

Learner Welcome Pack

2024/25



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 am 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.

I hope you enjoy your time learning with us.

Best wishes

Dan Ratcliff
Service Manager



Contents:

| | |
|--|---------|
| • Welcome from Service Manager | Page 2 |
| • Contents | Page 3 |
| • Our Values | Page 4 |
| • Getting the best from your learning | Page 4 |
| • Equality and Diversity | Page 5 |
| • Health and Safety | Page 6 |
| • Safeguarding & Prevent | Page 6 |
| • Learner Services | Page 7 |
| • Guidance for digital online learning | Page 8 |
| • Disclosures | Page 9 |
| • Examinations | Page 10 |
| • Complaints, Comments and Feedback | Page 10 |
| • Quiet Contemplation Room | Page 10 |
| • Frequently Asked Questions | Page 10 |
| • 2023– 2024 Term Dates | Page 11 |
| • Our Education Centres | Page 12 |

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 2024/25 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 collaborate 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
- Carlyne 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 from GOV.UK, our Rochester Centre, or on our

[Medway Adult Education website](#). You can also get independent financial advice from the [Citizens Advice website](#).

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.

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 for career advice on 0800 100 900.

nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

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:

dan.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:

How can I find out about the courses?

- Online: [Medway Adult Education website](#)
- From our course prospectus
- From the staff at one of our centres
- By phoning 01634 338400

How can I get more information and advice about a specific course?

- Read the course information sheet for each course, available from our centres or on the website: [the Medway Adult Education website](#). This will give you information about the level of the course, what new skills you will gain, whether you need any previous skills or qualifications and how the teaching will be delivered.
- You can make an appointment or arrange to speak to a programme manager by phoning 01634 338400 or emailing adulthoodeducation@medway.gov.uk They will discuss whether a course is right for you and will be able to suggest other learning providers if we do not have a course suitable for you.

Do you have any support for learners with disabilities?

At Medway Adult Education we are committed to helping learners succeed whatever their background or additional needs. If you have a disability or any other support needs discuss during your enrolment, come into one of our centres or phone us on 01634 338400. One of our staff will be pleased to assist you.

Do you have any study facilities for learners?

Public access computers are available at the Rochester library, which is at the same location as the Medway Adult Education centre in Rochester.

Can I get support with English, maths, and languages?

English and maths support may be available if you are studying certain subjects. We may also be able to provide language support if English is not your first language.

Please email adulthoodeducation@medway.gov.uk or phone 01634 338400 for more information.

Am I able to get any financial help with the fees?

You may be entitled to help with the cost of books, travel and childcare depending on your personal circumstances and the course you intend to study. Phone 01634 338400 for more information.

To be eligible for free training you need to be:

- Unemployed and in receipt of a state benefit

Or

- Employed (including self-employed) and earning less than £25,000 gross per year

This only applies to courses which have a course code that ends in the letter F, and other criteria may apply. For more information, or to discuss your eligibility, please phone 01634 338400.

Term dates: 2024/25

| | | |
|-----------------|---|----------------|
| Term 1 | Monday, 2 September to Friday, 18 October 2024 | 7 weeks |
| Autumn break | Monday, 21 October to Friday, 25 October 2024 | 1 week |
| Term 2 | Monday, 28 October to Thursday, 19 December 2024 | 8 weeks |
| Christmas break | Friday, 20 December to Friday, 3 January 2025 | 1 week |
| Term 3 | Monday, 6 January to Friday, 14 January 2025 | 6 weeks |
| February break | Monday, 17 February to Friday, 21 February 2025 | 1 week |
| Term 4 | Monday, 24 February to Friday, 4 April 2025 | 6 weeks |
| Spring break | Monday, 7 April to Friday, 18 April 2025 | 2 weeks |
| Term 5 | Monday, 21 April to Friday, 23 May 2025 | 5 weeks |
| May break | Monday, 26 May to Friday, 30 May 2025 | 1 week |
| Term 6 | Monday, 2 June to Tuesday, 22 July 2025 | 7 weeks |

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.

Rochester Community Hub (main centre)

Eastgate,
Rochester,
ME1 1EW.

Phone: (01634) 338400

Email: adulthoodeducation@medway.gov.uk

Opening Hours:

Monday to Friday: 9.00am-6pm

Saturday: 10.00am - 4.00pm

Access: There is a lift.

Parking:

Paid parking available at: Blue Boar Ln, Rochester, ME1 1PD and for longer courses there is the multi-storey car park off Corporation St.

Rail: 5-10 minutes' walk from Rochester Station.

Bus: Arriva buses numbered 133, 140, 141, 151, 190, 191, 193, 633, 670, 692, 693, 694, 695 and 700 stops outside the Centre on Corporation Street.

Gillingham centre (main)

Medway Learning & Skills Hub

Unit 2 Britton Farm Street

Gillingham

ME7 1GX

Phone: (01634) 338400

Email: adulthoodeducation@medway.gov.uk

Opening Hours:

Monday to Tuesday: 9am-5pm

Wednesday to Friday: 8.30am-4.30pm

Access: There is a lift.

Parking:

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

Rail: 5-10 minutes' walk from Gillingham Station.

Bus: Arriva buses numbered 101, 116, 121, 176, 177 and 182 serve the Gillingham town centre and will set passengers down about five minutes' walk from the centre in most cases.