



DRAFT - April 2022

Warwickshire's Adult and Community Learning Service

Statement of Intent 2022-2025

1. Introduction

Adult and Community Learning has an important part to play in improving the lives of the people of Warwickshire. By supporting residents to learn skills so that they can lead more independent and healthy lives, support their families, gain a qualification, progress, and navigate in the world of work and become less socially isolated.

This Statement of Intent identifies the key priorities for Warwickshire County Council's Adult and Community Learning Service over the next three years. It sets out what the Service will do to continue to be sustainable in the future.

This document provides:

- an overview of Warwickshire's Adult and Community Learning service,
- a summary of national and local drivers,
- the key priorities and aims of the service for the next three years,

The Statement will be reviewed in July 2023.

2. An introduction to Warwickshire

The [State of Warwickshire 2022](#) provides an in-depth snapshot of Warwickshire as a County.

3. An Overview of Warwickshire Council's Adult and Community Learning Service

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) provides Adult and Community Learning through [Warwickshire's Adult and Community Learning Service \(WACL\)](#). The Service is part of WCC's Education Services, within the Communities Directorate.

The Service supports and develops individuals and groups within Warwickshire for whom formal learning may have been a barrier in the past and works to build confidence and realise potential. This might mean learning new skills, building up personal confidence, meeting new people or finding a new job. Like all public services, it needs to respond to fast changing circumstances. This is not just financial challenges but also changing priorities in how people want to learn, the types of skills that employers wish to develop, and the priorities of other sectors such as within the integrated health care system.

The Service provides formal and informal learning programmes to adults aged 19+ across the county in over 30 inclusive learning environments in a wide range of community venues, many in the county's areas of highest need. Courses offered include English, maths, ESOL (English as a second language), IT, languages, arts

and crafts, and courses for adults with learning difficulties. Family Learning activities are also provided for parents and their children, with most of these activities organised through primary schools, targeting schools with the highest levels of need.

The Service is predominantly funded through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Over the last ten years this has been fixed at around £1.6m per year, in addition the service also generates learner fee income and external grants. The service is therefore dependent on the successful delivery of its provision.

The Service directly delivers and does not contract out to other organisations, which means the service directly employs its own staff and is required to cover all its costs and overheads.

The annual self-assessment report (SAR) is used to identify areas of good practice and areas for improvement. The self-assessment process starts in October and involves qualitative analysis of data to arrive at judgements of the provision against Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework. The SAR is ratified by WCC's Education Services Senior Leadership Team and from 2022 onwards it will also be validated by Warwickshire's Adult and Community Learning Service Advisory Board.

The Service has been recognised by the 2016 Ofsted Inspection as being a 'Good' (Grade 2) provider of education and skills. The Service also holds Matrix accreditation for Careers Information, Advice & Guidance.

In 2019/20 and 2020/21 enrolments and provision were severely impacted by COVID-19. In 2021/22 the service is working hard to increase learner enrolments.

An overview of the current learner numbers, delivery and outcomes and trends are referred to in Appendix 1.

4. Context Setting: Local, National Priorities and Needs Analysis

Local Priorities

Warwickshire County Council recognises the key role that adult learning has in supporting its residents. The Council's Plan has three strategic priorities, and the Service works to support all three:

1. We want Warwickshire to have a **thriving economy and places** that have the right jobs, skills, education and infrastructure.
WACL provides support to individuals who want to acquire skills that support their working lives. This can include those in need of new skills, people who are economically inactive or individual's new to Warwickshire who need help and support to work.
2. We want to be a County where all **people can live their best lives**; where communities and individuals are supported to live safely, healthily, happily and independently.
Community learning offers many opportunities for families and individuals to learn skills and behaviours which can support family cohesion and individuals to live healthier lives. Crucially, community learning provides mechanisms to reduce isolation, support recovery of mental health and support interaction. This approach will support a wider Community Power approach as well as the health and independence of our communities.
3. We want to be a **County with a sustainable future** which means adapting to and mitigating climate change and meeting net zero commitment, so that our generation ensures future generations can live well and reap benefits of a sustainable and thriving Warwickshire.

As Warwickshire adapts to a Net Zero future and deals with the effects of Climate Change, WACL can provide courses which can help individuals and families to navigate the changes and challenges which will impact on the world of work as well as our communities.

National Priorities

Nationally, Post-16 Education and Skills policy, in conjunction with wider skills approaches post-18 are a critical element of the Government's 'Levelling Up' agenda with repeated references made to the importance of skills through key Government policy documents such as the 'Plan for Growth'.

The White Paper stated two distinct missions in support of the wider Levelling Up objectives around education and skills; the specific aim for skills: -

- By 2030, the number of people successfully completing **high-quality skills training** will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.

Accordingly, the wider set of missions within Levelling Up opens the prospect of recognising the benefits of the skills and education system in supporting other missions, such as improving healthy life expectancy, pride in place and well-being. This has resonance with the value of community learning approaches and could have close associations with social prescribing models and contribute to the wider 'Health in All Policies' approach being developed within WCC.

There is a renewed emphasis on the importance of increasing the overall number of workers within the economy with a minimum of a level 3 qualification. Taken together, these approaches reinforce a focus on pathways and data as being critical to the delivery of these objectives. This will require an understanding on the needs and skills demand which a local economy will need and how that is met by supply.

Needs Analysis

Residents in Warwickshire, in general, have a reasonably high level of skills. One of the challenges is to increase the number of adults with a least a level 3 qualification. Currently some areas, such as North Warwickshire Borough and Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough, have comparatively high levels of adults without any qualifications, and large numbers of the workforce have little more than level 2 (e.g. GCSE grades 9-4 or A*-C; level 2 NVQ, intermediate apprenticeship), (Source: State of Warwickshire 2022).

For the period January 2020-December 2020, 4.5% of the population aged 16-64 had no formal qualifications. This figure was lower than both the equivalent West Midlands average (8.2%) and England average (6.2%). North Warwickshire Borough had the highest proportion of people aged 16-64 with no qualifications (8.2%) and Warwick District had the lowest (1.4%), (Source: State of Warwickshire 2022).

In contrast, 46.9% of Warwickshire's population were qualified to at least Level 4 or higher in 2020, this was slightly higher than both the West Midlands (37.1%) and England equivalent figure (42.8%). Again, North Warwickshire Borough had the lowest proportion qualified to Level 4 or higher (25.5%) and Warwick District had the highest (63.9%), (Source: State of Warwickshire 2022).

Warwickshire is currently experiencing a tight labour market with high levels of employment in-line with the national trend. Between October and December 2021, Warwickshire's employment rate was 80%, compared with 75.1% nationally, (Source: ONS Annual Population Survey).

Labour demand in terms of job vacancies in recent months has hit record heights. However, the onset of the pandemic has altered the types of jobs and skills demanded by employers.

Unemployment levels within Warwickshire remain fairly low despite initial increases due to the pandemic. Between October and December 2021 England's unemployment rate was 4.6%, compared to 2.5% for Warwickshire (Source: ONS Annual Population Survey). Warwickshire has seen a significant growth in over 50+ benefit claimants, as a result of the pandemic.

5. Key Priorities & KPIs for WACL

The Service priorities are based on the needs of its customers, i.e. Warwickshire's residents. This requires an understanding of the economic, social and environmental conditions and resident needs as the basis for planning service delivery.

Key Priorities 2022-2025

1. Recovery from COVID, both in terms of increasing learner numbers and ensuring financial viability and sustainability of the service.
2. Securing new sources of funding to grow the service.
3. All programmes to align with demand and local and national priorities whilst providing innovative curriculum capitalising on digital technologies.
4. Embed employability skills throughout all curriculum pathways to support individuals to up-skill and re-skill, in order to gain and improve employment opportunities.
5. Ensure that all programmes are of the highest quality to provide all learners with the very best opportunities to fulfil their full potential.
6. To maintain an OfSTED Grade 2 (Good) or above in the next inspection.

To achieve our priorities, we will:

1. Improve the marketing and promotion of the service and the courses/programmes available.
2. Increase learner numbers by widening participation through a targeted approach focused on the following groups of residents:
 - Over 50's who are economically inactive due to being adversely affected by the impact of COVID on the economy.
 - Adults who have missed out on previous educational opportunities.
 - Adults with learning difficulties or disabilities.
 - Refugees, residents with ESOL (English as a second or other language) needs.
 - Vulnerable or isolated residents (promoting interaction and community integration).
 - Adults who need support with their well-being (social prescribing model).
 - Adults from deprived neighbourhoods (IMD deciles 1-3)
 - Digitally excluded adults
 - Adults yet to achieve a Level 2 in English and Maths
 - Care Leavers
3. Improve learner attendance.
4. Continue to offer a blended delivery model (mixture of on-line and face to face delivery).
5. Continue to embed employability skills (eg: digital skills, communication skills, teamwork, time keeping, English and Maths).
6. Develop and improve ways of collecting information on progression and destinations to improve future planning and measure impact.
7. Promote progression pathways to all learners.
8. Ensure quality improvement across all provision and address issues identified in the self-assessment reports and quality improvement plans.
9. Explore other sources of funding.

10. Further develop and implement a Learner Voice engagement plan

Performance will be measured by the following key performance indicators (KPI):

KPI 1: The actual number of enrolments and funding earned to be at least **97%** of agreed delivery profile.

KPI 2: The overall attendance rate for learners to be a minimum of **90%**.

KPI 3: The achievement rate for learners commencing adult skills funded programmes to be a minimum of **85.5%**.

KPI 4: The achievement rate for learners commencing Community Learning funded programmes to be a minimum of **95%**.

KPI 5: The overall percentage of learners who state they have enjoyed their course to be a minimum of **96%**.

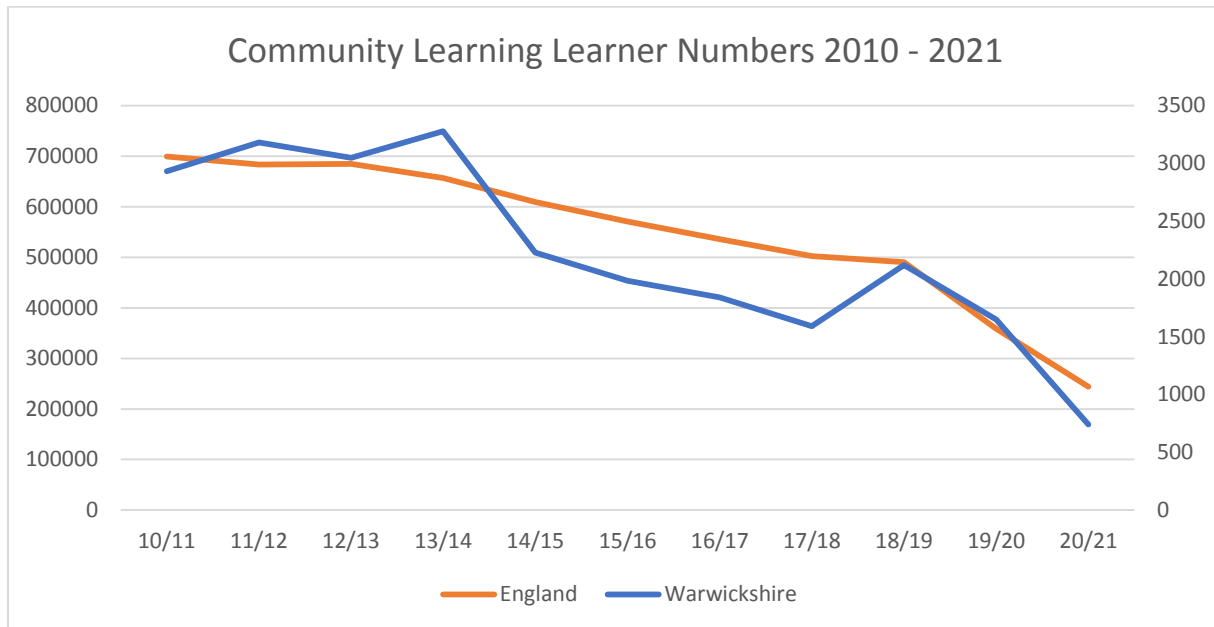
KPI 6: The overall percentage of new learners attending programmes to be a minimum of **35%**.

KPI 7: The proportion of learners who progress onto a positive destination to be a minimum of **89%**

Appendix 1: Warwickshire Adult and Community Learning Key Data

Enrolment Trends – Community Learning

Nationally, participation in Community Learning-funded provision has been declining for over a decade. The decline in Warwickshire’s numbers has closely matched that for England as a whole.

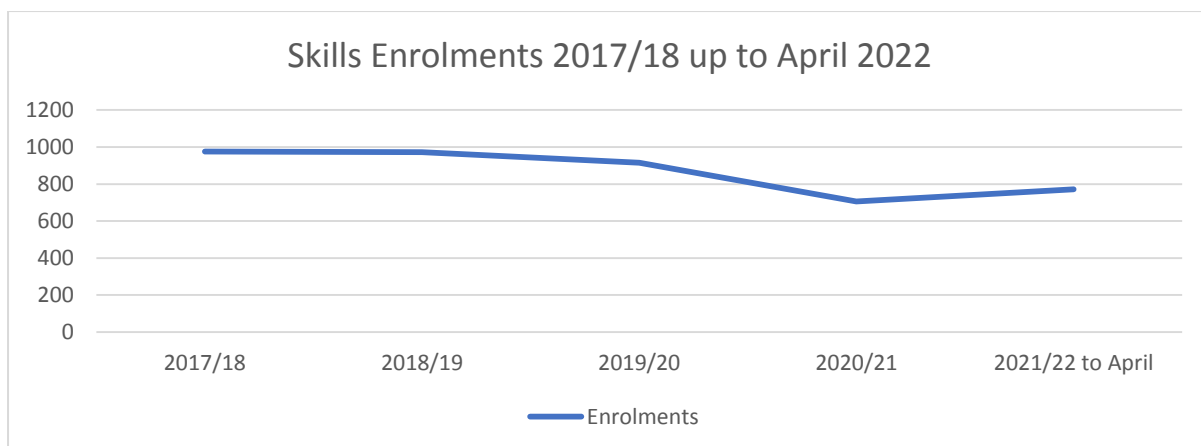


The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on participation rates. In 2020/21, these were half their immediate pre-pandemic levels. The 2021/22 academic year has seen an increase in learner and enrolment numbers over the previous year, but the improvement is modest.

Skills Funding and Enrolments

Part of ACL’s contract with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is for the delivery of Skills-funded adult learning. This provision, comprising mostly of learning leading to formal qualifications, is funded on a per-aim (qualification) basis, so that the service income is directly correlated with the number of learners enrolled and the learning aims they undertake and complete. This provision includes programmes in English, ESOL, Maths, ICT and courses for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities (LLDD).

The chart below shows the Skills-funded enrolments over a five-year period.

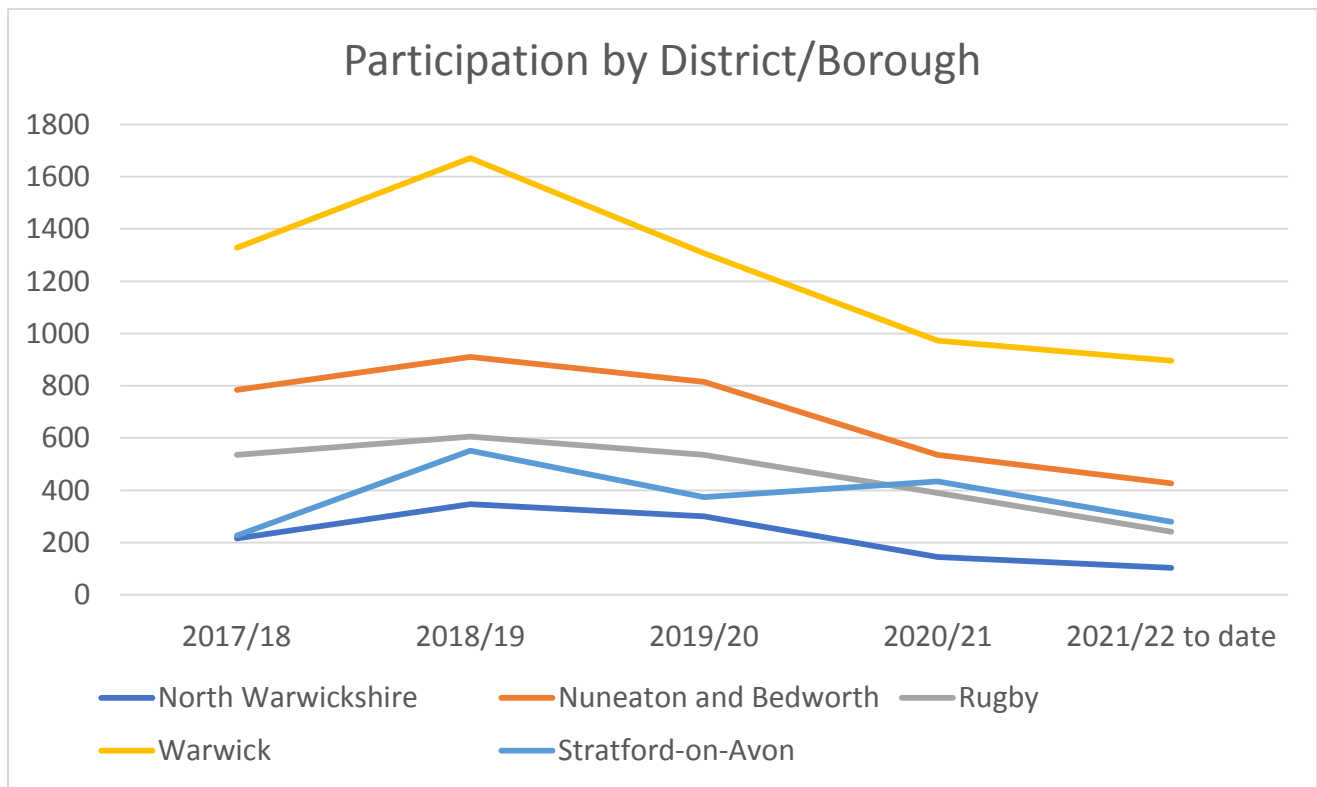


The 2020/21 academic year was impacted by Covid throughout, resulting in a further fall in enrolment numbers. As of April 2022, learner and enrolment numbers have shown a modest recovery over the previous year, but are still some way short of pre-pandemic levels.

Participation by District/Borough

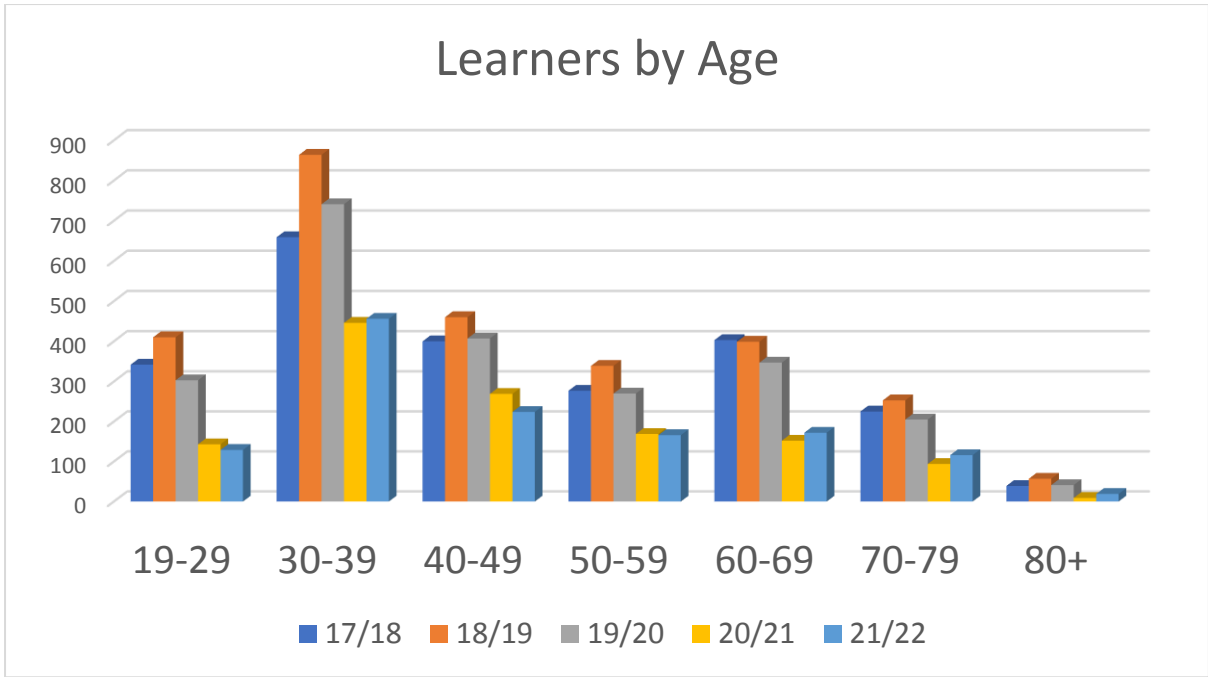
The greatest number of ACL participants live in Warwick District, a fact largely explained by the Pound Lane Learning Centre in Lillington, Leamington Spa, which is the location for a large proportion of the service’s classes.

North Warwickshire borough shows the smallest number of participants. Whilst the total population size is considerably lower than for other areas, this still represents a low participation rate (one enrolment per 429 residents in 2020/21, compared with a county average of one per 221 residents).



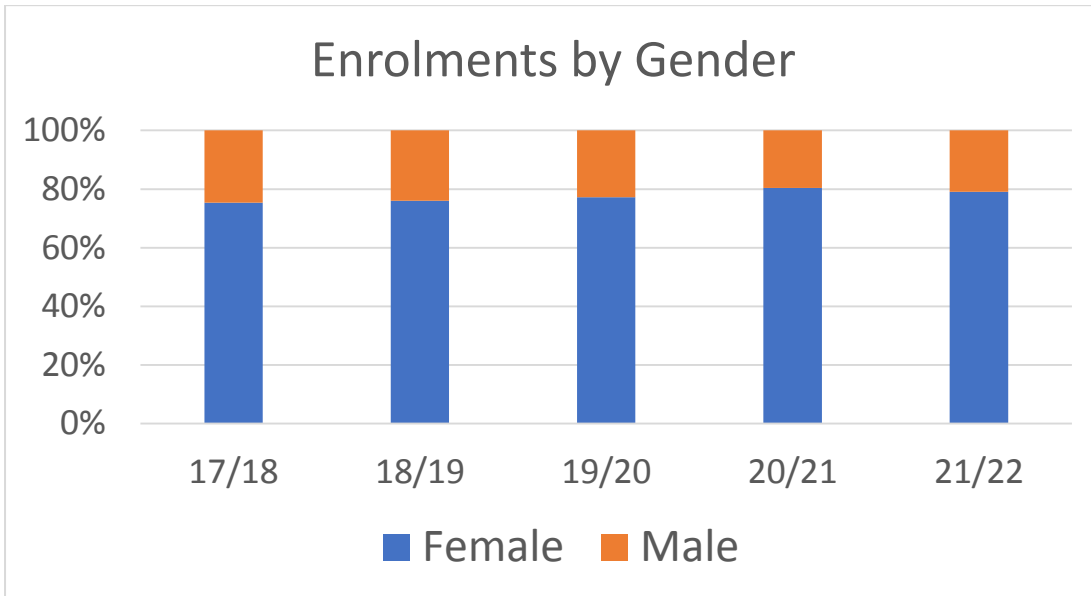
Learners by Age

The service is funded to work with learners aged 19+. Participation rates are highest for those aged 30-39, though there is significant variation across the curriculum: in the PCDL curriculum area (arts, crafts and languages) the highest participation rate is by learners aged 60-69.



Enrolments by Gender

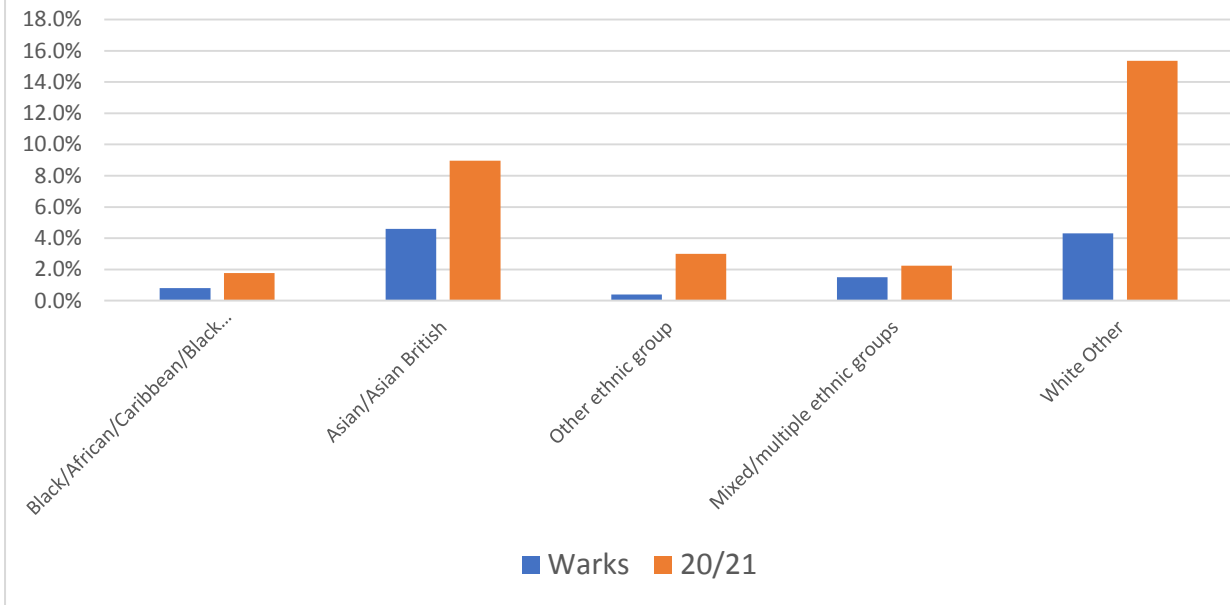
Participation by male learners has been between 20 and 25% in recent years. This is in line with national averages for the sector.



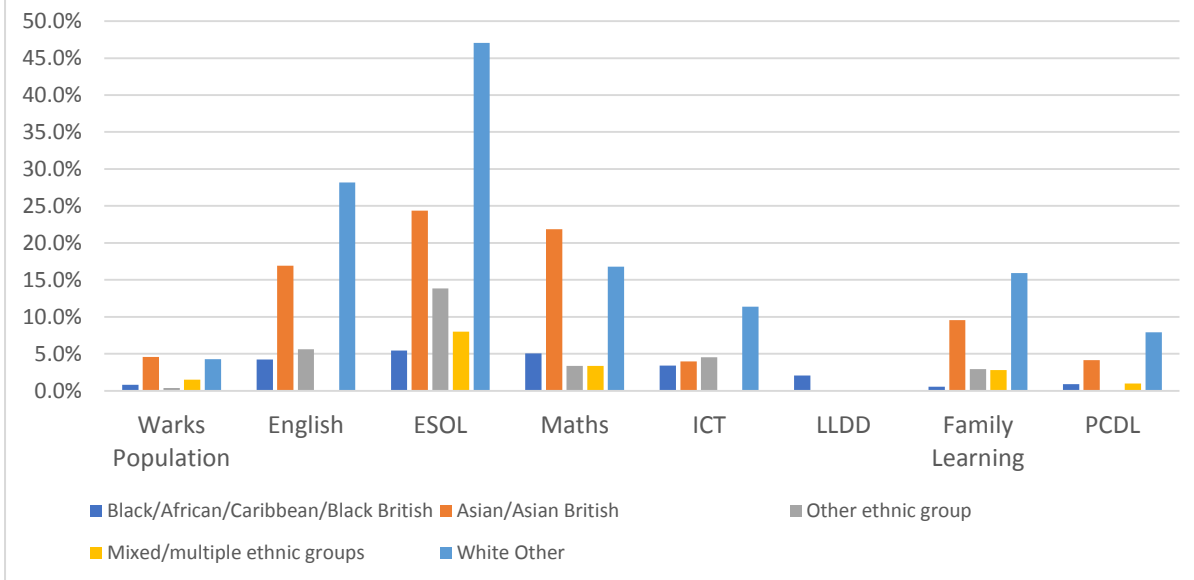
Enrolments by Ethnic Group

The charts below show participation rates (2020/21) of different ethnic minority groups, compared with their proportions in the Warwickshire population. Participation rates are above average for all minority groups. This is true even when one excludes English language classes (the English and ESOL curriculum areas).

Participation Rates - Ethnic Minority Learners



Ethnic Minority Participation by Curriculum Area (2020/21)



Participation by Geographical Deprivation

Approximately 14% of Warwickshire’s population live in areas classified as the 30% most deprived nationally (Index of Multiple Deprivation). A large proportion of those areas (35 of 50) lie in Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire boroughs. Participation rates in ACL provision by learners from deprived areas have

been above average in each of the last five years. However, that rate has shown a consistent decline across that period.

