



# Yorkshire & the Humber

# Adult Learners' Week

Regional Awards Ceremony

co-ordinated by

**niace**  
promoting adult learning

Yorkshire & the Humber  
**regional forum**  
Forum of the Yorkshire & Humber Region

supported by

  
European Union  
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**Careers  
Advice**

## Programme

## **Programme - May 19th 2010**

**6.00pm - 6.45pm**

Registration

**6.45pm - 7.00pm**

Welcome from host, Ian Clayton

**7.00pm - 7.45pm**

Hot buffet with a Yorkshire theme

**7.45pm - 9.30pm**

Awards presentation

**9.30pm - 10.00pm**

Entertainment

# Welcome to the Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Awards Ceremony

Welcome

Tonight is all about ordinary people who have used learning opportunities to turn their lives into something extraordinary.

Adult learners throughout the Yorkshire and the Humber region have created their own opportunities by signing up to all forms of learning - in workplaces, unions, colleges, universities, and voluntary and community organisations. Learning that has taken them on a journey of discovery about themselves; discovering abilities and strengths they never knew they had, and discovering their own capacity to overcome obstacles and persevere against the odds.

**Amanda Vickers**  
**Adult Learners' Week Regional Coordinator**  
**Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Forum**

Adult Learners' Week is the UK's largest festival of adult learning, run nationally by NIACE since 1992 to celebrate the achievements of learners like these. This is the first time the Regional Forum has co-ordinated Adult Learners' Week in the Region, and the most fulfilling part of the work is hearing the inspirational stories of the learners themselves, some of whom are here in Leeds tonight.

# Welcome



## Our host for this evening

We are delighted that tonight's event is hosted by **Ian Clayton**, who has been a freelance writer and broadcaster for 25 years. He has presented programmes on the BBC, ITV Yorkshire and the Discovery Channel, and also regularly on radio. He has led workshops in prisons, hospitals, schools and art centres, and has worked all over the world.

Ian lives in West Yorkshire with his partner Heather and son Edward. He has a special place in the hearts of many Yorkshire folk, and his latest book 'Our Billie' has just been launched; signed copies of the book are on sale tonight.

### Leeds College of Music

With over 1,000 full-time and 1,000 part-time students, Leeds College of Music is the only specialist music college to offer both Higher Education, Further Education and Adult Learning courses. The College runs an extensive programme of community classes that attract part-time students to the College and to our outreach centres around Leeds each term. The aim is to provide access to music for as many people as possible. We are pleased that two of our Adult Community Ensembles, the Sinfonia and Salsa Band, are playing for your entertainment this evening.

**Caroline Stephenson**  
Leeds College of Music



### unionlearn

unionlearn with the TUC helps unions, members and workers throughout Yorkshire and the Humber to generate a learning culture in the workplace. We bring together the best of union education, workforce development and community education to provide opportunities for working people to enhance their skills, employability and job security.

**Alan Roe**  
unionlearn

## Our supporters

### Business Link Yorkshire

#### Polished skills can boost productivity

A typical 50-employee company can save £165,000 every year by filling the gaps in its employees' skills – and having the right skills can make or break a business.

Business Link Yorkshire is now delivering support on skills – adding to the range of impartial expert information and advice already available at no cost to employers. In 2009 alone, we helped over 3,000 companies find £11 m worth of training to meet their business needs.

Our advisers are trained to spot gaps in staff skills, look for solutions and refer businesses to appropriate support. Delivery may be through structured learning such as NVQs or Apprenticeship programmes or maybe a bespoke training package, designed for the customer.

To find out more, call Business Link Yorkshire on 08456 048 048 or visit [www.businesslinkyorkshire.co.uk](http://www.businesslinkyorkshire.co.uk)



### KIER



At Kier we are committed to ensuring that our workforce development is fully aligned to the employment and learning needs of the communities within which we work.

Adult learning is vital for our people to feel empowered and motivated. As a significant private sector partner in the community, through our very successful adult employment programmes we ensure that, for those adults employed by Kier, learning and skills are seen as a route to career progression and self determination. Kier Sheffield also has an enviable track record of promoting learning and employment opportunities for those adults who want to move into employment.

By the very nature of our business streams and customer base, it is inevitable that we are integrated within the communities in which we work. A skilled and well trained workforce is vital to our success.

### Bradford College

Bradford College is committed to delivering quality education and training to adults at all ages and levels. The college aims to help adult students across the region achieve their potential and make a rewarding and positive contribution to their own communities.

**Julie Firth**  
**Bradford College**

### Northern College

Northern College is a residential college with a mission to provide opportunities for the transformation of individuals and communities and to promote social change through the provision of outstanding adult and community based learning. Northern College offers training for those who are active in voluntary and community groups and Trades Unions and has a growing program of work with employers.



**Veronica Callear**  
**Northern College, Barnsley**

## Introduction

In Yorkshire and Humberside this year we had a fantastic number of entries for the Adult Learners' Week Awards, with over 130 people being nominated. We are here to congratulate our learners and nominees, and recognise all the effort you have made to enrich your own life and those of others through learning and improving your skills. Adult Learners' Week is an excellent opportunity to promote the value of learning. We strongly believe that learning has the ability to change people's lives and the stories of our Yorkshire and the Humber award winners prove this.

You are an inspiration to all of us. Our thanks go to all who are involved in this year's ceremony: learners and nominators, learning providers, judges, presenters, and sponsors. Our very best wishes go to all the nominees and congratulations to the winners. Whether you are one of these people, or whether you are here to support and cheer them on, we hope you have a wonderful evening.

**Jan Novitzky**

**NIACE Programme Director, Yorkshire and the Humber**

## Sherrie Rhodes

**Aged 30, Hull**

**Nominated by Sylvia Kilvington, Willow North Hull Women's Centre**

Since overcoming post-natal depression, Sherrie Rhodes, aged 30, has gone on to give help to some of the most vulnerable and isolated women in the city of Hull.

Sherrie was struck down with debilitating panic attacks in 2005 whilst holidaying in Turkey. Although supported by her family and the Community Psychiatric Nurse, this illness was often misunderstood and she was frequently faced people telling her, 'Pull yourself together.'

The turning point came, she says, when she embarked on a lifelong learning programme, part of a community project arranged by Willow, North Hull Women's Centre in early 2006, designed to boost confidence. After a five-week Aromatherapy course in the heart of her own community, she progressed to a range of training and learning, including NVQs and Hull University Foundation Award courses in IT, Counselling, Volunteer Training and others to support children's learning.

In January 2009, she became a volunteer for the Doula project – supporting vulnerable and isolated women during and after pregnancy – and she hopes to become a midwife. **"Whilst my journey's not always been easy, my determination to overcome post-natal depression, the love of my family and my commitment to learning has inspired and motivated me to overcome many barriers."**



**“Learning has made a  
difference to my life in  
that it’s made me feel  
alive.”**

**Julie Cummins**

## **Julie Cummins**

**Aged 45, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire**

**Nominated by Dr Ian Burkitt, University of Bradford**

When Julie struggled to read and write at school, she was laughed at, so without the help she needed, Julie left school without any qualifications. It was at the age of 32, when her youngest son brought books home from school, that Julie felt she had to learn to read and write, as she couldn’t help him. Julie taught herself to read using flash cards, the Oxford Reading Tree and her children’s school books. Ten years later, Julie enrolled on an Access course at Dewsbury College, as she wanted the education she felt she should’ve had as a child. During the Access course Julie flourished and won the Adult Learners’ Week Aim Higher Award, in 2008. This led to her embarking on a degree course in Sociology and Psychology.

Julie is now studying for her degree at the University of Bradford and outperforms most of the other students in her year group – an exceptional achievement for someone who taught herself to read and write and who, at the age of 42, was diagnosed with having severe dyslexia. **“Learning has made a difference to my life in that it’s made me feel alive. It’s opened lots of doors for me and I’ve made new friends,”** said Julie.

# Valentine Nkoyo

**Aged 26, York**

**Nominated by Brett Arnall, York St John University**

Valentine has suffered an ongoing fight for education all of her life but her determination to succeed means she is now studying for a degree in Business Studies at York St John University.

In her homeland of rural Maasailand, Kenya, Valentine's community does not value the right for girls to have an education. So when her father struggled to pay for Valentine's school fees, she was often sent home. Valentine says, "I poured my frustration into a poem to plead with my father to consider my education," she continued, "It was this poem and a video made of it that brought me to the attention of the sponsors who helped me continue my journey to university in Kenya."

Valentine came to England in January 2009 to undertake a semester of creative writing and film making at York St John, and in September 2009, she won the University's Inspire International Scholarship to complete her Business degree in England.

Determined to help other students have a right to an education, Valentine volunteers with York St John University's development office, raising scholarship funds, whilst completing her degree. She is now also embarking on a project to support her former primary school in Kenya. "Education is something that never ends. Bringing it to others is my greatest satisfaction," ended Valentine.



## Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Award Winner



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## Sayra Wigglesworth

**Aged 32, Leeds**

**Nominated by Maggi Butterworth, Swarthmore Education Centre, Leeds**

Sayra first started her learning journey in 1999 as a young, single mum who had left school at 14 with no qualifications. She started with cookery classes and took a number of other courses, but when her mother became ill, she had to give up and become her carer, as well as look after her younger brother and her own daughter. When Sayra was able to return to learning, she looked for a short course that she felt was achievable. Sayra began an Introduction to Counselling course and never looked back, since achieving a Level 2 Certificate in Counselling, a Level 3 Certificate in Counselling Studies and a Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling.

At times, Sayra felt like giving up as she struggled with the academic side of her studies, but the support of tutors meant she persevered. Sayra said, "When Su gave me back my portfolio all signed off, it was truly amazing. I had done it, me a qualified counsellor! It still doesn't feel real and I almost want to ask someone if it happened." Sayra is now a volunteer counsellor and has a waiting list of clients.

## **Ali Hayward**

**Aged 45, Sheffield**

**Nominated by Rob Hindle, The Institute for Lifelong Learning,  
University of Sheffield**

Ali left school in her early teens due to a disability and then held down a steady job at the local council for many years. She gave birth to a daughter in 2003 who was diagnosed with having cerebral palsy, and that, along with a traumatic labour, saw Ali suffer post-natal depression and a deterioration in her own disability. Determined to overcome her negativity and become happy once again, Ali began voluntary work with a disability organisation. This led to friends suggesting that Ali should do something for herself, so she looked at courses available. Ali completed a Creative Writing Certificate and moved on to a part-time degree in Literature and Creative Media.

Ali said, **“My life has changed beyond anything expected. I’m excited about my future.”** Ali hopes to share her passion for English and teach others who’ve missed out on learning too. She ended, **“Education changes lives. It’s powerful and for me will always be a privilege I never thought I’d have.”**

**“My life has changed  
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**Ali Hayward**

## ESF Y&H Regional Award Winner



## Jon Honeyfield

**Aged 37, Sheffield**

**Nominated by Andrew Biggin, from Kier Sheffield LLP**

At the age of 32, Jon relocated to Sheffield, seeing it as a chance to reassess his life, gain qualifications and find a rewarding career. Whilst unemployed in his new home town, Jon completed a City & Guilds certificate in Basic Plumbing and was subsequently offered an apprenticeship with Kier Sheffield as a heating engineer. Jon showed a real hunger for learning when he began his apprenticeship and completed an NVQ Level 2 in Mechanical Engineering Services in just six months. He has since completed his Level 3 and ACS commercial qualification, along with his ACS Domestic Gas qualification and is now fully qualified.

“Learning has been directly instrumental in accelerating his career progress, earning him a place as a member of a highly skilled team and bringing job satisfaction – a significant achievement for someone who less than four years ago was unemployed with only a few basic qualifications,” said nominator Andrew. Jon said: “[Learning] has given me a trade and the ability to earn a fairly good living. It has given me more confidence in my own abilities and made me realise you are never too old to learn.”

## Peter Argyle

**Aged 58, Leeds**

**Nominated by Susan Vickers, Carr Manor Centre, Leeds City College**

“In 2008 I was made redundant at age 57, so I decided to take a course in **computer skills**,” said Peter. After 16 years as a store/quality controller with an engineering company, Peter knew he needed to update his skills. He visited the Leeds City College Carr Manor Centre to find out what was on offer, and it was suggested that he should learn how to use a computer, having never used one before. **“I have got my OCR CLAIT awards, and I am doing CLAIT Plus,”** said Peter. Peter now makes use of his computer skills to teach others in his community who have little or no computer experience.

**“I am very active in my community and carry out a lot of voluntary community-based work,”** said Peter. He has assisted the local Church Secretary by computerising the records, word processing and typing out the church newsletters, as well as volunteering for the Methodist Charity and Housing Association. Peter also helps people at a local community centre, Northcall - to learn basic computer skills, much to the delight of staff at the centre.



## Learning Works Award Winner



## Barry Young

**Aged 47, Leeds**

**Nominated by Gary Britt, First West and North Yorkshire Unite,  
West Yorkshire**

Barry Young's passion for lifelong learning is exceeded only by his desire to pass on what he learns to young people in the Sea Cadet Corps.

The 47-year-old bus driver in Leeds left school with no formal qualifications and has worked on the buses for 20 years. When First Bus and the TGWU (now Unite) launched a lifelong learning project in 2002, he was first in, taking everything from basic literacy, numeracy and IT training to the Level 4 City & Guilds Diploma in Youth Management & Training.

Barry has used his learning for promotion in every area of life, rising to Warrant Officer Class 1 in the Sea Cadet Corps, where he also qualified for the National Diving Section. He now gives otherwise expensive scuba diving lessons for free to young cadets. **"I have been infected by the learning bug and do not intend to stop anytime soon,"** he said. He now hopes to do a degree and be promoted to management.

Gary Britt, his nominator and trade union learning representative, said: **"Barry is a prime example of how, with drive and determination, you can overcome any barrier to learning and succeed."**

# Lifelong Learning Project

### Nominated by Polly Seward, Carers' Support Centre, North Lincolnshire

More than 200 unpaid carers have seen big improvements in their job prospects and personal lives through an innovative Lifelong Learning Project run since 2001 by the Carers' Support Centre in North Lincolnshire.

Staff use a personalised approach, addressing the many barriers carers face and identifying the most appropriate learning options. Learning opportunities are wide ranging, from music tuition and stress management workshops to IT skills and vocational qualifications. Carers receive financial help for learning activities and transport costs, and care workers are provided, where necessary, to give carers the time off.

**"Lack of confidence has been identified by the Lifelong Learning Project as a key barrier to accessing learning,"** said Polly Seward, lifelong learning assistant at the centre. **"When carers find a learning experience they enjoy, they will then have confidence and motivation to progress, for example, accessing more advanced courses."** Follow-up support is also given to help carers advance or diversify their learning or progress in their careers.

Kay Allen, who cares for her husband Len who has arthritis and diabetes, found the Lifelong Learning Project support life changing. **"I have gained a great deal already through the project and, with my new-found confidence, I look forward to continuing to progress."**



"Ashley has made  
tremendous progress in  
such a short space of  
time"

**Alex, Nominator**

## Ashley Lawton

**Aged 20, Doncaster**

**Nominated by Alex Dean, Sine FM/Higher Rhythm**

Ashley's study of music technology since his release from prison has helped his transition back into society. He attended Sine FM's Higher Rhythm facility to learn new skills, including DJ'ing, music production and media, which has seen him gain an NCFE Introductory Award in Music Technology and move on to study for the full award. Alongside this, Ashley is developing his recording skills by collaborating with other learners to record and produce a piece of music, and is working with a film director on a video for the music.

Ashley is currently on probation and living in a hostel in Doncaster, but shows great enthusiasm for learning new music skills. **"Ashley has made tremendous progress in such a short space of time and has adapted in terms of attitude and commitment to fit in,"** said nominator, Alex. Ashley is putting his skills to use whilst continuing to learn by showcasing his DJ skills in regular slots on Sine FM, as well as DJ'ing at local venues to gain experience.



# Craig Balmer

**Sponsored by Leeds College of Music**

**Nominated by Helen Hanson, from Doncaster College**

In September 2008, Craig lost his job at McDonalds and was sleeping on a friend's sofa. He lists the things he had at the time as: a camera, a place to live for the moment, a decent sleeping bag, and the belief that college was the way forward.

Craig began the National Diploma course in Photography at Doncaster College, and is managing to complete materials for the course, despite now living in a hostel. He has also started new courses in stone sculpture and painting, and has recently exhibited his first work. Craig is fully focussed on becoming an artist.



“Jane has always been willing to share and discuss her expertise with others”.

**Patricia, Nominator**

## Jane Leaning

**Sponsored by Business Link Yorkshire**

**Nominated by Patricia Farmer, from East Riding College**

Jane enrolled for an upholstery course in 2009 at East Riding College, as a total beginner to the craft. She rapidly progressed, and demonstrated that she was capable of producing extremely high standards of work. Jane has always been willing to share and discuss her expertise with others on the course.

Jane has recently opened a small business in a local antiques centre. Her superb upholstery work and professionalism has made a major contribution to the success of her business.

Her nominator says, “this particular learning journey has only been possible through dedication, commitment, identifying a talent and having the confidence and willingness to utilise it in a positive way”.



## James Ashton

**Sponsored by KIER Sheffield LLP**

**Nominated by Darren Hollingworth, from Sheffield City College**

At age 21, James Ashton's life was carefree - he had started up his own car delivery business and had no commitments and no qualifications. Within a few months however, James had not only lost his father but was also diagnosed with cancer, and needed surgery and radiotherapy. When James recovered he re-started his business, but four years later the cancer returned. During this vulnerable time, he realised that he needed a career that really interested him.

With no A levels, in 2008 he started with an Access to HE course for mature students. His goal was to progress to the University of Sheffield to study for a BSc in Aerospace Engineering, a goal he has achieved. James is also a major contributor to research into teenage cancer.

James says, "I would be very proud to offer any person considering returning to education positive proof that with determination, anyone can fulfil their ambitions, no matter what their starting point, and against whatever life may throw at them".

**"With determination,  
anyone can fulfil their  
ambitions, no matter  
what their starting  
point".**

**James**



“Nimo continues to support people from different communities in their learning”.

**Silvia, Nominator**

## Nimo Hersi

**Sponsored by the Yorkshire & the Humber Regional Forum  
Nominated by Sylvia Ashton, from Sheffield Hallam University**

Nimo was six years old when she arrived in the UK from Somalia and began to learn English, with the support of her primary school teachers. Nimo was motivated by her own and her family’s aspirations, and when she was the first in her family to gain a place at university to study Early Years Education, her happiness and pride at her achievement was shared by her family.

After graduating, Nimo started to get more involved in her community, and began helping out with ESOL classes in her local community centre. She enjoyed supporting women from her community by passing on her skills and knowledge, and soon backed this up by taking a seven week course run by the Sheffield Association of Voluntary Teachers of English (SAVTE). Nimo has followed that by undertaking a PGCE in Learning and Skills (ESOL) at Sheffield Hallam University so that she can “continue to support people from different communities and instil in them a desire to learn”.

## Tracy Tatchell

**Sponsored by Yorkshire and the Humber NHS**

**Nominated by Mark Sutcliffe, from Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust**

After leaving school with few academic qualifications, due to surgery at age twelve for lung problems, Tracy found work in the beauty industry. She completed a Beauty Therapy NVQ and a Diploma in Anatomy and Physiology, but when forced to make a career change, Tracy opted to help others and found employment in the care industry.

In December 2007 Tracy applied for a position with the Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust, and has been working as a Healthcare Assistant in the Outpatients department. Tracy is presently undertaking a General Healthcare Support Level 3 NVQ, and is also taking the opportunity to improve her literacy and numeracy skills.

Tracy's nominator says, "I have never worked with a candidate who has produced such a high standard of excellent quality work in such a short period of time". Tracy's goal for the future is to train as a nurse.

"Tracy has produced such a high standard of excellent quality work".

**Mark, Nominator**



***Yorkshire and the Humber***

## Booktrust Highly Commended Nominee



## Dawn Dale

**Sponsored by Booktrust**

**Nominated by Cheryl Parker, from Hull Adult Education**

Dawn refused to read a book or visit a library because of her limited reading skills. However, encouraged by the choice of accessible Quick Reads books, she became a member of the library and now reads regularly. "I take my son to the library and we love reading together. I borrow books for both him and me," said Dawn, who has gained Entry Level 3 in Literacy and is currently working towards Level 1.

booktrust

## Sue Whiteley

**Nominated by Rae Twidale, from Westcliffe Neighbourhood Drop-In Centre, Scunthorpe**

Sue went to the Westcliffe Neighbourhood Drop-In Centre seven years ago as a service user, and stayed on as a volunteer, undertaking the Centre's own Volunteer Signposting Course (Open College Network Level 2). Sue's area of interest is in supporting young people in the community to manage their sometimes chaotic lives, and offer them encouragement and the benefit of her experience.

Sue has since completed many complementary courses on, amongst other things, nutrition; alcohol and behaviour; listening skills and supporting others; giving information, advice and guidance; and counselling. Sue's learning journey has changed her whole life. Her nominator says, "**Sue now feels that the world is her oyster and she is focussing on the future with enthusiasm**".

## Michael Spencer

**Nominated by Marie James, from Northern College, Barnsley**

Michael began his first short course at Northern College, Barnsley, in 2008. He had suffered personal tragedy and ill health and was bringing up four small children. Within weeks of completing his first course, in assertiveness and confidence building, Michael signed up for the Access to Higher Education Diploma. Michael achieved Level 4 for all his assignments, which equates to the first year of a degree.

From the reserved person at the start of the course, Michael became a student who advised and supported his peers. Michael plans to go on to university to gain a degree in Social Work or Sociology. Michael's nominator says, "**Michael deserves recognition for his sheer tenacity**".

## Steven Utley

**Nominated by Lynn Whitfield, from HMP Moorland, Doncaster**

At school Steven's teachers said he 'could do better', but Steven saw school purely as a place to socialise. This attitude led to him being excluded several times. At exam time, Steven was living with friends. He still achieved seven GCSE's at grade C, but by the time he was living in his own flat, his lifestyle included committing crimes.

More recently Steven has taken every opportunity to gain qualifications, and acknowledges that the support of his tutors has been a critical factor in his success. Steven helps others who are finding learning difficult, adapting his style to different types of learner. Steven's plan for the future is to do a Law Degree, and to write a book!

## Noreen Younis

**Nominated by Debbie Rolls, Bradford College**

Noreen began her adult education at Bradford College with no formal qualifications at all. Noreen had suffered extensive burns as a child that meant she missed out on a school education and began her learning journey as an adult. Over the last few years she has progressed from Level 2 qualifications, to an access to higher education qualification, then a Foundation Degree in Supporting and Managing Learning. She is now taking a two year course that will enable her to become a qualified primary school teacher.

Her nominator says, "Noreen has changed from someone who did not believe she could learn at a higher level, to someone who, as a primary teacher, will inspire others to learn".

## Acknowledgements

This is the first year that the Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Forum has co-ordinated Adult Learners Week on behalf of NIACE. The team that rose to the challenge are:

**Amanda Vickers** - Regional Co-ordinator

**Brian Lawrence** - Sponsorship Manager

**Ruth Beattie** - Media Liaison Officer

**Martin Leonard** - Project Assistant (and Photographer)

**Sarah Janicwicz** - Project Administrator

Our sponsors have also demonstrated their organisation's commitment to adult learning in many different ways and the evening would not have been possible without them. They are:

- **Kier Sheffield LLP**
- **Business Link Yorkshire**
- **NHS Yorkshire and the Humber**
- **Leeds College of Music**
- **Leeds United Football Club**
- **Bradford College**
- **Leeds City College**
- **Northern College**
- **unionlearn**
- **University College Barnsley**
- **University of Bradford**
- **University of Sheffield**
- **Wakefield College**
- **York College**
- **Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Forum**

Our thanks are also abundantly due to **Ian Clayton**, our host, who has freely given his time and talent to helping the event be really special. Ian has just launched his book 'Our Billie', and is in huge demand, so we are especially pleased that he is able to be with us this evening.

**The Leeds College of Music** deserves a special mention for providing the Sinfonia and the Salsa Band.



## **Amanda Vickers**

Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Coordinator

Tel: **0113 3942300**

Email: [amanda.vickers@regionalforum.org.uk](mailto:amanda.vickers@regionalforum.org.uk)