



# Accountability Statement

## 2025/26

### **Vision**

To create a more prosperous, inclusive and vibrant Isle of Wight, made possible by the leadership, innovation and contributions of students, staff and partners with their diverse skills, ambitions and talents.

### **Mission**

To deliver excellent outcomes through an aspirational and inclusive environment that:

- Puts our students first
- Values our staff
- Builds and nurtures our strong relationships with employers
- Actively supports our local community

# Contents

<b>Section 1</b> Purpose and Key Priorities	<b>3</b>
<b>Section 2</b> Context and Place	<b>8</b>
<b>Section 3</b> Meeting Local, Regional and National Trends	<b>13</b>
<b>Section 4</b> Key Stakeholders	<b>19</b>
<b>Section 5</b> Engagement with Other Providers in the Area	<b>21</b>
<b>Section 6</b> Annual Objectives	<b>23</b>
<b>Section 7</b> Local Needs Duty & Corporation Statement	<b>26</b>
<b>Section 8</b> Appendices and Reference Sources	<b>28</b>

## Section 1: Purpose and Key Priorities

The Isle of Wight College stands as the sole general further education college on the island and is committed to catering to the Island's educational and skills requirements. This is accomplished by providing a wide-ranging curriculum pertinent to industry and for all that is required to support success in the ever-evolving world. Courses span from foundation learning to higher education and bespoke courses, for students across all age groups. This guarantees that the local community has access to a variety of courses to aid their advancement into employment, further studies or higher education, and ensures that businesses can tap into a pool of skilled labour to meet their operational needs. Our provision is important because it contributes to the economic and social development of the island.

Our strategic objectives, as set out in our new strategic plan 2024-2030, include putting students first, developing a relevant and flexible curriculum, supporting staff and student well-being, ensuring a strong financial performance, promoting an inclusive environment, and utilising sustainable practices to help deliver the College's mission.

Our mission is about getting excellent outcomes by the work we do with our local stakeholders and community. Collaboration on projects that matter for the island, with the people from the island, for the people from the island. Every single staff member is key to this as they support and deliver what is needed and support all students, in critical employability skills as well as island specific skills needs.

With over 3,000 16, 17 and 18 year olds on the island that need education, access to a full range of vocational options which in many subjects, the College is the only provider of. This ensures that young people have the full choice available to them that their peers on the mainland would have.

The College will also support those of working age, on the Island this amounts to circa 50,000 19 to 64 year olds. We will prioritise the use of our funding to support the upskilling or retraining of those looking to access new career pathways. In 2025, approximately 22.8% of the Island's households were workless and so supporting those able into work is a priority.

The College needs to ensure it reaches all communities across the island, ensuring it is an inclusive environment allowing the access they need to thrive. Collaboration is key to this to ensure the College knows who its communities are and how best to support them.

Working with employers, charities, councils and other support organisations will build momentum and strength to what can be achieved together. Various initiatives and schemes are utilised such as Skills Bootcamps, Sector Work Academy Placements to support people into jobs and the Institute of Technology and Higher Education programmes in collaboration with institutions such as the University of Portsmouth to support more people into level 4 and above qualifications in the priority areas.

The recent survey conducted by the Isle of Wight Youth Trust has unveiled a deeply concerning mental health crisis among the island's youth. The findings indicate that the wellbeing of many young individuals has not returned to pre-pandemic levels, with a significant rise in episodes of anger since 2021. Alarming, out of 1,223 young people aged between 11 and 25 surveyed, 30% have engaged in self-harm, 34% have contemplated suicide, and 11% have attempted suicide.

These troubling statistics underscore the vital importance of the College's role in supporting its community, particularly the younger generation. By providing resources, guidance, and a supportive environment, the College can play a crucial part in addressing these mental health challenges. It can offer a sanctuary for learning and growth, while also serving as a beacon of hope and support for those struggling with their mental health. The College's active involvement can contribute significantly to the healing and resilience of its students, fostering a healthier, more vibrant community.

The recent data from the Office for National Statistics sheds light on a concerning trend on the Isle of Wight, where key towns like Cowes, Newport, Ryde, Sandown, and Shanklin are seeing more individuals leave for advanced education than they attract. This suggests a pressing need for more educational opportunities on the island to prevent the outflow of local talent seeking higher education elsewhere. In contrast, cities such as Southampton and Portsmouth are successfully attracting individuals with advanced education, which is expected given their broader range of opportunities and economic scale. This situation highlights the potential for the Isle of Wight to develop strategies to retain its educated populace and to create an environment that draws in new skills and expertise, contributing to the island's economic and cultural prosperity.

The Isle of Wight College plays a strategic role in both the local and regional development by engaging with the Isle of Wight Skills Board and the Economic Development Board. Through its involvement with the Isle of Wight Skills Board, the college contributes to identifying the island's key priority sectors, which include Health and Social Care, Construction and Renewables, Technology, and the Visitor Economy. The Skills Board has formulated the IW Skills Plan, which supports the LSIP strategy by setting three primary goals: aligning aspirations with opportunities to meet employers' skill needs; developing a skilled, productive, and future-ready workforce; and promoting inclusive growth opportunities.

Simultaneously, the college collaborates with the Economic Development Board to influence the college's strategic direction. The EDB's Economic Development Plan outlines the island's priorities concerning regeneration and inward investment.

Their review in 2023 revealed challenges such as a widening productivity gap with the UK average, especially post-pandemic, and variations in nominal wages across sectors. The review also highlighted the link between productivity, competitiveness, and economic growth, and its impact on economic prosperity, wages, and household incomes. The outlook for the island's economy include moderate growth driven by sectors such as tourism, renewable energy and digital industries, but a decline in sales and business activity.

These insights from the Economic Development Board underscore the importance of the college's strategic planning in addressing the island's economic and skills needs, ensuring that education and training are closely aligned with the island's economic objectives and the well-being of its community.

The Isle of Wight faces several challenges, including a decline in real disposable incomes affecting discretionary spending and tourism, an increase in business failures, particularly among small enterprises, and the need for further investment in digital and transport infrastructure. The aging population, which is higher than national averages combined with a predicted decline in birth population over the next five years and low labour market participation among certain age groups also present significant hurdles.

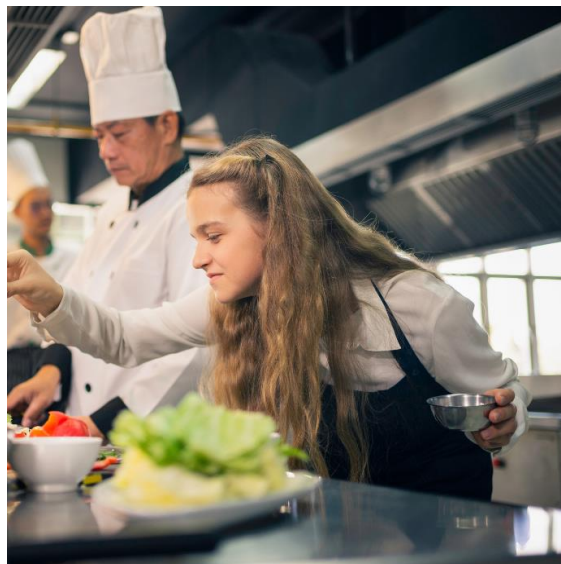
Conversely, there are opportunities in light marine and manufacturing activities, particularly with the new freeport, and in attracting higher value-added service activities. Encouraging migration from Hampshire due to flexible working, addressing the skills deficit through on the job training and retention, and sector-specific upskilling are all avenues for growth and development. Further the creative industries offer significant opportunities for economic growth through the Solent Growth Partnership which is looking to boost the region's screen industries including film and TV production and Creative Island which supports arts and culture on the Isle of Wight offering programmes such as IW Creative Network providing business support and training for creative professionals.

Data from the Office of National Statistics shows that the island is a demographic outlier against regional and national averages, and it continues to move further away from the norm. The island is experiencing a steepening decline in its young population, with an extreme and worsening ratio of retired to working age. The economic consequences of this can be that businesses close through retirement and enterprise and entrepreneurship suffer. The island's demographic decay and societal stagnation exacerbate existing challenges of low wages, low productivity, and rising child poverty. Without decisive action and collaboration, there are risks of the island becoming a fully stratified society characterised by low wages, low productivity, low growth, and high inequality within fifteen years. Action can be taken for change, with political will, shared vision, and collaboration across all sectors for rapid socio-economic impact, rejuvenation, and advancement.



There is a need to safeguard school and college campuses, as public assets, for future generations. This involves integrating support systems and community impact into the premises functions without hindering the primary task of teaching. Then enhance undergraduate and postgraduate course offerings on the island. Implement a strategy to develop shared, affordable student accommodation through partnerships between universities, partner providers and local councils. Leveraging the island's unique specialisations in the Engineering and Manufacturing, Construction trades and crafts, Digital, Creative, Media and Sports industries and natural sciences, which are part of the UK's fastest growing sectors. There is a plan to apply the island's apprenticeship expertise to emerging opportunities in the business, creative, cultural and sustainability sectors. There is ambition to establish three international centres of excellence within the Solent Region, with locations on the island and the nearby mainland in Ecology, Ecological Design and the Creative Industry. This initiative will involve collaboration with UNESCO, Solent Partners, and the central southern university cluster. This approach aims to build a sustainable and culturally rich educational environment that supports growth and innovation on the island.

We have continued to focus on meeting these needs of our local community and have made significant progress in delivering high-quality technical and vocational learning that is matched to the needs of island employers and the local community. Our annual Accountability Statement reflects our progress against the objectives set previously as well as our commitment to fulfilling the Local Needs Duty.



The corporation has a duty under section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 to review provision in relation to local needs, as proposed in the Skills and Post 16 Education Bill. The corporation already has the responsibility of approving the colleges strategy and this has now been extended to include the college's accountability plan. The board has provided an appropriate steer in the setting of strategic priorities and objectives.

The strategic plan, alongside the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), the government's national priorities and work with our stakeholders has informed the content of this accountability statement.



## **1. Put our Students first**

Our goal is to ensure high-quality, personalised student learning that prioritises individual needs and aspirations, facilitates transitions to further education or employment, and leverages digital platforms and data analytics for targeted support and enhanced student success.

## **2. Provide a relevant and flexible Curriculum**

Our aim is to develop and continuously adapt an inspiring, relevant, and flexible curriculum that addresses local skills gaps, aligns with community needs, integrates digital technologies for enhanced delivery, and empowers students to pursue their aspirations, careers and pathways to independent living while fostering lifelong learning and adaptability.

## **3. Staff and Student Well-being**

Our goal is to cultivate a supportive environment prioritising the well-being of all staff and students, providing support and a safe place to work and learn. We will provide tools and resource that support mental and physical health fostering a culture of care, respect, collaboration, and kindness

## **4. Financial Performance**

Our objective is to implement strategies for strong financial performance, creating a culture of financial responsibility and accountability. We will prioritise the efficient management of all resources ensuring we are providing value for public money. We will use financial and funding performance data to inform planning and to improve performance. We will ensure we focus on the quality of outcomes for all students and prioritise resource to make continuous improvements.

## **5. Inclusive Environment**

Our aim is to promote an inclusive and diverse environment where everyone feels safe and is safe. We will actively embrace difference and remove barriers to learning ensuring everyone is engaged and enabled to achieve their aspirations.

## **6. Sustainable Practices**

Our goal is to champion initiatives that promote environmental stewardship. We will be early adopters of new technology that promotes sustainable practices embedding this into our learning and work. We will actively create a more sustainable estate with a reduced carbon footprint. We will embrace a dynamic curriculum that develops advanced skills in sustainable careers that will contribute to a sustainable future.

## Section 2 Context and Place

The Isle of Wight College has prepared a dynamic curriculum strategy to secure relevant learning and skills that meet local needs and aspirations. This plan outlines the core curriculum offered which is co-designed with employers and community partners and sets out a vision for future skills. We will provide advanced skills to raise the aspirations of young people and adults and to meet the changing needs of employers. We will work alongside our students, employers, civil and community partners to provide the skills and knowledge required to meet the skills gaps. The curriculum strategy is aligned to the College Strategic Plan (2024-2030), the Learning and Skills Improvement Plan and the National Skills strategy placed in a local Island context.

As the only further education college on the island we deliver to local need and demand operating across two main sites and within employer and community settings. We have an extensive international provision that is vital for our young people and adults enabling them to understand cultural difference, building respectful relationships and working through barriers to communication through collaboration. These programmes raise aspirations and continually develop young people and adults beyond the qualification.

The College has two sites, one is located in Newport, the county town of the Isle of Wight and a second site, which is a Centre of Excellence for Composites, Advanced Manufacturing and Marine CECAMM, is located in East Cowes. This centre, opened in September 2017, was funded by the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership and built in partnership with GKN.

Recognising its role as the only provider of general further education on the island, the College offers a broad curriculum from foundation level to higher education, to meet the needs of employers and the local community. As a result, it trains approximately 5,000 students annually across full-time, part-time, SEND, apprenticeships and higher education provision. In the national context the College is a small to medium size with approximately 1,626 students aged 16-19 including 19-24 EHCP students, 1,794 adults, 19 Advanced Learner Loans students and 441 apprentices studying at the college at the time of writing. The number of Higher Education students studying on partner university validated programmes is circa 90.

There is a high proportion of young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities SEND on the island.

- ✚ In 2022/23, there were 21.6% students with SEND compared to 17.0% nationally
- ✚ On the Isle of Wight approximately 5% of pupils have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) compared with 3.7% nationally
- ✚ 13.6% of IW pupils receive SEND support compared with 12.2% nationally
- ✚ As of 2025 approximately 26.7% of working age adults with a learning disability in the UK are employed. On the Isle of Wight the employment rate for adults with a learning disability is slightly lower at around 24%
- ✚ The College provides comprehensive, high-quality programmes including supported



internships for SEND and specialist facilities for students with the most profound and complex needs



The island has a high proportion of electively home educated EHE individuals. In 2025 3.1% of the total school age population on the island were EHE. Nationally the percentage in EHE was around 1.5%. The College provides a supplementary GCSE programme for 14 to 16 year old students who are registered as EHE and referred to college by the EHE Local Authority Officer.

The College subcontracts provision to Platform One, a specialist music college, and UKSA, a maritime training charity, which are both based on the island. These partnerships enable the College to provide unique opportunities to students in niche markets with UKSA offering courses related to maritime and shipping activities and Platform One being a specialist music company with excellent links to industry and countless successful artists some of which have been in the UK music charts. Platform One recently began offering a course in Sustainable Fashion in September 2023.



Being located on an island is unique and the expanse of water between the island and mainland is amongst the most expensive to cross in the world. This geographical isolation presents a set of challenges including difficulty in attracting, recruiting and retaining staff outside of its own limited demographic. Travelling across the water to work with travel disruptions and high costs limits our ability to benefit from shared resources, we do not benefit from other economies of scale that mainland colleges enjoy and the premiums applied to the cost of equipment and materials for students and the estate due to the carriage charges applied by mainland companies. The prohibitive travel costs also limit a students opportunity to study on the mainland and it is important that the college can meet students needs, where possible – we believe that no-one should have to leave the island for their education. Therefore, the College is an anchor institution that works with others to ensure that island residents are not disadvantaged when compared to their mainland counterparts in relation to accessing the education, training and skills that they need.

Unlike many General Further Education Colleges, the Isle of Wight College offers a wide and varied curriculum across 14 sector areas to ensure that local residents have access to the learning and skills required to enable them to make progress in life and work. This includes SEND students, including those with profound and multiple disabilities, who wish to access education locally as opposed to being placed in a mainland residential provision.

There has been a history of low aspirations on the island, and it is currently positioned 47th out of 47 counties in the country for educational attainment at GCSE. Primary school performance is also poor with the island placed last out of the 153 LEAs in England. Only 53% of Key Stage 2 pupils on the Isle of Wight reached the expected standard, compared to the national average of 60%. Performance of maths and English is poor compared to the national picture with only 65.8% of students achieving Grade 4 and above in all their GCSE examinations, which is significantly below the national average of 76.3%. As a result many students leaving the school system at age 16 and progressing to further education are required to resit their maths and English GCSEs as they have not achieved a grade 4-9 at school. Confidence relating to maths and English is a significant barrier for students on entry to further education.



**Students from The Isle of Wight College at the MEI Maths Regional Final**

However, the college is committed to raising the skills of young people and adults through the delivery of innovative teaching and learning. We will raise the number of young people and adults taking part in local, regional and national competitions to increase opportunities for students to achieve and be successful in their life and work.



The future landscape of primary education on the island is facing a significant shift with a sharp decline in the number of primary places needed each year. As of 2025, the Isle of Wight has a physical capacity for 10,724 primary-aged children. The birth rate on the Isle of Wight is approximately 7.1 births per 1,000 people. Given the island's population of around 141,000 this translates to roughly 1,001 births per year, and by March 2026, 21 primary schools are projected to be in deficit, leading to an overall loss of £3.8 million.

The Local Authority (LA) is advocating for a whole-island approach to address these challenges, which includes reviewing primary education beyond just school place planning. By 2027, there will be 920 children entering education at age 4, resulting in a surplus of 399 places across primary schools.

Specific areas such as Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin, Cowes, Ventnor, Ryde Rural, and East Cowes are all expected to have surplus places, with numbers ranging from 19 to 80.

This surplus and the subsequent financial challenges could have a ripple effect on further education (FE) as this age group reaches FE age. The potential impact could include a reduced number of students enrolling in FE, which may necessitate a reevaluation of course offerings, staffing, and resources. Additionally, the LA is considering repurposing closed primary schools for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision to address the significant shortfall and accommodate the increasing number of SEND students.

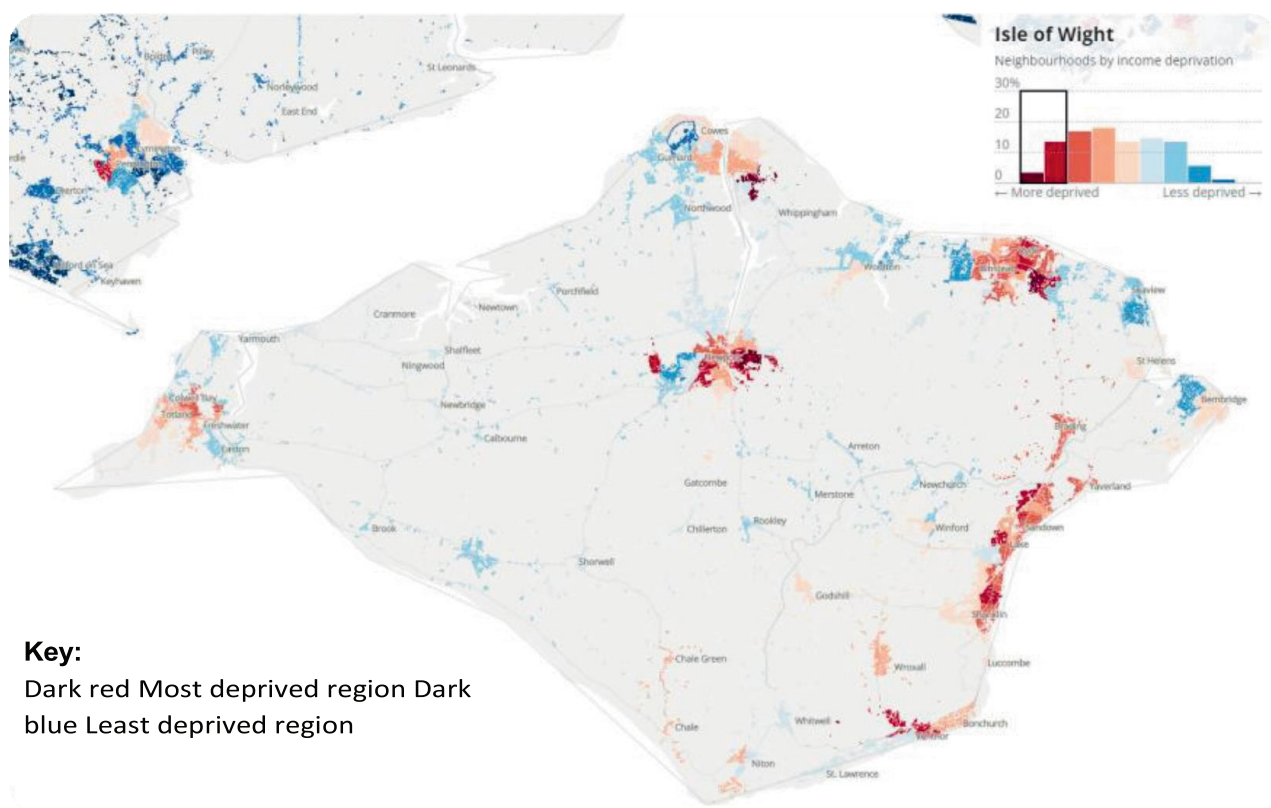
The Isle of Wight is a largely rural area and is renowned for its stunning and diverse coastline. The island features a mix of dramatic cliffs, sandy beaches, and picturesque coastal paths. The Isle of Wight Coastal Path, which spans approximately 70 miles, offers breathtaking views and is a popular destination for walkers and nature enthusiasts. The coastline is also subject to various natural hazards, including coastal erosion, cliff retreat, landslides and flooding. These challenges have led to the development of comprehensive coastal management strategies to protect the Island's natural beauty and infrastructure.

The island is classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and has UNESCO Biosphere status. The total population of the island is 144,581 (Office for National Statistics data, 2025) and the proportion of older people is higher than the national average and growing more quickly. 97% of the island population identify themselves as being white British, 2.4% as non-white and the remainder being from other ethnic groups. A significant minority of the population, approximately 23%, consider themselves to have a disability.

The number of economically active residents is lower at 75.5% than the South-East of England 81.9% and United Kingdom at 78.4%. There are fewer, higher skilled, higher qualified people in jobs on the island than the South-East of England. Conversely the island has a higher proportion of lower skilled jobs with less qualified employees. The percentage of people in work per profession type against the total number of people who are of working age for Isle of Wight in care and leisure is 13.7% compared to 7.4% in the South-East. In contrast professional occupations on the Isle of Wight are at 17.4% vs 21.2% in the South-East.

Labour demand differs locally from the region in a small number of ways for example 16.5% in human, health and social work activities, versus 13.2% in the South-East. There is a 4% demand for jobs in accommodation and food services on the island versus 7.8% in the South-East. The island has a larger proportion of employees that work on fractional, seasonal or sessional contracts with many working less hours when compared with data from the South-East or nationally. There is also a disparity in relation to the level of education, for example 8.8% of the population have no qualifications compared to 6.6% in the South-East. Whereas Level 4 and above is at 31.3% for the island versus 45% in the South-East.

The map below indicates the varying levels of deprivation on the island.



Deprivation map of the Isle of Wight (Office for National Statistics)

On the Isle of Wight, 13.8% of the population faced income deprivation in 2019, placing the island as the 95th most income-deprived out of 316 local authorities in England. Furthermore, out of 89 neighbourhoods on the Isle of Wight, 15 were among the top 20% most income-deprived in the nation. This data highlights the economic challenges faced by a significant portion of the island's residents, emphasises the need for targeted support and interventions to address income inequality and enhance the overall quality of life for those affected.

In 24/25, 11 students with EHCPs have bus passes, 41 students with EHCP travel to college by taxi. 288 16-18 students across the college have bus passes. The island has one transport provider, Southern Vectis, which limits resource and is unusual compared to the mainland with several transport providers. 114 19yr, students have bus passes.



## Section 3: Meeting Local, Regional and National Trends

Effective collaboration with Stakeholders is crucial for the successful execution of the College's strategy and objectives. Leaders and managers throughout the organisation consistently engage with employers and Stakeholders at all levels, using these interactions to shape the curriculum. This ensures that the College is prepared to provide the necessary skills locally and that the curriculum offered meets this demand. Key Stakeholders include local, regional, and national employers, the Isle of Wight Council (IWC), DWP, the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce (of which the college is a member), Isle of Wight Skills Board, Economic Development Board, Adult and Community Learning Advisory Board, the local MP, students, and apprentices.

The College collates information from all Stakeholders and resources such as the LSIP to gain a comprehensive overview and understanding of the economic and social situation, which is used to inform the annual update to the curriculum strategy and has been used to influence the seven key priorities below. Once identified, the College will implement the curriculum through various funding mechanisms and opportunities. The College aims to support 'The Isle of Wight Skills plan' (adopted in 2021) with the key strategic aim of "Growing our skills base and retaining our workforce in key sectors, such as hospitality and social care will be a key challenge for the next five years as will helping those who have lost time from education to recover and achieve their personal goals. These will be key aspects of our island skills plan"

The Seven Priorities:

1. **Grow each student's life opportunities** with a focus on providing an inclusive and diverse curriculum that suitably challenges all including those that are disadvantaged and SEND curriculum that enhances personal and professional growth.
2. **Offer a dynamic, adaptable and rewarding curriculum** which enables young people and adults to advance their skills and provide employers with the core competencies required for future roles.
3. **Sustain purposeful, mutually beneficial, and productive relationships with employers and the wider community:** Strengthen connections with local businesses and community organisations.
4. **Secure a vibrant and sustainable future:** Aim for long-term sustainability and growth of the college.
5. **Align aspirations with opportunities to meet employers' skill needs:** Match student aspirations with the skills required by local employers.
6. **Develop a skilled, productive, and future-ready workforce:** Prepare students for the evolving job market with relevant skills and training.
7. **Promote inclusive growth opportunities:** Ensure that growth benefits all members of the community, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.



The largest gap between local skills and local market needs is at Level 2 to 3 (14,000 skills deficit i.e., more job openings than people with these skills). The skills deficits in the region include:

At Level 1 and below, the largest deficit in skills is in critical and transferable skills. The larger volume of lower skilled job openings could provide a range of employability opportunities for young people with qualifications at this level.

- Also notable at Level 2 and 3 are gaps in: construction, learning support, and accounting and finance. All of these are in industries where both specific technical skills and a range of key skills will be required. A lack of these skills would be highly likely to impact upon employability opportunities for local people.
- Strong leadership and management is a key factor in fostering innovation, unlocking the potential of the workforce, and ensuring organisations have the right strategies to drive productivity and growth. There is a significant undersupply of Level 4/5 management qualifications, this gap is particularly notable in areas such as management and leadership which are essential for meeting local market needs.
- There are notable skills gaps at Level 4 and 5 in healthcare roles (although this may be explained by how/where these sectors recruit for this level of skills). Proportionally, the gap between supply and demand at Level 4 and 5 is the greatest, with only 15% of opportunities being catered for by local provision.

There is a strong need to develop the skills of the workforce at all ages on the island and allow them to adapt to the changing need from employers as well as to the need of emerging technologies. To retain and attract a skilled workforce on the island as well as supporting students to progress into the national and global arenas. The college can act as a 'anchor institution', having a significant stake in the local area, and significant interest in the long-term development and health of its residents.

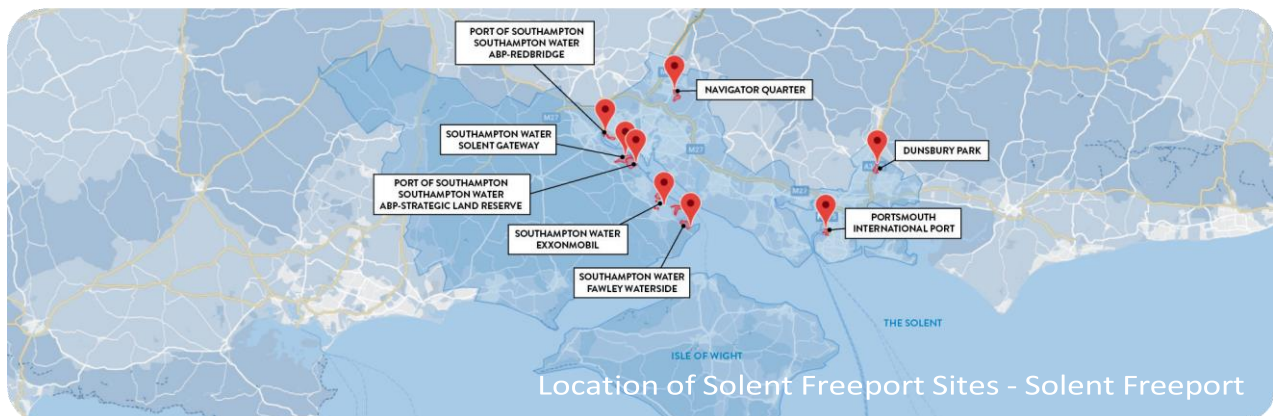
There is an increased need for skills as opposed to just qualifications in their professional workforce with a desire to pay for add on 'skills' course to address those skill gaps. Shorter, sharper courses are identified as more appealing as opposed to more traditional full apprenticeships and courses. Therefore, the Isle of Wight College is committed to working with the employers directly to find out what skills development they need and thus providing the relevant 'customised content' courses.

Employers and their workforce will need to adapt to the changing landscape and hit relevant sustainability targets. A key sector for the Solent region is low carbon which supports the LSIP's Solent net zero by 2050 strategy and decarbonisation which requires innovative, pioneering approaches and development of expertise. There is a need for retrofit courses as well as cavity wall insulators to support the local demand, in addition to energy and cost reduction skills and LCREE jobs (low carbon and renewable energy economy). The need for heat network engineers is identified, as well as the requirement of electrical skills for example to support the growth in EV charger installations and grid connection.

Feedback from employers indicates that as new employees start there is often a disparity in their expectations of the workplace versus that offered by employers. Some are also lacking in transferable skills such as problem solving, teamwork and resilience. Another area needed is the development of leadership and management skills and project management in sector areas such as construction as well as the traditional skills in the trades.

The national priority of engineering is key on the Isle of Wight as identified by the LSIP with a need for master and technical level skills. International companies operate on the island in manufacturing, engineering and electronic engineering. The Isle of Wight College is well placed to support the training and skills needs of these employers with the 'bespoke' facilities at CECAMM. This also includes the extension as part of the South Coast Institute of Technology, that will see significant investment at CECAMM, leading to bespoke higher-level qualifications by allowing use of the prototyping lab and industry standard specialist equipment. 3D printing and CAD are areas that are key for the future and are all embedded within the courses.

There is significant change in the area of land based and horticulture with the focus on efficient practices in food production and conservation. The College has a small horticulture department but is aiming to work with a collective at Gurnard Community farm in which sustainable practices can be developed. Students will be able to co- create the horticulture farm, thus also supporting the business aspects of running such an enterprise.



The Solent region aims to grow the marine and maritime economy and is quite unique with the Solent Free Port. Areas identified cover the transport elements from stevedores to load/unload ships, HGV and LGV as well as pilots of large vessels and freight water transport although this is not proven to be in demand on the island. However, bespoke courses in radar have been developed and delivered and will continue to run to support that need as well as boat building courses. The 'Improved Equipment Reliability Strategy' as part of the IoT for marine engineers has also been developed to help improve productivity. There is also a need to focus on green targets in this sector by upskilling the workforce to be able to deal with alternative fuels. The Freeport has targets to increase the business administration skills of employees, in addition to IT skills including programming and software development.

A key need on the island is the Health and Care sector with a high need but large gaps in the workforce. The social care sector is vast on the island and to meet the needs of workers in this area the college is developing courses that focus on the social care side compared to the more prevalent health side. The NHS have requested both clinical and nonclinical pathways for their current and future workforce. This will be mapped out from entry to the NHS, utilising apprenticeships, AEB and Free Courses for Jobs funding.

Although highly seasonal, the hospitality sector is a key one on the island. The themes indicated are the need for skilled chefs, as well as in customer service. The ability to maximise the benefits from an attraction hot spot by increasing visitor numbers. The College runs various courses to support this area including Sector Work Academy Placements in customer service supporting local people into jobs.

The creative industries are also heavily featured for the Isle of Wight with a variety of industry specific themes coming through such as lighting, production, set design and sound. As mentioned previously, the need for leadership and management skills as well as project management is also mentioned within this area. As part of the IoT the College offers courses such as 'Project management and Implementation' as well as 'A Quality Approach to Business Techniques' to help meet the need.



The theme of digital skills comes through many different sources with much of the new workforce lacking in the level of skills required by the employers. The Isle of Wight College is committed to developing the required skills for all students by embedding digital skills within the curriculum. This will mean preparing all students with the relevant digital skills for their curriculum areas, providing them with industry ready skills for the future workforce. Additionally, the development of cyber security knowledge is key for many sectors, and this course will be developed over the new academic year, to meet the local, regional and national needs.

It is also recognised that the landscape we work in is ever changing and we have to be prepared to look at not only the skills needed now but in the future. One area that is ever changing is that of artificial intelligence (AI) and a need to understand and harness the benefits for employers is important.

Health, retail & education are the three largest employment sectors in the Solent which compares to health & social work and manufacturing followed by construction, accommodation and food industries being the largest industries on the island.

## **Further areas of focus and priorities to support the needs of the island:**

### **Level 4/5 provision**

Supporting a co-ordinated approach to the Level 4/5 skills offer on the island, with the University Centre Isle of Wight, Platform One and the implementation of higher-level apprenticeships. Building on the i-aspire initiative and taking forward the recommendations of the HE Report 2019 to develop a co-ordinated approach and more provision in areas of identified need including creative industries, environmental, tech, low carbon, engineering marine engineering, leadership, management, health and social care. Being part of the South Coast IoT, has led to creating short modularised higher-level courses, which can be delivered bespoke for employers, to meet their needs for their new and existing workforce.

### **Lifetime skills guarantee**

Developing a strategic approach to mobilising the governments Lifetime Skills Guarantee which focuses on communities and individuals most in need and aligns to job opportunities and skills gaps in sectors with high growth potential including digital skills and leadership and management programmes. Further utilisation of the Free Courses for Jobs, with a particular focus on leadership, construction and childcare and implementing more Skills Bootcamps in the health and social care and digital sector.

Local Skills Improvement Plan under the current LSIP, the College is participating in four projects to support the local and regional needs. These projects are centred around the Creative Industries, Maritime, NEETs and Health and Social Care, as all are local and regional priorities.

### **Apprenticeships**

Build on existing programmes within the engineering and business curriculum areas and work across the provider network, with careers professionals and schools. To raise the profile of apprenticeships as a high-quality careers route and develop a targeted plan to address the mismatch in opportunities and applicants. Further development in the health and social care and construction sectors for growth areas are essential over the next academic year.

### **Careers**

Further develop strong and mutually beneficial relationships between schools, employers and education providers, to enhance awareness of the scope and quality of local career opportunities and ensure that young people aspire to jobs in sectors with vacancies and higher-level skills needs. The College careers team are strengthening networks to discuss and implement actions to address local career opportunities and skills needs in alignment with the forthcoming Gatsby Benchmarks. We are embedding career education within the curriculum from the very beginning of the student journey, providing a 'golden thread' of Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) and student reflection to achieve positive progression. There is collaboration with employers to design and deliver training programmes that align with current and future job market needs

### **Developing a highly skilled, productive and future ready workforce**

This priority will focus on raising skills levels across the island, ensuring sufficient higher-level provision, which is targeted at the needs of key sectors, and improving L4/5 technical opportunities, matched to labour market needs. It will support the education and skills ambition of the Digital island Strategy, the IOW University Centre and the South Coast IoT. It will also encourage upskilling within the workforce, promoting a culture of lifelong learning, support for



adults who wish to change careers and encourage better take up of leadership and management skills as a driver of innovation, entrepreneurship and growth. It will aim to increase productivity driven by higher skills levels and ultimately close the gap in average earnings between Isle of Wight residents and UK averages.





## Enabling opportunities for all and a more inclusive approach to growth

This priority will focus on improving participation in education and training and employment for disadvantaged groups and communities with high deprivation indicators. It will work with partner organisations to engage and support people to access training and employment programmes and will also consider accessibility for protected groups, ensuring access to opportunity for all.

## SEND opportunities

Enabling inclusiveness and achievement of SEND students by providing comprehensive, high-quality programmes, including supported internships, tailored to individual needs and aspirations. Ensuring specialist facilities and resources for students with the most profound and complex needs, so that they have access to the same educational opportunities as their peers.

The list of national priority areas is mapped against the College's provision showing what we currently offer, what we are introducing in 2025/2026 and what is under development beyond that, to support these priorities:

Priority Area	Existing Programmes	Introducing in 2025/2026	Under Development Beyond 2026
<b>Digital and Technology Skills</b>	- IT courses	- Advanced coding bootcamps -HTQ Software Development	- AI and machine learning programs
<b>Health and Social Care</b>	- Nursing and healthcare assistant courses and social care courses	- Specialised healthcare training for adults -Specific social care	- Higher level associate nursing courses, working towards degree level
<b>Engineering and Manufacturing</b>	- Basic engineering courses	- Higher level robotics and automation training	- Renewable energy engineering programs
<b>Creative Industries</b>	- Art and design courses	-Advanced photography programme	- Higher level creative industries courses
<b>Construction</b>	- Basic construction skills	- Sustainable building practices -Advanced carpentry programme	- Higher level construction programme for site supervising
<b>Business and Management</b>	- Business administration courses	- Entrepreneurship programs	- Advanced business analytics
<b>Education and Training</b>	- Teaching assistant courses	- Specialised education training	- Advanced pedagogical methods
<b>Maritime</b>	-Intermediate and advanced marine programmes	-Specialised courses on autonomous vessel training	-Advanced programme for coding and autonomous vessel delivery

## Section 4: Key Stakeholders

199 employers provided a work-industry placement for students over the last 2 years. Participation in work experience continues to improve year-on-year as expected after the lockdowns and restrictions employers placed on those entering their workplaces.

Overall, the College has increased the number of hours for placement year-on-year with over 18,000 hours of work skills and placement delivery taking place in this academic year.



The College works closely with the Local Authority SEND team and commissioning manager and other stakeholders to secure high needs funding and support for SEND programmes, which actively promote an inclusive and diverse environment where all students feel safe, engaged, and supported in achieving their full potential. The college works to support students to access education locally as opposed to being placed in residential mainland provision.

The College is also a member of the following associations and groups:

- Strategic Economic Planning - the College has worked with HCC and IWC to develop strategic plans such as the Isle of Wight economic overview in 2019 and 2023, and the Isle of Wight skills plan 2022. These strategic plans influence the College's strategy and priorities.
- The College plays a significant role in influencing the strategic direction of the Isle of Wight in terms of skills and education and has an important role on Boards including the Economic Development Board and the Skills Board.
- Island Careers Partnership - the College has a key role in this group which includes a network of education providers and employers which benefits current and future students. Information is shared on work placements and employer involvement in the curriculum. This involvement increases the College's links with schools and other providers.

- Hampshire SEND and Independence Employability Hubs – the college is a key partner on this board working to bring together workplace and non-workplace learning to develop and deliver a flexible programme, focusing on the elements young people with SEND need to gain independence and skills that maximise progression into sustained employment, transforming the life chances of young people with SEND.
- Adult and Community Learning Advisory Board – the College holds the key role of providing progression routes for the community to widen participation in learning and provide critical links to jobs.
- DWP – in partnership with the Job Centre, the College has delivered Sector Work- based Academy Programmes (SWAPs) which have helped employers to recruit to areas where there are skills shortages. This has been focused on helping the unemployed to upskill and gain employment. The College organises guaranteed interviews for all candidates, which can lead to employment.

Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce – close partnership working together to collectively produce the local skills improvement plan which influences the accountability statement as well as supporting various projects and initiatives.

- Skills Bootcamps and Multiply collaboration projects – The college has been involved in the delivery of Skills Bootcamps since running the pilot programme in 2022. Recently delivering a Health and Social Care Bootcamp. It has also been a key provider of maths workshops for those in employment and seeking employment

**HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE  
SKILLS FOR ADULTS**  
FREE\* Skills Bootcamps

Are you looking  
to up-skill or  
move into the  
care sector?

 **college** THE ISLE OF WIGHT

## Section 5: Engagement with Other Providers in the Area

The College is the main vocational and technical education provider on the island for full and part-time programmes for young people with approximately 48% market share for students aged 16.

The College works very collaboratively with local FE providers across Hampshire including colleges such as Fareham, Eastleigh, Southampton City, Brockenhurst, and Havant and South Downs. Additionally, the College works closely with the University of Portsmouth who validates the College's Higher Education provision and works in partnership with the Solent University. The College has delivered the following projects with these providers over the last two years.

- The implementation of the South Coast Institute of Technology, with two digital labs and an extension at our CECAMM campus with a state-of-the-art prototyping lab.
- Best practice sharing with multiple colleges for maths which is led by Fareham College.

Additionally, within the LSIP, projects, there have been two employer stakeholder events within the maritime engineering sector and the health and social care sector. These events have had several attendees discussing the current workforce needs and the needs for the future in these sectors. These events offer rich discussion, insight into the industry, designing the curriculum and highlighting the critical skills stakeholders require, leading to these being developed within the curriculum.

Overall, the College engages with a large number of initiatives, partners, stakeholders and funding streams for its size. This is due to the nature of being the only general further education college on the island which results in the college having a unique mission to develop and provide opportunity in all areas where possible which the college does well. The unique position of the college often lends itself to be able to identify supplementary funding mechanisms to meet employer and stakeholder needs.



For apprenticeships, the College is a major provider on the island. There are three other providers on the island directly which are focussed on the following sectors for their primary business operations which is apprenticeships.



**HTP Apprenticeship College**

Hospitality, Healthcare and Business-related subjects

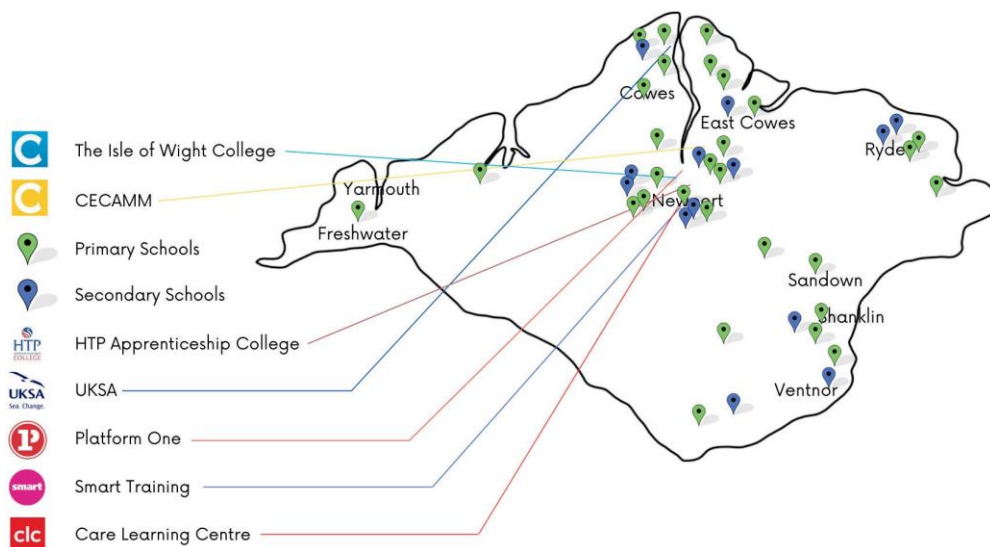


**Smart Training**

Business related subjects, Healthcare and Management



In addition to this provision, academic study post 16 is provided by 4 sixth forms on the island and they primarily provide A Level provision with a small number of vocational courses. The island has 6 secondary schools. The College visits each school at least twice a year to promote courses and raise awareness of its offer to students.



The College typically engages with over a thousand students across year groups 9-11 which is statistically significant on the island.

The College is a member of the local education headteachers group which provides strategic direction and objectives in conjunction with Hampshire County Council to ensure that best practice is shared and new directives on the mainland are replicated on the island where relevant.

## Section 6: Annual Objectives

Following consideration of the labour market intelligence and range of priorities the College has committed to seven over-arching accountability aims that will ensure that the needs of our students, community, stakeholders and employers are met.

AIM	SMART objectives (to be met within the period of the current accountability statement)
1.Prepare all students for work and life.	<p>1.Support improvement in the number of young people (16-25) with EHCPs engaged in work focused programmes, increasing supported internship student recruitment by 30% each year.</p> <p>2.‘Critical skills’ with all students to support them being work ready.</p> <p>3.Continue to offer and improve the number of students taking higher education courses at the college, raising the number of students on courses to 150.</p>
2. Offer a dynamic, adaptable, and rewarding curriculum that is relevant to the future skills needs of the Solent region.	<p>1.Increase the take up of apprenticeships on the Isle of Wight - maximising the use of the levy and targeting key sectors/student cohorts including Business Administration, Customer Service, Health and Care, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, and Hospitality. Increasing the number in learning from 460 to 485.</p> <p>2.Develop and introduce a set number of new product lines each year, offering new curriculum that is different from previous offers, with a target of 15 new products introduced in 12 months where there is direct evidence of local and regional need.</p> <p>3.Develop an IoT level four and five offer that provides new digital, creative, business, construction and manufacturing skills locally. Providing new courses to over 90 students.</p>



AIM	SMART objectives (to be met within the period of the current accountability statement)
3. Sustain a purposeful, mutually beneficial, and productive relationship with employers and community partners to enhance the opportunities to students.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.To support a 5% reduction in the proportion of the working age population with low or no qualifications.</li> <li>2. To support increased participation of Adults without a Level 3 qualification (Skills and Post 16 Education Bill) increasing the number of adults on free courses for jobs offer to 50, currently 11.</li> <li>3. Ensure that employers are satisfied with the products offered in the college conducting a meaningful satisfaction survey which results in a minimum satisfaction rate of 70% or more, with a minimum 40% response rate.</li> </ol>
4. Secure a vibrant and sustainable future for the college, its students, and partners.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To support an increase in the proportion of the working age population with qualifications equivalent to level 4 and above from the 2023 baseline of 37.2%.</li> <li>2.Support improvement of basic skills and digital skills in the workforce and for those looking to access the labour market.</li> <li>3.Support upskilling of the local workforce to ensure it has the skills required to adapt to technological change.</li> <li>4. Providing ‘step into’ adult work programmes to 90 students through the AEB. Embed sustainability in all aspects of college courses to raise awareness and interest in householders to adopt sustainability within their homes.</li> </ol>
5. Ensuring provision of important information and relevant courses to support the local community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Reach more people to inform how the College can support them by continuing to grow social media followers, combined from 11.5k to 13k and monthly website users from 3.5k to 4K</li> <li>2.Develop full-cost courses for employers that increases the number of customers received. Measured by income increase from £125k to £150k.</li> <li>3.Deliver non-accredited AEB courses to support the current need in sectors such as construction and engineering to provide skills development and contribute to students’ employability.</li> </ol>

AIM	SMART objectives (to be met within the period of the current accountability statement)
<p>6. Ensure that employers shape the college curriculum and contribute to students' programmes in a meaningful way.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop employer boards cross college that conduct meaningful reviews of the curriculum on offer and sign off the curriculum intent for all curriculum areas.</li> <li>2. Ensure that employers deliver master classes to students on a regular basis and in a purposeful manner, with a minimum of one master class per term.</li> <li>3. Develop a skills led competition in all curriculum areas, which is designed by employers and stakeholders that challenges students to undertake a specific task related to a real working environment.</li> </ol>
<p>7. Provide a safe and inclusive environment that is suitable for all which enables everyone to access the learning and skills they need to make progress.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to redevelop the campus, and curriculum departments, to provide dynamic and efficient learning spaces for all.</li> <li>2. Seek out innovative funding solutions to enable the college to purchase new equipment that mirrors what is used in industry.</li> <li>3. Ensure that all college spaces are accessible, ergonomic, and designed in a way that improves usage for all.</li> <li>4. Ensure all aspects related to college are supporting and providing the opportunities in all curriculum areas for those that want them. Promote opportunities in underrepresented courses e.g. support an increase in females participating in STEM subjects.</li> </ol>

## **Section 7: Local Needs Duty & Corporation Statement – this part is for Corporation update**

The Isle of Wight College's Corporation consistently evaluates the college's effectiveness in addressing local, regional, and national skills requirements. Through their interactions with the College, they are able to support the long-term development as well as ensuring the current position.

The strategic plan for 2024-2030 adopts a forward-thinking approach to position the College as a leading provider of the evolving skills needs. There has been a focus on reviewing curriculum needs while ensuring the College supports the local and national priorities in healthcare, engineering, low carbon technologies, manufacturing, construction, and digital. The development of employer led courses, new and innovative courses across a variety of levels which is further supported by the Level 4 and above courses via the Institute of Technology.

The IoT is focused on providing higher level courses within digital, business, creative industries, construction, engineering and marine. These review mechanisms collectively enable regular examination of how the college serves its communities by filling skills gaps, avoiding duplication, and collaborating with partners. Collaboration remains essential; ongoing validation of courses with the University of Portsmouth and the partnership with Southampton Solent University, due to the IoT, aims to align higher education curriculum and establish clear progression pathways. The College is developing a revised offer focusing on Higher Technical Skills in key priority sectors, including the introduction of the Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) in software development to support higher-level pathways in digital.

The College promotes inclusion and outcomes for SEND which focus on providing comprehensive, high-quality programmes which are tailored to individual needs and aspirations. There are specialist resources and facilities for students with more profound and complex needs so that there are local choices, and the College actively promotes an inclusive and diverse environment to ensure that students are engaged and supported to achieve their full potential.

The College stands as a beacon of progress, not only for its students but also for the staff, local community, and employers. It operates with a dynamic approach to education, tailoring programmes to foster critical skills that are essential in the modern workforce. By aligning its curriculum with the demands of the local economy, the College plays a pivotal role in facilitating job placements and career advancements. It is committed to nurturing young talent, ensuring that students are well-equipped to seize opportunities and excel in their chosen fields. Moreover, the college is dedicated to continuous evolution, regularly reassessing and refining its offerings to meet the ever-changing needs of society. This holistic approach ensures that the college remains a vital contributor to both individual growth and broader economic development.

The College thrives under the guidance and support of its dedicated governing body, ensuring a steadfast focus and responsive approach to education. Collaborating closely with key stakeholders and Solent providers, the College conducts comprehensive reviews of the curriculum offered by post-16 providers in the region. This strategic partnership fosters curriculum innovation, particularly in national priority sectors, aligning with the latest industry standards and societal needs.

On 1st March 2024, a 'Local Needs Duty forum' was convened by South Hampshire College Group, attended by Chairs and CEOs/Principals from the Solent region's General further Education Colleges, and most Sixth forms/post-16 Multi Academy Trusts. Representatives from Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council, and the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce were also present. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the skills agenda and collaborative working, with a focus on identifying areas for greater collaboration to support skills growth in Hampshire. This commitment has been renewed in 2025.

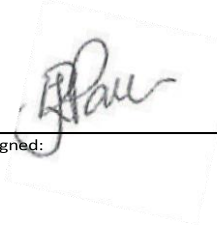
A review of collaborative projects funded through the Strategic Development funds and Local Skills Improvement fund was conducted, and research was commissioned to review the colleges' published accountability statements. The review concluded that skills priorities are well met in Engineering, Health & Social Care, and Childcare, but there is more work to do in measuring the impact on progression into employment. Gaps were identified in the Digital sector beyond Esports, ICT, and T-Levels, and the Science and Maths offer for the region is generic, requiring further development and engagement with employers.

On behalf of The Isle of Wight College Corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Corporation at their meeting on 21st of May 2025.

The plan will be published on the College's website within three months of the start of the new academic year can be accessed via this link: [Policies & Legal - Isle of Wight College](#)



**Ros Parker**  
Principal and CEO  
/Accounting Officer

  
Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
09.06.2025  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Sara Weech**  
Chair of Governors

  
Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
09.06.2025  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Section 8: Appendices and Reference Sources**

[Explore: Which towns attract people with advanced education?](#)

[IoW Biosphere](#)

[Isle of Wight Skills Plan](#)

[Solent Local Skills Improvement Plan](#)

[Solent Skills Action Plan \(LEP\)](#)

[IoW College Ofsted Report](#)

[SEND Report IoW Council](#)

[NOMIS Labour Market Data](#)

[Island Youth Mental Health Census 2023](#)

[ONS Economic Activity Status](#)

[Exploring Local Income Deprivation](#)

[LSIP Priorities Paper](#)

[Annual financial Statements](#)