

FUTURE



STRATEGIC PLAN 2026 - 29



The achievements of our college over the last three years have been made possible thanks to the oversight and leadership provided by Nottingham College's Board of Governors. Our last Strategic Plan 2023-2026 was presided over by Carole Thorogood BEM, our long-standing Chair of Governors, who stepped down as Chair of the Board in July 2026.

Carole oversaw significant change and improvement, particularly over the last three years, and our thanks and appreciation are offered to Carole, and all Board members, for their support and service to the college.

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FUTURE NOW



I'm thrilled to be presenting Future Now, Nottingham College's ambitious Strategic Plan for 2026-2029.

The last three years have seen huge progress and achievement across our college, spearheaded by our last Strategic Plan which focussed our investment into those things that could drive growth, improve the student experience and recognise our staff - investment that would help us get to a place where we could truly thrive as an organisation.

We believe we have now arrived at that place. Future Now reflects the huge progress we've made, our renewed confidence in our ability and our commitment to act quickly where change is needed, seize opportunities as they emerge, and claim our role as an anchor institution in Nottingham. This strategy enables us to embrace innovation, respond confidently to uncertainty, and make bold, informed choices that improve outcomes for students, staff and our communities.

We know that our work with our partners to meet the needs of our city, will stand us in good stead for our next Ofsted inspection, likely to come early on in the life span of this strategy. We expect that Ofsted will recognise the huge strides we've made in enhancing our curriculum offer, developing our inclusive practice and investing in student support that has led to year-on-year improvements in student satisfaction and student achievement.

We have embraced our role within the region's employment and skills ecosystem, with the largest adult skills offer and 16-18 offer across EMCCA. We have a significant role in play as a lead partner in the delivery of EMCCA's Inclusive Growth Strategy and Get East Midlands Working plans.

Whilst the last three years have been turbulent in many respects, we have remained resilient in the face of economic challenges, global political unrest and instability. We know that the next three years will present similar challenges, but we are also clear on what FE's role is in providing stability, providing opportunities for local people and acting as a lever for economic growth and prosperity for the region.

Our colleagues are our biggest asset and the work they do is truly extraordinary. They deserve a college that values them, develops them and nurtures and rewards their achievement and success. This strategy underscores a philosophy that is rooted in our purpose and our values. We are best when we work together, laser focussed on our students and prioritising their wellbeing and success.

This plan keeps us focussed on what's important and what is right, right now.

I'm so excited to start this next chapter!

Janet Smith,
Principal and Chief Executive

Chair's foreword

As Nottingham College's new Chair I'm immensely proud to be representing our governing body in launching this new Strategic Plan for 2026-2029.

This document sets out the college's strategic context, key challenges, emerging opportunities, and structured priorities over the next three years.

It builds on the college's significant progress since 2023, having set a course for innovation, improvement and investment that has delivered real change for the college and for Nottingham.

The governing body has been impressed by the strategic focus, pace of change and scale of organisational transformation led by the college's management team in delivering the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. As a board we fully endorse the aspirations and objectives set out in this Strategic Plan that will take us to greater heights over the next three years.

We build on some extremely strong foundations. We are a college that is growing, improving and delivering for its students. We see this in our employee satisfaction, student satisfaction, student outcomes, feedback from employers and engagement with our partners.

I was drawn to this college because of the amazing contribution it makes to Nottingham. It is a true engine of opportunity, but it does not work alone. We exist as part of an extensive and complex network of partners who work tirelessly to support our city's young people and adults in fulfilling their potential, creating opportunities for them to carve out rewarding and impactful careers for themselves. As Chair, I am absolutely committed to nurturing these partnerships and relationships over the life span of this strategy, to deliver improved outcomes for Nottingham. I know too that my fellow board members share this commitment.

This strategy has been informed by widespread stakeholder engagement. Local partners, employers and civic/community organisations came together to help focus the college on the things that mattered most to them, and our own students and staff were engaged in focus group discussions about our future direction of travel.

Through this engagement we have ensured that we are aligned fully to the region's goals and aspirations. We believe in our region and its potential, and we believe in our ability to respond effectively to our city and region's needs. This plan is the vehicle through which we make this happen.

Alex Peace - Gadsby

Alex Peace Gadsby OBE DL,
Chair, Nottingham College



**Future Ready was about readiness.
Future Now is about action.**

The pace of change facing education, skills and our communities has accelerated rapidly. Technological advancement, government policy, regional aspirations, evolving employer needs and shifting student expectations are no longer signals of what lies ahead - they are shaping the reality of today. Future Now reflects our recognition that the future is not something we can wait for, plan around, or cautiously approach. It is already here, and it demands decisive, purposeful action.

Future Now reflects our commitment to act quickly where change is needed, to seize opportunities as they emerge, to claim our role as anchor institution, and to tackle challenges with renewed momentum.

Building on the foundations set by Future Ready, this strategy marks a shift from readiness to delivery. We are no longer preparing for what might come next; we are shaping what happens now. That means modernising curriculum and pedagogy, embedding digital and green skills, investing where it has the greatest impact, and ensuring our students are equipped not just to participate in the future workforce, but to thrive within it.

At the heart of Future Now is our mission to unlock potential through learning. This strategy places students firmly at the centre; recognising that urgency, inclusion and responsiveness are essential to removing barriers to opportunity. It is about acting in real time to support student success, close gaps, respond to skills need and strengthen our role as a leading civic and economic partner.

Future Now is also a statement of confidence.

Confidence in our people, our values and our ability to adapt, innovate and lead. It reflects a college that is outward-looking, ambitious and prepared to evolve, to deliver tangible impact now and into the future.

Our college



Our college today is a successful college with a proud history and a catalogue of achievements accomplished over the last three years.

We are one of the largest colleges in the UK, having grown nearly 30% over three years, now with an annual turnover of more than £92m. Our extensive skills-based curriculum supports the needs of individuals, communities and employers.

Today we operate from eight core campus sites, each with their own curriculum specialisms, but united by a shared passion and core values. Our committed team of more than 1,700 staff are united by a shared passion for what they do – transforming the lives of our students.

Our last Ofsted inspection, in December 2022, gave the college a resounding vote of confidence in our direction of travel, quality of our offer and responsiveness to the economic needs of the region. It provided the foundation on which our first Outstanding grade was secured in 2024, and galvanised our workforce to strive for excellence, delivering year on year improvements in student achievement and outcomes since.

Our college today is positioned to embrace the opportunities and confront the challenges that face us now and in the future. Our established leadership team has ensured that the college is positioned, with its partners, to respond effectively to new policy, priorities and expectations. We are key partners of our regional combined authority, EMCCA, and our strategies are carefully aligned to the regional priorities as set out in EMCCA's regional strategies, inclusive growth plans and its Get East Midlands Working initiatives.

Our curriculum strategy has changed the shape of our offer. Reconnecting with our core purpose, we have created opportunities for more local people, whatever their starting point, to join the college and thrive. Our full time 16-18 student population has increased from 6,000 in 22/23 to 8,500 in 26/27. This growth has been facilitated by the development of a foundation learning curriculum offer, providing those who have, or are close to, falling out of the education system, with a route back into learning. As a result, we have become a national trail blazer for our inclusive curriculum and on our innovative work to break the NEET cycle amongst young people.

Our financial health is improving, with legacy debt falling, cash rising, and an investment strategy that has delivered sustained growth, improved productivity and greater efficiency. This extends to our estate where our investment has helped reduce our physical as well as carbon footprint. We are an efficient college, with investment in the right places to deliver what is right for our city and our people.

We are however a college, like much of the public sector, exposed to ongoing financial and economic turmoil. Public spending is limited by stagnant economic growth, itself influenced by geo-political and economic pressures outside of our control. Our resilience, strategic planning and pursuit of innovation to drive service improvement and efficiency, will be key to our success in the future.

Having assumed our place at the forefront of technical learning and skills development in our city, we are firmly focussed on supporting the current and future workforce needs of the local and regional economy, and delivering economic prosperity and social wellbeing for all.

Our Sites



CITY HUB



ADAMS/STONEY ST



BASFORD



HIGH PAVEMENT



HIGHFIELDS



RUDDINGTON



CASTLE MEADOW

Our communities



Nottingham College serves Nottingham city and its immediate conurbation, but draws students from across the region, including Derby and Derbyshire, as well as parts of Leicestershire, Rutland and Lincolnshire. We have a national provision serving the automotive sector at our specialist Emtec centre in Ruddington.

Increasingly, over the last few years, Nottingham College's 16-18 catchment has widened, with students taking advantage of public transport connections and the use of our discretionary student bursary which subsidises travel costs for those eligible.

More than half of our 16-18 student body is Nottingham city-based and nearly 90% come from the city and county areas. Many of our students are drawn from areas of socioeconomic disadvantage, from communities that face multiple, interconnected barriers to education and employment. Nottingham itself is ranked 11th for deprivation nationally and like other major cities, we face higher than average unemployment levels, high numbers of young people not in education, employment or training, high numbers of adults with low or no qualifications and high levels of economic inactivity, often due to health and mental health issues.

These challenges are compounded by broader workforce issues, with only 35.4% of Nottingham's working-age population holding higher-level qualifications (compared to 42.8% nationally), while 10.9% have no qualifications (versus 6.6% nationally). This skills gap directly impacts economic opportunities and social mobility within our communities. This complex landscape of deprivation, educational underachievement, health challenges, and skills deficits places Nottingham College at the heart of vital social and economic development work in our region.

Over the lifetime of this strategy, we expect demographic shifts to affect the number of school leavers in our catchment. Growth may not continue at the same pace, which in turn means we must think carefully about our provision, how we fund investment into our infrastructure and estate, and how we diversify to remain one of the UK's largest and most successful colleges.

We launch this plan at a time when a coherent set of national policies and regional priorities have aligned around the need to respond to rising NEET levels, and to support people back into work. EMCCA's mission to create 60,000 more jobs over the course of the next five years, will be a challenging target to meet, with current economic forecasts. We must continue to deliver training that responds to local need, deliver work-ready young people who are equipped to enter the workforce and thrive, and we must deliver employability programmes, with our employers, that create more opportunities for local people to access jobs.

Too few local young people find their way into a local apprenticeship. Government efforts to increase opportunities for young people are welcome. The demand for higher level skills, especially in this digital age, is increasing, so pathways from vocational education to higher level study are crucial in equipping local people with the in-demand skills of our more buoyant sectors.

The government's home building programme, local regeneration schemes like the East Midlands Investment Zone, East Midlands Freeport and the Broadmarsh development, will boost sectors such as construction, engineering, advanced manufacturing and clean technologies. Our curriculum must follow suit if we are to connect our communities to these opportunities.

To do this, and to be an enabler of opportunity, we must be community orientated and community-focussed. This strategy will prioritise community engagement - we will invest time in understanding our communities, their needs and their aspirations, and we will work in partnership with community partners, to deliver for Nottingham.

Nottingham College is part of a dynamic network of employers, civic partners, community organisations and public services working for the good of the city and the wider region. By working in partnership, we can respond more effectively to skills needs, remove barriers to opportunity, and support inclusive economic and social growth.



Our people



We are a large employer, one of the region's largest, and the 12th largest in our county. With more than 1,700 staff working across eight core sites, we have a huge responsibility to our people to ensure they feel a strong sense of purpose, belonging and personal pride in what they do. It's their determination, commitment and hard work that can literally transform the lives and career prospects of our students.

We are a college that cares about its people. With more than £20m invested into staffing and pay since 2022/23, we have injected more capacity into our curriculum delivery teams, secured annual pay awards for our staff to combat inflation and the ongoing cost of living pressures, and further closing the gap in teacher pay between FE and schools.

We have invested in staff wellbeing too. A beacon award winner in 2023 for our mental health and wellbeing initiatives with both staff and students, our wellbeing strategy, launched in 2025, will take the college further, with wellbeing a key priority within this strategy. Our innovative Café Connections Programme has been expanded over the last three years, to provide informal networks and support for colleagues with similar experiences, ensuring they feel valued, their needs are understood and ensuring we continue to learn from their experiences. These cafes will be further enhanced through this strategy to ensure they provide opportunities for genuine engagement, learning and can drive positive change through the organisation.

Our Café Connections programme underpins our renewed focus on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, with an EDI champion now appointed to help guide and drive our strategy in this area over the coming three years. We recognise that diversity enriches our communities, strengthens our culture and drives innovation, and we are proud to champion these principles across all aspects of college life.

Professional development is a cornerstone of our culture. All colleagues are mandated to undertake a minimum of 8 days pro rata of CPD a year, with our teaching staff regularly upskilling on the latest from industry, as part of their programme. Professional development is crucial as we move through the lifespan of this strategy, with ongoing innovation in pedagogy providing teachers with tools that will develop their inclusive practice. Digital skills are a mainstay of our professional development strategy too, with our support services increasingly utilising AI, automation and other tools, to boost productivity and efficiency and improve services to students.

This strategy aims to foster a collaborative, inclusive and ambitious college culture, with a focus on the connected power of people and technology to unlock potential and deliver real outcomes for Nottingham and its communities. This strategy aims to foster a collaborative, inclusive and ambitious college culture, and the vehicle through which we will achieve this is our new People and Culture Strategy, published alongside this Strategic Plan. This strategy ensures the ongoing investment in our leaders and managers, to enable them to drive a culture of empowerment, professionalism and consistent high standards.

Our People and Culture Strategy recognises too, the importance of talent attraction and retention. Over the life of this strategy we will build on improving staff retention and turnover and further refine our workforce development strategy to ensure we can attract, retain and nurture teaching and support staff to deliver organisational success.



Our strategic context



The policy landscape that frames our work has changed materially in the last three years. Two agendas sit alongside each other in shaping what is asked of us. The growth and skills agenda asks us to equip people for the industries that will power future prosperity. The inclusive growth agenda asks us to ensure no community is left behind. As shown in the diagram below, we sit at the intersection where these two agendas meet.

As the largest provider of vocational education and training for young people in our region, and the largest adult skills provider, we are well-positioned to act as an anchor institution in the delivery of both of these agendas.

The Growth and Skills Agenda

The Modern Industrial Strategy identifies eight sectors as the priorities for national economic growth, some of which are regional priorities too, including advanced manufacturing, clean energy industries, creative industries, life sciences and digital technologies. In addition, EMCCA has identified the visitor economy as a high growth sector for our region. EMCCA also recognises regional strengths in defence, logistics and low carbon construction. Foundational sectors, seen as critical enablers of economic growth, include construction, health and care.

All of this context matters because it shapes how national investment, infrastructure and specialist support reach our region.

The Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper sets out a new architecture through which colleges equip people for these sectors. Five reforms reshape our terrain over the life of this plan:

- V Levels are intended to become the main Level 3 vocational pathway, sitting alongside A Levels and T Levels, and replacing the existing range of vocational Level 3 qualifications.
- The Lifelong Learning Entitlement opens for applications in September 2026 and for teaching from January 2027. It gives adults a flexible, modular funding entitlement at Levels 4 to 6.
- Apprenticeship units become available from April 2026, allowing employers to commission short, focused through the new Growth and Skills Levy.
- The Growth and Skills Levy itself replaces the Apprenticeship Levy, broadening what employers can spend levy funding on and changing the economics of employer-led training.
- Technical Excellence Colleges establish a new tier of specialist institutions, in construction, advanced manufacturing, clean energy, defence, and digital technologies.





Inclusive Growth

EMCCA's Inclusive Growth Framework articulates the second agenda. It rests on six ambitions:

- Health, wellbeing and belonging
- Homes and places that enable a good life
- Connected communities
- Skills for good work
- Growth and opportunity
- Green growth and a better environment

Its central mechanism is the Opportunity Escalator: the journey from disadvantage into sustained, well-paid work, and its conviction that no part of that journey should be left to chance.

Our labour market context makes the case clear. EMCCA has set a target of 80% regional employment by 2035, requiring around 60,000 more residents in work over the next five years. There are around 39,400 vacancies in the region today. Reaching the target will therefore require growth in the demand for labour at the same time as growth in skill, capability and aspiration on the supply side.

The Get East Midlands Working Plan addresses the supply, focused on people who are economically inactive, those managing health conditions, those who have never worked and those who want to work but currently cannot. National policy contributes alongside it: the Youth Guarantee aims to ensure no young person is out of education, employment or training, and a renewed emphasis on Foundation Learning establishes the route into Level 2 study and beyond, for those furthest from it.

We sit at the intersection of opportunity and need. Our students come, in large part, from the communities the inclusive growth agenda speaks of. They progress, increasingly, into the sectors and roles the growth and skills agenda prioritises. We are the bridge between the two.

Both agendas are crucial. A focus on growth and skills that did not engage with inclusion would risk widening the gap between the parts of our city that already prosper and those that do not. A focus on inclusion that did not engage with the new economic architecture would risk preparing our students for a labour market that may not offer future prosperity. This Strategic Plan must deliver to both agendas.



Our journey over three years

Our last Strategic Plan 2023-2026, set out our ambitions against 10 strategic priorities for the college. It's been a busy, productive and successful three years with key highlights and achievements across all areas of our college.

1

Enhance pride in our college and strengthen our reputation as a trusted and collaborative partner

Having established ourselves as a trusted and collaborative partner with EMCCA, we have become the largest provider of adult skills in our region, demonstrating significant impact on adult outcomes, progression into further training and jobs. Our reputation has established us as a first-choice provider amongst young people, having seen growth of nearly 30% amongst this cohort, with more than 8,500 students now set to join us in 2026/27. Student satisfaction is the highest it's been, employee satisfaction has risen year on year and employer satisfaction is also on a three-year improvement trend. We are a college united by a common purpose and set of core values, and pride in our college is at an all-time high.

£65m  **£92m**

30% growth in 16-18 student numbers 2023-26

2

Develop our curriculum so it is responsive, agile and aligns to the skills needs of our region, ensuring all our learners are future ready

Our curriculum planning has been greatly enhanced over the last three years to ensure it is underpinned by a deep and complete understanding of our skills landscape, and our engagement with employers has ensured that all curriculum areas are informed by direct employer feedback and input. We are front and centre in the creation and evolution of our LSIP (Local Skills Improvement Plan) and regional growth plans. Curriculum has been re-aligned to ensure it responds to the needs of our city, with a tailored and inclusive offer now in place to ensure improved access to vocational training and academic support for those young people most estranged and at risk of becoming NEET.



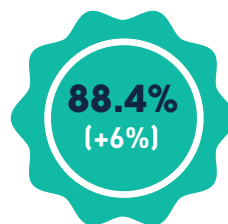
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employers

Directly influencing curriculum

3

Ensure all our learners enjoy outstanding teaching

We have achieved sustained improvements in our achievement rates across all provision types over the last three years. Achievement rates for those aged 16-18 now stand in line with national benchmarks for colleges. Our teachers now use a comprehensive suite of dashboards to help plan, prioritise and manage performance, and teachers are supported by a team of advanced practitioners and digital trainers to help develop pedagogical practice and deliver innovative and inclusive teaching in the classroom. An investment of more than £1.5m into curriculum delivery and leadership over the last three years has had a lasting impact on the quality of our provision and on the wellbeing and workload of our teachers, helping them to thrive.



Overall achievement rate improvement since 22/23

4

Ensure all our learners are in good hands with highly effective and supportive learner facing services

Our investment in wellbeing services and additional learning support resulted in a Beacon Award win in 2023 and ongoing national recognition for the innovative approach we have taken to delivering support for students. Student satisfaction with the college has increased every year, the proportion of students feeling safe and supported has remained consistently high and more students are participating in enrichment activities that are directly supporting them in developing skills for life. Gaining Matrix accreditation for our careers programme provides external endorsement of our careers education programme which provides thousands of students with one-to-one careers guidance, group tutorials on preparing for work, and increased access to employers through our annual faculty specific Future Me career events.



6,900
Students receiving specialist learning support in 25-26

5

Invest in and reward our people, develop their skills and recognise their success

The last three years have seen us invest more than £20m into pay, reward and staff development. This, coupled with our work on staff wellbeing, has seen us win a national award for our staff Café Connections programme and other wellbeing initiatives. It is however our efforts to reduce workload, including the introduction of a sector-leading teaching contract, that has had a significant impact on staff wellbeing and morale. This is seen first and foremost in our improvement in overall wellbeing scores in our annual staff survey. We are a college that takes our social impact seriously and have spent the last three years celebrating the huge social impact our staff and students have on our city and wider communities. We have won every year of the last three years of the national Good for Me, Good for FE Awards, for staff and student volunteering initiatives.



£22m
Invested in people and pay since 22/23

Our journey over three years

6

Embed a culture which is positive, inclusive, supportive and productive

Organisational culture was a focus of our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, with a key emphasis on staff ownership of the plan itself. Our mission, vision and values were developed by staff, as were our 10 strategic priorities, themselves now underpinning our purpose, organisational goals, and the high professional standards we embody as a college. We are surfacing a strong performance culture, with the development of systems and tools routinely used to monitor and drive performance and improvement across the college. Our values are woven into everything we do and inclusion is being embedded into our culture. This means that our students are at the heart of decision making and we have affected real culture change, leading to improved staff engagement and satisfaction

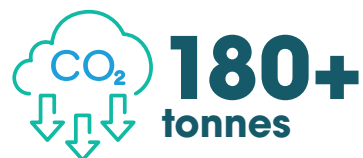


Year-on-year rises in staff engagement and satisfaction

7

Relentlessly pursue our ambitious target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030

We are becoming a national leader in sustainability, having secured a national Green Gown Award in 2025. Carbon reduction measures have improved the efficiency of our campuses and our curriculum has been enhanced by the creation of new sustainability courses, many running from our new Green Skills Centre. All students are encouraged to take part in environmental social action projects, and more than 1000 staff have participated in sustainability themed CPD. We have improved the sustainability of our catering and cleaning functions and all campuses have successfully delivered a 'wilding' project. We are active participants in the Nottingham Climate Assembly, demonstrating local leadership of this agenda.



Reduction in CO2 emissions in 3 years

8

Harness the power of digital technology in everything we do

The college's first Digital Strategy was launched in 2024 and provided a coherent vision for our digital investment plan over three years. It has led to the launch of a Microsoft and AI enabled transformation programme, enabling us to utilise CRM and AI technology to improve enquiry management and the wider customer journey. This strategy has also driven our investment in our WIFI network, with more than 300 WIFI points being installed in 2025-2026, improving speed, connectivity and security. Achieving Cyber Essentials has also been a fundamental component of our wider digital strategy, enabling us to better protect our infrastructure and systems from cyber-attack. In curriculum, a number of key systems have been embedded, supporting teaching, learning and assessment. The delivery of an AI-enabled maths and English learning platform is enabling us to differentiate learning for students and improve exam outcomes.



9

Transform our estate, setting ambitions high for the resources and facilities we provide to our communities

Our estate has continued to benefit from targeted investment over the last three years, with the rationalisation of our estate being enabled through the successful development of our Construction Skills Centre and Gateway Building for our SEND students. Our Highfields site is being reimaged and now houses all engineering, electrical and automotive full-time and part-time delivery, with our Ruddington campus now home to more of our apprenticeships offer, with the move of our electrical and engineering apprenticeships centre. Our Adams campus has benefited from Salix decarbonisation improvements, as well as improvements to the student social spaces, as has High Pavement. In fact, all our campuses have shared a proportion of more than £25m of investment into our estate over the last three years.



10

Secure a stable financial future

Our Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 prioritised investment into our people, our estate, our IT and into our curriculum, in order to drive up quality, improve efficiency, improve the student experience, and enhance the services on offer to students. This investment has been made possible thanks to sustained growth in student numbers, the reduction and elimination of our sub-contracted adult provision, and the re-financing of serviced debt, a legacy of the merger process and development of the college's flagship City Hub campus. Our cash position has improved, our debt has reduced and our curriculum has been assessed as efficient by the FE Commissioner's CEFSS process (Curriculum Efficiency and Financial Sustainability Support). The college is in a stable financial position and can now utilise its favourable cash position to deliver improved and sustained financial health going forward.



Inclusion at the heart of all we do



Inclusion is central to everything we do and intrinsic to the college achieving its mission of unlocking potential through learning. Our values place inclusion central in our organisational culture because inclusive education is critical to responding to our city's needs. Our curriculum is aligned to meet this need and we target investment to student support, creating a genuinely inclusive culture.

Our education provision starts at age 14, now with a rich offer at entry and level 1, including 21 cohorts of King's Trust per year, Youth Guarantee and NEET initiatives, and a foundation learning programme that spans most campuses. Growth has been dramatic, up 65% at entry and level 1 since 2022 (53% at level 2), as we have realigned our curriculum to our city, our place.

Targeted employability support for our most vulnerable students is central to our offer. Our bespoke internship programme, developed and delivered in partnership with the NHS, achieves an unprecedented 80% progression to employment for our students with SEND. Our award-winning ESOL+ programme brings together specialist vocational learning and English language tuition to support ESOL students gain vital vocational training and experience for the workplace, and our bespoke employability programmes are offered through our extensive community provision as well as our strategic employer partnerships, such as our highly successful initiative with East Midlands Airport. Our students with high needs and EHCPs are all guaranteed an offer of work experience with the college as part of their study programme with us.

The Inclusion and Support Team reduce barriers to learning, build resilience in our students, and prevent disengagement. Their focus on transition means that thousands of ESOL students can prepare for and adapt to life in the UK, and at Nottingham College. Our 14-16 work is embedded through support and bridging touchpoints and our targeted transition work for students with care experience and/or high needs means students receive multi-agency support and guidance throughout their journey with the college. Benchmarking confirms that our investment in student support is significantly higher than GFE averages and other large colleges. This reflects unique roles such as Wellbeing Mentors and our Neurodivergent Inclusion Team. Enrichment is purposefully inclusive with tailored activities to meet the needs of our most vulnerable students.

Staff wellbeing is as important to us. Our Wellbeing Strategy, Café Connections programme, Mental Health First Aiders and other significant investments were recognised through our achievement of the Beacon Award for mental health and wellbeing in 2023. We have targeted workload reduction, including bringing teaching hours down from 840 to 805 a year and we have begun investing in AI to support administration, teaching, learning and assessment.

We pride ourselves in being a trailblazer for our sector in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, recognised through our accreditations and our commitment to the AoC EDI and Mental Health Charters.

Communication and listening are strengths, with a wealth of opportunities for staff and students to be heard. Student and staff satisfaction have risen demonstrably over the last four years, and staff recognise the huge change in culture that has been achieved and they openly speak about it. This strategy will further prioritise our approaches and ensure that we enact policies and initiatives that further embed inclusion, break down barriers to opportunity, and acknowledge and promote the different cultures and lived experiences of all staff and students.

College Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Underpinned by our college mission, vision and values

Inclusion Framework

SEND
Strategy

Teaching
and Learning
Strategy

Wellbeing
Strategy

Professional
Development
Strategy

PSED and
EDI Action
Plan

People and Culture Strategy

Curriculum Strategy

Estate Strategy

Digital Strategy

The college is well versed in agility and adaptability. These are traits honed over many years of funding austerity, political turbulence and a global health crisis. The college can boast some core strengths that have enabled it to emerge from merger and carve out a place in the top 10 largest colleges nationally, with a growing reputation as a trusted and collaborative partner locally. To deliver this strategy the college must lean into its strengths and leverage any and all opportunities to build capacity and capability, with a clear view of areas where we can continue to develop and improve.

Key Strengths

Excellence in leadership and governance driving an inclusive culture and positive change

Breadth and diversity of our curriculum which is accessible and helps students progress

Embraces inclusivity, threaded throughout the college, with strong focus on wellbeing and student support

High levels of student satisfaction

Visibility, accessibility and credibility locally and regionally

Strong knowledge of, and alignment to, community need

First choice provider thanks to improved quality and outcomes for students

First class learning resources, campus environments and equipped classrooms and workshops

Passionate, enthusiastic and committed staff who put students first and thrive in a strong performance culture

To become a leader in NEET engagement and reduction

To embrace AI to enhance productivity and efficiency and reduce workload

Further leverage partnerships and our wider stakeholder community to secure more opportunities for our students

Collaboration to provide clearer FE and HE pathways with university partners

Strengthen level 4 and level 5 offer to respond to higher level skills demand

Enhanced support for students progressing into jobs

Further develop and grow our apprenticeships and commercial offer to help bridge skills gaps and support economic growth

Deliver for our partners, to the highest standards and consistently

Continue to develop our workforce, with skills for the future

Opportunities



Our Mission

We nlock potential through learning



Our Vision

**We will be recognised as
an extraordinary college;
a provider of choice for
education and skills**

The **EXTRA** factor  Our journey to extraordinary



Our VALUES

COLLABORATIVE

Ready and willing to work with colleagues and stakeholders in the best interest of students and colleagues

AGILE

Always seeking out ways to do things better, to enhance the student experience or that of our staff and wider communities

TRUSTED

Reliable and will always do what I say I'm going to do

INCLUSIVE

Taking active steps to build understanding of the diverse communities we serve

NURTURING

Prioritising the wellbeing of staff and students in whatever role I am in

ASPIRATIONAL

A role model for others demonstrating high standards of professional behaviour

At Nottingham College, our expectation is that every student, every colleague and every partner relationship is supported to achieve the very best. We are continually striving for excellence in teaching and learning, in support services, in leadership and in the experiences we create for our students and communities

Our values unite our staff around this common purpose and our mission: to unlock potential through learning. Our values set out the high expectations we have for ourselves and for the services we provide.

Each value was chosen by our staff, and reflect the aspirations we have for our college and for our students. We are united within a culture that places the student front and centre of all decision making, and it is through these values that our priorities and aspirations, as set out in this strategy, will be realised.

AIM



WE ARE Extraordinary Together



Maximise our role and reputation as an anchor institution in the delivery of regional economic and social priorities



Deliver for Nottingham and our region through an agile, responsive curriculum, with seamless progression pathways towards employment



Deliver inspirational teaching and learning that motivates students and transforms lives

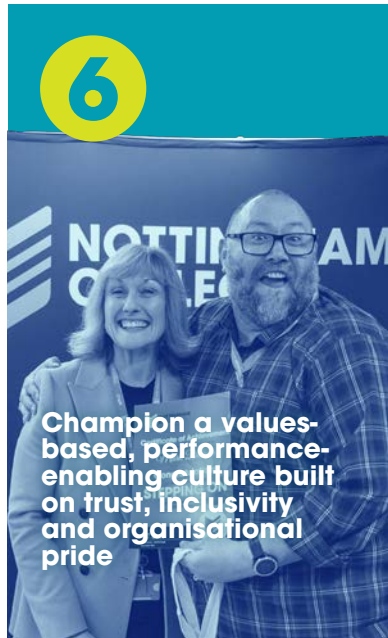


Offer proactive and personalised services that help students to thrive academically, personally and socially



Promote the wellbeing of our staff with a person-centred approach to high-quality personal and professional development

Strategic Priorities



Champion a values-based, performance-enabling culture built on trust, inclusivity and organisational pride



Be a national leader in ethical, environmental and organisational sustainability



Harness the power of digital technology to be an inclusive enabler, where digital skills are developed for a digital future



Use our resources to achieve maximum impact, where our estate is optimised to support learning, work and collaboration



Achieve efficiency and value for money through strong financial stewardship, focussing investment where it has greatest impact for students



Priority 1

Maximise our role and reputation as an anchor institution in the delivery of regional economic and social priorities.

Having delivered three consecutive years of unprecedented growth in full-time student numbers, Nottingham College can now firmly lay claim to being a first-choice provider for young people seeking a continuation of their education and training. Over the life span of this strategy, Nottingham College will build on its strengthened reputation to further enhance its apprenticeship and wider employer offer, evidencing our impact on economic and social prosperity to become a trusted and valued provider across full, part-time, higher-level skills and employer responsive training.

Our partnerships are strong, and we will build on this strength to form lasting working relationships with a wider network of stakeholders across our region, helping to ensure we are seen as a valued skills partner in the delivery of the region's economic and regeneration priorities.

We will work to champion our sector, our city and our region, ensuring we are recognised as a reliable civic and employer partner with a clear social and economic contribution. We will be valued within our communities for the role we play, the work we do and the impact we have on tackling deep-rooted community challenges within our city.

Our future, and the future of Nottingham, are fundamentally intertwined. As an anchor institution, we will leverage every opportunity to help Nottingham, and the wider region, thrive. We will do so through collaborative placemaking, championing inclusivity and creating campus community hubs, in which grassroots initiatives, and cultural and social activities can benefit.



The partnership has been built on collaboration. We've been able to develop a training academy that reflects our brands' high standards and the Emtec team has provided valuable insight at every stage."

Luke Garratt
UK Head of Technical Training
OMODA, JAECCO, CHERY & Lepas UK

Nottingham College values partnership. Through our Emtec automotive training centre our training partnerships with employers place us at the forefront of technical training and skills. Our new partnerships with OMODA, JAECCO and CHERY has been strengthened through proactive collaboration and expert technical guidance and support. The automotive manufacturer has established a new national training academy within our Emtec Ruddington campus and over the lifespan of this strategy could support the creation of many hundreds of new jobs.

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Maximise our role and reputation as an anchor institution in the delivery of regional economic and social priorities.



Strategy into action

- Form lasting and meaningful relationships with our university partners, forming collaborative agreements that shape the region's higher skills offer, and improved pathways to higher level skills provision for our communities.
- Leverage civic and political relationships to lobby, raise the profile of the college within the skills system and position FE as a crucial partner in realising regional and national ambitions.
- Further strengthen our reputation as a first-choice provider, recognising the power of our brand in attracting and retaining students from all walks of life.
- Nurture and develop our community partner relationships to create truly transformative solutions for tackling Nottingham's deep-rooted community challenges.
- Leverage the skills and experience of our wider leadership team and governing body to promote the college as a beacon of best practice.
- Actively listen, proactively seeking feedback and providing our community stakeholders with the opportunity to influence the work of the college.
- Engage, participate and influence, through our representation on key decision-making forums and bodies, providing a voice for Nottingham and for Nottingham College.
- Engage with parents, carers, schools and local authorities, helping our students to participate fully in their education, remove barriers to learning and giving them every chance of success.
- Amplify our brand as a multi-national, award-winning college, to celebrate the achievement of our college community and raise aspirations.
- Recognise FE's role as a critical enabler in the delivery of government policy, to position Nottingham College through national networks and government departments including the DfE, DWP and Skills England.
- Leverage employer relationships to provide increased access to work experience, employer engagement and employer support for our careers programme, creating a careers employer partner for every curriculum area over the course of this strategy.
- Build our reputation as a trusted skills delivery partner for employers locally and regionally, through the delivery of our apprenticeship, commercial and funded workforce development programmes.
- Work proactively with regional Technical Excellence Colleges to help shape the regional response to the national growth agenda for key sector areas.
- Open our doors to community groups and those leading grassroots initiatives, helping to cement our campuses as community hubs and beacons of cultural and social inclusivity.
- Establish effective feedback mechanisms to strengthen our understanding of the influence and impact we have within our city and region.

Success looks like:



Rising reputation amongst key stakeholder groups for our role as skills partner.



Increased number of employer and civic partnerships having a direct impact on the lives of students.



Increased employer engagement with, and satisfaction in, the services we provide.



Improved number of parents/carers actively engaging with the college.



Increased recognition regionally and nationally for the role and impact we have as a college.



Priority 2

Deliver for Nottingham and our region through an agile, responsive curriculum, with seamless progression pathways towards employment.

Our strengths as a college lie in our ability to build an agile and inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of our city and ensures that people can overcome barriers to learning and access training and support that helps them reach their full potential. We have dramatically expanded our foundation learning and lower-level pathways, enabling us to grow and support more people into progression pathways and into employment.

Our curriculum plan will continue to be driven by regional and national industry priorities, thereby supporting employment and broader progression for our students. The curriculum design will be informed by all key stakeholders, including community partners and employers, with employer co-design and co-delivery prioritised for vocational-led subjects.

Our students will be ready for their next steps, whether that is in employment or further study, as we deliver a skill-informed curriculum that provides additional opportunities to develop key life and work skills, utilising our extensive stakeholder connections and internally driven employer-informed initiatives.

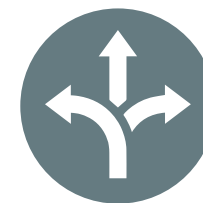
Creating seamless pathways for our students to navigate our comprehensive skills offer, from entry through to university level study, will enable more of our students to take full advantage of job opportunities in our region.



Through regular industry engagement and involvement, we offer our students valuable skills development opportunities. Our 'Meet the Employer events' at our Basford campus bring leading construction partners onto site, including DeWalt, British Gypsum, Howdens and more, so that construction students can engage with experts, learn about jobs within industry and engage with hands-on demonstrations and employer-led activities. These employer partnerships shape ongoing curriculum development through regular Industry Advisory Boards which take place across all our provision.

2

Deliver for Nottingham and our region through an agile, responsive curriculum, with seamless progression pathways towards employment.



Strategy into action

- Continue to work with external stakeholders and utilise robust labour market intelligence to drive the design and continuous evolution of our curriculum, ensuring it remains current, relevant and is aligned to industry needs, as evidenced in annual accountability statements.
- Further embed employer and partner co-design and co-delivery across our curriculum to ensure students develop the skills required now and in the future, positioning them at the forefront of industry talent pipelines.
- Deliver a coherent approach to the development of English, maths and digital skills, contextualised within industry and aligned to students' career pathways to support progression and employability.
- Create industry-aligned sector pathways that combine cross-disciplinary knowledge to meet the skills demands of emerging roles in priority growth sectors such as the defence sector and the creative industries.
- Utilise strong employer and stakeholder partnerships to embed meaningful industry encounters, including work experience and placements, enabling students to develop key skills.
- Continue to expand and strengthen our high-performing entry and foundation learning pathways, alongside our adult and community provision, positioning the organisation as a leading regional partner in reducing NEETs and improving employability outcomes.
- Improve progression through a clear opportunity escalator towards technical qualifications, improving access to long-term employability.
- Be a recognised and reliable skills partner in the delivery of key economic regeneration schemes locally and regionally, including East Midlands Freeport, East Midlands Investment Zone, major home-building schemes and Technical Excellence College requirements.
- Develop modular and flexible curriculum models, including micro-credentials, in line with the Skills for Jobs White Paper and LSIP priorities, enhancing flexibility, improving progression and support that is demand led, employer responsive and optimised for emerging and established funding opportunities.
- Generate a lasting market for our Green Skills Centre offer and further embed sustainability throughout our curriculum, affirming our sustainability and carbon net zero credentials.
- Respond proactively to apprenticeship reform and unit-based provision, with adapted apprenticeship delivery models to reflect emerging policy and employer need.
- Continue to develop industry-critical behaviours and soft skills through employer collaboration, embedded throughout curriculum delivery. This equips students with adaptive, professional skills to succeed in dynamic, high-performing workplaces.
- Maximise partnerships to become a preferred higher-level skills partner for employers across Nottingham and the region.

Success looks like:



Increase progression from level 3 into higher-level technical study.



Increase enrolments in line with national and regional skills needs and priorities.



Increase engagement at level 3 in real-world work experience within skills-priority sectors.



Become a regional employer of choice for flexible, modular industry upskilling.



Improved engagement with a tailored and flexible apprenticeship offer, aligned to employer demand.



Priority 3

Deliver inspirational teaching and learning that motivates students and transforms lives.

We have delivered four years of continuous improvement in achievement rates across all provision types, thanks to our unrelenting focus on developing inclusive and innovative pedagogical practice within our college.

Our strategy over the next three years will be shaped by the following core principles, which prioritise inclusive learning experiences that raise aspirations for all students, helping us reduce achievement gaps for those who are disadvantaged, enabling all students to reach their full potential.

- Students are active partners in their learning, not passive recipients.
- Quality improvement is owned collectively and driven at all levels.
- Inclusive pedagogy is fundamental to teaching excellence.
- Teachers are trusted professionals who are supported to innovate.
- Continuous professional development is essential to sustain improvement.

These core principles are underpinned by the college's values, brought to life through our day-to-day teaching practice: collaboration, agility, trust, inclusion, nurturing and aspiration. They are supported by a model of distributed leadership and collective responsibility for quality improvement, informed risk-taking and pedagogical innovation, teacher ownership of professional development, a relentless focus on inclusive pedagogy, and high-quality teacher support and development.

“

I was always the person in school who was told I'd never end up with a degree, but here I am. My college lecturers supported me every step of the way.”

Faith Russell

Faith's journey at Nottingham College is an example of progression and perseverance. After leaving school with grade 3s and being told university wasn't for her, she joined the college on a Level 1 Applied Science course, studying maths and English alongside her programme. With the support of her tutors, she built her confidence and skills, progressing through Levels 2 and 3 before moving on to degree-level Forensic Science. Faith has transformed her early passion for science into a clear career pathway into the police force, where she hopes to become a detective.

3

Deliver inspirational teaching and learning that motivates students and transforms lives.



Strategy into action

- Sustain positive improvement in overall achievement rates and progression outcomes across our curriculum, with continued focus on high-quality teaching, learning and assessment that enables students to achieve their full potential.
- Ensure teaching practices recognise individual starting points and celebrate progress, resilience and achievement.
- Remove barriers to learning through inclusive practice, high expectations and coordinated support.
- Enable students to see the value of further education through meaningful opportunities such as work placements, enrichment and real-world experiences that enhance their opportunities.
- Promote positive student behaviours, strong attendance, and high levels of engagement, recognising their critical role in improving achievement and closing attainment gaps.
- Utilise data and insights to provide real-time insights into student performance, progression and engagement, enabling leaders to identify trends, anticipate challenges and respond proactively to continuously improve teaching approaches and student outcomes.
- Build teacher and trainer capability and confidence by investing in staff development that enhances pedagogical expertise, including assessment for learning, inclusive practice, digital skills, and industry-informed teaching.
- Develop engaging, purposeful learning environments—physical, digital, and blended—that support active learning, independent study and progression to next steps.
- Collaborate with colleges across the sector to continuously develop and evolve our own approaches and share best practice with others.
- Continue to improve and innovate assessment methodologies and feedback strategies to support student progress, raise expectations and contribute to improved achievement rates across all programmes.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of assessment and feedback so that it supports student progress, raises expectations, and contributes to improved achievement rates.
- Continue to improve English and maths outcomes, enabling more students to progress onto their next steps in education, training or employment.
- Continue to develop our inclusive curriculum offer, providing a breadth of stepping stone opportunities that provide clear pathways through to higher level learning.

Success looks like:



- Sustained improvement in outcomes across all English and maths qualifications.
- Improvement in student engagement in digital skills qualifications and digital upskilling, ensuring they are future-ready.
- Increase engagement with tailored professional development for all practitioners to develop their pedagogical knowledge and industry skills.
- Year-on-year improvement in the proportion of teaching and learning reviews moving to Strong for inclusion.
- Continue to improve the higher-grade profile across exam-based qualifications, enabling students to aim high and achieve well.



Priority 4

Offer proactive and personalised services that help students to thrive academically, personally and socially.

Student support services are integral to student success, with direct correlation between quality of support and student outcomes. Our award-winning support services will continue to prioritise the early assessment of need, and the development of personalised support that builds independence, resilience and confidence over time.

Strengthening transition between school and college, and between levels of study within the college, will feature heavily in this plan, recognising that smooth processes, early identification and intervention around student need, can make all the difference to outcomes and success.

Enrichment and pastoral support will develop essential life skills that will ready our students for their next steps and improved access to information, advice and guidance will connect young people to meaningful careers that reflect their aspirations and their strengths.



The courses were really beneficial to me. I realised that going into the world of work isn't as hard as you might think, and I gained lots of valuable connections, tools and resources along the way."

Kalman McIntyre

Our Castle Meadow provision responds directly to the national Get Britain Working initiative, housing our Youth Guarantee programmes and wider NEET reduction projects. Working with EMCCA and local community stakeholders we are promoting economic prosperity and social mobility for all. Kalman McIntyre completed both our King's Trust and Next Gen Youth Guarantee programme and has secured paid employment, whilst continuing in a volunteering capacity at Nottingham College.

4

Offer proactive and personalised services that help students to thrive academically, personally and socially.



Strategy into action

- Enhance the use of data, insight and student voice to identify support needs earlier, enabling more targeted interventions that strengthen retention, achievement and progression.
- Embed a high-quality enrichment offer for all students, that supports personal growth, employability skills, wellbeing, and social development as an integral part of the student journey.
- Adapt our campus environments to create the conditions for independent learning, confidence building and sustained academic achievement.
- Prioritise wellbeing and social spaces across campuses, ensuring that students can socialise, collaborate and feel safe, valued and supported throughout their college day.
- Enable students to understand their career journey, opportunities and progression steps, through an enhanced careers education programme, utilising a network of partners and resources.
- Continue to evolve our award-winning mental health and wellbeing support service through enhanced partner engagement, providing greater resource and opportunity for students to grow in confidence, develop resilience and gain life skills.
- Further develop communication through the parent portal, encouraging parents to take an active role in student attendance, engagement and achievement.
- Further develop our personalised support and adaptive approaches to ensure inclusive learning and support for students with SEND, enabling equitable access to learning, enrichment and progression.
- Lead on the coordination of early intervention and targeted support, with local authorities and other agencies, to deliver personalised support that improves access to education for the most vulnerable students.
- Continue to maintain standards of safety and wellbeing across all our campuses, ensuring every student has access to support, understands how to keep themselves safe, and feel safe in college.
- Enhance our tutorial and wider study programme to improve access to work experience and work ready skills development opportunities.
- Deliver a personalised student journey from initial enquiry, through to enrolment, that delivers tailored advice and guidance, speeds up access to support and delivers continuous improvement to the student experience.
- Embed smooth transitions from school, particularly for learners with additional or higher needs, through improved pre-transition, transition and post-transition planning.
- Continue to develop and deliver programmes that re-engage vulnerable young people and adults with learning, ensuring further progression into education, training or employment.

Success looks like:



Securing a long-term solution for rising demand for our NEET reduction and 14-16 elected home educated offer.



Achieving all Gatsby Careers Benchmarks, with a nationally award-winning careers education programme.



A partner-led approach to sustained improvement in processes that support effective transition from school to college.



Strengthened parent engagement leading to improved parent-informed intervention and targeted support for students.



A lasting legacy for our Youth Guarantee activity, for the college and for the region.



Priority 5

Promote the wellbeing of our staff with a person-centred approach to high-quality personal and professional development.

We are proud to be a nurturing and inclusive employer. Over the past three years, we have made significant progress in strengthening our approach to staff wellbeing, workload management and work-life balance. Our Wellbeing Strategy, launched in early 2026, provides a clear and sustained framework for how we will continue to prioritise the wellbeing of our colleagues. It takes a holistic, person-centred approach to supporting positive mental and physical health, digital safety and wellbeing, financial resilience, and community wellbeing—ensuring colleagues feel a strong sense of belonging and acceptance.

Through our new People and Culture Strategy we will deliver a structured, tailored and values-led programme of continuing professional development that nurtures talent, builds skills and supports colleagues to grow both personally and professionally.

A strategic approach to workforce planning will enable us to attract and retain colleagues who reflect and complement the rich diversity of our college community. We will broaden our talent management offer beyond pay, creating opportunities through secondments, project-based work and targeted skills development.

All of this will mean that colleagues across the college will feel valued, supported and empowered to be their best selves, and their contributions and achievements will be recognised and celebrated.

Our Stepping On leadership and management programme, run in partnership with the Skills & Education Group, is a key part of our commitment to investing in our people, supporting talented colleagues as they take their first step into leadership. Since launching in 2020, it has helped more than 70 colleagues progress into higher-level roles.

5

Promote the wellbeing of our staff with a person-centred approach to high-quality personal and professional development.



Strategy into action

- Provide clear, inclusive career pathways across teaching and professional services, ensuring all staff have a clear progression and succession path within the college.
- Invest in high-quality induction, mentoring and professional development, aligned to strategic priorities, strengthening our starting well, staying well and leaving well programme.
- Ensure fair, meaningful and visible reward and recognition for contribution, skills and achievement, with the launch of a new recognition and appreciation scheme, linked to college values.
- Strengthen leadership and people-management capability to support performance and wellbeing, with a leadership programme of continued development, peer learning and best practice sharing.
- Review and refine our attraction, recruitment and selection processes to ensure we are maximising our ability to attract and retain a diverse talent pool, with clear alignment to college values, and reflects changing generational expectations.
- Implement our Wellbeing Strategy to expand our wellbeing initiatives to include emotional, digital and financial wellbeing and strive for improved wellbeing outcomes in our annual staff survey.
- Design and implement an affordable Incremental Pay Framework that provides opportunities for growth, development and reward through formal pay structures.
- Establish a framework for digital skills assessment and development, ensuring our staff receive tailored digital skills training aligned to their role and specific delivery objectives.
- Enhance our Performance and Personal Development appraisal framework, incorporating opportunities for intuitive self-reflection, 360 feedback and values-based competencies to inform personal development plans.
- Create capacity to utilise data insights to inform and drive performance development, talent management and succession planning across the college.
- Deliver a values-based cross-college CPD programme, with up to 8 tailored CPD days per academic year for all staff.
- Build staff capability to design and deliver co-created, industry-aligned curriculum, by investing in staff development that supports industry engagement, industry upskilling, curriculum co-design, and the delivery of modular and work relevant learning.
- Design and progress bespoke action plans to address Gender, Ethnicity and Disability pay gaps, through the implementation of our People and Culture Strategy and EDI Action Plan.

Success looks like:



○ Annual improvement in one and two year retention rate of staff.

○ Improvement in staff representation through proactive recruitment strategies targeting under-represented groups.

○ Improved engagement with college, team and individual CPD, aligned to organisational goals and personal development plans.

○ Introduction of new PDR framework that improves alignment to college values and high performance standards.

○ Introduction of a new colleague recognition scheme that improves the proportion of staff who feel seen and valued.



Priority 6

Champion a values-based, performance-enabling culture built on trust, inclusivity and organisational pride.

Culture remains a critical determinant of our success as a college. We are united by a single, shared mission: to unlock potential through learning. The values that bind us together must now be consistently modelled in the way we lead, work and engage with one another, every day.

Our values will be brought to life through our performance appraisal and development frameworks, professional behaviours and standards, and through regular, consistent and purposeful communication.

Through strong staff engagement, we will create a clear and shared understanding of how individual roles contribute to organisational success and the positive impact we have within our communities.

As digital advancement accelerates, so too must our capacity to adapt, innovate and lead change. We will strengthen organisational capability by equipping managers at all levels with the skills, confidence and attributes for effective, inclusive and inspirational leadership.

Our culture will promote high professional standards, mutual accountability and continuous improvement. Feedback will be welcomed and used constructively, collaboration will be encouraged, and all colleagues will be empowered to contribute, influence and be recognised for the value they bring.



In April 2026, we launched a new appreciation and recognition postcard scheme. This colleague-to-colleague initiative celebrates the everyday moments where staff bring our college values to life. They're a simple but meaningful way to acknowledge a colleague's contribution, whether that's a small act of kindness, a moment of leadership, or consistent commitment to our shared purpose.



Champion a values-based, performance-enabling culture built on trust, inclusivity and organisational pride.



Strategy into action

- Expand our staff forum and build visible feedback loops to strengthen staff voice and staff engagement, providing further visibility of how staff voice informs action and key decisions.
- Further build staff feedback and student voice into college policy setting and operational decision making, better connecting staff to the student body and vice versa.
- Develop a college wide approach to active listening, where open and constructive feedback is encouraged and where staff have ample opportunity to contribute, collaboration and influence.
- Increase opportunities for staff to celebrate success at departmental and college level, helping organisational pride to shine through in all we do.
- Enhance visibility of our social impact through regular and focussed communication of key social impact measures, aligned to our Strategic Plan and People and Culture Strategy.
- Continue to work towards becoming a 2-star Best Companies employer, with sustained improvement in survey outcomes.
- Embed the college's values across leadership practice, decision-making and everyday behaviours, ensuring they activity shape how we work with students, colleagues and partners.
- Foster a back-to-the-floor culture, cultivation opportunities for transformation, innovation and improvement.
- Increase staff awareness and confidence in inclusive management and leadership practices, developing new training in managing people with neurodiversity, unseen disabilities and mental health needs.
- Further strengthen relationships between governors and leaders, building on solid link governor connections and improved understanding of governance and strategic decision making.
- Promote physical environments and ways of working that support wellbeing, belonging and high professional standards.
- Implement an EDI (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) Plan that enhances the diversity of thought and ideas and celebrates the diversity of backgrounds and lived experiences of our staff across the college.
- Enhance our culture charter and set of culture commitments which reinforce our values-driven culture, sets high standards of customer service and provides a clear framework of accountability across the college.

Success looks like:



○ **Becoming a two star employer, through our annual Best Companies Employer Survey.**

○ **Staff satisfaction with communication continues to improve, with more staff feeling that they have a say and are listened to.**

○ **Our approach to EDI and employee wellbeing is celebrated as a national beacon of best practice.**

○ **More staff have the opportunity to give back, improving the social impact value of our college community.**

○ **Staff recognise and value visible and accessible leadership and can articulate the impact that leaders have everyday.**



Priority 7

Be a national leader in ethical, environmental and organisational sustainability.

Nottingham College has made significant progress in improving the efficiency and sustainability of its estate, achieving a 35% reduction in CO₂ emissions over the past five years. Awareness of climate change and sustainability has been strengthened across the organisation through themed CPD, campus wilding initiatives, and practical environmental projects. Students have actively embraced this agenda, leading social action projects that have delivered tangible environmental improvements both on campus and within the local community.

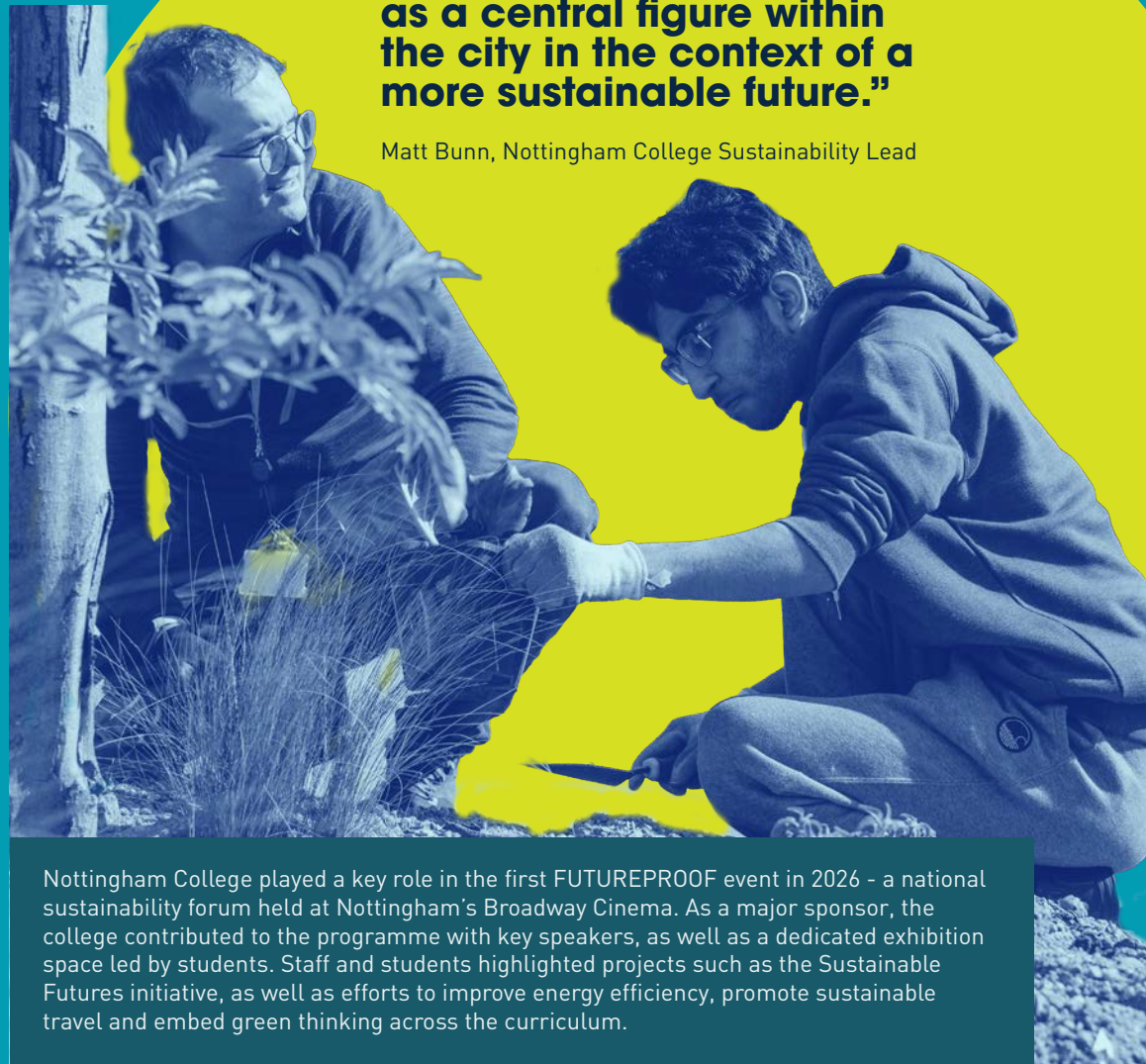
Over the next three years we will position Nottingham College as a regional and national leader in environmental sustainability. We will build on the increased momentum generated by our now established Sustainability Strategy, to embed a whole-college culture of sustainability—one that champions ethical, responsible and sustainable practice in everything we do.

Recognising that the time is now to take decisive and proactive steps to adopt best-practice environmental management, this strategy will reduce resource consumption through a circular economy approach, reduce electric consumption through upgrade and self-generation, and minimise waste through smart procurement, effective monitoring, and sustainable estates management. Alongside this, we will fully embed green skills across our curriculum, establishing Nottingham College as a key strategic skills partner in supporting a low-carbon future for our city and wider region.

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It was an enlightening and inspiring event to be part of and helps further lift the profile and standing of the college as a central figure within the city in the context of a more sustainable future.”

Matt Bunn, Nottingham College Sustainability Lead



Nottingham College played a key role in the first FUTUREPROOF event in 2026 - a national sustainability forum held at Nottingham's Broadway Cinema. As a major sponsor, the college contributed to the programme with key speakers, as well as a dedicated exhibition space led by students. Staff and students highlighted projects such as the Sustainable Futures initiative, as well as efforts to improve energy efficiency, promote sustainable travel and embed green thinking across the curriculum.

7

Be a national leader in ethical, environmental and organisational sustainability.



Strategy into action

Leadership:

- Meet and, wherever possible, exceed all relevant UK, European and international legislative and regulatory requirements by embedding ethical and sustainable practices across all college activity.
- Engage with the college's suppliers and contractors to reduce emissions associated with the goods and services procured by the college and ensure environmental sustainability standards progressively improve their own working practices.
- Facilitate the active participation of the college community in reducing the collective environmental impact of the organisation, through both formal and informal engagement activity.
- Partner regionally on sustainability initiatives that benefit the city and region's economic prosperity.

Organisational sustainability

- Identify and manage climate related risks and embed resilience and adaptation into capital projects, maintenance, and business continuity planning.
- Transition to a modern, integrated, clean energy system, delivering reliable energy supplies at an affordable price, whilst meeting environmental sustainability and net zero greenhouse gas emissions targets.
- Apply an ethical and sustainability lens to procurement, partnerships and digital development, to ensure decision making and policy setting follows an ethical framework.
- Enhance biodiversity and protect natural habitats through environmental and sustainable estates planning.

- Continue to roll out sustainability CPD across the college, improving engagement at all levels of the organisation.
- Embed environmental sustainability in the curriculum and encourage the recognition of student achievement that promotes sustainability, respects diversity and meets our commitment to environmental sustainability.

Campus operations

- Continue to reduce scope 1 and 2 emissions whilst also progressively measuring and reducing key scope 3 emissions.
- Employ a holistic approach to carbon reduction across student catering services, with reduced reliance on meat products, increased use of locally sourced fresh produce, and a complete removal of single use plastics.
- Promote and encourage the use of technology to reduce the environmental impact of college operations and activities.
- Ethically dispose of all college waste, including waste oil, cleaning chemicals and cleaning enzymes and redundant/end of life electronic equipment.

Success looks like:



○ 100% of leaders will complete Carbon Literacy training, with 15% of our cross college CPD programme dedicated to sustainability.

○ 10% reduction in electricity/gas/water consumption, with a 10% increase in use of self-generated renewables.

○ The number of students achieving green skills affiliated qualifications will increase by 20%.

○ National awards for our efforts in ethical, environmental and organisational sustainability.

○ Scope 3 emissions will reduce year-on-year over the course of this plan.



Priority 8

Harness the power of digital technology to be an inclusive enabler, where digital skills are developed for a digital future.

Nottingham College has embraced innovation in recent years, enhancing curriculum delivery through the use of emerging technologies such as immersive learning spaces and virtual reality, alongside the adoption of AI tools to support workload reduction and improve access to information. Alongside this, strategic digital projects are underway that will transform how we provide information and support to students and other customers, supported by significant investment in IT infrastructure to strengthen connectivity and Wi-Fi capability across our campuses.

The question of whether AI will transform the world of work has already been answered. AI is now embedded in everyday life, and our students are preparing for careers that will demand higher levels of digital capability, adaptability and confidence than ever before. Ensuring the college is equipped to develop these skills, embrace transformational change, and remove digital barriers to opportunity is central to unlocking both our organisational potential and the potential of the students we serve.



We are set to transform the way we communicate at Nottingham College with the launch of a new Omnichannel solution in 2026. Bringing together platforms such as Teams, phone, LiveChat, email and WhatsApp into one seamless system, this approach will give staff a complete, real-time view of every interaction - reducing duplication, improving efficiency and enabling faster, more confident responses.

8

Harness the power of digital technology to be an inclusive enabler, where digital skills are developed for a digital future.



Strategy into action

Systems, security and IT

- Enable students to develop their digital capability and to engage with digital technologies confidently, safely and ethically.
- Embed sustainability practices into our digital estate, including disposal, reuse and digital de-cluttering processes.
- Leverage AI and other technological developments to further strengthen our use and impact of PowerBI and associated systems
- Explore all opportunities for grant and project funding to continue to develop our IT estate.
- Work with partner agencies, including JISC, other colleges, and industry partners to collaborate on sector-wide digital transformation projects and initiatives.

In the classroom

- Enable students and staff to use digital technologies confidently, ethically and effectively.
- Leverage AI and other digital technologies to personalise, contextualise and evolve our pedagogical practice.
- Build capacity and capability within curriculum to develop and roll out digital skills, AI and data governance training to students and employers.
- Stay up to date with the deployment of technology in the classroom, as part of a comprehensive curriculum planning and prioritisation process, ensuring digital teaching and learning continually evolves.
- Expand our digital learning resource offer, as part of an ongoing review of student resources.
- Embed common platform solutions across the college to enhance student outcomes.

AI and innovation

- Adopt and embed safe, responsible agentic AI tools to automate and augment routine administrative and academic tasks, delivering measurable reductions in staff workload and releasing capacity for high-value teaching, support and leadership activity.
- Establish effective data governance and AI governance practices to protect students and staff, as well as college data.
- Implement a Microsoft partner project that enhances our student journey, improves access to guidance and support, delivers improved customer service and future proofs our student operations.
- Adopt cloud-based technologies that will support efficiency, safety or service improvement.

Digital skills

- Roll out a comprehensive CPD programme designed to deliver digital skills for all staff, for teachers, for leaders and managers, and systems experts, as part of a differentiated and tailored rolling training programme.
- Conduct regular digital skills audits to enable the tailoring of training and development to meet diverse needs.
- Embed digital tools across teaching and learning to improve AI enabled workload reduction practices.
- Equip staff to better utilise data and insights to inform effective decision making to support student transition, student outcomes and service improvements.

Success looks like:



Successful implementation of Microsoft partner project which increases conversion from enquiry to enrolment.



Agentic AI is introduced and delivers clear and sustained benefits to workload and service efficiency.



College data is safe and secure, in a robust architecture that enables safe deployment of AI systems.



Digital skills are enhanced across the college, with a minimum 10% of annual hours CPD logged as digital skills training.



Digital confidence amongst students increases as digital skills become further embedded in teaching and learning.



Priority 9

Use our resources to achieve maximum impact, where our estate is optimised to support learning, work and collaboration.

The college estate has benefited from significant investment in recent years, with outdated facilities decommissioned and replaced by new, purpose-built campus buildings. This investment—supported by external grants and college funding—has transformed our estate through improved energy efficiency and enhanced student spaces and facilities across all campuses.

Our focus now shifts to ensuring that these high-quality environments continue to meet the evolving needs of both students and staff, as digital experiences become increasingly integral, alongside physical ones. Our estate must offer a balanced mix of digital, social and collaborative spaces, while being maintained to optimise energy efficiency, performance and sustainability.

We remain ambitious in our commitment to meeting growing demand for technical and vocational education, particularly in STEM disciplines, through continued estate development. Alongside this, we will actively explore opportunities for increased collaboration with partners to deliver long-term accommodation solutions that support innovation, growth and regional skills priorities.



A £10 million+ investment at our Basford campus demonstrates our ongoing commitment to transforming and future-proofing our estate. In 2024, we launched our state-of-the-art Construction Skills Centre, significantly expanding capacity to meet industry demand and enabling up to 1,000 young people aged 16–18 to access high-quality construction training each year. This was closely followed by the opening of The Gateway, a dedicated centre supporting students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to develop independent living and employability skills. Both facilities have been designed in line with the Department for Education's specifications and reflect our commitment to sustainability, as we work towards becoming a carbon-neutral college by 2030.

9 Use our resources to achieve maximum impact, where our estate is optimised to support learning, work and collaboration.



Strategy into action

- Provide safe, welcoming, inclusive and high-quality environments that support learning, work and collaboration.
- Optimise estate use to support growth, flexibility and future delivery models.
- Invest in digital and physical infrastructure that enhances access, study and progression.
- Ensure estate development aligns with sustainability, accessibility and regional need and prioritise estates and resource investment that demonstrably reduces environmental impact.
- Maintain and renew assets responsibly within available funding.
- Facilitate improved collaboration with education providers across the region to explore opportunities to co-locate, share space and resources
- Devise a three-year programme of capital funding upgrades and maintenance, maximising available grant funding, and own college investment, ensuring it aligns with curriculum priorities.
- Continue to build on our already efficient estate, to further improve room and classroom utilisation.
- Minimise business disruption through appropriate and timely maintenance, ensuring alignment with curriculum delivery timetables and operational business plans.
- Continue to develop our campuses so that they provide social spaces to support the wider wellbeing needs of students and staff
- Secure a lasting solution for expanding NEET reduction and foundation learning programmes at our Castle Meadow campus
- Deliver a funded expansion of our Highfields campus, enabling the college to respond to growing demand for electrical and engineering and wider STEM provision.
- Continue to develop shovel ready projects, ready to seize on funding opportunities as they emerge, to improve and expand our estate in line with curriculum plans.
- Instil a professional customer service approach to the delivery of front-line security services and campus estates services.
- Develop our estate so that all visitors and members of our college community feel safe, welcomed and inspired.

Success looks like:



- Year-on-year improvements in satisfaction with the college's estate.
- All campuses will feature dedicated social spaces which promote collaboration and wellbeing amongst students and staff.
- 100% of kit and equipment procurement is informed/endorsed by employers with more curriculum spaces being co-designed with employers.
- A funded solution for the expansion of Highfields and our NEET reduction programmes, to support our growth agenda.
- Room utilisation and estate efficiency is improved year-on-year across all campuses.



Priority 10

Achieve efficiency and value for money through strong financial stewardship, focussing investment where it has greatest impact for students.

Strong financial stewardship underpins the delivery of our strategic ambitions and our ability to invest in the success of our students. We have demonstrated resilience and discipline in a challenging financial environment, strengthening our financial position while continuing to invest in teaching and learning, estates, digital capability and student support. This has enabled us to balance short-term pressures with long-term sustainability.

Our funding landscape continues to evolve, shaped by rising costs, constrained core funding, increased accountability, and targeted investment linked to national skills priorities. Against this backdrop, it is essential that we remain agile, financially resilient and focused on ensuring that every pound spent delivers maximum impact for students and the communities we serve.

Over the life of this strategy, we will continue to prioritise efficiency, productivity and robust financial management, maintaining strong control over costs while growing and diversifying income in line with strategic priorities. We will be disciplined in investment decisions, targeting resources where they have the greatest potential to improve student experiences, outcomes and progression.

We will work to protect the college's long-term financial health and create the capacity to invest in future growth, innovation and transformation. Through transparent decision-making and effective governance, financial stewardship will remain a core enabler of our mission to unlock potential through learning.



In 2022, The Department for Education introduced a Curriculum Efficiency and Financial Sustainability Support (CEFSS) initiative to help colleges improve financial planning and cost-effective curriculum delivery. In late 2025, the college invited the FE Commissioner's CEFSS team in to review our own mechanisms, as part of our continuous improvement efforts. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and confirmed that we have developed and embedded effective, and in some cases sector-leading, financial and curriculum planning practices. This provides a fantastic foundation on which to further refine our approaches and become a real beacon of best practice for financial stewardship within our sector.

10

Achieve efficiency and value for money through strong financial stewardship, focussing investment where it has greatest impact for students.



Strategy into action

- Deliver long term financial sustainability and resilience for the college measured through achieving the DfE's good financial health rating and the FE Commissioner's benchmark of 40 cash days (at each year-end), opening up doors to future investment, bidding and project opportunities.
- Maintain a strong focus on estate, room and staff utilisation, building on the endorsement of our curriculum efficiency received through the CEFSS FE Commissioner assessment in February 2026.
- Strengthen our position as a reliable adult skills partner in the delivery of a relevant adult education programme which consistently meets its ASF allocation targets.
- Consolidate our HE offer, preparing for a repositioning in the market, and in response to emerging HE reform, delivering improved curriculum efficiency and growth potential.
- Implement an affordable and aspirational incremental pay framework to provide staff with pay progression opportunities within the college.
- Restart debt repayments to the DfE in autumn 2027 alongside a financial plan to build up a cash position, to achieve the FE Commissioners 40 cash days benchmark at each year-end, to secure ongoing resilience and capacity for investment in estate, digital capability and strategic transformation priorities.
- Strengthen financial planning, investment appraisal and benefit realisation to demonstrate impact and help to identify future investment priorities.
- Build organisational capability and accountability for financial stewardship.
- Ensure digital and estates investment is affordable, sustainable and aligned to strategic need.
- Increase financial resilience in response to economic, political and technological uncertainty through ongoing comprehensive monitoring and management of risk.
- Achieve sustainable growth in income by expanding high-quality provision aligned to skills needs of students and employers and strategic priorities, while maintaining a balanced and resilient funding mix.
- Deliver a range of targeted efficiency initiatives and productivity improvements in order to invest in the ongoing development and future success of the college.

Success looks like:



- A year on year increase of cash profit (EBITDA) to grow annual unrestricted cash available for investment, net of debt servicing.
- Improving unrestricted cash days year on year, achieving the FE Commissioner's benchmark of 40 unrestricted cash days by the end of the strategy.
- Secure a 'Good' financial health rating every year of the strategy, as measured by the DfE.
- Becoming a £100m+ college with year-on-year growth and improvements on margins across delivery.
- Implementation of a pay framework that makes annual incremental pay increases affordable and sustainable.

