



## Event Planning Guide



- Adult Learners' Week
- Event planning
- Ideas for events
- Resources
- Sponsorship and partnership
- Engaging the media
- Evaluating the events

Co-ordinated by:



Supported by:



# Adult Learners' Week

Adult Learners' Week is the UK's largest festival of learning, engaging on average 100,000 people each year, it celebrates learning in all its diversity.

Every year, Adult Learners' Week inspires people to see what learning could do for them, offering them the chance to catch up on skills they've missed out on in the past, develop themselves for the future, or simply learn for pleasure.

Holding an event as part of Adult Learners' Week is a great way to showcase the opportunities that you provide, encouraging new audiences to take the first steps into learning, and highlight the benefits it can bring. The 20th Adult Learners' Week will take place from 14 – 20 May 2011.

It is a chance to have fun and be creative, whilst spreading the message that learning is good for health, self – esteem and employability.

So whatever you plan to do, make sure it fits your goals and appeals to your audience. For more information visit [www.alw.org.uk](http://www.alw.org.uk)



# Planning your event

Here are a few questions to think about to help you get started and make the most of your involvement in Adult Learners' Week.

## Step 1: Set your objectives

- What do you want to get out of the event and what do you want attendees to gain from the event?
- What sort of event will attract the type of audience you are trying to reach? (Fun and informal activities can be a great way to engage new people, so be creative.)
- Where will be the most appropriate location for the audience and for you?
- How can you reach your audience in the most cost-effective way?
- Is there a theme that you could base it on?

## Step 2: Be creative

- What resources do you have? For example, staff, volunteers, time, budget.
- How can you work with other partners in order to make the event as successful as possible? See p. 9 for more information about partnerships.

## Step 3: Use supporting resources

- Order **Adult Learners' Week resources** to help tie your activities to the national publicity and publicise your event.
- The Adult Learners' Week branding suite and guidelines enable any event to be associated with the national initiative. It features downloadable logos so that event materials, such as programmes, flyers or invitations, can be branded for Adult Learners' Week and downloadable posters to customise for your use.
- Offer free giveaways to promote other learning opportunities to your audiences such as New Horizons magazine – a motivational magazine for potential learners (free).
- For a full Adult Learners' Week resource kit, purchase an Event in a Box, which contains all the material you need for your activities all for just £55.

#### Step 4: Publicise your event

Put your event on the **Adult Learners' Week Event Diary**, this is a free online advertising opportunity for you to publicise your activities.

The event diary is used by the Next Steps helpline (0800 100 900) advisors who will inform callers of events in their local area. Visit [www.alw.org.uk/events](http://www.alw.org.uk/events) to add your event to the diary.

You can also register your event as a “closed event” so that it is not publicised to the public, but can still be used as an example in our national PR and advocacy activity.

#### Step 5: Use the media hook

Make the most of the local media – to ensure they are aware of your event and can promote your messages.

We have some suggestions to support you, including a press release template. See p.10 for more information.

#### Step 6: Measure success

Use **evaluation forms**, to measure the success of your event and help gain support for other similar activity. Let us know how you get on so we can continue to help make the national case for adult learners. See page 11 for further guidance.

## Ideas for events

Each year hundreds of events are held across the country to celebrate Adult Learners' Week. We have a variety of themes to give you ideas for your activities, and national and local events throughout the week include Cultural Diversity Weekend (14 – 15 May) and Digital Day (20 May). A range of resources to support this activity will be available from the Adult Learners' Week website from April.

Over 4,000 events took place last year engaging over 100,000 participants. These included:

- What is Twitter? Held by the Central library in Leicester, this event provided a relaxed look at social networking, providing an opportunity to explore how to use Twitter Facebook and Youtube. There were also popular events on ensuring child safety on the internet when using online forums such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace. Events also took place on how to buy and sell on Ebay and how to trace your ancestors online.
- Other digital events that took place included photography, and how to download music on to MP3 or iPods.
- An electric telegraph session took place, this hands-on and interactive workshop aimed at adults and families provided the basic science behind the electric telegraph, building a simple telegraph system, use Morse code and discuss the problems of sending electric cables under the sea.

An Introduction to astronomy was also offered during the Week, building awareness around science.

Edge, Dance Company held an evening of dance to embrace live music, participants were encouraged to engage in dance with Humour, rhythmic movement and innovative costumes and surprising choreography.

*'Dance off' is a popular aspect of Cultural Diversity Weekend. It has encouraged over 300 dance events taking place across the country to celebrate the weekend. Dance is a fun and informal way of engaging people in a learning activity; there are so many styles to choose from that everyone can get involved.*

- Clowne Library held a Girls night in, learners were encouraged to have a go at jewellery making, floristry, henna art, and have a consultation with a 'Book Doctor'! Participants were offered Fruit cocktails, hot chocolate and cupcakes covered by a small fee.
- At Tothill Community Centre, learners were encouraged to breathe new life into old clothes by letting down hems, adding a pocket, and other basic alterations.
- For those interested in starting a vegetable patch or filling a few window boxes with flowers, plant swap held by Newington library allowed learners to share hints and tips, as well as plants and seeds, and take home some new recipes to cook home grown vegetables.
- Waste Not Want Not, another green event allowed learners to find out where rubbish goes once it went in the bin. Participants learnt how to make the most of household refuse by composting and other ways of recycling.
- Toys Were U event at Newarke Houses Museum in Leicester held a talk by Philip French on the history of everyday toys. Participants were encouraged to bring along one old toys and share memories of their childhood.
- Dudley Metropolitan Council held a Literacy and numeracy game show and across the country there were numerous CV writing and interview skills workshops career matching workshops.
- A number of culinary tasters were held to developing skills in making cakes and patisseries , Cajun, Creole and Caribbean Chinese food and wine tasting .
- For more ideas and inspiration for planning an event visit the Adult Learners' Week [online events diary](#) that has details of past successful events.

# Resources

**Adult Learners' Week 2011 resources are available to help tie local or regional activities to the national publicity.**

The [Adult Learners' Week website](#) features **videos and podcasts** of Adult Learners' Week Award winners. Their stories are very powerful and can show other adults how learning could benefit them.

The Adult Learners' Week [online event diary](#) is used by Next Step to inform callers of learning opportunities and events in their area. It is a great source of free publicity, as anyone can use it to search for local activities.

## [Event promotion and branding](#)

The Adult Learners' Week **branding guidelines** and **branding suite** allow any event to be associated with the national initiative. It features downloadable logos so that event materials, such as programmes, flyers or invitations, can be branded for Adult Learners' Week.

**Customisable posters** can be downloaded from the Adult Learners Week website [www.alw.org.uk/resources](http://www.alw.org.uk/resources) to publicise activity as part of Adult Learners' Week.

## [Event in a Box](#)

The Adult Learners' Week Event in a Box is a complete starter kit to hold an event for up to 50 people. Download the **Event in a Box** flyer of Materials which contains:

- 50x pens
- 24x balloons in 3 colours
- 10x cotton shoppers
- 2x10 metre length bunting
- 10x Quick Reads (from the new 2011 titles)
- 10x Adult Learners' Week posters
- And a range of learning resources

**New Horizons magazine** is aimed at potential adult learners and includes inspirational features, advice on returning to learning, as well as showcasing different forms of learning. It is [free to order](#) through the Adult Learners' Week website.



# Sponsorship and Partnerships

**Adult Learners' Week** is what it is today because of organisations working together for mutual benefit, it can be an excellent opportunity to build and develop partnerships within your region or sector, and even strengthen your case for sponsorship/ funding.

**Think about what you need from a partner or sponsor to help you run your event?**

- is it money or resource?
- is it volunteers with particular skills?
- or is it contacts?

**What can partners bring?**

Could they help to:

- promote the event?
- share costs?
- increase activity and widen reach?
- provide some prizes as an incentive? or
- provide a venue for the event?

**What benefits will the sponsorship package offer to partners?**

- Logos on publicity materials.
- Media coverage and photo opportunities.
- Advertising space in materials or at events.
- Potential to reach a new audience.

Be open minded and think creatively about which organisations/partners could be useful to your activity.

Sometimes 'piggybacking' on other organisations' activities will provide opportunities to meet and network with their supporters. Local events may be the opportunity to collaborate on some activities under a joint theme.



## Partnership ideas

For example in 2010 a 'Think Tank Goes Wild' family themed event took place in Birmingham, celebrating family and intergenerational learning, the event organised by Thinktank ran workshops science shows, animal artefacts handling sessions. Open to the public this event was extremely popular.

Kendal Library organised a silver surfers event. Working in partnership with volunteers from a local school, college and charity shop, the library ran thirty minute one-to-one IT sessions with older learners.

Other Cumbrian based libraries linked with Local History Week to have local displays and offer introductory sessions to use [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), local history walks and talks also attracted people from the local area.

Working collaboratively during Adult Learners' Week, the Citizens Advice Bureau, Age Concern, Jobcentre Plus and Connexions worked in partnership with libraries in Maryport and Wokington to provide learners with information and advice on courses, job seeking and pension advice.

Unionlearn in Yorkshire and the Humber organised a number of events held at organisations such as United Biscuits, Royal Mail and Primark, and it is estimated that thousands of employees across the region took part in some kind of activity.

St Helens CVS in partnership with local learning providers, organised an event in St Helens town centre. Including demonstrations of dancing, sign language and information stands, it is estimated that over 600 people visited the marquee during the day.



# Engaging the media

Media coverage is a great way to promote events and engage sponsors. A local and regional medium have a regular local audience and offers a good medium to promote your event.

A press release is key to getting a journalist's attention. It provides a source of information for a journalist looking for a story, so they should be short, informative and interesting.

## **Writing a press release**

- Clearly mark the document as a 'Press Release' at the top, including the date.
- Make sure that the title of a release sums up the story, but it should not be a headline.
- The first paragraph should include the six golden questions of journalism: who? what? why? where? when? and how?
- The second and third paragraph can include more detail. Quotes from people, such as learners, sponsors or a spokesperson, can be included here for journalists to use.
- Keep the press release to A4 if possible, and don't forget to add full contact details so that the press can contact someone for more information.
- Any supplementary information can be added to the end as an Editor's Note, such as more about the organisation or person holding the event and relevant photo opportunities.
- Remember to use Adult Learners' Week as your 'hook': journalists keep notes on what happens at particular times of the year and they will have heard of it.

## Event evaluation

The organisations and individuals who get involved each year in promoting the benefits of learning are central to the success of Adult Learners' Week.

The **event holder evaluation form** allows us to measure the reach and outcomes of the initiative, ensuring maximum policy impact for adult learning. The form can be filled in on paper or online, and we will recognise and promote the organisations who support Adult Learners' Week by adding their web address to our list of supporters.

The **event attendance sheet** gives all of your event participants a chance to win a range of top prizes! Attendees can leave their name and phone number to participate in the annual telephone survey about the impact of Adult Learners' Week events and will be entered in to a free prize draw. Its also a great way for you to capture who attended your events.

Both these forms will be available from [www.alw.org.uk/events](http://www.alw.org.uk/events) from April 2011

**To find out more about Adult Learners' Week, to order materials and to access our event diary visit [www.alw.org.uk](http://www.alw.org.uk), or email [alw@niace.org.uk](mailto:alw@niace.org.uk).**