

East Sussex College



Annual Accountability Statement

2025-26



PROUD
POSITIVITY
RESPECT
OPPORTUNITY
UNITY
DIVERSITY

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Introduction

East Sussex College is a progressive and proudly values-driven organisation. We are dedicated to serving our communities in Eastbourne, Lewes, Hastings and Newhaven. Since our formation in 2018, we have worked tirelessly to build trust and improve the quality and clarity of our education and skills, striving for academic and technical excellence. Our ambition is to be recognised as the engine of East Sussex regeneration through academic excellence and ensure our provision aligns with the needs of employers. We are accountable to our communities, and we play a vital role in their success.

Our vision

To empower and sustain our communities through outstanding education and skills development.

Our mission

To provide an outstanding student experience through expert teaching, inspiring facilities and our ambitious partnerships.

Our strategic objectives

Our strategic ambitions build on the principle that everything we do is in the service of our students and our communities. Our students' experience, the opportunities that we enable and focusing on our Student Voice work to shape our college is central to this strategy.

The five ambitions we have identified will drive and shape our students' experience through our curriculum, the development of our staff, our estate, and our position within local communities.

- Curriculum & Skills
- People & Culture
- Reputation & Partnership
- Estates & Digital Transformation
- Resources & Investment

Our campuses across Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes and Newhaven reflect our commitment to serving diverse communities. We offer a broad and inclusive curriculum that directly responds to the skills, knowledge, and behaviours employers seek. As an early adopter of T Levels, we champion parity of esteem with A Levels, equipping young people with the skills needed for rapid career progression. Through strong partnerships with stakeholders, we ensure our students and apprentices are prepared to shape their futures and contribute to the prosperity of our region.

Inclusion and diversity are at the heart of our mission. By embracing every member of our community, we strive to contribute significantly to East Sussex's health and wealth. We are guided by our values of Positivity, Respect, Opportunity, Unity, and Diversity.



Executive Summary

East Sussex College provides an inclusive curriculum, offering vocational, technical, and academic pathways from entry-level to apprenticeships and higher-level diplomas. In the 2023-24 academic year, the college supported 5,485 students aged 16-18, with 17% studying up to Level 1, 33% at Level 2, 49% at Level 3, and approximately 1% at Level 4. T Level numbers increased from 380 in 2023/24 to 454 in 2024-25. The college also serves 1,211 apprentices and over 6,000 adult students in various training programmes. Additionally, there are over 900 higher education (HE) students through partnerships with the University of East Anglia and the University of Brighton. The college also provides 14-16 provision on behalf of the local authority.

The college's review of how well its education and training meet local needs concludes that its offerings is effectively aligned with the Sussex Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) priorities. The curriculum is designed to be both locally responsive and globally relevant, addressing East Sussex's significant socioeconomic disparities, particularly in Hastings, Eastbourne, and Newhaven, among the most deprived areas in the UK.

Key outcomes and achievements from the 2024-25 academic year include:

- **Immersive Technology:** Development of three immersive classrooms, a cross-campus teaching facility, and integration of VR employability tools and soft skills programmes into the curriculum.
- **AI:** Development and delivery of two modules for AI for business governance to both businesses and teaching staff.
- **T Levels:** Noted growth in employer engagement and student numbers by 20%, with new industry partners joining to inform curriculum development.
- **Adult Skills and Employability:** A 65% job success rate for students and partnerships secured with 20 local construction employers.
- **Green Skills:** Further development of the delivery team and a sustainable delivery model, resulting in over 100 students completing programmes.
- **Tutorials:** Develop a new tutorial programme that is differentiated for levels and courses, including key cross-cutting skills.
- **Apprenticeships:** Increased overall achievement rates and the development of new Gas Network operative programmes for a national employer.
- **ESOL:** Successful delivery of phonics, strategic embedding within Pre-entry and Entry 1 classes, and establishing a dedicated ESOL employability course for July 2025.

Specific actions for the 2025-26 academic year to enhance student success and address skills priorities include:

- **Degree Programmes:** Develop, validate, and deliver five degree programmes in engineering, computer and systems development, film production, games, and digital media, starting at least four programmes in 2025-26 with cohorts of 8.
- **AI Training:** Develop an AI teacher and student training course, with a target for all Level 2 & 3 students to complete the AI module and all teachers to be trained in AI for administrative tasks.
- **Immersive and VR Technology:** Develop immersive and VR technology modules integrated into the curriculum and support feed schools for English and Maths,

engaging with at least 10 schools and developing four programmes/modules/sessions.

- **Lewes ESOL Provision:** Develop ESOL provision to support residents in Lewes and surrounding areas. The provision should be two-term and have at least one cohort per term.
- **Skills Bootcamp Provision:** Deliver two cohorts of students per strand (Green skills, Catering) in the academic year 2025-26.
- **Digital Learning Designer Apprenticeship:** Develop and deliver the Digital learning designer apprenticeship to a cohort of 8 for the college and NHS.
- **Micro-credentials:** Develop and launch at least five distinct micro-credential courses for businesses in East Sussex, including Gas qualifications, Paint and panel work, and AI for business, aiming for an initial uptake of 100 business participants in the first year.
- **Retail Employability Provision:** Develop a retail employability provision for East Sussex through SWAPs and for care homes, running a minimum of 4 cohorts across Retail and Care sectors.

The college's self-assessment highlights the importance of continued focus on evolving needs, such as further developing AI and digital skills training, expanding reach to underserved communities, and ensuring ESOL provision continues to support workforce readiness.

Context & Place

East Sussex College is a large general further education college formed in 2018 to serve the communities of East Sussex. With five main campuses in Lewes, Newhaven, Eastbourne and Hastings, we provide an exceptional educational experience, empowering lifelong students to achieve their personal and career goals.



- Eastbourne** - Eastbourne was recently named one of the best seaside towns in England and is where you will find our largest campus, home to several specialist buildings including the construction & engineering workshops, art & photography studios, motor vehicle workshops and dedicated catering & hospitality and hair, beauty & complementary therapies centres.
- Hastings Station Plaza** - Our Station Plaza campus is an impressive five storey building crammed with unique facilities and classroom spaces including hair & beauty salons, a fully equipped gym, a Boeing 747 fuselage replica, the University Centre Hastings and training kitchens that serve Coast Restaurant, which has a 5 star rating on TripAdvisor.
- Hastings Ore Valley** - Our Ore Valley campus is a modern 7,000 square metre building that sees learning come to life, with a realistic working environment on the lower ground floor for live build areas where our bricklaying, carpentry and engineering students learn their trades. Our IMI-accredited Hastings Automotive Training Centre features the latest tools and equipment, providing hands-on training in all aspects of vehicle mechanics.
- Lewes** - Situated in the heart of Lewes town with its eclectic shops and cafes, this campus is home to specialist facilities including state-of-the-art science labs, stunning photography, art & dance studios, sports fields and dedicated hair, beauty & complementary therapies salons. The Creative Skills Studio is an exciting new

innovative partnership with Charleston Lewes, which will deliver work experience opportunities from retail to exhibition curation, inspiring a new generation of creative industry professionals.

- **Newhaven (Marine Workshops)** - We are excited to be delivering brand new marine and creative media production courses at the former UTC@harbourside site in Newhaven (now called the Marine Workshops), located right on the riverside in the revamped marina development.

We offer diverse vocational, technical, and academic pathways, from entry-level qualifications to apprenticeships and higher-level diplomas. In the 2023/24 academic year, we supported:

- 5,485 students aged 16-18. Of these, 17% are studying up to Level 1, 33% at Level 2, 49% at Level 3 and ~1% at Level 4.
- T Level numbers increased from 380 in 23/24 to 454 in 2024-25.
- There are 1,211 apprentices and over 6,000 adult students in various training programmes (including Community Learning, Loans Funded, and Full Cost), the majority of whom are part-time.
- The college offers a range of HE programmes in partnership with the University of East Anglia and the University of Brighton, along with a broad range of Access to HE programmes to support high-level skills development with over 900 higher education (HE) students.
- The college also offers 14-16 provision delivered on behalf of the local authority.

The college works with over 1,000 employers and actively participates in numerous countywide sector-based employer groups, including Skills East Sussex and our local Chambers of Commerce. This engagement shapes our education and skills programmes, ensuring they provide an appropriately skilled workforce, upskill working people, and support re-skilling unemployed adults.

We are a key partner in implementing the East Sussex Economic Recovery Plan, playing a crucial role in place-led regeneration activities such as Town Deals in Hastings and Newhaven, Levelling Up Fund opportunities (particularly Black Robin Farm in Eastbourne), and the Enterprise Zone in Newhaven.

About East Sussex

The economic landscape of East Sussex is diverse, characterised by coastal beauty and historic towns that attract businesses and tourism. East Sussex, as of July 2022-June 2023, had a total population of 546,861, with 313,300 individuals (57.3%) aged between 16-64, forming the core working-age population (Nomis). This proportion is slightly lower than the South East (61.9%) and Great Britain (62.9%), reflecting an ageing population across much of Sussex, with exceptions in areas like Brighton & Hove and Crawley. The LSIP Progress Report (June 2024) highlights that rural regions north of the coast in particular have a significantly ageing workforce. This demographic trend has considerable implications for the future labour supply, the demand for upskilling and reskilling, and the types of services, including education and healthcare, that will be required in the county.

East Sussex has significant economic challenges. As of 2023, Sussex (including Brighton & Hove) was home to 74,325 registered businesses, contributing over £40 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked (ONS 2020, as cited in LSIP Progress Report 2024). However, recent data indicates that net business growth has not fully returned to pre-pandemic levels, with most areas (excluding Hastings) seeing a net decline in business numbers in 2022.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of the East Sussex economy, with 87% of businesses employing fewer than 10 people. This presents both opportunities for tailored skills provision and challenges, as these smaller businesses often face constraints in accessing finance for growth and training. The LSIP Progress Report (June 2024) confirms that accessing finance remains an ongoing challenge for SMEs, potentially limiting job creation. Businesses are increasingly looking towards technology and AI to address long-term recruitment issues.

Major infrastructure projects, such as the proposed Gatwick Airport Northern Runway expansion and the Rampion 2 Offshore Wind Farm, have the potential to significantly impact the regional economy, promising thousands of new jobs in the construction and operational phases. However, these projects will also place considerable pressure on an already strained construction labour market and necessitate targeted skills development strategies, as highlighted in the LSIP.

Labour Market Overview

The East Sussex labour market shows signs of recovery post-pandemic but faces distinct challenges. According to the Nomis Labour Market Profile (data for Jan 2023-Dec 2023 for employment/unemployment figures), the economically active rate for individuals aged 16-64 in East Sussex was 76.9%, lower than the South East (81.6%) and the Great Britain average (78.6%). The employment rate for the same group was 72.1%, also below the regional (78.7%) and national (75.5%) figures. The unemployment rate (as a percentage of economically active individuals aged 16+) stood at 6.2%, higher than the South East (3.5%) and Great Britain (3.8%).

Self-employment is a significant feature of the East Sussex labour market, with 11.4% of those in employment aged 16-64 being self-employed, higher than the South East (9.9%) and Great Britain (9.3%). This reflects the prevalence of small businesses and potentially a more entrepreneurial but less secure employment landscape for a segment of the workforce.

Economic inactivity among the 16-64 age group was 23.1% in East Sussex, higher than in the South East (18.4%) and Great Britain (21.4%). Key reasons for inactivity include being a student (22.3% of inactive), long-term sickness (27.0%), and looking after family/home (17.3%). The LSIP also noted a significant increase in economic inactivity among the 50+ population since the pandemic. The number of workless households in East Sussex (Jan-Dec 2023) was 22,300, representing 13.5% of households, slightly below the Great Britain average of 13.9% but above the South East average of 10.5%.

According to the 2024 LSIP employer survey, employers in Sussex report that key challenges include finding people with the right skills (both technical and employability) and the cost of training.

Workforce Qualifications & Skills

The qualification profile of the East Sussex workforce presents a mixed picture with areas for significant development. According to the Nomis Labour Market Profile (Jan 2023-Dec 2023), 61.0% of residents aged 16-64 in East Sussex held NVQ Level 3 or higher qualifications. This is lower than the South East (67.6%) and Great Britain (64.0%). The data also shows that 41.3% of residents aged 16-64 had NVQ Level 4 and above, compared to 47.7% in the South East and 43.6% in Great Britain. Conversely, 8.7% had no qualifications, higher than the South East (5.6%) and Great Britain (6.6%). Those with NVQ Level 2 and above stood at 70.0%, below the South East (76.9%) and Great Britain (74.8%). These figures underscore the skills gap that East Sussex College is positioned to address.

The "Economic update May 2024 - East Sussex in Figures" provided a specific local insight, noting that within East Sussex, Lewes district had the highest percentage of the working-age population with Level 4 or above qualifications at 37.4%. National Census 2021 data for England and Wales showed that 42% of workers or jobseekers held higher education qualifications (Level 4+), with significant regional variations. Coastal towns nationally often struggle to attract and retain a highly qualified workforce, a trend relevant to East Sussex.

The LSIP identifies key sectors with significant skills needs and emphasizes the importance of digital skills, skills for the green economy (Net Zero), and essential employability/transferable skills across all sectors.

Deprivation

East Sussex experiences significant socio-economic disparities, with relative multiple deprivation rising in the county since 2015 (IMD 2019). While the county has a lower proportion of its small areas (LSOAs) in the most and least deprived national deciles compared to the England average, there are concentrated pockets of severe deprivation, particularly in its coastal urban areas.

According to the IMD 2019, 22 out of East Sussex's 329 LSOAs (6.7%) were in the most deprived 10% nationally, an increase from 19 LSOAs (5.8%) in 2015. Over 37,000 people (7% of the country's population) live in these most deprived areas. Income deprivation affects 12% of people in East Sussex, higher than regional and national averages, and 10% of the working-age population experience employment deprivation, again higher than the regional average.

All 22 of the county's most deprived LSOAs are located in urban areas, highlighting a stark urban-rural divide in terms of multiple deprivation. However, rural areas face their own challenges, particularly concerning barriers to housing, services, and living environments.

Hastings

Hastings faces the most significant deprivation challenges in East Sussex and ranks as the most deprived lower-tier local authority in the South East (IMD 2019). A staggering 30% of its neighbourhoods (16 out of 53 LSOAs) fall within the most deprived 10% nationally, with two LSOAs (in Baird and Tressell wards) among England's most deprived 1%. Furthermore, 43% of LSOAs in Hastings are in the most deprived, 20% nationally. This deep-seated deprivation has profound implications for educational attainment, aspiration, and the skills profile of the local workforce. The town's most deprived LSOA, Hastings 005A (Baird ward), remains critically deprived while showing some relative improvement in national ranking since 2015 (ranked 147th out of 32,844 nationally in IMD 2019). Central St Leonards is a ward where all its LSOAs fall into the most deprived national decile.

The concentration of deprivation in Hastings correlates with lower qualification levels and higher unemployment. Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions, accessible learning opportunities, and strong partnerships to connect residents with skills development pathways leading to sustainable employment.

Eastbourne

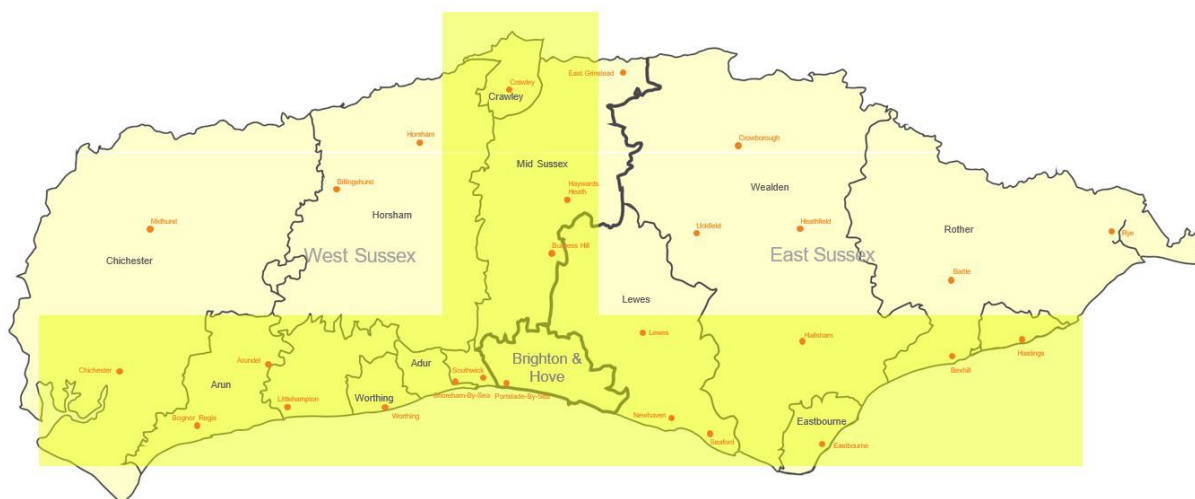
Eastbourne also presents a picture of rising relative deprivation. According to IMD 2019, 4 of its LSOAs (6.6%) are in the most deprived 10% nationally, an increase from 2 in 2015. The most deprived LSOA is Eastbourne 004A in Hampden Park ward (ranked 2,352 nationally). Twelve LSOAs in Eastbourne are now among the most deprived, 20% nationally. The town's overall deprivation ranking has worsened since 2015. These statistics underscore the need for skills provision to support economic resilience and social mobility for residents in deprived areas.

Lewes (including Newhaven)

Lewes district, which includes the town of Newhaven, presents a more mixed socio-economic profile compared to Hastings and Eastbourne. Overall, Lewes district ranks less deprived, yet it has slightly increased relative deprivation since 2015 (IMD 2019). While no LSOAs in Lewes district fall into the most deprived 10% nationally, two neighbourhoods are now in the most deprived 20%: Lewes 009B in Newhaven Valley (ranked 5,223) and Lewes 003E in Lewes Castle ward (ranked 5,932). This indicates pockets of deprivation exist even within generally more affluent areas. Conversely, Lewes district also has six LSOAs in the least deprived 10% nationally.

Meeting National, Regional & Local Needs

The Future Skills Sussex Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) offers a comprehensive analysis of the Sussex area's economic and social characteristics. As the employer representative body, the Sussex Chamber of Commerce oversees this crucial report. Access it [here](#).



The Greater Sussex area runs from Gatwick Airport south to Brighton – the two areas of Sussex with the greatest concentration of skilled jobs – and along the entire Sussex coastal strip, described as an inverted T. This area presents a unique economic landscape within a compact space, with the more buoyant economies of the area around Gatwick and Brighton contrasting with the less economically or socially advantaged areas found in some of Sussex's coastal towns. This is a compact, functional economic area, with natural travel to work patterns to Gatwick Airport and Brighton. The area encompasses Sussex's larger settlements and contains the greatest concentration of employers and providers. The area outside the inverted T is mainly rural and dominated by the land-based sector, which is one of the LSIP sectors of focus to draw in needs from these rural communities. There are issues in accessing skills and education across rural communities and this has been recognised in the recommended Framework.

The LSIP area comprises:

- 75,560 registered businesses, 79.7% of all Sussex businesses, producing over £35Bn GVA.
- 1,035,741 working age population.
- Three Local Authorities (LAs), two County Councils and one Unitary Authority.
- Two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).
- 7 FE and three HE institutions and two Institutes of Technology.
- Sussex Council of Training Providers, representing 90 Independent Training Providers (ITPs), FE and HE institutions.

Key Sectors (Future Skills Sussex LSIP Priorities)

The Future Skills Sussex LSIP (Progress Report June 2024) identifies seven priority sectors where skills are in greatest demand across Sussex, including East Sussex. These are crucial for aligning education and training provision with employer needs:

1. **Construction:** Facing increased demand from major infrastructure projects and general housing needs.
2. **Creative & Cultural:** A diverse sector with growing digital components.
3. **Digital:** Underpinning all sectors, with specific needs for tech skills.
4. **Engineering & Manufacturing:** Requiring technical skills and addressing an ageing workforce in leadership.
5. **Health & Care (including Bio Life Sciences & Pharmaceutical):** A major employer with persistent skills shortages and growing demand due to demographics.
6. **Land-based (including Horticulture & Viticulture):** Important for the rural economy and with emerging needs related to Net Zero.
7. **Visitor & Hospitality:** A key sector for the coastal economy, requiring customer service and management skills.

Cross-cutting themes also prioritized include **digital skills** for all, skills supporting **Net Zero targets** and climate change adaptation, and **employability/transferable skills** essential for all sectors.

Approach to Developing the Plan

East Sussex College Group's strategic planning is a collaborative process, incorporating rigorous self-assessment, input from diverse stakeholders (including government, community, education, and industry), along with data and research insights. Our Employer Exchange initiative is central, ensuring employer needs directly shape our curriculum. This multifaceted approach ensures our offerings align with evolving workforce demands.

We are a committed strategic partner, actively collaborating across East Sussex to meet regional needs. Our extensive partnerships with organisations across diverse sectors are crucial for achieving our strategic objectives. College leaders contribute to decision-making bodies at the local, regional, and national levels. Key partners include:

- East Sussex County Council
- Lewes District Council
- Eastbourne Borough Council
- Hastings Borough Council
- Wealden District Council
- Rother District Council
- Brighton & Hove City Council
- Jobcentre Plus and DWP
- Coast to Capital LEP
- South East LEP
- Newhaven Enterprise Zone
- Sussex Chamber of Commerce, LSIP and LSIF
- NHS Sussex
- Sussex Police
- Employer Exchange breakfasts
- FE Sussex

Engagement with Schools

East Sussex College maintains a strong collaborative relationship with secondary schools across the county to ensure our curriculum aligns with local needs. This includes offering vocational programmes for 14-16-year-olds as a path to full-time technical and professional education. Our school engagement activities encompass mentoring GCSE students, providing careers support, and facilitating taster sessions to empower informed decision-making. We partner with a diverse range of schools, including 11-16 comprehensives, those with sixth forms, and dedicated sixth-form colleges. These partnerships foster progression agreements and complementary curriculum development, alongside effective information, advice, and guidance aligned with Gatsby expectations. Our robust school liaison supports smooth transitions and progression, and we work closely with schools and local authorities to offer a successful 14-16 alternative provision.

Engagement with Other Providers in the Area

East Sussex College actively collaborates with other educational providers in the region to ensure a comprehensive and accessible educational landscape for students. As a member of the FE Sussex consortium (comprising all Sussex colleges and Sixth forms), we actively contribute to shaping the Sussex Local Skills Improvement Plan led by the Sussex Chambers of Commerce ERB. Our participation in the LSIF delivery demonstrates our commitment to collaboration. This partnership between Sussex's four Sixth Form and three General Further Education colleges has resulted in innovative initiatives including the development of cross campus teaching facilities, the landed Job app for students and the development of VR soft skills programmes delivered to over 3,000 students.

Contribution to National, Regional & Local Priorities

Our curriculum is designed to meet the unique needs of East Sussex and neighbouring counties while preparing students for a globalised economy. With a population of 550,000 and an economic output of over £9 billion, East Sussex is a county of opportunity, yet it faces significant socioeconomic disparities, particularly in Hastings, Eastbourne, and Newhaven, which rank among the most deprived areas in the UK. To address these challenges, we have created a curriculum that is both locally responsive and globally relevant.

Our Curriculum

We aim to empower students to reach their full potential and leave with their ambitions fuelled. We will support the prosperity and innovation of our region by offering a wide range of vocational, technical, and academic pathways, from entry-level qualifications to apprenticeships and higher level diplomas. Embedded within every college programme are the following core entitlements:

- Careers Education
- Digital Licence
- Entrepreneurial Acumen
- Literacy, Numeracy, and Fluency
- Green Skills Integration
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We work closely with local employers in sectors such as retail, creative industries, public services, and small businesses (90.2% of which employ fewer than 10 people), aligning our training with the skills needed in the regional job market.

East Sussex College is deeply committed to inclusivity and comprehensive support, offering extensive provisions for young people and adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), thereby promoting a culture where everyone feels valued and fostering a strong sense of belonging for students from all backgrounds. Furthermore, our dedication to excellence is demonstrated through continuous innovation, embedding cutting-edge technologies and flexible learning models into our curriculum to ensure our students are equipped with transferable skills that support lifelong learning and adaptability in a rapidly changing world, preparing them to succeed in both local and international markets.

Achievements

In the 2024-2025 academic year, we achieved significant progress towards our targets, demonstrating our commitment to addressing skills priorities and fostering a thriving workforce in East Sussex. These included:

- Immersive Technology – We have developed three immersive classrooms, a cross-campus teaching facility, and a suite of VR employability tools and soft skills programmes integrated into the college curriculum.
- AI – We have developed two modules for AI for business governance that have been delivered to business and teaching staff.
- T Level - We've seen notable growth in employer engagement and student numbers by 20%. Organisations such as Lewes FC, Raquet, and Charleston have joined as industry partners, contributing to meaningful employer exchanges. These sessions

have surfaced key skills gaps, which we are now actively integrating into tutorials and KSB (Knowledge, Skills, Behaviours) planning.

- Adult Skills and Employability – We have achieved a 65% job success rate for students and secured partnerships with 20 local construction employers interested in hiring or upskilling their existing workforce.
- Green Skills – We have further developed our delivery team for green skills and retrofit skills to secure a sustainable green skills delivery model, both commercial and funded, that has resulted in over 100 students completing programmes.
- Tutorials – We have developed a new tutorial programme that is differentiated for levels and courses and includes key cross-cutting skills for students to develop their skills for their next steps.
- Apprenticeships – We increased our overall achievement rate for apprenticeships, achieved an Ofsted good grade, and developed new Gas Network operative programmes for a national employer.
- ESOL - Phonics was delivered for the first time in 2024-25 in terms 1 & 2 (EBN). The strategy shifted to embedding within Pre-entry and Entry 1 classes rather than as discrete classes (EBN & HST). An ESOL Employability course has been set up for July 2025. All campuses have employability notice boards to display employability short courses as well as local job opportunities, inspirational posters and external talks.

The table below outlines objectives for the 2025-2026 academic year, which are designed to enhance student success, address local and national skills priorities, and develop a skilled, innovative workforce in East Sussex.

Objective	Target	Action	Contribution to National & Local Priorities
Develop, validate, and deliver five-degree programmes in engineering, computer and systems development, film production, games, and digital media.	Start at least four programmes in the 2025-26 academic year with cohorts of 8.	<p>Market Research: Conduct a thorough analysis of regional demand, employer needs (via LSIPs and employer engagement), and student interest to finalise programme offerings.</p> <p>Curriculum Development: Design industry-relevant curriculum for each degree, collaborating with industry experts and potential awarding university partners.</p> <p>Validation Process: Secure validation and accreditation for the programmes through UEA.</p> <p>Recruitment Strategy: Develop targeted marketing and recruitment campaigns to attract students and specialist teaching staff for niche degree areas.</p> <p>Industry Links: Build strong partnerships with businesses in the relevant sectors to ensure curriculum relevance, provide guest lectures, and explore work placement opportunities.</p>	<p>Addresses identified higher-level skills gaps in key growth sectors within Sussex and nationally, supporting economic development.</p> <p>Provides accessible local pathways to higher education and skilled employment, reducing brain drain.</p> <p>Supports the growth and innovation of local industries by providing a pipeline of qualified graduates.</p> <p>This aligns with the government's focus on expanding higher technical education.</p>
Develop an AI teacher and Student training course to be delivered as CPD and in Tutorial.	All level 2&3 students complete the AI module. All teachers are trained in AI to help with administrative tasks.	<p>Course Design: Develop differentiated course content for students (focus on AI literacy, tools, ethical considerations) and staff (focus on AI for productivity, teaching support, and administrative tasks).</p> <p>Resource Development: Create accessible training materials, tutorials, and practical exercises that can be embedded within existing tutorial structures and CPD sessions.</p>	<p>Support national and local initiatives to equip the workforce with future-ready skills in areas like AI.</p> <p>Promotes digital literacy, opens new opportunities for</p>

Objective	Target	Action	Contribution to National & Local Priorities
		<p>Training Delivery: Schedule and deliver mandatory training sessions for all relevant teaching staff and integrate the student module into the standard Level 2 & 3 tutorial programme.</p> <p>Support and Resources: Provide ongoing technical support and updated resources for staff and students using AI tools.</p>	<p>individuals and businesses, and develops innovation.</p> <p>Strengthens partnerships with industry and community stakeholders.</p>
<p>Develop immersive and VR technology modules integrated into the curriculum and support our feed schools for English and Maths.</p>	<p>Engage with at least 10 schools to facilitate English and Math transition.</p> <p>Develop four programmes (modules/sessions).</p>	<p>Technology Procurement & Setup: Secure necessary VR/immersive hardware and software licenses; set up dedicated spaces or mobile units.</p> <p>Content Curation/Development: Identify or develop VR/immersive content specifically designed to support English and Maths learning, focusing on engaging and experiential activities.</p> <p>Curriculum Mapping: Map how immersive modules align with and enhance the existing English and Maths curriculum for college students and feed schools.</p> <p>Staff Training: Train college staff on using the immersive technology and integrating the modules into their teaching practices.</p> <p>School Outreach: Develop a plan to engage with target feed schools, showcase the technology, and schedule sessions for their students to experience the English/Maths modules.</p>	<p>This aligns with the growing emphasis on integrating cutting-edge technologies into teaching.</p> <p>Prepares students and trainees for emerging technological trends, like VR, that are transforming workplaces.</p> <p>Emphasises soft skills development, which is crucial for success in the modern workforce.</p> <p>Supports improved foundational skills (English & Maths), critical for employability and progression.</p> <p>Facilitates smoother transition for school students into further education.</p>

Objective	Target	Action	Contribution to National & Local Priorities
Develop a Lewes ESOL provision to support residents in Lewes and surrounding areas.	Develop a two-term model with at least one cohort per term.	<p>Needs Assessment: Research the specific ESOL needs and levels of potential students in the Lewes catchment area.</p> <p>Curriculum Expansion: Develop and launch new ESOL courses tailored to the needs identified, potentially including pathways linked to employment or further study.</p> <p>Stakeholder Engagement: Collaborate with community groups, local councils, charities, and potential employers in Lewes to promote the provision and identify students.</p> <p>Outreach and Promotion: Actively promote the new Lewes ESOL provision to potential participants through local channels.</p> <p>Increase job opportunities: Integrate employability themes and signposting into the ESOL curriculum where appropriate.</p>	<p>Aligns with broader efforts to improve workforce readiness and increase employability across demographics.</p> <p>Supports the development of a diverse and skilled workforce within the Sussex region.</p> <p>Promotes opportunities for ESOL students, supporting a more inclusive and equitable society by improving language skills essential for daily life and work.</p> <p>Addresses community needs by providing accessible local education.</p>
Develop Skills Bootcamp provision for Green skills and Catering supporting LSIP priorities.	Deliver two cohorts of students per strand (Green skills, Catering) in the academic year 2025-26.	<p>LSIP & Employer Consultation: Engage with LSIP stakeholders and employers in the green skills (e.g., retrofit, renewables) and catering sectors to identify the skills most in demand for boot camps.</p> <p>Curriculum Design: Design intensive, short-duration boot camp curricula focused on practical skills directly relevant to employer needs in each sector.</p> <p>Funding Application/Management: Secure necessary funding, likely from the Department for Education via competitive tenders or existing frameworks.</p>	<p>Directly addresses critical skills gaps identified by the LSIP in priority sectors (Green economy, Hospitality/Catering).</p> <p>Provides fast-track training opportunities to reskill and upskill individuals, boosting employability.</p> <p>Supports local businesses by providing a pipeline of workers with relevant skills.</p>

Objective	Target	Action	Contribution to National & Local Priorities
		<p>Student Recruitment: Develop targeted recruitment campaigns to attract students interested in rapid training and employment in these sectors.</p> <p>Employer Partnerships: Establish strong links with employers for guaranteed interviews, work placements, and potential job outcomes for boot camp graduates.</p> <p>Programme Delivery: Deliver high-quality training with experienced instructors and appropriate facilities.</p>	<p>Contributes to national goals around net zero and building a green workforce (Green skills).</p> <p>Supports the recovery and growth of the hospitality sector.</p>
Develop and deliver the Digital learning designer apprenticeship.	Design and deliver to a cohort of 8 for the college and NHS.	<p>Standard: Utilise the approved Digital Learning Designer apprenticeship standard to structure the programme.</p> <p>Curriculum Development: Develop the curriculum and resources required to deliver the on-programme training components of the apprenticeship.</p> <p>Partnership Agreement: Formalise partnership agreements with the NHS and internal college departments for apprentice placements and support.</p> <p>Student & Employer Recruitment: Recruit apprentices internally (college staff) and externally (NHS staff); onboard participating departments/employers.</p> <p>Delivery & Assessment: Deliver apprenticeship training, support apprentices and employers, and manage the end-point assessment process.</p>	<p>This supports the government's focus on expanding apprenticeships and addressing skills shortages.</p> <p>Directly addresses skills gaps and workforce development needs identified within the Sussex Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), specifically in digital and training roles.</p> <p>Ensures apprenticeships meet the needs of local businesses (including the public sector like NHS), enhancing graduate employability and supporting a vibrant regional economy.</p> <p>Develops crucial internal capacity (for the college) in</p>

Objective	Target	Action	Contribution to National & Local Priorities
			designing effective digital learning.
Develop micro-credentials courses for businesses in East Sussex, including Gas qualifications, Paint and panel work, and AI for business.	Develop and launch at least five distinct micro-credential courses within the next 18 months. Achieve an initial uptake of 100 business participants across the launched courses in the first year of operation.	<p>Business Needs Analysis: Consult directly with companies in East Sussex (e.g., via the Employer Exchange and sector networks) to pinpoint precise micro-skill needs and preferred delivery formats.</p> <p>Course Design: Design short, focused, practical courses for each identified area (Gas, Paint/Panel, AI for Business, etc.), ensuring alignment with relevant industry standards or certifications (e.g., Gas Safe).</p> <p>Accreditation/Certification: Where applicable, seek necessary accreditation or develop college-recognised certificates for course completion.</p> <p>Marketing to Businesses: Develop a targeted marketing strategy to inform East Sussex businesses about the available micro-credentials and their benefits for upskilling staff.</p> <p>Flexible Delivery: Plan for flexible delivery methods (e.g., evenings, weekends, on-site at businesses) to suit the needs of busy professionals.</p>	<p>Provides flexible, targeted upskilling opportunities directly addressing local businesses' specific, immediate skills needs in key sectors (Construction/Trades, Automotive, Technology). It supports business innovation and competitiveness by enabling the rapid acquisition of new skills (e.g., AI). Enhances the responsiveness of the local workforce to technological changes and industry demands. Contributes to increased productivity and growth within East Sussex businesses.</p>
Develop a retail employability provision for East Sussex through SWAPS and for Care homes.	Run a minimum of 4 cohorts for this provision (across Retail and Care sectors).	<p>Employer Engagement: Build strong relationships with retail businesses and care home providers in East Sussex to understand their entry-level staffing needs and training requirements.</p> <p>Programme Design: Design structured employability programmes, ideally aligned with the Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) model where feasible,</p>	<p>Addresses workforce shortages in crucial local sectors (Retail and Care), supporting essential services and businesses. It provides direct pathways to employment for individuals,</p>

Objective	Target	Action	Contribution to National & Local Priorities
		<p>combining pre-employment training, work experience, and a guaranteed job interview.</p> <p>Recruitment & Selection: Develop effective strategies to recruit unemployed or underemployed individuals interested in working in retail or care, potentially targeting specific demographics or areas with high unemployment.</p> <p>Work Placement Facilitation: Organise and support work placements within participating retail stores and care homes.</p> <p>Employability Skills Training: Deliver training covering essential skills like customer service, communication, teamwork, interview preparation, and sector-specific basics (e.g., health and safety in care).</p> <p>Job Brokerage: Actively work to facilitate interviews and employment opportunities for participants upon completion.</p>	<p>reduces unemployment, and supports economic inclusion.</p> <p>Aligns with government initiatives focused on getting people into work and developing sector-specific skills.</p> <p>Supports the care sector, which is a significant local and national priority due to demographic changes.</p> <p>Enhances the skills and readiness of the local workforce for service-based roles.</p>

Local Needs Self-Assessment

This review, conducted under the Local Needs Duty, confirms that East Sussex College's curriculum offerings are robustly aligned with the priorities outlined in the Sussex Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and are designed to meet the unique needs of East Sussex and neighbouring counties while preparing students for a globalised economy. Recognising East Sussex's significant socio-economic disparities despite its substantial economic output, our curriculum is crafted to be both locally responsive and globally relevant, empowering students from all backgrounds to reach their full potential and fuel their ambitions. We offer a wide spectrum of vocational, technical, and academic pathways, from entry-level to apprenticeships and higher-level diplomas, all designed to support the prosperity and innovation of our region.

Embedded within every college programme are core entitlements aimed at holistic student development: Careers Education, a Digital Licence, Entrepreneurial Acumen, enhanced Literacy, Numeracy, and Fluency, Green Skills Integration, and a focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging. We work in close collaboration with local employers across key sectors such as retail, creative industries, public services, and the dominant small business sector, ensuring our training directly aligns with the skills required in the regional job market and facilitates invaluable employer exchanges that inform curriculum development.

East Sussex College is deeply committed to inclusivity and comprehensive support, offering extensive provisions for young people and adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), thereby promoting a culture where everyone feels valued and fostering a strong sense of belonging for students from all backgrounds. Furthermore, our dedication to excellence is demonstrated through continuous innovation, embedding cutting-edge technologies and flexible learning models into our curriculum to ensure our students are equipped with transferable skills that support lifelong learning and adaptability in a rapidly changing world, preparing them to succeed in both local and international markets.

The 2024-25 academic year saw significant progress that clearly demonstrates our commitment to addressing skills priorities and developing a thriving workforce in East Sussex. We successfully developed three immersive classrooms, implemented a cross-campus teaching facility, and integrated a suite of VR employability tools and soft skills programmes into the college curriculum, enhancing learning technologies. In the field of AI, we developed and delivered two modules focused on AI for governance to both businesses and teaching staff, building crucial digital literacy. Our T Level provision saw good growth, with a 20% increase student numbers, and welcomed new industry partners like Lewes FC, Raquet, and Charleston, whose input from meaningful employer exchanges is now being actively integrated into tutorials and KSB planning. Adult Skills and Employability programmes achieved a strong 65% job success rate for students, and we secured partnerships with 20 local construction employers interested in hiring or upskilling their workforce. In Green Skills, we further developed our delivery team, establishing a sustainable commercial and funded delivery model that resulted in over 100 students completing programmes, directly addressing environmental priorities. We developed a new tutorial programme differentiated for levels and courses, specifically designed to embed key cross-

cutting skills crucial for students' progression. Our apprenticeship offerings saw an increase in overall achievement rates, contributed to the college achieving an Ofsted 'Good' grade, and included the development of new Gas Network operative programmes for a national employer. Finally, our ESOL provision successfully delivered Phonics for the first time in 2024-25, strategically embedding it within Pre-entry and Entry 1 classes, set up a dedicated ESOL Employability course for July 2025, and established employability notice boards across campuses to promote short courses, local jobs, and inspirational content.

These achievements underscore our ongoing efforts to align with the LSIP and meet local demands. While celebrating this progress, our self-assessment highlights the importance of continued focus on evolving needs, such as further developing AI and digital skills training, expanding our reach to underserved communities, and ensuring our ESOL provision continues to support workforce readiness. Our established action plan reflects our commitment to continuous review and adaptation, ensuring East Sussex College remains a vital contributor to the region's skilled workforce, social mobility, and economic prosperity.

Governing Board statement

On behalf of the East Sussex College Governing Board, it is hereby confirmed that this document reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives, and fulfils the statutory Local Needs Duty, as approved by the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee on behalf of the Governing Board, at its meeting on 21 May 2025.

Chair of Governing Board:

Can Melrose

Date: 21/5/25

Principal & CEO:

R Conroy

Date: 21/5/25

This Accountability Statement is published on the college's website [here](#).

Relevant supporting documentation

[SELEP Skills Strategy](#)

[Future Skills Sussex LSIP reports](#)

[Strategic Plan 2025-28](#)

[Financial Statements](#)

[Ofsted inspection report 2025](#)

[Federation of Small Businesses *Scaling-Up-Skills* report](#)