

# RHACC

Richmond and Hillcroft  
Adult Community College



**STRATEGIC PLAN >>**

**2022–2025**



# CONTENTS >>

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. ABOUT THE STRATEGY	4
3. ABOUT RHACC	5
4. OUR ACHIEVEMENTS	6
5. OUR LEARNERS	8
6. OUR CAMPUSES	10
7. CONNECTING COMMUNITIES: RHACC TODAY	12
8. THE NATIONAL CONTEXT	14
9. MEETING THE GOVERNMENT'S EDUCATION & FUNDING AGENDA	16
10. CHALLENGES	18
11. OUR PURPOSE	20
12. OUR VALUES	22
13. OUR VISION	24
14. GOALS FOR 2022-2025	25
15. ACHIEVING OUR GOALS	26
16. KEY MILESTONES	30
17. LEARNER STORIES	32



# 1. INTRODUCTION >>



Thank you for your interest in Richmond and Hillcroft Adult and Community College. It is a privilege to be introducing our strategy for the next 3 years, which builds on the strong foundations that we have developed over decades of serving adult learners and the communities we are part of.



RHACC is a truly inspiring establishment, driven to enable adults and communities to thrive through education. It does this through the provision of learning, skills and enterprise activities that meet the needs of learners that are diverse in their background, ambitions and needs. RHACC has shown that by doing things differently, for example by developing co-working space for local businesses, it can ensure that every learner gets the support that is right for them to flourish (or that helps them to flourish and achieve).

There have been, and will continue to be, challenges to our mission. However, the next few years also offer us immense opportunity. The chance to develop a new centre on our Hillcroft campus, the refresh of the Hillcroft Women’s Education programme to make it relevant for current learners, and the lessons that we have learned though the pandemic on how to make our learning more accessible and inclusive give us the tools that we need to make an even greater difference for our learners.

The importance of wellbeing, of reskilling workers for new roles and jobs, of levelling up and of supporting local businesses will only increase. This strategy outlines how RHACC will make an even greater contribution in these areas, making a difference to the communities and learners we serve.

**OUR PURPOSE**  
**Enabling adults and communities to thrive through education**

**PROFESSOR ANDREW GEORGE**  
Chair of the Board of Governors

**GABRIELLE FLINT**  
Principal

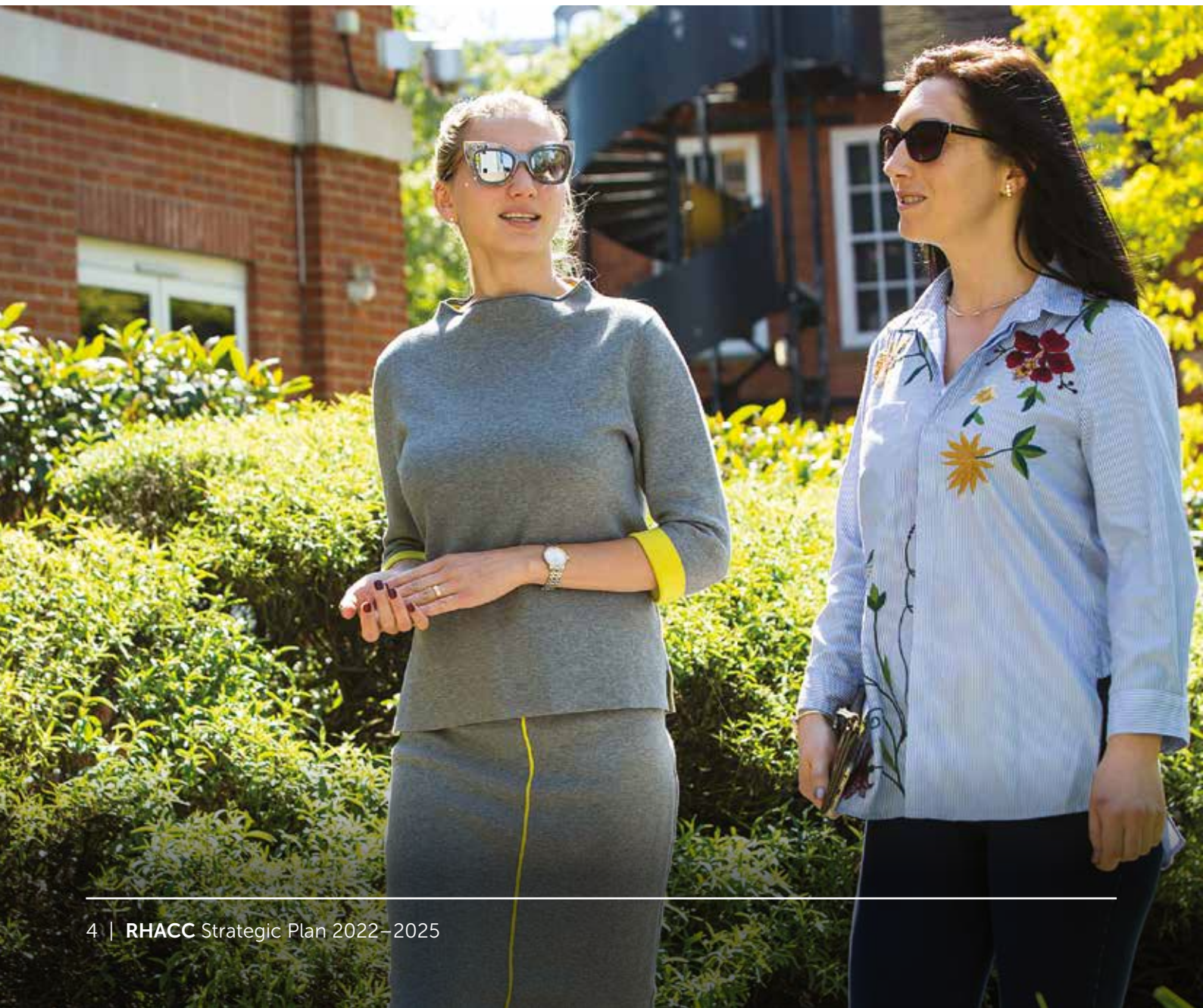


## 2. ABOUT THE STRATEGY >>

At RHACC we believe that education changes lives and improves life chances. Our educational mission underpins our social purpose and directs everything we do.

Our strategy for 2022-2025 sets out the goals and objectives that will help us deliver our social purpose. We update our strategy and operating objectives regularly to make sure they continue to be relevant and meet the needs of adult learners and our communities.

Our strategy ensures we empower and include those people and groups that are at risk of being excluded from playing a full and equal role in society.



## 3. ABOUT RHACC >>

**Richmond and Hillcroft Adult and Community College exists to enable adults and communities to thrive through education.**

Our curriculum provides a framework of skills and opportunities that supports enterprise, progress to work and that gives the most disadvantaged in society the same opportunities for wellbeing and prosperity as the most advantaged. More than a second chance in education, we open new doors, provide new opportunities and we welcome everyone.

RHACC is a specialist, adult education provider that was formed in 2017 through the merger of Hillcroft Women's Residential College in Kingston and Richmond Adult and Community College.

The merger has enabled RHACC to broaden its curriculum and to continue Hillcroft's mission of 1920, to give working women the skills and knowledge to assume leadership roles in their communities. No longer a residential college, we provide learning and a broad range of personalised support for both men and women that fits around the needs of their daily lives.

The wider curriculum now includes vocational and professional training in the Richmond Business School that is supported by the Basic Skills of English, Maths and Digital Skills, provision for the Creative Industries in the Richmond Art School and a person-centred approach to all learning. Our goal is to enable everyone to benefit from education and to improve their prospects regardless of their age, ability, gender or ethnic background.



# 4. OUR ACHIEVEMENTS >>

> Shortlisted for TES Adult and Community Learning Provider of the Year 2021.



> New online provision from March 2020 kept our communities learning, working and connected.



> Workforce of dual professionals bringing skills from the workplace and community to the classroom and studio.



> A diverse workforce and learner community that brings new perspectives and makes learning relevant.



> Generating over £2m of fee income that goes back in to teaching and learning activities and bursaries.



> The Bridge workspace providing small businesses with the support and space to grow.



## Ofsted rated 'Good'

In January 2020, we celebrated the outcome of our first full Ofsted inspection since the merger between Richmond and Hillcroft College.

### Ofsted said:

“Learners, who come from a variety of social backgrounds, arrive at an open and supportive environment. They are challenged to do their best by tutors who have high expectations of them, know them well and are sensitive to their needs. As a result, many learners develop their confidence and resilience.”

“Learners benefit from good quality teaching and support from tutors which enable them to achieve qualifications and go on to their next steps.”

“Through attending their well taught courses, women gain the qualifications and confidence they need to progress in their lives and, for example, to take up new careers.”

“As a result of good teaching learners achieve their qualifications.”





# 5. OUR LEARNERS >>

We are proud to be a diverse and harmonious community of approximately 8,000 learners each year recruited from our home boroughs, South West London, Greater London and the South of England.

Although the majority of learning takes place in Richmond and Kingston where the resident population is predominantly White British, 47% of our learners are Black or from other minority ethnic groups. Women continue to be well represented in all vocational areas of the curriculum. People who have a disability represent 20% of learners.

Our learners appreciate and benefit from this vibrant and diverse environment and achieve high standards, above national averages in most areas, irrespective of their backgrounds or starting points.

Ofsted Jan 2020:

“Learners from different ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds work cooperatively, and demonstrate respect and empathy for others.”



47% of our learners are Black or from other ethnic groups



75% of our learners are women



20% of our learners have a learning difficulty and/or disability

## Our curriculum is targeted at the following learner groups:

- 1 Adults facing social marginalisation due to age, gender, disability, poor mental health or caring commitments
- 2 Adults seeking wellbeing and personal development
- 3 The unemployed and adults seeking career change or development
- 4 Adults who lack the basic skills of English, Maths and Digital Skills
- 5 Businesses, SMEs and voluntary sector organisations



# 6. OUR CAMPUSES >>

We have two sites that accommodate our specialist adult learning centres:

**The Parkshot Centre** in Richmond upon Thames is home to Richmond Art School and Richmond Business School and The Bridge coworking facility for small businesses.

**The Hillcroft Centre** in Kingston upon Thames is home to the Women’s Education programme and employability courses for the unemployed.

Community education programmes of English, Maths and ESOL and support for people who have a disability are at the heart of our curriculum and are available at both sites. We also have an extensive online presence.

We are passionate about community, and make our facilities available to local groups and organisations that share our social purpose and offer services that benefit our learners. This enriches our curriculum, supports enterprise and helps to build social links.

We also work in the community at local centres and wherever we are needed.

“ We are passionate about community, and make our facilities available to local groups and organisations that share our social purpose and offer services that benefit our learners. ”



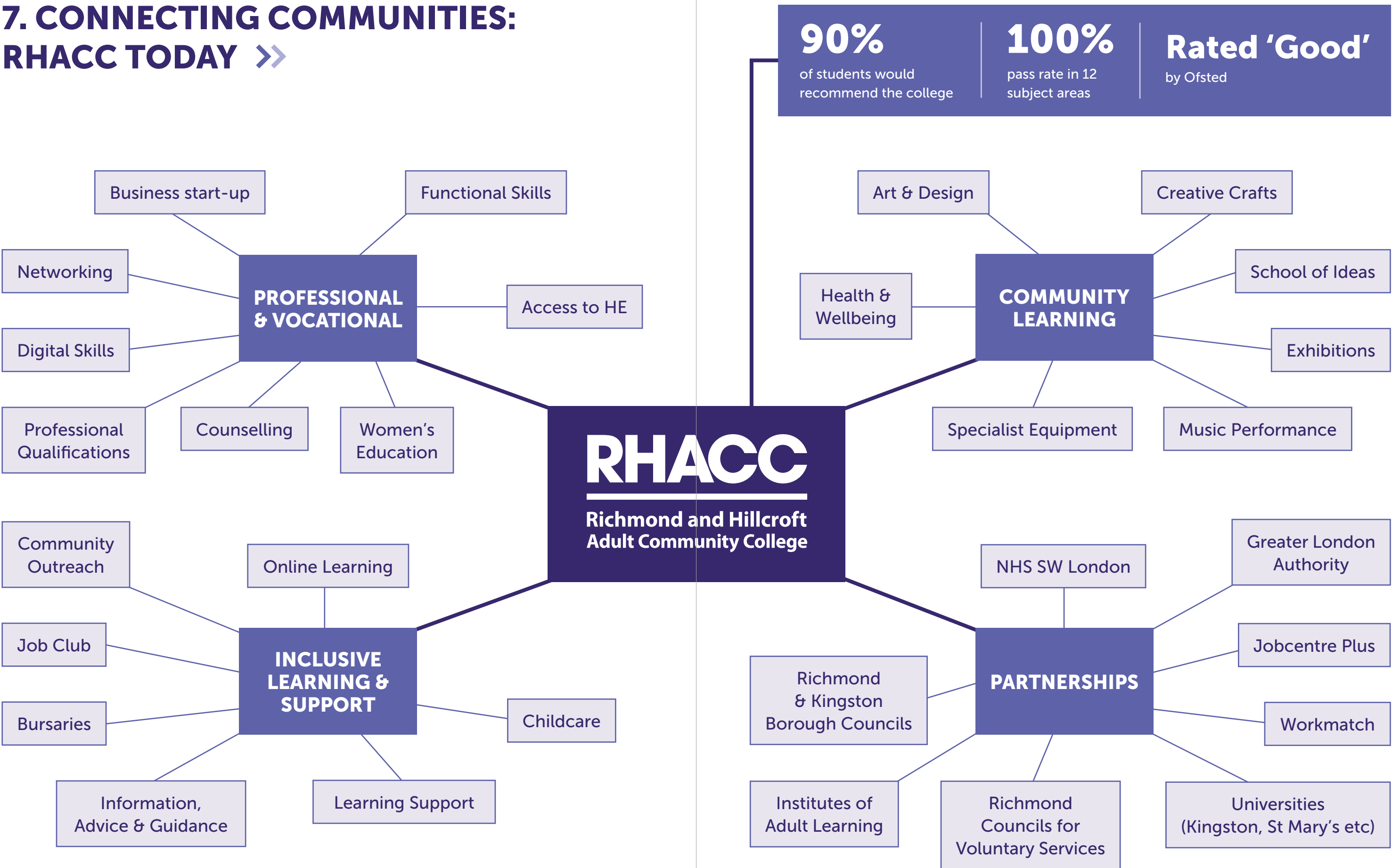
Parkshot Centre



Hillcroft Centre



7. CONNECTING COMMUNITIES:  
RHACC TODAY >>



# 8. THE NATIONAL CONTEXT >>

## The National Picture:

- > **The global pandemic and the UK's departure from the European Union have resulted in unprecedented economic and social turbulence and major international supply chain disruption.** Unemployment levels more than doubled in Richmond and Kingston and tripled in London during the period March 2020 to the end of 2021. The unlocking of the economy in 2022 has led to a fall in unemployment for some groups but older people, people who have a disability, adults with low skills and BaME groups continue to be severely impacted.
- > **Digital skills have provided a lifeline to many during lockdown and have also enabled continuity for businesses.** Digital systems are now supporting economic recovery and are enabling new ways of reaching others and doing business. However, 18% of Londoners lack some basic digital skills and 9% have none (ONS 2019). This reduces their chances of finding work, accessing government services and finding cheaper goods.
- > **There is increased pressure on the NHS** and care services and a shortage of skilled workers.
- > **Pressure also is increasing on local communities facing the ongoing challenges of Covid** such as dealing with bereavement, health issues, the risk of transmission and the impact on mental health. The most disadvantaged prior to the pandemic, people who have a disability, carers, the long term unemployed and those who lack the basic skills of English and maths, are now at risk of further marginalisation.



**RHACC is well placed to support the recovery process with a flexible, accessible adult curriculum and safe community space. Supporting both individuals and the organisations that serve them. Building community resilience through a network of partnerships.**

- > **The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, UK Poverty Report, 2022, cites educational inequalities amongst young people widening** as a result of the disruption caused by the pandemic and increased in-work poverty as a result of low skills and educational attainment.
- > **The decline of high streets, evidenced by the large number of empty shops, and the impact of the pandemic have resulted in a loss of community space** and places where people can meet and connect safely with others and engage with the diversity of the community. This increases the problems associated with isolation that include poor health, loneliness and extremism. The Mayor's Covid Recovery Plan identifies the need for 'Building Stronger Communities' through 'hyper-local', community led activities and support for grass roots organisations.
- > **The number of working households in poverty increased to 1 in 5** by December 2021, Institute of Public policy Research.



**The Mayor's London Response Plan sets out the important role of adult education in:**

- Supporting Londoners into good work
- Enabling adults to retrain
- Building capacity in the NHS and care sectors
- Developing digital skills for life, work and learning

Source: October 2020



# 9. MEETING THE GOVERNMENT'S EDUCATION & FUNDING AGENDA >>

## Learning for Work:

Government policy for Further and Adult Education is to align it with the needs of employers, in order to support economic growth and recovery.

Partnerships between employers, local and central Government and colleges will inform local area delivery plans and help support skilled adults into work in new growth areas.

The London Mayor has committed to ensuring that London is 'A City for all Londoners – making sure Londoners, employers and businesses get the skills they need to succeed in a fair, inclusive society and thriving economy.' These plans involve making sure that adult education and technical skills are accessible to everybody.

Our vocational curriculum taught by sector specialists, is enriched with English and Maths and Digital skills. Our modular delivery increases access to learning for adults who have work or caring commitments. We provide advice with career planning, help with fees and personalised support for people who have a learning disability which supports progress to new careers and helps to close gaps in prosperity.



**Adult Education has an important role to play in ensuring maximum inclusivity for everyone and RHACC embodies this by providing a relevant and accessible curriculum.**



## Learning for Wellbeing:

Learning is one of the Five Ways to Wellbeing recognised by the NHS. Learning new skills and joining a course involves connecting with others, being active and paying attention to the present.

This has a proven impact on mood, health and wellbeing in addition to the development of 'soft skills' such as improved communication, confidence, problem solving and teamwork.

Those furthest from work and wellbeing prior to the pandemic due to disability, disadvantage and low skill levels are now at risk of falling further behind.

Informal learning for personal development in areas such as Creative Writing, Cookery, Languages, Art and Exercise help adults to keep themselves healthy, well, active and lead fulfilling lives without the need for further services.



# 10. CHALLENGES >>

- 1

Continuing to offer a curriculum with the breadth to meet both the work and wellbeing needs of learners within the context of squeezed public funding for adult learning and an increasing number of adults experiencing in work poverty.
- 2

The funding system is linked to outcomes such as employment and does not recognise less measurable outcomes linked to wellbeing.
- 3

Staff recruitment is challenging across the education sector, particularly in relation to the dual professionals required in adult learning. Teachers who are also vocational specialists are essential to the delivery of outstanding adult teaching and learning.
- 4

Keeping our digital infrastructure up to date in order to improve our reach and the learner experience.
- 5

Maintaining and developing our estate and ensuring it is accessible to all. Our Hillcroft centre in Kingston upon Thames operates within a Grade II listed building and is of local historical interest but does not meet modern accessibility standards.





## 11. OUR PURPOSE >>

After consideration of our operating context and the needs of our learners and communities the Governing Body affirms RHACC's purpose:

**Enabling adults and communities to thrive through education**





# 12. OUR VALUES >>

## Service

We exist to serve our adult learners and communities. Their needs inform curriculum and business decisions and how we deliver our services.

## Enterprise

We are bold and enterprising and are not afraid to do things differently in order to deliver positive outcomes to those we serve. We use our initiative to get the best possible outcome for our learners and community by developing new courses, fundraising for bursaries or by providing new services where there is unmet need, such as co-working and collaborative space at The Bridge and vocational opportunities for adults who have a disability.

## Inclusion

We aspire to have something for everyone and take action to make services accessible to all through e.g. 1:1 learning support, small classes, and a supportive environment where diversity is celebrated and everyone is given the space they need to grow and thrive.

## Pride

We take pride in our unique character as an adult learning specialist, in the achievements and diversity of our learners, in achieving high standards and the positive impact we make.





# 13. OUR VISION >>

By 2025 we will be the adult education provider of choice in South West London with our skilled adult learning workforce delivering outstanding learning and development opportunities from first class facilities in Richmond and Kingston and online:

- > Providing routes to good work, new careers and improved wellbeing
- > Supporting people who have a disability to learn, work and thrive
- > Providing grass roots support through our community and online hubs
- > Creating social capital through our community and employer partnerships



# 14. GOALS FOR 2022 – 2025 >>

- 1 To provide an outstanding customer experience that supports learners to achieve high standards, take pride in their achievements and enjoy learning.
- 2 To increase our reach to enable more adults to benefit from learning.
- 3 To achieve long-term financial sustainability to meet adult learner needs.



# 15. ACHIEVING OUR GOALS >>

We will achieve our goals through our plans to develop:

## People

- > We will invest in training for our sector expert staff to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to stay at the top of their game in the classroom and workplace.
- > We will recruit, engage and support staff to ensure that we have a committed team of adult learning practitioners who share our values and the capacity to support growth and excellence.
- > We will provide employment opportunities for those adults who face barriers to employment and who are from disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds.

## Technology

- > We have an ambitious digital strategy that will enable us to reach more learners online, work more efficiently and make information on learning and support more widely available.
- > We will develop the same sense of safe community space in our online campus as at our two terrestrial sites.

## Estate

- > We will develop our Hillcroft site in Surbiton to provide an accessible adult learning and community hub for the Kingston upon Thames community and beyond. A safe and inclusive resource for the whole community.
- > We will support informal learning and business development by making our facilities available to partners and the community within a safety framework that takes account of best practise in Safeguarding and Covid management.

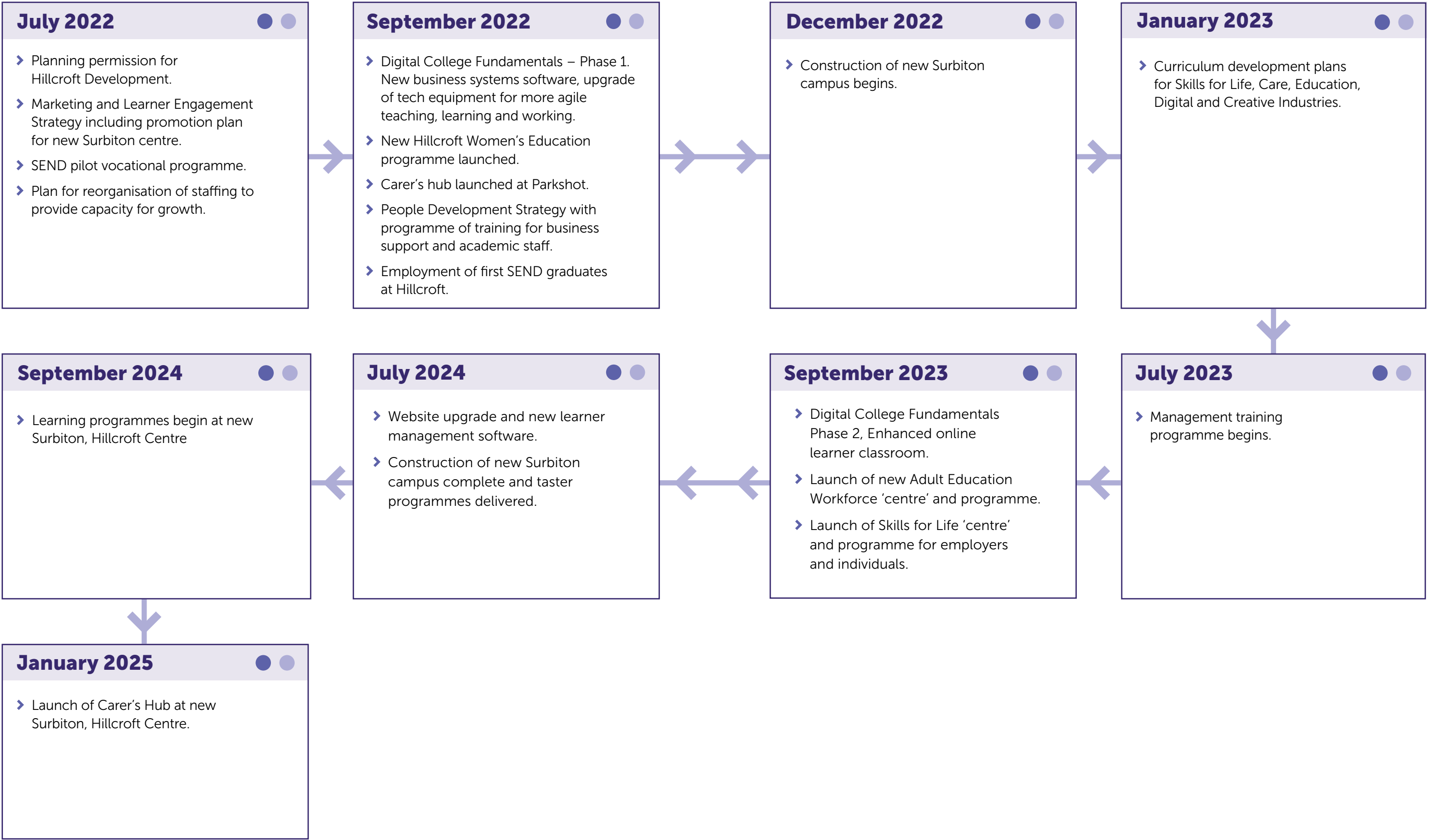








# 16. KEY MILESTONES >>





# 17. LEARNER STORIES >>



**Boo Linehan**  
**Age:** 32  
**Course:** Functional Skills English & Maths  
**Outcome:** L3 Childcare and plans to go to university

**My background**

I am a single parent of two and have been working in a nursery and really wanted to improve my options by studying for a formal qualification.

**What led you to RHACC?**

I was referred to RHACC by my employer and wanted to study for the Level 3 in Childcare but didn't have the level 2 Maths to be able to join the course. I joined the Maths course and was really inspired to keep studying.

**How did the course help you?**

I threw myself into my studies and really enjoyed learning again. The fact it was online during Covid meant I could really focus as I didn't have to worry about my childcare.

**What else did you gain from your learning?**

I built up my confidence and really enjoyed supporting other students. I shared some tips on note-taking and was able to contribute to the class.

**Did you get any other support at RHACC?**

My tutor and fellow classmates were really supportive. I was able to access the course for free which really helped and I will also be able to get a concession on the Level 3 course.

**What next for you?**

I am now enrolled on the Level 3 Childcare but the Maths course really inspired me and I want to go on to study for a degree.



**Tyler Denyer**  
**Age:** 27  
**Course:** Access to HE – Computing  
**Outcome:** Studying Game Design at Staffordshire University

**My background**

I had started a Foundation course at Bristol University alongside being a carer for my Mum and Grandmother. Covid hit and made me re-evaluate what I wanted from life that's when I decided I wanted to study Games Design.

**What led you to RHACC?**

RHACC was the only college in the area that did an Access Courses that included Games Design. I was impressed by the building and the tutors.

**How did the course help you?**

Not only did I improve my knowledge and understanding of technology I also learned the fundamentals of Microsoft Word and Python Coding The course prepared me for university and helped me shape my academic study skills.

**What else did you gain from your learning?**

Despite the stresses of Covid I attended all my lessons and it was great that many were recorded and I could watch them when studying remotely.

**Did you get any other support at RHACC?**

Yes, I had tremendous support from the learning support team as I have an eye condition and suffer from depression. I had a weekly learning Support mentor who really helped me manage the stress.

**How did the course shape your future?**

The course prepared me for university and helped me shape my academic study skills.

**What next for you?**

I am already studying Games Design at Staffordshire University and it's all down to the opportunities given to me at RHACC.



# 17. LEARNER STORIES >>



**Guillaume Dsindjeu**  
**Age:** 48  
**Course:** ESOL, Guitar, Singing  
**Outcome:** Aiming for University

**My background**

I moved to the UK from Africa – as there were no opportunities for me there. I have mental health problems as a result of trauma I experienced in Africa and I moved to Isleworth for a fresh start.

**What led you to RHACC?**

I started at RHACC this year and I have already enrolled on ESOL, Guitar and Parkshot Singers. The College is really close to me so I want to take advantage of the courses here.

**How did the course help you?**

The tutors are very helpful and clear. Not only is the teaching good but they also help me with strategies to improve my learning and my focus.

**What else did you gain from your learning?**

RHACC has put structure back into my life, I now have a boost of energy to learn and meet new people. It gives me focus and goals for my future and RHACC is helping me get there step by step.

**What next for you?**

My ESOL course has opened up a door of opportunity for me to progress and get to my final goal of getting to university to study Law.



**Afroditi Koutsoukou**  
**Age:** 42  
**Course:** ESOL  
**Outcome:** Secured a job as a Finance Officer at RHACC

**My background**

I moved to the UK from Greece in 2015 with my young family to have a new adventure in life. I was an accountant in Greece but did not have very good English as I wasn't required to use it in my job.

**What led you to RHACC?**

When my children went to school I have time to attend some classes. Firstly I wanted to improve my English and then get UK qualifications in accountancy.

**How did the course help you?**

The ESOL course was fantastic. It was delivered in a local school and I got to improve my English and my confidence. It also gave me the foundation skills to go onto study for my AAT qualifications.

**What else did you gain from your learning?**

I joined the Job Club where I did mock interviews and got advice on CVs and Cover Letters.

**Did you get any other support at RHACC?**

The Information, Advice & Guidance was also great which came as part of the Job Club.

**How did the course shape your future?**

Once I gained my accounting qualifications, I went on to get a job at RHACC of all places. I am now the Student Finance Officer and I assist students with their bursary and loan applications and payments.

**What next for you?**

I hope to develop my management skills and would like to move up to a role with more responsibility.



# 17. LEARNER STORIES >>



**Basma Alshather**  
**Age:** 58  
**Course:** Printmaking  
**Outcome:** Business Entrepreneur

**My background**

I came to the UK in the 70's from Iraq. I had a background in ceramics but also worked as a product manager and in marketing. I left work to care for my parents and realised I was missing something for myself.

**What led you to RHACC?**

I did a printmaking course at RHACC many years ago and was inspired by the exceptional tutor. I then returned to study drawing and Adobe software before returning to printmaking in more recent years.

**How did the course help you?**

I was able to revisit the techniques I learned previously and develop my creative practice with the guidance and expertise of the tutors at RHACC using the specialist facilities.

**What else did you gain from your learning?**

It was during the course I could see my print designs would translate well to textiles and the idea for my business was developed. I now have my own business selling hand printed scarves using my designs.

**Did you get any other support at RHACC?**

Learning at RHACC has been good for my mental health and I really enjoy working alongside other artists in the creative space at the College.

**How did the course shape your future?**

It was the foundation of my business basmadesign.com. I am now looking to improve my business skills so I can grow and develop the business.

**“ Learning at RHACC has been good for my mental health. ”**



**Sarah Smith**  
**Age:** 45  
**Course:** Creative Writing (Various)  
**Outcome:** MA in Writing for Poetry at the University of Newcastle

**My background**

I was a Project Manager in Construction before I suffered a severe nervous breakdown in 2018 which left me unable to speak or move. My mother then died two months later which compounded my illness. I was quite simply done with being alive and nothing helped me feel better.

**What led you to RHACC?**

I heard about the Writing for Wellbeing course at RHACC. At this point I would have tried anything to feel better. I felt the depression had stolen my words and I hoped writing could help me gather the broken threads together.

**How did the course help you?**

The course was exceptional. The tutor was kind and supportive, she created a safe space in the room. I realised I could write in short spurts as my concentration was (and still is) quite poor, so I was drawn to poetry.

I then joined the creative writing courses led by Jess Kidd who encouraged my writing. She helped me to understand you don't need to be published to be a writer.

**What else did you gain from your learning?**

The courses fundamentally changed how I saw myself. I am a carer for my father and brother and the learning gave me something for myself and a structure to my life. It has been the cornerstone of rebuilding my life.

**Did you get any other support at RHACC?**

The courses were free which was very helpful in my circumstances. The college was supportive in helping me enrol as I have found forms and processes very challenging.

**How did the course shape your future?**

I was awarded the Hillcroft Centenary Writing Prize which was a lovely accolade and reinforced my commitment to continue writing. I have since enrolled on an MA in Writing Poetry with the University of Newcastle and the School of Poetry.

**What next for you?**

I will complete the master's and continue writing. It's early days in terms of my recovery so I am rebuilding my life slowly but am hopeful for the future.



# 17. LEARNER STORIES >>



## Dave Gardner

David first came to RHACC in 2015 and did a drama and cookery course which helped him to develop his confidence, knowledge and independent living skills.

In 2016 he joined the supported Kitchen Internship programme where he learned about kitchen skills and safety in the kitchen and worked as an Assistant Kitchen Technician. At the end of the internship he gained part time employment as a Kitchen Assistant. David arrives every morning to start work in the kitchen which involves ensuring all the equipment has been cleaned and ready for use. He is continuing to join part time courses at RHACC that will help him with his skills and confidence.

David said: "I am doing this course to learn about money, work and being part of a team. My teacher is a very good tutor. I have been coming to the college for a number of years and have learned so much on my catering course that I have gone to have a job as an assistant kitchen technician which I really enjoy."





**CONTACT >>**

RHACC  
Parkshot, Richmond, TW9 2RE  
South Bank, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 6DF  
**T** 020 8891 5907 **E** [info@rhacc.ac.uk](mailto:info@rhacc.ac.uk)

**[WWW.RHACC.AC.UK](http://WWW.RHACC.AC.UK)**

**RHACC**  

---

**Richmond and Hillcroft  
Adult Community College**