

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT 2026/2027

Link: <https://newbury.college/accountability>



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PURPOSE

We believe in: ‘Creating opportunities to transform lives’. The purpose of our college is to meet the education and skills needs of the economy, by providing learning opportunities which transform career and life chances. As a leading educational provider for our community, our core intent is to deliver ‘careers not courses’. This means that we will support learners to identify, plan and achieve their career goals, through the acquisition of the skills they need to succeed. Listening to the views of our learners, staff and stakeholders is at the heart of ensuring the development and quality of our provision.

The College and University Centre Newbury (UCN) aim to deliver the education and skills required to meet the needs of business and the aspirations of our local community. The curriculum offer is built upon both an understanding of the skills required in the regional economy and on the demand for education and training from local people. The skills offer is underpinned by a key concept:

- **Careers not courses** – the intent of our offer is to enable all learners to access, or to progress with, their chosen career, rather than simply undertaking a particular course of study.

We also work in partnership with other organisations, to enhance our offer to learners and increase our ability to meet the skills needs of employers. This includes a collaborative approach with a range of other providers such as universities, colleges and training providers, where this supports the expansion or diversification of provision in accordance with our Strategy.

VALUES

How we aim to behave...



A - ASPIRATION

- being ambitious for individuals and for the quality of provision
- inspiring innovation and creativity



I - INTEGRITY

- acting with uncompromising integrity in everything we do
- taking responsibility for own development



R - RESPECT

- listening to all members of the College community
- fostering a culture of respect for their rights, differences and liberties



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Our strategic objectives are to deliver Excellence in our learning, in our support; for our people and our partners and to be sustainable in how we invest and for the future.



CONTEXT AND PLACE

What we do...

Career Academy	Full time programmes for young people and adults
University Centre Newbury (UCN)	Degree level and higher professional programmes
Apprenticeships	Skills in the workplace
Adult Learning	Development opportunities for adults
Foundation Learning	Developing skills for independence and employability
Online Learning (Study Online)	Skills development online

Newbury College is a general further education college based in Newbury, West Berkshire. The college is based on one main campus with some specialist provision for young people at other locations in the region. The College offers a wide range of programmes for adults, young people and apprentices from entry level to level 7. In 2025/26 the college has approximately 3,800 students, of which 373 are apprentices, 1215 are students aged 16 to 19 years, and the remainder are adult students.

Newbury College principally serves West Berkshire and the wider Thames Valley region, with its main campus located in Newbury, West Berkshire. The College operates within the Berkshire and Oxfordshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) area, led by the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce as the designated Employer Representative Body.

- The College’s travel-to-learn area includes:
- West Berkshire (including Newbury, Thatcham and Hungerford)
 - Reading
 - North Hampshire
 - South Oxfordshire

Learners typically travel from both urban and rural communities across the Thames Valley area, reflecting the College’s position within an “urban with significant rural” catchment.

- The travel-to-work patterns of the region are strongly linked to key employment centres across:
- Reading
 - Oxfordshire
 - Basingstoke
 - the wider Thames Valley economic area

- These areas support significant employment in:
- digital and technology
 - engineering and manufacturing
 - construction
 - health and life sciences
 - professional and business services

The College delivers provision primarily from its Newbury campus, alongside specialist delivery locations and employer-based apprenticeship provision across the region. Where learners are drawn from outside of this, they are served by the College because they live in areas with poor provision that does not meet their needs or have no access to specialist provisions. Learners are drawn from deprived wards designated in the 2019 English Indices of Deprivation, for example across Oxford, one of the most unequal cities nationally.

The area served by Newbury College is characterised by a diverse and evolving economy across West Berkshire and the wider Thames Valley region. These economic and social factors significantly influence local and regional skills demands and inform the College’s curriculum planning and strategic priorities.

Key characteristics include:

- A high concentration of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with over 99 % of businesses within Berkshire and Oxfordshire classified as SMEs. This creates demand for flexible, responsive training and workforce development across a broad range of sectors.
- Strong employment levels and a highly skilled workforce, with the proportion of residents qualified at Level 3 and above exceeding the national average. This increases demand for higher technical skills, professional qualifications, and progression into Level 4+ provision.
- Continued growth in priority employment sectors including:
 - digital and technology
 - engineering and advanced manufacturing
 - construction and low-carbon industries
 - health and social care
 - professional and business services
- Growing demand for skills linked to:
 - artificial intelligence and digitalisation
 - sustainable construction and net zero technologies
 - leadership and management
 - cyber security and data skills
- Regional housing and infrastructure growth, including significant local housing developments, contributing to increased demand for construction, engineering, planning, and public service skills.
- A mixed urban and rural catchment area, creating transport, accessibility, and participation challenges for some learner groups and increasing the importance of flexible and locally accessible provision.
- Areas of social disadvantage and inequality across parts of Berkshire and Oxfordshire, contributing to differing levels of educational participation, employment opportunity, and progression.
- Increasing demand for SEND and inclusive provision, alongside a growing requirement for tailored learner support and employability pathways.
- Strong travel-to-work patterns across the Thames Valley economic area, with many residents commuting to major employment centres including Reading, Oxford, Basingstoke, and surrounding business hubs.
- According to the 2019 English Indices of Deprivation, 17 of 61 wards in Oxfordshire are the most deprived in England. The city of Oxford is the second most unequal place in the UK (source: Cities Outlook 2022 | Centre for Cities), in terms of income, housing affordability and life expectancy.
- The proportion of people qualified at Level 3 or above is higher than the national average. Oxfordshire has the highest proportion across all 38 LSIPS
- The employment rate in both regions is higher than the national average

These characteristics inform the College’s focus on employer-led curriculum planning, progression pathways, higher-level technical education, apprenticeships, adult upskilling, and inclusive learning opportunities aligned to local and national skills priorities.

The map overleaf outlines the homes served by Newbury College.



Place Based Learning

APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

To understand local need when planning our curriculum, the College aims to engage as many stakeholders and key partners as possible. Across the region we work with Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership including the Skills Advisory Panel, LSIP, Workforce Development Partnerships and employer forums to gather information on skills needs. This is supported by the engagement we have with employers and local businesses through our sector specific forums and roundtable events and discussions. Our employer engagement team works with employers to identify skill gaps through training needs analysis and our curriculum areas work with employers to ensure their needs are embedded into the design and planning of curriculum.

Our agile approach ensures that we can cater for bespoke and individualised requirements, whilst ensuring we are best placed to support emerging needs. This information, alongside data from sources such as Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) and the Association of Colleges (AoC), informs the annual Curriculum Planning process and stakeholder engagement drives in-year decisions for each curriculum area.

Our board receives regular updates and reports on how we are performing against our targets in relation to the skills agenda and this academic year we have built upon the positive skills sub-judgement feedback we received from our recent Ofsted inspection. The Plan is informed through engagement with stakeholders from the following groups;

CIVIC

We recognise our responsibility to work collaboratively with local providers and partners to ensure that provision across Berkshire/Oxfordshire is coherent, responsive, and aligned to identified skills needs.

We have established strong and sustained partnership working with the Employer Representative Body (Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce). This has included active engagement in activity supporting the development of provision in priority sectors identified through the LSIP (both the LSIP in 20234, and in active engagement with the forthcoming new LSIP to be published in 2026).

In 2025, this collaboration has been further strengthened through the Thames Valley FE Partnership, bringing together FE colleges across Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Swindon alongside the ERB. This partnership provides a structured forum to align strategic priorities, share intelligence, and coordinate curriculum planning to address regional skills gaps and avoid unnecessary duplication of provision.

Through our ongoing involvement in LSIP Workforce Development Partnerships (WDPs), we work jointly with the ERB and employers in priority sectors to co-design and deliver targeted skills solutions. This ensures that our curriculum offer remains responsive to current and emerging labour market needs.

The Employer Representative Body has reviewed this accountability statement and confirms that it reflects local skills priorities and the collaborative approach being taken to address them.

EDUCATION PROVIDERS

The College regularly works closely with regional Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) providers on collaborative projects and through the LSIP workforce development partnership meetings and Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce events. Providers discuss their provision to ensure that courses delivered in the region are complementary and not overly competitive, thus ensuring learners and employers can be signposted to the most relevant provision for their needs. We work with colleges and local 6th forms by supporting their Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to ensure that students understand the broad range of programmes on offer to them, including T Levels and Apprenticeships.

The College works closely with numerous schools within the region to develop the curriculum offer. This includes partnership work with the St Bartholomew’s, Castle and Brookfield Schools. These schools have supported the development of the Foundation Learning pathways (Connect, Focus and Engage) and the linking of the Key Stage 4 extracurricular provision to the 16-19 vocational offer.

We work with our university partners to ensure that our provision meets emerging skills needs and currently collaborating a wide range of course to increase our higher-level provision.

EMPLOYERS

The College works with a range of employers who help to steer the curriculum to meet local skills needs, design the curriculum offer, provide talks, placements and progression opportunities to students and support with funding opportunities. We hold our own skills advisory events with employers.

Good links are in place to support good quality work experience and enables our place-based provision to complete competition and fixture opportunities.

COMMUNITY

The College collaborates closely with West Berkshire Council and local secondary schools to support students with high needs and those not yet in education, employment or training (NEET). This is in collaboration with the council’s post 16 education lead and SEND further education lead. The college are also collaborating with the council to implement resources that support the expanding sports curriculum offer and the local community. The council have a developing strategy around young adults’ fitness and healthy living and see the college as a significant partner in supporting the implementation and impact of young adults’ development in these areas; including work experience opportunities and partnership work with council sponsored and national organisations such as Everyone Active, Berkshire Youth, Sports England and the Football Foundation.

As well as contributing to the regional health strategy for health and wellbeing, the place-based provision offers coaching in the community and has the potential to build on pilots working with ex-offenders and NEET groups. Staff organise charity events to grow positive citizenship attitudes.

CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL, REGIONAL, LOCAL PRIORITIES

Sector	Local Priority	National Priority	Current contribution	Future Development / Target Outcomes
Construction	✓	✓	Provision is delivered through T Levels, study programmes, and apprenticeships from Level 1 to Level 3.	Planned expansion of short courses and localised adult provision.
Advanced Manufacturing	✓	✓	Our provision in manufacturing is strong, with options from Level 3 to Level 6, primarily through apprenticeships, higher education & Skills bootcamps.	Development of curriculum and recruitment of learners to new T-level planned to launch September 2027.
Digital and Technologies		✓	We have provision in study programmes and T-Levels.	Develop curriculum offer and recruiting of learners to new full-time curriculum provision planned for delivery in the 2027–28 academic year.
Creative Industries		✓	We have provision in study programmes and T-Levels.	Develop curriculum offer and recruiting of learners to new full-time curriculum provision planned for delivery in the 2027–28 academic year.
Defence		✓	Our provision supports the regional defence industry, with options from Level 3 to Level 6. We see uptake from employers in apprenticeships, higher education & Skills bootcamps.	Expand provision supporting regional defence organisations and their supply chains through collaboration with HE partners and participation in the Defence University Alliance (DUA).
Financial Services		✓	Offering Accountancy courses from Level 2	We have recruited specialist staff to drive growth, innovation, and expansion within this curriculum area.
Life Sciences	✓	✓	Level 2 and Level 3 Health and Social Care study programmes available. A suite of online courses supports adults studying health-related subjects under ASF funding. Access to HE courses offered in Health and Social Care, Nursing and Midwifery, Paramedic Science, and Science.	Establishment of a strategic implementation board to drive the development of new full-time and higher-level provision for September 2027.

Sector	Local Priority	National Priority	Current contribution	Future Development / Target Outcomes
Professional and Business Services		✓	Offering Accountancy courses from Level 2 to Level 4, Business Administration and Business T Level programmes.	Increasing offer in apprenticeships and higher-level provision
Clean Energy Industries		✓	Offering pathways in renewable energy and plumbing.	Further development of our Renewable Energy centre through the expansion of short courses and adult provision.
Health	✓	✓	Access to HE courses offered in Health and Social Care, Nursing and Midwifery, Paramedic Science, and Science.	Establishment of a strategic implementation board to drive the development of new full-time and higher-level provision for September 2027.

OBJECTIVES

Objective	26/27 Target Outcome
Developing a strategic implementation board to ensure curriculum provision is responsive to employer demand and aligned to regional and national priorities.	The implementation of Skills Stripes (Annex 1) which will support the development of clear career pathways through an employer-informed curriculum in priority sectors, strengthening alignment with national and local skills priorities.
Developing collaborative curriculum pathways with Higher Education partners to enhance access to higher-level education opportunities.	Introduction of new higher-level progression pathways with HE partners by July 2027, expanding access to Level 4–6 technical and professional qualifications that meet regional skills and workforce needs.
Implementing a comprehensive college wide framework designed to embed inclusive practices across all provision types.	Map the entire student journey, from initial application to alumni, ensuring that equity of opportunity and systemic removal of educational barriers is consistent for all students, provision types and ages.
Utilisation of a new CRM system and updated LMI data to strengthen employer engagement processes to ensure our curriculum offer and delivery equips learners and apprentices with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace.	Improved employer engagement including hosting an increased number of industry advisory boards, to help improve curriculum responsiveness, and ensure learners and apprentices develop the skills required by local and regional employers.
Unify the college’s support infrastructure into a single, cohesive function designed to dynamically match support resources directly to student need and keep pace with SEND Reforms.	The workstream will centrally track the progress and integration of learners with additional needs and implement a structured strategy for gradually withdrawing support over time to foster student independence and improve curriculum efficiency.

INCLUSIVE MAINSTREAM FUND

We will use the Inclusive Mainstream Fund to strengthen our Universal SEND offer, develop targeted and targeted plus support (including Individual Support Plans), invest in workforce capability, and improve early identification and multi-agency working. This will enable us to deliver inclusive mainstream provision aligned to the SEND reform programme, reduce reliance on EHCPs, and ensure learners receive timely, evidence-based support within our provision.

LOCAL NEEDS DUTY

Section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 places a duty on governing bodies of institutions in the further education sector to review how well the education or training provided by the institution meets local needs, and to consider what action might be taken in order to meet those needs better.

Newbury College/ UCN Board of Governors have conducted a review of the 2026/27 curriculum plan and evaluated how well it meets current local skills needs and appraise our preparedness for emerging needs in the future. This review was undertaken through engaging key external stakeholders and college leaders. It also takes into account the relevant findings and themes from our most recent Ofsted report and our Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). The College will continue to work collaboratively with our regional education providers to ensure that the offer is defined and addresses the needs of local employers and the priorities set out in the LSIP. This approach will ensure that we collectively fulfil those needs and avoid over saturation of sectors where possible. The College will continue to support educational partnerships, initiatives and projects across the region and build upon the positive relationships we have with our local education providers. This accountability statement was produced in consultation with these providers and by building on the existing strong relationships we already have we will work to ensure local needs are met by continuing the strong collaboration with stakeholders in the region.

The College has regular representation at LSIP Project Board Meetings, at which we review collaboration and provision with other partners including the Employer Representative Body. This meeting allows key representatives to discuss their goals and objectives for skills growth in Berkshire, identifying areas in which greater collaboration would help.

The Berkshire LSIP has concluded that there are gaps in provision for some priority sectors requiring further development and engagement with employers. We are working collaboratively with the ERB through the Workforce Development Partnerships (WDP) to do this. Leaders have kept the place-based provision under review to ensure the provision meets local needs and is preparing for the emerging needs locally. For example, engaging key external stakeholders through reviews; independent evaluation from sector leaders; and in-house focussed quality reviews, the latest being in November 2025. The College has also aligned quality assurance work so that place-based learning sits within quality cycle, reporting, and QIP development.

The College takes a deliberate, strategic approach to addressing the Berkshire LSIP priority sector gaps. Consequently, sectors such as Food and Farming, Logistics and Distribution, and Agrifood and Food Innovation are intentionally excluded from our provision, as they fall outside our current and future strategic direction. Conversely, Defence and Security represents an identified regional gap where the College is already actively delivering provision. As outlined in this Accountability Statement, we are actively expanding this offer to support regional defence organisations and their supply chains by embedding specialised pathways via the implementation of Skills Stripes (Annex 1)

CORPORATION /GOVERNING BODY STATEMENT

On behalf of the Newbury College corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the Corporation conducts reviews in line with the local needs duty and confirms the plan.

This annual accountability statement sets out an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the corporation at their meeting on Monday 20 July 2026.



Sally Osmond
Chair of the Corporation

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

ANNEX 1: SKILLS STRIPES

Skills Stripes





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