

8. Making connections

Number eight in a series of nine campaigning factsheets

Support for adult education and lifelong learning extends well beyond the WEA and other adult education providers.

There are many other voluntary sector and community organisations whose service users and members participate in and benefit from adult education. The WEA also works with hundreds of partner organisations who share common ground on the subject of lifelong learning.

These organisations, and their members, may be campaigning in their own right in the run up to the election – and could also be interested in joining meetings and adding their voice, independently or with yours, to your communications with parliamentary candidates and MPs.

This factsheet lists ideas for organisations to get in touch with, as well as national organisations who are supporting a campaign to speak up for lifelong learning. This includes the five founding members of the Campaigning Alliance for Lifelong Learning (CALL), of which the WEA is one.

WEA Branches

There are over 450 local WEA Branches in England run by volunteers, many of whom have been actively supporting and campaigning for adult learning for tens of years. Our website gives details of these on:

www.wea.org.uk/branches

CALL

The national Campaigning Alliance for Lifelong Learning has hundreds of member organisations which are listed under the ‘members’ tab of their website. The site also offers practical guidance on campaigning:

www.callcampaign.org.uk

UCU: University and College Union

UCU represents more than 120,000 educators and adult education employees. UCU campaigns in its own right and also lends its support to a range of campaigns to support adult education and lifelong learning.

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/>

NUS: National Union of Students

NUS represents seven million students through its 600 member students’ unions. A founding member of CALL and supporter of campaigns on many different aspects of adult, further and higher education. Local students’ unions listed on their website.

www.nus.org.uk

The National Federation of Women’s Institutes

The largest voluntary organisation for women in the UK. Over 6,500 WI’s and 205,000 members interested in education and campaigning. Visit ‘Find your WI’ on their website.

www.thewi.org.uk

Overleaf: More organisations

NIACE: The National Institute for Continuing Education

The national organisation which aims to promote adult learning of all kinds and runs the annual Adult Learners' Week. A good source of facts and figures and all kinds of information and links on adult learning, NIACE hosted the Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning which led to the publication of the Learning Through Life report.

www.niace.org.uk

NAVCA: The National Association for Community and Voluntary Action

NAVCA supports and advises the country's network of 160,000 local voluntary and community organisations and has recently signed a partnership agreement with the WEA. Member organisations can be found under 'Members Directory' on their website.

www.navca.org.uk

UNISON

The public sector union which has 1.3 million members, also lobbies and campaigns on areas representing the interests of its members including adult education and learning at work. A founding member of CALL.

www.unison.org.uk

BASSAC: British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres

A membership body for community organisations, with a focus on individual development, collective action and social justice. Members listings available through regional pages on their website.

www.bassac.org.uk

Learning Through Life

What the report recommends for a national lifelong learning strategy:

1. Adopt an approach to lifelong learning which reflects four 'age stages':
 - up to 25
 - 25-50
 - 50-75
 - 75+.
2. Rebalance resources fairly across these four stages.
3. Provide people with a range of learning entitlements.
4. Create a credit-based system that offers flexibility and encourages part-time learning
5. Improve the quality of work – focus on how skills are used.
6. Develop a curriculum for citizens' capabilities.
7. Stronger support and development for the lifelong learning workforce.
8. Restore local decision-making and responsibility.
9. Create a supportive national infrastructure and coherent lifelong learning strategy.
10. Make the system intelligent: review, compare and evaluate – act on knowledge.

There are nine Speak up for Lifelong Learning factsheets:

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Your campaign pack | 4. Send a postcard! | 7. Letting the media know |
| 2. Why we're campaigning | 5. How to call a meeting | 8. Making connections |
| 3. Getting involved locally | 6. Tips for running a meeting | 9. Further Information |

If you have a question...

You can contact us to ask about anything in this pack – or for more information: Maria Chica, email: mchica@wea.org.uk or call: 020 7426 3486.

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