

NCG Accountability Statement 2024/25

1. 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 colleges bound by the same mission, strategic aims and a number of business-critical policy frameworks. However, each college 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.

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.

As the only FE college with Indefinite Taught Degree Awarding Powers, NCG is also uniquely placed to address the current national and regional skills gap at Level 4 and 5, indeed we are already trailblazing in co-development of Higher Technical Qualifications with our partners.

2. NCG Strategic Aims and Objectives

As part of our development of the NCG Strategy to 2030 we have clearly set out our strategic aims and objectives as a group and these are underpinned by a set of strategic KPIs overseen by the NCG board. 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

The strategy and strategic aims were approved by the NCG Corporation in December 2019 and the KPIs are measured and refreshed on an annual basis. There will be a more comprehensive mid-point review during 2024/25 of the NCG Strategy.

Each NCG college has its own strategic plan which aligns to local skills needs and the NCG Strategy and they will be reviewed for the start of the 2024/25 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.

When determining our curriculum strategy, we will pay heed to 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

[NCG-Strategy-to-2030.pdf \(ncgrp.co.uk\)](#)

3. 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 main 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 combined authority North of Tyne, as well as large parts of Gateshead, Derwentside, South Tyneside, and Durham. It also 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. More recently, this has included 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 section of this plan.

4. Process followed by NCG to meet Statutory Requirements

As a national group of colleges, NCG has introduced 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. In 2023/24, NCG undertook a review of its local governance arrangement to better meet the changing demands of assuring local skills needs were being addressed. To develop the Accountability Statement for NCG, the following process was followed by all 7 colleges:

- Each college produced a draft Accountability Statement based on its own research and consultation relevant to its local area. For 2024/25 this includes a review that the college is satisfying the Local Needs Duty.
- 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.

5. National Policy Overview

The key policy focus for 2024/25 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. The focus on national skills priorities will include:

- Ensuring the curriculum offer to meet local and national skills needs as identified in LSIPs, now and in the future.
- Contributing to and responding to, curriculum and funding reforms
- Develop Higher Skills especially at levels 4 and 5.

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

6. NCG Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities

Across its 7 colleges, NCG will address all the National Skills Priorities shown below except for Haulage and Logistics.

This national priority is not pertinent to the local areas in which the NCG colleges operate, or it is actively being addressed by another provider in that location area. This will continue to be monitored as part of the Local Needs Duty.

- 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, now and in the future.
- Contributing to and responding to, curriculum and funding reforms including increasing the number of T Levels routes in the priority areas.
- Develop Higher Technical Skills especially at levels 4 and 5.

7. 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
<p>Aim/Objective 0.1:</p> <p>Continue to roll-out the NCG T-Level offer with the addition of subjects from wave 2 and beyond. NCG will review ‘what worked well’ and ‘lessons learned’ from wave 1 T-Level roll-out, so that we are better able to recruit to and deliver planned enrolment targets.</p> <p>From September 2024, we will have broadened our T-Level offer to include wave 2 subjects in Business and Administration, Creative and Design,</p>	<p>The aim is to build on the wave 1 subject roll-out and continue the delivery of T-Levels across 6 NCG FE colleges from September 2024. The pathways on offer will be different for each college and dependent on local facilities and skills needs.</p> <p>The 14 pathways offered in year 1 will be expanded to a minimum of 18 pathways in 2024/25. The T Level Council will continue to oversee approvals and course development, building on the model of identified T-Level Route leads that was successful last year, to ensure a consistent sequencing and delivery model exists to benefit all NCG learners.</p>

<p>Engineering, and Finance and Accounting.</p>	<p>NCG will share teaching and learning resources through dedicated communities of practice for each of the T-Level streams.</p> <p>T-Level marketing, communications and promotional materials will be developed centrally by the NCG Marketing and Communications lead, and these will be made available for colleges to adapt and use locally, to drive positive T-Level recruitment.</p>
<p>Aim/Objective 0.2:</p> <p>Ensure the curriculum offer in each college is meeting the local skills needs duty through the embedding of the revised 'place-based governance' model.</p>	<p>Introduce and embed the revised governance model for the 2024/25 academic year at all of our colleges.</p> <p>Recruit and train the new members of the college boards to support them in performing their duties in providing local oversight and advice on the curriculum offer which in turn will provide assurance to NCG Corporation that NCG is responding to the local skills needs.</p> <p>Provide the structure to enable the College Board members to advise and challenge the college SLT on meeting the current and future local skills requirements and in turn providing assurance to Corporation that the college is satisfying the Local Needs Duty.</p> <p>Introduce the updated sub-structure of Corporation to enhance the challenge and rigour of the governance process.</p>
<p>Aim/Objective 0.3:</p> <p>Optimising apprenticeship pathways and existing group sizes to achieve realistic growth building on the 'succeed through specialisms' apprenticeship strategy.</p>	<p>NCG has made significant improvements to the curriculum, quality and administration of apprenticeships resulting in a streamlined offer, based on college specialisms ('reduce to produce' improvement phase). As a result, standards of delivery, cohort size, compliance, contribution, and outcomes have improved in recent years. Additionally, the Group has successfully pivoted from a predominantly adult offering, to one that</p>

	<p>now predominantly supports young people aged 16-23. Therefore, NCG is now targeting modest growth by July 2025 with a focus on more substantial growth in 2025/26.</p> <p>This will be partially achieved by aiming to convert many more learners from study programmes, into apprentices on the current standards approved by NCG's Apprenticeship Council. A small number of additional standards are likely to be tabled for approval, however most growth is anticipating to come from subject growth, rather than diversification</p> <p>There is an additional target to ensure that NCG has at least 10% of apprentices drawn from under-represented participation groups - for examples apprentices with: SEND; care experienced learners; whilst NCG will continue to increase the proportion of non-White-British ethnicity groups in Lewisham (to reflect the learner community in the wider college).</p>
<p>Aim/Objective 0.4:</p> <p>Delivery of Higher level technical and professional skills HE provision priority development of Higher Technical Qualifications in national priority sectors.</p>	<p>NCG has been a national leader of the development of HE in an FE setting over the last two decades and was the first FE Corporation to gain Taught Degree Awarding Powers in 2016 (following FDAP in 2013). Having secured awarding powers without time limit in 2022/23, we will continue to implement our ambitious HE strategy, aligning with the national priorities around level 4/5 provision, and broadening the reach of NCG awards. The specific actions are contained within the strategy document. This focus meets the national priority to develop skills at level 4/5.</p>
<p>Aim/Objective 0.5:</p> <p>To increase the number of learners with SEND</p>	<p>NCG has a history of delivering very stable provision for young people, and adults at risk with SEND and profound high needs. In recent years this has included increased</p>

<p>participating on supported internships and apprenticeships.</p>	<p>participation on supported internships.</p> <p>NCG will pledge to increase the number of learners engaging with supported internships, and apprenticeships, as a vehicle for sustainable employment. We will do this through quality first teaching, and by exploring the potential to create a flexible apprenticeship agency. This will aim to support employers committed to creating opportunities for these learners, by hosting their employment, whilst the agency can ensure additional and specific needs are met in the transition phase to employment.</p>
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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 placed 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 in the appendices:

- Appendix A - Carlisle College
- Appendix B - Kidderminster College
- Appendix C - Lewisham College
- Appendix D - Newcastle College
- Appendix E - Newcastle Sixth Form College
- Appendix F - Southwark College

- Appendix G - West Lancashire College

8. 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.

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 local skills needs in its geographical area as well as contributing to the wider skills needs of its 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 5 high level aims that are aligned to the broader activity of NCG and cut across all our colleges in meeting priority skills needs. 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. For example, implementing curriculum reform and planning is developed with national partners such as Activate Learning and LTE and locally with Educational Partners North

East and 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.

The colleges have recognised that there is more to be done around the skills needs for Digital, Health and Care, Engineering and Construction trades. The green economy and sustainability is a theme that cuts across most areas.

In some areas Hospitality remains a regional priority and more will need to be done to meet these needs. Where NCG does not offer much training in a subject area such as Haulage and Logistics, we will 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.

9. 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 21st May 2024.

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	Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
John Widdowson	Liz Bromley

John Widdowson

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