

# **Learning and Skills Service**

## **Sunderland City Council**

### **Accountability Agreement 2023/4**

## Statement of Purpose

The Learning and Skills Service is part of Sunderland City Council and delivers a range of learning opportunities via the Adult Education Budget and Multiply. The Learning and Skills Service recognises that commissioned adult and community learning plays a vital role in supporting residents in the city on their journey to learn skills, to enter, return or progress in work. Alongside the economic benefits, it also provides an opportunity to reduce isolation, makes people happier, healthier, and more resilient. We commission a range of informal and formal learning from entry-level courses to accredited qualifications linked to sector-based employment as well as a range of courses that offer support for those moving towards the labour market, those looking to develop skills to support in everyday life and confidence boosting courses in a range of community settings.

## Service Vision and Mission

Our Vision is to motivate, equip and empower people through training and education to realise their full potential and improve all aspects of their lives, their families, their communities, and their local economy.

The Learning and Skills Service strives to meet its vision through the design, development and delivery of unique, high quality learning opportunities enabling people to acquire knowledge, skills, and behaviours for their personal and professional development.

## Strategic Aims and Objectives

We aim to:

- Contribute to Sunderland's economic growth supporting residents develop skills and help them gain, retain, and progress at work
- Empower residents to live healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives
- Improve integration and inclusion through promoting participation, reducing isolation, and bringing communities together
- Support residents with life transitions: helping people to navigate challenges such as redundancy, parenthood, and health issues
- Support behaviours and attitudes; helping people to acquire the characteristics needed to participate fully in work and life

## Context and place

Sunderland City Council's Learning and Skills serves the city which has a population of more than 277,000. Sunderland is home to over 127,000 households spread across sixty neighbourhoods. Sunderland is the second biggest local authority area in Tyne and Wear covering a total of 137 square kilometres.



Sunderland's local and regional economic challenges include high levels of deprivation. Office for National Statistics data shows out of the 'LA seven' councils of Gateshead, County Durham, Newcastle, Northumberland, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland, Sunderland had the highest percentage of homes classed as deprived by at least one measure, at 58.5%.

Employment rates in Sunderland compare unfavorably to both England and the wider Northeast. The percentage of out of work benefit claimants aged 16-64 in Sunderland in February 2023 was 4.7%, higher than the Northeast figure of 4.2% and the national figure of 3.7%.

In Sunderland 120,000 people (73.6% of the population) are economically active, with 26.6% economically inactive.

In the adult skills market, the city has more residents with no qualifications (17,700 / 10.2%) than the national and regional averages. It remains below the national averages in those achieving higher level qualifications and those qualified at Level 2. Many of the residents who engage and access learning via The Learning and Skills Service are unemployed, often on a long-term basis and may face multiple disadvantages. They often have low level literacy and numeracy skills and limited basic digital skills.

In the North East Local Partnership area, skills shortage vacancies are highest in construction and manufacturing (48%), with significant increases reported in hospitality, care, and transport. There is a need to develop the skills of residents who are employed in low paid, low skilled occupations, as well as provide higher-level technical skills to meet skills shortages in the local and regional area.

The Learning and Skills Service commissions training from 14 training organisations on its Adult Education Budget. In 22/23 we offered over 100 courses across the city. The provision currently offered includes: -

- Vocational qualifications such as functional skills in maths and English
- Preparation for work courses including interview techniques

- Family learning courses to enable parents to better support their children with literacy and numeracy
- Programmes to help learners with learning disabilities and/or difficulties develop independence, social skills, and employment skills
- Courses that focus on mentoring and supporting learners recovering from addiction or dealing with homelessness

## Developing the Plan – Engagement with Key Stakeholders and Providers

As a service we recognise the importance of engagement with key stakeholders and partners which ensures that the curriculum is highly responsive to local needs and sectors, national priorities and to Sunderland Council's strategic objectives.

The plan is informed by effective and well-established relationships with Elected members, Senior Leaders, and Policy Makers along with subcontracted training providers, schools, Jobcentre Plus, funders and voluntary and community sector organisations.

Our strategy is founded on the reforms outlined in the Skills and Post 16 Education Act 2022 – more commonly known as the Skills Act and the commitment to achieve a better alignment between further education provision and local employment needs.

Statutory guidance within the Skills Act sets out the process to be led by the designated employer's representative body for developing, approving, and implementing a local skills improvement plan.

The North East Automotive Alliance are the Department of Education appointed lead on the development of a Local Skills Improvement Plan for the North East. First draft of the North East LSIP is due for submission in June 2023. The LSS Service are engaged with the NEAA who have actively supported the consultation process for the Employer Representative Body. Once approved the NELSIIP will become a strategic driver and influencer for future development curriculum development which include development of skills programmes for key sectors.

### LSIP Key Priority Sectors

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Construction
- Digital
- Health and Life Science
- Transport and Logistics

Sunderland’s City Plan sets the ambition for the Learning and Skills Service, underpinned by the Joint Strategy Needs Assessment demographic analysis.

The City Plan 2023- 2035 is founded on

### Key Themes

- By 2030 Sunderland will be a **dynamic smart** city with more and better jobs, a low-carbon economy, and a great choice of housing. It will be a leading digital city, deploying smart and sustainable technologies for the benefit of residents, businesses, and visitors
- It will be a **healthy smart city** where people will live healthier, independent lives for longer. It will be clean and attractive city with great transport and travel links
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- And it will be a **vibrant city** with more resilient people feeling safe in their homes and neighbourhoods. There will be a range of opportunities for people to participate in their communities and in cultural events and activities

### Priorities and outcomes

		
<p><b>A lower carbon city with greater digital connectivity for all</b></p>	<p><b>Reduced health inequalities enabling more people to live healthier longer lives</b></p>	<p><b>More resilient people</b></p>
<p><b>More and better jobs</b></p>	<p><b>Access to equitable opportunities and life chances</b></p>	<p><b>More people feeling safe in their homes and neighbourhoods</b></p>
<p><b>More local people with better qualifications &amp; skills</b></p>	<p><b>People enjoying independent lives</b></p>	<p><b>More residents participating in their communities</b></p>
<p><b>A stronger city centre with more businesses, housing &amp; cultural opportunities</b></p>	<p><b>Great transport links with low carbon and active travel opportunities for all</b></p>	<p><b>More people visiting Sunderland and more residents informing &amp; participating in cultural events, programmes &amp; activities</b></p>
<p><b>More and better housing</b></p>	<p><b>A cleaner and more attractive city and neighbourhood</b></p>	

## Our Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities

Strategic Aims and Objectives 2023/24	Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities
<p>Re-shape our AEB curriculum offer to reflect emerging national education reform and support growth of opportunities in sectors of regional importance as identified in the Local Skills Improvement Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop progression routeways for AEB participants to ensure pipeline talent to meet the needs of local and regional businesses</li> <li>• Ensure that over 50% of AEB participants achieve a positive destination in 2023/24</li> <li>• Ensure that over 90% of AEB participants achieve their learning aims</li> </ul>
<p>Raise awareness of the range of education programmes and opportunities available through the Learning and Skills Service and the wider available skills across Sunderland City and therefore increase engagement and participation, particularly with hard to reach groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out systematic review of skills provision across Sunderland and develop a catalogue of skills, educational and support programmes</li> <li>• Robust IAG delivered by the Service will ensure residents are signposted to relevant skills and support programmes to enhance their opportunities and support</li> <li>• Increase participation of under represented groups and increase the the proportion of the working population with Level 2+ qualifications</li> <li>• Co-design and co-deliver with DWP and Employers a series of skills and employability events across the City</li> </ul>
<p>Contribute to the Levelling Up agenda via the UKSPF for People and Skills and Multiply Provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of the adult numeracy programme Multiply in Sunderland</li> <li>• Contribute to the UKSPF People and Skills Theme</li> </ul>

## Corporation Statement

On behalf of Sunderland City Council, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Service Manager in May 2023.

The plan will be published on the Council's website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed from the following link:

[Learning and Skills Service - Sunderland City Council](#)

## Supporting Documentation

[Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](#)

[City Plan - Sunderland City Council](#)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund \(UKSPF\) in Sunderland - Sunderland City Council](#)

[m0103076\\_healthy\\_city\\_plan\\_2021.pdf \(sunderland.gov.uk\)](#)

[Home - North East Local Skills Improvement Plan \(NELSIP\)](#)

## Ofsted

[50080430 \(ofsted.gov.uk\)](#)