



EASTERN
EDUCATION
GROUP



WEST
SUFFOLK
COLLEGE



Accountability Agreement

2025/2026 Academic Year



Contents

3	Introduction
3	College Mission and Purpose
4	Strategic Aims and Objectives
5	Understanding the local context.
8	Approach to Developing the Annual Accountability Statement
12	Local Skills Improvement Plan
13	Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities
21	Governing Board Statement



Foreword

Established in 1925, the Bury St Edmunds Technical Institute began offering Engineering, Building, and vocational evening classes on the grounds of the Silver Jubilee School. In 1925, it decided to construct a new, purpose-built college on its own land at the Gibraltar Barracks site, where West Suffolk College stands today, proudly serving our community for 100 years.

West Suffolk College is driven by a fundamental mission: to provide exceptional education and training tailored to the unique needs of our community, fostering personal and professional growth. Our commitment is deeply embedded in a strategic plan that prioritises academic excellence, inclusivity, and responsiveness to local demands.

In response to the evolving landscape of technology, industry requirements, and community expectations, West Suffolk College has continuously adapted its programmes, teaching methodologies, and support services since the last update to our strategic plan. These adjustments are essential to ensure sustained relevance and effectiveness in fulfilling our educational mission.

Our strategic objectives highlight the importance of agility in response to change, cultivating partnerships with local businesses, and enhancing the employability of our graduates. This approach is designed to make a significant contribution to the socioeconomic growth of our region and to empower individuals to thrive in an ever-evolving environment.

The symbiotic relationship between West Suffolk College's strategic plan and the annual Accountability Statement is crucial. The Accountability Statement serves as a vital tool for assessing our progress towards the strategic goals outlined in our plan, enabling transparent communication of our achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement to stakeholders.

Fulfilling the Local Needs Duty is a responsibility that West Suffolk College embraces with dedication. We are committed to articulating long-term strategic outcomes and actions that directly address the specific needs of our local community. This duty aligns seamlessly with our overarching mission, compelling us to proactively identify and respond to the distinct educational requirements and aspirations of our region.

West Suffolk College is more than an educational institution—it is a beacon of opportunity, growth, and transformation. We strive not only to meet but to surpass the expectations of our community, empowering individuals to unlock their potential and shape a brighter future. Through strategic planning, continuous adaptation, and an unwavering commitment to excellence, we inspire success, nurture ambition, and create lasting impact for generations to come.



Introduction

This document sets out West Suffolk Colleges Annual Accountability Statement for the academic year 2025/26 and our key strategic aims, which link to and enhance our existing strategic priorities for 2022-25.

This document should be in conjunction with our strategic plan and Board Curriculum Review 2022-2023.

Our Vision

As part of the Eastern Education Group, our vision is simple. In an ever- changing world, we deliver a world-class, inspiring life-long learning journey that drives prosperity and wellbeing for all in our communities.

At the heart of this is progression. We support students to the next stages of their lives by focusing on:



Qualifications

We enable every student to achieve the qualifications, acquire knowledge and develop the transferable skills that will support them to move onto the next stage of their education or employment.




Connections

Our strong relationships with businesses give our students real life work experience and contacts and gives employers their future pipeline of talent.



Personal Development

We develop social skills, resilience, and growth. We help our students leave us with the attributes that will enable them to thrive and grasp the opportunities that await them.



Strategic Priorities

Our Students

1. We will ensure every student is able to progress throughout our provisions.
2. We will ensure every student is able to develop personally and academically.
3. We will ensure every student is able to build strong employer connections.
4. We will provide excellent wraparound support and celebrate and champion diversity.

Our People

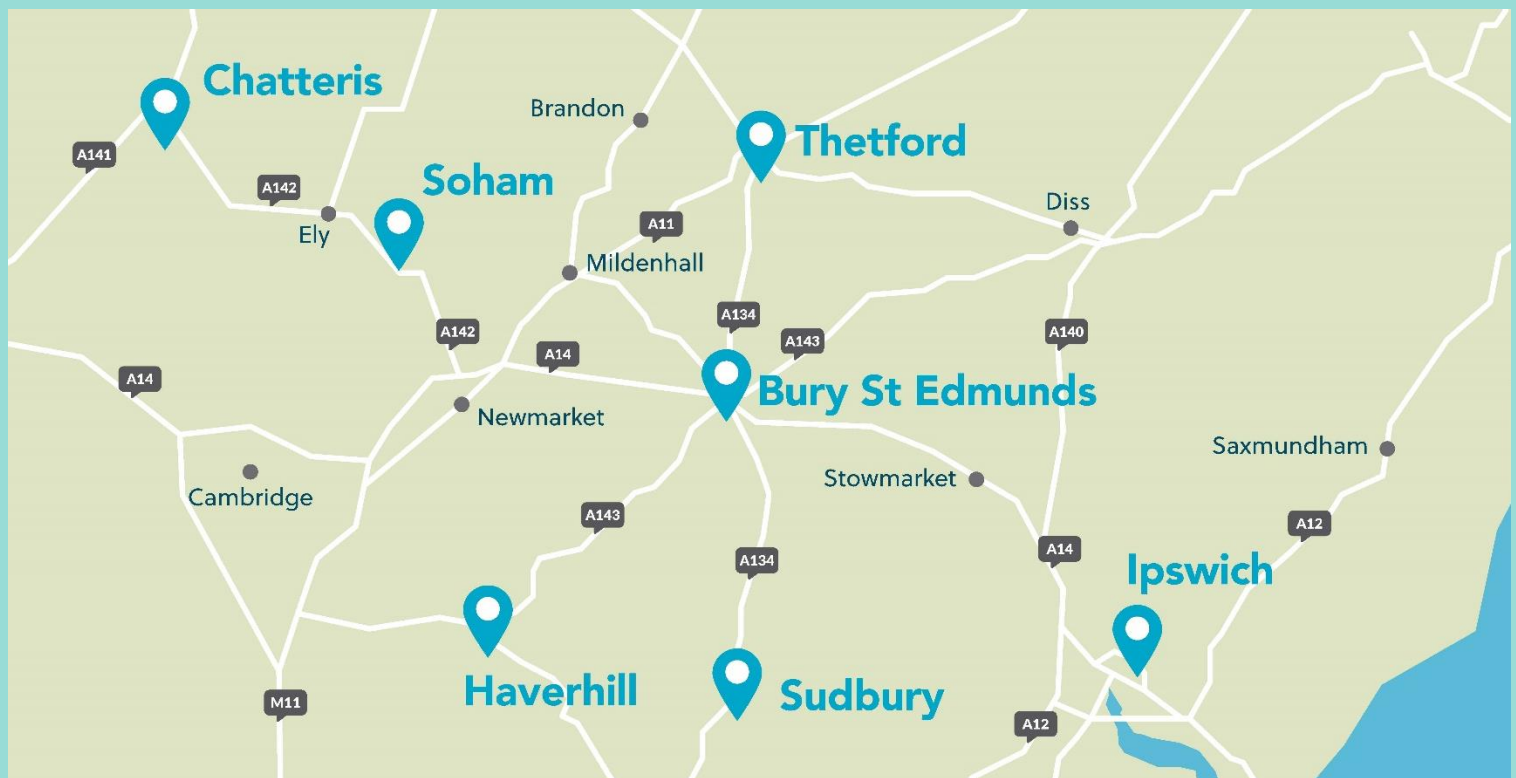
1. We will encourage and engage our people to develop mastery by offering a comprehensive range of courses and programmes.
2. We will unlock autonomy for all by advocating cross-discipline working.
3. We will showcase and reward purpose by continually celebrating the successes and achievements of our students and staff.
4. We will continue to create opportunity underpinned by a strong commitment to welfare that will support our people to thrive personally and professionally.

Our Communities

1. We will support our communities educationally through our Escalator Model
2. We will support businesses in the region by sharing knowledge, ideas, resources, skills and developing work-led education in collaboration with employers.
3. We will work in collaboration with the public and the third sectors to help fulfil workforce needs and ensure that they have the knowledge to succeed operationally.
4. We will promote safe, respectful, and socially inclusive communities where a strong sense of place and a shared vision of equality and diversity is enjoyed by all.

Our Infrastructure

1. We will ensure that every person has access to an appropriate virtual and physical learning environment.
2. We will ensure that every student and colleague have access to the appropriate and innovative technology and equipment, and that our systems promote a seamless flow of information.
3. We will focus on best practice resource management and diversifying of revenue streams will support our ongoing financial viability.
4. We will ensure that decisions that we make about our infrastructure, policies and practices reflect our environmental responsibilities and aspirations.



West Suffolk College:

Understanding the local and regional context.

West Suffolk College (the College) is rated Outstanding and Strong by Ofsted and is located in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, which has a population of over 42,000. There are seven other towns within a twenty-mile radius of Bury St Edmunds (the College's main catchment area for full time students) with populations of between 8,000 and 30,000, including Thetford and Diss. Teaching, Learning, and Assessment predominantly takes place at the sixth form campus, supplemented by outstanding, well-resourced Construction and Building Services facilities at the nearby Built Environment Campus. University and Higher Education take place at the University and Professional Development campus. There are further learning centers located nearby in Haverhill, Sudbury, Ipswich, Soham and Thetford as well as a specialist apprenticeship and engineering campus in Chatteris named North Cambridgeshire Training Centre (NCTC). The apprenticeship provision delivers across England and Wales with large numbers of employers and apprentices in Cambridgeshire, Essex, as well as Suffolk and Norfolk. The College holds national NHS contracts to deliver Pharmacy Technician and a national payroll contract. Adult provision is delivered in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk with increasing delivery taking place in employer premises.

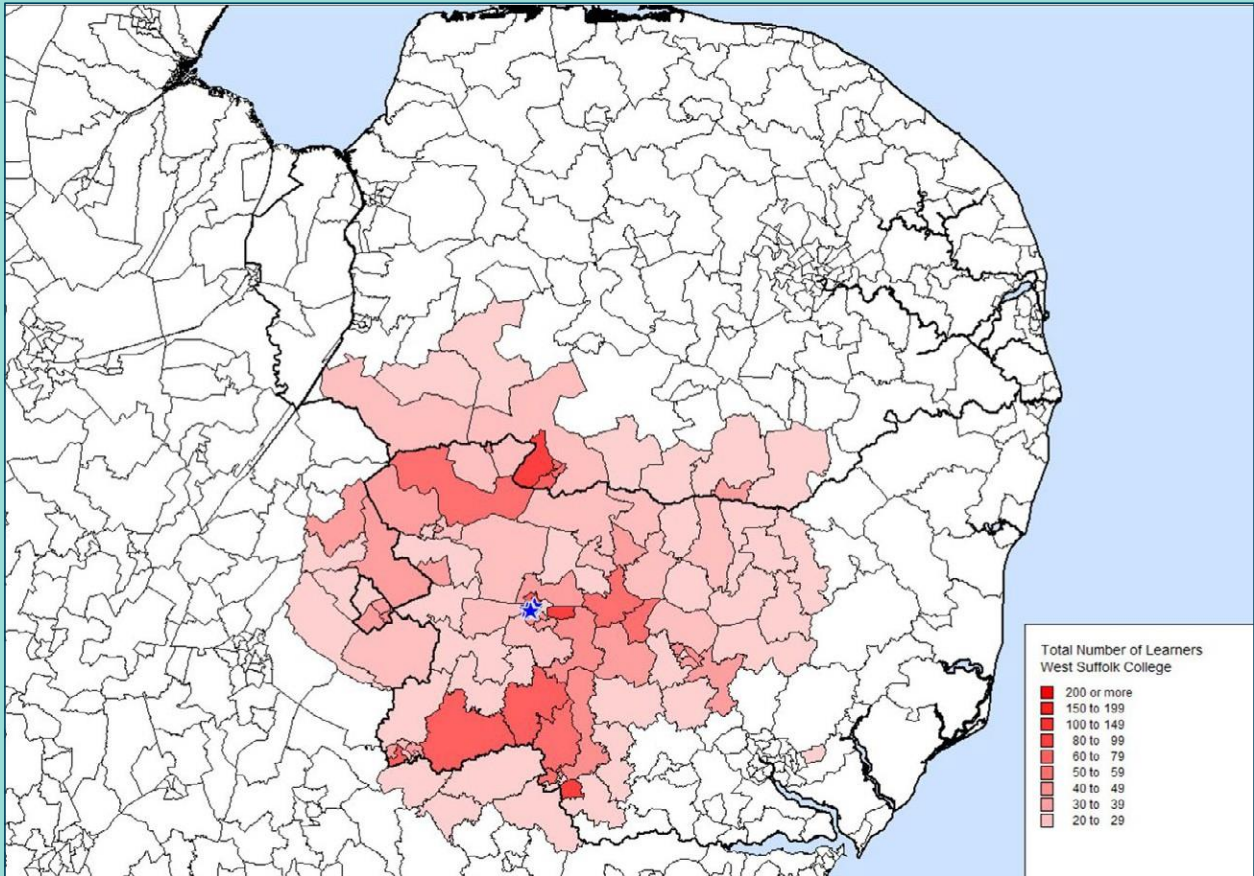
The College had a total of 10,705 students in 2023/24. 3,366 learners studied Education Programmes for Young People, with an additional 184 Elective Home Education students making up a 33% of the students studying at the College. Apprentices represented 23% of the College's cohort with 2,489 learners. Adult Provision saw 4,354 students joining their courses in the 2023/24 academic year (as of July 2024) representing 41% of the total student cohort. Finally, 312 students studied HE courses in the 2023/24 academic year.

The College is part of Eastern Education Group with Abbeygate Sixth Form College (Ofsted grade outstanding May 2023) in Bury St Edmunds offering A level provision to 1,079 students and One Sixth Form College (Ofsted grade outstanding April 2022) offering a mix of vocational, technical and A level provision to 2,308 students in 2023/24.

Unemployment remains below the national rates for the region and there is significant employment in health, social care and other public services, business and retail services, distribution, hospitality and tourism, construction, and manufacturing industries. However, since the end of the pandemic, employers have experienced difficulties in recruiting individuals with the relevant skill sets in most sectors as highlighted in the 'Get Britain Moving' government white paper.

It's important to note that 13% of the 16-19 cohort come from some of the most deprived wards in the East of England. It is also important to contextualize the East of England lags behind other parts of the country in terms of gross salaries. The East sees gross weekly pay fall in between that of the national average. It's also important to note that 90.0% of enterprise in the East is made up of Micro (0-9 staff) businesses. Small (10-49 staff) businesses make up 8.2%, Medium (50-249 staff) businesses hold a 1.5% market share and only 0.4% of enterprise is from Large (250+) businesses. The nearest General Further Education (GFE) College is 24 miles from Bury St Edmunds, as such, West Suffolk College have a wide remit and important role in ensuring engagement, promoting opportunities, raising aspiration level, and ensuring no community is left behind.

16-19 Funded Learners - West Suffolk College (2023/24)

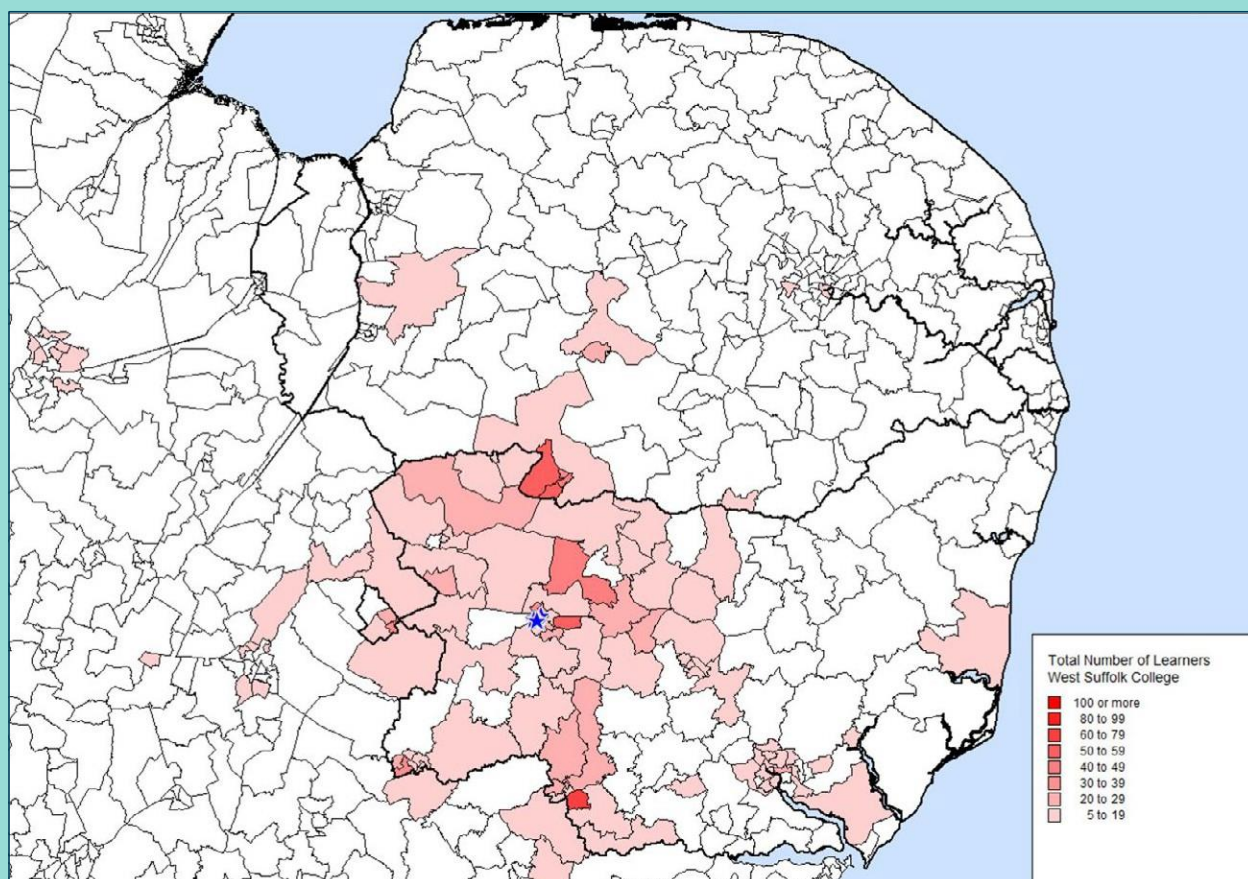


Source: RCU Norfolk and Suffolk Regional Mapping Report R14 2023/24

Locations of Employers with current Apprenticeship Enrolments

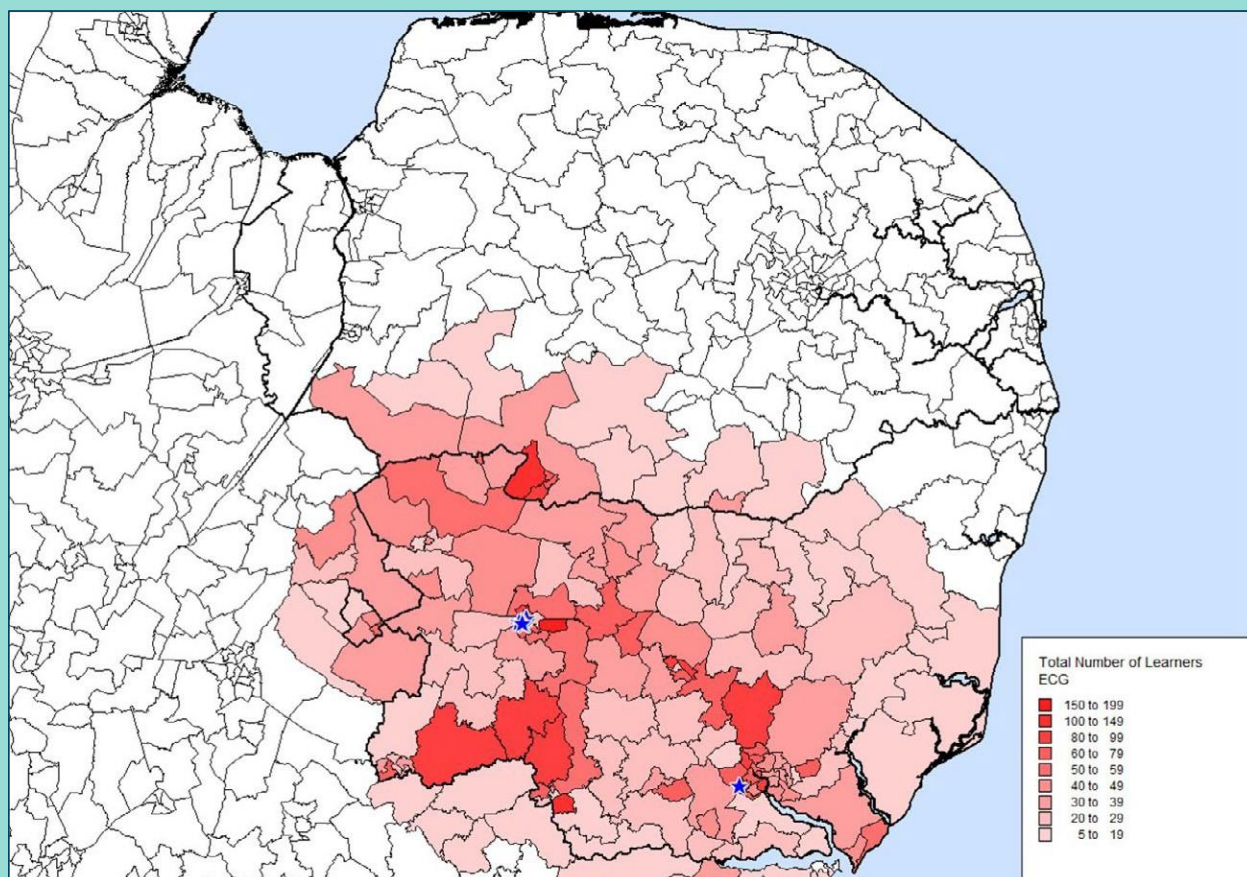


Adult Learners - West Suffolk College (2023/2024)



Source: RCU Norfolk and Suffolk Regional Mapping Report R14 2023/2024

16-19 Funded Learners - Eastern Education Group (2023/2024)



Source: RCU Norfolk and Suffolk Regional Mapping Report R14 2023/2024

Collaborative approach

West Suffolk College takes a strategic and collaborative approach to developing its annual Accountability Statement, establishing key priorities and target outcomes. Strong stakeholder relationships are central to our success, enabling us to align our strategy with regional priorities and deliver meaningful impact.

We work closely with the Department for Education (DfE) Employer Relations Board (ERB) and the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), ensuring our provision meets employer and industry needs. Our partnerships with local authorities, businesses, and community organisations provide valuable insights into evolving skills demands, helping us shape a curriculum that is relevant, responsive, and supportive of economic growth.

Our work is underpinned by a focus on key sectors that drive economic prosperity in the East of England, including health, engineering, construction, and digital industries. We also recognise the importance of emerging sectors, such as logistics, and are committed to developing innovative curricula that respond to evolving workforce needs. By continuously engaging with industry leaders, we ensure that our learners are equipped with the skills required to thrive in these vital fields.

West Suffolk College is actively engaged in major infrastructure projects across the region, working closely with local authorities and industry stakeholders to support regional development and align with national priorities. By collaborating on large-scale initiatives, such as transport, energy, and housing developments, we contribute to the creation of a skilled workforce ready to meet the demands of these projects. This proactive approach ensures that our educational provision is directly linked to the evolving needs of the region, driving economic growth and social progress.

Collaboration is at the heart of our approach. By engaging with educational institutions, training providers, and employers, we create a cohesive skills ecosystem that fosters curriculum alignment, removes barriers to participation, reduces duplication, and establishes clear progression pathways for learners.

Meeting the Local Needs Duty requires broad collaboration beyond the statutory Further Education (FE) sector. We actively partner with a large range of employers, civic and community organisations as well as the education sector to enhance the quality and relevance of education across the region. These relationships drive innovation, improve learner outcomes, and ensure a pipeline of skilled individuals ready to meet workforce demands.

Our commitment to stakeholder engagement underpins initiatives that strengthen curriculum development, widen access to education, and create seamless learner pathways. By working collectively, we address skills gaps, support economic resilience, and build a future-ready workforce.

West Suffolk College's success is built on strong, strategic partnerships with ERB, LSIP, employers, local providers, wider stakeholders. These collaborations enhance our strategic planning and reinforce our commitment to an inclusive, forward-thinking education system that meets needs of our community



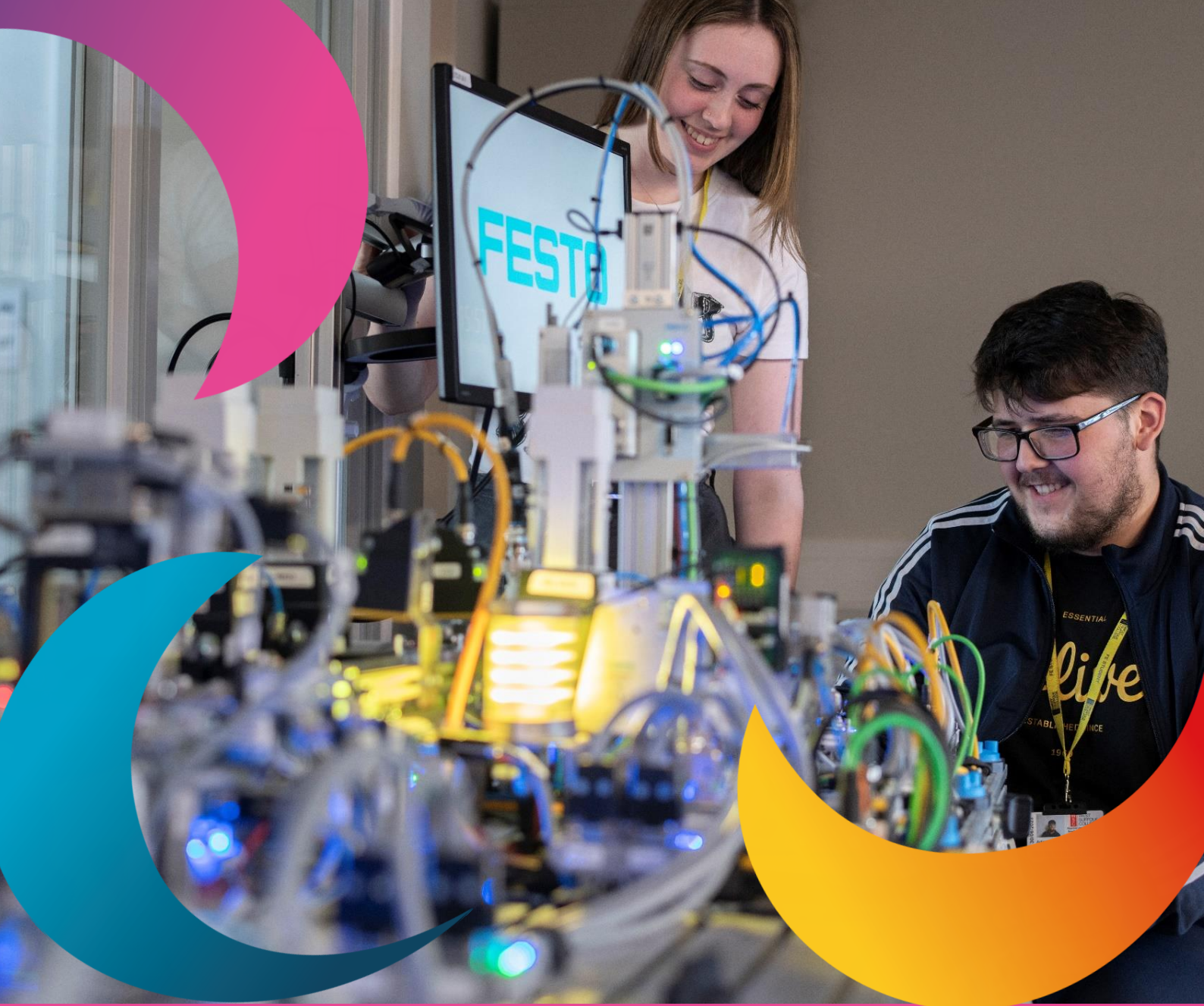
Collaborative approach

The College has a strong history of collaborative working, and we are at the heart of the community to ensure we develop the right knowledge, skills, and behaviours that employers and businesses require. The key organisations and groups in the table below are just an example of those who we have a strong relationship with:

Civic	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cambridge County Council Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) Cambridge Chamber of Commerce Breakland District Council Fenland Council East Cambridge Council Ipswich Borough Council Norfolk Chamber of Commerce Norfolk County Council Suffolk Chamber of Commerce Suffolk County Council West Suffolk Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Heroes Bury Town Trust Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce Chatteris Food Bank – (new engagement) Chatteris Resettlement Hub (Ukraine) Creative Fenland Dereham Ukrainian Aid Centre DWP EELGA East of England Local Government Association Fenland Community Fridge - (new engagement) Fenland Economic Development Manager Ferry Project – (new engagement) Green Skills Sundays Guild of Ceilers and Joiners HAY Fenland Healthy You Ipswich Co-Op Community Groups Leading Lives NATECLA ONE Haverhill Royal British Legion Social Prescribers at George Clare Surgery Sudbury Town Council Suffolk County Council, mental health, and youth agencies Suffolk Libraries and Cambridgeshire Libraries Suffolk Refugee Support The Bridge Project
Education	
<p>New Anglia Colleges Group – including College of West Anglia, Suffolk New College, City College Norwich, East Coast College, One Sixth Form College, Abbeygate Sixth Form College, East Norfolk Sixth Form and West Suffolk College.</p> <p>Associations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Association of Colleges Department for Education Sixth Form College Association Bury School Partnership Cambridge Principal Group <p>Higher Education Institutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Cambridge University of East Anglia University of Suffolk University of Essex Anglia Ruskin 	<p>Feeder Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bury St Edmunds County Upper School Castle Manor Academy Churchill Special Free School Culford School Debenham High School Ely College Felixstowe Academy Hillside Special School Iceni Academy King Edward VI School Linton Village College Mildenhall College Academy Newmarket Academy Olive AP Academy Suffolk (Central) Ormiston Sudbury Academy Priory School Riverwalk School Samuel Ward Academy Soham Village College St Benedict's Catholic School Stour Valley Community School Stowmarket High School Stowupland High School Sybil Andrews Academy The Albany Centre The Thetford Academy Thomas Gainsborough School Thurston Community College

Employers

- 2 Sisters Food Group (Thetford)
- A&S Coachworks Ltd
- Abbeycroft Leisure
- Achieving Aspirations - Sudbury
- Addenbrookes Hospital
- Adder Technology Ltd
- Advanced Air (UK) Ltd
- Aerotron Composites Ltd
- AES National
- Anglia Sunshine Nurseries
- Anglian Water Services
- B Braun Medical UK Ltd
- Barts Health NHS Trust - Newark Street
- Basildon Hospital
- Bloor Homes
- Broomfield Hospital
- Bury Developments
- Butterfly Day Nursery - Cambridge
- C P Foods
- Cambridge City Council
- Cambridge University Press & Assessment
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust
- Camden Boss
- Carl Zeiss Microscopy Limited
- Claret
- Clip Clop Day Nursery
- Cocksedge Building Contractors Ltd
- Coulson Building Group
- Covance Laboratorie Ltd
- Cranswick Country Foods
- Crofton Engineering
- Domino UK Ltd
- East of England Co-Operative Society
- EBAC Plumbing & Heating
- EDF (Sizewell B&C)
- Eurofins Chemtest Ltd
- Flagship Group
- G's Group Holdings Limited (Shropshire Group)
- Gasway Services Ltd
- Glasswell & Last Limited
- Grid2
- Guy's & St Thomas NHS Foundation Trust
- H G Frost Building Contractors Ltd
- Haas Automation
- Haltermann Carless
- Hampshire Hospitals NHS Trust
- Havebury Housing Partnership
- Heraeus Noblelight
- Herma UK Ltd
- Herrco Cosmetics Ltd
- Hutchison Ports (UK) Port of Felixstowe
- Huttie Building Services
- Huxley Bertram Engineering Ltd
- Ichiban UK Limited
- Imtech Inviron Limited
- Institute of Carpenters
- Ivor Searle Limited
- James Paget University Hospital
- JEB Technologies Limited
- JKH Limited
- Kier Construction
- King's College Hospital London
- Kings School
- Leading Lives
- Leeds General Infirmary
- Lintott Control Systems Ltd
- Lister Hospital (East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust)
- Marie Curie
- Mediterranean Shipping Company (UK) Ltd
- Morgan Sindall
- Mundesley Medical Centre
- Munro Building Services Ltd
- Muntons PLC
- National Trust
- Network 2 Supplies Ltd
- Norfolk & Suffolk Foundation Trust
- Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital
- North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust
- Northumbria Healthcare Trust
- Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust
- Omar Homes
- Paragon Customer Communications
- Pentaco
- Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust
- Ramage Brickwork
- Royal British Legion
- Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust
- Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust
- S Sacker (Claydon) Limited (Sackers)
- Seamans Building
- Shearline Precision Engineering Ltd
- Shelbourne Reynolds Engineering Limited
- Sherwood Forest Hospitals
- Siemens Healthineers
- South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
- Southend University Hospital
- SRL Technical Services Ltd
- Stainless Metalcraft (Chatteris) Ltd
- SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK (formally SITA)
- Suffolk and North East Essex Training Hub
- TAIT Technologies UK Ltd
- Taylor Made Joinery Interiors Limited
- Taylor Wimpy Homes
- The Guildhall Dental Practice (Gensmile)
- The Newcastle upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust - Royal Victoria Infirmary
- The Queen Elizabeth Hospital
- University College London Hospitals Pharmacy
- University Hospital Southampton
- University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust
- University of Cambridge
- Vertas
- Videndum Production Solutions
- Warren Services Limited
- West Suffolk Council
- West Suffolk Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Wirral Univeristy Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Worlington Hall Country House Hotel
- Yeovil District Hospital



As an education provider, the College does not work in isolation and is an integral partner of the New Anglia Colleges Group, where the Principals and Deputy Principals meet on a regular basis to ensure the skills required by the community are being addressed.

Senior leaders continued to strengthen the College's links with secondary and primary schools in the area. This is part of the College's wider strategic priority to encourage interest in STEM subjects among pupils and students, from an early age. This extensive work has reached over 10,000 under 16s and over 1000 educators over the 23/24 academic year and has enabled the College to become the heart of education in the county and the region.

The College has continued to extend its outstanding links with the business community for the benefit of students across the EEG group. Over the past year the College has worked with over 2000 businesses for both Apprenticeship and Student Work Placements. We have recruited over 750 new Apprentices and supported 3,000 Student Work Placements which equates to nearly 200,000 hours of work experience.

We have supported over 1,200 individuals from organisations with commercial training packages and continued to develop our open course offer to meet the local and regional skills requirements. As a result of this activity, the College has developed Employer Advisory Group (EAG) in areas where this method has the most sector and curriculum impact.

We are now delivering on a national geography in England and Wales. The College invests time in developing its strategic approach, developing relationships with larger stakeholders such as the East of England All party Parliamentary Group (EoE APPG) as well as sub-groups, the local Chamber(s) of Commerce, the District and County Council(s), the Federation of Small Businesses, HM Prison(s), Job Centre Plus, Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and other business enterprise boards.

This ensures we provide greater targeted support to a wider community.

Local Skills Improvement Plans

The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) 2 is a new initiative following on from the 2022 initial LSIP launch from the Department for Education (DfE). The purpose being to set out the key priorities needed to make technical education and skills provision more responsive to the changing needs of employers and the local economy by ensuring a better match between the supply of, and demand for, the skills employers most need to thrive and boost productivity, as well as helping to drive greater collaboration between providers to realize the benefits of economies of scale and specialisation.

A key objective is making provision more accessible and addressing barriers to progression. The LSIP will put employers at the heart of the skills agenda in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire.

The remit for LSIP focuses on four key parts:

- Articulate the employers' skills need – what are the skills employers need locally and struggle to find?
- Translating employers' needs into changes in provision – how can those employers' needs best be met by the provider in more responsive ways?
- Address learner demand and employer engagement – what can local stakeholders and employers do to raise demand for, and make better use, of those skills?
- Report annually to the DfE on what we want to achieve, why it matters, what changes are needed, and who needs to be involved. In other words what does skills success look like?

The LSIP contract runs from September 2022 until March 2025. The DfE have articulated that the LSIP is about quality engagement with a wide range of businesses. To achieve this, the College will be working in close collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders across the region including other colleges and training providers, Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, New Anglia LEP, all the universities, employers, charities and the voluntary sector, as well as the DWP/Job Centre Plus and other business organisations such as the Federation of Small Business and the Confederation of British Industry.

Norfolk and Suffolk have a joint LSIP which focuses on the following areas:

Agri-Tech:

- Data Analysis
- Health and Safety with Wellbeing
- Engineering for Advanced Technology and Machinery
- Land, Water and Waste Management

Net Zero:

- Solar and Wind
- Mobility
- BioEnergy and Alternative Fuels
- Fuel Cells and Energy Storage

Digital:

- Social Media for Marketing
- Microsoft Applications
- Website Updating and Development
- Industry Specific software e.g. CAD
- Data Entry e.g. CRM

Soft Skills:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Problem Solving
- Leadership
- Time Management

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough LSIP priorities are similar:

- Digital
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Life Sciences
- Agri-Tech

Each of these priority areas will be considered alongside cross cutting themes including digitalisation, green/low carbon, communications, skills brokerage, and careers.

The College has a place as the Suffolk Further Education representative on the Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP Governance Board, as well as having representation on the four working sub-groups, one for each of the areas listed in the LSIP. While the College has reviewed the LSIPs and will enhance aspects of the curriculum offer to ensure we support the skills required, we will also ensure other national priorities such as Health and Social Care, Advanced manufacturing and Construction are not overlooked, as well.



Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities

Objectives:

Aim 1:

Employers and other relevant stakeholders are involved very effectively in the design and implementation of the curriculum to prepare students for future education, employment, and work

1. Further embed effective mechanism (such as: Employer Advisory Boards) with key stakeholders to obtain Local Market Intelligence data (LMI) in areas of key strategical importance to West Suffolk College and across all curriculum areas.
2. Ensure all students and apprentices learn the skills they need through effective co-design, delivery and/or assessment of curriculums to meet local, regional, and national skills need.
3. Leaders and Managers clearly identify and implement progression pathways and understand gaps in progression as informed by curriculum review, employer boards and market intelligence – to increase access to further education and employment.

Link to National, Regional and Local Priorities		
<p>West Suffolk College is embedding employer and stakeholder collaboration into curriculum design and implementation, directly aligning with Ofsted's Advanced Inspection Skills Agenda. By ensuring education meets local, regional, and national skills priorities, the college is addressing workforce demands, driving economic growth, and enhancing student outcomes. This approach supports Ofsted's focus on curriculum intent, implementation, and impact, ensuring learners develop the skills required for sustained employment, career progression, and further education.</p> <p>At the local level, the college uses Labour Market Intelligence (LMI), stakeholder feedback, and horizon scanning to shape its curriculum, ensuring provision aligns with employer needs and economic priorities. This supports Ofsted's emphasis on relevance and responsiveness, ensuring learners develop high-quality, industry-relevant skills that lead to positive destinations. Through employer collaboration, the curriculum is co-designed to address workforce shortages, improve productivity, and prepare learners for sustained employment and apprenticeships.</p> <p>At the regional level, West Suffolk College is supporting the development of a highly skilled, adaptable workforce by aligning education with broader economic priorities. By embedding industry-led teaching, real-world application, and employability training, the curriculum meets Ofsted's focus on high-quality education and training that prepares students for long-term career success. This also supports Ofsted's assessment of impact, ensuring students can apply their knowledge and skills in the workplace, leading to higher progression rates into skilled employment, further education, or apprenticeships.</p> <p>At the national level, West Suffolk College's strategic approach aligns with government workforce strategies and the skills agenda, ensuring education supports the UK's competitiveness and productivity. By embedding digital literacy, technical expertise, and employability skills, the curriculum meets Ofsted's criteria for effective curriculum planning and delivery. The focus on closing skills gaps, fostering industry collaboration, and enhancing student readiness for the workforce supports Ofsted's emphasis on ensuring students receive a high-quality education that meets national priorities.</p>		
Baseline Numbers	25/26 Planned Volumes	Deadline Date
Strong 'Skills' judgement by Ofsted in November 2024 provided an effective insight to current effectiveness. However, constant development, iteration and growth will be essential to maintain and improve quality and consistency for 2025/26	<p>As part of the quality cycle, all current curriculum areas at West Suffolk College further integrate a dedicated focus on skills development by the end of the academic year 25/26 whilst the methodology per curriculum may be nuanced, quality and consistency will be robust and effectively monitored.</p> <p>16 – 19 Study programme emerging curriculum areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community sports coaching, • Healthcare Professionals • E-sports, • Artificial Intelligence (AI) <p>Programmes will be co-designed with employer advisory boards to ensure they align with current industry needs and regional skills priorities. Progress will be reviewed each term, with employer feedback captured and monitored to inform ongoing programme development. A summary of employer input and resulting adaptations will be documented to demonstrate responsiveness.</p>	September 2026 – with continuing review.

	Engagement from a minimum of eight employers will be required, with all interactions recorded and tracked through the CRM system.	
--	---	--

Aim 2:

Continue to embed Character Strengths within Personal Development sessions to improve transferable (soft) skills for students and apprentices.

Objectives:

1. Embed communication, teamwork, problem solving and time management into the Personal Development programmes for all students on 16-19 study programmes as appropriate for the level of study.
2. Further develop My Skills for Success for all apprentices to enable them to improve communication, teamwork, problem solving and leadership skills where appropriate
3. Increase the volume and breadth of courses that can be delivered flexibly for adult students, both stand alone and embedded curriculums.

Link to National, Regional and Local Priorities		
<p>Objectives directly supports local, regional, and national priorities identified in LSIPs, where employers consistently report gaps in soft skills critical for workforce readiness and productivity across sectors such as healthcare, logistics, manufacturing, and technology.</p> <p>To address this, staff will embed West Suffolk College's core character strengths—resilience, optimism, curiosity, ambition, ownership, respect, self-control, and confidence across all teaching and support practices. These values are foundational to developing soft skills and will be integrated through structured group activities, reflective practice, real-world tasks, and consistent language within lessons and tutorials. Staff are encouraged to model these strengths and create opportunities for students to recognise and apply them in both academic and workplace-relevant contexts.</p> <p>As students develop these skills and attributes, they will become more confident, motivated, and equipped for employment and further study. Improved teamwork, communication, and leadership will enhance classroom engagement and boost long-term career outcomes. To measure progress, staff will use skill gap analyses tool, observed behaviours in lessons and work placements, and personalised progress reviews, with strengths and skill development referenced in Individual Learning Plans. This character-led, skills-focused approach will ensure all learners are better prepared to meet the demands of the modern workforce and/or further study.</p>		
Baseline Numbers	25/26 Planned Volumes	Deadline Date
Study programmes: 3392 Adult programmes 5000 Apprentices: 1900	Staff to complete one CPD session per term focused on embedding and assessing soft skills within their teaching. All Personal Development schemes of work to be mapped against West Suffolk College's character strengths All Personal Development programmes to explicitly include activities and learning outcomes linked to communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and time management Volume of engagement for student cohort in 25/26: Target for 16-19: 3750, Adult programmes: 5500, Apprentices: 2200	May 2026

Aim 3:

Continue to develop digital skills for industry, especially advanced digital skills.

Objectives:

1. Increase Digital T-Level enrolments.
2. Embed Microsoft Applications within 16-19 mainstream curriculum at Level 2 and Level 3.
3. Increase the number of Adult students undertaking digital qualifications including ICT courses at Level 3 and above.

Link to National, Regional and Local Priorities

Narrowing the digital divide is a key priority in addressing skills shortages and ensuring equitable access to digital opportunities. The Norfolk and Suffolk Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) highlights the need for digital training to equip both businesses and individuals with the skills required for the modern economy.

At the local level, the College collaborates with businesses to offer accessible digital training, including through its Extended Reality (XR) Lab. This ensures both advanced and entry-level learners can develop essential skills, helping businesses stay competitive and employees grow their careers.

Regionally, expanding digital training opportunities is crucial for ensuring that individuals, particularly in underrepresented or rural areas, are not left behind. By increasing access to training, the College supports regional businesses in tapping into a wider pool of digitally skilled talent.

Nationally, reducing the digital divide aligns with the UK's Digital Strategy, helping the UK's workforce stay competitive in a technology-driven economy. Through inclusive digital training, the College helps address skills gaps, fostering a more resilient, digitally skilled workforce for the future.

By focusing on accessible digital education, the College is narrowing the digital divide, empowering individuals, and supporting business growth in local, regional, and national economies.

Baseline Numbers	25/26 Planned Volumes	Deadline Date
<p>Study programme</p> <p>Software Development T-Level = 19</p> <p>Cyber Security T-Level = 12</p> <p>Level 3 Computing = 16</p> <p>Level 2 ICT = 16</p> <p>Level 3 Social Media and Journalism = 12</p> <p>Adults:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential Digital Skills =100 • Level 2 Award in Digital and IT Skills = 50 • Digital Marketing = 100 • Level 2 Cyber Security = 20 • Level 3 Digital = 6 <p>Computing Hub engagement = 195</p>	<p>Study programme</p> <p>Software Development T-Level Target = 24</p> <p>Cyber Security T-Level = 20</p> <p>Level 1 ICT = 12</p> <p>Level 2 ICT = 18</p> <p>Level 3 Social Media and Journalism = 18</p> <p>Level 3 Computing = 16</p> <p>Level 4 AI = 10</p> <p>Adults:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential Digital Skills Target = 150 • Level 2 Award in Digital and IT skills = 70 • Level 2 Digital Marketing = 150 • Level 2 Cyber security= 30 • Level 3 Digital = 20 <p>Computing Hub engagement Target = 250</p>	<p>October 2025</p> <p>May 2026</p>

Aim 4:

Continue expanding and refining our renewable skills offer to meet the Net Zero and sustainability agenda both locally and nationally.

Objectives:

1. Embed sustainability into the existing 16-19 study programmes at Level 2 and Level 3
2. Increase the number of learners undertaking green apprenticeships
3. Increase the number of adult students undertaking sustainability courses including the up skilling of adults wishing to retrain in sustainable technology.

Link to National, Regional and Local Priorities

The Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP has identified Net Zero skills as a key area for improvement, with employers highlighting the need for a workforce better equipped to support sustainability goals. Beyond Net Zero, there is a broader necessity to upskill individuals with a comprehensive understanding of sustainability, ensuring businesses and communities can contribute effectively to the climate change agenda. Addressing this skills gap is critical at the local, regional, and national levels.

At the local level, Norfolk and Suffolk must equip their workforce with sustainability expertise to support sectors such as renewable energy, agriculture, and digital—industries vital to the region's economy. Strengthening sustainability knowledge will also help local businesses adopt greener practices, reduce carbon footprints, and comply with evolving environmental regulations. Investing in education and training in sustainable technologies, energy efficiency, and circular economy principles will drive job creation and economic resilience in the area.

At the regional level, East Anglia is uniquely positioned to lead in the transition to a greener economy, with its strong offshore wind sector, agricultural base, and growing clean technology industries. Enhancing sustainability skills will enable businesses to innovate, increase efficiency, and remain competitive in a rapidly changing economic landscape. Expanding training in renewable energy, green construction, and resource management will help the region meet Net Zero targets while ensuring a skilled workforce for emerging green industries.

At the national level, the UK's commitment to achieving Net Zero by 2050 makes sustainability skills a critical workforce priority. A nationwide push to integrate sustainability into education and training will strengthen industries, drive innovation, and position the country as a leader in the global green economy. Ensuring individuals across all sectors have the knowledge to implement sustainable practices will support businesses in meeting regulatory requirements, reducing environmental impact, and contributing to national climate goals.

To address these local, regional, and national priorities, investment in education, employer-led training initiatives, and partnerships between businesses and academic institutions will be essential. Strengthening sustainability knowledge at all levels will not only help meet climate targets but also create economic opportunities and long-term resilience in a rapidly evolving job market.

Baseline Numbers	25/26 Planned Volumes	Deadline Date
16-19 Study Programme: Level 2 = 874 Level 3 = 1607 Carbon Literacy Training = 210 Adults: Carbon Literacy Training = 50 Level 2 sustainability / Climate Change =53 Green Apprenticeships: 350 Level 4 IEMA = 61	16-19 Study Programme: Level 2 = 900 Level 3 = 1500 Carbon Literacy Training = 250 Adults: Carbon Literacy Training = 70 Level 2 sustainability / Climate Change =60 Green Apprenticeships: 400 Level 4 IEMA = 65	July 2025 July 2026

Aim 5:

To enhance specialist provision within the Agri-Tech and Food industry in Norfolk and Suffolk by addressing skills gaps in logistics, supply chain management, and technological advancements.

Objectives:

1. Expand provision and awareness of hydrogen in the transport and logistics sector by embedding relevant training and ensuring at least 20 individuals complete Hydrogen Awareness training.
2. Strengthen industry partnerships to upskill West Suffolk College staff, enabling the integration of hydrogen and logistics-related knowledge into student provision.
3. Reintroduce logistics into the Business and Management Level 2/3 curriculum, supported by an effective marketing strategy, while establishing a sector-based skills forum with 15 members, including local authorities and employers.

Link to National, Regional and Local Priorities

The provision of Agri-Tech and Food industry training within Norfolk and Suffolk is primarily delivered by land-based colleges in the region. However, the Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP has identified a significant skills gap requiring specialist provision to support the evolving needs of the industry. While traditional farm and food production skills remain essential, the sector also relies heavily on logistics, supply chain management, and technological advancements to enhance efficiency and sustainability.

Ensuring the workforce is equipped with the necessary skills to manage the storage, transportation, and distribution of agricultural products is crucial in maintaining the sector's competitiveness. This includes expertise in cold chain logistics, inventory management, and the use of digital systems to track and optimise the movement of goods. Strengthening provision in these areas through targeted training and commercial courses will enable employers to improve productivity and resilience within the Agri-Tech and Food supply chain, ultimately supporting the economic growth of the region.

Baseline Numbers	25/26 Planned Volumes	Deadline Date
Zero	<p>Increase awareness and training on hydrogen use in the transport and logistics sector, ensuring at least 20 staff complete Hydrogen Awareness training.</p> <p>Establish partnerships with industry organisations to provide specialist training for West Suffolk College staff, enabling them to embed hydrogen and logistics knowledge into student learning.</p> <p>Reintroduce logistics into the Business and Management Level 2/3 curriculum, ensuring content aligns with industry needs and future employment opportunities.</p> <p>Develop and implement a targeted marketing strategy to promote logistics education and career pathways, increasing student enrolment and employer engagement.</p> <p>Create a sector-based skills forum with 15 members, including local authorities and employers, to drive collaboration, address skills gaps, and support workforce development.</p>	<p>Sept 2025</p> <p>Sept 2025</p> <p>Sept 2025</p> <p>March 2026</p> <p>Sept 2025</p>



Aim 6:

Further diversify the adult provision with a high quality education offer that meets local employer needs, develops in demand skills and support individuals to achieve personal professions goals/aspirations

Objectives:

1. Introduce new SWAPs to meet regional industry need
- 2 Increased ESOL enrollment by 10%
- 3 Provide more community focused provision to meet local demand
- 4 Explore additional funding mechanisms such as bootcamps and 'Connect to Work'

Link to National, Regional and Local Priorities

Adult education at West Suffolk College plays a crucial role in developing a skilled workforce, supporting individuals in their learning and career progression while addressing employer and industry demands. Through a broad and responsive curriculum, the college helps bridge skills gaps and contributes to economic growth across West Suffolk and beyond.

Local Impact: West Suffolk College works closely with local employers, businesses, and communities to ensure courses align with labour market needs. By offering flexible and accessible learning opportunities, the college supports adults in gaining qualifications, upskilling, or retraining for employment in high-demand sectors such as health and social care, construction, and digital industries. This provision enables individuals to secure sustainable careers, supports local businesses in filling skills gaps, and strengthens the West Suffolk economy.

Regional Impact: As part of the wider East of England skills network, West Suffolk College plays a key role in supporting major regional industries, including advanced manufacturing, construction logistics, and renewable energy. Collaborating with local authorities, industry partners, and skills boards, the college delivers industry-led training that addresses regional economic priorities. By equipping learners with relevant skills, it helps businesses grow, supports innovation, and improves workforce productivity, ensuring the region remains competitive.

National Impact: West Suffolk College contributes to the UK's national skills agenda by addressing workforce shortages, increasing employability, and driving productivity. Through lifelong learning, professional development, government funded training, the college helps create a resilient and adaptable workforce, supporting the government's ambition for a high-skilled economy. By responding to national industry trends and skills demands, it plays a crucial role in ensuring the UK remains at the forefront of global innovation and economic growth.

Providing high quality, inclusive education for adults is key in ensuring we meet the needs of the local and regional needs. A broad and agile curriculum has been designed to meet the needs of our learners – ensuring we meet local labour market needs to provide the support needed to enable learners to take their next steps into further education, training or employment.

Baseline Numbers	25/26 Planned Volumes	Deadline Date
Logistics SWAP – 8 Programs Delivered SWAPs – 21 Programs Delivered ESOL – 1650 Enrolments English & Maths Functional Skills – 620 Enrolments Online Professional Development (Level 2) – 800 Enrolments Vocational – 5 Industry Sectors Delivered	Community Learning ESOL Tea & Talk - 100 Book Clubs (English & ESOL) - 100 Non-accredited Soft Skill Provision – 120 Construction SWAP – 50 Administration SWAP – 120 Logistics SWAP (Cambridge & Peterborough) – 60 ESOL – 1800 English & Maths Functional Skills – 650	July 2025

Aim 7:

Improve Math's outcomes for 16-19 students.

Objectives:

1. Increase 16-19 Study programme pass rate for Functional Skills and GCSE achievement rate above grade 4
- 2 Increase 16-19 Study programme GCSE achievement rate above grade

Link to National, Regional and Local Priorities

A strong foundation in mathematics is crucial for the growth and success of businesses across the country, as well as for the overall development of society. Mathematical skills are fundamental in today's world, equipping individuals with the ability to solve problems, think critically, and make informed decisions.

By enhancing mathematical proficiency among young people, we not only empower them to navigate personal and professional challenges more effectively but also contribute to the nation's economic prosperity. A workforce with strong mathematical skills is better prepared to drive innovation, improve productivity, and compete in a rapidly evolving global economy. From financial management and data analysis to engineering and technology, mathematics plays a vital role across various industries.

Investing in the improvement of math's education will help bridge skills gaps, boost employability, and create a more competitive and resilient workforce. In turn, this will support businesses, strengthen economic stability, and enable the country to thrive in an increasingly data-driven world.

Baseline Numbers	25/26 Planned Volumes	Deadline Date
<p>In 2023/2024 academic year grade 4 and above GCSE pass rate target = 24%. (10% above 22/23 Nr for GFE colleges).</p> <p>National pass rate for Maths Level 1 38% (22/23)</p> <p>National pass rate for Maths Level 2 37% (22/23)</p>	<p>Targeted successful achievement rate – Entry 3 Functional Skills: 75%</p> <p>Targeted successful achievement rate - Level 1 Functional Skills: 40% to meet national average pass rate for Edexcel.</p> <p>Targeted successful achievement rate- Level 2 Functional Skills: 27% which would be a 5% improvement on 23/24.</p> <p>Targeted successful achievement rate: 7% above the national GCSE average.</p>	July 2026



Aim 8:

Increase adults studying on higher level courses (including higher apprenticeships) to address the low levels of higher skills.

Objectives:

1. Introduce Higher Technical Qualifications in Engineering and Construction
2. Establish Employer Advisory Boards (as aim 1) to continue to explore HTQs in wider sectors of strategical importance such as: health, Construction, Engineering, Leadership and Management.
3. Introduce Higher Level Apprenticeships in Health.

Link to National, Regional and Local Priorities

Research by Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils highlights a skills gap due to low uptake of Level 4 and 5 qualifications compared to Levels 3 and 6. This shortage affects employers, particularly in health and social care, where higher-level skills are essential to meet workforce demands, including those of the NHS.

At the local level, expanding access to Level 4 and 5 courses will help address specific shortages in Norfolk and Suffolk, aligning education with employer needs and strengthening links between businesses and training providers.

Regionally, increasing participation in these qualifications will enhance workforce resilience in key industries such as healthcare, manufacturing, and digital sectors, improving job retention and career progression.

Nationally, bridging this gap is vital for economic growth and addressing critical workforce shortages, particularly in healthcare. Expanding opportunities for higher-level education will strengthen the UK's competitiveness and ensure essential services, like the NHS, have the skilled professionals they need.

Investment in education, greater awareness of Level 4 and 5 pathways, and stronger collaboration between employers and educators are key to tackling this issue effectively..

Baseline Numbers	25/26 Planned Volumes	Deadline Date
Undertake market research and engage stakeholders to ensure demand and viability for HTQ's in Engineering and Construction.	HTQ Engineering target = 15 HTQ Construction target = 15 HTQ Healthcare Professions = 15 HND Animal Management = 12 HND Leadership and Management = 12 HND Digital Technologies and AI = 12 HND Esports Production = 12	July 2025

Governing Board Statement

On behalf of West Suffolk College, 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 Governing Board at the meeting on 02nd June 2025

The plan will be published on the College's website within three months of the start of the academic year 2025/26 and can be accessed from the following link: <https://www.wsc.ac.uk/about-the-college/policies-and-reports>

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Dated: 02nd June 2025

Signed:

Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

Dated: 02nd June 2025

Links to other key documents that are referred to or directly relevant:

[Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP](#)

[Cambridgeshire and Peterborough LSIP](#)

[West Suffolk College Ofsted Report](#)

[2022/25 Board Curriculum Review](#)

[Suffolk-Academies-Trust-2023-24-1.pdf](#)

[Policies, Reports & Key Information - Eastern Education Group](#)

[The Trust - Eastern Education Group](#)



