



Our Corporate Strategy

2021-2024



Supporting people into higher levels of study and jobs

Bringing talent to life...



Foreword

Supporting People into Higher Levels of Study and Jobs

Established in 1952, Walsall College supports our customers with the highest quality education, skills development and training programmes, focused on the needs of a modern economy. One of the largest in the West Midlands, the College is the only General Further Education College in the Borough of Walsall, with 4,000 14-19 year-old students, 5,000 adults and an additional 2,000 apprentices and over 200 higher education (HE) students. Students are recruited from Walsall, the wider Black Country, Staffordshire and Birmingham, although some partnership work does serve other parts of the UK.

Links with partners locally, regionally and nationally are strong and interactions with businesses have become a prominent focus for the College, working with over 1,000 employers to ensure our curriculum is effectively aligned to industry and economic needs. We are passionate about providing high quality education and skills that enable individuals to progress and prosper in their chosen career pathways. This is made possible by effective working with employer partners such as the NHS, Balfour Beatty, Bell Group, Taylor Wimpey, Cisco, The Co-op Pharmacy and Barhale, who are supporting our students and making a direct difference to their experience.

Our wider partners, whether the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) or commercial partners such as the McArthur Glen Group enable us to support our communities and the regional skills agenda effectively. Our acquisition of Walsall Adult Community College has been a positive opportunity, one that gives Walsall and the surrounding areas a complete education solution from non-qualification community activity right through to level 6 degree and post-graduate opportunities. Cohesion and the growth of adult provision mean that our adult offer is stronger than ever before and widening participation, intergenerational learning and community cohesion work are more effective. We now offer education through 30 venues across Walsall and beyond. More recently our acquisition of the National Construction College Midlands, based in Birmingham affords the college new opportunities for which we are ideally suited; delivering further skills training for the wider construction industry. It will utilise our expertise in key areas, while enabling us to increase the level and breadth of our provision.

Driven by a desire to continue to build on our success we are delighted to present our Corporate Strategy 2021-2024, which looks forward to the continuing prosperity of

Walsall College and all those that we serve. The Governing Body recognises the transformational challenges within the Further Education Sector and the demands of a changing economy, the challenges posed by Brexit, the climate crisis and COVID-19 mean that there has never been a time when the role of Further Education (FE) Colleges has been so critical in supporting the national skills-recovery. We welcome the opportunities articulated in the Skills for Jobs, FE White Paper DfE (2021) to be instrumental in the strategic development of a 3 year Local Skills Improvement Plan. We aim to shape our provision to respond to new Government priorities and the skills needs by co-designing and co-delivering our curricula with our local, regional and national business partners.

In Our Corporate Strategy 2021-2024 we are committed to 7 Strategic Pledges, which outline our intent to ensure Walsall College is at the forefront of providing innovative, high quality education and skills for a modern Britain; we aim to help people develop the skills they need to do the high-skilled jobs of the future.

Our vision for the Walsall College of the future is of a college that truly meets the needs of all our students whilst delivering the skills needed for digitalised and greener economy drivers locally, regionally and nationally.



Jatinder Sharma OBE
Principal and Chief Executive




Allan Pinnegar
Chair of Corporation

Our Mission



Walsall College is uniquely and proudly vocational, delivering technical, professional and community education. Our greatest passion is unleashing the potential of individuals, communities and businesses; our greatest legacy is the talent of our students: skilled, professional and enterprising.





Our Vision

To provide students with an excellent learning experience, education and skills development to support them into higher levels of study and jobs.

Our Shared Values

Passion

The student is at the heart of everything we do. We create and deliver opportunities for prosperity to students, employers and our communities.

Integrity

We value professionalism, dedication, quality and excellence in our staff. We practice and promote respect, wellbeing and empowerment for the individual.

Innovation

We are committed to the needs of the modern economy and champion innovation, creativity and enterprise.

Equity

We are committed to an environment where we purposefully focus on fairness in our policies and management of the issues of diversity, equality and inclusion, in our college society and community.

Collaboration

We develop strategic partnerships with employers and wider stakeholders to ensure we lead and shape the education and skills landscape. We work positively with and value our partners.

Sustainability

We promote personal development and build confidence and ambition in our staff and students. We manage our resources responsibly for the benefit of our college community.

92%

of our students have
positive destinations
into higher levels of
study or employment.



About Us



11,000

Students

4,000 14-19 year-old students, 5,000 adults, 2,000 apprentices and over 200 higher education (HE) students

91%



ACHIEVEMENT RATE

on vocational programmes.

92%

OF STUDENTS



positively progress onto further or higher levels of study or into employment; this is despite the social, economic and environmental challenges within Walsall.



Working with over

1000



Employers

Links with partners locally, regionally and nationally are strong and interactions with businesses have become a prominent focus for the College



The College has continued to successfully grow its 16-19 provision and on the 1st April 2018 acquired the Walsall Adult Community College, expanding adult widening participation across

12

SECTOR SUBJECT AREAS

The College offers courses in twelve sector subject areas on a full-time, part-time day and evening basis, in the classroom and in the workplace.

30

COMMUNITY VENUES

89%



of the curriculum offer aligned with local skills priorities.

6

STATE-OF- THE-ART CAMPUSES

with the main Wisemore Campus and the Walsall Business and Sports Hub situated centrally within Walsall.

The Context

Walsall
Population



285,000

of which 173,300 are aged 16-64.



Walsall has a lower proportion of people aged 16-64 classified as students at

25.2%

compared to the WM (28.2%) and GB (26.3%).

74.2% OF PEOPLE IN EMPLOYMENT



compared to 76.2% nationally

Walsall is an area of high economic and social deprivation with low skills and a low-income economy. Full time workers earn an average of

£518.50

PER WEEK

compared to £550.80 (WM) and £587 (GB)



The College aims to provide opportunity for more adults from underrepresented communities to access higher level study and progress into highly skilled and well paid roles.



TOP JOBS BY INDUSTRY

wholesale, retail, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (18.3%), manufacturing (13.8%), human health and social work activities (11.9) and administration and support services (11.9).



The amount of people holding a

LEVEL 4 AND ABOVE

qualification in Walsall has improved in recent years from 24.3% in 2015 to

27.6%

but this is still 12.7% lower than the 40.3% for GB

Walsall Local Authority has an average rank of

31 OUT OF 317

local authorities nationally on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2019)

Our Teaching and Learning Philosophy

Walsall College believes in preparing students for the world of work with skills and attributes that go beyond the mastery of their chosen discipline. The Walsall College Graduate will be skilled, professional and enterprising.

Upon completing their courses, and in addition to their main qualification, students will have demonstrable qualities that enhance their value to employers.

The Walsall College Graduate programme equips students with the attributes required to make a positive impact in the workplace with wider interpersonal skills, professional confidence, positive attitudes to work, motivation, and health and wellbeing. Walsall College prepares students to be active, thoughtful and caring citizens by sustaining a culture that promotes positive attitudes to learning, work and those around them.





Our 7 Strategic Pledges

We are committed to 7 Strategic Pledges, which outlines our intent to ensure Walsall College is at the forefront of providing innovative, high quality education and skills for a modern Britain.

1

Work with an employer and business connection in every curriculum area to endorse and enhance provision and provide a line of sight to work.

2

Build a culture that celebrates and prioritises excellence and innovation in T,L&A.

3

Develop the maths, English and digital skills of all our students in order to prepare them for the world of work by embedding skills seamlessly into every programme.

4

Become a truly innovative digital college.

Our vision for the Walsall College of the future is of a college that truly meets the needs of all our students whilst delivering the skills needed for digitalised and greener economy drivers nationally, regionally and locally.

5

Proactively engage to upskill the regional workforce by helping people learn throughout their lives.

6

Create a high quality and seamless experience for all stakeholders, which is sustainable and accelerates the way to a greener future.

7

Promote rapid progression between levels and settings with an aim to increase numbers at Levels 3, 4 and 5.

Pledge 1



Work with an employer and business connection in every curriculum area to endorse and enhance the provision and provide a line of sight to work.

Students who choose to study at Walsall College receive a holistic education that supports their personal development, confidence, health and wellbeing, and prepares them for their next steps into work or higher levels of study. We engage and work proactively with employers and wider business sector bodies to ensure our curriculum is fit for the future; we develop strategic partnerships to support the local and regional skills agenda and productivity growth. Whether through industry placement, work-experience or project-based-learning, we aim to continue to strengthen our employer partnership network to best support our students' career potential and progression.

- We will provide clear and trusted information, advice and guidance for careers and education choices.
- We will work with our business partners to co-design and shape our provision by strategically developing a 3 year Local Skills Improvement Plan.
- All young people will experience employer master classes.
- All students will have the opportunity to contribute positively to their communities.
- We will support employers to drive business change, innovation and workforce planning.

Pledge 2



Build a culture that celebrates and prioritises excellence and innovation in T.L&A.

We understand that to deliver Our Corporate Strategy successfully and offer an excellent experience for students, parents, employers and our communities requires a culture of excellence in teaching, learning and assessment. We aim to ensure that our students are confident, ambitious and innovative, effectively supported and well prepared for the future.

- We will create a network of Advanced Practitioners for all subject areas.
- Every member of our network of Advanced Practitioners will achieve Advanced Teacher Status (ATS).
- We will become a Nationally recognised teaching and learning centre of excellence.
- We will develop networks of teaching, learning and assessment best practice.
- We will be recognised for our excellence in providing innovative online synchronous and asynchronous teaching, learning and assessment.
- Our College becomes increasingly dynamic and effective as it develops and innovates in response to student feedback. The Student Voice not only helps our College develop, but supports students in becoming Walsall College Graduates.

Pledge 3



Develop the maths, English and digital skills of all our students in order to prepare them for the world of work by embedding skills seamlessly into every programme.

Success in modern Britain requires students to be highly skilled in the use of maths, English and digital working. Our pledge to every student is that Walsall College will continually develop these essential skills through the study of qualifications such as GCSE and Functional Skills but also, more importantly, through the continual development of these skills within every aspect of their studies. We are fully committed to ensuring our students are confident and competent in their use of maths, English and digital skills.

- Our teachers and assessors will give corrective and meaningful feedback to ensure all students develop these essential skills.
- All teachers and assessors will consistently and relentlessly embrace and embed the importance of maths accuracy and competency in all elements of delivery.
- We will support and develop our teachers and assessors through staff development and a training hub to ensure our staff are appropriately skilled to support our students in English, maths and digital skills.
- We will introduce a student digital passport for all provision types and all ages.

Pledge 4



Become a truly innovative digital college.

The challenges of revolution come once in a century, 18th Steam, 19th Electricity, 20th Electronics and IT and 21st century the Digital Revolution.

We believe digital skills are the golden thread across all industries. Industry is being transformed by the power of digital technology, from advanced manufacturing, automotive and finance through to education, health care and public services. Walsall College will be at the forefront of technological change in both computer science and digital skills in all other sectors. The College will deliver high-level skills to the regional workforce. We aim to be renowned for our expertise in the digital sector by giving students real career pathways into professions such as cyber security, robotics, computer sciences, artificial intelligence and working with big data.

- We will be a leading provider of skills and training for the digital sector.
- All students, whatever their subject, will have the opportunity to upskill their digital competencies.
- All staff will be appropriately digitally skilled, with the skills and knowledge to effectively support students.
- We will ensure effective use of digital technology to deliver highly efficient processes and services that support our staff and students in their day-to-day activity.
- We will ensure we meet the demands of a changing world by being agile, innovative and creative with the skills for a modern economy.

Pledge 5



Proactively engage to upskill the regional workforce by helping people learn throughout their lives.

Working proactively together with employers, our Local Authorities (LAs), Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and both public and private sectors our aim is to provide the skills necessary to increase regional and national economic prosperity and contribute to the success of our communities. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has massively accelerated changes within the economy, for example in the digital, retail or hospitality sectors and there is an increased need to reskill and upskill the regional workforce to support our rapidly changing economy.

- Adult reskilling or upskilling will require ability to access a range of flexible courses through different modes of delivery.
- We will offer opportunities for people who have been affected by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, particularly around re-employment, re-skilling and up-skilling.
- We will ensure we are connected and work closely with all stakeholders to align funding and provision types for adults, whereby projects are mapped together for the benefit of the individual.
- We aim to maximise our adult provision at all levels and in all types of provision, including HE.

Pledge 6



Create a high quality and seamless experience for all stakeholders, which is sustainable and accelerates the way to a greener future.

Our passion is to achieve excellence in high quality customer service, from website to graduation, ensuring all of our customers are highly satisfied with all aspects of their College experience. We aim to ensure our investments are sustainable for future years while accelerating our environmental commitment to a greener future.

Achieving financial stability for the future in the current COVID-19 situation presents a significant challenge. However, we are committed to effectively managing our resources to deliver on financial health and generate an operating surplus to reinvest in facilities for the benefit of students and the communities we serve.

- We will provide high quality services, from first contact through to graduation.
- We will achieve all funding contracts.
- Students will develop their wider personal skills through impartial careers advice, the delivery of the core curriculum and the provision of a comprehensive tutorial and enrichment offer.
- We will invest in our buildings and resources to minimise environmental impact and support the College's net zero carbon reduction goal.
- The College intends to firmly embed environmental sustainability issues within all aspects of the College Curriculum.

Pledge 7



Promote rapid progression between levels and settings with an aim to increase numbers at Levels 3, 4 and 5.

Our curriculum will be designed to promote a student-centred and flexible offer that ensures the best education and skills route for an individual, whatever their level and career aspirations. We believe a high quality vocational, technical and professional education should fit together coherently to allow individuals to transition and progress easily between levels and types of education, such as from classroom to apprenticeship, moving within the system.

- All students will be offered a coherent and flexible pathway that meets the needs of each individual.
- We will grow our Level 3, 4 and 5 provision to supply the regional skills gap.
- We will offer flexible curriculum pathways from entry level courses through to Higher Education (HE).
- We will provide an easy transition for students progressing from Level 2 to Level 3.
- We will provide an easy transition for students progressing to Levels 4 and 5.
- There will be a seamless transition between provision types, for example classroom to apprenticeship.

What we will achieve by 2024

Self-assess as an
'OUTSTANDING'
COLLEGE



**EMPLOYER
ACADEMY**

in every curriculum area

☆☆ Placement in the ☆☆
TOP QUARTILE
on all national comparators (MIDES) for
MATHS & ENGLISH

Increase GCSE Maths and English
high grade results by

5%



Achieve all our

FUNDING

Contracts



Win national recognition for

EXCELLENCE

in teaching, learning and assessment.

Increase the value of our
**APPRENTICESHIP
PROVISION TO**

£6.5M

Microsoft Certified
Educator



**DIGITAL
SKILLS**

achieved by all staff.

**INCREASED
STUDENT
NUMBERS**

at Levels 3, 4 and 5.



25%

more students
progressing from Levels 1, 2 and 3.



Achieve the College's

**NET
ZERO**

Carbon reduction goal.



How we will achieve our Vision

Following consultation with our stakeholders¹ we have developed our vision, mission, values, strategic pledges and success measures, articulating the future aspirations for the College. In line with best practice for corporate planning, this document demonstrates vertical and horizontal alignment from our vision through to operational deployment. To achieve our vision, everything we do will be underpinned by the excellent interconnectedness and mutual support

provided by the dedication and professionalism of our people, financial stability and the quality of provision and services. It will be measured using agreed success criteria (Figure 1). Finally, effective implementation of Our Corporate Strategy² is essential for the successful delivery of our aims and to provide world-class technical and professional skills that are fit for modern Britain.

Figure 1: The levels of activity, project and performance management.



¹This includes staff, students, parents, employers, local Government, WMCA and business representatives. ²This document provides the detail of Our Corporate Strategy. The success measures and operational plans for each college department are contained in a separate document due to the need to periodically update operational plans to reflect progress and include emerging detail of the supporting strategies.



Supporting College Strategies

- Additional Learning Support Strategy 2020
- Curriculum Strategy 2020-2023
- EdTech Strategy 2020-2023
- Environmental Strategy 2020
- Financial Strategy 2020
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020
- Higher Education Strategy 2020-2023
- Human Resource Strategy 2020
- Property Strategy 2020-2023
- Quality Improvement Strategy 2020-2023
- Safeguarding Policy 2020
- Teaching and Learning Strategy 2020-2023
- Workforce Development Strategy 2020

External Documents and Policy

- BEIS (2017) Industrial Strategy: building a Britain fit for the future, London: HM Government.
- Bhattacharyya, Professor Lord (2019) West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy, West Midlands: West Midlands Combined Authority.
- BCLEP (2017) Black Country Strategic Economic Plan, The Black Country: Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership.
- DfE (2019) Independent panel report to the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding, London: HM Government.
- DfE (2020) Keeping children safe in education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges, London: HM Government.
- MHCLG (2019) Indices of Deprivation Interactive Dashboard Available at:
<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjojOTdjYzlyNTMtMTcxNi00YmQ2LWl1YzgtMTUyYzIxOWQ3NzQ2liwidCI6ImJmMzQ2ODEwLTljN2QtNDNkZS1hODcyLTl0YTJlZjM5OTVhOCJ9>
 (Accessed 26/10/2020.)
- ONS (2020) labour market profile dataset for Walsall Local Authority. Available at:
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157191/report.aspx?#ls>
 (Accessed 26/10/2020.)
- Ofsted (2020) Further education and skills handbook, London: HM Government.
- DfE (2021) Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth, London: HM Government.

Appendix

College Profile

Established in 1952, Walsall College aims to support our customers with the highest quality education, skills development and training programmes, focused on the needs of a modern economy. One of the largest in the West Midlands, the College is the only General Further Education College in the Borough of Walsall, with 4,000 14-19 year-old students, 5,000 adults with additional 2,000 apprentices and over 200 higher education (HE) students. Students are recruited from Walsall, the wider Black Country, Staffordshire and Birmingham, although some partnership work does serve other parts of the country. Links with partners locally, regionally and nationally are strong and interactions with businesses have become a prominent focus for the College, working with over 1,000 employers. The College has continued to successfully grow its 16-19 provision and on 1 April 2018 acquired the Walsall Adult Community College, enabling the expansion of adult widening participation across 30 community venues.

The College offers courses in 12 sector subject areas on a full-time, part-time, day and evening basis, in the classroom and in the workplace. The College has six state-of-the-art campuses with the main Wisemore Campus and the Walsall Business and Sports Hub situated centrally within Walsall. The Job Shop (based within Wisemore Campus) supports students and the unemployed to find work, whilst offering support for businesses.

Responding to the West Midlands regional priorities means that Walsall College's provision has expanded to include health and life sciences,

technology and digital engineering; 89% of the curriculum offer is aligned with local skills priorities. The College sets high expectations for students, which is reflected in an overall high achievement rate of 91% on vocational programmes. Ninety-two per cent of students positively progress onto further or higher levels of study or into employment; this is despite social, economic and environmental challenges within Walsall.

Labour Market Profile - Walsall

Walsall has a population of 285,500 of whom 173,300 are aged 16-64. Nearly four fifths (79.1%) of the population are economically active, of whom 74.2% are in employment; this compares to 74.7% in the West Midlands (WM) as a whole and 76.2% in Great Britain (GB). Two per cent fewer people are in employment than nationally. Workless households comprise 17.4% of households in Walsall compared to 15.3% (WM) and 13.9% (GB).

Walsall is an area of high economic and social deprivation with low skills and a low-income economy, which is evident in the average salary statistics. Full-time workers resident in Walsall earn an average of £518.50 gross per week compared to £550.80 (WM) and £587 (GB). Female FT workers earn £100 less per week compared to male workers and there is a similar trend for part-time hourly paid workers. As at September 2020, 8.9% are claiming out-of-work benefits compared to 7.4% (WM) and 6.5% (GB). The percentage of 18 to 21 year-olds claiming out-of-work benefit is the

highest of all age groups at 15.6%, higher than 10.5% (WM) and 9.2% (GB) (ONS 2020).

The College has an important role to play in improving the skills level for residents within Walsall. The proportion of people holding a Level 4 and above qualification in Walsall has improved in recent years from 24.3% in 2015 to 27.6%, but this is still 12.7% lower than the 40.3% total for GB. Similarly, the percentage of people with no qualification has fallen from 16.7% in 2015 to 12.3%, but remains higher than in the West Midlands (10.2%) and Great Britain as a whole (7.7%). Walsall has a lower proportion of people aged 16-64 classified as students – 25.2% compared to the West Midlands (28.2%) and Great Britain (26.3%). The College aims to provide opportunities for more adults from underrepresented communities to access higher level study and progress into highly skilled and well paid roles.

There are 109,000 employee jobs in Walsall (2018) of which 68.8% are full-time and 31.2% are part-time. The top jobs by industry are wholesale, retail, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (18.3%), manufacturing (13.8%), human health and social work activities (11.9) and administration and support services (11.9). Walsall has a higher manufacturing base than either the West Midlands (11.9%) or Great Britain (8.1%).

When we consider the labour market profile of Walsall, it is clear that the College and its local partners have a significant role in providing higher level skills for the future economic growth and prosperity of Walsall.

Walsall Deprivation

Walsall Local Authority has an average rank of 31 out of 317 local authorities nationally on the Index of Multiple Deprivation MHCLG (2019), and is ranked 23rd for income deprivation, 29th for employment deprivation and 21st out of 317 for

education, skills and training deprivation. However, these figures are averages for the whole of Walsall; in fact there are neighbourhoods to the west of the Borough that are more highly deprived and other, non-deprived neighbourhoods to the East.

Of the 16-18-year-old students attending Walsall College, 59% are from bands 1 and 2 of the IMD, a figure that rises to 65% for adult students aged 19+ and rises again for those on lower-level courses. Adults from bands 1 and 2 studying entry level courses comprise 97% of the entry level cohort. The comparable figure for 16-18-year-old students studying entry level courses is 72%.

Black Country (Walsall, Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Dudley)

Despite the decline in manufacturing in the early 1980s, the Black Country is a key national manufacturing centre and has enjoyed investment by companies such as Warburtons, the leading UK baker, and ZF Lemforder, a leading automotive company, as well as Jaguar Land Rover in recent times. The Black Country has one of the highest densities of automotive businesses, supplying 20% of the UK's aerospace output; it contributes a £900m share of the £90bn generated by the construction industry. The Black Country has a diverse business base with 69,000 jobs in advanced manufacturing, 73,000 in business services, 37,000 in transport technologies and 34,000 jobs in building technologies. Additional growth in these transformational sectors is expected to bring 54,000 extra jobs and £11.1bn GVA by 2033 (BCLEP 2017).

The Black Country hosts 32,000 enterprises, of which 87% employ fewer than 10 people, 11% employ 10 to 49 people and 2% employ 50 to 249 people. Larger employers employing over 250 people account for less than 0.5%.

The Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan

By 2033, the Black Country will have increased the number of local jobs to 545,000 (+113,000 jobs) and will have strengthened its business base of 32,000 with an additional 1,500 new businesses each year. The Black Country will be home to 1.2 million residents, with increased numbers of graduates and people in higher skill level occupations. An additional 47,000 new homes will be built, starting from a baseline of 445,000. The BC LEP priority sectors are:

Advanced Manufacturing, Building Technologies, Business Services, Environmental Technology and Transport Technology.

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

Devolution in the region places the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) at the heart of decision making regarding the regions Further Education adult provision. Walsall College works closely with the WMCA to ensure our adult education provision is highly effective and responsive to the skills need for our region.

"The West Midlands aims to continue growth and success, while ensuring a more inclusive and balanced economy, where all communities and residents benefit and no one is left behind."

Bhattacharyya, Professor Lord (2019)

The West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy (Bhattacharyya, Professor Lord 2019) has five foundations of productivity:

- Ideas
- People
- Infrastructure
- Business environment
- Places

The West Midlands is driving innovation and aims to build a reputation for high-value business and professional services with a highly skilled local workforce, offering modern services that create highly paid, highly skilled roles for all communities. The West Midlands is leading the UK with its 5G testbeds, research in electric and connected autonomous vehicles (CAV), and data-driven healthcare and environmental technologies. It has a number of opportunities for economic growth through the High Speed 2 rail network and the 2022 Commonwealth Games. The Regional Skills Plan identifies the requirement to boost digital and technical skills, job opportunities and productivity across the region. Opportunities for disadvantaged communities and under-represented groups such as women, are a priority to in improving the regional labour market.

Colleges West Midlands

Colleges West Midlands have a common mission and joint mandate for the 20 colleges in the region to work closely and effectively with the WMCA to:

1. Raise the technical skills of adult learners through:

- Full-time learning programme
- Progression into Higher Education
- Upskilling employees

2. Offer a second chance and re-engagement opportunities to adults through meeting needs in:

- Employability
- Special Educational needs and Disability (SEND)

- English for Speakers of Other languages (ESOL)
- Deprived and disadvantaged groups and localities

We intend to work with the WMCA and each other to:

- Maximise the use of funding for adult learning within the region
- Improve the coherence, consistency and focus of the FE offer across the region
- Move the region from low skills equilibrium to high skills ecosystem
- Develop the region's productivity and competitiveness, particularly in the priority sectors.

Indicators and measures will cover the whole of adult funded provision but will focus in particular on driving up performance in:

- Priority sectors – increasing the volumes of qualifications at all levels in construction and building technologies, automotive/advanced manufacturing, business and professional services and digital
- Priority wards, working with WMCA, ACLA, Local Authorities and other key local stakeholders, to maximise impact and increase qualification levels and ultimately employment, in those areas that have remained persistently difficult to change.

Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the Future

Britain's decision to leave the European Union makes it even more important to seize the opportunities before us to build a Britain fit for the Future. **The UK Industrial Strategy covers the same five foundations used by the West Midlands (p.24).**

The UK Industrial Strategy also identifies four grand challenges in putting the UK at the forefront of future industries:

- Artificial Intelligence and the Data Economy
- Clean Growth
- Future of Mobility
- Ageing Society

The strategic vision is for the UK to be an innovative economy that creates good secure jobs and greater earning power for all. It aims to develop prosperous communities across the UK, with major investment in the UK infrastructure while being the best place to start and grow a business. The Strategy recognises that there are some local economies that have struggled to keep pace with changes in national and global economies and, as a result, these have not shared in prosperity.

Since the financial crash, the UK economy has suffered from low productivity. Unless we improve productivity while holding on to high employment, we cannot raise living standards and improve the quality of life for all our citizens. The UK Industrial Strategy's four grand challenges are intended to position the UK, not just to look at the economy we have but to prepare for the economy we need to have.

Independent Review of Post-18 Education and Funding (DfE 2019)

The 2019 Independent Review of Post-18 Education and Funding prioritises access to high-quality specialist provision that is well resourced through capital investment into a national network of colleges. Levels of investment should be in line with the priorities of the UK Industrial Strategy. Bringing back full funding, at all ages, for Levels 2 and 3 would remove barriers in social mobility and productivity and allow people to meet changes in economic demand. The number of adults who do not progress beyond the levels they have achieved by the age of 18 is "one of the most disturbing aspects of England's current 18+ provision," the Report says. "Addressing this is a matter of some

importance to the individuals concerned, to social progression and to the needs of the economy". The Report urges government to meet this need by committing to provision of an indicative Adult Education Budget (AEB) which lets colleges plan and budget over a three-year period.

Investment in the FE workforce should be a priority. The Report says the most "important barrier to workforce improvement is simply a lack of money" as colleges currently cannot afford to match salaries in schools or HEIs. "Our recommendations would, if accepted, improve colleges' financial position and, therefore, their ability to attract and retain good staff".

Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth White Paper (DfE 2021)

The Skills for Jobs White Paper (DfE 2021) is significant for the FE Sector, described by the secretary of state as a "blueprint for the future." The Skills for Jobs White Paper aims to:

- build on the success government have already achieved in reforming apprenticeships.
- strengthen links between employers and FE providers.
- place employers at the heart of defining local skills needs and explore a new role for Chambers of Commerce and other business organisations.

The five key themes from the White Paper are:

Putting employers at the heart of the system so that education and training leads to jobs that can improve productivity and fill skills gaps. This includes business partners, the Chamber of Commerce and FE Colleges working together to co-design and co-deliver curricula through the strategic development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan.

Investing in higher-level technical qualifications that provide a valuable alternative to a university degree. The White Paper shows a range of initiatives to spearhead the increase in higher-level skills through the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, expansion of the roll out of T Levels and the reform of higher levels of technical education (levels 4 and 5).

Making sure people can access training and learning flexibly throughout their lives and are well-informed about what is on offer through great careers support. Government will update the National Careers Service website to become a single source of government-assured careers information for young people and adults. Government will introduce interactive careers maps, which will show the occupations and career options that technical or higher technical education can open the door to.

Reforming funding and accountability for providers to simplify how funds are allocated, give providers more autonomy, and ensure an effective accountability regime which delivers value for money. Simplification and streamlining of funding for further education to support high-value provision relevant to the labour market, with elements of simplified and streamlined funding to be tested ahead of consultation.

Supporting excellent teaching in further education. The Government will strengthen relationships between employers and providers for industry recruitment and upskilling. Introduce a comprehensive package of professional development and workforce data collection.

Ofsted - Education Inspection Framework

From September 2019, Ofsted introduced the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) (Ofsted 2020), which replaced the Common Inspection Framework. The EIF is a refocusing of the inspection framework that gives greater attention

to the quality of education. Inspectors spend less time looking at performance data and more time considering how students are developing skills, knowledge and behaviours that mean they progress and achieve. The framework considers the intent behind the curriculum, its implementation and its impact on how well students are prepared for their next steps towards their chosen career aspirations.

In a full inspection, inspectors will make an overall effectiveness judgement and key judgements on:

- the quality of education
- behaviour and attitudes
- personal development
- leadership and management.

Inspectors make all judgements (including on the effectiveness of different types of provision offered) using the following 4-point scale:

- Grade 1: Outstanding.
- Grade 2: Good.
- Grade 3: Requires Improvement.
- Grade 4: Inadequate.

Walsall College has a commitment to achieve Grade 1 outstanding within 3 years.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2020

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2020) provides statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). It gives information on what schools and colleges should do and sets out the legal duties and obligations schools and colleges must meet. It should be read alongside other statutory guidance such as Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, What to do if you're worried a child is being abused and, Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges. The College must ensure that all staff read and understand at least Part one of the KCSiE guidance.

Walsall College is passionate about safeguarding our students. We believe we have more than a statutory duty to ensure that we safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk of harm in our care. This is also a moral imperative. The way in which we recruit and train our staff, support our students, make referrals and work with our multi-agency partners is a high priority for the College. We recognise a wide range of risks we need to safeguard against, including those related to the prevention of violent extremism.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in the KCSiE guidance as:

“protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.”

(DfE 2020).

Reference is made throughout the KCSiE guidance to adults at risk of harm. Adults at risk of harm are defined as people aged 18 years old and over who may need or receive community care services, due to mental health or other disability, age or illness and who may be unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Recent updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 highlights a number of changes to the original policy. These include the emphasis that both physical and mental health is relevant to the safeguarding of children, information about child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation and advice for leads regarding domestic abuse.



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