

Adult Learning

Accountability Agreement, 2024-2025

May 2024



Contents

Adult Learning.....	1
Contents	2
Purpose	3
Statement of purpose	3
Our vision	3
Our strategic aims and objectives.....	3
Context and place.....	4
West Sussex key characteristics.....	4
Our planning and approach	5
Priority groups	6
Curriculum	7
Curriculum timeline	9
How we will measure the success of our strategy:.....	11
Our contribution to national, regional and local priorities	11
Corporation statement.....	16
Supporting documentation	16

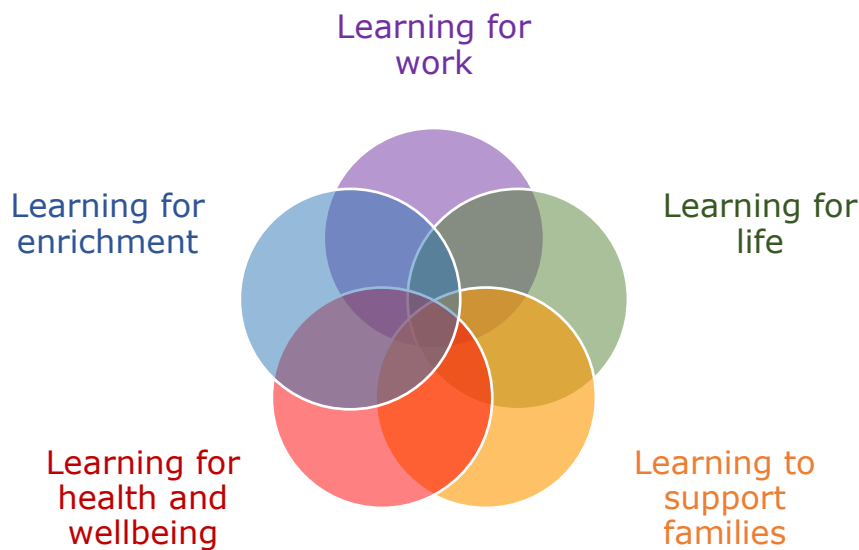
Purpose

Statement of purpose

West Sussex County Council's Adult Learning Service (WSCC ALS) provides learning opportunities that improve the lives and outcomes for individuals, families and communities and which support economic growth, improved employment, social inclusion, community cohesion, health and wellbeing.

Our vision

The overarching vision is to maximise adult participation in high quality, accessible and impactful learning and training which supports individuals to reach their potential through a curriculum offer that supports five inter-related outcomes:



Our strategic aims and objectives

We will:

1. Support a sustainable and prosperous economy through the provision of 'routeways' into employment and in work development,
2. Develop learners' skills and knowledge, empowering them and their families to live healthy and more independent lives,
3. Provide opportunities which support children and young people to reach their potential,
4. Provide the skills and understanding so individuals are safe from vulnerable situations,
5. Develop the skills and confidence of individuals so they take an active role in their communities,
6. Work in partnership and use our resources wisely in order deliver best-value,
7. Continually review our work and look to improve.

Context and place

West Sussex County Council's Adult Learning Service is part of the Education and Skills Directorate within the broader Department of Children, Young People and Learning. The Directorate plays a crucial part in delivering the [West Sussex Plan](#) to provide our children, young people and adults with the best education and start in life.

Key outcomes for us as a County are that all children are ready for school, young people are ready for work or further education, and that all adults have access to high quality education and training.

West Sussex key characteristics

The county is made up of seven local authority areas: Adur, Arun, Chichester, Crawley, Horsham, Mid-Sussex and Worthing.

Trends from the 2021 Census have highlighted that the population over the 10 years since the last census has grown by 9.4% to 882,700 people in West Sussex, this is a higher % increase than the national and regional average and is higher than our neighbouring upper tier authority areas. Horsham has seen the highest percentage growth at 11.8% compared to Adur which has seen the lowest growth at 5.4%. Growth is highest amongst our older populations - aged over 65 years, as is the national trend.

West Sussex generally has a strong performing economy, with good rates of economic activity and participation, low unemployment rates, a diverse business base, and an outstanding natural environment, which is a competitive advantage economically and includes a varied coastline and the South Downs National Park.

Whilst the economy performs strongly compared with national trends, it doesn't compare so favourably to the regional average and economic performance varies widely within the county. Generally, the economy of the northeast of the county (including Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex) is stronger than the rest of the county with higher earnings levels than the southwest of the county, which includes the coastal districts (Adur, Arun, Chichester and Worthing), though the latter has seen higher productivity levels and growth in recent years. Pre-pandemic, Crawley and Chichester were areas of net in-commuting – in Crawley driven by the presence of Gatwick Airport. Despite the strong economic performance West Sussex does have pockets of deprivation in the coastal areas and in Crawley, notably within three wards in Arun and one ward in Crawley falling within the 10% most deprived areas in England.

The global economic situation and the legacy from the pandemic continues to have significant impact on West Sussex economy. Gross Value Added (GVA) fell by 6% between 2019 to 2021 to £22.8bn, a higher % fall than for England and the southeast, and higher still, at a decrease of 21%, in Crawley due to the impact of COVID-19 on the travel sector that hit Gatwick Airport. Unemployment levels are however falling,

and economic activity and employment rates are increasing toward pre-pandemic levels, higher than the regional and national average.

West Sussex is home to a large number of highly skilled residents, but there is uneven performance across the county with less skilled residents earning considerably less than the county average in some places. The 2021 Census suggests that the proportion of over 16-year-olds in the county who hold a degree level qualification has increased from 27.8 % in 2011 to 33%, though this is a lower proportion than seen in England and the southeast region.

Nomis data also indicates that 77.1% of the population aged 16-64 have a highest qualification at level 2 and above, 3.6% lower than the southeast average, and 1.0% lower than Great Britain. Of the 22.9% with a highest qualification below level 2, 5.0% report having no qualifications.

22.9% of West Sussex residents aged 16-64 have a highest qualification below level 2.

Our planning and approach

WSCC ALS receives funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to delivery Adult Learning and Skills provision for West Sussex residents. For 2024-25 this comprises Adult Skills Fund (ASF), Tailored Learning and 16-19 programmes. We are currently also receiving Department for Education (DfE) funding to deliver the Multiply programme (which runs to March 2025).

Until Spring 2023 all ESFA funded adult learning provision was subcontracted to external organisations who delivered on WSCC ALS's behalf; the contracts were due to end in July 2023. Our Multiply programme is also fully delivered by external organisations through grant agreements.

In 2022, in preparation for the end of the contract cycle, a thorough options appraisal was undertaken which considered the needs and priorities of the county, the desired curriculum and a wide range of alternative delivery models.

Separate to the appraisal, in November 2022, our majority subcontractor for the delivery of adult learning at the time entered administration and closed with immediate effect. This caused significant disruption and required immediate and substantial recovery activity in parallel with appraisal that was concluding.

The recommended delivery model for West Sussex County Council (WSCC) residents was approved by the Council's cabinet member for Learning and Skills, 13 March 2023, and recorded in the [Key Decision Report](#).

Since the key decision, the Council has implemented and continued to evolve the delivery model, taking responsibility for the development and direct delivery of a range of key curriculum areas where beneficial to do so, whilst commissioning external partners with the specialist knowledge and expertise to deliver other programmes.

Our first annual Accountability Agreement, produced in May 2023, was developed following this period of significant change for ALS (the Adult Learning Service) and in the early stages of the substantial development activity of the new delivery model. Development has continued at pace over the last year. Our approach and 'direction of travel' has remained clear, and in fact strengthened through improved cross-directorate working and external partnerships.

"Leaders and managers have a clear vision for education and skills to support the most vulnerable including refugees, adults with learning disabilities and those who may not be in education, employment or training. Leaders and managers are developing a responsive curriculum with the help of their partners to closely match the needs of their communities."

"Following the swift collapse of the major subcontractor in November 2022, leaders and managers have acted rapidly to prioritise the needs of learners."

Ofsted, June 2023

Priority groups

The 2022 review, which included a broad range of internal WSCC teams and external stakeholders, resulted in the publication of a new Adult Learning Mission Statement (May 2022) and agreement on our priority groups:



As ALS seeks to support activity to 'level up' across West Sussex, we target and 'weight' our resource to support those who live in areas of social and economic deprivation. Indices of Deprivation data shows a strong geographic correlation with lower skill levels. We therefore use Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 data at Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level to prioritise our provision. Adur (10), Arun (18), Crawley (9) and Worthing (10) have the highest prevalence of the more deprived LSOAs.

There are 505 Lower Super Output Areas in West Sussex of which 52 (10%) are in the most deprived 30% nationally.

Curriculum

As part of the review, mapping of existing Council engagement with residents identified that some provision would be more impactful if delivered 'in-house' underpinned by cross-directorate working. The following specific curriculum areas, a blend of 'Adult Skills' and 'Tailored Learning', were identified:

- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL): with links to the Communities team and in particular the asylum, refugee, forced migration and resettlement teams.
- Programmes for Adults with mild to moderate Learning Disabilities (ALD): where delivery is in partnership with Adult Services and day centres.
- Family Learning and Parenting (FL&P): linking to the WSCC Education & Learning Strategy 2023-25 and the wider Children, Young People and Learning Plan 2021-2025.
- 16-19 Study Programmes: Bespoke programmes linking with Post-16 Support and Careers Team, Virtual School, Supported Accommodation and Care Leavers Services.

Engagement and consultation, particularly with those leading on the development of Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and with Department for Work and Pension (DWP) representatives, confirmed the need for more specific curriculum leading to employment opportunities than had been provided through the Adult Learning Service's previous delivery arrangements.

Market Engagement activity in the summer of 2022, when the high level new curriculum was shared externally, confirmed that the market has the necessary skills and expertise, to meet the requirements of the new curriculum.

As a result, the following provision is commissioned and delivered through specialist external partners:

- English and maths (including Multiply),
- Essential Digital Skills Qualifications,
- Routes into employment:
 - Construction, Engineering and Manufacturing,
 - Health and Social Care,
 - Education and Teaching Professions,
 - 'Green' sector,
 - Digital Sector,
 - Hospitality and Catering,
 - Retail.

ALS has also set the development and 'capacity building' of the sector as a priority in order to widen participation in adult learning. In the 2023-24 academic year a 'Community Learning Grants' programme was established to engage specifically with West Sussex based community organisations and the voluntary / charitable sector. WSCC ALS are working in partnership with the successful organisations to support them to develop the skills, knowledge, processes and infrastructure to be able to offer programmes which meet the requirements of the ESFA and Ofsted aligned to our overarching outcomes:

- Learning for Life,
- Learning for Work,
- Learning to Support Families,
- Learning for Health and Wellbeing.

Our Community Learning Grants programme largely sits within the ESFA's 'Tailored Learning' provision. The primary purpose of tailored learning is to support learners into employment and to progress to further learning, in line with the overall purpose of the Adult Skills Fund. It will, however, also support wider outcomes including using it to improve health and wellbeing, equip parents/carers to support their child's learning and develop stronger and more integrated communities.

All of our provision seeks to promote and ensure learners have a good understanding of:

- Safeguarding, Prevent Duty and the risk and threats of radicalisation and extremism. Learners will know how to keep themselves, friends and communities safe, including online.
- The British Values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of people with different faiths and beliefs.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Positive relationships are developed in an environment free from bullying, abuse and discrimination.
- English, Maths and Digital skills needed for everyday life and work embedded in the wider curriculum wherever appropriate.
- Behaviours - primarily those appropriate to the curriculum theme (e.g. punctuality and attendance in learning for work).
- Information and course content on sustainability and 'green' issues which supports learners in understanding the impact of their actions on the climate and the environment.
- The next steps available to learners on completion of their course(s).

Learner feedback is valued highly. Feedback is used to inform the curriculum we offer (including; what, where, when and how we deliver our courses), the learner journey

and quality improvement activity. Feedback is collected on an ongoing basis through a range of activities, including on-course and end of course surveys and evaluations, learning visits to classes, learning plans and journals, community events and direct communications.

Wider consultation activity to gather the voice of residents, and in particular those not currently engaged in learning, is undertaken in conjunction with other WSCC Service activity. ALS will also be introducing a specific consultation activity for January 2025.

Curriculum timeline

The following chart summarises our curriculum implementation timeline and milestones, January 2023 to December 2024.



How we will measure the success of our strategy:

High level measures are summarised in the following table. Appropriate data collection and recording processes are being implemented in 2023-24; this will create a baseline for future performance measures / targets to be set.

Benefit	Evidence
Sustainable and Productive Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No. of learners that move into work, apprenticeships, volunteering, further learning on completing their learning. ➤ Feedback from DWP and LSIP on the 'health' of the workforce's skills needs in relevant sectors and job roles.
Skills for life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No. of learners improving their skills and confidence with English and communication; Maths; Digital.
Social Inclusion & Community Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No. of learners who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ feel a heightened sense of belonging in their community, ▪ want to improve their local area after participating in adult learning, ▪ take a more active role or volunteer in the community (e.g., schools).
Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Learner's report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ fewer visits to their GP / health service, ▪ improved mental wellbeing and increased self-confidence.

Our contribution to national, regional and local priorities

Our curriculum considers many factors. We seek to reflect our role in a broad and complex sector so we can maximise the impact we have with the funding we receive and complement that provided by others. Key drivers include:

- The [Future Skills Sussex Local Skills Improvement Plan](#) (LSIP), the most recent version of which was published May 2023. The priorities, notably the 'key sectors identified as crucial to the future economic success of the area', 'important cross cutting themes' and Labour Market Supply intelligence informed the new Adult Learning curriculum, in particular the development of the "Routes into..." programme launched in 2023.

Examples taken from the Future Skills Sussex LSIP:

"An ageing workforce in sectors such as Construction and Engineering & Manufacturing is impairing growth and risks leaving businesses without the skills they need to survive and thrive."

"All agree that employability / transferable skills are as important as technical/specialist skills."

- Regular and direct engagement and consultation with regional and local **Department of Work and Pension (DWP)** colleagues ensures our curriculum reflects and is responsive to both the needs of local employers as well as those seeking employment, looking to re-train or progress in-work. WSCC Adult Learning facilitates county-wide partnership and intelligence sharing with DWP and a broad range of partners who focus on supporting employment, for example through termly Synchronise meetings which include representative from; District and Borough Councils, Housing, Health / Mental Health services, National Careers Service, a range of training providers, voluntary / community organisations and other WSCC teams. Along with our delivery partners, referrals from DWP are matched into provision and where appropriate, opportunities are co-located.
- West Sussex County Council's "[Our Council Plan 2021-25](#)" identifies four priorities, all of which are underpinned by a cross-cutting theme of tackling climate change. Adult Learning contributes to all of the priorities:

Tackling climate change

Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations

A sustainable and prosperous economy

Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential

Making the best use of resources



Adult Learning contributions (examples)

- Learners know how to keep themselves and their families safe and are aware of the risks of radicalisation.
- Family Learning / Parenting programmes support vulnerable families - particularly those with children identified as less likely to be school ready at age 5 and families with children in receipt of Free School Meals.
- Life skills for adults with learning difficulties and for those with low levels of English and Maths.
- Provision which supports physical and mental wellbeing, particularly at times of need.

- Learners develop skills and confidence to progress.
- Low skilled learners are supported in English, maths, and digital skills.
- NEET Young People (16-19) re-engage with education and develop the skills and knowledge for work / further learning.
- Opportunities prioritise those who are resident in areas of social and economic deprivation.
- Provision which aligns to the skills needs of local employers / employment sectors / LSIP.
- Re-training / re-entry into employment.

- Learners have skills to provide their children the best start in life.
- Learners understand the benefits of being online and how to keep themselves and their families safe online.
- Learners can reflect and promote British Values.
- Learners can make healthy lifestyle choices.
- Adults with learning difficulties feel safe and supported to become more independent.
- Learners develop skills and confidence to take an active role in their community, including those for whom English is not their first language.

- Work in partnership to plan, provide and improve provision.
- Listen and act upon the learner (and potential learner) voice.
- Provide high quality learning whilst assuring value for money.
- Target resource at those most in need of help and support.
- Provide a range of accessible learning opportunities including: online learning, distance learning, classroom / face to face, blended / hybrid

Tackling climate change & maximising social value

- The [West Sussex Education and Learning Strategy 2023-2025](#) has Adult Learning as a specific priority and key workstream, whilst also recognising the contribution adult learning, and especially family and parenting, can make to many of the other priorities.
- West Sussex County Council’s draft (as of April 2024) **Skills Action Plan 2024-2026**. The Action Plan vision is “to position West Sussex County Council to be at the forefront of the skills agenda, working with partners to shape the skills landscape, and helping local employers to have the skills they need to support a dynamic and inclusive economy in which everyone contributes to the best of their abilities.”

Four themes for skills, recruitment and retention are also identified which Adult Learning contributes to:

- **THEME 1:** Support the development of a flexible and responsive skills system that meets the current and future needs of West Sussex businesses and employers.
- **THEME 2:** Ensure all young people have access to high quality careers guidance and work-related learning with opportunities to progress through clear learning pathways.
- **THEME 3:** Develop a coordinated, flexible, and responsive approach to support priority groups into meaningful and sustainable employment.
- **THEME 4:** Attract, retain, and develop a high-quality Council workforce.

Our Adult Learning **Service Development and Quality Improvement Plan** details the activity we will undertake to deliver the curriculum and achieve our priorities.

Aligned to the plan, our key priorities for the 2024-25 academic year are:

- Complete the recruitment of the Adult Learning team, essential to the realisation of the intentions detailed in this Accountability Agreement.
- Develop and work with our delivery partners, internal and external to WSCC, building capacity to widen participation, support continuous improvement and ensure ongoing alignment with LSIP, DWP and WSCC local priorities.
- Consolidate and grow our direct delivery of ESOL and ALD.
- Establish our Family Learning & Parenting and our 16-19 programmes following pilot activity in the summer 2024.
- Achieve our delivery targets for 2023-2024 & 2024-25 (note, 2024-25 targets will be agreed August 2024 on completion of our ‘baseline year’):

	2023-24	2024-25
Unique learners	2,750	3,250
Enrolments	3,500	4,250

Attendance	85%	87%
Retention	85%	87%
Pass rate	90%	91%
Learners resident in priority Lower Super Output Areas	12%	-
Learners with prior attainment / qualifications below full level 2	30%	-
Learners in receipt of a means tested benefit or on low wages	20%	-
Learners who are not in paid employment, looking for work and available to start work	40%	-
Learners with positive destination & progression outcomes upon leaving / completing	50%	-

- Embed effective data collection and recording processes to monitor performance to our published 'success measures'.
- Achieve Matrix Standard accreditation for Information, Advice and Guidance by July 2025.
- Multiply: delivery of year 3 as outlined in the Investment Plan approved by DfE, June 2022. A total of 1,514 learners participate in WSCC Multiply provision.

Corporation statement

On behalf of West Sussex County Council, it is hereby confirmed that this Accountability Agreement reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills in the [Key Decision Report](#), 13 March 2023.

This Accountability Agreement has been considered and endorsed by the Adult Learning Scrutiny and Advisory Board (ALSAB), 17 June 2024.

This Accountability Agreement will be published on the Council's website within one month of approval and can be accessed from the following link: [Adult Learning Service - West Sussex County Council](#).

Supporting documentation

- [Education and Learning Strategy - West Sussex County Council](#)
- [Children and Young People's Plan 2022 to 2025 - West Sussex County Council](#)
- [Our Council Plan - West Sussex County Council](#)
- [Key Decision Report](#)
- [Future Skills Sussex Local Skills Improvement Plan](#)
- [Ofsted report, June 2023](#)