

**Staffordshire County Council**  
**Community Learning Service**  
**Accountability Statement 2023 – 2024**

**1. Forward**

- 1.1 Staffordshire County Council's (the Council) Community Learning Service provides learning opportunities for adults aged 19 plus (19+), across the eight (8) districts of Staffordshire, offering courses of learning that support people to gain the skills that they need so that they can progress in the world of work, and that support the independence and wellbeing of families and communities.
- 1.2 The Council is responsible for the delivery of commissioned services as Lead Provider for provision funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.
- 1.3 The Council delivers courses of learning that develop the skills, confidence, motivation and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds to:
- progress towards formal learning and employment,
  - improve their health and wellbeing and independence,
  - and to support our local communities and families to get the most from lifelong learning to improve life chances.
- 1.4 The Council directly delivers English Speakers of another Language and Essential Digital Skills qualifications, while most of the funding is subcontracted to local learning Providers to deliver non-accredited community learning provision through the Community Learning Framework 2023 – 2027), Community Learning Trust Responsiveness Fund (2023 – 2024) and Wider Family Learning Grants for Schools (2023 – 2024).

**2. Purpose and vision**

- 2.1 Our purpose is to improve the lives of Staffordshire residents and the local economy by providing a range of lifelong learning opportunities.
- 2.2 Our vision is to offer a service of outstanding quality, to ensure significant impact for learners and other stakeholders with efficient use of funding.
- 2.3 The overarching outcomes of the Service align closely with the outcomes and priorities of the Council as set out in the Staffordshire County Council Strategic Plan (2022–2026).

2.4 The Strategic Plan sets out the ambitions and priorities for the years ahead. It outlines what the Council wants to achieve and how the Council intends to do it. The strategic vision is:

*‘An innovative, ambitious and sustainable county, where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy’.*

2.5 The Council’s strategic outcomes are that people of Staffordshire will:

- have access to more good jobs and share the benefit of economic growth,
- live in thriving and sustainable communities,
- and be healthier and independent for longer.

2.6 The priorities are to:

- support Staffordshire’s economy to grow, generating more and better-paid jobs,
- tackle climate change, enhance our environment, and make Staffordshire more sustainable,
- encourage good health and wellbeing, resilience and independence,
- fix more roads, and improve transport and digital connections,
- and offer every Staffordshire young person the best start in life, and the chance to achieve their potential.

2.7 The overarching outcomes of the Community Learning Service are:

- Community Learning courses will contribute to better health and wellbeing, confidence, resilience, and independence for all learners, leading to raised aspirations.
- Learners and families who participate in Community Learning courses will gain the skills they need to achieve their personal aspirations, including making progress towards good jobs and giving their children the best start in life.
- Community Learning will bring local communities together through the promotion and delivery of lifelong learning to bring about new opportunities and improve lives, whatever people’s circumstances.

2.8 The Council aims for the Service to be inclusive and accessible to people from all demographic groups. The main target groups are as follows:

- Parents, carers and guardians who wish to develop their skills
- Adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including mental ill health.
- Refugees and asylum seekers.
- Care leavers.

- Adults yet to achieve a level 2, or those with low skills in English or maths or digital.
- Adults residing in the Staffordshire wards with the greatest concentrations of deprivation, worklessness and economic inactivity
- Adults on low income and/or in receipt of state benefits, as defined by the ESFA Adult Education Budget (AEB) Funding Rules (see 5.1 ESFA Funding Rules).
- Those who are unemployed and want to improve their chances of finding work by developing or acquiring relevant skills.
- New adult Learners.

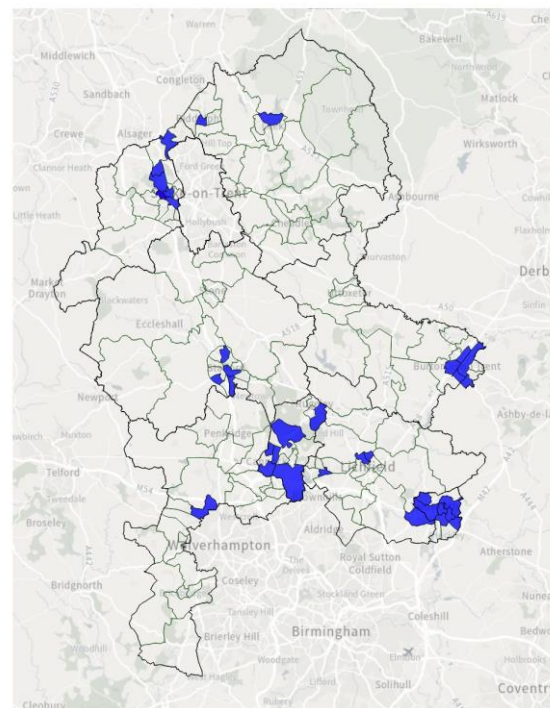
### 3. Local context and place

3.1 The County of Staffordshire (2,713 square kilometres) has a population of around 876,100, with approximately 25% living in an urban setting.

3.2 At the other end of the scale, London is 1,572 square kilometres with a population of 8.982 million. This exemplifies the rurality and challenges of delivering education in Staffordshire.

3.3 Staffordshire is made up of eight local authority areas including Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, South Staffordshire, Stafford (County town), Staffordshire Moorlands and Tamworth.

3.4 In the previous academic year at least 50% of Community Learning enrolments came from disadvantaged communities and 55% were adults below a full Level 2. The breadth and spread are illustrated in the map.



 Staffordshire  
County Council

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[www.staffordshire.gov.uk/maps](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/maps).

3.5 Around 76,900 Staffordshire residents (9%) live in areas which have been classified as being among the 20% most deprived in England. The county has an ageing population, with 22% of people aged 65+ with this age group seeing a 24% increase between 2011 and 2021.

- 3.6 In Staffordshire, there are significant inequalities in health outcomes, as the gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas is over eight (8) years for men and nearly eight (8) years for women.
- 3.7 Staffordshire has pockets of high level of deprivation in Education, Skills and Training, in particular in Tamworth and Cannock Chase, with a rank of 75th out of 151 upper tier local authorities in England.
- 3.8 Positively, Staffordshire has a lower rate of residents with no qualifications than nationally, however there are areas where residents with no qualifications remain higher than seen nationally, most notably Cannock Chase and Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- 3.9 Staffordshire has also seen improvement in higher adult skills at Level 3+ and 4+ and is closing the gap to the national average.
- 3.10 Although Staffordshire has seen strong improvement in adult skills recently, there still remain an estimated 32,000 working age residents with no formal qualifications.
- 3.11 In 2022 the Council developed a new Economic Strategy 2022-30 with one of the key priorities to have higher skilled, higher paid workforce. The strategy identified that low levels of skills are particularly entrenched within Cannock Chase, Tamworth, and parts of Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- 3.12 The most significant industry sector in Staffordshire, in employment terms, is wholesale and retail, followed by health and social care, manufacturing and education.
- 3.13 Unemployment is far lower than the national rate and Staffordshire has seen faster improvement in resident earnings than nationally with average earnings now largely in-line with national.

#### **4. Approach to developing the annual accountability statement**

- 4.1 In 2019 Community Learning opportunities were secured through an open and competitive tendering process for local learning Providers to deliver services through the Community Learning Framework (2019 – 2023). This arrangement is due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023.
- 4.2 The Council's planning cycle for Community Learning 2023 - 2024 commenced in March 2022 and will end in June 2023. The procurement activity for a new Community Learning Framework (2023 – 2027) was approved by Cabinet in May 2022.

- 4.3 In our most recent Ofsted inspection in February 2023, it was noted that leaders successfully work with a range of subcontractors to shape the curriculum, that curriculum planning takes account of relevant local Council priorities and prioritise provision to take place in areas of high deprivation. As a result, leaders positively support the focus for economic prosperity across the communities in which they work.
- 4.4 The Council has consulted with a range of stakeholders, including charities, Community Interest Companies, Colleges, Independent Training Providers, local and upper authority areas and adult learners through two (2) market engagement events, an online survey and learner focus groups and conducted a detailed analysis of national, regional and local priorities and taken into account Government policy.
- 4.5 The Council has a strong partnership with the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) and the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP). The SSLEP strategic vision is:
- “To help deliver a diverse, inclusive and sustainable economy across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, developing local skills which enable more people to access higher value, better paid jobs across a wide range of priority and locally important sectors.”*
- 4.6 The Local Skills Report produced by the SSLEP influences local partners to match the provision offer against employer skills demand and local identified need. Within this report there are seven strategic priorities; Community Learning strongly aligns to the following priorities:
- Supporting and enabling adults to secure employment, to reskill and raise their skill levels and engage in lifelong learning, to enable career progression and increased productivity in priority sectors.
  - Supporting greater diversity and inclusivity in the workforce and enable disadvantaged young people and adults to engage in learning and skills programmes, progress to employment and improve their health & wellbeing.
  - Ensuring young people and adults are equipped with the digital skills required in the changing world of work to support growth in productivity.
- 4.7 The Council’s Economic Strategy 2023 – 2030 is our roadmap to delivering our ambitions for the Staffordshire economy, where our existing businesses are helped to grow, new businesses are established and thrive, or residents have the skills needed to access the jobs of the future and our towns across the county are supported to be places we can all be proud of.

4.8 Alongside this the Employment and Skills Strategy 2023 – 2030 for Staffordshire is currently under development in partnership with a range of stakeholders to support the delivery of the Council's Economic Strategy and the Leaders Board's economic vision, priorities and pipeline projects by building on recent employment and skills improvement and success across Staffordshire and ensure that the county has the highly skilled workforce it needs to reach its full potential.

4.9 The shared mission for local employment and skills stakeholders is to:

*Create strong and effective partnerships which support our people to gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve their ambitions and pay a productive role in the growth of the Staffordshire economy.*

4.10 The priorities are:

- creating an aspirational and active workforce,
- providing inspirational careers advice,
- developing skills to drive productivity and growth,
- supporting innovation and enterprise,
- and creating a place of learning.

4.11 The priority sectors include:

- Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing,
- Advanced Logistics,
- Construction
- Health and Social Care,
- and crosscutting Digital and Green Skills.

4.12 Through collaboration with stakeholders and the analysis of the local economy and local and national priorities the Community Learning Strategy 2023 – 2027 was developed and informs the accountability statement.

## 5. Contribution to national, regional and local priorities

Community Learning Aims	
<p>1. The Community Learning Service will provide accessible and inclusive learning opportunities to promote social cohesion across Staffordshire and deliver a high-quality learner experience which empowers and raises aspirations for all learners. We will work in collaboration with a range of partners informing the development and delivery of targeted and responsive provision and take a place-based approach to align with the demand of local and national priorities making good use of available resources. We will focus on outcomes and progression that have significant personal and employability impact for learners and their families.</p> <p>2. We will implement the Community Learning Framework 2023 – 2027 across the eight (8) districts of Staffordshire, offering a programme of non-accredited and accredited learning with clear progression pathways to residents aged 19+. Delivery will include embedded contextualised opportunities to develop English, maths, digital and employability skills and information and advice to prepare learners for their next steps by providing knowledge, understanding, confidence and skills needed to make informed choices and plans for their future learning and career.</p>	
Community Learning Priorities	Impact and contribution to strategic aims, skills priorities and areas for improvement 2023 – 2024
<p>Contract with local providers of adult education to deliver the Community Learning Framework.</p> <p>Implement and deliver a broad curriculum offer to support Staffordshire residents based on their needs.</p> <p>Engage individuals and groups who would benefit most from improving their</p>	<p>The Community Learning Framework 2023 – 2027 consists of the following programmes of delivery:</p> <p><b>Independence &amp; Wellbeing</b> non-accredited provision for adults who are furthest from learning and employment, and these individuals will sometimes require additional bespoke support to be successful in learning and to achieve positive progression outcomes. A broad range of subjects including strategies to stimulate self-awareness, improve and develop personal wellbeing and independence and achieve personal aspirations. This may include developing skills for independent living including skills for improved health and financial management, getting involved in the local community and developing strategies to live a more sustainable lifestyle.</p> <p><b>Indicative enrolments:</b> 750, remaining consistent with 2022-23.</p> <p><b>Impact:</b> Working in strong partnership with social prescribers, GP surgeries, mental health professionals and other community-based support services the provision will develop good health and independence</p>

<p>confidence, motivation, resilience, and skills to access further learning and better jobs.</p> <p>Activity support learner progression through delivery of appropriate information and advice so the learner can make informed choices.</p> <p>Ensure provision is responsive to emerging needs and can be developed over time to stay current, including innovation in digital technologies.</p>	<p>ensuring learners can take personal responsibility for their wellbeing, an increased number of adults accessing community support to help them stay healthy and independent and improved essential skills to increase life chances. Online, blended and face-to-face community-based provision will be available contributing to reduced carbon emissions, and utilising community facilities and green spaces will contribute to improved health and wellbeing. Progression pathways on to other Community Learning courses with more stretching and challenging learning aims/or different subject, Multiply and Functional Skills qualifications, volunteering and work experience.</p> <p><b>Community &amp; Family Progression</b> non-accredited provision to support adults develop skills that contribute to their community and/or family learning that equips parents, carers and guardians with the necessary skills to give their children the best start in life. It may also improve parental engagement with education to boost the children’s success in school and provide a ‘way in’ to education despite possible negative experiences. Courses may include: family budgeting, cookery, creative subjects, sustainability and community action projects, DIY, forest schools and early years and school curriculums at different key stages.</p> <p><b>Indicative enrolments:</b> 900, remaining consistent with 2022-23.</p> <p><b>Impact:</b> The provision will widen community participation and develop stronger communities, with more self-sufficient connected and pro-active citizens leading to increased volunteering, civic engagement and social integration. Effective partnerships with Early Help, Children’s Centres, and schools to ensure the most vulnerable children and young people are safe and support them to achieve their potential. Parents will have the strengths, skills and knowledge to support their children and be better prepared for their own progression pathways, which may include further Community Learning courses, Multiply provision for parents that want to improve their own numeracy, direct delivery Essential Digital Skills or ESOL qualifications, volunteering and further education.</p> <p><b>English, Maths and Digital</b> non-accredited provision providing support to gain confidence and the necessary functional skills to effectively apply in everyday lives, work, and further learning. These skills often lead to people being more active in their local communities, accessing local facilities and online services. Courses include access to digital devices for adults with limited access to equipment and connectivity, practical everyday English, maths and digital skills that can be applied to increase</p>
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independence and including English courses that develop reading, writing and speaking and listening skills, activities that support cost-of-living, the development of basic IT and introduction to digital and collaborative technologies and e-safety.

**Indicative enrolments:** Increase the number of enrolments from 168 in 2022-23 to 300, a 44% increase

**Impact:** Provides a progression pathway from Multiply for those learners who are not ready to undertake formal maths qualifications. Provides an internal progression pathway for current learners who want to gain confidence and develop their functional skills. Planned progression pathway to Multiply (all interventions, across the eight (8) districts) and Functional Skills and GCSE English and maths with FE Colleges and Independent Training Providers. Learners wanting to further develop digital or English skills for employment can progress onto direct delivery of Essential Digital Skills or ESOL qualifications at Entry Level to Level 2. Learners will be able to access more good jobs and feel the benefit of economic growth through the delivery of English, maths and digital provision supporting opportunities to up-skill and re-skill to achieve personal aspirations.

**STEM & Vocational** non-accredited provision deeply rooted in science, mathematics, engineering and/or are of technical or technology application to develop necessary skills to facilitate progression opportunities in accredited STEM or vocational learning and/or apply for jobs in key sector areas: Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing, Advanced Logistics, Construction, Health and Social Care, Digital and Green skills. Vocational courses may include, business, health services, retail and customer service, hospitality, logistics, business and customer facing roles and outdoor or environmental skills. Learners will develop enterprise skills and learn about self-employment and how to access support in starting their own business. Provides internal progression pathways for learners engaged in Independence and Wellbeing, Community and Family Progression and English, maths and Digital programmes (where appropriate).

**Indicative enrolments:** Increase the number of enrolments from 284 in 2022-23 to 550, a 48% increase.

**Impact:** Partnerships and collaboration with local employers to support programme development and creating opportunities for adults to get higher skilled, higher value and higher paid jobs. Signposting learners to the Councils Staffordshire Means Business Get Started scheme and Start-up loans providing expert advice, support and loans for new businesses. Fully utilising the Councils Staffordshire Jobs and

Careers online platform and brokerage service to help support the local economy by providing residents with a quick and easy way to find employment and/or training opportunities leading to positive destinations. Strengthened partnerships with Further Education Colleges to secure progression pathways into accredited provision, which may include Multiply maths modules embedded in vocational subjects, Functional Skills and GCSE English and maths qualifications, supported internships, apprenticeships, higher level technical skills and work placements. Future planned collaboration for progression pathways and skills growth will include working in collaboration with Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Institute of Technology and businesses to deliver the facilities and technical provision needed in Staffordshire to provide the future skills for growth, Newcastle & Stafford College Group Innovation Centre at Stafford College equipped to deliver state-of-the-art skills in construction, engineering and motor vehicle, South Staffordshire College relocation of Tamworth campus to the city centre providing high-quality teaching and learning environment and specialist teaching spaces and Burton & South Derbyshire College's new suite of innovative facilities including Health and Social Care Realistic Working Environment, Mechatronics Suite, Creative Digital Learning Hub, Cyber Security Lab and a Games Development Suite.

**Community Learning Trust Responsiveness Fund (CLTRF)**, further develop the partnerships with the voluntary sector to extend learner reach and engagement and to be responsive to emerging needs with priority groups and deliver bespoke non-accredited learning to meet the identified need. The provision supports and develops individuals and groups for whom formal learning may have been a barrier in the past and works with them to build confidence and to realise their true potential. For the most disadvantaged learners the service will offer engaging 'first steps' learning opportunities as a way of increasing participation for people who are least likely to engage in adult learning and to prepare learners for a more formal course of learning.

**Indicative enrolments:** 205, remaining consistent with 2022-23.

**Impact:**

A progression pathway for those not ready to engage in formal learning. CLTRF will support residents of Staffordshire in achieving wellbeing and independence and gaining the confidence to increase personal aspirations and access further Community Learning including Multiply. Improved personal, social and functional skills will allow residents to access more good jobs and feel the benefit of economic growth. CLTRF is an important means of supporting social cohesion and ensuring everyone shares in a

prosperous Staffordshire. The diverse and inclusive nature of the curriculum offer and delivery via smaller community based specialised providers ensures an opportunity for amongst the most marginalised within society to gain the skills to access services and feel engaged in their community.

**Wider Family Learning Grants for Schools**, further develop the partnerships with schools to increase learner reach and engagement and to be responsive to emerging needs of local families and deliver bespoke non-accredited family learning to meet the identified need. The provision has two possible purposes: it can be designed to enable adults and children to learn together, and these courses aim to develop the skills or knowledge of both the adult and child participants. Or provision can be delivered to parents/carers to enable adults to better support their children's learning. These courses focus on developing learners' understanding of the school curriculum and how they can support this at home, or to support parents in their own parenting skills or family wellbeing.

**Indicative enrolments:** Increase the number of enrolments from 70 in 2022-23 to 115, a 39% increase.

**Impact:** In addition to the positive impacts on children's learning, and closer parental engagement in schools, the courses have a positive impact on adults' skills, wellbeing and attitude to learning. They will have the strengths, skills and knowledge to support their children and be better prepared for their own progression pathways, which may include further Community Learning courses, Multiply for parents that want to improve their own numeracy, direct delivery Essential Digital Skills or ESOL qualifications, volunteering and further education.

**Direct Delivery**, non-accredited digital skills provision for learners who have little or low digital skills who wish to develop their skills for everyday life and employment purposes. Courses may include the following: introduction to digital skills, digital skills for beginners, essential digital skills and/or bespoke content as requested by community groups.

**Indicative enrolments:** Increase the number of enrolments from 118 in 2022-23 to 146, a 24% increase.

**Impact:** the provision will focus on bridging the gap between the digital first steps and digital disengaged learners – those learners that may need to use multiple devices daily and those that have little or no experience of using digital devices and online content and will contribute to the achievement of the

Council's Digital Strategy. Progression pathways onto accredited Essential Digital Skills qualifications delivered at Entry Level 3 to Level 1.

Delivery of Essential Digital Skills qualifications at Entry Level 3 to Level 1 for learners who want to progress in the workplace.

**Indicative enrolments:** Increase the number of enrolments from 14 in 2022-23 to 50, a 307% increase.

**Impact:** With the increasingly large proportion of financial and governmental services being offered online and requirement for employees to access digital content or interact with digital devices becoming commonplace in a work environment, it is important to ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to gain these important digital skills.

Progression pathways from Entry Level to Level 1, provide skills needed to prepare adults to succeed personally and professionally. Learners will develop digital skills necessary for work, life and further study. They will also be able to interact with digital devices and handle information appropriately, share content and communicate effectively using digital devices, whilst developing transactional skills, be safe online, manage online accounts and maintain their privacy. The provision further strengthens partnerships with Further Education Colleges, to secure progression pathways into accredited provision. This could include functional, digital and vocational skills.

Accredited English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) supporting adults with little or no English language skills to acquire the necessary skills for everyday life and employment at Entry Level to Level 2. ESOL Skills for Life qualifications focus on preparing learners for the world of work or citizenship. The primary aim is to assist the learner in becoming independent of others when interacting with English-speakers, both in a work environment and elsewhere.

**Indicative ESOL enrolments:** Increase the number of enrolments from 134 in 2022-23 to 175, a 30% increase.

**Impact:** By improving communication and fluency in English, learners will benefit from enhanced prosperity, supporting the local economy by providing residents with a quick and easy way to find

	<p>employment and/or training opportunities leading to positive destinations. The provision strengthens partnerships with Further Education Colleges to secure progression pathways into accredited provision, including functional and vocational skills. Furthermore, these learners will benefit from the development of their independence to access service providers and to have the linguistic confidence to travel, work and socialise beyond their local community.</p> <p>Partnerships with Staffordshire’s refugee resettlement group, West Midlands ESOL partnership group and Staffordshire Strategic Migration Partnership group, has further supported economic prosperity. Learners are able to access services provided by organisations, working for the residents of Staffordshire.</p> <p><b>We will maintain the Services ambitious Key Performance Indicators as detailed below:</b></p> <p>100% of learners report they feel safe.  98% learners report they know how to keep themselves safe from radicalisation and extremism.  90% attendance  96% retention  94% achievement  98% pass  70% new learners  70% of learners report positive impacts on their wellbeing and confidence as a direct result of attending the course.  30% of learners who were unemployed and looking for work at the start of their course progress into a positive destination.</p>
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**6. Corporation statement**

On behalf of Staffordshire County Council, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by **\*\*cabinet\*\*** on **[insert date]**.

The plan will be published on the Council’s website within three (3) months of the start of the academic year 2023 – 2024 and can be accessed from the following link: **[insert link]**

**7. Supporting documentation**

[Staffordshire County Council Strategic Plan \(2022-2026\)](#)

[Staffordshire County Council Economic Strategy \(2022-2030\)](#)

[Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019](#)

[Community Learning Strategy \(2023-2027\)](#)

[Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership](#)

[Skills Advisory Panel](#)

[Skills Advisory Panel Local Skills Report](#)

[Staffordshire Jobs & Careers \(Job Brokerage Service\)](#)