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Festival of Learning is a showcase of the transformative power of adult education. It is the largest and longest running celebration of adult learning in England. For more than 30 years it has helped to celebrate the best in adult learning and inspire more adults to learn.

Choosing our award winners from hundreds of high quality nominations is always a huge challenge. The winners are all remarkable in their commitment to learning, the difference it has made to them and the difference they are making to others.

Their stories span a wide array, from employers investing in their workforce, tutors going the extra mile, projects bringing communities together, and individuals changing their lives and helping others. They show the range of motivations for and benefits from learning: from finding a job and getting on at work, through helping to get settled in a new country, to improving health and wellbeing.

This is going to be the lifelong learning century. Longer working lives mean we will need to update our skills regularly. We will need to learn how to make the most of new technology. An aging population will shine new light on the health and wellbeing benefits of learning.

We celebrate the achievements of our award winners and know that your examples will help to inspire many others too.

Stephen Evans
Chief Executive, Learning and Work Institute

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As Patron of Learning and Work Institute, I am pleased to congratulate everyone who was nominated for a Festival of Learning award this year. I understand the importance of celebrating the impressive journeys the award winners and finalists have undertaken to achieve their goals.

I would also like to thank them for sharing personal stories and experiences of their lifelong learning. These inspiring stories show the breadth of people's motivations to continue to learn: to support children's development, to get that first job or a promotion, for health and wellbeing, and of course to contribute to the community.

This year's Patron's Award winner for the Festival of Learning is Margaret Porta. Margaret's current learning journey began through a conversation with an Open Age staff member about how she had never put on an art show of her own. Margaret successfully organised an art show with an online event landing page and accompanying social media presence, all created through her learning at Open Age. Her story of passion reflects the very ethos of Festival of Learning. It also demonstrates how an individual's learning journey can also benefit communities and society.

Lifelong learning is exactly that—lifelong. I am convinced that it is never too late to start. Margaret's incredible story, I hope, will help to inspire the next cohort of adult learners. Congratulations again.

HRH The Princess Royal
Patron, Learning and Work Institute

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In my first year as President of Learning and Work Institute, I couldn't be more delighted to congratulate the winners and finalists for this year's Festival of Learning Awards, and to pay tribute to all the nominees.

Reading the shortlisted nominations and taking part in the panel discussions to select the winners is an immensely difficult but inspiring task as there are so many worthy entries. The President's Award recognises learning provision that stands out because it does something truly remarkable.

This year's President's Award goes to St Giles Trust, which began as a homelessness shelter in Southwark in 1962. The St Giles' London Peer Hub uses adult learning to help clients 'turn a past into a future', using their own lived experience of poverty, crime, homelessness, prison and addictions as a resource to help others.

St Giles' London Peer Hub trains and supports clients to achieve the Level 3 NVQ in Advice and Guidance—often the first qualification that they have ever attained. As part of the training all learners volunteer for six months at St Giles or a similar charity or agency, directly advising people who face situations which they themselves have faced.

Not only does this improve the life chances of others, it also increases the employment opportunities for the trainees. A very worthy winner.

Maggie Galliers CBE
President, Learning and Work Institute

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Phoenix Insights, a longevity think tank from Phoenix Group, is proud to be a sponsor of the Festival of Learning. One of the areas we are focusing on is the shifts we need to make in society to enable more of us to make the most of longer lives.

Learning has a huge role to play in this. With as many as one in three children born in the UK today living to 100, it is important that learning is sustained throughout adult life, to enable people to maximise their potential and sustain longer working lives in a world of rapid change.

The stories and lessons that the Festival of Learning offer us can play an important role in inspiring and creating the culture of lifelong learning we so urgently need.

The experience of reviewing all the nominees for this year's awards was incredibly moving. I was humbled by the stories of great courage, of persistence, of such passion and commitment to learning, and such life changing results, and I warmly applaud all the nominees and winners.

Catherine Foot
Director, Phoenix Insights

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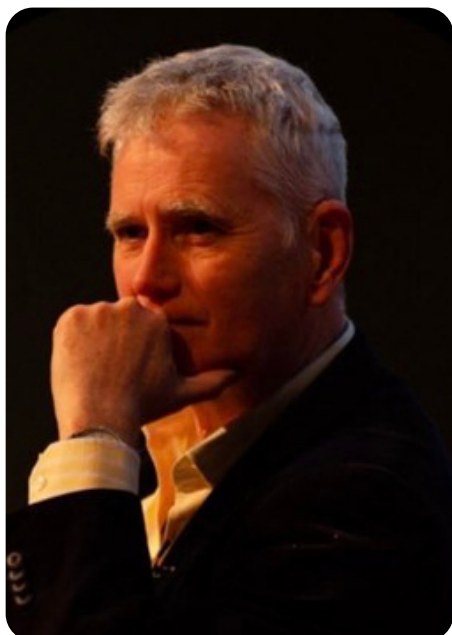


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We are proud to support the Festival of Learning, which plays an invaluable role in ensuring that lifelong learning is recognised for the vital contribution it makes in transforming people's lives on a professional and personal level.

City Lit is famous for bringing people together to enrich lives through learning. Since we opened in 1919, well over a million people have benefitted from our unique offering. This year, City Lit continues its mission to offers courses to adults in the UK—and we work hard to inspire people's passions and help them realise their ambitions.

Adult education is more crucial than ever—for economic and social reasons, but also for people's health and wellbeing. Life is stressful and adult education has the wonderful ability to give people opportunities to find their passions and interests and to relieve stress, improve employability, develop new skills, and of course, come together with people from different walks of life.

People coming back to learning at any point in their lives is something to applaud. The knowledge, skills, joy and fulfilment they gain is something that changes and improves lives immeasurably. We look forward to presenting the Return to Learning Award and celebrating the great achievements of this year's winners and nominees.

Mark Malcomson CBE
Principal, City Lit

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At the Education and Training Foundation we are proud to champion adult learning and the professionals across our sector who lead and deliver it. That's why we are pleased to continue our sponsorship of the Tutor Award at this year's Festival of Learning.

A good teacher leaves a lasting legacy with learners. Not just through sharing skills and knowledge, but also by building confidence, resilience, and self-belief in those whose lives they touch. In doing so, they help individuals to grow, become better equipped for the rapidly changing world of work and to thrive outside of it.

The transformational impact tutors, trainers and educators have is not limited to learners. It extends beyond the learners to their families and communities. In a world where we are all contending with diverse and rapidly-evolving challenges—ranging from the accelerating impact of technology on work to a cost-of-living crisis—this has never been more important.

Those nominated for the award illustrate that. Each year the Festival of Learning shines a light on individuals who are—through their dedication, determination, creativity, and hard work—transforming lives of learners. The ETF stands unequivocally behind these talented and committed individuals in the work we do supporting professional development and the quest for excellence, and through this award we are delighted to celebrate their work and achievements.

Dr Katerina Kolyva
Chief Executive, Education and Training Foundation

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NOCN Group is delighted to be working in partnership with Learning and Work Institute to support the 2023 Festival of Learning Awards.

We are proud to be a leading education and skills charity, our focus is social and economic mobility, not profit in the UK and overseas. We offer a wide range of products and services, including regulated qualifications, EPA for apprenticeships, SMART Job Cards and endorsed short courses.

NOCN has been involved with the Festival of Learning for a number of years as part of its ongoing commitment to Learning and Work Institute, and each year we are privileged to hear the remarkable stories of inspirational people and organisations. Learning not only changes careers and enhances prospects, but it is good for health and well-being—there is no doubt that it really can make us happier and healthier.

With the right help and the right attitude, we can all achieve great things, often which we did not think possible, overcoming the odds and realising our true capabilities and worth. Many of the learners shortlisted for these awards have benefitted from direct and effective support provided by compassionate organisations that firmly believe in the ability of their learners to achieve their goals. It is a partnership approach which delivers results.

There is no doubt that learning on the job or in preparation for a job, can be valuable not only to the employee but to the employer too, and the quality of nominees and winners for this year's awards prove that. Congratulations to you all!

Graham Hasting-Evans
Chief Executive, NOCN Group

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Here at the Skills and Education Group, we have been proud supporters of the Festival of Learning for several years, and we are so pleased to be involved again this year. Lifelong learning deserves to be celebrated and this event provides fitting recognition for adult learners.

Each year, we sponsor the New Directions Award, which highlights one of the best things about lifelong learning—it allows people to make a fresh start and follow a new path. I believe that it is never too late to try something different and develop new skills.

As someone who started my career wanting to be a chef but has ended up becoming Chief Executive of a membership body in the further education and skills sector, I am well aware that life can lead you in unexpected directions, and that continuous learning is vital to taking the opportunities that come your way.

Our organisation supports thousands of individuals each year. In 2021/22, the youngest learner to achieve one of our qualifications was 12, while the oldest was 86. You never stop learning, and we want to help all learners realise their potential, regardless of their age, background, or ability.

I am really looking forward to this year's Festival of Learning Awards and I wish all nominees the very best of luck.

Paul Eeles
Chief Executive, Skills and Education Group

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Get in touch

To discuss sponsorship opportunities for 2024, please contact
Emily Jones, Deputy Director, Learning and Work Institute
emily.jones@learningandwork.org.uk.

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