

Accountability Statement & Local Needs Duty

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Our Mission: Transforming Lives

The mission of the College is a simple one:
Excellence in Further and Higher Education to Transform Students' Lives.

Our outstanding students are guided by the College's HARTS behaviours:

HARTS

Hard-working
Ambitious
Resilient
Thankful & Respectful
Self-aware & Regulating

Purpose

Hartlepool College of Further Education (referred to from hereon as 'the College') is committed to excellence in further and higher education to transform students' lives. Central to this mission is the College's unwavering expectation that every student should aspire to achieve their fullest potential. To fulfil this mission, the College provides an inclusive and safe environment for all learners, ensuring that education is both accessible and aspirational.

Aligned with the Government's Plan for Change, which outlines key missions and milestones to drive economic growth, social mobility, and industrial development, the College offers a broad, professionally and technically focused curriculum. This curriculum meets the needs of diverse learners - from those requiring additional support due to prior educational challenges to those progressing into higher education and advanced qualifications. This strategic approach is underpinned by national frameworks such as the Industrial Strategy and insights from Skills England, ensuring the College's offer directly contributes to long-term national priorities.

The College prioritises a safe and supportive learning environment in multiple ways. It is a space where students can engage in discussions around social disadvantage without stigma, receive appropriate support, and develop the resilience to overcome challenges while maintaining high expectations. Safety also extends to physical and mental health, ensuring that all students understand their health, safety, and workplace rights and responsibilities. The College's student governors belong to the student body, and are active in gauging feedback and presenting it to the College's board.

Building on this foundation, a key driver of the College's strategy is to ensure that every student gains the knowledge, skills, qualifications, behaviours, attitudes, and confidence to thrive in their chosen career. Many students progress into employment - some via apprenticeships, others through higher education pathways - before entering the workforce. Regardless of the route taken, the College is dedicated to preparing students to meet the demands of the modern workplace and contribute as proactive citizens.

An essential component of this vision is aligning the College's curriculum with local, regional, and national labour market intelligence. Following the dissolution of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP), the two former LEP areas have now merged to form the North East Combined Authority (NECA). Additionally, the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) has commenced the early stages of a Growth Plan, shaping the region's future economic development. The College's curriculum remains responsive to these evolving structures and is strategically built around local, regional, and national priorities, including:

- ▶ **The Tees Valley and North East Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)**
- ▶ **The Northern Powerhouse initiative**
- ▶ **Key growth sectors such as health and life sciences, energy, advanced manufacturing, and digital**
- ▶ **Enabling sectors including construction and professional services**

Purpose

Hartlepool College of Further Education aims to:

- Strategic Aim 1**
Deliver teaching, learning and assessment practice which results in outstanding outcomes for all learners
- Strategic Aim 2**
Offer a curriculum that is aspirational and meets the needs of learners, parents/carers, employers, and stakeholders
- Strategic Aim 3**
Develop a culture as a form of competitive advantage
- Strategic Aim 4**
Deploy an effective and efficient resource to support and promote outstanding provision
- Strategic Aim 5**
Develop and sustain transformational stakeholder partnerships

Since its publication, national skills policy has evolved significantly, and this annual accountability statement reflects these changes. Notably, the College has adapted to the introduction of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) for the Tees Valley and North East regions, which were published in July 2023. The North East England Chamber of Commerce led the LSIP Trailblazer and subsequent LSIP in the Tees Valley, while the North East Automotive Alliance secured the LSIP for the broader North East region.

The College, in collaboration with other Tees Valley colleges, has been actively engaged in key Strategic Development Fund (SDF) pilot projects, focused on construction and digital skills. Furthermore, through the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF), the College leads on Health & Social Care skills development across the Tees Valley, ensuring its provision directly meets the LSIP priorities.

In line with national policy shifts, the College is implementing a major capital investment programme, leveraging funding streams such as the Town Deal fund, T Level Capital Funding, and the FE Capital Transformation Fund. This investment is enhancing College infrastructure, ensuring it is equipped to deliver a specialised curriculum aligned with regional and local economic priorities. A key outcome of this investment is the establishment of the Centre of Excellence for Fabrication & Welding, featuring 39 welding bays and a sub-arc welding machine - critical resources addressing the significant demand for these skills in the Tees Valley and beyond.

By embedding national and regional strategies into its curriculum and operational framework, Hartlepool College of Further Education remains committed to transforming lives through education, supporting regional growth and creating a pipeline to the future workforce.

Context and Place - The communities we serve

Hartlepool College of Further Education is situated within Hartlepool's unitary authority, which forms part of the Tees Valley economic sub-region and borders County Durham within the North East economic sub-region. The College considers itself a key contributor to the prosperity and development of both areas.

Within Hartlepool, the College is one of four institutions providing post-16 education, alongside two school-based sixth forms and an institution that has transitioned into a larger further education group. Additionally, numerous training providers operate in the region, delivering vital skills and qualifications to local businesses and residents.

Hartlepool faces significant socio-economic challenges, and the College plays a central role in addressing these by enhancing skills development and educational attainment. According to the English Indices of Deprivation 2019, Hartlepool ranks as the tenth most deprived local authority in England. A North East child poverty report, based on 2022/23 data, highlights that 32.9% of children in Hartlepool - equating to 6,861 young people - were living in poverty in 2022/23.¹

The College has witnessed a steady increase in enrolments from these disadvantaged areas, with learners from the most deprived parts of the country rising from 51.3% in 2023/24 to 58.2% in 2024/25—a 6.9% increase. In total, the College recorded approximately 4,700 classroom enrolments for on-site courses, including 1228 students aged 16 to 19, with around 1140 hailing from the Tees Valley. This represents a 3.7% growth in enrolments compared to the 2023/24 academic year. Currently, the College does not offer traineeships.

Adult education remains a key focus, accounting for approximately 2480 enrolments — a drop of around 220 over the last year. This is due to the increase of adult funding rates from the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) for one year only and the total funding value was capped. Many adult learners pursue employment-focused qualifications that align with the strategic priorities of the TVCA, with the majority of learners residing within the Tees Valley area.

¹ <https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty-2024/>



Context and Place - The communities we serve

Apprenticeships constitute a significant component of the College's provision, with over 1150 learners engaged on these programmes. The College's apprenticeship offer is instrumental in its emphasis on career-focused education, extending beyond the Tees Valley to serve learners and employers in County Durham (12%) and Tyne and Wear (18%).

The College provides education across 13 of the 15 recognised sector subject areas, with engineering and manufacturing, construction, and health among the most subscribed disciplines. The Tees Valley economy boasts strengths in key sectors, including petrochemicals and advanced manufacturing engineering. As of September 2023, Office for National Statistics (ONS) data indicates that 76.9% of Tees Valley residents are economically active, surpassing the North East average of 74.7%.

However, the regional economy is still heavily reliant on sectors such as wholesale, retail, accommodation services, and social care. By offering advanced qualifications in engineering, construction, and health, the College ensures that its graduates are well-positioned to drive economic diversification and seize new employment opportunities. Through its strategic curriculum offering, the College not only meets but anticipates the future needs of the local economy, preparing a skilled workforce to drive growth and innovation across Hartlepool and beyond.

The prevalence of insecure work remains a challenge for both Hartlepool and the wider Tees Valley region. Many residents face employment uncertainty due to zero-hour contracts, unpredictable wages, and limited access to workplace rights and protections.

Hartlepool has a population of approximately 93,000, with an employment rate of 68.2% and an unemployment rate of 6.2%.² However, economic inactivity stands at 27.3% for those aged 16-64. Furthermore, 22.4% of Hartlepool's workforce is engaged in severely insecure work, with an additional 37.5% in low-to-moderate insecurity—making Hartlepool the lowest-performing local authority within the Tees Valley.

Employment quality also varies significantly across the Tees Valley. According to Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) data from September 2022, 42.4% of Tees Valley workers hold roles classified within the highest employment bands (SOC 1-3), compared to 52.6% nationally. Conversely, 20.6% of the region's workforce occupies lower-level employment positions (SOC 8-9), in contrast to the national average of 14.9%. Notably, 18.1% (48,000) of Tees Valley workers are employed in human health and social work, while 14% (37,000) work in wholesale and retail.

Between October 2023 and September 2024, the Tees Valley recorded an economic inactivity rate of 25.7% (105,300 residents), exceeding the national average by 4.1%.² The Learning & Work Institute's Adult Participation in Learning survey found that 70% of those who had not engaged in learning within the past three years cited at least one barrier preventing participation. Additionally, 29% of respondents indicated that no external factors hindered their ability to engage in education or training.³

² <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/comb/1853882374/report.aspx>

³ https://learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/550D-KD-00_Adult_Participation_in_Learning_Survey_report.pdf

Context and Place - The communities we serve

Government data further underscores workforce challenges, with the latest Employer Skills Survey (2022) revealing an increase in job vacancies (23%, up from 20% in 2017) and growing difficulties in sourcing candidates with the required skills, qualifications, and experience⁴. Within the economically inactive population of the Tees Valley, 76.2% (74,600 individuals) have stated they are not seeking employment.

Findings from the Skills England report highlight several key challenges and opportunities in the regional workforce. Skills shortages persist in STEM fields, healthcare, digital industries, and skilled trades, aligning with the College's core curriculum focus. The report also emphasises the increasing necessity for technical education, apprenticeships, and lifelong learning to address workforce gaps and reduce economic inactivity. Additionally, it stresses the importance of collaboration between education providers and employers to ensure graduates are equipped with the competencies needed to thrive in an evolving labour market. By aligning with these findings, the College continues to play a critical role in developing a resilient, future-ready workforce that meets both regional and national skills priorities.

⁴ [Employer skills survey 2022 research report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)



Approach to developing the annual accountability statement

The College's annual governance report is overseen by the governing body and integrates a wide range of operational and strategic planning activities. These activities and associated documents include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ **The governors' annual strategic planning session, where they assess the College's impact in meeting local, regional, and national skills needs while continuously reviewing its strategic objectives**
- ▶ **The annual self-assessment cycle, which provides governors with a detailed evaluation of the College's performance across various areas**
- ▶ **The Curriculum & Standards Committee's ongoing monitoring of the College's progress towards its strategic aims, particularly within the Curriculum & Skills and Stakeholder Strategy, as they relate to the governance report**
- ▶ **Enabling sectors including construction and professional services**

At a local level, senior College representatives have contributed to discussions surrounding the Local Authority's Inclusive Growth Strategy (2022 – 2025). This collaboration, built on a strong partnership, has facilitated public consultation on adult learning curricula, promoting the exchange of best practices and the pooling of resources to create a more comprehensive and inclusive adult education offer.

Furthermore, the College's Principal plays an active role on the Hartlepool Education Board, addressing a broad range of education and skills-related challenges.

Regionally, the College is a long-standing member of FE+, a collaborative network that has existed for approximately thirty years, comprising all five of the Tees Valley's general further education and specialist colleges. This partnership meets at least once a month, with leadership roles rotating among members, including representation on the Mayoral Combined Authority skills committees. Through FE+ and other strategic partnerships, the College has built strong relationships with key employer representative groups, such as the North East England Chamber of Commerce and the North East Automotive Alliance, which play a vital role in the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) for the Tees Valley and North East.

The College has actively engaged in consultations with these bodies to align its curriculum with LSIP recommendations, particularly within its Construction & Civil Engineering Academy and the Health & Care Academy, working closely with industry partners like Seymour Civil Engineering and North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust. Within the Tees Valley, the College's participation in the LSIP aligns with its strong partnership with the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), leading to a significant increase in adult learners receiving training in skills-based qualifications. These efforts are particularly focused on facilitating employment transitions into key sectors, including manufacturing, engineering, construction, and health.

Approach to developing the annual accountability statement

The College is also an integral member of the Teesside University College Partnership (TUCP), a collaboration that seeks to address the economic needs of the Tees Valley and beyond by providing a seamless pathway from further education to higher education. This partnership fosters strategic thinking and innovation through engagement with businesses, ensuring education and training remain responsive to economic demands. By leveraging shared resources, the TUCP enables the provision of foundation degrees, apprenticeships, and master's qualifications across the Tees Valley, catering to learners of all ages and backgrounds.

At a national level, the College remains highly responsive to evolving government policies and strategic directives, as outlined in its Strategic Plan and supporting strategies. These documents align with the Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth initiative and the Skills and Post-16 Education Act. In response, the College has implemented several key actions:

- ▶ **Continuously expanding employer engagement via established Industry Advisory Boards in each academic school to inform curriculum development**
- ▶ **Enhancing access to technical education through the introduction of T Levels and Higher Technical Qualifications**
- ▶ **Investing in capital development to enhance facilities dedicated to construction, manufacturing, engineering, and health, with a particular focus on integrating green and digital skills to support the workforce of the future**

Through these coordinated efforts, the College ensures that its governance, strategic direction, and curriculum remain aligned with local, regional, and national priorities, equipping learners with the knowledge, skills, and qualifications necessary to thrive in an evolving labour market.



Our contribution to National, Regional and Local priorities

These aims relate to a combination of strategic objectives selected from the College's strategic plan and its six subsidiary strategies that best reflect the College's contribution to national, regional and local priorities.

College Strategic Aims and Objectives	Contribution to national, regional and local priorities	Reference to: Strategic Plan [SP] Tees Valley LSIP [TV LSIP] National Priorities [NP]
<p>Strategic aim 1: To deliver teaching, learning and assessment practice which results in outstanding outcomes for all learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement rates for young people, adults and apprentices are of a very high level Learners have positive progression into further learning, higher learning or employment Develop digital skills across all curriculum areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to drive improvements in teaching, learning and assessment to ensure more students achieve their chosen qualifications Continue to focus on the development of essential skills in English, maths and digital for all learners. Increasing by 5% the number of students achieving these qualifications in 2024/25 Improve positive progression for all to 90% by August 2025 for all College students. Increase progression to employment for adults in the Tees Valley to 72% in 2024/25 	<p>SP</p> <p>SP</p> <p>SP/TV LSIP/NP</p>
<p>Strategic aim 2: To offer a curriculum that is aspirational and meets the needs of learners, parents/carers, employers and stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a comprehensive T level curriculum offer Develop a clean energy curriculum Develop and then enhance the Higher Education in Hartlepool offer Implement digital advancements in all curriculum areas and standalone qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing 5 new T Level routes in 2024/25 in Construction, Engineering, Health, Early Years, and Management and Administration Through unit selection, add 'green' knowledge and skills to our existing curriculum. For example, in Aviation, Travel and Tourism teachers will deliver units on sustainable travel whilst in Construction and the Built Environment teachers will select and deliver a curriculum on 'green technologies' for sustainable construction methods Develop a clean energy curriculum in the pursuit of Net Zero, working with employer partners to create new provision with a particular focus on Hydrogen Through the curriculum and skills strategy, support the actions set out in the College's IT & Digital strategy Audit all existing qualifications, adding sector specific digital units wherever available With key partners, develop an essential digital skills suite of qualifications to support our local community Enhance the higher technical offer at the College – increasing the number of local people that study at higher education level in Hartlepool 	<p>SP/TV LSIP/NP</p>
<p>Strategic aim 3: to develop a culture as a form of competitive advantage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To attract and recruit the workforce of the future To engage, develop and retain high performing staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a comprehensive programme of staff development with a specific focus on increasing sector-related knowledge and skill through industry insight experiences Deliver a series of generic and curriculum-specific recruitment events Invest in digital technologies and associated staff training across all curriculum areas 	

Our contribution to National, Regional and Local priorities

College Strategic Aims and Objectives	Contribution to national, regional and local priorities	Reference to: Strategic Plan [SP] Tees Valley LSIP [TV LSIP] National Priorities [NP]
<p>Strategic aim 4: To deploy an effective and efficient resource to support and promote exemplary provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the Care Academy with North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust Open a state-of-the-art facility that will further enhance the College's curriculum offer in engineering and manufacturing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the Care Academy with North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust to meet the Government's agenda for new and replacement public sector roles whilst servicing the Tees Valley's largest employment sector Open a state-of-the-art facility that will further enhance the College's curriculum offer in engineering and manufacturing. Supply highly skilled individuals to the clean energy sector and businesses expected in the Tees Valley as part of the Freeport developments Utilisation of the T Level transformation fund to create a nursery, sensory room, condition monitoring workshop, and digital marketing suite 	<p>SP/TV LSIP/NP</p> <p>SP/TV LSIP/NP</p>
<p>Strategic aim 5: To develop and sustain transformational stakeholder partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Industry Advisory Boards to cover all curriculum areas Work in partnership with Hartlepool Borough Council to develop an aspirational and inclusive adult offer Work collaboratively with partners on future investment that supports all strategic aims/objectives (E.G. LSIF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play an active role in the development of the LSIP delivering LSIF curriculum and skills that are aligned to the strategic objectives of the College Work in partnership with Hartlepool Borough Council to develop an aspirational and inclusive offer that improves the lives and life chances of the adult population of Hartlepool Develop further the Higher Education in Hartlepool offer to address the disparity between attainment levels against national averages working with the Teesside University College Partnership Continue to develop an employer-led curriculum offer in the school of Employer Services that improves attainment whilst at the same time tackling unemployment Continue to increase the number of Industry Advisory Boards across all curriculum areas 	<p>SP/TV LSIP/NP</p> <p>SP/TV LSIP/NP</p> <p>SP/TV LSIP/NP</p> <p>SP/TV LSIP/NP</p>

"The College has brought me on as a person. I came in just expecting to do work experience. I impressed during that time, and was offered an apprenticeship.

Now I am a Workshop Manager."

Ryan Robinson, Autofab



Local Needs Duty

Hartlepool College of Further Education is dedicated to exceeding the educational and training needs of the local community by offering a wide range of qualifications that extend beyond the immediate employment landscape of Hartlepool. Our provision spans Level 3 qualifications up to master's degrees in specialised engineering disciplines, as well as Level 3 and higher qualifications in construction, the built environment, and health. This comprehensive educational offering is particularly crucial given Hartlepool's economic profile, which is characterised by relatively low employment levels, with many opportunities concentrated in wholesale, retail, and social care sectors.

By delivering a diverse and high-level curriculum, the College not only meets but surpasses local education and training demands. This approach ensures that students are well-prepared for both existing job opportunities in Hartlepool and emerging fields that have the potential to drive economic growth and diversification in the region. Our commitment to advanced education in engineering, construction, and health reflects our belief in the transformative power of skills development, both for individuals and the broader community.

The FE Provider Dashboard which is created by the Department for Education shows that the College is performing 33.4% above the national average for national skills priorities from the 2023/24 data. This places the College third in the entire country from a total of 154 Further Education Colleges. The figure from the national skills priorities shows a percentage of learning aims achieved at the College which is relevant to one or more of the seven priorities.

Beyond our extensive course offerings, the College is committed to maintaining excellence and innovation within our teaching faculty and leadership. Our staff engage in continuous professional development, ensuring their expertise remains aligned with industry advancements and best educational practices.

“From the moment we first met with the management team at the College, and visited their excellent facilities, we knew that this was the place to develop our apprenticeship programme.”

**Matthew Hart,
SeAH Wind**

Local Needs Duty

College leaders actively participate in horizon scanning and contribute to various boards within employer representative bodies, enabling them to anticipate and respond to evolving local, regional, and national skills needs. Furthermore, our Board of Governors is comprised of professionals from key industry sectors, providing valuable labour market insights that inform strategic decision-making. This holistic approach ensures that our curriculum remains relevant, future-focused, and aligned with workforce demands.

- ▶ **Successfully delivering two Skills Development Funds (SDF) in priority sectors**
- ▶ **Supporting the development and implementation of the Tees Valley Local Skills**
- ▶ **Engaging with inward investors and advising on skills policy at both local and national levels**

In Spring 2024, all five FE+ colleges undertook a comprehensive curriculum mapping exercise against local labour market needs. This included a full local curriculum review, supported by an independently facilitated workshop involving governing board members from each institution. The data and analysis from this review highlighted that the collective curriculum offer, and learner outcomes strongly support the Tees Valley economy, particularly in the engineering/manufacturing, construction, and healthcare sectors.

Areas for Development Identified in the Review:

FE+ has committed to working collaboratively on the following priority areas to better support local employers:

- ▶ **Further develop employability skills in young people, strengthening their confidence and resilience**
- ▶ **Enhance digital skills across all student cohorts**
- ▶ **Address the potential impact of qualification reform on Level 3 student numbers**
- ▶ **Expand training provision in logistics, digital, and professional skills**

Risks and Opportunities for Local Delivery

During discussions, College Principals and Chairs also identified key risks and opportunities that could influence the success of local skills provision:

- ▶ **Recruitment and retention of teaching staff, particularly in shortage areas such as construction, engineering, and digital due to pay constraints**
- ▶ **The need for broader employer incentives to invest in workforce development, particularly in apprenticeships for young people**
- ▶ **Devolution flexibilities, which could be leveraged to simplify retraining opportunities for adults at all levels**
- ▶ **The successful implementation of T Levels, ensuring a smooth transition while managing the timing of alternative Level 3 qualification defunding**

Through its strategic partnerships, employer engagement, and forward-thinking approach, the College remains committed to shaping a skilled workforce that meets the evolving needs of the Tees Valley economy and beyond.

“Hartlepool College of Further Education is renowned throughout the region for being one of the leading establishments for students looking to gain construction qualifications.”

Applebridge Group

Corporation Statement



Darren Hankey
Principal/Chief Executive and Accounting Officer



Stuart Irvine
Chair of Governors

On behalf of the Hartlepool College of Further Education Corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the college accountability statement as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the corporation at their meeting on May 9th 2024.

The plan is published on the College’s website and can be accessed from the following link
<http://bit.ly/hcfedocAccState2425>

Supporting Documentation:

[College Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025](#)
[Curriculum & Skills Strategy 2022 – 2025](#)
[Tees Valley LSIP](#)
[The College’s most recent Ofsted report](#)
[The College’s Financial Statement](#)
[FE+ Curriculum Review 2024](#)



Hartlepool College
of Further Education

