



MAYOR'S  
SKILLS  
ACADEMIES  
CREATIVE



# CITYLIT

INSPIRING PASSIONS · REALISING AMBITIONS

## Accountability Statement 2026-27

# City Lit's Social & Community Approach

The highest quality learning is the core of what we do, but we deliver more than just knowledge and skills, we also build communities and enhance physical and mental well-being. We believe that the opportunity City Lit gives for individuals to learn with a diverse mix of people from a wide range of backgrounds and life experiences is how we enrich lives and society as a whole. We create social and community wealth as well as giving an outstanding educational experience.

We are passionate about this work and we believe that...

...everyone should have access to adult education

...learning creates a sense of community, and our offer provides for some of those who need the most support

...learning plays a crucial part in physical and mental well-being



# Our Purpose: Bringing People Together to Enrich Lives Through Learning

## Our Strategic Goals

- Our students at the heart of everything we do
- Our commitment to excellence
- Delivering social and community value

## Deliverables

- Enriching individual lives, communities and society. Giving support at different life stages
- A curriculum strategy which enables our students to realise their potential
- Contributing to improving our students’ physical and mental health and well-being
- Widening participation and expanding national reach
- Enhancing government and mayoral relations and partnership working

## The Pillars we build on

- Our People
- Our Teaching & Learning
- Our Learning Environment
- Through a sustainable business and financial strategy

# Quality of Provision

City Lit was recognised by Ofsted as an Outstanding provider in May 2023

|                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Overall effectiveness     | Outstanding |
| The quality of education  | Outstanding |
| Behaviour and attitudes   | Outstanding |
| Personal development      | Outstanding |
| Leadership and management | Outstanding |

“

The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the skills needs they meet. They work very effectively with stakeholders, who value the role that the college plays in offering flexible, accessible and relevant courses that meet a varied range of needs within the capital and beyond.

Leaders, managers and staff ensure that the curriculum remains focused on both the skills that employers need most, and the skills that individuals need to gain and remain in employment.

”

Judged “Strong” for skills

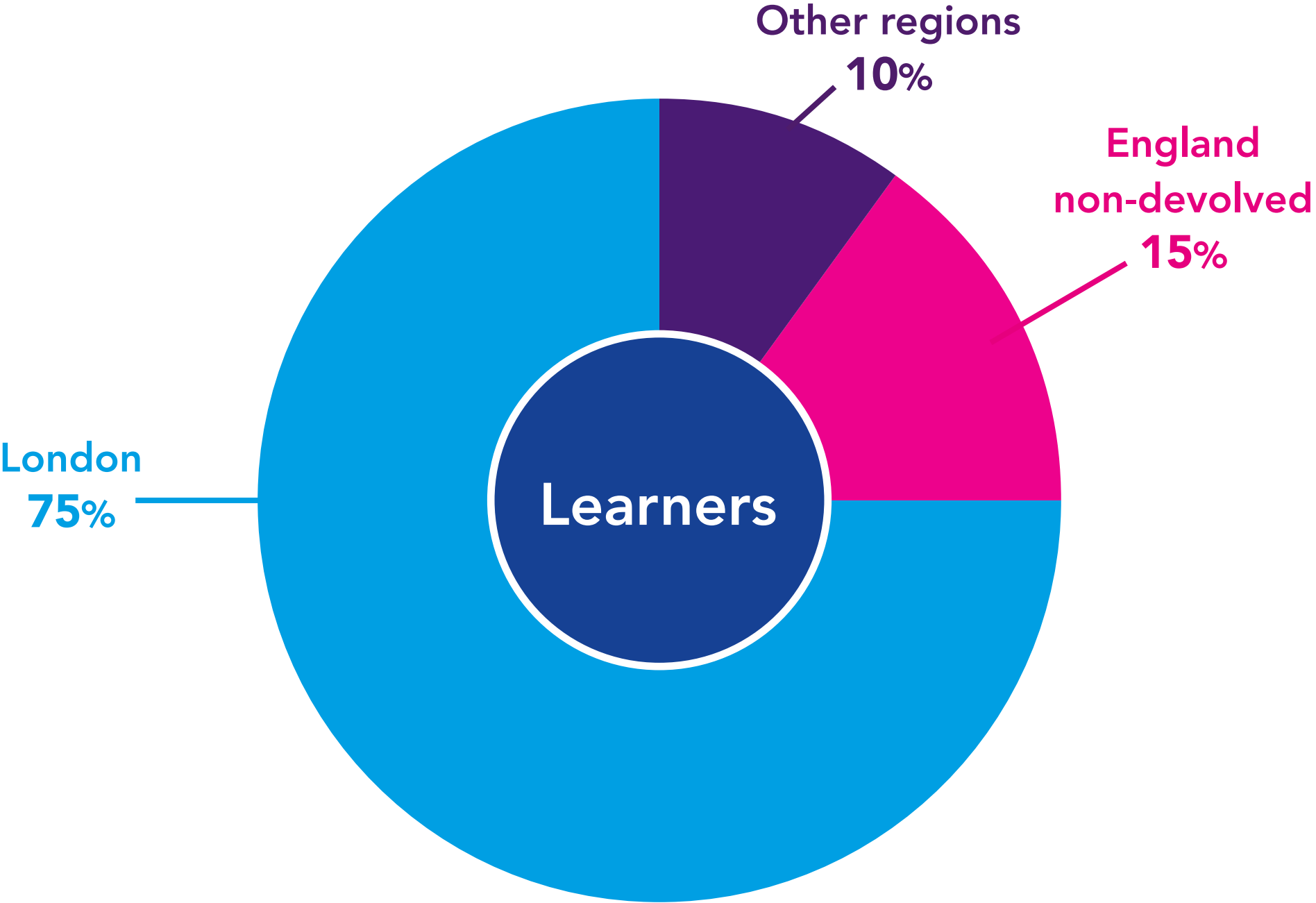
*"Ofsted's acknowledgement of your strong contribution to meeting London's skills needs and your focus on opening up adult education provision, for example through your offer to deaf and hard-of-hearing Londoners, demonstrates our shared commitment to delivering on my ambition."*

**Sir Sadiq Khan**  
Mayor of London



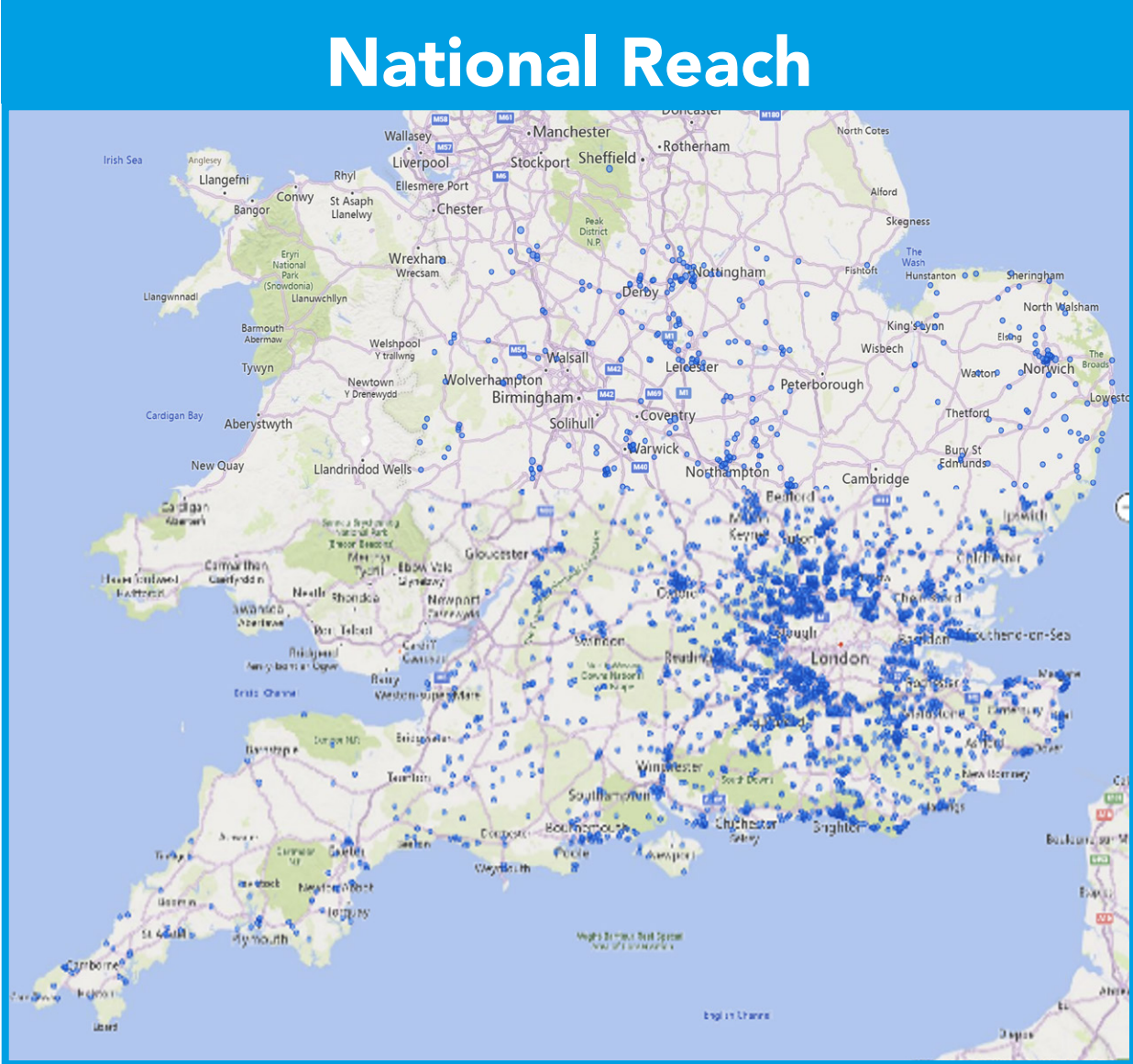
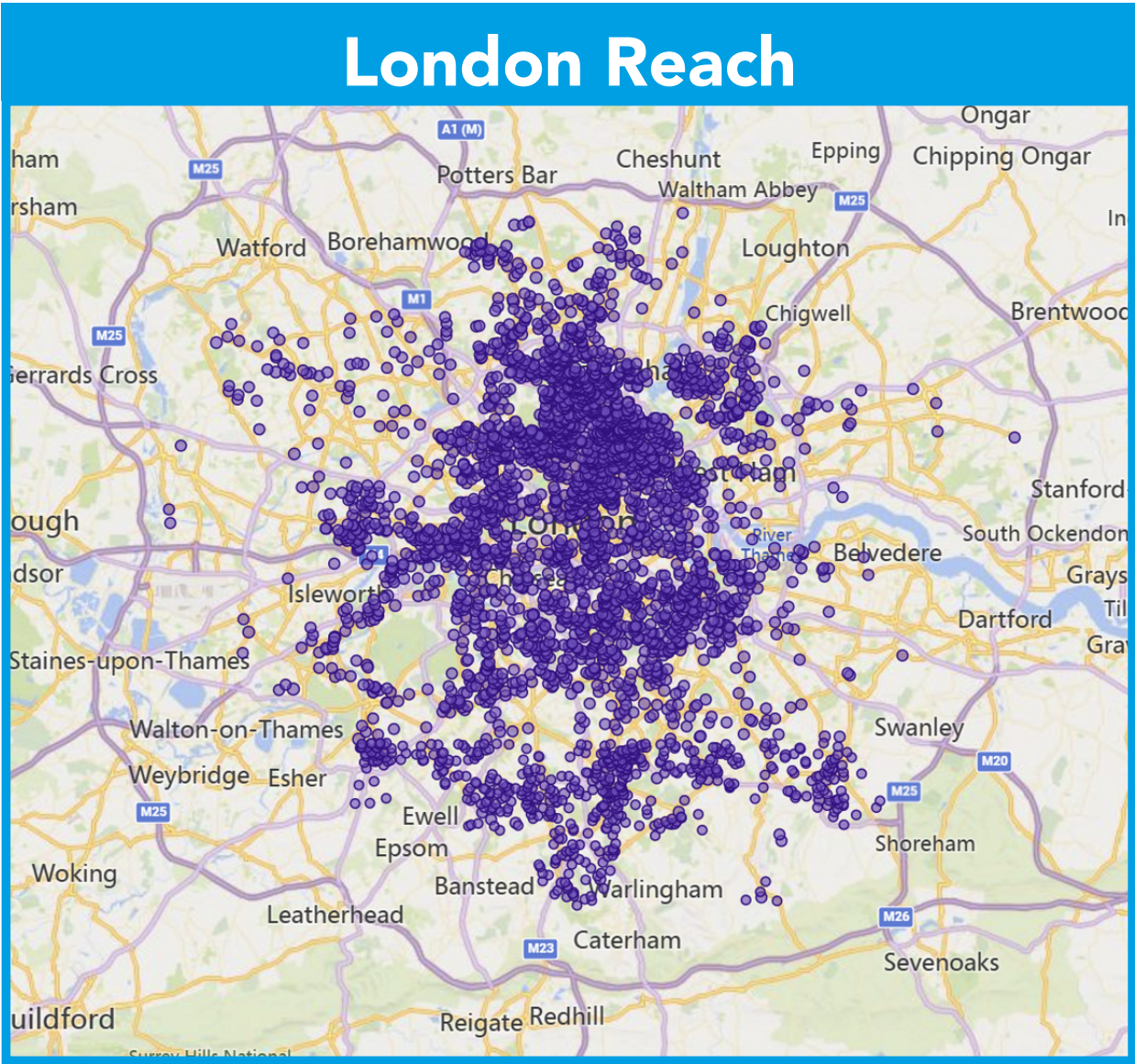
# Context and Place

We are Europe’s leading adult education provider. Located in the heart of London, we serve nearly 20,000 Londoners, 4,000 learners from non-devolved areas and 2,800 other learners nationally.



# We Attract Students from Across London and Beyond

City Lit has a pan-London reach, attracting students from all 32 boroughs. As an active member of our local Employer Representative Body (ERB) - BusinessLDN, we work collaboratively to develop and deliver the new London Local Skills Improvement Plan.



# Serving Learners Beyond London

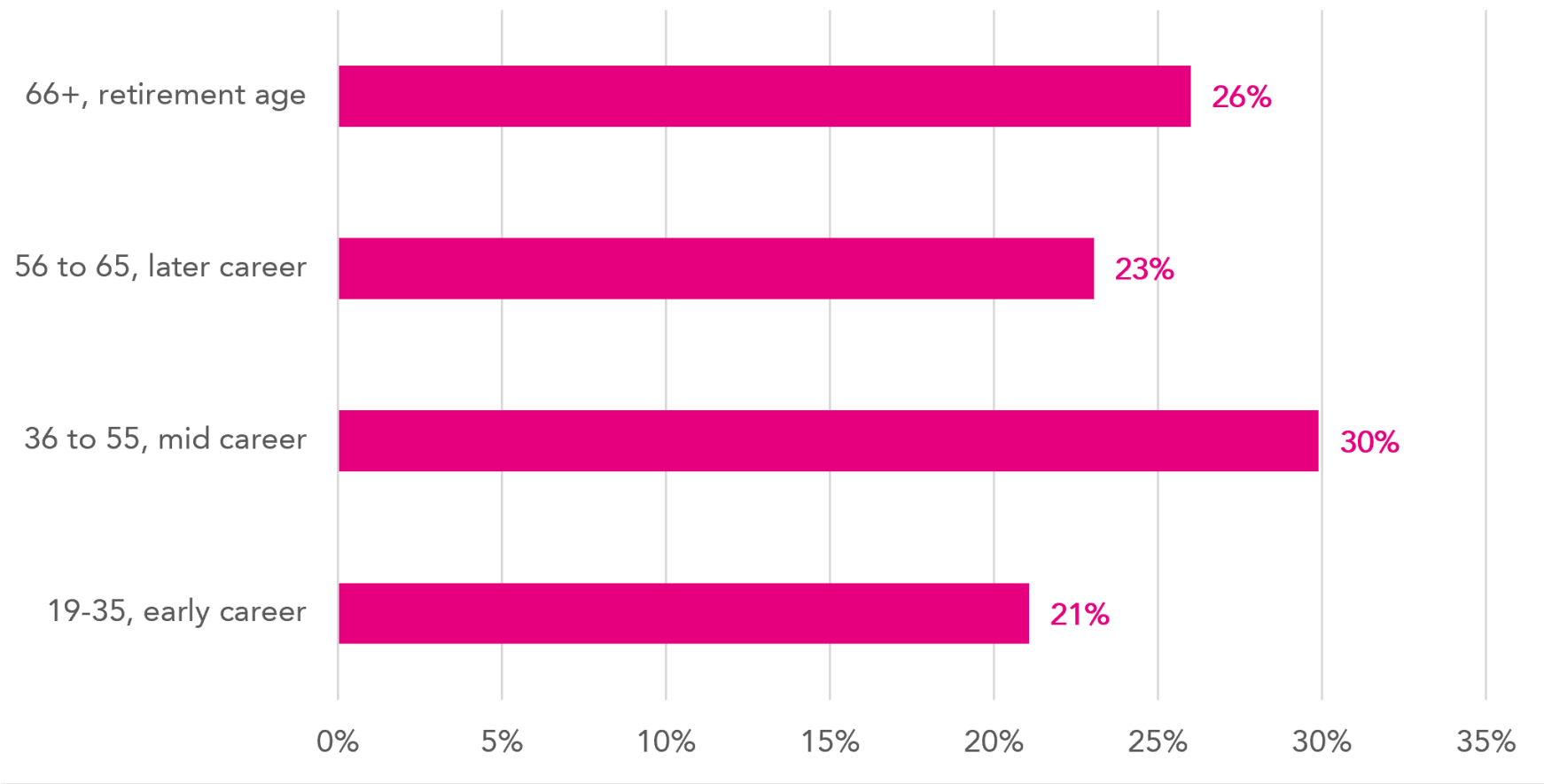


City Lit serves over 6,700 learners living outside of London. These learners will access learning in a number of ways: many of them work in London as commuters and attend evening classes after work; others, from farther afield use either our extensive range of synchronous online courses, or by travel into London to access in-person learning.

# Our Learners By Age

Our learners range in age from 19 to their 90s.

There is great diversity in our student base. We have people who are: unemployed; self-employed; in early stages of employment; have careers they wish to enhance; looking to change their job or career; volunteers; and those who are retired but still want to self-develop and contribute to society through volunteering or in other ways. Many of our students cover a number of these categories. Skills acquisition ranks highest in our learner intent and outcome statistics.



## HRH The Princess Royal



“It is particularly encouraging to see how people of all ages and backgrounds come together at City Lit to challenge themselves and transform their lives. If education can be defined as ‘training for life’, then lifelong learning and its ability to unlock potential throughout people’s lives should be accepted as part of life.”

# Why City Lit...

- We are inclusive in our subjects, levels, and our commitment to being open and accessible
- We provide 6,000 courses
- Our offer is diverse, covering vocational and transferable skills, well-being, humanities, languages, visual arts, and performing arts
- We are open seven days a week, from 8am to 10pm
- The outstanding quality of our teaching delivered by over 1,000 experts and practitioners, who are leaders in their field
- Our creative arts provision has launched the careers of many artists, writers and actors
- Our internationally renowned Centre for Adult Speech Therapy has supported many adults in their fluency journey and was recognised by the Queen's Anniversary Prize
- Our annual Mental Wealth Festival – partnering with the Mayor of London, Corporation of London, Royal Opera House, National Gallery, Mind, Age UK and the Samaritans
- Our Centre for Deaf Education supporting Deaf and hard-of-hearing students and their allies is recognised as the best in the country with expertise in teaching students and teachers. We are the only teacher training organisation for British Sign Language and Lipreading teachers in the country.
- Our purpose-built wellbeing centre trains professionals in wellbeing, health, counselling and psychotherapy
- Our portfolio of over 30 languages at different levels, including Cornish, Hungarian, Hindi and classical languages such as Biblical Hebrew
- Our Centre for Learning Disabilities supports 120 adults in a groundbreaking approach around the arts and advocacy



# Why City Lit...

We adopt a broad definition of "skills"

We have a focus on the creative industries

We have a specialised School of Skills Employment and Well-being

Many students progress to higher education and further study

We support those embarking on second and third careers

We also have expertise in areas of specific disadvantage

*"City Lit plays a distinctive part in London's skills system as one of five Institutes for Adult Learning and has a strong track record of supporting adult learners including disabled Londoners and older Londoners, to return to the labour market, change careers or improve their wellbeing."*

**Howard Dawber OBE**  
**Deputy Mayor of London**  
**for Business and Growth**

# Developing the Plan - Engagement with Key Stakeholders

We engage with a wide range of stakeholders in addition to funding bodies and ERBs to inform curriculum design and enrich our learners' opportunities for development or progression.

**Employer  
Engagement**

**Civic Stakeholder  
Engagement**

**Professional  
Associations**

# Government and Civic Stakeholder Engagement

Our civic stakeholders include national and regional organisations, including:

- Greater London Authority
- Department for Education
- FE Commissioner
- Learning & Work Institute
- HOLEX
- Association of Colleges
- Institutes for Adult Learning
- BusinessLDN
- London Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Grow London Local

City Lit contributes to shaping the policy for adult education in London and nationally and ensures its currency related to the latest societal and economic priorities. Through our political engagement, stakeholder and partnership working, we ensure that the benefits of adult education to individuals, economy and society are recognised and advocated for.

The Percussion Orchestra, part of City Lit's Centre for Learning Disability Education, is an inspiring music project for adults with learning disabilities. Launched in 2015, and in partnership with the Royal Academy of Music, the orchestra creates and performs original compositions, challenging societal assumptions and celebrating diversity. The world's greatest percussionist, Dame Evelyn Glennie, is the patron of the orchestra and plays an active role in supporting their work.

The Creative Exchange Project, in partnership with the Royal Ballet and Opera recently brought together some of City Lit's Deaf refugee and migrant students for an inspiring performance at the Royal Ballet in Covent Garden. Over six weeks, these students collaborated with members of the Royal Ballet and Opera, blending ballet, traditional dances, and sign language from their home countries which culminated in a public performance of a segment from Light of Passage.

For 30 years City Lit has been the founder and host of Deaf Day, the biggest and most significant Deaf and hard-of-hearing event in UK. We partner with 70 organisations and welcome over 4,000 of the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community, as well as their allies, to the college.

Our partner Grow London Local support SMEs by referring business owners and staff onto our essential skills and business courses, helping them build skills and grow their operations. Alongside this, we collaborate on engagement activity, including co-hosting events for disabled entrepreneurs to widen access and participation.

# Employer Engagement

**Our work with local, regional and national employers leads to the curriculum that reflects the appropriate knowledge, skills, and industry standards to provide gateways into a range of sectors. Our relationships with employers and professional bodies support our learners in three ways:**

- 1.** Employers share intelligence with City Lit about skills shortages or offer learners work placement, employment, and volunteering opportunities. Some run workshops for learners about aspects of self-employment.
- 2.** Professional associations offer opportunities for learners to join the professional communities of practice, supporting their future CPD and career progression.
- 3.** Employers whose workforce improves core skills and productivity through City Lit’s tailored learning programmes.

## Employers we have worked with to deliver programmes in the last year include:

|                                                     |                     |                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Urban Massage                                       | Shakespeare's Globe | Care for You                     |
| Amazon                                              | National Theatre    | DCAL at UCL                      |
| University of Sunderland                            | UAL                 | Deaf Empowering Network          |
| Royal Opera and Ballet                              | Wellcome Collection | Frank Barnes School              |
| Camden People’s Theatre                             | Met Police          | National Deaf Children’s Society |
| Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government | SOAS                | St John's Deaf Community Centre  |
|                                                     | Dassault Systèmes   |                                  |

# Engagement with Professional Associations

City Lit departments are either leading partners, or active members, of professional associations. These bodies include:

- STAMMA, the British Stammering Association
- Association of BSL Teachers and Assessors
- Association of Teachers of Lipreading to Adults (ATLA)
- British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)
- Complementary Therapists Association
- Federation of Holistic Therapists
- Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID)
- Crafts Council
- Designer Bookbinders & The Society of Bookbinders
- The Society of Scribes & Illuminators
- The Basket makers Association & The Worshipful company of Basket Makers
- Goldsmiths Livery Company
- Royal Society of Sculptors
- Calligraphy & Lettering Arts Society
- The Guild of Photographers & Association of Photographers
- Printmakers Council & Royal Society of Painter Printmakers
- Heritage Crafts Association



# Local Needs Duty

City Lit meets national, regional and local skills priorities as identified by government, the Mayor of London and the London LSIP Committee. Our leadership and governance teams work proactively as a member of BusinessLDN, and with the GLA, to implement the ambitions and objectives of the Industrial Strategy, the London Growth Plan, the Inclusive Talent Strategy and the London Local Skills Improvement Plan. Judged as making a strong contribution to meeting skills needs by Ofsted in 2023, we deliver outputs in the following priority areas:

## Local skills needs priorities

### Creative Industries

We recognise the critical importance of creative skills development and the role this plays in supporting the growth of London's and England's world-leading creative industries. This priority aligns with the Industrial Strategy and the London Growth Plan. We are passionate about the arts and understand the important economic impact this sector has in the national economy.

We hold the Mayor's Skills Academies Quality Mark for Creative Industries in recognition of high-quality skills training delivery and the role we play as a crucial part London's Creative industries nexus.

Approximately 25% of our courses are in the creative and visual arts. Our tutors are accomplished artists, makers and authors with developed practices of their own, providing up-to-date knowledge

and professional links to relevant industries. Our learners are often self-employed artists, jewellers, ceramicists, sculptors, animators, filmmakers, directors, producers and authors who start their careers with us or use us for their continuing professional development.



# Local Needs Duty

## Local skills needs priorities

### Experience Economy

We recognise the importance of the experience economy in driving London's economic growth and global competitiveness by making London a world-leading destination for national and global audiences.

Aligned with the London Growth Plan, we deliver nearly 1,000 courses annually to develop the creative and technical skills that underpin high quality live experiences. Our contribution is focused on acting, music performance, technical theatre and backstage production skills, including our Technical Theatre Bootcamp delivered in partnership with Camden People's Theatre. Our programmes support both entry into employment and continuing professional development (CPD) for those already working in the sector.

Our tutors are experienced practitioners, ensuring that teaching reflects current industry practice. They provide careers advice on securing freelance work, including building networks and sustaining income across multiple roles in this competitive area.

### Health & Social care

We invested in creating a new Wellbeing Centre in 2020 to support the growth in our health & social care offer so that courses can be delivered in an industry standard setting.

In alignment with the Inclusive Talent Strategy, the centre primarily supports London health & social care skills priorities through delivery of counselling and massage qualifications, supported by the FCfJ Regional Flexibility offering free places to those without a Level 3 qualification, unemployed learners or those earning below the living wage. Our employer partnerships are strong in this area, working with two anchor-employers to co-design curriculum.

Funding has fluctuated in recent years, with provision expanding and contracting due to changes in level 3 funding policy, resulting in unmet learner demand. To address this instability, we will seek an increase in Advanced Learner Loan facility for 2026-27.

# Local Needs Duty

## Local skills needs priorities

### Digital

We are committed to delivering the essential and advanced digital skills needed in the digital skills industry and wider workplace. This priority aligns with the Industrial Strategy, London Growth Plan and London's Local Skills Improvement Plan as a core capability running through all growth sectors.

These enabling skills play an important supporting role in London achieving other key objectives such as growth of the green skills industry. Our curriculum offer serves first-engagement learners at entry level, with progression routes through to level 3 certificates in programming and UX which has grown year-on-year supported by FCfJ.

We are actively looking to engage with the Mayor's forthcoming plans to give Londoners access to education and skills in AI.

### Essential/Basic Skills

The London LSIP reports a higher proportion of adult Londoners with lower proficiency in 'basic skills' (numeracy, literacy, and English language skills) compared to the national average. This resonates with City Lit, where expertise in delivering these critical enabling skills has built over decades.

Our essential skills provision equips adults with the core skills needed to participate, progress and express themselves in life. Through English, maths, ESOL and digital skills, it builds communication, problem-solving and confidence, enabling learners to navigate work and society more effectively and develop greater agency in their lives.

Our ESOL programme supports London's migrant workforce, often accessed free of charge to those earning below the London living wage.

We have specialist provision in ensuring that the Deaf community access classes in British Sign Language, English, maths and digital skills. Among our learners are over 100 Deaf refugees and migrants who have challenging needs which we support with expert knowledge and compassion.

# Local Needs Duty

## Local skills needs priorities

### Essential/Basic Skills Continued

Our maths offer reduced in 2025/26 due to the end of the London Multiply programme and cuts to the Adult Skills Fund budget. While GLA essential skills flexibilities allow non-regulated maths to be fully funded post-Multiply, reduced ASF funding has left a gap in provision across London.



### Transferable Skills

Transferable skills development including research, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, analytical skills, organisational skills and time management skills are a key part of adult education and are embedded across our wide curriculum.

They are explicit in our universal and employability skills offer and personal and professional development courses such as assertiveness and public speaking. LSIP research shows these as the most in demand employer skills, yet the most lacking in job candidates. City Lit works actively with BusinessLDN and seeks further skills brokerage opportunities to co-design courses with employers.

# Objectives

| Aim/objective                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Match to National/regional/local Priorities                                         | 2025/2026 estimated enrolments | 2026-27 Target |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Support England’s <b>creative industries</b> by sustainably growing our vocational pathways, including accreditation                                                                                                                                       | Local (London LSIP); regional (GLA); National (DfE)                                 | 12,642                         | 13,088         |
| Help make London a world-leading destination by growing our <b>experience economy</b> offer, including Skills Bootcamps                                                                                                                                    | Regional (GLA);                                                                     | 9,439                          | 9,772          |
| Sustainably grow our <b>digital skills</b> offer informed by the sector that addresses skills needs, including growing accredited progression pathways though the FCfJ stream and exploring Bootcamps.                                                     | Local (London LSIP); regional (GLA underpinning all growth sectors); National (DfE) | 1,216                          | 1,259          |
| Continue to deliver vocational training pathways in key <b>Health and Social Care</b> professions and continuing professional development, including a review to streamline accredited progression pathways in response to static FCfJ funding.            | Health and Social Care; local (London LSIP, BACP, employers); regional (GLA)        | 1,233                          | 1,233          |
| Address exclusion and marginalisation faced by the Deaf and hard-of-hearing communities through sustainable growth of BSL, lipreading and skills training for Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners, including BSL and Lipreading Teacher Training programmes. | Regional (GLA)                                                                      | 1,136*                         | 1,176          |
| Improve people’s jobs and wellbeing, strengthen society, and boost economic growth by growing our <b>essential skills</b> offer (English, maths, ESOL and essential digital) including specialist provision for Deaf learners.                             | Local (London LSIP); regional (GLA); National (DfE)                                 | 1,641                          | 1,660          |

\* Employer engagement with businesses including Royal Opera House, UAL, Wellcome Collection and SOAS delivered Deaf Awareness training to 568 employees in addition to this number

# Corporation Statement

On behalf of City Lit, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above, was approved by the Governing Body at their meeting on 07 July 2026.

[www.citylit.ac.uk](http://www.citylit.ac.uk)

# CITYLIT

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The City Literary Institute, a company limited by guarantee

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