



# Accountability Statement 2025-2026

CREATING BETTER FUTURES

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# Purpose

## Creating Better Futures

On August 1, 2023, the formation of the South Hampshire College Group marked a significant milestone achieved through the merger of City College Southampton, Eastleigh College, and Fareham College. This strategic consolidation, prompted by a thorough review by the Department for Education (DfE) of post-16 education provision in the local area, aimed to create a robust, financially sustainable structure that ensures comprehensive and accessible Further Education (FE), and Skills offerings tailored to meet local, regional, and national priorities.

Central to the mission of the South Hampshire College Group is the advancement of students, apprentices, and the local business community. By delivering high-quality further education where it is most needed, the group seeks to attract investment in skills development, thereby fostering economic growth.

The amalgamation of the colleges facilitates enhancements in learning and teaching practices, upgrades in facilities and resources, strengthens support services for students, and enriches the overall learning experience, all contributing to the Group's overarching goal of shaping better futures for its diverse student body.

Since the merger, the South Hampshire College Group has leveraged the strengths of its constituent colleges while charting a course of ambition and clarity. The group remains committed to providing exceptional support for students and achieving consistently excellent outcomes. By forging strong ties with local, regional and some national employers, the group enhances the value of its educational offerings, preparing students for successful futures.

The Group's prominent position as a leading provider of technical and professional further education in the region is underscored by Fareham and Eastleigh Colleges' substantial apprenticeship programs, Fareham College's success with T Levels, and its role as the primary FE provider for the South Coast Institute of Technology (IoT) and lead college for the Solent Local Skills Improvement Fund. Furthermore, Eastleigh College and Southampton College boast strengths in ESOL provision and progression pathways, with ample opportunities for further development.

In September 2024, the Group streamlined its curriculum offerings to better align with regional needs, removing unnecessary duplication, and invested in state-of-the-art facilities and resources. The Group is now in the second year of its strategic plan and remains committed to consistency in approach while acknowledging the importance of localised responses to community needs. Progress towards these goals has been recognised by an Ofsted monitoring visit in April 2024, which commended the Group's strides in establishing a shared vision and effective management and governance structures, as well as improvements in apprenticeship provision and education quality.

The strategic plan of the South Hampshire College Group is anchored in the business case presented to the DfE for grant funding, incorporating key performance indicators and metrics. Oversight of this plan is entrusted to a high-performing Board comprised of strategic leaders and domain experts, tasked with supporting and challenging the executive to fulfil the college's purpose.

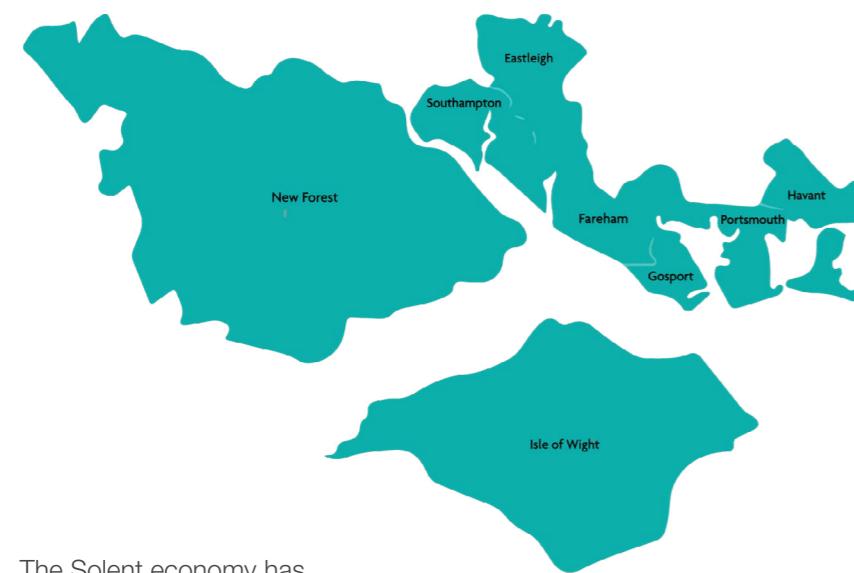
The strategic plan serves as a guiding roadmap for the South Hampshire College Group, outlining both long-term objectives and the operational frameworks for achieving them. Through ongoing performance measurement and flexibility in response to internal and external factors, the group remains poised to adapt and thrive in pursuit of its mission.



# Context and Place

The three campuses of South Hampshire College Group sit within the Solent LEP region and are within Hampshire County Council. City College Southampton is within the Southampton City Council Local Authority, Fareham and Eastleigh are local government districts with borough status.

The colleges all sit within the region covered by the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce. The Hampshire Chamber is leading the development of a Local Skills Improvement Plan set within the existing boundaries of the Solent LEP (a separate LSIP is in development for the north of the County, EM3 LEP boundary).



The Solent economy has a population of 1.24 million, 42,000 businesses, GVA of £31 billion, and is part of the wider Southeast economy valued at £240 billion GVA. It has a range of assets that are globally renowned, a strong SME and skills base, and a thriving research community through its universities and research institutions.

[Economic Outlook- Solent LEP](#)

Data from the Office for National Statistics ('ONS') puts total employment in the Solent at around 517,300 jobs and lists health (14.7%), retail (11.1%) and education (9.4%) as the three largest employment sectors locally. Other important employment sectors in the Solent include tourism and hospitality (8.0%), recreation (4.2%) and construction (5.7%).

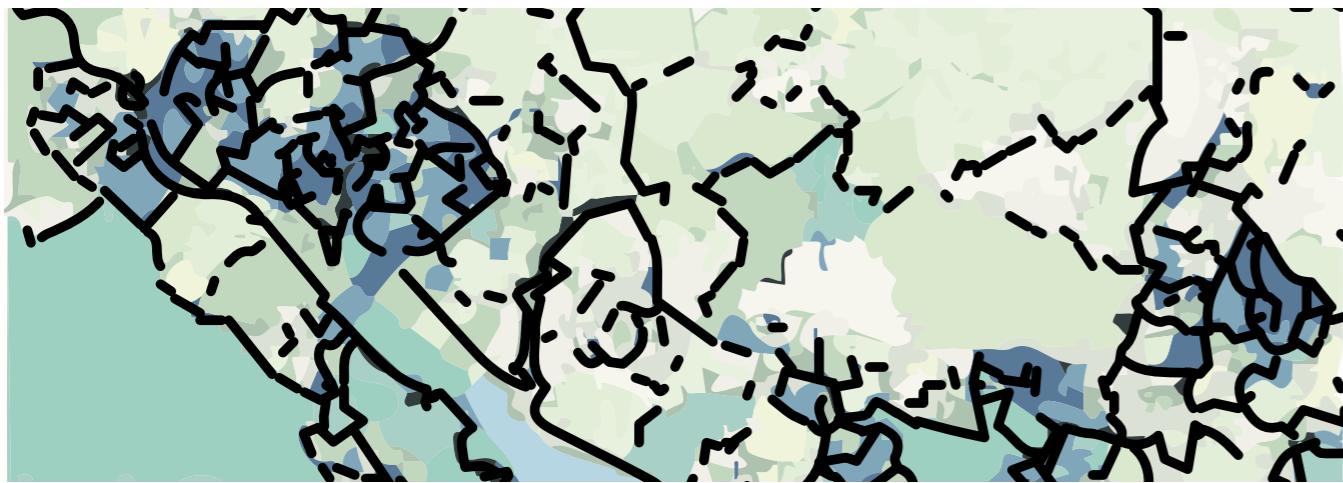
Overall, the labour market engagement rate in the Solent stands at 78.0%, which is lower than the averages across Hampshire (79.8%) and the wider Southeast region (80.4%). In addition, data shows that within the Solent there are over 54,000 economically inactive people who want to re-join the labour market.

[Solent Local Skills Improvement Plan](#)

All colleges have students in catchment from areas of the highest indices of multi deprivation, Southampton being 55th of 317 Local Authorities. Southampton has 19 LSOA's within the 10% most deprived nationally. Southampton is the 3rd worst in the country for crime deprivation and has persistent absences at secondary c.1% above national averages.

Total NEETs UK (October to December 2024)  
(Aged 16–24):

- Approximately 987,000 individuals, representing 13.4% of this age group
- This marks an increase of 110,000 from the same period in 2023. The Department for Education provides local authority-level data for 16–17-year-olds:
  - National: NEET and 'not known' rate for 16–17-year-olds was 4.6%
  - Hampshire County Council: NEET and 'not known' rate for 16–17-year-olds was 3.6%
  - Southampton City Council: The NEET and 'not known' rate for 16–17-year-olds was 6.1%

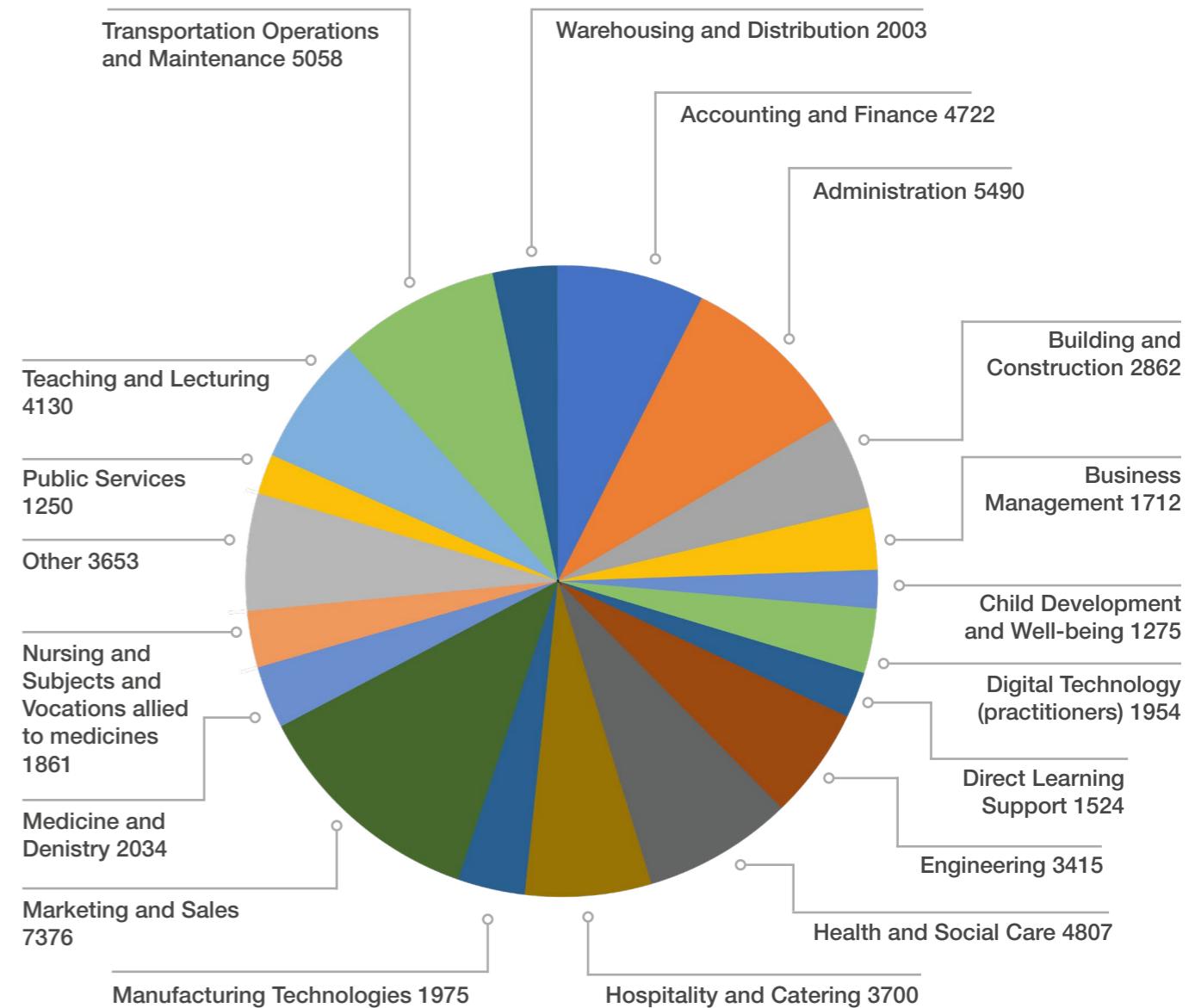


The Solent is home to 41,900 enterprises, the majority of which (88.8%) are micro (i.e. employing fewer than 10 people), 9.3% small (i.e. employing under 50 people), and 1.6% medium (i.e. employing up to 249 people). In aggregate, 99.6% of all businesses in the Solent can be classified as small and medium-sized enterprises ('SME') which is in line with the average across the Southeast and nationally (as shown in Table 3.3 below).

Metric	Solent	South East	UK
Number of enterprises 2023	41,900	404,800	2,370,100
Change in number of enterprises (2011–2023, %)	+25%	+23%	+33%
Business Size (2023)	Micro (0–9)	88.8%	89.5%
	Small (10 to 49)	9.3%	8.6%
	Small (10 to 49)	1.6%	1.5%
	Large (Over 250)	0.4%	0.4%
Business Size (2023)	119	109	142

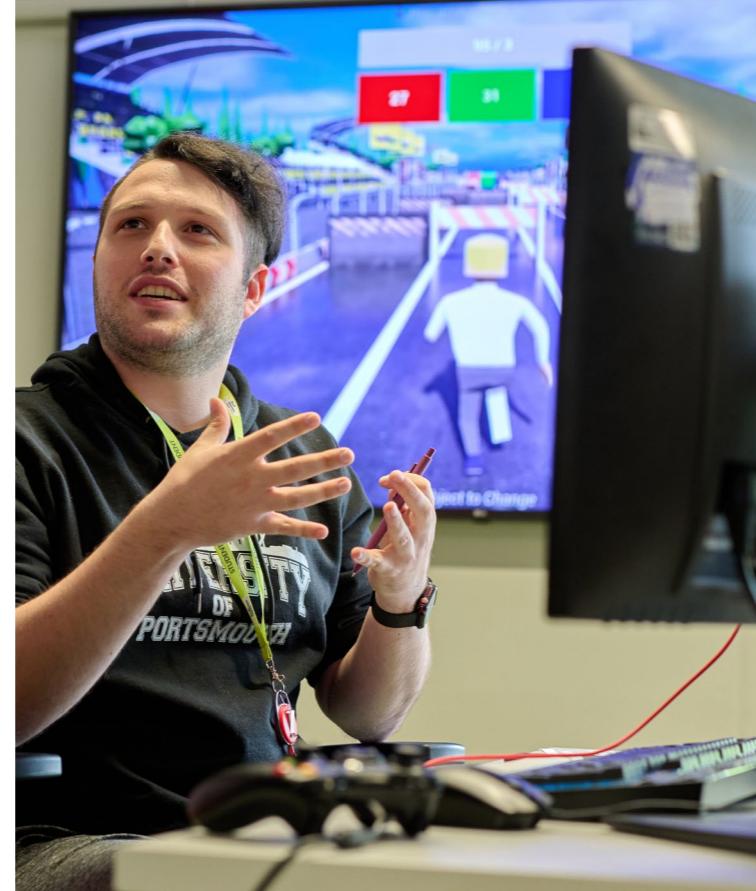
Source: Office for National Statistics (2023), Business Geography Statistics / Lichfields analysis

Solent LEP job roles Aug 24–Feb 25



## ➤ Mission (our actions)

To enable all our students and apprentices, and our region's businesses to be successful in their future, achieving their highest aspirations and standards, through exemplary technical and professional education and training.



## ➤ Vision (our future aspirations)

- We will lead a better distributed, accessible, and collaborative group of South Hampshire Colleges.
- Through this, and with the commitment of our highly-valued people, we will provide excellence in professional and technical education and training across a wide community of students and employers in the Solent region.
- Our work will support the skills needs of employers and improve regional productivity, economic development and social mobility.
- We will be an agile organisation, constantly developing and improving.
- We will be responsive to policy and reforms in further education, and be adaptive to the changing needs of the region's employers.
- We will be a financially resilient and sustainable Further Education college, valuing the need to invest in its people and infrastructure.





# Summary of Our Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities in 2024-2025

## Progress Update

- **We will increase the number of short courses provided across priority sectors**

**Progress:** To date the college has commissioned 8 new tailored courses in-line with LSIP priorities using our Tailored Learning Fund. These include training in cookery, healthcare, FGas, management/team leadership, and procurement across several local employers. T Level development aligned with centres of excellence is on track, with healthy enrolments expected for the 2024-2025 launch.

- **We will further develop our curriculum offer relevant to workforce and student demand – Southampton**

**Progress:** 2 T-Levels courses (Digital and Childcare) have successfully commenced this academic year in priority sectors, with further expansion of T- levels planned for 25/26.

- **We will further develop our curriculum offer relevant to workforce and student demand – Eastleigh**

**Progress:** The HTQ modular programme in Health Care has been developed and now able to receive applications, there is ongoing collaboration with employers to raise demand on this course. 5 New T-levels have successfully launched in Design, Surveying and Construction, Electrotechnical Engineering, Health and Legal, Finance and Accountancy and Management and Administration.

- **We will further develop our curriculum offer relevant to workforce and student demand – Fareham/CEMAST/CETC**

**Progress:** Our HNC in Robotics successfully launched in our brand new IoT facilities at CEMAST. Qualification approval is in progress for a new HTQ in Civil Engineering at CETC and additional upskilling short courses have also been delivered at CETC responding to employer and workforce skills demand. We have expanded our Construction offer at Fareham College of Multi-trades to cater for our increased demographic of students with low entry grades, supporting progression routes into high priority construction trades. Apprenticeship recruitment remains strong, particularly in key priority sectors, with 54% of apprenticeship starts being young people aged 16-18.

- **We will expand our ESOL provision in response to local demand**

**Progress:** We are on target to achieve our 10% growth target on ESOL adult provision this academic year and we are planning to expand this further into 25/26 to ensure positive outcomes for our ESOL communities across the region.

## Progress Update

- **We will expand our literacy and numeracy provision in response to local demand**

**Progress:** 2,038 enrolment aims recorded so far, showing strong progress toward the 10% growth target of 2,550. We will continue expand our adult literacy and numeracy enrolments by a further 10% in 25/26.

- **We will expand our transition to employment programmes such as SWAPs, Essential Digital Skills, Skills Bootcamps, etc.**

**Progress:** Construction SWAP programmes saw a decline in enrolments this academic year, however we have been working closely with the DWP to identify new SWAPs for delivery in 25/26, expanding the offer to include Business administration and customer services in line with local needs.

- **The destinations of all students will be tracked by sector area in 2024-2025**

**Progress:** We have improved our data capture of destinations to include employment progression by related course sector however work continues to improve response rates.

- **We will increase apprenticeship enrolments across priority sectors in line with regional and national priorities**

**Progress:** 477 new apprenticeship starts recorded, with major participation in engineering and construction. We will continue to grow apprenticeships further in 25/26 in priority sectors.

- **We will introduce Higher Apprenticeships in Digital**

**Progress:** The Business Development team is exploring higher apprenticeship opportunities in digital and assessing demand from employers.

- **We will increase the number of employers we engage with**

**Progress:** SHCG have engaged with over 2000 new businesses this academic year which has led to new collaborative projects, partnerships, and opportunities for students.

- **In 2024-2025 we will further develop the employability skills of our students, with a strong focus on careers guidance, transferable skills, sustainability, and progression pathways**

**Progress:** As a result of an aligned and improved tutorial model most of our students have an increased awareness of the progression opportunities available to them, the small number of students who are unsure have all received further CIAG.

# Approach to Developing Annual Accountability Statement

The South Hampshire College Group strategic plan sets out a clear vision of ensuring a cohesive response to local, regional, and national skills priorities in collaboration with other education and training providers. Our three strategic priorities underpin this vision and have influenced our agreed objectives outlined within the accountability statement.



We have also reviewed the initial findings of the Solent Local Skills Improvement Plan, which prioritises the following emerging themes:

**Priority 1:** Awareness and aspiration-Ensure the skills ecosystem can improve the life chances of all communities across the Solent

**Priority 2:** Navigating the skills ecosystem- Reduce complexity and improve complementarity within the skills ecosystem in the Solent

**Priority 3:** Proactive employer engagement- Encourage employers to play a greater role in shaping local provision and promote the benefits of engagement

**Priority 4:** A more agile skills ecosystem- Improve responsiveness by building on increased digitalisation and the requirement for flexibility

**Priority 5:** Pathways to skills- Acknowledge that career pathways are not linear and facilitate greater brokerage within the skills ecosystem

**Priority 6:** Managing the skills transition- As technology advances towards Industry 5.0, future- proofing the skills ecosystem is key to securing success

South Hampshire College Group engaged with a wide range of stakeholders to inform the overarching college strategic plan and the college accountability statement. The following activities have enabled the college to tailor its approach towards meeting local, regional, and national skills priorities:

- LMI (Labour Market Intelligence) gathered directly from employers through business development activities and sector related industry boards
- LMI published via Vector and Nomis used to inform objectives and curriculum intent
- Established partnerships with local and county councils, and the Department of Work and Pensions to ascertain priorities across the region
- Feedback gathered from employer representative bodies such as the Solent LEP, Maritime Solent UK, Business South, and Shaping Portsmouth
- Skills priorities published by the Solent LEP
- Ongoing engagement with Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, who are leading the local skills improvement plan for the Solent region
- Projects funded through the Strategic Development Fund and the Institute of Technology, which have identified skills gaps across the region and fostered collaborative working with FE providers and HEI's across the Solent region
- Gained governor feedback and approval of our strategic plan and the objectives set out in the accountability statement
- The college have responded to the following national skills priorities, identified by the Government, and published within the ESFA accountability agreement guidance document for 2025 to 2026:
  - Advanced Manufacturing
  - Creative Industries
  - Defence
  - Digital and Technologies
  - Financial Services
  - Life Sciences
  - Professional and Business Services
  - Clean Energy Industries
  - Construction
  - Health



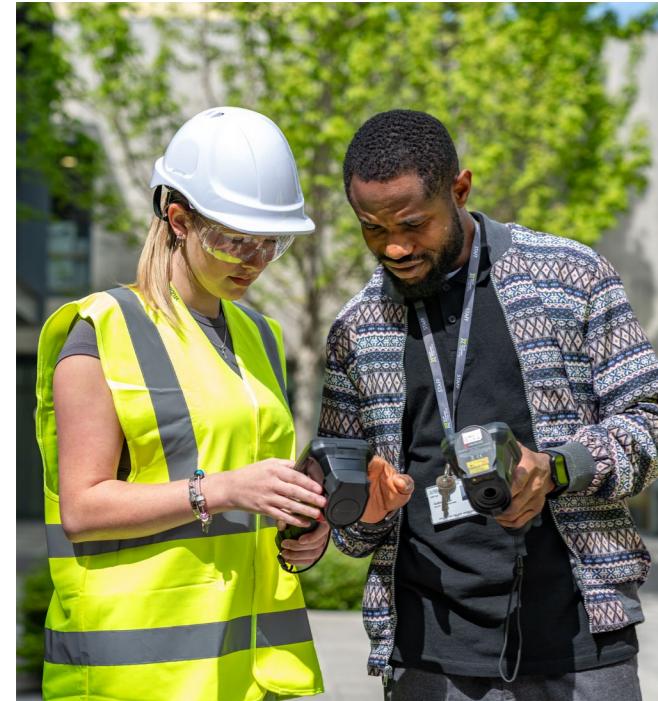
# Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities in 2025-2026

#	SP	College Objectives	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
1	1,2,3	Deliver Workforce-Responsive, Employer-Co-Created Curriculum	Co-develop 5 new courses with employers and wider stakeholders in local and/or national priority sectors
2a	1,2,3	Lead Green Skills Transition and Sustainable Technologies	Introduce short courses in Green Construction Skills in line with regional and national needs
2b	1,2,3	Lead Green Skills Transition and Sustainable Technologies	Embed industry relevant Sustainability principals across all courses through our tutorial model and contextualised embedding into the curriculum
3a	1,2,3	Drive Inclusion through Foundational Skills and Community Learning	10% growth in adult ESOL provision
3c	1,2,3	Drive Inclusion through Foundational Skills and Community Learning	Increase our SWAP programmes by introducing at least 2 additional pathways through close collaboration with LA's and DWP
4	1,2	Strengthen Technical and Digital Futures across Key Sectors	Embed digital literacy, including AI where relevant across all full-time and apprenticeship programmes
5	1,2,3	Expand Health, Care and Life Sciences Pathways	Work in partnership with the NHS to deliver tailored learning pathways that support recruitment and retention in the Health Care sector
6a	1,2,3	Accelerate Employer Engagement and Work-Based Learning	Create a further 10 employer partnerships that provide new high quality industry placements, apprenticeship opportunities and tailored learning pathways in priority sectors
6b	1,2,3	Accelerate Employer Engagement and Work-Based Learning	Further expand our participation in Industry boards to cover Creative, Hair and Beauty and Education and Early Years Sectors
7	2	Power Economic Growth Through Innovation & Business Support	Support 50 SMEs to grow their business through providing tailored support and solutions (collaborative Projects via the further education innovation fund)
8	1,2	Improve Destination Outcomes and Sector-Based Progression	Ensure our destination and outcomes data capture covers at least 80% of our full-time, Apprenticeships and Adult Skills cohorts
9a	2,3	Ensure that more of our Adult Skill's funding is Provided within the region	Reduce our reliance on subcontracted provision by 28% (less than 20% of our entire ASF Allocation)
9b	2,3	Ensure that more of our Adult Skill's funding is Provided within the region	Increase the number of online students undertaking qualifications within the region by 10%

# Local Needs Duty

The Local Needs Duty Meeting held on 19th May 2025 brought together further education providers, the local authority, and the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce to build on the curriculum alignment discussions of 2024, with a new focus on preparing for devolution and local government reform (LGR).

The meeting opened with Stephen Martin, Head of Economy & Skills at Hampshire County Council, outlining the strategic implications of devolution and LGR for local economic planning. This was followed by Rebecca Durber, Area Director (NW) and Senior Policy Lead for Devolution at the Association of Colleges, who explored the anticipated impact of devolution on post-16 education and training, particularly in shaping responsive, place-based provision. Ross McNally, Executive Chair of the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, concluded the session by discussing the future direction of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and its alignment across the Solent and EM3 in preparation for devolution.



## Corporation Statement

This accountability statement was compiled in consultation with the Corporation and approved via delegated authority at the C&Q Committee on 4 June 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Prail'.

Signed: Sandra Prail Chair of the Corporation

## Approved by the Governing Body

Website Hyperlink  
(Click the URL to view)

[www.shcg.ac.uk](http://www.shcg.ac.uk)

Supporting Documentation  
(Click the document to view)

- SHCG Ofsted Inspection Report April 2025
- Self-Assessment Report
- Financial Statements 2024
- SHCG Strategic Plan
- Solent LSIP Progress Report 2025
- Get Hampshire Working Plan
- Get Solent Working Plan
- Get Britain Working White Paper

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