



CITY OF LONDON

**ADULT SKILLS
EDUCATION AND APPRENTICESHIP
SERVICE**

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2025-2030



Adult Skills and Education

Guildhall – EC2V 7HH

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Executive Summary

The Adult Skills and Education Service (ASES) Strategic Development Plan 2025–2030 sets a clear direction to deliver high-quality, inclusive and future-focused learning that supports economic growth, workforce development and social mobility.

ASES aligns closely with City of London priorities and national skills policy, responding to labour market demand and emerging sectors. The service plays a key role in equipping residents and employers with the skills required for a changing economy.

Inclusion is central to delivery, with a strong focus on widening participation, reducing barriers and improving outcomes for disadvantaged learners. Tailored support and targeted provision ensure equitable access and progression.

The strategy prioritises growth in digital, green and employment-focused provision, strengthening employer partnerships and expanding opportunities for learners to progress into sustainable employment.

Four strategic priorities underpin delivery:

- Maintain outstanding quality through rigorous quality assurance and continuous improvement.
- Strengthen employer and stakeholder partnerships to drive relevance and impact.
- Expand access through digital innovation and flexible delivery models.
- Align curriculum to skills demand, progression pathways and economic priorities.

Success will be measured through participation, achievement, progression and employment outcomes, supported by robust performance management and data-led decision making.

Key risks, including funding, delivery capacity and quality performance, are actively managed to ensure resilience and sustainability.

Overall, ASES is well positioned to deliver a high-impact, inclusive and responsive service that supports both individual opportunity and the wider economic ambitions of the City of London.



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Background to the Service

Introduction:

The Adult Skills and Education Service is part of the Community and Children's Services Department (DCCS), headed by the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services. This department combines Family and Young People's Services, Housing, Public Health and Adult Services to facilitate a multi-agency approach across a range of services for local people.

The City of London Corporation's Adult Skills and Education Service (ASES) is a specialist learning provider dedicated to harnessing the transformative power of education. London, a city renowned for its commitment to lifelong learning, is an ideal setting for our diverse range of offerings. Our services deliver skills, educational, training, apprenticeship and employability provision designed to strengthen London's economy and meet the needs of both employers and our learners, many of whom are from disadvantaged and isolated backgrounds. Through our focus on skills development, we ensure that London's workforce is equipped with the necessary abilities to move into work and progress to meet their career aspirations. We do this through a range of initiatives, including offering national accredited qualifications, apprenticeships, vocational training programmes and continuous professional development opportunities.

Vision and Mission:

Our **vision** is to be the leading provider of inclusive and excellent lifelong learning, adult education and employment experiences.

Our **mission** is to equip adults, particularly Londoners, with the skills, confidence, and experiences needed to thrive in their diverse communities and careers.

The Service's strategic plan is informed by the challenges raised by the rapidly changing economic climate. The City of London's Adult Skills and Education Service (ASES) has a crucial role to play in providing training opportunities, new skills development and employment opportunities for City workers, apprentices, learners and local residents. We are committed to fostering an environment that encourages growth and development and offers a diverse range of programmes, reflecting the diversity of the people we serve.

The City of London's ASES Service has worked with the funders mentioned above to develop and deliver adult learning provision that is responsive to the needs of local businesses and learners. This development includes:



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- A full integration of strategic links with the Corporation's overall vision, mission, and strategic objectives.
- Delivering a service that provides high-quality services and achieves its agreed objectives.
- Completing a successful Ofsted inspection with the involvement of key external partners who have worked in partnership with us to develop a quality service.
- An environmentally sustainable service that delivers high-quality apprenticeship programmes and wider projects that successfully enable learners to access education, training and employment.
- A highly reputable Service among its external partners, learners/residents and other stakeholders.
- A service where learners/residents feel safe throughout their learning journey.

Inclusion:

ASES recognises that adult learners arrive with a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences, needs, characteristics and barriers to learning. We are committed to ensuring that all learners – including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or temporary or situational barriers – are welcomed, supported, and enabled to thrive, succeed, and move into meaningful next steps (employment, further learning, progression). We have established systems and processes, embedded in our Inclusion Policy and everyday activities, to set out our approach to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers, promoting belonging, high expectations, and equitable outcomes. These include:

Having high expectations for all of our learners – we believe that every learner can progress, succeed, and achieve, regardless of barriers. We set ambitious learning aims, target high aspirations, and support staff to plan for the full participation of all learners.

Tailored support and interventions – we provide differentiated teaching, learning materials, adjustments, and additional support (one-to-one, specialist input, mentoring, assistive technologies) to ensure learners can engage, progress, and achieve. We do not lower expectations for any learner; instead, we provide the routes and support to meet them.

Inclusive curriculum and learning environment – our programmes and learning environment are designed to promote belonging, remove barriers to participation, ensure accessibility (physical, digital, pedagogical, language), and encourage full participation. Adaptations are made thoughtfully so that all learners can access the curriculum and progress to the next stage.



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Promotion of equity and reduction of disparities – we monitor and track outcomes for learners with barriers (including SEND, disadvantaged learners, those with low prior attainment, temporary barriers) and take action to address any gaps in participation, progress, or achievement. We aim for equitable outcomes and successful destinations.

Learner voice and belonging – we ensure that learners are engaged, their views listened to, their feedback acted upon, and that they feel valued as members of our learning community. We foster an inclusive culture, free from discrimination or harassment.

Partnership working – we work with specialist services, subcontracted partner providers, employers, support agencies, and families (where relevant) to provide holistic support that addresses both learning and non-learning barriers (e.g., health, welfare, digital access, caring responsibilities).

Continuous improvement and accountability – we review and evaluate our inclusive practices, support mechanisms, and outcomes; we use data and qualitative evidence to identify strengths and development needs; we embed inclusion into strategic planning, leadership, governance, and operational delivery in line with inspection expectations.

Training and awareness – all staff, tutors, and support personnel receive training in inclusive practice, identification of barriers, SEND awareness, initial assessment processes, differentiated teaching and reasonable adjustments, and in promoting a culture of belonging and high expectations.

ASES is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment where every adult learner – regardless of prior attainment, background, barrier, or need – can access, engage, progress, and succeed. We embed high expectations, early and accurate assessment, tailored support, inclusive teaching and learning practices, and rigorous monitoring of outcomes. Inclusion is not an add-on; it is integral to everything we do and central to our mission of enabling adults to achieve, progress, and transform their lives.

The Strategic Planning Process

The purpose of strategic planning is to prepare a robust, innovative service that is fit to meet the needs of the future. The following processes have been used in preparing this strategy:

- A review of the City of London Corporate Strategic Plan.
- A review of the current strategic objectives of the Mayor of London's Skills agenda.
- An internal, annual self-assessment and course review that enables us to



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- identify both strengths and areas for improvement across our provision.
- Ongoing consultation with learners, partners, providers, employers and delivery staff to identify skills gaps, needs and progression routes that enable us to inform future provision. This has been and will continue to be conducted through scheduled 1:1 discussions with these stakeholders, employer forums and surveys.
 - Identifying possible new courses through learner surveys, 1:1 discussions to innovate, refresh and enhance the current offer. This may include qualifications and provision in local growth sectors that are also popular with local learners such as Green and Clean Energy, Digital Technologies, Health & Social Care and Cultural & Creative.
 - A Service audit to assess each area against past performance and stakeholder objectives, and against our funder's priorities.
 - An internal strategic planning meeting to draw together these strands, and to draft the Service aims, objectives and actions for the coming five years.
 - An annual review of all delivery targets and achievement/progression of learners.

The City demographic

The City of London has around 8,600 residents. Approximately 55% are from ethnic minority backgrounds; 13% are aged 16-24; 47% aged 25-49; 33% aged 50+. There are currently approximately 678,000 employers based in the City.

The majority of our residents live on four estates:

- Golden Lane Estate: This estate has 500 properties in the north of the City.
- Middlesex Street Estate with 200 properties in the east of the City.
- Guinness Trust Estate, Mansell Street has 200 properties. ASES has access to the Community Centre from which it offers provision.
- The Barbican Estate in the north of the City, offers private residential properties.

Employment is concentrated mainly in the financial and business services.



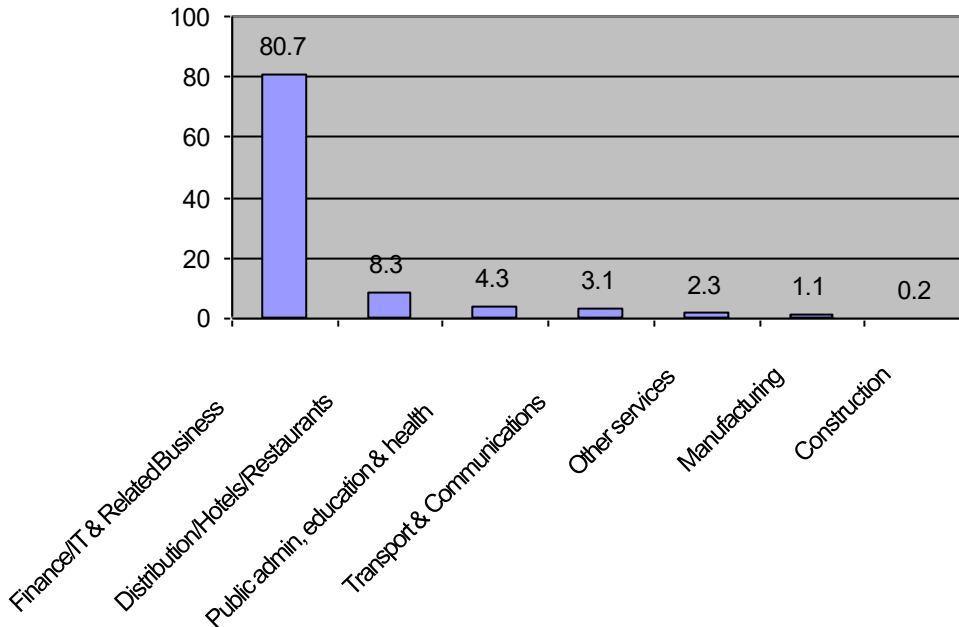
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Percentage of employee jobs in the City of London, by sector



The City of London produces £25 billion of the UK's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually and is of major local, national, and international importance. Its workforce commutes primarily from London, the Home Counties and as far as the Midlands, although there is a significant amount of cross-Channel/Atlantic commuting on a weekly or monthly basis.

Economic activity figures for City residents show a great difference between the five output areas. For example, in Portsoken, on the eastern edge of the City, 4.7% of the population are claiming unemployment benefit with an additional 27.4% of residents estimated to be economically inactive. In Cripplegate North (the Golden Lane estate) 9% of the population experience income deprivation, whilst in the neighboring SOA (Cripplegate South) this figure drops to 1%. The City Fringe, those wards that border the City of London to the north and east, includes some of the most deprived communities in the country with high levels of multiple deprivation and economic inactivity.

Our current Adult and Community Learning provision

ASES works in partnership with external providers to deliver a wide range of provision that meet the interests and needs of its learners, preparing them for the workforce. The Service has also increased the number of humanities-styled courses. These are designed to exploit the historical and cultural heritage of the City and support the wealth of history in the Square Mile. For example, our very popular City Guides course attracts over 200 applicants for a 28-capacity course.



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The provision, a combination of accredited and non-accredited learning, currently offered by the Adult Skills and Education Service covers the following areas:

- Information & Communication Technology/Essential Digital Skills
- Leisure, Travel & Tourism
- Arts, Media, and Publishing
- Health and Wellbeing
- ESOL, IELTS and Functional Skills
- Humanities, History, Philosophy & Theology
- Languages, Literature & Culture
- Skills for Work
- Employability Support
- Accounting
- Fishmongery
- Childcare and Family Learning
- Health and Social Care
- Green
- Digital Projects, Skills and Computing
- Pathways to Higher Education
- British Sign Language
- Health & Social Care
- Work Placement options for SEND Interns between the ages of 16-25
- Enterprise Workshops
- Specialist projects focusing on Work Placement/Employability and Pre-Apprenticeship Programmes
- Apprenticeships

How ASES contributes to meeting Government and Funder priorities

The UK government has several priorities for employment and skills, focusing on boosting productivity, supporting economic growth, and ensuring individuals are equipped for the future workforce. We will meet these key priorities through delivering tailored services and activities that have been co-designed with employers and local learners. These include:

Skills for the Future

- Promoting technical education, such as Adult Skills and apprenticeship provision.



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- Supporting lifelong learning enabling learners to undertake courses that provide progression routes throughout their careers.
- Addressing skills gaps in key future growth sectors such as green energy and digital to prepare workers for technological advancements and career pivoting.
- Supporting workforce transitions to align with net-zero ambitions and other strategic goals.
- Use our established Digital Hub to provide unemployed, employed and younger local residents, especially those from deprived backgrounds, with the tools, knowledge, training, and support needed to improve digital skills that align with current and future job requirements and ensure individuals are equipped to compete in the modern job market.

Levelling Up

- Reducing regional disparities by delivering skills and employment programmes in the most deprived areas to disadvantaged learners.
- Supporting local growth through our tailored initiatives, co-designed with local stakeholders such as employers and JobCentre Plus staff, that meet regional labour market needs.

Employer Engagement

- Encourage businesses to invest in workforce skills development and enhance collaboration between employers, training providers, and educational institutions through our ongoing Employer Forums.

Youth Employment

- Expanding opportunities for young people through delivering activities on our Youth Trailblazer and internship programmes that meet their aspirations.
- Strengthening career advice and guidance to help young people make informed decisions about their futures.

Improving Employment Opportunities

- Tackling unemployment and inactivity through targeted support for disadvantaged groups e.g. our focus on supporting those with disabilities for the Connect to Work programme; young people on our Trailblazer project.

Upskilling and Reskilling

- Promoting flexible training pathways to help individuals adapt to changing job markets.

Contributing to the strategic objectives of the City of London



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As well as considering the impact of previous, current and future provision, our strategic objectives are informed by the key priorities of the City of London Corporation's Corporate Plan and the Department of Community and Children's Services business plan.

The City of London's Corporate Plan Objectives are:

- Diverse Engaged Communities
- Dynamic Economic Growth
- Leading Sustainable Environment
- Vibrant Thriving Destination
- Providing Excellent Services
- Flourishing Public Spaces

ASES will deliver the following services and activities that directly align with the City of London's Corporate Plan Objectives:

Diverse Engaged Communities:

- Deliver inclusive, accessible learning opportunities that are tailored to the needs of diverse groups, including underrepresented and the most disadvantaged communities. For example, our Digital Hub has created a space for residents from a wide variety of social backgrounds, including underrepresented and the most disadvantaged communities, to come together and collaborate, innovate, and share learning.
- Promote community engagement through group skills workshops and apprenticeship programmes that foster collaboration and mutual understanding.
- Support learners to build their soft-skills such as confidence, motivation, leadership and teamwork that encourage active participation in civic life.
- Support social integration by offering training that encourages collaboration among diverse groups.

Dynamic Economic Growth:

- Provide training programmes that align with labour market demands, skills needs growth areas such as green and digital, ensuring participants acquire skills for high-growth industries.
- Partner with local employers to create apprenticeship opportunities that support talent development and economic expansion in the City.



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- Equip learners with entrepreneurial skills to contribute to innovation and business creation.

Leading Sustainable Environment:

- Incorporate sustainability-focused training into courses, such as green energy, waste management, and clean energy.
- Partner with organisations to offer apprenticeships in sectors supporting environmental objectives.
- Promote awareness of sustainability principles in all activities to encourage environmentally responsible practices.

Vibrant Thriving Destination:

- Deliver courses and qualifications in a wide range of sectors such as hospitality, tourism, and cultural industries to enhance the City's appeal as a destination.
- Deliver courses and qualifications that contribute to the vibrancy of retail, arts, and entertainment sectors.
- Engage learners in projects that celebrate and promote the City's heritage and cultural assets.

Providing Excellent Services:

- Offer high-quality education and apprenticeship services tailored to the needs of learners, employers, and the wider community.
- Continuously improve delivery through learner feedback and performance monitoring.
- Ensure services are accessible, responsive, and provide measurable outcomes for skills development.

Flourishing Public Spaces:

- Integrate skills training that contributes to the maintenance and enhancement of public spaces, such as horticulture.
- Involve apprentices and learners in projects that improve public areas, fostering a sense of ownership and pride.



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- Promote courses that encourage sustainable use and enjoyment of public spaces by all.

Developing the Service through to 2030

Service Priorities

1. Improve Quality and Sustain Excellence

GOAL: Ensure all programmes meet recognised standards and deliver high quality services and impactful outcomes, tailored to learner needs.

ACTIONS:

- Implement robust monitoring and evaluation processes that meets a minimum of strong Ofsted performance standards.
- Integrate robust monitoring and evaluation processes, enabling us to act on feedback from learners and employers.
- Robust Safeguarding measures enable our staff to identify and respond to issues immediately.
- Maintain high standards in teaching, curriculum design, and learner outcomes.
- Regularly update course curriculum using learner and employer feedback to match their needs and industry trends.
- Integrate tailored soft skills such as communication, teamwork, resilience, listening, confidence building and motivation support.

2. Strengthen Partnerships

GOAL: Maximise partnership work to improve access to resources, reach more learners, co-design courses, increase opportunities for learners, identify job vacancies.

ACTIONS:

- Ongoing 1:1 Employer Engagement and partnership.
- Host regular local engagement events and workshops.
- Organise ongoing Employer Forums.



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3. Enhance Accessibility

GOAL: Increase delivery space to be able to support more learners.

ACTIONS:

- Continue to communicate need to stakeholders.
- Maximise the benefits of our recently established Digital Hub, providing unemployed, employed and younger local residents, especially those from deprived backgrounds, with the tools, knowledge, training, and support needed to improve digital skills, foster community engagement, and enhance both their employability and social mobility.

4. Delivery offer

GOAL: Align delivery to industry, learner and employer needs.

ACTIONS:

- Promote technical education, such as Adult Skills and apprenticeship provision.
- Deliver access to employment opportunities and ‘Good Jobs’ that meet the career aspirations of our learners.
- Support lifelong learning enabling learners to undertake courses that provide progression routes.
- Promote social inclusion and wellbeing through widening participation in learning for City and City fringe communities and residents.
- Increase accessibility to the City’s cultural opportunities through the provision of Languages, Arts, Digital and Humanities courses in partnership with galleries, museums, schools, and libraries.
- Address skills gaps in key future growth sectors such as green energy and digital to prepare workers for technological advancements and likely job vacancies.
- Support workforce transitions to align with net-zero ambitions and other strategic goals.
- Extend family learning provision to those parents and children who have benefitted least from mainstream educational opportunities.
- Provide limited free creche support to some eligible ESOL learners.



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- Continue to develop basic and functional skills provision including ESOL, Literacy and Numeracy.

Operational Plan Performance Indicators

The performance indicators for the programmes we are due to deliver include the following:

	2025-26						2026-27					
	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3			Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3				
	Start	(Completion/ Job Interview)	Education/ Training	Increased Confidence	Employment Start	Employment Offer	Start	(Completion/ Job Interview)	Education/ Training	Increased Confidence	Employment Start	Employment Offer
GLA non-procured (Grant)	1178						1317					
Adult Skills Fund	267						311					
Tailored Learning	878						967					
Free Courses for Jobs	33						39					
GLA Procured (Jobs and Skills for London)	658											
Adult Skills Fund	543						110					
Free Courses for Jobs	115						35					
DfE Apprenticeships	100						100					
GLA Trailblazer	89		25	69	25							
GLA UKSPF	740		740	185	259							
GLA Supported Internship	20											

The performance indicators for the DWP Connect to Work programme are the following:

Contract Profile:	Target:	
Programme Starts	313	
Out of Work Starts	266	
In Work Starts	47	
Out of Work Cohort	Target:	
Programme Starts	266	



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First Earnings	133	50% of Programme Starts
LET (Lower Earnings Threshold)	106	40% of Programme Starts
HET (Higher Earnings Threshold)	77	29% of Programme Starts
In Work Retention Cohort	Target:	
Programme Starts	47	15% of overall programme starts
HET (Higher Earnings Threshold)	38	80% of IW programme starts



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Addressing and Managing Risks to the Service

Introduction

A risk is an uncertain future action or event that affects the objectives of the Service (either positively – an opportunity – or adversely, as a threat). Strategic planning should consider the risks that the Service faces over the coming years, and preparation of the provision should take into consideration the relative weight and immediacy of these risks.

Effective risk management supports better decision making by identifying the uncertainties that we may face in the future, and putting in place control measures, or contingencies plans, to reduce or mediate the threat, or exploit and take advantage of the opportunity. The Service may not be able to put in place controls for all risks, for example where a risk is unavoidable, or not within the control of the Service or its stakeholders, or where the costs of risk control outweigh the benefits.

The Risk Assessment Matrix

Impact of Risk (score in brackets)	Catastrophic (5)	14	20	22	24	25
	Severe (4)	11	18	19	21	23
	Moderate (3)	6	10	13	16	17
	Minor (2)	3	5	8	12	15
	Low (1)	1	2	4	7	9
		Improbable (1)	Unlikely (2)	Possible (3)	Likely (4)	Very Likely (5)



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Likelihood of Risk (score in brackets)



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The Risk Assessment Matrix measures risks according to their impact and likelihood, and assigns each cell a number from 1-25 (1 = a low impact and improbable event, 25 = a catastrophic and very likely event), and grades them overall as low, medium or high risk:

Cells 1-7	Low Risk
Cells 8-15	Medium risk
Cells 16-25	High Risk

Risk Assessment of the Service

The table below records the significant risks that the Service currently faces, assessing the severity and likelihood of this risk, the overall risk (as described above) a description of the consequences of this risk were it to happen, and the actions that can be taken to minimize the impact.

Risk	Severity (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Overall Risk	Consequences of risk occurring	Control Measures: Actions to reduce risk
1. Failure to achieve a Training Quality Matrix standard and secure a strong performance	4	2	Medium	This could contribute to a loss of future funding. Matrix is a mandatory Quality standard requirement, and Providers often require a Strong Ofsted rating to bid for certain Skills bids.	We have implemented a robust training programme, supported by a former HMI Ofsted Inspector, to prepare us for a future inspection. 1:1 and group discussions/workshops will be ongoing to prepare the team for any future legislative and/or regulatory changes we may have to implement. Progress is integrated into our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and self-Assessment Report (SAR).



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Risk	Severity (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Overall Risk	Consequences of risk occurring	Control Measures: Actions to reduce risk
2. Performance: Our delivery fails to achieve contractual delivery targets	5	2	Medium	Loss of staffing, the provision objectives will change. Loss of specialist staff knowledge, change to curriculum offer, which may not meet the needs of City learners.	Strengthen the profile of the Service across the City of London; building positive working partnerships with other departments; celebrate our strengths; ensure Common Councillors and senior managers are aware of what we do and our strengths. Continue discussions with central government stakeholders to develop a City adult learning and skills centre in the City of London.



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Risk	Severity (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Overall Risk	Consequences of risk occurring	Control Measures: Actions to reduce risk
3. Safeguarding	5	2	Medium	Poor safeguarding measures increase the risk of harm to individuals and/or staff, lead to regulatory breaches, damage organizational reputation, and undermine service quality and consistency.	Our highly experienced Safeguarding lead (Level 5 qualified) leads all safeguarding activities; we conduct enhanced DBS checks for all staff; provide mandatory annual Safeguarding and Prevent training for all staff; collaborate with specialist organisations e.g. City of London Police to deliver training; follow a clear incident reporting process, and monitor all activities through named Safeguarding Leads.



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Risk	Severity (1-5)	Likeliness (1-5)	Overall Risk	Consequences of risk occurring	Control Measures: Actions to reduce risk
4. Failure to provide courses local learners want	4	2	Medium	Enrolment drops, funding reduces and community engagement is weakened.	We run regular surveys with local learners across all of our programmes; meet termly with community groups and use enrolment data to adjust our course offer adding subjects with high demand.