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## NEWCASTLE COLLEGE – ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT 2025/26

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### Newcastle College – Our Purpose

As the region's largest college, recruiting across North East Mayoral Combined Authority (NECA), we play a pivotal role in meeting the skills needs in the region's key emerging economic sectors. Our Strategy to 2030 commits us to a clear vision to 'develop the talent for our region'; our 7 Strategic Objectives articulate with the national and local skills priorities set out in our LSIPs and our duties laid out in the Skills and Post-16 Education Act.

1. **Exceptional teaching and experiential learning, enhanced through technology** – The region's young people and adults deserve, need and expect the highest quality learning experience and a curriculum to launch their future careers. As digital transformation has accelerated across UK industry, our learners require the tools and the skills for life to thrive in future economies. Our aim is to deliver an exceptional experiential learner experience, enhanced where appropriate through learning technology to build skills and confidence.
2. **Powering skills, innovation and industry growth** – We develop and deliver future-ready skills that drive innovation and support high-growth industries, ensuring the North East leads in advanced manufacturing, digital, and green energy and has a thriving creative and cultural industry. We partner with employers, universities, and further education colleges to embed cutting-edge technology e.g. AI into training, equipping students with industry-led skills to fuel business expansion and regional competitiveness..
3. **A North-East University Centre** – through co-creation with employers and regional stakeholders we will develop programmes to provide the technical and specialist digital skills required by our region. Our efforts will focus around progression routes from L3 technical study to Higher Technical Qualifications, working across priority sectors, including Digital; Advanced Manufacturing; Health; Culture, Creative, Tourism and Hospitality.

4. **Pathways to employment for all** – We have seamless education pathways from entry-level to higher technical and degree-level apprenticeships. We collaborate with other education providers, community and business responding to and anticipating workplace trends, co-creating programmes that develop the technical skilled individuals to succeed in their chosen line of work..
5. **A champion of opportunity and Social Mobility** - We widen participation in education and training to ensure no one is left behind, in the North East of England the “**Home of real opportunity**” for inclusive growth. This includes targeted outreach, affordable learning pathways, and support services providing the opportunity for everyone to succeed.
6. **Investing in a sustainable, inclusive future** – We will deliver high-quality, value for money education, optimising demand-led funding opportunities. Our surplus, alongside funding grants, support investment in facilities to teach and train the skilled workforce for the regional economy. We will invest in green initiatives, digital inclusion, and accessibility, embedding sustainability and diversity in all aspects of College operations.
7. **Partnership for health, wellbeing, inclusion and prosperity** – Newcastle College will actively participate in and co-create community well-being initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles, social connectivity, and preventative care. Improving health literacy and engagement among the college community and residents. These initiatives will contribute to improving public health outcomes and strengthen trust and ties between the college and its communities, advancing social inclusion.

## **Newcastle College - Context and Place**

Newcastle College is an anchor institution operating in Northeast England delivering programmes in all funding streams throughout our City and across the area covered by Northeast Mayoral Combined Authority - NECA. The Newcastle Upon Tyne City ward, surrounding the College, is one of the most deprived districts in England, ranked

23 (most deprived) out of 317 based on the national Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD, 2019). The region in which we are based has some very significant social challenges. It has life expectancy below the UK average for men and women, high levels of economic inactivity, and the highest rate of child poverty in the country (38%) (Northeast Child Poverty Commission, 2023). The College is collaborating with other anchor institutions to build an inclusive economy to serve the City's residents, particularly those with fewest choices and least control.

Our regional economic challenges include high youth and adult unemployment and pockets of high deprivation. The Region's longer term economic challenge is skills supply and shortage. It continues to lag the rest of the country regarding the proportion of better jobs, with 42.6% of overall jobs in the Northeast being Managerial, Professional or Technical versus a national average of 51.9%. Levels of advanced and higher educational attainment in the Northeast are relatively low. The region has the lowest level of graduate employment, equivalent to 143,000 fewer graduate jobs than the UK average, worth circa £1/3bn of lost regional income a year (IFS, 2020). There is an over-representation of residents with low or no qualifications, the proportion of Level 3 qualified adults is the lowest in the country, and the rate of progression from Level 2 to Level 3 by age 19 is 10% below the national average (DfE, 2021).

GCSE Maths & English attainment is in line with national levels at age 16, but 30% of each annual cohort are still without a Level 2 qualification in Maths & English by age 19, meaning that many adults lack basic literacy and numeracy skills. It is vital, therefore, that skills development focuses on residents employed in low paid, low skilled jobs, as well as on developing higher-level technical skills to meet shortages in our growth and recovery sectors, as identified by our ERBs.

North East Chamber of Commerce, leading the LSIP in North of Tyne area, have identified key priority sectors to be Construction; Green Energy / Industrial Decarbonisation and Net Zero; Health & Social Care; Culture, Creative, Tourism & Hospitality; Business & Professional Services, alongside three cross-cutting themes (Digital Skills; Professional Development (communication skills) / Business Skills; Employability). Northeast Automotive Alliance Ltd, leading the NELSIP, have identified priority sectors, several of which overlap. The differing priorities include Advanced

Manufacturing; Health Science; Transport & Logistics. Newcastle College employer-led curriculum supports our community, developing talent for the regional economy and beyond. The majority of our curriculum serves learners, employers and communities across the NECA region from Northumberland in the north to South Tyneside and Durham in the south. The largest community served is the Newcastle city region. Specialist and emerging technical delivery, particularly in Renewable Energy and Transport, serves a broader community across the geography of both regional LSIPs.

Around 8,000 people are employed in the specialist digital sector in the region, thereby employment is still relatively low - 1.5% of workforce versus national average of 4.4% and found adjacent to areas of higher density (Newcastle & North Tyneside) (NELSIP 2023). Growth in Digital and Professional Skills for Business, are vital to growth of other priority sectors and are served through our comprehensive entry level to undergraduate offer. Green Energy underpins the UK's 2050 Net Zero commitment and that of our City's 2030 ambitions; it is estimated that there will be a demand for 6,000 regional jobs in this sector in the next 5 years (NTCA LSIP 2023). Our specialist Green Energy Academy is developing advanced engineering and maintenance technicians, fabricators and welders to meet these needs, and those of the growing motor vehicle electrification industry. Health is the largest employer within our LSIPs, with 60,000+ employed across a range of Health and Social Care providers and the 5 NHS Trusts, whilst also having the largest number of active job vacancies (c2,000 per month in the NTCA area (Indeed, May 2023).

Our Healthcare curriculum, the region's largest in post-16 education, is addressing this demand. Culture, Creative and Tourism industries underpin our region's inward investment proposition; Creative Industries grew by 68% between 2011-2020, the fastest of an UK region. Our Arts curriculum is aligned to the City's Culture Compact, our music students harness their talents through Generator, and we successfully train the talent pipeline to support the 87% of hospitality businesses who said they are very likely to face recruitment challenges (NEECC Quarterly Economic Survey Q4 2022).

## **Newcastle College actions to engage with key stakeholders and providers**

We have drawn our priority strategic objectives for 2025/26 from the priority sectors, key changes and actions identified by the ERBs in our LSIPs.

Our consultation and engagement with valued stakeholders of the College from the following categories, ensures that we continue to deliver an aligned and inclusive curriculum that delivers local skills needs:

- Civic (including local, regional or national government bodies and designated ERBs)
- Employers (including local, regional, national employers, and sector representative bodies)
- Community: (including community representative groups, local authority projects)
- Education / Training Providers: (including Colleges, Universities, Independent Training providers, Schools, etc.)

At a Senior level, we work closely with our key stakeholder groups and other Education providers, holding strategic conversations that bring us together on collaborative projects such as SDF, LSIF and UKSPF. These conversations have involved, for example NECA, NEECC, our Local Authorities and Council Leaders, Newcastle and Northumbria Universities, EPNE and Tyne Coast College. Work of this nature helps to avoid duplication of effort in the skills system and ensures that we are well placed to deliver the local skills needs captured within the LSIPs.

At a more focussed delivery and sequencing level, employers and key stakeholders endorse our curriculum learning ladders and progression pathways. This endorsement is recorded in our Curriculum Intent and Learning Ladders documents – examples include Barclays, Nissan, Gateshead Hospital Trust, Sterling Pharma, Endiprev, Department of Work and Pensions, Nexus, Newcastle International Airport, Beamish Museum, Your Homes Newcastle and Lumo.

Our Course RoadMap documents capture specific examples of where our key stakeholders are engaged in delivering and / or assessing the knowledge, skills and behaviours that our students develop aligned to local needs.

Our College Local Board have had input into, and consultation on, our Accountability Statement commitments and are reassured that the actions that we are taking directly impact and/or contribute to the skills needs identified in the LSIP.

## Newcastle College Accountability Aims and Targets

College Accountability Aims and Objectives	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
<p><b>Aim 1:</b></p> <p>We will continue to develop an employer-led curriculum, aligned to national education reform and ensuring a prioritisation of the technical skills needed for North East Combined Authority priority sectors</p>	<p>Develop and deliver an aligned and inclusive curriculum with clear progression routes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain our strong educational partnerships and school liaison providing clear progression pathways for our young people into jobs in demand</li> <li>• Ensure articulation with national education priorities, reforms (e.g. T Levels, HTQs, etc.) and regional priority sectors identified by ERBs</li> <li>• Focuses our curriculum content to ensure that students are work-ready at the end of their programmes by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prioritising patient-focused communication skills in practical sessions and a focus on holistic realistic working environment training to develop interpersonal and telephone communication skills (Health &amp; Social Care)</li> <li>- Embedding of communication skills development and understanding of principles of project management to support the transition into Business and Professional Services jobs</li> <li>- Integrating employer-led experiences into our programmes to raise awareness, aspirations and a focus on team working skills, professional behaviours and expectations in workplace settings</li> <li>- Supporting the NECA Mayor's Good Homes pledge, we will ensure our construction curriculum is aligned with the regional priority of delivering high-quality, sustainable, and affordable homes. This will involve:</li> <li>- Embedding Modern Methods of Construction (MMC): Ensuring students develop expertise in sustainable building techniques, including modular construction,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training for Net Zero Housing: Equipping students with the skills needed for energy-efficient homebuilding, heat pump installation, and sustainable material use.</li> </ul> <p>This strategic aim supports the progression of work-ready students into technical-level jobs in sectors of regional importance with a focus on delivering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a progression pipeline of 500+ work-ready level 3 students in Advanced Manufacturing, Renewable &amp; Subsea Engineering, Building Services Electrotechnical, Digital, Health, Social Care and Life Sciences</li> <li>• a progression pipeline of 600+ work-ready students qualified in Creative, Hospitality and Tourism sectors</li> <li>• 155 new T Level students (Health, Science, Digital, Construction, Business Management and Mechanical Engineering)</li> <li>• 200 more students qualified at higher technical level (L4+)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 2:</b></p> <p>Through co-creation and consultation with employers and regional stakeholders the currency of our higher education programme content and assessment will develop the technical skills and specialist digital skills required by our region.</p>	<p>Newcastle College University Centre offer aligns with the regional skills need sectors of Business and Professional Services, Culture, Creative, Hospitality and Tourism, Green Energy, Engineering and Digital.</p> <p>Specifically, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain curriculum content in our Creative and Arts programmes that enhance entrepreneurship and employability, so that graduates are confident to set up their own business or ready to add value to an employer.</li> <li>• Following design in 2024-25, pilot 4 and 5 year programmes of study that articulate routes from further to higher education e.g. T-Level to HTQ</li> <li>• Promote cross-faculty learning experiences that develop the critical thinking, problem solving and work-ready skills of our graduates</li> <li>• Develop higher level provision in field of Construction.</li> </ul> <p>These actions will contribute to the region's ambition to increase in the proportion of working age adults with level 4+ qualifications, as well as the proportion of L3 students</p>

	<p>progressing to higher technical study in priority sectors. Creative, Culture, Tourism and Hospitality, a sector identified as having immediately vacancies, will benefit from 394 creatives graduating from Level 5+.</p>
<p><b>Aim 3:</b></p> <p>We will continue to support employers to identify (and access) their workforce technical skills requirements by enhancing the routes of progression through to apprenticeships across the provision.</p>	<p>Embed our 'apprenticeship business engagement toolkit' to enable employers to better understand the joint expectations of apprenticeship programmes and associated apprenticeship funding models. This will support increased uptake of apprentices across the provision.</p> <p>Continue to engage with employers in the endorsement of curriculum which will support learners from various entry points to progress onto apprenticeships from study programmes. A clear focus on the curriculum areas within engineering, energy and the built environment. Continue to deliver workshops for employer mentors, designed to focus on the importance of a triangulated approach highlighting the expectations of the employer.</p> <p>25.</p>
<p><b>Aim 4:</b></p> <p>Through effective use of funding bids and devolved authority ASF, we will create a focussed suite of short-course programmes to upskill, reskill and retrain in priority sectors. Our offer will focus on social inclusion to support the most disadvantaged residents of our region to develop the skills needed to remove barriers to access pathways to high-value employment.</p>	<p>We will work collaboratively with existing strategic education and community partners to extend the reach of learning opportunities to a broader range of underrepresented groups of the City of Newcastle and beyond, across the wider devolved authority, by...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver) community-based offer to improve confidence targeting 450 economically inactive residents as part of UKSPF Open Doors: Beyond barriers programme, supporting them to move closer to employment.</li> <li>• Designing short-course adult education offer focussed on upskill, reskill and retrain in priority sectors, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Higher level, specialist skills in Green Energy, Wind and Renewables – 2 cohorts of adults trained on a Skills Bootcamp in Welding.</li> <li>- Creative Bootcamps for Technical Stage specialists – 2 cohorts of residents to be trained</li> <li>- Work with regional employers to develop further Skills Bootcamps supporting the region's skills gaps</li> <li>- Digital foundation level skills, upskilling 200 residents.</li> <li>- Delivering over 1000 short course enrolments across the health sector.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



<p><b>Aim 5:</b></p> <p>During 2025/26, to maintain a high quality learning environment, we will collaborate with other providers and with industry professionals to secure the capital investment needed to respond to emerging workplace trends and to develop the facilities to deliver the technical skills for regional growth</p>	<p>Working in collaboration with partner providers and with industry, through well-established industry advisory boards, we will make effective use of funding opportunities to secure capital investment. This investment will come from DfE funds / bids, OfS funds / bids / or industry sponsorship / donations to establish and/or update our industry-standard resources in priority sectors.</p> <p>We will have a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure the investment to increase the capacity of the Green Energy Academy providing the skills to power the North of Tyne economic ambitions.</li> <li>• Our digital transformation plans to support the integration of basic digital skills into technical programmes, including in construction studied by 300 study programme students</li> <li>• Providing access to specialist sector-specific software and programmes to enhance skills and learning experiences for 630 study programme Health &amp; Social Care students</li> <li>• Building digital literacy across all priority sectors to build a progression pipeline of 350+ work-ready students with L3+ technical skills</li> <li>• Advanced Manufacturing &amp; Engineering – Supporting the North East’s strengths in advanced manufacturing by investing in industry-standard equipment and training for automation, robotics, and precision engineering.</li> <li>• Creative &amp; Digital Industries – Strengthening partnerships with the region’s growing creative sector (gaming, animation, media production) to develop specialist facilities and programmes</li> <li>• Construction – Aligning with local regeneration projects, ensuring students gain hands-on experience with modern construction techniques, sustainability, and smart infrastructure</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 6:</b></p> <p>To ensure that we retain the capacity and expertise in the teaching profession to train the workforce of tomorrow, we will expand our collaboration with industry through the exploration and development of an ‘industry expert tutor and mentor scheme’.</p> <p>We will aim to develop pilot schemes in two identified</p>	<p>We will build on our year 1 and 2 Accountability Statement work to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expand our collaboration with employers in the Health, Green Energy sectors and introduce work in Creative and Cultural to bring ‘live’ industry expertise to students</li> <li>• to evolve from industry co-teaching opportunities, to enhancing the student experience and technical teaching. Leveraging ESG and investing in next-gen specifically for programmes in Health, Digital and Engineering (Green Energy) sectors</li> <li>• continue the success of 2024-25 industry mentor programme in a minimum of two priority sectors to support the transition of recently qualified students into employment</li> </ul>

Northeast Combined Authority priority areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Newcastle College Strategy to 2030 prioritises the development of expertise in the application of AI and understanding of sustainable futures in our teaching workforce to prepare students for the jobs of the future</li> </ul>
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## Newcastle College links to supporting documentation

[North East Combined Authority](#)

[Education, Inclusion and Skills Archives - NTCA \(northoftyne-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

[Homepage - North East Evidence Hub \(northeastlep.co.uk\)](#)

[Review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[220728-NTCA-UKSPF-IP-Summary-Documents-Final.pdf \(northoftyne-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

<https://www.teach-in-further-education.campaign.gov.uk/>

## Newcastle College Local Needs Duty

Newcastle College meets its local needs duty. We continue to deliver on our vision of 'developing talent for the region' and are focussed on, and committed to, delivering the skills needed by our region in the identified NECA priority sectors of Construction; Green Energy; Health and Social Care; Digital; Business and Professional Services; Culture, Creative, Hospitality and Tourism.

Our areas of significant expertise and anticipated growth to meet demand are in Green Energy (served by our specialist Energy Academy and serving the Floating Wind industries located in the NECA Green Skills Investment Zone), Health and Social Care (working collaboratively with the NHS Trusts and private providers through Sector-based Work Academy Programmes), Digital (with an offer underpinned by Digital Essentials for residents and expert technical skills at higher levels) and Culture, Creative, Hospitality and Tourism (where we are engaged in Bootcamps and investing LSIF funding to ensure access to the upskill and reskill training needed in the City and wider region).

Whilst we have thriving programmes in Construction and Engineering, we recognise that we are only part of the skills system here and we work collaboratively with other providers to ensure that efforts are not duplicated.

For instance, in academic year 2023/24 and 2024/25 we chose to support EPNE and Tyne Coast College, through SDF and LSIF efforts, to focus on modern methods of construction and advanced manufacturing / electrification (for net zero), whilst we have pursued specialism in green energy and floating wind. Similarly Transport and Logistics, which features in the NELSIP, is not an area in which play a significant role. Where we have had an opportunity to support the skills needs here, through Bootcamp and Adult funded provision, we have done so in collaboration with partners and in support of the immediate talent pipeline required by this sector.

We remain committed to collaborative work with other education providers in this way, as we move forward. We will also look at how we can better meet the LSIPs actionable priorities by using our degree awarding powers to meet needs for higher technical skills. We will further develop our Creative and Arts programmes to enhance entrepreneurship and employability skills, so that our graduates are confident to set up their own business, contribute to our region's economy and/or be ready to add immediate value to an employer.