

5. Learning

It's never too late to learn

When older people say 'it's never too late to learn' it is true. Many people in their 60s, 70s and 80s are taking courses, learning new skills and sometimes choosing to gain qualifications including degrees. Age shouldn't stop you learning something new and staying mentally active. In fact it's an opportunity to take part in something new that interests you. For example art classes, furniture restoration, flower arranging. A computer class could help you to use online learning, email to friends, buy things or access information through the internet. Learning is also an opportunity to meet new people and make new friends.

Why it's important

Learning can have positive effects on how you feel. Research suggests that keeping mentally active can reduce the risk of certain illnesses like dementia and alzheimer's.

Research also shows that sensory stimulation is more effective in changing the behaviour, mood and cognition of older adults with dementia than a physical activity such as a game.

Choosing what to do

There are many courses and activities available to the older age group. Many take place in local community venues. Listed below are a number of contacts. When you make contact ask about fees and fee reductions for people on low incomes. If you need help or support to take part in learning ask about the help you could receive.

Colleges of further education offer lots of community based classes as well as classes on their main sites.

For information contact:

- Kirklees College, Huddersfield centre, Tel: 01484 437000 or Freephone 0500 162100 or visit www.huddcoll.ac.uk
- Kirklees College, Dewsbury centre, Tel: 01924 465916 or visit www.kirkleescollege.ac.uk

You can also contact Learndirect. Learndirect is a government agency which runs a free national advice line about all areas of learning:

- Learndirect, Tel: 0800 101 901 or visit www.learndirect.co.uk

The Learning line is a free local helpline offering information and advice about courses available in the area:

- Learning line tel: 0800 5 979 979. Ring this number to find out about a wide range of courses including courses at local community centres and with voluntary organisations.

University of the Third Age (U3A) can also support you with learning. They cover various subjects such as languages, music, information technology and leisure activities. Some can be done in your own home:

- University of the Third Age, Tel: 01924 400512 or 01484 225208



Neighbourhood Learning Networks work with local organisations to plan community based learning. For details of your local network phone:

- Neighbourhood Learning Networks, Tel: 01484 225016

The Workers Education Association provides adults with access to a diverse range of learning.

- For more information contact the regional office, Tel: 0113 245 3304

A number of other organisations also provide community based learning, particularly in media, IT (including digital photography), literacy and numeracy (DPEVH). For more information on what they can offer contact:

- Beaumont Street Studios (Huddersfield Town Centre), Tel: 01484 452013
- Crosland Moor Community Learning Centre, Tel: 01484 462346
- Disabled Peoples Electronic Village Hall (Dewsbury Town Centre), Tel: 01924 453502
- Paddock Community Forum, Tel: 01484 431400

Visit www.workabout.org.uk

If you are involved in a voluntary or community group Voluntary Action Kirklees have a number of courses which can help you to get the most from the experience.

- Contact Voluntary Action Kirklees on 01484 518457.

Head to your local library and information centre – a great source of information.

Your local library and information centre is a good source of information. Kirklees has 27 libraries and seven mobile libraries. You can borrow books, open

learning materials and use the internet free. If you are unable to get to a branch or mobile library through a disability, medical condition or if you are housebound the home service can bring the library direct to your doorstep and deliver books and talking books on cassette or CD.

- Home service, Tel: 01484 226363
- Mobile service, Tel: 01484 226320
- Kirklees Library and Information Centres (Culture and Leisure Services), Tel: 01484 226300 or visit www.kirklees.gov.uk/libraries

You might also find the websites below interesting:

- www.bbc.co.uk/learning
- www.kirklees.gov.uk/localorganisations
- www.lifelonglearning.co.uk



Community activities take place across all of Kirklees.