



Accountability Agreement and the Local Needs Duty 2024/25

Bringing talent to life...



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Foreword by Walsall College Chair of the Corporation



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. 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. Our wider stakeholders including Department for Education (DfE), West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Department for Work and Pensions and the regions employers enable us to support our communities and the regional skills agenda successfully.

The College offers an education, skills and training solution from non-qualification community activity right through to Higher Level Programmes. Our Corporate Strategy is focused on the continuing prosperity of the College and all those that we serve. The Governing Body recognises the transformational challenges within the Further Education, Skills and Training sector and the demands of a changing economy.

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 and key stakeholders.

David Wheeler
Chair of the Corporation

Introduction

This document sets out Walsall College's statutory duties to:

- Respond to the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP).
- Continuously review our Curriculum offer and delivery methods in relation to local needs and priorities.

This duty originates from the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 and associated strategies and policies. This Accountability Agreement ensures that Walsall College is meeting the skills needs of the communities we serve.

[Accountability Agreements and the Local Needs Duty 2024 to 2025 1.pdf](#)

This guidance states that:

- Governing Bodies must undertake regular reviews of how well the education or training provided by the College meets local needs, in particular local employment needs.
- Governing Bodies should undertake a review at least once every three years.
- In reviewing provision within a local area, Governing Bodies are expected to collaborate with other Governing Bodies also serving that area.
- Governing Bodies are required to publish the outcome of their reviews on their websites.
- Governing Bodies must consider what actions they and other providers can take to best meet local needs, in particular local employment needs, including changes to the structures through which provision is delivered.
- The responsibility for the curriculum offer continues to rest with individual Governing Bodies.

Purpose of the College

Our Mission Statement:

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.

The strategic plan is underpinned by 7 Pledges which are the key drivers in meeting national, regional and local skills and employment needs:

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.

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.

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 TLRs.

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.

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.

Coupled with this, the Strategic Plan outlines the values to which we adhere to in order to deliver our response to national, regional and local skills needs.

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.

Walsall College's Mission Statement and Shared Values position the College as an agent for social inclusion and social change and one that welcomes students from all backgrounds, including those not traditionally well represented in Further Education. This mission is the core of everything we do; and is underpinned by our ambition to enable our students to either progress and find employment or move to higher levels of study from their starting points, addressing any barriers to this along each individual's journey.

Context and Place

The National Drivers

Levelling Up

The Levelling Up White Paper sets out how to spread opportunity more equally across the UK. It comprises a programme of systems change, including 12 UK-wide missions to anchor the agenda to 2030, alongside specific policy interventions that will assist to deliver change. The White Paper sets out a strategy to 'rebalance the economy at a national scale'. There is a need to tackle the challenges faced by individuals and employers in the Borough locally. Levelling Up needs to be done from the bottom up. The College continues to respond to the levelling up agenda with activity underway including the Green Lane development for our construction offer and future plans linked to the location of our adult provision to the Town Centre.

Skills for Jobs White Paper

The Skills for Jobs White Paper outlines how Government propose to support people to develop the skills they need to get good jobs, including measures to: -

- Give employers a greater say in the development of skills
- Provide higher level technical skills
- Provide a flexible, lifetime skills guarantee

The focus on jobs and growth will be delivered by: -

- Placing employers at the heart of the system so that education and training leads to jobs that can improve productivity and fill skills gaps.
- Investing in higher-level technical qualifications that provide a valuable alternative to a university degree.
- 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.

Governments Plan for Jobs is focused on protecting, supporting and creating jobs across the country and sets out a range of Government programmes for skills and employment, some of which offer financial incentives for employers who are considering hiring employees, offering work experience or upskilling existing staff.

The West Midlands - Local and Regional Data, Context and Plans

West Midlands Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) sets out the vision for improving the quality of life of everyone who lives and works in the West Midlands. The plan shows how devolved power and resources will be used to deliver a stronger West Midlands, with a focus on skills, innovation, transport and inward investment.

West Midlands Industrial Strategy sets out the Government's long-term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people in Britain and the West Midlands. It builds on the heritage of the region's manufacturing, research and technology sectors.

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

The vast majority of the College's students are residents of the West Midlands, which is a government devolved region. The WMCA provide over 90% (excluding apprenticeships) of our adult student funding through the Adult Education Budget, with the remainder coming from the Department for Education for those students outside of the West Midlands.

The WMCA Employment & Skills Strategy 2024-2027 sets out a vision for an integrated employment and skills system, through which we can stimulate economic growth, deliver improved outcomes for residents and businesses, and create healthier thriving communities. Over the next three years WMCA will focus on the following:

- Building strong and inclusive communities
- Providing a good education up to level 2
- Supporting residents into employment and supporting career progression
- Meeting future skills needs at level 3 and above through upskilling and reskilling

The College has a very close working relationship with WMCA, providing steer, piloting training, running specific projects and supporting the WMCA agenda. For the 2024/25 academic year the WMCA has identified the following priorities for AEB: -

- Increased job outcome rates
- New provision – job families and bootcamps
- Accelerated and combined basic skills delivery
- Increased progression
- Reaching more inactive residents
- More health, mentoring and in-work support
- New employer partnerships including employment agencies

Progression in the workplace is a key Government and WMCA priority, through schemes such as Free Courses for Jobs which offers training up to Level 3 for individuals even if they are currently employed. This provides opportunities for the College to deliver in a flexible model that fits around the working day. The WMCA present their thinking on progression in work in the following diagram:



Whilst training for those already in work is a key focus, it remains fundamental to the Walsall College offer we continue to support individuals into work, to ensure the training offer is reflective of current employer needs. We constantly monitor vacancies across the region, with the West Midlands and particularly Walsall have high numbers of unfilled vacancies against high but falling numbers of unemployed. The mix and balance of our offer shifts in line with vacancy trends to ensure students have the best possible chance of progression into employment. This is most notable with our work in partnership with DWP in the delivery of Sector Work Based Programmes.

Level 3 Provision

Although qualification levels are improving, they remain lower than the national average. Around 1 in 10 adults in the WMCA area have no formal qualifications. Just over half (54.9%) are qualified at level 3 or above, compared with 61.5% nationally. As a result, employers face persistent skills shortages, with around 1 in 4 vacancies classed as 'hard to fill', particularly in roles that require advanced and/or higher skills.

Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

The **Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)** sets out the key priorities and changes needed to make post-16 technical education and training more responsive and closely aligned to local labour market needs. The plan focusses on cross-cutting themes of digital and green skills and associated leadership and management capabilities in the region. The following have been identified as priority growth cluster groups: -

- Manufacturing of electric light vehicles and associated battery storage devices and Aerospace.
- Logistics and Distribution.
- Health Tech and Med Tech.
- Professional and Financial Services and Supply Chain.
- Modern and Low carbon utility and manufacturing of future housing.

LSIP Cross Cutting Themes

The West Midlands and Warwickshire LSIP focusses on the aforementioned cross-cutting themes of digital and green skills and associated leadership and management capabilities in the region. Walsall College is mirroring the approach taken by the West Midlands LSIP with cross cutting themes across our offer of digital, green skills and associated leadership and management capabilities.

In response to the LSIP, Walsall College is involved in all six of the Local Skills Investment Fund projects which support the following priority sectors:

- Electrification/Engineering
- Low Carbon
- Advanced Digital Skills
- Essential Digital Skills
- Employer Engagement

In response to the LSIP Walsall College is involved in the 6 LSIF projects approved for funding: -

Project 1 – Expanding the regional electrification and engineering offer

Funding will be used to support staff upskilling and initiatives to bring more technical trainers into FE, curriculum development activities, employer engagement and capital needs.

Project 2 – Low Carbon/Sustainable Construction

Funding will be used to support staff participating in CPD activities.

Project 3 – Green Skills

This project is focused on supporting the professional development of teaching staff.

Project 4 – Essential Digital Skills

This project will support capital equipment to create digital hubs accessible by the community. We have requested £30k Year 1 and £30k Year 2 capital funding. This comprises set-up costs for a mobile digital classroom to be used across the Borough in community locations (10 laptops, 10 iPads, 1 portable projector and screen, mobile wireless 5G and transportation costs).

Project 5 – Advanced Digital Skills

This project will support capital asks to purchase high specification laptops for flexi delivery, both within the College and out in the community.

Project 6 – Systems Approach to Employer Engagement

This project is focused on raising the FE and Skills brand and profile through employer engagement. See link to website: <https://skillswmw.com/>

Walsall - The Communities We Serve - A Local Perspective

Walsall is situated within the West Midlands and is one of four Local Authorities comprising the Black Country. It contains six urban districts centres: Walsall Town Centre lies at the heart of the Borough and is where our main campuses are located, surrounded by Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall. Socio-economically, there is a stark geographic divide between the west and the less deprived east.

Population

The total population of Walsall is 286,105 (48.9% male and 51.1% female). Of the total population 21.5% are under 16 years of age and 17.5% are aged 65 or over. Source: **Population data (age and sex)** – Population estimates - local authority based by single year of age. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/> Latest period – 2022

Age

	Total	% of population
Aged 0 to 15	61630	21.5%
Aged 16+	224475	78.5%
Aged 16 to 64	174450	61.0%
Aged 65+	50025	17.5%
All Ages	286105	100.0%

Sex

	Male	Female	Total
Count	140018	146087	286105
%	48.9%	51.1%	100%

Ethnic breakdown Source Population data (ethnicity) – Census 2021. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/> Latest period - 2021

Ethnic group	2021	
	number	%
Total: All usual residents	284,126	100.0
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	53,199	18.7
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	13,024	4.6
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	9,317	3.3
White	202,724	71.4
Other ethnic group	5,862	2.1

The Local Authority Area is the 25th most deprived out of 317 Local Authorities and 14th most deprived affecting children out of 317 Local Authorities. Walsall fares particularly badly in terms of income (16th), education, skills and training deprivation (11th) and employment (38th). Walsall is among 55 areas across England which has been earmarked as having some of the weakest education outcomes in the country.

Deprivation Levels in comparison to other Black Country Areas

Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019. Latest period – 2019. This data is to be updated in 2025.

Rank of Average Score - 1 being the most deprived and 317 (the number of local authorities in England) being the least deprived in the country

Local Authority*	2015	2019	Change in Rank
Dudley	110th	91st	-19
Sandwell	13th	12th	-1
Walsall	33rd	25th	-8
Wolverhampton	17th	24th	+7

The table below indicates how Walsall residents lag behind the skills levels of those across the West Midlands but also nationally, therefore our Curriculum Strategy will focus on raising the number of Level 3+ courses.

The recent data for skills shows qualifications by achievement of RQF rating for the year ending in December 2023, this data is released annually. The table below shows the proportion of people aged 16-64 who have achieved the stated level of qualification or above.

Area	% with RQF1+	% with RQF2+	% with RQF3+	% with RQF4+
Walsall	84.7	82.3	58.9	31.9
WMCA	84.5	81.3	60.7	41.6
West Midlands (region)	87.5	84.3	63.6	42.5
UK	88.8	86.4	67.7	47.1

Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>. Latest period – Year ending December 2023

Economic Activity

Area	Working Households	Mixed Households	Workless Households
Walsall	49.6%	32.1%	18.3%
WMCA	50.9%	31.6%	17.5%
West Midlands region	56.2%	29.2%	14.6%
UK	59.3%	26.8%	13.9%

The above table shows Walsall has the highest percentage of workless households compared to the WMCA area, the West Midlands region and the UK as a whole. The percentage of workless households in Walsall is 3.7% higher than West Midlands levels.

Business Count

The table below shows business counts and proportion of businesses by employment size band for 2023.

Employment Size band	Walsall		Black Country		WMCA		West Midlands region	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Micro (0 to 9)	7,230	88.6%	32,605	88.1%	81,855	88.7%	193,710	88.9%
Small (10 to 49)	740	9.1%	3,600	9.7%	8,555	9.3%	19,860	9.1%
Medium-sized (50 to 249)	150	1.8%	630	1.7%	1,490	1.6%	3,370	1.5%
Large (250+)	40	0.5%	155	0.4%	440	0.5%	945	0.4%
Total	8,160	100.0%	36,990	100.0%	92,335	100.0%	217,885	100.0%

Source: UK Business Counts - enterprises by industry and employment size band.

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>. Latest period - 2023

Business size and scale is typical of the region with a predominantly micro and small-sized base. The College engages with the business base via its Business Development Team, Work Experience Teams, 's, Employer Advisory Boards and our local Chambers of Commerce and Council Business Growth Teams. Staff in a number of work based learning areas are also involved with Trailblazer groups. Activity is tracked through our Employer in Every Classroom.

The main occupations of employment in Walsall are professional occupations (18.8%) followed by elementary occupations (14.3%). Walsall has higher levels of residents in elementary occupations than the Black Country, WMCA, West Midlands region and the UK. There is a direct correlation between this and the qualification levels of Walsall residents as shown above.

Employment by Occupation

The table below shows employment by occupation data for 2023.

Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>.

	Walsall		Black Country		WMCA	West Midlands region	UK
	Count	%	Count	%	%	%	%
Managers, directors and senior officials	11,900	8.8	43,600	7.7	7.4	9.2	10.7
Professional occupations	25,400	18.8	129,300	22.8	27.2	25.4	26.8
Associate professional occupations	15,000	11.1	59,900	10.6	13.1	13.8	15.0
Administrative and secretarial occupations	14,700	10.8	67,700	11.9	10.0	9.0	9.6
Skilled trades occupations	16,500	12.2	53,500	9.4	8.4	9.3	8.8
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	13,600	10.0	50,800	9.0	8.4	8.6	8.0
Sales and customer service occupations	8,000	5.9	39,300	6.9	6.3	6.2	6.3
Process, plant and machine operatives	11,100	8.2	48,900	8.6	7.7	6.9	5.4
Elementary occupations	19,300	14.3	71,300	12.6	10.9	11.3	9.2

Latest period - Year ending December 2023

Walsall has two areas of key challenge for the College to consider: -

1) A weak local economy

Walsall, located in the West Midlands region of England, has a diverse skills landscape that reflects the area's history and economic trends. Some of the key skills and industries in Walsall include:

- **Manufacturing:** Walsall has a strong tradition of manufacturing, with a particular focus on metalworking and engineering. Many businesses in the area produce components for the automotive, aerospace, and construction industries. This has created a demand for skilled workers with expertise in areas such as welding, machining, and toolmaking.
- **Logistics and distribution:** Walsall is well-connected to major transportation routes, including the M6 and M6 Toll motorways, and is home to several large logistics and distribution companies. These businesses require workers with skills in areas such as supply chain management, warehousing, and transportation.
- **Health and social care:** Like many areas in the UK, Walsall has an aging population, which has led to an increased demand for health and social care services. This has created opportunities for workers with skills in nursing, healthcare management, and social work.
- **Retail and hospitality:** Walsall has a vibrant retail and hospitality sector, with many restaurants, cafes, and shops located in the town centre. Workers in this industry require skills such as customer service, sales, and food preparation.
- **Creative industries:** Walsall is home to a growing creative industries sector, with businesses in areas such as graphic design, web development, and video production. This has created opportunities for workers with skills in areas such as digital marketing, graphic design, and coding.

2) A lack of local pride

Looking at Walsall through the Social Fabric Index which is a measure of the strength of civil society across the country, Walsall ranked well below the UK and the West Midlands averages. Residents said the town centre was ‘depressing’, a ‘hellhole’. ‘run down’ and ‘rough’. They also raised concerns about crime and police data which showed that public order offences have more than doubled in the Borough in the last ten years.

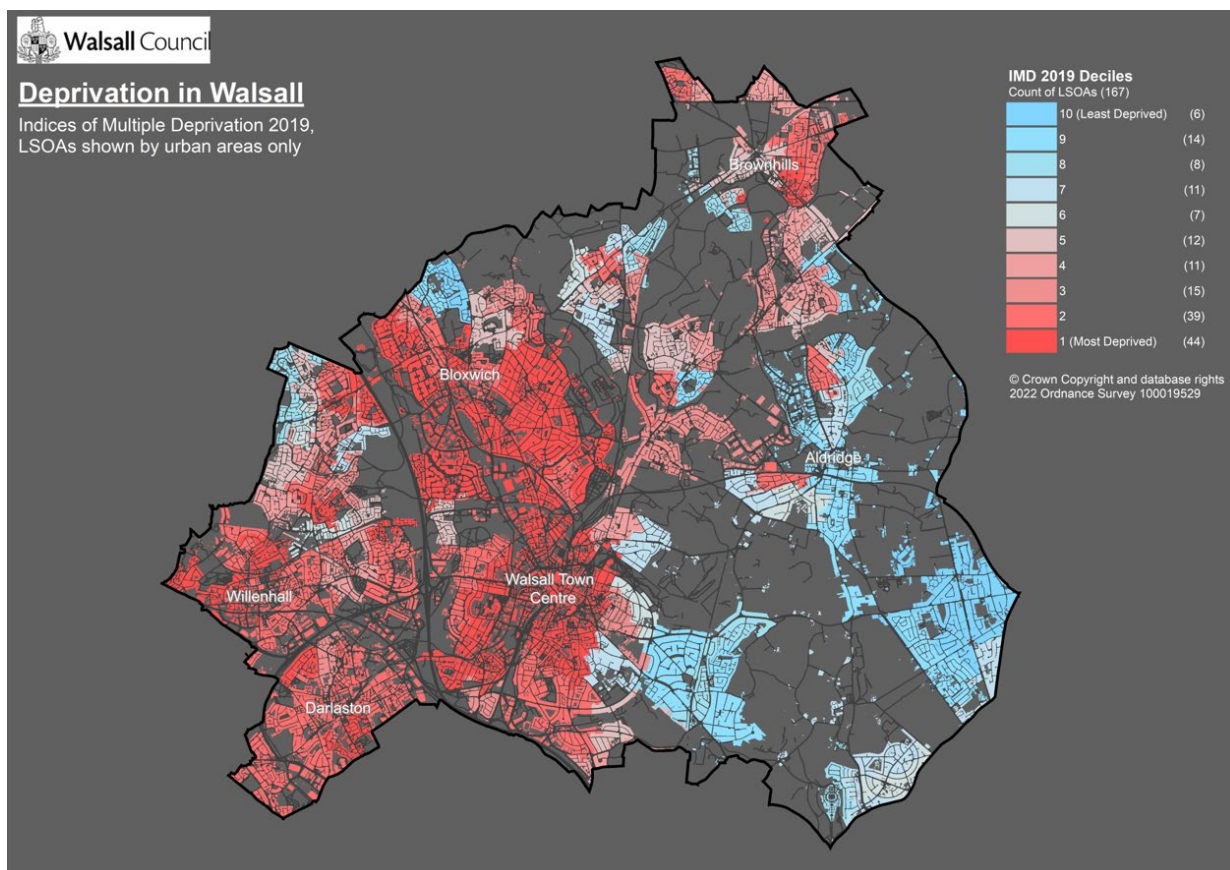
The report describes Walsall as ‘characterised by deep intra-local differences between towns and neighbourhoods. In Walsall, the drivers of economic inactivity varies from ward to ward, between low levels of formal skills, chronic health conditions, ageing workers and cultural norms in ethnic minority communities. A high level of economic and social need is holding back opportunity in Walsall. The College must support Walsall residents with their broad ranging skills requirements’.¹

Overall, Walsall's skills landscape reflects the area's diverse economy, with opportunities for workers in a range of industries and sectors.

Worker productivity is almost 30% below the national average and neighbourhoods like Darlaston, Willenhall and Brownhills are in the bottom 20% nationally for economic output (GVA). This is driven by a concentration of low productivity sectors: almost 1 in 3 workers in Walsall are in either logistics or retail employment compared to 1 in 5 nationally. Walsall is among the poorest 10% of local authorities in the UK in terms of Gross Disposable Household Income. Walsall has some of the lowest social fabric scores in the West Midlands.

Social challenges

Parts of Walsall are deeply disadvantaged. In Walsall North, 1 in 3 adults are economically inactive compared to 1 in 5 nationally. **Almost** half of women in Walsall South constituency, which has a large South Asian population, are economically inactive, twice the national average. Half as many people in Walsall have a degree-level qualification as the UK average. Walsall has some of the highest levels of welfare dependency in the country.



¹ Source: Levelling Up Locally Final Report from Onward's Levelling Up in Practice project

Walsall Employment and Skills Board (WESB)

The Walsall Employment and Skills Board (WESB) has a key role in the successful realisation of Levelling Up, along with a range of key strategies (listed below). The Board comprises of key strategic Private, Public and Voluntary Sector agencies and the Board is chaired by Walsall College through our Assistant Principal Commercial Development to ensure that, as a cornerstone learning organisation, we are consistently aware of the changing needs of the Borough and communicating our offer through key partner organisations.

The WESB objectives fit with a number of key strategic documents, these include; the emerging **Walsall Economic Strategy** and an emerging Skills and Employment Strategy, which sets out the short and long-term plans and interventions to deliver sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the Borough, including investment, housing, health, jobs and skills. In the last 12 months Walsall College has been responsive to the findings of the WESB through the development and opening of The Link in Walsall Town Centre.

The College at the Heart of its Community

Walsall College is an anchor institution within the Borough, working closely with key partners. The College employs circa 800 staff and delivers over 12,000 training interventions each calendar year, the majority of which are to Walsall residents. The College's impact and influence on the skills landscape stretches far beyond the Borough boundaries, working in partnership with key strategic partners including local authorities, Department for Education (DfE), Chambers of Commerce, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and key sectorial membership bodies to ensure we influence post-16 education policy and respond to employer and community needs. By having a local and regional offer which aligns to national priorities, our students and employers have a competitive advantage in a fast-paced economic landscape.

Walsall College believes in preparing students and apprentices for the world of work and higher study, coupled with a curriculum of wider personal development, focusing on behaviours and attitudes that go beyond the mastery of their chosen discipline, to become 'Walsall College Graduates' (skilled, professional and enterprising).

The College offers vocational courses in most sector subject areas on a full-time, part-time day and evening basis, in the classroom and in the workplace. The primary focus of college activity is within the Walsall Local Authority area, responding to the needs of Walsall's employers and residents. The College is also responsive to the West Midlands devolved region and LSIP boundary. Delivery does include provision in non-devolved areas, including Staffordshire and nationally for our specialist apprenticeship provision.

The College has seven campuses: the main Wisemore Campus (which opened in 2009), Green Lane, Digital Engineering Skills Centre, The Hub, Hawbush and Whitehall Campuses and Construction College Midlands. The latter was purchased in December 2020 providing Walsall College with a specialism in scaffolding and roofing, along with a campus in Birmingham. With an increased community offer, the College supports adults wanting to develop their confidence and personal advocacy, with a view to becoming active, positive citizens, more able to progress and contribute to wider society. Higher Education provision is well established in the College through direct funding for a range of Pearson Higher National Certificate and Diploma programmes. This includes a growing portfolio of Level 6 qualifications and higher apprenticeships. Links with partners locally, regionally and nationally are strong. Our curriculum is underpinned with our 'Employer in every classroom' agenda.

The College has been front and centre in supporting Walsall regeneration with a number of projects being developed as part of the Walsall and Bloxwich Town Deals including; a major extension to our Green Lane Construction Campus, the acquisition of land and planning for a new Electrical Vehicle and Sustainability Centre, the move of our Adult Campus to a new town centre location. The college are also the named prime organisation to support other capital projects around the borough to deliver skills and employment outputs.

Innovate - Walsall College leading the way to support Growth Mindset Business

Walsall College is leading a one-year project through Innovate UK to support the creation and development of Innovation Centres across the Black Country. The project is a collaborative project between Walsall, City of Wolverhampton, South Staffordshire, Dudley and Halesowen Colleges. In addition, this project will allow the College the opportunity to work with other regions (Manchester and Glasgow) in sharing best practice on innovation and employer engagement activity.

The project will provide Innovation Centres in central, accessible locations within the above FE Colleges for local businesses seeking technical expertise and practical support. The Innovation Centres will accommodate the schedules of businesses, ensuring timely access to state-of-the-art facilities and expert guidance around technologies such as:

- High end Computer Numerical Control production
- Robotics
- Computer Aided Design
- Rapid Prototyping and Additive Manufacturing
- Materials and product testing
- Networking and cyber security
- Artificial Intelligence
- Web solutions
- Retrofit
- Green technologies

Key Facts about the College

Key Facts 2022/23	
Turnover 2023	£44,602
Staff employed	874
ESFA financial health rating	Good
Current Ofsted grade	Good

Student Numbers 2022/23		In-year numbers to R09 23/24
Young people aged 16-18	3775	4140
Adult Students	5648	5201
Apprentices	1831	1559
Higher Education	173	123

16-19 STUDENTS BY LEVEL

The table below shows the numbers of young people on college courses by level for academic year 2022/23. It is clear to see that the largest number of students are studying at Level 3 in line with the regional and local need for more higher-level skills.

Level	No of Students	%
1	736	19.5
2	1039	27.5
3	1673	44.3
4	4	0.1
E	321	8.5
Level not known	2	0.1

16-19 STUDENTS BY SUBJECT SECTOR AREA (MAIN VOCATIONAL PROGRAMME)

The table below shows the numbers and percentage of young people studying in each of the Subject Sector areas at Tier 1. Our provision is suitably broad to meet the needs of many different student personas and mapped to local need. The data shows the College has a well-represented curriculum covering priority areas in Construction and The Built Environment and Health, Public Services and Care.

Subject Sector Area Tier 1	Subject Sector Area Description	No of Students	%
1	Health, Public Services & Care	749	19.8%
2	Science & Maths	89	2.4%
4	Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies	297	7.9%
5	Construction, Planning & The Built Environment	632	16.7%
6	Information & Communications Technology	185	4.9%
7	Retail & Commercial Enterprise	327	8.7%
8	Leisure, Travel & Tourism	241	6.4%
9	Arts, Media & Publishing	515	13.6%
12	Languages, Literature & Culture	3	0.1%
13	Education & Training	39	1.0%
14	Preparation for Life and Work	391	10.4%
15	Business, Administration and Law	307	8.1%

ADULT 19+ STUDENTS BY LEVEL

The table below shows the number of adult students at the College in academic year 22/23. The College has the majority of students enrolled at Level 1 and Level 2. The College has a pledge within the Corporate Strategy to develop and grow the Level 3 adult offer.

Level	No of Students	%
1	1576	23.6%
2	1867	28%
3	577	8.6%
4	18	0.3%
5	54	0.8%
E	1314	19.7%
Community Learning and Into Work Programmes	1270	19.0%

ADULT STUDENTS BY SUBJECT SECTOR AREA (MAIN VOCATIONAL PROGRAMME)

The table below shows the number of adults within Tier 1 Subject Sector areas. It is clear to see priority areas such as Health, Public Services and Care and Information and Communications Technology are well represented. It is important to note that the College supports a large number of adults in Preparation for Life and Work which meets the demographic make-up of Walsall and supports individuals through programmes such as Vocational ESOL, digital and employability skills in order to support adults in our communities to either progress to higher levels of study or into employment.

Subject Sector Area Tier 1	Subject Sector Area Description	No of Students	%
1	Health, Public Services & Care	1736	24.1%
2	Science & Maths	116	1.6%
3	Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care	24	0.3%

4	Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies	116	1.6%
5	Construction, Planning & The Built Environment	389	5.4%
6	Information & Communications Technology	1165	16.2%
7	Retail & Commercial Enterprise	277	3.9%
8	Leisure, Travel & Tourism	84	1.2%
9	Arts, Media & Publishing	293	4.1%
10	History, Philosophy & Theology	77	1.1%
11	Social Sciences	30	0.4%
12	Languages, Literature & Culture	365	5.1%
13	Education & Training	253	3.5%
14	Preparation for Life and Work	1952	27.1%
15	Business, Administration and Law	312	4.3%

OfS Funded HE STUDENTS BY LEVEL

The table below shows the number of students studying higher level skills funded by OfS at the College. Although our standalone OfS provision is small, there are more students on Level 4 programmes funded in different ways to meet regional demands. The College will be introducing suites of new Higher-Level programmes including further HTQ programmes, Higher Apprenticeships, and modular credits in readiness for Lifelong Learning Entitlement.

Level	No of Students	%
4	94	54.3%
5	46	26.6%
6	14	8.1%
7	19	11.0%

OfS Funded HE STUDENTS BY SUBJECT SECTOR AREA

The table below shows the subject sector areas at Tier 1 for HE programmes and shows provision is in line with and does meet the regional sector drivers particularly Information and Communications Technology and Health, Public Services and Care. The majority of learners are studying courses within Arts, Media and Publishing.

Subject Sector Area Tier 1	Subject Sector Area Description	No of Students	%
1	Health, Public Services & Care	26	15%
6	Information & Communications Technology	31	17.9%
7	Retail & Commercial Enterprise	15	8.7%
8	Leisure, Travel & Tourism	10	5.8%
9	Arts, Media & Publishing	72	41.6%
13	Education & Training	19	11.0%

APPRENTICES BY LEVEL

The table below shows the number of apprentices in-learning in the academic year 2022/23. It is clear to see most apprentices are at Level 3 with students progressing from Level 2 to Level 3 where the apprenticeship standard will allow.

Level	No of students	%
2	711	37.9%
3	983	52.4%
4	52	2.8%
5	85	4.5%
6	33	1.8%

APPRENTICES BY SUBJECT SECTOR AREA

Our apprenticeship provision is aligned to the regional drivers for Level 3 and above. Our apprentices are employed in key strategic growth sectors with Health, Public Services and Care, Construction and The Built Environment and Business and Administration being the largest areas of provision.

Subject Sector Area Tier 1	Subject Sector Area Description	No of students	%
1	Health, Public Services & Care	508	26.1%
4	Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies	283	14.5%
5	Construction, Planning & The Built Environment	638	32.8%
6	Information & Communications Technology	14	0.7%
7	Retail & Commercial Enterprise	3	0.2%
13	Education & Training	40	2.1%
14	Preparation for Life and Work	33	1.7%
15	Business, Administration and Law	428	22%

Table with all post level 4 programmes

Level	Apprenticeships	Adult	OfS Funded HE Students	Total
4	52	18	94	164
5	85	54	46	185
6	33	0	14	47
7	0	0	19	19

Our total post level 4 provision across all programmes is significantly higher than our standalone OfS funded programmes which clearly shows a direction of travel in the right way to meet regional demands for higher level skills.

The Link

The Link is a multi-service centre, designed to empower and support the residents of Walsall on their journey to employment. It is a one-stop shop for individuals aged 16 and over, to access a wealth of resources and personalised mentoring from a diverse group of service providers, all within a safe, supportive and nurturing environment.

A unique initiative, based in Walsall town centre that supports the key Government drivers of Skills for Jobs, Levelling Up and the Towns Fund, this facility hosts and works with a range of key partners including the National Careers Service, University of Wolverhampton, Department for Work and Pensions, Walsall Council, Walsall Housing Group and others. The Link plays a key role in the Employment & Skills Hub initiative and forms part of WMCA planning for employment and skills hubs across the region. Our Multiply provision, a national initiative to boost adult numeracy skills in daily work and life, is also delivered from The Link.



Green Skills

Walsall College this year has launched courses in green roofing, solar panels, sustainable urban drainage systems, external wall insulation and others. The College has invested in equipment at both CCM and Green Lane campuses. We are working collaboratively with key support and manufacturing organisations within the sector which enables the college to access the latest products whilst also working in partnership with key stakeholders to support input into curriculum design and joint delivery.

Nationally there are 12 high carbon omitting industries, of which construction, manufacturing, retail and transport are prevalent in our region. 41% of the West Midlands workforce are employed in these carbon omitting industries. It is estimated 283,000 West Midlands workers will need some form of up-skilling and re-training, especially in low-medium skilled jobs. There is a risk to workers where working practices will significantly change, resulting in displacement and redundancy. There will be demand for new jobs, however, the upskilling of the current workforce and those in transition is a key area of focus.

Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion remains a challenge across the West Midlands region and particularly within Walsall. The College is focussed on addressing this situation and working with the Combined Authority Digital Inclusion Strategy which highlights the region has the highest number of non-internet users in the UK. This challenge is mirrored within local businesses who have the highest proportion of employers saying they find digital skills difficult to obtain from job applicants of any UK region.

Walsall College has utilised a range of Government funding and invested from its own reserves to ensure students have access to appropriate equipment whilst embedding digital in every course delivered, this includes local delivery in in our most deprived wards where digital poverty is most acute.

Personal Development

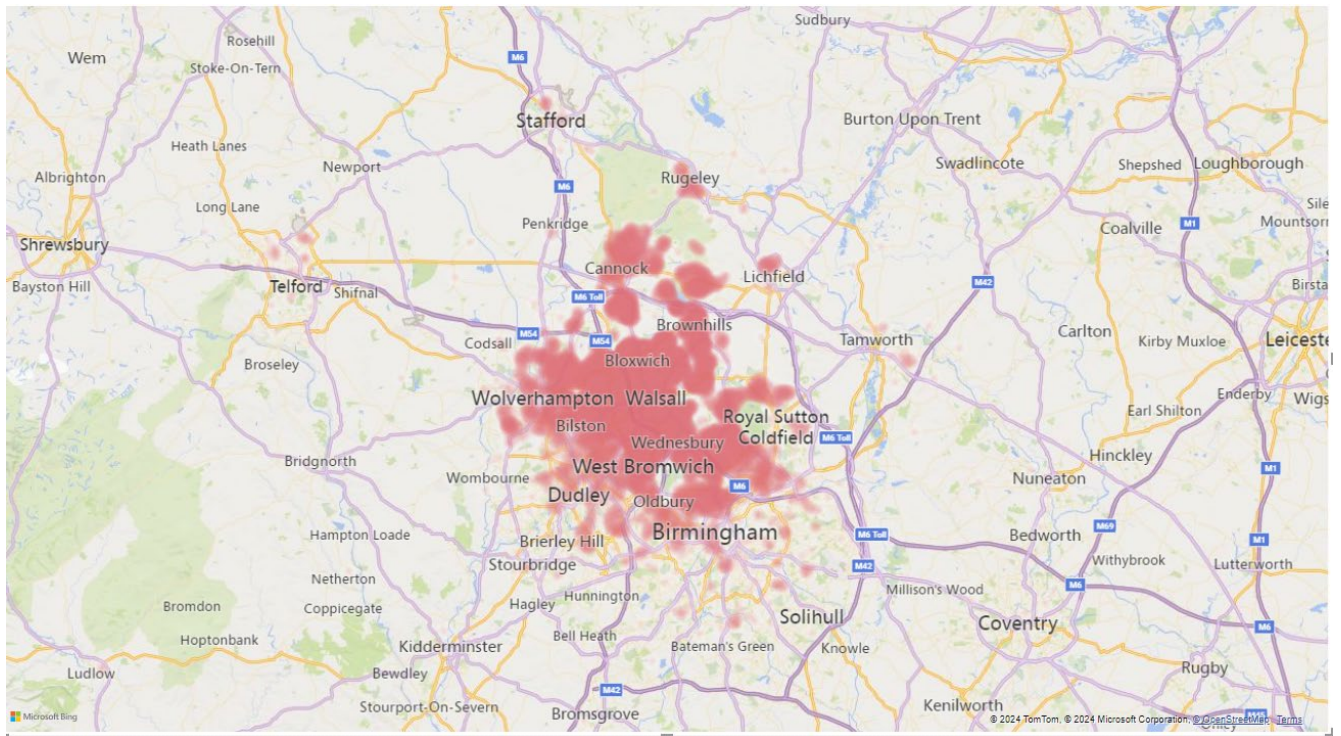
We are committed to supporting all Students and Apprentices to develop their character – including their resilience, confidence and independence and, where relevant, help them know how to keep physically and mentally healthy. This is developed through meaningful and impactful Personal Development activities, sessions and discussions. Topics such as Knife Crime, Healthy Relationships, Resilience, Managing Mental Health, PREVENT, Next Steps, Positive Citizenship and British Values are mandated for all Young People and dedicated Personal Development Tutors provide engaging sessions littered with activities and discussion to enable our Young People to make informed decisions about their future. Personal Development activities help to promote equality of opportunity so that all students and apprentices can thrive together, understanding that difference is a positive, not a negative, and that individual characteristics make people unique. There are opportunities for students and apprentices to show commitment beyond the basics, for example participation in skills competitions or social action projects.

Focussed event weeks around Staying Safe and Student Driven Celebrations events such as Pride hosted in central area of the college campuses ensure British Values, Inclusion and Safety remain regular discussion points for learners of all ages and all modes of study.

Apprentices through their regular reviews are encouraged to discuss and reflect upon key events in the awareness day calendars and reflect upon their next steps with Vocational Assessors.

Travel to Learn Patterns of our students

The vast majority of students who enrol with the College are from Walsall and surrounding Black Country postcodes, with a smaller number from surrounding areas. The heat map above shows a clear concentration of where our students travel to learn from. It is worthy to note that large numbers of students travel from the east of the Borough which typically has the higher levels of deprivation.



Destinations

1. Headline Data

The overall headline destination data includes the following provision types: Young People (includes in-fill 19+); Adults (on specific adult provision); Apprenticeships; and Higher Education (OfS regulated). 2022/23 is the fifth academic year we have used J2Research to contact our leavers (allowing a six-month period after leaving their course) to find out if they have secured a positive destination (either into a job, or into further study/ training). The data we get back also explores which sectors people are working in and what study sectors did they progress from. There is also data for a range of supplementary questions around the wider impact of their study with us, such as how the course has helped them to: socialise, work and communicate with others; protect themselves online; keep physically and mentally well etc.

The data in this report however focuses just on the percentage of students (overall and then in each provision type), who successfully progress into a positive destination at six month point after leaving their course.

Key

	Lower than the overall Positive >3%
	>3% Lower than peers
	<3% /Increase/Equal to overall and peers

Year	Leavers	Destinations			Gender		Ethnicity		High Needs		Widening Participation	
		Known	Unknown	Positive	Female	Male	BAME	Non-BAME	HN	Non-HN	WP	Non-WP
2022/23	3737	3027 (81%)	710 (19%)	91%	91%	91%	91%	91%	94%	91%	90.2%	92.4%
2021/22	4536	3439 (76%)	1097 (24%)	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	88%	92%
2020/21	9040	6750 (75%)	2290 (25%)	86%	84%	88%	84%	87%	83%	86%	84%	89%
2019/20	8532	6470 (76%)	2062 (24%)	78%	77%	80%	75%	80%	80%	78%	76%	83%
2018/19	9121	7133 (78%)	1988 (22%)	83%	83%	83%	82%	84%	89%	83%	81%	86%

Looking at the overall picture above we see that for 2022/23 we managed to get responses from 3027 leavers and an impressive 91% of these told us they were in work or further study (positive progression). Overall positive destinations have improved over this six-year period. Coincidentally there is no difference at all for female or male students or BAME, Non-BAME students. There is no material gap for High Needs students or those from WP areas. The table shows that this recent improvement in WP destinations breaks a 5-year period WP were less successful in securing positive destinations.

2. Young People

Key

	Lower than the overall Positive >3%
	>3% Lower than peers
	<3% /Increase/Equal to overall and peers

Year	Leavers	Destinations			Gender		Ethnicity		High Needs		Widening Participation	
		Known	Unknown	Positive	Female	Male	BAME	Non-BAME	HN	Non-HN	WP	Non-WP
2022/23	3143	2640 (84.0%)	503 (16.0%)	91.0%	91.7%	90.4%	90.4%	91.2%	93.9%	90.9%	90.2%	92.8%
2021/22	3523	2757 (78.3%)	766 (21.7%)	90.2%	90.3%	90.0%	90.4%	90.0%	90.9%	90.1%	89.1%	92.1%
2020/21	3686	2976 (80.7%)	710 (19.3%)	90.7%	91.4%	90.2%	90.0%	91.1%	89.7%	90.8%	89.8%	92.3%
2019/20	3303	2707 (82%)	596 (18%)	87%	88%	86%	86%	87%	84%	87%	85%	90%
2018/19	3470	2916 (84%)	554 (16%)	91%	91%	88%	91%	89%	92%	89%	88%	91%

In the provision for Young People we see that for 2022/23 we had responses from 2640 leavers and a notable 91% of these told us they were in work or further study (positive progression). High proportions of positive destinations have been a strong feature of this provision across the last six years. There is no difference material gap across this provision.

3. Adults

Key

	Lower than the overall Positive >3%
	>3% Lower than peers
	<3% /Increase/Equal to overall and peers

We no longer use J2Research to collect destinations data for our Adult provision. You can see in the table above that destinations collection started to shift out of the data set during 2021/22 leaving only 102 leavers who were part of the collection that year.

Year	Leavers	Destinations			Gender		Ethnicity		High Needs		Widening Participation	
		Known	Unknown	Positive	Female	Male	BAME	Non-BAME	HN	Non-HN	WP	Non-WP
2022/23	102	81 (79.4%)	21 (20.6%)	82.7%	80.3%	90.0%	78.9%	83.9%	-	82.7%	85.4%	78.8%
2021/22	296	237 (80.1%)	59 (19.9%)	83.8%	83.9%	83.7%	83.6%	83.9%	89.3%	81.8%	81.4%	87.7%
2020/21	3957	2888 (73%)	1069 (27%)	85.7%	84.5%	87.2%	84.2%	86.9%	82.6%	85.8%	84.0%	89.0%
2019/20	4304	3228 (75%)	1076 (25%)	71%	75%	62%	70%	74%	75%	70%	64%	76%
2018/19	4482	3424 (76%)	1058 (24%)	82%	83%	81%	80%	84%	84%	80%	80%	87%

Purlos Data

Year	Leavers	Destinations		
		Known	Unknown	Positive
2022/23	3773	2084 (55.2%)	1689 (44.8%)	71%

The Purlos data includes our adult short courses provision, for example, skills for life, distance learning, ESOL and community, SWAPs/construction gateway, and various other adults across a range of sectors. The vast majority of the positive destinations here show that the majority of adult students are in paid employment for 16 hours or more per week, with a further volume of students in paid employment for less than 16 hours per week. Smaller numbers secure further training and HE and apprenticeships, for example. Adult students were asked where they felt their training related to their current job or training and the large majority agreed that this was the case, especially those progressing from skills for life, ESOL and community and distance learning.

The Net Promotor Score (NPS) is a scale of 1-10 measuring how likely you are to recommend the college to a friend or a colleague. Our score is 8.8, against an average NPS score of 7.8 from the colleges that Purlos works with. This is extremely positive for the college to note.

4. Apprentices

Key

	Lower than the overall Positive >3%
	>3% Lower than peers
	<3% /Increase/Equal to overall and peers

Year	Leavers	Destinations			Gender		Ethnicity		High Needs		Widening Participation	
		Known	Unknown	Positive	Female	Male	BAME	Non-BAME	HN	Non-HN	WP	Non-WP
2022/23	339	205 (60.5%)	134 (39.5%)	96.6%	96.2%	97.0%	96.7%	96.6%	-	96.6%	95.7%	95.3%
2021/22	518	308 (59.5%)	210 (40.5%)	93.8%	92.9%	94.8%	96.0%	93.4%	-	93.8%	94.5%	93.4%
2020/21	712	410 (57.6%)	302 (42.4%)	96.3%	96.1%	96.6%	93.0%	97.1%	-	-	93.8%	98.3%
2019/20	609	304 (50%)	305 (50%)	88%	90%	87%	89%	88%	-	-	84%	91%
2018/19	476	301 (63%)	175 (37%)	93%	91%	95%	89%	93%	-	-	88%	96%

We have maintained strong positive destinations for our Apprenticeship provision across these previous six years. We see that for 2022/23 we had responses from 205 leavers with 96.6% enjoying positive progression into employment or further study. There is no difference material gap across this provision.

5. Higher Education

Year	Leavers	Destinations			Gender		Ethnicity		High Needs		Widening Participation	
		Known	Unknown	Positive	Female	Male	BAME	Non-BAME	HN	Non-HN	WP	Non-WP
2022/23	153	101 (66.0%)	52 (34.0%)	85.1%	80.9%	88.9%	83.3%	85.7%	-	85.1%	86.4%	83.3%
2021/22	199	137 (68.8%)	62 (31.2%)	85.1%	87.0%	83.6%	80.5%	87.5%	-	85.1%	78.5%	92.9%
2020/21	198	139 (70.2%)	59 (29.8%)	89.9%	89.2%	90.8%	92.9%	88.7%	-	89.9%	89.2%	90.8%
2019/20	127	111 (87%)	16 (13%)	87%	91%	84%	81%	90%	-	87%	91%	83%

Positive destinations for our Higher Education students (OfS regulated only) has remained consistently high across this four-year period. For 2022/23 we had responses from 101 leavers with 85.1% of these finding work or further study (positive progression). We see that 8% fewer female students progress into positive destinations although a year before (2021/22), female progression was 3.4% better than male. There are no other material gaps for 2022/23.

Key Walsall College Stakeholder Groups

<p>Civic. Any local, regional or national government bodies. These include: local authorities, county and local councils, LEPS, chambers of commerce, regional development bodies and agencies, WMCA, unitary authorities, Jobcentre Plus, LSIPs.</p> <p>Walsall Council Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership Walsall Employment & Skills Board Walsall DWP/JCP Offices West Midlands Combined Authority Education & Skills Funding Agency Department for Education Black County Chamber of Commerce Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education Office for Students (OFS) Ofsted Ofqual Health and Wellbeing Board Birmingham City Council</p>	<p>Community. These include community representative groups, local authority projects to train or bring into education those further from employment or training, project groups that target particular neighbourhoods, areas, communities.</p> <p>WHG, WATMOS, Gatework 2 Housing, Black Country Impact Programme, One Walsall, Black Country Click Start, Black Leadership Group, Jane Lane School, Castle School Transforming Communities Together, Small Street YMCA, Ikon Fostering, Brownhills Community Centre, Stan Ball Centre, The Glebe Centre, Samaritans Walsall, Rethink Mental Illness, YMCA, Sail Ltd, Walsall Fostering Services, Citizens Advice, Pelsall Community Association, Recovery College Youth Connect, Black Sisters Collective, Linking Lives Aldridge, Agenda 21, The Mind Kind Projects, Afghan Community Walsall, A'aina Community Hub, Pleck Youth Centre, Black Country Foodbank</p>
<p>Education. In this group would be other colleges, ILPs, ISCs, higher education institutions, CLS providers, feeder schools and other educational stakeholders or partners.</p> <p>Colleges West Midlands University of Wolverhampton University of Warwick University of Worcester Birmingham City University Staffordshire University Coventry University De Montfort University Nottingham Trent University Liverpool John Moores University Newman University Birmingham Aston University University of Birmingham Examples of our feeder schools AELP Association of Colleges Education Training Foundation Open College Network Numerous Sector Skills Councils including Habia We have 30 key feeder schools where 80% of our young people are referred from</p>	<p>Employers. Includes small local and larger regional/national employers. Also, partnerships with employer or sector representative bodies such as the CBI, CITB, NFU, Institute of Directors and others.</p> <p>Balfour Beatty VINCI Birmingham City Council Walsall Council Dudley Group of Hospitals Accord Group Birmingham Hippodrome Francesco Group Dudley Council Taylor Wimpey West Midlands Ambulance Service West Midlands Fire Service CITB Walsall Art Gallery Federation of Small Business WHG Walsall and Wolverhampton NHS Trust Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme (CISRS) Jet 2.com Tui</p>

Approach to Developing the Annual Accountability Statement and Meeting Skills Needs

Walsall College works tirelessly with local authorities, Local Employment Partnerships, West Midlands Combined Authority, Department for Work and Pensions, sector bodies, employer groups and a myriad of other stakeholders to ensure we understand the changing needs and requirements of employers and students, identifying key priorities and target outcomes. We are proactive in our approach with our Principal Jatinder Sharma a Board Member of Association of Colleges and the Black Country Chamber, amongst other bodies. Jatinder is also currently a Deputy Lieutenant for the West Midlands.

We are active members and lead on a range of West Midlands Combined Authority planning activity and sector specific groups including Chairing the Digital Skills group for the region. We are fully engaged in the Colleges West Midlands Group and have Board membership on the Association of Employment and Learning Providers. At a local level, we work with all stakeholders from businesses and community including holding the Chair of the Walsall Employment and Skills Board.

This broad ranging activity is at the heart of curriculum planning for the College, informing on current and emerging needs along with enabling us to consult with stakeholders on the development of our plans. A clear example of this is the Colleges West Midlands Group where Colleges across the West Midlands compare their offers and specialisms to ensure coverage of all needs across the region, limiting overlap and the associated risk of wasted resources. This results in the annual College West Midlands Course Directory, a shared prospectus for Further Education across the region which students and employers to make informed decisions when selecting a provider.

This Accountability Statement and our Duty to Review Skills Needs will be reviewed annually and informs the Curriculum planning process and the wider Curriculum Strategy. The Duty to Review is data, employer and stakeholder driven, supported by and leading to timely and considered shifts in the curriculum offer. Ensuring staffing and capital requirements are planned over 3 years. The plan is agreed with the Walsall College Board on an annual basis but continually tested through identified lead governors for each curriculum area throughout the year.

Accountability Framework - Part 2 - Walsall Colleges Aims and Outcomes for the next 12 months

Below, we set out a number of aims and outcomes for the year ahead in an Action Plan which reflects how we are responding to national, regional and local priorities and skills needs. Each outcome is aligned to our Pledges contained within our Corporate Plan.

Pledge Number	College Strategic Aim	Strategic Outcome
Pledge 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	<p>Local Policy driver – Walsall Council Plan 22/25, Walsall Employment and Skills Board, Towns Investment Fund</p> <p>Regional Policy – WMCA Skills Strategy/Plan, West Midlands LSIP, WMCA Employment & Skills Strategy 2024-2027, WMCA Single Settlement</p> <p>National Policy – Skills for Jobs White Paper, Levelling Up, Shared Prosperity Fund and Deeper Devolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers and stakeholders will increasingly co-design and shape the College offer through Employer Advisor Groups and Employer in Every Classroom tracking to inform curriculum planning. Strategic planning through employer and stakeholder activities, leading and being members of local, regional and national sector and employer groups to support the implementation of LSIP findings, moving more people into employment or higher levels of study. Increase delivery of employer driven recruitment and in work upskilling activity through apprenticeships in work learning, Sector Work Based Programmes and Bootcamps to ensure we support business change, innovation and workforce planning. Continued roll out of T Levels, developing capital and facilities and continuing to work with employers to offer industry placements. College is leading on the Innovate project which will further enhance employer engagement activity
Pledge 2	Build a culture that celebrates and prioritises excellence and innovation in Teaching, Learning and Assessment	<p>Regional Policy – WMCA Skills Strategy/Plan, West Midlands LSIP, WMCA Employment & Skills Strategy 2024-2027, WMCA Single Settlement</p> <p>National Policy – Skills for Jobs White Paper, Shared Prosperity Fund and Deeper Devolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a network of Advanced Practitioners to identify strengths and areas for development within all subject areas. Advanced Practitioners will be encouraged to achieve Advanced Teacher Status. Innovation in Teaching, Learning and Assessment to support students to develop skills beyond their core programme. This is captured as part of the Walsall College Graduate programme. Celebrate excellence and innovation in teaching through an annual Curriculum Conference and other subject relevant events. We will be developing our Teaching and Learning Training offer in academic year 24/25
Pledge 3	Develop the maths, English and digital skills	<p>Local Policy driver – Walsall Council Plan 22/25, Walsall Employment and Skills Board</p>

	of all our students in order to prepare them for the world of work by embedding skills seamlessly into every programme	<p>Regional Policy – WMCA Skills Strategy/Plan, West Midlands LSIP, WMCA Employment & Skills Strategy 2024-2027, WMCA Single Settlement</p> <p>National Policy – Skills for Jobs White Paper, Levelling Up, Shared Prosperity Fund and Deeper Devolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise initiatives including Multiply, Tuition Fund and Skills Bootcamps to ensure students gain core transferable skills which support progression. • Multiply provision is being delivered from the Link. • Ensure that all students have the opportunity to develop maths and English beyond their starting point. • Increase the proportion of students who improve their GCSE grades in English and maths. • The College has and will continue to drive a Maths and English improvement plan, including new deliver methods, Century Tech Implementation, review of exam arrangements and a new programme of Teacher CPD. • Ensure all students have the appropriate access to digital technology to support their vocational pathway, in line with the Combined Authorities Digital Inclusion plan and Walsall College Graduate. • We will continue to support our students to build their resilience and prepare them for the challenges of today's world of work.
Pledge 4	Become a truly innovative digital college	<p>Regional Policy – WMCA Skills Strategy/Plan, West Midlands LSIP, WMCA Employment & Skills Strategy 2024-2027, WMCA Single Settlement</p> <p>National Policy – Skills for Jobs White Paper, Levelling Up, Shared Prosperity Fund and Deeper Devolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital as consistent theme throughout all delivery areas of the College with the new Digital Hub facility being accessible to every curriculum area to provide exposure to the latest digital capabilities including design and virtual reality, equipping students for the world of work. • All staff to be appropriately digitally skilled, facilitated by the Walsall College Digital Educator Programme to ensure the knowledge and skills are in place to effectively support students. • Employer Digital needs to be met through the expansion of our Digital offer to include Digital Bootcamps, providing a focussed and timely digital education and route into employment and crucially upskilling those already in work. • College is leading on the Innovate project which will further enhance employer engagement activity. A sector focus for the College will be digital.
Pledge 5	Proactively engage to upskill the regional workforce by helping people learn throughout their lives	<p>Local Policy driver – Walsall Council Plan 22/25, Walsall Employment and Skills Board, Towns Investment Fund</p> <p>Regional Policy – WMCA Skills Strategy/Plan, West Midlands LSIP, WMCA Employment & Skills Strategy 2024-2027 WMCA Single Settlement</p> <p>National Policy – Skills for Jobs White Paper, Levelling Up, Shared Prosperity Fund and Deeper Devolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Link is a multi-service centre, designed to empower and support the residents of Walsall on their journey to

		<p>employment. It is a one-stop shop for individuals aged 16 and over, to access a wealth of resources and personalised mentoring from a diverse group of service providers, all within a safe, supportive and nurturing environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the Colleges in work provision through initiatives including Flexible Courses for Jobs, WMCA “in work” flexibilities and Apprenticeships alongside a range of commercial courses to provide timely market demand lead provision including an expansion of specific green programmes. • Increasingly varied methods, location and timings for college courses to enable those already in the workplace or with commitments to access training in a way which is appropriate for their circumstances, including the continued development of blended learning programmes. • Continue to develop an ambitious adult plan aligned to occupational vacancies increasing provision and access to the key sectors of Health, Digital, Green, Professional and Financial services and Construction and Engineering. • Further development of Level 4 and 5 provision in key sectors to enable progression and social mobility through HTQ development, Expansion of Higher Apprenticeships and AEB flexibilities and modular delivery. • Support our communities to develop skills to support wider Personal Development including Health and Wellbeing. <p>Note - Numerous indicators and research identify Logistics and Distribution as a key sector within both Walsall and the surrounding regions, we acknowledge the need for this provision but have identified a number of specialist providers who already delivery this provision regionally and as a result Walsall College does not plan to deliver in this sector within the next 12 months.</p>
Pledge 6	Create a high quality and seamless experience for all stakeholders, which is sustainable and accelerates the way to a greener future	<p>Local Policy driver – Walsall Council Plan 22/25, Towns Investment Fund</p> <p>Regional Policy – WMCA Skills Strategy/Plan, West Midlands LSIP, WMCA Employment & Skills Strategy 2024-2027, WMCA Single Settlement</p> <p>National Policy – Skills for Jobs White Paper, Levelling Up, Shared Prosperity Fund and Deeper Devolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise and embed the Walsall College Environmental Strategy, developed through a range of specific focus groups with both internal and external partners to ensure College practices and delivery are all reflective of environmental pressures. • Grow Environmental focused provision and facilities through funded and commercial activity to continue our expansion of programs in Electric Vehicle, Heat Pump, Solar, Gray Water Harvesting, Green Roofing, Modern Methods of Construction and Wall Insulation. • Continue to review and enhance our Website to Graduation agenda enabling students to access and transition to different provision types seamlessly.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green and Sustainability agenda across all provision types. Students to develop the technical skills, knowledge, values and attitudes needed in the workforce to support sustainable social, economic and environmental outcomes in business, industry and the wider community. Curriculum will need to meet one of the following criteria when being planned: • Green Skill Tier 1 – Awareness – This is where the programme includes a general understanding of Green and Sustainability topics • Green Skills Tier 2 – Specific – The is where the programme has specialist elements of Green and Sustainability skills development embedded • Green Skills Tier 3 – Specialised – This is where the programme specifically meets a technical Green or Sustainability agenda
Pledge 7	Promote rapid progression between levels and settings with an aim to increase numbers at Levels 3, 4 & 5	<p>Regional Policy – WMCA Skills Strategy/Plan, West Midlands LSIP, WMCA Employment & Skills Strategy 2024-2027, WMCA Single Settlement</p> <p>National Policy – Skills for Jobs White Paper, Levelling Up, Shared Prosperity Fund and Deeper Devolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase take up of Apprenticeships to include students progressing through our community and entry/access level provision. • Continued growth of Supported Internships in partnership with key employers. • Curriculum focus on increasing the number of Level 3, 4 and 5 courses offered, in line with policy and employer reported requirements for higher level skills. • Seamless transition between provision types and levels, enabling student progression from entry level through to higher education. • The College is currently undertaking a review of all HE provision • The College is increasingly delivering more level 3 and level 4 provision. An example is our successful business case to WMCA to secure funding for Level 4 Beauty provision to support students to grow their business/develop in their job role. • Continue to work with the University of Worcester to support student progression to the new Health Hub Higher-Level in Dudley


Corporation Sign off

Duty to review provision in relation to local needs

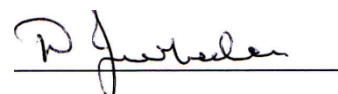
We are committed to complying with our duty under a new section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 to review provision in relation to local needs, as proposed in the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill 2022. We will look to hold a review at least every three years to identify how well we are meeting local needs associated with securing suitable employment. We will publish a report on our main website following this review. We will factor in any actions from this report into our Accountability Agreement plan.

Statement

On behalf of the Walsall College Corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the College plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Corporation at their meeting on 11th June 2024. The plan will be published on the College website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed from the link below.



Jatinder Sharma CBE DL
Principal & Chief Executive
Walsall College



David Wheeler
Chair of the Corporation
Walsall College

Hyperlink to [College Website](#)

Supporting Documentation

[wmca-employment-and-skills-strategy-2024-2027.pdf](#)

[Walsall College Corporate Strategy 2021-2024](#)

[Skills for Jobs White Paper](#)

[WMCA Digital Roadmap](#)

[WMCA Plan for Growth](#)

[West Midlands and Warwickshire LSIP.pdf](#)