

Is that on the SCQF...? Community Action and Leadership Awards (CALA)



By Gail Philips, Engagement and Development Officer at Lead Scotland

Ever wanted to see a change in your community but don't know how to go about making it happen? Lead Scotland has developed their Community Action and Leadership Award (CALA) in response to just that scenario. Their accredited and inclusive CALA course aims to empower people to become more active citizens in their own communities.

And there has never been a better time for the people of Scotland to be able to influence change by having a say in decisions which affect them. Since the opening of the Scottish Parliament, the Community Empowerment Act, the accessibility of the internet and growing social media platforms people, rightly so, expect to be consulted and involved in shaping local, regional and national decisions.

The conversation is positive and the direction of travel towards increased involvement is heartening, but disabled people, carers and those affected by disadvantage are still underrepresented in decision-making forums across Scotland. Many people have great ideas about things they'd like to change but often don't have the confidence, skills or support to try to change them. Our SCQF levels 3 and 5 Community Action and Leadership (CALA) Awards bridge that gap.

Eighty disabled people contributed ideas and thinking to shape the Awards, creating courses which are accessible, accredited and person centred and delivered in a small group with the right support available at all times. Learners choose projects which match their passion and motivation which in turn leads to increased confidence to act, like the group of school pupils who successfully influenced their school to start stocking fair trade products or the group of community learners who petitioned a bus company to stop a service being cut because they realised how many people would have been disadvantaged within the local community.

Feedback on completion of the course is very positive with one learner commenting, *"The course built my confidence. I wasn't doing anything before because I didn't think I had anything to offer anyone."*

Every learner is individually encouraged to build their confidence to influence change and make a positive difference to their community and deepen their understanding of the needs of community members with a range of impairments. The CALA course enables learners to understand themselves, their rights and responsibilities in order to create a fairer, more representative Scotland.

The CALA at SCQF level 3 has 18 credit points and the CALA at SCQF level 5 has 16 credit points. For more information on the Awards, have a look at the [SCQF database](#).

Lead Scotland, is a voluntary organisation set up to empower disabled young people and adults and carers across Scotland to access learning opportunities. For more information on the services available visit the [Lead Scotland website](#).