

Luton Adult Learning Accountability Statement 2025/2026

The accountability statement forms part of the wider set of reforms introduced in the Skills for Jobs White Paper to transform the skills system, so it better supports young people and adults to develop the skills they need to get a good job and ensure a clearer focus on the delivery of outcomes. It sets out what providers will do in return for the Department of Education's funding investment and must be submitted to the DfE by 30th June 2024. The statement allows providers to focus in on what and how they intend to deliver to support local, regional, and national needs.

Statement of purpose

The council's strategic aim is that by 2040 Luton will be a healthy, fair and sustainable town, where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty and this is underpinned by 5 strategic priorities.

Our priorities for Luton 2040:

Building an inclusive economy that delivers investment to support the growth of businesses, jobs and incomes.



Improving population wellbeing and tackling health inequalities to enable everyone to have a good quality of life and reach their full potential.



Becoming a child friendly town, where our children grow up happy, healthy and secure, with a voice that matters and the opportunities they need to thrive.



Tackling the climate emergency and becoming a net zero town with sustainable growth and a healthier environment.



Supporting a strong and empowered community, built on fairness, local pride and a powerful voice for all our residents.



[Hyperlink to statement on Adult Learning website](https://www.lutonacl.ac.uk/policies.html)

The Employment and Skills Plan for Luton focusses on 4 strategic aims that underpin delivery within Luton Adult Learning.

- Skills driving economic recovery and growth
- Developing a pipeline of talented and resilient people
- Tackling long term inequality and economic inactivity
- Creating an adaptable and upskilled workforce

Luton Adult Learning Strategic Aims and Objectives

The priority areas of activity in 2025-26 are determined by national policy and local need. The strategic goal that the Service has been set by Luton Council is to contribute to its 2040 vision by:

- Ensuring that residents take advantage of their Level 2 and 3 entitlement.
- Better equipping residents of all ages to get jobs or further their careers.
- Working effectively with partner organisations to ensure that the town's most vulnerable residents are safe and supported.
- Working effectively with partner educational organisations to ensure that learners have a seamless skills pathway.
- Supporting resident's health and wellbeing.

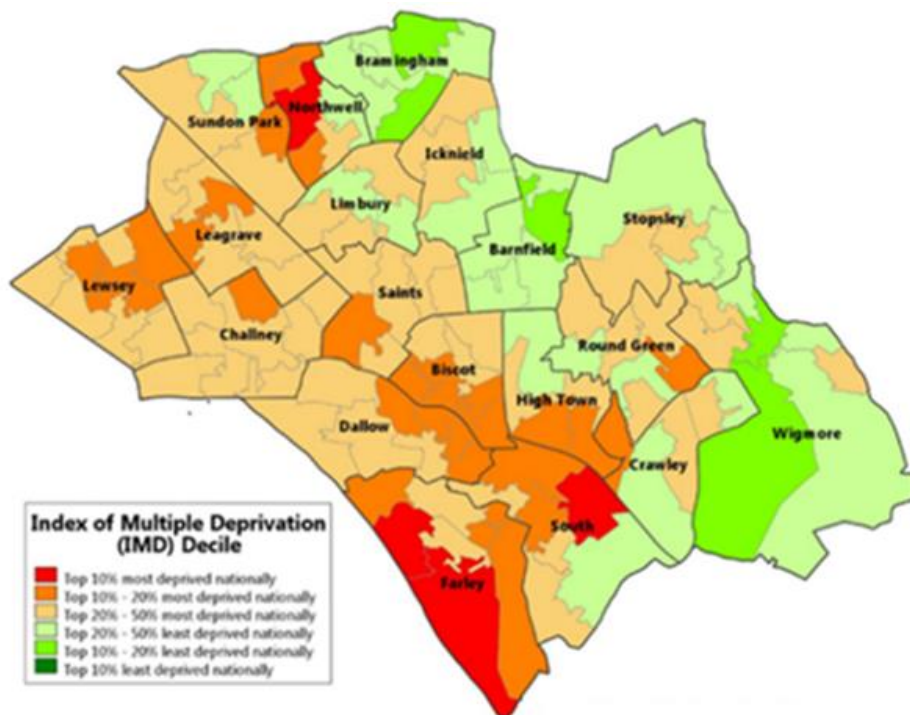
Service vision

To deliver inclusive growth, where Luton's residents can access the education, skills and employment support they need to enable them to secure fulfilling, appropriate, sustainable careers throughout their lives, which supports the growth, diversity and prosperity of the local economy.

Context and place

Luton is a densely populated urban area, substantially more so than England averages, with an estimated population of just over 225,300. A super diverse town, with a vibrant mix of cultures, skills and languages. Luton is significantly more ethnically diverse than the English average, with large Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian, African and Caribbean communities.

Luton is currently ranked 70th most deprived out of 317 local authorities and has four output areas in the 10% most deprived parts of the country. These are Northwell, South and two in Farley.



Qualification levels are lower than national averages in Luton:

- 9.8% of the working age population in Luton have no qualifications, which is 3% higher than national averages.
- 72.5% of the working age population in Luton are qualified up to Level 2, which is 5.5% lower than national averages.
- 37% of the working age population have qualifications at level 4 or above, which is 6.5% lower than national averages.

The Service has developed a 'bottom-up' learner and employer responsive curriculum model, which offers a rich variety of learning and training programmes that are comprised of Adult Skills courses, including ESOL, Apprenticeships, Vocational courses and Tailored Learning.

Local strengths

- Strong FE/HE base with wider levels of engagement.
- Provision geared around local employers.
- A strong strategic focus on inclusive growth and skills, with considerable momentum.
- Wider labour market catchment is broad and dynamic.
- Key investments in local economy are being made.
- Inward investment remains strong with new businesses re-locating to Luton and speculative development continuing.
- Home to the fifth largest airport in the UK- supporting 27,000 jobs and adding around £1.1 billion to the regional economy.

- Received £20 million of Levelling Up funding to develop The Stage, a mixed-use development to provide over 400 new homes, 7,000sqm of high-quality workspace, 2,000sqm of community space and a cycle hub.
- Work on Power Court, a mixed-use development, which will include a new stadium for Luton Town's Football Club, are underway. The site will create new jobs, both in the building phase and thereafter at the completed site.
- Newlands Park, a pivotal new commercial gateway to Luton is set to elevate the town onto a national platform. This 40-acre site by the M1 is being transformed into a mixed-use zone for workplace, logistics and retail and will create new jobs in all sectors.
- Morton House a brand-new development in Kimpton Road, Luton is providing a flexible space for work, learning and creativity. The council's Adult Learning team are situated on the lower ground floor.

Local challenges

- There are gender and ethnic inequalities in skills and employment outcomes. Luton's residents are less likely to achieve high attainment scores at GCSE and A level, whilst those from disadvantaged backgrounds are least likely to progress.
- There are persistently high levels of economic inactivity that are higher than comparators and the national average, particularly for those from ethnic and migrant backgrounds, women and those physically or mentally impaired.
- Residents are not accessing the best paid jobs versus those commuting into the borough and there is also a pronounced gender pay gap.
- Currently more than a quarter of employees in Luton earn below the Real Living Wage.
- Skilled talent is drawn outside of Luton to neighbouring areas.
- A projected decline in overall population and working age population could tighten labour supply.
- Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy in Luton is below the national average.
- Small business owners are indicating an increase in poor quality applicants, with challenges around the lack of literacy, numeracy and digital skills, as well as difficulty securing people with good communication, team working and general employability skills.

The planning approach

When determining our curriculum strategy, we pay heed to four key drivers:

1. Our strategic aims.
2. The national and regional economic context.

3. Emerging government national and regional policy ambition.
4. Local skills requirements and stakeholder needs.

Critical to the success of our strategic aims is effective stakeholder engagement. Our main stakeholders are:

- Department for Education
- Ofsted
- Matrix
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Local employers
- VCS and third sector organisations
- Local further education and sixth form colleges
- University of Bedfordshire
- Connect2Luton
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- Adult Learning Governing Board
- Employment and Skills Partnership Board
- Inclusive Economy Board
- Fairness Taskforce
- Population Wellbeing Board
- Employer Representative body

Contribution to national, regional and local priorities

Making the connections – Strategic alignment

Key National Strategies

Skills and Post 16 Education Act 2022

Careers Strategy

UK Digital Strategy

Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009

Key Regional Strategies

Local Skills Improvement Plan

Key Local Strategies

Luton 2040 – A place to thrive

Luton Employment and Skills Strategy

Luton Inclusive Economy Strategy

Luton Population Wellbeing Strategy

Luton Education Strategy for Children and Young People

Luton Fairness Strategy

The employment and skills strategy was co-created with direct engagement with more than 300 organisations, communities and individuals to ensure that national, local and regional priorities were fundamental to its development.

The employment and skills four strategic priorities are expanded upon below:

Strategic priority 1:

Skills driving economic recovery and growth

- Decrease in the number of hard to fill vacancies
- Increase in the proportion of residents in higher level occupations
- Increase in the number of jobs and job density
- Increase per Job Average Productivity (GVA)

Strategic Priority 2:

Developing a pipeline of talented and resilient people

- Increase in the proportion of residents with 5+GCSEs
- Increase in the number of apprenticeship and traineeship completions
- Increase in the levels of FE and HE participation
- Increase in the levels of FE and HE progression

Strategic priority 3:

Tackling long-term inequality and economic inactivity

- Decrease in the proportion of benefit claimants
- Decrease in the proportion of unemployed and economically inactive
- Increase in the proportion of jobs paying the Real Living Wage/wage equality
- Decrease in the proportion of total population registered as NEET

Strategic priority 4:

Creating an adaptable, upskilled workforce

- Decrease the level of reported business skills gaps and shortages
- Increase in the Adult and lifelong learning participation levels
- Increase in the proportion of businesses investing in CPD and training
- Decrease in the proportion of residents with no qualifications or Level 1

Adult Learning’s strategic aims come directly from the Employment and Skills priorities.

Strategic aims and objectives for Adult Learning	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
Ensuring that residents take advantage of their Level 2 and 3 entitlements.	By 31 st July 2026 we will recruit to fill workforce gaps in priority subject areas linked to the level 2 and 3 entitlements. Currently 0.5 FTE teaching vacancies. By 31 st July 2026 we will recruit 1 person to join our team of casual Learning Support Assistants to further support residents to take advantage of their Level 2 & 3 entitlement by providing more support in the classroom and support for events that promote the level 2 & 3 entitlement to residents.

	<p>By 31st July 2026 we will have provided a minimum of 4 Community Events where we will promote the level 2 & 3 entitlement to residents.</p> <p>Relevant Local, Regional & National Priorities</p> <p>This supports local, regional and national priorities by giving people the opportunity to gain basic skills and the skills that employers value, so that they can improve their job prospects and wage outcomes: Luton 2040; Employment & Skills Strategy 2022-2027; Local Skills Improvement Plan; Skills & Post 16 Education Act 2022.</p>
<p>Better equipping residents of all ages to get jobs.</p>	<p>By 30th April 2026 we will have developed a Passport to Police in partnership with Bedfordshire Police.</p> <p>Throughout 25/26 we will continue to reflect termly on local LMI data and intel from the LSIP to inform curriculum planning. Adapting the curriculum as needed to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of residents and local employers.</p> <p>By 31st July 2026 we will have delivered a minimum of 4 Job Fairs, where we will go out into our most deprived wards and deliver these events in people’s locale, giving them every opportunity to attend and get advice on job vacancies, job searching and pathways to employment.</p> <p>.</p> <p>Relevant Local, Regional & National Priorities</p> <p>This supports local, regional and national priorities by supporting people of all ages, particularly those who are NEET, unemployed and economically inactive into employment. It also encourages older people who have left the workplace early to consider returning to work or looking at a new career: Luton 2040; Employment & Skills Strategy; Local Skills Improvement Plan; Skills & Post 16 Education Act 202; Careers Strategy.</p>
<p>Working effectively with partner organisations to ensure that the town’s most vulnerable residents are safe and supported.</p>	<p>Throughout 2025/2026 we will provide quarterly Provider Forums for potential sub-contractors and assist any organisation that wants to work with us to get on to our approved provider list.</p>

	<p>We will make it explicit in the ITT that sub-contractors must have innovative ways to engage with those residents who have multiple barriers to education and employment.</p> <p>Throughout 25/26 we will sub-contract out a proportion of our Tailored Learning funding to local community organisations to enrol a minimum of 100 learners who are the furthest from learning by 31st July 2026.</p> <p>Relevant Local, Regional & National Priorities</p> <p>This will help to ensure our offer reaches residents with multiple barriers to learning, which will support the Population Wellbeing Strategy’s aim to improve the quality of life for our residents by supporting everyone to reach their full potential. It also feeds directly into one of their five priority targets, which is to ensure there is better support for mental wellbeing and reduced social isolation for people of all ages: Luton 2040; Population Wellbeing Strategy; Luton Fairness Strategy.</p>
<p>Working effectively with partner educational organisations to ensure that learners have a seamless skills pathway.</p>	<p>Work carried out by the ERB and the Employment and Skills Partnership Board, which includes Adult Learning, Senior Leaders from the local FE and Sixth Form Colleges and the University of Bedfordshire, shows that lack of English is a barrier to learning in Luton. By extending our Engagement Officer post for an additional year, we will further support the integration of ethnic minority communities by ensuring they have access to skills pathways via our English for Speakers of other Languages courses and our Passport to Employment and Wellbeing courses.</p> <p>By 30th September 2025, we will have enhanced our IAG offer by having one service wide IAG information session for learners per week and classroom visits from an IAG advisor at the start of every term.</p> <p>Relevant Local, Regional & National Priorities</p> <p>This will support residents to formulate specific, achievable career goals and to understand and follow the most effective pathway to success, which will support more Luton residents to gain the higher paid roles in the town that currently go to those living outside the borough: Luton 2040; Employment & Skills Strategy 2022-</p>

	2027; Local Skills Improvement Plan; Skills & Post 16 Education Act 2022; Careers Strategy.
Supporting resident's health and wellbeing.	<p>By 30th September 2025 we will have an additional Mental Health First Aid England trainer in place.</p> <p>By 31st July 2026 we will have supported more disabled residents and their carers. We will extend our Engagement Officer contract by one year. We will also work alongside our Connect to Work colleagues to engage with the carers of those disabled residents that the Connect to Work funding supports. We will provide them all with relevant IAG to ensure that they understand the learning and work opportunities that are open to them.</p> <p>Relevant Local, Regional & National Priorities</p> <p>This will support the council's Population Wellbeing Strategy's priority outcome 4: greater support for mental wellbeing and reduced social isolation for people of all ages: Population Wellbeing Strategy; Luton 2040; Local Skills Improvement Plan, Employment and Skills Strategy.</p>

Confirmation of governance sign off:

Signed off by Luton Borough Council Executive Committee: 22nd April 2025

Supporting documentation:

<https://northants-chamber.co.uk/support/local-skills-improvement-plans-lsip/>

<https://www.chamber-business.com/hubfs/LSIP%20Progress%20Report%202024%20-%20SEM%20region.pdf>

https://www.luton.gov.uk/Council_government_and_democracy/Lists/LutonDocuments/PDF/Luton2020-2040/Luton-2040-strategic-vision.pdf

https://m.luton.gov.uk/Page/Show/Council_government_and_democracy/2040/Pages/Inclusive-economy-strategy.aspx

https://m.luton.gov.uk/Page/Show/Council_government_and_democracy/2040/Pages/Population-wellbeing-strategy.aspx

<https://www.instituteoftheequity.org/resources-reports/reducing-health-inequalities-in-luton-a-marmot-town>

https://www.luton.gov.uk/Council_government_and_democracy/Lists/LutonDocuments/PDF/luton-employment-and-skills-strategy-2022-2027.pdf