

WEA update for partners

wea.org.uk

4 August 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.

Online learning

Since the first WEA update in May the WEA have continued to roll out online courses using Zoom and our Virtual Learning Environment Canvas. As at mid-July over 6500 individual students have been actively involved in over 1200 'face to face on line' courses, and the end of course evaluations completed so far indicate that 85% of respondents would want to continue using Canvas support their learning.

We have worked closely with City and Guilds and NCFE to ensure that our students who weren't able to take exams could receive qualifications via calculated results, and we are continuing to deliver accredited courses including ESOL speaking and listening and community interpreting on line. Alongside this we've run a full programme of free courses to support health and wellbeing and confidence for life and work.

RETURNING TO FACE TO FACE PROVISION

We know that community partners are keen to get back to face to face courses where and when it is safe to do so, and you will be aware of the requirements for COVID-19 risk assessments. This will be done on a partner-by-partner basis in the way most appropriate for the needs of the partner, students and in line with both national and regional guidelines. We are currently finalising our risk assessment framework in line with guidance from the Department for Education. Please contact your WEA Education Co-ordinator for more information and to discuss next steps. In the meantime, we have launched our autumn programme online at wea.org.uk/online

NEW PATHWAY TO SUPPORT ADULTS AT RISK OF REDUNDANCY

We are currently developing a range of course options for individuals at risk of redundancy or who are looking to explore alternative employment options as part of our response to COVID-19. For more information please contact your local WEA.



We started with The Book Club Innovation Fund Course. The students mainly come from low paid roles and struggle with mainstream education. With Unite's alternative education programme, UNWEP & Waling Waling, we have been able to accommodate the students with evening and weekend classes to work around their employment hours. The organiser and volunteers thought our style of learning was ideal for their students and enjoyed how we accommodated for all of their needs.

Funded by GLA Innovation Fund.

WEA is working with the Textile Cooperative Project in Greater Manchester to support women to develop sewing skills and to set up local co-operatives with funding from Community Grants and the adult education budget. The project said



We feel that the willingness from WEA managers to help us find ways to support these vulnerable women and the flexible nature of support from WEA was crucial.

WEA Update

WEA
Adult Learning
Within Reach

Research update - we need your help

Planning is underway for our annual Partner Survey which will be sent out to WEA partners at the end of the academic year. We are hoping to get some insight into what our partners think of the services that the WEA provides, as well as your feelings on your partnership with us. We also want to gain a clearer picture of the support provided to us by our partners in order to help improve our work and strengthen partnerships moving forward, so we'd be very grateful for your feedback.

The WEA works with over 450 partners and these partnerships are a fundamentally important part of WEA education. We know from our previous surveys that your primary focus is support for the most disadvantaged in society, economic and social prosperity of communities, digital skills and reducing social isolation.

Partners have previously told us that the way courses were delivered by WEA were 'good' or 'excellent' (80% - 2019 survey), and you also have given us feedback where we need to improve as an organisation, including communications and online enrolment, and more blended learning opportunities. We hope you will see improvements in these areas including via this regular update. Your views are very important as this enables us to improve the learning experience for WEA students and to inform our planning.

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WEA Update

Funding update

One area you asked for more information about is funding opportunities. We have recently been successful in a number of bids to deliver online learning, including in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and London, and we are keen to build on this elsewhere. If you are interested in knowing more, please let your WEA contact know or email partnerships@wea.org.uk

Digital lifeline campaign

Dear Colleague,

11.3 million adults lack basic digital skills

A third of UK adults don't have qualifications beyond level 2 GCSE's

Please help us to circulate our Digital Lifeline campaign far and wide through your networks by following **#LearningIsALifeline** and **#LeaveNobodyOffline** on Twitter, on Instagram and Facebook or donate at virginmoneygiving.com/fund/DigitalLifeline

Together let's smash the hidden disconnect on our society

