
WEST LANCASHIRE COLLEGE – ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT 2026/27

1. West Lancashire College – Our Purpose

West Lancashire College plays a key role in delivering high-quality vocational and technical education across West Lancashire and surrounding areas. The College advances NCG's mission by responding directly to local economic, social and skills needs.

Our ambition is to be firmly embedded at the heart of place, recognised for driving social mobility, workforce development and inclusive economic growth. Through a careers- and skills-focused curriculum, we support learners to access opportunity, progress into sustainable employment and achieve their potential.

The College's strategic direction is aligned to NCG's Strategic Pillars and the Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). Priorities for 2026/27 are to:

- Deliver an outstanding learning experience that supports achievement and progression for all learners
- Strengthen financial sustainability to secure long-term resilience
- Recruit, develop and retain a high-performing workforce with strong industry expertise
- Deepen employer and stakeholder engagement to inform curriculum and progression pathways
- Grow and adapt the curriculum in line with current and emerging local skills

2. West Lancashire College Context and Place

West Lancashire College is a small, community-focused FE college based in Skelmersdale, delivering vocational and technical provision. Its location, within reach of Liverpool, Manchester and the M6 corridor, enables it to serve a diverse learner and employer base across both local and wider labour markets.

Lancashire is a large, diverse and polycentric economy, with around 1.5 million residents, 55,000 businesses and 700,000 jobs, contributing approximately £35bn. It includes nationally significant sectors such as advanced manufacturing, aerospace, digital, health, low carbon technologies and the visitor economy.

Despite these strengths, the area faces ongoing challenges, including lower job density, fewer higher-level qualifications, a declining working-age population, and rising economic inactivity linked to ill health and caring responsibilities. Employers continue to report skills shortages, particularly in technical skills and workplace readiness.

Within West Lancashire, Skelmersdale and surrounding communities experience high levels of deprivation across employment, health and education. As an anchor institution, the College works with local partners to support inclusive growth, raise skills attainment and align provision closely to labour market need.

3. Developing the West Lancashire College Accountability Statement with key stakeholders and other providers

The College's priorities for 2026/27 are directly informed by the Lancashire LSIP (August 2023, updated June 2024 and June 2025) and the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2024–2029. Developed through extensive employer engagement led by the North and Western Lancashire and East Lancashire Chambers of Commerce, these provide the key framework for curriculum planning and development.

West Lancashire College is an active member of The Lancashire Colleges (TLC), a well-established partnership of FE and sixth-form colleges. Through TLC, the College collaborates on quality improvement, curriculum planning, workforce development and capital investment to ensure a coherent and complementary offer across the county.

In 2024, the College established a place-based Skills Advisory Board of local employers and stakeholders. This forum informs curriculum design; reviews emerging skills needs and supports responsiveness to local economic change.

In developing this Accountability Statement, the College has engaged widely with:

- Civic partners, including Lancashire Skills Hub, West Lancashire Borough Council, Skelmersdale Ambassadors and employer representative bodies
- Employers across priority sectors such as health (NHS), construction (Wates, Liberty Group, Tawd Valley Developments), manufacturing (ASCO Engineering) and business (Barclays)
- Community partners, including local authority initiatives and community organisations
- Education and training providers across FE, HE and schools (Edge Hill University, West Lancashire Head Teachers Group).

Key partners include West Lancashire Merseyside and NHS Trust, West Lancashire Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, Wates, Liberty Group, HCRG, The Lancashire Colleges (TLC), Lancashire Skills Hub and Edge Hill University, West Lancashire Head Teachers Group.

4. West Lancashire College Addressing National, Regional and Local Priorities

Aims and Targets

College Accountability Aims and Objectives	Contribution towards addressing National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
Aim 1: By September 2027, the College will further refine its curriculum offer, learning pathways and progression routes to ensure alignment with national policy priorities and the priority growth sectors identified in LSIPs. National Skills Priorities supported: - Construction - Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing - Digital Technologies - Health Care and Adult Social Care	Targets Sustained progression pipelines delivering at least: • 90+ work-ready Level 3 learners annually in Engineering, Digital, Health and Social Care and Business • 70+ Level 2 qualified learners in Construction trade (Electrical, Plumbing, Carpentry and Joinery, and Bricklaying) • A minimum of 100 learners enrolled on T Levels routes across Health, Early Years, Digital, Business and Engineering.

Rationale The curriculum is being developed to provide a broader offer to support progress into employment or higher-level skills and professional roles.	
Aim 2: By September 2027, the College will strengthen its careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) activity to promote vocational pathways, progression routes through to employment or higher skill in addressing skills shortages.	Targets • Develop an initiatives course that support opportunities for NEETs to engage in taster activities for re-engagement in educations and access in-year enrolment opportunities.
National Skills Priorities supported: - Equity and inclusion - Identifying and addressing skills gaps Rationale Currently the drop out and withdrawal rate at WLC is too high across 16-19 provision. Improved early exposure to opportunities at WLC, progression routes and CEIAG will strengthen a more robust enrolment process with integrity, to improve progression, student experience, retention and achievement for learners.	• Delivery of at least 20 targeted school engagement activities across business, digital, construction, engineering and hospitality. • Hosting a large-scale Careers Fair and STEM Festival involving 60+ employers and engaging over 1000 Year 9 and Year 10 learners from a minimum of 10 local schools • Active engagement with at least 30 employers and higher education institutions to promote progression routes into priority sectors • Improve retention rates to above 90% for vocational course and achievement rates to above 85% at WLC through more rigorous and targeted CEIAG to get the right learner on the right course.
Aim 3: By September 2027, the College will consolidate and evaluate level 1 and NEET targeted programmes and assess future curriculum development opportunities to support the reduction of NEETs in West Lancashire.	Targets • Expand and align the curriculum to create multiple entry points targeted at entry and level 1 courses across priority sectors (engineering, construction, business, digital, health and early years), with the explicit aim of reducing local NEET figures and increasing entry and level 1 enrolments to above 160.
National Skills Priorities supported: - Construction - Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing - Digital Technologies	• Assess the viability of new level 1 provision in Travel and Tourism, the Arts and Performance Arts.

- Health Care and Adult Social Care - Equity and inclusion - Identifying and addressing skills gaps Rationale NEET numbers in West Lancashire are rising, with an increased number of 16-19 NEETs being seen in Skelmersdale on previous years. So, an increase in new entry level qualifications will support re-engagement in education for many of these potential learners.	• Provide short taster courses targeted at NEETs to engage a minimum of 20 NEETs 26/27
Aim 4: By September 2027, the College will enhance its workforce development and recruitment strategy to support a skilled, motivated and high-performing staff body.	Targets • All teaching staff participating in industry insight activity to maintain occupational competence and sector currency • Targeted leadership development for Heads of Curriculum to strengthen middle leadership capability in order to improve student experience, attendance, retention and achievement • Clear progression and talent development pathways delivered through coaching and the NCG Leadership Hub • All staff to have completed the basic AI training and development through the NCG CPD plan
National Skills Priorities supported: - Construction - Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing - Digital Technologies - Health Care and Adult Social Care Rationale This aim strengthens staff capability, ensuring teaching remains current, leadership is effective, and talent is developed. A skilled, supported workforce improves student outcomes, drives innovation (including AI use), and enhances overall College performance.	
Aim 5: By September 2027, the College will expand opportunities for adults to retrain and upskill in line with LSIP priorities and local labour market intelligence.	Targets • Develop employer advisory boards in engineering, construction, digital technologies and Health, with at least 4 relevant employers on each advisory board. • Development of strategic partnerships with employers, community organisations and public sector bodies to co-design and deliver responsive adult education solutions in engineering, construction, digital technologies and Health.
National Skills Priorities supported: - Construction - Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing - Digital Technologies - Health Care and Adult Social Care	

Rationale This aim ensures the College responds directly to local skills shortages by aligning adult provision with employer needs. By strengthening partnerships and co-designing programmes with industry, it increases employability, supports economic growth, and provides flexible retraining opportunities for adults in priority sectors.	• Delivery of employer-informed adult programmes addressing identified skills gaps, supporting at least 60 new adult enrolments on part-time provision across engineering, construction, digital technologies and health.
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5. West Lancashire College links to supporting documentation

1. Get Lancashire Working – The Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategy: [Get Lancashire Working](#)
2. Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan – Progress Report 2025: [Lancashire LSIP Progress Report 2025.pdf](#)
3. Work Ready Lancashire: [Work-Ready-Lancashire-Booklet-Updated-Nov-25.pdf](#)
4. Lancashire Connect to Work: Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2024 -2029: [Lancs Skills Employment Strat Framewk](#)

6. West Lancashire College Local Needs Duty

In line with its statutory duty, NCG Corporation, as the accountable body, will undertake a rolling, evidence-led review of how effectively provision across the group meets local, regional and national skills needs over the 2026–2029 period.

Within this framework, West Lancashire College will contribute proportionately through place-based analysis, curriculum planning and partnership engagement aligned to the priorities of Lancashire County Council, West Lancashire Council and wider functional labour markets.

The review will operate on a three-year cycle with annual refresh points to ensure responsiveness to labour market change, employer demand and government reform. Progress and planned actions will be reported through the annual Accountability Statement.

Evidence and Intelligence

The College will inform the review through a robust evidence base, including:

- Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and engagement with the Lancashire Chamber of Commerce and Lancashire Skills Hub
- Labour market intelligence, including Get Lancashire Working
- Employer feedback from advisory groups, sector partnerships and engagement activity
- Learner participation, achievement and destination data
- Intelligence from local authorities, DWP and employability partners

This evidence will be reviewed annually to identify emerging needs, provision gaps and collaboration opportunities.

Collaboration and System Working

The College will discharge its role through collaborative working, including:

- Engagement with neighbouring FE providers, including The Lancashire Colleges group (TLC)
- Partnership with local authorities, including Lancashire, West Lancashire, Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester
- Collaboration with employers, sector bodies and employability partners

Where appropriate, the College will support collective actions to reduce duplication, strengthen progression pathways and improve system coherence.

Actions and Outcomes

The review will inform:

- Curriculum development, growth or rationalisation
- Capital and infrastructure priorities
- Funding bids and programme design
- SMART objectives within each Accountability Statement

Progress will be reviewed annually and reported transparently.

Governance and Assurance

NCG Corporation retains overall accountability for the Local Needs Duty. The West Lancashire College Advisory Board will provide local assurance, ensuring that contributions are evidence-led, place-responsive and deliverable, and that provision reflects the College's role as an anchor institution.

Through this approach, West Lancashire College will support NCG in meeting its Local Needs Duty, ensuring provision remains responsive to skills needs, supports inclusive economic growth and aligns with national and regional priorities.