provision or at least cancellation of some activities. This left people feeling particularly vulnerable at the transition points between school or training and work.

We reacted swiftly – developing and adapting more than 60 new lessons, tools and resources to fill in gaps and tackle the challenges. There's more about this on page 4.

These resources will have enduring benefits as we move into a new world of work. Long-term trends, which were already underway, such as digitalisation and automation, have been accelerated. With our agile and responsive approach, LifeSkills will play an increasingly important role in helping people and businesses adapt to these changes. See page 12.

During the year, we also continued our mission to widen and deepen our impact across society and bring LifeSkills to more of the people who need it most.



As we look to the future, we are committed to helping people of all ages and abilities to improve their employability chances, while meeting the needs of employers and benefitting the whole economy and society.

This included working with our charity and public sector partners to extend our reach among adults facing life challenges and among disadvantaged young people. See page 16.

Kirstie Mackey
Managing Director, Barclays LifeSkills

Evolving to meet changing needs

Barclays LifeSkills aims to give millions of people the skills, knowledge and confidence they need for work – inspiring them towards a better future and supporting our economy and society.

The programme helps everyone, from young people preparing for their first job to adults wanting to progress in their career. It recognises that we all need to develop core transferable skills and a lifelong learning mindset to be able to achieve fulfilling and sustainable employment. LifeSkills works with educators, businesses and parents to help learners develop these skills and boost their confidence, aspirations and motivation.

In a world impacted by COVID-19 and rapidly changing technology, the need for LifeSkills is greater than ever. As work becomes increasingly digital and agile, people need personal skills that make them more employable and adaptable, from problem solving and creativity to personal resilience.

Over the last year we adapted elements of the programme to fit the changing circumstances.

As we emerge from the pandemic, we will continue to evolve our resources, respond with agility, and find new ways to help people close their skills gaps and navigate the world of work, now and in the future.

Enabling remote learning

We launched more than 60 new tools, resources, virtual lessons and workshops, to assist teachers and parents in delivering remote and home schooling.

Supporting families

To help families with the UK's virtual shift, we launched a new Families hub to enable parents to feel confident tackling important topics, including wellbeing and employability.

Helping adults adapt

We provided more advice for adults on essential upskilling and making changes to their working lives.

Providing practical assistance

We developed resources focused on wellbeing and mental health, managing finances and practical employability skills to help people through challenging times.

We brought LifeSkills to even more people

Programme highlights

- Reaching further – more than 2.3 million people participated in LifeSkills in 2020, including school and college students and adults
- Supporting learning through COVID-19 – LifeSkills now offers more lessons and short activities that can be delivered by educators virtually, and content that can be accessed by learners and parents independently through films, interactive tools and accompanying worksheets
- Deepening our impact – bringing the benefits of LifeSkills to groups facing issues and challenges, from families in need to people leaving the criminal justice system
- Promoting diversity and inclusion – we developed new resources to help students recognise and celebrate what makes us different and how this benefits them and their future workplaces



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All the resources [we used during the lockdown] have been really accessible. There were quizzes, problem solving tasks and we were given a lot of links to support on mental wellbeing and how you're feeling.

Secondary school student

LifeSkills resources teach me what working life is like and also important things like managing money, which I think is very beneficial.

FE student

LifeSkills gave me a framework which I was able to adapt to help me with answering questions in my interview. It also taught me ways to seem more confident when I was really nervous.

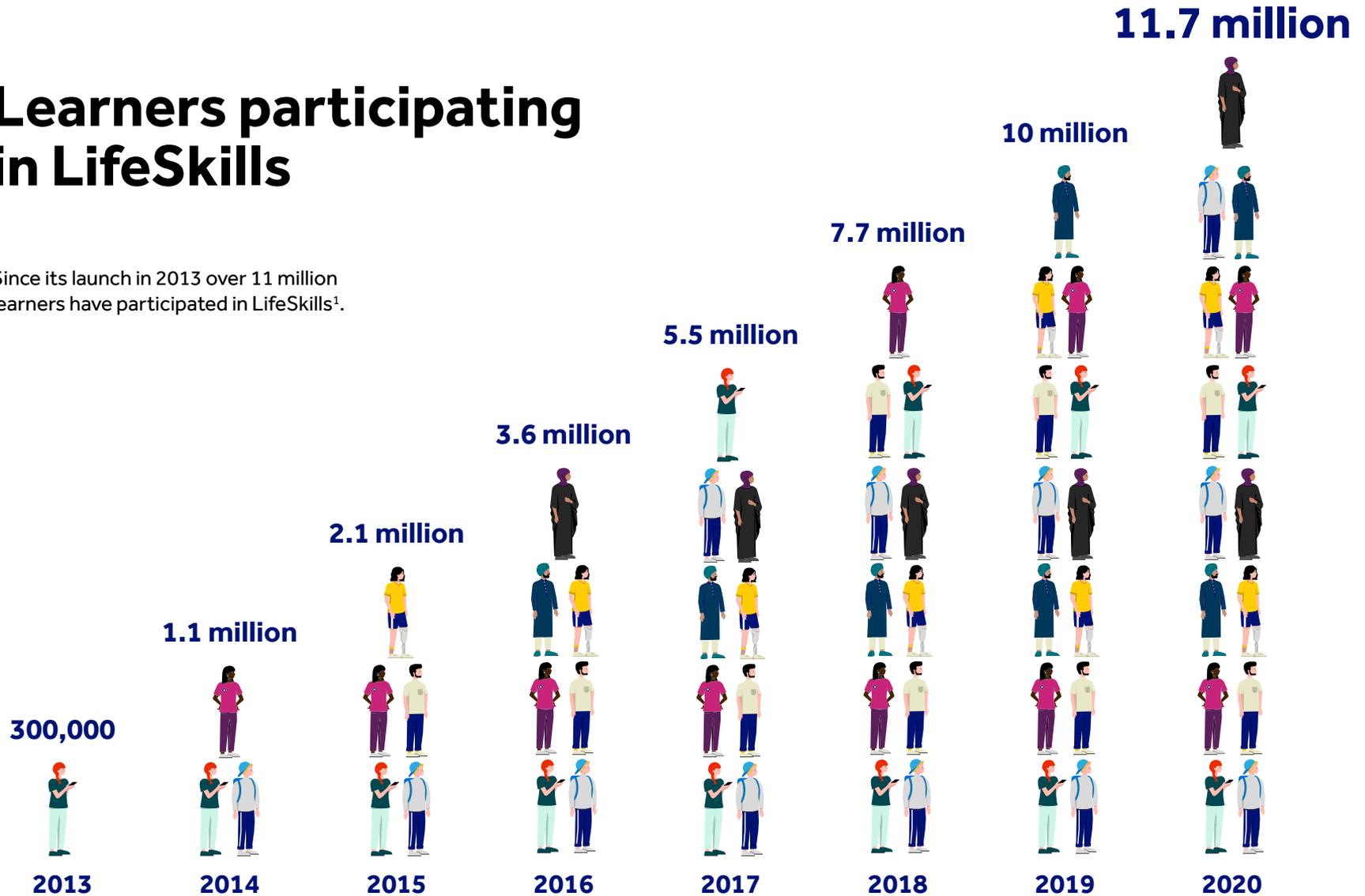
Apprentice

LifeSkills gave me ideas for jobs I may not have thought of before, which was really interesting...it's just opening your mind to new horizons.

Adult learner

Learners participating in LifeSkills

Since its launch in 2013 over 11 million learners have participated in LifeSkills¹.

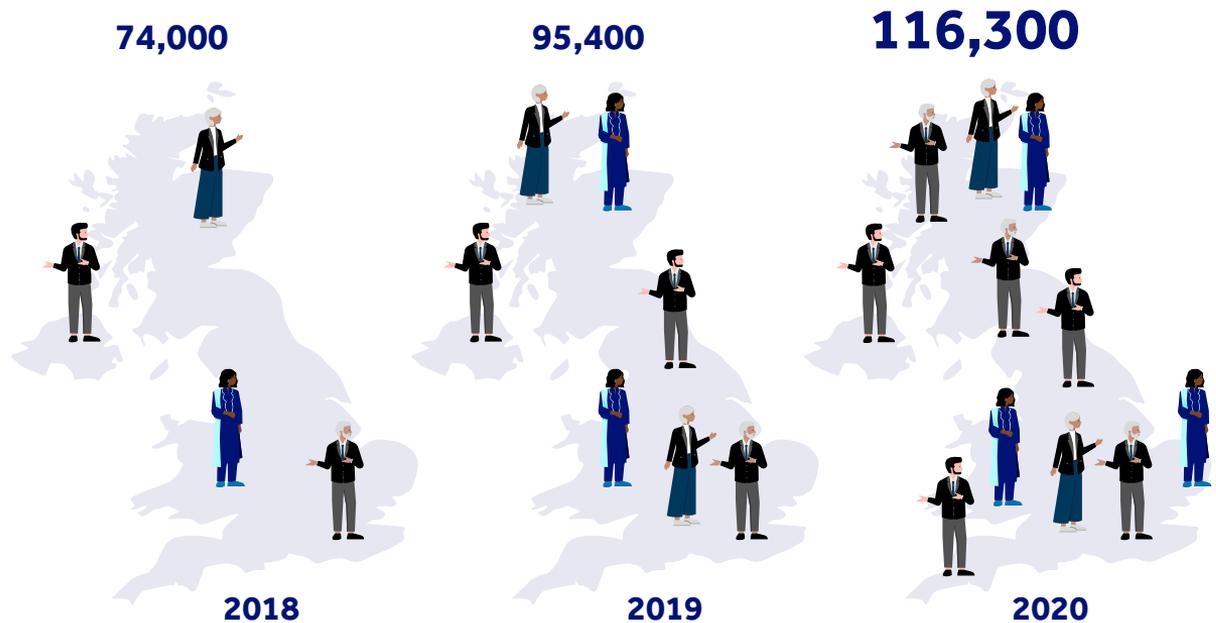


¹ These figures are assured by KPMG

Educators using LifeSkills

At the end of 2020, more than 116,300 educators were registered with LifeSkills. Educators are based in secondary schools, further education colleges, universities and formal or informal adult learning settings across the UK.

Since extending the programme to all ages, the number of adult educators has been steadily growing. To expand the reach, interactive sessions have been provided to organisations such as Jobcentre Plus, who are beginning to embed LifeSkills resources into the support they provide to jobseekers.



Participation by educational institution

Institution	Registered	Actively using
Schools	90%	85%
FE colleges	79%	76%
Universities	87%	81%

Building learners' skills and confidence

LifeSkills aims to inspire change in people's lives and help them achieve their goals and ambitions. We measure the impact of the programme by how confident and motivated young people and adult learners feel, and how likely they are to take positive action after engaging with the programme².



Learners felt LifeSkills improved their confidence, motivation and mindset

86%

felt more positive about the future

89%

were more motivated to succeed, including doing well in their academic and vocational studies

82%

have more understanding of the skills needed for the workplace

Learners rate LifeSkills content as high quality and relevant to them

88%

said the resources are useful and cover things they need to know

86%

felt the content gave them an idea of what the world of work is like and what employers are looking for

78%

thought the resources covered topics and situations they can relate to

² Chrysalis Research Evaluation of LifeSkills 2020

A woman with dark hair and colorful earrings is laughing joyfully while holding a young child on a teal leather couch. The child is wearing a maroon shirt and has their hands clasped. Another child's head is visible in the foreground, looking towards the camera. The background is a wood-paneled wall.

LifeSkills impact on adult learners

Early evidence from adult learners suggests that LifeSkills resources are effective in supporting them to develop the skills and confidence they need to progress into employment and/or improve their financial circumstances². Around **9 in 10** of them said they had improved across a wide range of outcomes such as more awareness of their own strengths and skills and improved ability to manage money. This success is in part due to adults using LifeSkills resources intensively with holistic support from educators, particularly vulnerable adults.

² Chrysalis Research Evaluation of LifeSkills 2020

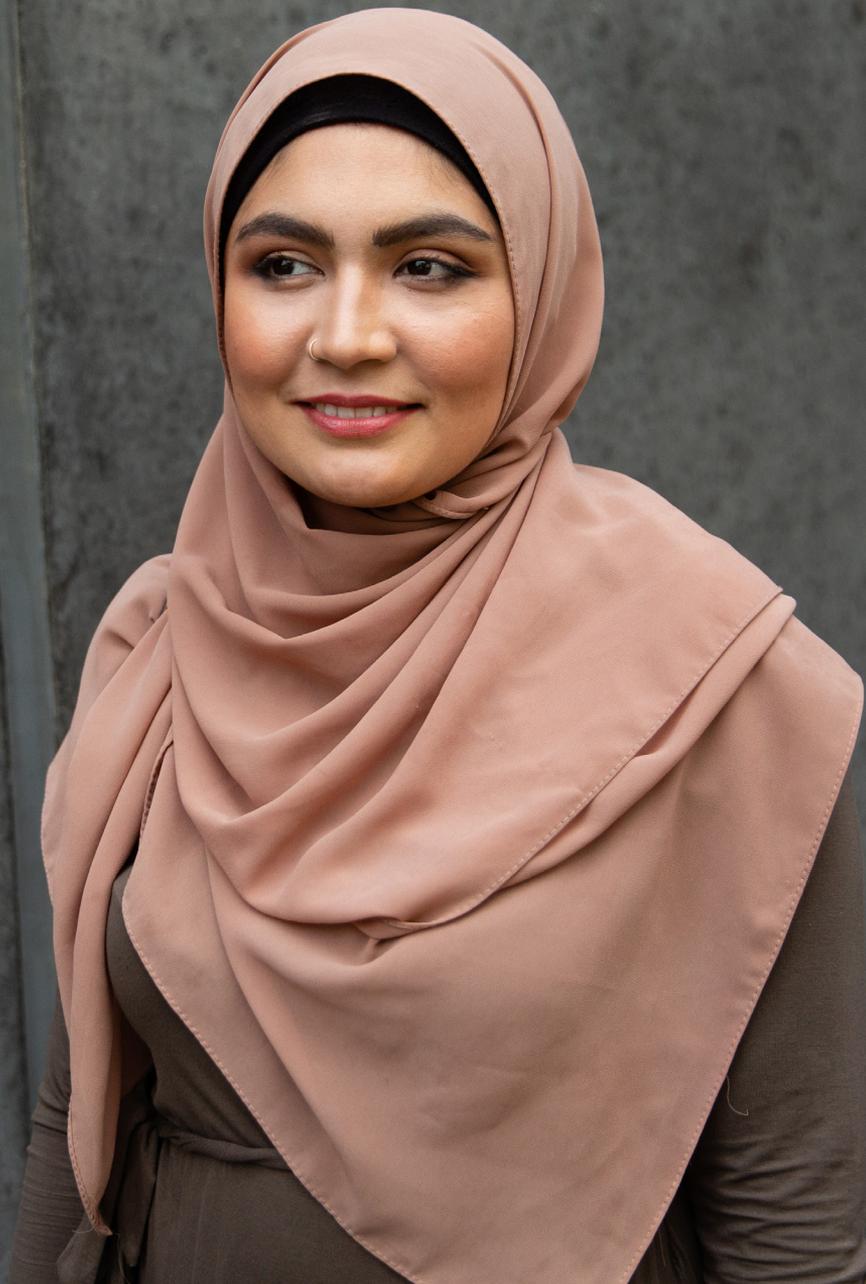
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Barclays LifeSkills is brilliant... so useful because it's current. It's actually now... Our learners can see that they can use what they learn straight away.

Trainer working with vulnerable adults, Scotland

The resources are excellent. Clearly explained and well-written. They are appropriate for my learners who are lower ability and vulnerable.

Lecturer, FE college, Wales



Supporting a wide range of educators

We redesigned our website for educators, making it much easier to find the content they need. The new structure guides users to the resources that are relevant to them, whether they want to teach a class in school, coach an adult in a support setting, or mentor a group with specific challenges.

We also developed new lessons, tools, resources and advice to help educators delivering remote teaching through the pandemic.

Most educators felt that LifeSkills has a positive impact on their personal development, quality of teaching and ability to prepare learners for work

78%

A positive impact on educators' knowledge and expertise

67%

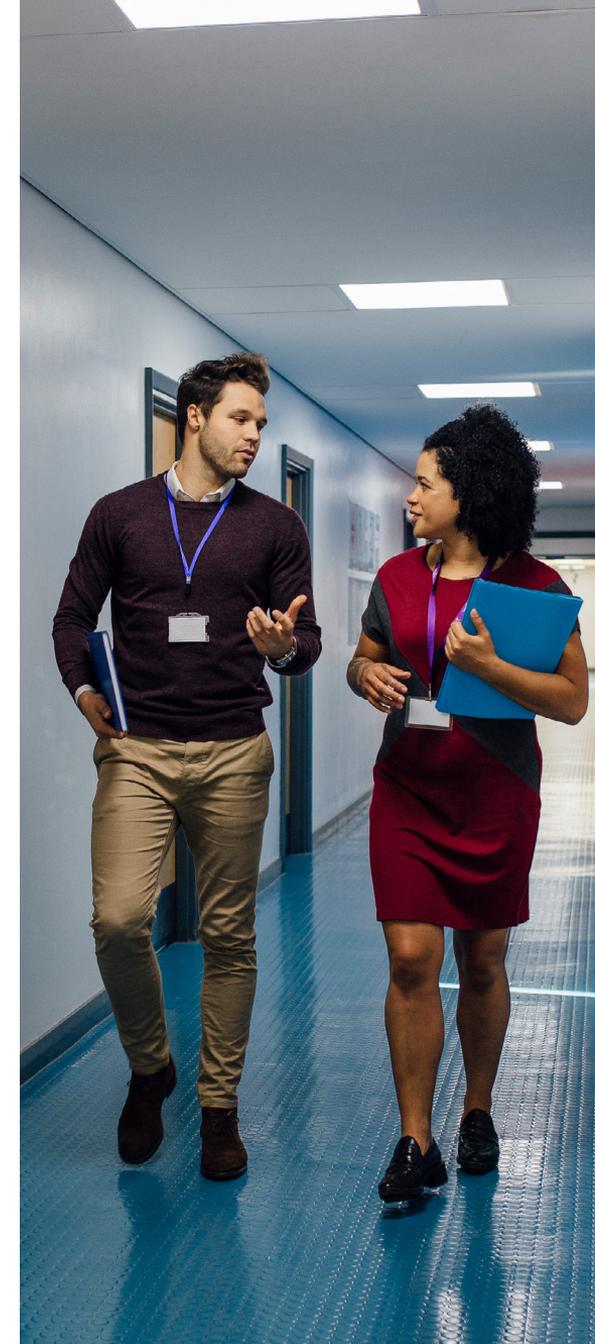
A positive impact on the quality and breadth of the employability and careers education curriculum at educators' institutions

72%

A positive impact on educators' institution's ability to prepare learners for their future

91%

The majority of educators rated LifeSkills either good or very good



Helping people of all ages adapt to rapid change

As digitalisation, automation and flexible working gather pace, core transferable skills that help people adapt to change and adopt new thinking will be needed now more than ever.

These global trends, which have been accelerated by COVID-19, are transforming the world of work, sending some jobs into decline, as new high-demand roles emerge.

Many jobs will require new ways of working, driven by advances in technology. For adults already in the workforce, upskilling and reskilling will be more important than ever to keep pace with changing job demands.

Key trends shaping the future of work

- Digitalisation and technology adoption will continue to rise and accelerate³
- Upskilling and reskilling will be critical to long-term employability³
- New jobs being created in emerging growth areas will outweigh those replaced by automation³
- More workplaces are expected to encourage flexible and home working⁴



³ [weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs-report-2020/digest](https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs-report-2020/digest)

⁴ [timewise.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Timewise-Flexible-Job-Index-2020.pdf](https://www.timewise.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Timewise-Flexible-Job-Index-2020.pdf)

Giving people the tools and skills they need

The World Economic Forum states that by 2025⁵ the top skills needed will include complex problem solving, creativity and initiative, resilience and flexibility, and leadership. LifeSkills is helping young people and adults to navigate these changing labour market trends and face the future with confidence.

40%
of workers will
require reskilling
by **2025**⁶

As the world of work evolves, we continually flex what we do, launching new tools and resources that offer more support for learners to help them adapt and thrive. Recent innovations include:

- LifeSkills virtual work experience content enables young people to get a taste of real-world projects from wherever they are and learn more about the skills needed for different sectors
- The LifeSkills Wheel, a diagnostic tool, which helps adult learners identify where they need support and make a plan to develop skills in those areas
- An online CV Builder tool that guides adults to create a CV to help them to stand out from the crowd



⁵ [weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/top-10-work-skills-of-tomorrow-how-long-it-takes-to-learn-them](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/top-10-work-skills-of-tomorrow-how-long-it-takes-to-learn-them)

⁶ www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2020.pdf

Around the UK with LifeSkills

Northern Ireland

We use the Barclays LifeSkills programme to promote confidence and develop our students' employability skills and money management. As many of our pupils come from areas of high deprivation, we do everything we can to improve their confidence levels, so have used many of the lessons from 'Character and personal development' and 'Future skills for the workplace' to do this. We also made use of a lot of 'Money, budgeting and numeracy' lessons, particularly for Year 9 pupils. For Year 10, the enterprise lessons, and particularly the problem solving lesson, were very successful in helping them work through the process of problem-solving. All our students love the Wheel of Strengths too, which works really well on the interactive whiteboard.

I think the LifeSkills resources are excellent and invaluable to me as a teacher of employability. I very much view my role as preparing children for the world of work and life in general and I am passionate about equipping them with the skills that they need. I think the resources have been developed with that in mind and I like that they are simple and effective to use. I really like how accessible and user-friendly the resources are, especially the SEND adaptations that cater for the needs of all learners. The website is updated regularly and the email communication is very informative.

**Teacher, Learning for Life and Work and Employability,
Secondary school, Northern Ireland**

Wales

I work with young people aged 16 to 24 years, and help them to move into employment, education or training. I use Barclays LifeSkills as a tool to help improve young people's employability skills, as well as their personal and social development so that they can transition from adolescence into adulthood as successfully as possible.

LifeSkills is implemented with all the young people I work with during our one-to-one appointments. They love doing the Wheel of Strengths as it helps to identify starting points, which are then documented in their participant portfolios and used to set action plans for the young person.

The resources available are in depth, and very useful in helping to develop knowledge and understanding on a huge array of topics that cover every aspect of a person's life: improving their employability skills, online safety, virtual work experience and interviews, a person's soft skills such as confidence and becoming more assertive, communication...the list is endless!

LifeSkills is a fantastic tool to help educate young people formally and informally. I have implemented it in classroom settings as well as in youth work environments, street-based settings in local parks, and in green spaces with young people we encounter who wouldn't normally enter one of our Communities for Work centres.

Youth Economic Inactivity Worker, Local Authority, Wales



I will certainly incorporate lessons around LifeSkills into my core teaching content more often and plan to use some of the tools during academic guidance. Ready-made lessons will save me time and the fact that students can access activities from home will make it so much easier when planning activities.

Lecturer, FE college, Scotland

Scotland

I use LifeSkills with students studying Business and ESOL. Many of my students, particularly those studying ESOL, are adult learners.

Barclays LifeSkills plays an important role in my courses, complementing the content we offer and enhancing students' overall college experience. The programme also helps me with preparing students for the practical assessments. As an example, I delivered a LifeSkills personal branding workshop to ESOL students as well as various short videos and tools such as the Wheel of Strengths.

The workshop was a great success; students were actively engaged in discussions and from their feedback, I know that they would like to learn more about employability, digital and all sorts of transferable skills on top of acquiring language skills.

Meanwhile, my Business students also had the opportunity to practise writing their CVs and master interviewing skills during their workshops.

I have found the LifeSkills website and resources very useful and easy to navigate. There is a good balance of text, videos and tools that can help learners learn skills.

Lecturer, FE college, Scotland

England

We deliver an Adult Community Learning programme for a Borough Council in the South West of England. We offer a skills and employability qualification for vulnerable adults aged 19 years and over, although in reality almost all are over the age of 25.

The learner profile varies considerably, from adults with learning difficulties such as dyslexia and Asperger's, to ESOL learners, to individuals who have experienced homelessness or domestic abuse. However, these learners all have at least two points in common: they want to find employment and require help in order to do so.

Initially, I came across a PDF on how to write a job application, and then I looked at the whole LifeSkills website, and it's amazing. Some of the resources, especially the motivation and self-reflection ones, are brilliant. The Wheel of Strengths gives you ideas for jobs you may not have thought of before. It also makes recommendations for jobs you can move on to, which I thought was really handy. It opens your mind to new horizons.

I really rate Barclays LifeSkills. They've done the thinking for me, like top tips for filling in an application form. Also, I quite like that it's Barclays; surely, if they've written it, I can trust it.

Tutor, adult community learning programme, England

Bringing LifeSkills to the people who need it most through delivery partners

Supporting adults through life challenges

We work closely with organisations such as charities, housing associations, Local Authorities and job centres, to provide support for people in difficult situations – such as care leavers and those with low literacy or mental health challenges. This includes offering support and resources to help them develop employability and financial management skills.

LifeSkills provided training sessions to adult support workers at HMP Leeds and Jobcentre Plus, to encourage more educators to maximise their use of LifeSkills.

Offering targeted support for young people

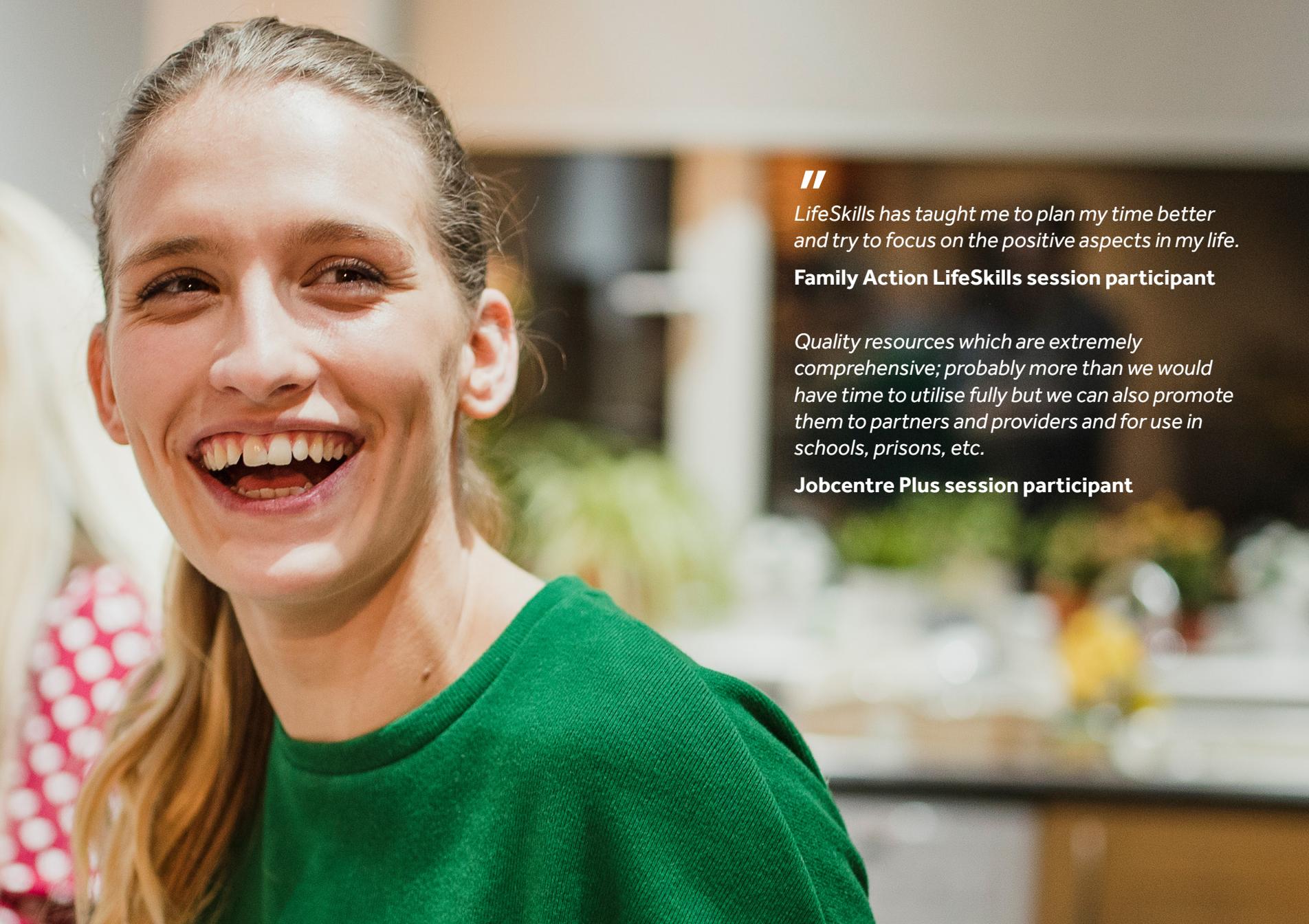
LifeSkills provides deeper, targeted interventions to support hard-to-reach young people, often in areas of deprivation. For example, with the help of the Talent Foundry and Business in the Community, LifeSkills provides employability support for groups such as young people in care.

In response to the shift to remote learning, some sessions for schools in disadvantaged areas continued virtually. These were complemented by online lesson films to ensure key topics could be accessed at home.

Helping people and families in need

LifeSkills works with a number of charities supporting people with specific issues and challenges. We have designed packages of support, including courses, workshops and toolkits, to meet their needs. Examples include resources to help:

- Women in financial stress to develop better skills in areas such as employability, managing money and reducing debt
- People back to work after cancer treatment
- Women leaving the criminal justice system into employment
- Carers over 50 to stay in work longer



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LifeSkills has taught me to plan my time better and try to focus on the positive aspects in my life.

Family Action LifeSkills session participant

Quality resources which are extremely comprehensive; probably more than we would have time to utilise fully but we can also promote them to partners and providers and for use in schools, prisons, etc.

Jobcentre Plus session participant

LifeSkills in action

Inspiring adults to overcome challenges

An adult who was living in supported accommodation having suffered severe trauma in her life, joined the LifeSkills employment support programme at the Smallwood Trust. She has since built her confidence and is now applying for jobs.

"The LifeSkills group has made me look to the future and believe that I can achieve my dreams. The group makes me feel good about myself and gives me something to look forward to. It makes me feel like I matter, and I am important and cared for. It has been a lifeline, with the help and support from everyone here, I have started believing in myself more and pushing myself out of my comfort zone."



Empowering students and their families

After attending a careers fair, a 16-year-old student was introduced to the Barclays LifeSkills site by their Careers Adviser and they and their family benefitted.

"My Careers Adviser explained to me the different resources that Barclays provides. For example, there are student resources that support your financial wellbeing and managing debt – as well as tools to help you find exactly what you need. I think there is even a tool where you can say, 'I am a current student and I need help with a CV'.

I really enjoyed using the Barclays LifeSkills website. I found it very accessible. There are a variety of resources, such as quizzes and interactive videos. The other thing that I really enjoyed about Barclays LifeSkills is that it wasn't only accessible to me, it is accessible to my family. I remember my father went on to the website to read the family section and about how he could support me."



The Barclays LifeSkills modules have had a really positive effect on my mindset and helped me turn things around. After taking the Overcoming Setbacks module, I realised that one setback isn't the end of the road and there is more than one way to achieve your goals.

Supporting adults to plan their next steps

This adult learner was supported by a charity working with economically inactive people – many of whom have been out of work for a very long time, usually due to ill-health or caring commitments. After attending an employability course using Barclays LifeSkills, as part of their holistic support package, this participant learned new skills and rethought their attitude to work.

"I was thinking of going back into document control, which I was doing before I got ill. But the LifeSkills employability workshops helped me see that I should be looking for a job that's right for me now, at this stage of my life. Work affected my health before. I want to get back into work, but it needs to be something that helps me be healthy and happy.

We worked through different things like interview techniques, CV writing, first impressions.... Even though I was in work for 30-40 years before I got ill, I still found it helpful. Things change. The workshops helped me get my head back into it, to realise what I can do and what I want to do."

Helping adults develop the confidence to succeed

A qualified nurse, who put her career on hold to care for her sick mother, faced severe financial difficulties, including being declared bankrupt. Through the Wise group, a social enterprise which helps people get back to work, she completed a number of Barclays LifeSkills modules, which have helped her take control of her situation.

"The Barclays LifeSkills modules have had a really positive effect on my mindset and helped me turn things around. After taking the Overcoming Setbacks module, I realised that one setback isn't the end of the road and there is more than one way to achieve your goals.

The Understanding the Zones of Control unit helped me understand that there are situations I can't control but I can use them as opportunities. It's still early days but thanks to Barclays LifeSkills, my confidence is returning and I'm feeling a lot more positive about the future."



Building personal resilience to overcome challenges

COVID-19 has demonstrated how quickly our lives and plans can be upturned by unexpected events. Before March 2020, no one would have conceived of having to stay at home under lockdown, being unable to attend school or wearing a mask in public places. Yet these things quickly became reality.

The changes brought by the pandemic are an extreme example of something that's always happening. Through new technology, automation and changes in the economy, life is constantly challenging and making new demands on all of us, especially in the world of work.

What matters is how we respond to those changes and adapt to new realities. We all need personal resilience and a positive mindset to help us overcome obstacles and continue to develop even in adverse circumstances.

With its focus on core transferable skills and lifelong learning, LifeSkills can play an important part in helping people adapt and thrive.

Looking back on the year, I'm proud of how the programme has risen to meet the challenges, quickly pivoting to support educators and learners, finding out what works and changing its offer at pace, while continuing to expand its reach among those who need it most.

As we recover and adapt, I am sure that LifeSkills will be more relevant than ever. I'm looking forward to seeing more people using the programme to gain the confidence they need to seize the new opportunities that emerge; while also helping employers find people with the right skills and attitudes, so we can build a stronger, more resilient economy for all.

Baroness Karren Brady CBE
Chair and Ambassador, Barclays LifeSkills





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