

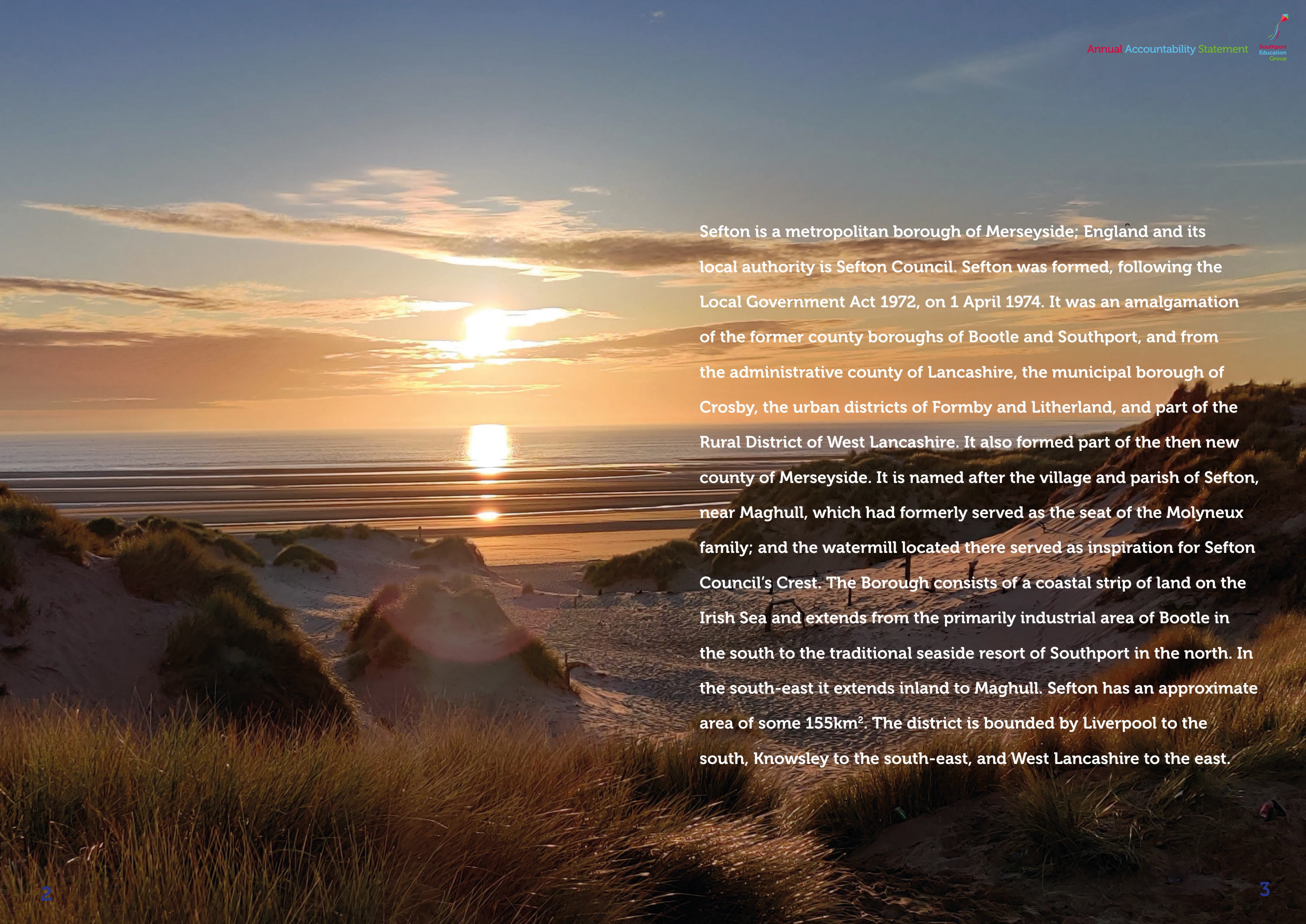


Southport
Education
Group

Annual Accountability Statement

2025/27





Sefton is a metropolitan borough of Merseyside; England and its local authority is Sefton Council. Sefton was formed, following the Local Government Act 1972, on 1 April 1974. It was an amalgamation of the former county boroughs of Bootle and Southport, and from the administrative county of Lancashire, the municipal borough of Crosby, the urban districts of Formby and Litherland, and part of the Rural District of West Lancashire. It also formed part of the then new county of Merseyside. It is named after the village and parish of Sefton, near Maghull, which had formerly served as the seat of the Molyneux family; and the watermill located there served as inspiration for Sefton Council's Crest. The Borough consists of a coastal strip of land on the Irish Sea and extends from the primarily industrial area of Bootle in the south to the traditional seaside resort of Southport in the north. In the south-east it extends inland to Maghull. Sefton has an approximate area of some 155km². The district is bounded by Liverpool to the south, Knowsley to the south-east, and West Lancashire to the east.

The College: History, Mission & Purpose 2026

Southport Education Group consists of Southport College, King George V Sixth Form College, Compete Apprenticeships & Training and The Bridge. The colleges campuses are long-established independent further education colleges which together provide a diverse range of education and training to a wide variety of learners across Sefton and the Northwest. Southport Education Group is the area's largest provider of vocational courses and has over 1200 full-time 16–19-year-olds studying a range of qualifications including A Levels, T Levels, BTECs, NVQs and City & Guilds qualifications, in a wide range of subjects from Law, Physics, Hairdressing & Beauty Studies or Electrical Engineering to Childcare, Construction and Digital.

Compete Apprenticeships & Training works closely with employers to offer a range of apprenticeship programmes in subject areas which include Management and Administration, Engineering, Plumbing, Hospitality, Care and Motor Vehicle. In addition to meeting the training needs of employers to develop the skilled workforce of the future.

Southport Education Group provides a range of courses to over 2000 adult learners, including those that support people back into employment, improve their career prospects or provide a route to higher education.

The Bridge is a specialist centre for 16-25 year olds who have additional support requirements, SEMH or need a smaller nurturing environment to help them on their path to further education, training, employment or supported internships. This specialist centre provides a person centric approach with highly individualised support, with a clear focus on personal development to support their next steps.

We continue to invest into improving the extensive and varied learning environments and specialist facilities for all our students with many exciting plans for the future, with the aim of maintaining the College Group as the first choice for high quality training and education. We were incredibly proud to be the first college in the country to achieve the Rainbow Flag Award in recognition of our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. In addition we hold a Gold Award for Supporting Mental Health & Wellbeing in the FE sector.

Inclusion is at the heart of our values and drives our everyday actions and future plans.

Our Vision:

To be a driving force for educational and economic excellence in Southport and the region.

Our Mission:

To create a positive, high expectation learning environment that allows people to excel in their future careers, education, training, and life.

This mission continues to underpin our strategic contribution to the Liverpool City Region (LCR), aligning with updated 2026–27 national skills priorities and the requirements of the Local Needs Duty, which obliges colleges to evidence how provision meets evolving local needs and LSIP priorities.

Our Strategic Intentions are to be:

1. A place where learners fulfil their potential
2. A place where people want to work and are supported in their careers
3. A place where employers develop their skilled workforce
4. A place at the heart of our communities.

Progress against Strategic Priorities

Southport Education Group continues to make strong progress toward its strategic intention of supporting learners, employers and communities through high quality provision aligned with local, regional and national priorities. In line with updated Department for Education (DfE) expectations for 2026–27, this section reflects strengthened alignment with Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), increased emphasis on employer engagement and the statutory requirement to demonstrate how our current and future provision meets local needs under the Local Needs Duty.

A place where learners fulfil their potential

T Level growth and delivery

Over the last three years, the Group has significantly expanded its T Level offer, achieving strong progression toward its multi year growth targets. Recruitment increased to 111 learners in 2023/24, rising to 182 in 2024/25, and further to 219 in 2025/26, surpassing interim milestones and demonstrating sustained year on year growth. This trajectory highlights strong learner demand alongside effective employer partnerships that continue to underpin high quality industry placements.

Implementation of new T Levels in Design, Surveying and Planning (DSP) and Health has been successful, evidenced by positive learner feedback and the development of relevant skills, knowledge and behaviours. The 2026 accountability framework places increased emphasis on evidencing the impact of technical education pathways and alignment with LSIP identified priority sectors; our continued expansion in DSP and Health T Levels directly responds to these priorities.

Learner Development & Core Skills

Across vocational programmes, the Group has successfully embedded core employability behaviours, digital competency and social action through a well-structured and sequenced personal development curriculum. This curriculum is intentionally designed to complement technical learning, ensuring that learners not only acquire occupational competence but also develop the wider skills, attitudes and behaviours required to thrive in modern workplaces and society.

Learners are supported to build key employability attributes such as professionalism, communication, teamwork, resilience, problem-solving and adaptability. These are developed through a combination of taught sessions, industry-relevant projects, employer encounters and reflective practice, enabling learners to understand and apply these behaviours in real and simulated work environments. The integration of employer input ensures that expectations are current, meaningful and aligned to sector-specific workforce needs.

It also places a strong emphasis on social action and personal responsibility. Through enrichment activities, community engagement and sustainability-focused initiatives, learners are encouraged to develop an understanding of their role within society, fostering active citizenship, cultural awareness and respect for diversity. These opportunities support learners to build confidence, broaden their perspectives and contribute positively to their communities.

Importantly, the personal development curriculum is closely aligned with national expectations and inspection frameworks, particularly around preparing learners for their next steps. The Group actively tracks and evaluates how these broader skills contribute to positive progression outcomes, including sustained employment, apprenticeships and further study. Learners receive structured careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG), with clear links between their programme, labour market information and future opportunities.

Through this integrated approach, the Group demonstrates a clear commitment to developing well-rounded individuals who are not only technically competent but also equipped with the behaviours, digital skills and personal attributes demanded by employers. This ensures that learners are effectively prepared for high-quality destinations and are able to make meaningful contributions within their chosen industries and wider society.

A place where employers develop their skilled workforce

Apprenticeships

The Group has taken a strategic approach to consolidating and strengthening its apprenticeship and workforce training offer, ensuring clear alignment with both national priorities and regional labour market needs. Particular emphasis has been placed on addressing persistent skills shortages within construction and trade-based occupations, where employer demand continues to outstrip supply. This targeted focus has enabled the Group to position itself as a key partner in supporting economic growth, infrastructure development and sector sustainability.

Curriculum design and delivery have been shaped through close and ongoing collaboration with employers, industry bodies and regional stakeholders. For example, the Group works in partnership with regional construction firms and specialist subcontractors to co-design apprenticeship pathways in areas such as carpentry and joinery, electrical installation, gas engineer and bricklayers. Employers contribute directly to training plan, on the job training and participate in gateway readiness, ensuring apprentices develop industry-relevant skills aligned to current working practices.

Employer engagement across apprenticeship and workforce provision remains a significant strength. We maintain strong partnerships with a diverse range of employers, from SMEs to larger regional employers. In addition, we work with public sector organisations and local authorities to support regeneration projects, creating opportunities for apprentices to contribute to socially impactful developments within their communities.

Regular attendance at employer forums and advisory boards are used to gather feedback and identify emerging skills gaps, such as increased demand

for sustainable construction methods and the integration of digital technologies. This ensures that the apprenticeship offer remains agile, forward-looking and responsive to sector change.

The introduction of updated apprenticeship accountability expectations in early 2026 has further reinforced the Group's commitment to quality and impact. These expectations place greater emphasis on timely achievement, progression, off-the-job training compliance and the demonstrable value of apprenticeships to both learners and employers. In response, the Group has strengthened its quality assurance processes, enhanced progress monitoring systems and increased focus on learner support and employer communication to ensure high retention, achievement and progression outcomes.

The Group also ensures that apprentices benefit from a holistic development experience, integrating technical training with the broader personal development curriculum. This includes the development of English and maths where required, digital skills, safeguarding awareness and employability behaviours, ensuring apprentices are well-rounded and capable of contributing effectively within their roles.

Through this cohesive, employer-led approach, the Group demonstrates a strong commitment to delivering high-quality apprenticeship and workforce training provision that meets accountability expectations, supports employers and enables learners to progress successfully into sustained employment and career advancement.

Community Training Initiatives

Working with Sefton Council and local employers, the Group trained over 100 residents in Year 1 and 220 in Year 2 through the "Building Better Customer Experiences" bespoke programme. Engagement expanded from 15 to more than 20 employers. This reflects strengthened national expectations for early engagement with employer representative bodies (ERBs) and alignment with LSIP priorities in service driven economies such as Sefton. This has now informed and developed the next training programme that further enhances customer experience and inspiring leaders.

Our college serves learners from across Southport and West Lancashire, a region characterised by significant socio-economic contrasts. Whilst parts of Southport and the surrounding rural communities are relatively affluent, many of our learners come from neighbourhoods experiencing considerable deprivation and social disadvantage.

Within Southport, a significant proportion of learners are drawn from wards such as Norwood, Cambridge and Dukes, which are among the most deprived communities in Sefton. These areas experience higher levels of income deprivation, unemployment, lower skills attainment and wider social challenges when compared with other parts of the borough.

Similarly, in West Lancashire, learners are recruited from communities within Skelmersdale, including areas served by the wards of Tanhouse, Digmoor, Birch Green and Ashurst, where socio-economic disadvantage remains significantly above the national average and where deprivation is often linked to lower educational attainment, poorer health outcomes and reduced access to opportunity.

Many of our learners experience financial hardship that is not always reflected through traditional measures of disadvantage. This “just under the radar” cohort may not qualify for additional financial support but still faces barriers relating to transport costs, digital poverty, housing insecurity, caring responsibilities and household financial pressures. These factors can affect attendance, engagement and progression.

The learner population also has relatively limited access to wider cultural, professional and enrichment opportunities. As a result, some learners begin their studies with lower levels of social capital, reduced awareness of progression pathways and fewer opportunities to develop the confidence and networks required to access higher-level learning and skilled employment.

Analysis of learner postcode data against the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shows that 55.2% of our students reside within IMD bands 1–5, meaning that over half of our learners come from areas that experience the highest levels of deprivation nationally. This profile reinforces the importance of our commitment to providing targeted support, raising aspirations, developing cultural capital and ensuring that all learners can access high-quality progression opportunities regardless of their background.

This understanding of learners’ starting points informs our curriculum design, student support strategy and employer engagement activity, enabling us to address barriers to success and support positive outcomes for all learners.

Our approach

Health & life sciences

The Group has prioritised Health and Social Care as a key curriculum and capital investment area in response to regional workforce demand and NHS priorities. A new T Level care suite, launched in September 2024, provides industry-standard simulation environments to develop clinical and patient care skills. Strong partnerships with seven NHS Trusts support high-quality industry placements and progression pathways. Apprenticeship provision is delivered flexibly with NHS and care employers to address workforce shortages and meet employer need. .

Digital

Digital qualification provides a pathway for individuals to develop their digital skills and gain employment in the digital sector. It is designed to give learners the knowledge and skills they need to work in a range of digital jobs, such as software development, web development, cybersecurity, data analysis and more. The digital curriculum in the way it is co-designed and delivered will also help local business in Southport and Sefton engage emerging talent and have access a larger pool of talent with the right knowledge, skills and behaviours to meet their needs. .

Financial, professional & business services

The Group supports Southport’s professional services sector through accountancy, business and leadership provision for example Management and Administration T Level programme which worked with a range of businesses to deliver the Next Gen Energy programme. Leadership and management apprenticeships at Levels 3 and 5 enable employers to upskill staff, improving productivity and business performance. Accountancy provision supports progression to AAT qualifications, ensuring a pipeline of skilled professionals. Pathways also support access for young people and disadvantaged learners, contributing to social mobility and widening participation.

Tourism & visitor economy

The value of tourism and the visitor economy to Southport and the wider Sefton borough is significant. Recent data indicates that the visitor economy across Sefton is worth approximately £683 million annually, supporting around 4,400 jobs. The borough attracts in the region of 7.9 million visitors each year, with Southport accounting for a substantial proportion of this activity as the area’s primary coastal destination.

This highlights the continued importance of the visitor economy to local employment, business sustainability and wider economic growth, with Southport remaining central to the borough’s tourism offer and future development.

This makes Southport an important destination for the leisure and hospitality industry. The town has a range of tourist attractions, including parks, beaches, museums, and a range of shops, restaurants, and cafés. This means that there is an increased demand for jobs in the hospitality and leisure industry, creating opportunities for businesses and individuals to develop their skills and provide services in this sector.

Southport College is key in providing training for the hospitality and leisure industry. The college offers a range of qualifications and training courses in a variety of hospitality and leisure related areas, including customer service, cookery and hospitality. Alongside these established sector-based programme Southport Education Group also support the tourism and the visitor economy function by providing education programmes including travel and tourism, business studies, construction, public services and engineering to name a few.

There is currently a large demand for professional chefs in the industry and the College while working with partners will promote opportunities and train students on this pathway to help with the skills demand in the sector. As well as the above there is a national shortage of staff that the college will look to address in its local area by working with employers.

In both the tourism and hospitality industries employers need the current workforce and the workforce of future to have a high level of professionalism, but also to have further skills and mandatory qualifications for example events management, food hygiene, health & safety, alcohol retailing and many more. The college will work with the local community and employers to offer training in these areas where there is a need.

Basic skills, soft skills and employability

Feedback from employers indicates that their main requirement when recruiting young people is that they demonstrate the right attitudes and behaviours. For this reason, we developed our personal development and careers education programme which is underpinned by our college values of positivity, trust, achievement, collaboration, and professionalism. This programme ensures the characteristics and skills which employers are looking for in our learners are incorporated into the activities of our learning programmes and supporting enrichment, and work experience activities.

We have outlined previously the importance of improving social inclusion within our communities and the impact of the tight labour market on large sections of the economy. Consequently, FE corporations will always be the major supplier of basic skills for learners of all ages, and we plan to continue to be a major player in this area.

"Green Skills" (Construction and Motor Vehicle)

Investment through SDF and LSIF has strengthened green skills provision, particularly in electric vehicles, renewable energy and sustainable construction. The development of a specialist ECO Centre supports training in low-carbon technologies, including heat pumps, solar PV and battery systems. This provision addresses regional and national priorities linked to net zero and supports employers in transitioning to green technologies.

Manufacturing & Engineering

The Engineering Level 3 course at Southport Education Group is essential in preparing students for a career in the manufacturing industry. In 2024, we will be delivering the Engineering T Level programme. The course provides practical training in engineering design, project management, and quality control, as well as theoretical knowledge of advanced mathematics, physics, and mechanics. This combination of skills is highly sought after by local businesses, particularly in the manufacturing industry, which contributes significantly to Southport's economy.

According to data from the Office for National Statistics, manufacturing is a crucial sector in the Northwest of England, contributing £28.4 billion to the regional economy in 2019. Local businesses require a skilled workforce to maintain their competitiveness, and the Engineering provision at Southport Education Group provides students with the necessary skills to excel in this field. In addition, the course emphasises practical, hands-on experience, enabling students to apply their knowledge in real-world settings.

Creative Industries

Southport Education Group is proactively addressing both local and national skills needs in the creative industries sector through a comprehensive range of courses and state-of-the-art facilities. The college offers specialised programs in Creative Media Production & Photography, encompassing various disciplines such as television, film, radio, interactive media, computer games development, and photo imaging. These courses are designed to equip students with industry-relevant skills, preparing them for dynamic careers in the expanding UK Entertainment & Media industry, which is projected to be worth £96 billion by 2026.

To further enhance learning, Southport Education Group provides access to Creative Arts Studios, offering students personal workspaces, fully equipped fashion and print workshops, state-of-the-art Mac suites, a TV studio, design studios with the latest industry software, a professional gallery, 3D printers, a photographic studio with advanced equipment, and a darkroom. These facilities ensure that students gain practical, hands-on experience, fostering creativity and technical proficiency.



Contribution to National, Regional and Local Skills Priorities (2026/27)

Context and Approach

Southport Education Group (SEG) has considered national, regional and local labour market priorities in developing its curriculum offer for 2026/27. This includes alignment with:

- National skills priorities, including the expansion of technical education, apprenticeships, higher technical qualifications, and skills to support productivity and Net Zero
- The Liverpool City Region Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), particularly priorities relating to construction, health and social care, digital, and engineering and manufacturing
- Local economic need, including skills shortages, economic inactivity, and progression gaps in coastal communities

Group’s curriculum strategy is underpinned by its four strategic aims:

- A place where learners fulfil their potential
- A place where people want to work and are supported in their careers
- A place where employers develop their skilled workforce
- A place at the heart of our communities

These aims inform curriculum planning, investment and employer engagement, ensuring that provision is responsive, inclusive and supports progression into employment, apprenticeships and higher education.

How our provision meets skills priorities

The Group delivers a broad and balanced curriculum through Southport College and King George V Sixth Form College (KGV), ensuring that both technical and academic pathways contribute to meeting priority skills needs.

Supporting learners to fulfil their potential

Southport Education Group provides clear progression pathways from entry level through to higher education and employment. Provision includes:

- Study programmes, T Levels and vocational qualifications in priority sectors such as engineering, construction, digital and health
- A broad academic offer at KGV, including STEM subjects (mathematics, physics, biology) and social sciences, supporting progression into high-demand careers
- Foundation learning, supported internships and access to further education programmes, promoting inclusion and progression
- English and maths provision to enable learners to achieve the qualifications needed for employment and further study

This supports national priorities relating to social mobility, progression and attainment, and regional priorities focused on reducing NEETs and increasing participation in higher-level skills.

Developing and supporting the workforce

Southport Education Group invests in its workforce to ensure high-quality teaching and training aligned to current and emerging industry practice. This includes:

- Professional development and upskilling for staff, including AI training and sector relevant training
- Maintaining industry-relevant expertise within curriculum areas
- Supporting career progression for staff, contributing to recruitment and retention

This contributes to national priorities relating to workforce development and quality of provision, and regional priorities to strengthen workforce capability across key sectors.

Supporting employers to develop a skilled workforce

The Group works closely with employers to design and deliver provision that meets workforce needs. This includes:

- Apprenticeships in key sectors such as engineering, construction, business, early years and health and social care
- Industry placements as part of T Level programmes
- Employer engagement in curriculum design and delivery
- Flexible and bespoke training to support upskilling and reskilling

Southport College plays a key role in delivering this provision, particularly in areas identified through the LSIP, including construction, health, digital and engineering.

KGV contributes by providing a strong academic pipeline into higher education and higher-level apprenticeships, particularly in STEM and business-related disciplines.

This supports national priorities to increase apprenticeship participation and employer-led training, and regional priorities focused on productivity, sector growth and addressing skills shortages.

Supporting Communities and Inclusive Growth

Southport Education Group contributes to its local communities by providing accessible and inclusive learning opportunities. This includes:

- Adult education and ESOL provision
- Programmes to support individuals into employment, including employability and sector-based provision
- Provision designed to reduce economic inactivity and support reskilling

This aligns with national priorities relating to lifelong learning and inclusion, and regional priorities focused on inclusive growth, community regeneration and reducing economic inactivity.

Summary of Alignment

The table below summarises how SEG’s strategic aims align with national and regional skills priorities and are delivered through its curriculum offer.

Strategic aim	National priorities addressed	Regional priorities addressed	Curriculum contribution
Learners fulfil their potential	Social mobility; progression; attainment; technical education	Reducing NEETs; raising aspirations; higher-level skills	T Levels, A Levels, vocational pathways, foundation learning, Access to HE
People want to work and are supported in their careers	Workforce development; CPD; leadership	Workforce capability; staff retention; leadership in SMEs	Staff development, leadership programmes, industry-aligned teaching
Employers develop their skilled workforce	Apprenticeships; HTQs; productivity	LSIP sectors: construction, health, digital, engineering	Apprenticeships, T Level placements, employer-led provision
At the heart of our communities	Lifelong learning; inclusion; adult skills	Economic inactivity; community regeneration; inclusive growth	ESOL, adult learning and employability programmes

Overall Contribution

Through this approach, Southport Education Group ensures that its curriculum:

- Is aligned to national and regional skills priorities
- Supports economic growth and productivity
- Provides clear progression pathways for learners
- Meets the needs of employers and communities

The Group will continue to review its provision in line with labour market intelligence, employer feedback and policy developments, ensuring that its offer remains responsive and relevant.

Alignment to Skills Priorities Curriculum Mapping 2026/27

Strategic Intent (SEG)	National Skills Priorities (England)	Regional Skills Priorities (Liverpool City Region / North West)	Southport College Curriculum Offer	KGV Sixth Form Curriculum Offer
1. Deliver technical education in priority growth sectors	• Engineering & manufacturing • Construction & infrastructure • Digital & AI skills • Green skills (Net Zero)	• Advanced manufacturing & maritime • Construction & housing retrofit • Port logistics growth • Digital sector expansion	• T Level Engineering & Manufacturing • Engineering Level 2–3 (Electrical/Mechanical) • Construction trades (Brickwork, Carpentry, Electrical, Plumbing) • Green Skills (retrofit, renewables) • IT & Cybersecurity	• A Level Maths & Further Maths • A Level Physics • Applied Science (BTEC) • Core Maths
2. Grow apprenticeships aligned to employer demand	• Apprenticeship expansion • Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) • Workforce productivity	• SME workforce development • Apprenticeship growth in construction, care, logistics • Higher-level skills shortages	• Apprenticeships: • Engineering Technician • Business Administrator • Accounts/Finance Assistant • Early Years Educator • Adult Care Worker • Construction trades	• A Levels (Business, IT, Sciences) • Progression into higher and degree apprenticeships
3. Meet workforce demand in health, education and care sectors	• NHS workforce plan • Social care expansion • Early years entitlement rollout	• Health & social care staff shortages • Early years workforce demand • Public sector recruitment pressures	• T Level Health • BTEC Health & Social Care (Level 2–3) • Care apprenticeships • Early Years apprenticeships • Access	

How do we engage with stakeholders to understand skills needs

Southport Education Group uses a systematic, evidence based approach to assessing local, regional and national skills needs. This forms the foundation of our curriculum planning, our strategic engagement with employers and our fulfilment of the Local Needs Duty, which requires providers to review how well their provision meets local needs and outline actions taken as a result.

This process has been strengthened to reflect 2026 DfE updates emphasising early engagement with Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs), ongoing involvement in LSIP development and the requirement for annual accountability statements to forecast how future provision will respond to both current and emerging priorities.

Use of Labour Market Intelligence (LMI)

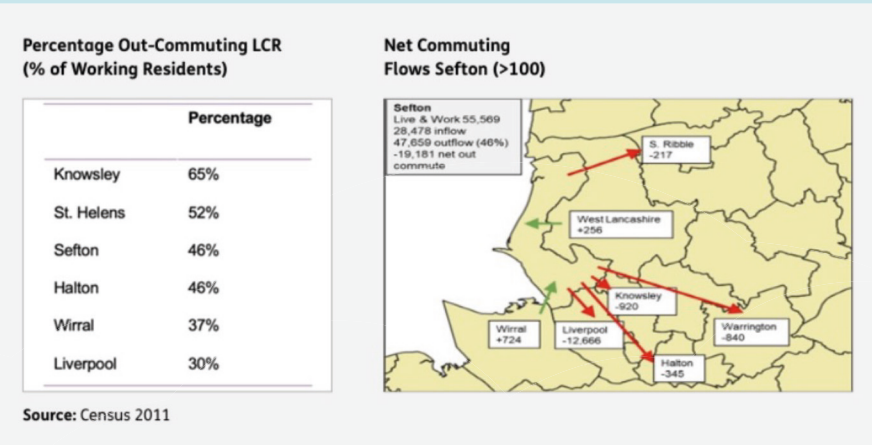
The Group draws upon a wide range of labour market intelligence sources to monitor economic changes, job growth patterns and skills shortages, including:

- Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) for Liverpool City Region and Lancashire
- LSIP Groups and Liverpool Combined Authority – through engagement in Skills Advisory partners, or the annual skills reports, association of Liverpool city region colleges.
- Liverpool City Region Skills Reports, which provide annual analysis of the region’s priority sectors, future growth areas and skills challenges.
- Unit for Future Skills – Local Skills Dashboard, which offers national and local data on employment trends, qualification demand, wage levels and future skills trajectories.

- Employer representative bodies –such as Chambers of Commerce, CITB, etc.
- Sector based skills or employment reports –e.g., PWC Economic Outlook; City & Guilds, CITB, Learning, Vector, LSIPS & Work Institution etc.
- Employers supporting our curriculum design and delivery.
- The College has a close relationship with the Southport BID that has over access to over 800 local business in Southport from small to national.

Abstract from Sefton Economic Strategy Update (2026) - Office for National Statistics (2017): 2011 Census aggregate data. UK Data Service.

This triangulation supports curriculum decisions and ensures the Group’s forward delivery plan is responsive to both national priorities and local employer feedback.



Engagement with employer representative bodies and strategic authorities

The 2026 DfE update introduced a clearer expectation for early and ongoing engagement with Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) and Combined or Mayoral Authorities as part of the accountability process.

Accordingly, the Group ensures active representation and regular participation in: Liverpool City Region skills advisory structures

- LCR LSIP working groups and consultation activities
- Chamber of Commerce sector specific employer panels
- Strategic development forums across the FE sector

This engagement is essential for aligning provision to LSIP priorities, particularly in Health, Digital, Engineering, Construction and Green Technologies.

Employer Engagement and Curriculum Co Design

In line with strengthened national guidance requiring employer involvement in shaping curriculum, the Group maintains a well established three tier employer engagement model, which includes:

- Employer led curriculum design and updating (programme validation, technical content alignment, equipment recommendations).
- Employer input in delivery (guest lectures, employer set projects, etc).
- Work based learning and placements, including T Level industry placements and apprenticeship collaboration.

The Group’s work with more than 300 local employers ensures that programmes remain current, technically aligned and reflective of workforce needs.

Collaboration with local stakeholders

The Group collaborates extensively with local partners, reinforcing the Local Needs Duty requirement for stakeholder validation of curriculum decisions:

- LSIP Groups and Liverpool Combined Authority – through engagement in Skills Advisory partners, or the annual skills reports, association of Liverpool city region colleges.
- Employer representative bodies –such as Chambers of Commerce, CITB, etc.
- Sector based skills or employment reports –e.g., PWC Economic Outlook; City & Guilds, CITB, Learning, Vector, LSIPS & Work Institution etc.
- Employers supporting our curriculum design and delivery.
- The College has a close relationship with the Southport BID that has over access to over 800 local business in Southport from small to national.

These engagements ensure that employer demand, community needs and strategic priorities—such as tourism growth, social inclusion, adult reskilling and health workforce expansion—are reflected in the curriculum.

How Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) Informs Decisions

Cross college and regional FE collaboration

The Group actively contributes to collaborative work across the Liverpool City Region FE sector, including SDF and LSIF projects involving:

- City of Liverpool College
- Hugh Baird College
- Wirral Met College
- Riverside College
- St Helens and Knowsley College

These partnerships support development of consistent regional curriculum standards and investment in new technologies.

Triangulation of data for strategic decision making

Curriculum planning panels triangulate evidence from:

- LSIPs
- Local labour market data
- Regional skills reports
- Employer feedback
- Internal performance data

The College Corporation validates these findings, as required under Section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, which mandates governing bodies to assess how well provision meets local needs and what further action is required.

Implementation of DfE 2026–27 Accountability Requirements

The Group’s revised approach reflects the 2026 updates to accountability guidance, including:

- Using LSIP engagement to shape the forthcoming year’s curriculum, even where LSIP publications are not yet finalised.
- Responding to updated national skills priorities, as reflected in the 2026 revision to accountability agreements.
- Preparing for the new publication timeline, requiring accountability statements to be submitted by 31 July 2026. These measures ensure compliance and alignment with DfE expectations for clear, future focused planning.

Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) provides the evidence base that underpins the Group’s curriculum planning, resource allocation, investment decisions and strategic priorities. As required in the 2026–27 Accountability Statement guidance, providers must demonstrate how their future provision aligns with local, regional and national needs, informed by LSIPs, national skills priorities and local labour market data.

Southport Education Group uses LMI to:

Identify Priority Sectors and Skills Shortages

LMI drawn from Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), the Liverpool City Region Skills Report and the Unit for Future Skills dashboard highlights sectors with current and forecast shortages, such as Health, Digital, Engineering, Construction and Green Technologies. This shapes decisions about where to expand T Levels, which apprenticeship programmes to prioritise and where to direct capital investment.

Forecast Future Workforce Needs

National and regional datasets highlight long term skills trajectories, enabling us to plan multi year growth in areas such as renewable energy, digital innovation and health and care—an explicit expectation within the 2026 guidance.

Shape Curriculum Content and Qualifications

LMI insights ensure that course content, assessment methods and technical skills remain aligned with the competencies employers identify as essential for emerging job roles, particularly in fast changing sectors such as AI, cyber security and EV technologies.

Determine Modes of Delivery

Where LMI shows rising demand for flexible training—especially for adult learners and SMEs—the Group adjusts its offer to include short courses, modular training, blended learning and employer responsive bootcamps.

How Employer Feedback Is Used

Employer engagement is a core requirement of both the LSIP process and the 2026 accountability framework, which emphasises early, ongoing and meaningful collaboration with Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) and local businesses.

Employer feedback influences decisions by enabling the Group to:

Validate and Co Design Curriculum

Employers participate in curriculum panels, qualification planning and review discussions to ensure technical content, assessment approaches and specialist equipment reflect real workforce expectations.

Shape Work Based Learning and Industry Placements

Feedback guides the structure of T Level placements, apprenticeship off the job training and sector specific work experience opportunities.

Identify Emerging Skills Gaps

Employers provide intelligence on new technologies, regulatory requirements and shifts in job roles, enabling rapid curriculum adaptation and the creation of new short courses, such as sustainability training, digital upskilling and EV system maintenance.

Influence Strategic Investment

Employer insights contribute to decisions around capital expenditure, including investment in renewable energy training equipment, health simulation facilities and digital laboratories.

Engagement with other providers in the area

Southport Education Group recognises that meeting the skills needs of the region cannot be achieved in isolation. The expanded 2026 accountability guidance highlights the importance of strategic collaboration between schools, FE colleges, HE institutions and training providers to ensure a coherent, complementary regional offer aligned to LSIP priorities.

Collaboration with local schools

The Group works closely with Sefton schools to ensure clear progression pathways into post 16 education. Engagement includes:

- **Attendance at school careers events, progression evenings and STEM days**
- **Sharing curriculum developments and new T Level opportunities**
- **Joint work on transition support for learners with SEND**
- **Delivery of outreach taster sessions**

These partnerships ensure learners and families are fully informed of local options, supporting a key LSIP objective of improving transitions and reducing skills leakage.

Collaboration with Further Education Colleges

Southport Education Group is one of six FE Colleges / College Groups serving the Liverpool City Region (LCR), namely:

- **Hugh Baird College, Bootle, Sefton.**
- **SK College Group -(St Helens College, St Helens and Knowsley Community College, Knowsley.)**
- **Southport Education Group, (Southport College and KGV Sixth Form), Sefton.**
- **Riverside College, Halton.**
- **The City of Liverpool College, Liverpool.**
- **Wirral Metropolitan College, Wirral.**

Whilst recognising that each individual college has a unique offer that serves its local community, LCR Colleges work collaboratively in support of the wider City Region. Collaboration involves ensuring our FE Colleges have a collective strategic voice that both informs and delivers the socio-economic outcomes for education and skills, central to our mission. This includes the development of new and innovative curriculum; engaging employers and their representative bodies; building partnerships with schools; enhancing careers education and developing positive relationships with key stakeholders within the Liverpool City Region, all of which harnesses innovation and improves efficiency.

The Association of Liverpool City Region Colleges (AoLCRC) was established c25 years ago, to facilitate such collaborative work. In the last few years, in addition to representing and supporting developments within the FE sector as a whole; the LCR Colleges have developed collaborative projects for the Skills Development Fund, the Local Skills Improvement Fund and other project based devolved funding. This has facilitated capital investment, development of new curricula, employer and school engagement and professional updating.

Throughout this time, the AoLCRC and each of the colleges it represents, have worked closely with the Combined Authority, informing and contributing to the LCR Growth Plan, the Long Term Skills Strategy and the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) which is led by Liverpool Chamber of Commerce. In addition to these key strategies we inform the many additional, project focused strategies within LCR documentation where they define strategic intent.

Our FE colleges are key strategic partners that support the socio-economic growth of our region, through the design, development and delivery of education and skills both regionally, as a devolved administration, and nationally, as the public sector anchor organisations responsible for education and skills.

The collective commitment to, and engagement in, AoLCRC is a key component of our Colleges' focus on harnessing innovation and improving efficiency through collaborative work within the FE sector. Further details can be found on our website: <https://www.aolcrrcolleges.ac.uk/>

Contribution to Regional Strategic Development

The Group plays an active role in cross sector boards and employer networks, including:

- **Southport Skills and Productivity Board**
- **Sefton Council economic development networks**
- **Local enterprise and sector panels**

The 2026 accountability guidance directly reinforces the role of FE collaboration in delivering LSIP priorities and avoiding fragmented provision.

Collaboration with Higher Education Institutions

The Group collaborates with regional universities including:

- **Edge Hill University**
- **UCLan**

These partnerships support:

- **Progression routes for students completing T Levels, vocational programmes and creative industries pathways**
- **Joint curriculum planning and bridging content**
- **Higher level apprenticeship opportunities**
- **Enrichment activities and guest lectures**

This enhances learner progression opportunities and aligns with national expectations for increased parity and connectivity between FE and HE.

- **Chambers of Commerce and Business Improvement District (BID) structures**
- **These partnerships ensure the Group's curriculum reflects validated employer and sector intelligence, consistent with DfE's expectation for early engagement in LSIP development.**

Use of Inclusive Mainstream Funding to Support SEND Reform (2026/27)

Context

Southport Education Group (SEG) recognises the importance of the national reforms to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system, which aim to improve inclusion, consistency of support, and outcomes for learners with additional needs.

Inclusive Mainstream Funding (IMF) will be used to strengthen SEN support across the Group, ensuring that learners with SEND can access high-quality education, make sustained progress, and successfully transition into employment, independent living or further study.

Our approach aligns with our strategic aims, particularly:

- A place where learners fulfil their potential
- A place at the heart of our communities

Strategic Intent

- SEG intends to use Inclusive Mainstream Funding to:
- Support early identification and timely intervention for learners with SEND
- Strengthen inclusive teaching practices across all curriculum areas
- Enable successful transition into and within post-16 education
- Improve outcomes, progression and destinations for learners with additional needs
- Align provision with the reformed SEND system, including greater consistency and partnership working

Planned Use of Funding

Transition into Post-16 Education

SEG will prioritise effective transition from school into college by:

- Enhancing transition planning with feeder schools, local authorities and families
- Delivering taster programmes, summer transition activities and enhanced induction
- Providing individual learner profiles to ensure support needs are clearly understood from enrolment
- Increasing liaison with EHCP coordinators and SEND caseworkers
- This will ensure that learners enter provision with appropriate support in place, reducing the risk of disengagement.

High-Quality Inclusive Teaching and Learning

Funding will be used to embed inclusive practice through:

- Continuous professional development for staff in adaptive teaching, neurodiversity, and inclusive pedagogy
- Deployment of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) in a targeted and needs-led way
- Development of assistive technologies and digital accessibility tools
- Embedding universal design for learning (UDL) principles across the curriculum
- This supports a shift from reliance on individual support to high-quality teaching for all learners, in line with SEND reform expectations.

Targeted Learning Support and Intervention

SEG will ensure that learners receive appropriate targeted support through:

- Structured in-class and out-of-class interventions
- Specialist support for learners with autism, SEMH needs, and specific learning difficulties
- Small group and personalised programmes where required
- Access to pastoral, wellbeing and safeguarding support services
- This ensures that support is proportionate, personalised and outcomes-focused.

Preparation for Adulthood and Progression

Funding will support improved outcomes by strengthening preparation for adulthood:

- **Expansion of Supported Internships and employability pathways**
- **Integration of work experience and employer engagement for learners with SEND**
- **Development of independence, communication and life skills programmes**
- **Close working with employers to improve inclusive employment opportunities**
- **This aligns with national expectations for SEND learners to progress into employment and independent living.**

Systems, Partnerships and Continuous Improvement

SEG will work with partners to ensure alignment with the reformed system:

- **Collaboration with local authorities, health services and other providers**
- **Participation in local SEND networks and LSIP-informed activity**
- **Use of data tracking and learner reviews to monitor progress and outcomes**
- **Continuous review of provision to ensure consistency and quality**

The Bridge – Specialist Support and Inclusive Pathways

SEG will utilise Inclusive Mainstream Funding to further develop The Bridge as a key component of its inclusive offer by:

- **Providing a structured, supportive environment for learners with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who require additional support to transition into mainstream provision, supported internships or employment, particularly those who have struggled to engage in mainstream education, present with SEMH needs, or have been home schooled or accessed alternative provision**
- **Delivering highly tailored programmes that build confidence, engagement and readiness to learn, supporting re-engagement with education**
- **Supporting learners to develop core skills in communication, emotional regulation and independence**
- **Offering a stepped approach that enables learners to reintegrate into mainstream education or undertake work placement opportunities at an appropriate pace**
- **Ensuring close collaboration between The Bridge team, curriculum staff, LSAs and external professionals, including Local Authorities and SEND Casework Officers**

As a new provision from 2026/27, is designed to support learners to successfully reintegrate into education and progress into mainstream provision, supported internships or employment. It will act as a flexible and responsive pathway, ensuring that learners with higher levels of need are not excluded from mainstream or employment opportunities, but are instead supported to access them successfully over time. This provision will play a vital role in improving engagement, reducing barriers to learning, and enabling positive progression routes.

Intended Impact

Through the effective use of Inclusive Mainstream Funding, SEG expects to:

- **Improve retention, achievement and progression rates for learners with SEND**
- **Increase successful transition into employment, apprenticeships and further study**
- **Enhance learner experience, confidence and independence**
- **Ensure consistent and high-quality inclusive practice across all provision**

Southport Education Group will use Inclusive Mainstream Funding to deliver a coordinated, inclusive and outcomes-focused approach that supports the successful implementation of SEND reforms. By focusing on early intervention, high-quality teaching, targeted support and strong partnerships, the Group will ensure that learners with SEND are fully supported to achieve their potential and progress into meaningful destinations.

Governance, curriculum assurance & corporation statement

Southport Education Group maintains a robust governance and assurance framework that ensures all curriculum planning, delivery and quality improvement activities align with statutory duties, national policy expectations and validated local skills needs. The strengthened requirements introduced in the 2026–27 Accountability Statement Guidance place significant emphasis on governor oversight, triangulation of evidence and clear demonstration of how the institution meets both current and emerging local needs.

Governance oversight of local needs duty and LSIP alignment

Under Section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, governing bodies are legally required to review how well the education and training provided meets local needs and to determine actions improving alignment. The 2026 guidance reiterates and strengthens this statutory duty, with explicit expectations for governing bodies to:

- Scrutinise the evidence informing curriculum planning
- Validate alignment with LSIP priorities
- Assure that planned provision is responsive to employer verified needs
- Confirm that actions taken reflect recommendations from LSIP engagement, community feedback and labour market analysis

The Corporation receives detailed reports on LSIP engagement, employer partnerships, curriculum development, project delivery and workforce planning. These inputs allow governors to evaluate whether curriculum decisions support both national priorities and local labour market needs, as required in the updated guidance

Governors also receive updates on the newly reinforced expectation for providers to work proactively with Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) and Combined Authorities throughout the LSIP development cycle, not only upon publication.

Evidence triangulation and independent validation

To fulfil the Local Needs Duty and meet governance expectations, the Corporation triangulates:

- Internal curriculum planning reports
- Local Skills Improvement Plans (Liverpool City Region and Lancashire)
- Labour market intelligence from national and regional sources
- Ofsted findings and monitoring reports
- Employer feedback from advisory boards, sector panels and ERB engagements
- Community stakeholder insights
- Reports from external professional advisors

This triangulation process is an explicit requirement in the 2026 accountability guidance, ensuring that providers base decisions on validated, externally informed evidence rather than purely internal analyses.

The use of an independent advisor further enhances the objectivity and credibility of governance assurance.

Monitoring, curriculum impact & quality assurance

The Principal reports regularly to the Corporation on the impact of collaborative work, employer engagement and strategic initiatives, consistent with updated DfE expectations for transparent reporting and targeted oversight.

Curriculum assurance activities monitored by governors include:

- Progress against strategic curriculum development priorities
- Quality of apprenticeship provision in line with the updated 2026 Apprenticeship Accountability Framework (AAF), including revised indicators, removal of outdated supplementary metrics and emphasis on quality and progress over administrative measures
- Performance against national benchmarks (achievement, progression, English and maths)
- This systematic monitoring provides assurance that curriculum developments remain aligned with both LSIP priorities and national skills policy.

Assurance of curriculum alignment with local, regional and national needs

Having reviewed internal planning, external data and expert validation, the Corporation is satisfied that:

- The curriculum plan accurately reflects local labour market conditions, including high demand sectors such as health, digital, construction, green technologies, hospitality and creative industries.
- Actions taken following the Local Needs Duty review are appropriate, forward looking and aligned with LSIP identified priorities.

- The curriculum is responsive to emerging needs, supported by employer feedback and ongoing involvement in LSIP development processes.
- The Group plays an active, credible role in regional collaboration, aligning provision with neighbouring FE colleges and strategic partners, as emphasised in the 2026 guidance.

These conclusions are reinforced by findings from recent inspections, advisory feedback, curriculum panels and strategic development initiatives.

Corporation Statement

On behalf of the Corporation, it is confirmed that the updated College Plan and Accountability Statement presented above reflect the agreed purpose, aims and strategic objectives of Southport Education Group. The plan has been reviewed in accordance with the statutory Local Needs Duty, triangulated with external labour market intelligence, informed by employer and stakeholder engagement and aligned with the priorities identified through Local Skills Improvement Plan processes.

The Corporation further confirms that this Accountability Statement meets the requirements set out in the Department for Education's 2026–27 guidance, including strengthened expectations for early engagement with Employer Representative Bodies, alignment with LSIP priorities and publication by the statutory deadline of 31 July 2026.


Paul Walker
Chair of Governors


Michelle Brabner
Principal
Chief Executive

Southport Education Group is committed to ensuring transparency, accountability and compliance with statutory requirements as set out in the 2026–27 Accountability Statement and Local Needs Duty Guidance. The Group will publish its Accountability Statement within the required timeframe and ensure that supporting documents are accessible, current and aligned with national policy.

Required supporting documentation

Ofsted Reports and Monitoring Visits

The most recent Ofsted reports and monitoring visit findings will be published alongside the Accountability Statement. These reports provide external validation of curriculum quality, leadership effectiveness and learner outcomes, which form part of the Corporation’s triangulation process for determining curriculum alignment.

These reports are available via Ofsted and will be linked appropriately in the published document. (e.g., 2024–25 inspection and monitoring visit reports).

Financial Statements

The Group’s audited financial statements will be referenced as part of governance transparency. These include the most recent year end accounts and provide assurance regarding financial sustainability and strategic investment decisions, supporting DfE expectations for strong governance and accountability.

Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)

Links to both the Liverpool City Region LSIP and the Lancashire LSIP will be included, as providers are required to demonstrate how provision for the coming year aligns with validated regional priorities and employer verified skills needs.

[Local Skills Improvement Plan - Liverpool Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Home - Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan](#)

Unit for Future Skills – local skills dashboard

The Group draws on national labour market data published by the Department for Education through the Unit for Future Skills. This source is explicitly referenced in the Accountability Statement guidance as a key tool for providers in demonstrating evidence based alignment with local needs.

[Unit for Future Skills – Local Skills Dashboard - Movement to Work](#)

Liverpool City Region Skills Reports

The annual LCR Skills Report and the LCR Green Jobs & Skills Plan provide essential context for shaping the Group’s technical, professional and green skills provision. These reports clarify sector priorities and labour market trends across the region, consistent with the statutory requirement for local needs alignment.

[Skills & Apprenticeships | Liverpool City Region Combined Authority](#)