



YOUR FUTURE OUR FOCUS

A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR
THE SANDWELL COLLEGES
2025-28



Lisa Capper MBE



The Sandwell Colleges play a vital role in working with employers and stakeholders to drive up productivity and to generate a pipeline of skilled and professional people to work across the West Midlands region. We are an ambitious organisation with a focus on progression and success for learners, employers, our colleagues and stakeholders.

CEO FOREWORD

A very warm welcome to our Colleges and to ‘Your Future Our Focus’, our bold new strategic plan to mark the next stage of our journey to 2028. I am delighted to present our collective vision anchored in creating local and regional impact, enabling social mobility and contributing to the well-being and prosperity of our learners and local communities.

Our Colleges and Learning Campuses pride themselves on putting the learner at the heart of all we do. Our ethos of ‘we never give up’ shines through with our colleagues and the roles they fulfil. We are ‘One Team’. Our talented and professional teams work together to deliver an excellent standard of academic education and inspired skills training across the full range of levels to Level 5. This is strengthened by our powerful partnerships with employers which enables immersion into real-world opportunities and a curriculum that is enriched and vibrant.

The progression of learners, no matter what their background, whether young person, adult or apprentice, to employment, university, further training and apprenticeships is our main focus. Our partnerships with universities support pathways to higher level skills.

At a time when there is both significant challenge and opportunity in our regional and national economies and infrastructure, our local offer, enhanced through partnerships and future-focused education and skills, is more important than ever. Our commitment to Lifelong Learning will be transformational in Sandwell and will help tackle inequalities, offer improved opportunity for life and work, and drive-up meaningful employment.

Our strategy showcases the benefits and impact of industry standard facilities and specialist teaching through our Skills Hubs and Learning Campuses whether that is for A Level such as our STEM specialisms, for T Level in Health and Engineering, or for our wide ranging technical and vocational programmes. Our innovative partnership with the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital will be a game-changer for helping to address skills needs in the NHS and the health and social care sector.

We have set out how we will work in tandem with the strategic aims of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Birmingham City Council and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and help deliver the Mayor’s Youth Plan and ‘West Midlands Futures’.

Our learners are regularly engaged in speaking about, and sharing, their progression and experiences with our stakeholders and partners. They do this with infectious passion and pride.

We are excited for the future and hope you feel inspired to join us in delivering this strategy.

Lisa Capper MBE
CEO & Principal

**SANDWELL
COLLEGE**

Central
Saint Michael's
Sixth Form

cadbury sixth
form college

Tomorrow's
People

CHAIR FOREWORD

We are a vibrant set of Colleges and Campuses focused on the progression of all learners, boosting business and supporting our local communities and economy to thrive.

It is with great pride that I introduce our new strategic plan ‘Your Future Our Focus’. I have been connected to Sandwell College for over 17 years and in that time the College has seen significant growth and expansion. There has never been a better time for our Colleges to develop further through partnerships and collaboration with employers and stakeholders to extend their impact and reach.

Our learners are at the heart of business. Our new strategic plan sets out how we will continue to invest in our learners, creating the best learning environment, excellent teaching and training, and industry standard facilities where our learners can prosper.

Through our new Campuses, with co-investment from the Towns Fund, WMCA and Department of Education(DfE), we are developing much needed facilities such as the Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering and STEM Centre, a Learning Campus at the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, our Cradley Heath Skills Campus and specialist Skills Hubs. With these additional facilities we can offer even more local and relevant programmes to prepare our young people and adults for the world of work and enhance their life experiences.

We are an Anchor organisation for community inclusion and skills growth. We want to play our part as the largest college in the West Midlands to ensure that we are focused on the skills needed for now and the future. Our role in Sandwell is critical to meeting the targets for some of the stubborn indicators on lack of qualifications at higher levels aged 19, employment, health inequality and poverty and we will continue to make similar contributions in Birmingham and across the Black Country. Improving local skills will strengthen business and industry, help fill vacancies and support some of the large infrastructure projects across the region, whilst affording opportunity to those who need it most.

The Governing Body, and our new Chair Designate Anne Frost, are committed and excited to launch this strategy and the future prospects for our learners that it will bring.

Please do join us on our journey - ‘Your Future Our Focus’.



John Tew
Chair of Governors



Anne Frost
Chair Designate
(Chair from August 1st 2025)



OUR FUTURE FOCUSED MISSION AND VISION

MISSION

**Achieving Ambitions.
Progressing Further.**

Achieving excellent outcomes
for all learners ensuring
successful futures for everyone.

VISION

The Sandwell Colleges are recognised as leading and transformative colleges in the heart of Sandwell, Greater Birmingham and the West Midlands. Our education and skills training changes lives. It has tangible and lasting impact on individual learners, communities, places and regional prosperity. We are driven by incredible people who work as One Team. We never give up. We are creating brighter and successful futures every day.

OUR KEY AMBITIONS AND 5 STRATEGIC PILLARS

ALWAYS AMBITIOUS FOR OUR LEARNERS

Work towards
100% progression
of learners in all our
Colleges to positive
choices, higher-level
skills and successful
careers.

FUTURE FOCUSED CAREERS AND SKILLS

Engage local and West Midlands employers in co-creating industry standard curriculum, teaching and learning that provides a pipeline of skills for now and for the future. Grow our Skills Hubs and Learning Campuses in sector priority areas such as Health and Social Care, Engineering, Construction and Digital.

POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Create powerful partnerships with civic, community, employer and education partners that deliver tangible impact for our learners and support growth and reach of our provision in Sandwell, Birmingham and the West Midlands.

EMPOWER OUR PEOPLE

Empower our teams; invest in our 'Sandwellness' well-being plan; grow professionally; deliver and enjoy our impact and success as One Team.

FINANCIAL RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE COLLEGES

Strengthen our business model and strategic resilience (financial, digital, estates) to ensure ongoing success and relevance to communities and skills. Expand market share and income (16-18, adult, apprenticeships), develop the estate, and pursue net zero by 2030.

OUR VALUES

We listen to every voice, we support and challenge, we collaborate, inspire and celebrate. We break down barriers. We never give up on our learners.

We **CARE**



CONNECT AND COLLABORATE

Together is better. We form strong, effective and thoughtful connections enabling and maximising collective impact.



AMBITIOUS

We aim high, work hard and focus on our goals. We are aspirational, committed to realising the maximum potential of ourselves and others.



RESPECT

We take time to listen and celebrate our rich diversity. We are considerate, inclusive and we take pride in all we do. We take responsibility for our actions.



EMPOWER

We nurture and support, and we are determined and strong. We encourage each other to be inspiring, resilient and bold. We create opportunities for change and growth, enabling ownership, trust, and lasting impact.

The mnemonic CARE was developed by our learners, colleagues and governors.

MORE THAN A COLLEGE

Navjot Kaur

Deputy Campus Principal at Central Saint Michael's Sixth Form



MORE THAN A LEADERSHIP ROLE

I enjoy leading change that transforms lives through collaboration, innovation, and a student first approach. Success is when ambition becomes action - learners succeed, staff feel empowered, and our collective vision is clearly reflected in outcomes and the culture of our Colleges.



Kieran Poole

Foundation Learning Lecturer at Sandwell College



MORE THAN JUST TEACHING

Sandwell College is an exciting and vibrant place to work. In my role, I find fulfilment in guiding students through their educational path. Success is when they leave with the confidence, skills, and knowledge to tackle future challenges and thrive in their personal and professional lives.



Khulud Khalif

Deputy Student President at Cadbury Sixth Form College



MORE THAN I IMAGINED

Cadbury Sixth Form College has helped me become the person I am. I found my passion for electronics, something I never thought I'd enjoy. It has helped me grow and develop my confidence through opportunities such as being the Vice President of the Student Union and being a work experience ambassador.



Siân Whitehouse

Additional Learning Support Manager and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead at Cadbury Sixth Form College



MORE THAN A JOB

What I love most about my role is being able to support students to realise they're more capable than they ever believed. Success is knowing they leave us not just with qualifications, but with a stronger sense of self and belief in their future.



Anmoldeep Daulke

Student Union President at Sandwell College



MORE THAN I HOPED FOR

College has given me incredible opportunities, from becoming Student Union President to studying T Level Health. I've built confidence through presenting at events and working in multidisciplinary teams during hospital placements. I have grown into someone who truly believes in themselves.



Rhys Lane

Senior Network Engineer at The Sandwell Colleges



MORE THAN A PROFESSIONAL ROLE

Our Colleges are a rewarding place to work. I enjoy delivering and supporting technological solutions that enable staff teams and students to meet their potential. Providing a secure and stable infrastructure underpins my role, driving success and enabling achievement.





OUR SCALE, OUR REACH

Sandwell College draws over 4,600 learners aged 16-19 from across Sandwell, the Black Country and Birmingham and delivers vocational, technical and professional pathways up to Level 5. Sandwell College also serves adult learners, apprentices and delivers an inclusive foundation learning provision.

**SANDWELL
COLLEGE**

Central Saint Michael's Sixth Form is our University-Style Campus serving over 900 learners from across Sandwell, the Black Country and Birmingham. It excels in its delivery of A Levels and technical courses through its Young Professionals Academy.

Central
Saint Michael's
Sixth Form

Cadbury Sixth Form College serves the City of Birmingham and North Worcestershire delivering high quality education in the form of vocational and technical qualifications, T Levels and A Levels to over 2,000 learners from its Campus in Kings Norton.

cadbury sixth
form college

OUR COLLEGES SERVING SANDWELL, BIRMINGHAM AND THE WEST MIDLANDS

Our Industrial Roots, Shaping Futures

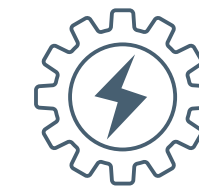
We are proud of our Colleges' history built on Sandwell's industrial heritage, beginning in the 1840s when the Chance Brothers glassmakers established a technical school in Spon Lane. Workers learnt practical subjects such as Mechanical Drawing and Chemistry, laying the foundation for regional technical education.

Sandwell College and Central Saint Michael's Sixth Form

From Smethwick Municipal College (1927) to Chance Technical College (1945) and Warley College of Technology (1968), our institutions grew alongside industry. In 1986, Sandwell College was formed after merging with West Bromwich College, and further expanding with the launch of Central Saint Michael's Sixth Form housed in the former arts venue, The Public.

Cadbury Sixth Form College: Shaping Futures in Birmingham

In 2018, Sandwell College merged with Cadbury Sixth Form College, reflecting John Cadbury's legacy and ambition for the City.



POWERED BY INDUSTRY, THEN AND NOW

Engineering and Toolmaking: Birmingham, known as the City of a Thousand Trades, is building its reputation upon advanced manufacturing, digital and creative industries, health technologies and professional services. Sandwell's legacy in engineering continues at our Advanced Manufacturing Engineering and STEM Centre in West Bromwich, blending traditional trades with modern technologies.

Canals and Transport: Sandwell's historic canals are being revitalised through regeneration projects like the Grove Lane Masterplan and Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, all needing a pipeline of skills through our Colleges and partnerships.

Brickworks and Housebuilding: We continue investing in traditional trades like bricklaying and modern construction techniques to meet the Government's housebuilding targets.

Lock and Chainmaking: Cradley Heath, home of the 1910 Women Chainmakers' Strike, will see a revitalised skills offer at our new Cradley Heath Skills Campus.

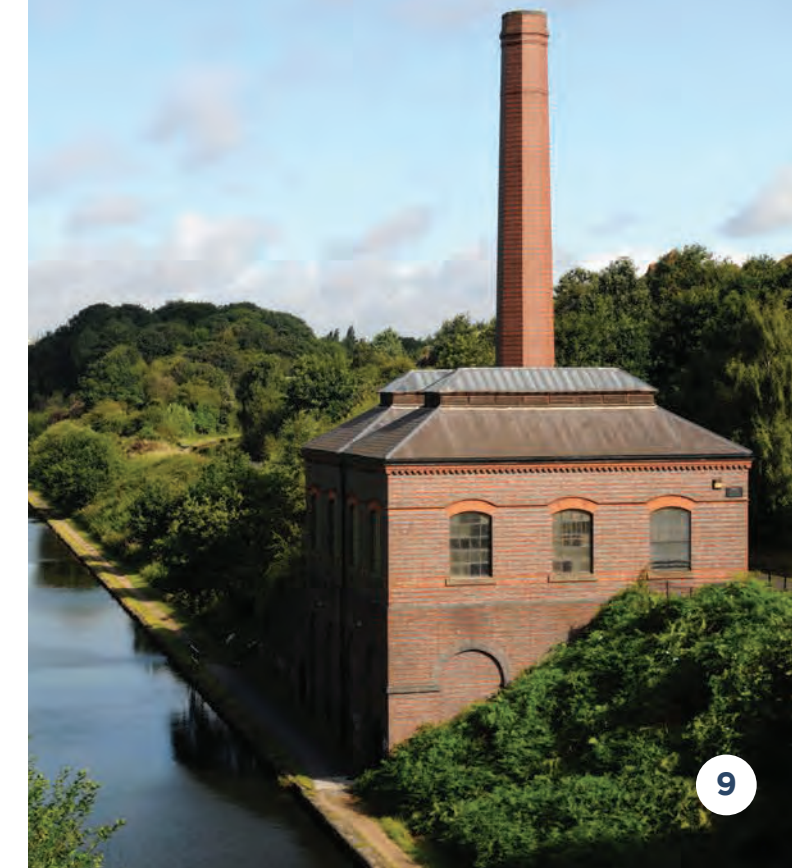


7,500
16-19 year
old students

500
apprentices

5,000
adults

2,000+
employers and
partners



MEETING SKILLS NEEDS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

CONNECTED AND COLLABORATIVE

At the heart of the UK's most dynamic region, Sandwell and Birmingham drive a multi-billion-pound economy, home to 1.5 million people. With strengths in advanced manufacturing, automotive technologies, digital innovation, and emerging sectors such as green energy and health, this is a critical moment for innovation and advancing skills to support growth and inward investment.

Our Colleges will:

- Play a critical part in the wider skills system providing essential pathways for academic and technical success, personal growth and progression to much needed higher-level skills at Level 3, 4 and above
- Create opportunities by connecting learners with real-world experiences and industry insight which supports them to achieve their career ambitions
- Work in partnership with employers to shape curriculum and ensure that our learners have industry-ready knowledge, skills and behaviours including essential 'softer' skills
- Connect with partners to ensure adult learners can access critical basic skills and higher-level vocational qualifications to re skill and up skill aligned with local priorities to achieve good jobs
- Indirectly support other West Midlands Futures goals such as leadership and management for business, housing, health equity, poverty and life chances



FUTURE SKILLS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

SECTOR	INVESTMENT FOCUS & HIGHLIGHTS
Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing	13% of all businesses operating in Sandwell are from the Advanced Manufacturing sector, with increased demand for skills in advanced manufacturing, electronics and robotics reflecting the Colleges' curriculum 2030. Our Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Hub works with employers to ensure skills are relevant and needed by employers. A £5.5bn Investment Zone in automotive, aerospace, and battery tech in Sandwell and an electric vehicle and robotics hub in Birmingham provide further opportunities for learners to progress to good jobs and help employers move up the 'value chain'.
Digital & Tech	With over 2,000 unfilled digital roles in the West Midlands there is an essential need for future skills. Birmingham is a global Tech Hub, attracting international employers for tech in energy, advanced mobility, healthcare and life sciences. Through our offer in Digital, Creative Industries, Cyber, Networking and Communication we will help to tackle the skills shortages and propel young people in to cutting-edge careers.
Green Economy & Net Zero	Low carbon industries employ over 100,000 people in the region, contributing to an economy worth over £12bn. In Sandwell the Kelvin Waste-to-Energy Plant will power 95,000 homes, driving the towns towards net zero. Green Skills are embedded throughout our curriculum provision, linked to modern construction methods, hybrid and electric vehicle and renewable energy, enabling progression in green jobs and industries.
Healthcare & Life Sciences	Our innovative public sector partnership with the NHS Trust and Midland Metropolitan University Hospital will create the pipeline of skills needed by the NHS. The collaborative Learning Campus at MMUH will see new pathways in health occupations open up to young people and adults from entry levels through to Higher Education. Our partnerships with the Black Country Integrated Care Board and Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust will expand our work placements, industry-standard curriculum and expert teaching.
Building for the Future	Over 125,000 new homes are needed in Birmingham by 2040 and will contribute to the regeneration of the built environment. Alongside significant infrastructure projects including HS2, the Big City Plan and the West Midlands Metro Tram Extension and Sandwell-Dudley corridor, the need to create skilled construction workers and civil engineers has never been greater. We will expand programmes in the trades such as brickwork, joinery and plumbing, and higher level skills such as digital surveying and advanced engineering.

- 55% of jobs in WMCA need skills Level 4+ by 2035.
- Level 3 is critical to skills ladder for areas we serve.
- The skills of Birmingham residents don't match employer demand, making finding skills and getting jobs harder.
- By 2030 Sandwell Council aims to increase 18-24 year olds in work by 1,253.

(Shaping Birmingham's Future Together to 2030, West Midlands Future Green Paper 2025, Sandwell Skills and Employment Strategy 2024-30)

OUR SKILLS HUBS AND LEARNING CAMPUSES



We will enhance our capabilities and responsiveness to meet employer and stakeholder needs utilising Apprenticeships, growth and skills levy qualifications, micro-credentials, Licences to Practice, and bespoke activities that will drive our technical excellence by:

- Delivering practical, employer-linked skills, directly addressing local business needs and pushing productivity
- Boosting our A Levels and T Level range fostering academic skills for higher education, high-skilled jobs, and driving innovation
- Improving social mobility, enabling more young people and adults to access higher-level skills, industry immersion and good careers, strengthening the local workforce, attracting investment from employers and improving local prosperity



The West Midlands has a higher percentage of unemployed young people than any other region in the country - more than double the national average in some areas. That's why, I want to create 20,000 work experience, apprenticeship and training opportunities for our young people. By working together with skills providers such as Sandwell College we can give people the skills they need to get on in life.

Richard Parker Mayor of the West Midlands

Our Skills Hubs and Learning Campuses reach across all of our Colleges and respond to the skills needs and economic drivers of Sandwell, Birmingham and the West Midlands.

1

**ADVANCED
MANUFACTURING
ENGINEERING
AND STEM**

2

**HEALTH AND
SOCIAL CARE**

3

**DIGITAL AND
CREATIVE
INDUSTRIES**

4

**CONSTRUCTION
AND GREEN
SKILLS**

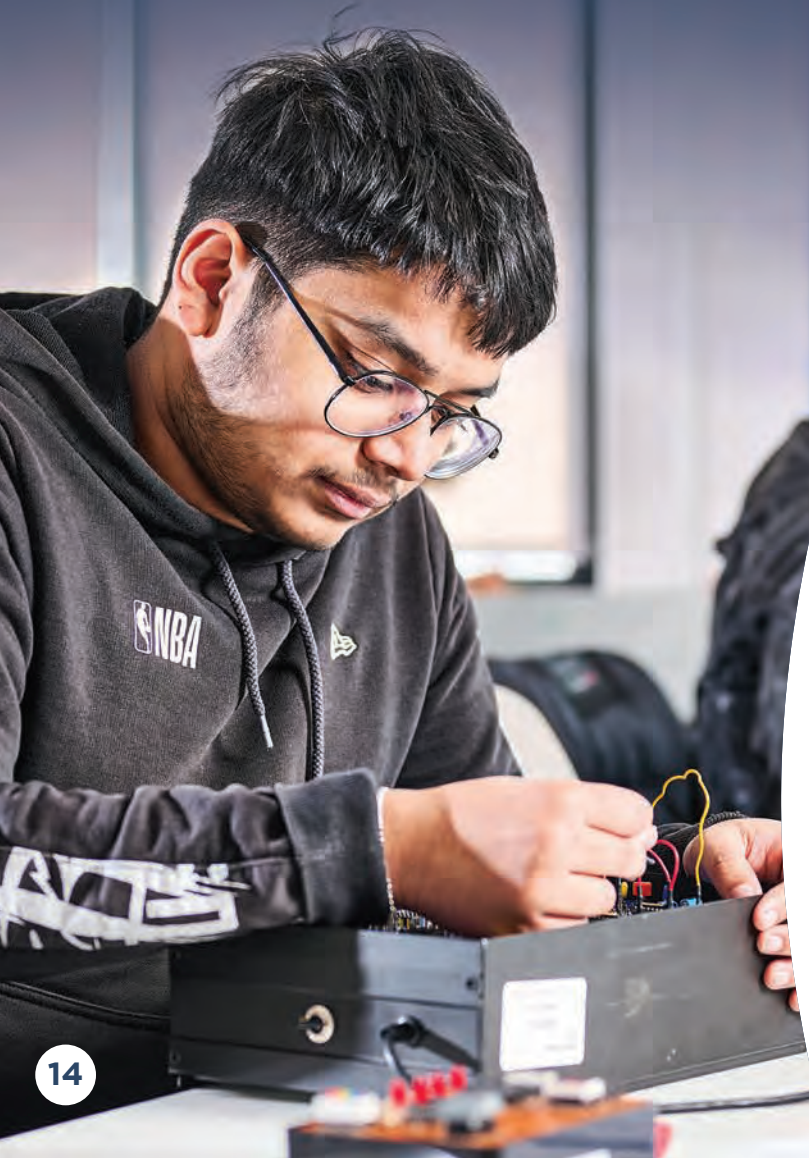
We also deliver specialist and academic career-focused programmes including:

A range of technical and vocational qualifications, Apprenticeships, A Levels and T Levels.

Business and Professional, IT, Arts & Media, English, Maths, ESOL, Foundation Learning, Preparation for Life and Work, Adult and Community Learning, Animal Care, Travel and Tourism, Hair and Beauty, Sports, Education and Early Years, Construction Trades, Health and Social Care, Engineering and Digital.

Over 50 qualifications in A Levels and T Levels across a range of subjects including Health, STEM, Arts, Humanities, Languages, Business and Professions, Digital, Construction and Engineering, combined vocational and academic courses through our Young Professional Academies that supports progression to Higher Education.

FUTURE SKILLS



COLLABORATIVE WORKING WITH HYDRAPOWER DYNAMICS

The Sandwell Colleges have developed a powerful partnership with hydraPower Dynamics, an international engineering company who continually invest in future proof equipment to ensure the best engineering solutions. The ongoing project has set a benchmark for employer-led skills development, providing over 20 Sandwell College students with industry placements, and subsequently leading to six students securing full-time employment as engineers in its first year of operation.

Their continued commitment includes expanding opportunities for 60 new Engineering T Level students, as well as supporting BTEC Engineering and Construction and Business and Marketing learners through work experience and interactions.



Partnerships are so important. We value our relationship with The Sandwell Colleges and subsequently their employer connections. These are essential for building a skilled pipeline of talent for the future, ensuring the competitiveness and prosperity for the Black Country.

Sarah Moorhouse CEO Black Country Chambers of Commerce



WOLVES ESPORTS

By blending gaming, media, business, and STEM into one exciting industry, Esports is redefining how we experience leisure, technology and gaming. Through our dynamic partnership with Wolves Esports, we place our students at the heart of this fast-growing sector. With access to cutting-edge gaming rooms, editing suites, and enterprise pods, our learners gain a powerful mix of digital, creative, and professional skills, turning their passion into real career opportunities.

SOLOTECH

Our partnership with Solotech brings live performance learning to life, giving our music production students real-world experience and industry insight on a global scale. With Solotech shaping our curriculum, every lesson is cutting-edge, and empowers our students with the confidence, creativity, and skills to thrive in this exciting industry.



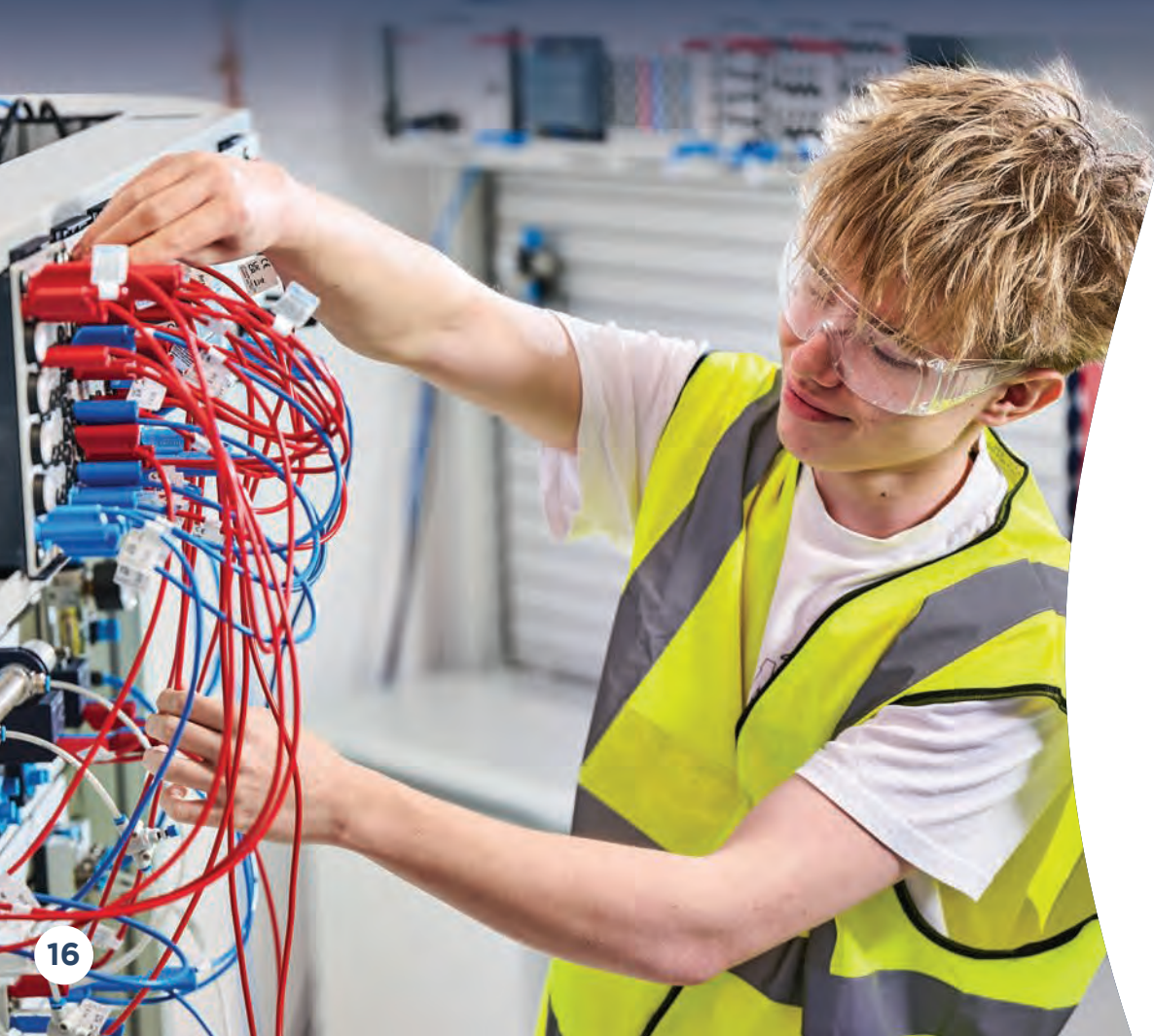
Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust greatly benefits from a workforce with a strong foundation in clinical and educational practice. Collaboration and multidisciplinary teamwork are essential to the success of the NHS. Building relationships with The Sandwell Colleges across both clinical and non-clinical settings is a vital step in supporting our staff to reskill and upskill whilst also developing opportunities for young people and adults across our local communities, ensuring they are well-prepared and ready to access roles within our Trust and across the healthcare sector.

Diane Wake Chief Executive Officer, The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust & Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust.



FUTURE SKILLS

We are committed to working collaboratively with significant employer responsive bodies, such as through our patronage and memberships of the Chambers of Commerce in the Black Country and Greater Birmingham, and partnership with the West Midlands Growth Company.



We partner with colleges and providers in the Black Country, Birmingham and the West Midlands through the WMCA Compact, Skills West Midlands and Warwickshire and Colleges West Midlands to join forces on specialism, and offer effective solutions to policy makers and employers.



Access to skills and talent is a key area of interest for our members of all sectors and sizes. Sandwell College are an active part of our local business community and our Chamber of Commerce. They are committed to directly engaging with our region's businesses to better understand and meet their specific skills needs.

Henrietta Brealey CEO, Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce

Building on our successful capital programme, we will maximise impact by transforming facilities into opportunities for learners, employers, and community growth. The Skills Hubs and Learning Campuses will bring capacity and ensure specialism to create the skills for the future.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING AND STEM CENTRE - WEST BROMWICH

£10m investment: Advancing precision engineering and promoting diverse engineering disciplines. Developed with the Towns Fund and DfE it features design areas, classrooms, and a precision engineering workshop, ready to enhance skills and employer partnerships. It will provide modular, accredited workplace skills training, facilitate employer-led upskilling via micro-credentials, promote engineering frameworks with business incentives, and transform how high-value manufacturing careers are viewed in schools.

CRADLEY HEATH SKILLS CAMPUS

£9.5m investment Towns Fund: Expanding Reach with a 'College in the Community'. This will provide skills and community learning and features a specialist social/domiciliary care hub, construction facilities and vital capacity for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. It will enable progression into further learning and will offer accessible courses such as construction, early years, health & social care, and foster new collaborations and integrated Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) services.

MIDLAND METROPOLITAN LEARNING CAMPUS - SMETHWICK

£18.5m investment Towns Fund and Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust. This innovative Learning Campus is co-located at the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital. It will house 16-18 years-olds studying at Level 3 and support the MMUH People Plan through recruitment and upskilling to tackle vacancies and future skills needs. The campus will provide a responsive curriculum focused on higher-level vocational learning for young people and adults and expanding employment programmes for residents with the Learning Works.

TOMORROW'S PEOPLE - BIRMINGHAM SKILLS HUB

Our Birmingham city-centre hub is focused on jobs and higher-level skills. Drop-in sessions for employers and clients advertise vacancies and services in a 'Skills Shop' environment. Building on successful 'into employment' programmes, we will deliver Leadership and Management training up to Level 7 for city professionals.



OUR COLLEGES IN THE COMMUNITY

At a critical time for boosting prosperity through skills and jobs, our Colleges are central to growing a skilled, adaptable workforce across all levels and boosting inclusion.

- Addressing the West Midlands' growing population and low-skill levels is vital
- As the region's largest Further Education provider, we empower disadvantaged learners, raising aspirations and widening access to higher and technical skills
- Over two-thirds of both young people and adults in our Colleges come from some of the most disadvantaged wards in England
- Because of this, going to university or to higher skilled roles are less common, and youth unemployment and inactivity in Sandwell and the West Midlands are concerningly high



IN SANDWELL AND BIRMINGHAM

Deprivation and Poverty:

- Sandwell (12th in England) and Birmingham (9th) are highly deprived, with child poverty exceeding national rates by 38%.

GCSE Attainment:

- Too many 16-year-old school leavers in Sandwell and Birmingham lack essential English and maths GCSEs.

Level 3 and 4 Attainment:

- Sandwell (17%) and Birmingham (16%) have some of the lowest Level 3 attainment at 19 in the West Midlands (national 21%). Level 4 attainment is also significantly lower in Sandwell (31%) compared to Birmingham and England (43%).

Our response:

We provide wraparound services, integrating health, education, and work initiatives with strong pastoral care for the most disadvantaged, allowing learners to thrive in college, including:

- **Unemployed Adults:** Partnering with DWP on employment pilots, including re-skilling for the 50+
- **ESOL:** Extensive language acquisition provision enables progression to skills and jobs
- **Asylum Seekers & Care Leavers:** Collaborating with social and children's services to enhance education and progression
- **Out-of-School & Justice System:** Building pathways for sustained post-16 progression with schools, trusts and councils
- **Learners with Disabilities:** Dedicated special educational needs (SEND) unit and ongoing support foster independence, employment, and mainstream education.

LEARNER SUCCESS



Jake Collins

Having been a full-time carer for his mum and missing out on formal education, at 20 years old, he joined the College's Sector Work Academy Programme (SWAP) through a referral from the NHS Trust's Learning Works. He excelled, earning the 'Step into Learning' award in the West Midlands Combined Authority Adult Learning Awards and played a key role in launching the Young Employment Plan with the Mayor of the West Midlands. Today, Jake has advanced his career with the NHS to become the Linen Lead at the Trust.

Sector Work Academy Programme

The Colleges SWAP won the Community Excellence Award at The Signature Awards 2025 recognising the college's work in empowering individuals, supporting businesses, and strengthening communities.



Jasmine Johnson

Jasmine's dream of a career that kept her active, challenged, and inspired was achieved through her Highways Operative Apprenticeship at Sandwell College with Doocey Group. She embraced the opportunity to break new ground in a male-dominated industry, determined to show what was possible. Her passion and perseverance were recognised when she proudly won Young Apprentice of the Year in 2024. Under the guidance of her trainers and workplace mentors, Jasmine developed practical skills and the confidence to aim high and is now thriving in a full-time role, as a shining example of how our apprenticeships open doors and break down barriers.



We want Sandwell to be a place of opportunity, where our young people, adults and wider community can realise their potential. We are working proactively with Sandwell College and other partners to support our businesses to thrive, our residents to gain valuable skills and our local economy to be prosperous and resilient.

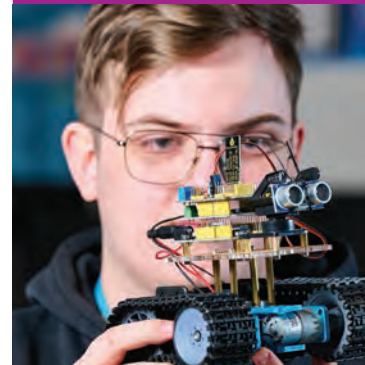
Shokat Lal
Sandwell Council Chief Executive

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND COMMITMENTS



ALWAYS AMBITIOUS FOR OUR LEARNERS

Through excellent education, inspired skills training and a careers curriculum focused on inclusion and progression.



FUTURE FOCUSED CAREERS AND SKILLS

Through industry focused readiness and expertise, engaging employers in shaping our curriculum, immersing our colleagues and learners in industry, and ensuring progression to higher-level skills.



POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Through connection, collaboration and community, our partnerships will benefit learners and drive the growth and impact of our Colleges.



EMPOWER OUR PEOPLE

Through attracting and harnessing talent, investing in our colleagues' ambitions, and creating an environment for adaptable and innovative practice as part of our professional and skilled 'One Team'.



FINANCIAL RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE COLLEGES

Through investment, growth and sustainable practice towards digital transformation and net zero.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY ONE

ALWAYS AMBITIOUS FOR OUR LEARNERS

Through excellent education, inspired skills training and a careers curriculum focused on inclusion and progression.



OUR COMMITMENT

We commit to prioritising the professional growth of our teaching and support colleagues, equipping our teams to lead in cutting-edge knowledge, skills, and pedagogy, so that every learner receives outstanding, future-focused learning experiences every single day.

We will:

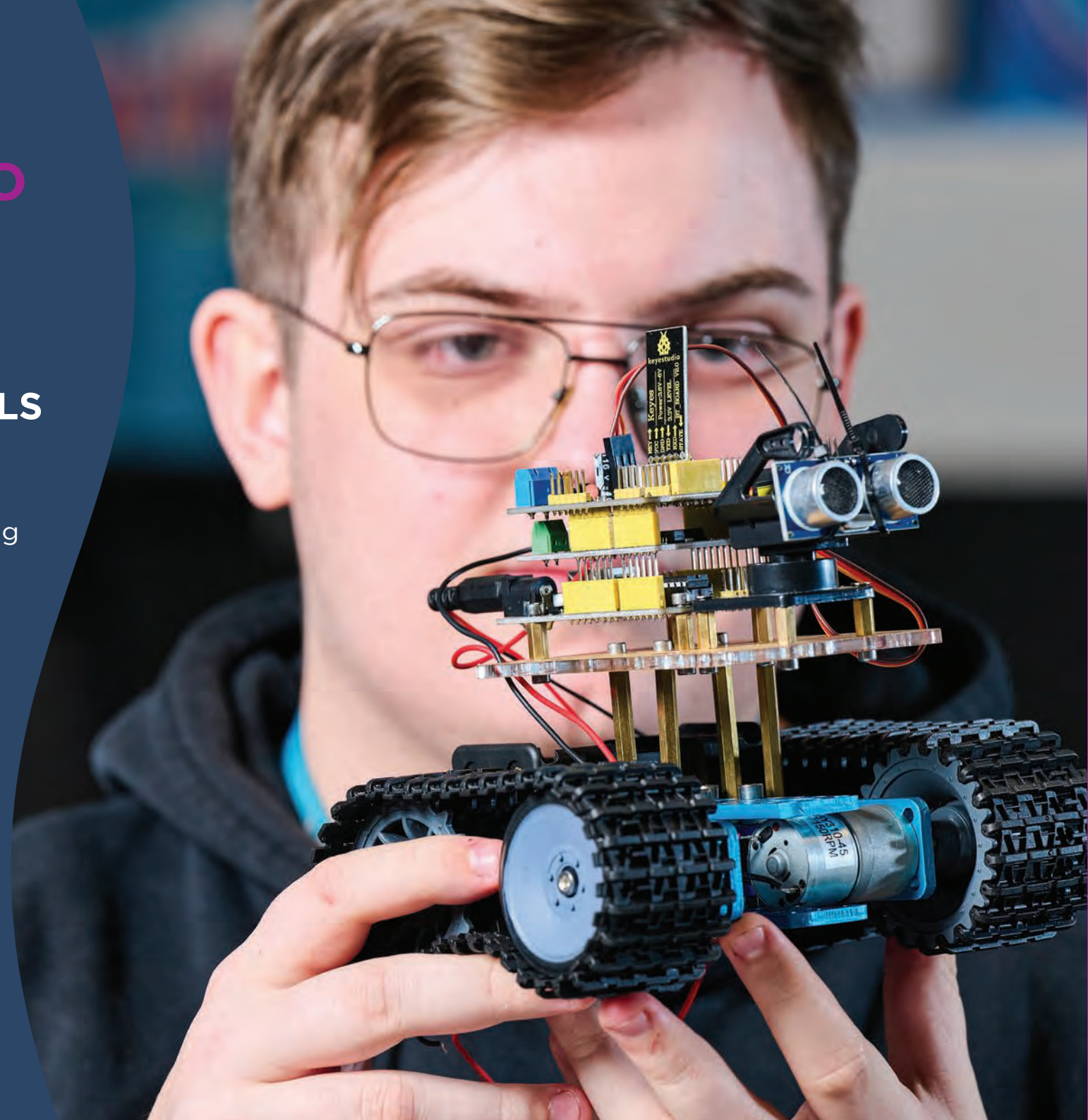
1. Drive learner achievement by delivering outstanding academic and specialist skills training, equipping students with the knowledge, skills, behaviours and enrichment activity needed to thrive in the workforce or advance to further or higher education and training.
2. Deliver an unwavering and sustained focus on learner progression, with a target of at least 92% of learners transitioning to positive destinations with clearly structured pathways that support long-term personal and professional development.
3. Utilise innovative digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence to enrich learning, teaching and skills development; including the integration of emerging industry technologies to prepare learners for the future workforce.
4. Integrate literacy and numeracy skills throughout the curriculum to support student progress and progression to their next stage, and continue using our 'Sandwell Strategies' to boost higher GCSE achievement.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY TWO

FUTURE FOCUSED CAREERS AND SKILLS

Through industry focused readiness and expertise, engaging employers in shaping our curriculum, immersing our colleagues and learners in industry, and ensuring progression to higher level skills.



OUR COMMITMENT

We are committed to designing a forward-thinking and collaborative curriculum that develops learners' knowledge, skills, and behaviours, ensuring their successful progression into and within the workplace and to Higher Education. Our curriculum will equip learners to meet the evolving needs of employers, while also enhancing their career and life opportunities for long-term success.

We will:

1. Invest in priority Skills Hubs and new Skills Campuses to meet local and regional skills need, supporting economic growth and providing learners with access to high quality academic education and skills training aligned to employer and industry demand.
2. Design a curriculum that integrates industry exposure and actively involves employers in its development and delivery, ensuring that learners gain relevant, real-world skills and work experience that align with current and future workforce needs.
3. Develop targeted adult learning and apprenticeship strategies to address regional skills priorities, providing accessible pathways to good jobs, and including higher-level skills for learners to gain the knowledge and experience needed to re-train and upskill, enhancing their career opportunities.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY THREE

POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Through connection, collaboration and community, to benefit learners and drive the growth and impact of our colleges.



OUR COMMITMENT

We are committed to a collaborative approach in the way we work to bring about lasting impact and change to the people and areas we serve. Our connections and compacts will tackle skills gaps in both the community and business in Sandwell, Birmingham and across the Black Country and West Midlands, and will amplify 'The Sandwell Story' for the success and prosperity of our local communities. By building powerful partnerships, we'll ensure the voices of learners, employers and stakeholders drive everything we do.

We will:

1. Create powerful partnerships that deliver tangible impact for our learners, support growth and further reach of our provision.
2. Deepen our partnerships, ensuring that they become a catalyst for raising aspirations leading to greater engagement and benefit for our learners with relevancy to their chosen course.
3. Be an effective leader in local decision-making and policy development, working closely with further education partners, employers and professional bodies, schools, local authorities, WMCA, central government and universities to expand the impact and capacity of education and skills in Sandwell, Birmingham and the West Midlands.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOUR

EMPOWER OUR PEOPLE

Through attracting and harnessing talent, investing in our colleagues' ambitions, and creating an environment for adaptable and innovative practice as part of our professional and skilled 'One Team'.



OUR COMMITMENT

We commit to investing in our colleagues; fostering a culture of growth, support, total reward and recognition - offering quality development opportunities, clear career pathways, and embedding our 'Sandwellness' well-being strategy. This will enable us to attract, retain, and empower talented teams who deliver outstanding outcomes and make a lasting impact.

We will:

1. Enhance and embed our 'One College, One Team' values of shared opportunity to create even greater impact and success for our learners and colleagues.
2. Deliver our 'Professional Journey' pathways by investing in our new Continuing Professional Development Strategy and Talent Framework, building expertise across all teams and enabling opportunity for industry immersion.
3. Harness and embed digital tools and technologies to enhance our practices and approaches - improving efficiency, enriching learning and service delivery, and enabling smarter, data-informed decisions across our Colleges.
4. Celebrate our richly diverse environment by actively embracing a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives - fostering inclusion, an open dialogue to inform our decisions, delivery and impact.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY FIVE

FINANCIAL RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE COLLEGES

Through investment, growth and sustainable practice towards digital transformation and net zero.



OUR COMMITMENT

We are committed to ensuring that our Colleges remain financially resilient, sustainable, secure and operationally efficient; safeguarding the quality and long-term impact of our education offer and learning environments, supporting excellence in teaching, learning, and institutional resilience.

We will:

1. Direct financial resources towards initiatives that align with and advance strategic priorities and the prosperity of our communities.
2. Invest for impact in new sustainable facilities and equipment allowing us to deliver quality learning experiences for students and support employers in priority sectors.
3. Deliver our IT & Digital Transformation Strategy and Sustainability Strategy, while implementing our Estates Strategy from which sustainability, and measures towards net zero, will be embedded to attain positive long-term impact.
4. Enhance income from core funding sources by increasing our market share across services to young people, adults and apprenticeships, whilst identifying and pursuing new income generating opportunities to broaden our financial base.



MORE THAN SUCCESS...

SANDWELL COLLEGE



Maya Ghazal

Maya Ghazal, a former engineering student at Sandwell College, became the world's first female Syrian refugee pilot. After studying Aviation Engineering at Brunel University, she joined the TUI Cadet Scheme, successfully completing all 13 airline exams. Maya now flies the Boeing 737 and represents refugees as a UN Goodwill Ambassador. Her journey shows how education can help people overcome obstacles, break boundaries, and inspire others to believe in what's possible.



Charlotte Goode

Charlotte's journey as a Level 3 Early Years Educator Apprentice at Darlaston Day Nursery highlights the transformative power of vocational learning. From day one, she impressed with her dedication, warmth and commitment to going above and beyond for the children in her care. Valued by staff, parents and children alike, Charlotte quickly became an essential part of the team, earning her the prestigious Overall Star Award at the Sandwell College Star Awards. Now employed full time by Walsall Childcare, Charlotte continues to inspire as a role model in early years education, showing how apprenticeships create confident, caring professionals who make a lasting impact.

Central Saint Michael's Sixth Form



Amninder Singh

Amninder's A* success at Central Saint Michael's Sixth Form paved the way for a First Class Master's Degree in Mechanical Engineering and a standout placement at Jaguar Land Rover. Now a Tooling Design Engineer at JLR's Gaydon HQ, he is helping to shape the future of electric vehicles. Amninder's accomplishments reflect the ambition and real-world achievement that The Sandwell Colleges inspire; where students are supported to aim high, excel, and turn their potential into meaningful careers.



Boma Praise J

Boma Praise J. was named Apprenticeship Advocate of the Year in the Kaplan Apprenticeship Awards held at The Shard in London. She achieved Distinction Star and BB grades in Health & Social Care, History and English Literature at Central Saint Michael's Sixth Form, and is now a Risk and Compliance Assistant Manager Apprentice at HSBC UK.

Praise was recently invited to share her professional journey and experiences at the Career Connect event at Millennium Point. Praise believes that her learning journey will keep growing thanks to the great start she had at Central Saint Michael's Sixth Form.

cadbury sixth form college



Dr Ekbal Hussain

Dr Ekbal Hussain's journey began at Cadbury Sixth Form College, where a supportive and inclusive learning environment helped spark his passion for science. As the first in his family to attend university, he went on to study at Cambridge and earned a PhD in Geophysics. Now Head of Multi-Hazard Systems at the British Geological Survey, Ekbal uses satellite data to support earthquake resilience in some of the world's most vulnerable regions. His story is a powerful example of how the opportunities and support offered at Cadbury College can lay the foundations for a career that makes a global difference.



Samiha Kalam

Samiha's journey at Cadbury Sixth Form College is a shining example of how The Sandwell Colleges empower young people to lead with purpose. Highly commended in the Young Active Citizen Award, she has shown incredible resilience and drive - founding the Birmingham Young Women Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG), championing equality and sustainability, and supporting the Colleges' net zero goals. With key roles on Birmingham's Youth City Board and the Young People's Home Office Board, Samiha exemplifies how the opportunities and support provided by The Sandwell Colleges empower young people to become powerful forces for change.

FUTURE FOCUSED FACTS

No.1

achievement in the West Midlands for full-time courses

7,500

young people: we are the largest Further Education Provider in the West Midlands

3,800

16-18 year old learners studying maths, English or both

600+

Students with High Needs and from the 'Looked-after' System

950+

staff: we are one of the largest employers in the locality

The College has

Outstanding

financial health

£35m

capital: we have attracted investments from stakeholders who share in our plans to deliver the best facilities and experiences for our students

90%

of our students progress to further learning or jobs, with a significant number going to university

94%

of our students pass their courses with us and progress to the next level

95%

of our students agree the College is an inclusive community where the diversity is valued

97%

of our students express a high degree of satisfaction in the education, training and services we provide



SUCCESS MEASURES

The Sandwell Colleges will go from strength to strength through delivering its strategy to 2028 and beyond.

We will navigate national, regional and local Further Education and economic policies to ensure good planning for financial resilience, investment in colleagues and campuses and impact for learners.

Our success will be measured through six key performance indicators (KPIs):

Strong Colleges endorsed by Ofsted and with >95% student rating

Growth in specialisms and expertise for 16-19yrs for Curriculum 2030 including % increase in market share for adult and apprenticeships

Progression of learners to positive destinations >92% or better including supported internships

Sustainability and Digital Strategies launched and targets met to 2028

Our people, stakeholder and employer surveys >90% or better endorsed mission and vision for future focused skills

Financial resilience and sustained financial health rating and KPIs

A SELECTION OF OUR PARTNERS



ACCREDITATIONS





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Sign up for our
stakeholder
newsletter here:

