



NCG

**ACCOUNTABILITY
STATEMENT
2026-27**



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NCG MISSION AND PURPOSE

NCG's strategic curriculum intent is set out in **Our Strategy Towards 2030**, which is defined at corporate level through our mission and vision:

MISSION

Enabling social mobility and economic prosperity through exceptional education.

VISION

To be the UK's leading college group recognised for our local impact, national influence and reach.

NCG's mission sets out the ambition we aim to realise, whilst our vision describes how we will know when we get there. To underpin both, we have six strategic themes that are based on fundamental pillars of the organisation (Quality, Curriculum, People, Facilities, Finance and Reach). Our focus in each theme is on continuous improvement towards excellence, and each theme intrinsically supports our curriculum strategy delivered through our national network of colleges.

We are a family of seven general Further Education colleges with a strong HE offer bound by the same mission, strategic aims and a number of business-critical policy frameworks. However, each of our colleges retains a very unique identity which is based on its heritage, its curriculum and its place

in the community. We work collaboratively through the theme 'One NCG' to ensure that wherever possible, we develop common approaches to the National and Regional Skills Priorities, whilst ensuring that each college has the flexibility to be able to respond to specific local skills needs supported by its local governance model.

That way we ensure that each NCG college remains embedded at the heart of its local civic infrastructure, whilst drawing on all the benefits of being part of a large national group.

Using the Indefinite Taught Degree Awarding Powers, NCG is also uniquely placed to address the current national and regional skills gap at Level 4, 5 and 6.

NCG STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

As part of our development of the NCG Strategy to 2030 we reviewed and consulted on the strategy in 2024/25 to ensure its relevance for the next five years. The review confirmed that the vision mission and strategic themes are still valid and will carry NCG forward to 2030. The strategic objectives are underpinned by a set of strategic KPIs and plans that are overseen by the NCG board and its sub-committees.

THE KEY THEMES ARE:

- Exceptional Teaching, Learner Experience and Outcomes
- Innovative, Relevant Courses and Qualifications
- Ambitious and Responsible Educators and Leaders
- Outstanding Digital and Physical Learning Environments
- Financial Sustainability Powering Reinvestment
- Impactful External Engagement and Civic Commitment Where We Operate

The updated strategy and strategic aims were approved by the NCG Corporation in November 2024 and the KPIs are measured and refreshed on an annual basis.

Each NCG college has its own college strategy which aligns to local skills needs and the NCG Strategy. As with the NCG strategy the college strategies have reviewed their college strategy, and were in place for the start of the 2025/26 academic year.

There is also a statement of local curriculum intent.

The curriculum intent is reviewed, to ensure it remains relevant in its efficacy (self-assessment). Our local curriculum intent is tested routinely with college boards and other local stakeholders and periodically through Ofsted Inspection.

OUR CURRICULUM STRATEGY IS SHAPED BY FOUR KEY DRIVERS:

- 1 Our Strategic Mission and Vision
- 2 National and regional economic context
- 3 Emerging government national and regional policy ambition
- 4 Local skills requirements and stakeholder needs

THE COMMUNITY NCG SERVES

Our colleges are each located in their own distinctive geography and serve a specific local demographic:

Carlisle College – the single FE college in Cumbria's only city, works closely with the other 3 Cumbrian colleges to ensure a coherent FE offering for that area.

Kidderminster College – serves the Wyre Forest area of Worcestershire to the West of Birmingham, reaching into the fringes of the Black Country.

Lewisham College – sits at the heart of the vibrant SE London Borough with its campus on Lewisham Way. It is a community-focussed college with a large adult and ESOL provision.

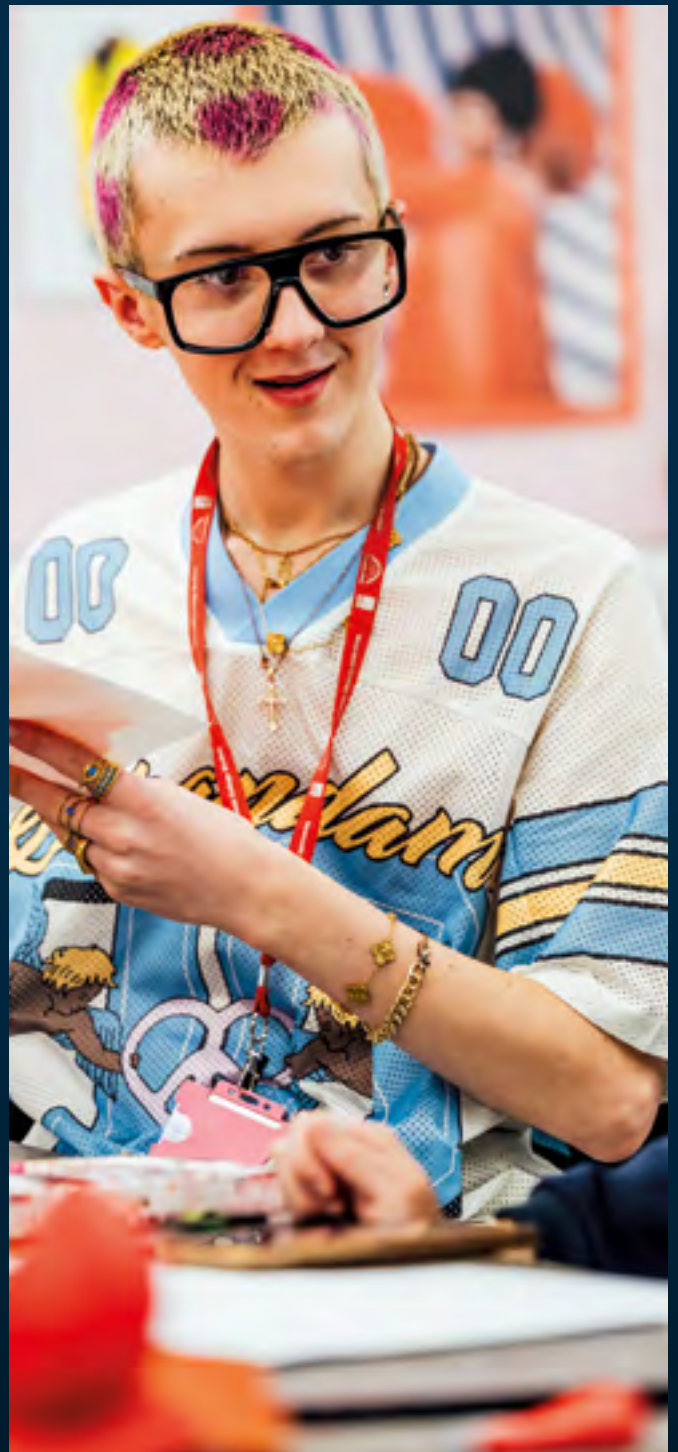
Newcastle College – serves the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and the broader North East Mayoral Combined Authority. Covering the 7 local councils, due to its scale it offers sector-specialist vocational and technical education across the wider NE region and beyond.

Newcastle Sixth Form College – is a specialist, high-quality and inclusive provider of A Levels to the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and surrounding areas.

Southwark College – located on The Cut close to Waterloo Station, serves the diverse borough of Southwark, with a growing focus on the working population that travels to the borough each day.

West Lancashire College – located in the town of Skelmersdale, serves a broad population spread from the fringes of Greater Manchester to the outskirts of Liverpool. The college is also the base for our national online learning offer.

Each college is positioned as an anchor institution within their community and also is actively engaged with local stakeholders. This includes the Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) within the area to inform and then deliver the local LSIPs. The specific demographics and local geographies are set out in each college's local document.



PROCESS FOLLOWED BY NCG TO MEET STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

As a national group of colleges, NCG has a process to meet this statutory requirement which maximises the local knowledge and expertise of its local governance arrangements and the wider stakeholder groups to review their college's provision in relation to accountability statement aims / targets as well as its Local Needs Duty.

NCG has successfully introduced and operated a place-based model of governance for a number of years. This is achieved through the College Boards which are focused on local skills and fulfil an Advisory, Advocacy and Assurance role. Place-based governance is a collaborative, stakeholder model of governance in which the NCG Corporation Board, its committees and local college boards, work together within clearly defined parameters to ensure that decision-making is informed by the needs of all our key stakeholder communities. In developing the Accountability Statement for NCG, the following process was followed by all seven colleges:

- Each college produced a draft Accountability Statement based on its own research and consultation relevant to its local area. For 2026/27 this includes a review that the college is satisfying the Local Needs Duty, now and for the next three years.
- Key to developing the statement is direct engagement with larger employers, Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) and those responsible for producing the LSIPs.
- The draft Accountability Statement is discussed locally under the governance arrangements and is also taken to a broad range of stakeholders for consultation and input including employers, other education providers and civic bodies and community groups.
- The stakeholders are also consulted with on the extent to which the college offer meets the local skills needs and national priorities.
- The college accountability statement is modified as a result of the feedback from the consultation process.
- A statement on the colleges success in meeting the local skills and national priorities is agreed and identifies how this could be further improved.
- A final version is agreed with NCG Executive and checked for alignment to the NCG strategic priorities and satisfying the Local Needs Duty.
- The final version of the College Accountability Statements is incorporated into the NCG Accountability Statement.
- This NCG Accountability Statement is reflective of the skills needs across NCG's scope of operation and has been developed and robustly challenged through a comprehensive consultation process including community representatives, employers, civic bodies and other education providers.
- The NCG Accountability Statement including the statement on how well NCG meets the local skills needs and national priorities, Local Needs Duty, is presented to the NCG Corporation for approval.

NATIONAL POLICY OVERVIEW

The key policy focus for 2026/27 and beyond for NCG will be to continue the implementation of the Further Education curriculum reforms for Post-16 Education, alongside responding to the national skills priorities. We will:

- Ensure the curriculum offer meets local and national skills needs as identified in LSIPs, now and Local Growth and Industrial Strategies in the future.
- Prioritise national strategic objectives of the SEND reform.
- Contribute to addressing the increasing number of NEETS.
- Contribute to and implement the curriculum reform.

The overarching NCG approach to national priorities is identified in the Strategic Aims of each of the colleges.



NCG CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL PRIORITIES

The key policy focus for 2026/27 and beyond for NCG will be to continue the implementation of the FE White Paper – ‘Skills for Jobs’, particularly the changes enacted through the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, alongside responding to the qualification and Higher Education reform.

Across its 7 colleges, NCG will address all the National Skills Priorities shown below:

- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Digital and Technology
- Health and Social Care
- Haulage and Logistics
- Engineering
- Science and Mathematics

The focus on national skills priorities will include:

- Ensuring the local curriculum offer meets the local and national skills needs as identified in LSIPs, Local Growth or Industrial Strategies, now and in the future.
- Contributing to and responding to, curriculum and funding reforms.
- Develop Higher Technical Skills.



NCG ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT OVERARCHING AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

NCG Strategic Aims and Objectives	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
Aim/Objective 0.1: Prioritise national strategic objectives of the SEND reform and use of IMF.	Across NCG we will: ▪ Improve outcomes and opportunities for learners with SEND through high-quality inclusive provision. ▪ Develop a confident and capable workforce equipped to deliver SEND reform successfully. ▪ Demonstrate effective stewardship of the IMF through measurable impact on learner outcomes. ▪ Ensure a consistent and equitable learner experience across all NCG colleges and curriculum areas.
Aim/Objective 0.2: Support more young people to progress into education, employment and training.	Across NCG we will: ▪ Implement the revised NCG Tutorial Framework in all colleges by July 2027. ▪ Deliver an integrated tutorial, careers and enrichment offer aligned to Gatsby and the DfE Enrichment Framework, improving learner participation and progression.

NCG ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT OVERARCHING AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

NCG Strategic Aims and Objectives	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
Aim/Objective 0.3: Lead the implementation of curriculum reform and qualification change.	Across NCG we will: ▪ Implement Strategic Transition Plans in all colleges to deliver qualification reform from 2027/28. ▪ Introduce new T-Level, V Level and Level 2 qualifications in line with national reforms. ▪ Strengthen English and maths provision through the implementation of new Level 1 qualifications and the refreshed NCG English and maths strategy. ▪ Align curriculum reform with local, regional and national skills priorities.

Due to the geographically dispersed nature of NCG as a college group, each of our colleges has undertaken its own local review to identify how well it is meeting the local needs. This is a place-based review engaging with and responding to feedback from local stakeholders. This has enabled the specific challenges and needs of the local area to be identified and reported on to NCG Corporation and included in the NCG Accountability Statement.

The colleges response has been agreed by their College Board Chair and addressed the following headings:

- The College Purpose
- Context and Place
- Engagement with key stakeholders and providers
- Strategic aims and targets
- Links to supporting documentation
- Local needs duty statement

The College statements can be found below:

- Carlisle College
- Kidderminster College
- Lewisham College
- Newcastle College
- Newcastle Sixth Form College
- Southwark College
- West Lancashire College

INCLUSIVE MAINSTREAM FUNDING

NCG has taken a strategic approach to the implementation of Inclusive Mainstream Fund (IMF). We are committed to ensuring that all learners can access an ambitious curriculum through high expectations, effective teaching and timely, proportionate adjustments within mainstream provision. We will use the IMF as a strategic lever to strengthen inclusive practice across curriculum areas, improving consistency, reducing barriers to learning, and increasing learner independence through earlier intervention and better curriculum and assessment design.

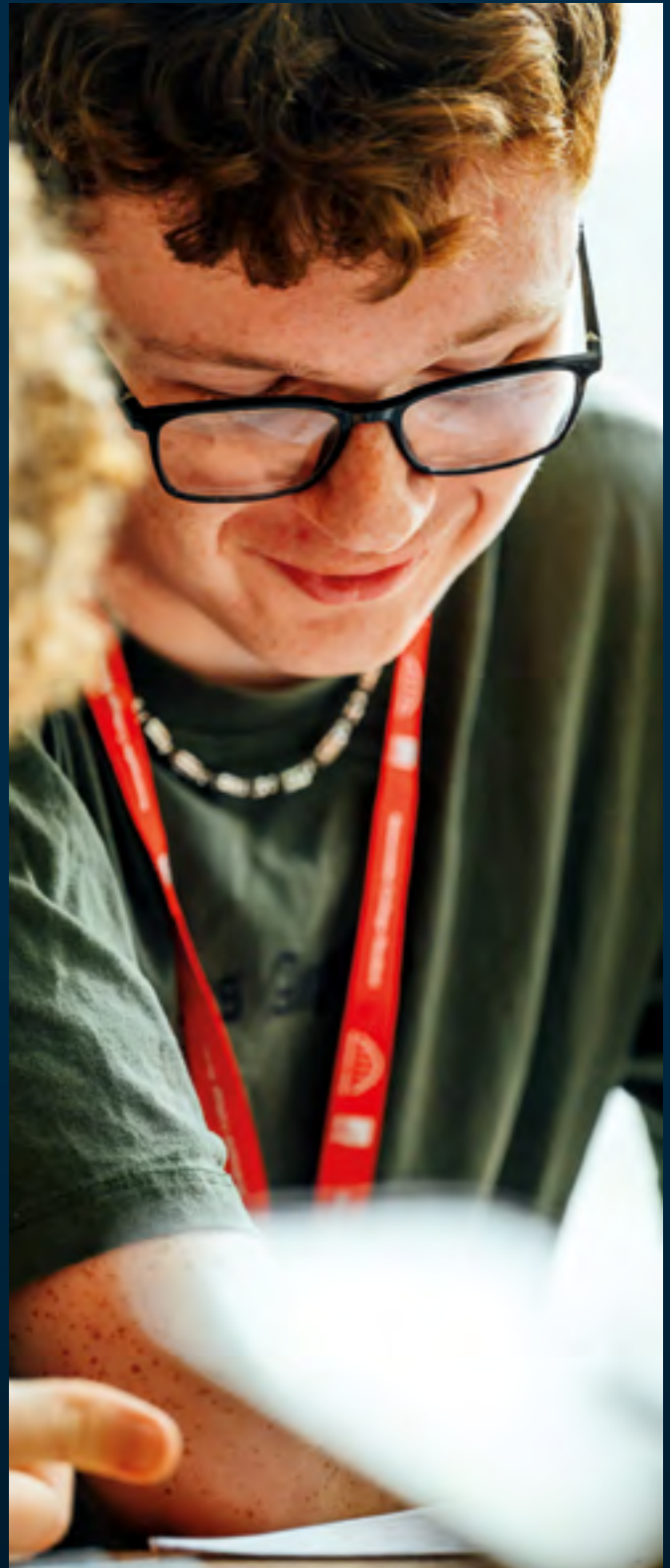
We are not using IMF as a substitute for strong teaching, nor as a reactive “top up” for individual need. Instead, we will target the fund to build sustainable capacity: developing staff capability, enhancing curriculum accessibility, strengthening early identification and the graduated response, and embedding shared accountability for inclusion within curriculum leadership. Our allocation decisions will be evidence-led, aligned to learner need and operational priorities, and reviewed termly to ensure impact and value for money.

We will evaluate the effectiveness of IMF investment against agreed measures, including: learner progress, attendance, retention and achievement; timeliness and appropriateness of support; quality of teaching and learning evidence; patterns in referrals and escalations (where appropriate); and learner and staff feedback on accessibility and confidence.

Our termly review will test whether investment is strengthening mainstream capacity and improving learner experience and outcomes, and we will use the evidence to inform continuous improvement and next steps.

We will monitor those delivering IMF supported improvements as part of our wider quality and performance cycle based on 5 key strategic objectives.

1. Strengthen curriculum embedded inclusive practice.
2. Build staff capability and confidence.
3. Improve learner experience, independence and engagement.
4. Ensure clear accountability and value for money.
5. Strengthen consistency across curriculum areas.



NCG LOCAL NEEDS DUTY

NCG is meeting its local needs duty in its area of operation across the country as well as supporting the national skills priorities. This has been assessed for up to three years from 2026/27.

NCG provides a framework through its executive and its governance arrangements that enable the Corporation to satisfy itself that it is meeting the local needs duty.

Each college has demonstrated that it is meeting the current and future local skills needs in its geographical area as well as contributing to the wider skills needs of the region as well as contributing towards the national priorities. This is confirmed by the College Boards who have specific knowledge of the local skills needs and opportunities.

NCG has reviewed and refreshed its governance arrangements to provide better advice and oversight in developing a skilled workforce. Local college board members are drawn from the four key Ofsted stakeholder groups (employers, educators, civic and community) and have knowledge of the local skills demands and challenges.

NCG has set its three high level aims that are aligned to the broader activity of NCG and cut across all our colleges to enable them to meet national priorities. These are supported by more specific, local objectives that are identified, developed and agreed at college level. Together the two sets of objectives provide comprehensive targets for NCG.

To complement the local arrangements, NCG has worked to develop regional and national partnerships to provide input into our curriculum offer and planning. Whereas the employer stakeholders have direct input to the local curriculum offer in the college, the national relationships tend to be with sector based ERB and other education providers to provide broader objectives. This includes implementing curriculum reform and planning with national partners as well as more locally with regional Universities. The employer relationships are with organisations such as Chamber of Commerce and CBI.

We recognise the need for continuous improvement, as addressing the skills needs will require a process of reflection and adjustment to meet the changing demands of the external environment. Significant progress has been made against the previous year's aims/objectives and new challenges are emerging.

Where NCG does not offer the full range of education and training required we work with and support other providers to meet the local needs.

Although NCG is involved in a great number of partnerships at local and national level, we recognise that we need to continue to build on this success to provide a comprehensive approach to meeting the skills needs.



NCG CORPORATION/ GOVERNING BODY STATEMENT

On behalf of the NCG corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the NCG plan as set out above and in the individual college accountability statements, reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Corporation at their meeting on 8 July 2026.

The plan will be published on the college’s website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed on the NCG website: www.ncgrp.co.uk

Chair of Governors

John Widdowson



Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

Liz Bromley

