



# Bristol Employment, Skills and Lifelong Learning Plan







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# Executive summary

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This plan provides a road map for Bristol’s Employment, Skills and Lifelong Learning Service. Based on extensive research and feedback from residents and stakeholders, we have identified 8 top priorities that are aligned with wider strategies and policies. Working together, we want to smash through barriers and achieve shared prosperity for all. As we drive things forward, detailed plans and progress are being shared through community conversations, multi-agency boards and regular governance reports. In preparing this plan, you said, we learned and we will...

## 1. Connect the local system better to tackle employment inequality and poverty

- Continue to build a co-ordinated hub and spoke employment and skills offer with partners.
- Improve referrals to ESL services by raising the profile and integration of ESL as a priority service.
- Work with strategic partners to develop an ‘Employers 4 Change’ forum.
- Embed ESL into the Bristol Family Hub model.
- Work in partnership with the Integrated Care Partnership, the NHS and Public Health.
- Join up with strategic bodies and teams that oversee our transport and childcare infrastructure.

## 2. Achieve better career outcomes for young people and families being left behind

- Secure long-term investment for Bristol WORKS.
- Continue to strengthen the Bristol Post 16 partnership and team.
- Secure long-term funding for a NEET reduction programme.
- Work with schools/settings to develop a ‘work readiness curriculum’.
- Develop innovative parent/care training programmes.
- Pilot a Cradle to Career programme.

## 3. Drive employment and skills priorities and targets into all major developments and contracts

- Develop the Building Bristol consortium.
- Introduce new monitoring and reporting arrangements on BCC managed developments.
- Accelerate joint working and co-develop reporting arrangements with BCC commissioners.
- Investigate opportunities for joint working and reporting requirements with VCS organisations.
- Improve the operation of the BCC Social Value Policy and TOMS procedures.
- Ensure that city infrastructure developments and plans take account of critical employment and skills needs.

## 4. Prepare local people for jobs of the future, including clean energy and digital jobs

- Deliver the Innovate UK Mission Net Zero Skills and Supply Chain project.
- Work with City Leap to embed employment and skills..
- Motivate young people to progress to jobs with a positive impact on Bristol’s carbon neutrality goals.
- Secure critical resources so that recycled and new digital devices can be distributed.
- Create and support community IT suites.
- Provide information about net zero and new digital technologies.



**5. Help employers recruit diverse talent and plug skills gaps in essential job roles**

- Complete the pilot ESL Health and Social Care and Parks and Green Spaces Inclusive Career Pathway programmes.
- Secure long-term funding to maintain and further develop ESL Inclusive Career and Talent Pathway programmes targeting.
- Work together with the BCC HR and Learning and Development Team to improve diverse recruitment.
- Co-ordinate a campaign through Building Bristol to improve the reputation of the construction sector.
- Develop an early years and education recruitment campaign and career pathway programme.
- Ensure that Future Bright resources are targeted at individuals from equalities groups.

**6. Support Disabled people and those with health conditions to achieve paid employment**

- Involve Disabled people in shaping ESL services.
- Work with SEND, Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care Teams to transform policies and procedures relating to employment outcomes.
- Maintain and build on the successful We Work for Everyone programme.
- Ensure that partner employers have access to Disability equality training.
- Ensure that Bristol has a functioning Access to Work and specialist employment support services.
- Work with the Integrated Care Partnership, the NHS and key local partners to secure new devolved health and work funding.

**7. Enable migrants and refugees to build on their skills to settle and thrive in Bristol**

- Build a strong co-ordinated ESOL offer including part-time and intensive programmes.
- Support migrants and refugees to access skills programmes with embedded ESOL.
- Develop improved access to volunteering, experience of work and career coaching support.
- Establish local arrangements for overseas qualification and driving licence validation and conversion.
- Strengthen ESOL Conversation Clubs.
- Develop an employer toolkit to support their employment of refugees and asylum seekers.

**8. Boost lifelong learning for work, life, citizenship and wellbeing**

- Develop a collaborative local Bristol lifelong learning offer.
- Expand and further develop Community Learning provision.
- Support the creation and take up of apprenticeships.
- Develop a community development programme to empower residents.
- Develop and deliver a positive action tutor training programme.
- Rejuvenate Bristol's Learning City Partnership.

# Introduction

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The aim of this plan is set out a clear road map for the Bristol City Council Employment, Skills and Lifelong Learning (ESL) service for the period 2024-2030.

This plan is based on extensive research and feedback from residents, employers, elected members, ESL team members, partner providers, wider council teams, funders and strategic partners. It is aligned with and designed to inform wider strategies and policies at a national, regional and local level.

We know that many local people feel that their potential is not recognised. They're struggling to make ends meet. They feel shut out of education and employment opportunities. Many local employers are also struggling to recruit people with the right skills to plug their critical vacancies and progress their business.

We believe that the work of the ESL team is key to tackling these challenges. Our core purpose is to unlock potential and change lives. We do this by giving people a chance to find decent paid employment, improve their skills and qualifications, increase their household income, improve their wellbeing, and enjoy more opportunities to develop and progress.

Every member of the ESL team is excited to work with residents, communities, employers, and supportive partners to smash through the barriers and achieve shared prosperity for all.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed and shown interest in this plan. If you're not already working with the ESL team, now is a great time to get in touch and find out how we can work together.

**For more information and regular updates please go to:**

[Employment Skills and Learning \(bristolesl.com\)](https://bristolesl.com)

**You can also send us an email using this address:**

[esl@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:esl@bristol.gov.uk)





# Making the Connections and Adding Value

ESL has a strong track record of contributing to important strategies that drive relevant policies and resources for employment, skills and lifelong learning. Bringing substantial external funding to the City we add significant value to major initiatives and action. Throughout this plan, we have considered our alignment with a wide range of strategies and policies, including key plans in the pipeline:



# Bristol Employment, Skills and Lifelong Learning Service

Bristol ESL aims to unlock potential and change lives. We are a strategic system leader and a major provider, located at the heart of Bristol City Council and the West of England Combined Authority. We are proud of our integrated services and the positive difference they make.

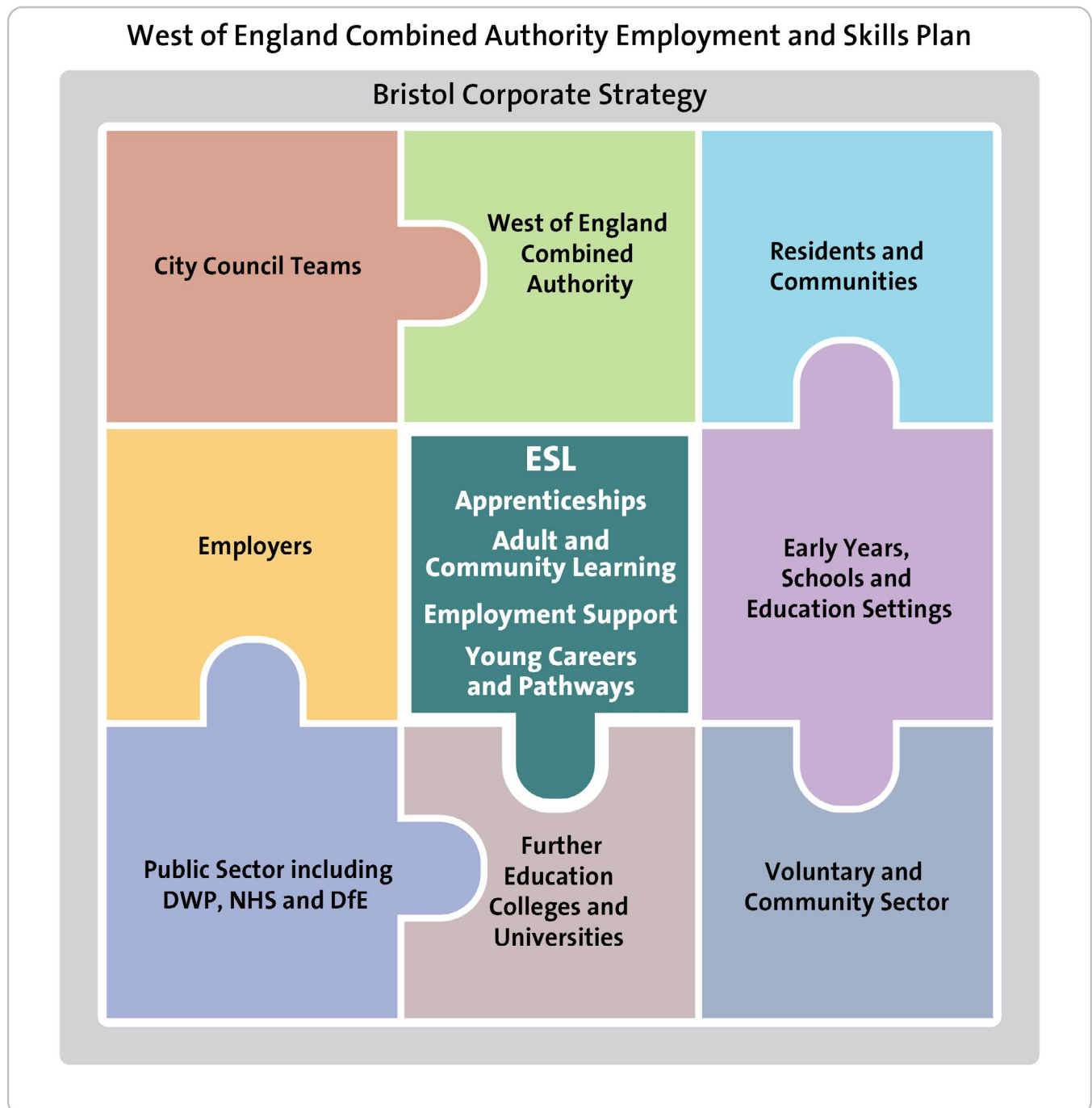
Team	What we deliver	Impact in 22/23
Bristol WORKS	Targeted careers development and experience of work opportunities for young people pre-16 in partnership with schools, employers and providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6757 young people gained experiences of work</li> <li>146 employers pledged support</li> <li>21 school career leads supported with developing best practice</li> </ul>
Bristol Post 16	Tracking, co-ordination and delivery of Post 16 and youth engagement services including 1-to-1 career coach support for those who disengage early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2245 individual young people contacted</li> <li>272 young people supported into employment, education, or training</li> <li>43 post 16 providers supported</li> </ul>
Apprenticeships	Brokerage of construction skills apprenticeships through On Site and innovative talent pathway initiatives targeting localities, key sectors and major developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>351 apprentices enrolled onto programmes</li> <li>£679,837 grants generated and apprenticeship levy shared with employers</li> <li>271 businesses supported to recruit local people</li> <li>34 major developers supported to produce employment and skills plans</li> </ul>
Adult Learning	A wide range of paid-for adult education classes for personal development, work and social wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2949 enrolments onto adult learning courses</li> <li>55 expert part time tutors supported and employed</li> <li>£373,596 learner fees collected</li> </ul>



Team	What we deliver	Impact in 22/23
Community Learning	Develop and provide free adult learning courses for people with few or no formal qualifications. Courses include English, Maths, Digital Skills, ESOL and sector -based employability courses. Targeted advice and guidance is also provided as part of all courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1554 learners enrolled onto community learning courses</li> <li>• 1214 learners have few or no formal qualifications</li> <li>• 225 learners obtained a qualification</li> <li>• 494 learners took part in ESOL courses and 321 engaged with ESOL conversation clubs</li> <li>• 30 mini-IT suites set up in community settings</li> <li>• 300 people at risk of becoming homeless and rough sleepers supported to improve their housing security, skills and employment</li> <li>• 80 people with experience of the criminal justice system or recovering from drug and alcohol misuse supported to access learning and work</li> </ul>
Employment Support	Job search, preparation and matching through the One Front Door, including in-work progression support and specialist programmes for those facing the most complex barriers to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1274 job seekers supported to find work</li> <li>• 663 people in low paid jobs supported to increase their household income</li> <li>• 6558 people attended job fairs</li> <li>• 44 employers supported to recruit diverse talent</li> <li>• 63 Disabled people with learning difficulties and autism supported into paid employment</li> </ul>

# The Bristol ESL Eco-System

Bristol ESL is part of a varied and lively employment and skills eco-system. We work ‘bottom up’ with residents, community groups, providers and employers to develop innovative solutions together. We also work alongside city leaders and funders to develop impactful strategies and investment plans that make a real and lasting impact on the ground.





# Our Research and Listening

This plan has been informed through many conversations, focus groups, meetings and surveys. We have directly engaged with over 300 individuals, organisations and community members. In addition to extensive desk based research and data analysis, all the research and feedback we have collected is included in two technical appendix documents:

**Appendix A** Strategy and Policy Review – relevant strategies and drivers that underpin the eco-system

**Appendix B** Consultation Feedback Report – detailed feedback from stakeholder conversations

This is just the start of the conversations that will continue for the life of this plan and beyond.

Desk based research and literary review		
Evidence gathering	Strategy and policy review	Stakeholder conversations
Consultation and Plan Co-creation		
Employer interviews and surveys	Young people focus groups	School career adviser workshop
FE and HE leader ‘think tanks’	BCC leader and manager discussions	Community conversations
VCS workshop	Member briefing	ESL staff survey
DWP discussion	Ways2Work Network	Parents/carers of SEND young people
Bristol Disability Equality Commission	Bristol City Council Staff Led Groups	Young people with SEND
Draft plan testing and endorsement		
Final plan		

# The Bristol Challenge

From all the evidence sources gathered and used, we have identified several critical issues that make up The Bristol Challenge.

## 1. Neighbourhood Dimension

There is a powerful spatial dimension to The Bristol Challenge, with several neighbourhoods experiencing far higher than average concentrations and persistence of unemployment, worklessness and low skills.

In Bristol, 46 lower super output areas (out of total 252) have had worklessness rates higher than the English average continually since September 2018.

The majority of these are either in Central Bristol (17 areas) or South Bristol (16 areas). In addition, seven are in the 'Northern Arc' and six are in East Bristol.

The best performing areas form a largely continuous area in the wards of Hotwells and Harbourside, Clifton, Clifton East, Cotham, Redland, Stoke Bishop and Westbury-on-Trym.

With such a strong neighbourhood dimension to both education and employment outcomes, The Bristol Challenge includes the need for localised solutions involving key stakeholders close to the ground. How do we achieve more co-designed and co-delivered programmes and services? How do we put local people at the centre, drawing on the expertise of trusted local organisations and developing innovative solutions 'bottom up'?

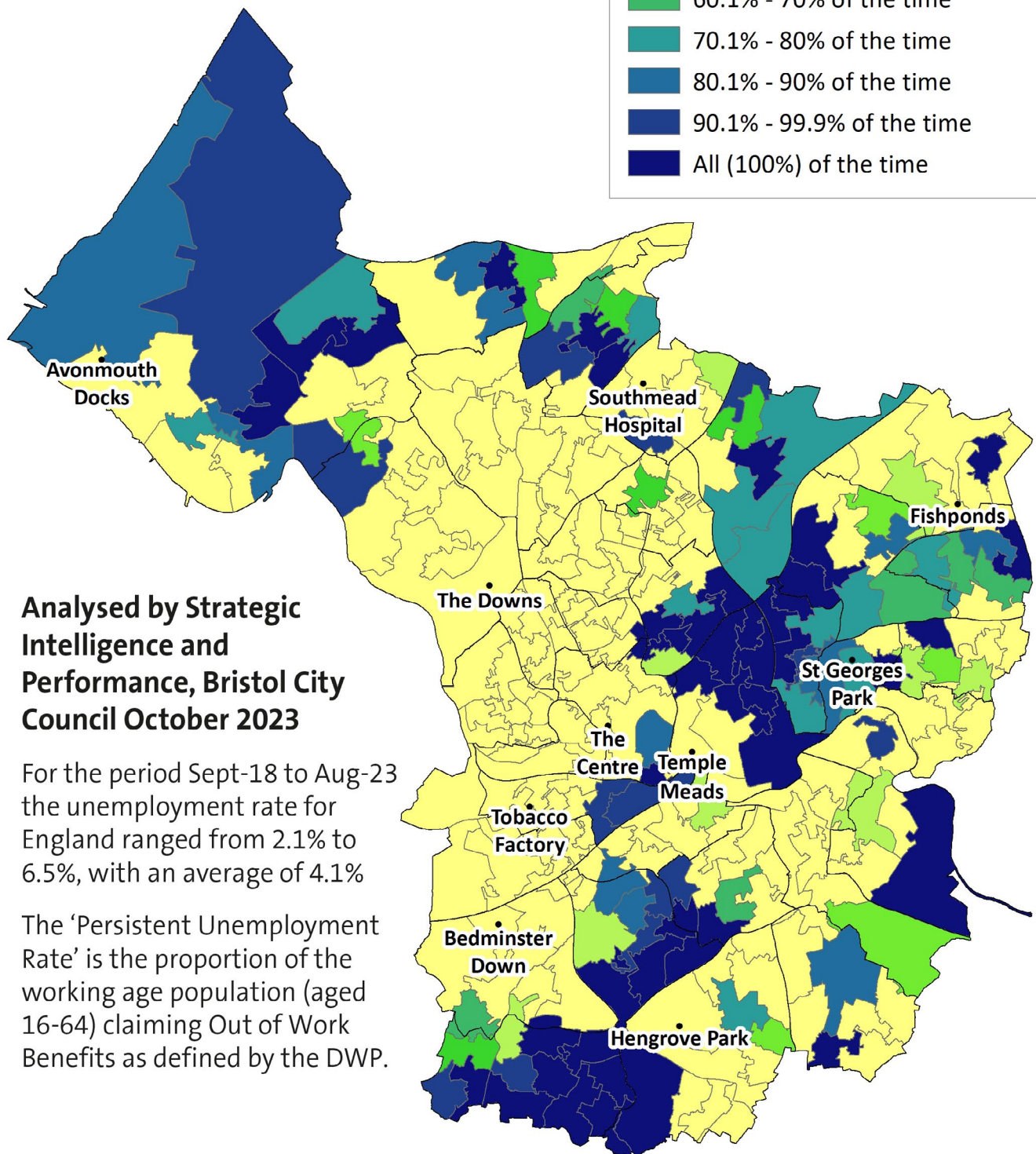
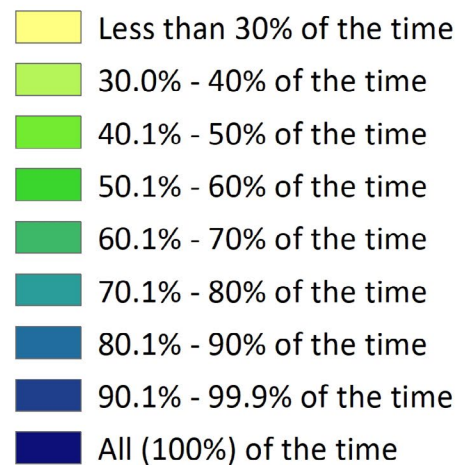




## Persistence of Unemployment Over 5 Years Between Sept-18 and Aug-23

The map shows the percentage of time for which the unemployment rate was greater than England rate

### % of time greater than England rate



### Analysed by Strategic Intelligence and Performance, Bristol City Council October 2023

For the period Sept-18 to Aug-23 the unemployment rate for England ranged from 2.1% to 6.5%, with an average of 4.1%

The 'Persistent Unemployment Rate' is the proportion of the working age population (aged 16-64) claiming Out of Work Benefits as defined by the DWP.

Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0  
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## 2. Poverty

Even before Covid 19, our analysis shows persistent trends in poverty over many years in Bristol. Growing child poverty, homelessness, and food poverty are impacting on mental health problems, limiting health conditions and life expectancy, especially for people living in the poorest areas. These are the same areas where 10 years of austerity measures have hit the poorest communities the hardest. It has been widely recognised that the pandemic has exacerbated these existing inequalities.

Systemic discrimination continues to blight our city, causing trauma and inequity in employment. There is strong evidence that some people experience unfair treatment in the workplace based on their ethnicity, Disability, sexuality, gender, age, and class (Equality and Human Rights Commission; Stonewall; Centre for Ageing Better; Social Mobility Commission). Discrimination exists in recruitment practices, workplace policies, hostile work environments and failure to provide reasonable adjustments.

People living in areas most impacted by the cost of living demonstrate huge resilience and skills, somehow making it through difficult times and providing support to others in their

community. However, residents most impacted by poverty have told us about their multiple and complex barriers to work – the availability and affordability of childcare; digital poverty; low skills resulting from disrupted education; language barriers; low employability skills and work readiness; mental ill health; lack of access to volunteering or work experience; concerns about impact of accessing a job on potential loss of benefits and support services.

One of the main themes through our consultation and engagement is the issue of availability, accessibility and affordability of transport in Bristol. Transport is a significant barrier for people living in areas of low jobs density and limited connectivity, particularly parts of South or North-West Bristol.

The implication of all these barriers is the urgent need for a more focused and joined up approach that uses all Bristol's investment and secures significant additional resources to eradicate poverty. ESL has a key role as a system leader and provider of post 16 engagement, lifelong learning and employment support so people can access the economic prosperity which is currently denied.





## Cost of Living index October 2022

### Legend

Ward

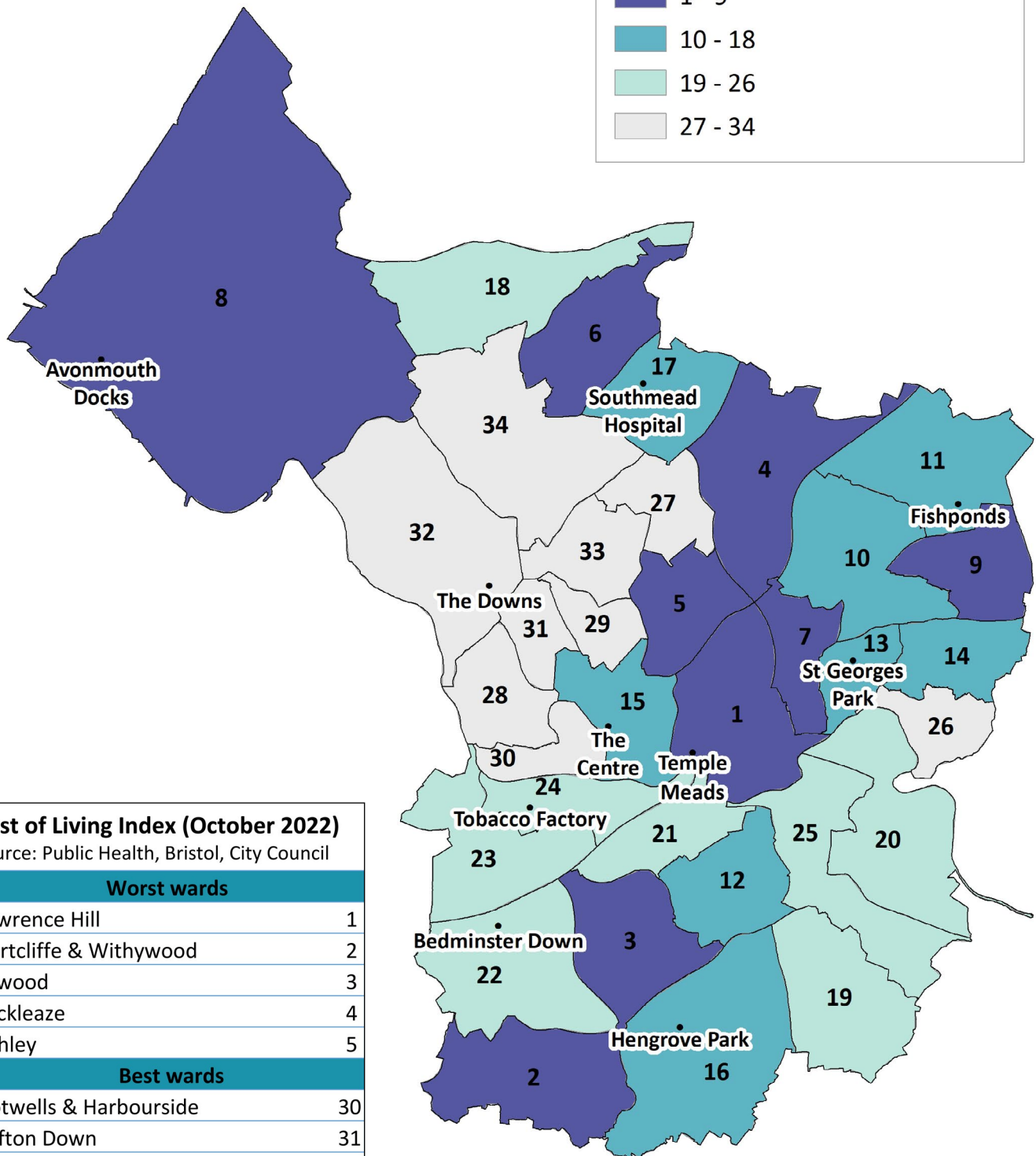
Index Rank where 1 = highest risk

1 - 9

10 - 18

19 - 26

27 - 34



### Cost of Living Index (October 2022)

Source: Public Health, Bristol, City Council

#### Worst wards

Lawrence Hill	1
Hartcliffe & Withywood	2
Filwood	3
Lockleaze	4
Ashley	5

#### Best wards

Hotwells & Harbourside	30
Clifton Down	31
Stoke Bishop	32
Redland	33
Westbury-on-Trym & Henleaze	34

Source: Public Health, Bristol City Council

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### 3. School Achievement

An analysis of Key Stage 4 Achievement in Bristol (GCSEs with English and Maths) by ward reveals the long-standing and persistent underachievement in certain areas.

The percentage of pupils achieving grades 4 and above in English and maths GCSEs has improved since 2019 from 60% to 63%. Whilst Bristol remains below the national average the gap is narrowing and sits at 2.1 percentage points in 2023.

However, achievement rates vary considerably by ward with some falling significantly below the Bristol and national average year on year. Hartcliffe and Withywood has been in the bottom three wards for percentage of pupils achieving grades 4 and above in English and maths GCSEs since 2019 and results in this area were 27 percentage points below the national average in 2023.

Overall, the number of Bristol wards that are performing below the national average has changed very little with 23 below the average in 2019 and 18 below in 2023.

2023 education data also shows the persistent and significant lower attainment of pupils with Special Education Needs, particularly those young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan. 20% of pupils eligible for free

school meals achieved grades 5 or above in English and maths compared to 50.5% of all other pupils. 34.6% Black pupils achieved grade 5 or above in English and Maths GCSEs (45.5% nationally), compared to 49.5% achieved by Asian pupils. Academic underachievement for these groups is exacerbated by high levels of persistent absence.

Significantly fewer young people in Bristol go on to Higher Education when compared to the England average (31.6% Bristol, 42.2% England). Bristol is ranked 367th out of 406 amongst UK local authorities in relation to university attendance by our local population. In South Bristol participation is only 22.3%, including 3 of the 5 lowest performing areas in England: Hartcliffe (8.7%, lowest in England), Highridge and Withywood. Highest in Bristol is Westbury Park at 77.6%.

One implication of this data is the need for bottom-up co-designed interventions that more successfully engage young people who are disengaging and under-achieving in school. ESL is well placed to build on work with young people, parents/carers, schools and education settings, local youth providers and employers to unlock motivation and improve post 16 outcomes.





## % pupils with GCSE English and Maths (grade 4+) 2023

### Legend

Ward

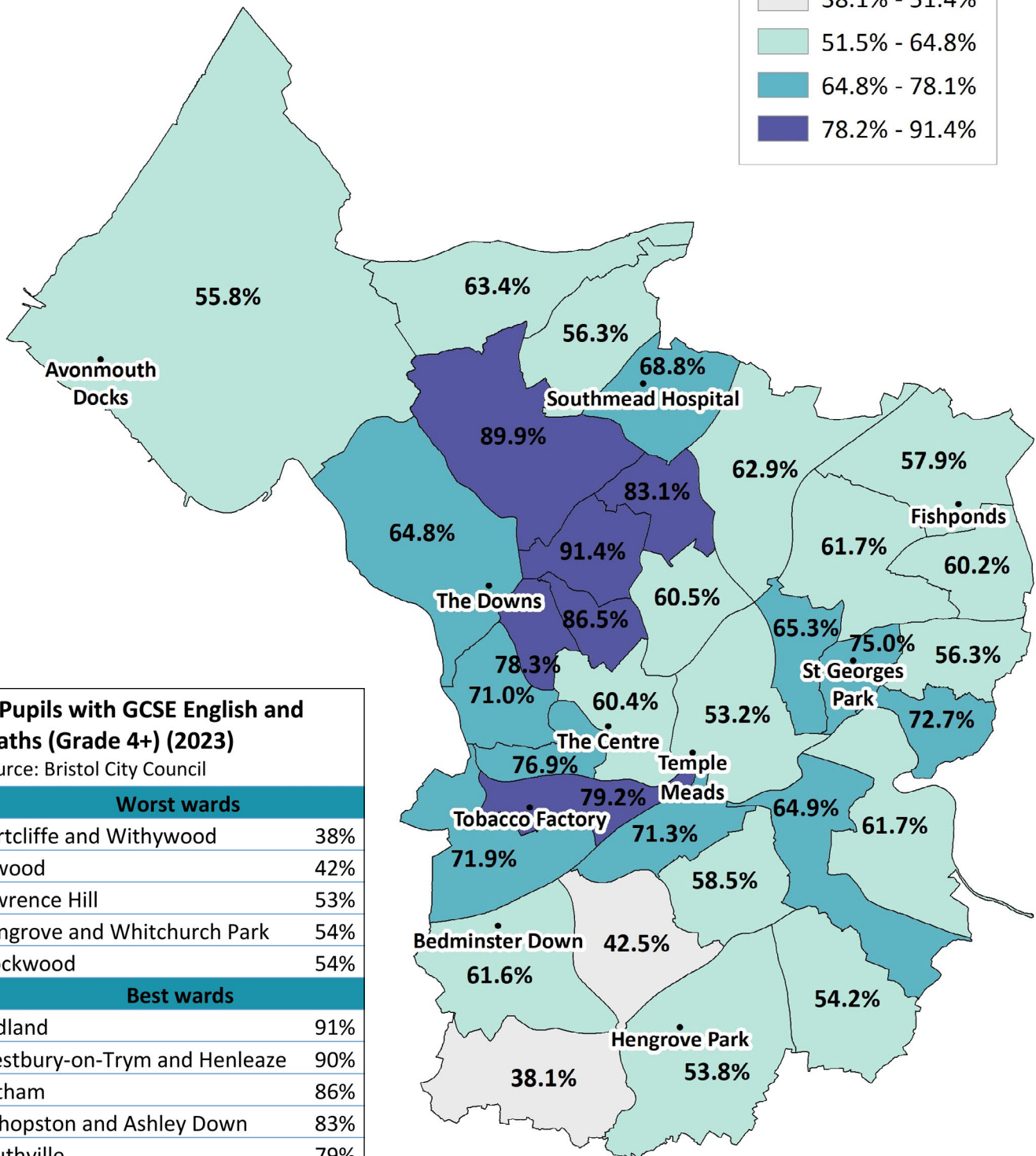
### % pupils

38.1% - 51.4%

51.5% - 64.8%

64.8% - 78.1%

78.2% - 91.4%



### % Pupils with GCSE English and Maths (Grade 4+) (2023)

Source: Bristol City Council

#### Worst wards

Hartcliffe and Withywood	38%
Filwood	42%
Lawrence Hill	53%
Hengrove and Whitchurch Park	54%
Stockwood	54%

#### Best wards

Redland	91%
Westbury-on-Trym and Henleaze	90%
Cotham	86%
Bishopston and Ashley Down	83%
Southville	79%

#### Bristol local authority

Bristol	62%
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Source: Bristol City Council

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## 4. Post 16 Pathways

Each year approximately 500 young people academic age 16/17 in Bristol are disengaging early from education, employment, or training (NEET).

The highest concentrations of young people who are disengaging early correlate closely with Bristol's Cost of Living Index with the top 10 areas making up 57% of the NEET population (289).

South Bristol makes up 42% (214) of our NEET cohort with evidence of higher levels of income deprivation, child poverty and below average mental wellbeing. There is also a higher concentration of NEET young people in areas such as Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston that are geographically distant from available post 16 provision. Young people disengage early from education and employment when they must undertake 40min+ travel time and incur public transport costs.

NEET young people in Bristol share a range of characteristics and complex barriers that result in them being excluded from mainstream learning programmes, including:

- 20.7% Children in Care and those Leaving Care
- 46.2% Young people who are pregnant
- 70.5% Teenage parents
- 14.9% Refugees and asylum seekers
- 44.7% Supervised by the Youth Justice Service
- 36% of young people who attended an ALP (Alternative Learning Provision)
- 12% of young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)
- 10.7% of young People requiring SEN (Special Educational Needs) support.

A significant element of the Bristol Challenge is ensuring that the right support is provided early on for young people most at risk of becoming NEET. We need to pool resources and also secure additional dedicated funding to improve our response and support for those who disengage early. This includes providing the right experience of work, careers advice, pre-employability training and post 16 supported pathways with personalised wraparound support.





## NEET young people aged 16 and 17 by ward area

### Legend

Ward

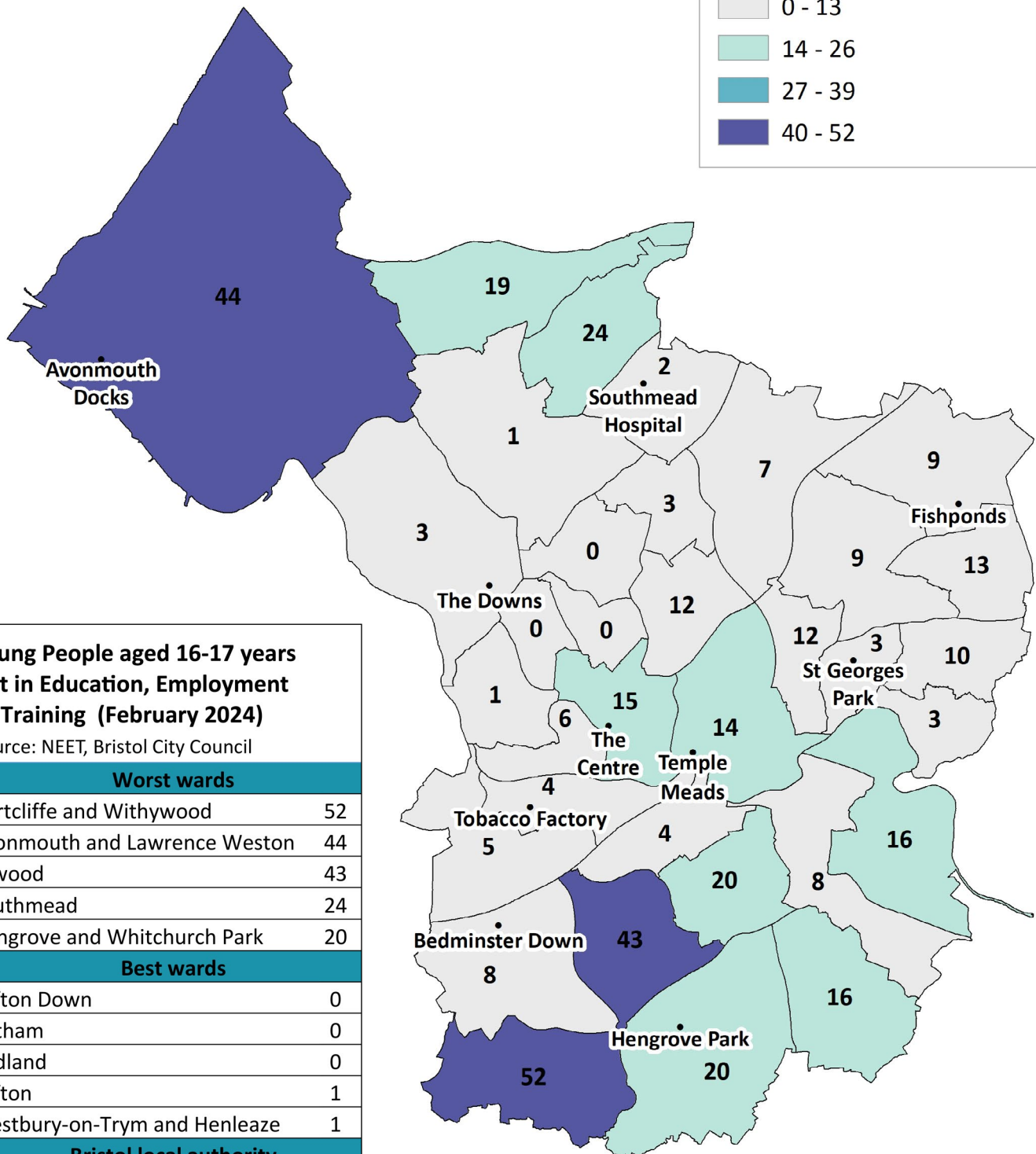
### Number of 16-17 year olds

0 - 13

14 - 26

27 - 39

40 - 52



### Young People aged 16-17 years not in Education, Employment or Training (February 2024)

Source: NEET, Bristol City Council

#### Worst wards

Hartcliffe and Withywood	52
Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston	44
Filwood	43
Southmead	24
Hengrove and Whitchurch Park	20

#### Best wards

Clifton Down	0
Cotham	0
Redland	0
Clifton	1
Westbury-on-Trym and Henleaze	1

#### Bristol local authority

Bristol	406
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Source: Bristol City Council

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## 5. Skills Mismatch

A significant factor of The Bristol Challenge is the mismatch between the skills required by employers and those of the workforce.

Almost 58,000 (18%) people of working age are without a level 2 qualification (equivalent to GCSE level) and of these 33,300 (10%) have no qualifications, including essential skills in English and maths. This means that a significant number of working age people do not have the formal qualifications they need to compete for job vacancies and most are at a disadvantage in the labour market. Many migrants, refugees and asylum seekers find it difficult to obtain recognition for their overseas qualifications and do not have the required level of English Language and employability skills to achieve their career aspirations.

A significant proportion (44% - almost 15,000) of economically active people in Bristol with no qualifications are in employment. However, due to the lack of formal skills, these employees are often being held back from Level 2 and above apprenticeships and further career progression.

The Covid 19 pandemic accelerated certain trends in the job market, emphasizing the importance of digital skills and remote work capabilities. Some unemployed individuals have faced challenges in adapting to the changing job market, especially if their skills were not aligned with the evolving needs of employers.

This data underlines the critical for community learning so that people with negative experiences of education can obtain the essential skills and qualifications they need to secure decent work, particularly English, maths and digital skills – including English for Speakers of Other Languages. The ESL service is able to build on highly successful models of apprenticeship brokerage which enable people to learn while they earn, providing alternative routeways to higher level apprenticeships up to level 4 and beyond. The ESL Future Bright service remains critical to support people in work on low pay to access advice, skills and qualifications so they can progress to better and higher paid employment.





## Working age population with no formal qualifications

### Census 2021 None or Level 1 and entry level qualifications only

#### Legend

Ward

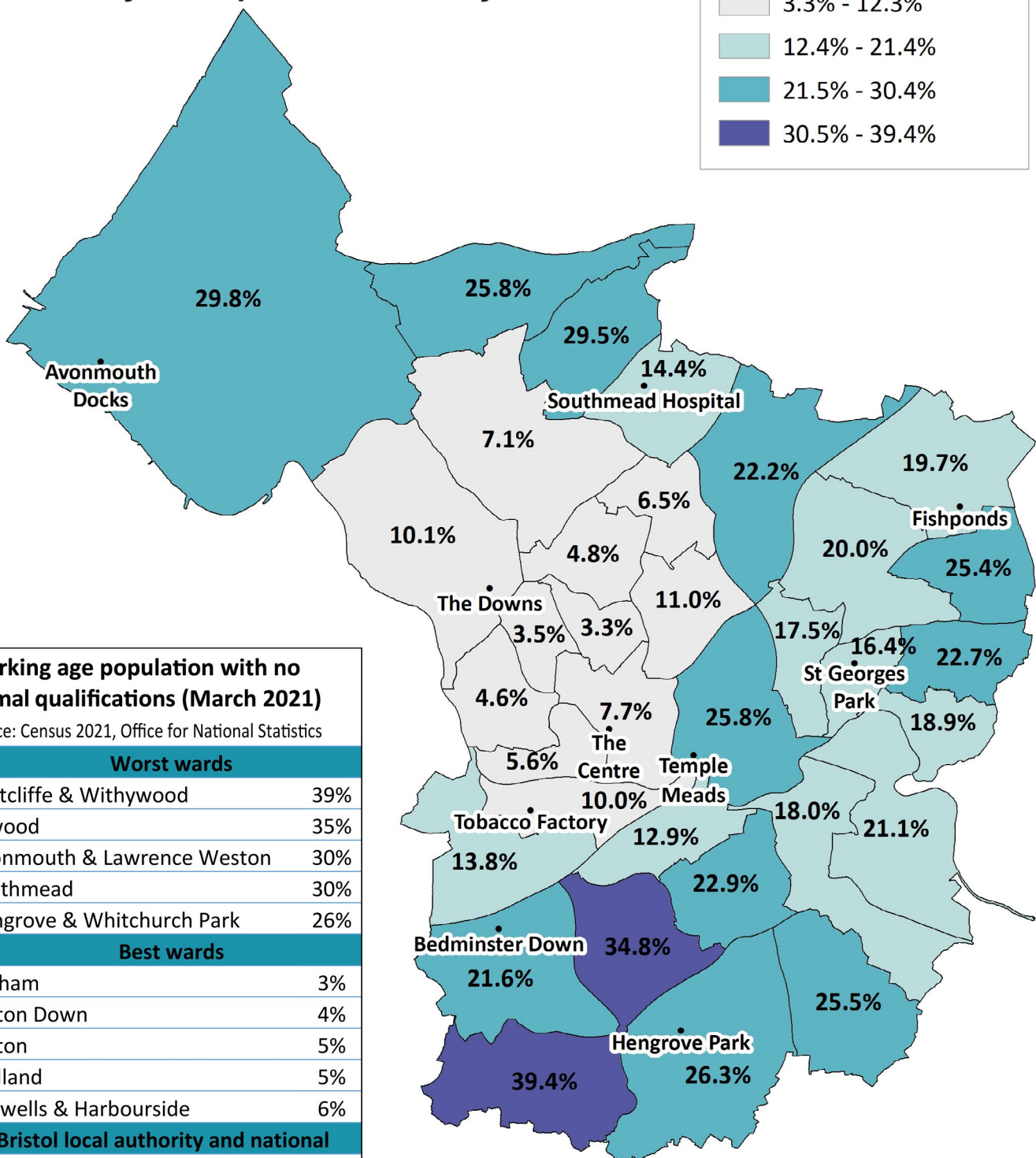
#### % working age population

3.3% - 12.3%

12.4% - 21.4%

21.5% - 30.4%

30.5% - 39.4%



#### Working age population with no formal qualifications (March 2021)

Source: Census 2021, Office for National Statistics

##### Worst wards

Hartcliffe & Withywood	39%
Filwood	35%
Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston	30%
Southmead	30%
Hengrove & Whitchurch Park	26%

##### Best wards

Cotham	3%
Clifton Down	4%
Clifton	5%
Redland	5%
Hotwells & Harbourside	6%

##### Bristol local authority and national

Bristol	18%
England & Wales	22%

Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0

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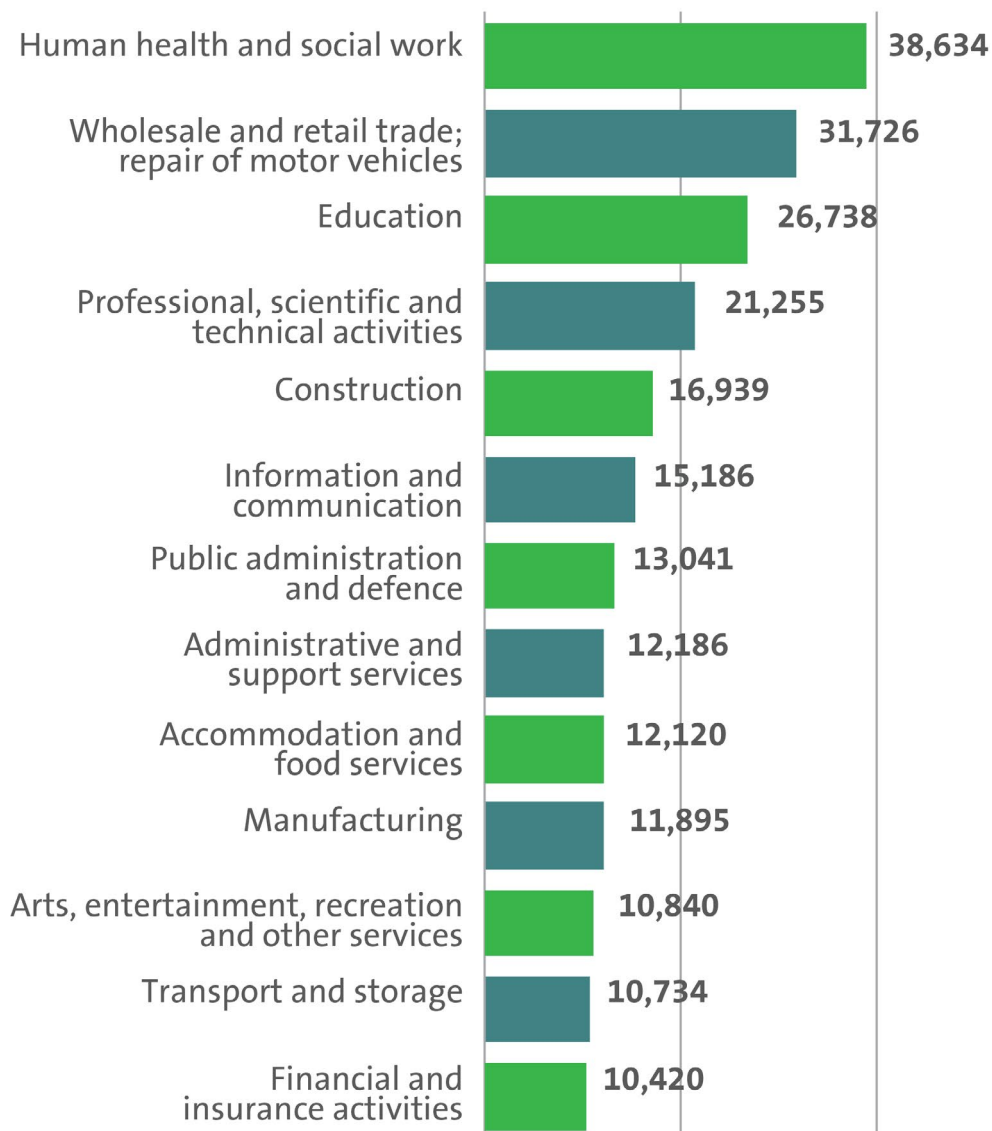
## 6. Essential Jobs

Bristol has high job density, and the number of jobs is gradually increasing to the levels seen in 2019 before the Covid pandemic. Regeneration plans for the next five years and beyond includes the transformation of the Temple Quarter, a project that aims to attract 22,000 new jobs. There are also numerous major developments in the pipeline, providing significant new jobs across growth sectors including creative media and advanced manufacturing and engineering.

Over the next four years, many of Bristol’s highest volume jobs are in ‘hard to fill’ foundational employment sectors - suppliers of everyday essential goods and services that enable the city to function such as health and social care, early years and education, kitchen and catering assistants, skilled building trades and transport.

### Bristol residents aged 16+ in employment by industry

Source: Census 2021 ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis]



In 2023, many employers in foundation sectors have been struggling to recruit. For example, the average vacancy rate is 12% for adult social care in the West of England. Employers in the region also posted over 7,000+ unique adverts in Bristol for teaching and educational professionals (April 22 – April 23). The early years sector, already under significant workforce recruitment challenges, now faces additional workforce demand following the government expansion of the free 15- & 30-hours early education entitlements from three-and- four-year-olds to all children aged over nine months in 2024 and 2025.

Many people are discouraged from entering these critical roles due to the prevalence of low pay and inflexible working conditions. In 2021, 33,756 Bristol residents in work were estimated to be earning below the living wage,

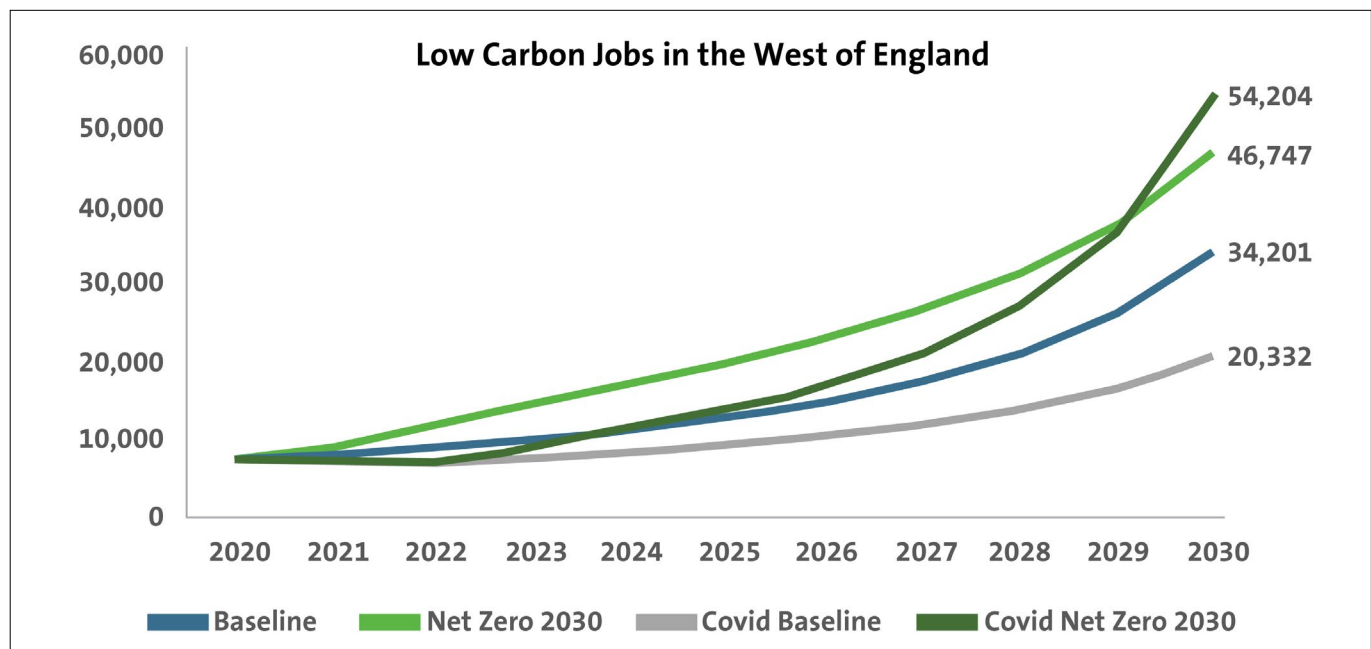
remaining dependent on the government for support, and often struggling to cover essential expenses with negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

The large number of vacancies suggests that the Bristol Challenge is not about a shortage of jobs, rather how we drive up the city's economic employment rate in all sectors whilst also working with partners to achieve better pay and to incentivise people into sectors that are experiencing the most critical skills shortages. By building on our successful inclusive career and talent pathway models, ESL is well placed to improve the diversity of the Council's workforce, as well as supporting other employers to recruit diverse local people into decent 'normal' jobs that pay a living wage with opportunities for training and progression.



## 7. Skills for the Future

The City of Bristol has declared a climate and ecological emergency. City Leaders have made a commitment to become carbon neutral, to improve our climate resilience and protect the natural environment by 2030.



To future proof our buildings, Bristol will need thousands of trained people with technical skills to install heat pumps and district heating networks, cavity wall and solid wall insulation, loft and roof insulation.

As digital technology and digitalisation is changing our personal lives, it is also changing work at a rapid pace. Whilst new technologies are creating great wealth and improving living standards for some, we are also experiencing historic wealth inequality with many people feeling alienated and shut out from technological innovations. Critical action is needed to prepare local communities so they can make a fair shift to both a green economy and digitalised world.

To achieve a step change in the number of local people gaining new technical and digital skills at pace, we need significant investment in the right education, training and infrastructure, along with strong social contracts with employers, to help mitigate the negative impacts.

In driving forward green energy and digitalisation, the Bristol Challenge is to ensure the new training and jobs available

are accessible to our most excluded neighbourhoods and communities. ESL is gearing up to work together with priority neighbourhoods to inspire young people and people of working age to get into new careers, also supporting local businesses to adapt, scale up and adopt inclusive recruitment and workforce development practices.

ESL played a vital role in addressing digital poverty throughout the pandemic by ensuring those people most excluded from online learning, work and services had access to recycled laptops, free data and digital skills training. It is critical that this work continues through business sponsorship and dedicated funding.

Positive action interventions and campaigns are also required to tackle the under-representation of Bristol's equalities communities in technical and digital careers, particularly women, Black and Minoritised people, and Disabled people.

Through the Building Bristol partnership and the ESL On Site Bristol partnership, we need to support those who have trained and worked in traditional industries to update their skills and benefit from the changes to come.



# Bristol Assets

**As the largest city in the South West, the Bristol city region is the eleventh largest urban area in the UK. Most of us can name things we love about Bristol. Working in partnership, ESL wants to find new ways to draw on these many assets**



- Local people: entrepreneurial, compassionate and resilient
- Rich multi-cultural mix and diverse communities – including a buzzing LGBTQ+ scene
- Creative and arts scene on the street and in numerous galleries
- A young vibrant community
- Expansive local parks and green spaces
- Innovative food scene with popups, cafes, markets and restaurants
- Thriving sports and leisure clubs and services
- Strong economic sectors like finance, technology and engineering
- Attracting significant inward investment from government and business
- Green energy and sustainability innovations like City Leap
- Major regeneration developments like Temple Quarter
- International links and reputation – and an expanding international airport
- Science and technology hubs like the Engine Shed
- Growing media hub including the Bottleyard Film studio
- A strong appetite for multi-agency and cross-council working
- Expansive local health system and partnership
- Trusted community and voluntary sector organisations
- Supportive local schools and early years settings
- Ambitious FE Colleges, 6th Form College and Independent Training Providers
- Top universities and a thriving research community





# Feedback Summary

To develop this plan, we have held conversations with lots of different people about employment, skills and lifelong learning – what’s not working and hopes for the future. This is a summary of what they said.

<b>Residents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No-one felt prepared for a life or career after school – particularly those who were not on a traditional academic pathway</li> <li>• Since leaving school, many residents have developed a strong appetite for further learning, work experience and employment – supported through ESL and other community based providers</li> <li>• Poverty, inadequate transport, childcare costs, lack of digital kit and skills are barriers to learning and work</li> <li>• Community based organisations and local employers have a critical role to play</li> </ul>
<b>Young People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to learn about the real world – including managing finances and learning about what you can do when you leave school</li> <li>• Enjoy people doing different jobs coming into school and showing interest in them and what they have to say</li> <li>• Would rather do real work tasks than practicing skills for work through classroom-based activities which can be boring</li> <li>• Students that live in Bristol’s poorest communities are anxious about the bad reputation attached to their postcode and how this may impact negatively on their job prospects</li> <li>• Students are aware of the wasted potential in their peer group and where young people have low aspirations and are settling for lower level jobs</li> </ul>
<b>Young people with ‘Special Educational Needs and Disabilities’ (SEND)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport funding stops when young people reach age 16 which creates barriers to post 16 education or training</li> <li>• Disabled young peoples post 16 options are often part time which creates logistical issues for families</li> <li>• There are not enough Post 16 choices for young people with an EHCP</li> <li>• Some young people with SEND fear moving to a new Post 16 provider and would prefer to continue their education at their school until they are age 19</li> </ul>
<b>Bristol Disability Equality Commission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Disabled Person Travelcard cannot be used until 9am</li> <li>• There are huge problems with the Access to Work scheme that need to be tackled</li> <li>• Parents/carers need to be recognised as critical partners to support young people as they transition from education to independence and employment</li> <li>• Deaf people are struggling to access the right employment support</li> </ul>



<b>Parents/ Carers of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lack of accessible public transport means that young people with SEND cannot easily get to training and work</li> <li>• There are not enough accessible opportunities for young people to take part-time English and Maths GCSE courses</li> <li>• There is inconsistent careers advice in schools and a lack of information for parents/carers about non-traditional pathways</li> <li>• Would like to see local employers create more entry roles and inclusive recruitment</li> </ul>
<b>Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The VCS sector believe they have a key role in providing and supporting ESL services</li> <li>• See lots of challenges: affordable childcare, language and cultural barriers, transport, discrimination, lack of flexible 'good' jobs, digital poverty, mental ill health</li> <li>• Long term secure funding for the VCS sector is key – WECA funding has proven difficult to access due to heavy bureaucracy</li> <li>• Great to see more community friendly training, work experience, career coaching, intensive English language tuition and free childcare</li> </ul>
<b>Employers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many would welcome support with local and diverse recruitment</li> <li>• ESL teams are highly regarded by local SMEs – WORKS, On Site, One Front Door, Community Learning</li> <li>• We need to address the lack of diversity and inclusion across construction site workplaces, including a campaign to generate more interest in technical roles amongst women and Black and Minoritised communities</li> </ul>
<b>ESL Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team needs more support to spread the word about ESL services</li> <li>• Are seeing many people struggling with complex lives, including digital poverty, language barriers, childcare and transport issues, mental ill health and anxiety, lack of confidence</li> <li>• Can achieve more through more joined up systems and procedures</li> <li>• Long term funding and workforce stability would make a huge difference</li> </ul>
<b>Employment and Skills Providers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inaccessible recruitment practices are a big issue – we need a campaign to support employers to utilise diverse recruitment practices</li> <li>• Job seekers are impacted by poverty, poor public transport, childcare costs, digital poverty, insufficient JCP capacity, low confidence</li> <li>• Some groups are excluded due to way courses and services are delivered</li> <li>• The Disability Confident scheme is out of date and sadly a 'tick box' exercise</li> </ul>



<b>School Career Leads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More support needed for priority students: particularly those at risk of becoming NEET and young people with SEND</li> <li>• More employment readiness for young people who don't want to progress to formal learning in college or sixth forms</li> <li>• Recruiting more employers to provide work experience – including SME's</li> <li>• Lack of funding and capacity in the curriculum for careers are big issues</li> </ul>
<b>Elected Members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like to see a big push on jobs for future particularly green industries</li> <li>• Recognise the need to expand careers advice, access to HE and in work progression support</li> <li>• Want more promotion of lifelong learning using trusted local organisations and people rather than relying on websites</li> <li>• See inadequate public transport is a big problem</li> </ul>
<b>BCC Leaders and Managers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keen to see resources prioritised on key priority groups and neighbourhoods – care leavers, people with mental ill health, refugees and asylum seekers</li> <li>• Stressed the importance of community shaped and led services</li> <li>• Would like to see more done to join this work together across all council services</li> <li>• Committed to improving diverse recruitment practices in BCC and across all employers</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Work and Pensions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel and where things are represents a big issue for job seekers</li> <li>• There is a need for more specialist and targeted provision for those facing discrimination and barriers to employment</li> <li>• Keen to build on what's worked – for example the South Bristol Talent Pathway programme and the Launchpad concept to increase support in areas with high youth unemployment</li> <li>• Inclusive recruitment with larger anchor employers is critical</li> </ul>
<b>City of Bristol College</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified a critical need to develop combined ESOL vocational pathways into employment</li> <li>• Recognition of the huge shift in workforce requirements – including the impact of AI</li> <li>• There is a need to support the city to prepare for green energy and sustainability, and also develop a clearer training and career pathway into social care jobs</li> <li>• There are future opportunities to develop more flexible, modular, online and blended HE</li> </ul>
<b>Universities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universities can do more to accelerate diverse recruitment – building on the UoB 'Join Us' programme</li> <li>• There is scope to widen participation to HE through outreach, alternative routes to HE, alumni role modelling, free credits for adult returners</li> <li>• Would like to see the Learning City Partnership Board come back to life so we can map our lifelong learning offer and address skills challenges together</li> </ul>







# You said, we learned, we will...

We have drawn on all findings to set out our top priorities for action. We believe this focus will give Bristol the best chance to increase skills, reduce unemployment and improve life chances. We want these priorities to steer our collaborative working, guide our annual service plans, and influence the way we deliver and commission services locally.

**1.** Connect better to fix the system and tackle employment inequality and poverty together

**2.** Achieve better career outcomes for young people and families being left behind

**3.** Drive employment and skills targets into all major developments and council contracts

**4.** Prepare local people for the jobs of the future, including clean energy and digital jobs

**5.** Help employers recruit diverse talent and plug skills gaps in essential job roles

**6.** Support Disabled people and those with health conditions to achieve paid work

**7.** Enable migrants and refugees to build on their skills to settle and thrive in Bristol

**8.** Boost lifelong learning for work, life, citizenship and wellbeing





# 1. Connect the local system better to tackle employment inequality and poverty

ESL works in a strong strategic partnership with the West of England Combined Authority, the DWP and DfE, the NHS and Integrated Care Partnership, key City Council teams and wider partners. Yet so much more can be achieved by finding new ways to join things up across strategic and operational silos. If we are to eradicate poverty and provide better access to skills and employment, strategic support for ESL and accountability for outcomes must increase and accelerate. Transforming our local system will help results for residents and employers.

## What we want to do:

1. Continue to build a co-ordinated hub and spoke employment support and skills offer with key partners – including the Skills Connect One Front Door, Future Bright, Bristol Launchpad and targeted programmes that plug gaps in employment support
2. Improve referrals to ESL services by raising the profile and integration of ESL as a priority service at Corporate, Directorate and team level across Bristol City Council so that more residents on low pay and with few or no formal qualifications can get the support they want and need e.g. housing tenants and customer support clients; people supported by social care; welfare rights/debt management clients
3. Work with strategic partners to develop an ‘Employers 4 Change’ forum for all local employers who are committed to inclusive and diverse recruitment and workforce development in Bristol, encouraging them to sign up to the West of England Good Work Charter and Disability Confident kite mark
4. Embed ESL into the Bristol Family Hub model to improve resident access to all ESL services and to improve hub sustainability and impact
5. Work in partnership with the Integrated Care Partnership, the NHS and Public Health to integrate ESL with health-based services
6. Join up with strategic bodies and teams that oversee our transport and childcare infrastructure to ensure that local plans, investment, and campaigns better support the employment and skills needs of priority communities

## How will we know we have made a difference?

Key Performance Indicators
Unemployment rate in priority wards
Number of participants registered and supported through the One Front Door, Future Bright and other employment support programmes
No of adults aged 19+ who have progressed from all employment support activities into skills provision, employment or better employment

## Skills Connect - Bristol 'One Front Door'

Bristol's One Front Door provides employment support, advice and guidance for local residents. Part of the West of England Skills Connect Hub the service helps people consider their work and training options and find the support they need.

Residents may be assigned a careers coach who can also signpost them for help with mental health, wellbeing, financial problems and a wide range of other topics.

### Karen:

Karen came over to One Front Door to ask for help with finding a job, preparing for an interview, and increasing her skills. The team talked to Karen about her ambitions to become a teaching assistant, gave some advice on first steps and signposted her to the organisations who may be able to offer teaching assistant training who were at the event.

Karen signed up to start a teaching assistant course with the local college which was starting the very next week! Karen also talked to Community Learning and signed up on another course to improve her English and Maths and left looking forward to her next steps.

One Front Door also works with employers to help fill vacancies, get support and develop a more inclusive workforce.

The team organise Job Fairs giving employers an opportunity to meet potential employees and giving job seekers a chance to connect and take the next step in their career journey.



### Why employers value jobs fairs:

“Meeting a diverse group of organisations and being able to reach a cohort which we usually wouldn’t. We handed out our leaflets a lot!” **Well Aware**

“Good energy, lots of people looking for help, jobs, starting a business.” **Black South West Network**

“Speaking to a wide range of job seekers. Lots of potential candidates who are applying for roles that we have found hard to fill via jobs boards.” **Bristol Waste**

“Meeting people who wouldn’t normally apply as not skilled, we can transition them!” **Wagamama**

## Move In, Move On, Move Up (MIMOMU)

**MIMOMU provides bespoke support for anyone with a history of rough sleeping or living in temporary or unsettled accommodation. Some participants are rough sleepers, some from supported accommodation, safe houses and hostels. All are looking to move on from temporary accommodation or need support to maintain their accommodation.**

MIMOMU is a partnership between Employment Support and Community Learning alongside Housing Options and Community partners.

Together they offer participants specialist one to one support from a careers navigator, language support through ESOL classes, digital support and skills through IT classes and free tablets or laptops and internet bundles. Participants are supported to think about their goals and ambitions for the future and to access courses that allow them to build skills and improve their employability.

### **Krasimir:**

Krasimir was living in a tent and hostels, but he really wanted to start a job as soon as possible. Krasimir was comfortable looking for work, but his CV was out of date and his financial issues and accommodation were unstable and making it hard for him to focus.

His navigator worked with him to update his CV and outline his skills and experience. He was referred to WRAMAS, a financial advice service, to get support with managing money. Now also getting support from a local hostel Krasimir was able to access a food bank voucher. This helped him to feel more in control and able to start to think about his goals for work again.

He attended a job fair with his navigator and having found a chef job he was interested in his navigator helped him complete his application. Krasimir was delighted to get the job and feels like this is the beginning of a new chapter for him.

“Krasimir has moved from rough sleeping to paid work, which is fantastic and a huge success for him. Getting his financial situation a bit more stable and encouraging him to stay engaged with the hostel has really helped him be able to prioritise updating his CV and exploring his work options. This allowed us to visit a job fair and for him to meet with some employers. I am really pleased for him this is just what he wanted. It really feels like he’s on his way.”





## 2. Achieve better career outcomes for young people and families being left behind

The data is clear – specific Bristol communities are systematically ‘under-served’ by the current education offer, including both geographic and equalities communities. The evidence shows that early disengagement from education, training and employment by young people creates huge risk for the young people and places a significant burden on the public purse due to the likelihood of long-term unemployment, poverty and health related issues. To tackle Bristol’s persistently high NEET figures and reverse this wasted potential requires significant additional investment, not just to maintain what works, but to achieve transformation through innovative collaborations and holistic community-led programmes.

### What we want to do:

1. Secure long-term investment for Bristol WORKS so the team can continue to provide innovative high quality Careers, Education, Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) and meaningful experience of work for young people most at risk of becoming NEET, particularly young people with SEND and children in care and leaving care
2. Continue to strengthen the Bristol Post 16 partnership and team, including our management and use of post 16 data; deployment of young career coaches; development and promotion of a co-ordinated CEIAG and post 16 offer; transition support through our Into Learning Network and transition panels
3. Secure long-term funding for a NEET reduction programme combined directly managed and commissioned services from expert providers who can help us re-engage and motivate young people so they can progress into education, training and employment
4. Work with schools/settings to develop a ‘work readiness curriculum’ that supports young people’s employability, enterprise and progression to technical training/apprenticeships – including managing stress, resilience and travel training
5. Develop innovative parent/care training programmes that support their roles as children’s primary educators and as community leaders, managers, trainers and peer advocates
6. Pilot a Cradle to Career programme – working with a place-based consortium that can support young people’s career aspirations, pathways and outcomes

### How will we know we have made a difference?

Key Performance Indicators
Number of employers engaged and pledged to delivering experience of work
Number of experience of work opportunities delivered to young people pre-16 at risk of NEET
Number and % of young people academic age 16-17 who are NEET and Not Known

## Bristol WORKS

Bristol WORKS supports schools and employers by delivering quality experiences of work to young people who are at risk of being left behind. The WORKS experience of work framework goes beyond the traditional week of work experience – including visits to employer sites; employer talks in schools; one-to-one mentoring and real work challenges.



### Careers Day at Oasis John Williams

Bristol WORKS supported Year 9 learners from Oasis John Williams school to expand their knowledge of exciting careers and pathways in Bristol. Throughout the day, learners attended different interactive workshops and a speed networking session, providing them with the chance to develop their communication skills and gain industry insights.

Workshops included exploring creativity and curiosity in set design with Bristol Old Vic; mobile application design in technology and working to a budget with BJSS; discovering a range of health roles with the NHS; and an introduction to military careers through a giant 'top trumps' game with the British Army.

Teachers told us: "the students were absolutely buzzing about everything they had gotten to do, and all the information they had learnt as a result."

## Bristol Post 16 Team

The Bristol Post 16 team offer a wide range of support for young people and their families to find the right post 16 learning and employment for them.

The team produce an annual post 16 directory, collating information and contact details for providers across the city that offer opportunities for learning and support.

The Young Parents Maths and English group is based in central Bristol. It aims to fill the void in provision that young parents often experience, building their confidence and enabling them to move on to their next educational goal, at their own pace. The group provides an inclusive, supportive environment with a small creche on-site which is essential for these young parents to access the course.

### Ella:

"I never really got the hang of school, always felt like I fell behind in everything. I came out of school and found I had ADHD and autism; I was struggling academically because this was hidden and undiagnosed. When I had my daughter, I dropped out of college because I couldn't cope with the work and a newborn, I also had a lot of family issues going on at the time too. I had also lost my confidence, but this course has given me another opportunity to get my qualifications and provide care for my daughter. My confidence has grown, I really enjoy the learning and the support I get from the staff"

### Keris:

"I struggled with education as my family moved often and I had to start new schools all the time, I never really settled in and as a result didn't do very well. When I had my son, I didn't feel like there was anything for me and didn't have any support with childcare. I wouldn't be able to take my maths and English it wasn't for this course"

### Emma:

"I came on the course as I struggled with education and then became a young mum. This course gave me the opportunity to be able to do maths and English and have my daughter with me in the creche provided. It's a fabulous community for mother and baby and you make new mum friends along the way"





### 3. Drive employment and skills priorities and targets into all major developments and contracts

Building Bristol and On Site Bristol are strong vehicles that are helping to broker local recruitment with developers, at construction and end use phase. In managing our complex system of capital development, we need to find new and better ways to plan, act, monitor and report on ESL integration and diverse local recruitment achieved through our local partnerships. Working hand in glove with the Council's Growth and Regeneration Directorate and Commissioning Teams, there are great opportunities for us to sweat every pound so that it creates employment and skills opportunities for those being left behind.

#### What we want to do:

<b>1.</b> Develop Building Bristol as the main partnership which oversees and co-ordinates the delivery of inclusive employment and skills through major developments as they progress through the Bristol planning system – at construction and end use
<b>2.</b> Introduce new monitoring and reporting arrangements on BCC managed developments and arm's length companies and how well they are working with ESL to achieve inclusive employment and skills outcomes (including: Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone; City Leap; HRA energy efficiency programmes; Bristol Waste; Goram Homes; Strategic Partnership)
<b>3.</b> Accelerate joint working and co-develop reporting arrangements with BCC commissioners working across all Directorates to link with ESL and increase employment and skills social value outcomes
<b>4.</b> Investigate opportunities for joint working and reporting requirements with VCS organisations receiving BCC grants to link up with ESL and support employment and skills outcomes
<b>5.</b> Improve the operation of the BCC Social Value Policy so that delivery of employment and skills outcomes are more systematically supported by ESL
<b>6.</b> Ensure that city infrastructure developments and plans take account of critical employment and skills needs for priority communities e.g. transport, childcare, school places

#### How will we know we have made a difference?

Key Performance Indicators
Number of developers working with Building Bristol on an Employment and Skills Plan
Number of apprenticeships enrolled on construction apprenticeships with On Site Bristol
Number of jobs and apprenticeships created and filled by diverse candidates from priority communities through local developments and commissioned contracts

## Building Bristol

Building Bristol was set up to embed employment and skills plans in all major planning applications. The team collaborates closely with local developers and their contractors to help create inclusive employment opportunities, apprenticeships, and skills development within construction projects.

Building Bristol have been working closely with Sir Robert McAlpine who are the contractors for Bristol University Enterprise Campus.



**Tom Buter, Project Manager at Sir Robert McAlpine says:**

“We started working with Building Bristol when we commenced construction on the University of Bristol’s Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus - TQA1 project. We attended a really useful networking event which Building Bristol organised and that helped us make some great connections in the City.

The Building Bristol manager has also visited us on site and been able to

connect us to a range of services so we can meet and exceed our Social Value targets during the project build. Building Bristol have been able to match us with students in the City for work experience, site visits, and support us in attending careers events.

We look forward to working with Building Bristol and supporting local people during the construction of this project over the next two years”

## On Site Bristol

The On Site Bristol team have excellent relationships with construction companies across the city and work closely with employers to encourage the next generation into the industry and fill skills gaps.

The team offer construction apprenticeship training programmes in 7 key trades; Electrical, Plumbing, Joinery, Carpentry, Bricklaying, Plastering and Painting and Decorating.

Each apprentice is assigned a training officer who offers support throughout the apprenticeship to ensure a positive and successful outcome for both the student and employer.

### Marley:

“I was unsure of what to do after studying my A Levels at college. I knew I wanted to get into a trade but wasn’t sure whether to do Electrical or Gas Engineering, a family friend recommended electrical and suggested an Apprenticeship. I was able to get some work experience once a week for around 6 weeks with Bristol City Council in the planned maintenance section and they suggested I apply to On Site Bristol.

I really enjoy the working environment, it’s a good balance between working and college, with the 4 days at work and 1 day at college. It helps to put into practice what I have learned at college, and I can do this with Charlie and he’s always happy to discuss them with me.

I like to learn new skills, and I am enjoying it more as my understanding increases. I feel like I’m progressing more after each week. I like meeting new people and have made new friends at college. I’m enjoying meeting new customers as we are moving around to different jobs at work.

I am in my 2nd year and have another 2 and a half years to complete my apprenticeship. I would in the future like to venture out on my own or start my own company but want to gain more experience and confidence first.”





## 4. Prepare local people for the jobs of the future including clean energy and digital jobs

ESL is working in targeted neighbourhoods so that residents have an equal chance to learn about carbon neutral and digital opportunities. We are going to need dedicated resources and major donations to maintain our successful distribution of digital kit and data through a network of local learning and family centres. Innovative career pathways and positive action programmes will ensure that everyone can benefit from new jobs and play an active role in building more sustainable communities.

### What we want to do:

1. Deliver the Innovate UK Mission Net Zero Skills and Supply Chain project to support the expansion of local SMEs and to generate an inclusive talent pathway for residents including decarbonisation skills and jobs in three targeted neighbourhoods
2. Work with City Leap to ensure that ESL services and resources are fully utilised to maximise inclusive employment and skills outcomes
3. Motivate young people to progress to jobs with a positive impact on Bristol's carbon neutrality goals through innovative experience of work and career development programmes through Bristol WORKS
4. Secure critical resources so that recycled and new digital devices, together with free data and digital skills, can be distributed to those who need them
5. Create and support community IT suites with local partners where residents can access learning and employment support both face to face and online
6. Provide staff and service users with information about skills and jobs of the future - including clean energy and new technologies

### How will we know we have made a difference?

Key Performance Indicators
No of residents from priority neighbourhoods engaged in Carbon Neutral or Digital inclusive career pathway programmes and skills initiatives
No of residents provided with a digital device, free data and/or digital skills training
No of community IT suites created and numbers of local residents actively engaged

## Digital Skills for the Future

### Mini IT Hubs

Community Learning worked with a range of neighbourhood organisations to supply and set up Mini IT Hubs in local venues. Providing equipment, training and technical support to make sure the equipment was installed, and staff and volunteers were confident using the technology.

Equipment included laptops, smart TVs and webcams and all the associated security and storage equipment. Centres were also offered MiFi devices to ensure they all had good internet access.

### Avonmouth Community Centre

Since the Hub was set up Community Learning have also offered free computer courses at the centre to support people to build and develop their digital skills and feel more confident using the equipment and accessing services online.

“The equipment has been used by residents in lots of ways. The laptops in training courses and for some resident groups. The TV’s have been used by local groups for speakers with powerpoint and slideshows as well as events like our community celebrations and ward meetings. We will also be using them to show films in our welcoming space at the centre.”

### Tackling Digital Poverty

Community Learning have been working to tackle digital poverty and improve access to digital services and online learning and employment services.

Overseeing the distribution of refurbished laptops in partnership with the Council’s IT Team and Bristol Waste.



### Bristol Somali Centre:

“The equipment has been a massive help: we’ve been able to use the TV and the laptops in our English classes, as well as using the TV for other sessions with service users. Without the large TV screen, especially, our English classes would have been a lot less of a success over the last year and a half. It lets our teachers work with video materials, as well as displaying classroom tasks and presentations in a much more engaging way than was possible before with just our whiteboard. We are also planning a basic IT course for later in the year, in response to massive demand from service users of all ages.”



### Chloe:

Chloe received her laptop when she started the Heading Home course, delivered in partnership with Housing Options to prevent homelessness.

She said she was ‘blown away’ to realise that the laptop was hers to keep, even after her course. She said that without the laptop she would have struggled to access resources and activities on her phone which is not up to date.

The laptop has enabled Chloe to continue to learn new skills and has made so many services and opportunities more accessible through improved email and website capacity.

## Inclusive Career Pathways – Parks and Green Spaces

Inclusive Career Pathways (ICP) aims to raise the profile of Parks and Land Management careers and training pathways by developing community engagement and social inclusion activities, and providing experiences of work, career coaching and pre-recruitment training. In partnership with the Council's Parks Team, the ESL ICP has given people an introduction to working in horticulture and an opportunity to obtain a Level 1 qualification.

### Graham:

"I had been unemployed for nearly 3 years having been made redundant from my previous job as a baker. I had been struggling with long term addiction issues which worsened when I no longer had a job to go to, so it took me some time to get sober and physically and mentally well enough to look for work again. I had no formal qualifications in horticulture and a long gap in my employment history.

After an unsuccessful application for a horticulture apprenticeship with Bristol City Council I was told about the Inclusive Career Pathways programme and jumped at the chance to get help looking for work in my chosen field. I had engaged with other services in the past but they were focused on finding any kind of work and had no specialist knowledge in horticulture so I knew this would be far more useful to me.



My Employment Navigator helped me to enrol on a City and Guilds Level 1 Horticulture Award with the Community Learning team, which I have now completed. As a result, I was able to secure the horticulture apprenticeship with Bristol City Council. I have been really well supported throughout my course and with settling into my new job.

This means I will soon have good qualifications and experience which should allow me to apply for a range of different horticultural jobs or to set up a business of my own.

I think the project was what made it possible for me to find work in horticulture. Access to free advice, courses and help with applications helped me bridge the gap from volunteering to work which I may not otherwise have been able to do."





## 5. Help employers recruit diverse talent and fill skills gaps in essential job roles

Bristol has a strong entrepreneurial culture with thousands of businesses operating in all parts of the city. The ESL team has developed a successful model of inclusive career pathways which links with employers across a range of sectors with motivated and talented job seekers who are often left behind. We now need to unlock sustainable funding to maintain and extend this work, targeting essential sectors and neighbourhoods, building a strong talent pipeline that provides quality entry roles with supported progression.

### What we want to do:

1. Complete the pilot ESL Health and Social Care and Parks and Green Spaces Inclusive Career Pathway programmes with a detailed evaluation to demonstrate what works in addressing critical skills shortages and improving diverse recruitment
2. Secure long-term funding to maintain and further develop ESL Inclusive Career and Talent Pathway programmes targeting key sectors and neighbourhoods. Explore options for rolling out the Bristol model to other areas and essential sectors – for example: night time economy; sport and leisure; youth and community; retail and customer service; logistics and warehousing
3. Work together with the BCC HR and Learning and Development Team to explore options for improving diverse recruitment of young people into entry roles with training, and to support diverse recruitment in the council overall
4. Co-ordinate a campaign through Building Bristol to improve the reputation of the construction sector – including an inclusive work culture and diverse recruitment across both office and site based technical roles
5. Develop an early years and education recruitment campaign and career pathway programme with employers and training providers which can address both the skills shortage and lack of diversity across all parts of the sector
6. Ensure that Future Bright resources are targeted at individuals from equalities groups that experience a glass ceiling, lack of career progression and pay gap

### How will we know we have made a difference?

Key Performance Indicators
No of residents engaged in ESL inclusive career pathway programmes (e.g. Health and Social Care; Parks and Green Spaces; Food Talent Pathway etc)
No of employers engaged and supported to diversify their workforce through inclusive career pathway programmes
No of people progressing into and within inclusive jobs through ESL sector or place based initiatives

## Inclusive Career Pathway – Health and Social Care

ESL Inclusive Career Pathways (Health and Social Care) involves partnership working with the City of Bristol College and care sector employers to develop and co-design a health and social care curriculum pathway that ensures learners have the knowledge and skills employers are looking for.

Learners have been introduced to working in the world of health and social care with Community Learning courses including a Level 1 qualification with progression support. Job coaches are on hand to offer advice and guidance on next steps either to further qualifications or to employment opportunities.

“I was on the Level 1 Health and Social Care course with Community Learning. I passed and was able to secure a job with Medacs healthcare as a support worker. I then went on to start a Level 3 Health and Social Care course which included 100 hours of work experience.



I was able to get a placement with one of the creches supporting Community Learning courses like mine.”

“I attended the Community Learning Health and Social Care course and achieved a qualification. I got my CV updated with help from One Front Door and secured employment with the Wellspring Care Company as a support worker.”

### Shelby:

“I fell pregnant after my first year of college, but after my daughter was born I went back to college and gained three A-levels. I had a part-time voluntary role behind a bar, but I had always had a passion for caring and supporting others when they need it the most.

I felt very motivated to get into work and was referred to the Inclusive Career Pathways programme as I want to go to university to study Nursing, however in the meantime, I wanted to secure a role in a health or social care setting for experience.

My careers coach did a fantastic job at providing me with great advice and all the tools I needed to secure a role in Health and Social Care. Providing help on how to structure my CV and what to be included to ensure I am short-listed.



She understood that I have a toddler, so she was accepting and flexible with phone conversations which I was very grateful for and after every phone call, she would send me summaries of our discussion and action plan, this was very useful as I was able to reflect on what we had spoken about and what my next steps are.

My achievements have made me feel very positive about myself. Because this programme and my career coach I have the confidence to be able to say to myself that I am capable of anything I put my mind to. As for the future my trainee support worker role means that soon I will have good experience which should enable me to climb the ladder in the NHS and some day achieve my dream job of becoming a Nurse.”

## Future Bright

**Future Bright is a bespoke, 1 to 1 specialist service for people that are in work but are in low paid or insecure roles. It matches them with their own Career Progression Coach who will help them develop their skills and confidence to progress in their careers and take the next step.**

Through an initial meeting, the Career Progression Coach and participant will develop a goal driven action plan which will look at their existing skills, their aspirations and what is preventing them from achieving them. The Coach supports the participant to develop a plan to move them towards meeting their career ambitions through regular meetings and reviews.

This can involve additional training and development, CV writing, interview skills, confidence building and referrals to other support including benefit and debt advice and counselling services where appropriate.

### Rory:

“I worked as a self employed personal trainer out of a gym and worked a second job to help for bills and rent etc.

I was unsure of what to do to improve my business. I had the knowledge and skills to train people but knew little of business and marketing. I hoped Future Bright would assist me in improving in these areas where I lacked confidence and knowledge

I met my coach both face to face and on Teams to go over my goals and any actions I could take to improve my work. We would catch up every two weeks to see how I was progressing and what I could try next. The meetings were very useful and always felt non-judgemental. We would discuss what I felt I needed to improve upon and who and what in my life could help.

I have been able to breakdown previously daunting tasks into more manageable, smaller tasks that I can achieve on a regular basis. I have also stepped out of my comfort zone in things that I would not have thought of doing before.

I feel a lot more confident and positive about my business and feel a lot less



stuck in a rut. I have more direction of what I want to do. I find it has put things into perspective for me and it has helped me to enjoy the process more.

My coach was always there to support and nudge in the right direction. The support always felt helpful and I never felt pressured to have to do anything nor was unable to talk openly about the struggles I was facing.”



## 6. Support Disabled people and those with health conditions to achieve paid employment

Our evidence shows that Disabled people face the greatest systemic barriers to education and paid employment. People with learning difficulties and autism have the lowest employment rate amongst all equalities groups. Since the Covid 19 pandemic, there has been a marked spike in the number of people struggling to find and stay in work due to health conditions. In the West of England, Bristol has the highest rate of fit notes being issued by GPs to people struggling with work due to mental ill health and muscular skeletal conditions. ESL is firmly committed to the social model of Disability and building on our WE Work for Everyone programme to meet access requirements and support more Disabled people to find, secure and maintain paid work with progression opportunities.

### What we want to do:

1. Involve Disabled people in shaping ESL services, and also parents/carers of SEND young people. Help build the capacity of local VCS and social enterprises providing inclusive employment for Disabled people.
2. Work with SEND, Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care Teams to transform policies, use of resources, and procedures so that employment outcomes are more systematically built into EHCPs and individual action plans, and regularly monitored and reported to Directors
3. Maintain and build on the successful We Work for Everyone programme supporting people with learning difficulties and autism into paid work and also plugging the critical funding gap for experience of work and CEIAG for young people with SEND from year 7 to year 11
4. Ensure that partner employers have access to Disability equality training so that recruiting managers and supervisors are well prepared to support Disabled employees
5. Ensure that Bristol has a functioning Access to Work and specialist employment support services that meet a range of health and impairment related needs, e.g. mental health and neuro diversity; visual and sight impairments; musculoskeletal conditions; learning difficulties and autism
6. Work with the Integrated Care Partnership, the NHS and key local partners to secure new devolved health and work funding for innovative positive action delivery models – including WorkWell and Universal Support

### How will we know we have made a difference?

Key Performance Indicators
No of Disabled people and those with health conditions achieving paid employment
No of employers registered as 'Disability Confident' and recruiting Disabled people through inclusive recruitment and provision of access support
No of adults with learning difficulties supported by Adult Social Care in paid employment

## WE Work for Everyone

WE Work for Everyone is an employment support programme for Disabled people with a learning difficulty or autism. The service supports people to find a pathway into paid work. Working to empower people by finding employment, promoting independence and challenging social isolation.

Employment navigators help people to explore their aspirations, support them to create a CV and think about their skills and experience talking them through opportunities like access to training, career coaching and job placements

Each person has different interests and needs and navigators offer a holistic approach. Navigators help with preparing application forms, finding relevant training, preparing for interviews or having a mock interview. Clients are supported to access reasonable adjustments at interview and if needed, navigators can attend interviews with clients for support.

### Luke:

“I found out about WWfE programme at a job fair. The trip was arranged by my school. I was in my final year and was looking for a part-time job over summer. Me and my navigator had online sessions and in-person ones too, which fitted around my school times well. She helped me find different jobs sites, supported me how to use them, created a CV, cover letter and gave me advice.

Since I started the programme, I have job searched independently, attended job fairs and went to job interviews.

A challenge was when I was applying to catering jobs but wasn't getting any response, so I started to focus on customer service jobs to widen my opportunities. In November, I got a job offer at Airhop Bristol as a Court Monitor at Cribbs Causeway. I am finding it very good so far!

Since I finished the programme, I am more confident and am I'm looking forward to buying my family a meal and buying gig tickets when I get paid!

My next steps are starting catering BTEC in September and would like to work in catering in the future.”



## 7. Enable migrants and refugees to build on their skills to settle and thrive in Bristol

Bristol's Black and Minoritised communities has increased from 5.1% in 1991 to 18.9% in 2021 (similar to the national average 18.3%). The population is increasingly diverse with more than 287 ethnic groups – with the largest groups including Somali (1.9%), Pakistani (1.9%) and Indian (1.8%). In addition to these established communities, Bristol has acted as a City of Sanctuary for many new refugees and asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan and the Ukraine. This situation has resulted in a surge in demand for ESOL courses and waiting lists of over 2,000 potential learners held back from developing their critical English language skills. ESL has a key role working with community and training providers to develop a strong integrated ESOL and employment support offer so learners can fully realise their language, employment and progression aspirations.

### What we want to do:

1. Build a strong co-ordinated ESOL offer including part-time and intensive programmes supported by a Single Access Point and provider referral system
2. Support migrants and refugees to access skills programmes with embedded ESOL, including vocational and pre-employment training
3. Develop improved access to volunteering, experience of work and career coaching support for migrants and refugees
4. Establish local arrangements for overseas qualification and driving licence validation and conversion
5. Strengthen ESOL Conversation Clubs so that people have an opportunity to practice their spoken English through volunteer led groups and activities
6. Develop an employer toolkit to support their employment of refugees and asylum seekers

### How will we know we have made a difference?

Key Performance Indicators
Number of adult enrolments on ESOL Courses, ESOL Conversation Clubs and courses with embedded ESOL support
Numbers of migrants and refugees taking up volunteering, work experience and paid employment
Number of employers engaged and supported to provide inclusive employment for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers



## English for Speakers of Other Languages

Community Learning ESOL courses are delivered in local centres that are easy for residents to access. Classes provide wrap around support for learners in many cases offering free childcare, advice and access to wider support services, such as support for health and wellbeing, housing and benefits advice.

Tutors work hard to encourage learners to develop their skills and recognise their successes and achievements. Many learners were keen to get qualifications and the team have brought in a new range of accredited ESOL qualifications that learners can work towards.

### ESOL Conversation Clubs

Community Learning organise and support ESOL Conversation Clubs across the City. Clubs are staffed by volunteers who are trained and supported by a dedicated Development Worker.

Conversation Clubs are free, open to everyone and provide a fantastic opportunity for people to practise their speaking skills in a welcoming and friendly environment. Clubs can help participants to build on the skills they learn in ESOL classes as well as creating a space for friendship and support.

“It helped me improve my English and taught me to feel confident and safe in society.”

#### Nuwar

Nuwar was a doctor and worked for 15 years as a dermatologist in her home country of Sudan.

Since coming to Bristol as a refugee she has been keen to improve her English skills to help her to find work that uses her skills and expertise. Both Nuwar and her husband are attending ESOL courses.

“We went to a community centre when we first came to Bristol and were told about classes to help learn English. We both really

#### Sylwia told us:

“The English course definitely improved my self-confidence and made it easier for me to communicate with institutions that are important to me. As a mother of a disabled child, it was very important to me, and it will certainly make our lives easier. I hope that soon I will be able to start another course thanks to the ESOL course that will allow me to find a job in the profession that interests me.

My teachers were amazing. Incredible patient and able to explain everything so that classes with them were pure pleasure. Thank you so much for taking the time to make a huge positive difference to my life.”



want to improve our English and think it is really important.

I have lots of experience in skin conditions and want to find a job where I can help people.

The tutor is nice, and the class is really helpful. We are always waiting for the day of the class and look forward to coming.”

## 8. Boost lifelong learning for work, life, citizenship and wellbeing

Lifelong learning is a central element of Bristol's Learning City status with UNESCO. The Learning City Partnership was formed to help raise the profile of learning beyond statutory school age, including post 16, adult education for personal development and learning for work. Lifelong learning remains a cross-cutting theme which runs through the Bristol Corporate Strategy, cutting across children and young people; economy and skills; digital inclusion; health and community themes. ESL and partners have a critical role in building and promoting a strong lifelong learning offer through imaginative campaigns and impactful programmes and events.

### What we want to do:

1. Develop a collaborative Bristol lifelong learning offer which includes entry level community learning, adult education for personal development, accredited vocational training and access to higher education programmes – including classroom based, online, hybrid, and modular learning opportunities.
2. Expand and further develop Adult and Community Learning provision including the development of targeted and specialist courses that increase essential skills and 'soft skills' that support progression to further learning, work and volunteering
3. Support the creation and take up of apprenticeships through CEIAG in priority schools, targeted pre-apprenticeship programmes, and levy sharing with valued employers who are committed to diverse recruitment
4. Develop a community development programme to empower residents as local leaders, facilitators, researchers and peer supporters - strengthening skills for fundraising, organising, campaigning and growing local groups
5. Develop and deliver a positive action tutor training programme to build a more sustainable and diverse workforce and provide positive pathway into teaching for our learners and priority communities
6. Rejuvenate Bristol's Learning City Partnership through collaborative campaigns, projects and events

### How will we know we have made a difference?

Key Performance Indicators
Number of adults enrolled on ESL targeted Community Learning courses and fee-paying Adult Learning courses
Number of adults achieving essential skills accreditation in English, maths and digital skills
Number of people trained as adult learning tutors, including the % from diverse communities

## Adult Learning - Lifelong Learning

Bristol Adult Learning Service provides a popular range of personal development courses. Courses include subjects like arts and creative courses, languages, cookery, gardening, health and wellbeing, computers and history.

Adult Learning courses appeal to people who want to develop skills for a creative project or to fulfil personal ambitions. For others, making friends, reducing isolation and improving their social life is a key benefit that helps to promote good mental health and wellbeing.



### Simon:

“Since retiring just over two years ago I have attended French Language and Literature classes at Stoke Lodge. I have found these to be tremendously beneficial and fun as well.

On the social side I have made new friends who I see at least weekly - I think this is very important when one leaves the daily interactions with colleagues in the workplace. The mental stimulus of learning a foreign language is excellent.”



### Sheila:

“After a lot of thought and a bit of trepidation I decided I would try actually painting, having done art history courses before. I hadn’t touched a paint brush since leaving school, where I was deemed not good enough to do GCE in art so that was the end of my art education!

found it hard for a couple of years but stuck at it mainly due to the tutor who is so helpful, encouraging and fun. We are a great group and have become good friends. I go to art class for creative and mental health. All the classes I do definitely give my week structure and they all have a big social impact as well.”





## Community Learning - Functional Skills

The Community Learning Multiply programme is helping build adult learner confidence with maths, enabling them to gain new skills and progress to formal qualifications. Learners have told us just how much impact improving their maths skills has had.

### Nick:

“After leaving the Royal Navy I suffered substance misuse disorder, for years I suffered with patches of homelessness, hospitalisations and many failed attempts at sobriety. My constant obsession and need for substances put a stop to me moving forward with anything positive and my future looked bleak to say the least. After a time in Hospital, I was offered a place in Emerge Charitable Trust, a supported sober living charity in Bristol.

I have begun to study to gain my level 2 numeracy with Community Learning, I never achieved this qualification at school, and it is required before I move forward to a college course. Community Learning is not only supporting me to achieve this, but it is also helping me by getting me used to being in a learning environment, which I believe will help me when moving into college as a mature student.

Thanks to Community Learning I am now able to apply to college with the qualifications required to start an access course to higher education. This in turn will grant me access to university to study towards my lifelong ambition of becoming a paramedic.

If I am living proof of anything, it is that no matter how much of a bottom you think you have hit, you can make change for yourself which in turn makes change to the city you live in.”



# The Way Forward

This plan and accompanying documents are intended to provide a strong evidence base for critical resources and support – from within Bristol City Council, from West of England Combined Authority, from government Departments and funding bodies. Each year, more detailed ESL service action plans will continue to be produced ensure that the service remains on track and responsive to changing needs.

To maintain strong community ownership and engagement, managers are holding regular community conversations with residents and young people from priority neighbourhoods. These sessions provide important opportunities to update on progress and to understand what's working and needed on the ground. We are also establishing an 'Employers4Change' network so that employers, large and small, can work together with ESL and partners on transforming inclusive and diverse recruitment and in work progression.

ESL is part of Bristol City Council core governance arrangements. In addition to regular scrutiny from Education and Skills lead members, executive leaders and directors, the priorities and actions outlined in this plan are being supported and monitored through various advisory boards and steering groups, and by external funders and Ofsted, which provides helpful scrutiny and accountability.

From 2024, we are proposing to update some of our multi-agency groups and networks into a more streamlined framework:

<b>West of England Combined Authority Business and Skills Board Employment and Skills Advisory Panel</b>		
<b>Full Council and Committees:</b> Economy and Skills Children and Young People And reporting into other committees too		
<b>Community Learning and Skills Advisory Board</b>	<b>Employment and Skills City Leaders Group</b>	<b>Post 16 Strategy Group</b>
<b>Building Bristol Board</b>	<b>Programme Steering Groups</b>	<b>Into Learning Network</b>
<b>ESOL Network</b>	<b>Ways2Work Network</b>	<b>CEIAG Best Practice Network</b>

We are strengthening links and reporting from ESL managed groups into the Council's Committee system. This will help us improve accountability and ensure maximum support for the successful delivery of this plan.







