



Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES)

Shortlisted for the Family Learning Innovation Award

About Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES)

Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) serves over 6,000 learners annually through qualification courses, apprenticeship programs, and extensive community-based initiatives. Their approach addresses a wide range of needs through diverse offerings, including Professional Pathways, Creative Industries, ESOL, Functional Skills, and Community Learning.

WAES collaborates with local partners and employers to support communities in growth, learning and development, helping individuals secure employment.

Family Learning Innovation: Green Live Learning Lab

WAES developed the Green Live Learning Lab to tackle Westminster City Council's challenge of engaging residents with local low-carbon and retrofit regeneration efforts. They recognised that their Family Learning programme primarily catered to a limited group of families who were already familiar with their services.

The team decided to expand their curriculum to reach a broader audience of local families, specifically residents of North Paddington, to engage in green issues and sustainability planning.

The project also aimed to inspire interest and aspirations towards careers in the green economy. To do this, they created a 'live classroom' in neighbourhoods, fostering a 'see it, understand it, be it' approach. By engaging communities traditionally distant from the green agenda, they aimed to highlight and promote green careers for families and their children.

Activities included:

- Sessions with sustainability experts
- Learning walks
- Site visits
- Co-creating teaching materials
- Group work – comparing, evaluating, discussing and presenting



Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES)

Shortlisted for the Family Learning Innovation Award

Impact and next steps

"I've learned how to live a sustainable lifestyle to minimise our impact on the environment and avoid overusing the Earth's resources. From now on, I will always think about how it will impact the environment before making any decisions."

The project successfully engaged over 100 Westminster residents, leading to increased community involvement in the council's retrofit initiatives. Participants were excited and energised by the innovative learning opportunities the Green Live Learning Lab provided.

Families and learners developed a deeper understanding of sustainability and environmental issues. Families particularly expressed an appreciation for the learning walks, shared discussions, and informative presentations, which encouraged them to adopt greener habits at home and influence others to do the same.

There were also benefits to general Family Learning, particularly in ESOL classes. The Green Live Learning Lab enabled learners from diverse backgrounds and language abilities to progress at their own pace. By focusing on the parent as the starting point and drawing on their existing education, WAES was able to support them in their specific areas of need.

To enable the programme to continue to evolve, partnerships within the local council are key. The college now has a new department delivering Green Skills with Level 2 and Level 3 accredited courses in retrofitting.