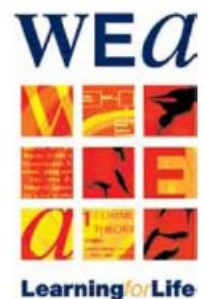


The Workers' Educational Association



Speak up for lifelong learning

Campaign Pack



1. Your campaign pack

Number one in a series of nine campaigning factsheets

Thank you for your interest in our Speak Up for Lifelong Learning election campaign.

As an adult education charity and provider, the WEA has argued the case for 'Learning for Life' and for democratic participation since 1903. In September 2009, the adult learning sector welcomed Learning Through Life, the report of the independent inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning. The summary of this is enclosed.

The report states that the right to learn throughout life is a human right and makes ten clear recommendations for a stronger national lifelong learning strategy.

We see the fruits of lifelong learning in individuals and communities: increased self-confidence, a new job, a chance to meet people and an improved understanding of the world - career prospects, rehabilitation, community empowerment and cohesion. These are only some of the benefits that can emerge from people attending part-time adult education courses.

Lifelong learning: occupying an apparently quiet place in politics and with modest public investment, but with far-reaching, positive consequences for people, society and the economy.

As our politicians develop their election campaigns we want them to understand and acknowledge the value of lifelong learning in society today – and to protect and re-assess funding for adult education as a new government is formed.

Please help us to influence this by taking part in our awareness-raising campaign, This pack contains information on ways you can practically support this, including:

- Sending a 'Pledge your support' postcard to your PPCs and your MP
- Calling a meeting with candidates from all political parties
- Sending a press release to your local paper
- Writing to your local MP or PPC
- Sending a letter to your local newspapers

If you do decide to take action please let us know (see right).

Thank you.

Workers' Educational Association
We're committed to equality and diversity.

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

If you have a question.....

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Maria Chica, email: mchica@wea.org.uk
or call: 020 7426 3486

www.wea.org.uk

2. Why we're campaigning

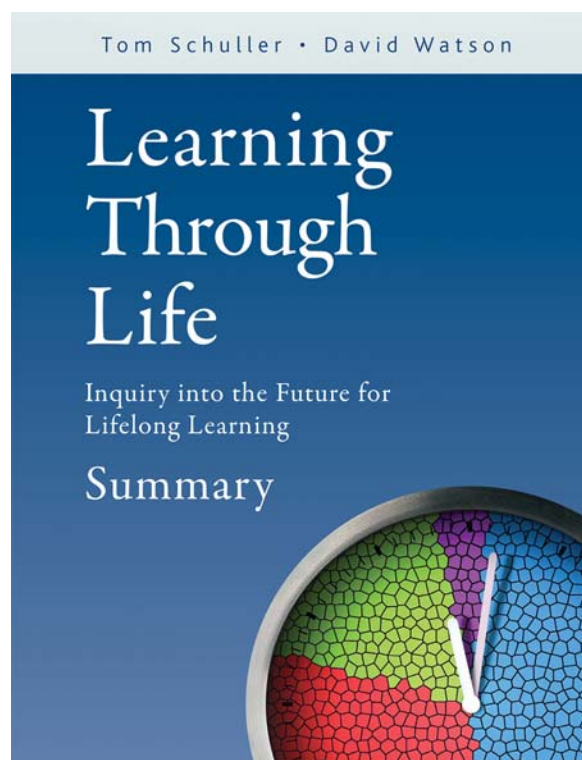
Number two in a series of nine campaigning factsheets

1. We want our local and national politicians to understand the importance of adult learning - and how much society gains from a relatively modest amount of public funding for this vital work.
2. We want to show that adult learning benefits many different aspects of people's lives and communities – and that it's relevant to the aims of a number of different government departments.
3. We want politicians to commit to rebalancing the existing amount of education funding around a four life-stages model, establishing learning entitlements and a 'citizen's curriculum'.
4. We want the adult education system to be improved so that there is more local responsibility and accountability for adult education, within a national framework.

Our campaign is built around an important report, recently published, which demonstrates the value of learning and makes recommendations for what the next government should do. The Learning Through Life report is the result of an independent two-year inquiry by education experts which considered over 250 evidence submissions.

The report begins with the premise that the right to learn throughout life is a human right. It argues that the UK's current system of lifelong learning has failed to respond to the major demographic challenges of an aging society and changing patterns of employment. The report's recommendations include:

- Basing lifelong learning policy on a 'four life-stage' model (up to 25, 25-50, 50-75 and 75+) with entitlements to learn for people in all the life stages
- Rebalancing existing resources invested in all learning for those aged over-18 more evenly across the four life-stages in recognition of the changing economic and social context we face
- Establishing a clear set of learning entitlements for people of all ages
- Building a framework of learning opportunities to enhance people's control over their own lives. This is called a 'citizen's curriculum' in the report, and would be built around digital, health, financial and civic aspects, together with employability.



Questions for your PPCs or MP

If you are meeting or writing to your prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs) or MP, here are some ideas for questions you might ask about lifelong learning policy. They are all based on the Learning Through Life summary, so make sure you have a copy of that with you!

As well as questions like these, which go into some detail about adult education policy, it's a good idea to have a few questions and comments in mind about local adult education issues – including to show the value of adult education to people in your area.

Protecting existing resources devoted to lifelong learning

1. Do you agree that the next Government should not reduce overall spending on lifelong learning?

Rebalancing those existing resources across the four life-stages

2. Do you support the four-stage model of the adult educational life-course (18-25, 25-50 50-75, 75+) proposed in the Learning Through Life report?
3. Do you agree that resources should be rebalanced over time, with a higher proportion going to the growing population of older adults in the UK?
4. What is your view on how this rebalancing could be achieved - bearing in mind public, private and voluntary (e.g. charity and 'third sector') investment? How might employers and individuals be encouraged to invest more?

The impact of lifelong learning – beyond just the education budget...

5. The four-stage model has public policy implications which go well beyond education and training. It links to employment, pensions, social services, health and well-being, community cohesion and beyond. Do you agree that lifelong learning has great value for the aims of many government departments – not just the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)?

6. What do you think is the best way for government to encourage providers of adult education to continue to provide courses that have benefits across the remits of different government departments?

Entitlements and the 'citizen's curriculum'

7. We propose a range of learning entitlements including legal entitlement to education to acquire basic skills; a financial entitlement to education towards a minimum level of qualification, and transitional entitlements as people move from one life stage to another. Do you support this principle?
8. Do you support the proposals for a 'citizen's curriculum' which encourages people to have control over their own lives? The report recommends developing four personal capabilities: digital, health, financial and civic (including employability) – are these the right ones?

Local or national?

9. Learning Through Life argues that local authorities should have a strategic role on lifelong learning. What is your view on this?
10. We believe that national leadership is also needed to deliver a coherent nationwide strategy. How do you think this can best be achieved?

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3. Getting involved locally

Number three in a series of nine campaigning factsheets

The next general election will see all 650 UK constituencies up for grabs with the certainty of a new government and the possibility of a new prime minister.

On polling day people living in each constituency – called constituents – will vote for local candidates representing a political party, to become their next Member of Parliament (MP) and to take a seat in the House of Commons.

It's the job of your MP to represent the interests of their constituents in parliament. If you don't let your MP know what's important to you and what issues you care about – locally, nationally or globally – they may not be able to represent you as well as they could. Some people are very practised at making sure their MP is aware of their concerns and views – and some people don't know who their MP is.

This factsheet helps to explain what happens in a general election and how – if you want to have a say about adult education or any other subject that's important to you – you can get in contact with an important group of people called prospective parliamentary candidates – or PPCs for short. It's these individuals who are standing for election as MPs in the next general election.

To succeed they need your vote!

You may not feel that you can influence national politics but as the general election approaches you have a chance to do just that.

The country's next general election is due to be held on or before 3rd June 2010. On the day the election is announced the campaigning begins – locally, regionally and nationally.

Our political parties – which have already started their campaigning – will increase their efforts to persuade you that your vote is best placed with them.

Locally your prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs) will also be on the campaign trail. This sometimes includes knocking on your door hoping for a chat, holding meetings locally and sending you flyers and letters explaining what they aim to do if they are elected as MP.

Every constituency in the UK will be contested. When the votes are counted after election day, the party with the most seats/MPs in the House of Commons will form the next government.

The election is forecast to be a close run thing between the Labour and Conservative parties, but your vote can really influence whether this is the case.

As far as prospective candidates from all parties are concerned, your vote really counts.

Overleaf: how to find out who your local PPCs are

Making contact with your local PPCs

It's likely that in most constituencies there will be a prospective candidate for each of the country's three main political parties. In England these are Conservative, Labour and the Liberal Democrats. There will be other recognised parties in your area as well as independent candidates. By the beginning of 2010 all parties should have announced their local candidates.

A good way of identifying the most important candidates locally is to find out who your current MP is – as well as learning about the recent political history of your area. The easiest way to find this out is to check with the respective political parties.

Their central offices will know who is standing in your area – and candidates who have got their act together will be easy to find on the internet.

The box below shows how you can find out more. If you don't have internet access or can't find out who your local candidates are, get in touch with us and we can help – see below right for contact details.

Useful websites

Find Your MP

<http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/>

The Labour Party

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

The Conservative Party

<http://www.conservatives.com/>

The Liberal Democrats

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

Green Party

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

They Work For You

<http://www.theyworkforyou.com/>

Write to Your MP/Councillor

<http://www.writetothem.com>

General Election 2010 political map

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/2432632/UK-General-Election-2010-political-map.html>

Supporting lifelong learning: getting the message across

Our message to PPCs is simple: adult education and lifelong learning is important - please don't underestimate its personal, social and economic value in a time of recession and as the new government is formed.

More specifically we're supporting the recommendations outlined in the enclosed report: Learning Through Life. Among other things the report asks for a re-balancing of investment in adult education so that for people aged fifty plus, the spend is fairer. You can read more about what we're asking for in Factsheet 2 in this Speak Up pack.

There are a number of easy ways to get the message across to PPCs:

- Send a postcard enclosed to your PPCs or your current MP
- Write a letter or email your PPCs – there's a sample letter included in this pack
- Attend any of the local campaigning meetings held by PPCs and use our question sheet to make sure adult education is on the agenda
- Host a debate or call a meeting on the subject of lifelong learning and invite local candidates to present their views and answer questions on adult learning. Supporting materials are available in this pack
- Send a letter to the letters page of your local paper – see sample on factsheet 4

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4. Send a postcard

Number four in a series of nine campaigning factsheets

If you agree with the Campaign, please send a postcard to your local prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs) and/or to your current MP. This will raise awareness of the campaign—plus MPs and PPCs want and need to know which issues local people care about. Here's a chance to tell them that adult education matters to you.

Don't forget to tell your PPCs or MP who you are on the postcard!

**Pledge your
support for
lifelong learning**

Dear Mr/Ms Candidate

We believe that lifelong learning changes and enriches lives for individuals and communities. It is about more than qualifications and skills. Learning develops self-confidence, health and well-being. It is a powerful aid in rehabilitation for people living at the edges of society and a catalyst in the development of local communities.

Adult education brings about thousands of personal transformations every year and delivers benefits across the agendas of many government departments—affecting health, communities and culture as well as business.

We support the proposals of the recent *Learning through Life* report and would like to see our politicians do the same—by recognising the importance of lifelong learning and supporting the reports' proposals to distribute existing resources more equitably across all age groups.

Please come with us on a new learning experience into and beyond the general election.

You can read the report summary at wea.org.uk.

Yours sincerely, A Student of
Nary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Sq, WC1N 3AQ



My PPC

10 Sample Street

My Town

PC1 PC3

Ordering more postcards

If you can use more postcards, please order (free) from us using the contact details overleaf, or by post to Campaign Postcards Order, WEA, 3rd Floor, 70 Clifton Street,

Send a letter to your local paper

As well as sending the postcards, why not send a letter to your local paper letting them know about the campaign. An example letter to give you some ideas is below, but do personalise the letter to reflect local issues and your own involvement and experience in adult education. Including a campaign postcard and with your letter might be a good idea too.

If you have also organised an event (see Factsheets 5 and 6) then be sure to mention it in your letter to the newspaper.

If you don't know the contact details for your local papers, we can help – contact us using the details below.

Dear Editor

Along with adult students from around the country, I have recently sent postcards to <MY LOCAL PPCS/MY LOCAL MP> in support of the Speak Up for Lifelong Learning Campaign.

The Campaign aims to help local and national politicians understand the value society gets from spending a relatively small amount of money on adult education. We are not asking for more money to be spent overall, but we do want to see the amount spent to be divided more evenly across different stages in people's lives – that's one of ten proposals we support from a recent independent report called Learning through Life.

Those of us in The Mary Ward Centre know from personal experience the value of adult education classes – not only for the joy of learning itself but for the benefits many students gain to their health and confidence and for the sense of community they help create.

Anyone who wants to find out more about the campaign can contact me or visit www.wea.org.uk or email campaigns@wea.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Mr/Ms Adult Learner

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The Workers' Educational Association. Registered address: Third Floor, 70 Clifton Street, London, EC2A 4HB.

Registered charity: 1112775. Company limited by guarantee in England and Wales: 2806910.

5. How to call a meeting

Number five in a series of nine campaigning factsheets

In the run up to the general election, a great way to support this campaign is to hold an event with your local prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs). This will raise the profile of lifelong learning locally at first – but one of the PPCs will become your next MP, so with events taking place around the country, we can have a real effect on the value our decision-makers place on adult education.

Inviting your PPCs

A simple, short letter or email should be sent to invite your PPCs. The invite is not the place to go into great detail about the arguments around adult education, but you should make PPCs aware of the Learning Through Life report. An example of what your letter or email might look like is included below, but do personalise it to be relevant to local issues and your own involvement in and experience of adult education.

Dear <NAME>

We in the WEA <MY TOWN> Branch/ Mary Ward Centre are pleased to invite you to speak and take questions from members of the public at a free event on the subject of adult education, to which we are inviting the <CONSTITUENCY> PPCs from all the main political parties.

We believe adult education provides a range of benefits that help achieve the aims of several government departments. In return for modest levels of public investment, we see the far-reaching, positive consequences it has for people, society and the economy.

Our event forms part of the Speak Up for Lifelong Learning campaign, which supports the ten proposals from a recent independent report called Learning through Life – you can find the free summary at:

<http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/IFLL-summary-english.pdf> or via www.marywardcentre.ac.uk.

The event will be held at <VENUE>. Please could you indicate your availability on each of the following dates: <GIVE CHOICE OF DATES AND TIMES>.

Yours sincerely

Mr/Ms Adult Student of The Mary Ward Centre

Do I need to invite every single candidate?

No, but it is advisable if you choose not to invite all candidates to ensure that the cost of venue hire, refreshments and other items paid for in relation to the event does not exceed £50 per candidate invited.

This is because it is possible otherwise that the extra platform and publicity for candidates generated by the event (which was not available to those candidates not invited) could be interpreted as an 'in-kind donation' to the political parties who did attend. Where such 'donations' exceed £50, they need to be registered by the political parties concerned and the WEA (as an organisation campaigning at election time). There is no need for such registrations if the actual cost of venue hire and any refreshments does not exceed the £50 'per candidate invited' limit.

If you invite every single party, there is no need to worry about complying with the £50 limit listed above. However, some organisations have found in the past that inviting every single political party to an event has prevented it going ahead. For instance, the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution invited all 17 parties taking part in European elections to a hustings in Spring 2009, having decided they should invite every single party that was contesting the seat. However, the event did not get underway as planned due to both to large-scale public protests against the British National Party, and also the refusal of the major political parties to share a platform with that party at the event. You can read a news article about this at: <http://www.thisisbath.co.uk/news/Anti-BNP-protest-Bath-election-meeting/article-1017416-detail/article.html>

How WEA Folkestone Branch organised their PPC meeting

The WEA Folkestone Branch held a public meeting with the local Potential Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs) from the three main parties in November 2009. As well as the PPCs and members of the public, co-author of Learning Through Life Tom Schuller, WEA General Secretary Richard Bolsin and a speaker from the local university were present.

The three parties responded to the recommendations made in the report as well as taking questions from the audience regarding lifelong learning. The discussion highlighted the 'four life-stages' referred to in the report and support for the idea of rebalancing education policy across these.



WEA Deputy President Lynne Smith, who lives in Folkestone and organised the event, shares her views on what contributed to its success:

How easy was it to get in contact with your local PPCs?

Apart from the connections I already had with some, I was able to get in contact with other political parties by finding the local party online. You can also find out contact details for your local PPCs at the Civic Centre or other local council offices, or try your library.

NB: If you are having trouble finding out who your PPCs are, let us know using the contact details below and we will try to find them for you.

What timing arrangements did you decide on for your meeting?

The meeting was three hours long with a fifteen-minute break. There was time at the start for each party to set out their position on lifelong learning before questions were invited from the audience. We provided tea and coffee during the break.

Having organised the Folkestone event, what do you think the main things people need to keep in mind when arranging this sort of meeting? Allow plenty of time to contact and arrange a date with candidates of all the different political parties. I chose a date two months in advance so that all candidates were available for that date. You should give them a couple of dates to choose from until there is an agreement with all.

It really helped in our meeting that we had a good mix of people from other education providers and members of the public in the audience to input into the discussions and ask questions.

Is there anything you found particularly challenging about setting up the event?

Pinning down the PPCs - that's why it is important to leave plenty of time prior to the meeting.

Was the question and answer session successful? Do you have any suggestions for this?

It was a success and there was a good range of questions asked on the subject matter. My suggestion would be to pick out specialist questions that members of the audience can pose to the parties.

We hope that the question list on Factsheet 2 of this pack will give you some ideas for questions.

What did you find was important for chairing the meeting?

You need to have very tight chairing to keep on the subject in hand. We found that people were tempted to ask PPCs questions on other educational matters.

What was the best way of publicising the event?

I posted up some eye-catching flyers anywhere I thought relevant. So this could be libraries, universities and other appropriate locations that will allow you to put your flyer up.

Lynne has offered her help to anyone who is organising their own event, please use the contact details below initially and we will put you in touch.

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6. Tips for running a meeting with PPCs

Number six in a series of nine campaigning factsheets

Planning ahead

Choose a date that will give you enough time to prepare and for candidates to be available – but before the election! At the time this pack was produced, the date of the election had not been announced. Many commentators think it is likely to be in early May – although it could be earlier or later than this. General elections are always held on a Thursday, and the last possible election date is the third of June.

Even once they have agreed to attend, a brief reminder to PPCs of the event a few days beforehand is advisable. Mentioning the Learning Through Life report (including the website link below, where they can obtain the free summary) is also a good idea, ensuring PPCs will have had a chance to prepare themselves for the event.

<http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/IFLL-summary-english.pdf>

Ask someone to chair the meeting. It's better if they are politically impartial - and they need to chair the meeting without partiality. They also need to be able to facilitate discussion by creating an atmosphere where questions and debate are welcome, while keeping discussion relevant to the topics at hand. They will need to be briefed on the timing arrangements. Typing up a schedule is a good idea.

Think about a suitable venue and also any possible catering needs. It is better to have space and chairs for more people than you expect. See overleaf for a note on finding venues.

Providing refreshments such as tea, coffee and juice is a good idea if possible. It will help to get people chatting as well as creating a positive atmosphere.

Structuring your meeting

- Make sure that your meeting cannot be seen as promoting any one candidate or political party.
- Decide a length and structure for the event including arrival, introductions, speeches and questions-and-answers. Decide how long you wish to allocate for each speaker before opening the event up for questions from the audience. Try and keep the pace lively and avoid each session becoming over-long.
- Someone needs to open the meeting, making introductions and explaining what the meeting is about. They can refer to the Learning Through Life report to help set the context. Copies are available for this purpose from the WEA's marketing department, or from the web address given earlier on this page.
- For your question and answer session, you may want to consider 'priming' one or two people so they are ready to ask questions to avoid any chance of an awkward silence.
- The questions on Factsheet 2 in this pack can help to give you ideas for questions and for areas to discuss.
- If there are points of action remember to conclude with these. If possible try to end on a strong note that reinforces the positive message about lifelong learning to PPCs.
- At the end of the meeting make sure to thank all participants and summarise the main points of the day.

Follow up with a thank you email or letter to participants and anyone who helped at the meeting.

Publicising your event

Think about who to invite

You will need to give some thought to who you think would be interested in attending your meeting and how you might attract them. You might find the list of relevant organisations on Factsheet 8 useful – and there are likely to be other local community groups or education providers who might be willing to advertise the event to their members or students or have staff members interested in attending or speaking.

Design a flyer or poster

This will need to capture people's attention and explain the point of the meeting. Be clear whether the event is free-of-charge or not. It helps to make clear what the key issues being discussed are so that people know what to expect.

Make a list of public places where details of the meeting could be advertised

For instance libraries, post offices, community centres, shop windows and so on.

Send a press release to local newspapers and radio stations.

A sample press release and tips on how to produce your own can be found in Factsheet 7. To find contact details for your local media visit their websites, or contact us using the details below and we can help you find your local media. Simply writing a letter to your local newspaper can also be effective if it is published on the letters page – see factsheet 4 for a sample letter.

Post your event on the WEA membership events page

If you are a WEA member, you can post the details of your event on the membership website at <https://members.wea.org.uk/members/index.asp?m=14&t=Events> – this page is designed to publicise events that haven't happened yet, so other WEA members can find out about them and attend. If you are having trouble posting your event please let us know using the contact details below.

A simple A4 poster did the trick for the WEA Folkestone Branch, who attracted about 45 people to their event with PPCs. They also printed a smaller version of the same one for use as a flyer.

If you are having trouble producing a poster or flyer for your event we can produce one in this standard WEA style for you – contact us using the details below.



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7. Letting the media know

Number seven in a series of nine campaigning factsheets

If you're holding an event with local parliamentary candidates or just sending a postcard to your MP, it's a good idea to draft a short press release to send to your local papers. If you haven't written a press release before, here are eleven commonly practised 'good habits' to help you on your way.

- 1. Put a date on it:** Always start with the date of submission – and add the words 'For immediate release' so news editors are aware that the story is for use straight away.
- 2. Give it a strong title:** The job of the title or a headline is to capture the attention of the journalist or editor receiving your press release. Make it short and self-explanatory and try to capture the essence of your story in this one sentence. It's not your job to craft a brilliant headline – that's the job of the paper's sub-editor – but an interesting headline will help.
- 3. Keep it brief:** The job of a press release is to give a flavour of your story to news editors and their readers – not to draft an essay. A journalist will follow up with you if your story looks like it has potential. Aim for one side (or two at most) of A4 – and use double spacing.
- 4. Start with the 'five Ws':** A common rule of thumb is to ensure your first paragraph covers the 'who', 'what', 'why', 'where' and 'when' of your story. This means all the need-to-know elements are up front and helps the news editor.
- 5. Include a quote:** Quotes add a human dimension to stories as well as a sense of opinion or authority. Anyone with something to say can be a spokesperson. Quotes are often made up by the person drafting the release but once in print you would never guess! Name your spokesperson and do get their permission.
- 6. Keep it simple:** If you like writing it can be tempting to go to town and be really creative or use lots of long words – try to write simply and use short sentences.
- 7. Put an end to it:** At the end of your release add 'Ends' – this indicates that anything above this point is news copy.
- 8. Notes to editors:** What follows your press release is a note to editors section. This is a chance to include any relevant context, background, web links and statistics.
- 9. Contact details:** Don't forget to offer your name, email and telephone number for journalists who want to obtain further information or follow up with you.
- 10. Check your timing:** Don't miss the deadline! When is your local newspaper issued – weekly, fortnightly, a weekday or a weekend? Papers are compiled over a few days and the copy deadline may be four days or two weeks prior to issue.
- 11. Email or post?** Some editors say they prefer to receive news by email and some by post. If you're sending an email, it's good practice to paste your story into the main body of your message and not to send it as an attachment.

If you don't know who your local newspapers are we can tell you - contact Maria Chica on email mchica@wea.org.uk or by phone at 0207 426 3486.

Press release

15 February 2010: For immediate release

Volunteers stage 'Question Time' for parliamentary candidates

Members of the Wimbledon branch of the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) have joined with the Wimbledon Trust to hold a debate with local parliamentary candidates on the subject of lifelong learning. Over fifty people are expected to gather at Friends Meeting House next Saturday 20 February to quiz local candidates about their views on the importance of publicly funded adult education.

Stephen Hammond MP will be joined by Labour candidate Andrew Judge and Shas Sheehan who was this week nominated as the Liberal Democrat candidate.

The meeting has been called by the WEA in the hope that the candidates will pick up a clear message about the need to continue funding adult education into and beyond the election. Chris Hills, Branch Secretary of Wimbledon WEA says:

"In a time of recession everyone is talking about cuts. We want our politicians to understand how important adult education is and to support adult education in Merton and Wimbledon. WEA students and learners come from all walks of life and subsidised courses mean more people can access adult education – to learn new skills and develop personal interests. Adult education keeps people's brains active, creates a sense of community and makes Wimbledon a better place to be."

During the meeting, the three local candidates will be asked to respond to a recent report which recommends greater public investment in adult education for families and for adults throughout their whole life. Members of the public are invited to join the meeting which starts at 10.30, next Saturday 20 February.

Ends

Notes to editors: see overleaf

There are nine Speak up for Lifelong Learning factsheets:

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

Workers' Educational Association www.wea.org.uk
We're committed to equality and diversity.

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Registered charity: 1112775. Company limited by guarantee in England and Wales: 2806910.

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. Mary Ward Centre is a member.

Mary Ward Centre

www.marywardcentre.ac.uk

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. The Mary Ward Centre is a member.

www.bassac.org.uk www.marywardcentre.ac.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.

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9. Further information

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If you wish to get more involved in having a say, find out about local issues, vote in local or national elections, understand more about living in a democracy, promote community action – or learn how to run a campaign for a cause that you think needs more support – there are all kinds of information services available to you.

On this factsheet we have listed 30 organisations and points of information. The alphabetical list is not comprehensive but includes a variety of places that can help if you want to learn more about the way our political system works, how to exercise your democratic right to vote and how to play an active role in society in a variety of ways. If there's no telephone number listed it's because the service is mainly web based.

Overleaf, you will also find contact information for the WEA's regional offices in England and WEA Scotland. In 1903 part of our founding mission was to make sure that adults could access the kind of education that explains and encourages democratic involvement. This remains true today and we continue to run part-time courses in politics, history, sociology, economics, citizenship – and much more. We also receive funding from the government to run courses that support adult learning, local volunteering and community development. Your local region will be able to advise what courses are running locally or you can visit our course search facility on the WEA website: www.wea.org.uk/courses.

Useful websites and sources of information:

- **Mary Ward Centre**
www.marywardcentre.ac.uk
- **10 Downing Street**
www.number10.gov.uk
- **About My Vote**
www.aboutmyvote.co.uk
or tel: 020 7271 0500
- **BBC Democracy Live**
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/democracylive>
- **Campaign Central**
www.campaigncentral.org.uk
- **Citizen's Advice Bureaux**
www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- **Citizenship Foundation**
www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk
or tel: 020 7566 4141
- **Directgov**
www.direct.gov.uk
- **Directory of Social Change**
www.dsc.org.uk or tel: 08450 777707
- **Do It Volunteering**
www.do-it.org.uk
- **Do Politics**
www.dopolitics.org.uk
- **Electoral Commission**
www.electoralcommission.org.uk
or tel: 020 7271 0500
- **Electoral Reform Society**
www.electoral-reform.org.uk
or tel: 020 7928 1622
- **Fix My Street**
www.fixmystreet.com
- **Groups Near You**
www.groupsnearyou.com
- **Hear From Your MP**
www.hearfromyourmp.com
- **Institute for Citizenship**
<http://citizen.org.uk> or
tel: 020 7844 5444
- **Institute of Community Cohesion**
www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk
or tel: 024 7679 5757

- **Learndirect**
<http://learndirect.co.uk>
 or tel: 0800 101901
- **Local Government**
www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment
- **NCVO**
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk
 or tel: 0800 2 798 798
- **NAVCA**
www.navca.org.uk or tel: 0114 278 6636
- **No 10 petition site**
<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk>
- **Novas Scarman**
www.novasscarman.org
 or tel: 020 7939 9720
- **Parliamentary Outreach**
www.parliament.uk/outreach
 or tel: 020 7219 1650
- **Take Part**
www.takepart.org or tel: 01709 360886
- **They Work For You**
www.theyworkforyou.com
- **UK Parliament**
www.parliament.uk or tel: 020 7219 4272
- **Volunteering England**
www.volunteering.org.uk
- **Write To Them**
www.writetothem.com

For other organisations of interest also see factsheet 8 Making connections.

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