

Islington Adult Community Learning

Learner Handbook **2025–26**



SUPPORTED BY
MAYOR OF LONDON



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1. Welcome to Islington Adult Community Learning

We are delighted that you have decided to learn with us and hope that you are excited about getting started.

We know that you may also feel nervous at first, but you will soon realise that everyone at IACL is here to help you to reach your goals because, as adult education specialists, we understand what it's like to go back to education after a break.

You will soon find yourself amongst new friends, other people who also want to improve their skills and learn new things, and because learners are our best source of advice, we will listen to what you tell us so that we can tailor our courses to meet the needs of our learners.

We hope that starting a course with us is your first step towards achieving your goals. We wish you the best of luck and will be with you every step of the way!



2. Calendar and term dates

Week beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
15/09/25	Start of term				
22/09/25					
29/09/25					
06/10/25					
13/10/25					
20/10/25					
27/10/25	Half-term holiday				
03/11/25					
10/11/25					
17/11/25					
24/11/25					
01/12/25					End of term
08/12/25	Winter holiday				
15/12/25					
22/12/25					
29/12/25					
05/01/26	No classes	No classes	Enrolment		No classes
12/01/26	Start of term				
19/01/26					
26/01/26					
02/02/26					
09/02/26					
16/02/26					
23/02/26	Half-term holiday				
02/03/26					
09/03/26					
16/03/26					
23/03/26					End of term
30/03/26	Spring holiday				
06/04/26					
13/04/26	No classes	No classes	Enrolment		No classes
20/04/26	Start of term				
27/04/26					
04/05/26					
11/05/26					
18/05/26					
25/05/26	Half-term holiday				
01/06/26					
08/06/26					
15/06/26					
22/06/26					
29/06/26					
06/07/26					End of term

3. Getting started with IACL: what to expect

If you have been out of education for a while, or if you haven't been educated in the UK, then starting a course as an adult can seem daunting. However, knowing what to expect can help; we hope that this guide is useful.

What is an initial assessment and what is it for?

Most of our learners need to complete some kind of skills assessment before starting a course. This helps to make sure that you are on the course that is right for you. If you can't answer all the questions or find some of them tricky, that's fine! This shows the tutor what you need to focus on and how we can help you.



What do I need to know about my first class?

- **Check the location** and make sure that you know how to get there.
- Aim to arrive about five minutes before the class starts but remember that you may not be able to go into the classroom until the start time.
- Be prepared to **ask for directions to the room for your class** at the centre reception. If you feel nervous, it may be useful to take along the details of your class on your Learning Agreement so that you can show it to the centre staff. They will direct you to the classroom.
- **Wear something comfortable.** We want you to feel at ease so that you can focus on learning, so you do not need to wear formal clothing.
- If you can, **bring a notebook and a pen or pencil**, but don't worry if you can't do this. Your tutor will be able to help and advise you.
- Remember that you should **not eat or drink in our classrooms**, although it is fine for you to bring a bottle of water.

What happens in an ACL class?

Our classes are small (usually fewer than 10 learners), supportive and friendly. Our tutors are adult learning specialists, so they understand your needs and how to help you to learn.

We will encourage you to play an active part in classes but in a way that suits you and your learning needs. Our tutors will give you the opportunity to take part in a range of different activities, work in groups and pairs with other learners and develop your skills through the use of technology.



Understanding our learners and giving them the best chance to fulfil their goals is very important to us. That is why you will complete an **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)** with your tutor. They will ask you about things you have learnt before and what you are hoping to achieve on the course. This information, along with the results of your initial assessment, will be used to create your personal learning goals, such as skills that you develop during the course and personal goals like improving your confidence. At the end of the term you and your tutor will review your ILP, record the progress that you have made and, if your course will continue, set goals for the next term.

What do our learners say about us?

Our learners are our best advertisement, and our best source of advice, so we will give you a formal opportunity every term to tell us what we are doing well and how we can improve.

Please look out for an email from acl@islington.gov.uk asking you to complete our survey. It's your chance to be heard!

Below is some of the feedback that our learners gave us in summer 2025:

I meet new people, and it is fun, and we have different people from different backgrounds, and we find out new things from each other and are able to help each other too. The class is very friendly, and the people are great.

Excellent teacher, really supportive and always makes sure that we all know what we are doing. My teacher uses different methods to make sure that all class are in the same level of understanding.

I like the structure of the class. I like that we are plotting our achievements via the learner's diary. Tutor also gives lots of encouragement to her students when they submit their projects to the group chat. Lovely, welcoming group.

4. ACL Gateway: our virtual learning environment

Your tutor will save materials for your course on the ACL Gateway¹ (also called Moodle). This is an exciting and useful secure website that can only be used by learners in your class and your tutors. It gives you access to resources such as PowerPoint slides, articles and handouts to assist you with lessons and homework.

At the start of your course you will be given a username and password. When you log in for the first time, you will be asked to change the password to something you can remember. If you forget your password, please use this link [ACL Gateway password click here](https://aclgateway.islington.gov.uk/login/forgot_password.php).²

Your tutor will explain how and when you should use the ACL Gateway and will help if you have difficulties accessing the resources that you need.

¹ <https://aclgateway.islington.gov.uk/>

² https://aclgateway.islington.gov.uk/login/forgot_password.php

5. Your guide to success: the learner agreement

We hope that you enjoy your course and reach your goals. We want to help you to make the most of your time with us so we have created a set of course rules that will help you to be successful and make progress.

Attend all classes and arrive on time

It is important that you attend all classes and arrive on time. If you do not attend or arrive late, your learning will be affected, and you may not complete the course. Arriving late also affects other learners since the class will be interrupted.

If it is not possible for you to attend a class, or if you know that you will be late, you must inform your tutor before the class. If something is preventing you from attending classes, please tell your tutor. We want you to learn and we may be able to help.



Please keep in touch! If you are absent for two or more classes without an explanation your place may be withdrawn.

Avoid booking holidays during term time: Missing classes will impact your learning and achievement so whilst you are learning with us, please book any trips away in non-teaching weeks.

Follow the classroom rules

In your first class your tutor will explain these rules to you. They are designed to allow everyone to learn in a calm, safe and supportive environment. These rules include:

- ✓ Turning your phone off during classes.
- ✓ Treating everyone with dignity and respect and being tolerant of the views of others.
- ✓ Being ready to learn and contribute to the lesson. If your tutor has asked you to prepare something for the class, make sure that you complete the task so that you can benefit from the session.

6. Learning safely: safeguarding

At the start of your course your tutor will talk to you about safeguarding: how you can stay safe and ensure that others feel safe so that everyone can learn. You have the right to feel safe where you learn. Other people should not hurt or abuse you in any way. Other people should not threaten to hurt or abuse you.

To create a safe learning environment, we ask that everyone:

- Respects other people's rights to safety
- Does not hurt or abuse others
- Does not threaten to hurt or abuse others.

ACL staff are here to support you and help make your place of learning safe.

You can read more about safeguarding at ACL on our website:

[Safeguarding Islington Adult Community Learning](https://adultlearning.islington.gov.uk/?page=safeguarding)³

Contact one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads below:



Simon Fuller
07892 700 217



Ying Chan
07834 395 094



Juliet Bellagambi
07816 116 639



Akeel Ahmed
07971 599 383

If you are concerned about your safety or the safety of someone else you should tell someone you trust about what is happening.

You can tell your tutor or contact one of our Safeguarding Officers.

³ <https://adultlearning.islington.gov.uk/?page=safeguarding>

7. Help and support: tell us what you need

Everyone who works at ACL wants to help you to succeed so we offer a range of ways for you to get support to help you reach your goals. If you are finding your course difficult, you need help with finding work or a course, or if other things in your life are standing in the way of your progress, speak up! There is help available within ACL and Islington Council.

Here's who you can contact:

- **Your tutor:** speaking to your tutor about your concerns is a great first step. If you are worried about the course or your learning, remember that your tutor is there to help you. They want you to succeed and will be happy to help. If your concerns are about issues outside of the classroom, your tutor can direct you to other places where you can get help.
- **Find Your Islington** is an online directory that brings together local support, services, and things to do in your community, whether you are living, visiting or working in Islington. **Go to:** [Find Your Islington](https://findyour.islington.gov.uk/kb5/islington/directory/home.page)⁴
- **Book an appointment for information, advice and guidance**
You can get impartial one to one information advice and guidance from one of our qualified advisors to help you move forward into work or further training. Call or text Alison on 07808 879 044.



⁴ <https://findyour.islington.gov.uk/kb5/islington/directory/home.page>

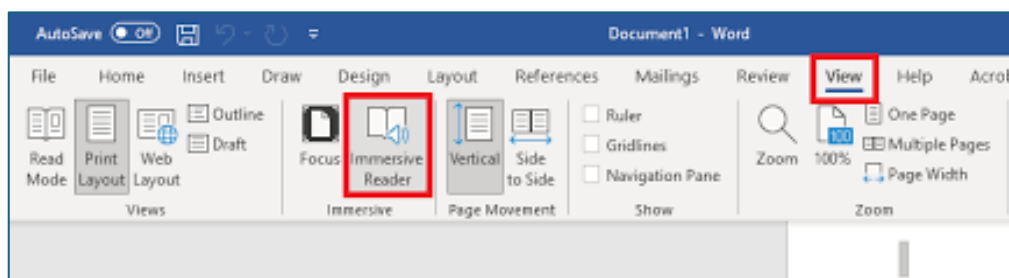
8. Tools to help you to learn

Below are details of online tools and apps that can help you to read and understand websites and documents.

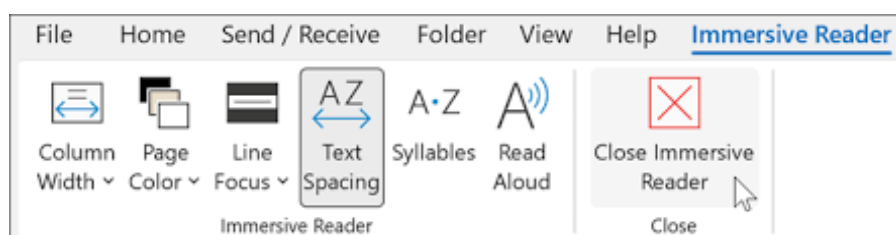
- **Immersive Reader in Word**

If you use Microsoft Word, you can select 'Immersive Reader' on the View tab. This offers a number of options to make the document more accessible, including a coloured background and a 'Read Aloud' function.

To use Immersive reader, go to View and then click Immersive Reader.



The font and text spacing will look different. You should also see Immersive Reader in blue at the right of your tool bar, like this:

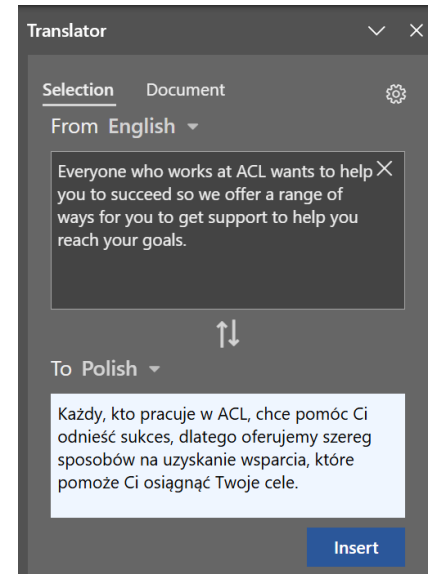


Click on this blue text and you will see the Immersive Reader options as above. You can select Read Aloud, change the page colour (especially useful if you are dyslexic) or change the spacing or focus.

- **Translate a document in Word**

To translate text in a Microsoft Word document to another language simply highlight the text, right click and choose Translate. The Translator will open to the right of your screen. Scroll down and choose a language. The translated text will appear under the original in the Translator.

To replace the original text with the translation, click Insert.

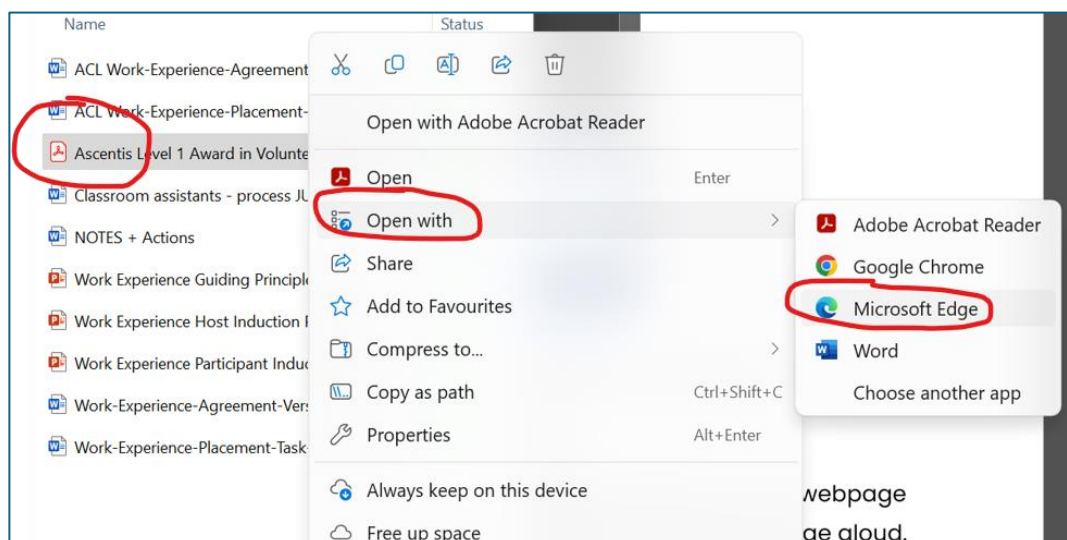


- **Read Aloud feature in Edge**

The Edge browser has a built-in read aloud feature. On any webpage type **Ctrl + Shift + U** and the reader will begin reading the page aloud. A Read Aloud tool bar will appear above the page so that you can pause or use playback options. |

Tip: If you open PDF documents in the Microsoft Edge browser, you can use the Read Aloud feature with PDF files.

Right click on the document and select 'Open with' then choose Microsoft Edge.



9. What to do if something goes wrong

In the section above there are details of who you can speak to for help and support. However, we realise that sometimes you may feel unable to approach your tutor or you may want to make a formal complaint.

Islington Council's Complaints Procedure recommends that feedback and complaints are sent to the relevant council service. If you have feedback or a complaint that you would like to make, please email acl@islington.gov.uk. Your message will be acknowledged and sent to a member of the senior management team who will investigate. You will be sent a full response within 10 working days of your original message.

If you are unhappy with the response you may make a formal complaint to Islington Council by completing [this form](#).⁵ Details of the council's complaints procedure can be found here: [Complaints and feedback | Islington Council](#).⁶

10. Contacts

Your tutors will give you their contact details so that you can communicate with them by phone or email. You may also find the following contact details useful:

- **General enquiries:** acl@islington.gov.uk, 07746 777 466
- **ACL Safeguarding:** aclsafeguarding@islington.gov.uk

⁵ <https://app.casetracker.uk/capture/isl-complaint>

⁶ <https://www.islington.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-and-complaints-info>

11. Our learning centres

Our courses are delivered at learning and community centres across Islington. You will be given details of the location of your courses when you enrol however, details of some of our most used venues are below.

Centre name	Address	Telephone
Corker Walk Youth Employment Hub	54 Corker Walk, N7 7RX	0207 527 5960
Andover Community Centre	24 Allerton Walk, N7 7RN	0207 272 3493
Arsenal Learning Hub	56 Benwell Road, N7 7BA	0207 704 4660
Cat and Mouse Library	277 Camden Road, N7 0JN	0207 527 6975
Durham Road Community Rooms	Under 32-43 Bolton Walk, N7 7RW	0207 272 3493
First Steps Learning Centre	2 nd Floor, Central Library 2 Fieldway Crescent, N5 1PF	020 7527 7002
Highbury Roundhouse	71 Ronalds Road, N5 1XB	0207 359 5916
Hilldrop Community Centre	Hilldrop Road, N7 0JE	0207 607 9453
Holloway Neighbourhood Group	84 Mayton Street, N7 6QT	0207 607 9794
Holloway Park	Parkhurst Road, N7 0NU	
Islington Computer Skills Centre	245 St John Street, EC1V 4NB	0207 527 7965
Jean Stokes Community Centre	Cambridge House, Carnoustie Drive, N1 0DX	07745 744 273
Light Project Pro International	The Exchange, Watkinson Road, N7 8DE	0207 833 4009
Margaret McMillian Children's Centre	Hornsey Rise, N19 3SF	0207 281 2745
Mildmay Library	21-23 Mildmay Park, N1 4NA	0207 527 7880
New River Green Children's Centre	Marquess Road, N1 2PY	0207 527 4843
North Islington Children's Centre	110-112 Tollington Park, N4 3RB	0207 527 4843
Paradise Park Children's Centre	164 Mackenzie Road, N7 8SE	0207 697 7330
The Training Facility	Unit 9 Bush Industrial Estate, N19 5UN	0207 527 4352
Vibast Community Centre	167 Old Street, EC1V 9NH	07547 867 921

12. What next? Our courses and life after ACL

We hope that your course with ACL will be the start of your journey into further learning and rewarding work. To help you with whatever comes next, we offer the following information and support.

- **ACL courses:** See what else you could do with ACL. We offer a range of courses to help you make the most of your learning such as:
 - ✓ Empower you: confidence unlocked
 - ✓ Stand Out CV secrets
 - ✓ Volunteering in the Community
 - ✓ Customer Service
 - ✓ Preparing to Work with Children in Schools

Go to <https://adultlearning.islington.gov.uk/> to see our full list of courses and to find out more.



- **Information, Advice and Guidance:** Get impartial one to one information advice and guidance from one of our qualified advisors to help you move forward into work or further training.
To book an appointment online or at a venue near you call or text Alison on **07808 879 044**.
- **What next? Life After ACL** is an event that we run each year to give you the opportunity to hear from organisations that can help you with your next steps. Presenters have included City and Islington College, Volunteering Islington, Islington Working, and London Metropolitan University. All ACL learners are invited so look out for the email in your inbox or speak to your tutor for more information.

13. Our policies and procedures

All our policy and procedure documents can be found on the ACL Gateway.

Please see: [Adult Community Learning Policies](#).⁷

14. Thank you

Thank you for joining Islington Adult Community Learning. We look forward to helping you to achieve your goals and supporting you along the way.

⁷ www.aclgateway.islington.gov.uk