

Lifelong Learning

Taking up learning opportunities at any age can enhance your life and help you to feel healthier and happier. If you want to get out and about and do activities where you can meet other people, you could do a lifelong learning course.

What is Lifelong Learning?

There are a number of different options open to you if you are thinking about learning a new skill or developing an existing interest further. Courses can be formal or informal and range from one-off workshops, to longer courses that can last for weeks or months.

You can find out about courses in your area at your [local library](#) or [community centre or hub](#).

Where to take part in lifelong learning

There's lots of places in Newcastle where you can learn new skills. Some organisations run free sessions. Contact the organisations listed below to see what's available.

Arts, Culture and Heritage

[BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art](#) has a range of free activities including; a public programme of artist's talks, discussion events, and various courses and workshops.

[Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums](#) offer a range of activities and exhibitions across their venues in Newcastle and Gateshead

[Newcastle Libraries](#) runs events, talks and activities that you can take part in. For example reading groups, knitting, public talks on local history and from authors.

[Open College of the Arts \(OCA\)](#) offer flexible distance learning with tutors who are practising artists, writers and designers. Courses include: painting; drawing; sculpture; textiles; calligraphy; photography; creative digital arts; art and design; art history; creative writing; garden design; interior design; composing music; singing; and understanding dance. They're a non-profit making charity that is affiliated to The Open University.

Colleges and Universities

[Gateshead College](#) is an inclusive, values driven organisation. Equality and diversity is firmly embedded in the culture, strategy and day-to-day operations to deliver fair and equal access to learning for all. They offer a range of courses for 16-18 year olds and for adults looking for a promotion, want to change career or return to education after a break.

[Newcastle City Learning](#) deliver hundreds of Adult Education courses every year. Their courses include: informal sessions to learn new skills and meet new people. Such as arts and crafts, cookery, holiday Spanish and digital skills. Formal sessions to gain qualifications. Such as literacy and numeracy, apprenticeships and much more. Visit their website or Facebook to find out what's available.

[Newcastle College](#) has an wide range of day, evening and weekend courses.

[Converge Northumbria](#) offer free educational opportunities to people 18 years old and over. You can take part if you are currently receiving mental health support or have experienced mental health issues. This is a supportive and inclusive environment at Northumbria campus. Courses are between 4 and 10 weeks in length. You can apply for courses throughout the year. There's no limit on how many you can attend. Courses include: drama and performance, creative writing, music and employability.

[Newcastle University](#) is home to teaching and research across a diverse and exciting range of subject areas. They have over 200 undergraduate and 300 postgraduate degrees to choose from.

[Newcastle University – Public Lectures office](#) runs a series of public lectures called **Insights**. The lectures cover a wide variety of topics and are given by public figures and scholars. The lectures are **free**, although sometimes it is necessary to book a ticket for them.

[Northumbria University](#) offers educational opportunities to people of all ages and backgrounds. They offer a range of study programmes including undergraduate degree programmes; part-time courses; postgraduate opportunities; and distance learning options.

[Sunderland University](#) offer a range of undergraduate, postgraduate, online and short courses.

Community learning

[Community Centres and Hubs](#) there are lots of community centres in Newcastle that run lots of different activities. Such as cookery, fitness and much more

[Northern Learning Trust](#) work with people to develop their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and communication. They work with people through personalised learning programmes, either one-to-one or in very small groups.

[Walker Learning Hive](#) is a community centre offering free learning opportunities to residents living in Walker. Topics include English and mathematics, crafts, computer skills and information on volunteering.

[Workers' Educational Association \(WEA\)](#) is the UK's largest voluntary provider of adult education. They are committed to providing access to education and learning for adults from all backgrounds, and in particular to those who have previously missed out on education.

Crisis Skylight Newcastle is an education, training and employment centre for homeless and vulnerably-housed people in the centre of Newcastle. Classes include Art, Fitness, ESOL, ICT and Digital Photography.

ReCoCo The Recovery College Collective: run a variety of creative, educational and support-based classes. All courses are free and open to anyone who would find them helpful in their recovery from mental illness, substance misuse, trauma or distress, or to anyone who might find them beneficial to their wellbeing.

Guide Training NE is a company that delivers a training course to help people qualify for a Blue Badge for Tourist Guiding.

Online

Explore is a co-operative lifelong learning scheme where members pay an annual subscription fee and can then choose to attend a wide range of one off talks or longer courses. As a member you can attend as many courses as you like.

FutureLearn provides free online courses from various universities and cultural institutions from around the world. You can choose a course from a range of topics; from Science & Technology to Arts & Humanities, from Body & Mind to Business & Management.

LearnDirect offer a range of courses in maths, English, IT and business and management. You can do a course at your local centre, or from home if you have access to the internet.

The Open University offer a range of free online courses including Writing Fiction, Managing your money, Music, Psychology, Voluntary Sector, Online security and much more.

Older People

The Glasshouse International centre for Music has **The Silver Programme** which is part of their Learning and Participation programme. They provide a range of supported music workshops and events for people over the age of 50.

Search Newcastle If you live in the inner west area of Newcastle, Search may have something that would interest you. They organise activities for people aged over 50 years old. To find out about what they have to offer, contact them or visit their website.

Elders Council of Newcastle is the older people's forum for people over 50 in Newcastle. Helping to make Newcastle more age friendly. When you become a member you can volunteer to take part in their working groups, digital skills project, newsletter and radio show.

Newcastle U3A – University of the Third Age offers lifelong learning opportunities for older people. Newcastle U3A is one of hundreds of U3As throughout the country. Newcastle U3A has over 30 special interest groups as well as monthly social meetings.

Rest Less is a digital community that aims to inspire today's generation of over 50s and 60s to get the most from life – focusing on work, financial wellbeing, learning, volunteering, lifestyle and more. You can find a learning course on their website and start learning a new skill.

[Pottery Bank Community Centre](#) runs a range of courses. They include, cookery, woodwork, sewing, and first aid.

Information Technology (IT)

If you don't want to, or are unable to, take up an IT course with one of the above organisations, there are some other ways for you to get help using a computer. You can call in to your local library, which all have computers for public use. Other sections of Information Now that may be of interest include

- [Computer Classes and IT Support Available](#)
 - [Getting Online and Digital Equipment](#)
 - Visit our [Libraries](#) section to find out where your nearest library is.
 - [Information Technology \(IT\)](#) lists other opportunities that may interest you.
 - [GCF LearnFree.org](#) offers 125 free online tutorials. This includes e mail, internet, Microsoft office, maths, reading, career planning and digital skills
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Grants and funding available to help you study

[S.Y. Killingley Memorial Trust](#) give grants to part-time learners in the arts and humanities in the North-East of England. Grants may be used to pay for course fees, travel, materials or other expenses of following a course. Anyone over 18 living in the North-East, or wanting to follow a course in the North-East, who has difficulty meeting the cost can apply to the Trust. This is open to those who would like to take part in evening classes, private tuition or part-time degree or diploma courses.

[Turn2us](#) is a charity where you find charitable funds and grants to apply for, when you need money for essential things in life. For example, furniture, household items, white goods, electrical items, studying, bringing up children, experiencing life changing circumstances and more. On their website they provide a benefits calculator, grant finder, and a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Helper tool.

[Community Foundation](#) have a variety of grants available to apply for individuals and organisations. You can use their online grant finder to see the grants that are available at the moment. These grants are usually available to help improve health, wellbeing and education opportunities for people in the North East.

Last updated: March 7, 2025

Useful Organisations

Newcastle U3A – University of the Third Age

Email: newcastleu3a@hotmail.com

Website: u3asites.org.uk/newcastle

Telephone: 0191 230 4430

Address: 5 Pink Lane, NE1 5DW

Newcastle City Learning

Email: NCLGatewayEnquiries@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: www.newcastlecitylearning.ac.uk

Telephone: 0191 277 3520

Address: Westgate College, NE4 9LU

Newcastle College

Email: enquiries@ncl-coll.ac.uk

Website: www.ncl-coll.ac.uk

Telephone: 0191 200 4000

Address: Rye Hill Campus, NE4 5BR

Workers' Educational Association (WEA)

Email: northeast@wea.org.uk

Website: <https://www.wea.org.uk/north-east>

Telephone: 0191 212 6100

Address: 21 Portland Terrace, NE2 1QQ

Open College of the Arts (OCA)

Email: enquiries@oca.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.oca.ac.uk/>

Telephone: 0800 731 2116

Address: Michael Young Arts Centre, S75 1JN

Newcastle Libraries

Email: information@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: www.newcastle.gov.uk/leisure-libraries-and-tourism/libraries

Telephone: 0191 278 7878

Address: Newcastle City Library, NE1 8AX

Northumbria University

Email: course.enquiries@northumbria.ac.uk

Website: www.northumbria.ac.uk

Telephone: 0191 3495600

Address: Ground Floor, NE1 8ST

Nourish Food School

Email: hello@nourishfoodschoo.co.uk

Website: <https://www.nourishfoodschoo.co.uk/>

Telephone: 07888280155

Address: Nourish Food School, NE6 5PA

Northern Learning Trust

Email: hthirkell@northernlearningtrust.org.uk

Website: www.northernlearningtrust.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 271 0131

Address: Cheviot House, NE3 2ER

Newcastle University – INSIGHTS Public Lectures

Email: public.lectures@ncl.ac.uk

Website: www.ncl.ac.uk/events/public-lectures

Telephone: 0191 222 6136

Address: Curtis Auditorium, NE1 7RU

Crisis Skylight Newcastle

Email: enquiries.newcastle@crisis.org.uk

Website: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/get-help/newcastle/>

Telephone: 0191 222 0622

Address: City House, NE1 2AF

North East Museums

Email: info@northeastmuseums.org.uk

Website: <https://www.northeastmuseums.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 232 6789

Address: Discovery Museum, NE1 4JA

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art

Email: info@balticmill.com

Website: www.balticmill.com

Telephone: 0191 478 1810

Address: South Shore Road, NE8 3BA

The Glasshouse International Centre for Music

Email: boxoffice@theglasshouseicm.org

Website: www.theglasshouseicm.org

Telephone: 0191 443 4666

Address: The Glasshouse International Centre for Music, NE8 2JR

LearnDirect

Website: <https://www.learndirect.com/>

Telephone: 01202 006 464

The Silver Programme

Email: silver@sagegateshead.com

Website: <https://theglasshouseicm.org/make-music/>

Telephone: 0191 443 5034

Address: St Mary's Square, NE8 2JR

Explore

Email: weareexplore@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.weareexplore.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 261 1633

Address: Ampersand Inventions, 4th Floor,, NE1 6RQ

S.Y. Killingley Memorial Trust

Website: <http://syktrust.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 285 8053

Address: 9, Rectory Drive, NE3 1XT

Walker Parish Church and centre

Email: walkerparishchurch@gmail.com

Website: www.walkerparishchurch.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 234 1414

Address: Walker Parish Church, NE6 3BS

FutureLearn

Email: feedback@futurelearn.com

Website: <https://www.futurelearn.com>

Telephone: 0191 234 1414

Address: FutureLearn Limited, NW1 2DB

GCF LearnFree.org

Website: <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/>

Telephone: 0191 234 1414

LaterLife

Email: laterlifeenquiries@laterlife.com

Website: <http://www.laterlife.com>

Telephone: 0191 234 1414

The Open University

Website: <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/>

Telephone: 0191 234 1414

VOICE

Email: voice@ncl.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.voice-global.org/>

Telephone: 0191 208 1288

Address: VOICE, NE4 5PL

Trained Guides and Guide Training

Email: enquiries@northeastenglandtouristguides.co.uk

Website: <https://northeastenglandtouristguides.co.uk/>

Telephone: 07758 077818

Rest Less

Email: info@restless.co.uk

Website: <https://restless.co.uk/>

Telephone: 07758 077818

Turn2us

Email: info@turn2us.org.uk

Website: www.turn2us.org.uk

Telephone: 07758 077818

Address: Unit 9, CF15 7QQ

Elders Council of Newcastle (Older People's Forum)

Email: info@elderscouncil.org.uk

Website: www.elderscouncil.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 208 2701

Address: The Elders Council of Newcastle, NE4 5PL

ReCoCo: The Recovery College Collective

Email: info@recoverycoco.com

Website: <http://www.recoverycoco.com/>

Telephone: 0191 261 0948

Address: 1 Carliol Square, NE1 6UF

Gateshead College

Email: start@gateshead.ac.uk

Website: <https://www.gateshead.ac.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 490 2246

Address: Gateshead College Main Campus, NE8 3BE

Sunderland University

Email: student.helpline@sunderland.ac.uk

Website: <https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 515 3000

Newcastle University

Website: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 208 6000

Address: Newcastle University , NE1 7RU

Pottery Bank Community Centre Ltd

Email: info@potterybankcc.co.uk

Website: <http://new.potterybankcc.co.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 224 2349

Address: Yelverton Crescent, NE6 3SW

Community Foundation North East

Email: general@communityfoundation.org.uk

Website: <https://www.communityfoundation.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 222 0945

Address: Community Foundation, Philanthropy House , NE3 1DD

Converge Northumbria

Email: converge@northumbria.ac.uk

Website: <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/academic-departments/northumbria-school-of-design/research/converge/course-info/>

Telephone: 0191 243 7393

Address: Northumbria University, NE1 8ST

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