

LEARN : HARROW

London Borough of Harrow

Adult Learning Strategy



LONDON BOROUGH OF
HARROW

Setting the Context

In December 2018, London Borough of Harrow approved the Adult Learning Strategy 2019-24 that set out the key adult learning priorities for the London Borough of Harrow for the next five years. It took into account national changes in policy and funding, in particular, the move towards a devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) for London, regional and local priorities, and local economic and demographic changes.

Since 2019, a number of factors have influenced the further education sector, including funding, regional and national strategies, and the economic and employment landscape locally. There are multiple national and international developments influencing the direction of travel in Harrow. These include:

1. The Pandemic, where significant changes in practices have been taken forward to provide greater flexibility for some learners.
2. Changing demographics following Brexit, the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy, the British National Overseas Programme, the Ukraine Family Scheme, and Ukrainian Sponsorship Scheme
3. changes in funding from European Social Fund (ESF) to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF); to Skills England
4. Free 30-hour childcare has been introduced for working parents.

These factors influence residents, employers and learning providers across the board and have led to positive systemic changes for the Learn Harrow service, greatly improving the learner journey for residents.

The main drivers for this revised strategy are:

- A national policy change from the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to the Adult Skills Fund (ASF), with new funding criteria based on a revised qualification framework linked to Skills England and Get Britain Working
- The Skills for Londoners Framework and Skills Roadmap that sets out priorities for reform, including Adult and Community Learning (ACL).
- The London Growth Plan, which will support the Government's objectives for economic growth.
- Development of an agreed Local Skills Improvement Plan for West London.
- Alignment with a number of local, regional and national initiatives or strategies, including the Harrow Economic Strategy, Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- The recent restructure of London Borough of Harrow services bringing the Learn Harrow and Xcite Employment teams together
- Learn Harrow's role in delivering the London Borough of Harrow's objective to be "**A place where those in need are supported**" This includes learning provision that provides outcomes for; skills, employment, health and well-being, active citizenship, social cohesion and an appreciation of education, heritage and cultural activities. .
- The Ofsted "Big Listen" and recent changes from the Common Inspection Framework to the Education Inspection Framework, depicting the intent and impact, as well as recent changes to the Matrix Framework.

An important part of this agenda is a Service and Curriculum Framework that supports adults to gain the relevant skills needed to enter into and progress in employment. However, this is not a

Skills Strategy, but an Adult Learning Strategy that addresses learning for work AND learning for life. We need both skills training and adult community learning, as they are part of a whole, and the framework is weaker if one is omitted.

The Strategy therefore seeks to build on our strengths in an adult community learning programme that benefits individuals, families, communities, the economy and society, as a whole, with the promotion of the wider benefits of learning as part of our delivery.

The strategy will support up to 4,000 residents each year. Of which around 75% will attend longer courses and 25% shorter workshops or receive information, advice and guidance. The demand for entry level learning in Harrow is much higher than the service can support. Notwithstanding the funding allocated to the two local further education colleges, borough residents would benefit greatly from an increase in funding, both in terms of employability but also in terms of wellbeing and engagement with arts and culture.

The London Borough of Harrow Adult Learning Service delivers high quality learning (Ofsted Good October 2024) with higher retention and achievement levels than any other comparative London authority at above 96%. With high quality delivery and capacity to expand, it is therefore crucial for the borough to lobby central government and the GLA to increase funding for Harrow residents.

Harrow benefits from an adult learning service that targets those most in need, providing wrap around support to maximise the potential for every learner to succeed. This support is flexibly applied to suit the individual but the provision of a creche enables the service to reach learners that would otherwise not engage.

“Learners attend courses that are accessible because they meet their personal circumstances. For example, vocational learners who are in employment or seeking to progress in their careers learn online or through mixed online and in-person classes. Those who are parents to younger children use the onsite creche facility while they attend their lessons. This carefully considered approach to training makes the courses accessible to a wide range of local residents.” Ofsted quote October 2024

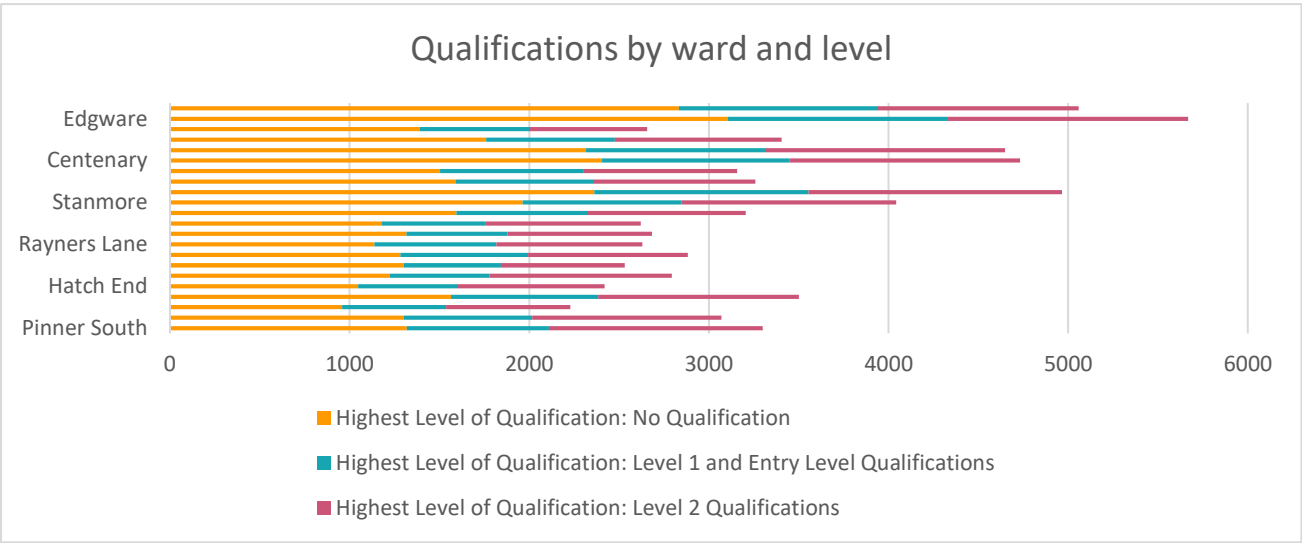
About Harrow

The 2021 Census outlined Harrow’s diversity, in terms of all protected characteristics and socio-economic indicators. The population has seen changes over the years which impact on the focus areas for adult learning initiatives.

Harrow’s employment landscape is varied. The most recent data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) highlights that a significant portion of the working-age population is employed, but there are disparities. For instance, employment rates are influenced by socioeconomic status, with lower employment rates observed among those from less affluent backgrounds. Additionally, Harrow has experienced a decrease in home ownership, which may correlate with economic challenges that affect employment stability and opportunities.

Educational attainment in Harrow reflects a mix of qualifications. A considerable percentage of the population has higher education qualifications (NVQ Level 4 or above), but there is also a significant proportion with lower or no educational attainments. The percentage of residents with a qualification below an NVQ Level 2 or with no qualification is 14.9%. (Source: Census 2021)

Levels of Qualifications for residents of working age



This disparity suggests a need for targeted educational programmes that can address skill gaps and improve employability for adults across different educational backgrounds.

Harrow's socioeconomic status shows notable diversity. In the latest census, around 125,100 Harrow residents said that they were born in England. This represented **47.9%** of the local population. The figure has decreased from just over 128,400 in 2011, which at the time represented 53.7% of Harrow's population. The area has new communities, with significant communities from India, Afghanistan and Romania, and most recently, Ukraine and Hong Kong. This diverse demographic can benefit from tailored adult learning programmes that consider language barriers and cultural differences. Furthermore, socioeconomic status impacts educational and employment outcomes, which underscores the necessity of providing accessible and relevant learning opportunities to enhance residents' socioeconomic mobility. (Source: Census 2021)

Harrow is one of the most culturally diverse areas in London, with a rich tapestry of ethnicities, languages, and religious communities. This diversity shapes the social, economic and cultural fabric of the Borough. Linguistic diversity and the need for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is one of the main drivers for the Learn Harrow curriculum.



Vision

Our vision is to deliver learning that promotes the wider benefits of learning, enables people to develop skills, knowledge and confidence, increases health and well-being and encourages a culture of life-long learning. Learners can be progressed to further study or training and/or employment by securing an accessible, coherent and high-quality learning programme for adults and families in Harrow.

Strategic Priorities:

- Widening participation in learning through targeting adult learning and enabling learners who do not currently participate to access the learning process.
- Enhancing individuals' life opportunities by providing a wide range of learning. This can improve employability skills, health and well-being, community cohesion and citizenship, personal development and stronger family relationships.
- Enabling adult learning to support a range of local and regional priorities and service delivery areas.
- Developing high-quality teaching, learning and assessment that enables learners to achieve their learning goals and progress to relevant learning and/or employment.
- Increase the funding levels for adult and family learning by lobbying and bidding for additional funds

These priorities are shaped by the needs of Harrow's local communities, in particular:

1. Developing vocational pathways and employability skills to improve social mobility.
2. Widening access to English language skills.
3. Improving access to health and well-being courses.
4. Enhancing community cohesion and citizenship.
5. Enhancing access to creative and cultural opportunities.

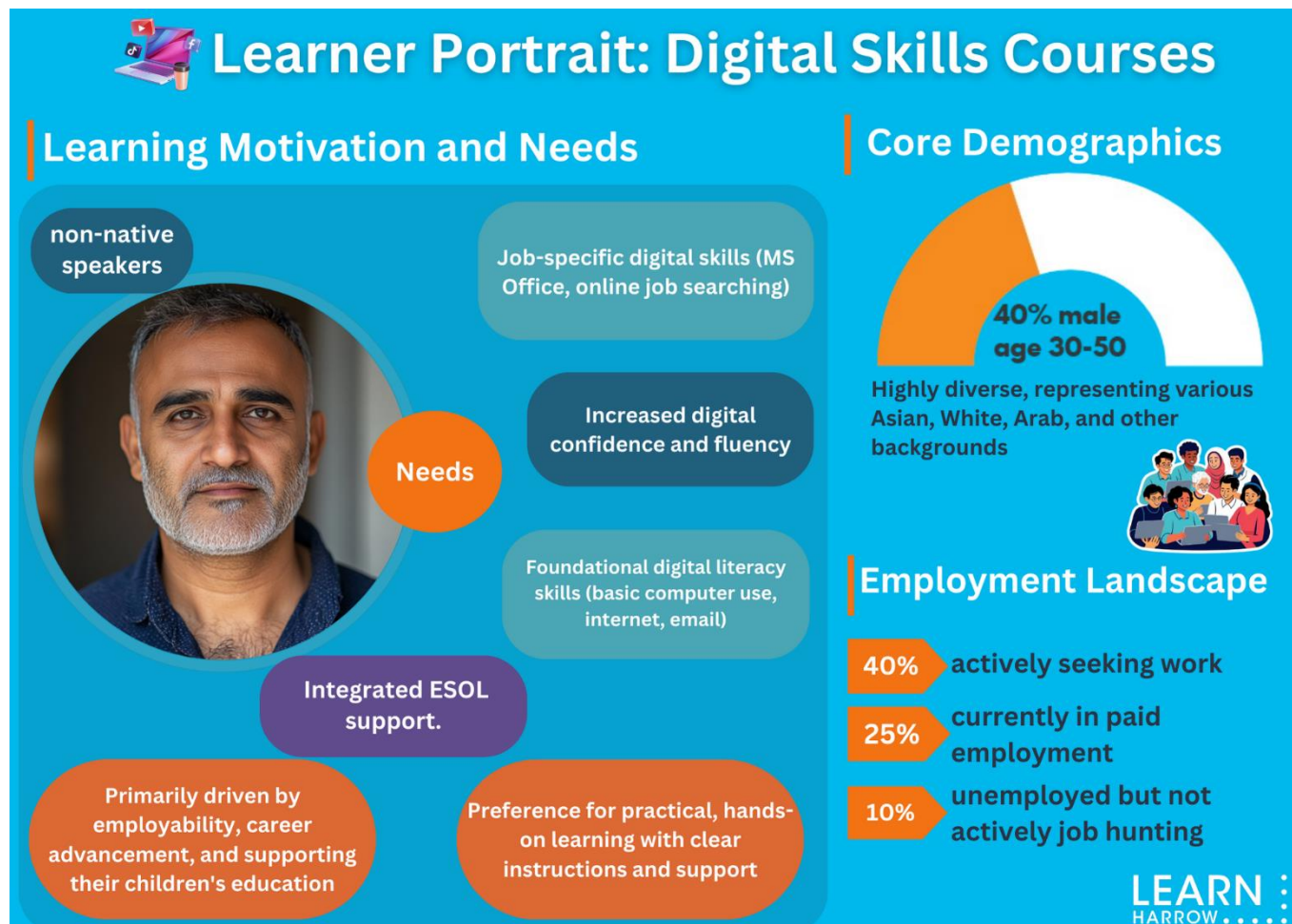
These align with the London Borough of Harrow priorities of being:

- A council that puts residents first.
- A borough that is clean and safe.
- A place where those in need are supported.

Appendix 2 of this document sets out the Council's alignment with a range of local, regional and national priorities.

"Learners are taught and supported by staff who take pride in seeing them achieve their personal and career goals and developing their interests and hobbies. Many learners progress from learning English to taking vocational subjects, alongside improving their ability to use mathematics. Staff support learners very well on every step of their journey". Ofsted 2024

Developing Vocational Pathways, Employability Skills and Improving Social Mobility



Economic Activity levels in Harrow (82.9%) are higher in Harrow than London (79.2%) and GB (78.49%) Data from the census indicates unemployment rates are significantly higher in certain areas of the borough, particularly in the Wealdstone and Marlborough wards (central Harrow) and Roxbourne (south Harrow), focused on the Rayners Lane estate and amongst residents classified as Black and Other ethnic groups. There are also particular groups that have specific obstacles in progressing to the labour market. These include adults with learning disabilities, adults with severe mental health issues and communities with low levels of English language skills. Low levels of literacy/numeracy, digital and language skills amongst some residents provide an obstacle to employability. Within Harrow, the highest proportions of the population without qualifications or with low level qualifications are in Kenton East, Edgware, Roxbourne and Roxeth. *Nomis 23-24*

Harrow is also a borough of microbusinesses, with 93.4% employing 0-9 employees. Wages in Harrow £735.80 are lower than in London £905.50.(NOMIS 2024 Earnings by Place of Work) Harrow aligns its vocational provision with sectors experiencing high levels of vacancy rates. Vocational curriculum planning is flexible to suit the needs of Harrow business base but is likely to include Social Care, Early Years and Digital provision. The majority of Learn Harrow's clients lack functional skills, provision is tailored to support those learners gain skills and qualifications to support them into work. There is a relationship between the volume of learners and the cost of provision. The higher the vocational qualification, the higher the cost. To help the greatest

volume of learners who are most in need Learn Harrow delivers provision up to Level 3. *ONS*
2024

The merging of learning, skills and employment teams which was successfully completed in 2024 has led to improved progression opportunities for residents. Giving job-seeking learners access to employment advisers who have a direct line of sight to employers and can give comprehensive information, advice and guidance, has already improved outcomes.

Intended outcomes and impact:

Supporting outcomes action plan		
	Intended Outcomes	Intended Impact
Mapping and delivery of progression pathways from Entry Level to Level 3.	Improved access to qualifications linked to priority sectors within Harrow.	Increase the number of residents entering employment or volunteering within priority sectors.
Improving and expanding the provision of Information, Advice and Guidance by Learn Harrow and Xcite teams.	Delivery of quality advice and guidance to all learners to support employability and wider community outcomes.	Increased progression rates into further learning, employment and volunteering.
Collaborating with local employer networks, skills providers and support agencies to map skills gaps.	Courses aligned with local resident and employment needs.	Increase the number of residents exiting Learn Harrow and Xcite with a positive progression outcome.

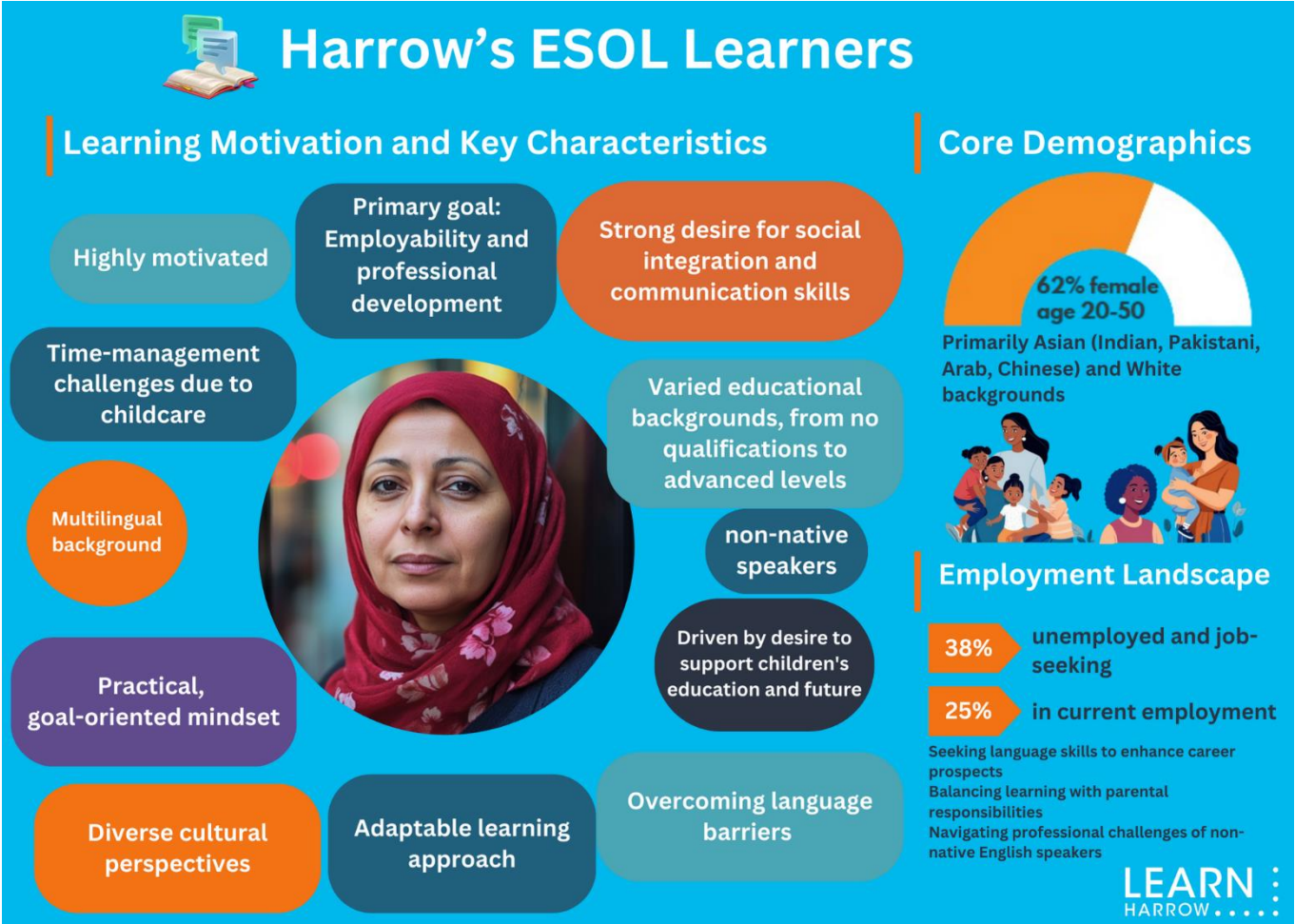
Case study

F began learning with Learn Harrow in February 2022 learning English but also taking other underpinning courses such as digital skills and numeracy. F is the mother of 3 dependent children, and although highly educated, has never learned or worked in the UK due to the lack of affordable childcare. Because of the creche at the Kenton Learning Centre, she was able to start gaining Early Years qualifications that would enable her to work.

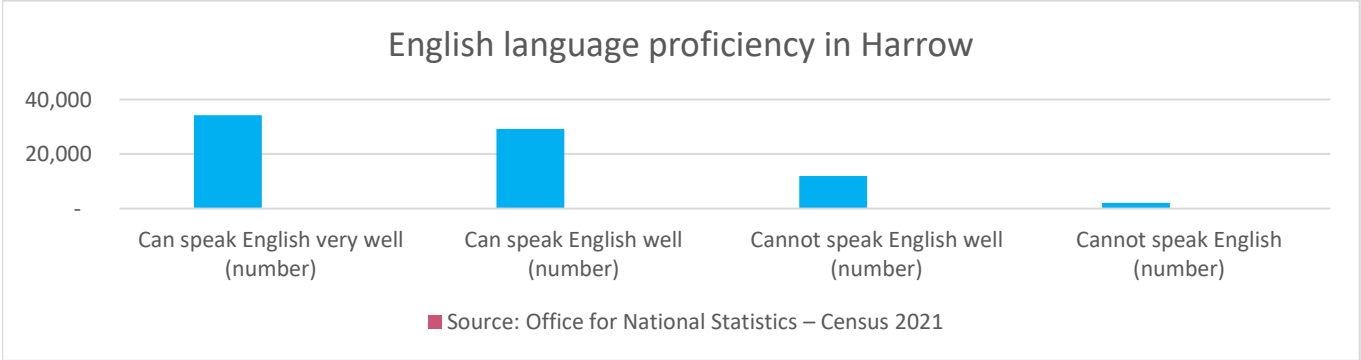
F was lacking confidence and also knowledge about the UK labour market. Learn Harrow referred F to the Xcite Employment Support team who provided one-to-one CV writing, job searching and interview skills support.

F quickly gained a paid placement working as a teaching assistant in a Harrow school. She continued to learn English and also completed a “Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools” qualification at level 3. F is now working full time as she benefits from child care tax relief and 30 hour entitlement. F now wants to enter a teaching apprenticeship at level 4.

Widening Access to English Language Skills



As mentioned above, the population is culturally and ethnically very diverse. The boroughs of West London have high numbers of residents who speak very little or no English (estimated at around 88,000 people) and many of those entrants to the labour market with qualifications below Level 2 are unable to progress, due to a lack of English language skills. Figures from the 2021 Census show that in Harrow, the percentage of the population which cannot speak English well (15.6%) or has no English language skills at all (2.5%) totals 18.1%. Generally, these percentages coincide with the areas which have the highest indices for multiple deprivation, and low levels of literacy and numeracy skills. (Source: Census 2021)



Against a background of public spending for ESOL having been reduced by more than 60% since 2009, demand for Pre-Entry Level provision and provision at lower levels remains high. Local authority providers in West London, including Harrow, are currently working at capacity within the English language curriculum. A lack of English language skills can create a barrier for employability and increase social isolation. It means that some parents have little contact with their children's schools. There is an identified need for many parents, particularly amongst new arrivals, to improve their English for effective communication with the school. There is also a need for many parents to improve their own English and Mathematics skills in order to assist their children's progress at school, as well as their own functional skills.

Intended outcomes and impact:

	Intended outcomes	Intended impact
Curriculum planning for discrete and embedded ESOL provision.	Increase the number of residents able to live productive and independent lives, take up employment and support their families.	Improved access to services including schools, GP and Local Authority.
Establish links with voluntary sector ESOL provision.	Improved progression opportunities.	Increase opportunities for residents with literacy needs.
Develop an ESOL curriculum for social integration and digital inclusion.	Increased confidence, social connections and community bridges.	Improved integration and sense of belonging.
Deliver an ESOL family learning programme.	Deliver ESOL courses in partnership with schools and the Early Years sector.	Play an active role in children's education and help them shape their future.

Improving Access to Health and Well-Being Provision

Though overall statistics for health in the borough are generally good, the number of people with a moderate or serious physical disability has decreased since the last 5 census. Across the borough there are marked geographical inequalities in life expectancy: there is a 10 year difference for women between Pinner South and Wealdstone, for example. There are also health inequalities related to ethnicity Harrow is less active and more inactive than London and the nation: Nearly one in three (31%) of the adult population in Harrow is classed as physically inactive falling into the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) "high risk" health category. This is higher than the London (27%) and the national (27.7%) level of inactivity. This means that 31% of the adult population in Harrow do less than 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week.. Time, cost and accessibility were the commonest examples raised as barriers to participation in local consultation. *Source Harrow Physical Activity and Sports Strategy*

Intended outcomes and impact:

	Intended outcomes	Intended Impact
Develop courses to promote and improve physical and mental well-being.	Learners feel a sense of improved well-being by participating in learning programmes.	Increased confidence in making better lifestyle choices.
Curriculum planning for reduced social isolation.	Learners feel confident communicating with health professionals.	Improved access to wider local services such as Leisure Centres, pools, tennis courts, park walks and volunteering.
Family Learning programmes for health and well-being.	Learners feel confident communicating with health professionals.	Learners have skills to help their children make healthy lifestyle choices.

Enhancing Social Cohesion and Citizenship

The Borough overall is one of contrasts. In the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Harrow is ranked 207th out of 326 Districts in England, an increase in deprivation since 2015. The Borough performs particularly poorly on the 'Incomes Affecting Older People' indicator. There are pockets of severe deprivation, mainly in the central and southwestern areas, with the most deprived Local Super Output Area (comprising up to 250 households) being in Stanmore Park ward, which includes the Woodlands and Cottesmore Estates. Harrow's second most deprived Local Super Output Area is in Hatch End ward and includes parts of the Headstone and Headstone Lane Estates. Generally, the highest indices for multiple deprivation coincide with areas with a higher concentration of social housing. *2019 Indices of deprivation*

There are, therefore, significant differences across the Borough in indicators of deprivation, as there are of levels of English language, literacy and numeracy, digital skills and health. All of these have had an impact on unemployment rates, life expectancy, physical and mental health and child poverty. Lack of ICT skills can mean loss of contact with Council services. Lack of language skills can mean lack of contact with schools or public services. Lack of previous involvement in learning can lead to a lack of awareness of opportunities available for career development. These problems limit social and cultural integration and heighten social isolation. Adult community learning can encourage active citizenship and volunteering within the community, address the issue of social isolation and loneliness and support residents to access local services. *Source: Census 2021*

Intended outcomes and impact:

	Intended outcomes	Intended Impact
Curriculum planning for digital inclusion.	Improve inclusion and reduce social isolation.	Support residents to become digitally aware and independent.
Develop enrichment activities for personal growth.	Improved self-awareness and reflection on personal goals.	Increased confidence and self-worth.
Development programmes of learning designed for newly-arrived communities.	Enhanced understanding of life in Britain.	Improved integration and sense of belonging and ability to support other migrants.

Enhancing Access to Creative and Cultural Opportunities

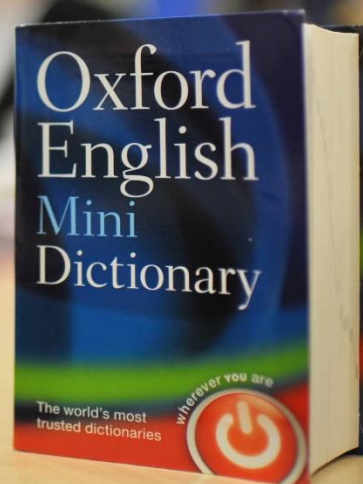
The engagement of individuals and communities in cultural and artistic pursuits through learning is part of this overall strategy. As previously highlighted, lives are enriched by participation in art, music, dance, drama and a mosaic of other activities. It is also important to recognise that not every adult is in the employability market. As already stated, Harrow's population is ageing at a faster rate than average across the rest of Greater London and the proportion of residents aged over 65 and 85 is higher than the London average. Some Borough residents have learning difficulties or physical impairments that make sustained employment impossible, but whose learning needs remain important. Others have childcare or caring responsibilities that may prevent them from entering the job market.

It is part of this Strategy, therefore, to promote learning for personal development and enrichment in the belief that it also strengthens community bonds, boosts self-confidence and promotes well-being.

Intended outcomes and impact:

	Intended outcomes	Intended impact
Develop courses for creative stimulation.	Reduced social isolation for targeted learners.	Improved well-being and opportunities for personal growth and self-discovery.
Develop courses for cultural enrichment.	Improved confidence and social skills.	A diverse Borough where residents embrace other cultures and their values.
Establish/maintain links with Arts Centre, Museum, libraries and private providers.	Enhanced progression to further engagement with arts and culture.	A plethora of cultural opportunities for residents to explore and participate in.
Develop courses for intergenerational learning.	Parents/carers more confident in their ability to help their children learn and progress in their own learning.	Increased mutual understanding and ability to tackle issues such as ageism, housing, and care needs.

Linked Policies



- **Government Policies:** The Skills England white paper has not been published at the time of writing this strategy. The Get Britain Working white paper is included below.
- **Regional Policies:** The London Skills Roadmap, Skills for Londoners, London Growth Plan and The Local Skills Improvement Plan continue to shape provision locally.

	Unemployed	Under-employed	Economically inactive	Families	Families in Need	Older	SEND	BAME	Men / Women	Isolated / Lonely	Refugees / new arrivals	Not yet achieved Level 2 in English and Mathematics	Not yet achieved basic ICT skills	Not achieved E3 ESOL skills
London Borough of Harrow Economic Strategy	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	
London Borough of Harrow's previous adult learning strategy	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Local Further Education; Strategic Development Plan	✓	✓	✓				✓					✓	✓	✓
Greater London Authority Skills Roadmap	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
Local Skills Improvement Plan	N/A - entirely employer led													
Department for Education; Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth	N/A - entirely employer led													

	English and Mathematics	ESOL	Digital Skills	Health and Social Care	Early Years	Business Skills	Retail	Hospitality	Construction	Film and TV	Green skills	Transport and Logistics	Well-Being
London Borough of Harrow Economic Strategy			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
London Borough of Harrow Climate and Green Spaces									✓			✓	
London Borough of Harrow's previous adult learning strategy	✓	✓	✓										✓
Greater London Area; Skills Roadmap	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Local Skills Improvement Plan			✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
West London Authority; Skills, Employment and Productivity Strategy		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Get Britain Working, Occupations in demand	✓			✓					✓	✓	✓		

The Further Education Landscape in Harrow

The Borough of Harrow benefits from three sources of Further Education (FE): Skills, Skills Boot Camp provision, and private and voluntary sector training providers across the Borough. The devolved Adult Skills Fund via the Greater London Authority gives Harrow residents the flexibility to learn beyond the Borough's boundaries. Many learners travel to colleges, universities and apprenticeship providers in neighbouring boroughs.

Partnerships

- **Partnerships:** Explore opportunities for collaboration with local employers, educational institutions, and community organisations.
- **Community Involvement:** Develop strategies for involving community members in the planning and implementation of adult learning programmes.

Learn Harrow commissions a small amount of its provision, with delivery commissioned annually following the submission of curriculum bids and dependent upon performance. Harrow Council procurement services enable Learn Harrow to invite providers to submit quotations for small lots below the value of twenty-five thousand pounds. Sub-contracted providers are commissioned to deliver adult and community learning programme(s) through bids in accordance with a Prospectus. Quotations which are submitted must demonstrate a commitment to quality assurance. The rationale for sub-contracting through a range of providers is:

- To deliver more effective targeting of community learning and recruitment of priority groups.

- To increase the variety of learning opportunities in the Borough.
- To develop opportunities to meet the needs of learners and employers in new and emerging areas of delivery.
- To meet the local and regional economic agenda more effectively.
- To maximise the value of a relatively small core budget.

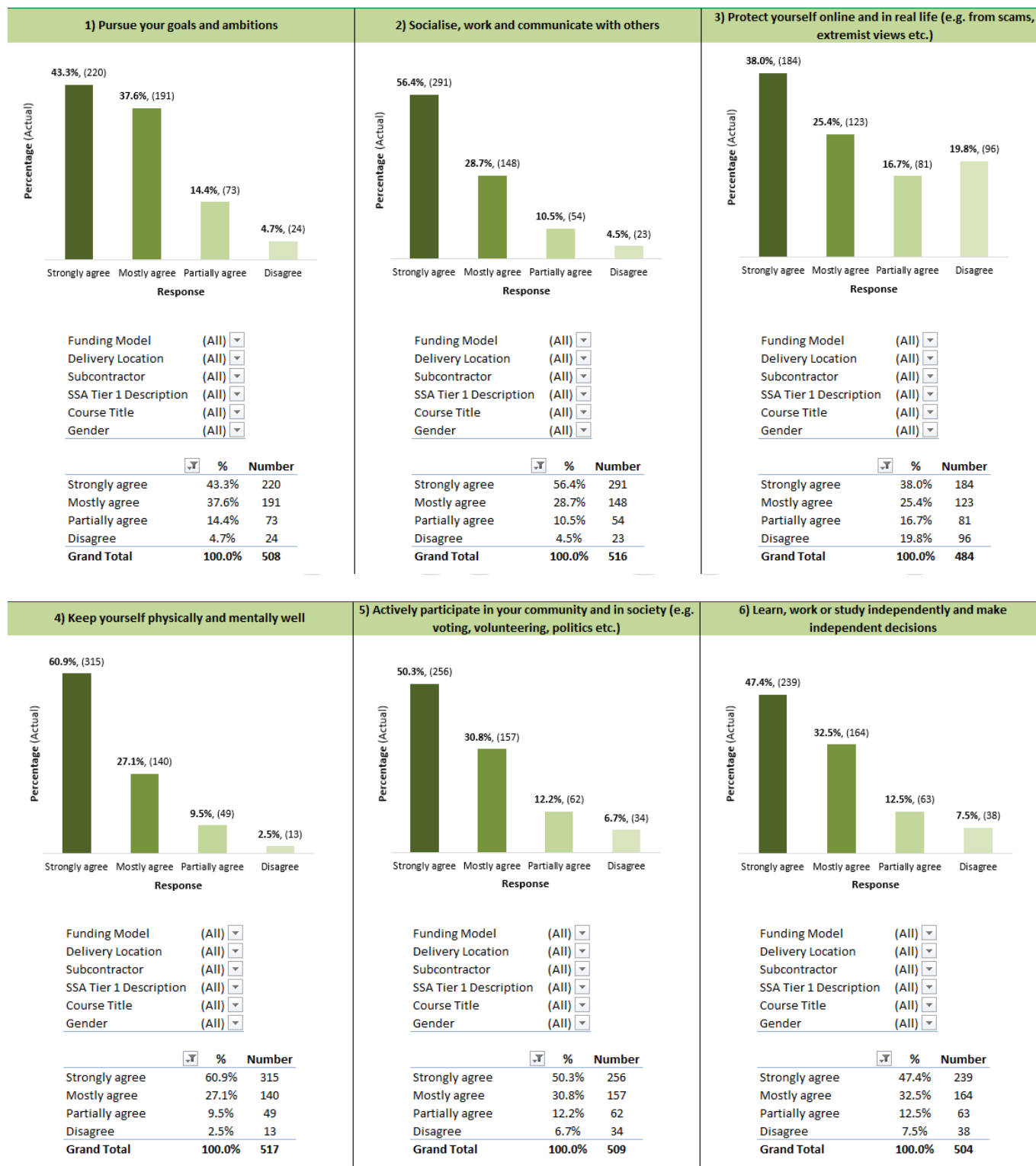


Appendix: Delivering the strategy – Learner motivation

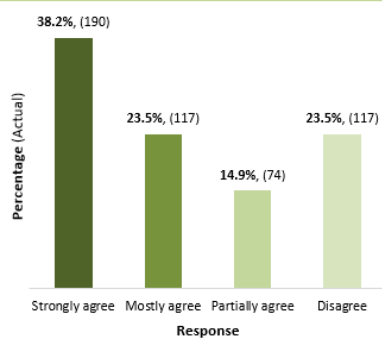
Impacts of Learning - 9 Impacts

800 learners were surveyed in August 2024 about their motivation for joining a course and the extent to which the learning experience helped them to achieve this motivation.

How much do you agree that the course and the time you spent learning has helped you to...?



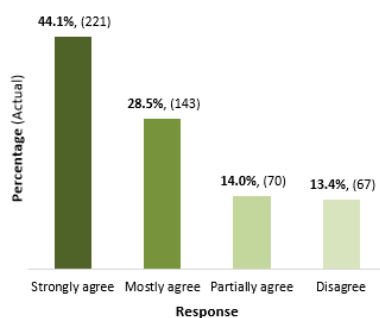
7) Get better at English and maths



Funding Model (All)
 Delivery Location (All)
 Subcontractor (All)
 SSA Tier 1 Description (All)
 Course Title (All)
 Gender (All)

	<input type="button" value="v"/>	%	Number
Strongly agree		38.2%	190
Mostly agree		23.5%	117
Partially agree		14.9%	74
Disagree		23.5%	117
Grand Total		100.0%	498

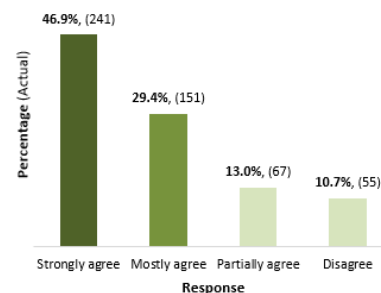
8) Support other adults or children's learning



Funding Model (All)
 Delivery Location (All)
 Subcontractor (All)
 SSA Tier 1 Description (All)
 Course Title (All)
 Gender (All)

	<input type="button" value="v"/>	%	Number
Strongly agree		44.1%	221
Mostly agree		28.5%	143
Partially agree		14.0%	70
Disagree		13.4%	67
Grand Total		100.0%	501

9) Develop new interests or hobbies



Funding Model (All)
 Delivery Location (All)
 Subcontractor (All)
 SSA Tier 1 Description (All)
 Course Title (All)
 Gender (All)

	<input type="button" value="v"/>	%	Number
Strongly agree		46.9%	241
Mostly agree		29.4%	151
Partially agree		13.0%	67
Disagree		10.7%	55
Grand Total		100.0%	514

DRAFT