

There's a WEA course for you

Learner Handbook 2023-24



WEA

Adult Learning Within Reach

Welcome to your learner handbook

Learning plays an important part in our everyday lives and also our wellbeing.

If this is your first step back into learning, we hope that it is just the beginning of a long and successful journey. A journey that will bring you new skills, interests and qualifications. If you have already attended some of our courses in the past, we hope you enjoy your new course and continue to learn new skills.

We will help and support all of our learners as much as possible. Please talk to your tutor if there is anything we can do to help.

The WEA wants you to have an enjoyable time with us and in this handbook you will find details about what to expect from your course. You will also be asked to give feedback at the end of your course. Your views are very important to us and will help us to plan and improve future courses.

We hope your learning experience with us will be exciting and stimulating.

Preeya Buckley

Director of Quality & Learner Services

About Us

We're a charity and the UK's largest voluntary sector provider of adult education. We believe learning is for everyone and learning is for life. We also have a special mission to reach those who want to improve their lives and communities. We actively campaign for adult education and you can get involved in the WEA as a volunteer or member.

Our Vision

A better world - equal, democratic and just; through adult education the WEA challenges and inspires individuals, communities and society.

Read more about us here

wea.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are

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1. Enrolling on a WEA course

To enrol on a WEA course you must be aged 19 or over by the 31st August 2023.

UK residency

Learners who have not been resident in the UK/EU for the last three years are required to complete a learner eligibility form and provide appropriate evidence, or a higher course fee will be payable.

If you would like more information please call **0300 303 3464**.



To find out about courses we offer in your area you can:

Use our online course search
wea.org.uk

Contact your local WEA office or branch.
wea.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/departments

Looking for a new job, or want to learn new skills?
Visit: wea.org.uk/courses/skills-for-work

Once you have found the course you are interested in, you can:

Apply online: wea.org.uk

Apply and enrol by telephone **0300 303 3464**
(9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, local rate).

Please bear in mind that a course may be full or if numbers are insufficient, cancelled. We strongly advise that you enrol online/by telephone wherever possible to avoid disappointment.

What to expect from the WEA

When you enrol with us you will enter into a Learning Agreement. The application and enrollment process sets out the agreement between learners and the WEA to ensure that learning opportunities are of a high standard.

We want you to get the most from your course with us. The WEA Learning Agreement ensures that our classes are of a high standard.

WEA Learner Learning Agreement

We will:

- offer you clear information and advice before and after your course
- check what you want to get from the course and whether it is suitable for you
- provide you with an introduction to the WEA and the course
- create a safe and positive learning environment where you are respected and valued
- inform you of financial and learning support you may be eligible for to support your learning
- arrange additional support as far as is reasonably possible
- provide suitably qualified, experienced and supportive tutors
- expect tutors to use a range of teaching and learning activities to keep you actively involved in your learning

- expect tutors to use tasks to see how you are learning, which may include quizzes, question and answer, small projects, discussion, written or practical work
- keep you informed about your progress and achievement
- let you know about WEA activities outside of your course
- ask for your feedback about this course and the WEA
- take positive action to promote equality and diversity
- let you know if WEA staff are joining the session for quality checking purposes
- deal quickly and politely with any complaints about the WEA

WEA Learner Learning Agreement (cont)

As a learner, you should:

- arrive on time, attend every session and let your tutor know if you can't attend a session
- be able to complete the whole course
- complete work given to you by your tutor on time and only submit work that is your own
- let your tutor know if you are thinking about leaving the course and tell them why
- tell the WEA if you move, change your contact details or if your income changes
- return any borrowed equipment or teaching resources at the end of the course
- let your tutor know about any support you might need to complete your course (e.g. financial, learning, disability or technical support.)
- reflect on and record your learning and progress using the WEA Learning Record
- provide feedback after your course through the Tell Us About It quiz
- be actively involved in your learning and ensure everyone has a chance to take part
- wear clothing suitable for learning or the work place
- contribute to a positive and safe learning environment; behaving with respect for others and following all the class rules that have been agreed
- demonstrate the Common (British) Values of tolerance, mutual respect, individual liberty and the rule of law
- report any safeguarding concerns and follow the relevant procedures.

While you are learning with us

The information below may refer you to our policies. Our policies set the standards for the way we work and can be found on our website at: wea.org.uk/resources/policy-docs

If you prefer to be sent any policy by post please contact your nearest regional office. wea.org.uk/find-your-local-wea

WEA Learner Hub

The 'Learner Hub' is a new feature on our website. This platform allows learners to upload evidence, such as ID, to support your application.

It also has access to Canvas, as well as details of the courses (times and zoom links) you have been enrolled to. You can also utilise the online version of Microsoft 365 via the Learner Hub. This gives you access to Microsoft applications including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and more.

Your welcome email will contain your WEA Microsoft 365 account details, including your username and password. When you first log in, you will be prompted to change your password.

For more information please visit:

wea.org.uk/help-and-support/how-do-i-access-learner-hub

Canvas and Online Learning

We have grown the number of courses we can offer learners online, offering you more choice than ever before.

This means you can now learn virtually via your preferred IT devices, such as a laptop or desktop computer, or a tablet or mobile phone, providing you can connect to the internet.

All our classes taking place online are delivered using Canvas and Zoom.

For more information wea.org.uk/help-and-support

What is Canvas?

Canvas is a learning area that allows teachers to run courses online, so you can take part in your lessons from a distance, as well as after the classroom session has ended.

What is Zoom?

Zoom.us is a website application that allows people to take part in virtual meetings and classes. By following a link or by entering the class information, you can join a classroom from the comfort of your own home. Learners will also need to have access to speakers, a microphone and a video camera on (where required).

To use Zoom you will need:

An IT device (e.g. laptop, PC, tablet or smart phone) which has speakers, a microphone and a video camera. If you do not have a video camera, you can buy these inexpensively.

If your computer doesn't have speakers or a microphone, you might try hands-free headphones which have an integrated microphone.

For more information on Canvas and Zoom please visit wea.org.uk/help

Access and support for learning

Your tutor can provide information when you are on the course, or you can contact your local regional office for further information regarding available support:

wea.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/departments

Additional Learning Support - if you have a disability, learning difficulty, health issue or other support needs please tell us as soon as you can, so that we can put support in place. Contact your nearest regional office, or speak to your tutor if you have started your course already.

Sometimes we may talk to other organisations to ensure we know how to support you best. If we need to talk to someone else we will ask for your permission first. We will also keep you informed about what is happening, and discuss any follow up action with you.

Getting to our classes - most of our classes take place in local community venues and we use venues that are accessible wherever possible, but we cannot guarantee this. For details of access at our venues, refer to the online course information (where available) wea.org.uk or contact your nearest regional office.

Improving your with English, Digital and Maths - We can offer courses to help you improve your English, Maths and Digital skills. Please use our on-line course search wea.org.uk or by contacting the our Learner Support team for more information wea.org.uk/about-us/contact-us

Access to assessment – access to assessment is extra help for learners taking accredited courses or qualifications. Examples of access arrangements include extra time, a sign language interpreter or coloured overlays. Some access arrangements require us to notify the awarding organisation and take a little time to put in place. Speak to your tutor as soon as possible so that we can make the right arrangements for your needs, or contact your regional office.

For more information see our Disclosure of Needs policy. wea.org.uk/resources/policy-docs

2. Course fees and financial help

Information about course fees is shown online. The WEA receives public funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCA) for the majority of our courses and this funding supplements the fees paid by learners.



Discretionary Learner Support Fund

What is the DLS?

The Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) is a limited fund that allows the WEA to provide financial support to learners on a course funded through the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) or Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) with a specific financial hardship preventing learners from taking part in learning.

Learners can be supported with the following:

- Tuition fees
- Examination or Accreditation fees
- Other course costs e.g. books and equipment
- Childcare
- Travel

Eligibility for the DLS fund:

- Learners to be on an income assessed benefit
- Household income less than £21,000 (£21,547.50 for GLA only)

How to apply:

- * Download a DLS form please wea.org.uk/help-and-support/financial-support (Each form has a set of guidance notes which explains the application and approval process)
- * DLS forms must be completed before or two weeks after the course has started. (Late submission of the DLS may not be processed due to insufficient DLS funds)
- * If you are applying for childcare learners must have their DLS applications approved before confirming childcare placements. Any unapproved childcare claims will remain the responsibility of the learner
- * Learners who have been approved DLS support will receive a confirmation email from the WEA Student Support Team.

If you have any questions please contact the Learner Support team
Email: studentsupport@wea.ac.uk or Tel: **0300 303 3464**

Free Tuition fees (for learners on low wages)

If you are currently working and earning a certain amount you may be able to apply for 100% fee remission towards the cost of your tuition fees for a WEA course up to level 2.

For learners to receive full funding they must:

- Enroll on to a WEA course up to level 2
- Be in employment up to 37.5 hours (full/part time) and;

Be earning **up to** the set amount, based on where you live. Due to the creation of Mayoral Combined Authorities the salary threshold differs.

Learners will need to complete Low wage form. If unsure, learners are advised to check their eligibility for the Low wage offer via your WEA course organiser or Tutor.

For more information please visit

wea.org.uk/help-and-support/low-income

Course cancellation and refunds

If you have booked or enrolled on a WEA course, you may cancel a course booking at any time by informing us in writing.

If you cancel a course booking within seven working days of receiving the course confirmation, provided that the course has not commenced, you are eligible to receive a full refund.

If the course is scheduled to be delivered over more than three sessions, you may cancel your course booking and request a full refund from the Support Centre team. This applies if you cancel prior to the scheduled start time of the second course session.

If the WEA cancels a course before the course begins, or up to and including the second session, you will be eligible for a full refund of the course fee that you have paid.

See our full Course Cancellation and Refunds policies.

wea.org.uk/about-us/policies

3. Information and advice

We can provide information and sometimes advice about a number of things:

- WEA courses in your area
- choosing the right course
- fees and financial support
- learning support
- progression – information on what you can do next
- signposting or referral – directing you to other courses, agencies or resources



You can get information and advice

- by talking to staff in your nearest regional office
- by talking to your tutor, if you are already on a course

You can also ask for the information in larger print, or for the information to be read to you.

For information about progression and next steps in your learning please see our website and discuss with your tutor wea.org.uk/future-careers

The WEA is matrix accredited. This means that we are assessed for the quality of our information and advice services. We will help you to make sure your learning with the WEA is right for you; you know what support is available and how you can progress. You can expect to receive a good service from us. We are always looking at ways in which we can improve how we work and welcome feedback on all aspects of the WEA.



I really enjoyed
it. I've made
friends and I've
got a job.

4. Equality, diversity and inclusion

The WEA believes that education plays a major role in challenging discrimination and disadvantage. We are committed to inclusive learning and ensuring that all our learners achieve the best possible outcomes. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the WEA is a collective responsibility. We expect everyone involved in the WEA to challenge conditions that place anyone at a disadvantage and create an inclusive community in which diversity is valued and celebrated.

See our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy
wea.org.uk/about-us/equality-diversity-and-inclusion



Our Values

Our values as an organisation actively commit us to promote democracy, individual liberty, the benefits and challenges of the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. These are also the values defined by the government as “British” values and are part of the Prevent Duty to challenge radicalisation and extremism.

We promote these values in our classes by encouraging you to:

- actively, research, debate and question aspects of the subject you are studying, lead discussions and presentations
- draw on your study and broader experience to explore the wider contexts of your subject and apply it to the external world
- apply your learning individually and where possible as a class through activities in your communities
- put into practice what you have learned outside the classroom, either as a group or as individuals
- become WEA members or active citizens in your own right
- explore different views to your own

For more information on the WEA
wea.org.uk/resources/wea-strategy

Safeguarding

We aim to provide a welcoming environment where you feel safe and secure. If you have any concerns about your own safety or the safety and wellbeing of others, including discrimination, abuse, exploitation, harassment or bullying you can tell your tutor.

If you do not feel you can talk to your tutor, you can ring your Regional Office. Within each region, there is a trained member of staff called a Safeguarding Officer who will respond to your concerns.

The Prevent Duty

All educational organisations have a role to play in safeguarding learners from becoming radicalised and being drawn into terrorism. If you have any concerns of this nature about yourself or someone else, you can talk to your tutor or to the Regional Safeguarding Officer.

You can contact a regional Designated Safeguarding officer who can offer support with any safeguarding or Prevent concerns. Please visit wea.org.uk/help-and-support/what-is-safeguarding for names and contact details.

For the Safeguarding Policy and Prevent Policy with visit wea.org.uk/resources/policy-docs

Online safety

We aim to promote the use of technology to support and enhance your learning experience. Digital skills are an important aspect of your study and interaction both in and beyond the classroom. It is important that all of us understand the risks that sometimes arise from using such technologies and know how to keep ourselves safe online.

WEA Online Safety Policy in Teaching and Learning and Student Computer and Digital Use Policy sets out responsibilities of learners and WEA staff members. Policies can be downloaded from wea.org.uk/resources/policy-docs

Health and Safety

The WEA is committed to ensuring the health and safety of our learners during their learning journey with the WEA.

If you have any health and safety concerns, please raise them with your tutor initially.

For more information please see our health and safety policy statement at wea.org.uk/resources/policy-docs

5. Become a member of the WEA

Whether or not you have finished your course, we invite you to consider becoming a WEA member and joining a movement that transforms lives. Membership is open to anyone who supports our aims and values.



Become a WEA member today

Be part of our award-winning learning community and movement that helps to bring adult learning within reach of more people than ever before.

WEA membership costs just £15 a year, and is free if you're under 25, a current WEA volunteer, or receive a means-tested benefit.

By becoming a member, you will be able to:

- access to our award-winning weekly members' lecture series. Learn from our network of expert tutors, and interact with other members from your own home
- get priority online or telephone booking for autumn term courses. Secure your spaces before anyone else during our special members' early enrolment window each summer! (members in England only)
- receive our Highway magazine, and access digital back issues to stay updated on the work we're doing
- attend our members' annual conference
- make great savings with discounts at local and national retailers
- be part of a movement that helps others and transforms lives

To join, visit wea.org.uk/become-member

You can also support us as a volunteer. Volunteers give their time freely and make a difference in their communities. You can see the range of volunteer roles we offer at wea.org.uk/volunteer

Active volunteers are also eligible for free membership. By volunteering with us you can gain valuable skills for employment and further training or utilise your skills to make things happen. If you are interested in volunteering ask your tutor or email: volunteering@wea.ac.uk



**It's made me
inquisitive about
the world again.
And it's made me
want to take part.**

6. Unacceptable behaviour

At the WEA, we try to keep rules for learner conduct to a minimum. However, it's important that you know what we consider to be unacceptable behaviour and what happens when someone behaves unacceptably.



What we expect of learners:

If your tutor feels that you are not keeping to the agreement, the following will happen:

- 1** He or she will first discuss the matter with you, and agree with you how to tackle the problem.
- 2** If he/she is not satisfied with the result, they will pass the matter on to their Course Organiser/Line Manager who will discuss it with you and see if a resolution is possible.
- 3** If there is no resolution or improvement, or you do not carry out suggested actions to help you improve, the Course Organiser/ Line Manager may then take disciplinary action. You may be given
 - a verbal warning
 - a written warning.
- 4** If there is still no improvement in your conduct, or you do not carry out suggested actions to help you improve, the Course Organiser/ Line Manager will refer the matter to a member of the Regional Management Team. If there is no resolution, you may be asked to leave the course.

What the WEA expects of learners is also set out in the following Agreement and policies:

- ◆ WEA Learning Agreement
- ◆ WEA Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- ◆ WEA Online Safety Policy in Teaching and Learning
- ◆ attendance and Punctuality Policy
- ◆ WEA Unacceptable Student Behaviour Procedure

wea.org.uk/resources/policy-docs



My course built my confidence and prepared me for my role as a support worker for adults with mental and physical disabilities.



7. Data protection and GDPR

Under the new General Data Protection Regulation, all organisations need to be clear about what they are using your personal details for. This section is intended to show you how the WEA uses your personal data.



When you enrol on a WEA course you agree that we can use your personal data for:

Giving you information and advice - if you contact WEA for information and advice about our courses, we may need to share your personal details with other WEA staff members or volunteers. If we need to share your details with anyone outside of the WEA to assist with your enquiry, we will always ask your permission first.

Processing your enrolment - we may use your personal data to check your details are correct on your enrolment (for example to check your benefit status or confirm your date of birth). We may also use your personal details to carry out an initial assessment so we can enrol you on the right course for your level. In certain circumstances, we may also need to check your right to eligibility by asking you to provide appropriate documentation such as your passport. This information will not be processed by the WEA and will only be checked by a WEA staff member.

Donations - In the future we may tell you about our upcoming campaigns or ask you for contributions towards the WEA to help further support our work which ensures that learning is able to be delivered to everyone that needs it. This information will only be stored by the WEA and will not be shared with any third parties or partners.

Providing you with support for your course - we offer a Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) Fund for learners who need financial support. If your personal data (including bank details) is collected on a DLS form, it is used to:

- establish if you meet the requirements to access financial/digital device support
- reimburse any travel or course materials i.e. books or equipment you have paid for, if you have met the DLS requirements
- set you up with an account in order to support your continued learning (where applicable)

We also offer Additional Learning Support to learners who need help with English, Maths, a disability or learning difficulty. We use your details to:

- establish your support requirements
- put appropriate support in place for you

If we ever need to share your details with anyone outside of the WEA to assist with your enquiry, we will always ask your permission first.

There may also be provision for the temporary use of a digital device in order to support you with your learning, you will be contacted by your local supporting officer if you are applicable to use some of the WEA assigned digital devices.

If your personal data (including bank details) is collected on a DLS form, it is collected on a DLS form, it is used to::

- establish if you meet the requirements to access financial support
- reimburse any travel or course materials i.e. books or equipment you have paid for, if you have met the DLS requirements
- set you up with an account in order to support your continued learning (where applicable).

We also offer Additional Learning Support to learners who need help with English, Maths, a disability or learning difficulty.

We use your details to:

- establish your support requirements
- put appropriate support in place for you
- if we ever need to share your details with anyone outside of the WEA to assist with your enquiry, we will always ask your permission first

Meeting our funding obligations -

the WEA receives funding as part of a contract to run courses from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and other funders. It is a condition of our funding that we collect the information we request from you when completing a WEA/partner enrolment form and report this information to our funders.

Recording your attendance - the WEA is required to keep a record of your attendance when attending either face to face or virtual courses with the WEA. This is for insurance, safety, legal and funding purposes. This includes recording your name, basic contact details and attendances, and a reason for non-attendance if known e.g. sick or holiday etc.

Delivering your learning - the WEA (including its staff, tutors and volunteers) may use your personal details to:

- undertake an initial assessment with you if you are applying to join one of our English, maths, ESOL or accredited courses
- provide you with information about your course
- let you know of any change to your course for example if your course is cancelled, if the tutor is unwell or if there is any change to the normal running of the course that will affect you
- where applicable, provide support for your learning through external applications or sources
- engage carefully selected external partners to progress your learning

We may provide you with some of this information by email, text message or telephone.

If you have joined a course that involves e-learning we may need to set up an account for you on our e-learning platform (Canvas) and supporting systems, and as part of this process you may be required to agree to the additional terms and conditions required by the e-learning platform. The privacy information for the Canvas system is available from [instructure.com/policies/intl-privacy](https://www.instructure.com/policies/intl-privacy)

Recording exam results and obtaining certificates – if you are studying on an accredited course, we will use your personal details to register you with an approved awarding body, administer your exam and to send you your results / certificates.

Performing legal duties - some things like records of accidents, Safeguarding records and Prevent records are required by law so the WEA must collect and retain this information.

Producing anonymous statistics – As a charitable organisation we will use some of the personal data we collect to produce anonymous statistics on our learners for use in publicity, funding bids and as part of educational campaigning activities.

When you enrol you can decide whether you want to give the WEA permission to:

Send you WEA marketing and publicity materials – this includes getting brochures, leaflets and other publicity from your local branch as well as from the WEA Marketing Team. (Note: If you are a learner who does courses with a local branch, and you wish to continue to receive brochures and leaflets from them, please opt in as failing to do this will stop your local branch from sending you this material. You can do this when completing your initial enrolment or via your learner online account).

Contact you about surveys and research - this helps us to improve experiences for future WEA learners and to obtain further funding to support Adult Education.

Sometimes we use approved partners to help us with surveys and research. You are free to decide whether you are happy for these partners to contact you.

You can choose to change your contact preferences at any time by calling our Support Centre on 0300 303 3464 or alternatively you can change your contact preferences by accessing your learner account online.

What are my rights?

The right to be informed - the WEA must provide you with information about what we are using your personal data for, why we are using it and how long it will be kept for. We are fulfilling this requirement through this Privacy Notice.

The right of access - at any time, you have the right to obtain access to the personal data the WEA holds about you.

The right to rectification - at any time, you have the right to ask for incorrect, inaccurate or incomplete personal data to be corrected.

The right to erasure - at any time, you have the right to ask for any personal data the WEA holds on you to be erased when it's no longer needed or if holding it is unlawful.

The right to object - at any time you have the right to object to the processing of your personal data for marketing or research purposes.

The right to data portability - at any time you have the right to request that the WEA provides your personal data in a machine-readable format so that you can send it to another organisation or individual.

Rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling - the WEA does not use automated decision making or profiling, we can guarantee that all decisions made by the WEA that affect you are made by people, not by computers.

The right to restrict processing - at any time you have the right to request that the WEA restricts of the processing of your personal data. This is not an absolute right and only applies in certain circumstances. It means that the WEA can store your personal data but must not do anything with it until the restriction is lifted.

How do I exercise my rights?

If you wish us to update the information we hold on you or amend your contact preferences for marketing and research you can contact our Support Centre on **0300 303 3464** or alternatively you can amend this by accessing your learner online account. **studentsupport@ac.uk**

If you wish to exercise any of your other your rights under the General Data Protection Regulation, you must make a Subject Access Request (SAR). You can do this by completing our SAR web form: **app-de.onetrust.com/app/#/webform/25919219-0f28-40a4-a522-ab332669e8ac** or by contacting our Data Protection Officer **dataprotection@wea.org.uk**

If you don't feel that the WEA has responded to your complaint in a satisfactory manner, you can then raise concerns about the processing of your personal data with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO).

Please see: **ico.org.uk/concerns** or call the ICO on **0303 123 1113**.

8. Feedback, suggestions and complaints

We would like to hear about any part of your WEA experience, as your feedback helps us to improve our service. You can do this by contacting the WEA Student Support team by emailing studentsupport@wea.ac.uk or calling **0300 303 3464**.

To make a complaint please read through the WEA Complaint Procedures, this can be found within the WEA policy section wea.org.uk/resources/policy-docs



General information for learners

National line number 0300 303 3464

Support Services

For general enquiries

E. studentsupport@wea.ac.uk

For course enquiries

E. courseenquiries@wea.ac.uk

T. **0300 303 3464**

*For information on phone rates please read our terms of use

For all written enquires please
use the following address:



WEA,
First Floor,
Coach Works,
21 The Calls,
Leeds,
LS2 7EH

To contact a regional office please visit:

wea.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/departments

The WEA
4 Luke Street
London
EC2A 4XW

T. 0300 303 3464
E. supportservices@wea.org.uk
W. wea.org.uk

 @WEAadulted
 [weaadulteducation](https://www.facebook.com/weaadulteducation)

