



ACL

ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT

ACL ESSEX

JUNE 2024

2024/25 ACADEMIC YEAR



ACL Essex Vision, Mission and Purpose

Vision

- Giving Essex residents the opportunity to be the best they can be and achieve their goals.

Mission

- To provide a high-quality learning offer that makes a positive difference to the lives of residents and businesses of Essex.

Purpose

- To improve lives through learning.

Strategic Aims and Goals

The strategic aims in the ACL Essex Strategic Plan align with the key commitments of Essex County Council as set out in Everyone's Essex: our plan for levelling up the county 2021 to 2025. This will ensure we can work with others towards our common goals.

Everyone's Essex focuses on 4 areas where outcomes really matter, they are:

- the economy
- the environment
- children and families
- promoting health, care and wellbeing for all the parts of our population who need our support



Our Plan for Essex

Our plan for Essex sets out 20 commitments to improve the lives of the people of Essex divided into 4 key areas: economy, environment, health and family.

Economy	Environment	Health	Family
Good Jobs	Net zero	Health lifestyles	Education outcomes
Infrastructure	Transport and built environment	Promoting independence	Family resilience and stability
Future growth and investment	Minimise waste	Place-based working	Safety
Green Growth	Green communities	Carers	Outcomes for vulnerable children
Levelling up the economy	Levelling up the environment	Levelling up health	Levelling up families

Strategic Aims and Goals

ACL aims to deliver a great service, being ambitious for its learners and staff. It will be imaginative and open to new ways of doing things to meet the needs of Essex people.

We aim to improve chances for increased prosperity, improved health, wellbeing and independence and create a greener and more sustainable Essex.

We want our offer to inspire, create a love of learning and bring a sense of achievement and pride.

We want our offer to create opportunities for progression and improved destinations.



Our Goals and Purpose

Communities and families

- Support families to access learning that promotes aspiration and resilience for themselves and their children
- Reach underrepresented and/or disadvantaged groups to support progression towards learning opportunities
- Widen participation in areas of disadvantage by working in partnership with families, community groups, providers and Essex County Council colleagues.

Economy

- Deliver courses that improve the maths, English and digital skills of adults in Essex
- Deliver inclusive skills and employability courses so residents can gain skills, find good jobs and improve social mobility
- Provide a curriculum that meets the skills needs of Essex employers and gives consideration for the jobs of the future.

Health, wellbeing and independence

- Support residents to lead healthy and socially included lives, thereby reducing loneliness and dependency on health services
- Increase digital inclusion so the people of Essex can access services and remain connected
- Adult learners with learning difficulties will lead more independent lives
- Support residents who are recovering from mental illness and who are mentally frail.

Environment

- Respond to the skills needs of the new green sectors
- Encourage a greener future and work towards Net Zero
- Embed sustainability in all aspects of our delivery to raise awareness of environmental issues
- Reduce travel by developing an online learning offer.



Context and Place

Essex is a county in the East of England. One of the home counties, it borders Suffolk and Cambridgeshire to the north, the North Sea to the east, Hertfordshire to the west, Kent across the River Thames estuary to the south and Greater London to the south and south-west.

Currently Greater London, along with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, are devolved authorities.

Proximity to London is significant, with high levels of commuting to the capital or home-based working for London-based employers. Similarly, proximity to areas such as Cambridge, Hertfordshire and Suffolk are factors for people commuting in and out of Essex.

In the context of the Local Enterprise Partnerships, Essex is part of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).

Although there are a number of high-profile large employers in Essex, the table overview illustrates the large presence of small and micro-businesses. Essex has a slightly larger proportion of micro-businesses than the regional average, with small businesses often requiring additional support to engage with the skills system and to provide opportunities such as apprenticeships. In general, the number of businesses in Essex has steadily increased, from 51,600 in 2011 to 66,800 in 2020.

The Essex Skills Plan 2022-23 highlights that skills levels have improved but are still generally below the national average, although there are variations at district level.



UK business counts (2022)

Essex	
Micro (0-9)	60,110 (90%)
Small (10-49)	5,590 (8.4%)
Medium (50-249)	920 (1.4%)
Large (250+)	180 (0.3%)
Total	66,800

Source: Official Labour Market Statistics (Nomis)



Locations

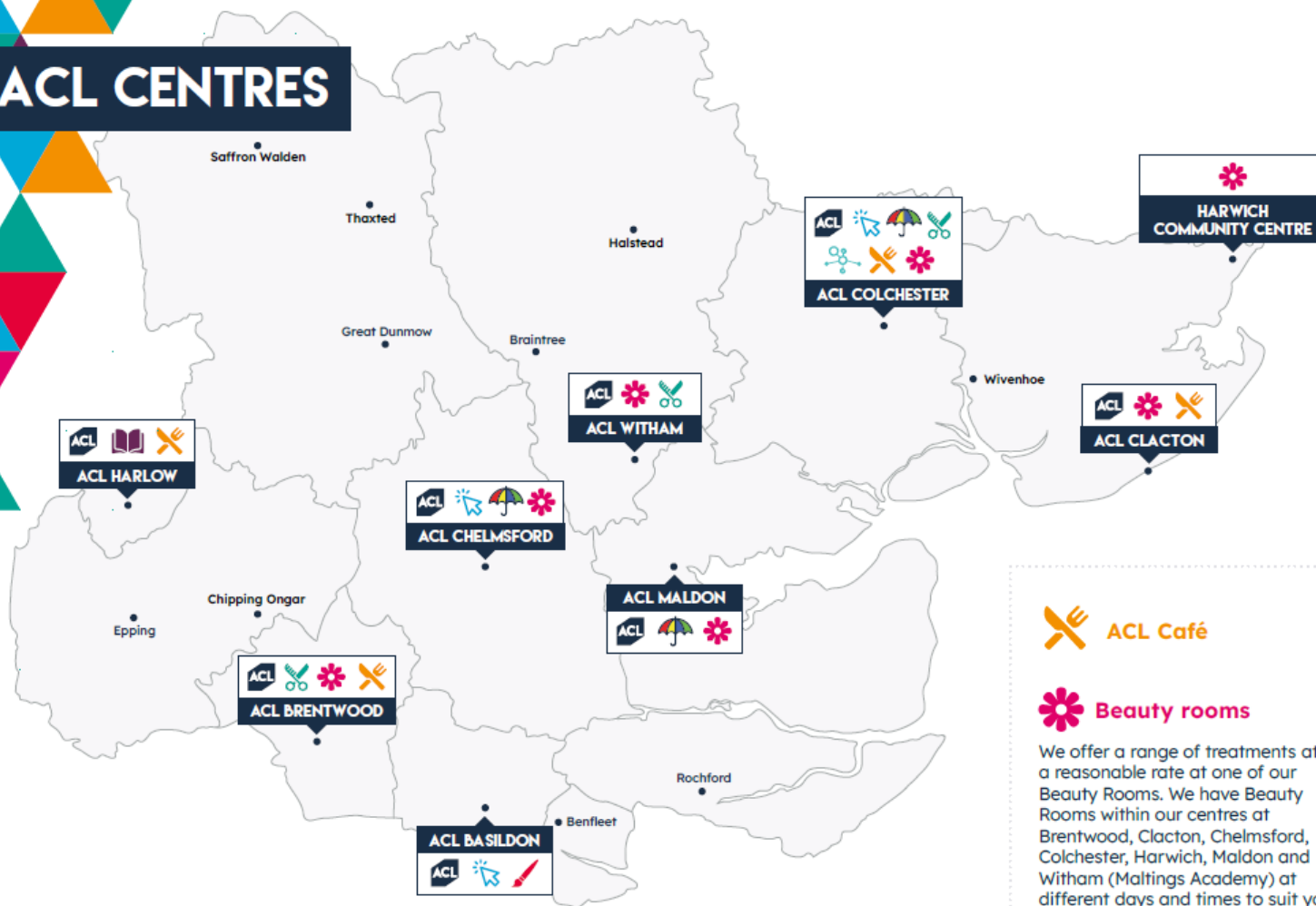
Essex County Council commissions Adult Community Learning Essex (ACL Essex) to provide learning across the county, with Southend and Thurrock unitary authorities having their own ACL provider. Essex is a large county with a population of around 1.5 million (working age 16-64 910,000) . It has a wide range of communities spanning rural, urban and coastal areas with widely varying qualification levels and areas of significant social deprivation

ACL Essex is primarily a direct delivery service and has eight adult community learning centres in most of the major cities/towns in Essex. In support of the levelling up agenda, ACL Essex also offers courses at other community venues across the county including libraries, community centres, schools and care providers.

ACL Essex is graded as 'good' by Ofsted in 2018 and 2024.



ACL CENTRES



ACL core services

English, maths, digital skills, qualifications, creative learning, languages, mental health and wellbeing, supported learning for people with learning difficulties or ASD, apprenticeships and family learning.

aclessex.com

Essex Library services

Essex Libraries offer FREE access to a wide range of learning resources and services. ACL shares facilities with libraries to support residents to access training, equipment and resources, provide signposting to useful services and gain skills and qualifications.

libraries.essex.gov.uk

Craft Studios

Unleash your artisan skills at our specialist Basildon Craft Studios. Courses start from beginners to qualifications meaning you can turn your passion into a career. Courses include woodwork, silversmithing, pottery, textiles and upholstery.

aclessex.com/basildon-craft-studios

Hair Salon

Our student salons offer services and treatments for residents. There is not a set time that you can book an appointment due to our lessons taking place at different times. However, if you are interested in booking a treatment, we will try our best to find a time that suits you.

aclessex.com/acl-hair-salons



Little Learners preschools

Are you attending a course and looking for childcare during your lessons? We have Ofsted registered pre-schools, that care for children aged 3 month – 5 years old. Our nurseries are open to learners attending courses, and the local community. You may even be able to receive funding to pay for childcare.

aclessex.com/preschools



Skills Hub

The Skills Hubs are a place for you to undertake online courses in a facilitated environment. If you are not confident using technology, such as computers or any devices, our Skills Hub team can provide you with support. The hubs are also available to people that want to learn online but not at home, providing an opportunity to access a classroom environment with others.

aclessex.com/skills-hub



ACL Café



Beauty rooms

We offer a range of treatments at a reasonable rate at one of our Beauty Rooms. We have Beauty Rooms within our centres at Brentwood, Clacton, Chelmsford, Colchester, Harwich, Maldon and Witham (Maltings Academy) at different days and times to suit you.

aclessex.com/beauty-rooms



Digi Hub

The new Digi Hub within ACL Colchester offers digital skills courses for residents at all levels, including virtual reality and technology enabled programmes in range of subject areas

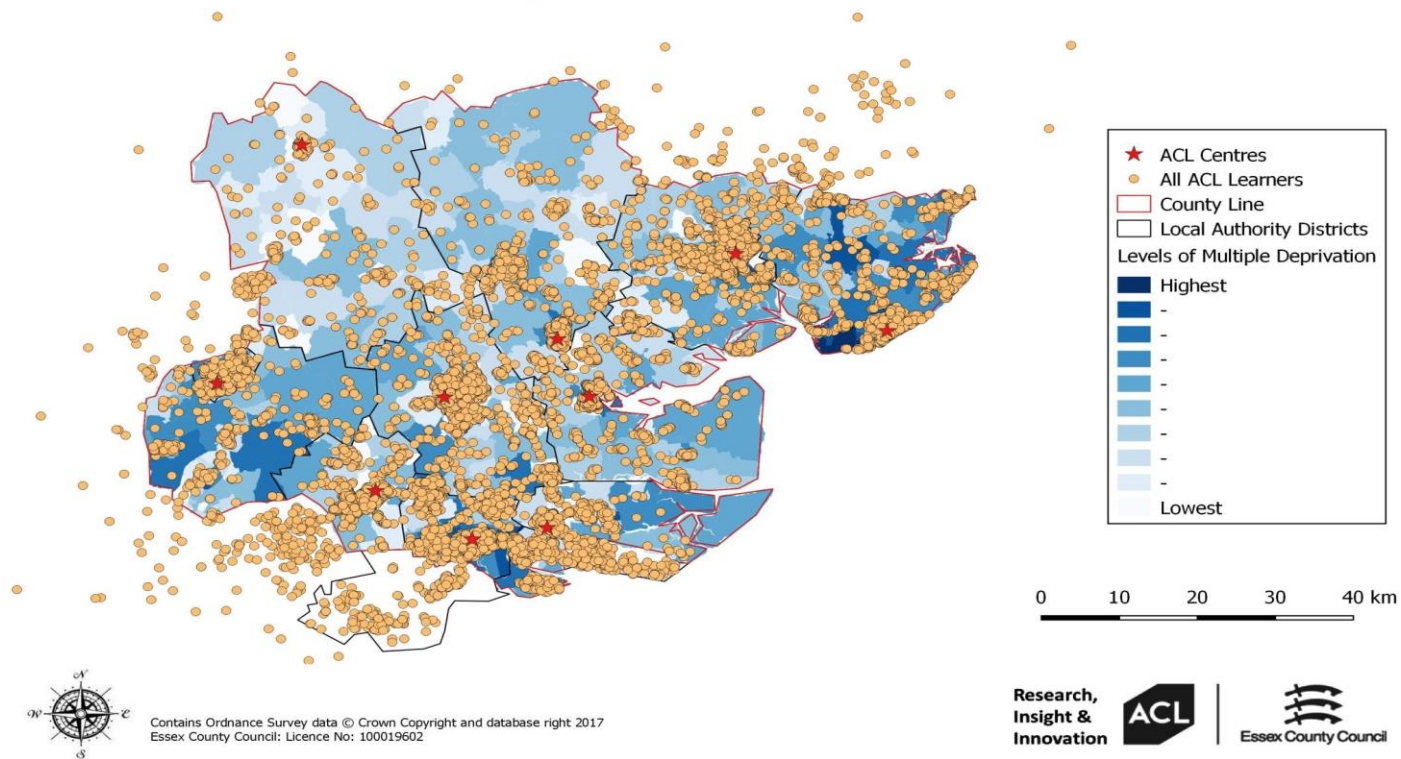
aclessex.com/digi-hub



ACLESSEX.COM

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lifelong.learning@essex.gov.uk



The diagram highlights the spread of ACL Essex’s learner’s pre-pandemic, along with the indices of multiple deprivation across the county. This effectively highlights the uneven spread of deprivation across the county.

Data from Essex County Council, Strategy Insight and Engagement, highlights that a fifth of Essex households are offline, with over half using the internet for limited purposes, skills or frequency (141,765 (22%) are offline and 357,667 (45%) have limited online access in their households, which equates to 500,432 either have limited access or are offline, as opposed to 148,475 (23%) that are online). This data analysis informs our curriculum offer and its mode of delivery e.g. face to face, online, hybrid.

Key Stakeholders that inform key priorities

Engagement with Other Providers in the Area

- Across the area served by ACL Essex, there are significant Further Education providers which offer a substantive vocational curriculum. There are also a number of special schools across the county. Working links exist between these organisations and ACL in various cross-county forums. Examples include the Essex Provider Network that brings together both private training providers and GFECs, the Federation of Essex Colleges that promotes collaborative work of member colleges. Another body where colleges meet is HOLEX East, which includes the other adult community learning providers in Essex, namely Southend ACL and Thurrock ACL covering the unitary authorities that make up Greater Essex.
- A good example of how we collaborate with across levelling up priority places is The Tendring Strategic Group, with whom we are equal partners. In Harlow we are part of the Council Skills Forum, along with Harlow College. Another example is in the 'Your Future Matters Project'; some of our funding is being utilised to deliver IAG training at level 4 and 6 to staff in Colchester Institute as well as in Harlow College and Chelmsford College.
- There are two universities across Essex, one in mid-Essex; Anglia Ruskin University, and the University of Essex in Colchester and Southend. ACL Essex works in partnership with each of these in a variety of ways, for example developing courses for the general adult population or supporting apprentices with English and maths.



Key Stakeholders

Engagement with Other Stakeholders in the Area

ACL Essex has an established business development team that, along with curriculum areas, have good employer and stakeholder links to support the curriculum offer and delivery. Examples of these include: Freeport East, anchor groups, South Essex Advanced Technical Skills, National Careers Service, Job Centre Plus, local district councils, South East Digital Skills Partnership, ECC Skills Team, Essex Cares, BEST Growth Hub, Federation of Small Businesses, Essex Chamber of Commerce, Citizens Advice Bureau, COLBEA, Let's Do Business, NHS Trusts, Essex Wildlife Trust and a range of employers and voluntary organisations, in addition to a broad range of private sector organisations. ACL Essex works with these organisations both at a strategic and operational level, which has included the co-design of curriculum.



Contribution to national, regional and local priorities

ACL Essex undertakes an annual curriculum planning cycle to bring to life the Strategic Plan, which in itself is informed by national, regional and local priorities including the Essex skills plans. Each year, data updates are sought to inform curriculum planning. In addition to the above, updates from the ACL Essex Strategic Annual Review, the associated Quality Improvement Plan as well as our learners and local/regional employers.

“ACL Essex has designed an ambitious, responsive curriculum that meets the needs of the local community. Leaders offer courses that meet employment shortages in sectors such as early years and health and social care” Ofsted 2024

ACL Essex does not have the resources to operate in all Skills Sector Areas, however local private training providers and the large GFECs do have the required resources and specialists in these areas. As a result, ACL Essex is directly supporting the following national priorities that also fit well with identified regional/local need:

- Construction, via a retrofit offer
- Digital and Technology, via the Digi Hub
- Health and Social Care, via the Nightingale Bursary
- Science and mathematics, via STEM rooms, resources and Multiply

However, all national priorities including Engineering and Manufacturing are supported by the ACL Essex offer of essential and employability skills that prepares learners for the opportunities learning creates for progression and positive destinations. This includes routes into other providers supported by FEDEC membership as detailed in provider stakeholders.



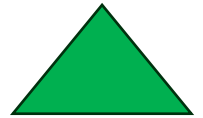
Local Priorities

In the year ahead, ACL Essex will contribute to addressing a core set of challenges faced within Greater Essex:

- 123,000 Essex residents live in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country with too many residents unable to benefit from economic growth and prosperity, now also facing rising costs of living.
- There are too many residents who are under-employed with low skills and poor connectivity to employment and training opportunities.
- Our economy is not yet fit for the future, with structural problems such as poor productivity, a mismatch between business need and resident skills and low levels of innovation in the economy.
- The county suffers from insufficient new affordable housing, with pockets of extremely poor housing impacting the physical and mental health of our residents.
- Our town centres and businesses have suffered during Covid and are now facing increasing costs, so need support to adapt and recover.
- 15% of greenhouse gases in Essex stem from housing. Non-net zero carbon housing continues to be developed in Essex and will continue to do so until at least 2025.
- Early Years sector in Essex is facing significant challenges with sufficiency of places and workforce recruitment and retention.
- Multiply in Essex believes that maths is more than numbers and equations – it is a key to unlocking potential in various aspects of everyday life. Multiply in Essex aims to empower Essex residents aged 19 and over with essential number skills to improve their personal and professional lives
- ACL are part of the countywide campaigns to inspire a love of learning in Essex, supporting children, young people, parents and carers to further develop valuable skills in literacy “Year of Reading”, numeracy “Year of Numbers” and beyond.



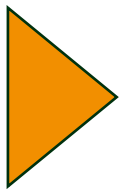
Evaluation 2023 Objective 1



College Strategic Aims and Objectives	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
<p>Aim/Objective 1: Deliver courses that improve the mathematics, English and digital skills of adults in Essex</p>	<p>ACL Essex aimed to increase the number of adults who participate in maths, English and ESOL by 10% from 3,296 to 3,626.</p> <p><u>EVALUATION:</u> An increase of 24% has been achieved with current enrolments of 4,106.</p> <p>The breakdown of enrolments as at 6th June 2024 can be seen below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• English 674• ESOL 1526• Maths 952• Total accredited enrolments: 3152• Multiply 954• Total including Multiply: 4106



Evaluation 2023 Objective 2



College Strategic Aims and Objectives

Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills

Aim/Objective 2:
Provide a curriculum that meets the skills needs of Essex employers and gives consideration for the jobs of the future.

Develop and pilot the Level 2 Supply Chain Warehouse Operative role with an initial recruitment target at least 10 starts for May 2024.

EVALUATION:

Curriculum Development was completed by February 2024 with enrolments target not achieved.

Completed actions:

- Awarding body approval gained for qualifications. Standards identified.
- End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) in place.
- Resources and scheme of work developed for delivery.
- Promoted to employers from February 2024.
- Three prospective starts in the pipeline.

Delay in enrolments provided capacity to accelerate the development of the Level 3 Transport and Warehouse Operative standard for delivery from August 2024.

- End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) in place.
- Developing of resources and scheme of work for delivery.
- Ready to market apprenticeship standard to employers from 1st July 2024.

Engagement activity is taking place with employers with a revised sales and marketing approach to drive apprentice numbers.



Evaluation 2023 Objective 3



College Strategic Aims and Objectives

Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills

Aim/Objective 3:
Respond to the skills needs of the new green sectors

Construction and Built Environment/Green Skills via Retrofit

Addressing national, regional and local skills and technical priorities recruiting to various construction and green skills roles.

Building upon the successful launch of Retrofit courses with the Retrofit Academy in 2022/23 to support the projected county demand for 6000 enrolments in Essex for this sector by 2030, ACL Essex is planning to extend provision. This will be accomplished by developing and piloting the Level 2 Facilities Service Operative apprenticeship standard. Initial minimum target for this new provision is a minimum of 10 starts.

Develop and pilot the Level 2 Facilities Service Operative apprenticeship standard. Initial minimum target 10 starts for May 2024.

EVALUATION:

Level 2 Facilities Service Operative: Curriculum Development was completed by February 2024 with enrolment target not yet achieved.

Completed actions:

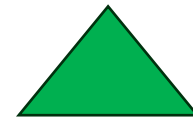
- Awarding body approval gained for level 2.
- End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) in place.
- Resources and scheme of work developed for delivery.
- Marketing of apprenticeship standard to employers December 2023
- One apprentice has started on the standard and 5 are in the pipeline to start.

In addition to support progression the Level 3 standard is being developed and will be available for new starts in August 2024 .

Engagement activity is taking place with employers with a revised sales and marketing approach to drive apprentice numbers.

In addition to this:

Evaluation 2023 Objective 4



Aim/Objective 4:
Widen participation in areas of disadvantage by working in partnership with families, community groups, providers and Essex County Council colleagues

Levelling Up

Through the development of an Essex Learning Partnership group and working with community partners and schools, including engagement of the multiply project we will extend the reach of our provision into areas of disadvantage. This objective will contribute towards the levelling up agenda and ensure that those in areas of disadvantage and furthest from the labour market are given opportunities to re-engage with learning.

Our family learning enrolments (for 2022-23) are 1,441 and we will aim, in the next 12 months to increase this area provision by 15% (1660).

We will pilot new provision in two local priority areas (Canvey Island and Harwich) as identified within the Everyone's Essex plan. [Everyone's Essex: our plan for levelling up the county 2021 to 2025: Our 20 commitments - Essex County Council](#) . The offer will consist of accredited and community/family learning courses with the expectation of a further 40 enrolments on accredited courses and 200 community/family learning course enrolments in each locality during 2023/24.

EVALUATION:

- Overall Family Learning enrolments 2023 24 as at R10 1630 an increase of 13% **Run again before sending as target will be fully met.**
- ACL Essex has achieved beyond target for accredited courses in Canvey and Harwich by 29% with 103 enrolments to date. Engagement on Community/Family Learning courses in these areas has been more challenging, currently with 146 enrolments.

	Target Accredited	Actual Accredited	Target CL/FL	Actual CL/FL
CANVEY ISLAND	40	50	200	34 (20CL/14 FL)
HARWICH	40	48	200	112 (89 CL/24 FL)

The aim of this objective has been to support enrolments onto accredited courses, and in both levelling up areas we have exceeded expectations for accredited.

Objectives for 2024

College Strategic Aims and Objectives	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
<p><u>Aim/Objective 1:</u></p> <p>Learners are well informed about their learning and work choices and supported to progress.</p>	<p>Establish a team of IAG Officers and Community Engagement Officers across Essex to support positive progression of learners that includes progressing to further learning, re-entering the job market and upskilling those already in employment.</p> <p>This will be measured through providing <u>750 learners</u> with meaningful IAG, linked to accredited programmes of learning/apprenticeships to support positive progression to further learning and/or employment.</p>
<p><u>Aim/Objective 2:</u></p> <p>Provide a curriculum that meets the skills needs of Essex employers and gives consideration for the jobs of the future.</p>	<p>Create a new area within ACL Essex to have a focus on Commercial and Employer Led Learning. The aim being to grow apprenticeship numbers with double the amount of starts in 2024/5 (236) compared with 2023/24 (118 @ R10) thereby supporting the LSIP.</p>
<p><u>Aim/Objective 3:</u></p> <p>Deliver inclusive skills and employability courses so residents can gain skills, find good jobs, and improve social mobility</p>	<p>Diversify income through the utilisation of new and alternative funding streams. Achieved through responding to new opportunities and LSIP priorities with a focused response to local, regional and national needs in Early Years. This will involve establishing a bursary system and bootcamp to support the sector recruit qualified employees whilst enabling residents to retrain, upskill and/or return to work in this priority area.</p> <p>It is intended that the bursary will be available for three years, providing funding to support people from identified priority cohorts and localities as defined in the ECC White Paper to access training and qualifications to enable them to gain employment in the Early Years sector.</p> <p>In the 2024/25 academic year the aim is to support 40 on a Bootcamp and via the bursary scheme 100 to enrol onto accredited courses.</p>
<p><u>Aim/Objective 4:</u></p> <p>Deliver courses that improve the maths, English, and digital skills of adults in Essex</p>	<p>Continue our strategy and intent to expand our essential skills provision to further meet local, regional and national needs with a focus on digital inclusion to target those not digitally engaged to improve life opportunities and support the creation of stronger and more integrated communities. This will be measured through a further increase in digital enrolments by a minimum of 10% to 683 or more.</p>

Corporation Statement

On behalf of the ACL Essex Strategic Advisory Board, it is hereby confirmed that the ACL Essex plan, as set out above, reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives. The plan will be published on the ACL Essex website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed from the following link:

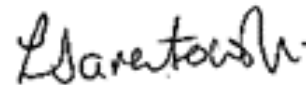
Chairman of Strategic Advisory Board

Cllr Tony Ball



Principal

Lisa Jarentowski



Reference to Relevant Supporting Documentation

ACL Essex Strategic Plan:

<https://www.aclessex.com/strategic-plan>

[Broader determinants of health | The King's Fund
\(kingsfund.org.uk\)](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/broader-determinants-of-health)

https://www.essexchambers.co.uk/local_skills_improvement_plan_lsip.htm

<https://www.essexchambers.co.uk/lsip/lsip-report/>

Everyone's Essex: our plan for levelling up the county 2021 to 2025

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/everyones-essex-our-plan-for-essex-2021-2025>

Levelling up Essex: An Essex White Paper

<https://assets.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/xTQoof74Yb8VF4DlqYGQ2/a1b9223c9730c307979a527a2270261e/Essex-County-Council-Levelling-Up-strategy.pdf>

Local Area Report: Canvey Island

[Local Area Report for areas in England and Wales - Nomis
\(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/local-area-reports/canvey-island)

[Local Area Report: Harwich](#)

[Local Area Report for areas in England and Wales - Nomis
\(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/local-area-reports/harwich)

[Social determinants of health - The Health Foundation](https://www.healthfoundation.org.uk/social-determinants-of-health)

[Understanding the wider determinants of health | Rochford District Council](https://www.rochford.gov.uk/understanding-the-wider-determinants-of-health)

