



Halesowen
College

**Meeting Skills Needs;
Our Annual Accountability Agreement**
2025 - 2026

Here for skills.

Our Vision

is for Halesowen College to be exceptional

Our Purpose

To inspire, shape and enrich futures, helping our communities to thrive through educating and the development of skills.



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Our Future

Halesowen College is a lively, ambitious and highly inclusive tertiary college providing broad and extremely supportive education and skills development to young people and adults from across the Black Country and Birmingham. We provide the exceptional education, training and support that will transform life chances and equip our communities to flourish in a rapidly changing world.

We are proactive and focused on the future.

Halesowen College has ambition:

Our students will:

- be inspired to be ambitious and achieve their potential
- flourish personally and professionally, enjoy College and go on to live happy and purposeful lives
- be resilient, independent and ready to learn
- use the skills they have learned to contribute to the local, regional or national economy
- have strategies to sustain positive physical and mental health

Our employers and stakeholders will:

- be an integral part of the College
- shape our curriculum with innovation, knowledge and enthusiasm
- provide opportunities for students to build skills via work placements and apprenticeships
- benefit from skills development to realise increased productivity
- see Halesowen College as their partner of choice

Our parents will:

- be an important lever for raising achievement
- work together with teachers to positively influence and motivate young people
- feel a valued part of the Post-16 educational journey
- have access to information and opportunities to regularly engage with the College

Our community will:

- see the college as an anchor institution
- benefit from the skills developed by the college
- see positive economic impact from College activities
- be rewarded with a talent pipeline who will be the nurses engineers, accountants and scientists of tomorrow



Strategic Objectives

Our plan has been refreshed. This new plan is not in any way a move away from the strategic direction we agreed two years ago, it does modernise the approach and align us more clearly with the priorities of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and the government missions. Victor Hugo's quote "Change your opinions, keep to your principles, change your leaves, keep intact your roots" – best describes our position. Our five strands will enable us to move towards our vision and continually improve the quality of teaching, learning and skills development whilst maintaining the financial resilience and sustainable approach to invest in the College of the present and the future.

Our strategic objectives:

- provide exceptional quality of education by developing skills, shaping of attitudes, behaviours and the whole self, to inspire all learners to be their best
- deliver an impactful, inclusive and stimulating curriculum which enables learners to lead happy and fulfilled lives whilst contributing positively to the local, regional and national economy
- position Halesowen College as an anchor institution with a reputation for success; impacting positively in our communities
- invest to drive forward our high performing, sustainable and resilient College
- maximise the talent, performance and well-being of our team

These objectives will be delivered by our team who are:

- valued and supported
- inclusive and welcoming
- innovative and motivational
- passionate about learning, skills and success for all students
- ambitious for everyone
- proud to work at Halesowen College

Our vision, intent and strategic direction all support our values:

Inclusion

Care

Ambition

Respect

Empower

The Corporation conducts regular reviews of the College's curriculum ensuring it has positive impact and readiness for current and future skills needs as detailed within this accountability statement. When prioritising this year's annual objectives we have considered the national skills priorities; Invest 2035, Get Britain Working and the driving sectors including digital and technologies, professional and business services, creative industries, defence, health and construction.

Our Place and the Communities We Serve

The College serves multiple communities, mainly within the Local Authority areas of Dudley, Sandwell and parts of Birmingham. These communities have diverse demographics and different labour markets. However, all face some level of socioeconomic challenge.

The claimant count in Dudley is 5.1% of the working age population whereas in Sandwell and Birmingham this rises to 7.4% and 10.7% respectively. The national position is 4.3%. Youth unemployment is a significant problem at 7.7% across the region as a whole.

In demand occupations in Dudley include teachers; care and health workers; business, administration, accounting and retail. Gaps in provision currently include dentistry and professions allied to medicine; management and professional; finance and accounting; forklift operators; digital and hospitality and catering.

Against this backdrop, the College has a clear and important role - upskilling and educating local people to enable them to gain sustainable employment and go on to live happy and fulfilled lives.

We believe that education is powerful and provides choices. Whilst the data is sobering, Halesowen College has the opportunity to impact positively and ensure that our communities can learn, flourish and succeed. Working alongside the West Midlands Combined Authority, Black Country Chamber of Commerce, Halesowen BID and, in partnership with our employers, other educational providers and the wider community, we can support all five government missions and have significant positive impact.

There is much work to do as our area still lags behind the rest of the UK in terms of qualifications, employment, pay and skills. There are many areas of deprivation. The place based data provides context to our strategic ambitions and objectives within this Accountability Agreement.

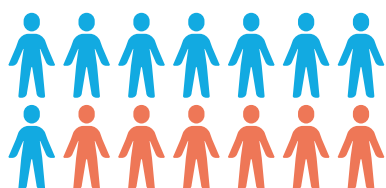


Our College Community

Currently Halesowen College has 5,333 full time 16-18 learners. This cohort has the following characteristics:

GENDER

58% of our learners are female, with 41% being male and 1% other



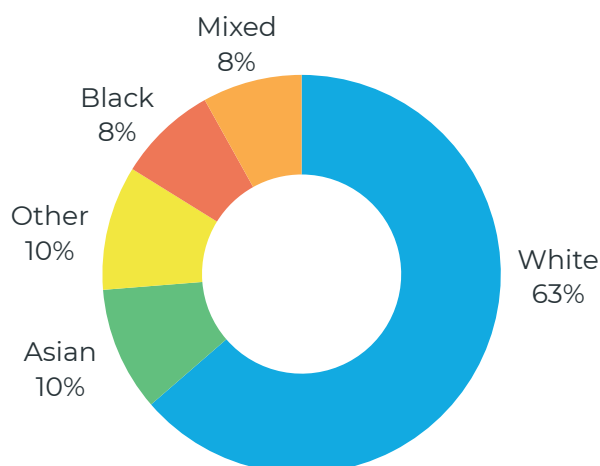
DISABILITY

80% of our learners have no disability, with 18% having a disability and 2% preferring not to say



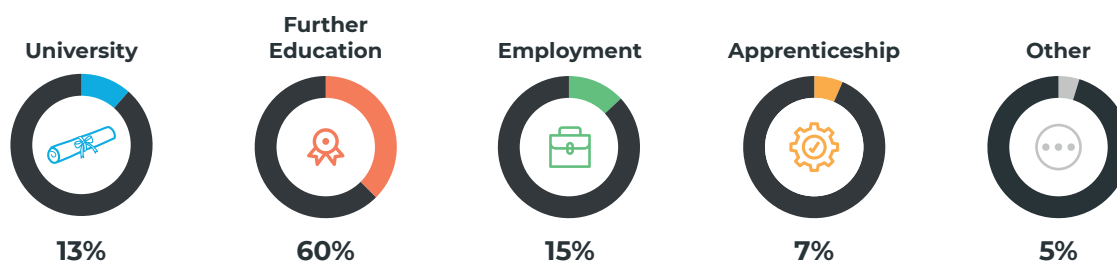
On entry to the College, 1,245 of learners did not have GCSE Maths and English at grade 4 or above. We draw from 133 first level postcodes and work with young people from some of the most deprived areas such as Lye, Netherton and Smethwick. Despite these challenges, destinations are very positive as shown below.

ETHNIC DIVERSITY



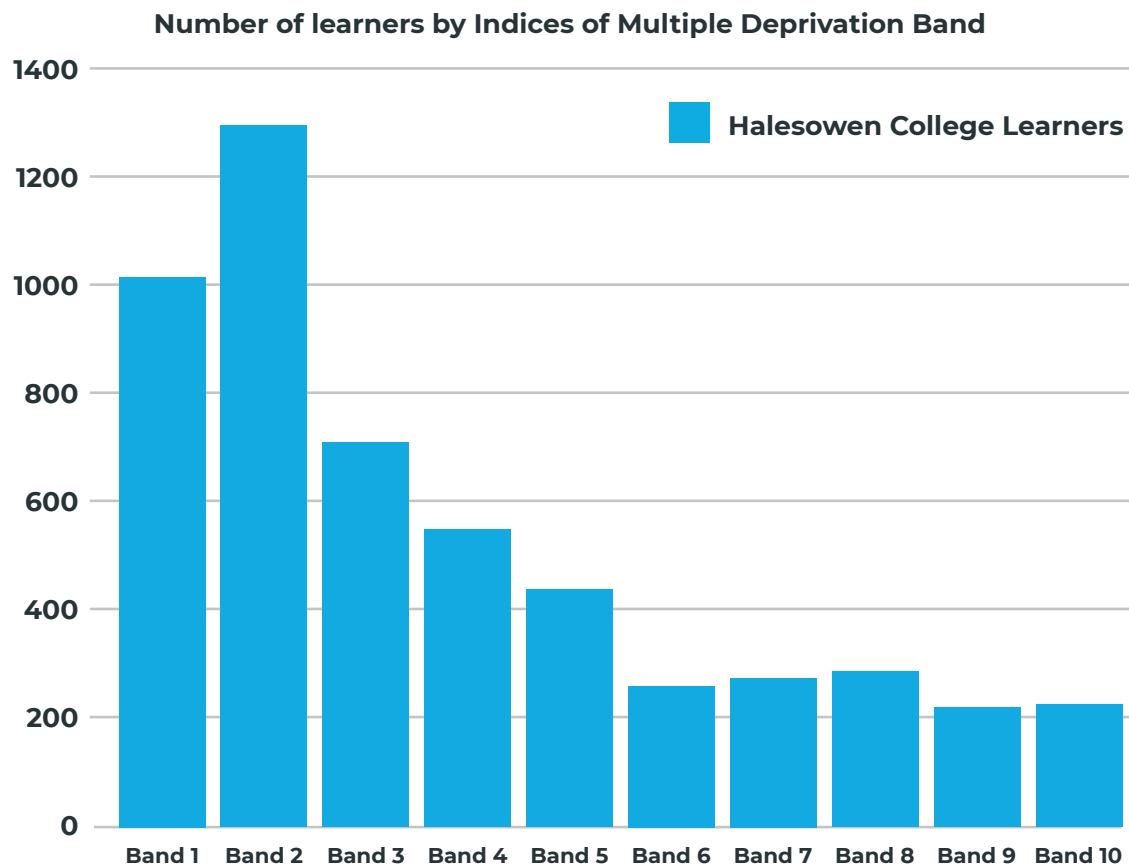
DESTINATIONS

The graphs below show the positive destinations that many of our learners go on to after leaving us despite challenges that can be experienced in the local area.



We support learners financially through our learner support fund, removing financial barriers to engagement. We work with more than 1,400 adult learners and 190 apprentices. The characteristics of our adult community reflects the 16-18 cohort in terms of socioeconomic factors. The diverse and vibrant community creates a rich cultural base and has enabled Halesowen College to be re-accredited as a Leader in Safeguarding Gold Standard, a College of Sanctuary and the Rainbow Flag.

Many of our students, young people and adults face the challenges of poverty and deprivation. The graph below shows the volumes of learners who reside in the areas poorest communities with band 1 being the most deprived communities on the indices of multiple deprivation; 57% of study programme learners live in bands 1 to 3. Socioeconomic issues are such a potential barrier to learning that we have adopted poverty as an additional protected characteristic in our new Single Equality Scheme alongside children who are looked after and care experienced learners.



In Dudley 7.9% of people have no qualifications and this rises to 13.9% in Sandwell – the national average is 6.7%. By 2030, it is expected that the entry point for most jobs will be at level 3 and currently in Dudley only 59.2% of residents have a level 3 qualification. Nationally this figure is 67.9%

Many of our full time learners enter further education without a grade 4 in English and/or Maths. The table below shows qualification deficit in our area.

	Dudley	Sandwell	Birmingham	UK
Level 4	39%	29.6%	44.9%	47.6%
Level 3	59.29%	51.5%	64.6%	64.9%
Level 2	88.3%	78.1%	80.4%	86.7%
Level 1	89.1%	79.2%	83.4%	89.1%
Other	3%	6.9%	4.9%	4.2%
No Qualifications	7.9%	13.9%	11.6%	6.7%

Our Approach to Meeting Local, Regional and National Need

Halesowen College is at the cornerstone of our community and we continue to make positive impact in meeting the skills gaps in current and emerging areas within our area. We have refreshed our employer engagement strategy which sets out our plans for excellence in employer and stakeholder engagement within our region of the Black Country and Birmingham, within the national context. We have set out the three aims below which are incorporated into our strategic plan.

- We will build upon established industry links and forge new relationships to ensure that our curriculum is genuinely co-designed with employers and provides an ongoing talent pipeline for the economy.
- Increase our regions productivity by working in partnership to meeting evolving skills needs of our communities, establishing a sense of place.
- Drive forward all of the government missions, not least the skills agenda, to realise an increased positive societal impact.

Our curriculum planning cycle incorporates a detailed view of the local, regional and national skills landscape in order to ensure our curriculum continues to be accessible, impactful and meets the needs of learners and employers – now and in the future. Data sources used in the planning process including LMI accessed via Nomis, Office for National Statistics, Active Black Country Labour Market Profiles, WMCA Place based reviews, and the Economic Intelligence Unit bulletins. Key sources which shape our offer include the four priorities announced by the Mayor of the West Midlands and Chair of the WMCA;

- Jobs for Everyone.
- Homes for Everyone.
- Growth for Everyone.
- Journeys for Everyone.

At Halesowen College we support these ambitions by providing education and skills development to reduce unemployment and ensure everyone has a sustainable job. By developing our curriculum offer we can provide skills to build an affordable home. Through upskilling we help businesses grow and support innovation. By providing a good standard of education to all we can facilitate everyone earning sufficient income to make sustainable choices.



The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for West Midlands and Warwickshire was launched in May 2023. Firstly, the LSIP identifies three priorities:

Priority 1 aims to ensure that Post-16 education and training provision across the West Midlands and Warwickshire regions meets the ongoing and changing needs of employers across the key sectors.

To support the growth of the region, the LSIP recommends the following key sectors are given primary importance:

- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Construction
- ICT and Digital
- Logistics and Distribution

There is also recognition of the importance of the Health and Social Care sector, the Creative Industries and the Business and Professional Services sector to the West Midlands and Warwickshire economy. In addition, importance should be placed on providing sector specific and cross-cutting responses to skills development in our core themes of:

- Digital Skills
- Leadership and Management
- Power Pack of Skills for employment and life
- An increasingly important theme is of course net zero

This continues to correlate in many ways to the government's missions. The UK's "Invest 2035" focuses on eight key growth driving sectors where the UK excels and has the potential for continued growth. Our curriculum supports this ambition.

Priority 2 aims to facilitate business growth in the region through the provision of targeted and flexible leadership and management training in general and specific topics according to business need.

Priority 3 aims to respond to employer requests for greater levels of essential skills for work and workplace digital skills.

Halesowen College is committed to working with local and regional stakeholders; including employers, local authorities, Chamber of Commerce, ERBs (Employer Representative Bodies), the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and other providers. By playing a key role in the Black Country skills ecosystem we ensure that our provision is responsive to local needs whilst taking account of the surrounding skills ecosystem.



The table below maps Halesowen College's offer against national, regional and local priorities

				Halesowen College		Comments
	Local	Regional	National	Actual	Planned	
Advanced manufacturing		✓	✓			Neighbouring College is a leading provider
Clean Energy Industries		✓	✓	✓		Science/STEM curriculum supports renewable energy and low carbon technology
Creative Industries			✓	✓		Film, music and digital media are well established
Defence			✓	✓		
Digital and Technology		✓	✓	✓	✓	Extensive curriculum offer with more adult skills work planned
Financial Services			✓	✓	✓	Development of CICM (Chartered Institute of Credit Management)
Life Sciences			✓	✓	✓	Building capacity with pharmacy apprentices to build on a comprehensive offer
Professional and Business Services		✓	✓	✓	✓	Broad and impactful curriculum in place with plans to roll out LEAD
Construction	✓	✓	✓		✓	Wet trades centre planned to meet local demand
Health	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Launch a Centre of Excellence and new dentistry curriculum
Logistics/Fork Lift	✓			✓		Forklift training in place and successful in getting people into jobs
Retail	✓			✓	✓	Curriculum in place with promotion of customer service apprenticeships planned
Hospitality and Catering	✓			✓	✓	High performing 16-18 offer and plans to roll out to adults working with Dudley MBC
Initial Teacher Training	✓			✓	✓	Successful partnership delivery with University of Worcester. Level 5 apprenticeship planned from September 2025 linking with new TEACH graduate scheme

Our Partnerships

Halesowen College has strong links with a wide range of partners and we aim to further advance our stakeholder engagement and grow our place in the local communities we serve, continuing to inspire and educate young people and adults. Forging new and strengthening established partnerships, we aim to reach further into our communities to provide, through world class education, routes out of poverty and ensure our learners live happy and fulfilled lives. We understand the importance of place and work with our partners within Dudley, Sandwell and Birmingham to ensure a cohesive educational landscape for our communities.

We continue to work closely with:

West Midlands Combined Authority

Halesowen College supports the aims of the WMCA by developing skills to promote inclusive economic growth in every corner of the region. Working with employers we strive to understand their training needs, adapt our curriculum and ensure its agility to deliver excellent standards of education and training to provide the talent businesses need to realise economic growth and increased prosperity. The WMCA has provided several vehicles for the College to support this through applying local flexibilities to remove financial barriers to learning. The learning is actively engaged in working with the WMCA and key stakeholders from across the West Midlands to collaboratively design our regions response to the “Get Britain Working” Agenda.

Chamber of Commerce

Halesowen College has forged excellent relationships with the Chamber of Commerce, and is now a Patron Member. The Chamber is endorsing our Power Pack of Skills which ensures students develop the behaviours and attitudes needed to thrive at work.

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Halesowen College is committed to reaching out to the most difficult to reach sectors of our community and this will only be possible through partnership working. The Local Authority has a programme of community-based learning which engages some of the hardest to reach cohorts. The College works with the Local Authority, offering courses in community centres and working with the team to shape progression pathways onto more formalised learning which will be valued by an employer. Alongside Dudley College of Technology we meet termly with DMBC to ensure a coherent and impactful educational landscape for Dudley.



West Midlands
Combined Authority



Dudley Business Champions and Education and Skills Board

The Principal is a member of the Board which comprises a group of business leaders, the Local Authority and education providers with the objective of driving regeneration in the Dudley Borough. This provides an opportunity to get to the heart of what makes local businesses tick and hence what the College can offer in terms of skills development and talent pipeline. The College, alongside Dudley College of Technology, and the Local Authority, works with key employers in the borough to establish priorities which we address collectively. The Local Authority is undergoing structural change and there is likely to be adaptations to the Education and Skills Board moving forward.

Department for Work and Pensions/JCP

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. As the UK's biggest public service department, it administers the State Pension and a range of working age, disability and ill health benefits to around 20 million claimants and customers. The College has forged excellent links with the DWP and Job Centre Plus (JCP) in offering Into Employment Programmes to get local people into work.

Halesowen BID

Halesowen BID was established to ensure that Halesowen's future is secured for our local community of businesses and traders. The College works alongside the BID in supporting the skills development needs of the local economy. We host a monthly breakfast meeting which is valuable for networking but which also has an educational element. The College is actively integrated into the business community in the town.

NHS

The College has formed positive partnerships with several NHS Trusts. We have a long-standing relationship with the local Trusts which has involved our students in Health and Social Care working as volunteers for placement. Our Deputy Principal is a public elected governor for the Dudley Group Foundation NHS Trust and is a member of the Council of Governors. The College is working in partnership with Walsall College, Dudley College of Technology and University of Worcester in the Health in Dudley developments.

Engagement with other providers

Halesowen College is an active member of Colleges West Midlands who operate on behalf of Further Education Colleges in our area. The senior team also operate via the Association of Colleges at a regional and national level. There is a culture of collaboration in our area. We are part of Skills West Midlands and Warwickshire which is a collaborative partnership between local employers and educational providers working to improve access to technical skills provision.

Ambition for the Future

Halesowen College aims to be exceptional and provide high quality education and skills development. We have a positive culture of ambition, celebration and inclusivity and look forward to continuing to upskill local people, driving up the standards of education in our area and having an ongoing positive impact on qualifications, employment, pay and skills. Partnership working is crucial – together we can all achieve our shared purpose for skills.



Department
for Work &
Pensions



HALESOWEN **BID**
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

NHS

Our Annual Objectives

	Actions	Impact	Measuring Success
1	Every vocational course and technical pathway to be endorsed by employers demonstrating genuine co-design and collaboration.	Providing a talent pipeline with skills that employers genuinely value.	100% of provision to be endorsed by at least one employer.
2	Launch year 2 of the Power Pack of Skills ensuring it is embedded within schemes of work; contextualised for all cohorts and accessible through exciting and individual enrichment.	Ensuring all learners have the attitude, knowledge and behaviours to seek employment and thrive in the workplace. Thus, supporting the Youth Guarantee.	100% of learners to engage in the skills development and enrichment activities.
3	Work with partners to scope and develop our wet trade centre and electrical engineering.	Positive response to government priorities to upskill and train more people which will further reduce the skills deficit.	Building, staff and curriculum in place for Sept 2026.
4	Develop and deliver an impactful programme of digital expertise for staff, students and employers to provide robust and relevant skills, including AI for the modern workplace.	Providing skills to aid efficiency, navigate and thrive in the AI generation.	50 employers, 300 staff and all learners to engage in at least one module.
5	Refresh and implement a strategy to reduce the volume of NEET students and economically inactive adults including bespoke provision for learners with mental health fragility and alternative provision (AP).	Supporting "Get Britain Working" and ensuring those who have not engaged in, or withdrawn from formal education, have the opportunity to succeed.	Enrolments on BEST to exceed 100; 20 places for mental health resilience and 20 places for AP.

	Actions	Impact	Measuring Success
6	Educate the whole person within a skills focused college which has a modern careers service to ensure that all learners, including those with SEN/ high needs, have the knowledge they need and are well prepared to take the next positive step.	Learners go on from Halesowen College to further study, an apprenticeship or sustainable employment enabling them to lead a happy and fulfilled life.	100% positive destination for all learners.
7	Work with the Black Country Chamber as part of our Patron Membership and the voluntary sector to deepen and formalise partnerships with key employers, civic organisations and other educational institutions to increase cultural capital.	Meaningful partnerships will ensure our curriculum and our approach to engagement is effective and impactful.	At least 30 formal partners.
8	Complete the refurbishment at Shenstone House and launch our Centre of Excellence for health, care and professions allied to medicine to provide a talent pipeline to the NHS.	Addresses the gap in provision for health, dentistry and allied professional and supports the governments mission to provide an NHS fit for the future.	Increase in health enrolments from 400 to 470.
9	Introduce TEACH, our graduate scheme, to increase our talent and aid recruitment; especially in areas where it has been hard to attract applicants.	Recruitment of highly motivated and able individuals to advance the quality of teaching and strengthen industry links.	Recruit at least 5 graduates.

Our Duty

The governing body regularly reviews how Halesowen College meets local, regional and national skills needs both in the immediacy and as part of the longer-term planning process. This is enabled by a clearly defined annual curriculum planning cycle, which demonstrates how the curriculum offer is mapped to local, regional and national priorities. It is triangulated by receiving information on destinations of young people and adults to see that they are moving into a further course of study or securing sustainable employment. Labour market trends are considered in the strategic planning process and shaping our annual plan.

The curriculum strategy was considered in detail at the Corporation planning day in January 2025 and this document supports the overarching strategic ambitions. Regular employer boards for each curriculum area ensure that the evolving skills needs of the local economy continue to be supported by our offer.

Together these mechanisms of review enable regular scrutiny of how the College serves its diverse communities by identifying and planning provision to address skills deficits, and collaborating with partners so that the Corporation has a clear view of the College's place in the educational landscape of our area. It is important to ensure that the College is retaining and growing its strong connection with industry so that the offer remains agile, responsive and future focused.

The Corporation continues looking outward, challenging constructively and supporting the senior team in meeting the skills agenda and achieving all strategic objectives.

On behalf of the Halesowen College Corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the Corporation conducts reviews in line with the local needs duty, as such resulting in this plan. The Annual Accountability Statement sets out an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the corporation at their meeting on 17 June 2025.

The plan will be published on the college's website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed by visiting www.halesowen.ac.uk



Jacquie Carman

Principal and Chief Executive Officer



Jo Chilton

Chair of Governors



Our Supporting Information

Halesowen College Strategic Plan

Curriculum Strategy

Annual Plan 2025/26

DWP/West Midlands Combined Authority Place Based Plan

Dudley Economic Regeneration Strategy

www.halesowen.ac.uk