

Nottinghamshire Learning Service Strategy and Accountability Statement

Mission and Approach

“To ensure that young people and adults have access to an appropriate range of flexible learning opportunities that contribute to personal, health, social, educational and economic development.”

We will do this by:

- Creating opportunities to achieve lifelong potential
- Providing high quality courses
- Bringing learners together in welcoming, accessible and friendly spaces.

Strategic Drivers

Nottinghamshire County Council [Our Council Plan](#) has three ambitions:

1. Stronger Families, Caring Connections
2. Rooted in Communities, Thriving Together
3. A Connected County, Creating Opportunity.

East Midlands Combined County Authority Adult Skills Priorities and Outcomes:

1. Match skills to economic need to increase productivity and wellbeing
2. Reduce inequality and promote social mobility to allow people to achieve their potential
3. Improve healthy life expectancy and reduce inequalities, especially in communities and groups who are most disadvantaged
4. Support the unemployed and economically inactive to gain and sustain employment
5. Unlock progression opportunities and career adaptability through skills, particularly for those on low wages and with insecure work.

The Adult Skills Fund (ASF) ambitions:

- Increased productivity through the delivery of high-quality skills provision which enables residents to enter the labour market or secure in-work progression
- Reduce inequality, promote social mobility and allow people to achieve their potential
- Work in alignment with other public funding sources to offer coherent routes to upskilling and greater prosperity.

ASF funding will be used to develop robust progression pathways to reduce inequality, promote social mobility and allow people to achieve their potential. In addition, it will ensure that the ASF works in tandem with other Department for Education (DfE) funding sources such as Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) and Skills Bootcamps to offer routes to upskilling across the region.

Local Skills Improvement Plan Priorities (due to be updated June 2026):

1. **Digital skills.** There is a need to address digital skills at all levels, from basic digital skills through to advanced skills.
2. **Net Zero.** The transition to a low carbon economy will require both upskilling of existing workers and integration into the current curriculum offer to ensure alignment.
3. **Essential and transferable skills.** including work readiness and soft skills such as resilience, communication, teamwork and problem solving.

Nottinghamshire County Council learning service delivered by Inspire will focus on:

- reaching those who are furthest away from employment
- providing courses for adults without a level 3 qualification
- providing access to the 'four entitlements' of English, maths, ICT and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- young People (16-18) who would otherwise be 'Not in Employment, Education, or Training' (NEET).

Inspire Learning Programmes

The service will deliver provision broadly categorised into five main areas:

1. **Tailored Learning** – (Adult non-accredited learning) (Adult Skills Fund - EMCCA / DfE)
2. **Accredited Adult Learning**– (80% four entitlements) (Adult Skills Fund – EMCCA / DfE)
3. **Projects** – learning aimed at entry level to level 3 – e.g. Employability
4. **Full Cost recovery** leisure adult learning
5. **Inspire College** Study Programmes for Young People for 16–18-year-olds and for 16 – 25-year-olds who possess an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Tailored Learning Purpose and Outcomes

1. Improved confidence: Learners have more confidence in their abilities
2. Improved skills for work: Learners have skills and qualifications that support them to gain and maintain employment
3. Improved skills for further learning: Learners have skills and qualifications that support them to progress to further learning
4. Improved essential skills: Learners have improved English, maths, and digital skills
5. Improved ability to support a child's learning: Parents or carers are better equipped to support their child's learning
6. Improved physical health: Learners have improved or maintained their physical health
7. Improved mental health and well-being: Learners have improved or maintained their mental health and well-being.

Accredited Learning

Courses to help adults to improve Maths, English, digital skills and ESOL whilst gaining a relevant qualification to help them progress in their employment and education.

Help local residents to grow in confidence and gain the functional skills needed in everyday life and to play a meaningful role in their community.

Provide specific vocational courses in areas designed to enhance and provide employability for both the unemployed and for people in work, supporting progression into more senior roles.

Full Cost Recovery Adult Leisure Learning

Courses and programmes not funded through any funding streams, including leisure-based courses, responding to demand and delivered by subject experts. Pilot work will commence in 2026 to consult, market and establish the best model for Nottinghamshire.

Inspire College: Study Programmes for Young People

A college programme to provide employability, personal and social development, and vocational courses for young people across Nottinghamshire who would otherwise be not in employment, education or training (NEET). The curriculum provides learners with high levels of individual pastoral support, along with the knowledge, skills and experiences that prepare them for life as responsible citizens and help them to gain qualifications and access to further learning and/or employment.

Inspire College's expertise lies in offering specific courses for young people with high needs and where more traditional provision has failed. There is a strong track record of progression to further training and employment, and exam results above national benchmarks in maths and English.

Our Delivery Approach

- Offer local accessible courses in venues across Nottinghamshire using Inspire Libraries, NCC Youth Centres and other community venues.
- Quality and continuous improvement.
- Delivery of entry-level to level 3 courses.
- Value for money offering affordable learning.
- Collaboration and partnership with providers, stakeholders, and employers.
- Commissioning of specialist providers who deliver to 'closed' groups and/or who are better placed than our team to deliver the curriculum to vulnerable learners.
- Integration of new technologies into curriculum and teaching.
- Offer a mixture of online, hybrid and face-to-face learning opportunities.

Inspire Learning is uniquely positioned across Nottinghamshire to offer young people and adults opportunities to learn at a local community level. We focus our college and tailored adult programmes at those with the highest need.

Service Development and Focus 2026 - 2027

Following external and internal review, several challenges have been identified:

- build key relationships across County Council, EMCCA and with employers
- ensure learner progression within Inspire learning and with other local providers
- embed the new MIS to support an improved customer journey
- increase average class sizes, particularly across adult skills and tailored learning
- increase conversion of course enquiries to course attendance
- increase income from fees
- respond to the opportunities and risks of the devolution of ASF to EMCCA
- review and communicate the overarching vision and curriculum intent
- take a place-based approach to provision of both young people's and adult learning
- widen the leisure learning offer beyond core funding, through a full cost recovery model.

Access: Street corner learning opportunities

The service will continue to deliver from accessible settings across Nottinghamshire – using public libraries and youth centres, village halls, community centres, schools, and family hubs where appropriate.

Inspire-run venues will be established as Inspire Learning Centres where the majority of the adult learning provision will be focused.

Courses will be available during weekdays and weekends, daytime and evenings. At least 25% of courses will be held outside of weekday daytimes.

Online, hybrid and face-to-face learning opportunities will continue to be part of the offer.

Fees and remission policies are reviewed each year by the County Council. We adhere to the funding rules (including provision of free courses) as outlined in the relevant funding agreements. The hourly rate for those without fee remission is currently set at £4.00 per hour.

Needs Assessment**Qualifications of working age (16-64) adults in Nottinghamshire**

- 7.5 % have no qualifications; this compares with 6.5% nationally
- 43.6% have a qualification at level 4 or above; this compares with 47.3% nationally
- 62.7% have a level 3 qualification or higher, compared with 67.8% nationally
- 14.7% do not have a level 2 qualification. This compares with 13.5% nationally.

Employment

- 43,800 (15.5%) of households in Nottinghamshire are workless, compared with 13.9% nationally
- 22,300 are unemployed
- 111,308 (22%) of 16-64 year olds in Nottinghamshire are economically inactive. Of these, 13.1% want a job. The other 86.9% (96,900) do not want a job. This compares nationally with an economically inactive rate of 21.3%

Four out of the seven Nottinghamshire districts are classed as Social Mobility Cold Spots (2016 Social Mobility Index), meaning that there is low social mobility in these areas and poor children are more likely to become poor adults.

Curriculum Development

We consult and work with a range of stakeholders to plan and co-develop courses relevant to the needs of local communities and business. This enables Inspire to respond to local needs quickly and effectively.

Inspire's core curriculum is built around the region's Local Skills Improvement Plan, EMCCA's ASF Strategic Skills Plan and the County Council Plan. The curriculum incorporates the 'Universal Offer' of Maths, English, IT, ESOL and employability skills courses, which are delivered twice yearly in each of

the seven districts and online. We are focusing on employability to ensure that adults across Nottinghamshire can develop their work readiness and develop transferrable skills, become more productive, and help them succeed in their careers.

Inspire works with reputable awarding organisations to ensure its qualifications are fit-for-purpose and recognised by employers. City and Guilds support the accreditation of functional skills courses, OCR accredit GCSE programmes, NCFE accredit vocational courses and AIM awards certificate employability courses.

In developing the tailored learning curriculum, local community engagement and consultation (via learner surveys, learner focus groups and course evaluation forms) helps shape the offer, sensitive to the needs of local adults. This encompasses further employability skills courses, health and wellbeing, family learning and discrete courses for adults with learning disabilities. Inspire seeks to reduce inequality, promote social mobility and allow people to achieve their potential.

Inspire ensures that learner representatives attend the Inspire Learning and Skills committee, giving them a voice at the highest level of governance.

Whilst Inspire's ASF curriculum is planned annually, course organisers add new courses on a termly basis in line with the needs of the learners, the community and key stakeholders.

Inclusive Mainstream Fund

Inspire College delivers provision that supports young people who would otherwise be NEET to access high-quality, bespoke education programmes across Nottinghamshire. Inspire's students require smaller class sizes, enhanced pastoral support, and a carefully planned programme of study to support them to achieve their learning aims and progress.

Inspire College is committed to ensuring no young person gets left behind by supporting them to remove their unique, and often multiple, barriers to learning.

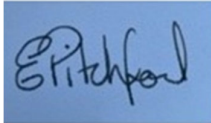
Inspire will use the Inclusive Mainstream Fund to offer smaller class sizes, increase classroom support and provide additional staff training.

Corporation Statement

On behalf of the Inspire Learning, it is hereby confirmed that the service plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Learning and Skills Committee on 23rd June 2026. The plan will be published on the service's website by the start of the new academic year and can be accessed from the following link:

<https://www.inspireculture.org.uk/skills-learning/policies-and-provider-information/policies/>

Signed Chair of Learning and Skills Committee:



Emma Pitchford

Dated: 27/07/2026

Background Papers

- Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Local Skills Improvement Plan – FSB August 2023:

[Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire LSIP | FSB Local Skills Initiative](#)

- East Midlands Combined County Authority – ASF Strategic Skills Plan – January 2025:

https://www.eastmidlands-cca.gov.uk/content/uploads/2025/01/EMCCA-ASF-STRATEGIC-SKILLS-PLAN_FINAL.pdf

- East Midlands Growth Plan 2025:

[EMCCA Growth Plan](#)

- Nottinghamshire County Council - Our Council Plan 2025 – 2029

[Our Council Plan 2025 to 2029:](#)

Key Objectives and Targets 2026/2027

	Aims and Objectives	Actions	Status 2025/26	Target 2026/27	Deadline(s)	Strategic Priority
1	Deliver Level 1 and Level 2 Entitlement and Local Flexibility provision to hard-to-reach adults in Nottinghamshire.	Deliver accredited qualification in Maths, English, ESOL, IT, Employability Skills and Level 2 and 3 vocational qualifications.	On track to draw down £700k of EMCCA ASF funding	Draw down £700k of EMCCA ASF funding	July 2027	Nottinghamshire Plan 2 and 3 EMCCA ASF 2,4 & 5 LSIP 1&3
2	Deliver a high quality and accessible tailored learning offer in all Nottinghamshire districts in person, blended and online.	Increase adult learning participation in non-accredited courses, in line with the seven tailored learning priorities.	On track to achieve 7,000 enrolments	7,000 enrolments	July 2027	Nottinghamshire Plan 2 and 3 EMCCA ASF 2 3,4 & 5 LSIP 1&3
3	Develop progression routes from tailored learning into accredited learning.	Ensure that learners on all tailored learning courses have a 'next steps' advice session with reference to accredited courses delivered by Inspire and other local organisations.	Early stages of vocational mapping exercise commenced	All vocational areas to be mapped to accredited provision	April 2026 for the 2026/27 academic year	Nottinghamshire Plan 2 and 3 EMCCA ASF 2 3,4 & 5 LSIP 3
4	Deliver Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ).	Deliver accredited learning to Nottinghamshire adults in line with the Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs and Skills Bootcamps offer.	On track to deliver the £55,000 contract in year	Exceed the £55,000 FCFJ contract	July 2027	Nottinghamshire Plan 2 and 3 EMCCA ASF 4 & 5 LSIP 3
5	Reduce the number of Nottinghamshire young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and close the educational attainment gap.	Develop partnerships with local schools, colleges and referral organisations. Maintain marketing focus through social media and local advertising. Develop a 'Transitions' programme that supports young people to re-engage in education.	300 young people enrolled in the last full academic year	Enrol 300 young people onto Inspire College provision	300 learners enrolled by April 2027	Nottinghamshire Plan 1, 2 and 3 EMCCA ASF 1,2,3,4 & 5 LSIP 1,2&3

6	Maintain higher than national achievement rates across all aspects of the service.	Continue to improve upon the current successful achievement rate through a robust quality assurance process.	College 80.1% (2025/26) Adult Learning FF 90.6% (2024/25)	College 81% Adult Learning FF 91%	July 2027	Nottinghamshire Plan 2 EMCCA ASF 2 & 5 LSIP 1&3
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Key Objectives and Targets 2026/27

Strategic Priority Key

Nottinghamshire (Our Council) Plan 1 - 3

1. Stronger Families, Caring Connections
2. Rooted in Communities, Thriving Together
3. A Connected County, Creating Opportunity

EMCCA ASF (Strategic Skills) Plan 1 - 5

1. Match skills to economic need to increase productivity and wellbeing.
2. Reduce inequality and promote social mobility to allow people to achieve their potential.
3. Improve healthy life expectancy and reduce inequalities, especially in communities and groups who are most disadvantaged
4. Support the unemployed and economically inactive to gain and sustain employment.
5. Unlock progression opportunities and career adaptability through skills, particularly for those on low wages and with insecure work

East Midlands LSIP (Local Skills Improvement Plan) 1-3

1. Digital skills. There is a need to address digital skills at all levels, from basic digital skills through to advanced skills.
2. Net Zero. The transition to a low carbon economy will require both upskilling of existing workers and integration into the current curriculum offer to ensure alignment
3. Essential and transferable skills. including work readiness and soft skills such as resilience, communication, teamwork and problem solving.

Appendix A

Localities

We will establish 9 Inspire Learning Centres where the majority of our adult courses will be delivered from:

Inspire Learning Centres

1. Beeston – Beeston Library
2. Kirkby - Library and Learning Centre
3. Mansfield – Mansfield Central Library
4. Newark – Inspire Buttermarket Learning Centre
5. Southwell – Library
6. Stapleford – Library and Learning Centre
7. Sutton – High Pavement House (includes catering and construction facilities)
8. West Bridgford – Library and Young People's Centre
9. Worksop – Library and Inspire College Base

In addition to these centres, Inspire will deliver from smaller libraries and other community venues to enable access for disadvantaged communities across Nottinghamshire.

Inspire College will be delivered from 8 locations:

1. Sutton - High Pavement House
2. Worksop library

Including 6 Young People's centres

3. Eastwood Young People's centres
4. Hucknall Young People's centres
5. Mansfield – Westfield Folkhouse My Place
6. Newark (Hawtonville) Young People's centres
7. Retford Young People's centres
8. Stapleford Young People's centres

We will also seek to provide a college base in Gedling borough if funding can be identified.

Appendix B

Landscape of Other Providers across East Midlands Combined County Area:

There are five 'grant' funded Adult and Community Learning Services:

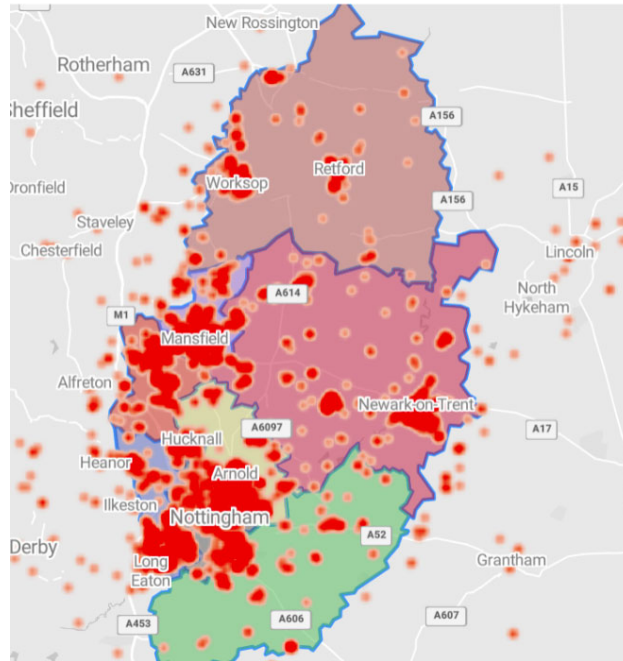
- Academy Transformation Trust Further Education (ATTFE – a part of an Academy Trust that runs Sutton Community Academy and The Dukeries Academy in Ollerton)
- Derby Adult Learning Service (Derby City's Adult Learning Service)
- Derbyshire Adult and Community Education Service (DACES – Derbyshire County Council's Adult Learning Service)
- Nottingham Adult Learning Service 100% of delivery is subcontracted and is 100% Family Learning.
- Nottinghamshire County Council's Adult Learning Service delivered by Inspire

There are 7 'grant' funded General Further Education Colleges that operate across the EMCCA region:

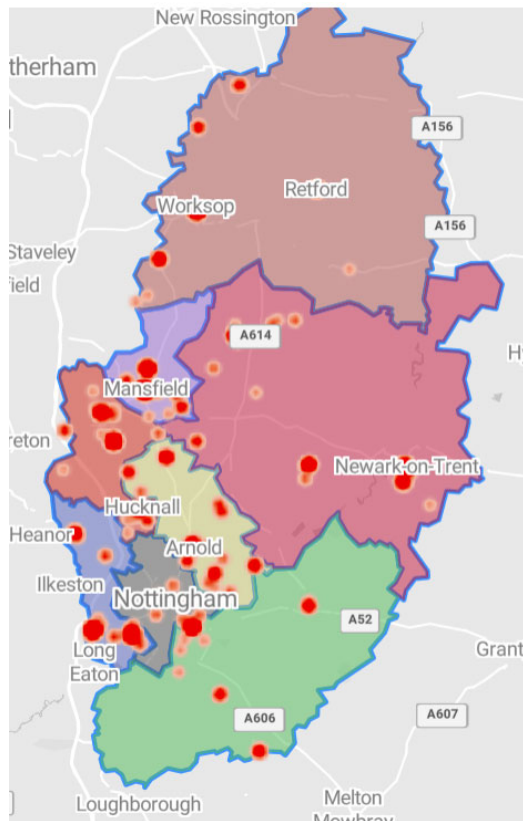
- Buxton and Leek College (part of the University of Derby)
- Chesterfield College
- Derby College
- Newark College (part of the Lincolnshire College Group)
- Nottingham College
- RNN College (part of the Rotherham and North Nottinghamshire College Group)
- Vision West Nottinghamshire College

Appendix C

Adult Learner Enrolments



Course Locations



Appendix D

Service Performance

In the last full academic year (i.e. 2024/25), Inspire worked with **278** 16–19-year-olds via its College provision and **7,259** adult learning enrolments across various Adult Skills Funded provision.

Achievement rates compared to the relevant sectors remain high, with 80% of its Study Programme funded learners achieving their associated qualifications (compared with a national Local Authority benchmark of 76.8%). Across Adult Skills provision, 90.6% of learners (compared with a national benchmark of 86.5%) achieved the qualifications they enrolled onto, whilst 95.1% achieved their tailored learning outcomes.

97% of adults reported that the course met their expectations. At the end of the first term, **96%** of College learners felt that they were progressing well on their course.

As reflected in its 2024/25 [Self-Assessment Report](#), and its most recent [Ofsted Report](#), Inspire continues to be a 'Good' learning provider.