

City of York Council

York Learning Accountability Statement 2026/27

York Learning is the City of York Council service delivering Adult Learning, Skills and Employment training within York. As an FE LA provider and as part of the Skills & Post 16 Education Act 2022 and section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act, we have a duty to review our contribution to meeting skills needs – at a local level, but also at a regional and national level, with a view to ensuring individuals secure employment.

Our Values

- Supportive** - Helping learners to find their next course and decide on their future steps.
- Inclusive** - Promoting an affordable, inclusive safe culture in which diversity is valued, and learners can excel.
- Excellence** - Working within the local community and businesses to provide the best learning experience for you with excellent achievement.

1. Purpose

York Learning's mission is to empower learners to take the next steps into better work, life and health. We want them to feel confident and inspired to pursue further learning opportunities and achieve in their objectives. Providing a range of courses which can be stepping stones into improving their opportunities in life and general wellbeing through further learning, better career options, and more confidence in their abilities.

Inclusion is at the heart of what York Learning does and we strive to reach those who are most disadvantaged and to serve as a bridge towards opportunities for adults, young people and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, enabling them to reach their full potential. Whether that be greater integration into society or to move into more fulfilling employment roles, supporting individuals to thrive, improving their physical and emotional health, and recognising the opportunities available to them.

We aim to do this by:

- Providing learners with high-quality information, advice, and guidance through an ambitious, employer-led, and community-responsive program, enabling them to develop essential skills and confidence for progression.
- Provide a purposeful curriculum, that is in line with local skills needs which helps learners enhance their personal qualities, knowledge, skills, confidence, and ambition, preparing them for success in education, employment, and their careers.
- To reach and inspire learners, including young people and those from disadvantaged backgrounds and our wider community demographic, with an offer that builds skills in free access to English, Math, and digital skills, offering flexible provision with multiple entry points throughout the year.
- Provide high quality provision in community skills and wellbeing programs which directly tackle health inequalities, the mental health crisis and expanding opportunities for the disadvantaged.
- To grow provision into areas that are harder for adults to access but are part of the Local Skills Improvement Plan requirements.
- To continue to provide an offer that is value for money both for residents and funders.

We consider ourselves a vital service within the authority, utilising our funding to align with the city's priorities for residents and to meet the broader objectives of the City's 10-year skills plan, the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for York and North Yorkshire, and the skills aspirations of the Mayoral Combined Authority.

The accountability statement for 2026-27 builds upon the work of previous years in response to the needs of the city and region. We have established strong foundations in celebrating transferable skills across all aspects of our curriculum. Our engagement with a wider and more diverse cohort of learners has increased through, employability and digital inclusion efforts, family learning, trailblazer activities and individual placement support into employment.

With a strong background in running project funding from various funding streams we continue to perform and secure additional funding. This year we have created targeted provision aligned to the 'Get Britain

Working' whitepaper being managed locally by the Combined Authority, as one of the key partners in this initiative.

2. Context and Place

York Learning, as part of City of York Council is funded primarily through York North Yorkshire Combined Authority, 19+ adult and tailored learning provision, with additional income from dedicated project work and funded offer from Department for Further Education and the Department for Work and Pensions including:- apprenticeships, support for learners aged 16-18 Young People Study Programmes and those 16-24 with Education Health and Care Plans.

City of York Council are grant funded by:-

- York North Yorkshire Combined Authority for Adults Skills, Tailored Learning and Free Courses For Jobs at £1,448,630.10
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority provide grant funding at £16,274.78.
- DFE funding as well as Apprenticeships, Young people learning for 16-24 Study Programmes and HNS programmes mentioned above we also receive a small grant in skills funding for learners and continuing learners from out of area and from Advanced Learner Loans all of which are paid on learner numbers as and when recruited.
- Hull East Yorkshire Combined Authority for between £80,000-£100,000 all of which support those who live outside of York but find York easier to get to for learning. (still waiting for confirmation finally have a meeting booked for Wednesday 27th May)

We are rightly ambitious as a city within the regional economy, with world-class innovation at the core of the combined authority's ambitions. York, a city of over 200,000 residents, boasts around 60% of its population qualified to NVQ 4 or above, with less than 4% having no qualifications. The city contributes over £5bn to the UK economy, making it a key driver of regional growth. Over 86% of the working-age population is economically active, while the 13.5% economically inactive includes over 6,500 students and 2,900 retired individuals. However, these figures often mask widening education and health inequalities, particularly in areas of acute deprivation, with six districts among the 20 most deprived in England.

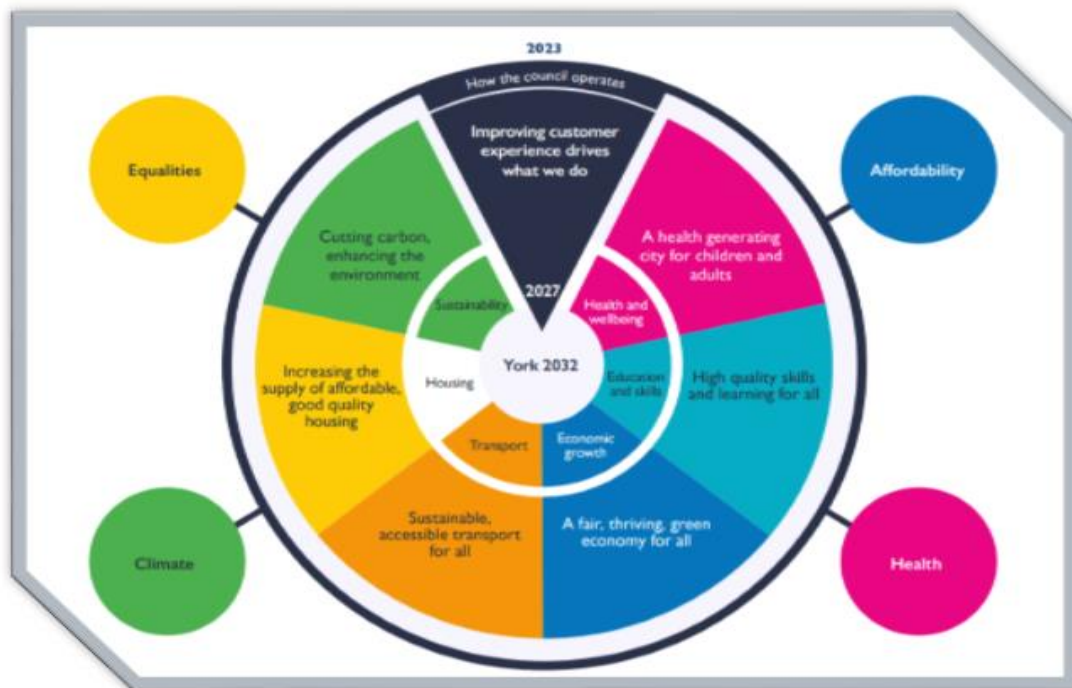
Our service plays a crucial role in enabling residents across the region who have not had the best education or employment opportunities to move on to achieve qualifications and learning they may have thought out of reach, their progression and achievement help them to contribute towards our thriving economy. Our offer is primarily delivered face-to-face from venues across the city, including community centres, libraries and other locally based buildings. There is also a proportion of the offer which is online taught with a tutor as well as a distance learning model to suit different learning needs and styles of learners.

Our Intent

- Provide life chances and opportunities through learning via a responsive flexible offer to increase the social mobility of all our residents
- Encourage prosperity through opportunities to upskill or reskill for the unemployed and those in the workforce.
- Improve wellbeing and quality of life for residents and communities through an inspiring and creative tailored lifelong learning offer that interweaves skills alongside employability and transferable skills.
- Work with community-based partners and employers to co-design meaningful skills courses to enable us to engage with their client group.

The City of York is home to two General Further Education Providers, Askham Bryan and York College, and two universities. The wider geography of North Yorkshire hosts four General Further Education (GFE) providers: Craven, Scarborough TEC, Selby, and Harrogate Colleges.

Our passion for adult learning drives us to deliver effective programs to a diverse range of adults, with a particular focus on those from disadvantaged and marginalised communities. We aim to offer inclusive services with high-quality learning provision and support that cater to the spectrum of needs, while fully aligning with the local economy's requirements. In line with the 'One City, for all' initiative, we strive to set strong ambitions to increase opportunities for everyone living in York to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.



The city plan sets four core commitments: Equalities, Affordability, Climate Change, and Health. These commitments align with the city's 10-year plans and are reflected in the city's 10-year skills strategy. At York Learning, we are ambitious in highlighting the significant impact that adult learning can have in meeting these commitments. By leveraging creativity, innovation, and our community roots, we can utilise our Adult Skills funding to:

- Increase opportunities for people to manage 'life' through financial challenges by understanding waste, energy bills, budgeting and practical hints and tips, with embedded core numeracy, literacy, and digital skills
- Enhance the independence of adults with disabilities, enabling them to take personal responsibility for their health and wellbeing
- Encourage families to work, learn, and play together, promoting green ambitions, utilising the opportunities within the city, and strengthening connections with arts and heritage.
- Support the training of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), equipping them with the skills to do more.

Through all these efforts, we will demonstrate clear pathways that:

- Improve essential skills.

- Help people overcome digital poverty.
- Enable individuals to secure better jobs that align with their skills, ambitions, and aspirations, and progress into the broader economic infrastructure.
- Encourage families to work, learn, and play together for their 'Best Start in Life' and whilst promoting lifelong learning.
- Grow an offer that can provide pathways in construction for adults that support our local heritage buildings.

The York and North Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) highlights that the area is well-served by high-quality education at all levels, but there is a clear challenge in connecting with those individuals who would most benefit from this provision.

Research conducted for the LSIP describes an economic landscape in the region characterised by a high proportion of higher-skilled, non-manual sectors such as education, finance, and professional services, contributing to a resilient economy. Unemployment levels are low, with a significant number of jobs available in highly skilled sectors such as agritech, engineering, and life sciences.

The proportion of people with higher-level qualifications in the region is higher than the national average (48% versus 43% in the Annual Population Survey Jan-Dec 2021). The region has an aging demographic, with an older-than-average working age population and an emerging need for succession planning in industries where large numbers are soon to or have retired. The LSIP emphasises that retaining talent in the workforce at all ages is critical. The working-age population contracted by 2% between 2011 and 2021, in contrast to the national picture, which expanded by 4% based on census information. The plan, published in July 2023, detailed that there were 9,445 unemployed claimants, accounting for 2% of the working population in the region, against a national average of 3.7%. Despite this, there remained a high number of jobs available in highly skilled sectors such as engineering and life sciences, and high-quality learning institutions provided a significant graduate pipeline attractive to employers.

The region now benefits from the opportunities afforded by devolution, with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority established on 1st February 2024 and the Combined Authority published its economic framework for the region in August 2024 and further published its

progress report in June 2025 on the York and North Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).

The Combined Authority has outlined their ASF priorities as follows:

- Widening Access and Participation by using the ASF as a gateway to learning and progression.
- Embedding Basic and Transferable skills in provision to support higher skill and employment transition.
- Unlocking Progressive Pathways to develop underutilised talent by using ASF in a targeted manner that supports upskill and re-skill opportunities to meet the workforce demands of the region.
- Developing Flexible provision to improve access to training for employers, employees, and the public at times and in ways that meet the availability of the learner.
- Building Capacity and Capability to support an integrated, flexible, and responsive provider base.
- Enabling effective collaboration to drive partnerships between institutions, supporting learners and employers in navigating the skills landscape

3. Approach to developing the plan.

York Learning undergoes a rigorous review of its curriculum plan and accompanying processes yearly to ensure their offer meets the needs of current and projected local labour market intelligence as well as local representations on what is required. Therefore, provision York Learning provides is relevant to local need but aligned to regional and national priorities.

As a local provider we recognise the strength that partnership brings and continue to develop and explore new organisations and employers to work with whilst continuing an inclusive and accessible choice of programmes. This year we developed an inclusive offer towards:-

- Heritage Construction with trailblazer funding to enable us a wide range of young people and adults to try different skills sets within heritage construction working with Pinnacle construction Ltd which we are continuing to do into 26/27.
- Programmes have been developed with local group 'MySight' to deliver digital programmes that are meaningful to them.

- An inclusive programme has been delivered to ‘carers’ in the city both young people by working with York Carers and adults through various school and other SEND delivery partners.
- Working with schools to provide a wide-ranging offer to parents to support children in schools whilst also building on those parents own essential skills, promoting their recognition of their transferable skills and opportunities towards work.
- Continue to work with our local colleges and universities to promote progression opportunities to further learning and higher-level learning with them.
- Working with cross community organisations as part of a Clear, Hold Build project run by NY Community Policing to increase access to learning in a targeted area.
- Working with Public Health to grow a support pathway via individual placement support with those recovering from addiction and helping them to find and sustain good employment.

Whilst developing this plan we also consider the funding rules which set the parameters of our funding and ensuring our Adult Skills offer and Tailored Learning offer meets their purpose. Which is ‘to support learners into employment and to progress to further learning whilst also (within tailored learning), support wider outcomes which include improving health and wellbeing, supporting equipping, those predominantly in deprivation areas, parents/carers to support their child's learning, and developing stronger and more integrated communities’.

Annex 2

Contribution to national, regional, local priorities

Strategic Aim for 2026/27	Actions	Targets	Link to local / National Skills Priority
<p>A. Increase participation and engagement in progression-based packages of learning</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop curriculum models that clearly link learning opportunities to job role in priority sectors with at least one pathway by sector area in place by January 2025 2. Provide wider range of learner touchpoints through on-demand, blended, hybrid and face to face interactions linked to each pathway. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase participation in IAG (Information Advice & guidance) linked activity by increasing specific visits to classes which have an employability and progression focus from the test and learn (in 2025/26) process from 10 to 20 2. Increased training for signposting to staff members on progression and the 'YNYCA' Interchange and promoting pathways to learners. IAG team will target 65 staff members for training. 3. Increase alternative delivery of sessions from face to face to hybrid/blended/online from 17.5% to 20% bearing in mind those who have furthest to travel, that we primarily target, for learning prefer face to face delivery and would struggle at that level to do online learning. 4. Increase progression into provision in: Wider FE/HE from level 2/3 provision (from 28% to 40%) 	<p>Local – engagement and participation; recruitment to target sectors.</p> <p>Regional – Widen access and participation; unlock progression pathways and underutilised talent; develop flexible provision.</p> <p>National – progression into bootcamps, Free courses for jobs (FCFJ), apprenticeships</p>

<p>B. Develop curriculum pathways for adults who find mental wellbeing is a barrier to engagement with learning and employment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Widen delivery of an offer that engages with a group of individuals that struggle to see themselves in learning or employment due to health barriers. 2. Identify referral partners to ensure the right learners are on programmes. 3. Widen employment pathways for progression and destination outcomes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase SEMH programmes from 12 to 25 for 26/27 delivery all of which has clear wellbeing and employment / skills links created 2. Referral partners and support pathways identified to increase learner numbers to 140 3. Progression into wider learning or employment of 60% of the cohort. 	<p>Local - Increase the levels of independence in adults with disabilities to take personal responsibility for health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Regional – Widen access and participation;</p>
<p>C. Reduce levels of digital inequality that impact participation and progression</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roll out digital engagement programme (community workshops) to 3 IMD areas in York that also target online safety 2. Improve progression rates from engagement to formal quals 3. Increase the number of learners engaging with new tech such as VR/AR, aerial technology 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Digital Engagement via Community Digital Menu to increase participation by 8 more delivery sessions, Online Safety offer increased from 7% (of the current offer) with aim to increase that again by 50% in 26/27 including 3 new additional community groups in IMD area accessing programme by July 2027 2. New digital skills offer at level 1 and level 2 are now available which is aimed to improve learners increasing progression from engagement and onwards into Level 1 or 2. Currently the conversion rate is at 30% and we aim to improve that to 40% for this coming academic year. This is 	<p>Regional – Widen access and participation; unlock progression pathways and underutilised talent; develop flexible provision.</p> <p>National – progression into bootcamps, FCFJ, apprenticeships</p>

		<p>counting learners from engagement to formal accredited IT routes</p> <p>3. Increase learner numbers overall by 30% from 25/26 academic year learner numbers and continue to focus on accessing and engaging with new technologies, including but not limited to courses on AI; VR/AR; Aerial Technologies (drones); Data visualisation using Tableau Public</p>	
<p>D. To enable people from all background and abilities to access skills provision to support pathways.</p>	<p>Using the lens of inclusion to reduce barriers to residents which will enable them to access the offer and thrive in a learning environment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase 'success rates' for those who receive Learner Support 2. Distinguish target groups not currently identified 3. Monitor attendance, achievement and retention for those groups 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase learner support success rate with tracking of support called 'Above and Beyond' from 83% to 87% by July 2027 2. Increase identification of and outreach to individuals of the offer and follow up reporting on, of key groups of need:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Care leavers & those in care ▪ NEET ▪ Those known to Youth Justice Service <p>Added to those already collected such as diversity/ethnicity/disabilities/ send/ those without maths/English digital at level 2 and those on low income.</p> 3. Monitor achievement, attendance and retention from all specific groups including those groups currently struggling; Indian, Pakistan, Arab, any other Asian or ethnic Background, 	<p>Local – engagement and participation; recruitment to target sectors.</p> <p>Regional – Widen access and participation; unlock progression pathways and underutilised talent; develop flexible provision.</p>

		<p>Gypsy/Traveller Community to bring up to national standard benchmarks.</p> <p>4. Identify key support mechanism that have helped improve support to those key groups, share good practice to lead to improved future support.</p>	
<p>E. To enable people from all background and abilities to access skills provision to support pathways.</p>	<p>1. Develop an offer that supports 16-24 young people into build skills towards pathways in education, employment or training</p>	<p>1. Deliver a mentor programme (via Trailblazers) to help increase young adults confidence in themselves and their abilities.</p> <p>Targets are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onboard at least 15 young people who are 16-19 NEETs into learning and developing interpersonal skills • Onboard 15 young people 16-24 into provision which matches them to a mentor to build up self-confidence and resilience 	
<p>F. Parental skills development as a bridge between early years support and workforce readiness.</p>	<p>2. We will collaborate with Raise York (Family Hubs) to deliver integrated Family Learning sessions for parents supporting the Best Start in Life goal of improving the Home Learning Environment as it is connected to the LSIP priority to unlock underutilised talent by creating clear progression pathways from community engagement</p>	<p>2. Expand Early Start courses (for parents of children aged 1-4) from 5 to 10, including an evening online offer, which shows clear outcomes relating to Early Years Foundation Stage(EYFS) with a clear pathway of progression to support the home learning environment for children’s learning, development, communication skills, SEND and Mental wellbeing, alongside English and Maths development for the parent.</p>	<p>Local – engagement and participation; recruitment to target sectors.</p>

	into formal skills training and employment."	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Build on 'Get Ready for School' which includes the importance of toilet training and children's independent skills. 4. Continue to work with other BSIL strands: Neighbourhood teams, Family Hub Manager and Raise York – Family Information Service and the Families peer support model to help develop a co-ordinated model. And continue to look for opportunities where Family Learning can support the BSIL objectives. 	
G. Increase access to additional funding to support the ability to meet targets above.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Seek out funding opportunities to increase venue opportunities from MCA, LA and Central Government. 6. Continue to explore mayoral opportunities towards a Business Skills Centre to support provision of entry pathways to higher levels in specific skill sectors. 7. Identify additional training places towards employment for 16-24 which engage with Heritage Trades/Construction. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to seek out additional capital funding and/or support to achieve venue aims and expansion of provision into creating those entry pathways to higher level skills needed. 2. Secure approvals for a Building suitable for Trades Training which is developed and open before the start of 27/28 academic year. 3. Identify how an offer around trades, heritage construction and heritage crafts can represent growth for the 16-24 offer which could be serviced within this venue to grow opportunities towards heritage skills/trades in the new building and will thereby increase opportunities for those more disadvantaged. 	Local and Regional - Widen access and participation; unlock progression pathways and underutilised talent; develop flexible delivery modes. Local - Increase the levels of independence in adults with disabilities to take personal responsibility for health and wellbeing.

Corporation statement

This statement was agreed at a meeting of

Hyperlink

A copy of the accountability statement will appear on [our website](#) alongside the Service Strategy

Supporting Documentation

Will link to:

- [York and North Yorkshire Learning Skills Improvement Plan](#)
- [York and North Yorkshire Learning Skills Improvement Fund](#)
- [City of York : One City for all Council Plan 2023-2027](#)
- [City of York Economic Strategy](#)
- [York 10-year Skills Strategy](#)
- [York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Economic Framework](#)

Glosary of terms Definition

- **AI** Artificial Intelligence
- **CA** Combined Authority
- **CEIAG** Careers Education Information Advice & Guidance
- **CPD** Continuing Professional Development
- **DFE** Department for Education
- **DWP** Department for Work & Pensions
- **EDI** Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- **FE** Further Education
- **GVA** Gross Value Added
- **HE** Higher Education

- **IT** Information Technology
- **JCP** Job Centre Plus
- **KPI** Key Performance Indicators
- **LA** Local Authority
- **LSIF** Local Skills Improvement Fund (funding to support the delivery of LSIPs)
- **LSIP** Local Skills Improvement Plan
- **NY** North Yorkshire
- **UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
- **WYCA** West Yorkshire Combined Authority
- **VR/AR** Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR)
- **Y&NY** York & North Yorkshire

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