

WAES at the **Heart** of Westminster

Westminster Adult Education Service **Strategic Statement**

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WAES at the Heart of Westminster - a City for All

WAES' new strategic plan 2019-22 is inspired by a determined focus to ensure Westminster residents have the right skills and opportunities for today's and tomorrow's economic challenges. Westminster City Council's City for All, with its five strategic pillars, is a key strategic driver for WAES' growth and the repositioning of our offer to better meet the needs of Westminster residents.

WAES is well known for inclusive, high-quality adult education programmes in arts, vocational, work-based, basic skills, community and family learning. We will continue to inspire and support our learners to achieve their ambitions to build a bright future.

Westminster is at the heart of London and the City for All ambition has been fundamental to our strategic thinking. The ambition is for Westminster to be a place where people are born into a supportive and safe environment, grow and learn throughout their lives, build fantastic careers in world-leading industries, have access to **affordable homes** and retire into the community with dignity and pride. This backdrop sets the scene for WAES to put a career-focused agenda to the forefront of our strategic planning. We will build on collaborative working with key services to deliver and unlock the opportunities for the learners we serve.

City Of Opportunity:

WAES delivering to make Westminster a **City of Opportunity**: The Service delivered education and training activities to more than 8,500 learners in the

last academic year, with around 50% of these being Westminster residents. The majority of our Westminster residents live in some of the wards with the highest ranking on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD): Churchill Gardens, Church Street, Harrow Road, Queens Park and Westbourne.

WAES' strategic plan provides life-changing opportunities for Westminster residents and the new Strategic Plan 2019-22 harnesses our longstanding reputation of working with the hardest to reach adults and families. With this backdrop, the new proposition has taken shape through consultation, which has inspired the strategic plan's central idea: **Careers, Community and Culture**.

WAES is committed to creating a curriculum offer that enables learners to meet the skills gaps required by industry, now and in the future. Our offer will be industry-led, supporting residents into jobs, equipping them with the vocational and transferable skills that will enable them to build multiple and resilient careers during their working lives; thus enabling communities to share in the economic prosperity of our city.

WAES will work with Westminster City Council directorates on collaborative partnership projects, which have direct lines of sight to employment for the hardest to reach learners, including the unemployed.

WAES will set out a curriculum to our learners and employers which focuses on careers. This dynamic shift will map each learner's journey towards their career goal, creating opportunities for learners to make

informed and responsible choices for themselves, which will impact on their families and their neighbourhoods. New areas of collaboration for

WAES will include the proposed partnership between Westminster Employment Service, Westminster Kingsway and City of Westminster College, to enhance the career pathways that we are able to offer our learners, as part of the City Skills Framework.

WAES continues to widen the educational offer to young people to include vocational and alternative paths to employment and future careers. We are committed to providing educational services to young people with clear progression pathways to work and higher professional studies.

Westminster City Council is the corporate parent of "Looked after Young People" in Westminster. WAES supports Westminster City Council by guaranteeing these young people a place on a high-quality Traineeship Programme with the right mix of practical and academic support to get them ready for employment or further education.

Our programme is flexible and new learners can join at different points during the year. Our Traineeships are focused on supporting young people to gain a sector-relevant qualification through industry-specific training, as well as English and Maths skills. We are proud to be working with The Ritz Hotel and are in discussion with other high-profile leads in the hotel sector.

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Our traineeships work across a number of sectors:

- Business & Administration
- Construction
- Customer Service
- Hospitality
- Retail
- Sports

WAES' Apprenticeship offer continues to lead on developing industry skills for young people and adults in marketing, teaching, team leadership skills, operational delivery, adult care, and libraries information and archive services. These alternative pathways allow Westminster residents real opportunities to develop careers where skills are most in demand.

WAES in the Community: We will continue to build on the long-established family and community learning offer that serves Westminster residents. This initiative will engage the long-term unemployed, lone parent families, the homeless and the elderly in activities to support social integration, reduce isolation and focus on digital transformation to inspire our communities and propel them on their journey to improved wellbeing and economic prosperity.

Community and family learning programmes continue to directly deliver the City for All strategy. One of the priorities last year was to extend our reach and we enrolled 3,086 learners in 2017-18 compared with 2,072 in 2016-17, with excellent outcomes.

For example, in a bid to increase the engagement of our male learners, WAES launched a new initiative, 'Read

with Dad'. This was delivered as a pilot in partnership with two Westminster primary schools.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and more schools are exploring this with WAES as a means of improving parental engagement and boost support for children in primary school.

In 2017-18, the Family and Community learners who declared themselves as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) was 60% of the cohort, a further 10% did not declare ethnicity, 15% were White Other and 15% were White British. This cultural mix of learners is representative of previous years' trends with some minor fluctuations. Therefore, for learners WAES has classified as being the furthest away from employment, Community and Family learning works with an large proportion who declare as BAME and live in the most economically challenged wards of Westminster.

The achievement outcomes are outstanding and progression from Family and Community Learning into high-level study is rapidly increasing year on year.

Working with WCC toward the shared objective, **City of Opportunity**, WAES contributes by achieving good progression for learners. The starting point for most learners who study at WAES is low, with many having minimal or no formal qualifications. In a destinations survey of more than 3,000 learners, to which 1,881 learners responded, 71% of learners achieved a positive destination: employment or further or higher education.

Our offer continues to support Westminster residents

into employment, and of the 832 who were unemployed and in receipt of benefits at the start of their programme, 133 progressed to employment.

As part of our commitment to create opportunities for work and lifelong learning, we run an extensive volunteering programme, which provides invaluable experience for local people, enabling them to give something back to the community, gain insight into a job role, or build up their work experience alongside their studies.

Every year this programme attracts around 40 residents, some of whom progress to a range of roles locally.

Excellent Local Services:

WAES helping to support a city that offers excellent local services: WAES is committed to ensure that Westminster residents have a great experience and our service users' feedback is a clear indication of a high quality service, with 95% recommending us as a place to study. WAES was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2016 and was graded as 'remaining a good provider'. WAES has the ability to connect with the hardest to reach people in our community with excellent customer service, consistently supporting them towards the fulfilment of their goals.

WAES has a longstanding commitment to removing barriers to learning for our learners, by providing nursery places for under 5-year-olds. Annually, WAES supports 60 Westminster parents to study and work through the nursery provision offered on and off-site. Both our nurseries are Ofsted rated good.

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Caring And Fairer City:

WAES continues to significantly contribute to a **Caring and Fairer City**. WAES works with the most vulnerable in our community, including the homeless, older residents and learners with learning difficulties, throughout the year. Our strategic commitment to these groups remains unwavering as is our determination to make a difference to the lives of those residents who need additional support through our services in order to achieve equitable outcomes.

We are proud of our longstanding excellent partnerships with Westminster organisations such as The Passage, Cardinal Hume Centre, Connections at St Martins, House of St Barnabas, West London Day Centre and Church Army Women's Day Centre. In the last three years we have provided learning services to support 700 adults who have been at risk of becoming homeless or declared themselves as homeless. The majority of this group are male at 65% of the cohort.

WAES is gratified to have 10% of our learner population aged 65 and over. The oldest learner is 96 years old and, in total, we have 262 learners over the age of 80. Our over 65-year-olds study a wide range of courses, from programmes for personal development and leisure to qualifications and learning a new skill. The programmes help to reduce isolation and promote social integration.

For example, learners can engage in activities such as Drawing, Watercolours, Exercise Classes, Community Choirs, ICT, Smartphone Lessons, Sewing and Lunch Clubs.

We have 210 older learners on leisure provision, while 152 of our learners have chosen to study qualification courses, showing you are never too old to upskill and learn something new.

WAES' most popular provision with older learners is Community Learning with over 700 learners accessing courses in our main centres, or locally and closer to home.

Our offer for learners with learning disabilities and difficulties is a longstanding provision. Most recently we have positioned this adult learning provision to promote health and well-being and preparing learners for employment. The provision has five key sections:

- **Get Healthy**
- **Get Independent**
- **Get Work Ready**
- **Get Creative**
- **Get Communicating**

This provision attracts a high number of Westminster residents who are inspired by staff at WAES to flourish into independent adults. Last year, 15 WAES learners with LDD were successfully placed on work experience through Westminster Employment Service and other learners with LDD were placed into paid part-time work. WAES is proud of our learners with LLD who have worked in organisations such as Marylebone Town Hall and Hyatt Regency Hotel. WAES provides vulnerable Westminster adults with a route into employment and to build their self-esteem.

Healthier And Greener City:

WAES is helping to support a **Healthier and Greener City**: In our role as an education provider, WAES is committed to helping learners to live healthier and more sustainable lifestyles. This is embedded in the work that we do as part of the regulatory compliance with Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework to support learner's personal development, behaviour and welfare.

WAES has partnered with the NHS to provide health screening sessions for learners on a termly basis.

Learner feedback has been extremely positive with some learners making lifestyle changes that will positively impact their lives and that of their family. Our bespoke Westminster-based community learning programmes like Balcony to Table-top Food, Grow, Cook and Eat, Young at Heart and Walk and Talk are examples of the offer that delivers on this agenda.

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Celebrating Our Communities:

WAES is delivering on a City that **Celebrates its Communities**: WAES engages Westminster residents in the wider cultural life of the City of Westminster through WAES enrichment activities.

The diversity of the WAES learner population creates a unique, unrivalled opportunity for WAES to value and celebrate Westminster's communities, and is an integral part of how we deliver our education and learning services. The learning experience for our ESOL, community and learners with learning difficulties and disabilities is enriched through visits to the British Museum, Kensington Palace, the Wellcome Collection and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

WAES has established a learning community where learners show very good mutual respect and tolerance, work well collaboratively in groups and regularly take part in celebrations of each other's cultures. Throughout the academic year, learners are also encouraged to engage with the regular programme of events, interactive activities and displays presented, covering topics such as LGBTQ+, International Women's Day and Black History Month. A 'Diversity Calendar' and supporting resources further embed this and help tutors to plan lessons that are individualised to their learners' backgrounds.

These celebrations raise awareness amongst the staff and learner cohorts of the wide range of communities at WAES, as well as giving our learners a sense of belonging and identity. Our end-of-year awards and exhibitions harness and celebrate the best of what our learners and local communities have achieved over the course of the academic year and provide fantastic opportunities for individuals, families and WAES supporters to come together to celebrate their achievements.

WAES works with around 50 Westminster community partners at any given time, using learning opportunities to connect and celebrate the communities that we work with. WAES supports the City Council's #MyWestminster Day by providing one of the most interactive stalls that generates a buzz for all who attend annually.

Every year WAES also collaborates with local partners on festivals and events such as SouthwestFest, Westbourne summer festival and many others, delivering fun, engaging and exciting learning opportunities as part of these celebrations, and as a means of connecting people.

Going forward, WAES is working with our outstanding Westminster Library Services to ensure that all WAES learners have access to our libraries. We are working with colleagues in the libraries to ensure that we introduce WAES learners to the benefit of being a Westminster resident and ensure that all learners understand the resources available and provided by Westminster City Council to extend their learning and professional development.

WAES' first Creative Graduates event took place in Westminster Reference Library in November 2018. WAES was proud to hold a Fine Art, Graphics and Ceramic Art exhibition displaying the high-quality artwork from WAES graduates. The event celebrated the learner progression into further studies, or work as independent artists in microbusinesses.

Building on the Five Strategic Pillars, which have been the drivers for our success thus far, going forward the new Strategic Plan distils our vision for Careers, Community and Culture to transform our learners' lives, provide opportunities for Westminster residents and collaborate with businesses to promote enterprise, growth and employment.

WAES Strategic Plan 2019-22

WAES Strategic Plan 2019-22 is shaped by our vision, our mission and our values. Our six priorities have emerged as a result of a consultation process which has helped us realise this plan.

Our Vision

To transform our learners' lives through inclusive, inspirational lifelong learning

Our Mission

To provide learning pathways that enable all learners to achieve their career aspirations and fulfil their potential

Our Values

Passion and High Achievement

We are passionate about transforming lives through education and enabling our learners to realise their full potential.

Inclusivity and Fairness

We are an open and welcoming service. We create an inclusive learning and working environment for each person, treating everyone fairly and with respect.

High Standards and Quality

We are ambitious for our learners, staff and community, setting aspirational targets and high standards. We aim for excellence in all our teaching and learning.

Flexibility and Responsiveness

We value our stakeholders, particularly our local community and strive to be agile in meeting their needs.

Our Priorities



Learners

To promote a learner-first culture in everything we do



Staff

To develop a workforce that delivers excellence for our learners



Stakeholders

To innovate delivery through partnerships and collaboration in Westminster and the wider London area



Accommodation

To maintain digitally enhanced, inspirational, fit-for-purpose accommodation for teaching and learning



Finance

To build on our financial resilience to provide long-term financial stability as an outstanding Service



Reputation

To deliver excellence in performance

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