



STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-27





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1. FOREWORD

Dudley College of Technology is proud to share our latest strategic plan 2024-27, detailing the next steps we will be taking in our continued journey to provide academic and technical education opportunities for our region.

In the years since the launch of our previous strategic plan 2020-23 we have continued to innovate our provision and services to meet the needs of the local residents and employers that we serve. There has been much to celebrate over those three years, from being granted the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Education, opening one of the country's first Institutes of Technology, leading the way with the rollout of T levels and supporting some 30,000 young people and adults to gain their qualifications. It was also of course an exceptional time for us all, as just weeks after the launch of the strategic plan the College faced periods of lockdown brought on by the pandemic. As detailed in a Strategic Plan Mid-point Review (Strategic Plan 2020-23 Mid-point Review) we are incredibly proud of the varied ways our staff and learners worked collaboratively across our borough to support the pandemic response. It was of course a difficult time, but also a time that showed the strength of our fantastic community and what can be achieved when we work together.

It is this continued focus on collaboration to support our community that can be seen throughout this new strategic plan 2024-27. Our unrelenting focus will be on working with partners to continue to expand the training opportunities we offer so, that we can support more people to begin and progress towards rewarding careers, from our work with Dudley Academies Trust supporting more school leavers to enter successful further education opportunities, to our work with local university partners to enable more residents to access higher education. Most importantly we will continue to

grow the strong links we have with local employers to ensure we remain responsive in the curriculum we offer and that our learners move into fulfilling careers.

Building on the £60m already invested in our facilities over previous strategic plans, we will continue to identify funding to develop our technical facilities so that they meet the needs of the industries we support. In addition to this strategic plan, we have published a separate estates strategy which details our ambitious plans for the ongoing development of our estate and technical training facilities. This includes the development of Health Innovation Dudley (completing in 2025), our new Centre for Transport Technologies (completing in 2026) and our plans for expansion and redevelopment of some of our existing facilities.

Throughout all of this we will focus on innovation in our curriculum. We will continue to lead the way with curriculum reforms, as we have done with our introduction of T levels and Higher Technical Qualifications, whilst also ensuring we embrace best practice in teaching, learning and digital technologies, all leading to an exceptional experience for our learners which paves the way for their successful next steps. This plan, therefore, details our core ambitions for the coming years and the actions we will take to realise these ambitions in every area of the College.



Neil Thomas
Chief Executive & Principal



Paul Noon
Chair of the Corporation

2. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



February 2020

Queens Anniversary Prize Presentation at Buckingham Palace.



March 2020

Lock down-delivery moves completely online.

April 2020

CAT Centre is converted into a call centre for West Midlands Ambulance Services.



June 2020

PM Boris Johnson visits Dudley College of Technology.



August 2023

Students achieve examination success 100% T level pass rate, 91% Level 3 BTEC pass rate (30% at distinction level). 100% overall pass rate in 24 A level subjects.



March 2023

Staff and students hike 1500 ft Scafell Pike to raise money for local charities Ronnie & friends and Black Country Mental Health.



January 2023

College commits to achieving net Zero by 2040.



November 2022

Higher Education Graduation for 300 learners across HND, Degree and Professional Level 4+ qualifications.



September 2023

Work start on the new Animal Science wing – opening September 2024 providing new facilities for dog grooming, animal physiotherapy and domestic and wild animal care.



November 2023

Students win gold and bronze medals in World Skills competition. Tom Sadler (19) Level 3 Manufacturing and Engineering Apprentice took gold in Metal Fabrication and Amelia Higgins (20) Level 3 Hairdressing Apprentice won bronze.



July 2020

Towns Fund bid to create University building for Dudley takes a step forward.



August 2020

Completion of new digital centre in Brierly Hill.



December 2020

Photography lecturer Phil Brooks is named Pearson FE lecturer of the Year.



July 2022

Achieved Cyber Essentials Plus validating the college's approach to protecting against cyber threats.



October 2021

Rt Hon. Michelle Donelan Minister of State for Higher and Further Education opens the Black Country & Marches Institute of Technology £22 million new build on Castle Hill.



July 2021

The Black Country Skills Shop at Merry Hill opens a new Youth Hub.



November 2023

Michael Gove Secretary of State for Housing and Communities confirms £14m funding for a new Transport Technologies Centre at Brierley Hill.



December 2023

Ofsted Inspection – awards the college as Good in all areas.



December 2023

ISO14001 Sustainability Accreditation reissued for the next 3 years.

3. OUR MISSION AND VISION

The College's mission statement is as follows:

OUR MISSION

Outstanding technical and professional learning, which raises aspirations, develops skills and changes lives.

OUR VISION

By 2027 the College will be recognised as an anchor institution in the region, working collaboratively with local stakeholders to deliver highly valued education and training opportunities to our residents and beyond. Our learners, across all ages and programmes, will recognise the College as a great place to study and will leave us with the knowledge, behaviours and skills to move forward. Most importantly, we will be recognised as a driving force in the regional economy, supporting individual prosperity and business productivity through the education, training and services we deliver.

To realise our vision, this strategic plan is broken down into individual sections for each of the sectors that we serve as well as important cross-college priorities that underpin our success. All of this is framed by the core aspirations of the College and this plan, which are detailed in the following section. Our core aspirations of People, Innovation, Place and Sustainability articulate what drives us as an organisation and have informed the actions detailed in every section of this strategic plan.



4. OUR CORE ASPIRATIONS

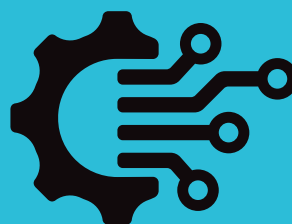


PEOPLE

It is of course the work of our learners that makes us so proud, and this plan rightly starts with learners being at the heart of everything we do. As articulated in our mission statement, the plan aims to maximise the life chances of every individual, with a focus on being an inclusive College that excels in providing the support every person needs to succeed.

Our staff are what makes the College brilliant and we will continue to do all we can to invest in their training, wellbeing and recognition, with a focus on succession planning and creating opportunities for progression.

We also recognise the role we play in supporting our community as a whole. As an anchor institution in Dudley, this plan articulates how we will partner with other anchor institutions, West Midlands Combined Authority, funding bodies, partners, voluntary organisations and charities to maximise the impact for our communities.



INNOVATION

This is a plan where we expect to see considerable change in our curriculum as we deliver national qualification reforms and continue to innovate in the programmes we develop to meet employer needs. At the heart will always be our focus on excellence in technical skills development and clear progression pathways regardless of an individual's starting point.

Our use of technology continues to drive our practice, with this plan committing to our ongoing investment in information technology and systems including the best practice implementation of digital learning, artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented/virtual reality to support teaching.

Outside of the classroom, our services to learners and employers will continue to be developed through this plan, with a particular focus on enhanced professional services that enable all residents to engage in education, the development of innovation services for local employers to drive productivity and the ongoing improvement of our professional services to drive efficiency.

All underpinned by our core values of collaboration, excellent



PLACE

Working closely with our local employers is critical to ensuring we meet the skills needs of the region going forward. This plan shows our renewed commitment to partnership with employers and representative groups to ensure we meet the challenges set out in the West Midlands Local Skills Improvement Plan and beyond.

We will continue the development of our College estate, ensuring it provides a learning environment to be proud of, delivers the technical facilities our employers demand and provides benefit to local stakeholders as well as our learners and staff.

Our culture of collaboration with other education providers will continue to strengthen through this strategic plan. Particular priorities will be the continued development of our work with Dudley Academies Trust and our partnerships to deliver higher technical provision in the Institute of Technology and wider College. We aim to create a 'skills ecosystem' in Dudley that allows everyone to progress and reach their full potential in the borough.



SUSTAINABILITY

As part of our shared declaration of a climate emergency, our commitment to reducing our impact on our environment is hugely important. We will be making significant steps in delivering our sustainability roadmap as a large business ourselves, whilst also ensuring we embed sustainability into the curriculum of all our programmes.

Retaining our financial security is critical to ensuring we can deliver on this strategic plan, continue to improve learner and employer experience and be resilient to any challenges the College may face in the future. This means targeted income growth in priority areas, effective utilisation of funding opportunities and reinvestment of any surplus into developing future facilities and programmes.

We recognise the College journey goes way beyond the next three years. Therefore, this plan will also lay the foundations for developments we expect to see in our future, thereby ensuring the long-term success of the College and the ongoing development of opportunities for the communities we serve.

learner experience, transparency and inclusion.

5. A COLLEGE WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF

Put simply, we want the experience across all elements of our provision and services to be the highest quality it can be.

This plan therefore starts with a section for each of the cross-college activities that we believe are essential in creating this excellent experience for all our stakeholders. In each section we will briefly describe what we have achieved to date, followed by the actions we intend to take over the life of this strategic plan, to continue to drive excellence in all we do.

Cross-college activity:

- 5.1 Learner support, enrichment and safety
- 5.2 Teaching and learning practice
- 5.3 Best practice in use of technology
- 5.4 Careers and employment
- 5.5 Supporting our staff
- 5.6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
- 5.7 Tackling the climate emergency





We currently employ over 150 staff in roles dedicated to providing support to learners.

Our recent Ofsted report commented that:

"Learners and apprentices feel welcome and well supported."

"Learners and apprentices participate in a wide range of enrichment activities linked to their curriculums, next steps or wider talents and interests."

"Learners and apprentices feel safe and know how to report any concerns they may have. They talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe physically, mentally and online."

5.1 LEARNER SUPPORT, ENRICHMENT AND SAFETY

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

- We have increased the number of trained designated safeguarding leads to fifteen.
- We implemented a new process for diagnosing any support needs for apprentices, so that support can be in place from the start of the programme.
- We increased external agencies visiting the College on a regular basis to provide advice and guidance to learners on specific topics, such as sexual health and wellbeing.
- Throughout the pandemic, the College continued to provide a wide range of support activities to learners and staff, both on-site (for those most in need) and virtual. This included issuing over 500 laptops.
- We reviewed, restructured and expanded the Inclusion Team to ensure that learners and staff are supported across all curriculum areas.
- We successfully gained funding to support a dedicated child in care lead support practitioner.
- All staff have been trained on safeguarding, conduct and SEND.
- 35 members of staff were trained to be Mental Health First Aiders.

INNOVATION

- We have invested in 'Togetherall' to provide 24-7, 365 days a year mental health support for learners and staff.
- We launched a new digital platform to support our Performance Improvement Programme, which included dedicated sessions linked to mental health and wellbeing.
- We introduced a Wellbeing Hub for learners and staff as part of the MyDudleyCollege App.

PLACE

- We increased the number of multi faith and quiet contemplation rooms.
- We implemented 'Tea and Chat' sessions for staff.
- We were part of a group of colleges supporting the 'Good for Me, Good for FE' campaign, which is driving up support of our communities through volunteer and fund-raising activity.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Needs assessments and EHCP reviews are completed digitally instead of paper based.
- CPOMs and electronic safeguarding systems have reduced the amount of paper used for safeguarding meetings and records.
- As part of financial support, full-time learners are provided with a free bus pass to support sustainable travel.





Our key developments over the life of this plan

We will:

- Increase the frequency of celebrating learner success activities, to include termly recognition of good attendance and commitment.
- Further expand the range of dedicated spaces that provide support for learner wellbeing.
- Provide specific training and opportunities to share best practice around SEND, to ensure academic and support staff create an inclusive environment for learners.
- Commit to the creation of a revised and extended enrichment programme to be promoted to all student groups, offering a wider variety of extra-curricular options. This will be supported by the Students' Union and our Academy of Sport.
- Develop a bespoke programme of enrichment and support for those in care that can best support them into adulthood.
- Continue to enhance our approach to security to ensure we meet the needs of the College and its learners.
- Increase learner involvement in decision making across the College, such as policy review, area reviews and strategic plans.
- Develop our staff to use assistive technology and artificial intelligence, so they can better support our learners in preparing them for the digital world including how to keep themselves safe online.
- Review the process for assessment for exam access arrangements to ensure this is fit to meet learners needs.
- Continue to financially support our Students' Union that provides advocacy, enrichment and inclusion opportunities for our learners.
- Further develop our relationship with local police and local colleges to understand regional risks and better support our learners' safety.
- Remain a key strategic member of the Colleges West Midlands (CWM) Safer Learners and SEND group to ensure we are at the cutting edge of safeguarding and SEND practice within our region.
- Maximise the financial support we can provide to our learners, including a commitment to continuing to finance free bus passes for the life of this strategic plan.
- Expand our skills competition activity, right from college-based competitions, through to national and international opportunities such as WorldSkills. Providing an opportunity for learners to enhance their skills outside of taught programmes and to showcase these skills. As a result, we will increase the number of learners competing nationally.

The College employs 321 lecturers, 19 trainer assessors, 111 Education Support Assistants, 14 technicians and 13 instructors to support teaching and learning.

Below are some extracts from the College's enhanced Ofsted inspection in November 2023.

- Learners and apprentices enjoy studying at Dudley College.
- Learners and apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that prepare them for their next steps.
- Learners and apprentices are motivated and take pride in their work.
- Most learners and apprentices benefit from effective teaching and high expectations.
- Teachers are appropriately qualified, have expert subject knowledge and, in many cases, relevant industry experience.
- Most teachers use a range of strategies to help learners and apprentices learn.
- Most teachers and assessors provide feedback that supports learners and apprentices to improve their work.
- In practical lessons, teachers and assessors support learners and apprentices to practise and hone their skills.
- Leaders maintain a sharp focus on the quality of education and training that learners and apprentices receive.

5.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICE

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

- We have continued to support teacher development and sharing best practice through teaching triangles.
- We have introduced learner visits and walkthroughs to ensure learner experience is captured in a variety of ways.
- We have introduced a new role to deliver the Performance Improvement Programme to free up subject specialists in areas where recruitment is challenging.



INNOVATION

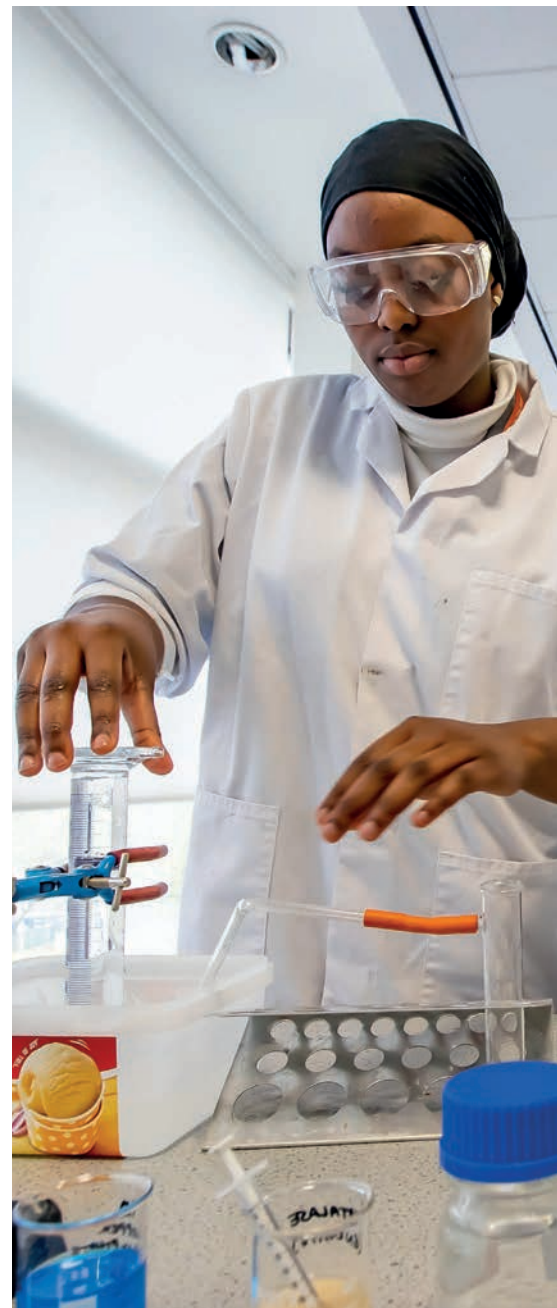
- We have continued to develop the use of digital technologies across the College, including fully embedding the use of Microsoft (MS) Teams as a tool for teaching and learning.
- We have established a MS Teams teaching network for sharing best practice and introduced online CPD (Continuing Professional Development).
- We have continued to embed Smart Assessor as an e-portfolio system to electronically collate an apprentice's skills and knowledge.
- We have continued to engage proactively with WorldSkills competitions to drive high standards in learners' work.

PLACE

- We have continued to ensure teachers and learners have access to industry standard resources to ensure they are well prepared for their next steps.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Through the sustainability roadmap we have introduced the 17 Sustainable Development Goals into the Performance Improvement Programme.
- We have provided training for all staff around sustainability, including a full staff conference.





Our key developments over the life of this plan

We will:

- Introduce opportunities for academic and technical staff to engage in annual research activity to develop teaching and learning practice within further and higher education.
- Adopt an ethical use of artificial intelligence framework for teaching and learning which is regularly updated.
- Develop the knowledge and skills of teachers to enable them to educate learners on how to use artificial intelligence safely and ethically.
- Review the roles and responsibilities within the Quality and Standards team to ensure a sharp focus on quality assurance and improvement.
- Support teachers so they can be experts in all aspects of planning, delivery and assessment and have the confidence and trust to be innovative.
- Through the College's sustainability road map, we will continue to develop the knowledge and skills of teachers to enable them to educate learners on how to reduce their impact on our planet.
- Continue to research and implement the latest digital technologies to enhance teaching and learning for staff and learners.
- Working closely with the Employer Engagement team, we will further enhance our relationships within industry to ensure all teachers and trainers can keep their skills up to date and that industry partners engage in routine opportunities to impact on curriculum.
- Review the impact of new roles which support the delivery of the Performance Improvement Programme and look at opportunities to further support staff recruitment.
- Celebrate excellent practice, expanding learning fairs, teach-meets and introduce monthly 'best practice in teaching, learning and assessment' sessions.
- Excellent practitioners will be recognised through our regular staff recognition nominations.
- Implement a bespoke teacher development programme for higher education practitioners to ensure the quality of higher education provision within the College is in line with the Teaching Excellence Framework.
- A dedicated conference will be added to our longstanding biennial conferences to allow teams dedicated time for bespoke team developments.
- Implement a bespoke induction process for practitioners joining us from non-traditional routes to teaching.
- Support teachers to provide an inclusive learning environment without adding to their workload.

Endpoints

The College has 3,800 endpoints deployed across all campus buildings. This includes a mixture of Windows and Apple based devices.

Investment

The IT investment strategy has identified the £2.3m worth of investment to replace existing kit from our digital estate.

**An endpoint is a physical device that connects to a network and includes networked computers and servers.*

5.3 BEST PRACTICE IN USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

- We have implemented the necessary technical controls to ensure our filtering systems are effective in protecting our learners in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance. Senso plays a key part in keeping our learners safe on college devices.
- We continue to develop the digital skills of our staff and learners through the roll-out of the Jisc Discovery tool.
- We provide forums for our staff to discuss upcoming changes in the world of technology, express ideas for change and support best practice.

INNOVATION

- We launched the parent portal system allowing us to keep parents updated with College news, events and learner progress.
- We introduced the use of AI tools to support in the planning and delivery of teaching.
- Microsoft (MS) Teams is now widely used throughout the College community and the vast majority of learners have opportunities to access blended learning sessions through our personal development programme providing more opportunities to learn outside of the classroom.
- Blended learning resources for teaching staff are shared via Sway and the Dudley College Digital Channel on the teaching staff network.

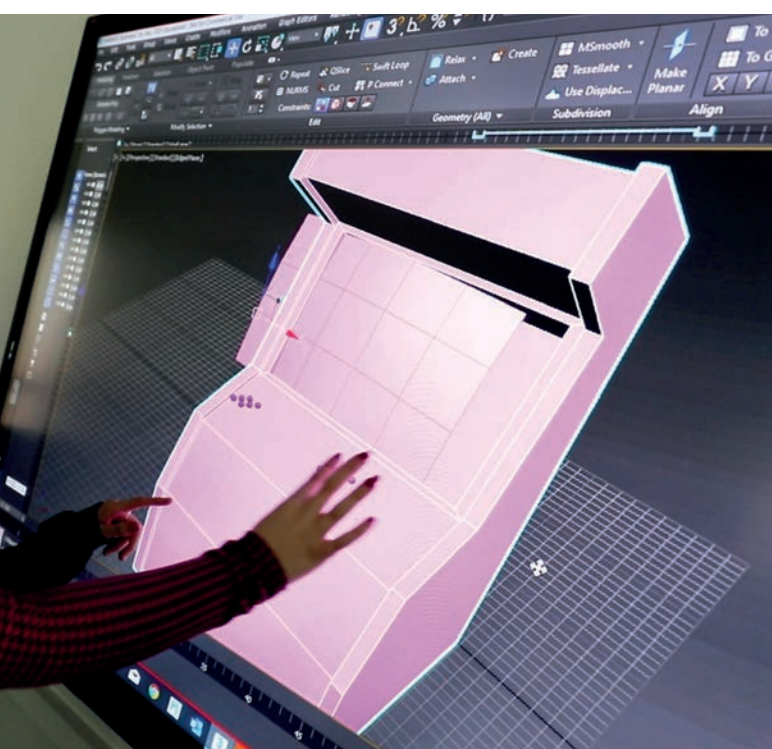
PLACE

- We implemented multi-factor authentication (MFA) for all users of College systems for additional protection against cyber threats.
- We implemented the Eduroam guest wireless system allowing learners and staff from other institutions to use our internet service when on site.
- We have invested over £1.5 million on a variety of infrastructure enhancements to ensure we are able to offer the very best experience to our users.

SUSTAINABILITY

- All College computers are Energy Star rated or meet EU regulations.
- We are putting in place robust cyber security measures.
- The College recycles redundant IT equipment through several different partners where it may be donated to charitable causes or the raw materials will be repurposed in the manufacturing of new electronics.





Our key developments over the life of this plan

We will:

- Re-introduce Senso classroom management for all lecturers to ensure learners receive the best experience in IT classrooms.
- Commit to the replacement of at least 15% of the digital estate on an annual basis.
- Complete the final wave of classroom audio-visual enhancements.
- Fully implement Microsoft SharePoint to improve communication, collaboration and productivity.
- Continue to review and evaluate the digital developmental needs through the Jisc Discovery and Elevation tool and take action to make improvements.
- Make effective use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to support delivery of services and staff workload.
- Ensure all learners are exposed to AI tools to support their development and preparation for the world of work.
- Implement plagiarism identification tools taking into account AI capabilities to help confirm academic integrity in summative assessment practices.
- Embrace the third wave of virtual reality by introducing opportunities for all learners to improve their soft and employability skills through immersive simulations.
- Installation of a motion capture suite at our Inspired campus, creating opportunities to collaborate with external stakeholders and further enhance technical facilities.
- Work with external partners such as Prodigy Learning to empower learners to develop and prove their digital skills.
- Undertake an annual review of technology equipment for teaching to ensure all equipment continues to meet the needs of qualifications at all levels.
- Continue to increase opportunities in sustainable digitalisation ensuring we fully respect our environment and the people we serve.
- Further improve the integration of our multiple key IT systems to improve the learner journey right from enrolment through to assessment.
- Deliver our commitment to the Local Skills Improvement Plan to create further new digital facilities to support adults improving digital skills.
- Actively seek capital funding opportunities to support the ongoing need to replace and update our technical equipment across College.
- Review our data retention practice and architecture to streamline data storage.

5.4 CAREERS AND EMPLOYMENT

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

Over the life of the previous plan, we supported:

- 1,888 16-18 full-time learners to progress to university, and 2,014 learners into employment and apprenticeships.
- 6,739 adults completed upskilling programmes which helped them to secure employment or gain more meaningful work/promotion.
- 1,045 adult learners completed sector-based work programmes of which 76 obtained sustainable employment.
- 1,716 adults obtained Essential Skills qualifications which allowed them to improve their employment opportunities.

INNOVATION

- We fully achieved 7 of the 8 Gatsby benchmarks in Careers Education, Advice and Guidance.
- A Careers Leader and Lead Governor were appointed to oversee the College's response and work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Careers Hub.
- We worked closely with our Enterprise Advisor, to draw on their business knowledge to guide careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG).
- Work experience and work placement opportunities were extended to all learners – expanding T levels to 17 programmes of study.
- We worked with over 2,000 employers to train their staff and contribute to addressing regional skills shortages.
- We made online tools Unifrog and Start available to all learners to support their CEIAG activity.

PLACE

- We expanded the number of programmes offered from the Black Country and Marches Institute of Technology (IoT) based in Dudley and extended the reach into the Marches with new partnerships.
- We developed curriculum to meet the demands of the Regional Skills Plan and respond to the needs of the Local Skills Improvement Plan.

SUSTAINABILITY

- We trained 381 learners in green technologies and renewables contributing to a net zero target by 2040.
- We trained 322 learners in electric vehicle technology.

| Employee Jobs 2022 | Dudley (Employee Jobs) | Dudley % | West Midlands % | Great Britain % |
|---------------------|------------------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total Employee Jobs | 110,000 | | | |
| Full-time | 72,000 | 65.5 | 68.4 | 68.8 |
| Part-time | 37,000 | 33.6 | 31.6 | 31.2 |

| Employee Jobs by Industry | | | | |
|--|--------|------|------|------|
| Mining & Quarrying | 10 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| C. Manufacturing | 16,000 | 14.5 | 11.3 | 7.6 |
| D. Electricity, Gas, Steam + Air Conditioning Supply | 500 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.4 |
| E. Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management + Remediation Activities | 350 | 0.3 | 0.8 | 0.7 |
| F. Construction | 6,000 | 5.5 | 4.1 | 4.9 |
| G. Wholesale + Retail trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles + Motorcycles | 21,000 | 19.1 | 15.0 | 14.0 |
| H. Transportation + Storage | 3,500 | 3.2 | 6.6 | 5.0 |
| I. Accommodation + Food Service Activities | 6,000 | 5.5 | 6.3 | 8.0 |
| J. Information + Communication | 2,250 | 2.0 | 2.9 | 4.6 |
| K. Financial + Insurance Activities | 1,750 | 1.6 | 2.5 | 3.3 |
| L. Real Estate Activities | 2,000 | 1.8 | 2.6 | 1.9 |
| M. Professional, Scientific + Technical Activities | 6,000 | 5.5 | 7.4 | 9.1 |
| Administrative + Support Services | 5,000 | 4.5 | 8.7 | 9.0 |
| O. Public Administration + Defence | 4,000 | 3.6 | 4.0 | 4.7 |
| P. Education | 10,000 | 9.1 | 8.3 | 8.6 |
| Q. Human Health + Social Work Activities | 20,000 | 18.2 | 14.3 | 13.5 |
| R. Arts, Entertainment + Recreation | 2,250 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 2.4 |
| S. Other Service Activities | 2,500 | 2.3 | 2.7 | 2.0 |

Source: ONS Business Register and Employment Survey



Our key developments over the life of this plan

We will:

- Embed the consistent use of online CEIAG tools into all curriculum areas, including upskilling staff around effective delivery of impartial advice and guidance as required.
- Enhance the provision of CEIAG for adults, to better meet their needs and support access to out of hours provision.
- Create a bespoke CEIAG programme for Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) learners to support their next steps.
- Respond to government best practice in provision of careers advice, including alignment with Gatsby benchmarks.
- Identify the best external accreditation for our CEIAG services and ensure this is achieved through the life of this plan.
- Strengthen our work experience/exposure support to all full-time learners and record all relevant work on a suitable electronic system.
- Develop an enhanced programme of study that ensures young people leave us with the core skills needed to succeed in employment, as well as their technical skills. This could include elements such as problem solving, communication, resilience and creativity.
- Expand employability programmes, including pre-apprenticeships, Sector Based Work Academies and Bootcamps to meet the needs of regional business working closely with Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and National Careers Service.
- Through our Employer Engagement team, expand the number of small businesses we work with.
- Through our partnership working with higher education partners including the Aim Higher and A2B projects with the University of Wolverhampton and Birmingham University respectively, support more learners to aspire to and to progress to university.
- Expand our Degree Apprenticeship offer, to provide in-work higher level skills opportunities.
- Introduce Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) from 2025, using learning from the Modular Acceleration Programme, to stimulate career development for adult learners.
- Commit to the creation of a stand-alone end point assessment (EPA) centre for a range of technical disciplines, supporting apprentices to complete and progress their career.
- Work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to develop funded routes for adults looking to train in priority sectors.



Our staff turnover is 13%, which sit well below the Association of Colleges (AoC) average of 17.8%.

Our full-time staff teaching hours are 816, which sit well below the AoC average of 873.

Our gender pay gap is 9%, this has seen a 5% reduction since 2017.

Our average academic salary is £37,511 which is £6,352 higher than the AoC average.

97% of our staff understand their role and the contribution they make to the goals of the College.

88% of staff are proud to work for the College.

Extract from Ofsted inspection report

"Leaders are mindful of staff welfare and staff wellbeing. They provide staff with access to mental health support, well-being sessions and a counselling service."

"Most teachers feel well supported by Leaders."

5.5 SUPPORTING OUR STAFF

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

- We have continued to offer extensive CPD and industrial upskilling opportunities to all staff, introduced a third College Conference day at the request of staff and extended two CPD days to Professional Services colleagues.
- We have continued to work closely with our Trade Unions and introduced monthly catch-up meetings in addition to our termly Joint Consultative Committee meetings.
- We have reviewed our working time policy to extend the flexible working options in accordance with the needs of the business, keeping our learners at the heart of what we do.

INNOVATION

- We continued to run our aspiring managers programme and supported staff in completing external progression programmes such as Colleges West Midlands (CWM) Racial Equality Leadership Programme and Further Education Strategic Leadership Programme.
- We continued to make, as a minimum, pay awards in line with the Association of Colleges (AoC) recommendation and removed the motivational points to increase the salaries of our lowest paid staff in each pay grade

PLACE

- We have streamlined our charity work to support local charities and given back to the community that we serve.
- We participated in the 'Good for me, Good for FE' campaign, allowing us to measure our fundraising and voluntary contributions alongside sharing case studies such as our staff and learner Scafell Pike climbs, abseiling down the Evolve Campus building and the King's Coronation 'big tea'.

SUSTAINABILITY

- We have introduced an annual Professional Services customer satisfaction survey.
- We have enhanced our health, care and wellbeing benefits including training over 30 staff mental health first aiders, creating a mental health lead role, set up a staff wellbeing hub, introduced Togetherall and Fika mental health apps, free staff flu jabs, supervision for senior managers, mental health training and 24/7 counselling support regarding Education Support.





Our key developments over the life of this plan

We will:

- Review our terms and conditions of employment, benchmarking them against the sector to ensure we remain competitive.
- Review and update our staff policies to further enhance our family friendly approach.
- Develop a community matters programme to further enhance our charity and volunteering work and extend the period we are working with our nominated charities to three years.
- Continue our commitment to pay by making, as a minimum, pay awards in line with the AoC recommendation and to increasing the salaries of our staff in the lower pay bands.
- Further enhance our staff reward and recognition through extending our long service awards, staff recognition categories and the frequency of awards.
- Introduce a peer-to-peer recognition scheme and retirement awards for long serving employees.
- Undertake a complete redesign of our performance management system to better drive staff performance and recognition.
- Enhance our employee voice and communication by introducing termly employee voice meetings and pulse surveys, giving staff the opportunity to share feedback or ideas.
- Invest in enhancing our facilities to benefit both staff and learners.
- Work with staff, unions, occupational health and external welfare organisations to offer enhanced mental health, medical and welfare support to our employees, in turn reducing our levels of sickness absence.
- Develop a clear progression framework and accompanying set of training programmes for staff looking to progress to higher roles in the organisation.
- Provide all staff with the opportunity to learn from other organisations through industry placements or visits to external providers.
- Develop a bespoke staff upskilling and succession plan for each area of the College to ensure staff are supported to meet the needs of the future.
- Redevelop our staff induction process to ensure staff continue to feel supported in their transition into the College and have the support they need in their new role.
- Further extend the staff wellbeing activities available across the year, based on feedback from staff.
- Collaborate with our industry partners to address the shortage of skilled experts to support curriculum delivery at a higher level.
- Continue to refresh the membership of our Corporation to ensure effective governance of the College and senior team.



Comment from recent Ofsted report (Nov 2023):

“Learners and apprentices are respectful of their peers, teachers and the public. They benefit from a culture of inclusivity and mutual support.”

5.6 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

- We are proud of our annual calendar of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) events which are well attended by learners.
- We support our Students Union in their wide-ranging activities to promote and celebrate our diverse learner community, to raise the profile of under-represented groups and give them a louder voice.
- We use jobs boards such as Black FE Leadership and Centre for Equality and Diversity to advertise vacancies to under-represented groups.
- We support staff through the Colleges West Midlands (CWM) Aspiring Managers programme.
- We encourage our staff and learners to represent or be an ally for diversity with our EDI ambassadors, mental health champions, learner liberation groups, EDI calendar events and staff networks.
- We have reviewed and updated our staff policies to enhance our family friendly approach and provide training to all staff on EDI.

INNOVATION

- We have strengthened our data collection and reporting tools to enable us to tackle discrimination.

- We have enhanced our pay monitoring and reporting beyond the requirements for gender, through our annual workforce report.

PLACE

- Our sponsored charities reflect our focus on diversity and inclusion.
- We engage widely with our diverse range of stakeholders and we are:
 - A founding member of the CWM Racial Equality group
 - Patron of the Multicultural Apprenticeship Alliance
 - Pride in FE member
 - Member of Association of Colleges (AoC) EDI steering group.

SUSTAINABILITY

- We are an accredited Disability Confident Leader.
- We provide a wide range of support for staff and learners including counselling, education support, advice on financial hardship and signposting to a variety of medical and mental health agencies and organisations.
- We are a neurodiversity champion and have signed the Menopause Workplace Pledge, providing a wide range of support to staff and learners where needed.

| Our Community by Protected Characteristics | Dudley Population | DCoT Students | DCoT Staff |
|---|-------------------|---------------|------------|
| Male | 49% | 59% | 44% |
| Female | 51% | 41% | 56% |
| Asian or Asian British | 8% | 16% | 10% |
| Black, Black, British, Caribbean or African | 3% | 9% | 5% |
| Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups | 3% | 5% | 3% |
| White | 85% | 66% | 82% |
| Other ethnic group | 1% | 2% | 0% |
| No Disability | 74% | 83% | 92% |
| Declared Disability | 26% | 16% | 8% |



Our equality objectives over the life of this plan

The College is committed to the following objectives and will annually report on our progress against these.

We will:

- Develop a college environment that is safe, inclusive and encourages all staff and learners to be themselves, regardless of age, race, disability, faith, gender or sexuality. We unite against discrimination.
- Take positive action to address the under-representation of learners with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD); and to increase the proportion of female learners in traditionally male dominated sectors.
- Review our teaching approaches so they are tailored to the diverse needs of our learner population, eliminating achievement gaps and taking opportunities to promote and celebrate our diverse population.
- Take positive action to address under-representation across our staff profile at all levels of the organisation.
- Promote and celebrate cultural awareness through a broad range of EDI focused CPD, and through the growth of staff, learner and wider networks.

We will achieve this through:

- Celebrating diversity; promoting broader understanding through our calendar of EDI events, working with our student ambassadors.
- Establishing college networks for all protected groups and supporting these through promotion and allyship.
- Showcasing the work we do with learners with learning difficulties and disabilities through our open days and school events.
- Offering bespoke learning opportunities to females in engineering and construction.
- Encouraging greater disclosure from staff and students to enable us to report on and respond to our diverse needs.
- Ensuring policies and procedures support all protected characteristics and are considered through impactful equality analysis.
- Being an active member of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) racial equality employee focus and student focus operational and strategic groups.
- Ensuring staff are suitably trained and receive regular updates on best practice in EDI, through sector networks and inhouse train the trainer events.



5.7 TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

- We have held a staff conference centred on sustainability to help raise awareness of the climate emergency and the factors that affect it based around the United Nations 17 Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs).
- We have appointed a new Deputy Director of Estates and Capital Projects to lead on the investment in the improved efficiency of our College estate and achieving our target of net zero by 2040.
- We have rolled out more in-depth sustainability training for managers with improvement tasks in each area to help further understanding and secure impact.

INNOVATION

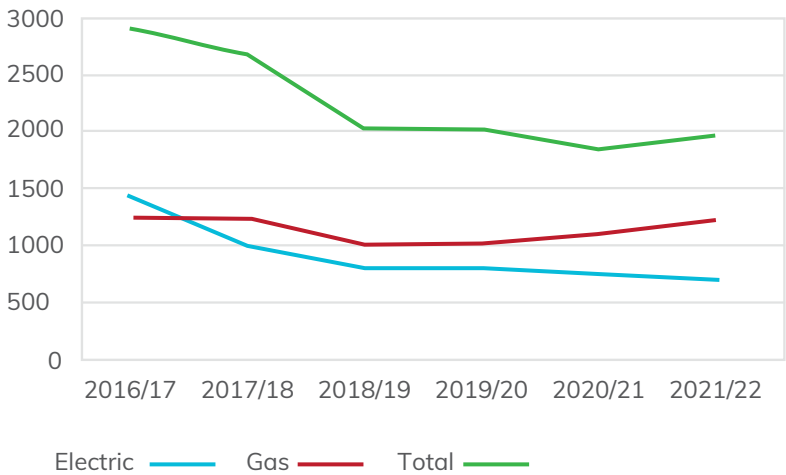
- We have invested £100 million over the last 12 years on improving the efficiency of the estate and reducing its carbon footprint.
- We have been measuring and monitoring our carbon footprint emissions for 14 years to ensure our investments and management of the College are producing improved results.
- We are an active member of the Colleges West Midlands (CWM) Sustainability Group working to share experiences and best practice.
- We have launched the 'Seven Pillars' of sustainability initiative as a vehicle to deliver our net zero strategy.

PLACE

- We have improved our building management systems that control our heating and climate controls to improve energy efficiency.
- All our new buildings have been built to BREEAM Excellent standard or better when measuring their energy efficiency and emissions.
- Our older estate such as the main Broadway building has had improved roof insulation, more efficient windows and new central heating which uses greener energy and reduces the College's impact on the environment.
- We have provided more open social spaces including seating and planting in the main Broadway courtyard.

SUSTAINABILITY

- We maintained the College's ISO 14001 Environmental Management accreditation for the last six years.
- We reviewed and mapped the 17 UN SDGs against our curriculum.
- We reduced our carbon footprint emissions by 32% from the 2017 base, against our target of 50% by 2030.
- We signed a net zero commitment statement targeting 2040.





Our key developments over the life of this plan

- Prepare a costed plan to achieve our commitment to net zero by 2040.
- Employ a dedicated Sustainability Manager to lead on the cross-college net zero plan and raise awareness of the issues, and the actions the College is taking.
- Complete the improvement of the existing estate to lower the College's operational impact on the environment.
- Continue to source external funding to implement the planned improvements towards net zero.
- Review the College's vehicles and plan replacements to minimise the embedded and operational carbon footprint of our fleet.
- Work with other major employers in the area and CWM to share best practice and gain any benefits from economies of scale.
- Publish termly updates on College initiatives and improvements towards tackling climate change.
- Review the College's energy purchasing to maximise green generated energy use.
- Undertake a feasibility study and plan for installation and operation of 'onsite' generation of energy.
- Increase waste and recycling initiatives and awareness.
- Create more social environment spaces and biodiversity locations throughout the College.
- Improve learner awareness and engagement on sustainability and the climate emergency through course development and enrichment activities.
- Through the work of Local Skills Improvement Fund and CWM, develop sustainability curriculum content for all areas of the College, linked to the needs of those industries.
- Support industry through training in low-carbon construction methodologies and sustainable manufacturing to help meet their net zero commitments.
- Continue to review our supply chain and partners to ensure we make the best possible sustainable selection.

6. MEETING SKILLS NEEDS

In developing our provision, it continues to be incredibly important that this meets both the needs of those undertaking education and training programmes, as well as the skills requirements of the industries we serve.

The following sections are dedicated to each of our priority industry sectors, detailing the work already underway and the actions we will take over the life of this strategic plan to ensure we continue to meet the skills needs of each sector.

Our priority sectors:

- 6.1 14-16 Alternative Provision
- 6.2 Academic Studies
- 6.3 Building Technologies and Services
- 6.4 Digital Services
- 6.5 Creative Industries
- 6.6 Engineering and Automotive
- 6.7 Health and Science
- 6.8 Adult Employment and Upskilling
- 6.9 Professional and Service Industries
- 6.10 Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)





6.1 14-16 ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

- We appointed two learner coaches who provide wellbeing support to our learners.
- We have increased the number of external agencies that we work with to support learner wellbeing.
- We increased the number of designated safeguarding leads in the department to three.
- We utilised mental health first aiders to provide intervention.
- Our specialist staff deliver vocational pathways, providing the support our learners need.
- We introduced taster sessions in vocational post-16 provision.

INNOVATION

- We introduced three specific pathways, underpinned by BTEC level 1 for our 14-16 learners (sport, construction and creative media)
- We supported local schools by delivering English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programmes in their environment.
- We successfully collaborated with Dudley Academies Trust schools to introduce five placements.

PLACE

- We introduced practical sessions which utilise the specialist resources across College sites, such as bricklaying workshops and use of the sports hall.
- We established a base room at the construction centre.

SUSTAINABILITY

- We embedded projects into speaking and listening delivery for English functional skills.

High and improving achievement rates for vocational qualification

| Performance | Hybrid End Year 20/21 | 2021/22 | 2023/2023 |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------|
| Total Achievement % | 82.4% | 85.4% | 88.9% |
| Total Rentention % | 94.1% | 100.0% | 88.9% |
| Total Pass% | 87.5% | 85.4% | 100.0% |

High and improving achievement rates for functional skills

| Performance | Hybrid End Year 20/21 | 2021/22 | 2023/2023 |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------|
| Total Achievement % | 85.4% | 92.4% | 87.1% |
| Total Rentention % | 100.0% | 100.0% | 96.8% |
| Total Pass% | 85.4% | 92.4% | 90.0% |

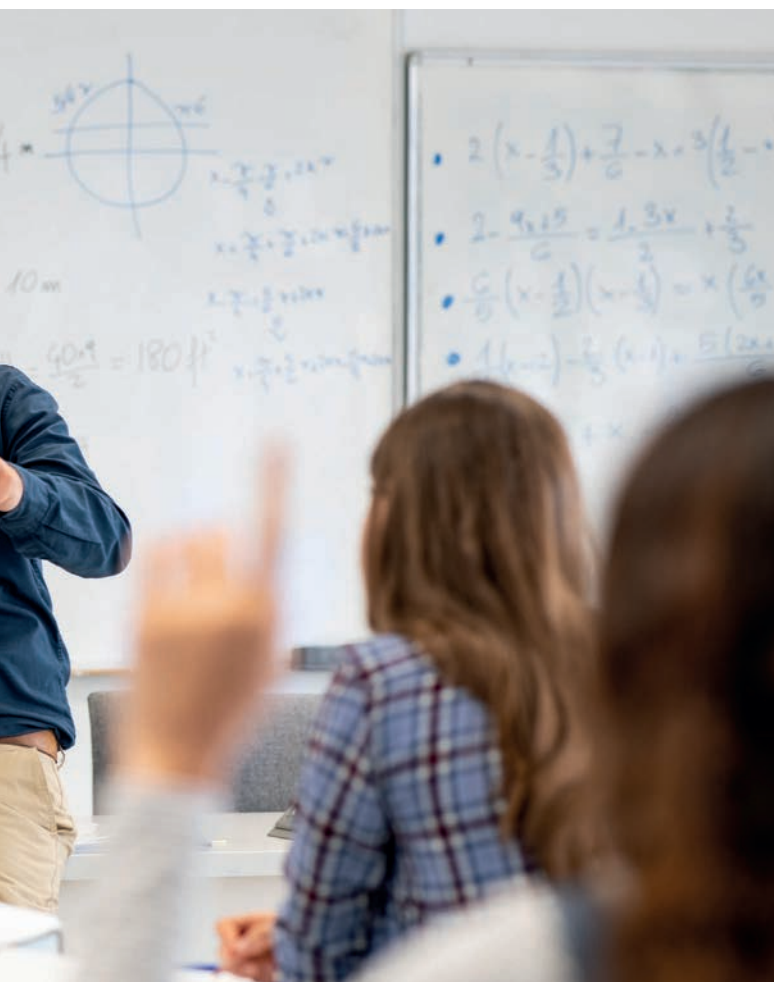




Our key developments over the life of this plan

We will:

- Through our master collaboration agreement with Dudley Academies Trust, expand our alternative provision for young people in years 7 to 11, providing more opportunities for pupils from those schools to study a more suitable vocational pathway.
- Work with Dudley Academies Trust to provide short-term vocational input for school pupils to enhance their school programme of study.
- Commit to an expansion of our 14-16 offer in the borough, with a financial commitment to increasing the number of staff dedicated to this provision.
- This will include an alternative provision offer that will be made available to all schools across the borough.
- Continue to work with the local authority to provide quality education for those on inclusive pathways in years 10 and 11.
- Increase the number of vocational pathways open to 14-16 year old learners, prioritising key areas such as automotive, care and hair and beauty.
- Further develop the curriculum to ensure learners build sustainability awareness and undertake projects linked to sustainability goals.
- Continue to develop digital technologies in the classroom, to include the use of artificial intelligence, ensuring that students can successfully progress in their vocational careers.
- Complete a review of our facilities for alternative provision and identify any enhancements to support the development of this provision.



6.2 ACADEMIC STUDIES

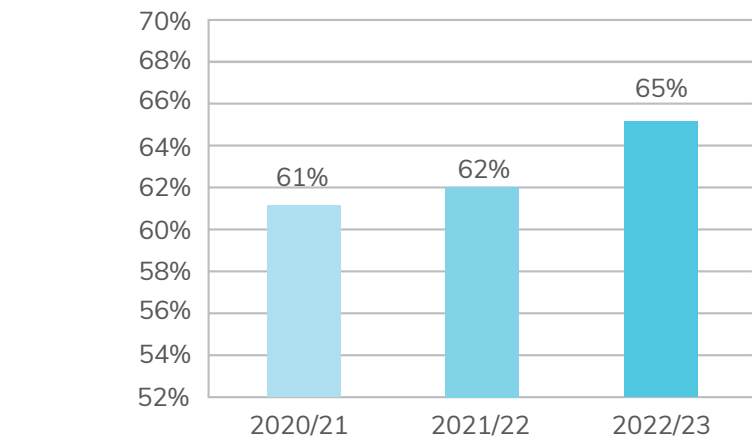
Our response to date

PEOPLE

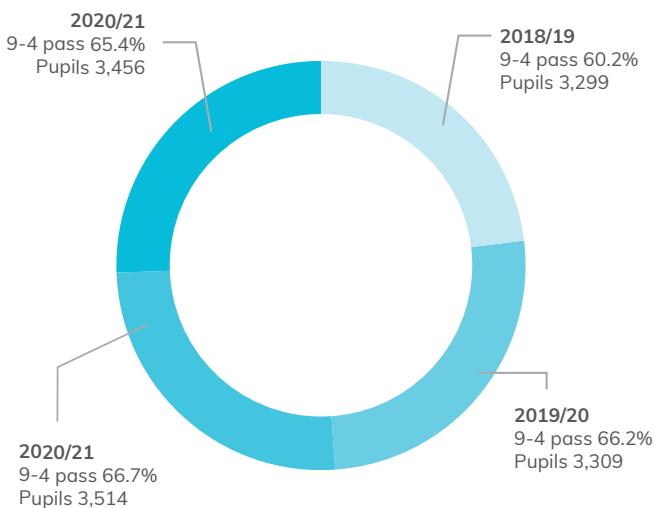
- In the period of the last plan we supported some 818 learners to successfully retake their GCSE English qualification and 655 learners to achieve their GCSE maths: at grade 4 or above.
- We have delivered a broad range of A level subjects, introducing new subjects where there is local demand. The number of learners and their achievement has continued to rise since Dudley Sixth was opened in 2012.
- We have introduced the A level prefect scheme, providing second year learners the opportunity to develop a wider skill set, leading on subject mentor programmes to support first year learners.
- For adult learners, we have continued to provide fast-track functional skills programmes, to support progression into further study or to meet employer needs.

INNOVATION

- We have invested in a number of digital platforms to enhance learning such as Teachmatik and Century AI, enabling our learners to benefit from emerging technologies and expand their knowledge. For mathematics we have invested in Classpoint Pro, to increase learner interaction in class.
- We identify gifted learners and provide enhanced support and coaching to assist them in their applications to Russell Group universities.
- We provide one-to-one support and small group intervention, where needed, to specifically target those learners more in need of tailored help to succeed.
- We have reviewed the delivery model of GCSE English and mathematics, aligning these subjects more closely with the vocational curriculum.



Percentage of A level learners at Dudley Sixth studying STEM subjects linked to priority sectors.



40% of learners in Dudley secondary schools are not leaving with a grade 4 or above in English and mathematics.

- We created vocationally centred teams of English and mathematics teachers to foster a culture of collaboration between teaching teams.

PLACE

- We have continued to offer high quality advice and guidance, ensuring easy access to the latest information on university courses, higher level apprenticeships and internships.
- We support young adults to make the transition to high level study.

SUSTAINABILITY

- We have developed a bespoke Performance Improvement Programme (PIP) curriculum for A level learners, with sustainability embedded as a key central theme.
- We have continued to develop our use of digital technologies to enhance the delivery of A levels and support learner autonomy.



Our key developments over the life of this plan

For our A level learners we will:

- Undertake an annual review our A level subject offer and introduce new programmes in line with level 3 qualification reforms from 2025.
- Improve mathematics education by engaging with the teaching for mastery approach and increasing access to core mathematic.
- Stay abreast of government reforms and build on the best of our current A level offer, developing complimentary occupational standards.
- In line with curriculum reforms, launch a hybrid technical/academic study programme on targeted pathways in professional services, science and sport.
- Promote Dudley Sixth as an aspirational centre of excellence and to ensure it remains a sixth form of choice for the region. We will do this by investing in the estate through considered capital investment and by ensuring our focus on high grades remains constant.
- Expand our enrichment opportunities to provide a wide range of opportunities for our learners, enabling them to develop their skills and explore further interests.
- Extend the opportunities for A level learners to undertake work experience activity as part of their programme of study.
- Ensure all learners have access to advice and guidance around all possible next steps following A levels.
- Work in partnership with Eton/Star Academies to develop a coaching/mentoring programme to better prepare learners for Russell Group universities.

For our learners re-taking GCSE English or mathematics we will:

- Strengthen the embedding of English and mathematics in vocational areas by developing a programme of CPD for practitioners and promoting the sharing of best practice across the curriculum areas.
- Introduce a recognition scheme for high-attending learners.
- Enhance programmes of study with vocationally focussed English and mathematics courses to continue to improve the skills of all our learners.
- Review the delivery model of GCSE English and mathematics to ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve the highest grades.



6.3 BUILDING TECHNOLOGIES AND SERVICES

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

- We have improved our employer relationships by holding a number of breakfast meetings and stakeholder visits to promote our centres.
- We have developed a schools engagement offer to enable year 10 and 11 pupils from local schools the opportunity to engage with our offer as a means of encouraging the uptake of Science, Technology, Engineering and mathematics (STEM) courses in the Black Country.
- We hold a post placement employer event for employers and T level learners to ensure ongoing commitment in securing placements.

INNOVATION

- We have launched the Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) in architectural technology, a level 4 in construction design and build and short courses in building information modelling (BIM) at the Institute of Technology (IoT).
- We have introduced level 2 technical certificates to run alongside diplomas in a number of the traditional trades.
- We have successfully launched T levels in construction, design, surveying and planning.
- Geospatial has enabled us to attract national business due to its innovative use of new scanning and drone technology.

PLACE

- We have established the Black Country and Marches Institute of Technology as a local offer, delivering higher level programmes in modern construction and related technologies.

- We have expanded our facilities at the Construction Apprenticeship Training Centre (CAT) in response to a growing local demand for traditional trades.
- We have developed our own end point assessment (EPA) centres in refrigeration, building services and plastering.

SUSTAINABILITY

- We continue to source our resources from sustainable suppliers ensuring we follow FSC guidelines for timber purchases.
- We follow stringent waste management policies in order to minimise waste and recycle our resources where possible.

West Midlands Employment demand 2023-2027 in this sector

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 2023 18,108 jobs | 2023-27 +1.2% increase | Media wages £15.7 p/hr £32,600 p/yr |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|

| Occupation | 2023 Jobs | Growth 2023-2027 |
|--|-----------|------------------|
| Production Manager & Directors | 1,845 | +3.90 % |
| Carpentry + Joiners | 1,680 | +3.10% |
| Plumbers + Heating Ventilation Engineers | 1,246 | -7.46% |
| Construction + Building Trades | 1,090 | +2.94% |

West Midlands Employment demand 2023-2027 in this sector

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 2023 6,000 jobs | 2023-27 -2.2% decrease | Media wages £17.4 p/hr £36,900 p/yr |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|

| Occupation | 2023 Jobs | Growth 2023-2027 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Electricians + Electrical Fitters | 3,062 | -4.44 % |
| Electrical Engineers | 802 | +1.50% |
| Electrical + Electronic Trades | 401 | +0.75% |
| Electrical + Electronic Technicians | 242 | +4.13% |

Our key developments over the life of this plan

We will:

- Undertake an options analysis of our existing construction site (CAT Centre), committing to updating the existing buildings or working towards a proposal to relocate to new, purpose-built premises.
- Review and develop our provision to be able to deliver a wider offer around sustainability training, retrofit and renewables.
- Develop our T level pathways as they become available and strengthen our T level foundation programmes to encourage learners to go further in education.
- Ensure we are equipped to deal with national post-16 qualification reform at levels 1 and 2 so that staff and learners are confident and informed about the changes.
- Strengthen our progression pathways to higher level skills in modern methods of construction through to The Black Country and Marches Institute of Technology.
- Work with tier 1 organisations to improve higher level skills development within their Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) supply chain, through the development of collaboratively delivered technical skill programmes.
- Strengthen our relationships with chartered institutes and employer bodies to ensure we are meeting the needs of a range of industries.
- Expand short courses to help the construction industry adjust to emerging technologies such as building information modelling (BIM), digital surveying with the use of drones and building control systems.
- Develop an EPA (End Point Assessment) centre for painting and decorating and explore the potential for further EPA centres in the construction trades.



- Introduce new level 4 programmes in construction management and product management.
- Strengthen our employer engagement groups to enable businesses to contribute to our curriculum offer.
- Develop a funded adult evening offer to enable returners or starters to various trades to refresh and upskill.
- Contribute to the Department for Education (DfE) initiative to develop courses and resources as part of a low carbon construction project. This includes delivering the outcomes of the Local Skills Improvement Plan.
- Host the regional heat of the National Skills Build competition, raising the aspirations of our learners and showcasing the skills and high standards of the College.
- Invest in staff training and upskilling linked to industry sustainability and green developments.
- Ensure that sustainability awareness is embedded into the curriculum at every level to increase learner knowledge and responsibility towards a net zero construction industry.
- Implement an internal project working in collaboration with the Estates team to offer our students real life experience of site visits on the projects that we are working on.

6.4 DIGITAL SERVICES

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

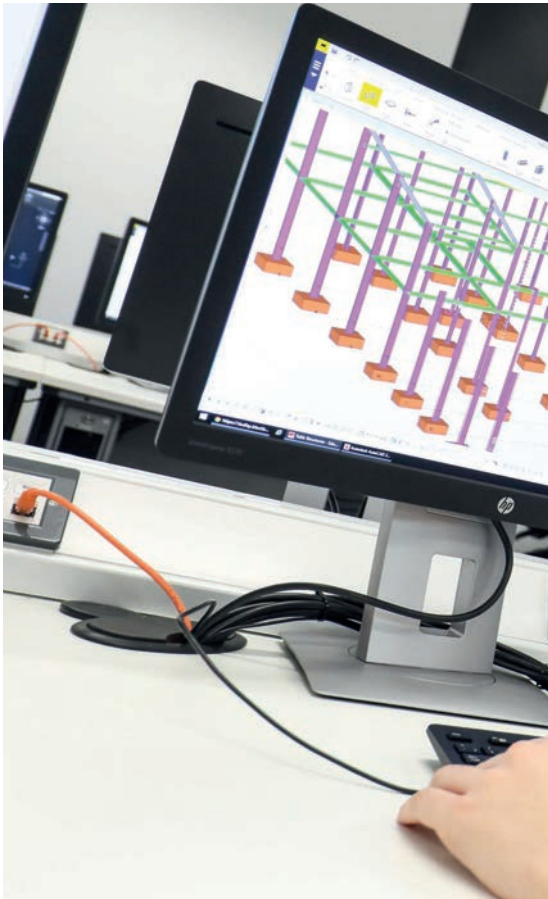
- Throughout the term of our previous plan, our digital curriculum has been reviewed by local digital employers and we have responded to their feedback by adapting our delivery programme to help our learners become more employable.
- We have successfully delivered T levels in both digital production and design and digital support services achieving pass rates and high grades exceeding national levels.
- A high proportion of our digital T Level learners have successfully progressed onto apprenticeships with companies such as Housing 21 and Highways England demonstrating our success in preparing learners for employment.
- In partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), we have increased opportunities for adults to achieve professional vendor qualifications such as CompTIA and Cisco qualifications.
- Our digital learners have continued in their quest to raise money for charitable funds both locally and as part of national campaigns such as Children in Need.

INNOVATION

- We have actively supported our local schools in providing bespoke careers advice and guidance around digital careers via our DigiTech Bootcamps.
- We have worked collaboratively with other colleges in the Black Country to support meaningful digital industry placements demonstrating a shared goal in supporting our learners to achieve.

PLACE

- Our Skills Shop within the Merry Hill Shopping Centre continues to play a key role in developing the essential digital skills for our local community helping them improve their employability skills.
- Our learners have supported a number of local projects such as development and review of a local karate club social media site, commissioned photographic work for the Holocaust memorial fund and Dudley Remembers commissioned by the Gentleman Songsters and designed presentations and promotional material for The Dudley Volunteer Service awards ceremony.



SUSTAINABILITY

- We have continued to recycle and upcycle our digital equipment wherever possible ensuring we make every effort to reduce our carbon footprint.
- We have introduced the use of Senso to ensure the energy we use is limited through automatic shutdown.

West Midlands Employment demand 2023-2027 in this sector

| 2023 14,413 jobs | 2023-27 +2.7% increase | Media wages £21.04 p/hr £39,700 p/yr |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Occupation | 2023 Jobs | Growth 2023-2027 |
| IT professionals | 10,283 | +3.05% |
| IT Technicians | 2,881 | +1.98% |
| Web + Multimedia Design Professionals | 660 | -1.06% |
| Design Occupations | 588 | +3.23% |



Our key developments over the life of this plan

We will:

- Through the Local Improvement Support Fund, further expand our digital provision within our Skills Shop in Brierley Hill with the aim of improving essential digital skills for success in life and work for the community we serve.
- Aspire to become a specialist teaching and learning centre for delivery of advanced courses related to cybersecurity, machine learning and IT infrastructure to help future proof local businesses.
- Design and develop a motion capture suite creating opportunities to use the latest in digital technologies to enhance both our digital and creative provision as well as other sport or performance disciplines.
- Create opportunities for learners to develop and prove their digital skills through digital credential certification.
- Enhance our current IT provision at the Inspired Campus to ensure all equipment continues to meet the needs of new qualifications at all levels as they are introduced.
- Creatively re-design our study programmes at levels 1 and 2 to provide the best opportunities for progression into T levels, further study and work.
- Further embed opportunities to work with employers to help inform our curriculum and increase learner positive destinations, including securing valuable industry placement opportunities that lead to employment.
- Continue to grow our digital Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQ) developing advanced technical work skills in our learners.
- Further develop collaborative HE partnerships providing bespoke digital progression pathways that support learners to reach their full potential.
- Explore opportunities to grow a digital commercial offer through a digital support hub for use by local businesses.
- Continue to grow our adult digital flexible provision, in line with local priority needs, so more adults can progress in their careers. This will include digital Bootcamps, drop-in workshops and enhanced opportunities to gain vendor qualifications.
- Continue to explore every opportunity to work on live projects within our community to enrich learning and develop our young people in their citizenship.
- Further create opportunities to promote digital careers in our local schools and help more females to see digital opportunities as a viable option.
- In line with the College's sustainability goals, endeavour to take every opportunity to guide our learners in the development of behaviours that will help futureproof the environment they live in.
- Work with our English for Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL) team to provide digital upskilling programmes for these learners.

6.5 CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

- The Creative Industries department makes an enormous contribution to the culture of our College with our learners and staff supporting events, taking every opportunity to showcase skills and demonstrate the pride they have in their work.
- Our learners continue to support a wide range of local public and commercial projects and events, enhancing their social and cultural development.
- We have started to explore bespoke higher education pathways through collaboration with local providers.
- A number of our learners have won prestigious awards, such as top 10 finalist in the UK Photography Learner of the Year and Dudley Community Award for work raising awareness of mental health.

INNOVATION

- We continued to exhibit our learner work during our Arts Fest and Media Film Festival events and worked creatively to ensure this was not disrupted due to the pandemic by moving our exhibition online.
- We have positively enriched our learner experience through exposure to the successes of our alumni, raising their goals and aspirations.
- The photography department has continued to work tirelessly with art and commercial photographers resulting in publication of works in the Guardian Newspaper as well as exhibitions at the YMCA, Dudley Archives and The Cube Gallery.

PLACE

- We have invested over £1.4m in our Inspired campus in Brierley Hill which now includes state of the art facilities in creative media and games design.

- Our creative learners annually contribute to a number of local live projects such as The Black Country Living Museum Halloween event and working closely with Dudley Zoo, The Rotary club, Thomas Dudley Limited, National Theatre Connections.
- Our photography department continues to strengthen its relationship with local employers such as Dudley Zoo.

SUSTAINABILITY

- We continue to use recycled materials where possible and reduce waste through recycling at both our Dudley and Brierley Hill campuses.
- We are conscious of our energy usage and make every attempt to use energy responsibly.

West Midlands Employment demand 2023-2027 in this sector

| 2023 1,272 jobs | 2023-27 +0.7% increase | Media wages £14.30 p/hr £25,800 p/yr |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Occupation | 2023 Jobs | Growth 2023-2027 |
| Graphic + Multimedia Design | 536 | -1.68% |
| Design Occupations | 276 | +3.99% |
| Clothing Fashion, Accessories Designers | 211 | +2.37% |
| Artists | 54 | +5.56% |

West Midlands Employment demand 2023-2027 in this sector

| 2023 1,200 jobs | 2023-27 +3.1% increase | Media wages £15.34 p/hr £29,300 p/yr |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Occupation | 2023 Jobs | Growth 2023-2027 |
| Public Relations Professionals | 596 | +2.68 % |
| Arts Officers Producers Directors | 291 | +7.22% |
| Musicians | 61 | -1.92% |
| Actors Entertainers + Presenters | 57 | +14.04% |
| Dancers + Choreographers | 11 | -9.09% |



Our key developments over the life of this plan

We will:

- Review the location of our creative provision across our two sites to create two distinct facilities – focussed on digital creativity and traditional and performing arts.
- Ensure that there are a range of relevant stakeholders from the creative industries advising in curriculum development and how we adapt to the needs impacting the future of the area.
- Introduce new Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), including graphics.
- Launch new T levels in craft and design and media broadcast and production.
- Introduce progression pathways at levels 1 and 2 that support learners to positively progress to their chosen destination.
- Maintain our performing arts provision through the creation of multi-discipline programmes and a strengthening of links with theatre venues.
- Ensure staff and learners benefit from technologies across the College to support their creative projects – such as 3D printing facilities or a motion capture suite.
- Create more opportunities for staff to explore and develop their vocational skills and practice.
- Collaborate with a suitable university partner to develop level 4 and 5 pathways for our learners in priority disciplines.
- Prepare and plan for the introduction of new Advanced Academic Qualifications (AAQs).
- Develop our use of visiting lecturers, freelance artists and speakers who bring industry standards and skills to our programmes.
- Continue to expand the use of alumni who are currently working in the industry to enrich and help promote our programmes for young people.
- Develop a pilot program at Dudley Academies Trust schools to promote and foster collaboration between the performing arts departments and further improve recruitment for the area.
- Introduce a new creative industries schools liaison lecturer to drive recruitment in the creative areas.
- Further build on the department's relationship with Black Country Radio to offer opportunities for learners to perform across a broader range of skills.
- Explore and increase commercial opportunities across all creative areas and raise awareness of our presence within our community.
- Increase opportunities to work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to upskill adults and support progression in their careers.
- Explore expansion of our full-cost art workshops to improve the mental wellbeing of our staff, learners and local community.
- Develop our sustainability practice through effective controls and by embedding sustainability into our assignment briefs and projects.



6.6 ENGINEERING AND AUTOMOTIVE

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

- Over the life of the previous strategic plan we have trained:
 - o 1,251 16-18 year olds on full time programmes
 - o 977 apprentices
 - o Over 430 learners on higher level programmes
 - o 709 adults on technical upskilling programmes
- Hundreds of school pupils have also benefitted from delivery of enrichment programmes at Dudley Advance and the Institute of Technology (IoT).

INNOVATION

- Successful launch of the new T level engineering pathways.
- Highly regarded Engineering Academy, offering employers support with recruitment.
- New modular upskilling programmes in such areas as robotics, automation and control systems fully funded for local employers.
- Our learners were medal winners in WorldSkills competitions for the last three years.
- We have launched the Innovation Zone offering Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) access to technical space and support with product and systems development.

PLACE

- We opened one of the first Institutes of Technology, a £30m facility specialising in higher level programmes in advanced manufacturing.
- We have a highly engaged employer advisory board attended by over 50 local employers from this sector.

SUSTAINABILITY

- The launch of successful new provision in electrification and electrical vehicle systems.
- We won the Queens Anniversary Prize for the impact our training has had on the productivity of local employers.
- We submitted a successful bid to develop a range of new programmes for manufacturing SMEs on sustainable methodologies.

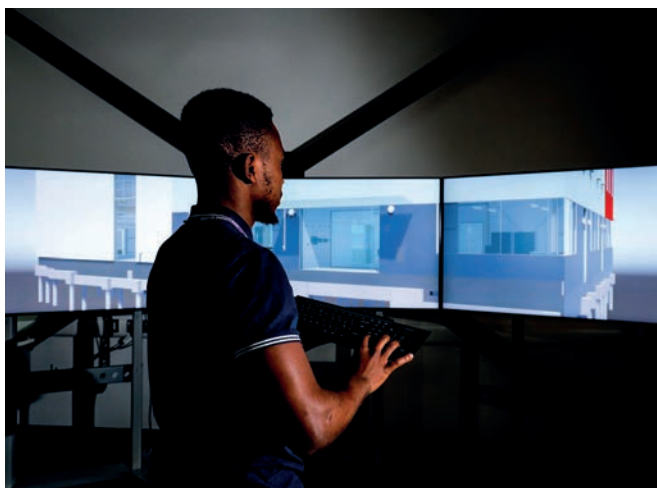


West Midlands Employment demand 2023-2027 in this sector

| 2023 22,505 jobs | 2023-27 +0.1% increase | Media wages £17.81 p/hr £36,400 p/yr |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Occupation | 2023 Jobs | Growth 2023-2027 |
| Vehicle Technician. Mechanics + Electricians | 3,162 | +0.93% |
| Electrical Engineers | 802 | +1.50% |
| Mechanical Engineers | 794 | -0.63% |
| Civil Engineers | 744 | -0.54% |

West Midlands Employment demand 2023-2027 in this sector

| 2023 6,980 jobs | 2023-27 -0.9% decrease | Media wages £14.17 p/hr £30,200 p/yr |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Occupation | 2023 Jobs | Growth 2023-2027 |
| Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics + Electricians | 3,162 | +0.98 % |
| Vehicle Parts Advisors | 801 | +0.75% |
| Vehicle Body Builders + repairers | 307 | -2.93% |
| Tyre, Exhaust, Windscreen Fitters | 254 | -1.57% |



Our key developments over the life of this plan

We will:

- Deliver our ambition to create a brand new Transport Technologies Centre, focussed on electrification and future technologies.
- Extend our successful Engineering Academy model into the automotive sector.
- Expand our adult technical upskilling programmes at level 4, particularly in automation, electrification, and robotics.
- Introduce new, short courses and services linked to metrology.



- Expand our innovation services to employers, opening access to technical facilities for their use, supported through Innovate UK funding.
- Deliver a programme to maximise progression opportunities for learners into The Black Country and Marches Institute of Technology (IoT) within the engineering pathways.
- Introduce a sector-based work academy programme (SWAP) for engineering and work collaboratively to ensure there is an adult offer to meet local skills requirements.
- Launch the new Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQ) in engineering and manufacturing.
- Partner with Black Country Innovative Manufacturing Organisation (BCIMO) to deliver support services to SMEs.
- Partner with Wolverhampton College and Very Light Rail National Innovation Centre to develop a higher-level pathway through transport engineering.
- Continue to roll out T level pathways to enhance our provision.
- Redesign the curriculum offer at level 2 and below to ensure progression routes into employment or further education.
- Expand our modular programmes to support the needs of local employers in upskilling their staff.
- Work with Next Gen Makers on the Educational Partnership Programme for engineering apprenticeships.
- Work in conjunction with the Employer Engagement team to increase the number of opportunities for employers to engage with the College and its learners. This will include opportunities for industry to influence delivery in the classroom.
- Introduce trade events as part of the work exposure for our learners to gain a valuable insight into industry.
- Introduce a Science, Technology, Engineering and mathematics (STEM) school teacher post to help promote STEM subjects within local schools.
- Devise and implement an internal competition plan and increase the number of learners competing at WorldSkills in different disciplines.
- Ensure CPD opportunities are given to ensure the staff are trained in the latest technologies.
- Create more opportunities for learners and staff to be involved in sustainable practices.

For more information log on to www.dudleycol.ac.uk

6.7 HEALTH AND SCIENCES

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

- We have further enhanced our relationships with employers in this industry to secure valuable work experience placements for our learners.
- We engage with a large number of school pupils, offering enrichment programmes linked to careers in health and care.
- We engaged with over 40% of our young people on full time programmes relating to Science, Technology, Engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.
- We have a member of staff attending the green skills teaching training.

INNOVATION

- We successfully launched the new T level programmes in health and science pathways.
- We delivered fully-funded programmes to support people to move into careers linked to health and care. This ranges from academy programmes for entry level positions, through to technical upskilling for employed adults.
- The Black Country and Marches Institute of Technology (IoT) medical technologies programmes have attracted learners from over 40 hospital trusts across England.

PLACE

- We opened one of the first Institutes of Technology (IoT), a £30m facility specialising in higher level programmes in medical technology.
- £1.2 million refurbishment of our science laboratories and classrooms.
- We obtained funding and started work on a new animal science training facility.
- We are working with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) and the University of Worcester in creating a new Health Innovation Centre in Dudley.

SUSTAINABILITY

- We have reduced waste through recycling.
- We are conscious of our energy usage and make every attempt to use energy responsibly.
- We have representation on the College environmental team.
- We improved the College's biodiversity with a natural pond and wildlife area.

West Midlands Employment demand 2023-2027 in this sector

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 2023 3,520 jobs | 2023-27 +2.2% increase | Media wages £14.53 p/hr £34,000 p/yr |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|

| Occupation | 2023 Jobs | Growth 2023-2027 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Laboratory Technicians | 908 | +4.30% |
| Biochemists + Biomedical Scientists | 452 | +3.99% |
| Social + Humanities Scientists | 182 | +2.20% |
| Physical Scientists | 122 | +0.82 |

West Midlands Employment demand 2023-2027 in this sector

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 2023 72,929 jobs | 2023-27 +3.3% increase | Media wages £15.58 p/hr £25,800 p/yr |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|

| Occupation | 2023 Jobs | Growth 2023-2027 |
|--|-----------|------------------|
| Care Workers + Home Carers | 13,015 | -1.40 % |
| Registered Nursing Professionals | 5,913 | +5.04% |
| Early Education + Childcare Assistants | 2,198 | +3.87% |
| Dental Nurses | 1,759 | +13.19% |



Our key developments over the life of this plan

We will:

- Open a brand-new higher education facility for health and care programmes (Health Innovation Dudley) in 2025, in partnership with the University of Worcester, offering progression to full degree programmes for local residents.
- Expand our level 3 offer to include progression to higher level programmes and priority roles in the NHS and beyond.
- Open a new animal management training facility in September 2024.
- Launch the new Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) in animal science and early years.
- Launch the new T level in animal management and roll out relevant pathways.
- Continue to roll out T level pathways in health and add the mental health pathway.
- Redevelop the curriculum offer at level 2 and below to ensure progression routes into employment, T level or other further education.
- Introduce a new mixed alternative academic pathway in science to include A levels.
- Become a Canine (K9) specialist unit including dog grooming and hydrotherapy courses, including the creation of an outside animal area.
- Introduce an animal van to help promote the curriculum to local schools.
- Expand our successful partnership with Avensys to extend our medical engineering offer to level 6 and introduce short CPD upskilling for existing industry engineers.
- Create more opportunities for learners and staff to be involved in sustainable practices which will become the norm.
- Develop a network of flagship employers that sponsor T level placements, providing a range of opportunities for these learners.
- Introduce an adult offer in animal management to include dog grooming and small pet related courses.
- Work in conjunction with the Employer Engagement team to increase the number of opportunities for employers to engage with the College and influence what is delivered in the classroom.
- Develop the relationship with University of Worcester to ensure an automatic progression route into higher education for our Access learners.
- Launch international trips for animal science learners to enhance their experience and knowledge.



- The Dudley local authority area has a working age population of 196,435. This is 61% of the total population of 323,495.
- The population aged 18 to 24 is 23,464 (12% of all working age). Dudley and Solihull (11%) have the smallest proportion of 18-24-year-olds (of all working age) in the WMCA area. The West Midlands regional average is 14%.
- The age 50-64 population is 64,342 (33% of all working age – Dudley and Solihull (34%) have the highest proportion of 50-64-year-olds (of all working age) in the WMCA.

Dudley has a lower Claimant Count rate than the West Midlands regional average. The Claimant Count for Dudley Local Authority (those receiving Universal Credit in the intensive work search group plus those receiving Jobseeker's Allowance) is 9,050 (October 2023). This is 4.6% of the working age population, where the West Midlands region average is 4.8% (3.8% across England as a whole). This compares to a rate of 7.4% in Wolverhampton and 6.2% in Sandwell.

At ward level, there are high rates of unemployment in St Thomas's (8.3%), St James's (7.3%), Brierley Hill (7.1%), Netherton, Woodside and St Andrews (6.7%) and Brockmoor and Pensnett (6.4%).

The employment rate in Dudley local authority is 76.5% (Annual Population Survey July 2022 to June 2023). This is above the rate for the West Midlands region as whole which was 74.3% at the time and compares to rates of 65.4% in Sandwell and 66.4% in Wolverhampton. Dudley has seen extremely strong growth in recent years despite the pandemic. It was below 72% for most of 2009-19.

6.8 ADULT EMPLOYMENT AND UPSKILLING

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

- We successfully delivered a broad range of courses for adults as a direct response to the needs of the region.
- We designed and introduced a number of sector-based work academy programmes, successfully moving over 200 adults into jobs with our partner employers.
- We have continued to develop our relationship with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), housing the Youth Hub within the Black Country Skills Shop at the Merry Hill Centre and working alongside Jobcentre Plus (JCP) colleagues to provide a streamlined experience for our learners. We have also engaged with specific 50+ job centres and in-work progression coaches to up-skill older employed adults.
- Recruitment to priority sectors has grown to 63% at level 3 and above, providing more opportunities for our learners to aspire to better or new career opportunities. This includes training in electrical, health and social care, automotive, CompTIA and CompTIA N+.

INNOVATION

- We have developed our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision by providing vocational courses in retail, hospitality and warehousing alongside our language offer, providing more opportunities for ESOL learners to move into employment.
- We have continued to review and develop our Groundworks Construction Gateway provision, to ensure it meets the needs of employers and unemployed residents.



- We expanded our warehousing offer, providing forklift truck training from within the Merry Hill Centre.
- We have worked closely with large local employers such as Midland Metro, the NHS and Savills to develop bespoke programmes to match their particular needs.
- We have developed links with Warwick Manufacturing Group in upskilling staff to deliver new programmes in electrification.

PLACE

- We have enabled more adults to access training in English, mathematics and digital skills by utilising the Skills Shop for fast-track Saturday courses.
- We established a new forklift truck delivery space within the Merry Hill Centre.
- We have engaged with large employers to deliver the Multiply programme in-house to reduce barriers to learning and aid promotional prospects.

SUSTAINABILITY

- We launched the pilot 'My Green Dudley' sustainability programme to local employers.



Our key developments over the life of this plan

We will:

- Develop our level 3 offer, enabling more learners to progress onto training in priority sectors – digital, construction, engineering, accounts and finance to support the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) regional skills plan.
- Expand the Black Country Skills Shop by extending our premises at the Merry Hill Centre to provide a greater range of courses and even more flexible delivery for adults seeking employment.
- Engage with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to establish sector preferences and launch pre-apprenticeship programmes in business administration and engineering.
- In response to the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), work with WMCA to secure funding to offer digital/ leadership and business training for employed people seeking to upskill for career development.
- Develop an introduction to teacher training programme specifically focused on those in industry who wish to transition into education.
- Retain a sharp focus on growing our Free Courses for Jobs offer, ensuring even more opportunities for adult learners in the borough.
- Expand our vocational English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programmes to increase the number of learners studying English alongside a vocational pathway to support progression to work.
- Review our ESOL curriculum offer to ensure it is ambitious and meets the needs of all learners.
- Support those learners with asylum status who are prohibited from working by introducing a volunteering programme to enable them to gain experience of working in the UK.
- Launch a new distance learning offer to enable us to continue supporting learners who have achieved employment but aspire to further their career options.
- Expand our bootcamp offer to include new and aspiring managers and digital skills improvement programmes.
- Strengthen our adult and community learning links to develop a single streamlined offer in neighbourhood activity hubs to support communities.
- Explore funding opportunities for adults to develop English and mathematics skills through small bitesize learning programmes.



6.9 PROFESSIONAL AND SERVICE INDUSTRIES

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

- We have introduced new programmes for adults looking to upskill or retrain in accountancy, leadership and management, fitness instructing and personal training, hairdressing and beauty therapy.
- We have created opportunities for our learners to develop knowledge and skills outside of the classroom via blended learning.
- Several of our learners have gained valuable work experience abroad via fully-funded external partnership programmes.
- Our learners have gained additional qualifications in response to feedback from local employers for example, gel manicure application, cabin crew and aviation and Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) accreditation.
- Our learners continue to volunteer within our community.
- Our Sports Academy has seen major success in regional and national competition with male and female achievements in football, basketball, cross-country and wrestling.

INNOVATION

- We have developed our curriculum based on labour market intelligence, increasing flexible courses and apprenticeship programmes in management, accounting, customer services and business administration.
- We have successfully launched a new T level in business administration.
- We have rebranded our Sports Academy and increased opportunities for elite specialist pathways.
- We have developed bespoke programmes for local employers such as Dudley Group of Hospitals Foundation Trust and Black Country Partnership Foundation Trust.

PLACE

- Our partnership with Chartered Management Institute (CMI) continues to flourish gaining approval as a Chartered Management assessment centre.
- We developed recruitment partnerships with key stakeholders such as Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) and Dudley borough NHS Trusts.
- Our learners continue to support important local events such as Dudley Town Remembrance Service and Dudley Volunteer Service Awards events.

- Our Beauty Therapy department continues to receive the Ragdale Hall Spa Centre of Excellence for recognition of its high standards in training.

SUSTAINABILITY

- We have introduced a recycle scheme for our sports kit.
- We reviewed our suppliers to reduce our carbon footprint by considering packaging, transport, manufacturing materials and ingredients.

West Midlands Employment demand 2023-2027 in this sector

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 2023 89,279 jobs | 2023-27 +1.4% increase | Media wages In the range £9.82 - £16.18 p/hr Between £14,300 - £34,000 p/yr |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|

| Occupation | 2023 Jobs | Growth 2023-2027 |
|---|-----------|------------------|
| Customer Service Occupations | 5,643 | +2.25% |
| Business + Financial Management Professionals | 2,615 | +2.26% |
| Office Managers | 3,055 | +0.26% |
| Sports Coaches, Leisure officials | 1,664 | +5.65% |
| Fitness _ Wel being instructors | 2,99 | +6.35% |
| Leisure + Travel Service Occupations | 151 | +0.77% |
| Police Officers (Sergeants) | 1,664 | +5.65% |
| Solicitors + Lawyers | 988 | +4.15% |
| Air Travel Assistants | 237 | -3.80% |
| Leisure Occupations | 151 | +0.007% |
| Hairdressers and Barbers | 577 | -13.69% |
| Beauticians + Related Occupations | 364 | -12.56% |

Our key developments over the life of this plan

In Sport and Protective Services we will:

- Respond to qualification reforms, working with our A Level provision to deliver an alternative vocational academic route.
- Introduce a sports coaching higher education offer in partnership with University of Wolverhampton.
- Continue to widen participation in sport and leisure activities improving mental health and wellbeing of the people we serve.
- Expand our Academy of Sport including the introduction of cricket, golf and rugby and become the sports college of choice.
- Widen participation in sport in under-represented groups.
- Work in partnership with University of Worcester to create a direct entry route into BSC (Hons) Paramedic Science for protective services learners.

In Hair and Beauty we will:

- Launch foundation and T level programmes in hair, barbering and beauty therapy.
- Expand our adult offer to allow for modular upskilling for those looking for a change in career.
- Ensure our learners develop the business skills they need to start up in business.
- Explore the introduction of level 4 qualifications including salon management.
- Work with local higher education providers on progression pathways after college.

In Travel and Tourism we will:

- Launch new occupational entry qualifications.
- Continue to build and strengthen relationships with employers including Jet2 and Birmingham Airport to ensure our learners develop the enhanced skills required for industry.
- Continue to support local community events providing learners with enrichment opportunities to demonstrate the skills they have developed at College.



In Professional Services we will:

- Launch foundation and T level programmes in finance, legal services and marketing and procurement.
- Develop partnerships with local higher education providers to ensure all learners have access to university pathways.
- Develop more flexible modular learning that help employees gain the qualifications they need to progress in their career.
- Launch an aspiring/new manager and a business startup short course to support adults locally.
- Continue to build our relationships with large public sector employers to provide bespoke training that supports their staff to progress in their careers.

6.10 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES

Our response to date:

PEOPLE

- We have supported growth in the number of learners with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- We successfully negotiated 25 additional high needs places, taking the total places at the College to 175.
- We reviewed and restructured the Inclusion Team to ensure that learners and staff are supported across all curriculum areas.
- Specialist training has been delivered to all Aspire staff.

INNOVATION

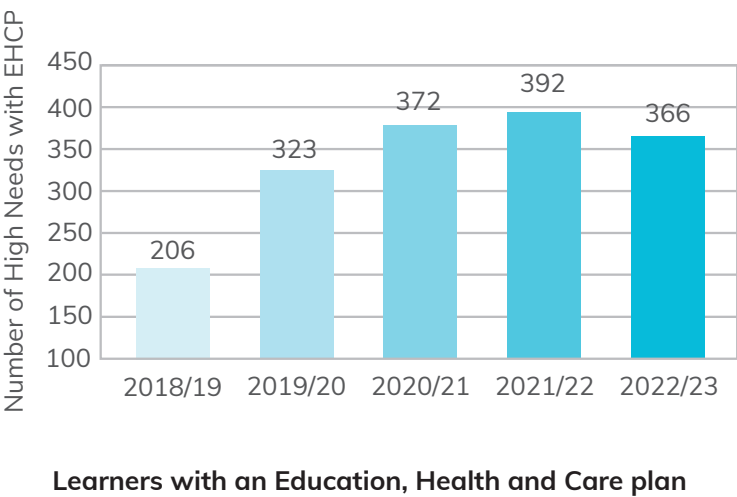
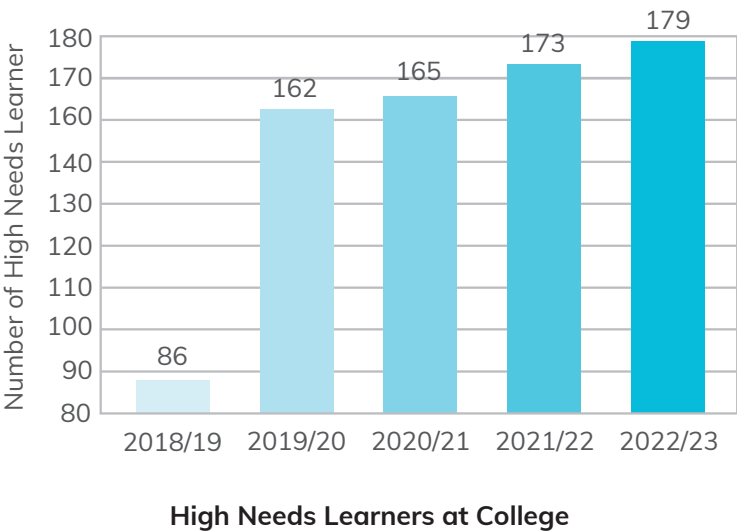
- Three programme pathways were created within our Aspire provision, including a pathway for employment for SEND learners, which culminates with a supported internship.
- We created Gateway provision to enable transition into College for those who find transitioning into new environments difficult.
- We have introduced Evidence for Learning, which is an electronic portfolio, where an increased amount of visual evidence can be used.

PLACE

- We have obtained full approval for the refurbishment of No. 12 Broadway to allow specialist facilities for our Aspire learners.
- We restructured the delivery of programmes so that our Independent Living learners have access to a specialist environment.

SUSTAINABILITY

- We involved learners in the conservation of Saltwells Nature Reserve, Brockswood Animal Sanctuary and Hawbush Community Gardens.
- We delivered practical lessons on up-cycling, with learners contributing items to local charities.
- We have ensured all of our English lessons have been based on sustainability.





Our key developments over the life of this plan

We will:

- Further develop the use of evidence for learning methodologies, to incorporate evidence from learners' daily lives.
- Continue to improve transition arrangements for those going into mainstream provision from Aspire.
- Improve transition for SEND learners from school into mainstream and Aspire provision, to ensure a smooth and sustained entrance into post 16 education.
- Invest in technology, including artificial intelligence to better support those with SEND.
- Focus Independent Living delivery to meet preparing for adulthood outcomes.
- Provide a bespoke English and mathematics offer for Aspire learners.
- Continue to grow supported internship provision and look to introduce a SEND apprenticeship model in collaboration with local employers.
- Review the specialist support provided by the dyslexia tutors, to provide support to both learners and tutors.
- Work with our Estates department to refit No.12 Broadway to open a new social enterprise centre for SEND learners.



- Through relationships made via the Colleges West Midlands (CWM) SEND group, develop further opportunities for our supported internship learners.
- Collaborate with specialist colleges and Whitbread to provide opportunities for supported interns to train and work at Premier Inn.
- Continue to use college conferences and other opportunities to upskill staff across the College in effective practice to support SEND learners.

7. SUCCESS THROUGH COLLABORATION

As articulated throughout this strategic plan, collaboration continues to be a core value for the College and we recognise that we cannot achieve all that is needed in terms of educational opportunities in the area without the support of a wide range of partners.

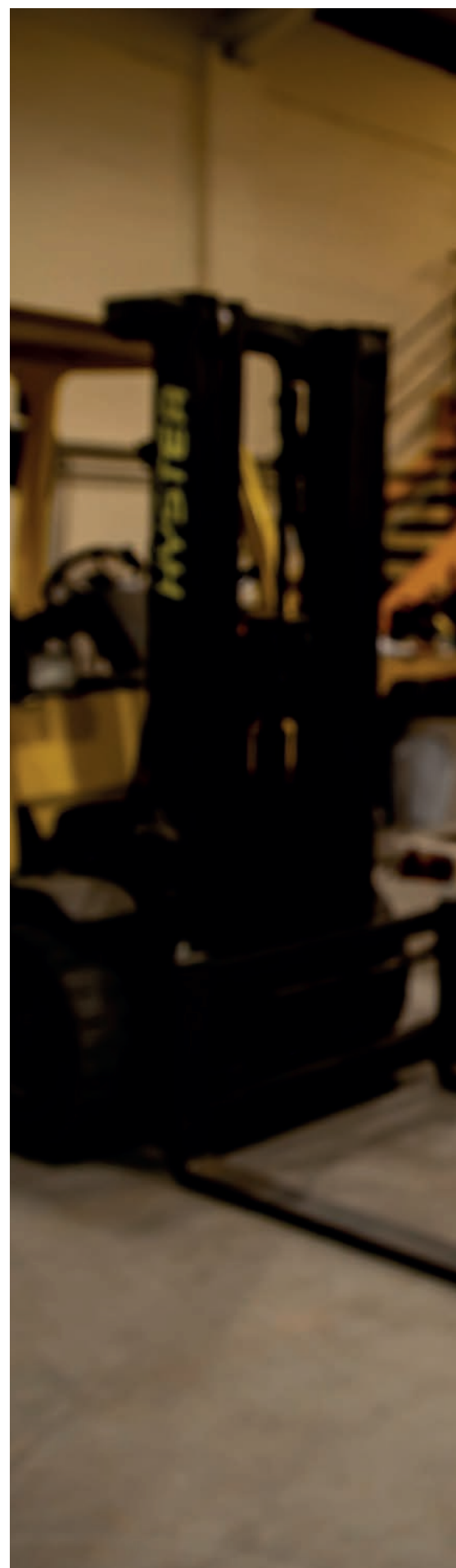
Be that our work with local schools, other colleges, private training providers, universities, employers or local representative bodies, this section of the plan aims to recognise some of the key partners that we expect to work with to realise the ambitions set out in this plan and what actions we will take to do this.

Success through collaboration:

7.1 Working with our schools

7.2 Engaging with employers

7.3 Delivery partners





7.1 WORKING WITH OUR SCHOOLS

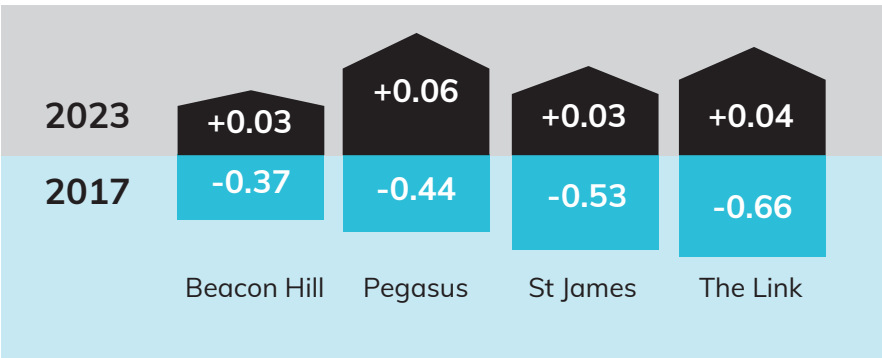
Our work with schools

The College is proud to be the sponsor of Dudley Academies Trust, working collaboratively to support improving outcomes for school pupils and ensuring their success in further education and employment. During its first six years of operation Dudley Academies Trust has achieved significant improvements in the performance of its secondary schools. In 2022, The Link Academy was the most improved secondary school in Dudley for the Progress 8 measure and Pegasus Academy was the third most improved for attainment in five plus GCSEs in English and mathematics. In 2023, all schools were at or above the national average for Progress 8, which is an important milestone confirming how far the schools have come. In addition, the Trust has expanded to include two primary schools. One has an Ofsted rating of outstanding and the other is good. This means that the Trust is now 'cross-phase' and intends to grow its family of schools further to include other local primary and secondary schools, all sharing a common vision and working in partnership with the College to meet the needs of learners in the local area at every stage of their educational journey.

Dudley Academies Trust About Us

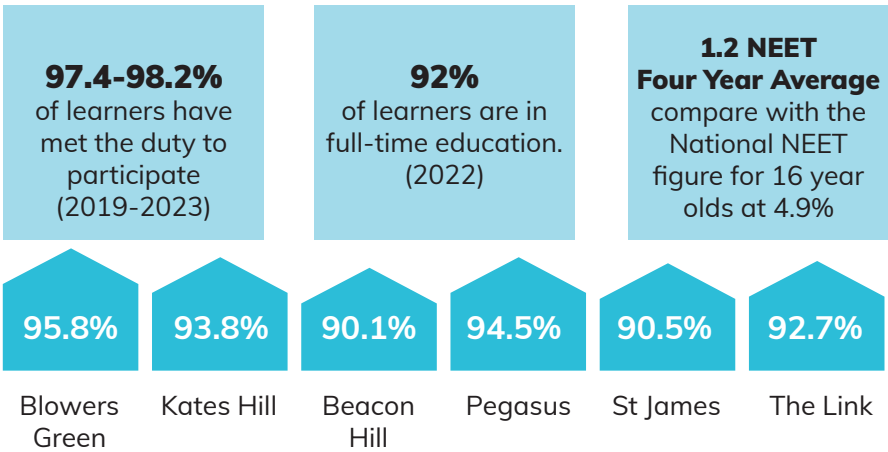
Outside of the Trust, the College works with over 130 secondary schools to support with careers advice and transition to further education pathways. This includes such activity as taster sessions, advice and guidance support, careers events, exposure to employers and qualification support. With the changing landscape of qualification reform happening over the life of this strategic plan, we expect do more to support schools, young people and parents/guardians to understand the options available after school and how to access the much-needed advice on careers of the future.

Dudley Academies Trust had the four most improved academies for Progress 8 within Dudley LA in 2023 compared to 2019.



All schools at or above the national benchmark

Positive Destinations



Our key developments

For Dudley Academies Trust we will:

- Develop and launch a new master collaboration agreement, underpinned by the shared vision of:
 - o A truly joined up compulsory education system that supports young people to transition between phases effectively, whatever their individual circumstances.
 - o Expanded opportunities for young people to succeed academically or technically meaning they can progress to rewarding employment.
 - o Effective use of the educational facilities and resources across the borough to ensure every young person can benefit from these opportunities.
 - o A highly effective, innovative alternative provision to meet the needs of primary and secondary learners.
 - o A recognition that our institutions are 'stronger together', with all stakeholders recognising our group identity, and demonstrating best value for money for the public purse in the eyes of our stakeholders.
- The shared ambitions of the agreement will be delivered by an agreed set of actions under the following streams of work:
 - o An innovative curriculum offer that allows every young person to realise their full potential.
 - o High quality inclusive practice prioritising the safety and wellbeing of learners at every stage of their education. In partnership with external agencies, support for the social, emotional and mental health needs of our young people will be central to our provision.
 - o Effective careers, information, advice and guidance for young people to support them in choosing and gaining rewarding employment.
 - o A truly collaborative approach to developing all our staff, both teaching and associate, ensuring they are able to offer the best possible experience to our learners.
 - o High quality leadership development programmes for leaders at all levels which contributes to strong staff retention.
 - o A closer relationship with parents and carers which supports each young person on their education journey.
 - o A joined-up approach to delivery of services and facilities that ensures all young people have equal opportunity and access to the provision that is right for them.



For all our schools we will:

- Introduce College teachers who will offer taught sessions in schools to engage young people in priority disciplines and careers.
- Expand our offer of employer exposure events for school pupils, raising their awareness of exciting local careers.
- Further strengthen our advice and guidance services to schools, ensuring all stakeholders are aware of the curriculum options available to them post 16.
- Offer schools access to our specialist technical and performance facilities to support their curriculum delivery.

7.2 ENGAGING WITH EMPLOYERS

We are proud to have developed some very strong relationships with local and regional employers. Each year we work with over 1,000 employers. These relationships help inform and, in some cases, support the delivery of our curriculum, ensuring we are meeting industry needs. We recognise however that we will need to further develop and strengthen our employer relationships to meet the requirement of technical curriculum reform.










Our key developments

- We will create a dedicated employer engagement team for each of our priority sectors, to act as a 'one stop' service for all employer interactions in that sector, be that apprenticeships, staff upskilling, recruitment, work placements or collaborative delivery. We expect this will mean a considerable expansion of the existing team.
- We will continue to expand membership of our Employer Advisory Boards for each of our priority sectors, to ensure employers have a voice in our curriculum planning and delivery.
- We will expand and rebrand our existing Apprenticeship Hub into an Employer Hub, to ensure the services offered to employers and residents cover all employer-led provision.
- We will introduce development services to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to support their business. This will begin with manufacturing services from our Innovation Hub and then extend to other priority sectors including digital, professional services, building technologies and creative industries.
- We will deliver a package of support to employers who are willing to provide industry placement opportunities to our learners, including a dedicated account manager and financial support.
- We will deliver a calendar of employer events and trade shows throughout the year, aimed at supporting our local industries and raising awareness of training opportunities and services.
- We will actively look for further employer delivery partners, who are able to work with us to design and deliver programmes to meet industry needs through shared access to funding or staff secondment.
- We will continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce (and other trade associations) as it moves into Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) Stage 2 and beyond, to ensure we are able to respond to emerging skills and training needs identified by local employers.
- We will play an active role in the delivery of the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF), ensuring new programmes aligned to the LSIP are made available to employers from our College.
- We will provide high quality advice and guidance to employers ensuring they benefit from the most appropriate education and training, leading to positive outcomes and ultimately, making a difference to productivity within the region.

7.3 DELIVERY PARTNERS

We would like to recognise the many education delivery partners who we work with and who we hope will continue to help us realise the ambitions set out in this strategic plan.

In addition to those existing partners listed below, we will continue to actively explore further delivery collaborations linked to our priority sectors.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
|  <p>Colleges West Midlands A collaboration of colleges across the West Midlands, with a shared mission to support the region's economy and drive up the prosperity of all people in the West Midlands through the transformational power of learning and skills development.</p> |  <p>University of Worcester A collaboration whereby the university offers a range of degree programmes as progression for our learners. They are also the lead provider for Health Innovation Dudley programmes.</p> |  <p>University of Wolverhampton We work closely on the Aspire to HE programme, which is designed to increase access to higher education for learners from under-represented communities.</p> |
|  <p>Coventry University The university is a key delivery partner for our engineering and construction higher level provision in the Institute of Technology.</p> |  <p>In-Comm Training Services Ltd A key delivery partner for our engineering provision delivered as part of the Institute of Technology in the Marches.</p> |  <p>Avensys UK Training Ltd A key partner in our Institute of Technology, collaboratively delivering programmes in the field of medical engineering.</p> |



Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College

A key delivery partner for our engineering provision delivered as part of the Institute of Technology in the Marches.



CNET

CNET offer specialist training programmes linked to networking and related building services offered through the College.



Sports Structures

Sport Structures are specialists in offering sporting qualifications and delivery programmes on behalf of the College in Community Activator Coach, Community Sport and Health Officer.



K2 Advanced Training Ltd

Collaborative delivery of adult programmes designed to support employment in a variety of security roles.



Black Country Innovative Manufacturing Organisation

Operator of the Very Light Rail National Innovation Centre and partner in delivering specialist innovation and training facilities linked to transport technologies and related manufacturing disciplines.



Telford College

A key delivery partner for our engineering provision delivered as part of the Institute of Technology in the Marches.

8. FINANCIAL STRATEGY

PEOPLE

We will seek to invest in our staff to ensure they have the best skills to deliver a great experience or service to our learners, customers and stakeholders. We will target our resources in the best professional development and upskilling to ensure we have the right talent for today and tomorrow.

INNOVATION

We will support our curriculum and professional services teams to invest in the infrastructure and technology that enables innovation and improves our business delivery.

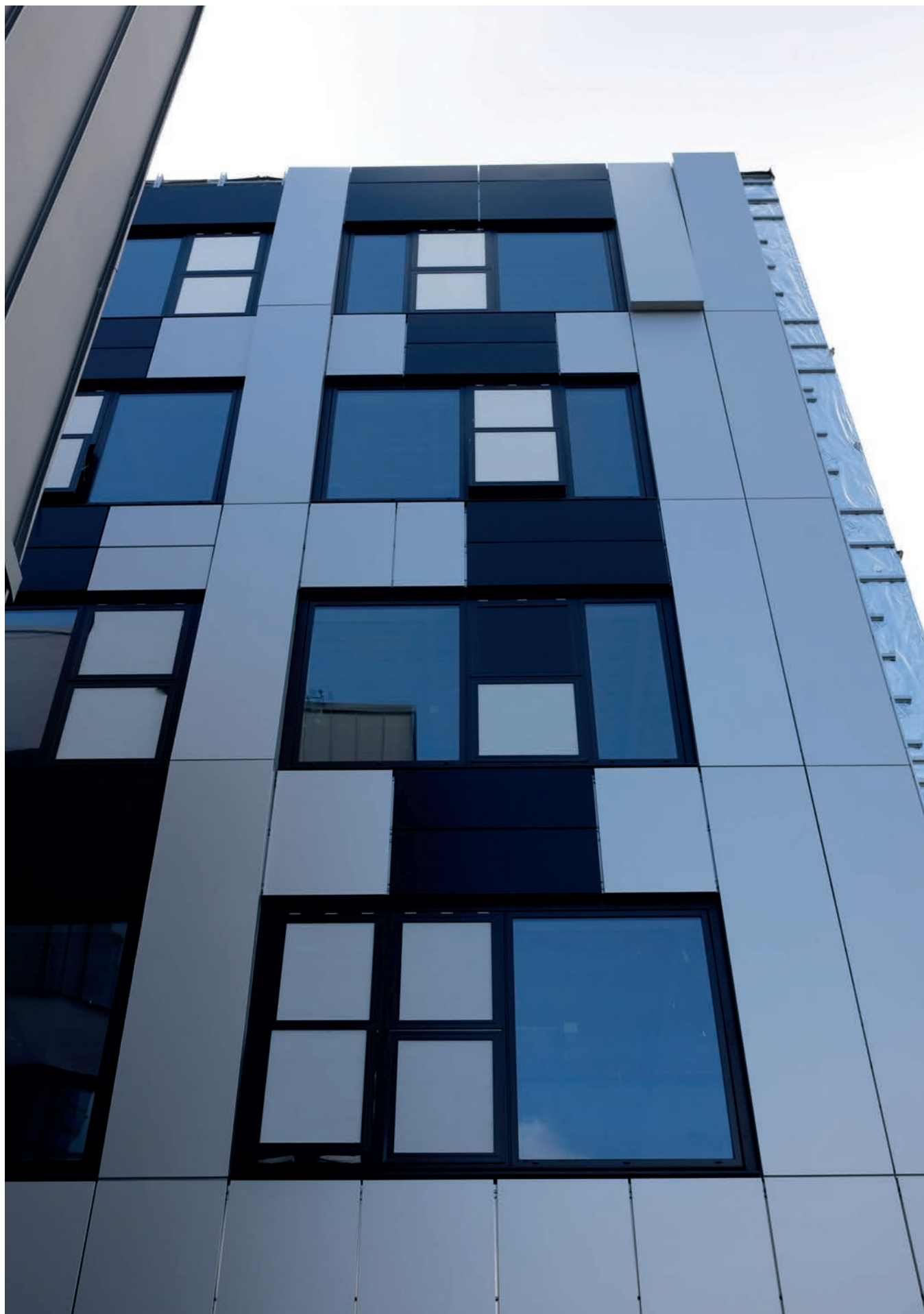
PLACE

We will seek to secure external funds to match our own investment in the best college facilities in the Black Country.

SUSTAINABILITY

We will support the creation of our College of the future that is underpinned by a net zero carbon plan and a financial strategy that will deliver the sustainability required for our strategic plan.

| | 2022/23 Actual | 2022/24 Budget | 2024/25 Target | 2025/26 Target | 2026/27 Target |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Education EBITDA as a percentage of turnover | 12% | 7% | 8% | 9% | 8% |
| Pay as a percentage of turnover | 64% | 67% | 66% | 66% | 67% |
| Current ratio | 1.47 | 1.08 | 1.10 | 1.25 | 1.38 |
| Cash days in hand | 58 | 34 | 32 | 39 | 44 |
| Borrowing as a percentage of turnover | 31% | 28% | 25% | 22% | 20% |
| Debt service cover | 1.22 | 1.29 | 1.85 | 2.31 | 2.57 |
| Financial health | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good |



9. RISK MANAGEMENT

In developing this strategic plan and realising our core aspirations, we recognise there are risks which may affect our ability to achieve the outcomes desired.

For each element of our core aspirations, we have identified the key risk in its realisation. These are detailed below (to be read in conjunction with section 4 – Our Core Aspirations):

| Aspiration | The following have the potential to limit our success |
|----------------|--|
| PEOPLE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to market a strong offer through our schools and promotional events will impact on learner recruitment and therefore financial performance. • A shortage of staff with the required technical skills to deliver new programmes will reduce our ability to deliver these programmes and meet employer needs. • Failure to engage with our community partners, funding bodies and sector partners means we won't be responding to their priorities and could miss out on funding opportunities. |
| INNOVATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum reform is complex and moving quickly. If we don't keep up with policy changes our curriculum offer will not be relevant for our learners or employers, which will ultimately impact on recruitment. • If we don't support our staff in keeping pace with technological change or we are unable to make the required investment the College will be left behind and unable to deliver the required programmes of the future. • We will create a barrier to engaging with our learners and employers if our professional services are not using and developing the systems that will best serve our customer needs. |
| PLACE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to proactively engage with employers in our specialist and target growth areas means we will not meet the requirements of the Local Skills Improvement Plan and may not be able to deliver key programmes, such as T levels. • An inability to invest in the College estate will prevent us from having the technical facilities demanded by our employers and could jeopardise our access to capital funding. • If we fail to engage with our education partners we risk creating a fragmented skills system where our learners are disadvantaged or don't progress. |
| SUSTAINABILITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we don't embed a culture of environmental sustainability we will limit our learners' ability to play their part in responding to the climate emergency. • Financial security underpins the success of our aspirations and we need to ensure we have the resources to make the right investment decisions. • Horizon scanning, engagement with policy makers and staying abreast of educational developments will be critical for the successful future of the College. Failure to do so will result in reduced performance and reputation. |

Each of these risks will be reflected in the College's annual risk register, along with the mitigations and actions the College will put in place to reduce the risk and therefore realise our strategic plan. The risk register is monitored termly through the senior team and the Corporation and is fully updated annually to ensure we remain responsive to developing risks.



10. OUR IMPACT

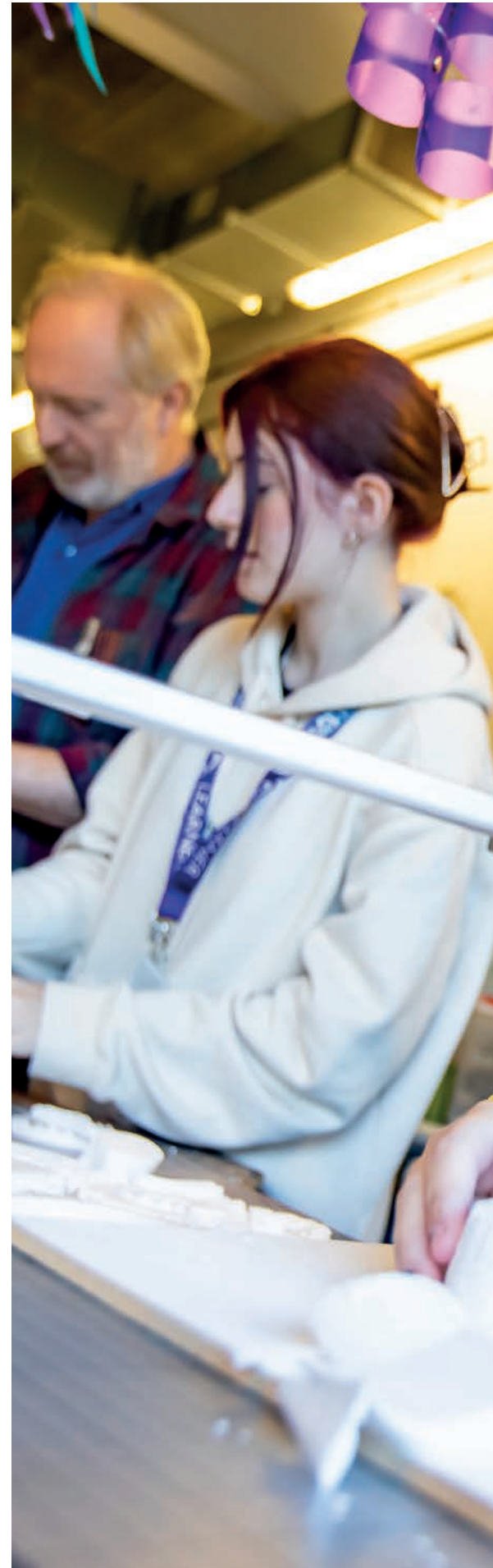
For each year of this strategic plan the College will publish an annual strategic impact assessment.

The annual strategic impact assessment is a high-level analytical document which reviews the College's progress in delivering our mission and vision. It explicitly assesses the impact the College has made on its learners and the wider economy.

Published in January each year, the report provides a detailed analysis of the impact we have had on each of the key client groups we serve during the previous academic year. Highlighting data on key impacts, including:

- Participation rates
- Impact on diversity and inclusion
- Outcomes for learners
- Stakeholder satisfaction
- Learner destinations
- Impact on regional skills and economy

This report is made publicly available to all stakeholders via our website. Alongside this we will continue to update our performance dashboard on our website which provides in-year updates on our performance in many of the impact measures listed above.





To find out more

The College operates a policy of openness and transparency in all its activities. Further information about the College is freely available from the following sources:

- Information on governance can be found on our website at dudleycol.ac.uk/our-college/governance
- Information on a wide variety of live performance indicators and our Annual Strategic Impact Assessment Report can be found on the Dudley dashboard. dudleycol.ac.uk/our-college/about-us/dashboard
- The College's published annual report and consolidated financial statements can be found at dudleycol.ac.uk/our-college/about-us
- To contact a member of our senior management team, their contact details can be found at dudleycol.ac.uk/our-college/about-us/exec-leadership-team



Produced by Dudley College of Technology

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