Hereward College

Promoting individual achievement







2026-2027 Accountability Agreement

Hereward College Accountability Agreement 2026/27

Purpose:

Hereward College is a General Further Education College with a student population that mostly have special educational needs and disabilities. It is located in Coventry but attracts residential learners from across England and Wales as well as day learners from the West and East Midlands. The College offers inclusive provision for all learners, with specialist facilities for learners with broad-spectrum needs, including, autism, physical and sensory impairments, medical conditions, social, emotional and communication difficulties, acquired head injury and associated learning difficulties.

A pathway approach to learning is emphasised at Hereward and this ensures that all levels are catered for, with a dedicated programme of study developed to help learners achieve their goals. Courses range from pre-entry up to level 3, with a Learning for Life sensory group specifically aimed at students with profound and multiple learning difficulties. English and maths are included on all programmes and there is a strong focus on employability across most pathways and learning programmes. Hereward offers work skills and employability programmes, including supported internships, working in partnership with regional and national employers. The College also has a small adult education provision mostly targeted at supporting individuals that work within the SEND and care sectors and the parent population of the local SEND community.

The College recognises its role in being a leader in the field of SEND education and its staff and stakeholders were pleased to receive the highest grades possible from Ofsted for all its full time provision as well as its contribution to meeting the skills needs of its community. The College is committed to sharing its excellent practice with others and works with the national organisation Natspec to provide guidance on curriculum development. The College also leads the SEND forum of Colleges West Midlands which is a strategic partnership of eighteen colleges. As part of this role Hereward has led the way in innovative employer awards and the training of college based SEND practitioners. The College takes seriously its role as a key ally to the regional local authorities and over the last few years the College has created bespoke provision to meet the needs of learners where there has been no other provision available to them regionally.

More than anything else the College remains focussed on improving the experiences of all its learners and of meeting and exceeding their expectations and those of their family and carers.

Mission

Our mission statement is:

"Hereward helps learners to make progress and realise their potential and ambitions. The creativity and skills of staff, working in partnership with the community and employers, ensure learners develop skills for life and work, achieve appropriate qualifications and develop safe and healthy lifestyles that prepare them for the future."

Vision

The College's Vision is:

"Each learner's experience at Hereward College will prepare them for the next stage of their life, with outstanding employability skills and much greater control over their own future. Their growing independence and well-being will enable their talents to shine."

The Curriculum

The curriculum is linked to four strategic intentions of the College which are the major strategic drivers and all college activity is arranged around these intentions as detailed below.

	Curriculum Objectives
Strategic Intention 1 *Embed the person-centred destination-led structures and develop staff to focus support for learners to raise their aspirations and help them to prepare for adulthood and achieve their goals for health, employment, independent living and being part of the community*	**Our summary of objectives is that:** ➢ programmes of study support the gaining of greater independence skills ➢ study programmes support the increasing complexity of presentation of learners ➢ study programmes are coherently planned and sequenced and builds skills and knowledge ➢ the curriculum is appropriately resourced to meet the complex needs of learners ➢ programmes and ways of working support the management of learner behaviour that allows them to then make a positive contribution to society whilst at College and on graduation ➢ all aspects of a learner's programme of study supports the gaining of social and work skills.
Strategic Intention 2 *Deliver exciting, innovative, and effective learning, teaching and assessment that actively engages learners, develops their English and maths skills, helps them to make progress, and enables them to achieve their goals and qualifications and move on to the next stage of their lives.*	**Our summary of objectives is that:** ➢ staff have the subject expertise and understanding of SEND to provide consistently strong levels of support for learners ➢ the Hereward Approach is embedded in all aspects of teaching, learning, and assessment.
Strategic Intention 3 *Be pro-active to benefit learners by collaborating and working with partners, including parents and carers, local authorities, health and care agencies, employers, and funding agencies, to enable the learners' goals and ensure the SEND Code of Practice is delivered.*	**Our summary of objectives is that:** ➢ employer needs within specific localities will be identified and vocational provision developed to meet those needs ➢ programmes of study support the needs and aspirations of young people with SEND and meet their needs and the needs of employers ➢ new models of delivery will be explored with local authorities that addresses their provision gaps and future needs in line with the mission vision and values of the College ➢ the curriculum is appropriately resourced to match the expectations of employers
Strategic Intention 4 *Maximise the effectiveness of all physical and staffing resources to improve the quality of provision, grow Hereward Training and new services, and maintain the College's financial health and viability while providing value for money.*	**Our summary of objectives is that:** ➢ labour market intelligence and employer need in the region will be used to define the subjects being taught within each of the College's locations and will also define the mode of delivery

Context and Offer

Hereward College has a fulltime cohort of circa 380 learners, all of whom have an Education Health and Care Plan. Most learners travel to Hereward from Coventry, Warwickshire, and Solihull although residential learners are from across the country.

Recent employment and skills data highlights a mixed national picture. Unemployment is at its highest level in four years, payroll numbers have declined year-on-year, and wage growth is slowing. Youth unemployment remains a particular concern, with nearly one million young people nationally not in education, employment or training. At the same time, economic inactivity linked to long-term health conditions continues to present a significant structural challenge.

Locally, partners across Coventry & Warwickshire are exploring coordinated approaches to support young people, address health-related inactivity and ensure employers can access the skills they require.

The characteristics of the West Midlands and in particular Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull's labour force influence the focus of where the College's skills support is targeted. For example, Coventry has a Skills strategy that ambitiously aspires to provide a "citywide skills offer that raises aspirations and allows each and every resident through their lives to reach their full potential".



The College has responded to this strategy and the growing regional landscape by developing programmes that develop skills that enable young people to progress within key service sectors such as Health and Social Care. There is a continued need for labour with the requisite generic, leadership and management, and technical skills to fill roles, so it is vital that the College provides the placements and skills that reflect this. The College has increased the number of employers that it engages to provide real work experience and supported internship places over the last year and now has a footprint across a diverse range of employment sectors including retail, health, financial services, utilities, care, hospitality, local government and manufacturing. This span of employment sectors allows the College to understand the curriculum and support needed by its community to successfully compete for paid work and thus address a key local priority. For example, the College has tailored the curriculum offer to meet the needs of the skills gap within health and social care by offering distance learning Level 2 and 3 qualifications and the College works in partnership with Warwick Conferences providing high quality training for students in hospitality and catering an important regional sector with significant staffing challenges.

The West Midlands Combined authority also has an ambitious skill strategy which states "our ambition is to develop an integrated skills system for the region through which we can stimulate

economic growth, deliver better outcomes for residents and business, and create healthier thriving communities." The College has responded to this strategy in three important ways, by providing leadership to Colleges West Midlands on the creation of work-based programmes for learners with special educational needs and disabilities, rolling out the national award winning Thrive Programme across the region and by leading the RIDE research project (https://www.hereward.ac.uk/supporting-employers/research-and-innovation/) .

The employer consultation stage of the Local Skills Improvement Plan, LSIP, was a process which involved over a thousand local businesses and where one of the main barriers to the right skills and training being identified was a lack of awareness among employers regarding the support available from further education providers. In response to this, Skills West Midlands and Warwickshire were created and Hereward has worked effectively to raise the profile of the potential of young people with SEND to gain and maintain good quality jobs. In 2024 the College led the creation of the inaugural Skills West Midlands and Warwickshire Excellence Awards for SEND which was repeated in 2025. These events brought together high-profile employers and education providers from across the region and highlighted best practice in SEND employment. The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has identified digital as a major economic growth area along with high value manufacturing. These themes have been reiterated in the Skills Bill 2022 and by the new body, Skills England, created in 2024.

Within the SEND community many learners have been able to secure paid work whilst operating at entry level 3, level 1 and level 2 and in many cases, it is behaviour and social understanding that is the main barrier to their progression rather than cognitive ability. Local authority skills plans for SEND highlight the need for high quality work programmes and many have set targets for the attainment of supported internships and supported apprenticeships.

Nationally the numbers of people with a learning difficulty gaining paid employment has fallen over recent years and sat at around 5% in 2025. At the same time the number of young people being assessed as needing an EHCP has continued to rise. The table below shows the rise nationally and it should be noted that the rate of increase is mirrored in counties across the West Midlands.

EHC plans - to 2023					
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of statements and EHC plans combined	430,697	473,300	517,049	575,963	638,745

The Local Needs Duty

The College meets the needs of its local community and this was confirmed in April of 2023 when Ofsted inspected all aspects of provision, rating High Needs, which is all the full and part time on campus day provision as outstanding. The assessment of meeting the skills needs of its community was also given the highest grade of "strong". These judgements have confirmed that the College is amongst the highest performing specialist colleges in the country. The contributing factors to the highly effective way in which the College meets local need is its robust curriculum planning process which it has maintained for many years. This planning process has at its core the curriculum strategy which is informed by and scrutinised by the Governing body and is based on information and

intelligence gathered from across the region and on feedback from stakeholders. As a result of this now mature process which has by design a review mechanism incorporated within it, further improvements have been made since inspection with regard to meeting the employment and independence needs of the college cohort.

A revised curriculum strategy detailing how local need will be met was presented to the full College Board in March 2025 and revised again in March 2026 to reflect proposed major changes to education and skills described in the Schools White Paper "Every Child Achieving and Thriving" published in Feb. 2026. The strategy was given scrutiny at committee level before submission to the Governing body to ensure compliance with the requirements of The Skills Act (2022) regarding the statutory duty to review how the College it meets local need.

Approach to developing the annual accountability statement

In developing the College Strategic Plan, curriculum strategy and this Accountability Agreement due regard has been given to national and regional economic factors as well as the needs of local authorities. Our main external stakeholder group is comprised of the following:

- Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull Local Authority SEND and social care departments
- Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce
- Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub
- West Midlands Combined Authority
- Regional and National employers

The main College stakeholder is its student body, and each full time student has an Education, Health and Care Plan which sets out their medium and long term goals. Analysis of student need expressed through the EHCP process helps to shape the College curriculum. The College runs an employer forum where senior leaders from a range of employers input to the curriculum and each vocational programme in the College is influenced by employer partners. The College also has a relatively small but significant budget for adult learners which is split between the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Department for Education. The College uses this allocation to focus on the skills needs of the wider SEND community such as those working in care and education settings. In the next section an overview is given of the curriculum offer.

Hospitality

Current Programmes at Hereward:

Hospitality at Entry Level 3, Level 1 and 2
Food preparation and service at Entry Level 1 & 2
Transition to Employment programmes and Supported Internships with the Holiday Inn, Premier Inn and smaller hospitality providers.

Customer Service

Current Programmes at Hereward:

Transition to Employment – Customer Services at Entry Level 3, Levels 1 & 2
Supported Internships at Severn Trent Water, Warwick University, The British Heart Foundation
Business Studies at Entry Level 3, Levels 1, 2 & 3

Communication

Current Programmes at Hereward:

Communication skills are either embedded into all programmes of study and Internships or defined as separate timetabled events. The significance of communication is emphasised in the Hereward Approach, the College places huge emphasis on the importance of developing the communication skills of all learners to equip them for the future. The College uses a range of communication methods to support all learners' needs.

Green Skills

Current Programmes at Hereward:

Horticulture at Entry Level 3 and Level 1
Business at Entry Level 3, Levels 1, 2 & 3
Environmental skills are taught and embedded in programmes at Entry Level 3, Levels 1, 2 & 3 as part of the employability, personal, social development and citizenship curriculum.
Understanding Environmental Sustainability Level 2
Business in Action

Construction, Engineering and manufacturing

Programmes at Hereward:

Construction at Entry Level 3 and as part of the Vocational Studies Offer at Level 1, this programme develops skills in carpentry, tiling, plastering and painting & decorating.

Supported Internships with construction companies.

A manufacturing workshop created and sponsored by SES Manufacturing provides bespoke job focussed skills training at levels 1 and 2

Logistics

Current Programmes at Hereward:

Supported Internships at Evtec and L2 Warehousing distance learning programmes.

Digital

Current Programmes at Hereward:

ICT programmes at Entry Level 3, Levels 1, 2 & 3
Media at Entry Level 3, Levels 1, 2 & 3
Supported Internships at Severn Trent Water, West Midlands Police
Digital skills are taught and embedded in programmes at Entry Level 3, Levels 1, 2 & 3 as part of the Preparing for Adulthood, employability, personal, social development curriculum.

Creative industries

Current Programmes at Hereward:

Art and Design programmes at Entry Level 3, Level 1, 2 & 3
Performing Arts programmes at Entry Level 3, Level 1, 2 & 3
Music programmes at Entry Level 3, Level 1, 2 & 3
Supported Internship

Sport

Current Programmes at Hereward:

Sports programmes at Entry Level 3, Level 1, 2 & 3

Programmes aimed at gaining greater independence

These programmes include Learning for Life and Foundation plus and partially, the Foundation pathway. The College uses the EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan) as the starting point for developing targets for greater independence and works with families, carers and social care professionals to refine the curriculum for each individual.

Programmes aimed at fostering inclusion

Explorer plus and Aspire provide tailored education and support for learners who are vulnerable to becoming NEET (not in education employment or training). The intention is that learners progress for these programmes into the main vocational pathways.

Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities

The West Midlands and Warwickshire (WMW) Local Skills Improvement Plan, LSIP has been created in consultation with over 1000 local employers and it has identified two main cross cutting themes as well as a number of "sector-independent" skills. Sector-independent skills tend to be more general and transferable in nature These are detailed below followed by the College aims and target outcomes for the year ahead in the form of an action plan.

LSIP Cross Cutting themes

- **Green skills**

The low carbon and renewable energy economy, LCREE is a major driver of policy for the region with the LSIP describing the need for business leadership in this area as well as expressing the breadth of organisations that are actively planning to reduce their carbon footprint, Additionally, the importance of green jobs is also emphasised in its broadest sense. The extract below gives an example of how the scope of the work is being considered.

Extract from the LSIP - *The Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP's Priority Sectors Skills Research suggests that there could be as many as 694,000 direct jobs (relating to designing, manufacturing, constructing, operating and maintaining a particular technology or energy source directly) employed in the LCREE by 2030 in England, rising to over 1.18 million by 2050. The contribution to these figures made by the West Midlands is estimated to be a total of 97,000 in 2050, accounting for 8.2% of the total number of Low Carbon jobs in England that will be required in the future.*

The LSIP states that employers have identified that recruitment into the sector is a challenge with not enough new talent entering the workforce and that there is a consensus that a higher volume of broad engineering skills at Levels 2 and 3 is needed but this is reliant on better promotion of STEM careers at an earlier age.

- **Digital skills**

The digital skills agenda has been a significant feature of the regional skills landscape for some time and it now takes a prominent place in the LSIP. The extract below gives an understanding of why such emphasis is being placed on it.

Extract from the LSIP - *The West Midlands lags significantly behind the rest of the UK in basic digital skills. The Essential Digital Skills Survey for 2022, conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of Lloyds Bank found that the West Midlands has a high proportion (15%) of people with Zero of the Essential Digital Skills for Work as defined by the Department for Education Framework (compared to 8% nationally).*

- **Logistics and Distribution**

Logistics and distribution have been highlighted as an emerging and potential priority area with employers highlighting a lack of specific courses for their industry and where they do exist a lack of take up of the courses.

Summary of the LSIP sector-independent skills priorities

- **Strategic Leadership**

As a response to evidence that suggests that many SME and micro businesses are consumed with day-to-day activities and business survival, part of the response articulated in the LSIP is to provide support to improve strategic leadership capabilities. The capabilities are described as those required to ensure that businesses operating in the region are able to plan ahead and secure engagement with skills provision to meet future skills gaps and build talent pipelines. It is also needed in order to ensure that these businesses have the capabilities to overcome challenges and/or maximise opportunities associated with the transition towards net zero and digitisation and the adoption of new technologies.

- **'Essential Skills' and Practical Experience**

Evidence gathered as part of the LSIP creation process indicates that there are difficulties in the region regarding the recruitment of staff with requisite generic and/or "soft" skills. Part of the response to this describes the need for curriculum funding and assessment to recognise the importance of essential skills, including communication, numeracy and digital skills.

Wider considerations

- **Recruiting into Education**

Many skills providers report shortages of teaching and support staff with high levels of technical skills. A response to this challenge is to generate innovative methods of securing a skilled workforce.

- **Identifying the Right Providers**

West Midlands and Warwickshire Local Skills Improvement Plan surveying found that around 74% of regional employers haven't worked with post-16 education and training providers in the last 5 years. Therefore, the LSIP calls for improved strategies to combat this problem.

- **Identifying the Right Means of Delivery**

Some of the feedback from employers described in the LSIP indicates that more work is needed to ensure that training programmes are the correct fit for the organisation and that employers feel less like they are being "sold to" and more like they are being "worked with".

- **Resource needed for collaboration**

Employers report being willing to work with FE providers on innovative solutions but there are barriers of time, cost and knowledge to achieving this on both sides.

Aim/Action	Progress and Impact
LSIP Priority – Strategic Leadership The College will continue to be responsive to the needs of the SEND and Care communities for leadership and management training.	○ A Bespoke training package has been created by the College for hotel managers to assist them to better meet the needs of customers with autism and SEND. Over three hundred managers have taken part in the training nationally including teams from Coventry, Solihull and Birmingham and in 2025 development of hotel managers was taken to the Greater Manchester area and Lincolnshire. ○ The College will continue to lead the College West Midlands forum of SEND provision managers.
LSIP Priority -Education recruitment The College will evolve its approach in this area into two strands which support the technical SEND specialist needs of organisations. 1. The College will work with other FE providers in the region to improve the skills of Health and Social Care graduates entering the world of work using its status as CQC registered home and large SEND provider to give high quality work experience and skills development opportunities. 2. The College will further develop its Adults Budget to target individuals and organisations that require a higher skilled workforce to meet the SEND needs of its client group.	○ The College works effectively with a local apprenticeship provider to develop career development pathways for learning and care staff. Successful placements have been created in the college for former students covering estates and IT. A partnership with a neighbouring college has allowed Health and Social Care graduates the option of work at Hereward with the first successful applicant in 2025 . ○ Enrolment has increased at both level 2 and 3 with many learners opting to improve their knowledge and understanding of how to work with customers and colleagues with autism and special educational needs.
LSIP Priority – Sector independent skills The College will explore new ways of developing the curriculum to maximise the essential skills development of learners with emphasis on the following skills ○ Communication ○ Collaboration ○ Problem solving ○ Innovation ○ Commercialisation	○ Communication skills development continues to be prioritised with the College investing in specialist expertise to enable an integrated speech language therapy model and tailored work with advanced practitioners. ○ Improvements in collaboration, problem solving and innovation have been made with the development of the College's

○ Employability	entrepreneur department and its new purpose built SES Manufacturing sponsored workshop. ○ Major regional and national employers either sponsor or support large areas of the curriculum offer giving learners real experiences in understanding the commercial world and employability e.g. Whitbread have built a fully functioning hotel on the College campus. ○ A new Job Shop facility was opened in 2026 which features the use of specialist employability software, a virtual reality interviewing room and a fully immersive suite to aid transitions.
LSIP Priority -Identifying the Right Providers The College will increase its business-to-business activity over the next year to increase the understanding within the business community of the potential of employees with SEND. This will be achieved via a modification to the already successful employer engagement strategy.	○ The College gained ten new business partnerships since the last accountability statement was published in 2025 and as a result the diversity of work placement offers as increased significantly. ○ The College continues to host a successful employer forum which is used to shape and guide the curriculum offer and which was a major contributory factor to the College gaining the highest possible grade from Ofsted for its contribution to the skills needs of its community.
LSIP Priority - Identifying the Right Means of Delivery The College will meet the expressed needs of businesses who have requested greater collaboration in the designing of work focussed programmes of study. This will be achieved via an increase in the availability of co-designed supported internships. The College is already a sector leader in this area and further development will be made in both numbers of interns and the variety of employers and roles available.	○ Supported internship places have increased for 2026/27 as well as increasing in diversity of placement type. Paid employment rates continue to be high at over 60%. ○ The College led the Colleges West Midlands SEND group and in 2025 continued with the employer awards event hosted by Shoosmiths Solicitors in their prestigious Birmingham conference centre where regional employers received recognition for excellence in SEND employment practice.

Resource for Collaboration The College will work collaboratively with large organisations that are prepared to invest in the development of innovative programmes for young people with SEND and for their workforce.	○ The College created a subsidiary company HTS LTD to work in collaboration with the Uk's largest hospitality provider Whitbread PLC. The collaborative venture has seen the roll out of supported internship places across the Premier Inn hotel estate regionally with seven West Midlands based colleges involved.
LSIP cross cutting theme –Green Skills The College will continue to develop its provision supporting self-employment using the vehicle of a green business model run by students and overseen by the registered charity Friends of Hereward. This pilot programme has inspired learners to develop their own green business plans and has attracted sufficient learners for the programme to continue. In addition, the College will evolve this provision to see how business start-ups can be directly supported for young people with SEND. The College will work with local engineering companies working within the sustainability sector to job carve roles for learners with SEND.	○ The development of entrepreneurs has been successful within the College's Business in Action department. For example, a 2025 graduate has created and took to market an innovative green travel support service for learners with disabilities. Another graduate is now the director of their own sustainable clothes business. ○ A successful partnership with Prism Engineering based in Coventry has allowed Hereward College learners to gain insight into the sustainable construction and engineering model for commercial buildings providing work experience and paid jobs. ○ A cross college Green Committee was created in 2025 and has initiated curriculum development in Business in Action, Horticulture, Construction and Foundation studies all linked to the CWM Green Strategy.
LSIP cross cutting theme – Digital curriculum development The College will continue to invest in developing its Media Suite to ensure that it meets industry standard as well as investing in technology to support the creative curriculum.	○ The College has refurbished its Media Suite, TV Studio, and Music Studio up to industry standards allowing the production of high quality content. ○ The TV Studio now has a high profile sponsor from the work of television allowing learners the opportunity to have experiences of work within the TV industry.

	○ An investment in a comprehensive AI software package was made in 2025. The service is managed within a protective "walled garden" and is allowing staff to safely introduce AI into teaching strategies. ○ Investment in a fully immersive room was made in 2025 and will be integrated into multiple facets of college life through 2026 and 2027.
Local and National SEND needs The College will Increase provision for learners with complex needs requiring an independence curriculum. This will be achieved by developing the physical environment and the training of support staff within its CQC residential home. This will give greater support to the SEND community and the families that support learners and will also allow for an increase in respite. Respite is essential for many families to enjoy a quality of life and be physically and mentally fitter for work and life therefore it is important that this need is met. Additionally, many families have requested further educational support around SEND and associated topics.	○ A new residential respite service in the CQC inspected home is being offered through 2026 and into 2027. ○ New sensory spaces have been created across the campus to meet learner need. A new accommodation strategy has been developed with staff across the organisation creating integrated teaching, learning, and sensory spaces. ○ A further investment in the Arboretum is planned for 2026 to provide a covered outdoor teaching space that is fully accessible together with a comprehensive outdoor learning teaching package for staff.

Corporation Statement

On behalf of the Hereward College corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Corporation at their meeting on 19th of May 2026. The plan will be published on the college's website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed from the following link:

Chair of Governors



George Trow

Dated: 19/05/2026

Principal/Chief Executive and Accounting Officer



Paul Cook

Dated: 19/05/2026