

WEA update for partners

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20 May 2020

This newsletter provides WEA partners an update on our response to the current pandemic both nationally and locally. Over the last few weeks we have all experienced that partnership and collaboration is more important than ever and we are grateful to you for your ongoing support.

Providing an on line offer for students

Since March, the WEA have moved quickly to move our courses on line. Our previous experience of using our virtual learning environment Canvas alongside Zoom has meant that we could escalate this side of our provision very quickly and at scale. Over 700 tutors have now participated in our comprehensive training programme, and we now have over 500 courses up and running, including ESOL, Community Interpreting and a wide range of community learning courses which we are delivering free of charge this summer.

Quality education which brings students together

We are committed to staying true to our WEA vision and ethos in making these changes. We have maintained an emphasis on quality, prioritising accredited courses in the first instance and ensuring that we continue to use our qualified tutors delivering their specialist subjects. We have also worked hard to ensure our classes remain interactive and engaging, providing online communities for students.

INFORMAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to formal courses the WEA has also extended our offer to include informal drop in and taster sessions. Participants can join one of our regular sessions for some "bite-size" learning or even simply a chat and the chance to make a connection. We have had extremely positive feedback from those taking part and it has been a great way of gaining an insight into what our students value most. You can find out more here: wea.org.uk/ActivitiesLive

Support for voluntary organisations involved in EU funded delivery

The WEA is part of Civil Society Involvement, an EU project which represents the voice of voluntary organisations. You can find out more here: civilsocietyinvolvement.com/



I have very much enjoyed the online classes. It is so lovely to have contact with real people via Zoom, during this very difficult time when I, like a lot of people, are self-isolating. I think this is such a valuable medium for keeping in touch with the outside world.

Christine
WEA student



We had the option to attend weekly classes via Zoom. Never heard of it before, but wow, it's been brilliant. We all learnt together how to work Zoom and also managed to complete our course and have the ability to meet up together. This is not only good for the soul at this time of worry, but also the mind. Thank you - I'm really looking forward to hopefully starting my level 2 in September.

Natalie
WEA student

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Support for students unable to engage with digital

Alongside this we are also producing a range of resources for students who are unable to access online learning including newsletters and distance learning offers which we'd be happy to discuss.

Plans for next term

We are carefully monitoring information about the next phases of lockdown and social distancing. We will continue to prioritise the health and wellbeing of our students, employees and partners as we plan to move back to face to face learning.

For the autumn term we will be organising face to face courses with community partners in local venues as soon as it is safe and practical to do so. In the meantime, we will be continuing and expanding our online offer. This will include:

- ▶ **Online courses developed with partners to meet local needs, which bring together students linked to your organisation**
- ▶ **Online community learning courses in a wide range of subject areas open to adults eligible for funding from across England**
- ▶ **A national online programme of accredited and specialist courses**

CURRICULUM OFFER

At the same time, we are continuing to build our curriculum offer and our Pathways in order to deliver outcomes for students in 6 areas:

- ▶ **confidence for life and work**
- ▶ **mental and physical health and wellbeing**
- ▶ **adults into work**
- ▶ **in work progression**
- ▶ **broadening horizons**
- ▶ **active citizens in vibrant communities**

More information is available from your WEA relationship manager who will be in touch shortly to start planning.

In the meantime, please keep safe and well and thank you for your continued support.

This week I have received such positive comments from students emphasising how much they are learning and how supported they feel through the use of extended learning in Canvas.

WEA tutor

We have been able to offer a comprehensive range of short courses via Zoom which are tailored to the needs of the participants. The courses have been in high demand and have been received really well. They are helping participants progress on the project which has become a real opportunity for us even in the current climate.

BBO Work Live Leicestershire Project manager