

# Adult Learning

## Accountability Agreement, 2023-2024

May 2023



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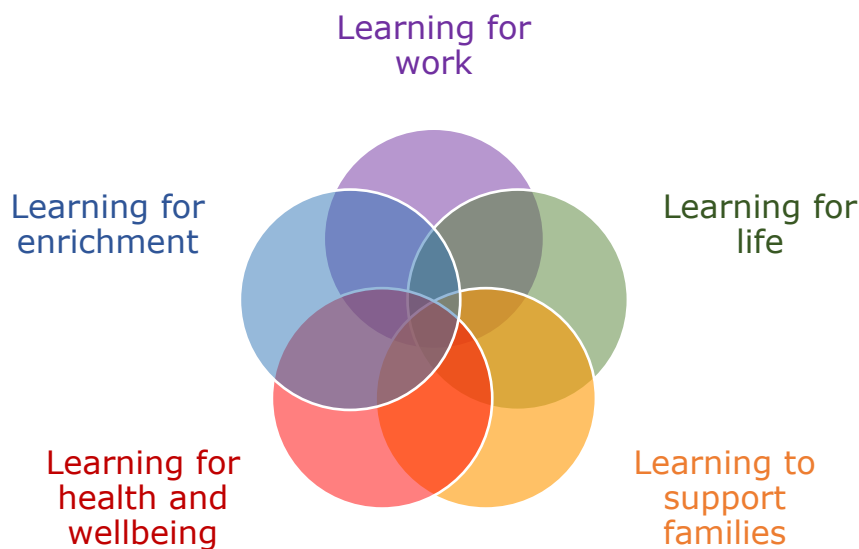
## Purpose

### 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.

WSSCC ALS works county-wide. Until Spring 2023 all Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funded adult learning provision, and the new Department for Education (DfE) Multiply programme (which runs to March 2025) was subcontracted to partners who delivered on WSSCC ALS's behalf. From March 2023 the Council has evolved the delivery model, taking responsibility for the development and delivery of three key curriculum:

- ✚ English for Speakers of Other Languages,
- ✚ Programmes for Adults with mild to moderate Learning Disabilities
- ✚ Family Learning and Parenting.

The remaining provision will be commissioned and delivered through specialist external partners. Provision will include:

- ✚ English and maths (including Multiply)
- ✚ Essential Digital Skills Qualifications
- ✚ "Routes into..." a broad range of employment sectors.

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.

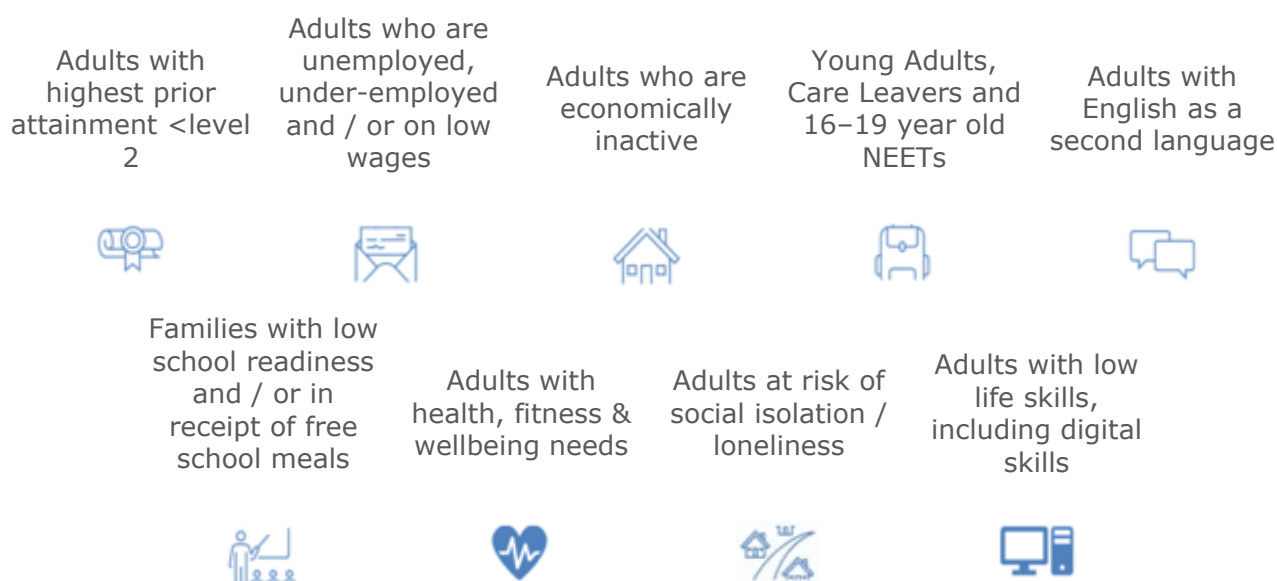
## Our planning and approach

This, the first of our annual Accountability Agreements, follows a period of significant change for the Adult Learning Service. It is being produced on the back of our majority subcontractor for the delivery of adult education going into administration and closing with immediate effect in Autumn 2022. Whilst this has caused significant disruption and led to delays in establishing the curriculum for 2023-24, our approach and 'direction of travel' has remained clear from May 2022, and in fact strengthened through improved cross-directorate working and external partnerships.



## Priority groups

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



## 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. Three specific curriculum areas were identified:

- 🚦 English for Speakers of Other Languages: 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: where delivery is in partnership with Adult Services and day centres.
- 🚦 Family Learning and Parenting: linking to (at the time 'emerging') Education & Learning Strategy 2023-25 and the wider Children, Young People and Learning Plan 2021-2025.

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.

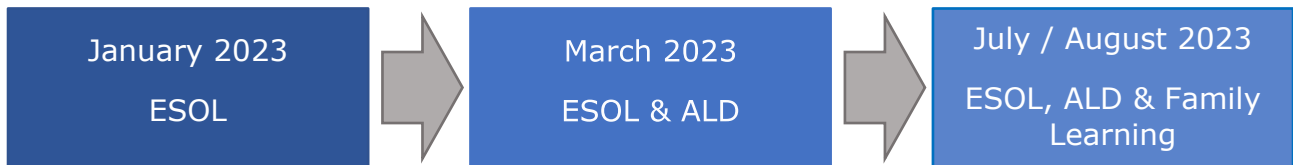
Market Engagement activity in the summer of 2022, when the higher level new curriculum was shared externally, confirmed that the market has the necessary skills and expertise, to meet the requirements of the new curriculum.

A thorough options appraisal which considered the desired curriculum, and a wide range of alternative delivery models was completed in autumn 2022. The

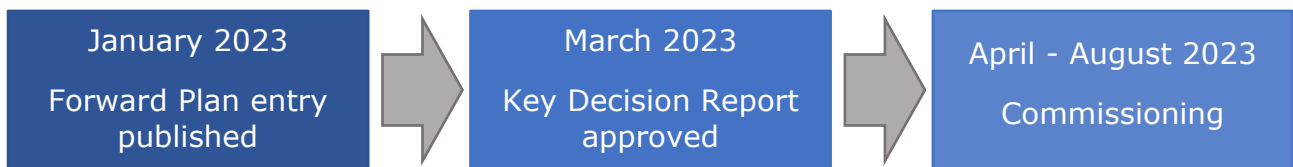
recommended delivery model for West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) residents was approved by the Council’s cabinet member for Learning and Skills, 13 March 2023, and recorded in the [Key Decision Report](#).

The following illustration summarises the timeline:

WSSCC Direct Delivery:



Commissioned:



As we seek to ‘level up’ across West Sussex, we target and ‘weight’ our Adult Learning 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, 52 (10%) are in the most deprived 30% nationally.

### How we will measure the success of our strategy:

High level measures are summarised in the following table. Appropriate data collection and recording processes will be 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"> <li>➤ No. of learners that move into work, apprenticeships, volunteering, further learning on completing their learning.</li> <li>➤ Feedback from DWP and LSIP on the ‘health’ of the workforce’s skills needs in relevant sectors and job roles.</li> </ul>
Skills for life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No. of learners improving their skills and confidence with English and communication; Maths; Digital.</li> </ul>

Social Inclusion & Community Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No. of learners who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ feel a heightened sense of belonging in their community,</li> <li>▪ want to improve their local area after participating in adult learning,</li> <li>▪ take a more active role or volunteer in the community (e.g., schools).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Learner's report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ fewer visits to their GP / health service,</li> <li>▪ improved mental wellbeing and increased self-confidence.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 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 [Local Skills Improvement Plan \(LSIP\)](#), the most recent version of which was published March 2023. The priorities, notably the sectors with identified labour / workforce concerns, and 'roadmap for change' have informed the new Adult Learning curriculum, notably the development of the "Routes into..." programme.
- ✚ 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:
  - Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations
  - A sustainable prosperous economy
  - Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential
  - Making the best use of resources.



The recently launched [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.

Our Adult Learning Service Development and Quality Improvement Plan details the activity we will undertake to deliver the curriculum and achieve our priorities. From the plan, our key priorities for the 2023-24 academic year are:

- ✚ Recruitment of required 'core' Adult Learning team, essential to the realisation of the intentions detailed in this Accountability Agreement.
- ✚ Commissioning a network of high quality external delivery partners delivering our revised curriculum, aligned with LSIP and DWP local priorities.
- ✚ From September 2023, the development of a Family Learning and Parenting (FL&P) programme.
- ✚ Development in the use of the recently implemented Management Information System (MIS) to support the breadth of AL activity.
- ✚ Multiply: delivery of years 2 & 3 as outlined in the Investment Plan approved by DfE, June 2022. A total of 1,547 learners in year 2, and 1,757 in year 3 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 will be published on the Council's website within one month of approval and can be accessed from the following link:

[Adult education - 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](#)
- [The Local Skills Improvement Plan \(LSIP\) | Sussex Chamber of Commerce](#)

