Learner Welcome Pack2023/24



Welcome to Medway Adult Education.Our vision is to be the place of choice for all residents to realise their aspirations, whether that’s to improve your skills, to expand your creativity, to spend time with other like-minded people or just to have fun!

Our qualified teaching staff are specialists in their subject areas, they dedicate time to maintaining their skills through continuing professional development on a regular basis. They are all passionate about helping you learn and get the best from your time with us.

All our staff are committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment with an enjoyable and purposeful experience for all learners. We invest in our facilities to ensure that they meet the standards necessary for a successful learning outcome. I’m delighted to say this includes the investment in a new purpose built facility in Britton Farm Mall Gillingham, which opened in 2022.

The ultimate judgement of whether we meet the quality that we aspire to lies in the hands of our learners. If we fail to meet your expectations, you need to tell us, so that we can take steps to put things right.

On all courses we will ask you routinely how things are going for you, but if you ever want to share other comments, complaints or compliments, please raise with your tutor, or phone (01634) 338453 or email learnersupport@medway.gov.uk.

I hope you enjoy your time learning with us.

Best wishes

**Dan Ratcliff
Service Manager**





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# **Our Values**

Medway Adult Education has adopted Medway Council’s priorities and ways of working.
In addition we are determined to be an outstanding provider for adult skills and community learning.

**For 2023/24 the Council and Medway Adult Education’s priorities are to:**

* Ensure Medway is a place to be proud of.
* Maximise regeneration and economic growth.
* Support Medway's people to realise their potential.

**Ways of working**

* Giving value for money.
* Finding the best digital innovation and using it to meet residents' needs.
* Working in partnership where this benefits our residents.

**Medway Adult Education’s key objectives:**

* To use our community learning funding to focus on turning around the lives of local people particularly those who are disadvantaged and re-engage with those who are least likely to participate.
* To identify the needs of the community and local businesses using a range of partners and stakeholders to inform the curriculum planning.
* To work closely with employers to identify the skills gaps and support them in the recruitment and training under the traineeships and apprenticeships programmes.
* To prepare learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities for employment and independent living.

# **Getting the best from your learning**We promise to:

* Work hard to meet your individual needs as a learner.
* Make sure you learn in a healthy and safe venue.
* Give you accurate information about the courses we offer before, during or at the end of your course.
* Only collect information about you and your learning which helps us to improve the quality of your learning and that is needed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency that funds your learning.

**To enable you and your fellow learners to gain the greatest possible benefit and enjoyment from your course we ask you to:**

* Attend every session of your course, arrive on time and participate in the class.
* Provide the information we need about you and your learning, especially what you expect to get from your learning.
* Take part in surveys and course evaluations – your views are important to us.
* Only engage in activities that do not put yourself or others at risk or in danger.

# **Equality and Diversity**

Our commitment to equality means recognising and respecting differences and treating each other with fairness and dignity.

Medway Adult Education demonstrates commitment to equality and diversity in Community Learning by:

* Building fairness into all that we do.
* Eliminating all forms of discrimination.
* Listening, responding and working together with our learners to provide learning.
* Providing services which are accessible to everyone.
* Positively promoting equality in our activities and communications.
* Developing learning environments where people are valued and respected and implementing British Values throughout our program of learning.
* Taking any complaints about inequality seriously and challenging all forms of discrimination or harassment.

# **Health and Safety**

We will endeavour to run all our courses in a safe environment and ensure we take care of all your health and safety needs. If you are unfortunate enough to have an accident this should be reported to your tutor, reception or the caretaker, who will be able to put you in touch with one of our trained first aiders.

**First Aid Boxes at Medway Adult Education centres**There are always trained First Aiders on Site and first aid boxes can be found in every centre.
Contact the caretaker or your tutor for more information.

# **Safeguarding and Prevent**

As a service we take our commitment to safeguarding very seriously. Safeguarding means protecting our learners, especially those who are most vulnerable, from bullying, harassment, abuse of any kind, discrimination, or victimisation.

If you feel at any time in your learning experience that you have been subject to, or have witnessed, any of the above you have the right to report this and to expect that the situation will be investigated, and action taken to resolve the issue. Initially you should report any safeguarding issues to your tutor or programme manager.

The designated persons for safeguarding adults within Medway Adult Education are:

* Jeri Burden (Safeguarding Officer, Medway Adult Education)

geraldine.burden@medway.gov.uk

* Fiona Congreave (Programme Manager for ESOL)

fiona.congreave@medway.gov.uk

* Carolyne Pilcher (Programme Manager for Community Learning)

carolyne.pilcher@medway.gov.uk

* Lorraine Miles (Programme Manager for Vocational Skills)

lorraine.miles@medway.gov.uk

* Gareth Williams (Programme Manager for English and maths)

Gareth.williams@medway.gov.uk

It is the responsibility of every staff member, volunteer, and learner to become familiar with the safeguarding and prevent policy within Medway Adult Education and to know who to communicate with in case of any concern with regards to the protection of learners. The Prevent strategy, published by government in 2011 is part of their overall counterterrorism strategy Contest. Prevent Duty should be seen as an extension to existing safeguarding practices and procedures. Prevent is intended to safeguard all learners from being exposed to violent and extreme ideologies.

# **Learner Services**

Medway Adult Education puts the learner at the heart of everything we do.
Learners are our priority, and we are here to help.

**The Learner Services Team can:**

* Assist you in enrolling in a suitable course.
* Provide you with educational and careers information, advice and guidance.
* Arrange for additional support with your studies.
* Signpost you to other organisations for support.

**Enrolling you on the right course**You may be required to meet with a member of the Learner Services Team prior to enrolling on a course. During this meeting we will undertake an initial assessment and discuss your needs and experiences as a learner to ensure you are enrolled on the most suitable course. If you would like book an advice and guidance session with a member of the Learner Services Team please call: (01634) 338400.

**Learning Support**We at Medway Adult Education are committed to helping learners succeed, whatever their background or additional needs. If you have a disability, learning difficulty or any other support needs please phone (01634) 338475 or email learnersupport@medway.gov.uk and ask to speak to the Learner Services Co-ordinator.

The support you will get will depend on your need and subject to funding requirements. This may include may:

* Dyslexia support.
* Special equipment, access to digital tools or materials in class.
* In-class learning support.
* Tutorial support with a tutor.
* Interpreters.

If you have any support needs and have an exam or assessment as a part of your course it is essential that you contact the Exams Manager, Manjit Sanghera, manjit.sanghera@medway.gov.uk , when your course begins in order for us to make any special arrangements for you with the awarding body.

**Financial Help with Fees**You may be entitled to help with the cost of books, travel and childcare depending on your personal circumstances and the course you are studying. This help is available via the Discretionary Learner Support Fund. It is a limited fund for those learners who are eligible.
Please contact us on (01634) 338400 for further information and how to apply.

If you are over the age of 19 and looking to study a level 3 or 4 course you may be able to get some financial help. You could apply for an Advanced Learning Loan to cover the cost of tuition fees for your qualification. The Government no longer funds adults aged over 19 years old to study Level 3 or Level 4 courses, even if you are receiving benefits, unless you are aged between 19 and 23 and studying your first full level 3 qualification. You can find out more about the loans [on GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan), at our Rochester Centre, or [on our website](https://www.medwayadulteducation.co.uk). You can also get independent financial advice from the [Money Advice Service](https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk). We also have a Loans Bursary Fund to help vulnerable and disadvantaged learners who are being funded through a Loan such as those with learning difficulties or disabilities and parents who need help with childcare. To apply for funding from the Bursary please phone (01634) 338400 and ask to speak to the Learner Services Co-ordinator, or email learnersupport@medway.gov.uk

If you are struggling financially and would like to talk to us in confidence you are welcome to book an appointment with a member of the team. We can signpost you to relevant support organisations.

# Guidance for digital online learning

Medway Adult Education (MAE) aims to provide the residents of Medway with skills and qualifications to help aid their personal development and in turn benefit their local communities. In an increasing digital and online world providing these skills via a digital medium is both the most cost effective and inclusive. It allows learners to develop at their own pace and can bring people together who are not geographically connected.

Medway Adult Education will continue to explore ways in which we can integrate technology to enable learners to actively engage with ideas and their peers, to enhance the learning experience, increase motivation and ultimately improve outcomes. We will be using a range of digital technologies including Moodle, Google Classroom and ZOOM, to provide online learning opportunities for our learners. This is part of a blended model of learning.

Online learning programmes or online learning support, in most cases, can be accessed via a tablet or laptop computer with an up-to-date internet browser and a typical broadband or 4G connection.

Learners who do not have access to the required equipment or software to progress with their learning can apply to loan it from the service wherever it is practical and affordable to do so. Strict conditions related to the loaning of such equipment will be in place and staff and learners will need to sign and agree to certain conditions in relation to the safe use and return of said equipment.

Learners wanting to use their own equipment to support their learning will be permitted to do so providing they abide by the conditions of our BYOD policy and protocols, and the Acceptable Use Agreement.

**Information and Advice about learning**We hope that you will find that the information and advice you received before you enrolled has allowed you to choose the right course. If you have any concerns about being on the right course, please talk to your tutor or centre staff as it may be possible for you to move to another course if it is early in the term.

If you would like to do another course or are interested in moving on to a Further or Higher Education college course, please ask centre staff for information. They will be able to tell you about learning opportunities in our centres and other subject areas. They also have contact details for Kent colleges. You can also contact the [National Careers Service](https://www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk) for career advice on 0800 100 900.

# Disclosures

It is important to us that you get the best from your learning and for us to achieve this, to put support in place to help you and respond sensitively to your needs, we need to be aware of any challenges you may face such as a disability, health condition which may cause you to faint, the need to take any medication or a learning difficulty. This information may also be useful in the event of any emergency. Condition’s people have told us about in the past include:

Visual impairment, hearing impairment, difficulties that affect mobility, epilepsy, asthma, mental ill health, temporary disability after illness, dyslexia, dyscalculia, etc.

If you missed the opportunity to tell us something on your enrolment form you can tell any member of the centre staff or your tutor. We will contact you in confidence to discuss possible support arrangements.

Although we try to ensure our buildings are accessible there may be some areas where we are unaware that we are not meeting your needs. If you are concerned about physical access to any facilities within our buildings, please talk to centre staff.

# **Examinations**

If your assessment or examination result is not what you expected and you feel that you have a good reason to challenge the result, you are entitled to appeal. If you wish to appeal about an assessment marked by your tutor you must write to the Examination Manager within seven days of receiving the result. The Examinations Manager will refer the matter to the appropriate member of staff.

If you wish to appeal against an external examination result you must contact the Examinations Manager within 10 days of receiving the result. For GCSEs, this procedure is known as an Enquiry about Results (EaR) and you will be given written guidance at entry time and follow up guidance on results day.

If you have a query about any aspect of your examination or concerning special arrangements that you may require for the exam, please contact: Manjit Sanghera, manjit.sanghera@medway.gov.uk - Telephone: (01634) 338446

# **Complaints, Comments and Feedback**

We welcome all feedback on the experience you have with us. Learners can provide feedback on their experience through the end of course Learner Satisfaction Survey or alternatively they can leave feedback through Learner Voice, phone (01634) 338475 or email: learnersupport@medway.gov.uk

If you have a complaint, we would like to resolve it as quickly and effectively as possible. In the first instance please talk to your tutor, centre staff or contact the Programme Manager for your course. Our Service Manager is Daniel Ratcliff: Skills & Employment Programme Manager: daniel.ratcliff@medway.gov.uk

# **Quiet Room**

If you want to pray or just sit somewhere quietly, we have a quiet contemplation room available at the Rochester Centre. Please ask at reception for more information.

# Frequently Asked Questions

Question 1: I am on low income but not on benefits. Can I get a discount?

Concessionary rates are available to learners who are over 60 and not in full-time employment and to learners on eligible benefits.

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Question 2: Do you offer any free training?

You may be eligible for free employment-related training and qualifications if:

* You are unemployed and looking for work and are in receipt of a state benefit
* You are employed but earning less than £20,319 (gross annual salary)

All the programmes in our directory, which end with the code F, are free to those who are eligible for support – but there are also programmes that are not published in our directory.

We keep personal advisers at the Job Centre informed of all new courses for unemployed people.

To find out whether you are eligible for free training telephone (01634) 338400 and ask for employability programmes.

We offer some free courses in family learning and community learning. These courses are aimed at adults returning to learning who are parents with school age children, or adults without the equivalent of 5 GCSEs. In addition, English and Maths classes leading to a qualification are free.

Please ask a member of staff for details.

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Question 3: I am doing my course for enjoyment. Why are there so many forms?

We try to keep paperwork to a minimum but there is information that we will need to collect.

Medway Adult Education receives funding from the Education & Skills Funding Agency and is inspected by Ofsted. The information we receive from you demonstrates that we are using public money properly. We also want to know how we can improve the service we give you so also ask you for feedback on your course and on the service you get from Medway Adult Education.
Please contact: adulteducation@medway.gov.uk

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Question 4: I’ve paid for my course. Is there anything else to pay?

For some courses you will need to buy materials and you will be told what these are before you start your course. In some courses there will be exam fees.

# Term Dates:

**Term 1 -** 7 weeks **Start: 4/9/23 Finish: 20/10/23**

Autumn break
Monday 23 October to Friday 27October 2023

**Term 2 -** 7 weeks **Start: 30/10/23 Finish: 15/12/23**

Winter break
Monday 18 December 2023 to Monday 1 January 20224

**Term 3 -** 6 weeks **Start: 2/1/24 Finish: 9/2/24**

February break
Monday 12 February to Friday 16 February 20224

**Term 4 -** 6 weeks **Start: 19/2/24 Finish: 28/3/24**

Spring break
Friday 29 March to Friday 12 April 2024

**Term 5 -** 6 weeks **Start: 15/4/24 Finish: 24/5/24**

**Early May Bank Holiday - Monday 6 May 2024**

**Late May Bank Holiday - Monday 27 May 2024**

**May break - Monday 27 May to Friday 31 May 202**

**Term 6 -** 7 weeks
**Start: 3/6/24 Finish: 19/7/24**

Medway Adult Education offers a 50 week of the year programme and will be running a range of activities during the holiday periods, look out for our fliers and leaflets.

All centres have staff teams with extensive knowledge about the courses on offer, the administrative processes and the answers to most questions that you may have during your course. Staff will be more than happy to help you in any way they can. Details of our centres are below.

# **Our Centres**

Rochester Community Hub (main centre)Eastgate,
Rochester,
ME1 1EW.

**Phone:** (01634) 338400
**Fax:** 01634 338403

**Opening Hours:
Monday to Thursday:** 9.00am-7.15pm
**Friday:** 9.00am - 4.30pm
**All other times:** 9.00am - 4.30pm

**Parking:**
Paid parking available at: Blue Boar Ln, Rochester, ME1 1PD.

**Access:** There is a lift.

Gillingham centre (main)
Medway Learning & Skills Hub

Unit 2 Britton Farm Street

 Gillingham

ME7 1GX

**Phone:** (01634) 338400

**Opening Hours:
Monday to Wednesday:**
**Thursday and Friday:**
**All other times:**

**Parking:**
No parking is available on site. There are several paid parking options available close by.

**Access:** There is a lift.