

WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY

# **ADULT EDUCATION STRATEGY: 2021/22**

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## 1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1. As WECA launches the planning and allocation process that will underpin the third year of our delegated stewardship of the Adult Education Budget, we will be more closely aligning adult education provision to the economic needs of the region, ensuring that our businesses and our residents have the skills they need to thrive.
- 1.2. We have set out the region's broad strategic direction through our **Local Industrial Strategy**<sup>1</sup> and built on this to develop and publish our **Employment and Skills Plan**<sup>2</sup>. More recently we have responded robustly to COVID-19 through developing our **Recovery Plan**<sup>3</sup>. Adult Education will play a fundamental role in support of these over-arching strategies and their priorities.
- 1.3. During the first two years of WECA Adult Education, our priority has been to protect the stability of the provider base. We have preserved allocations at the level actually delivered in the 2017/18 academic year, offered protections and flexibilities to support providers to meet the extraordinary challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, and maintained close alignment with ESFA funding rules (applying changes only where this represents an enhanced offer to our residents).
- 1.4. Since taking on responsibility for the Adult Education Budget in 2019, we have introduced **Curriculum and Delivery Plans** (C&DPs) which require providers to set out how their delivery responds to local economic need. This has enabled us to build a comprehensive baseline picture of historical provision for us to plan against.
- 1.5. Our **Adult Education Strategy 2021/22** will further focus provision and funding on the priorities identified by the evidence base which underpins our Employment and Skills Plan.

Although the region's labour market has historically been a picture of relative strength, our evidence shows that a large number of residents remain economically inactive and lack the foundational skills required by employers, with Covid-19 exacerbating these structural issues. Our economic forecasts suggest a continued shift towards a high skilled economy, meaning it is imperative that we provide the right training opportunities for our residents which create pathways into sustainable employment. In addition, a range of 'softer' skills such as communication, numeracy, literacy and interpersonal skills, continue to be highly demanded by employers and should form a key part of our regional adult education offer.

- 1.6. The 2021/22 Strategy will ensure AEB reaches those most in need, by proactively targeting funding at **priority residents** who have been unemployed or economically inactive (for over 6 months and/ or with skills below level 2) or who are low-skilled and employed in jobs which are either low pay or at risk of redundancy.

Success will be determined through the tangible **benefits** that residents gain from adult education which enables them to progress into work, within work, and along the lifelong learning pathway.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/818989/1907\\_VERSION\\_West\\_of\\_England\\_Interactive\\_SINGLE\\_PAGES.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818989/1907_VERSION_West_of_England_Interactive_SINGLE_PAGES.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/West-of-England-Employment-and-Skills-Plan-July-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Recovery-plan-version-2.pdf>

- 1.7. Funding will be allocated against the following categories and associated benefits:
- **Engagement Provision:** to support disadvantaged residents to re-engage in education and progress into or towards a positive destination (the learner outcome which can either be quantified or tracked through provider data returns).
  - **Employability:** to support unemployed residents to progress into work.
  - **Foundation skills for work:** to support employed residents to improve their skills and progress within their careers (skills up to and including full level 2).
  - **Intermediate skills for work:** to support employed residents to improve their skills and progress within their careers (skills at level 3).
  - **Learning for personal development:** to support residents to progress into Higher Education.
- 1.8. All providers funded to deliver adult education on behalf of WECA in i2021/22 will be asked to set out how they propose to deliver this strategy through the Curriculum and Delivery Plans that they negotiate with us. This strategy sets out a range of new measures to help providers exert more focus on our identified priorities and offers greater flexibility and resource.

## 2. EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLAN

- 2.1. The utilisation of WECA adult education funding is driven by our Employment and Skills plan. The Plan set out the following vision:
- “By 2036, the West of England will be internationally recognised for its sustainable, inclusive and diverse economy, providing a high quality of life, prosperity and opportunities for all its residents. Our people will be skilled, healthy and able to access a ‘pathways of opportunity’ to achieve their potential and our businesses will be able to find the skills and talent they need to innovate, add greater value and thrive.”
- 2.2. It sets out a number of strategic objectives. Although many aspects of adult education provision make a significant contribution towards a number of our strategic objectives, for reporting purposes we assign each of our categories of adult education to a single strategic objective:

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY OF ADULT EDUCATION
SO1	Integrating our employment, skills and education system to ensure it is aligned with demand and responsive to changing patterns of employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LEARNING FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</li> </ul>
SO2	Encouraging all young people to achieve their potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
SO3	Supporting everyone who is able to work by helping to address their barriers to employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ENGAGEMENT</li> <li>EMPLOYABILITY</li> </ul>
SO4	Empowering people to progress within employment, including to better higher paid opportunities, if they wish to do so	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FOUNDATION SKILLS FOR WORK</li> <li>INTERMEDIATE SKILLS FOR WORK</li> </ul>
SO5	Ensuring employers are able to recruit and retain the diverse skills and talent they need to thrive from within and beyond the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EMPLOYABILITY</li> <li>FOUNDATION SKILLS FOR WORK</li> <li>INTERMEDIATE SKILLS FOR WORK</li> </ul>

### 3. EVIDENCE BASE

- 3.1. In addition to publishing this Strategy, we are also publishing updated Evidence Base from our Employment and Skills Plan, which sets out our best understanding of the characteristics of the West of England Adult Education landscape, and the established needs of residents and the local economy.
- 3.2. The evidence base underpins this Strategy and providers will need to set out in their C&DPs how their delivery will address the challenges and opportunities identified. The Strategy will focus on the high-level structural changes which we plan to realise within adult education and the evidence base should be used to determine the specific nature of provision to be delivered within the over-arching framework.
- 3.3. The evidence base contains a number of key messages in relation to the Labour Market and Business Demand and also the Demographics of WECA's population which WECA is seeking to respond to. Key extracts from this information are as follows:

#### LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION AND BUSINESS DEMAND

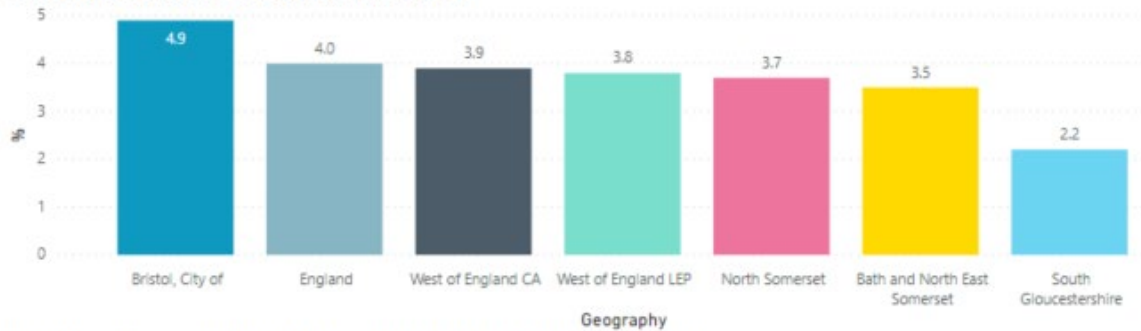
- 3.4. Both the West of England and WECA have a lower unemployment rate and a higher employment rate than the rates for England. There is also a higher proportion of economically inactive people of working age in the region than at the national level. WECA is putting a key focus on supporting unemployed residents into work, with a particular focus on those who are disengaged and economically inactive. This is particularly through the engagement and employability categories.

## Economic Status of 16-64 year olds for the 12 months to June 2020 by geographical area

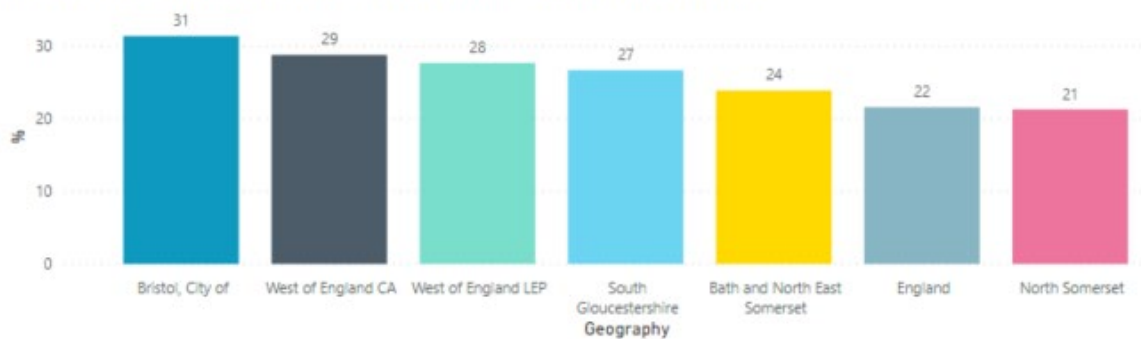
Employment rate, 16-64 by geographical area



Unemployment rate, 16-64 by geographical area

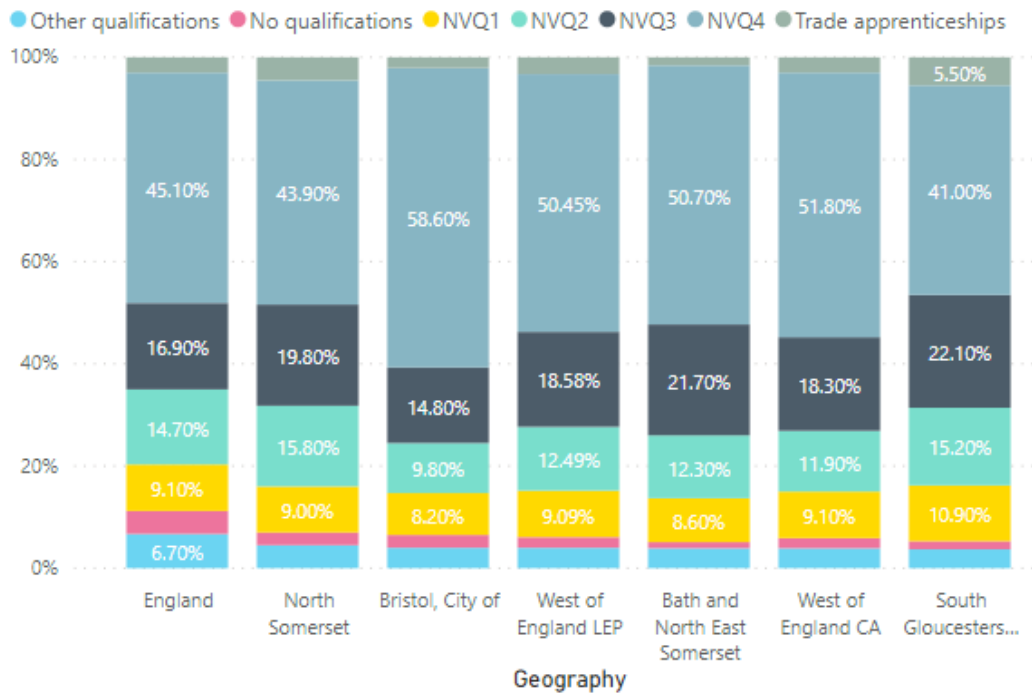


Percentage of economically inactive who want a job, 16-64 by geographical area



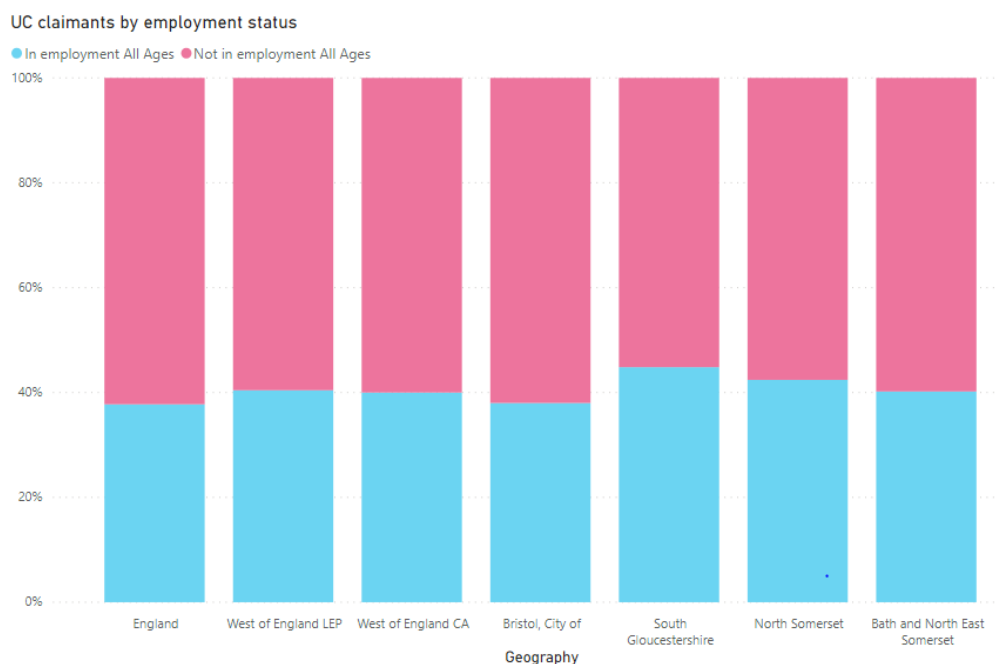
- 3.5. Historically the region has a lower claimant rate than the rate for England; this remains the case despite the recent spike in claimants experienced across all geographical regions between March and May 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. For 2021/22 responding to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic will be a key issue for WECA's devolved AEB affecting the focus on our priority residential groups supporting decisions around investment levels for different categories. **This means supporting residents through their immediate challenges and also the ones left by the impact on the local economy and jobs market.**
- 3.6. West of England and WECA residents (both the whole population and those employed) have higher rates of NVQ3 and NVQ4 achievement than England as a whole, reflecting a highly skilled workforce. Bristol has the highest proportion of employed working aged population with an NVQ4; but also had the highest rate of people with no qualifications (5.7%).

### Highest Qualification achieved breakdown of working age population, 2019



- 3.7. Whilst the region demonstrates a highly skilled population with proportionately fewer people with no qualifications than the England average, there are still approximately 53,100 people of working age employed in WECA (64,700 in the West of England LEP) with either only NVQ1 qualifications or no qualifications. **WECA's AEB should focus on those who have low skills levels and support them to progress through to provision for, and jobs which require, higher skills levels.**
- 3.8. The West of England is estimated to have between 102,600 and 153,900 jobs paying less than the Living Wage Foundation's rate of £9.50 an hour. Across the West of England and the constituent authorities there are significantly more jobs held by females that pay less than the LWF living wage than jobs held by males. Within the region Bristol and South Gloucestershire have the highest number of jobs that pay below the living wage. **WECA will continue the focus on supporting those who are low skilled/low paid through our related funding rule.** This will enable these residents to gain the skills they need to progress which benefits both themselves and local economy/employers. Key support for residents is also put in place via decisions around priority residential groups and investment levels for our different AEB categories.
- 3.9. Data from August 2020 shows that 40% of Universal Credit (UC) claimants in the WECA are employed (27,847 claimants) which is higher than the 38% rate for England as a whole. 50% of all WECA UC claimants were female, with female claimants more likely to be employed than males.

## Universal Credit claimants by employment status and geographical region Sept 2020



3.10. Across the West of England there are 51 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that fall within the 10% most deprived in the country (7.5% of LSOAs in the West of England). Whilst there are 70 LSOAs that fall within the 10% most deprived in relation to education (10.3% of LSOAs in the region).

3.11. 37% of jobs in the WECA area are thought to be in lower skill level occupations (NVQ Levels 1 & 2). The broad industry which has the highest proportion of low skilled occupations is distribution, hotels and restaurants; this sector is a volume industry, employing c.85,000 people in the West of England and c.66,900 in WECA in a wide range of activities including retail.

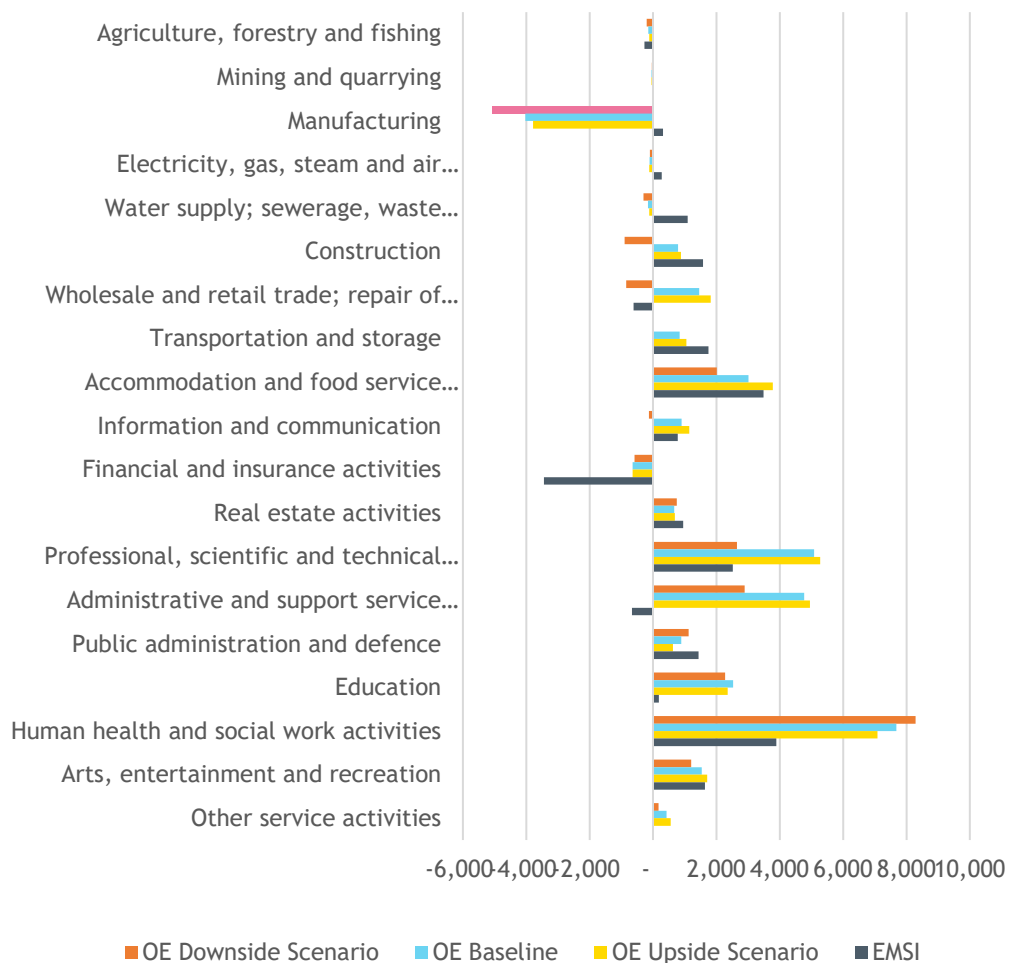
### Number of jobs by broad industry and occupation NVQ level in WECA in 2020

Industry	Level 4 Occupations		Level 3 Occupations		Level 1 and 2 Occupations	
	Employed	%	Employed	%	Employed	%
Agriculture & fishing	0	0	1,100	100	0	0
Energy & water	4,200	47	2,100	23	2,700	30
Manufacturing	12,300	34	14,800	41	8,700	24
Construction	9,000	26	17,500	50	8,300	24
Distribution, hotels & restaurants	12,100	18	10,600	16	44,200	66
Transport & communication	18,600	41	6,100	13	20,900	46
Banking, finance, insurance & other professional activities	44,100	46	26,000	27	26,000	27
Public admin, education & health	83,400	46	32,600	18	63,800	35
Other services	5,900	23	9,700	37	10,500	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>189,600</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>120,500</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>185,100</b>	<b>37</b>



3.12. The largest sector increase in future employment is expected for human health and social work activities, with this increase predicted because of both an uplift in spending and recruitment due to the pandemic and longer-term investment because of the demographics of the nation's ageing population. Through our funded provision, WECA needs to both support residents to develop the skills needed to gain employment in the WECA area and also progress within that employment. **Ensuring provision supports sector and occupational growth (either directly or as part of a progression pathway) is key.** At the same time WECA does not wish to support residents to gain skills (directly or indirectly) which will not benefit them or the local economy.

### Forecast change in jobs by sector in West of England from 2019-2025



3.13. The days shows that occupations with level 4 skills are going to see the greatest demand, through both net change and replacement demand. However, occupations requiring level 2 skills are expected to see the second highest demand; whilst occupations with level 1 skills are going to see the lowest level of demand. **Whilst occupations requiring lower-level skills are anticipated to see less jobs growth, ensuring individuals have basic lower level skills is critical to opening up opportunities and pathways to higher skilled occupations.** WECA will support residents to gain both the skills they need now, and also the skills and skills levels they and the local economy will need in the future. WECA's AEB needs to form a part of overall progression pathways for residents through provision enabling them to progress in their employment and their related wage levels.

3.14. Soft skills such as **communication, numeracy, literacy and interpersonal skills** are often cited within job adverts as required competencies regardless of sector or occupational; ensuring

that the population is equipped with these lower level basic skills is critical in enabling individuals to engage in the labour market.

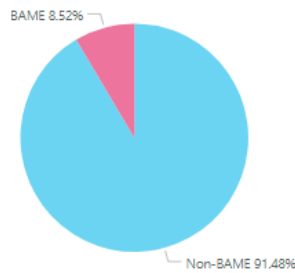
DEMOGRAPHICS:

3.15. As of 2019 estimates put the population of WECA at 0.94m. By 2025, this is projected to grow to 0.99m. Per 2019 estimates 0.74m of the WECA population would be eligible for adult education funding (aged 19 and over), increased from 0.71m in 2015. **By 2025, this eligible age group is projected to grow to 0.78m.** With a growing eligible population against a static budget identifying the key residential groups AEB (as opposed to other related provision) is supporting is key.

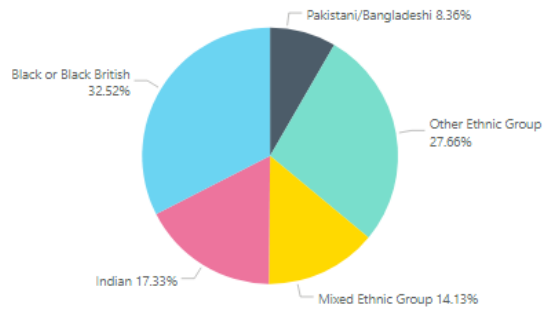
3.16. Approximately 8% of the population of WECA are from a BAME background, with Black or Black British accounting for around a third of this total BAME population.

**BAME / populations, and groups within BAME populations, shown by WECA and WELEP**

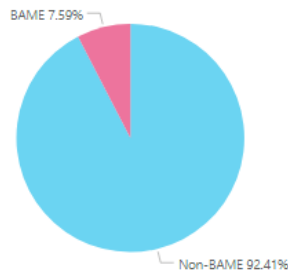
CA BAME/Non-BAME Population



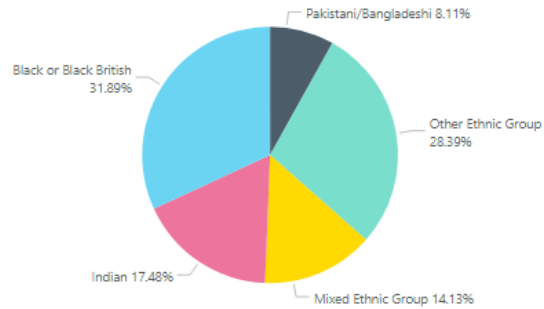
CA BAME Population



LEP BAME/Non-BAME Population

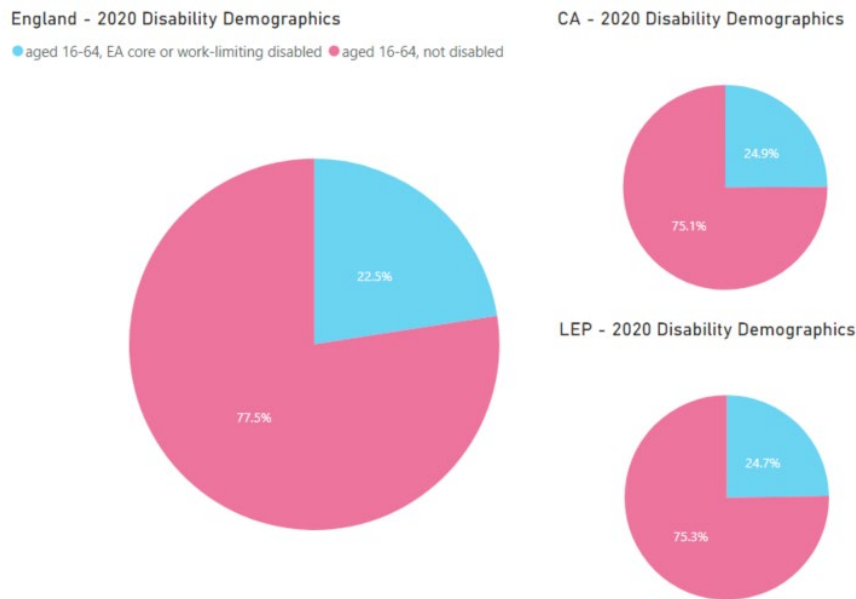


LEP BAME Population



3.17. 22.5% of the working age population in England in 2020, are classed as Equality Act core or work-limiting disabled. This is c.2 percentage points higher for both the West of England and WECA; this is driven up by a higher percentage of those classified as Equality Act core or work-limiting disabled within Bristol at 26.7%.

## Disability by WECA and WELEP with coparitive England Figure



### 3.18. IMPROVING ALIGNMENT WITH IDENTIFIED ECONOMIC NEED

- 3.18.1. Providers will need to demonstrate alignment between the provision they offer and the identified needs of the local economy. We have communicated our understanding of the needs of the local labour market through the evidence base which informs this strategy.
- 3.18.2. Providers should utilise this intelligence, combined with their own understanding of economic needs across the smaller geographies which they serve, to inform the development of their curriculum offer and the completion of their Curriculum and Delivery Plans for the 2021/22 academic year.
- 3.18.3. Whilst developing such plans providers will need to consider the specific role that Adult Education Provision may play in addressing local economic need. As set out above, the West of England is increasingly becoming a high-skill economy requiring skills at levels which exceed those which can be supported by adult education funding. A key role of adult education funding is therefore to establish effective progression pathways which will allow residents to enrol on programmes such as Apprenticeships, advanced learner loans and Higher Education courses which directly deliver the skills most demanded by the West of England economy.
- 3.18.4. Within such progression pathways the need for increased investment in literacy and numeracy skills is clear as even if technical knowledge is present, deficiencies in these areas are likely to prevent progression to higher levels of qualification and limit employment opportunities. Given this where literacy and / or numeracy is identified to be a significant barrier to progression support should be offered within adult education programmes. Providers should place a particular emphasis on numeracy skills as these underpin many of the areas of anticipated economic growth such as finance, professional services and digital.
- 3.18.5. Providers should also consider the role of adult education in terms of meeting future skills needs, as this may require training in advance of employment opportunity. A key example of this is the provision of skills which support the green agenda where local expertise will

provide a catalyst which enables the West of England to capitalise on this significant economic opportunity and critical environmental necessity.

#### **4. BENEFITS**

- 4.1. We are moving the focus away from the transactional outputs that are easiest to quantify (e.g. the achievement of a qualification) towards the tangible benefits that residents will gain through participation in WECA funding adult education. Put simply, we consider a qualification to be a means to an end as opposed to an end in its own right. Our primary focus is the positive destination towards which the qualification enables the learner to progress.
- 4.2. We will seek to establish a focus for our collective efforts through structuring the planning and performance monitoring of the provision we fund around the concept of 'benefits'.
- 4.3. Benefits are a common feature of various programme management systems and are a key mechanism through which the progress, performance and impact of all WECA's People and Skills programmes will be monitored and performance managed. Given this, it is essential that they are effectively embedded within the plans that we negotiate with our partners.
- 4.4. The Curriculum and Delivery Plans which we negotiate in advance of the 2021/22 academic year will therefore primarily focus on the benefits which we will secure through our investment in Adult Education. Each category of adult education will include a range of specific benefits which should be the focus of provision.
- 4.5. To balance this, we will significantly streamline the up-front course by course statement detailing precisely what providers plan to deliver on our behalf. Delivery profiles will remain and will include an additional focus on benefit delivery at the key performance management points.
- 4.6. The benefits quantified within the C&DPs are not intended to represent the totality of WECA adult education provision, but the aspects of provision that we consider to be of greatest importance. We will maintain sufficient flexibility to support a range of other provision but intend to see a significant increase in the proportion of funding which providers utilise in direct support of the agreed benefits.
- 4.7. A significant majority of benefits are based on data which already forms part of the ILR returns submitted by all providers. For a small number of benefits WECA will implement reforms to the ILR to enable the benefit to be monitored through this mechanism.
- 4.8. There are a number of benefits which are not currently monitored via the ILR and it is unlikely to prove practicable to monitor in this manner. These are however amongst some of the most important benefits which we will monitor, including measures such as sustained progression to a positive destination. Where this is the case, WECA proposes to monitor performance through an annual learner survey. Providers should make learners aware that they will be asked to participate in such a survey as part of their enrolment processes.

#### **5. PRIORITY RESIDENTS**

- 5.1. One of the most significant challenges associated with the management of adult education provision is that the eligibility criteria of the programme are very broad and can accommodate most types of WECA resident on either a fully funded or a co-funded basis. However, we are operating within a finite budget and the level of need varies significantly across the range of residents who may be potentially supported by adult education provision. Focusing this provision on certain priority residential groups (leaving other types of provision to support other residential groups) is very important.
- 5.2. Historically the primary focus of adult education provision has been disadvantaged residents suffering from long-term unemployment and / or with very low levels of prior attainment. Data from the evidence base and the positioning of WECA's AEB as part of a wider local education and skills landscape which enables learner progression shows this should remain the case. However, during the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years we saw a significant reduction in the proportion of adult education funding being utilised in support of such residents, replaced by a significant increase in investment in employed residents in well-paid jobs with high levels of prior attainment
- 5.3. In order to address this trend and restore the established focus of adult education provision, WECA confirmed the types of resident who are deemed to be of greatest priority for investment and support. We have already begun to use the various processes at our disposal (such as the in-year growth and voluntary transfer of allocation processes) to re-establish support for such residents and will continue to do so in 2021/22.
- 5.4. WECA considers the following types of resident to be the priority for our investment in adult education:
- A. Residents who have been either unemployed or economically inactive for 6 months or more.
  - B. Residents who are either unemployed or economically inactive, with prior attainment below full level 2.
  - C. Residents who are employed in jobs which are either low pay or at risk of redundancy, with prior attainment below full level 2.
- 5.5. WECA confirmed these types of resident as a priority through the publication of our 2020/21 COVID-19 Response and Mitigating Under-Performance Policies. They were also a key focus within our in-year growth process.
- 5.6. The Priority residents were selected on the grounds that they have historically been the primary focus of adult education investment, ILR data shows that historically an average of c.65% of adult education provision has been invested in support of residents who were either unemployed or had prior attainment below full-level 2. However, this level of support collapsed during the COVID-19 pandemic and although slowly recovering remains significantly lower than historic averages.
- 5.7. At the end of the 2019/20 academic year, ILR data (R14) shows that only 16% of enrolments related to residents with prior attainment below full level 2 and only 12% of enrolments related to residents who were unemployed and seeking work, and only 6% of enrolments related to residents who had prior attainment below full level 2 and were unemployed and seeking work. In comparison, 9% of enrolments related to residents who were in paid employment and had prior attainment at level 4 or above.

- 5.8. During the 2021/22 academic year the intention of WECA is to restore the level of investment and support offered to the types of resident traditionally supported by AEB who are amongst the most disadvantaged within the West of England.
- 5.9. Given this, in order to determine whether or not a learner falls within our Priority Resident categories providers will need to establish both the employment status and level of prior attainment for all learners in 2021/22 as part of their enrolment processes.
- 5.10. WECA will continue to prioritise such residents in 2021/22 and in support of our efforts to recover from the detrimental impact of COVID-19 and re-establish the historic focus of adult education provision we will aim to ensure that at least 51% of our funding is utilised in support of such residents and aspire to match the historic level of investment of c.65%.
- 5.11. In the longer term, we plan to further refine our definitions of priority residents. The following table sets our broad planned direction of travel. This priority matrix has not yet been formally adopted by WECA in relation to other projects/provision and all references to priority residents within this document relate to the definition set out above. Providers will however want to consider this matrix in anticipation of the 2022/23 academic year.

WECA ADULT EDUCATION PRIORITY LEARNER BAND MATRIX				
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	PRIOR ATTAINMENT OF LEARNER			
	BELOW FULL LEVEL 2	FULL LEVEL 2	FULL LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4+
UNEMPLOYED OR ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE FOR 12 MONTHS OR MORE	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM
UNEMPLOYED OR ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE FOR LESS THAN 12 MONTHS	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW
EMPLOYED – LOW WAGE [Below £18,135 per year]	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW
EMPLOYED – NOT LOW WAGE [Above £18,135 per year]	HIGH	LOW	LOW	LOW
NOT IN PAID EMPLOYMENT / NOT LOOKING FOR WORK	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	LOW
OTHER TYPES OF LEARNER / AREAS OF PROVISION DEEMED TO BE A HIGH PRIORITY				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. STATUTORY ENTITLEMENTS, INCLUDING THE NEW DIGITAL AND TARGETED LEVEL 3 ENTITLEMENTS.</li> <li>2. PROVISION THAT SUPPORTS RESIDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND / OR DISABILITIES</li> <li>3. ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION</li> <li>4. ESOL</li> </ol>				
OTHER TYPES OF LEARNER / AREAS OF PROVISION DEEMED TO BE A LOW PRIORITY				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PROVISION THAT DOES NOT SUPPORT MEANINGFUL / SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE PROGRESSION FOR THE LEARNER</li> <li>2. LEISURE LEARNING (OTHER THAN AS A MEANS THROUGH WHICH TO RE-ENGAGE DISADVANTAGED RESIDENTS)</li> </ol>				

- 5.12. This matrix does not suggest that low priority residents will not have access to WECA adult education funding, but the total level of funding available to support such residents will be significantly lower than that available to support residents deemed to be a higher priority.
- 5.13. If providers have suggestions for types of resident / provision which should be deemed to be a high priority irrespective of the matrix (such as access to HE and ESOL), we will be happy to consider incorporating this within our potential approach for 2021/22.
- 5.14. It is not yet possible to establish a full understanding of how much funding WECA currently invests in support of each element of this priority matrix due to a combination of incomplete data within the ILR and elements of data not yet being collected. As we move into the 2021/22 academic year, we will begin to secure the data that is necessary to form a robust analysis of relative levels of investment across our established order of priority.
- 5.15. We are however able to establish an incomplete picture of investment based on Adult Skills ILR data from the 2019/20 academic year:

WECA ADULT EDUCATION  
**PROPORTION OF ADULT SKILLS FUNDING INVESTED WITHIN PRIORITY LEARNER BANDS**

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	PRIOR ATTAINMENT					TOTAL
	<FL2	FL2	FL3	L4+	?	
NOT IN PAID EMPLOYMENT, LOOKING FOR WORK AND AVAILABLE TO START WORK	18%	7%	2%	3%	2%	32%
NOT IN PAID EMPLOYMENT, NOT LOOKING FOR WORK AND / OR NOT AVAILABLE TO START WORK	3%	7%	2%	1%	2%	15%
IN PAID EMPLOYMENT	19%	10%	6%	8%	4%	46%
NOT KNOWN / NOT PROVIDED / NOT COMPLETED	3%	2%	0%	1%	1%	7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>100%</b>

SOURCE: OCCUPANCY REPORT 2019/20 R14

- 5.16. On the basis of this analysis, we believe too much funding has historically been invested in provision that we consider to be a low priority, or where it is not possible to ascertain the precise level of priority due to the availability of data. We intend rebalance our investment towards the types of resident that we deem to be the highest priority.

## 6. BUDGET

- 6.1. WECA will allocate a total of **£15,764,272** to support adult education delivery in the 2021/22 academic year. Within this overall budget a total of £1,066,300 is ring-fenced by DfE to support of the National Skills Fund Level 3 Offer and may not be used for any other purposes: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-skills-fund#free-level-3-qualifications-for-adults>
- 6.2. The current pattern of distribution between categories has been determined by providers and WECA has not yet sought to significantly shape the distribution. We will begin to actively shape this distribution in 2021/22.
- 6.3. It has proven difficult to establish a reliable baseline from which to plan our investment of funds across our categories of adult education. The categories were introduced in 2020/21 and therefore do not feature within historic data. We have therefore applied categories to 2019/20 data in a formulaic manner to establish an indicative baseline. Furthermore, it has become clear that the categories of adult education were not sufficiently well understood during the development of initial Curriculum and Delivery Plans for the 2020/21 academic year and therefore the plans contained a significant degree of mis-categorisation. Given this, the most reliable baseline available is that emerging from the current mid-year update of Curriculum and Delivery plans following our in-year growth process.



- 6.4. The application of our mid-year growth process helped to shape the balance of investment across our categories of adult education to offer an improved focus on priority residents.
- 6.5. The following table details our best estimate of the historic funding distribution (derived from provider ILR data), the current planned distribution of funding across our categories of adult education (based on C&DPs submitted by providers), and the distribution which we intend to realise in 2021/22. The intended distribution for 2021/22 takes into account: the evidence base (including current employment and skills levels, forecast employment demands), historical investment levels and the needs of our priority residential groups.

<b>HISTORIC AND PLANNED DISTRIBUTION OF ADULT EDUCATION FUNDING ACROSS CATEGORIES OF ADULT EDUCATION.</b>					
<b>CATEGORY OF ADULT EDUCATION</b>	<b>BASELINE 2019/20 ACTUAL [FORMULAIC]</b>	<b>BASELINE 2020/21 ORIGINAL C&amp;DP</b>	<b>BASELINE 2020/21 UPDATED C&amp;DP</b>	<b>PLANNED DISTRIBUTION 2021/22</b>	<b>PLANNED BUDGET 2021.22</b>
ENGAGEMENT	27%	19%	28%	30%	£4,729,282
EMPLOYABILITY	12%	22%	34%	35%	£5,517,495
FOUNDATION SKILLS FOR WORK	39%	28%	23%	25%	£3,941,068
INTERMEDIATE SKILLS FOR WORK	0%	25%	7%	8%	£1,261,142
LEARNING FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	22%	6%	7%	2%	£315,285
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	£15,764,272

- 6.6. We are seeking to increase investment within the Engagement, Employability and Foundation Skills for Work Categories as these are the categories which support the greatest proportion of priority residents.
- 6.7. The increased level of investment within the Intermediate Skills for Work category is attributable the ring-fenced allocation from central government granted to support the implementation of the National Skills Fund Level 3 Offer.
- 6.8. The planned reduction to the level of investment within the Learning for Personal Development category is necessary to support the planned growth within other categories. This is the category of adult education which currently supports the greatest proportion of low priority provision which does not seek to support residents to progress into employment of increase their skill levels. Within this category the only form of priority provision is access to HE courses. The planned level of investment within this category will support the historic level of delivery of access to HE qualifications.
- 6.9. As the proposed change to the distribution of funding across our categories of adult education is relatively minor, the planned distribution is both realistic and deliverable. This is the distribution which we plan to establish at WECA level. It is possible for individual providers to adopt a different distribution, especially where they are smaller and more

specialised. However, in order for the planned distribution to be realised the larger providers will need to establish a fairly strong degree of alignment.

- 6.10. Within the planned distribution for 2021/22 providers should note:
  - 6.10.1. Within the 8% of adult education funding planned to be utilised in support of Intermediate Skills for Work, c.6.8% will be ring-fenced by DfE to support the Level 3 offer, leaving 1.2% of total adult education funding available to support other forms of work-related level 3 provision.
  - 6.10.2. The suggested level of investment within the Learning for Personal Development category in 2019/20 is significantly inflated as it was arrived at in a formulaic manner. In order to effectively categorise it is necessary to understand both the employment status and prior attainment of each learner. Where these are not recorded within the ILR the learner may only be included within the learning for personal development category. It is therefore likely that the category is significantly inflated due to absence of data.
  - 6.10.3. Within the Learning for Personal Development category, the only priority for WECA is 'access to higher education' provision. The proportion of adult education funding planned to be invested in this category in 2021/22 is more than enough to support the maintenance of such provision at historic levels.
- 6.11. Within the grant funding agreements issued to providers for the 2021/22 academic year, the budget allocated to support each category of adult education will be ring-fenced. Providers may only vire funding between categories with the approval of WECA in the form of a variation to the grant funding agreement. Permission to vire must be sought in advance.

## **7. PRINCIPLES**

- 7.1. Our approach to adult education is driven by the following principles which providers should use to inform the development of their delivery plans for the 2021/22 academic year. Where issues are not explicitly addressed within the strategy, we will refer to these first principles to inform our decisions and expect providers to do likewise.

- 7.1.1. **DRIVEN BY EVIDENCED NEED:** WECA will move away from largely 'demand-led' approach which has informed adult education provision in recent years and replace it with the principle that provision should be 'driven by need'.

This means that our investment in adult education will be directed towards the residents, communities and employers within the West of England for whom the evidence of need is strongest and most aligned with our strategies, plans and accompanying evidence base.

WECA does not equate 'demand' with 'need' and our evidence suggests that the residents in greatest need of support are frequently amongst the least likely to actively seek it. Given this we need our providers to significantly increase the proportion of learners who are engaged through an active targeting process as opposed to self-referral. We have already indicated to providers that we are willing to consider proposals to increase utilisation of community learning budgets to fund staff to undertake such intelligence gathering and active engagement activity.

### 7.1.2.

**TRANSFORMATIONAL:** WECA wishes to utilise our adult education funding in a manner which has a significant beneficial impact on the residents, communities and employers of greatest need. WECA considers the achievement of a qualification to be a means to an end as opposed to an end in its own right. We will therefore measure the degree to which the provision we fund is transformational in terms of the positive destinations to which learners progress.

Given this we encourage providers to increase their focus on substantial programmes of learning, potentially encompassing multiple learning aims which clearly offer a transformational intervention and facilitate progression which would have been unlikely to happen if not for the intervention of adult education provision.

Although many short courses are capable of offering such a transformational intervention, the majority do not as the volume of learning delivered is not sufficiently substantial. Furthermore, it is too frequently delivered to residents who were perfectly capable of progressing to the destination irrespective of the support offered by AEB (based on the prior attainment and prior work experience of the learner, compared with the length and level of the qualification undertaken).

Current ILR data (2020/21 R07) demonstrates that only 6% of learner have progressed to a positive destination such as employment or further learning. 2019/20 (R14) ILR data shows that 18% of AEB learners are undertaking learning at a lower level than they have previously attained, and 10% undertook learning more than two academic levels lower than that previously attained.

Providers should invest in their CEIAG and initial assessment processes to ensure that every learner is enrolled on a qualification (or package of qualifications) which equips the learner with knowledge, skills and experience which they do not already possess and supports their progress towards a positive destination.

### 7.1.3.

**COLLABORATIVE:** Since the devolution of the adult education budget to WECA we have sought to move away from the highly competitive regime which preceded us and establish a more cohesive and collaborative adult education system within the West of England.

We expect providers to plan their provision in a collaborative manner, actively engaging with each other and WECA to avoid unconstructive competition and duplication of effort and to establish a better distribution of provision across the West of England with an improved focus on the residents, communities and employers in greatest need of the type of support that adult education can offer. This should be more achievable in 21/22 due to the introduction of the Minimum Contract Value (MCV) resulting in a smaller and more strategic provider base.

WECA is seeking clear evidence of active engagement between providers in support of collaborative planning and increase evidence of collaboration to establish effective progression pathways between providers in support of the lifelong learning journey.

## **8. KEY POLICY REFORMS AND DIRECTION**

### **8.1. MINIMUM CONTRACT VALUE:**

8.1.1. In order to establish a smaller and more strategic network of directly funded adult education providers to proactively focus on evidenced need, WECA will introduce a Minimum Contract Value (MCV) policy with a threshold of £150k for the 2021/22 academic year. Providers who hold WECA adult education funding allocations above this threshold in the 2020/21 academic year will be directly funded in 2021/22 and invited to develop a Curriculum and Delivery Plan that responds to this Adult Education Strategy. The MCV in part addresses issues relating to the makeup and balance (particularly financially) of the inherited provider base.

8.1.2. We will use the allocation that providers hold following our 2020/21 mid-year review policy to determine which providers fall above and below this threshold. This will therefore account for any in-year under-performance which we are forced to recover, and any additional funding granted in support of our growth priorities. The indicative roll-forward allocation will be set at the same level as the 2020/21 post mid-year review allocation (though may be adjusted to account for any subsequent under-delivery).

8.1.3. Providers that fall below our MCV threshold will potentially be able to access WECA adult education funding through either a sub-contract or through successfully applying to WECA to secure an allocation in excess of £150k through our open applications process (see below).

### **8.2. OPEN APPLICATION PROCESS:**

8.2.1. WECA will launch an open application process (for funding not allocated via the roll-forward allocations) through which providers may secure allocations to deliver adult education on our behalf in 2021/22. The MCV threshold will apply to this process.

8.2.2. The open application process will not focus on proposals to deliver general adult education provision but will instead be used to secure provision that directly responds to this Adult Education Strategy where gaps are identified or where the level of need exceeds the level of supply. The process is intended to offer existing WECA providers who fall below our MCV threshold a potential route to funding but will also be made available to providers with allocations above our MCV threshold as a mechanism through which to secure growth funding, and to new providers who are in a position to deliver the provision we seek.

### **8.3. THIRD-PARTY DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS (SUB-CONTRACTING & PARTNERSHIPS ETC)**

8.3.1. We will continue to enable providers to access WECA funding through subcontract as this is necessary in order to protect valuable elements of provision that are by definition limited to smaller scales.

8.3.2. We will update our subcontracting policy to establish an effective and equitable approach to subcontracting that incorporates elements of reforms being implemented by ESFA whilst not undermining important high-quality WECA provision delivered through subcontract.

8.3.3. Under WECA funding rules, a 'subcontract' relates to all circumstances within which a third-party organisation plays a role within the delivery of the provision we fund. Any such arrangements must be approved by WECA in advance of delivery as part of the C&DP process.

8.3.4. WECA introduced a number of new funding rules concerning our approach to subcontracting at the beginning of the 2020/21 academic year, including:

a) A provider who is directly funded by WECA to deliver adult education on our behalf may not access additional WECA adult education funding as a subcontractor of another WECA provider.

b) A provider who is indirectly funded by WECA to deliver adult education on our behalf through a sub-contract may not secure funding through more than one prime provider

WECA will continue this approach during 2021/22 alongside closer monitoring of subcontracting arrangements.

8.4. DISTANCE LEARNING:

8.4.1. When adult education within the West of England was devolved to WECA, we inherited a disproportionately large element of distance learning. This has subsequently expanded significantly and rapidly, in part as a response to the challenges presented by COVID-19.

8.4.2. WECA values distance learning where it serves the following purposes:

a) To provide access to learning, and support for, priority residents who would not otherwise be able to participate

b) To broaden the local curriculum offer so that is most effectively supports our local employers and the local economy

8.4.3. Within WECA's current portfolio of funded distance learning provision, our evidence shows a considerable degree of duplication. In 2019/20 WECA invested c.£1.1m in distance learning provision, of which £900k related to qualifications delivered by multiple providers, of which we invested c.£350k in specific distance learning courses delivered by five or more providers.

8.4.4. WECA will ensure distance learning provision engages the types of resident that represent the greatest priority for WECA Adult Education. In 2019/20 16% of distance learning provision funded by WECA was delivered to residents with prior attainment below level 2. In contrast, 34% was delivered to residents who already held HE level qualifications and only 14% of all distance learning provision enrolled residents on a qualification at a higher level than they had already achieved.

8.4.5. During the development of C&DPs for the 2019/20 academic year, we encouraged all providers to plan in a collaborative manner in order to avoid duplication, asking providers delivering significant levels of distance learning provision to consider how they may diversify their provision in terms of the curriculum offered or the groups of learners targeted. This has yet to show tangible progress.

8.4.6. Given this, we are adopting the following policy in relation to distance learning provision in the 2021/22 academic year and beyond.

- a) For the purposes of this policy, WECA considers distance learning to be provision that is designed and intended to be primarily delivered remotely from the outset. We do not include provision originally intended to be delivered in the classroom that has been forced to utilise remote delivery mechanisms as a temporary response to COVID-19. We do not include blended learning where the majority of delivery takes place in the classroom.
- b) From 2021/22, WECA will only fund distance learning provision through providers that have a significant classroom-based offer within the WECA area that complements the providers classroom-based offer through either broadening the curriculum offer or targeting priority residents who would otherwise be unable to participate.
- c) WECA will not directly fund providers who deliver exclusively through distance learning or providers for whom the classroom-based offer represents a relatively small element of provision.
- d) A provider with a significant offer of classroom learning located within the WECA area may secure distance learning through a subcontractor delivering exclusively through distance learning where they lack capacity to offer distance learning in their own right and the provision is needed in order to respond effectively to identified local needs.

8.4.7. We want to ensure any distance learning offers, in addition to being strategically focussed, also offer good value for money. National funding rates are intended to be broadly aligned with the actual costs associated with the delivery of a qualification. However, a qualification delivered within a classroom setting by a tutor is likely to have significantly higher delivery costs than the same qualification where this is delivered remotely in a manner driven by software with limited interaction between tutor and learner (especially where the costs associated with the development of the qualification were met by another organisation).

8.4.8. Given the significant disparity in delivery costs, the same funding rate should not be applied to both delivery mechanisms. Moving forwards WECA will review this position to establish different funding rates for qualifications delivered exclusively or predominantly through distance learning, especially those with limited interaction between tutor and learner.

## 8.5. ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF LEARNERS

8.5.1. WECA will incorporate a more significant focus on supporting the residents, communities and employers in greatest need of support. It is likely to prove increasingly difficult to establish this focus by relying on self-referral as the primary mechanism through which learners are recruited. In order to effectively engage the types of learner prioritised by WECA, providers will need to invest in their intelligence gathering and outreach functions in order to actively engage learners.

8.5.2. WECA will continue to support providers to do this through enabling Community Learning funds to be utilised to support the staffing of such functions where the learning falls within

our engagement and employability categories of adult education and / or supports the active engagement of priority residents.

8.5.3. As part of this approach WECA expects such functions to be developed and operated in a collaborative manner across all providers serving the same geographies / types of resident. We also expect all intelligence and referrals emerging from such investment to be shared across all relevant WECA providers.

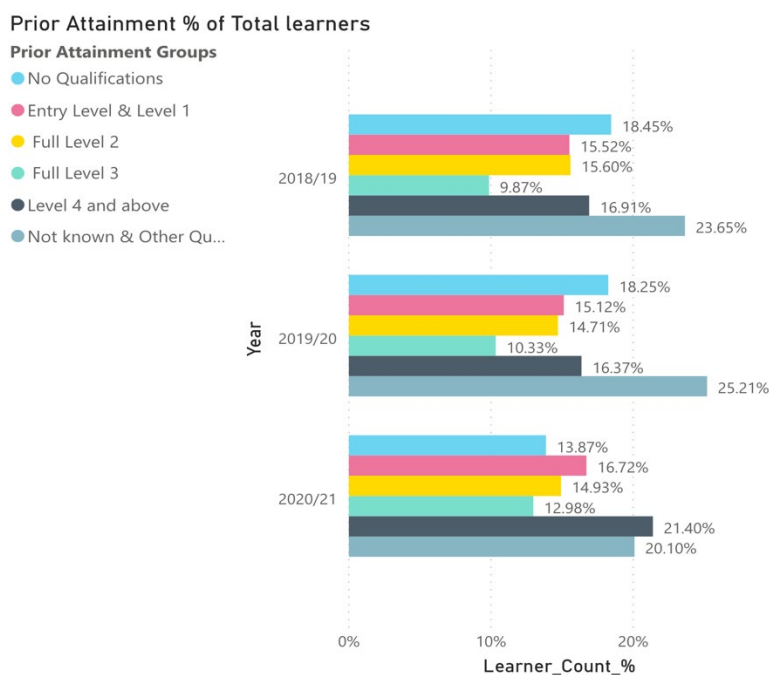
8.6. PRIOR ATTAINMENT AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS

8.6.1. To ensure our funding is effectively utilised in support of our priority residents we need to make better use of the functionality which exists within the ILR.

8.6.2. Our ability to analyse historic data to establish how much of our investment in adult education has directly supported priority residents is limited by the incompleteness of data. In order to establish which category of adult education an individual learner should be enrolled within, it is necessary to establish both their prior attainment and their employment status. This would also form a key element of any robust initial assessment process. In 2021/22 we will expect this information to be reported in the ILR for all learners and this will be monitored and discussed in the regular meetings with providers.

8.7. PRIOR ATTAINMENT AND LEVEL OF LEARNING UNDERTAKEN

8.7.1. Current prior attainment data for WECA learners suggests an increasing proportion of adult education learners are already qualified a degree or post-graduate level but are enrolled on qualifications at very low academic levels. In contrast the proportion of learners with no prior attainment is decreasing. However, as demonstrated above and within the evidence base, WECA needs to increase support for low/no skilled groups whilst also being position as part of wider progression pathways for learners.



8.7.2. Although there are clear exceptions (such as ESOL), we expect learners to be enrolled on qualifications at least equal to the level of learning which they have previously achieved, and ideally at a higher level in support of the lifelong learning journey. Where study at a lower level is required (for example within the context of re-training) the gap between the level studied and the level previously achieved should be as small as possible, and the learning undertaken should be sufficiently substantial to clearly demonstrate that it has had a transformational impact on the learner’s efforts to retrain and progress into the alternative employment they seek.

8.7.3. To illustrate this issue, the following table sets out the extent of adult education delivered at a lower level than that already achieved during the 2019/20 academic year, indicating that almost £1m of adult education budget was used to support residents to undertake qualifications at a significantly lower level than that already achieved:

LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION UNDERTAKEN v LEVEL OF PRIOR ATTAINMENT 2019/20	£	%
HIGHER	£3,974,716	44%
SAME LEVEL	£1,781,577	20%
LOWER LEVEL	£1,632,350	18%
SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER LEVEL [-2 LEVELS]	£926,518	10%
UNKNOWN	£707,408	8%

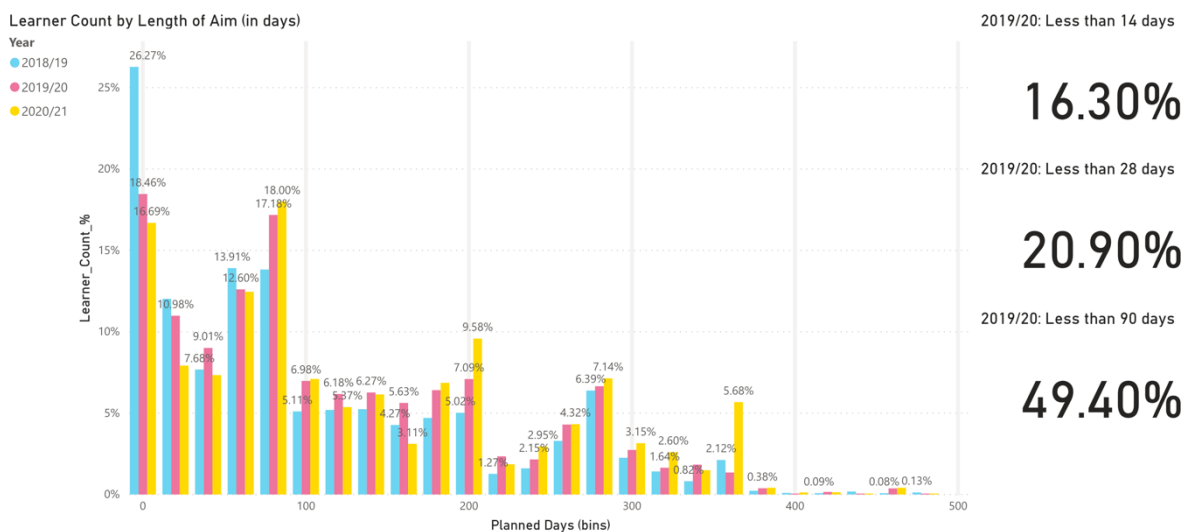
8.7.4. Our Strategy will rebalance the proportion of learners with degree and postgraduate level qualifications undertaking very short qualifications at very low qualification levels towards priority residents.

8.8. MORE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRAMMES OF SUPPORT / BETTER OUTCOMES

8.8.1. Historic data shows that the majority of WECA AEB learners undertake a single short learning aim. As we increase focus on the residents with greatest need we will need to address a wider range of barriers to progression into work and within work, and therefore there is a clear need to establish more substantial programmes of support.



**Aim Length:** Total number of learners on aims of each length



NB: Current ILR data does not permit analysis of the number of guided learning hours actually delivered and the number of planned days recorded can be distorted where a significant gap exists between the learning delivered and the assessment. Given this, the actual substance of the qualifications funded is likely to be somewhat lower than suggested above.

8.8.2. Where initial assessment and diagnostic testing identified that a learner faces a literacy / numeracy / ESOL / digital barrier, providers should offer programmes of support which address these issues in addition to the main learning aim. Similarly, within employability provision if it is clear that the learner has little, or no experience of work providers should utilise the new Work Experience learning aims established by WECA.

8.8.3. Investing a greater proportion of adult education funding in well-structured programmes which are proven to offer good progression (E.g. the Sector Based Work Academy programme) will be supported.

8.8.4. Finally, WECA has created new learning aims to enable providers to offer enhanced CEIAG and Initial Assessment to priority residents, which may form a component within a broader programme of support. In order to realise this vision, the average cost per learner will inevitably increase. This increased investment will result in a significant increase in the number of learners progressing to positive destinations thereby offering improved return on investment overall.

8.9. EFFECTIVE UTILISATION OF SUPPORT FUNDING

8.9.1. WECA will ensure that utilisation of Learner Support and Learning Support is sufficient to support our most disadvantaged learners and our priority residential groups; however, our data shows varied levels of utilisation of this funding across the provider base.

8.9.2. We will not place caps on the proportion of a provider’s allocation utilised in the form of Learner Support or Learning Support. Providers will ensure that support needs are effectively identified through robust initial assessment processes and that learners receive the support they need to achieve and progress.

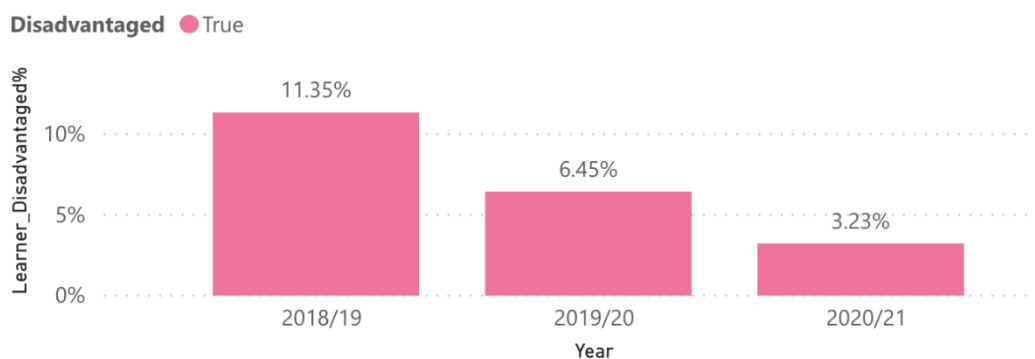
8.10. POSITIVE PROGRESSION

8.10.1. Within adult education provision, positive progression refers to the destinations to which learners progress as a result of their participation in AEB. A narrow range of positive progression destinations are currently captured within ILR data and

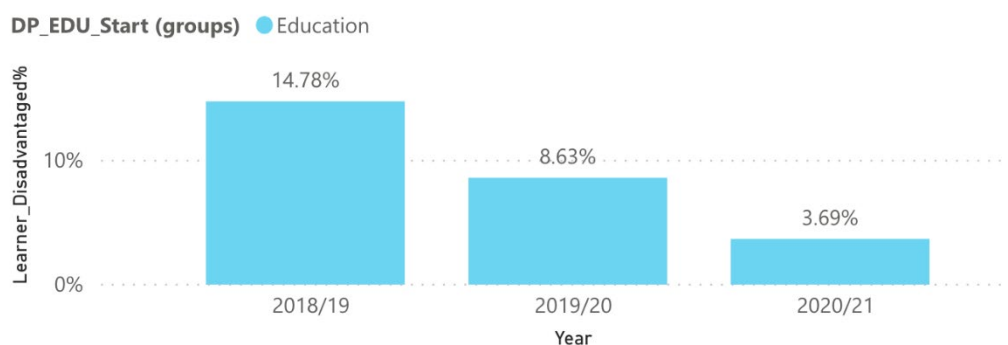
8.10.2. The WECA Employment and Skills plan identified that although the West of England is increasingly becoming a high-skilled economy, historically we have been more successful in attracting skilled workers from elsewhere in the country than we have been in our efforts to upskill our own population. WECA intends to use our devolved management of the adult education budget to improve this situation.

8.10.3. The primary purpose of WECA adult education investment is to support residents to progress towards and into positive destinations, especially where the learner faces significant disadvantage. The learning journey should begin at whatever point is appropriate to the individual but should also aspire to encourage and support learners to progress into better jobs and learning at a higher level, so they fully participate in our economy. However, the number of residents actually progressing into or towards positive destinations appears to be very low:

### Progressing to Employment % for Disadvantaged Learners



### Progressing into Learning % of disadvantaged learners



8.10.4. We frequently find that the destination to which a learner progressed immediately following their participation in WECA funded adult education is not recorded in the ILR. We do not believe that this accurately represents the actual situation on the ground, but it highlights that often the most important outcome of learning is not accurately reported.

- 8.10.5. As set out above, in 2021/22 we will monitor the performance of our adult education provision through a range of defined benefits, many of which relate to positive progression.
- 8.10.6. We will also utilise surveys to monitor whether positive progression was sustained. These surveys will operate at least once a year and will consider progression beyond the point of exiting the funded provision.
- 8.11. CO-FUNDED FEE INCOME
- 8.11.1. WECA will ensure that the flexibility to waive potential fee income is utilised in an appropriate manner to target priority residents facing significant challenges who would not otherwise be able to afford to participate
- 8.11.2. WECA will monitor the collection of co-funded fee income more closely in 2021/22 and will require providers to maintain documentary evidence to account for all instances within which potential income is waived. This evidence will be periodically reviewed as part of our ongoing monitoring and audit processes.
- 8.11.3. Where learning is delivered in direct support of an employer, we will accept payment in kind, in the form of Work Experience placements of commensurate value to the potential fee income. Work experience placements generated in this manner should be used by the provider to support their Employability programmes or shared with other WECA providers.

## 9. CATEGORY OF ADULT EDUCATION: ENGAGEMENT PROVISION

**BENEFIT: To support disadvantaged residents to re-engage in education and progress into or towards a positive destination.**

### 9.1. DEFINITION

- 9.1.1. Engagement provision is intended to support residents facing various forms of disadvantage and residents suffering from low levels of prior attainment to re-engage in education and training and progress into further learning and (where appropriate) towards employment.
- 9.1.2. The majority of learners benefitting from Engagement provision will be either unemployed or economically inactive (and are likely to have been so for a significant period of time) for a variety of reasons. Other learners may be employed but face various issues such as under-employment, low pay and insecure employment.

### 9.2. PRIMARY PROGRESSION ROUTE(S)

- 9.2.1. The primary progression route for learners undertaking Engagement provision will normally be into further learning (ideally at a higher level as part of Employability provision).
- 9.2.2. Some may progress into work, but for most the degree of disadvantage and disengagement would make this an unrealistic prospect. Where direct progression into employment from the provision undertaken is a realistic prospect, it is likely that it would be more appropriate to categorise the learning and Employability.
- 9.2.3. Where the learner is already employed, progression within work is the preferable progression route.
- 9.2.4. For some learners, in particular those with learning difficulties and or disabilities, progression into independent living may be the most appropriate progression route.

### 9.3. MEASURES

- 9.3.1. WECA will adopt the following measures to monitor performance within this category of adult education:

MEASURES: ENGAGEMENT	TARGET
TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS RECRUITED WITHIN THE EMPLOYABILITY CATEGORY	4,700
TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIORITY RESIDENTS ENROLLED WITHIN THE EMPLOYABILITY CATEGORY	3,430
Total number of disadvantaged residents enrolled	4,700
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents from disadvantaged neighbourhoods enrolled	2,360
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents unemployed or economically inactive for 12 months or more enrolled	3,510
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents aged 50+ enrolled	2,020
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents aged 19-25 enrolled	1,600
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents from under-represented communities enrolled	1,550
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents with learning difficulties and / or disabilities enrolled	1,640
Total number of disadvantaged residents progressing into employment	500
Total number of disadvantaged residents progressing into learning at a higher level	2,820
Total number of disadvantaged residents completing a course and making progress towards a positive destination [TBC]	3,760
Total number of disadvantaged residents achieving literacy / numeracy / ESOL qualifications at Level 2	450

#### 9.4. BUDGET

9.4.1. WECA intends to invest approximately **30%** of its total adult education budget for 2021/22 within the Engagement category. This equates to a total budget of **£4,792,282** to be allocated through a combination of directly funded roll-forward allocations and the open application process.

#### 9.5. RINGFENCING

9.5.1. The following forms of ring-fencing will apply within the Engagement Category in 2021/22:

- a) PRIORITY RESIDENTS: Within our overall Engagement Provision budget for 2021/22, WECA will utilise at least **£3.5m** in support of our Priority Residents. This equates to **c.73%** of our total level of investment within the Engagement category of adult education.

#### 9.6. KEY PRIORITIES / CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED

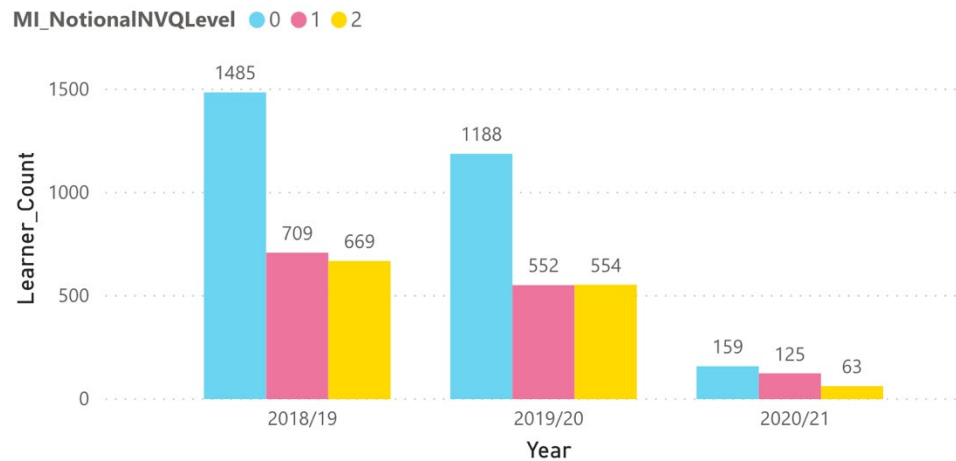
9.6.1. Within this category of adult education, WECA expects providers to respond to the following key priorities and challenges:

- a) ESOL: Our data shows that in recent years, the total number of residents undertaking ESOL qualifications has declined significantly, and even where

residents benefit from support relatively few progress to achieve at level 2 and therefore still lack functional language skills when they leave adult education:

### ESOL Learner Participation

Learner\_Count by Year and MI\_NotionalNVQLLevel



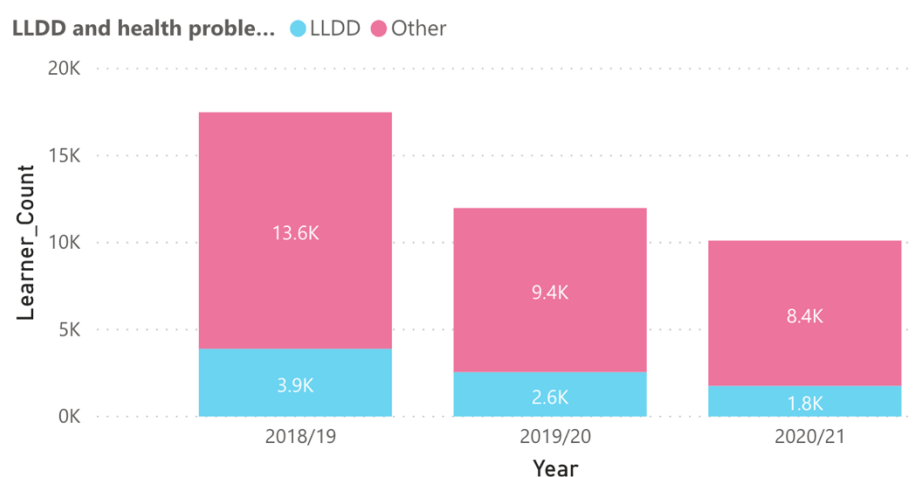
During the 2021/22 academic year, providers should further develop and expand their ESOL provision through programmes that effectively remove language barriers and offer high-quality CEIAG to promote progression into employment and / or learning at a higher level.

Providers should also support more residents with language barriers to progress through ESOL provision to achieve at level 2, the level at which the learner is deemed to be functionally literate. During the 2019/20 academic year, WECA funded 2,986 ESOL qualifications but only 174 of these (6%) were delivered at level 2 meaning the overwhelming majority of learners still faced significant language barriers after they had completed their WECA funded ESOL courses, and therefore their capacity to progress into and within employment, and their ability to interact with wider society remained significantly limited.

We have incorporated targets relating to the achievement of ESOL at level 2 within the range of benefits that will be used to manage performance within this category of adult education.

- b) LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND / OR DISABILITIES: 22.5% of the working age population in England in 2020, are classed as Equality Act core or work-limiting disabled. This is c.2 percentage points higher for both the West of England and WECA; this is driven up by a higher percentage of those classified as Equality Act core or work-limiting disabled within Bristol at 26.7%. However, the number and proportion of learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities supported by WECA adult education funding has reduced significantly in recent years, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of all learners:

## Learner\_Count by Year and LLDD and health problem (groups)



These residents frequently face the most significant barriers to employment and social inclusion and therefore represent a clear priority within our engagement provision.

Data published by the Department of Work and Pensions and the Department of Health and Social Care<sup>4</sup> show that employment levels amongst disabled people fall 28.1 percentage points below non-disabled people, and that disabled people are twice as likely to move out of work.

We are aware of particular challenges faced by individuals who benefitted from an Education Health and Care Plan up to age 25 but are still in need of support once the funding previously accessed through the EHCP is no longer available.

### c) DIGITAL SKILLS:

During the 2020/21 academic year WECA identified (via information from key stakeholders and provider feedback) a priority concerning digital access and inclusion, with a particular reference to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This adds to the existing evidence around jobs demand for digital skills and the national direction introduced via the new statutory Digital Entitlement. Subsequently, WECA invested significant additional monies to stimulate demand for digital qualifications, support the costs associated with delivering such qualifications and to purchase digital devices to be loaned to disadvantaged residents who would not otherwise be able to participate within the restrictions associated with COVID-19.

We encourage providers to maintain their focus on the delivery of digital skills during 2021/22, especially where the lack of such skills presents a significant barrier to progression into or within employment, and as a mechanism through which to enhance life-chances. We will continue to monitor the utilisation of the equipment purchased to ensure that it continues to benefit additional learners following the initial investment.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/875199/employment-of-disabled-people-2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875199/employment-of-disabled-people-2019.pdf)

## 10. CATEGORY OF ADULT EDUCATION: EMPLOYABILITY

**BENEFIT:** To support unemployed residents to progress into work

### 10.1. DEFINITION

- 10.1.1. Employability provision is intended to equip unemployed residents with the knowledge, skills and experience they need to secure employment.
- 10.1.2. The majority of learners benefitting from Employability provision will be either unemployed or economically inactive (and are likely to have been so for a significant period of time). Residents who are employed should not be enrolled on employability provision (though equivalent provision may be supported through the Foundation Skills for Work Category).
- 10.1.3. Direct progression into employment must be a realistic progression route for residents supported within this category. Where prior attainment, initial assessment and diagnostic testing suggests that this is not a realistic positive progression route the learner should be enrolled on Engagement provision from which progression into Employability provision is the planned progression route.

### 10.2. PRIMARY PROGRESSION ROUTE(S)

- 10.2.1. The primary progression route for all learners undertaking employability provision is a job. Ideally a secure job with a good wage, though we recognise that progression into any form of employment is amongst the most effective means of ultimately securing secure employment with good pay. Where the employment to which a learner progresses is insecure and / or low pay, providers may continue to support the learner through Foundation Skills for Work provision.
- 10.2.2. Direct progression into employment must be a realistic progression route for residents supported within this category. Where prior attainment, initial assessment and diagnostic testing suggests that this is not a realistic positive progression route the learner should be enrolled on Engagement provision from which progression into Employability provision is the planned progression route. This includes progression into an Apprenticeship.
- 10.2.3. Where a learner was deemed capable of progressing into work at the beginning of their programme of employability provision but do not actually progress into work other destinations such as voluntary work or further learning may be appropriate.

### 10.3. MEASURES

- 10.3.1. WECA will adopt the following measures to monitor performance within this category of adult education:



MEASURES: EMPLOYABILITY	TARGET
TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS RECRUITED WITHIN THE EMPLOYABILITY CATEGORY	4,130
TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIORITY RESIDENTS ENROLLED WITHIN THE EMPLOYABILITY CATEGORY	2,620
Total number progressing into paid employment	1,390
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents unemployed or economically inactive for 12 months or more enrolled progressing into paid employment	870
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents unemployed or economically inactive for 6-12 months or more enrolled progressing into paid employment	180
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents with prior attainment below full level 2 progressing into paid employment	410
Number achieving literacy / numeracy / ESOL qualification at Level 2	280
Number achieving qualification at Full Level 2	120
Number achieving qualification at First Full Level 2	40
Number achieving a High Value qualification	60
Number achieving qualification at Full Level 3	60
Number achieving qualification at First Full Level 3	60
Number achieving a targeted level 3 offer qualification	60
Number competing a Sector Based Work Academy programme	630
Number completing a WECA Recruitment Pipeline programme	100
Number Progressing into Paid Employment with a above the low wage threshold	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment and still in employment 6 months after progressing	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment and still in employment 12 months after progressing	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment within a skills shortage occupation	TBC

TBC = WECA does not yet have access to data which can be used to establish a baseline for these measures. We will therefore use the planned surveys to establish a baseline and set targets for future years.

#### 10.4. BUDGET

10.4.1. WECA intends to invest approximately **35%** of its total adult education budget for 2021/22 within the Employability category. This equates to a total budget of **£5,517,495** to be allocated through a combination of directly funded roll-forward allocations and the open application process.

#### 10.5. RINGFENCING

10.5.1. The following forms of ring-fencing will apply within the Employability Category in 2021/22:

- a) PRIORITY RESIDENTS: Within our overall Employability Provision budget for 2021/22, WECA intends to utilise at least **£3.5m** in support of our Priority

Residents. This equates to **c.63%** of our total level of investment within the Employability category of adult education.

- b) SECTOR BASED WORK ACADEMY PROGRAMME [SWAP]: Building upon the expansion of SWAP provision supported by WECA during the 2019/20 academic year, and the anticipated removal of delivery challenges following the removal of COVID-19 restriction's, WECA plans to invest at least **£1.5m** of our Employability Provision budget in Sector Based Work Academy Programmes during the 2021/22 academic year.
- c) WECA RECRUITMENT PIPELINE: Complimenting our investment in SWAP provision and expanding upon our £200k investment during the 2019/20 academic year, WECA plans to invest at least **£500k** of our Employability Provision budget in WECA Recruitment Pipeline programmes during the 2021/22 academic year

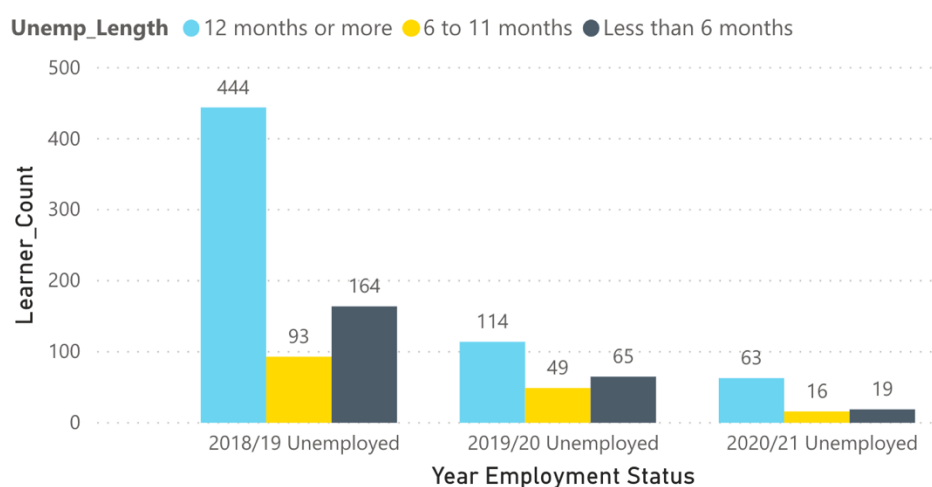
## 10.6. KEY PRIORITIES / CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED

10.6.1. Within this category of adult education, WECA expects providers respond to the following key priorities and challenges:

- a) SUPPORTING THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED: Unemployed residents face a range of barriers to unemployment. For some the major barrier to employment is simply the lack of appropriate employment opportunities, an issue that an offer of education can do relatively little to address. At the other end of the spectrum residents may face multiple and complex barriers to employment many of which can be effectively addressed by adult education, not least the lack of skills.

The barriers which can be addressed by AEB tend to be more prevalent amongst the long-term unemployed, and this has traditionally been the primary focus of AEB. However, within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic the level of support offered to unemployed residents has fallen to a very low level.

**Learner\_Count by Year, Employment Status and Unemp\_Length**

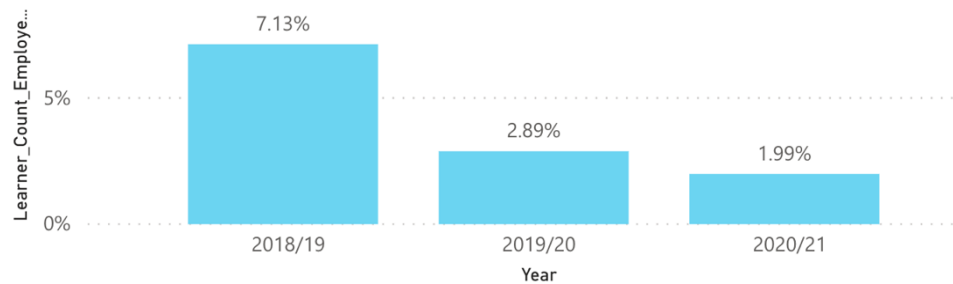


A clear priority within WECA Employability provision is to restore the level of support accessed by residents who have been unemployed for 12 months or more. We will also increase the level of support accessed by residents who have been

unemployed for 6-11 months to exceed the level of support accessed by residents who became unemployed more recently.

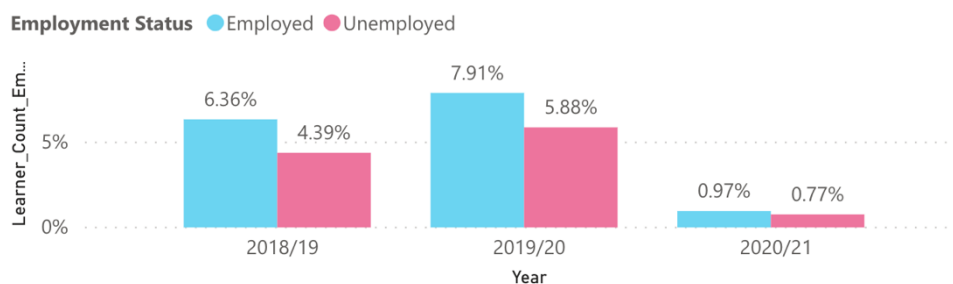
- b) **LOW PRIOR ATTAINMENT:** In addition to increasing the uptake of Employability provision amongst the long term unemployed, we will also significantly increase the level of support accessed by residents with low levels of prior attainment (<L2). ILR data shows that the proportion of such residents who progress from Adult Education provision into employment is very low:

**Learners with <FL2 progressing to Employment % of Unemployed**



- c) **UNDER-REPORTING OF POSITIVE PROGRESSION:** According to most recent 2020/21 ILR data, only 3% of learners supported by WECA employability provision progress into work at the end of their programmes. This is far too low, though we believe that the issue is exacerbated by significant levels of under-reporting. The priority for WECA is the destinations to which learners progress, the qualification achieved is simply a means to this end. We therefore require all providers to report the destination to which all learners progressed within their ILR returns. WECA will initiate surveys to confirm whether progression is sustained.
- d) **LITERACY / NUMERACY / ESOL:** These issues are amongst the most significant barriers to employment and yet too many residents who are functionally literate and / or innumerate participate in WECA adult education programmes which do not seek to address these critical issues.

**Eng/Math/ESOL achieved at L2 % by Employment Status**

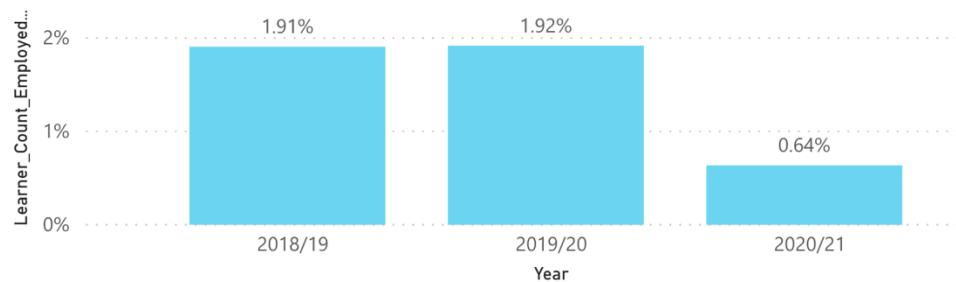


WECA expects providers to incorporate literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision within the programmes delivered within the Employability category of adult education and to utilise effective initial assessment processes to identify such needs whenever they are present.

- e) **ACHIEVEMENT AT FULL LEVEL 2:** Full level 2 is the level of achievement at which historically an individual has been deemed to be 'employable'. However, historically almost all of the adult education provision delivered in support of unemployed residents has focussed on skill at a far lower level. Therefore the Employability provision which we fund does not equip residents with a significant

level of skill. This is likely to be one of the reasons why positive progression into employment appears to be so low as learners will need to compete for jobs with residents with far higher levels of prior attainment.

### Full Level 2 Achieved % of Unemployed Learners



Only 38% of jobs in the West of England are thought to be lower skill level occupations (NVQ Levels 1 & 2); this decreases slightly to 37% of jobs in WECA. The broad industry which has the highest proportion of low skilled occupations is distribution, hotels and restaurants; this sector is a volume industry, employing c.85,000 people in the West of England and c.66,900 in WECA in a wide range of activities including retail.

The largest sector increase in future employment is expected for human health and social work activities, with this increase predicted because of both an uplift in spending and recruitment due to the pandemic and longer-term investment because of the demographics of the nation's ageing population.

Data suggests that occupations with level 4 skills are going to see the greatest demand, through both net change and replacement demand. Occupations requiring level 2 skills are expected to see the second highest demand; whilst occupations with level 1 skills are going to see the lowest level of demand. Whilst occupations requiring lower-level skills are anticipated to see less jobs growth, ensuring individuals have basic lower-level skills is critical to opening up opportunities and pathways to higher skilled occupations.

Therefore providers should increase their efforts to equip unemployed residents with skills at full level 2, in particular qualifications from the 'high-value course' list that are of particular relevance to the WECA local economy. It is critical to increase the focus at full-level 2 because WECA is increasingly a high-skilled economy, and the 'employable' threshold is rapidly gravitating towards full level 3 and above.

- f) **WORK EXPERIENCE:** For residents who have little or no previous employment, a work-experience placement is likely to be amongst the most transformative interventions that a provider can offer in order to support progression into employment.

During the 2020/21 academic year, WECA created a suite of learning aims which made work experience a directly fundable element of an adult education programme. Thus far the pandemic has prevented significant utilisation of these new learning aims, but as restrictions relax providers should incorporate work experience within all Employability programmes where residents lack sufficient experience to secure employment.

g) DIGITAL SKILLS:

During the 2020/21 academic year, WECA identified a priority concerning digital inclusion and invested significant additional monies to stimulate demand for digital qualifications, the support the costs associated with delivering such qualifications and to purchase digital devices to be loaned to disadvantaged residents who would not otherwise be able to participate within the restrictions associated with COVID-19.

Providers should maintain their focus on the delivery of digital skills during 2021/22, especially where the lack of such skills presents a significant barrier to progression into or within employment. We will continue to monitor the utilisation of the equipment purchased to ensure that it continues to benefit additional learners following the initial investment.

d) SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS: WECA aims to expand the range of Supported Internships made available to residents with learning difficulties and / or disabilities during the 2021/22 academic year.

Supported Internships are widely recognised to be amongst the most effective means through which to support disabled people into employment. They are well established as a form of prioritised provision for disabled people up to the age of 25<sup>5</sup>, but national policy does not go beyond this age (for technical funding reasons). However, if a supported internship is an effective means through which to support young people with disabilities into work, they are likely to provide equally effective for older disabled people who lack good work experience.

Providers should incorporate such opportunities within their Employability programmes in order to ensure that disabled people are not excluded from support.

e) SELF-EMPLOYMENT / BUSINESS START-UP: The aftermath of the pandemic is likely to result in an extremely challenging and competitive labour market for some time to come. For some residents, starting their own business may offer a more certain route into employment than applying for jobs. Providers should develop and offer more provision which supports such residents to establish business start-ups and / or become self-employed. Providers offering qualifications which support self-employment and business start-up will want to sign-post learners to the WECA Growth Hub in order to access a broader range of support (<https://www.wearegrowth.co.uk/>)

## 11. CATEGORY OF ADULT EDUCATION: FOUNDATION SKILLS FOR WORK

**BENEFIT:** To support employed residents to improve their skills and progress within their careers [skills up to and including full level 2]

### 11.1. DEFINITION

11.1.1. Foundation Skills for Work provision seeks to support employed residents to improve their skills and progress within their careers through an offer of learning including provision up to and including full level 2

11.1.2. Within this category we will support the following types of resident:

- a) Employed residents who are not functionally literate or numerate (including those with ESOL needs)
- b) Employed residents with prior attainment below full level 2
- c) Employed residents in low wage employment
- d) Employed residents in insecure employment (including those at risk of redundancy and employed through zero-hour contracts)

### 11.2. PRIMARY PROGRESSION ROUTE(S)

11.2.1. The primary progression route for learners undertaking Foundation Skills for Work provision will normally be into improved employment. This may take the form of:

- a) Higher paid work with the same employer or a new employer
- b) More secure employment with the same employer or a new employer
- c) Progression to Intermediate Skills for Work provision
- d) Progression to an Apprenticeship
- e) Progression to Higher Education

### 11.3. MEASURES

11.3.1. WECA will adopt the following measures to monitor performance within this category of adult education:

MEASURE	TARGET
TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS RECRUITED WITHIN THE FOUNDATION SKILLS FOR WORK CATEGORY	4,330
TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIORITY RESIDENTS ENROLLED WITHIN THE FOUNDATION SKILLS FOR WORK CATEGORY	2,210
Number enrolled on the Low Wage Pilot	1,500
Number enrolled with prior attainment below Full Level 2	2,340
Number achieving literacy / numeracy / ESOL qualification at level 2	490
Number achieving qualification at Full Level 2	270
Number achieving qualification at First Full Level 2	170
Number achieving a High Value qualification	130
Number Progressing into Paid Employment with a wage above the low wage threshold	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment with a wage above the low wage threshold and still in employment with a wage above the threshold 6 months after progressing	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment with a wage above the low wage threshold and still in employment with a wage above the threshold 12 months after progressing	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment with a wage above the low wage threshold within a skills shortage occupation	TBC

TBC = WECA does not yet have access to data which can be used to establish a baseline for these measures. We will therefore use the planned surveys to establish a baseline and set targets for future years.

#### 11.4. BUDGET

11.4.1. WECA intends to invest approximately **25%** of its total adult education budget for 2021/22 within the Foundation Skills for Work category. This equates to a total budget of **£3,941,068** to be allocated through a combination of directly funded roll-forward allocations and the open application process.

#### 11.5. RINGFENCING

11.5.1. WECA does not intend to establish any ringfencing of funds within this Category of Adult Education

#### 11.6. KEY PRIORITIES / CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED

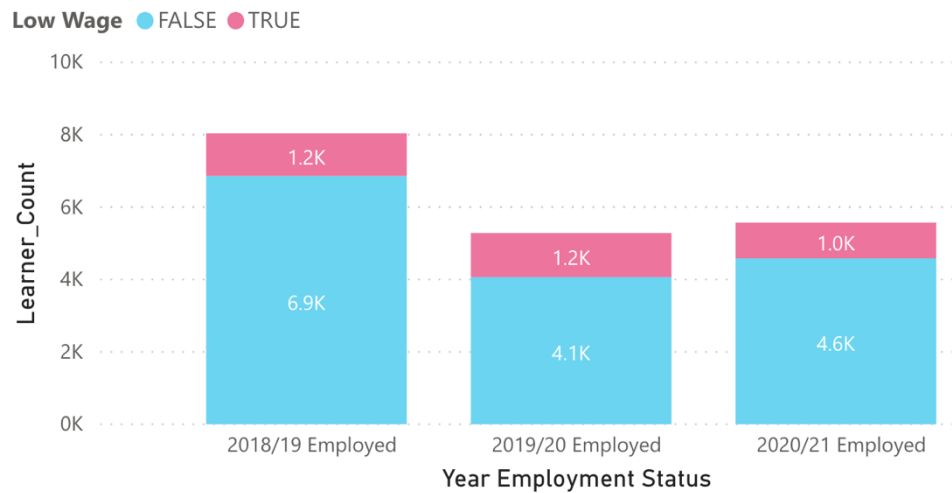
11.6.1. Within this category of adult education, providers should respond to the following key priorities and challenges:

- a) **LOW WAGE PILOT:** The West of England is estimated to have between 102,600 and 153,900 jobs paying less than the Living Wage Foundation's rate of £9.50 an hour. Across the West of England and the constituent authorities there are significantly more jobs held by females that pay less than the LWF living wage than

jobs held by males. Within the region Bristol and South Gloucestershire have the highest number of jobs that pay below the living wage.

Despite our previous efforts to encourage providers to increase the level of support offered to residents on low wages, the number of residents supported through the low wage pilot remains very low. In 2019/20 only 1,200 residents were enrolled through the low wage pilot and almost all of these residents were recruited by a single provider.

### Learner\_Count by Year, Employment Status and Low Wage

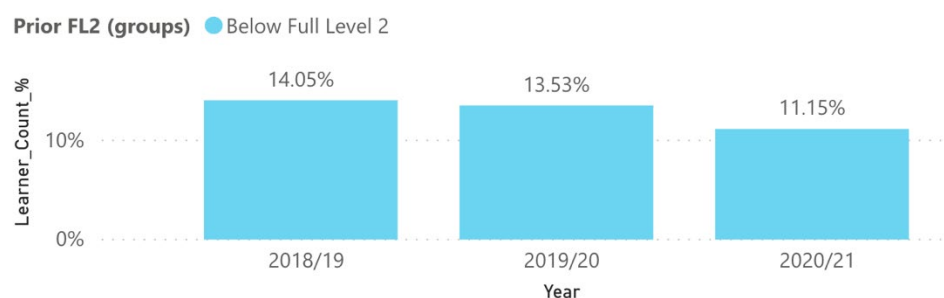


As set out above, during the 2021/22 academic year we aim to invest at least 51% of our total budget in support of priority residents, including those on low wages, we therefore expect to see a significant increase in uptake in 2021/22. **Providers should establish eligibility for the low wage pilot for all learners enrolled within the Foundation Skills for Work category from 2021/22 to maximise participation.**

WECA has increased the threshold below which residents are able to access funding through the low wage pilot to align with the real living wage of £9.30 per hour (£18,135 per annum). This has the added benefit of increasing alignment with other WECA funded provision (such as Future Bright – see below).

- b) **PRIOR ATTAINMENT BELOW FULL LEVEL 2:** Other than residents supported under the low wage pilot, the only group of priority resident supported within this category are those with prior attainment below full level 2. However, historically the proportion of employed learners with prior attainment below full level 2 has been relatively low:

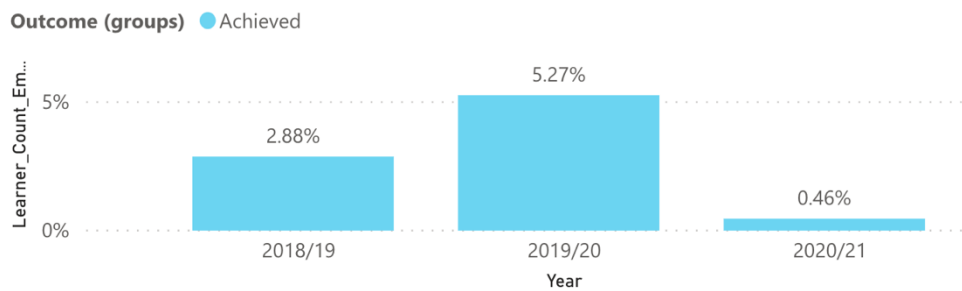
### Prior attainment <FL2 % of Employed





Even though the majority of learners supported are already qualified at or above full level 2, the number of achievements at full level 2 is extremely low:

### Full Level 2 Achieved % of Employed Learners



This suggests that the vast majority of learners are undertaking qualifications at a significantly lower level than which they have already achieved and is therefore unlikely to have a significant impact on their overall skill levels.

Only 38% of jobs in the West of England are thought to be lower skill level occupations (NVQ Levels 1 & 2); this decreases slightly to 37% of jobs in WECA. The broad industry which has the highest proportion of low skilled occupations is distribution, hotels and restaurants; this sector is a volume industry, employing c.85,000 people in the West of England and c.66,900 in WECA in a wide range of activities including retail.

The largest sector increase in future employment is expected for human health and social work activities, with this increase predicted because of both an uplift in spending and recruitment due to the pandemic and longer-term investment because of the demographics of the nation's ageing population.

Providers should increase their efforts to equip unemployed residents with skills at full level 2, in particular qualifications from the 'high-value course' list that are of particular relevance to the WECA local economy. It is critical to increase the focus at full-level 2 because WECA is increasingly a high-skills economy, and the 'employable' threshold is rapidly gravitating towards full level 3.

- c) **WORKPLACE DELIVERY:** WECA has reformed adult education funding rules to make the delivery of adult education provision in the workplace possible. Where this is the case the employer will be required to pay any co-funded fee required and this may not be waived by the provider. WECA will, however, accept payment in kind in the form of Work Experience Placements. If the provider offering to co-funded delivery is unable to utilise the work experience placements secured in this manner they should be shared with other WECA providers. The payment in kind will not be considered to have been 'paid' until the work experience placement is utilised.
- d) **TRADE UNION PROVISION:** WECA values Trade Union provision and the role it plays in establishing more effective workplaces and supporting residents to improve their skills and progress. However, Trade Union Provision faces a funding challenge within the context of devolution as there are many trades unions and each supports a relatively small number of learners at insufficient scale to meet adult education minimum contract level requirements.

We will continue to support Trade Union provision through our directly funded providers and seek a single prime provider who may act as a route to funding for

other Trades Unions. This route may be established through an existing directly funded provider with a roll-forward allocation for 2021/22 or through the open application process.

- e) FUTURE BRIGHT: WECA also supports residents on low wages through our Future Bright programme which offers mentoring and coaching, advice and skills support. Some of the skills support offered to Future Bright Learners is funded through the Adult Education Budget and WECA will increase the proportion of AEB funding utilised in this manner.

## 12. CATEGORY OF ADULT EDUCATION: INTERMEDIATE SKILLS FOR WORK

**BENEFIT:** To support employed residents to improve their skills and progress within their careers [skills at level 3]

### 12.1. DEFINITION

12.1.1. Intermediate Skills for Work provision seeks to support employed residents to improve their skills and progress within their careers through an offer of learning at level 3.

12.1.2. Within this category we primarily seek to support the following types of resident:

- a) Employed residents with prior attainment below full level 3
- b) Employed residents in low wage employment
- c) Employed residents in insecure employment (including those at risk of redundancy and employed through zero-hour contracts)

### 12.2. PRIMARY PROGRESSION ROUTE(S)

12.2.1. The primary progression route for learners undertaking Intermediate Skills for Work provision will normally be into improved employment. This may take the form of:

- a) Higher paid work with the same employer or a new employer
- b) More secure employment with the same employer or a new employer
- c) Progression to an Apprenticeship
- d) Progression to Higher Education

### 12.3. MEASURES

12.3.1. WECA will adopt the following measures to monitor performance within this category of adult education:

MEASURE	TARGET
TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS RECRUITED WITHIN THE INTERMEDIATE SKILLS FOR WORK CATEGORY	1,820
TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIORITY RESIDENTS ENROLLED WITHIN THE INTERMEDIATE SKILLS FOR WORK CATEGORY	240
Number achieving a High Value qualification	130
Number achieving qualification at Full Level 3	420
Number achieving qualification at First Full Level 3	310
Number achieving a targeted level 3 offer qualification	260
Number Progressing into Paid Employment with a wage above the low wage threshold	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment with a wage above the low wage threshold and still in employment with a wage above the threshold 6 months after progressing	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment with a wage above the low wage threshold and still in employment with a wage above the threshold 12 months after progressing	TBC
*Number progressing into paid employment with a wage above the low wage threshold within a skills shortage occupation	TBC

TBC = WECA does not yet have access to data which can be used to establish a baseline for these measures. We will therefore use the planned surveys to establish a baseline and set targets for future years.

#### 12.4. BUDGET

12.4.1. WECA will invest approximately **8%** of our total adult education budget for 2021/22 within the Employability category. This equates to a total budget of **£1,261,142** to be allocated through a combination of directly funded roll-forward allocations and the open application process.

#### 12.5. RINGFENCING

12.5.1. The following forms of ring-fencing will apply within the Intermediate Skills for Work Category in 2021/22:

- a) NATIONAL SKILLS FUND / LIFETIME SKILLS GUARANTEE LEVEL 3 OFFER: Within the overall budget available to support Intermediate Skills for Work, WECA is required to invest at least £1,066,300 in Level 3 offer provision

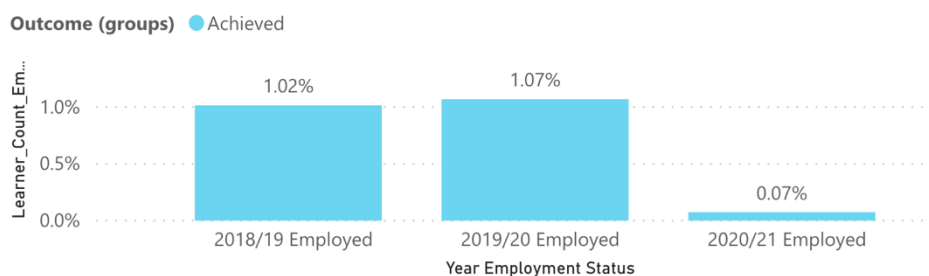
#### 12.6. KEY PRIORITIES / CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED

12.6.1. Within this category of adult education, WECA expects providers respond to the following key priorities and challenges:

- a) ACHIEVEMENT AT FULL LEVEL 3:

Historically, a very low number of WECA residents achieved qualifications at full level 3 as a result of their participation in adult education:

## Full Level 3 Achieved % of Employed Learners



The West of England is a high-skilled economy with most future opportunities expected to emerge at level 4 and above. However, historically, the West of England has tended to import highly qualified workers from elsewhere in the country than upskilling its own population.

The adult education budget may support learners to progress up to and including full level 3. Beyond this point learning must progress through other routes such as higher-education, Apprenticeships and Advanced Learner Loans. The role of AEB is to support residents to reach the point where they are able to enrol on such programmes. This journey may last many years and include multiple phases of learning.

From April 2021, WECA has been granted a ring-fenced allocation to support the delivery of the National Skills Fund Level 3 Offer. We will therefore significantly increase the level of participation and achievement of full level 3 qualifications that form part of the Level 3 Offer.

WECA will propose additional qualifications to be added to the Level 3 offer list (within a defined set of parameters put in place by DfE). If any provider wishes to propose additional qualifications to be added to the Level 3 Offer list they should email [adulteducation@westofengland-ca.gov.uk](mailto:adulteducation@westofengland-ca.gov.uk) and WECA will consider adding them to a business case to DfE

### 13. CATEGORY OF ADULT EDUCATION: LEARNING FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

**BENEFIT:** To support residents to progress into Higher Education

#### 13.1. DEFINITION

13.1.1. Learning for Personal Development is a ‘catch-all’ category which includes all adult education provision which does not satisfy the definitions which apply to the other categories as detailed above. As such the provision delivered within this category is generally considered to be our lowest priority.

13.1.2. The most significant element of high-priority provision within this category is provision that supports progression into higher education. This may take the form of formal ‘Access to HE’ courses or other forms of L3 provision where HE is the intended destination of the learner and their learning does not satisfy the definitions of the other categories detailed above.

#### 13.2. PRIMARY PROGRESSION ROUTE(S)

13.2.1. The primary progression route for residents undertaking Learning for Personal Development provision is into Higher Education

#### 13.3. MEASURES

13.3.1. WECA will adopt the following measures to monitor performance within this category of adult education:

MEASURE	TARGET
TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS RECRUITED WITHIN THE LEARNING FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY	260
TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIORITY RESIDENTS ENROLLED WITHIN THE LEARNING FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY	130
Number of residents enrolling on Access to Higher Education provision	190
Number achieving qualification at Full Level 3	190
Number achieving qualification at First Full Level 3	190
Number of residents progressing from WECA Adult Education provision into Higher Education	TBC
Number of residents from communities with low HE participation rates progressing from WECA Adult Education provision into HE	TBC
Number of residents from under-represented BaME communities progressing from WECA Adult Education provision into HE	TBC

TBC = WECA does not yet have access to data which can be used to establish a baseline for these measures. We will therefore use the planned surveys to establish a baseline and set targets for future years.

#### 13.4. BUDGET

- 13.4.1. WECA aims to invest approximately **2%** of our total adult education budget for 2021/22 within the Learning for Personal Development category. This equates to a total budget of **£315,285** to be allocated through a combination of directly funded roll-forward allocations and the open application process.

#### 13.5. RINGFENCING

- 13.5.1. WECA does not intend to establish any ringfencing of funds within this Category of Adult Education

#### 13.6. KEY PRIORITIES / CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED

- 13.6.1. The main challenge within this category of adult education is likely to relate to the categorisation of provision. Historically, all learning which does not satisfy the definition of one of the categories above has been placed within the Learning for Personal development category. However, much of this provision is not a priority for WECA, especially that which is primarily undertaken for purposes related to leisure where the individual learner does not aspire to progress to any positive destination.

Within this category the only form of learning which does represent a priority for WECA are those programmes which promote access to higher education

The key challenge within this category is therefore likely to be the reduction of low-priority provision in order to support increased investment within other categories.

## ANNEX 1: SUMMARIES

### BENEFITS

# ADULT EDUCATION BENEFITS AND MEASURES: ENGAGEMENT



## BENEFIT:

To support disadvantaged residents to re-engage in education and progress into or towards a positive destination.

BUDGET: £4.8M  
RINGFENCING: £3.5M [PRIORITY RESIDENTS]

## CHALLENGES / PRIORITIES

- ESOL
- LLDD
- DIGITAL SKILLS

MEASURES: ENGAGEMENT	TARGET
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS RECRUITED WITHIN THE EMPLOYABILITY CATEGORY</b>	<b>4,700</b>
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIORITY RESIDENTS ENROLLED WITHIN THE EMPLOYABILITY CATEGORY</b>	<b>3,430</b>
Total number of disadvantaged residents enrolled	4,700
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents from disadvantaged neighbourhoods enrolled	2,360
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents unemployed or economically inactive for 12 months or more enrolled	3,510
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents aged 50+ enrolled	2,020
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents aged 19-25 enrolled	1,600
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents from under-represented communities enrolled	1,550
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents with learning difficulties and / or disabilities enrolled	1,640
Total number of disadvantaged residents progressing into employment	500
Total number of disadvantaged residents progressing into learning at a higher level	2,820
Total number of disadvantaged residents completing a course and making progress towards a positive destination [TBC]	3,760
Total number of disadvantaged residents achieving literacy / numeracy / ESOL qualifications at Level 2	450



## ANNEX 1: SUMMARIES

### BENEFITS

# ADULT EDUCATION BENEFITS AND MEASURES: EMPLOYABILITY



## BENEFIT:

To support unemployed residents to progress into work

**BUDGET:** £5.5M  
**RINGFENCING:** £3.5M [PRIORITY RESIDENTS]  
 £1.5M [SWAP]  
 £0.5M [WRP]

### CHALLENGES / PRIORITIES

- LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED / LOW PRIOR ATTAINMENT
- PROGRESSION INTO JOBS
- LITERACY / NUMERACY / ESOL
- FULL LEVEL2
- WORK EXPERIENCE
- DIGITAL SKILLS
- SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS
- SELF-EMPLOYMENT / BUSINESS START-UP

Not yet have access to data which can be used to establish a baseline for these measures. Use the planned surveys to establish a baseline and set targets for future years.

MEASURES: EMPLOYABILITY	TARGET
TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS RECRUITED WITHIN THE EMPLOYABILITY CATEGORY	4,130
TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIORITY RESIDENTS ENROLLED WITHIN THE EMPLOYABILITY CATEGORY	2,620
Total number progressing into paid employment	1,390
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents unemployed or economically inactive for 12 months or more enrolled progressing into paid employment	870
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents unemployed or economically inactive for 6-12 months or more enrolled progressing into paid employment	180
<i>of which:</i> Number of residents with prior attainment below full level 2 progressing into paid employment	410
Number achieving literacy / numeracy / ESOL qualification at Level 2	280
Number achieving qualification at Full Level 2	120
Number achieving qualification at First Full Level 2	40
Number achieving a High Value qualification	60
Number achieving qualification at Full Level 3	60
Number achieving qualification at First Full Level 3	60
Number achieving a targeted level 3 offer qualification	60
Number competing a Sector Based Work Academy programme	630
Number completing a WECA Recruitment Pipeline programme	100
Number Progressing into Paid Employment with a above the low wage threshold	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment and still in employment 6 months after progressing	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment and still in employment 12 months after progressing	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment within a skills shortage occupation	TBC

## ANNEX 1: SUMMARIES

### BENEFITS

# ADULT EDUCATION BENEFITS AND MEASURES: FOUNDATION SKILLS FOR WORK



## BENEFIT:

To support employed residents to improve their skills and progress within their careers [skills up to and including full level 2]

BUDGET: £3.9M  
RINGFENCING: NONE

### CHALLENGES / PRIORITIES

- LOW WAGE PILOT
- PRIOR ATTAINMENT BELOW FULL LEVEL 3
- WORKPLACE DELIVERY
- TRADE UNION PROVISION
- FUTURE BRIGHT

MEASURE	TARGET
TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS RECRUITED WITHIN THE FOUNDATION SKILLS FOR WORK CATEGORY	4,330
TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIORITY RESIDENTS ENROLLED WITHIN THE FOUNDATION SKILLS FOR WORK CATEGORY	2,210
Number enrolled on the Low Wage Pilot	1,500
Number enrolled with prior attainment below Full Level 2	2,340
Number achieving literacy / numeracy / ESOL qualification at level 2	490
Number achieving qualification at Full Level 2	270
Number achieving qualification at First Full Level 2	170
Number achieving a High Value qualification	130
Number Progressing into Paid Employment with a wage above the low wage threshold	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment with a wage above the low wage threshold and still in employment with a wage above the threshold 6 months after progressing	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment with a wage above the low wage threshold and still in employment with a wage above the threshold 12 months after progressing	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment with a wage above the low wage threshold within a skills shortage occupation	TBC

TBC = WECA does not yet have access to data which can be used to establish a baseline for these measures. We will therefore use the planned surveys to establish a baseline and set targets for future years.

## ANNEX 1: SUMMARIES

### BENEFITS

# ADULT EDUCATION BENEFITS AND MEASURES: INTERMEDIATE SKILLS FOR WORK



## BENEFIT:

To support employed residents to improve their skills and progress within their careers [skills at level 3]

BUDGET: £1.3M  
RINGFENCING: £1.1M [LEVEL 3 OFFER]

### CHALLENGES / PRIORITIES

- ACHIEVEMENT AT FULL LEVEL 3
- LEVEL 3 OFFER

MEASURE	TARGET
TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS RECRUITED WITHIN THE INTERMEDIATE SKILLS FOR WORK CATEGORY	1,820
TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIORITY RESIDENTS ENROLLED WITHIN THE INTERMEDIATE SKILLS FOR WORK CATEGORY	240
Number achieving a High Value qualification	130
Number achieving qualification at Full Level 3	420
Number achieving qualification at First Full Level 3	310
Number achieving a targeted level 3 offer qualification	260
Number Progressing into Paid Employment with a wage above the low wage threshold	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment with a wage above the low wage threshold and still in employment with a wage above the threshold 6 months after progressing	TBC
Number progressing into paid employment with a wage above the low wage threshold and still in employment with a wage above the threshold 12 months after progressing	TBC
'Number progressing into paid employment with a wage above the low wage threshold within a skills shortage occupation	TBC

TBC = WECA does not yet have access to data which can be used to establish a baseline for these measures. We will therefore use the planned surveys to establish a baseline and set targets for future years.

## ANNEX 1: SUMMARIES

### BENEFITS

# ADULT EDUCATION BENEFITS AND MEASURES: LEARNING FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



## BENEFIT:

To support residents to progress into Higher Education

BUDGET: £315K  
RINGFENCING: NONE

### CHALLENGES / PRIORITIES

- ACCESS TO HE
- MINIMISING LOW PRIORITY PROVISION

MEASURE	TARGET
TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS RECRUITED WITHIN THE LEARNING FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY	260
TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIORITY RESIDENTS ENROLLED WITHIN THE LEARNING FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY	130
Number of residents enrolling on Access to Higher Education provision	190
Number achieving qualification at Full Level 3	190
Number achieving qualification at First Full Level 3	190
Number of residents progressing from WECA Adult Education provision into Higher Education	TBC
Number of residents from communities with low HE participation rates progressing from WECA Adult Education provision into HE	TBC
Number of residents from under-represented BaME communities progressing from WECA Adult Education provision into HE	TBC

TBC = WECA does not yet have access to data which can be used to establish a baseline for these measures. We will therefore use the planned surveys to establish a baseline and set targets for future years.