

Learner handbook



Sunderland Learning and Skills Service

2025 – 2026

www.sunderland.gov.uk/learning-skills

Welcome

We are pleased you have decided to take part in a course funded by The Learning and Skills Service, and we hope you enjoy your learning experience.

Our ambition is that everyone is well equipped to respond positively to all the opportunities and challenges that life presents, with a particular focus on, ready for education, ready for work and ready for life.'

The Learning and Skills Service offer a range of high-quality courses, delivered in the heart of local communities and at times to suit your needs. Learning is provided to help you gain a new skill, upskill, re-connect with education, learn how to support your children better or progress into further learning, volunteering and employment.



All courses are funded by the North East Combined Authority – Adult Skills Fund.

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Learner Charter

Our commitment to you is to have:

- A safe, comfortable and welcoming learning environment
- Up to date and accurate course information
- Experienced and qualified tutors, who offer a variety of teaching and learning styles
- Friendly and helpful staff who will treat you with respect
- Resources and materials to help with your learning
- Regular feedback to improve your skills and develop your understanding
- Specialist information, advice and guidance to help you progress into further learning, volunteering or employment
- A simple way to report your comments, compliments or complaints
- Appropriate confidentiality in relation to personal information shared with us



Your commitment to us is to:

- Tell your tutor if you require any additional support
- Arrive on time with the correct equipment, so that you do not disrupt other learners
- Attend every session and let your tutor know if/when you are going to be absent
- Treat all staff and other learners with consideration and respect – verbal/physical abuse will not be tolerated
- Engage in wider learning themes, including PREVENT, British Values and Safeguarding
- Follow guidance from tutors, relating to Healthy and Safety, E-Safety and Safeguarding procedures
- Complete a Learner Survey about your learning experience, to help us to continually improve the service
- Share information with us about your next steps, such as employment, volunteering or further training



Supporting you as a learner

Information, advice and guidance

Your tutor/training provider will provide information and advice about your learning options prior to enrolling on a course and at appropriate times during your course. You are also free to request information at any point during your learning journey. Throughout your course, your tutor will be able to offer information about other progression opportunities.

Support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

The Learning and Skills Service and all Training Providers are committed to providing a supportive learning environment to all learners. If you have a disability, learning difficulty or health problem that may affect your learning, please let your tutor know and this will ensure you get the right help and support.



Support with English and maths

If you have any concerns regarding your English or maths skills, please discuss this with your tutor during your initial assessment. It is better to highlight this at the start of your course rather than wait until part way through. Your tutor will be able to explain what help may be available to improve your skills.

Additional support

Funding may also be available in certain circumstances to remove other barriers to learning including financial hardship or childcare where support is not being provided by other organisations. Please discuss this with your tutor or email learningandskills@sunderland.gov.uk

Our commitment to keeping you safe

The Learning and Skills Service have committed to:

- Safe recruitment of staff, which includes Disclosure and Barring Service checks and other relevant pre-employment checks
- A clear process for reporting cases of suspected abuse
- Informing all learners of their rights and responsibilities for safer learning
- Ensuring Internet and E-safety is widely promoted
- Regular staff training on all matters of safety



Safeguarding

You have the right to feel safe where you learn

It is everyone's responsibility:

- To respect other people's rights to safety
- Not to hurt or abuse others
- Not to threaten to hurt or abuse others

As part of your learning, your training provider will make sure you are aware of how to keep yourself and others safe and will let you know how to report concerns and who to. They will also share the details of their own and The Learning and Skills Service Safeguarding Leads.

If you think you have been hurt or abused by another learner, staff or visitor, you should report this immediately to your tutor or other staff member.

Your training provider will have safeguarding procedures in place and will be able to support you. If you do not feel able to discuss the incident with your tutor or training provider, please contact The Learning and Skills Service.

The Learning and Skills Service Safeguarding Leads		
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sarah Potts	07747565939
Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Sarah Storer	07500551920
Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Mike Law	07776453720

Please be aware that The Learning and Skills Service staff work flexible hours from Monday-Friday.

E-Safety

The Learning and Skills Service seek to maximise the educational benefit that can be obtained by the use of ICT, whilst at the same time minimising any associated risks.

You are encouraged to access various technologies, but in doing so we want to ensure you remain safe from harm. Your Training Provider will share further details on their ICT policy and how to stay safe online.



British Values

British values are important because they promote a society that is free from discrimination, intolerance and hate. These values act as a guide to peoples' behaviour and can help them to know what is right from wrong.

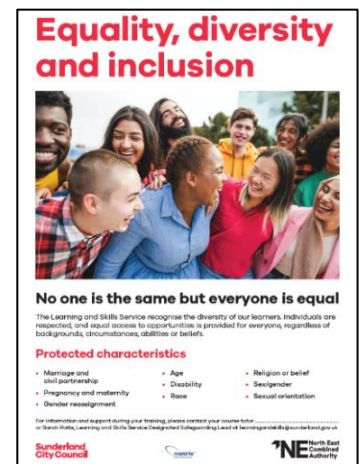
The officially defined British Values are:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect
- Tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Equality and Diversity

The Learning and Skills service is committed to equal opportunities for all. All learners have the right to work and receive education in an environment which is free from discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation



You are protected under the [Equality Act 2010](#) from these types of discrimination.

Prevent

The aim of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The duty requires specified authorities such as education, health, local authorities, police and criminal justice agencies (prisons and probation) to help prevent this risk, by supporting individuals to identify threat and risk.

The objectives of Prevent are to:

- Tackle the ideological causes of terrorism
- Intervene early to support people susceptible to radicalisation
- Enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate



Further information can be found at: [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Health, safety and First Aid

The Learning and Skills Service takes the safety and welfare of all learners and staff seriously and ensures safe and secure learning environments.

To help maintain this, you should:

- Be clear about emergency evacuation instructions in the event of fire
- Listen carefully to all health and safety advice
- Keep belongings stowed away
- Report any potential hazards to your training provider

If you, or another learner, require any first aid assistance, please seek help from your tutor and ensure that all accidents, no matter how small, are recorded in the accident book by your tutor.

Exclusion

The Learning and Skills Service reserves the right to exclude any learner causing offence, abuse or harm.

Useful information

Enrolment Form

This form provides The Learning and Skills Service with important information about you and your course. Your enrolment details form part of your learning agreement and it is used to secure funding from the North East Combined Authority.

Why is my National Insurance number required?

Your National Insurance number is used to assess the economic impact of training programmes on learners, particularly but not exclusively, those who are unemployed. Being able to demonstrate the impact of training for all learners helps us secure funding.

What is my Unique Learner Number (ULN)?

Your ULN is a ten-digit reference number, unique to yourself for use within education. You retain the same number for accessing your personal learning record (PLR) throughout your life, whatever level of learning you attain and wherever you choose to undertake education, training and learning.

Your ULN is issued and held by the Learning Records Service (LRS) who use your number to index learner identity details, as well as education and training qualifications within the PLR. For more information about how your information is processed and to access your Personal Learning record please refer to [LRS privacy notice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/learning-records-service-privacy-notice)

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Why is information about my learning difficulty, disability or health problem required?

This information helps with planning, to study trends and to monitor the outcomes of initiatives and interventions for learners with different types of disability, learning difficulty and health problems.

Initial assessments

Initial assessments are used to help you and your tutor understand your starting point and to ensure your learning journey is appropriately planned. These should take place at the very start of your learning and may be in written or digital form.

Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

This document is a record of your personal learning journey. The ILP includes your personal aims and shows the steps you are making to succeed on your course. Your aims may be linked to the course itself or include wider developmental goals, such as increasing confidence, improving communication skills, problem solving etc.

You will review and update your ILP at regular points throughout your course.
Please note classroom visitors may ask to view your ILP.

At the end of your course, you will be requested to identify your main achievement from training and will be supported to plan your next steps.

Privacy Notice

What information do we collect and why?

The type of information we will collect:

- Personal information (such as name and address, email, telephone)
- Characteristics (such as ethnicity, language, nationality, country of birth)
- Attendance information (such as sessions attended, number of absences and absence reasons)
- Health information, including relevant medical information,
- Special Educational Needs information

The Learning and Skills Service will collect information about you to:

- Support your learning
- Monitor and report on your progress
- Assess the quality of our services
- Safeguard your wellbeing
- Provide you with appropriate courses to gain new skills
- Support you to seek further education or employment.

Information may be recorded in writing, electronically on a computer or a mixture of both. We will only use information collected lawfully in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and future UK Data Protection legislation.

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We will not use any of your information for any other purpose than the reason it was collected, unless we have obtained your consent beforehand.

Do we share information about you with anyone?

There are times when it will be appropriate for us to share relevant information with other agencies to help us work together for your benefit.

We may share your information with the following main partners and they may share it with us to support your learning:

- The Local Authority
- Other local providers of Education and Training Courses
- Department for Education (DfE)

We do not share information about you with anyone without your consent unless the law requires or allows us to do so. We will always seek your positive consent to share information if there is no legal basis to share.

In all cases where we must pass on information, we will only share the minimum amount of information required and will use the most secure method to transfer; wherever data will be anonymised (i.e. does not identify you personally) or encrypted.

This privacy notice guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/25-26/ilr/ilrprivacynotice is issued by on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Department of Education (DfE) to inform learners about the Individual Learner Record (ILR) and how their personal information is used in the ILR. Your personal information is used by the DfE to exercise our functions under article 6(1)(e) of the UK GDPR and to meet our statutory responsibilities, including under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. Our lawful basis for using your special category personal data is covered under Substantial Public Interest based in law (Article 9(2)(g)) of GDPR legislation. This processing is under Section 54 of the Further and Higher Education Act (1992).

Completing your course

Completion

Upon completion of your learning, you should receive a certificate which will demonstrate your achievements.

Learner Voice – Feedback

Your feedback is important to us. At the end of your course, your tutor will ask you to complete a learner survey via a weblink or QR code (shown below)

Learner voice surveys provide appropriate ways for learner concerns, interests and suggestions to be heard. The feedback you provide will be used to enhance learner experiences and continue to create effective learning environments.



<https://forms.office.com/e/6SmJLEZea2>



You may also be contacted after you have completed your programme of learning to establish whether you have entered employment or gone into further learning.

Comments and Compliments

The Learning and Skills Service are always looking for ways to improve. We also love to hear what is working well and how your course has helped you. If you have any suggestions, comments or feedback that you would like to share with us, please let us know.

learningandskills@sunderland.gov.uk

Complaints

We hope you do not find yourself in a position to make a complaint, however, should something go wrong, please contact your tutor or training provider in the first instance.

If you still have a cause for complaint, contact: learningandskills@sunderland.gov.uk

Contact us

The Learning and Skills Service
Sunderland City Council
City Hall
Plater Way
Sunderland
SR1 3AA

Email: learningandskills@sunderland.gov.uk

Web: www.sunderland.gov.uk/learning-skills

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