

WEA Strategy 2025

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Empowering people through learning



WEA

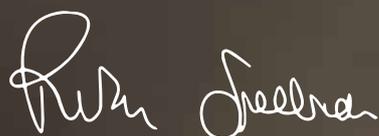
Adult Learning
Within Reach

Introduction

This is an aspirational strategy setting out a clear set of priorities for the next seven years. It is not a plan or budget. The plans and budgets (for one year and three years) will be developed in consultation with staff and governance and we will agree realistic and achievable objectives for each year.

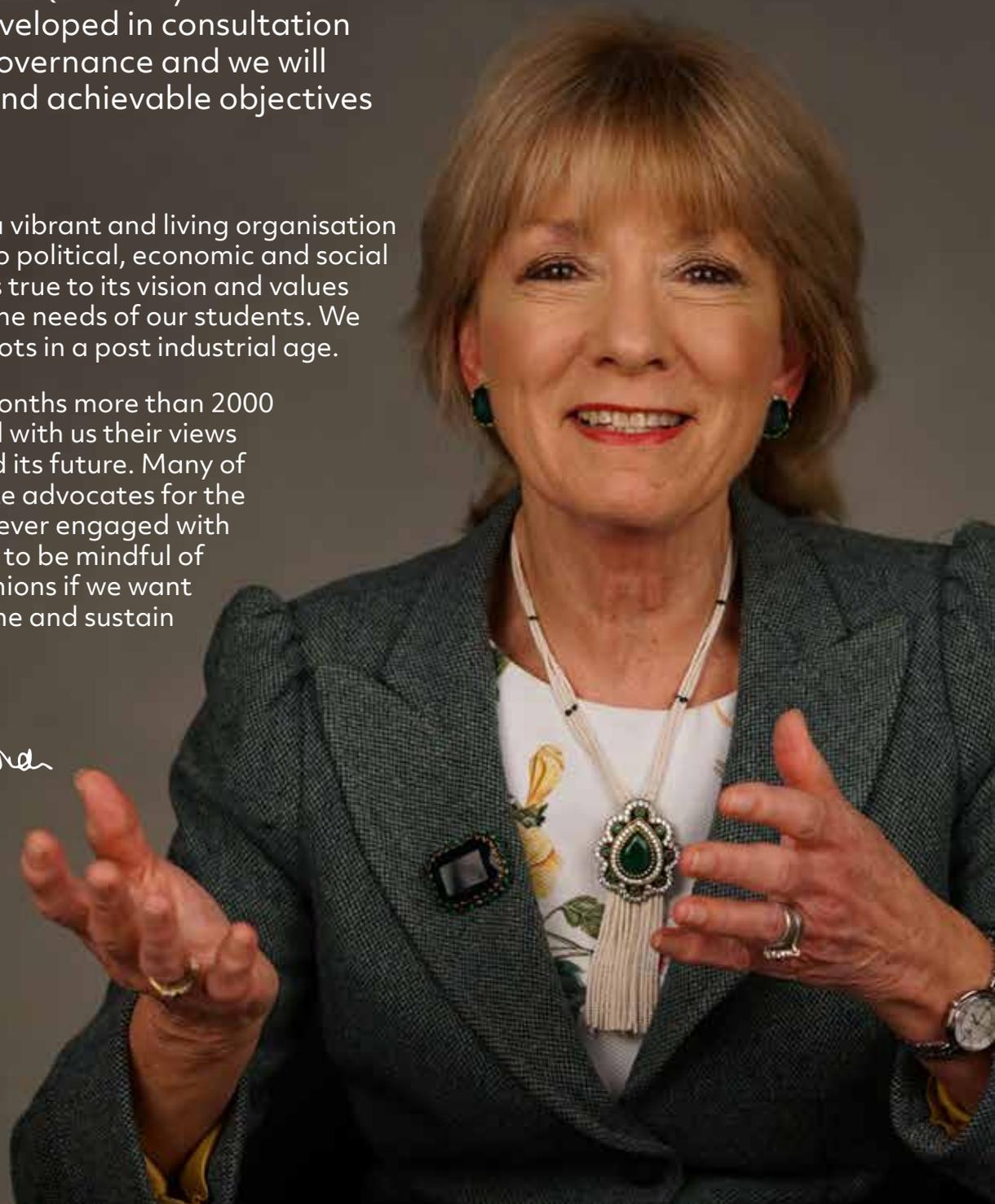
The WEA remains a vibrant and living organisation which is adapting to political, economic and social change but which is true to its vision and values and responsive to the needs of our students. We are growing new roots in a post industrial age.

Over the past 12 months more than 2000 people have shared with us their views about the WEA and its future. Many of them are passionate advocates for the WEA. Some have never engaged with us before. We need to be mindful of their views and opinions if we want to grow, raise income and sustain the WEA.



Ruth Spellman

Chief Executive and
General Secretary



Vision, mission and values

Vision

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

Mission

- ▶ Raising educational aspirations
- ▶ Bringing great teaching and learning to local communities
- ▶ Ensuring there is always an opportunity for adults to return to learning
- ▶ Developing educational opportunities for the most disadvantaged
- ▶ Involving students and supporters as members to build an education movement for social purpose
- ▶ Inspiring students, teachers and members to become active citizens

Approach

We deliver our mission by developing partnerships to meet individual and collective needs, using active learning and a student centred approach in which teachers and students work as equals. We constantly strive to adapt our services to meet people's needs, making full use of technology.

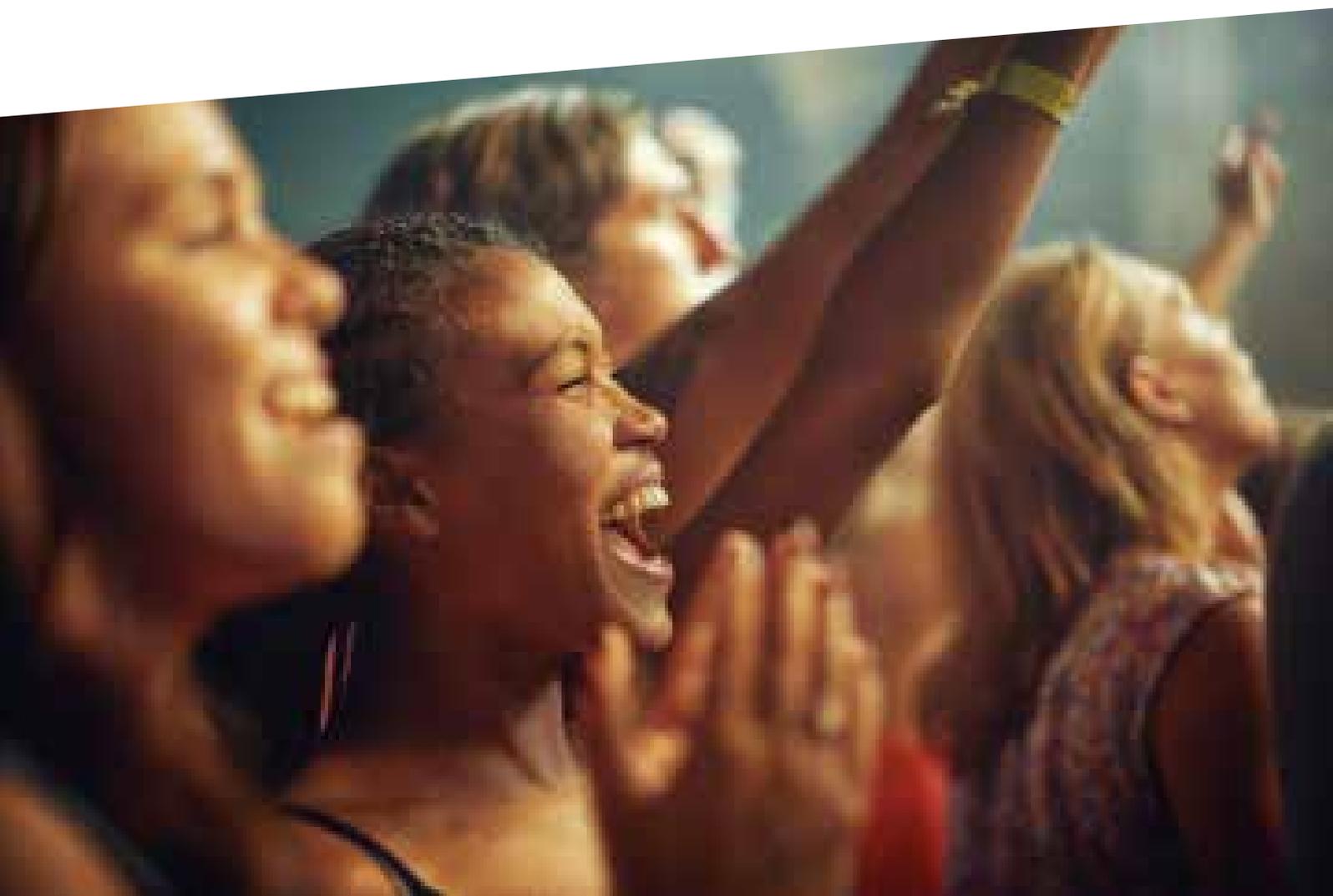
Values

- ▶ **Democratic**
- ▶ **Equal**
- ▶ **Inclusive**
- ▶ **Accessible**
- ▶ **Open**

In summary:-

We empower adults through learning at all stages of life.

Through our work we enable individuals, communities and society to change for the better.



Who do we serve and who benefits?

At the core of the WEA are our students. Their best interests will always come first.

We enable our students to make short term progress and achieve longer term ambitions.

We help our students to overcome poverty of aspiration and break 'glass ceilings' at all ages. We enable our students to manage change and feel more confident about the future.

We are there for those who are on zero hours contracts, those on benefits, the 'working poor', those whose jobs will be displaced by technology and those who have not had the benefit of further or higher education and who live in a community – but are not part of it. We are there to enable individuals to lead a healthier and fuller life at all life stages. We inspire our students with the love of learning and enable them to engage with the world.

We reach out to all adults who need us and we help them address challenges in their daily lives. By helping our students we help employers to succeed and communities to flourish.

We make an impact:

At an individual level

- ▶ Taking learning to the learner, whoever and wherever they are
- ▶ Providing learning opportunities for adult students and progression to achieve their ambitions
- ▶ Delivering a route out of poverty
- ▶ Building confidence, self esteem, self belief and a brighter future
- ▶ Delivering health benefits and tackling isolation
- ▶ Fostering a love of learning and inspiring others

At a community level

- ▶ Providing local access to education
- ▶ Addressing skill shortages and creating opportunities for self development
- ▶ Bringing a renewed sense of belonging through learning and engagement with local history, culture and the arts
- ▶ Improving health & wellbeing in the community
- ▶ Developing better citizens

At a societal level

- ▶ Addressing gaps in our education system
- ▶ Tackling social & economic disadvantage
- ▶ Developing skills for the future workforce
- ▶ Reducing health inequalities
- ▶ Increasing social mobility
- ▶ Healing community divisions

Strategic priorities for the WEA up to 2025



We will deliver the best learning by:-

- ▶ Strengthening the core curriculum and the student experience by:
 - ▶ Embedding numeracy, literacy and digital skills in our educational offer and supporting social inclusion through ESOL
 - ▶ Delivering consistent high quality teaching across our 4 themes, employability, health and wellbeing (including mental health), community engagement, history, culture and the arts
 - ▶ Reducing barriers to learning (e.g. bureaucracy and administration)
- ▶ Offering routes to accredited learning
- ▶ Providing careers advice and progression into employment, further learning, community roles and volunteering
- ▶ Learning from best practices in the UK and overseas
- ▶ Investing in innovation and partnerships

We will raise the profile of the WEA and of adult education by:-

- ▶ Publicising our student achievements
- ▶ Developing our network of influencers, patrons, fellows and ambassadors
- ▶ Leading on adult education with policy makers and practitioners and international partners
- ▶ Branding all our products, venues, research and publications
- ▶ Conducting research, sharing the findings and evaluating the impact of adult education
- ▶ Communicating clear and consistent messages at national, regional and local level
- ▶ Developing employer partnerships and accrediting employer best practice

We will make learning accessible by:-

- ▶ Developing digital skills and resilience
- ▶ Providing resources online
- ▶ Working with partners to broaden the base of our learners
- ▶ Being close to home, and available inside and outside of working hours
- ▶ Delivering in the workplace and through partners and volunteers in the community

We will be a great place to work and volunteer through:

- ▶ Moving towards IIP Gold status
- ▶ Developing a volunteering offer which helps us retain and recruit diverse volunteers
- ▶ Introducing pathways and qualifications for staff and volunteers
- ▶ Planning for succession

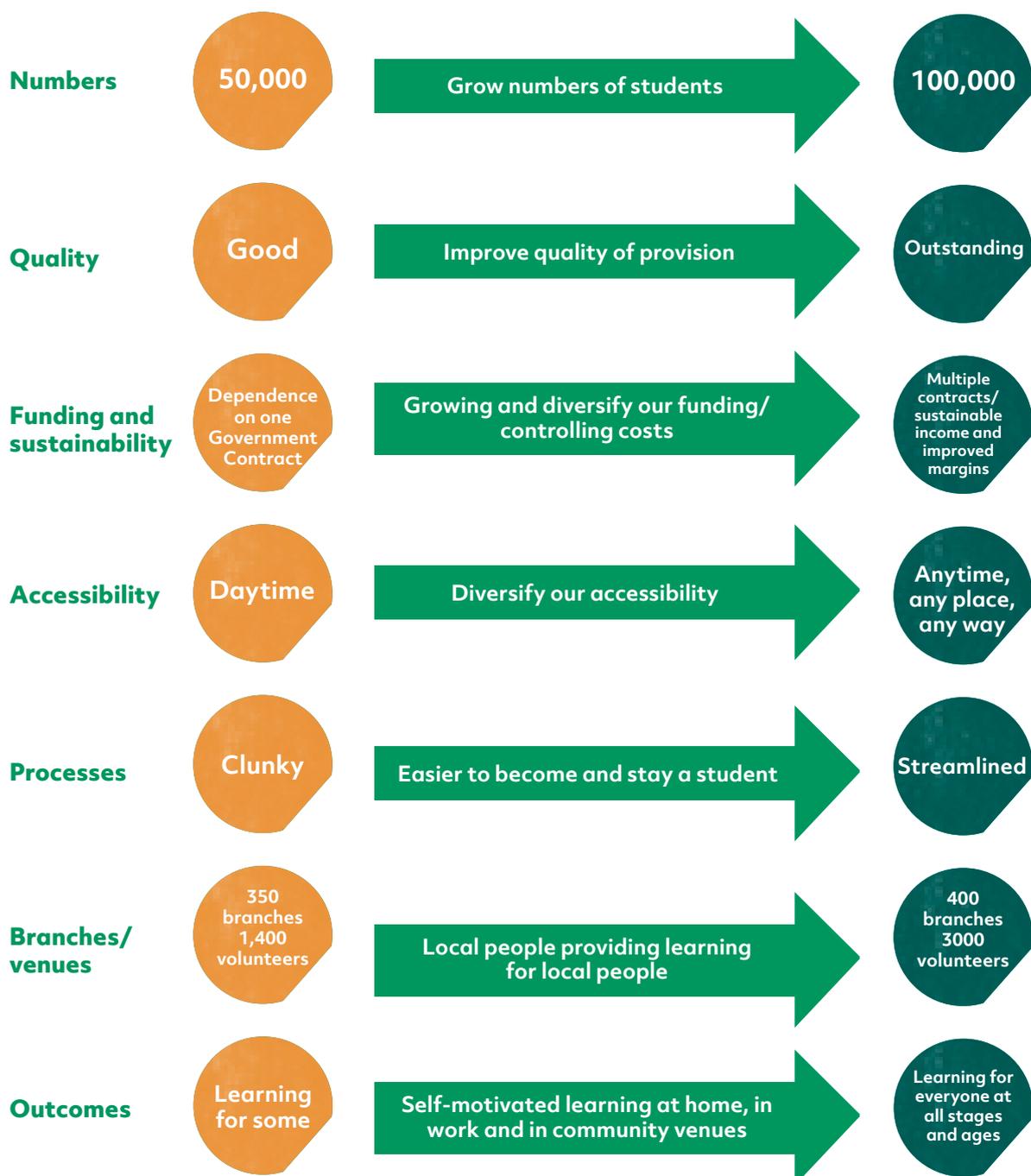
We will be financially and organisationally sustainable through:-

- ▶ Growing and diversifying income, securing new national funding by engaging with a broader range of government departments in both England and Scotland
 - ▶ Embedding the WEA into skills plans and priorities of governments and devolved authorities
 - ▶ Responding to national, regional and local bidding opportunities
- ▶ Generating sustainable income from student fees, voluntary contributions and our work with partners
- ▶ Delivering value for money and benchmarking our costs against other providers
- ▶ Employing sector best practice in governing, leading and managing the Association

Our journey

**WEA now
2017/2018**

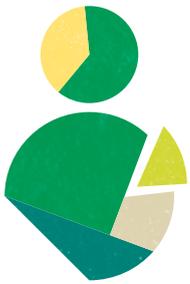
**WEA aspirations
for 2024/25**



WEA student experience

There is no such thing as a 'typical' student in the WEA but we want all our students to benefit from the same high quality experience.

An illustration is given below:-



WEA 2018

I attend during the day at a location next to me. There's something special about the learning with the WEA that builds me up as a person. I enjoy the learning, but sometimes the paperwork can be a pain. Whilst it's not been the best experience getting onto a course it is getting better. I hadn't really heard of the WEA but I would recommend them to other people like me.



WEA 2025

I have the freedom to learn when and where I want to. I still really enjoy the face to face sessions, and I can now learn online at any time. There are some courses I've managed to do completely online but I still have access to a tutor or WEA contact if I get stuck. There is something and someone to help me no matter where I am in my life, especially as I make big transitions. Learning is a part of my life and I now volunteer to give something back. Learning has helped me grow as a person in my community and I'm now giving others a hand.

I am a member and a change activist bringing more learning to more people. Everyone who knows me knows about the WEA & what a difference we make to people's lives.

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The WEA is a charity registered in
England and Wales (no. 1112775)
and in Scotland (no. SC039239).