



Wandsworth Council Lifelong Learning Key priorities for Adult Skills learning provision 2025/26

To improve the employment skills, career development, the quality of life and wellbeing of residents in the Borough, making Wandsworth a vibrant, prosperous learning community.

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Introduction

The Wandsworth Lifelong Learning (WCLL) team is part of the Council's Children's Services Department. It is responsible for a wide range of lifelong learning activities and courses across the borough.

The main functions of the service are to deliver:

- An extensive programme of part-time **Tailored Learning** (non-accredited Community Learning) through an Adult Skills Fund
- **Adult Core Learning** (Accredited Learning) through an Adult Skills Fund
- **Apprenticeships** to young people and adults
- **Work experience** and preparation for employment
- **A fundraising strategy which maximises income** for young people and adults learning in Wandsworth

There is a high level of participation in all programmes from learners of different ages, backgrounds and experiences. Increasingly the focus of the Service is on those who are most disadvantaged to enable improved access to learning and employment.

The [Wandsworth Council Lifelong Learning Three-Year Development Plan](#) reflects the work undertaken by the team and describes plans for the future in a measurable context. The Plan encompasses local and national priorities with the aim of targeting funding to maximise social and economic inclusion. On a local level the plan is directly linked to Wandsworth Council's Priorities.

Wandsworth Council's Priorities

A fairer Wandsworth

To make Wandsworth fairer we will:

Work towards ensuring all local people have a genuinely affordable place to call home
Support residents who are impacted by the cost of living crisis and COVID-19

A compassionate Wandsworth

To make Wandsworth more compassionate we will:

Be a compassionate Council that truly listens and is ambitious for all

Create safer neighbourhoods where communities feel confident and protected and victims and survivors are supported.

A more sustainable Wandsworth

To make Wandsworth more sustainable we will:

Tackle climate change by working together with our residents, businesses and communities and will be carbon neutral as a council by 2030

Lifelong Learning Priorities, Aims and Objectives

Priorities	Objectives
<p>1. To lead and manage high quality learning</p>	<p>Develop staff, resources and infrastructure to ensure effective delivery of local and national policy objectives. Continue to improve quality assurance and standards across Lifelong Learning in line with the Education Inspection Framework. Continue to develop partnerships, funding, and the procurement of high-quality learning providers/subcontractors to ensure the long-term sustainability of Lifelong Learning services.</p>
<p>2. To increase the number of learners achieving and gaining qualifications</p>	<p>Provide effective and relevant careers information, advice and guidance to assist learner achievement, accreditation and progression to further education, training and employment. Where appropriate, expand the potential for accreditation across the curriculum, maximising use of new technologies.</p>
<p>3. To meet the needs of individuals, communities and employers in Wandsworth and to support effective pathways to employment</p>	<p>Consult and involve learners, employers, providers, and other stakeholders to ensure the development of services which meet individual, corporate and community needs. Work with employers to increase job outcomes in Wandsworth for young people and adults and close skills gaps. Promote and provide access to English, mathematics and other essential education and training required for the workplace. Encourage learners to identify key experiences and skills to make the most of their opportunities to progress.</p>
<p>4. To widen participation in learning</p>	<p>Provide an inclusive, responsive, innovative and broad offer to encourage and improve learner participation - promoting Lifelong Learning to all age groups. Encourage learners to remain active, engaged and fitter for longer. Create learning environments where learners feel safe, respected and listened to regardless of their background or personal attributes.</p>
<p>5. To link the Adult Skills Fund priorities to other key strategies and initiatives</p>	<p>Align the work of Lifelong Learning to wider local, regional and national strategies including employability, parenting and families and well-being for all ages. Contribute to the Council's work with care leavers, vulnerable families, migrants and learners with disabilities and learning difficulties. Participate in area reviews and partnerships, ensuring that appropriate provision is in place for Wandsworth residents.</p>

Demographic Context

Wandsworth is the second largest inner London borough with a population of 327,500 (2021 Census). The 2021 census revealed that the size and make-up of the local population has changed, particularly in relation to age.

Since the last Census, the Wandsworth population has increased by 6.7%. The borough had the 4th largest population increase in inner London. The local population is now older with the largest increase seen in 55-59 year olds (+43% since 2011), followed by 50-54 (+33%). There has been a large decrease in 0-4 year olds (-14% since 2011).

Wandsworth has a lower proportion of 0-19 year olds and 65+ adults than London and a much higher percentage of 20-44 years olds compared to London and England. However, the census also revealed that there were 4,000 85+ year olds, 307 more (+8.3%) compared to 2011. This is the highest number of 85+ year olds in inner London.

Like most London boroughs, Wandsworth is ethnically diverse with 32.2% of the population from ethnic minority group communities.

The English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019) rank Wandsworth as 173 of 317 on the average score, where 1 is the most deprived, and the area ranked 317 is the least deprived. The highest levels of deprivation in the borough are concentrated in the wards of Latchmere, Roehampton and Queenstown. There are also concentrations of deprivation in the West Putney and Tooting areas.

As with most parts of London, areas of deprivation are closely located to areas of extreme advantage and the borough is set to benefit from the regeneration of the Nine Elms area which will provide up to 25,000 jobs over the next 20 years. The Nine Elms development remains one of the largest regeneration projects of its type in Europe.

Delivering Council Values



Key delivery priorities for Adult Skills provision – Priority Groups 2025/26

The Lifelong Learning team includes staff who work with community providers to develop learning opportunities to encourage hard-to-reach and priority groups, including those who:

- are furthest away from work
- are in low paid employment and/or are low qualified
- have a government entitlement to basic skills and/or up to level 2
- are socially isolated (or at risk of social isolation)
- live in an area of poor social cohesion
- would benefit from improved health or wellbeing
- have a learning difficulty or disability
- are older learners who would benefit from more social interaction
- are underachieving or under-represented
- need to retrain
- are learners whose first language is not English
- are learners without a level 2 qualification
- are men who are traditionally under-represented in adult learning
- those who lack digital skills and/or experience barriers to access digital technology
- are ex-offenders
- have been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic (employment, financial, wellbeing)
- are adult learners accessing education and training opportunities that promote better and more sustainable ways of living and working

Key delivery priorities for Adult Skills provision – Curriculum 2025/26

Key priorities have been determined:

- Courses or activities that support improved English and maths skills
- Courses or activities that support increased English language skills for those for whom English is a Second Language
- First rung - supporting students into work or further study - Courses or activities that offer employability skills and tailored training provision to engage those furthest from the workplace or learning
- Enterprise
- IT and digital - Courses or activities that introduce people to digital technology, social media and ICT skills
- Health and wellbeing
 - Courses and activities that promote and develop confidence building, communication skills, personal presentation, and individual resilience
 - Courses or activities that contribute to older people's health and quality of life by enabling them to stay physically and mentally active and promote their fitness and wellbeing
 - Courses or activities that support healthy lifestyles, nutrition and wellbeing
- Courses or activities that support and promote Family Learning activities

- Enrichment programmes that will improve wellbeing or lead to a job change (provide infrastructure and income generation)
- Courses or activities that provide clear progression routes - Informal ESOL and Functional Skills provision that provides a stepping stone to more formal/regulated provision
- Courses or activities that will engage disadvantaged priority groups in learning, specifically engaging adults with special needs (disability and learning difficulties), the socially isolated, adults suffering from mental health conditions, adults moving towards independent living and families on low incomes
- Courses or activities that support that support communities in combatting climate change and improving the environment and neighbourhoods keeping them clean, green and safe
- Courses that support the Mayor of London's [London Growth Plan](#)
- Courses that support Wandsworth Council and it's residents in our selection as London Borough of Culture for 2025/26

Adult Skills Fund

The Adult Skills Fund (ASF) replaced the Adult Education Budget from August 2024 simplifying the funding and accountability system and giving providers more flexibility to respond to local need.

There are 2 main parts to the Adult Skills Fund:

1: Skills Fund Adult Core – for WCLL this would be accredited (regulated qualifications) delivery

2: Skills Fund Tailored Learning – for WCLL this would be non-accredited delivery (what is currently known as Community Learning)

Free Courses for Jobs (Level 3) remains ringfenced as a separate line within providers' funding agreements.

Influencing Strategies – Greater London Authority (GLA) and Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

The WCLL service works across multiple funding streams to contribute to national, regional and local priorities.

The curriculum is agile and takes account of national priorities, particularly in areas such as personal development, digital, English and maths. There is also a responsiveness to fast changing circumstances such as Covid, cost of living and work with refugees. Work is also aligned to the Mayor's [Skills Roadmap for London](#) and the [London Local Skills Improvement Plan](#) which outline London-wide priorities.

Criteria for Assessing Expressions of Interest

In addition to the above, all proposed CL provision will be required to meet the following criteria:

- The proposed target group is one of those defined above.

- Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.
- Mechanisms are in place to properly assess learner needs, and to provide information, advice and guidance to learners.
- Adequate resources are available to learners that are appropriate to the target group.
- All delivery is linked to and in accordance with the Mayor's Skills for Londoners Strategy and up to date GLA Adult Education Budget Funding rules.
- If the provider has delivered for WCLL before they must have a strong track record of having delivered successfully against their delivery plans approved by WCLL, and that targets have been met (Wandsworth residents, London Learner Survey, Course Evaluation Survey, SAR deadlines, etc.)
- There are suitable safe venues for delivery of adult learning
- The organisation has effective mechanisms and/or strategies to monitor the quality of provision
- The organisation has up to date policies in place including Health & Safety, Diversity and Safeguarding
- The organisation has adequate procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable adults
- The organisation has appropriate insurance cover
- Financial viability of the organisation
- The organisation has a past track record of delivering local community-based learning
- Due Diligence documentation is provided upon request and deemed to be of sufficient quality and content
- Suitable references are available
- The organisation must plan provision in line with [WCLL's Digital Policy](#)

Curriculum Offer

Skills Fund Tailored Learning:

The total budget for tailored learning (non-accredited Community Learning) provision in this invitation to offer is **£ 419,000.00** and the indicative allocations for the curriculum packages are as below:

Curriculum package	Indicative funding
Creative/Media	£7,000.00
Digital skills	£45,000.00
English, maths and ESOL	£75,000.00
Enterprise	£7,000.00
Family learning	£24,000.00
Financial skills	£4,000.00
Green/sustainability	£10,000.00
Health & Wellbeing	£22,000.00
LLDD	£100,000.00
NEET ages 19-24 yrs	£35,000.00
Pre-employment training/Employability	£90,000.00

Skills Fund Adult Core:

Qualifications from Entry 1 to Level 2 must be listed as approved for funding on the ESFA's 'Find a learning aim' online search: <https://findlearningaimbeta.fasst.org.uk/>

Qualifications should have sufficient approval time to enable completion of delivery, verification and final certification. The indicative budget for adult core (accredited) provision in this invitation to offer is **£175,000.00** and the indicative allocations for the curriculum packages are as below:

Curriculum package	Indicative funding
Creative/Media	£ 10,000.00
Digital skills	£38,000.00
English	£35,000.00
ESOL	£20,000.00
Green/sustainability	£14,000.00
maths	£24,000.00
Vocational (Priority areas: Health & Social Care, Hospitality and Catering, Retail)	£34,000.00

Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs:

These courses must help learners improve wage outcomes and job prospects, and gain skills that employers value.

To check the validity of your qualification for this programme you can go to <https://www.qualifications.education.gov.uk/Search>

The total we will be allocating for commissioning for L3 FCFJ is **£77,000.00** and the indicative allocations for the curriculum packages are as below:

Curriculum package	Indicative funding
Digital skills	£17,000.00
Creative/Media	£10,000.00
Employability	£20,000.00
Green/Sustainability	£10,000.00
Vocational Health & Social Care	£10,000.00
Vocational Hospitality & Catering	£10,000.00

Commissioning timeframe

Process	Deadline
Adult Skills Priorities Guidance, Expression of Interest and Course Application Form distributed	17/01/2025

Expression of Interest, Funding Application Form and Business Continuity Plans to be returned to WCLL	21/02/2025
Evaluation of tender and Governor review	24/02/2025 – 10/03/2025
Provisional result of Tender and Due Diligence templates distributed	11/03/2025
Due diligence templates to be returned	28/03/2025
Contracts issued	TBC – we will need to wait until WCLL contract is issued by GLA
Signed copies of contract to be returned to WCLL	01/07/2025

Bidding process

To be considered for funding under the Adult Skills Fund organisations must initially complete the following annually:

- The Expression of Interest Form 2025-26
- Adult Skills Funding Application Form 2025-26
- The Due Diligence document (if successful when provisional results are published on 11/03/2025)

The Expression of Interest form asks some general questions about your organisation and helps us establish if your organisation is in a position to deliver good quality Adult Skills programmes in line with our overall mission and quality framework. We also ask for references. The forms need to be completed once every academic year (August - July) by all potential providers whether we have worked with you before or not.

The Due Diligence form should be completed annually, and requests information to perform financial checks, company registration checks, DfE checks, safeguarding, prevent and policy and CPD checks.

The Funding Application Form details the budget requested for the courses it is intended to deliver.

The completed Expression of Interest form is considered by a panel consisting of Wandsworth Council staff and certain members of the Monitoring and Advisory Group if required. You will need to provide 2 referees from 2 different institutions/businesses (preferably providers you have delivered/currently deliver for) whom we will contact for a reference as part of the application process.

Your Business Continuity Plan must include actions in place to ensure that course delivery can continue in the case of any lockdowns and with minimal impact on learning. It must also describe how the provider will move to online learning in a timely manner.

We will not be able to contract with you if your organisation:

- Has an Ofsted rating of 'Inadequate' for any of the 4 categories: Quality of education; Behaviour and attitudes; Personal Development; and Leadership and management
- Does not meet the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Greater London Authority (GLA) Minimum Standards
- Has an above-average risk warning from a credit agency or if the outcome of your annual financial health assessment is inadequate, unless we have written permission in advance from the ESFA or GLA
- Has passed a resolution (or the court has made an order) to wind up or liquidate the company, or administrators have been appointed, or
- Statutory accounts are overdue
- If you have any other ESFA or GLA funding (directly or indirectly) and the funding from us takes your organisation over the £100,000 threshold for the funding year, you must ensure that you are listed on the Register of Training Organisations beforehand, otherwise we cannot contract with you until you do so
- If any of the required documents in this process are not returned in the required format and/or without all of the required information
- If any of the funding applied for is not in line with the priorities detailed or referenced in this document
- If we are unable to obtain satisfactory references for your organisation
- If you have delivered for WCLL previously and such delivery was not satisfactory as measured through regular monitoring reports.