

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS

Annual Accountability Agreement 2023/24



Purpose:

The purpose of Kent County Council's Community Learning and Skills Service is to provide and secure learning opportunities for Kent's residents which will: engage and build confidence, preparing them for further learning and employment; improve essential skills in areas such as English, ESOL, maths, digital skills; equip parents/carers to support children's learning, and improve health and wellbeing to develop strong, integrated communities.

Strategic aims:



Kent

Kent is divided in 12 local authority districts, with Medway Unitary Authority located within it.

Kent is the 5th largest county by population (1,846,478)* and 11th by area, with a land area of 1,368 square miles and approximately just over 350 miles of coastline. 75% of Kent is undeveloped, leading to many rurally isolated areas.

The number of Kent LSOAs that are within the 10% most deprived LSOAs in England between the IMD2019 and the previous IMD2015 remains at 51. Thanet continues to rank as the most deprived local authority in Kent. Gravesham has experienced the largest decrease in deprivation relative to other areas.

Kent borders London boroughs, which has implications for workforce travelling to work in London, and is the Gateway to Europe, which has resulted in high levels of demand for support for refugees, asylum seekers and UASC, with 3 Afghan hotels being located in Kent as well as Asylum accommodation and reception centres for adults and unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

*English Counties by Population and Area 2021/2022 – UK Population Data.



Broadband (mobile and home)

(information based on amalgamated data from the four physical network providers:- EE, O2, Three and Vodafone at an inside location*).

Most areas within Kent are well served by mobile telephony and mobile data outside. Most coastal towns have good coverage of true mobile broadband (4G) but the challenges of using mobile data inside significantly reduce coverage and performance in rural areas of Kent. To highlight this, in areas such as between M2/A2/A260 and M20/A20 (excluding the A28), there is patchy or no signal for data reported at or near many settlements. There are similar issues affecting communities between the A21/A228 and A28/A274 (excluding along the A229) with similar weak, intermittent or no signals reported at many locations. There is a concentration of mobile data along the traffic and travel infrastructure that crosses Kent motorways, highways, and trainlines.

Whilst some areas benefit from home ultra-fast or full fibre broadband, rural areas away from the transport infrastructure generally receive the lowest bandwidth.

*A small number of towns have 5G (for outside use).

Employment sectors and employment sector gaps (Kent summary (2021 survey):

- Employee jobs in Kent have increased by 3.5%, (+21,500 jobs) over the last year. This is a higher increase than the regional average of +1.4% and the national average of +3.0%.
- In Kent, the biggest number and percentage increase in jobs was in transportation & storage (+8,500 jobs, +25.8%).
- Kent has a larger proportion of jobs in six sectors than seen nationally. The biggest differences are in construction (Kent 7.7%, GB 4.9%) and wholesale and retail trade (Kent 16.7%, GB 14.4%)
- There are over 72,000 businesses employing 720,000 people in Kent and Medway, and a further 158,000 self-employed people. As elsewhere in the UK, most businesses (90%) employ 9 or fewer people, but almost half of all jobs are in medium-sized and large companies.
- There are just over 1,129,000 working age (16-64) people resident in Kent and Medway. While the area has more retirement age people than the national average, there is also a higher proportion of young people (19 and under). The Office for National Statistics forecasts that the population will grow by 8% by 2030, above the national average of 6%. The population of 15-19-year-olds will grow by 20% over the same period.



Unemployment

The number of people who were unemployed in Kent in January 2023 was higher than at the end of 2022.

The claimant rate in Kent is currently 3.3%, below the GB average rate of 3.6%. Unemployment in Kent increased by 1.4% since the end of 2022, while nationally it increased by 0.5%. Youth unemployment (18-24) in Kent (4.9%) is slightly above the national average of 4.7%.

Unemployment has increased for both males and females since the end of 2022: +1.7% for males in Kent compared to +1.0% for females. Currently, approximately 57,385 people in Kent (6.0%) are claiming unemployment benefit.

Ethnic makeup

6.6% of Kent's residents are of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) origin. The largest single BME group in Kent is Indian, representing 1.2% of the total population. CLS supports refugees in Kent's 3 Afghan hotels and under the Afghan Resettlement Scheme; refugees from Ukrainian and under the UK Resettlement Scheme; HK BN(O) passport holders and many Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)



Qualifications

The percentage of Kent's population aged 16 to 64 with no qualifications, at 7.8%, is lower than the national figure of 8% but higher than the South East (5.4%).

Skills demand

At a national level, the Plan for Growth (March 2021) set out new measures to improve productivity and to invest in low carbon technologies. The Skills White Paper (January 2021) proposed greater alignment between provision and employer needs, the production of local skills plans, college business centres to increase collaboration between colleges and employers, access to finance for re-training, and increasing the quality and uptake of higher-level skills.

National Skills Priorities have been identified in these sectors:

- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Digital and Technology
- Health and Social Care
- Haulage and Logistics
- Engineering
- Science and Mathematics

At a Kent and Medway level, the Economic Renewal and Resilience Plan adopted by KMEP in August 2020 focused on three principles of 'greener futures' (linked with the decarbonisation agenda); 'productive and open', and 'better opportunities, fairer chances' (linked with 'fair work' and higher-pay, more productive employment). The Employment Task Force was established to drive economic recovery through specific, strategic actions.

The Workforce Skills Evidence Base, produced by Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, highlighted skills needs in key sectors, and a plan was developed through Integrated Skills Progression workshops, to initially focus on:

- Health and Care
- Hospitality, Retail and Visitor Economy
- Land-based and Food (including food manufacturing)

With other key areas being:

- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Transport and Logistics
- Finance, professional and Business services
- Visitor Economy
- Energy, utilities and environmental technologies
- Life Sciences
- Creative and Cultural Industries
- Digital Technologies

Building on the analysis of employer needs, the LSIP highlights five key areas for action:

- **Modernise the training offer.** It needs to be alert to the needs of business, not simply keep pace with it. It must meet current employer and industry need, including greater emphasis on new technologies and systems, and on the flexibility of Apprenticeships and other work-based learning programmes to meet industry working practices – and boost productivity.
- **Increase the volume of provision to increase supply.** We recognise the quantitative gap (especially in construction) between new entrants to the industry and employer demand, however, the current measures and incentives for FE works against narrowing the gap.
- **Invest in soft transferrable skills.** Wider considerations of work readiness, work ethic and 'getting the basics right' are important – especially in the context of a career path achieved through multiple employment.
- **Up-skill and re-skill the existing workforce.** All sectors reported pressures in adapting to the pace of developing markets and technologies within. There is evidence of demand for **more accessible, non-qualification locally-based short courses**, with the express need for the focus to be clearly on the practical application of skills in the workplace.
- **Better communication.** A key element of the challenge will require the business community to be better-informed and aware of the range and variety of opportunities and career paths in modern industry, ensuring learners are securing meaningful employment. This will also tackle long-terms perceptions among employers of the value of training.



Community Learning and Skills

Kent County Council's Community Learning and Skills (CLS) Service contracts with the Department for Education (via the Education and Skills Funding Agency) to annually deliver over 25,000 learning opportunities to all parts of the County, through our programmes for adults, Apprenticeships and Study Programmes.

For the academic year 2023-24, CLS will deliver a wide and diverse range of courses, from pre-entry to Level 5, under the following categories:

- Employment, Skills and Career Progression
- Family Learning
- Health, Wellbeing and Personal Development

CLS also leads on the delivery of the Department for Education's 'Multiply' programme, working with multiple referral and delivery partners across Kent. Multiply aims to increase the numeracy skills and confidence of ten distinct cohorts of adults without Level 2 qualifications in numeracy.

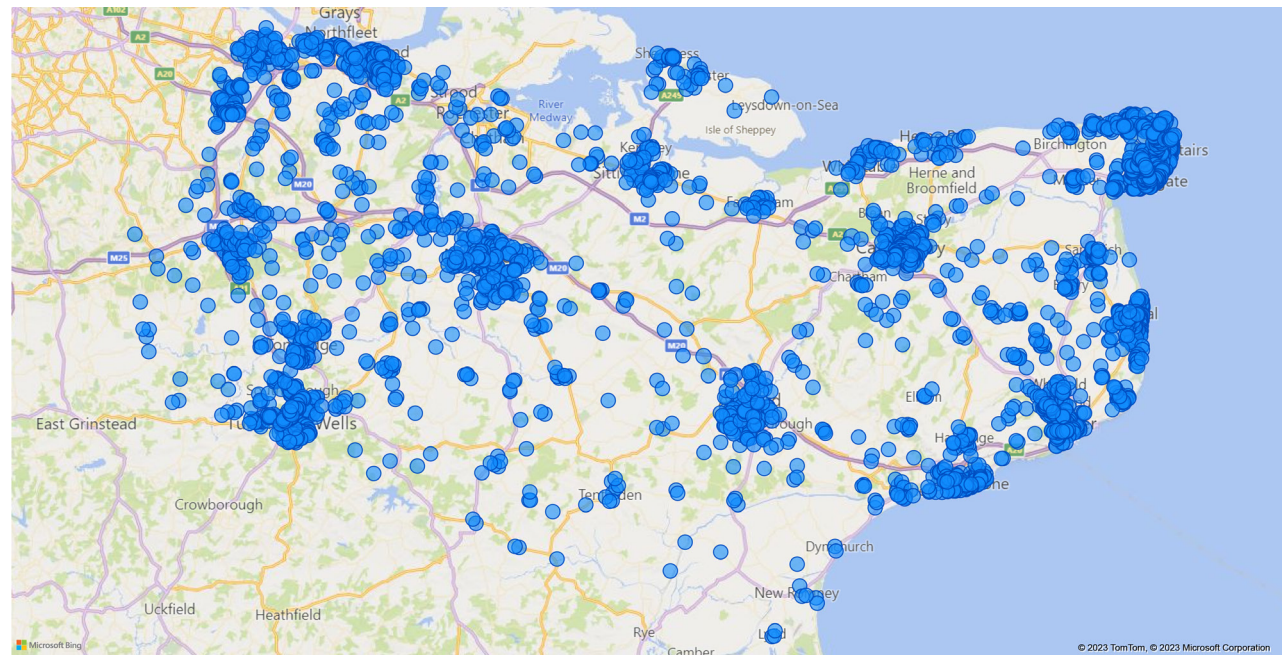
During 2023-24, CLS will deliver from 16 main centres across the County.

As well as from community venues, children's centres, schools and faith centres.



1. Ashford
2. Broadstairs
3. Canterbury
4. Dartford
5. Deal
6. Dover
7. Folkestone
8. Gravesend
9. Maidstone
10. Margate
11. Sevenoaks
12. Sheppey
13. Sittingbourne
14. Tenterden
15. Tonbridge
16. Tunbridge Wells

Spread of 2022/23 learners (to end March) by postcode



Community Learning and Skills 2023/24

Strategic Aim and Objectives	Measurable Outcomes	Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
<p>Aim 1 : Support the Kent economy</p> <p>Maximise the impact of adult and community learning on economic well-being and independence of individuals, families, and communities</p> <p>Offer a targeted range of employability and skills courses in areas such as traineeships, apprenticeships, and qualification courses in areas such as English, Maths and ESOL</p> <p>Continue to develop and offer new courses to support pathways to employment, including those in priority sectors</p> <p>Introduce intensive ESOL courses to support language development and move refugees towards work sooner</p> <p>Continue to drive quality improvements in apprenticeship provision, and increase Apprenticeship numbers</p> <p>Have a particular focus on unemployed adults over 50, as an identified need in Kent</p> <p>Lead delivery of DfE 'Multiply project, working in partnership with a range of delivery partners across all districts of Kent.</p> <p>Increase the offer of independent Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance opportunities.</p> <p>Help reduce the number of young adults at risk of becoming NEET by offering courses of study tailored to their educational, employment and well-being needs.</p> <p>Increase the number of districts that courses are delivered in.</p> <p>Support Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) to improve language skills to be able to progress to positive outcomes, including further learning.</p>	<p>1,300 unemployed adults or those on low incomes complete employability programmes</p> <p>550 learners complete programmes in Functional Skills and GCSE Maths and English</p> <p>4,000 learners will develop confidence and skills in numeracy through engaging with the 'Multiply' project, led by CLS</p> <p>750 Syrian, Afghani, Ukrainian and other refugees and asylum seekers benefit from ESOL and other classes</p> <p>Targeted CEIAG ensures 4,000 learners, join the right course, are successful and move to positive outcomes</p> <p>Achieve renewal of Matrix accreditation</p> <p>Recruit and provide training for 100 adult Apprenticeships per annum.</p> <p>50 NEET learners complete Study Programmes which include employability skills, English, Maths and a work experience placement. Positive outcomes include employment, a Traineeship, Apprenticeship or a college placement.</p> <p>75 UASC complete ESOL study programmes which support language development to progress to further learning and/or other positive outcomes.</p>	<p>KCC Priority (Framing Kent's Future 2022-26): Levelling Up Kent:</p> <p>To support the Kent economy to be resilient and successfully adapt to the challenges and opportunities it faces over the coming years, work with partners to develop a skills system for Kent that delivers skills that are resilient to changing workforce needs and opportunities and supports people to higher level skills.</p> <p>LSIP Priority 1: Modernise the training offer</p> <p>LSIP Priority 2: Increase the volume of provision to increase supply</p> <p>LSIP Priority 3: Invest in Soft Transferable Skills</p> <p>LSIP Priority 4: Up-skill and re-skill the existing workforce</p> <p>LSIP Priority 5: Better Communication</p> <p>Kent and Medway Economic Renewal and Resilience Plan, Key Principle 3: Better Opportunities, Fairer Chances (ensuring that people are supported through recession and stand to gain from a more resilient economy in the return to growth).</p> <p>HM Government target: Levelling Up the United Kingdom:</p> <p>Skills - By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.</p> <p>Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging.</p> <p>Living Standards - By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, and the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.</p> <p>Levelling Up the United Kingdom: Executive Summary (publishing.service.gov.uk)</p>

		<p>KCC Priority : Levelling Up Kent:</p> <p>To see significant improvements in the economy, connectivity, educational attainment, skills and employment rates and public health outcomes in deprived communities in coastal areas so that they improve faster than the rest of Kent to reduce the gaps.</p> <p>LSIP Priority 2: Increase the volume of provision to increase supply</p> <p>LSIP Priority 3: Invest in Soft Transferable Skills</p> <p>LSIP Priority 4: Up-skill and re-skill the existing workforce.</p> <p>Kent and Medway Economic Renewal and Resilience Plan, Key Principle 3: Better opportunities, fairer chances (ensuring that people are supported through recession and stand to gain from a more resilient economy in the return to growth).</p>
<p>Aim 2 : Support the most vulnerable children and families in our county</p> <p>In conjunction with schools and children's centres, deliver a programme of family learning to increase parents/ carers' skills, and their understanding of how their children are educated.</p> <p>Increase the number of courses which support understanding of particular special educational needs</p> <p>Increase the number of men accessing courses</p>	<p>2,500 parents, guardians, children and other family members from schools and other community partners, focusing on identified areas of deprivation, benefit from family learning programmes</p> <p>500 adults benefit from Parenting courses</p>	<p>KCC Priority: New models of care and support</p> <p>To support the most vulnerable children and families in our county, ensuring our social work practice supports manageable caseloads, reflective learning, joined up safeguarding and effective corporate parenting arrangements.</p> <p>LSIP Priority 2: Increase the volume of provision to increase supply</p> <p>LSIP Priority 3: Invest in Soft Transferable Skills</p> <p>HM Government target: Levelling Up the United Kingdom:</p> <p>Education - By 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third.</p>

<p>Aim 3: Promote healthy, creative, and active communities</p> <p>Maximise access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people's circumstances.</p> <p>Maximise the impact of adult and community learning on the social of individuals, families, and communities</p> <p>Increase our reach into communities by taking learning to learners</p> <p>Increase the number of courses that focus on working in creative industries</p>	<p>10,000 learners benefit from programmes designed to improve mental and physical health and wellbeing. Through accessing programmes designed to develop social, cultural, creative, intellectual and physical skills.</p> <p>300 learners, including older learners, develop Essential Digital Skills and attend other IT courses which reduce isolation, help them access services, develop skills for work and stay safe online.</p>	<p>KCC Priority: Infrastructure for Communities</p> <p>To work with our partners to hardwire a preventative approach into improving the health of Kent's population and narrowing health inequalities</p> <p>LSIP Priority: Invest in soft transferrable skills</p> <p>HM Government target: Levelling Up the United Kingdom: Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost.</p> <p>Pride in Place - By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.</p> <p>Age UK – Look after your thinking skills 'Staying Sharp': You might be surprised to learn that speaking more than one language helps keep our thinking skills healthy in later life.</p> <p>Arts Council England – Let's Create: Recognition of the part that creativity and culture can play in supporting local economies and talent, health and wellbeing, improving the lives of people everywhere.</p> <p>Sport England Imagine a nation of more equal, inclusive and connected communities. A country where people live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives.</p> <p>There's no quick fix to make this vision a reality. But we know being active is one of the most effective and sustainable ways to achieve it. From better mental and physical health, to greater career opportunities and social cohesion, movement benefits us from the day we're born through to old age. And if young people are able to have positive experiences of getting active, it can help build the foundations for an active life.</p> <p>NHS England Social Prescribing: Social prescribing is an approach that connects people to activities, groups, and services in their community to meet the practical, social and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing.</p>
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<p>Aim 4: Offer an Inclusive Curriculum which widens participation</p> <p>Ensure equity of opportunity for learners from marginalised groups and with barriers to participation in education</p> <p>Increase the number of Supported Internships</p> <p>Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills, bringing them back into education</p> <p>Review CLS Fee Remission Policy to ensure it reaches all target communities, and breaks down barriers to participation</p> <p>Continue to ensure digital poverty is not a barrier to learning by, for example, providing laptops for learners</p> <p>Continue to drive referrals from Social Prescribing partners</p> <p>Engage in community events and festivals across Kent, for example cohesion events</p>	<p>200 learners with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) will complete courses to develop independence, skills and confidence</p> <p>50 learners with EHCPs will complete Supported Internships</p> <p>100 courses will be delivered in local community venues across Kent, to enable participation in rurally isolated areas and areas with poor transport systems.</p> <p>1,000 learners from under-represented groups such as ex-offenders/ on licence; Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities; those recovering from mental health challenges; Care Leavers and those undergoing drug/alcohol rehabilitation, LGBTQ+ communities.</p> <p>Engage in 25 events across Kent to promote opportunities to under-represented groups</p>	<p>KCC Priority: Infrastructure for Communities</p> <p>To work with our partners to hardwire a preventative approach into improving the health of Kent's population and narrowing health inequalities</p> <p>LSIP Priority: Invest in soft transferrable skills</p> <p>ESFA Vision:</p> <p>To support, develop and fund world-class education and skills provision so that every learner can reach their potential, regardless of background.</p> <p>Arts Council England:</p> <p>Diversity - Our commitment to diversity and equality is a long-standing one. We believe arts organisations, museums, and libraries, should ensure that their work draws on and reflects the full range of backgrounds and perspectives to be found in our society, as well as ensure that the leadership and workforce of creative and cultural organisations reflect the diversity of contemporary England.</p> <p>Sport England</p> <p>Imagine a nation of more equal, inclusive and connected communities. A country where people live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives.</p> <p>There's no quick fix to make this vision a reality. But we know being active is one of the most effective and sustainable ways to achieve it. From better mental and physical health, to greater career opportunities and social cohesion, movement benefits us from the day we're born through to old age. And if young people are able to have positive experiences of getting active, it can help build the foundations for an active life.</p> <p>KCC Priority: Infrastructure for Communities</p> <p>To work with our partners to hardwire a preventative approach into improving the health of Kent's population and narrowing health inequalities</p> <p>LSIP Priority: Invest in soft transferrable skills</p> <p>NHS England Social Prescribing:</p> <p>Social prescribing is an approach that connects people to activities, groups, and services in their community to meet the practical, social and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing.</p>
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Approach to Developing the Plan for 2023/24

The aims, objectives and targets identified in this statement are the result of a high degree of engagement and interaction between CLS and key stakeholders across the County.

It complements and underpins the priorities identified in Framing Kent's Future: Kent County Council's overarching strategic statement, as well of those of its constituent directorates for Adult Social Care and Health; Children, Young People and Education; Growth, Environment and Transport as well as Chief and Deputy Chief Executive's Departments. It has also been fully approved and endorsed by its own Governing Body (or "Client Group").

It has also actively engaged and interacted with a wide range of stakeholders external to the Council. These include local schools and colleges, Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, third sector agencies operating in the County and agencies such as Department for Work and Pensions.

Furthermore, it is also the product of widescale engagement with Kent's residents, as employers and employees, trainees, apprentices, parents, volunteers and its past, present and future learners.

Finally, it supports the overall direction of travel identified by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, Ofsted (in its Education Inspection Framework) and national governmental priorities, such as those identified in its Levelling Up agenda.

Annual accountability statement

On behalf of Kent County Council, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the the CLS Client Group on 4th May 2023.

The plan will be published on the Council's website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed from the following link: www.communitylearningandskills.co.uk



Sarah Hamilton MA Ed
Deputy Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, KCC
Chair of Governance Group

Key documents

Framing Kent's Future - Our Council Strategy 2022- 2026:
www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/framing-kents-future

Kent and Medway Economic Renewal and Resilience Plan, Aug 2020:
[Renewal and Resilience Plan \(kent.gov.uk\)](http://kent.gov.uk)

SELEP Skills Strategy:
[Skills - The South East Local Enterprise Partnership \(southeastlep.com\)](http://southeastlep.com)

Local Skills Improvement Plan:
<https://kentemployerskillsplan.org/resources/local-skills-improvement-plan-march-2022/>

Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, 2021, Workforce Skills Evidence Base (WSEB):
[Workforce Skills Evidence Base 2021 - Local Skills Improvement Plan \(kentemployerskillsplan.org\)](http://kentemployerskillsplan.org)

Multiply Prospectus:
[Multiply Investment Prospectus \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

CLS Ofsted report 2020
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/42/52836>

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