



# Activate Learning Accountability Statement (2025/26)

# Purpose



Activate Learning is a pioneering education group committed to transforming lives through our Learning Philosophy and extraordinary mindset. We operate eight Further Education (FE) college campuses across Surrey, Berkshire and Oxfordshire as well as delivering apprenticeships, higher education, and online courses locally, regionally, and nationally.

**We reach over 20,000 learners annually, through providing secondary, further and higher education, apprenticeship, community learning and business training opportunities for individuals from 14 – 85, supporting a lifelong approach to learning.**


We provide education and support to learners with high needs across our college group ensuring we are increasing the number of vulnerable learner groups and wider communities with whom we engage.

We also work with the Government, job centres, employers and agencies in our areas of delivery to provide programmes to those in need of help with employment. Our dedicated teams assess our existing resources and how best they can be utilised

to help our partners, ensuring that our students, business, and local community benefit.

Activate Learning believes everyone can improve their lives through learning, with emotional support, motivation, purpose, and the right application.

We have recently developed our strategic plan for 2025 to 2030 – Extraordinary Learning. The plan articulates our organisational vision and mission:



The plan includes four growth objectives, each of which has been developed based on our analysis of local and national skills needs. These are:

1. Connecting young people to opportunities in local and national priority sectors.
2. Expanding programmes for learners with high needs
3. Transforming our approach to adult education
4. Grow our Education Provision in Surrey

Our unique and impactful Learning Philosophy provides the culture and framework from which our staff works with learners to develop emotional resilience and the motivation to learn so we go beyond just teaching a subject, to ensure our learners feel confident, ready and happy to learn in the best way they can.

A person is wearing a white VR headset in a classroom. The person is seen from the back, wearing a dark jacket. The classroom has desks, chairs, and windows in the background. The entire image has a blue tint.

## **VISION:**

*"...through our people, we will be an extraordinary provider of learning for the communities we serve."*

## **MISSION:**

*"...to deliver consistent, high-quality, and highly relevant education and training while serving as a driving force for vibrant community development."*



## Banbury

### The characteristics of our organisation

Activate Learning has college campuses in the counties of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Surrey.

The map below identifies the geographical communities we serve within Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Surrey:

## Oxford

## Reading

## Bracknell

## Merrist Wood

## Farnham

## Guildford

# Context and Place

# B

**In Oxfordshire** we have three campuses: Banbury and Bicester College, City of Oxford College, and our Technology Campus in Blackbird Leys, Oxford. Delivery at these sites is supported by civic stakeholders that include Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OXLEP) and Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce as the Employer Representative Body and creator of the Oxfordshire LSIP.

**In Berkshire** we have two campuses, Reading College and Bracknell and Wokingham College. At these sites, delivery is supported by civic stakeholders that include, Reading Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Council and Wokingham Borough Council, Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (Berkshire LEP) and the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce as the Employer Representative Body and creator of the Berkshire LSIP.

**In Surrey** we have three campuses, Guildford College, Merrist Wood College, and Farnham College. The civic stakeholders supporting delivery from these locations are Surrey County Council, Guildford Borough Council, Waverley Borough Council, and the Surrey Chamber of Commerce as the Employer Representative Body and creator of the Surrey LSIP.

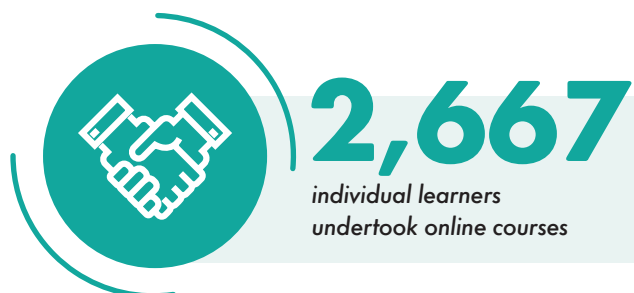
In terms of learner population in **2023/24** key headlines regarding overall learner enrolment across Activate Learning include:



**1,786**  
learners were undertaking  
apprenticeships



**9,127**  
learners undertook 16-18 Study  
Programmes across all business sectors,  
representing a c. 8% year-on-year growth



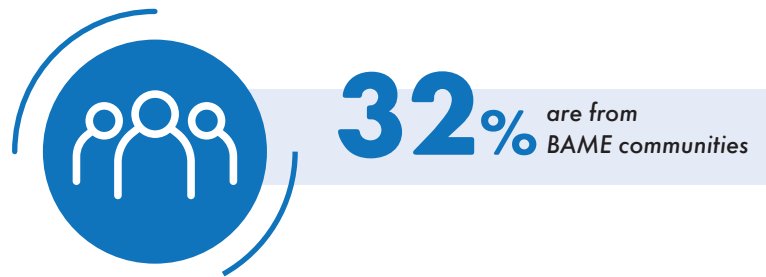
**858**

learners were undertaking  
Level 4 to 6 programmes  
with our partnerships  
with Kingston University,  
University of Reading,  
Oxford Brookes University  
and Middlesex University

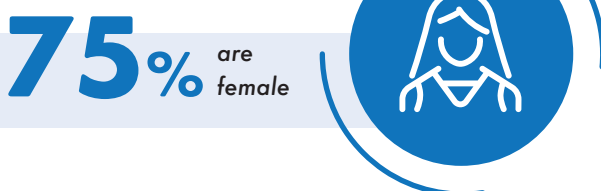
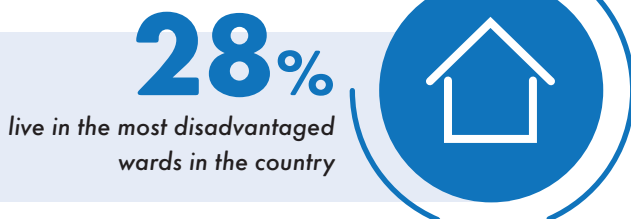
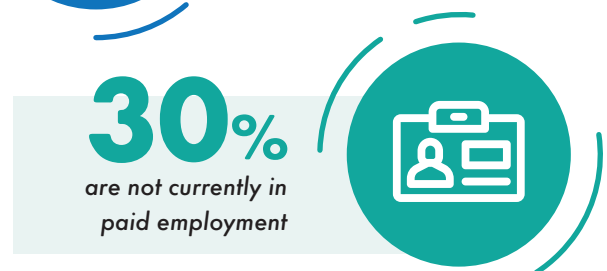
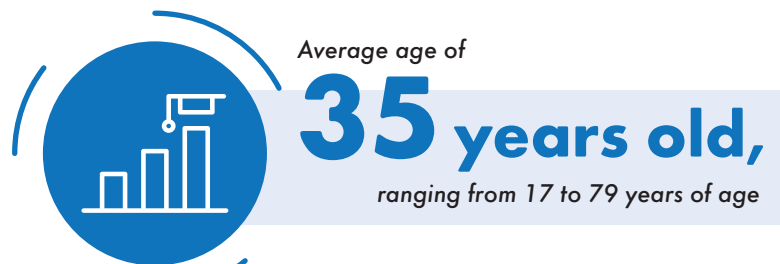
As well as serving the local regions where we have a physical presence, we are seeing an increase in the number of apprentices and adult learners that access our provision remotely, taking advantage of advancements in digital technology which allows us to reach learners from across the country.

Nationally, we offer approximately 90 online courses from entry to level 5 to our growing number of adult learners which accounted for more than 3,000 enrolments from 2667 learners in 2023/24. We forecast online enrolments to be 3,700 for 2024/25. The most significant sectors include Access to HE, English and Maths (GCSE & Functional Skills), short vocational and professional courses (Business, Care, Counselling, ICT).

Our online participants join us from a broad range of communities from across the country that are typically under-represented in learning:



Are from **92** nationalities



We also have a significant number of learners from Greater London Authority, where we currently hold an Adult Education Budget contract. This highlights the importance for us to consider Local Authority devolution developments in our adjacent geographies and increase the number of these contracts to continue to reach those who wish to access our provision.

Our areas of physical operation share many similarities. These include key priority business sectors outlined in their respective LSIPs and the nature of the local demographics.

All our areas of operation benefit from high skilled, high wage economies and as such, we are producing a single Accountability Statement that falls from this premise whilst recognising and outlining their local nuances in line with other larger F.E. providers that fall across multiple LSIP regions.

## Commonalities:

Our Colleges across Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Surrey as adjacent counties share many similarities in economic activity and growth potential. All the regions have high employment, skills and prosperity with business stakeholders recognising the value of recruiting staff trained to level 4 and above which is reflected in our increasing course offering. All experience high property prices and a surplus of job vacancies, however the picture is starting to shift slightly as at the end of 2024, the ONS data showed an increase in unemployment and a reduction in job vacancies compared to the summer 2024, which is typical across the Southeast and Nationally.

The three regions have a considerable proportion of their working population commuting in or out of the areas. Guildford, Bracknell, and Reading are particularly affected due to their easy access to London.

As with all areas that are considered affluent and prosperous pockets of often hidden deprivation exist which are particularly reflected in our Oxford, Banbury and Reading Colleges. Individuals from these more deprived areas may experience no, low or under employment, lower general skill attainment, limited English Language Skills, struggles with health and wellbeing and lower economic standing as opposed to their more prosperous neighbours.

This presents Activate Learning, as an inclusive and community focussed Further Education anchor institution, with the opportunity to work alongside local authorities to deliver against social inclusion policies (such as the previous government's Levelling Up agenda) and attract funding (such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund) to provide the right learning opportunities at the right time for all residents in our local areas to ensure that no one is left behind. We look forward to supporting residents, local authorities and national government in achieving their new priorities for economically inactive and unemployed people when their new policies are released.

## Oxfordshire specific priority sectors:

Employment **10%** in 2023, continuing an upward trend.

By 2035, 241,000 new or replacement jobs will be needed. Growth is being led by Professional and Associate Professional roles, with demand expected to continue. Education remains a key driver of the local economy, with two universities, a strong school's sector, and international education all playing a part. All priority sectors, particularly professional, scientific,

and technical services, are evolving rapidly due to digitalisation and technology, increasing the need for new skills.

The region's economic strategy prioritises high-tech industries including quantum computing, zero carbon, digital health, autonomous vehicles, space, and fusion. These are developing in clusters such as Harwell Campus, Milton Park, and Oxford University spinouts, driving both economic and skills growth.

Oxfordshire ranks third nationally for R&D workers, underlining the importance of Health & Life Sciences and Manufacturing (Science & Innovation). Growth in medical equipment manufacturing and established automotive firms highlight the need to train the next generation of engineers and scientists.

Life science companies rose by **22%** from 2017–2022, with biotech firms doubling.

Human health roles also grew, creating urgent demand for scientists and lab technicians. The Care sector is closely aligned, with an ageing population, 42% of Oxfordshire's residents projected to be over 50 by 2034, driving demand. Overseas recruitment is helping to fill gaps, but also increasing the need for English language, cultural awareness, and leadership skills.

Construction and the Built Environment will require 18,100 new or replacement workers by 2035, mostly to replace the ageing workforce. Current and planned residential and commercial development is high. Labour shortages are being met with external workers, particularly in shortage areas like electricians.

The sector must also **30,000 workers** upskill for Net Zero goals, with a total of **90%** to replace leavers.

Tourism and Hospitality remain vital, especially in Oxford. Visitor spending reached £2.3bn in 2023, with further growth reported in 2024. However, the sector continues to face recruitment and retention challenges, limiting operating hours and investment. Around 22,000 workers will need training or upskilling by 2035.

The Digital/IT sector continues to grow, particularly in design, programming, and software development. Around 10,000 new or replacement workers will be needed by 2035, fuelled by advances such as AI. Proximity to Berkshire, where IT is a major sector, adds to recruitment pressures.

Haulage and Logistics are being reshaped by automation and changing consumer habits. Postal and courier roles have seen the biggest growth. While job numbers are expected to remain stable to 2035, 6,600 replacement workers will be needed.

Since our last update, Moderna opened its Innovation & Technology Centre at Harwell in February 2025, following a 10-year partnership with the UK government. New proposals to connect Oxford and Cambridge could boost the UK economy by £87bn, offering significant future growth potential.

### Berkshire specific priority sectors:

Berkshire lies at the heart of the Thames Valley growth corridor. The IT sector continues to be a major driver of Berkshire's economic growth and productivity but is rapidly diversifying into subsectors such as Data Infrastructure, Software as a Service (SaaS) and Artificial Intelligence (AI). High-value specialisms such as Life Sciences and Biopharmaceuticals, Media & Publishing, Medical Technology and the Screen Sector make a rising contribution to the economy and the range of highly skilled employment on offer; these enhance Berkshire's identity as centre of innovation-based growth. Berkshire has several sub-sectoral specialisms which are growing in importance: e.g. AI, Cybersecurity, Data Infrastructure and Software Development.

Berkshire is geographically adjacent to Oxfordshire and its economy has many similarities. Most of the priority sectors in the Berkshire LSIP are the same as those in the Oxfordshire LSIP, although the relative size and importance of sectors may be different. For example, in health and life sciences the manufacturing of drugs plays a greater role in Berkshire compared to Oxfordshire, whereas Oxfordshire is larger in the number of companies developing new drugs and treatments.

The choice of Screen Industries as a key priority sector for Berkshire reflects the significant increase in investment in TV, video, and films production in the county, including a new cluster at Shinfield Studios in Reading, Stage Fifty in Winnersh Triangle and Bray Studios in Maidenhead. Many of the skills needs are linked to technical professions such as engineers and electricians working with film set equipment, and those able to use animation or virtual software. Importantly, there are increasingly a range of entry level roles suitable for young people including production co-ordination or runners.

The Information and Communication sector in Berkshire has 14.4% of all jobs, compared to a national average for the sector of 4.7%.

This sector will require a significant **48,000** new and replacement workers by 2035.

### Surrey specific priority sectors:

Surrey has strengths in knowledge-based sectors such as Digital, Technology and Professional Services, Aerospace, Defence, and Pharmaceuticals. One in five jobs are in "knowledge intensive services." Around 35,000 green jobs already exist, with 6% annual growth projected to 2030. High-skilled and professional/technical roles are expected to grow the most.

Employers seek both specialist and entry-level skills across hospitality, health and social care, sales, IT, and space. Personal care is a top-requested skill, and the health and social care sector employs around 120,000 people. Challenges persist in recruiting experienced staff, young talent, and achieving gender balance.

This area has **2x** the national average of **(17%)** creative arts/design graduates

Strong academic schools lead many young people into university instead of vocational or apprenticeship routes.

In the Surrey LSIP area, the Createch sector is prominent. Guildford is a global gaming hub with the highest number of games industry employees outside London. TV and film production is also growing, with around a third of the sector freelance, highlighting the need for ongoing professional development. Netflix and Amazon's £500 million expansion at Shepperton Studios in 2024 is expected to increase job demand in screen production.

Digital and IT are well established locally, with strong subsectors in telecommunications, consultancy, and programming. Skills in cybersecurity and cloud technology are in high demand.

Space South Central, which includes Surrey, is the UK's largest space cluster. While aerospace employment is currently aviation-focused, engineers and scientists will be increasingly needed to support future growth in aerospace, space, and advanced manufacturing.

Farnborough Airport plans to raise flight limits from **50,000** to **70,000** annually, potentially creating 950 new jobs.

To meet Net Zero targets by 2050 and zero-carbon electricity by 2030, job growth from 2030–2050 will centre on low-emission vehicles, infrastructure, services, and alternative fuels. Construction will play a major role, requiring workforce upskilling in energy efficiency, heat pumps, and solar power.

The Land-Based sector is vital to rural Surrey. It includes animal health and welfare and requires resilient, skilled workers. The region exceeds national averages in forestry and conservation employment. Though small in scale, the conservation sector is growing rapidly. Agriculture remains significant and will support Net Zero goals through tech innovation.

*Hospitality and  
Tourism has  
been the*

## **UK's fastest-growing employment sector since 2010,**

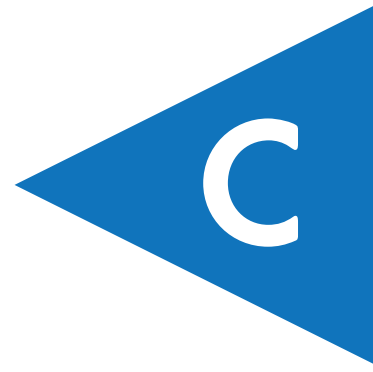
*but struggles with low productivity, high  
staff turnover, and retention issues.*

The care sector faces acute recruitment challenges, driven by an ageing population, low pay, Brexit, and lingering impacts of COVID. With 29% staff turnover, organisations constantly recruit. In response, Surrey County Council launched a Health and Social Care Skills Bootcamp.

Professional services are also central to the Surrey LSIP economy, particularly management consultancy. These roles require high-level skills, particularly in fintech and other emerging technologies.







# Approach to developing the Annual Accountability Statement

Our accountability statement is informed by our ongoing engagement with local stakeholders including working closely with LSIP Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs), Local Authorities and the other Further Education Colleges in our region. To inform our key priorities and target outcomes, we have mapped our provision and curriculum offer against local and national priorities to identify gaps and areas for development.

**We have long-established collaborative working with other partners including the Employer Representative Body (ERB) for Berkshire and Oxfordshire (Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce). This has included close partnership work driven by the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF). In 2025, this collaboration has evolved into a new Thames Valley FE Partnership across Berkshire and Oxfordshire. This group allows key representatives from FE Colleges across the region, with the ERB and other partners, to discuss their goals and objectives for skills growth, identifying areas in which greater collaboration would help.**

We also work collaboratively with the ERB in Berkshire and Oxfordshire through the LSIP Workforce Development Partnerships across identified priority sectors to co-create solutions for skills and workforce development. The ERB has reviewed and endorsed this accountability agreement.

In Surrey the four FE Colleges have launched SurreyFE as an umbrella brand and vehicle to demonstrate our commitment to collaborative working. SurreyFE is at the heart of the strategic intention to deliver the local, regional and national targets, for 16 -18 education and training, Apprenticeships, Higher Education

and Adult Training and upskilling, in the county and supporting areas. The Local Skills Improvement Plans and the Surrey Skills Plan, underpins this work. Our collaborative working includes regular meetings between the CEOs, thematic peer groups, competitions for learners, collaboration on CPD and a teaching and learning conference.

Our productive relationships with local authorities are crucial for adapting to new government skills policies and funding, including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund extension. We work closely with local authorities, especially those that have taken on the remits of the previous Local Enterprise Partnerships and wider skills agendas.

For example, since the publication of the Surrey LSIP in 2024, there have been some notable changes regarding local government responsibilities and impact on skills policy and delivery.

At present, Surrey has a two-tier council system, with 11 district and borough councils and a county council. The government expects all two-tier areas to reorganise in the coming years and has confirmed that Surrey has been selected for the 'first wave' of reorganisation and devolution.

The council could move to a unitary model or a new Strategic Authority which will shape how services will be delivered across the area.

Furthermore, since April 2024, core functions undertaken by Enterprise M3 LEP have been integrated into Surrey County Council responsibilities.

Both changes will strengthen our ongoing stakeholder relationship regarding skills planning and delivery with this local authority. This has been reinforced by our collaborating with other FE providers across the region as an integral member of SurreyFE.

### Other examples of our engagement with local stakeholders include:



*Our Schools Liaison Team works with over one hundred local schools to help their pupils understand skills and training opportunities available at college.*



*Working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Job Centre Plus on employability programmes, we are assisting hundreds of long-term unemployed, economically inactive, or disabled individuals in finding employment each year.*



*Working with other FE providers to launch Surrey FE to collaboratively develop provision and communicate through a common website.*



*Engaging with local employers on Faculty Advisory Panels to identify skills needs and design curriculum. We have co-developed a range of Skills Bootcamps with local employers who have informed the curriculum, co-delivered alongside our tutors and provided participants and job outcomes for learners.*



*Attending Workforce Development Partnerships organised by ERBs to address priority skills sectors.*



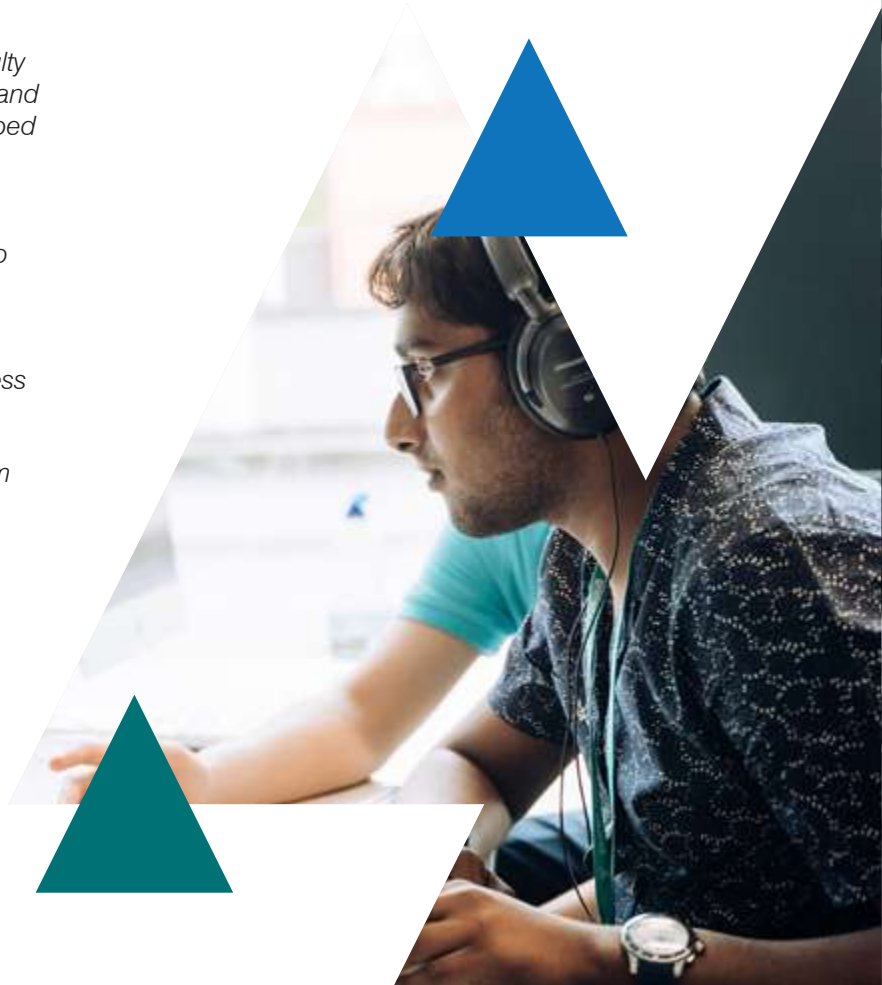
*Working with local authorities to help them design and commission skills provision under the government's Skills for Life Skills Bootcamp programme for adults.*

As a multi-regional college group, we welcome the renewed national focus on skills under the new government. The upcoming launch of Skills England will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of post-16 education, aligning it with the forthcoming Industrial Strategy and the new Growth and Skills Levy. Skills England will bring together businesses, training providers, unions, and local and national government to assess national skills needs and map clear pathways to meet them (Skills England, Driving Growth and Widening Opportunities, Sept 2024).

Alongside national reform, the government's Skills Devolution Policy signals a shift towards greater local control over economic growth, labour market planning, and skills provision. Devolution will become the norm, encouraging more strategic authority models and joint ownership of LSIPs between Employer Representative Bodies and local authorities.

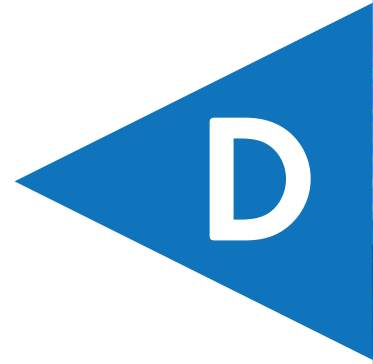
This shift presents an exciting opportunity to deepen our strategic partnerships across all regions. It will be particularly important as the Adult Skills Fund becomes locally managed, supporting the expansion of our online learning offer and localised skills solutions.

Net Zero remains a strong priority across all LSIPs, now reinforced under the new government. There is a clear emphasis on equipping both current workers, especially in construction and transport, and the next generation with the green skills needed to meet future demands.





# Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities



The table below summarises the priority sectors and cross-cutting themes highlighted in the three LSIPs in our region alongside the new, national skills priorities:

<b>Berkshire - Key Priority Sectors</b>	<b>Oxfordshire - Key Priority Sectors</b>	<b>Surrey - Key Priority Sectors</b>	<b>National Skills Priorities</b>
Construction & the Built Environment	Construction & the Built Environment	Construction	Construction
<i>Digital (ICT)</i>	<i>Digital (ICT)</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>Digital and Technologies</i>
Care	Care	Health & Social Care	Health & Social Care
<i>Transport &amp; Logistics</i>	<i>Transport &amp; Logistics</i>		
Health & Life Sciences	Health & Life Sciences		Life Sciences
<i>Creative (Screen Industries)</i>		<i>Creative</i>	<i>Creative Industries</i>
	Manufacturing (Science & Innovation)	Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	Advanced Manufacturing
	<i>Hospitality &amp; Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Hospitality &amp; Tourism</i>	
		Aerospace, Space & Satellite	
		<i>Professional Services</i>	<i>Professional and Business Services</i>
		Land-Based	
			<i>Defence</i>



Cross cutting / Cross sector Skills Needs			
Leadership & Management	Leadership & Management		
Digitalisation	Digitalisation	Digital Skills	
Skills for a Net Zero Economy	Skills for a Net Zero Economy		Clean Energy Industries
Business & Professional	Business & Professional	Professional Skills	Financial Services and Professional Business Services
		Employability Skills	

Across our college group, we have contributed toward the following priority sector examples through the following learner volumes against the 2024/25 national priority categories:

24/25 National Priority Area	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Construction and Manufacturing	1,696	1,575	1,537
Digital and Technologies	761	462	376
Engineering	2,352	2,124	1,773
Health & Adult Social Care	2,460	2,316	1,806
Science & Mathematics	5,146	5,746	6,869
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12,415</b>	<b>12,223</b>	<b>12,361</b>

# 24%

of our provision as a college currently contributes to the 24-25 National Skills Priorities.

Please note that the 2024/25 learner numbers will continue to increase until the end of the academic year and official numbers are not ratified through the ILR until October 2025.

**Overall, since the last report, we have seen the following take place across our regions to support the LSIPs and address local skills gaps:**

## Oxford



A Life Sciences Hub at the City of Oxford College has been introduced through LSIF funding, which includes the development of new Science Labs on campus. With already strong links to industry through collaboration in the health and care sector, the facility aims to support new and existing learners to study programmes in the life sciences, biology, and chemistry, as well as provide a state-of-the-art modern facility to upskill learners looking to progress into the sciences and/or allied healthcare professions.



Funded via OXLEP, a new Skills Bootcamp in E-Bikes was launched to support individuals to upskill in the cycle industry and contribute toward the Green Skills agenda.

## Berkshire



Sustainable Technologies Centre (STC) in Reading, Berkshire funded through the LSIF. The STC provides a modern facility for new and existing learners and apprentices to develop contemporary skills in plumbing and heating engineering supporting the green skills agenda whilst providing upskilling opportunities within the construction sector as identified in the LSIP.



A Skills Bootcamp in Sustainability was commissioned through Berkshire LEP to support the development of Sustainability Champions within businesses across the county.

## Surrey



Createch facilities at Guildford College which provide a state-of-the-art media production environment to enable the teaching and learning of creative skills and emerging technologies, so learners are ready for careers in this fast-moving and ever evolving industry.



Our Merrist Wood campus in, Surrey attracted £21m of government funding to invest in capital development of the site which will include new teaching spaces, workshops, a café, and a construction skills area. These new facilities will be complete and ready for new learners by September 2026.



Two Skills Bootcamps in Sustainability and Carbon Management and Retrofit were commissioned through Surrey County Council to contribute toward the local sustainability and green skills agenda.



Our commitment to environmental sustainability and industry-relevant education was also recognised when Merrist Wood College and University Centre received accolades at BBC Gardeners' World, further establishing it as a centre for excellence in land-based education.

## Other developments linked to the Sustainability and Digital cross-cutting themes include:



Design and delivery of Green Skills Electric Vehicle Short courses aimed at upskilling technicians who are already in employment to meet the skills gap as the nation moves toward our roads becoming fully electric by 2030.



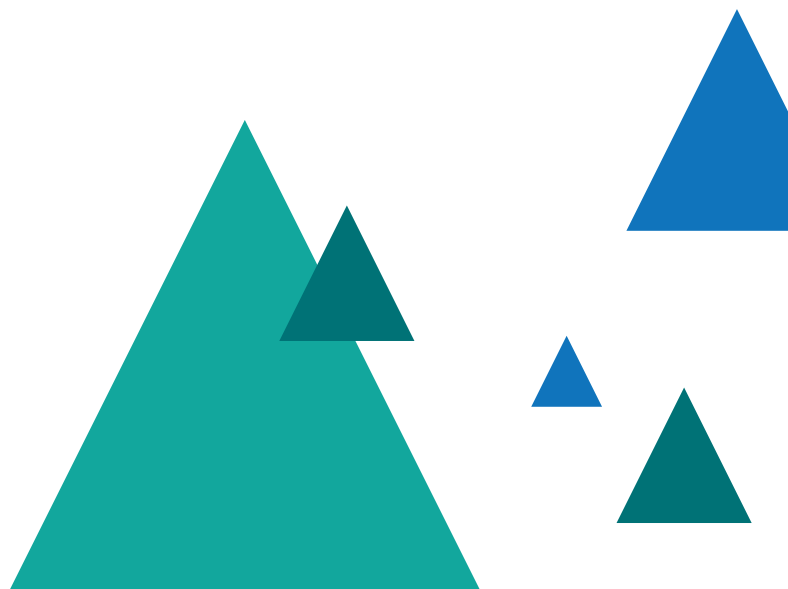
Degree programme in Digital Technologies which offers pathways in cyber, data, and innovation which address the recognised skills needs in this area in the LSIP.



Data Analytics courses to meet the increasing need for data analysts, as data analytics is a key skill required more and more within multiple industries.



Suite of Sustainability Programmes designed alongside Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire Greentech and Siemens Healthineers, for employers to support businesses with awareness, training and staff upskilling, as they become more 'green aware' and sustainable in practice.



Objectives – To be completed by end of 2024/25 academic year		Progress Update
<b>Objectives for ALL regions</b>		
<b>Priority 1 – Digital / ICT Sector</b>		
1.	Develop short courses for businesses in Artificial Intelligence and Data Analytics – combination of 150 starts on these courses	Activate Learning has developed courses in Artificial Intelligence and Data Analytics in partnership with a major manufacturing business and tech experts
2.	<i>Launch On-line/blended Higher Technical Qualification in Digital Technologies and achieve 25 starts</i>	<i>Our innovative on-line HTQ in Digital Technologies launched in Autumn 2024. It is available as a full qualification and with individual units in cyber security. At the time of writing we expect to exceed 50 starts by the end of 24/25</i>
<b>Priority 2 – Green Economy and Sustainability</b>		
3.	Launch a suite of courses to support businesses to embed sustainable practices in their organisations and achieve 150 starts on these courses	We have developed a range of courses to help businesses develop their sustainability strategies. These courses have been developed in partnership with local businesses and national experts in sustainability. We have exceeded our target of 150 starts in 24/25
<b>Priority 3 – Growth of Government Priority Programmes</b>		
4.	Expanding our T Level offer to include Design, Surveying and Planning, and Science and growing the total number of T Level starts from 182 in 23/24, to 368 (across all 7 subject areas)	Activate Learning successfully launched two new T Levels in 24/25. Further expansion is planned for 25/26, with four new T Levels due to be launched. We recruited 214 learners in 24/25 which was an increase from the previous year, but short of our target
5.	<i>Launch two new Higher Technical Qualifications in Digital Technologies and Leadership and Management and grow the number of starts on all HTQs from 13 in 2023/24 to more than 50 in 2024/25</i>	<i>New HTQs were launched in Leadership and Management and Digital Technologies. Each course is offered as a full qualification and as individual modules. At the point of writing, we have recruited 65 learners</i>
6.	Grow the total number of Apprenticeship starts from 647 in 2023/24 to 750 in 2024/25	Our forecast is to have achieved 650 apprenticeship starts by the end of 25/26. This includes significant growth in the nationally and regionally important construction sector and the launch of new programmes for Marketing Executives and Teaching Assistants
7.	<i>Launch Skills Bootcamps in Sustainability and Retrofit and grow the number of Skills Bootcamp starts from 52 in 2023/24 to 120 in 2024/25</i>	<i>Activate Learning successfully launched Skills Bootcamps in Sustainability and Retrofit, to add to its existing cycle mechanic programme. We are forecast to achieve approximately 120 starts by the end of the 24/25 year. We plan further expansion of our Skills Bootcamps in 25/26, including the launch of a programme for Teaching Assistants</i>

**Additional Objective for Berkshire**

**Priority 4 – Screen Industries**

8.	<p>Develop a range of short courses to promote the screen industries sector and deliver a combination of 80 starts on courses including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set building</li> <li>• Hair and make-up</li> <li>• Costuming for the film industry</li> <li>• Electrical installation for the film industry</li> </ul>	<p>In partnership with Reading Economic Development agency, we have developed a range of short courses to help people develop the skills needed in the strategically important screen industries. At the time of writing we forecast more than 50 starts by the end of 24/25</p>
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**Additional Objective for Oxfordshire**

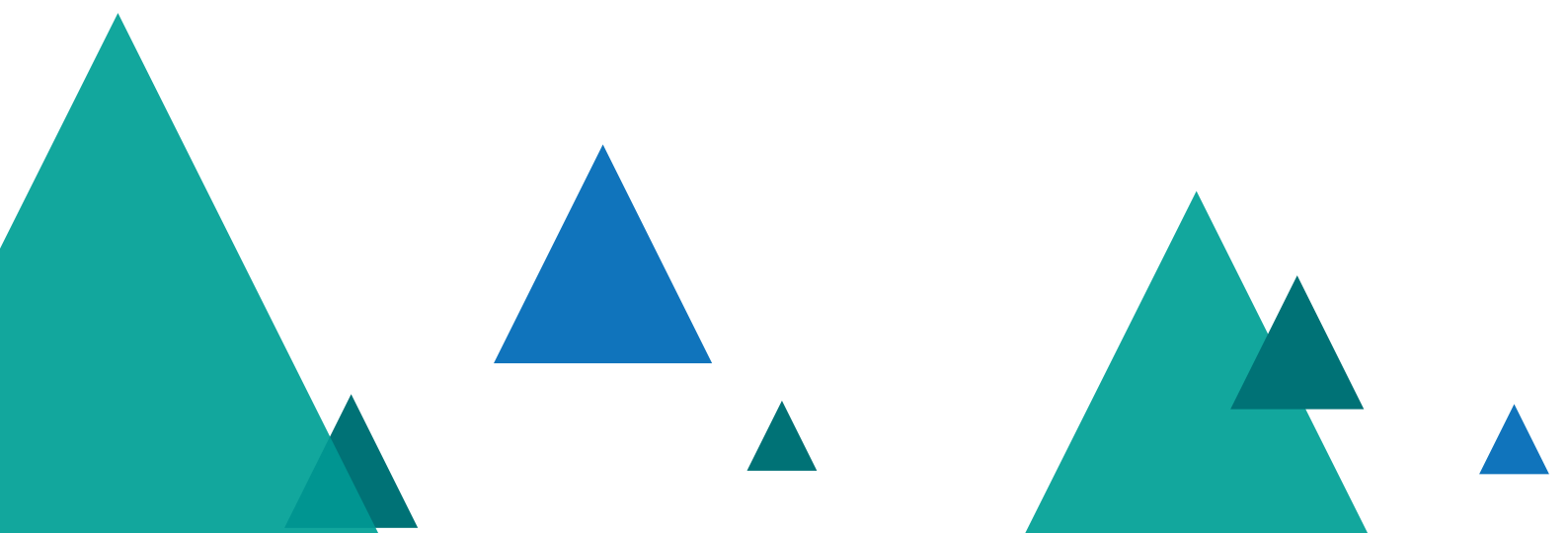
**Priority 5 – Life Sciences**

9.	<p>Create a new science hub with laboratory facilities at City of Oxford College and establish an Advisory Board of employers from the sector who will support the roll-out of a new curriculum in 2025 that will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Level Science</li> <li>• Skills Bootcamps</li> </ul> <p>250 learners will use the new facilities in 2024/25</p>	<p>Our new science facilities at City of Oxford College were opened in autumn 2025. More than 260 learners have used these facilities in 24/25. We have established an Advisory Board to oversee the design and development of our science curriculum offer. Members of the Advisory Board include Cherwell Laboratories, NeuroBio, Oxford Instruments, Oxford Nano Systems and Mastek.</p>
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**Additional Objective for Surrey**

**Priority 6 – Construction**

10.	<p>Launch new construction courses including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Level in Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction</li> <li>• Access to HE Diploma in Construction</li> <li>• Skills Bootcamps in Retrofit</li> </ul> <p>Achieve 16 starts on the T Level in Design, Surveying and Planning, and 20 starts on a Retrofit Skills Bootcamp</p>	<p>For the first time Activate Learning delivered T Levels in Design, Surveying and Planning and a Skills Bootcamp in retrofit. These programmes build on our expertise as an approved gas centre and National Electrotechnical Training Centre. In combination we recruited 10 learners to these programmes, with plans for significant expansion of T Level learner numbers in 25/26</p>
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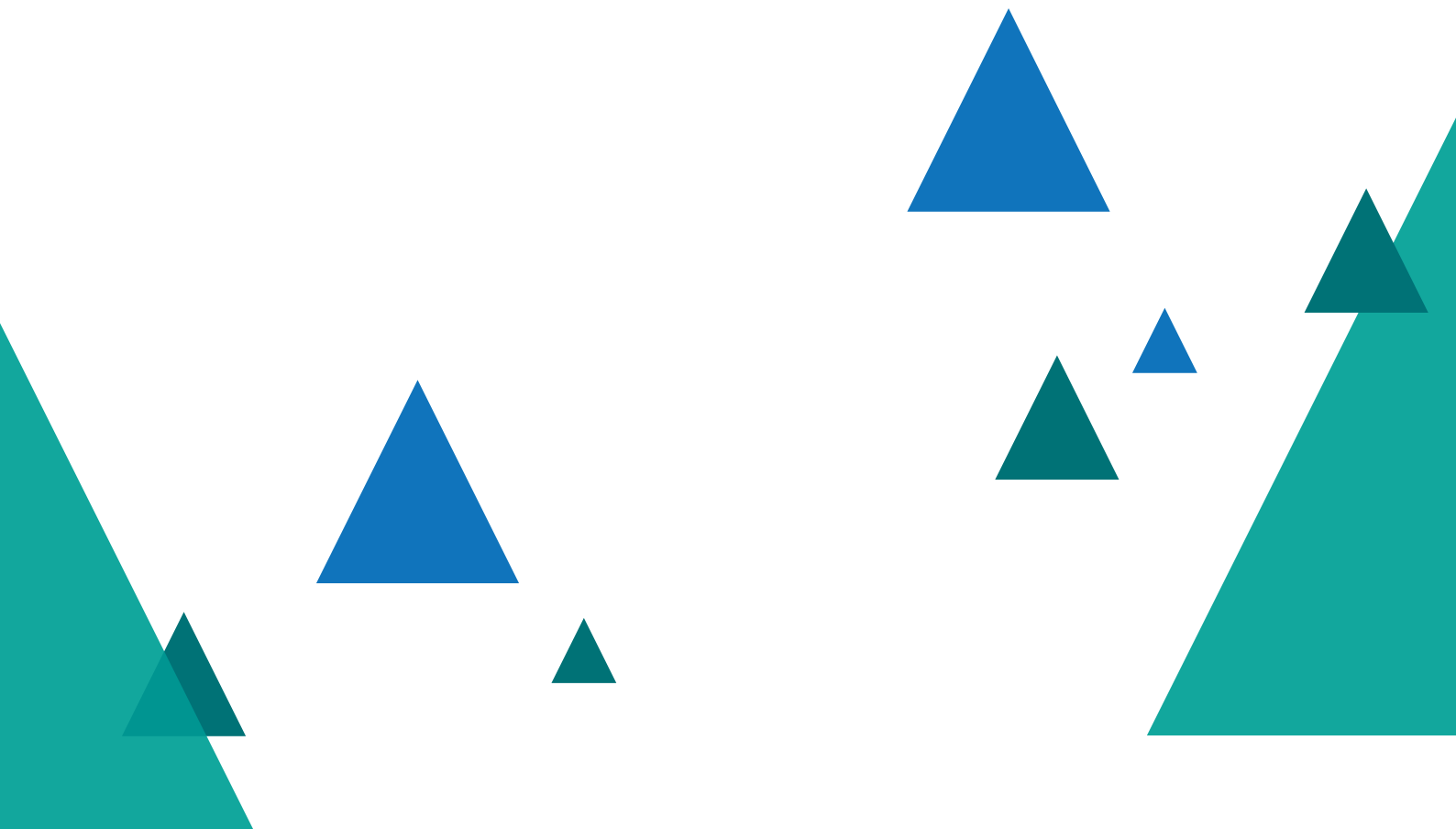
Looking ahead, Activate Learning remains focused on innovating and expanding our offerings to meet the evolving needs of learners and employers alike, while championing sustainability, wellbeing, and a continued positive impact on our communities.

Having completed the statutory Local Needs Duty in spring 2024 and having consulted with our faculty leaders and governing body, and local Employer Representative Bodies, we have committed to working on the following SMART targets for the 2025/26 academic year. These will be tracked by our governing body through its Quality and Relevance Committee in the same way in which actions and progress towards them are included in our corporate Improvement Plan.

We have mapped our objectives against our Strategic Plan to drive consistency and focus between these two important documents.

	Objective	Supporting Information	Activate Learning Strategic Objective	Priority Sector(s) Addressed
1	Grow T Level starts from 215 in 24/25 to more than 400 in 25/26	We will introduce T Levels in Data Analytics, Media, Fashion and Textiles, Animal Care, Livestock Production, Horticulture and Woodland Management, Design, Surveying and Planning and expand the delivery of existing T Levels in Software Development, Management and Administration, Education and Early Years, Engineering, Adult Nursing, Laboratory Science	Create opportunities for young people to progress in priority sectors	Creative industries, Defence, Digital Technologies, Professional and Business Services, Construction, Health, Aerospace, space and satellite, Land-based
2	<i>Growth of HTQs and modularised Higher Education Provision in preparation for the rollout of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement in September 2026.</i>	<i>Activate Learning is preparing for the roll-out of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement by delivering full HTQs and individual HTQ modules in the following key subject areas: Digital Technologies, Construction, Leadership and Management and Sustainable Business Management</i>	<i>Maximise Lifelong Learning Opportunities for Adults through Online and Blended</i>	<i>Digital Technologies, Clean Energy Industries, Professional Business Services Construction</i>
3	Introduction of Space Study Programmes at Farnham College, Surrey	The space sector was highlighted as a priority in the EM3 LSIP due to the location of the Surrey Space Centre and Space south Central Cluster. This sector is also increasingly important to the defence industry	Create opportunities for young people to progress in priority sectors.  And growth of our Surrey colleges	Aerospace, space and satellite, Defence
4	<i>Continue to grow our online and on-campus Access to Higher Education programmes in health-related disciplines.</i>	<i>Activate Learning is already the largest provider of funded Access to Higher Education programmes in England. More than 60% of these learners' study for qualifications in the health sector including Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Science</i>	<i>Maximise Lifelong Learning Opportunities for Adults through Online and Blended Learning</i>	Health

5	Introduction of Study Programmes in Haulage and Logistics	Haulage and Logistics is a key sector of the economy in Berkshire and Oxfordshire as well as being a national skills priority. Until now there has been no full-time study offer for young people in our region to develop the skills needed. We will be piloting the programme at Banbury and Bicester College, with a view to wider roll-out if successful	Create opportunities for young people to progress in priority sectors	Haulage and Logistics, Defence
6	<i>Consolidate and grow our Skills Bootcamp offer across each of the three counties in which we operate.</i>	<i>We plan to consolidate the delivery of our successful Skills Bootcamps in Sustainable Business Management and Cycle Maintenance, with the addition of two new Bootcamps in Landscaping and Teaching Assistants</i>	<i>Maximise Lifelong Learning Opportunities for Adults through Online and Blended Learning</i>	<i>Clean Energy Industries, Land-based</i>
7	Growth of our high needs provision in response to demand from local authorities. Recruit and additional 100 learners in 25/26.	Feedback from each of the local authorities in our region indicates that there is an urgent need for greater local capacity in post-16 provision for high needs learners. Activate Learning's high needs provision is rated as Outstanding by Ofsted	Expand Programmes for Learners with High Needs	This priority has been identified through engagement with local civic stakeholders





# Local Needs Duty

In May 2024, Activate Learning conducted a detailed evaluation of how well we meet local skills needs as articulated in the three LSIPs in our region.

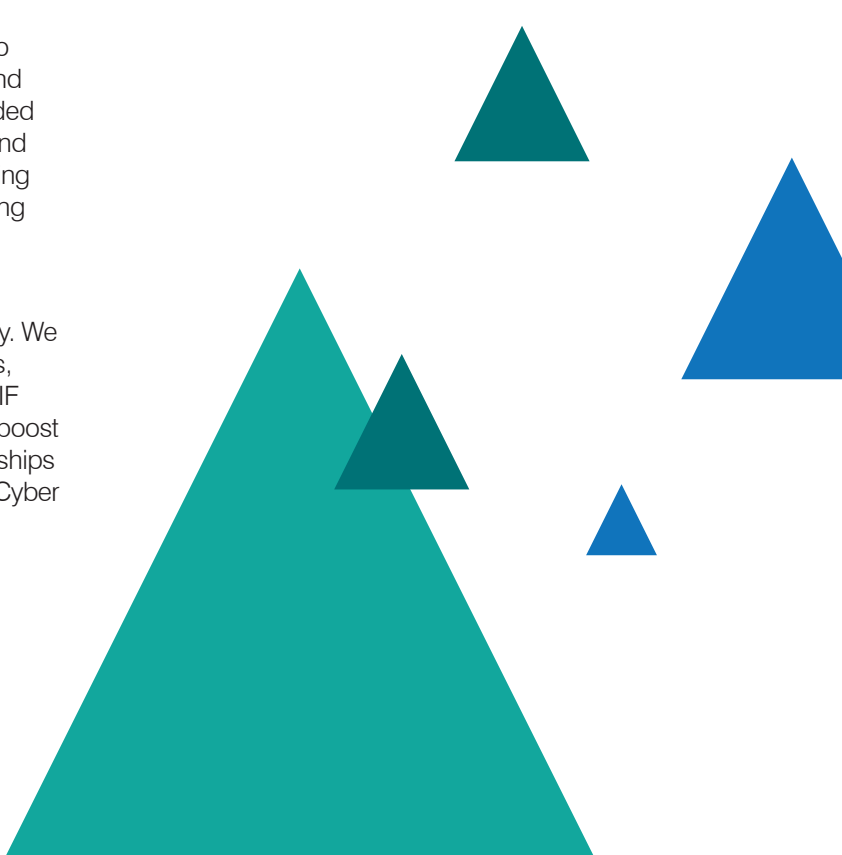
**The purpose of this exercise was to understand the strength of our overall contribution, identify how well we meet each individual LSIP priority and propose ways in which we could improve our impact over the next few years.**

We have reviewed the evidence against our detailed Local Needs Duty review that took place in 2023/24 and believe the main judgements outlined below remain unchanged.

The following summarises five main judgements from completing this Local Needs Duty review:

- 1.** We have significantly improved our contribution to local skills needs since the November 2022 Ofsted inspection, which cited the organisation as making a “strong” contribution, especially in Berkshire. Our learner numbers and curriculum in priority sectors have grown, including in Surrey where we have the most potential for growth, and online, as shown by our performance since the June 2024 Accountability Statement.
- 2.** The greatest potential for improving our impact is by further improving our offer to adult learners, especially for upskilling and reskilling the workforce. We have expanded through Skills Bootcamp programmes and online learning and aim to utilise all funding streams to support adults, complementing our strong 16–19 Study Programmes in priority sectors.
- 3.** Digital skills remain a cross-sector priority. We offer a wide range of digital qualifications, enhanced by investment through our LSIF projects. However, we must continue to boost enrolment, particularly in key Apprenticeships and Higher Technical Qualifications like Cyber Security and Data Analytics.
- 4.** We have a strong employer engagement record and can improve in haulage and logistics. Engagement with Life Sciences has grown via partnerships, advisory boards, and new facilities at our Oxford campus. We must better understand how our FE offer complements universities and Independent Training Providers in sectors where they traditionally have high market share in some business sectors.
- 5.** Our scale and online capability allow us to meet the similar skills needs across three regions, achieving critical mass for new courses. Our growing online learning offer improves access for those with work or family commitments, with strong growth, high learner satisfaction, and achievement supporting a broader, high-quality curriculum.

These findings are reflected in the objectives in this accountability statement and will inform our priorities in future years.



# Corporation / Governing Body Statement

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On behalf of the Activate Learning Corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Corporation and fulfils the statutory Local Needs Duty.

The plan has now been published on the college's website as per the Department of Education's guidelines and can be accessed from [here](#).

## Chair of Governors Signature

*Sue Sturgeon*

S Sturgeon

## Chief Executive and Accounting Officer Signature

*Gary Headland*

G Headland

**Dated:** 16/06/25





# Supporting Documentation



The hyperlink to the following supporting documentation provides background economic and social demographic data which has influenced the choice of key priority business sectors within the Local Skills Improvement Plans for Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Surrey. This in turn has supported our own review of the statutory Local Needs Duty, in the creation of this Accountability Statement, and in our choice of SMART targets for 2025/26 to better meet local skills needs.

## **Oxfordshire**

[Oxfordshire Local Skills Improvement Plan \(LSIP\)](#)

[Oxfordshire LSIP Progress Report – June 2024](#)

## **Berkshire**

[Berkshire LSIP](#)

[Berkshire LSIP Progress Report – June 2024](#)

## **Surrey**

[Surrey LSIP](#)

[Surrey LSIP Progress Report – June 2024](#)

Details of our November 2022 Ofsted Inspection Report which describes how we make a strong contribution to meeting skills needs, the highest grading available, can be read [here](#).

## **Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce 2025 Business Manifesto**

<https://www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Business-Manifesto-2025.pdf>

## **Surrey Chamber of Commerce**

<https://www.surrey-chambers.co.uk>

## **Activate Learning Financial Statement for the period ending 31 July 2024**

<https://www.activatelearning.ac.uk/app/uploads/sites/2/2025/01/Activate-Learning-2024-Signed-Accounts-ID-1068943-.pdf>

## **Activate Learning Strategic Plan**

<https://www.activatelearning.ac.uk/who-we-are/empowering-learning/>

We are currently working with a wide range of local stakeholders, to develop our next 5-year Strategic Plan which we expect to publish later in 2025. This will form part of our 2026 Accountability Statement.



