

Here for you.

# **Local Needs Duty and Annual Accountability Agreement**

2024 - 2025

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## Our Vision

is for Halesowen College to be exceptional

## Our Intent

We will be exceptional, and have a positive impact on lives, through the delivery of high quality education, training and development of skills to all learners irrespective of age, background, mode of study or prior levels of attainment. We believe that education is powerful and provides choices. With our broad impactful curriculum, dedicated and talented staff, motivational learning environments and high-quality standards we will ensure that all students at Halesowen College learn, flourish and succeed.



# Our Key Purpose and Priorities

Halesowen College is a lively, ambitious and highly inclusive tertiary college providing broad and extremely supportive education and skills development to young people and adults from across the Black Country and Birmingham. We provide the exceptional education, training and support that will transform life chances and equip our community to flourish in a changing world.

We are proactive and focused on the future.

## Halesowen College has ambition:

### Our students will:

- be inspired to be ambitious and achieve their potential
- flourish personally and professionally, enjoy College and go onto live happy and purposeful lives
- be resilient, independent and ready to learn
- use the skills they have learned to contribute to the local, regional or national economy

### Our employers and stakeholders will:

- be an integral part of the College
- shape our curriculum with innovation, knowledge and enthusiasm
- provide opportunities for students to build skills via work placements and apprenticeships
- benefit from skills development to realise increased productivity
- see Halesowen College as their partner of choice

### Our parents will:

- be an important lever for raising achievement
- work together with teachers to positively influence and motivate young people
- feel a valued part of the post 16 educational journey
- have access to information and opportunities to regularly engage with the College





# Strategic Objectives

Our plan has five strands to enable us to move towards our vision and continually improve the quality of teaching, learning and skills development whilst maintaining the financial resilience and sustainable approach to invest in the College of the present and the future. Our strategic objectives are to provide:

- an impactful, inclusive and broad curriculum to meet the needs of learners and address the skills deficit
- exceptional quality of education which inspires students to learn, flourish and succeed
- a physical and digital estate which are visionary and provide motivational environments in which to learn.
- to maintain sustainability and financial resilience to invest in our environment and excellence in education
- to be known for exceptional education, support, skills development and positive impact a reputation that we proudly uphold

These objectives will be delivered by our team who are :

- valued and supported
- inclusive and welcoming
- innovative and motivational
- passionate about learning, skills and student success
- proud to work at Halesowen College

Our vision, intent and strategic direction all support our values:

- Inclusion
- Care
- Ambition
- Respect

The College continuously review curriculum and there are regular Corporation reviews ensuring the offer has positive impact and readiness for current and future skills needs. In response to local needs and resulting from the local needs duty to review key sectors including digital, health, logistics, business and finance and science have been prioritised within this year's annual objectives and strategic plans.



# Our Place and Community

Halesowen College is firmly rooted and has positive impact in the local communities which it serves. An anchor institution:

- providing education and training to local residents
- preparing them for employment
- contributing to the local economy
- enabling local people to live happy and fulfilled lives

Education is powerful and provides choices.

Our communities are challenged by poverty, deprivation and economic inactivity. There has been improvement over the last 12 months; for example, economic activity by 3.4 percentage points to 78% (national average 78.7%)

Halesowen College will continue to impact positively enabling our communities to learn, flourish and succeed.

However, we still face challenges:

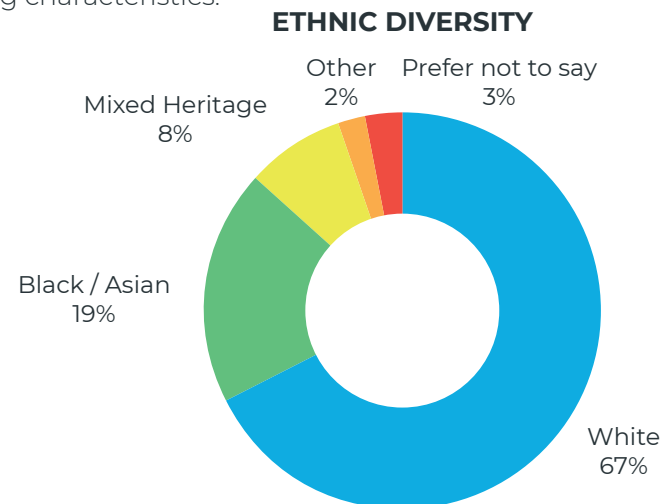
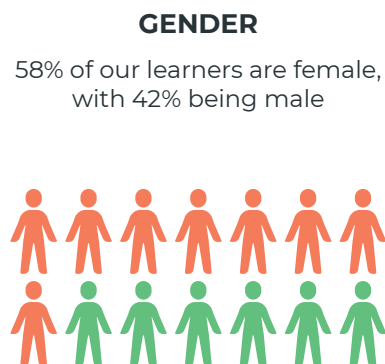
- 7.3% of people have no qualifications (national average 6.5%)
- hourly pay lags behind UK average by 10.5%
- youth unemployment is increasing and there is currently 9,220 claimants in the Black Country

There is work to do and West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) recognises this in their Employment and Skills Strategy which outlines their bold ambition to build a better West Midlands which is fairer, greener and healthier. We will support their vision building on our success to forge forward.



# Our College Community

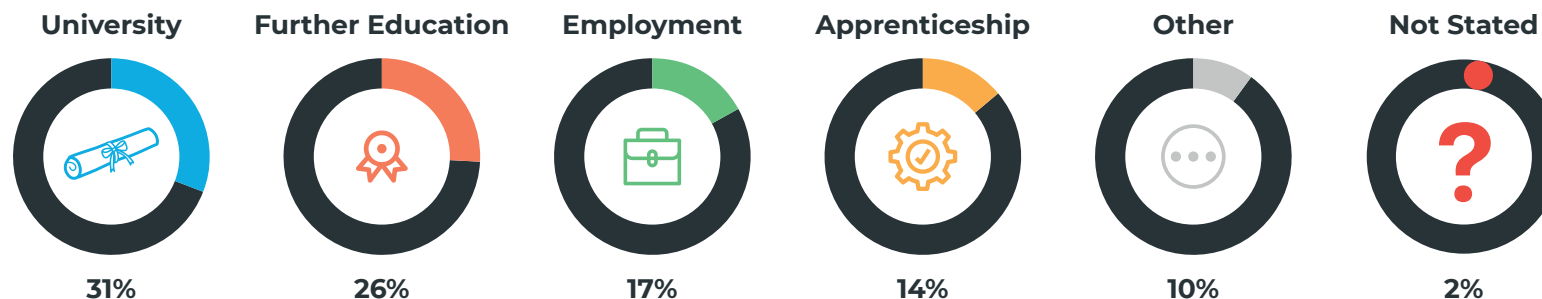
Currently Halesowen College has c. 4841 full time 16-18 learners. This cohort has the following characteristics:



On entry to the College 15% of learners did not have GCSE Maths and English at grade 4 or above. We draw from 133 first level postcodes and work with young people from some of the most deprived areas such as Lye, Netherton and Smethwick. Despite these challenges, destinations are very positive as shown below. 726 of our learners have declared a disability, learning difficulty or medical condition.

## DESTINATIONS

The graphs below show the positive destinations that many of our learners go on to after leaving us despite challenges that can be experienced in the local area.

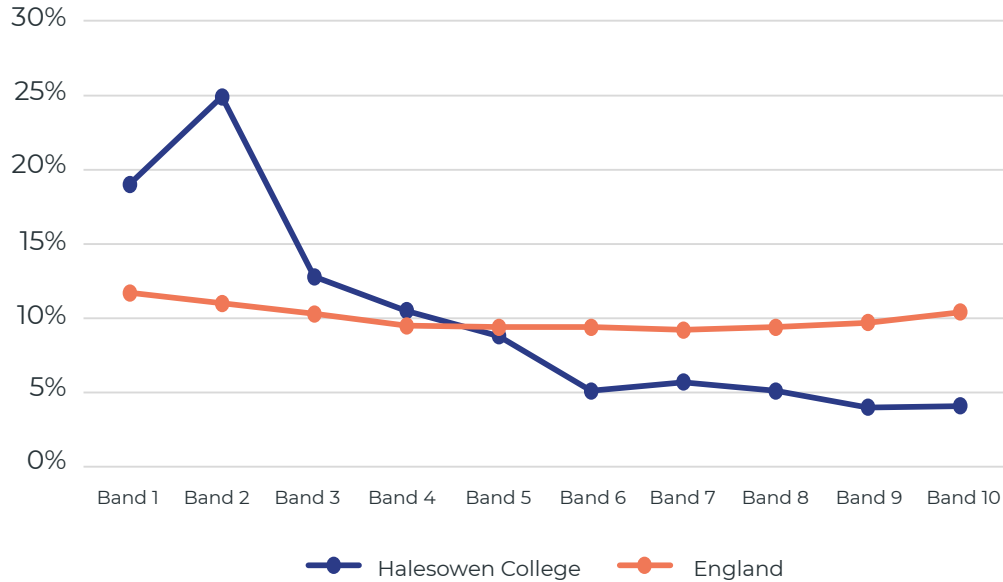


We support learners financially through our learner support fund, removing financial barriers to engagement.

We work with more than 1300 adult learners and 150 apprentices. The characteristics of our adult community reflects the 16-18 cohort in terms of socioeconomic factors. The diverse and vibrant community creates a rich cultural base and has enabled Halesowen College to be re-accredited as a Leader in Diversity, a College of Sanctuary and the Rainbow Flag.

Halesowen College has a disproportionate number of learners from the most deprived areas and a lower proportion of learners from less deprived areas compared to the national position. The graph below demonstrates the distribution of learners across the IMD deciles. Band 1 represents the most deprived and Band 10 represents the least deprived:

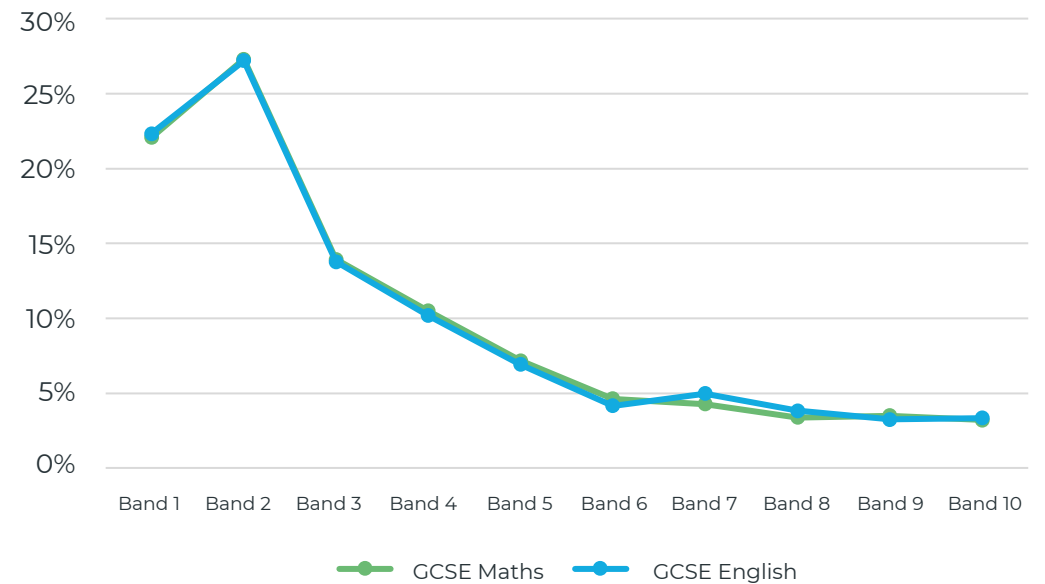
**Student Population by IMD Decile**



There is a correlation between attainment of GCSE's and levels of deprivation. The latest data shows that 69% of pupils in England secured a grade 4 or above in GCSE Maths and English. This dropped to 28.4% for learners who were in receipt for Free School Meals. In Dudley, this percentage fell below the national average at 65.49% and was just 61.3% for Sandwell.

In 2024, 30% of 16-18 learners re-sat GCSE Maths and 22% re-sat GCSE English. The distribution by IMD decile is given below:

**Percentage of resit students by IMD Decile**



Compared to the main college population, 75% of resit learners live in Band 1 to 4 postcode areas – however, in the main college population this number is 66%.

# Our Approach to Meeting Local, Regional and National Need

Halesowen College is at the cornerstone of our community and we continue to make positive impact in meeting the skills gaps in current and emerging areas within our area. We have refreshed our employer engagement strategy which sets out our plans for excellence in employer and stakeholder engagement within our region. We have set out the three aims below which link into our strategic plan.

Our curriculum planning cycle incorporates a detailed view of the local, regional and national skills landscape in order to ensure our curriculum continues to be accessible, impactful and meets the needs of learners and employers – now and in the future.

Two key information sources which shape our offer are the WMCA Employment and Skill Strategy and the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for West Midlands and Warwickshire which was launched in May 2023.

The LSIP identifies three priorities:

Priority 1: to ensure that Post-16 education and training provision across the West Midlands and Warwickshire regions meets the ongoing and changing needs of employers across the key sectors. To support the growth of the region, the LSIP recommends the following key sectors are given primary importance:

- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Construction
- ICT and Digital
- Logistics and Distribution

There is also recognition of the importance of the Health and Social Care sector, the Creative Industries and the Business and Professional Services sector. In addition, importance should be placed on providing sector specific and cross-cutting responses to skills development in our core themes of:

- Digital Skills
- Leadership and Management
- Power pack of skills for employment and life
- An increasingly important theme is of course net zero

Priority 2: to facilitate business growth in the region through the provision of targeted and, flexible leadership and management training in general and specific topics according to business need.



Priority 3: to respond to employer requests for greater levels of essential skills for work and workplace digital skills.

Halesowen College is committed to working with local and regional stakeholders; including employers, local authorities, Chamber of Commerce, ERBs (Employer Representative Bodies), the WMCA and other providers. By playing a key role in the Black Country skills ecosystem we ensure that our provision is responsive to local needs whilst taking account of the surrounding skills ecosystem.

The table below maps Halesowen College's offer against national, regional and local priorities. It can be seen that our broad, inclusive and accessible curriculum supports local, regional and national priorities thus contributing to increasing productivity and economic prosperity in our area.



	Priority Areas				Halesowen College		Comments
	Local	Regional	National	Emergent	Actual	Planned	
Digital	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Health	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Dentistry planned for 2025/26
Logistics	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Expansion of curriculum to apprenticeship standards
Engineering	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Development of electrical engineering
Science & Maths	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Introduction of T-Level
Low Carbon	✓	✓				✓	All curriculum areas to be mapped to green skills
Pharmaceutical	✓				✓	✓	Build capacity and develop higher level apprenticeship
Tourism/Catering/Culture	✓				✓	✓	Introduction of Level 4 Patisserie
Space Technologies				✓			
Agri-Tech/Animal Care					✓		
Finance/Business	✓	✓			✓	✓	Leadership and management programmes 2024/25
Performing Arts					✓		
Sports					✓	✓	Introduction of football academy for female learners
Art and Media					✓		
Construction	✓	✓	✓				
Manufacturing	✓	✓	✓				

## Our Partnerships

Halesowen College has strong links with a wide range of partners and we aim to further advance our stakeholder engagement and grow our place in the local communities we serve, continuing to inspire and educate young people and adults. Forging new and strengthening established partnerships, we aim to reach further into our communities to provide through world class education, routes out of poverty and ensure our learners live happy and fulfilled lives. We understand the importance of place and work with our partners within Dudley to ensure a cohesive educational landscape for our communities.

We continue to work closely with:

### **West Midlands Combined Authority**

Halesowen College supports the aims of the WMCA by developing skills to promote inclusive economic growth in every corner of the region. Working with employers we strive to understand their training needs, adapt our curriculum and ensure its agility to deliver excellent standards of education and training to provide the talent businesses need to realise economic growth and increased prosperity. The WMCA has provided several vehicles for the College to support this through applying local flexibilities to remove financial barriers to learning.

### **Chamber of Commerce**

Halesowen College has forged excellent relationships with the Chamber of Commerce, especially during the research stages of the Local Skills Improvement Plan. The College reviewed its offer considering the priorities stated in the LSIP, and linking this with the student demand and local labour market data.

### **Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council**

Halesowen College is committed to reaching out to the most difficult to reach sectors of our community and this will only be possible through partnership working. The Local Authority has a programme of community-based learning which engages some of the hardest to reach cohorts. The College works with the Local Authority, offering courses in community centres and working with the team to shape progression pathways onto more formalised learning which will be valued by an employer.

### **Dudley Business Champions and Education and Skills Board**

The Principal is a member of the Board which comprises a group of business leaders, the Local Authority and education providers with the objective of driving regeneration in the Dudley Borough. This provides an opportunity to get to the heart of what makes local businesses tick and hence what the College can offer in terms of skills development and talent pipeline. The College, alongside Dudley College of Technology, and the Local Authority, works with key employers in the borough and the Local Authority, to establish priorities which we address collectively.



West Midlands  
Combined Authority



## Department for Work and Pensions/JCP

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. As the UK's biggest public service department, it administers the State Pension and a range of working age, disability and ill health benefits to around 20 million claimants and customers. The College has forged excellent links with the DWP and Job Centre Plus (JCP) in offering Into Employment Programmes to get local people into work.

## Halesowen BID

Halesowen BID was established to ensure that Halesowen's future is secured for our local community of businesses and traders. The College works alongside BID in supporting the skills development needs of the local economy. We host a monthly breakfast meeting which is valuable for networking but which also has an educational element. The College has also secured a unit in the main shopping centre, The Cornbow, and is actively integrated into the business community in the town.

## NHS

The College has formed positive partnerships with several NHS Trusts. We have a long-standing relationship with the local Trusts which has involved our students in Health and Social Care, working as volunteers for placement. Our Deputy Principal is a public elected governor for the Dudley Group Foundation NHS Trust and is a member of the Council of Governors.

## Engagement with other providers

Halesowen College is an active member of Colleges West Midlands who operate on behalf of Further Education Colleges in our area. The senior team also operate via the Association of Colleges at a regional and national level. There is a culture of collaboration in our area. We are also working with Heart of Worcestershire College in terms of a collaborative approach to counselling training.



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions



HALESOWEN BID  
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

NHS



# Our Annual Objectives

Our annual plan drives us towards our strategic ambitions. A cornerstone of this is our contribution to skills. The actions in the table below show how we will forge forward.

	Actions	Impact	Measuring Success
1	Develop a strategic partnership with CPC Training.	Build capacity with logistics and forklift truck driving to develop skills and hence fill jobs locally. Also, address one of the priorities for health in the training of 111 call handlers.  Develop apprenticeship standards in procurement, supply chain and logistics.	Increase the student numbers for logistics from the pilot of 30 to 200 learners in 2024/25.  In excess of 150 learners to complete the NHS 111 Into Employment Course.  Both metrics will support the delivery plan approved by the WMCA and get up to 350 people into sustainable employment.
		Chamber of Commerce data demonstrates that 80% of businesses continue to have recruitment difficulties. There is a higher-than-average concentration of logistics companies in Dudley and Sandwell especially around Junction 2 of the M5. Apprenticeships are a further educational pathway for young people to sustainable employment.	Successfully deliver the apprenticeship standard in procurement, supply chain and logistics establishing a year one cohort of 20 learners with at least an 80% retention rate.
2	Introduce a leadership and management programme focused on SMEs in Halesowen to engage our community.	More trained and qualified leaders in our region will have a positive impact on productivity and inclusive growth; Oxford Economics estimated that each Chartered Manager boosts business revenue by £62K p.a. Leadership and management skills are crucial to the rapidly changing business environment, yet the LSIP identified that >14% of respondents did not believe leaders had the skills to overcome challenges or maximise opportunities.	50 learners to successfully complete the programme of which at least 80% will gain employment or progress within their workplace.
3	Review and modernise a curriculum offer at Level 1 & 2 for 16-18 learners and adults alongside a Level 3 offer which is being reshaped by educational reform.	Supporting the WMCA priority of a good level 2 education for everyone. A refreshed offer will ensure that we can support young people and adults with more limited levels of prior attainment, and those for whom English is a second language, to develop the skills and knowledge they need to progress in education and/or secure sustainable employment. The Level 3 offer must be reviewed to accommodate educational reform.	An increase of 50% (baseline 60) in students on programmes designed to combat NEET Positive destination for level 1 and 2 adults to exceed 85%.
4	Establish a centre in Stourbridge to deliver adult skills in Priority areas.	Since the closure of BMET Stourbridge in 2019, there has been no adult provision in the town. It is a known cold spot and a learning hub there would provide opportunity for skills development to local people.	Secure premises in the town (lease/rental).  Research with employers and other stakeholder to offer at least 5 courses in term one.

Actions		Impact	Measuring Success
5	Explore feasibility for establishing a centre of post 16 alternative provision in partnership with another local college and the Princes Trust.	Opportunities for students with a range of challenges to develop the skills necessary to access mainstream FE.	Identify premises to establish legal framework with partner.  Secure DfE funding for 30 places.  Recruit suitably qualified Centre Manager.
6	Increase number of apprentices in learning by at least 50% (baseline R04 2023/4).	Curriculum reform will reduce choice for many learners from September 2024 and this will only become more acute unless government policy changes. Apprenticeships can offer an alternative route of study, and this is especially important for digital and early years in September 2024.	Increase number of apprentices in learning on standards already on offer by at least 50% by January 2025 and exceed 250 learners by the end of the academic year. Retention on programme should be at least 80%.
7	Introduce the power pack of skills for full time learners alongside the 6 in 6; involvement with six employers/careers in the first half term.	At a time when there is a fast-paced digital revolution and the importance of green skills continues to gain momentum it is imperative to equip students with the personal, social and employability skills to succeed not just today but in the labour market of tomorrow.	Surveys support that employers value the skills being developed and at least 85% of the 16-18 cohort engage in the programme.
8	Increase the careers focus for A level learners to motivate and inspire all learners to flourish and succeed raising the College's value added to a score of 5 or better.	A level learners also require the personal, social and employability skills to confidently take the next positive step. Currently value added is below the required threshold and there is a need to inspire ambition; which is one of our values.	Value added composite score to be 5 or better. Every subject to be on a positive trajectory.
9	Establish Digital Business Hubs and a programme of engagement for Digi-Bus.	The College has led on the digital strands of the LSIF and is now delivering Innovate priorities for digital skills. More than 15% of our population lack the basic digital skills to search for a job and, employers' state digital skills as the most scarce. Creating a dedicated space in our centre of excellence for digital technologies and media, employers can get support developing skills and, provide work experience for learners to support their needs. The Digi Bus will enable the College to go out into the Community, engaging with those most hard to reach to equip everyone with employability skills for the digital revolution.	Digital Hub available at Trinity Point with at least five employers per half term engaging with the facility.  Digi Bus to engage with at least 100 learners during the academic year who will gain employment because of skills developed.

# Our Duty

The governing body regularly reviews how Halesowen College meets local, regional and national skills needs both in the immediacy and as part of the longer-term planning process.

This is enabled by a clearly defined annual curriculum planning cycle, which demonstrates how the curriculum offer is mapped to local, regional and national priorities. It is triangulated by receiving information on destinations of young people and adults to see that they are moving into a further course of study or securing sustainable employment. Labour market trends are considered in the strategic planning process and shaping our annual plan and transformational projects.

The curriculum strategy was considered in detail at the Corporation planning day in January 2024 and this document supports the overarching strategic ambitions. A special meeting was held to consider skills which enabled the Senior Management Team to present all the external sources of data and share plans for curriculum development linked with capital projects.

Together these mechanisms of review enable regular scrutiny of how the college serves its diverse communities by identifying and planning provision to address skills deficits, and collaborating with partners so that the Corporation has a clear view of the College's place of in the educational landscape of our area. It is important to ensure that the College is retaining and growing its strong connection with industry so that the offer remains agile, responsive and future focused.

The Corporation continues looking outward, challenging constructively and supporting the senior team in meeting the skills agenda and achieving all strategic objectives.

On behalf of the Halesowen College Corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the Corporation conducts reviews in line with the local needs duty, as such resulting in this plan. The annual Accountability Statement sets out an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the corporation at their meeting on 3/7/2024.

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 at [www.halesowen.ac.uk](http://www.halesowen.ac.uk)



**Jacquie Carman**  
Principal and CEO



**Jo Chilton**  
Chair

# Ambition for the Future

Halesowen College aims to be exceptional and provide high quality education and skills development. We have a positive culture of ambition, celebration and inclusivity and, look forward to continuing to upskill local people, driving up the standards of education in our area and having an ongoing positive impact on qualifications, employment, pay and skills. Partnership working is crucial – together we can all achieve our shared purpose for skills.

## CEDRIC

Creating Engaging Digital Resources in the Community



### Our Supporting Information and Data Sources

- Halesowen College Strategic Plan
- Curriculum Strategy
- Annual Plan 2024/25
- West Midlands Combined Authority Employment and Skills
- Dudley Economic Regeneration Strategy
- Labour Market Information (NOMIS)
- National Office for Statistics
- Active Black Country Labour Market Profiles
- WMCA Place Based Review Economic Intelligence Unit Bulletins





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