



**Buckinghamshire
Adult Learning**



Accountability Agreement 2023/24



Purpose

Buckinghamshire Council's Adult Learning Service provides learning opportunities that improve people's lives and outcomes, enabling people to participate in their communities and support growth and prosperity in Buckinghamshire.

Service Vision

We anticipate and respond to the needs of individuals, communities, employers and Buckinghamshire's economy through the delivery of outstanding, inspirational and highly flexible learning opportunities

Strategic Aims and Objectives

With a focus on education and employment, we will:

1. Support young people, parents, carers and residents to overcome challenges
2. Keep young people, parents, carers and residents safe
3. Provide opportunities for young people, parents, carers and residents to meet their potential
4. Improve young people, parents, carers and residents' health and wellbeing
5. Enable the development of a greener, more resilient future.

"The whole set up at Bucks Adult Learning is superb. The relaxed atmosphere and the helpfulness of the staff and all the course tutors/assistants all helps towards an excellent learning environment"

Context and Place

Buckinghamshire Adult Learning serves the whole county of Buckinghamshire and its 551,000 residents. As a new unitary council, formed in 2020, we use our unique co-terminus position with the Buckinghamshire LEP, NHS trust, College Group and partners to harness the outcomes for over 5000 adult learners per year.

Buckinghamshire has excellent educational facilities with 91% of schools and colleges rated good or above by Ofsted, including Buckinghamshire Adult Learning.



***Our £18.4bn economy
is strong with
31,470 businesses
providing 281,000 jobs***

***The Small and Medium Enterprise
sector is abundant, with
77% of Buckinghamshire's
businesses employing
less than 5 people***

Buckinghamshire is home to world-leading assets which provide huge potential for economic growth dependent on harnessing innovation and equipping our residents with the right skills:

- Creative, including Pinewood and the National Film and Television School
- Digital
- High performance technology, including Silverstone Business Park
- Medtech at Stoke Mandeville Stadium
- Space, through Westcott Business Park

However, there is unequal access to the strong Buckinghamshire economy for its residents.

Buckinghamshire's Claimant Count rate currently stands at 2.6%, which is lower than the national average of 3.7%. However, the claimant count rate is rising as 8,825 Buckinghamshire residents claimed 'out-of-work' related benefits in January 2023, 110 more than in December 2022¹.



***60,981 (11%) of
Buckinghamshire
residents have no
qualifications²***

There are ongoing pressures on public services with spatial concentrations of health inequalities, such as a gap of seven years in life expectancy between males in the most and least deprived population quintiles.

¹ Buckinghamshire Economic Intelligence Observatory, Claimant count data

² Census 2021: Highest level of qualification - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Challenges of an ageing population on public services and labour market with 10% more residents over 90 years old than the national average and an expected growth of 147% in this age group by 2038.

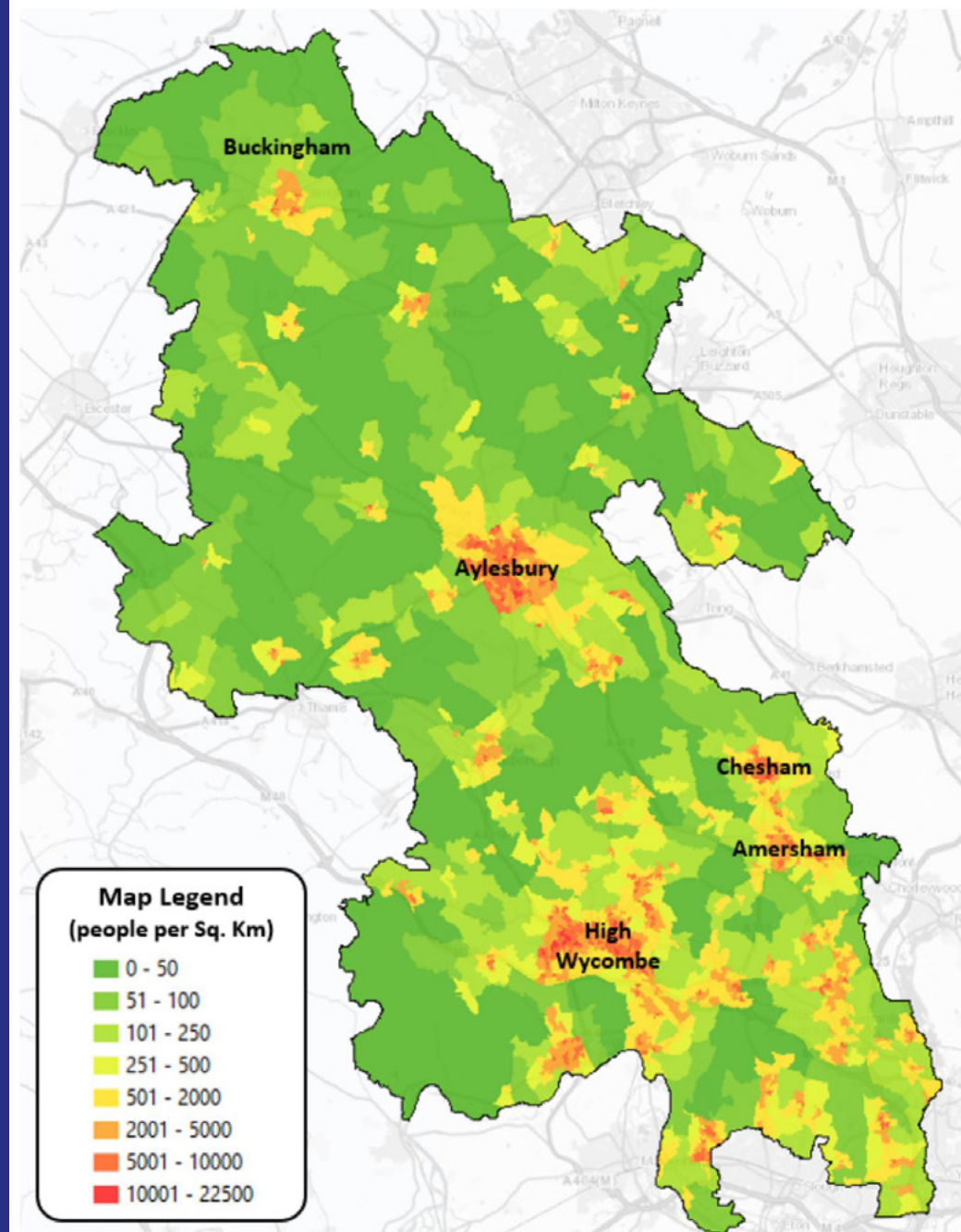
Successful Homes for Ukraine had seen an increase of residents to Buckinghamshire, this is alongside Afghan and Hong Kong resettlement programmes which are offered in the county.

We have launched our 'Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All' programme, which is a long-term partnership strategy focused on levelling-up ten wards in Buckinghamshire where residents are experiencing the most hardships.

We see education and adult skills as the key to engaging our residents in fulfilling opportunities. By providing Buckinghamshire Adult Learning services in 9 centres and over 30 community venues, we will ensure that every resident has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Buckinghamshire Council has engaged in and endorses the Local Skills Improvement Plan to align provision to employer need and move our residents towards the exciting future economy enabled by our growth assets.

Population Density in Buckinghamshire (people per Sq. Km)



APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The priorities for the service are set with the agreement of the Corporate Director Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and in line with the Corporate Strategic priorities. Buckinghamshire Adult Learning Service is then governed in line with the Performance Governance Framework for Buckinghamshire Children's Services.



Adult Learning's annual planning cycle commences in October and finishes in April prior to the beginning of the academic year. The service conducts a detailed analysis of national, regional and local priorities, taking into account the direction of Government policy, regional analysis, local insight data produced by Buckinghamshire's Business First and relevant information identified through Buckinghamshire County Council's Better Together for Buckinghamshire Strategy 2021-25.

1. The Adult Learning management team, as a starting point for the planning process, set draft service targets based on an initial set of planning proposals.
2. An analysis of what Buckinghamshire needs is conducted which provides an in-depth analysis of Buckinghamshire's data, from a wide range of sources.
3. The service's annual Operational Plan is approved by the Council; the 2022-2023 annual plan was approved in May 2022.

Strong governance, together with local engagement with external stakeholders are two things that are intrinsically linked within Adult Learning. We know that the closer links with stakeholders, the better the insight into local wants and needs, which is crucial to ensuring we provide relevant and purposeful skills, knowledge, and experience to the residents of Buckinghamshire.



Our learners are:

- Those with below level 2 qualifications in English, maths and digital;
- Those for whom English is not their first language who need to improve their English speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, in particular to obtain employment;
- The unemployed who need the skills to obtain work, include those recently unemployed, or at risk of unemployment;
- Those who wish to improve their skills through undertaking an apprenticeship, so as to sustain employment or gain promotion and ensure employers have an appropriately skilled workforce;
- Young people with EHCPs to wish to improve their skills through undertaking a supported internship, so as to sustain employment;
- Businesses and organisations wishing to take on supported internships and apprentices or upskill their existing workforce.
- Parents/carers with below level 2 qualifications who are on state benefits or whose children are attending schools in areas of deprivation, so they improve their own skills and also support their children so as to drive up attainment levels;
- Adults with learning disabilities to maintain wellbeing and support development of independent living skills;
- Community groups who need support within the community to take the first steps to formal learning and community inclusion;
- The elderly who need to maintain physical and mental well-being;
- Residential homes, day care providers, acquired brain injuries unit and other such organisations to support them in enhancing the quality of life for those with health and support needs;

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

What happens to get the plan approved?

In order for the plan to be approved, it must be well researched and have strong relationships with other teams in the council and with other local and partner organisations. Buckinghamshire Adult Learning works with a wide range of partners to meet our strategic objectives and ensure our programmes continue to be responsive to local need.

Buckinghamshire Adult Learning works with a wide range of partners to meet our strategic objectives and ensure our programmes continue to be responsive to local need. The service works collaboratively with strategic partners across the council and throughout the county including: schools and children's centres; employers; JCP; voluntary and community organisations and social and health care providers. Buckinghamshire Adult Learning also commissions specialist provision through delivery partners to meet specific needs, expand the offer and ensure a wide reach. BAL works in collaboration with other council services to support the Council's strategic priorities.

Partners:

- LEP
- Bucks Business First
- VCSE organisations
- Local employers
- Other council teams
- DWP/JCP
- NHS
- Bucks College Group
- Other council teams at all levels such as Opportunity Bucks, Libraries, Adult Social Care, Homes for Ukraine, Helping Hand, Children's Services and Public Health, to ensure that the programmes the service delivers are responsive to local priorities.
- VCSE Organisations such as Recovery Bucks which supports recovering alcoholics
- The service has close relationships with a wide range of employers, and this closely informs developmental work, for example, the implementation of the new introduction to health and social care programme in the current academic year or the development of the apprenticeships progression routes for learners and actively refers learners to each other's programmes.
- Further Education Colleges
For example, the service is currently working with Bucks College Group to deliver the new Multiply programme and manage level 3 qualification options available under National Skills funding

CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL PRIORITIES

Strategic Aims and Objectives

Impact and/or contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills Priorities impacted and reason for objective:

1: Support young people, parents, carers and residents to overcome challenges

- To offer basic English, maths and digital provision which underpins all national, regional and local priorities, for example, the Better Together for Buckinghamshire aspiration for people to gain the skills they need for jobs and independent lives.
- We will be an active partner of the Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All programme, delivering education with a focus on levelling-up, targeted within ten wards in Buckinghamshire where residents are experiencing the most hardship.
- We will improve the outcomes for the 500 learners on basic skills courses, through improving achievement rates in maths from 71.2% to 75%, ESOL from 69.6% to 75% and in digital from 49.5% to 60% . Currently 74.6% of learners accessing basic skills declare 2 or more disadvantages and face multiple issues with attendance.
- We will support the national priority Apprenticeship programmes and Free Level 3 Courses for Jobs programmes by expanding numbers
- We will improve digital inclusion in Buckinghamshire, increasing the digital skills and confidence of 1,000 adult residents, supporting us through loaned equipment and data scheme.
- We will further support the integration of ethnic minority communities (including those from Afghanistan, Hong Kong, Syria and the Ukraine), through the delivery of a comprehensive and targeted programme of skills to 350 learners, including English as a second language, employability and life skills.



2: Keep young people, parents, carers and residents safe

- Effective implementation of our Prevent action plan.
- Further development of Stay Safe work across the Service, in particular staying safe online and the risk of scams.
- Increase inter- council working in priority areas such as early help and adult social care.

3. Provide opportunities for young people, parents, carers and residents to meet their potential

- We will grow our highly successful apprenticeship and supported internship programmes to provide sustainable employment opportunities for residents, support employers to address staffing shortages to build business and the economy.
- We will increase the number of apprentices on programme from 150 in 2021/22 to 180, a 20% increase. We will secure a minimum overall achievement rate of 75% (nationally 67%), with at least 95% of completing apprentices remaining in long term sustainable employment. We will work with employers to specifically support in the identified skills gaps in areas such as health and social care management and team leading training.
- We will increase the number of supported internships on programme from 12 in 2021/22 to 24, a 100% increase. We will secure a minimum overall achievement rate of 75% (nationally not published) of young people moving into sustainable employment. Our Job Coaches will work with employers to support job carving, mentoring and on-job training.
- We will widen curriculum pathways, to further enable development of knowledge and skills necessary for jobs and independent lives. For example, the Opportunity Bucks programme aspiration to level-up within ten Wards in Buckinghamshire where residents are experiencing the most hardship.

4. Improve young people, parents, carers and residents' health and wellbeing

- We will further develop and enhance the impact of our Learning for All programme for adults with disabilities to ensure that it focuses on gaining learners the skills they need to support their personal development, live independent lives, and gain meaningful employment. We will increase the number of learners enrolled onto this provision from 135 to 150 (11% increase).
- We will engage with communities' groups to expand health and wellbeing courses to enable individuals to gain skills and knowledge to live independent lives, reducing dependency on other public services.

5. Enable the development of a greener, more resilient future.

- We will introduce qualifications, ready for delivery from 1st August 2023. Initially a cohort of 50 learners throughout 2023/24 will be enrolled.
- Through enrichment activity, we will provide relevant learning and activity to teach our learners ways which they can support a greener future in their everyday lives.



CORPORATION STATEMENT

On behalf of Buckinghamshire Council, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives.

The plan will be published on the **Council's website** within three months of the start of the new academic year.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Better Together for Buckinghamshire Strategy 2021-25
- Local Industrial Strategy for Buckinghamshire
- Buckinghamshire Economic Recovery Plan
- Latest Ofsted Report
- Buckinghamshire's Local Skills Improvement Plan
- Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for all



**Buckinghamshire
Adult Learning**

Inspiring learning, changing
lives in Buckinghamshire



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