

# WEA Educational Impact Awards 2019

Transforming lives through adult learning

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**WEA**

Adult Learning  
Within Reach

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# Welcome to the WEA Awards 2019

**At the WEA, our purpose is to bring adult education within reach - because so often this opportunity to a better future is made inaccessible due to cost, location or lack of information.**



Providing adult learning for over 100 years, we have made it our mission to ensure that the most disadvantaged adults have access to learning opportunities. As we reflect on the great achievements of our winners, we remember the simple idea that learning is for everyone, and here at the WEA, our ability to deliver to our learners is our unique WEA way.

The WEA Awards have been running for six years proving it's worth as each year our winners show us how they are empowered to take control of their destiny, showcasing tremendous heart, drive and focus they attest time and time again that anything is possible.

Every winner has embodied the core WEA values, and it is our privilege to celebrate not only their success but recognise their outstanding growth.

Everyone connected to the WEA has played a vital role in our progression this year and together we have taken the WEA forward with many innovations. These awards give us the chance to say thank you to all our students, tutors, volunteers, members, staff, ambassadors and partners as without your help, we simply wouldn't have been able to serve a new generation of adults.

While it has been an unsettling time in the sector, we have still managed to successfully deliver 384,232 unique adult learning journeys and made vast improvements to our student recruitment and support.

You may already be aware that I have announced that I will be stepping down as your CEO and General Secretary at the end of the year. I have loved leading the organisation through all the challenges and triumphs over the past seven and a half years. In my long career in a variety of sectors, I have never encountered such a body of inspirational people, or such passion and dedication - it has truly been a privilege to work for such a brilliant organisation.

With the greatest gratitude, I would like to thank everyone who has made these awards possible this evening, including all our fantastic sponsors. Finally, my heartfelt congratulations to all our award winners and nominees this year – your example motivates others and changes lives.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Ruth Spellman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Ruth Spellman OBE**

Chief Executive and  
General Secretary

# WEA 2019 Awarded Fellowship

Graham Hasting-Evans

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**NOCN Group Managing Director, Graham Hasting-Evans, worked in building and construction before developing the skills strategy for the London 2012 Olympics.**

He was programme director at the UK Commission for Employment and Skills before joining NOCN, in 2011. Graham has worked closely with the government on apprenticeship reforms, including the Apprenticeship Levy and has powered NOCN to become the top government-approved End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO). He regularly speaks at events in the UK and internationally and is often called upon for comment in further education sector media.

# WEA 2019 Awarded Fellowship

Stephen Evans

Stephen has been chief executive of Learning and Work Institute since 2016, following two years as deputy chief executive, and is responsible for overall leadership of the organisation, looking to maximise its reach and impact.

He joined from Working Links, where he was director of policy and strategy. Prior to that he was director of employment and skills at the London Development Agency, commissioning programmes and leading the work of the London Skills and Employment Board. He has also been chief economist at the Social Market Foundation, and spent six years as senior policy advisor at HM Treasury, working on policy to cut child poverty, increase employment and boost productivity as well as the independent Leitch Review of skills.



# WEA 2019 Awarded Fellowship

Caroline Diehl MBE

**Caroline is Executive Chair and Founder of Together TV, and until March 2017 was Founder CEO of the Media Trust, the UK's leading communications charity.**

Caroline set up Media Trust in 1994, to connect the UK media industry and the voluntary sector. Over the last 23 years, many thousands of media professionals and companies have given their time, resources and creative power to amplify the work of tens of thousands of charities, community groups and young people across the UK through training, volunteering, film production and content distribution. In 2000, Caroline set up the Community Channel, which in 2016 became an independent Community Benefit Society after a successful Crowdfunder campaign. Community Channel is now called Together TV, is co-operatively owned by its new community shareholders and supported by the UK broadcast and digital industry, broadcasting free-to-air on Freeview, Sky and Virgin Media, with 10 million TV viewers and over half a million Facebook followers. Caroline is a 2019 Churchill Fellow, a Social Entrepreneur in Residence at INSEAD, an Associate of Newnham College, Cambridge and was a founder trustee of the Small Charities Coalition. She has 2 sons, is an avid consumer of arts and culture, and ran the London Marathon in April 2016. Caroline was awarded an MBE for services to the media industry, is an EY Social Entrepreneur of the Year, a winner of the Cannes Chimera Award and the PRCA Charity Communications Award.



# National Award Winners







# Impact in your local community award winner

**Anne Hollis**

Supported by



**Anne's dedication to widening the participation of WEA branches has seen the inclusion of 16 courses from the Reaching Out programme in 19/20 including Making Music, Dancing, Drama, Woodland Activities, Art Design and Jewellery. Through the Reaching Out programme, Anne has opened up the WEA branches to students who, due to disability, would not ordinarily attend. The courses help students to learn the skills they need to participate in wider community life while making friends.**

Anne liaises with venues, finds tutors and meets them before formal interviews and identifies new subject areas to keep the courses interesting



and beneficial for students. She has risen to the challenge to increase minimum numbers for classes and ensures the venues and tutors supports the needs of the students.

Despite being a volunteer herself, arranges opportunities to showcase the WEA and the work of their students, including a guided tour at the Pallant House Gallery and most recently an art exhibition in the Oxmarket Centre of Arts in Chichester where students exhibited their work alongside professional artists.

Anne's dedication doesn't stop with the students; she also organises large groups of volunteers to support classes. She has developed people in their role as a volunteer; one long term volunteer has now progressed and became a tutor. Anne also arranges an annual get together to celebrate the work of the volunteers ensuring everyone that gives their time feels valued.

Anne was instrumental in starting Reaching Out art classes at Ashley Place for the Bognor Regis branch widening the reach of the programme. At a time when many classes are no longer running for students with disabilities, the programme has remained full and varied with a good standard of engagement and student success and progress. The Reaching Out programme could not function as it does without her efforts.

Anne is passionate about providing a programme of courses in the Chichester area for all students and works to make sure that disabilities never get in the way of learning, having fun and making friends.

# Outstanding regional partner award winner

## Dolphin Women's Centre

**The Dolphin Women's Centre understands the challenges of local women. Based in Ward End in Washwood Heath, one of Birmingham's most deprived wards residents have some of the lowest income levels in the city; the centre is a place where women can come together to learn.**

Since 2014, the WEA and The Dolphin Women's Centre have been delivering a range of adult learning activities, and the relationship has moved beyond the transactional to a true partnership where we are planning and seeking funding together to develop the centre and the educational activities. Together we have provided local women with both creative courses and training and educational courses to support employment. The Dolphin Women's Centre runs a volunteer program where local women use their skills and knowledge to support one another as well as helping with the running of the centre, including consulting them to plan the courses and activities.

Over the past year, the WEA, the Dolphin Women's Centre and the Friends of Ward End Park liaised with HS2's Community Outreach who repaired the raised beds in the park's community garden for our gardening learners to use for their WEA course. Together we have been supporting the long term regeneration plan for the building and the surrounding park helping residents to develop the nearby walled garden into a resource for the community. Participants using the garden are reporting better mental and physical health, better food choices, more adventurous family eating as they bring home fresh produce and an increased interest in developing skills and knowledge. In spring 2019, we ran a successful pilot that



introduced a group of local BAMER women to adult education using gardening as a theme and helped them to improve confidence, literacy and numeracy through contextualised learning activities. The group are growing produce and reporting improved health and wellbeing for themselves and their families. Two participants have decided to pursue careers in the horticultural sector, something they hadn't considered before their courses.

The team at the Dolphin Centre are very active in promoting adult learning and are a crucial partner for recruiting learners in Ward End. The centre is a hub attracting people for many reasons; they have built trust with residents over time; as a result of our partnership, the residents have come to trust the WEA too.

# Outstanding volunteer award winner

## Norma Hinson

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Norma has dedicated most of her adult life to the WEA. Norma first enrolled on to a WEA literature class at her local library after her return to Amble, with her husband, left her feeling isolated. Since then Norma has enrolled on countless courses, before becoming a volunteer at her local branch. After a couple of years of supporting her local branch and distributing publicity for local classes, Norma became the branch secretary in the early 1970s. Norma held this position for 46 years.

Norma embraced change and ensured that the branch was up to date with changes in the WEA and researched and inducted new tutors. She continuously promoted the WEA, and this is evident in the many years the class has seen new students, new tutors and new members of staff.

She encouraged members of the community to attend the local WEA classes by highlighting the importance of continuous adult education and the benefits this brings. Norma remembers her first participation in classes where she helped support members and students who lived alone. She helped create an atmosphere in which friendships could flourish and continue outside the classroom.



Norma continued her role as branch secretary through personal difficulties, including her husband's illness. She has dedicated time and enthusiasm and is very modest about her role. But without her as secretary, Amble branch and their classes would not have been sustainable in such a rural region of WEA.

# Outstanding tutor award winner

## Frank Ferrie

Supported by



**Frank is an inspiration. As part of the Reaching Out programme at Bognor Regis branch, he teaches art classes to students with varied needs, from students who wouldn't ordinarily have access to arts education through to students who are post-stroke, with MS, dementia or with mental health needs. Frank encourages them to realise their talents and to inspire a passion for art.**

Frank empowers students. He creates courses to reflect the interests of the class. Frank champions their work, volunteering his time to frame pieces and organise exhibitions to celebrate the students. He raises students' self-belief and ambition through seeing their work on display alongside the professional artist.

Always happy to share his knowledge Frank has widened the participation through gestures of goodwill with other groups, including setting up classes closer to residential homes so that more students could attend without relying on transport. Frank is passionate about making art accessible to everyone. Students are continually full of praise for the support he gives them and his patience in explaining how to apply specific techniques. Students walk out of the Centre with their artwork, proudly showing off the work that they have created.

Frank works tirelessly to help students with LDD issues to engage with using practical art to build their confidence and social skills.



# Olive Cordell foundation student award winner

**Hava Cil**

Supported by

**Olive  
Cordell**

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**Hava is a remarkable student. Originally a maths teacher in Istanbul, Turkey, Hava was eager to continue sharing her knowledge. When she attended her first class with the WEA, she had low levels of English language skills but did not let that be a barrier for her not to succeed. Since 2016 Hava has completed the Level 2 support work in schools and colleges, progressed on to more specialist SEND courses with the WEA and this year has been accepted to study PGCE Maths at the University of Oxford.**

Now a fluent English speaker, Hava has been working as a support worker in schools within Oxford. Her kind nature and passion for learning have seen her support not only children in schools but her peers in class too. She cares deeply for the wellbeing of others and has spoken at schools about her aspirations and achievements, as well as supporting at refugee events within Oxford.

She is an outstanding role model and an inspiration to her fellow students. Her incredible achievements have been shared locally so that her story continues to raise the aspirations of fellow ESOL students, refugees and women and to challenge the stereotypical attitudes towards these groups.



**The WEA course was the first step on my journey and helped me get a place at Oxford University.**



# Olive Cordell foundation tutor award winner

**Cathy Kirk**

Supported by

**Olive  
Cordell**

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**Cathy Kirk is one of the most inspirational tutors at the WEA East Midlands. Cathy's calm and reassuring presence supports students through an intensive ESOL programme through the ambitious Midland's Engine project, designed to give students the language skills they need to work in careers matching their (often advanced) skills and qualifications.**

Alongside her role as a tutor, Cathy has created entire content for two six-week learning programmes on the digital learning platform Canvas. The content she has created has provided material and support for other ESOL courses across the WEA. Cathy has embraced the Canvas

platform more than anyone else in the East Midlands region and continues to push forward to develop it further and support staff and tutors across the whole organisation.

Cathy regularly goes above and beyond; her students receive a highly personalised programme of learning which accommodates each one's individual needs. She is aware of each student's unique circumstance and puts in exceptional levels of effort to accommodate their needs and address the barriers they face. Cathy even volunteers her own time to provide additional classes to support students before exams if any students are at risk of failing.

Cathy has promoted the benefits of remote digital learning amongst students who typically struggle to engage with this method of learning. She has embedded classes with a broader context of engagement in the community and in becoming a confident and active citizen with some of her students securing a range of volunteer work placements.

Many students who come to Cathy's classes suffer from mental health difficulties. They often arrive lacking in confidence. Many students report that by attending Cathy's ESOL classes, they have gained not only the linguistic tools they need but also the confidence to function effectively in everyday situations and life. One student said that Cathy encouraged them to find answers for themselves and acted as a signpost to websites and books and "enriched [their] student life week by week. I now realise that with a good teacher and studying by myself, I will achieve my goals."





# Social impact award winner

## Adult Signpost Haverhill

Supported by



**Through weekly sessions, Adult Signpost has prevented a group of adults from becoming marginalised and socially excluded due to mental health conditions.**

In partnership with the WEA and Haverhill Town Council, Adult Signpost supports adults at risk of developing mental health conditions to learn new skills and build friendships. Led by Karen Chapple and Dan Cooke, from Haverhill Town Council, each session helps to improve wellbeing and confidence. To date, sessions have included art therapy, confidence-building and cooking and a Community Health project using the Town Council's allotment.

Students attending have benefited significantly from a range of health and wellbeing courses to encourage social inclusion and confidence building, assisting them to integrate into the wider community. And this is not the only impact. Family, friends and the local community of the attendees have benefited from their new skills and lifestyle changes. Students have now gained the confidence to progress and continue learning, they have created



a space where they support each other beyond the classroom.

Adult Signpost project provides opportunities to learn about broader health issues in the community. Using the Town Council's community allotment the project hosted 'Learning to Cook' pathways and 'Community Health Matters' using a community teaching

kitchen. Using a social prescribing approach to health and wellbeing, students are encouraged to think, reflect and take action by making real lifestyle changes.

This success of Adult Signpost has motivated and inspired other Haverhill community groups such as The Princes Trust and Life Link, to engage in classes. Students have shown a willingness to

engage, as participants and volunteers, in further projects.

Adult Signpost has enriched our local community and brought together people from all walks of life. It has provided a means for further learning experiences to take place in the future, not just for the students but for the entire community.



# Outstanding staff member award winner

**Sam Jones**

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**Despite being new to the WEA, Sam was a cornerstone to the North West teams during a stressful time for staff. She was integral to the success of the Liverpool and Greater Manchester devolved funding bids and went above and beyond to support the team.**

Sam made sure the bids were scrutinised to the highest standard to make sure we had the best chance at winning. She was working over hours to complete this – weekends and evenings and really went the extra mile making a difference to the WEA's future.

Sam overcame lots of obstacles during this process. Under vast amounts of pressure, she juggled multiple bids and formed new ways of working, aligning the WEA's mission to the different skills agenda. She organised and motivated different teams across the WEA to create a winning bid.

However, Sam wishes to acknowledge all colleagues who made a huge contribution to the bids, particularly John Wimbush and the BD team. They too worked incredibly long hours and another long list of colleagues who were exceptionally supportive in so many ways.

Fortunately, Sam's tireless work meant jobs were saved - the impact on the organisation cannot be overlooked. Colleagues in the regions and nationally are thankful for her commitment to the WEA's future success.



# Outstanding staff team award winner

## Midlands Engine ESOL project

**Midlands Engine is an innovative project delivering intensive employability-related ESOL courses to students across Birmingham, Leicester and Nottingham. Targeting students with high levels of qualifications in their home countries, the project team delivered intensive courses using blended learning.**

The Midlands Engine project team has worked with a target group that is hard to identify and even harder to reach to embed a strong focus on language learning within a programme of employability skills designed to support these highly able learners to progress towards work commensurate with their qualifications and talents.

The National Digital Manager noted that the Midlands Engine team have 'worked tirelessly to challenge themselves in terms of the technology and have produced amazing materials and activities'. The National EME and Accreditation Manager has reported that the team 'have

been so enthusiastic and an absolute joy to work with where they have piloted the online ESOL initial and diagnostic assessments and created resources for the benefit of others. Their feedback and ideas have been vital as we move towards creating the blueprints'

The project team have helped encourage and inspire many people. The Celebration of Learning event demonstrated the success of the team not only for the students but for staff.



# Outstanding student group award winner

## Science for ESOL Glasgow

Supported by



**This inspirational group of ten refugees and asylum seekers demonstrates to ESOL students across the country that there are different pathways open to them when they progress to an Intermediate level of English. Having fled Eritrea, Sudan, Yemen and Iraq, the group at different stages in the resettlement process completed their course. Seven gained SCQF Level 4 and three gained a certificate of participation.**

With excellent volunteer support at The Ogilvie Centre/St Aloysius Church, the WEA piloted the first WEA Accredited "An introduction to science in everyday life." The course based on "Science for a successful Scotland" was not designed for ESOL students and requires an understanding of maths.

Despite the difficulties of their settlement situation, the students came to class motivated and excited

to learn. They rose to the challenge of moving from the comfort of general ESOL in a relaxed community setting to an assessed academic Science course which included a lot of maths. The learners worked well as a team and helped and encouraged each other to keep going despite the numerous obstacles that stood in their way. They made sure to pass on information or work to those who missed classes due to unforeseen circumstances or unavoidable meetings.

The participants were diverse in terms of ability, age-range and gender. Two of the most motivated and successful learners were young Eritrean women, and they were an inspiration to other women in the wider ESOL group. One of the learners, who had quite a low level of English, was an anaesthetist by profession in Yemen and attended the course to help transfer his scientific vocabulary into English. He became a role model for the group because he was older and experienced and could help translate more difficult concepts into Arabic. He also gave feedback that it helped him support his children, in English, with their science homework.



# Outstanding student award winner

**Sarah Marie Birks**

Supported by

**Ruth  
Spellman**

**Sarah wanted to work in a school but wasn't sure where to start. Her mum saw a WEA Helping in School course at the local library and gave her a leaflet and she's never looked back.**

The course enabled Sarah to open many doors for her professional development. The course allowed her to volunteer at a school, which she did for three years before getting a full-time job as a teaching assistant. Since then she has gone from strength to strength – presenting at an awards evening at the school and getting involved in schools programmes on health and fitness and becoming the after-school club manager.

The course has helped her overcome low confidence and a lack of self-belief. She overcame her fears and is now more resilient and determined to achieve more. None of this would have been possible without the WEA. Sarah is a great inspiration - showcasing the importance of people believing in your potential. Her learning journey started at the WEA and has turned into a career, and she plans to continuously improve.

From September 2019, Sarah is starting a new chapter in her learning journey. She will be studying a BA in Education Culture and Childhood with a Foundation year at The Sheffield University.

Sarah now encourages more people to join WEA courses. She tells them that returning to education “will transform your life, just like it has done mine. It will boost your confidence and working in a relaxed, friendly environment will enable you to thrive, as you move through your professional journey.”



Sarah credits the course for so much more than her career. She says that “the course has given me confidence and self-belief. In my life outside of work, I have recently passed my driving test and overcame my fears. It made me more resilient in pursuing my goals by not giving up and continuing through difficulties. I have taken part in many long-distance running events, and these experiences have taught me that when you're determined enough, you can achieve anything.”

WEA Awards 2019

# Regional Award Winners





# Eastern: outstanding student award winner

**Anni Fleet**

**Anni has overcome many barriers to learning but since attending a WEA creative writing branch course in Colchester and Ipswich, she has gained confidence, and decided to follow her dream of studying creative writing at University.**

Anni has overcome many barriers to learning but since attending a WEA creative writing branch course in Colchester and Ipswich, she has gained confidence, become self motivated and decided to follow her dream of studying creative writing at University.

The WEA course and support from staff and tutors has inspired her to apply for a WEA bursary to Cambridge University Institute of Continuing Education, to study a Foundation degree in creative writing.

Anni is passionate about her subject and since becoming a WEA student, has travelled a huge distance and become motivated to progress and pursue an HE qualification.

Anni has started writing short stories and is continuing to attend creative writing courses with the WEA.

She has suffered from poor health since a child and was unable to complete GCSEs at school which resulted in low self-esteem and difficulties in finding work. After being given the opportunity of applying

with her mum and myself, she has become so positive and now looks forward to what the future holds for her.

The University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) with the WEA (Eastern) is offering a fantastic opportunity for a 100% full tuition fee bursary for their Undergraduate Certificate courses.

Anni, her mum and myself plus our REM, Sharon Watson, visited Madingley Hall, Cambridge University, for an open day in July. The bursary scheme is the first of its kind with Cambridge University and we all proudly promoted the WEA at the event. Anni spoke to lecturers about the WEA and we talked to the Program Leader about how the WEA has inspired and supported students like Anni, to pursue their dreams.

Anni is an inspirational young woman. She manages pain and complex health issues every day of her life but continues to smile and be motivated to learn, progress and succeed. The opportunities the WEA has provided have changed her life and has made a really positive impact not only on her career prospects but her self awareness, confidence and well being. She is pro-active in finding solutions to problems and her mum is 'amazed at the difference the WEA has made'.

Anni has achieved so much and progressed so far, she embodies the true values of the WEA, to provide an education to all, regardless of their background or starting point. She has a strength and determination to succeed and is a positive role model to others. Her mum and family are very proud of her achievements

After being encouraged by her mum, Anni decided to take her first step on her WEA journey by joining a creative writing class in Colchester. Although she was the youngest in the class and very scared, through her positive learning experience and with the support of her tutor and fellow students, she gained the confidence to attend other WEA classes. Her progress is an excellent example of overcoming personal difficulties and barriers to succeed, not only through academic education but by gaining soft skills, a holistic, supportive approach to learning which the WEA embodies.





# Scotland: outstanding student award winner

**Christie Paterson**

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Chris came to a WEA Job Club in the Falkirk area for employability support and was determined to get a job that allowed him to work with young people. With great perseverance and a strong mindset, Chris quickly secured a position as a volunteer mentor working with young people on the local canals project in addition, he also attained an accredited Communications Skills course at the job club, achieving his first ever qualification.

Since coming to the WEA Job Club Chris has surpassed all expectations and has showcased tremendous growth not only has he become a mentor for young people but he has also successfully gone on to complete a counselling course at West Lothian College as well as become a volunteer at the WEA Job club where he first started.

Despite having a rough upbringing Chris is a shining example of never letting your past dictate your future. Offering support to young people in similar situations Chris is the true definition of WEA values.

As a volunteer at the WEA Chris supports others with multiple barriers and is a great inspiration to many as he has said many times before "If I can do it, anyone can".



# East Midlands: outstanding student joint award winner

**Emson Maneya**

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A friend of Emson recommended joining the WEA, and since then Emson has found his silver lining. Initially hesitant as he thought he had no skills to offer Emson has gone from strength to strength and showcased incredible commitment, empathy and perseverance. Not only has Emson succeeded as a student at the WEA he has also gone on to be an incredible volunteer which has improved his health and wellbeing and given him the confidence to make more friends.



Achieving success in his computer skill as well as his personal life Emson has found enjoyment, motivation and confidence through the WEA.

Showcasing great spirit and persistence Emson has overcome many obstacles since coming to the UK, now fully integrated into a community where he feels comfortable and at home, Emson is a prime example of openness and inclusivity at the WEA as through volunteering he has become a more confident and well-rounded individual. He has shown great courage and proven adversity is an opportunity in disguise.

Emson is now a valuable volunteer at the WEA and contributes to supporting and guiding others.

# East Midlands: outstanding staff member joint award winner

**Patricia Wilson**

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**Patricia has been employed by the WEA for a few years now and is employed as a support worker. She provides one-to-one support to students with learning difficulties and disabilities and enhances their learning experience to help them to fulfil their academic potential through her encouragement and support. Going over and beyond in many aspects of her work Patricia has won the hearts of many students.**

Patricia has been a beacon of strength to our students, who feel particularly comfortable approaching her during times of difficulty. Her personable nature and ability to deal sensitively and patiently with others makes her truly an inspiration for everyone who works with her.

Being extremely hands-on Patricia can handle the trickiest situations with extreme compassion and care her calm and professional manner puts the students at ease and gives them a safe environment. Her support has been invaluable in helping her students to achieve their learning goals and in helping them to overcome their barriers to learning. She has helped them to improve their confidence and has helped build their self-esteem

Over the months Patricia has gone from strength to strength although her role involves pressure and sometimes stressful situations she has never once floundered or shown any sign of frustration. She has responded to each and every challenge with dedication, enthusiasm and positivity.



# London: Social impact award winner

## Journeys Project

Partnering with the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, this was an innovative example of co-production with Central North West London (CNWL) NHS Foundation Trust, the WEA and The Playground Theatre, to help tackle the ever growing problems of mental health within communities, delivering an outlet for those who live with mental health issues, with a unique theatre presentation created by the mental health community of St Charles Hospital.

Written, staged and performed by the patients, this new project covered the light and dark moments in the struggles of mental health. Performed at the Playground Theatre in Latimer Road, this heartfelt piece not only inspired but educated family, friends and professionals about the personal battles and triumphs within. It was not only a brilliant collaboration between different parties, but it was a shining example of courage, togetherness and understanding. Journeys was an outstanding and moving example of how individuals can come together to share their stories and in doing so, promote wellbeing and recovery. The camaraderie that grew over the months was a powerful bonding experience for the whole community that supported those who took part through their recovery journeys in hospital and on back into the community, forging bonds that continue beyond the performances.

The Well Written workshops, the name inspired by work co-created by Cate and Anthony who had previously set up Well Read (a play reading group with patients in hospital) saw Cate as Service User and Carer Engagement with St Charles CNWL working closely with patients to organise a brilliant project that helped others blossom as well as bring



more light, and more unashamed conversation to a sensitive topic. Leading the writing, Stewart created a great platform and creative outlet which inspired many patients to share their story. Anthony as director brilliantly guided and inspired everyone with confidence in their growing voices and stories to bring out the best in all and to bring the presentation to a finessed and heart felt vision that astonished everyone who bore witness. The opportunity to present in the welcoming space of the theatre with the wonderful Isabella Strada on lighting and sound, gave this work the most incredible platform to come together.

This project inspired many people within the community, creating a memorable theatre production that showcased mental health struggles, loss and bereavement, dark and light humour and joy in the connections of humanity.

Successfully creating a safe space and a comfortable environment this project gave others the opportunity to bond as well as find the confidence within themselves to perform and share their emotions on difficult subjects. For those who have dealt with or are still dealing with mental health this was a great chance to be creative and bring the local community together.

# North East: outstanding tutor award winner

**Kelly Ness**

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**Kelly Ness is an outstanding role model. Her work ethic is second to none, and she will always go above and beyond for her students. Kelly has taken a group of women who had no knowledge or experience of drama or performing in any way, shape or form, to a level where they are now at home on stage and gave them the confidence to use these skills in everyday life.**

Kelly Ness has inspired every member of the Drama Queens to progress in the performing arts. She has taken people who only wanted to be backstage to taking on lead roles and even singing solo to a live audience. Kelly has inspired people who didn't think they could do drama, who had low self-esteem and no confidence, to come and join a drama group and perform on a stage. She provides support and encouragement for every individual student.

Kelly is willing to listen and incorporate the ideas of her students. She empowers her students to take a leading role not just on stage but in their own lives too.



# North West: outstanding regional partner award winner

## STEC Speke Training and Education Centre

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**STEC aims to advance learning and relieve poverty in South Liverpool communities, especially Speke Garston and Belle Vale wards. The charity assists unemployed people back into employment while also promoting advancement amongst residents who are under-employed or perhaps seek greater job security.**



STEC is a registered charity which was initially established as a not for profit company in 1983. STEC works with local partners to build and sustain regeneration on Merseyside. It has developed its main Speke site to be a multi-organisational community anchor building accommodating a range of charitable and community activities together with small businesses. Such onsite partnerships create a synergy which can fortify community resilience and bolster local pride.

STEC actively welcomes all applicants facing disadvantage and barriers to success in the labour market or to progression in life - whether this may involve accessing further/higher education, achieving greater well-being or simply playing a more active role in their community. STEC also welcomes learning providers to deliver their programmes on-site.

Highly valued as a brilliant asset to the community, STEC offers a testing ground for many local innovative projects such as The Original Swap Shop – a very successful anti-poverty initiative.

Partnering with the WEA since 2010, STEC has accommodated the WEA's delivery of ESOL, Driving Theory for ESOL Learners, PTTLS and varied community capacity-building initiatives.

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has recognised the work of STEC by investing in a major upgrade of facilities to provide full accessibility and better environmental sustainability. This investment will empower STEC and learning partners on-site to operate more inclusively and will directly support learners of both STEC and WEA by enhancing

facilities. All in all, STEC is a wonderful example of an enterprising and successful independent community learning centre and a sustainable resource for residents, community groups and indeed local business.

STEC Chief Executive Mark Ord is a member of the Regional Committee and an avid supporter of the WEA. Mark's passion for education for those who are disadvantaged is infectious, and we can be proud to have him and STEC as our partner. The number of students and people's lives that are improved serves as a testament not only to Mark but to all the staff whose endeavours are inspired by his determination to help others to achieve a greater quality of life through education.

This partnership between WEA and STEC has undoubtedly brought benefit to both organisations, has further promoted our reputation for reaching the most disadvantaged and is a great model for other partners to follow.

# Southern: social impact award winner

## Stronger Together Project

**With a grant from Southampton City Council, Project Coordinator, Margarita Waller-Gutierrez embarked on a community project to work with several local residents to organise and take part in a family-friendly event to encourage parents from local schools to engage in broader community activities.**

Twelve students from BAMER backgrounds, ten of who were speakers of other languages, settled on a plan to create a community garden to attract local wildlife and provide an educational space by Mount Pleasant school. To gain the skills they needed, the students undertook a Level 1, City & Guilds, Team Working skills course over five weeks which started in January.

As part of the project, the team was keen to engage experts to advise and guide them. They worked with Ian Bailey from The Hawthorns Urban Wildlife Centre to produce a gardening calendar to help them understand when to plant, prune and harvest. They enlisted the help of Southampton Wood Project, a local recycling organisation to establish what type of materials they could use to help promote sustainability. - The group took part in a 'seed swap' at The Art House and also engaged with Terry Rendle from Sholing Valley Study Centre and Phil Budd, an ecologist.

In March the students organised an event where over 400 visitors learned about our garden plans, made bird boxes' feeders, met and talked to each other, participated in activities with their families and volunteered to make a difference in their local area. The event drew the Mayor, local councillors and community leaders which gave it real status, but it also attracted hard to reach families who might not otherwise engage with an academic event held in school and the buzz achieved that day has lingered.

The project has supported active movement, encouraged participants to get involved in seed planting and the growing of vegetables. It has also served to engage the wider school community which, in turn, has helped to inform and educate residents.



# West Midlands: outstanding student group award winner

## St Vincent's Ladies Birmingham

**The students at St. Vincent's Ladies in Birmingham confronted many difficult challenges throughout their course. These challenges ranged from personal difficulties and changes in circumstances through to course delays and a change of tutor. Nevertheless, they continued to support one another to complete and achieve their qualification.**

The students came from all walks of life, and many had not met before joining the course. Each of them formed good bonds quickly, already building new friendships and widening community engagement. Many on the course faced tough challenges, but they supported one another in and outside of the classroom. They have inspired one another to push their boundaries and develop their skills. They

have opened one another's homes and built firm friendships which they continue to do so. They are an inspiration to everyone who feels like giving up because when it got tough for them, they pushed, supported, encouraged, challenged one another and hugged one another through it all.

They have inspired staff members in the schools with their commitment and determination to complete and achieve this qualification. For example, one student had her baby girl while taking the course and didn't want to be taken off the course as she felt it would support her development. The group all supported her by planning study nights at this student's house so she would still be able to do her work and not fall behind.





# South West: outstanding student award winner

**Helen Russell**

**Helen has showed great progression through the Return to Learn course and has now enrolled to complete a degree in Health and Social Care at the Open University. Despite not doing any studying in the last 11 years and feeling very self-conscious about undertaking a maths course she has not only improved her skills but also gone from strength to strength on her learning journey.**

Helen's learning journey has not only helped boost her self-esteem and wellbeing but has also allowed her to move on in her career as she has now gained her confidence back in numeracy and literacy. After taking a WEA course Helen has enrolled on a Higher Education course in Health and Social Care at the Open University and is now considering a Trainee Nursing Associate or Operating Department Practitioner role. In addition she now has the confidence to support her son who is currently studying for his GCSE's.

She has motivated many individuals on her course and is a wonderful ambassador for adult education.

Since joining the course Helen has had a great impact on others on her course. She has truly inspired and motivated many individuals similar to herself to stay consistent. Her enthusiasm and commitment throughout the course was commendable and something that many students on the course admired.

Helen is a fantastic role model for those looking to improve their career prospects - she has shown genuine heart and character by



stepping into the world of learning. Having not studied for a while Helen understands what is like to feel self-conscious about walking back into a classroom. Her positive attitude and willingness to learn has not only helped inspire other students but also help create a strong supportive environment which has encouraged other students to progress.

Helen is a prime example of those who wish to push themselves further but have worries and self-doubt about their abilities, having overcome her own personal barriers Helen has managed to re-sharpen her skills and progress onto a higher level of learning. Balancing her work, home and learning she has never lost sight of her goals or helping others to achieve theirs. She has been a great energy to have around and is a true asset to the WEA.

# Yorkshire & Humber: outstanding student group joint award winner

## Painted Fabrics Project group

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**The WEA received a grant to deliver a project focusing on Sheffield's Painted Fabrics Company which was set up to provide retraining and employment to severely injured and psychologically traumatized casualties of the First World War. Many of the students who came together in 2017 to participate in the project have experienced difficulties with their mental and physical health.**

Forging a durable and supportive group, the Painted Fabrics Project demonstrated great creativity and empathy in producing art, textiles, poetry and stage props emulating the work of the company. For many participants the level of commitment was challenging; however the core group maintained their involvement and indeed became the driving force of the project. Growing in confidence and asserting their right to

determine the direction of the work participants were involved in devising, writing, rehearsing and performing in an original play, Painters of Light and Shadow, which was performed to full houses in December 2018 as part of the University of Sheffield's EnableUs.

The project has helped many develop new or existing skills and interests in research or creative work, with many trying things for the first time and achieving outcomes which gave them great pride and helped to challenge assumptions about disability.

The group is now in the process of setting up a social enterprise in order to share their learning about Painted Fabrics Ltd. They have already secured bookings at events including a poetry book launch and an Armistice Day event.

The participants have shown their commitment, enthusiasm and skill in sustaining their involvement and increasingly leading the direction of the project. They have been an inspiration to staff, partners and volunteers.



# Yorkshire & Humber: outstanding student group joint award winner

**Action Towards Inclusion Helping in Schools group**

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**This Outstanding Helping in Schools group are participants in “Action Towards Inclusion” a BBO project in York, North Yorkshire and the East Riding, which supports the most disadvantaged and socially excluded individuals who are furthest from the labour market and who experience significant barriers to work. It provides support for these people to address barriers to work and tackle the disadvantages they face, helping them move towards job search, education or training and employment.**

All students have disabilities, social exclusion and/or serious mental health issues. Students needed significant extra support and, because of their additional needs and disabilities, had to put in a significant amount of extra time and effort into their learning. Just being in the classroom every week was an achievement for some and so to attend and complete the requirements of a long accredited course was a major achievement and a credit to all involved.

The group sometimes struggled with the workload and the commitment required and students were often a long way “out of their comfort zone”, so extra support was needed from both their project key workers and the tutor. But students didn't give up, and the group worked so hard to achieve their goals in spite of facing many educational and emotional challenges along the way.





**With thanks  
to our sponsors**

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## Lloyds Banking Group

Lloyds Banking Group partnered with the WEA back in 2014 to offer skills-based volunteering to LBG colleagues in WEA classrooms. A great opportunity for colleagues and WEA students alike, this has enabled more than 3,000 students to develop their reading, writing, digital skills, confidence and employability.

Based on feedback from those involved, the partnership was extended for a further two years and expanded to focus our energy on the large number of 'hardly reached' adults who are in the greatest need of training and education but receive the least support and funding.

An exciting work placement programme has also been piloted in Edinburgh with the Mitie foundation. Unemployed students, referred by Jobcentre Plus, attend an employability session run by WEA and supported by Lloyds colleagues, with the prospect of a four week work placement with Mitie and potentially a full-time job. This programme and the use of LBG digital champions to support students with their digital learning will continue to develop into 2020 and beyond. The programme continues to inspire our colleagues and help the most vulnerable in our local communities.



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## Learning and Work Institute

We are an independent policy, research and development organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion. We research what works, influence policy, develop new ways of thinking, and help implement new approaches.

We want everyone to have an opportunity to realise their ambitions and potential in learning, work and throughout life. We believe a better skilled workforce, in better-paid jobs, is good for business, good for the economy, and good for society. We want learning and work to count.

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## Skills and Education Group

With more than 100 years of collective experience, the Group's strategic partnerships create opportunities to develop, inform, influence and represent the wider education and skills sector.

We want all learners to achieve their full potential – no matter what their age, background or ability. We do this by supporting the development and delivery of education and skills providers, as well as providing high-quality qualifications and assessments.

Our brands include ABC Awards, Certa Awards, Certa Access and emfec.

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## Arden University

Arden University is a young, modern university with a mission to make Higher Education (HE) more accessible, engaging and beneficial to people everywhere.

As one of the fastest-growing universities in the UK, Arden's programmes are designed to fit around people's lives, with courses delivered via Distance Learning, Blended Learning (a mix of face-to-face and online study) or as higher-level Degree Apprenticeships.

All courses come with a strong focus on employment and many have been approved by professional bodies such as ACCA, BPS, CMI. By involving alumni, industry experts and academics in the creation of our programmes, graduates acquire key practical skills which are highly valuable in the workplace.

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## Ruth Spellman

Ruth Spellman, CEO & General Secretary of the WEA is sponsoring this year's Outstanding Student award as she is standing down this year after leading the WEA for over 7 and half years. Ruth has dedicated her career to passionate campaigning for further and adult education, lifelong learning and diversity and firmly believes that increases in social inequality can only be addressed if people have access to the education services that enable them to reach their full potential. Both her grandfather and father lectured for the WEA in the 1930's and 1950's, and she, too, was a part-time lecturer for the WEA in the 1970's so she is well aware of the impact of the organisation to the thousands of students we reach each year.

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## NOCN Group

Established in 1987, NOCN Group is an educational and skills charity whose core aims are to help learners reach their potential and organisations to thrive. The group includes business units specialising in regulated UK and international qualifications, End Point Assessment, Access to Higher Education, assured short courses, SMART job cards, assessment services, consultancy, and research. NOCN is at the forefront of vocational skills development and apprenticeships, including the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in the UK. NOCN is the only awarding body in the UK, which specialises in productivity and is focused on increasing the UK's competitiveness globally.




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## Olive Cordell

Olive Cordell embarked on a career in teaching as an adult learner herself, beginning by taking a part-time degree in education while employed in full-time youth and community work, going on to excel first at teaching adult literacy and numeracy then at other subjects. Following her death in 2002, Olive Cordell's family decided to remember, and in a sense continue, her work by funding an award that would recognise and encourage those similarly committed. The WEA was and is the ideal institution to host this award, offering as it does wide access to a host of opportunities which often positively transform the lives of continuing and new students. Both of these annual awards, one for the Tutor and one for the Student, honour the indefatigable self-motivation and hard work which is essential to successful adult teaching and learning.

# Olive Cordell

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## FE Week - Media Partner

FE Week is the premier news service for the further education and skills sector in England.

Since its founding in September 2011, FE Week has cemented itself as the go-to news source for further education and skills with a reputation for breaking news, investigations and expert analysis.

FE Week is published by Lsect during term time, and is written for middle and senior management working in colleges and private training providers, and those interested in this sector, including government, policy shapers and other service providers.

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# FE WEEK

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