

Accountability Statement.

2023-24

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Purpose.

Education Partnership North East formed in 2019 after City of Sunderland College merged with Hartlepool Sixth Form College (2017) and Northumberland College (2019). A regional college group, Education Partnership North East (EPNE) is a trading name and comprises:

- › Northumberland College
- › Hartlepool Sixth Form College
- › Sunderland Sixth Form
- › City of Sunderland College (legal entity)

EPNE is a North-east of England place focused provider and materially contributes to regional socio-economic progress. It delivers across all types of provision (within key sectoral areas) including technical education, apprenticeships, sixth form, degree and other higher education. All campuses deliver 16-19 and provision for adults.

The group has developed specialist delivery centres including SEND, Animal and Land, Construction Skills (open 2024), Technical, and Academic.

Developed within the spirit of accountability agreements, our strategic plan sets out our vision and purpose to:

- › Ensure curriculum pathways meet the current and future demands of the regional labour market.
- › Maintain an unwavering and relentless focus on developing students through outstanding teaching, learning, support and assessment.
- › Build culture and develop high performing people, empowered to lead, innovate and take ownership.
- › Build financial resilience and resources to ensure all stakeholders benefit from outstanding learning environments.
- › Ensure we are an engaged sector leader with a strong reputation and growing partnerships.



Context.



EPNE’s geographical footprint stretches from the Tees Valley to the Scottish Border; an area currently comprising 2 devolved authorities (the Tees Valley Combined Authority and North of Tyne Combined Authority); and 1 non-devolved area (North East Combined Authority). Local enterprise partnerships include the TVCA and North East LEP.

Economic characteristics

Pan regional sectors of strategic economic areas of importance include:

- Advanced manufacturing
- Process, chemical and energy
- Digital and creative
- Culture, tourism (including rural) and leisure
- Energy.
- Health and social care, biologics and life sciences.
- Education
- Business and Professional Services
- Transport and logistics
- Construction.

Initial emerging LSIP priorities 2023 (phase 1)

Tees Valley	North East	North of Tyne
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green Energy and Net Zero – Construction• Green Energy and Net Zero – Operational• Health and Social Care• Business and Professional Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Automotive/advanced manufacturing• Construction industries• Digital• Health and health sciences• Transport and logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Construction• Green Energy and Net Zero• Health and Social Care• Business and Professional Services• Culture, Creative, Hospitality and Tourism
<p>Cross-Cutting Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital• Professional Development and Business Skills		<p>Cross-Cutting Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital• Professional Development and Business Skills• Employability

Social and demographic characteristics.

In the TVCA area, the population is 678,200 of which 413,800 are of working age (16-64) and 307,200 are economically active. There are 108,200 individuals economically inactive, of which 30,100 want a job, and there are 40,400 workless households, equating to 20.0% in the area. The area is the same as the UK average for individuals with no qualifications and below the UK average for those with NVQ Levels 1 and above. 9% of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are in the 10% most deprived nationally. The area has 17,930 businesses.

In the NECA area, the population is 1,139,600 of which 703,000 are of working age (16-64) and 556,100 are economically active. There are 173,400 individuals economically inactive, of which 29,400 want a job, and there are 72,000 workless households, equating to 19.0% in the area. The area is above the UK average for individuals with no qualifications and below the UK average for those with NVQ Levels 1 and above. The area has 29,850 businesses.

In the NTCA area, the area’s population is 829,000 of which 517,900 are of working age (16-64) and 394,600 are economically active. There are 127,900 individuals economically inactive, of which 30,700 want a job, and there are 47,800 workless households, equating to 18.5% in the area.

The area is above the UK average for individuals with no qualifications and below the UK average for those with NVQ Levels 1 and above. 80 of the LSOAs are in the 10% most deprived nationally with the majority of these located along the River Tyne corridor and north into SE Northumberland. The area has 25,490 businesses.

The whole area is characterised by:

- High youth unemployment and high adult worklessness.
- Slow labour market recovery after previous recessions.
- Underperformance in Gross Value Added (GVA) per head.
- Skills gaps in growth sectors being acute.
- Household income below UK average.



Local authorities and campuses.

The main campuses of Education Partnership North East are located in 3 local authority areas which are characteristic of aforementioned demographic and social characteristics:

- > Hartlepool Hartlepool Sixth Form College
- > Sunderland City of Sunderland College
- > Northumberland Northumberland College

Main college campus characteristics

- **Hartlepool Sixth Form College, Hartlepool.**

Provides mainly level 3 academic and technical provision. Travel to learn is mainly from the borough of Hartlepool and immediate surrounding area. Provision links to 9 out of 10 strategic economic areas. Pathways to higher education or apprenticeships cater for 3 out of 4 Tees Valley LSIP priority areas

- **Sunderland College City Campus, Sunderland.**

Provides entry to level 5 in technical further and higher education. Travel to learn is mainly from the city of Sunderland and immediate surrounding areas. Provision links to 6 out of 10 strategic economic areas. Pathways to higher education or apprenticeships cater for 4 out of 5 NE LSIP priority areas

- **Sunderland College Bede Campus, Sunderland.**

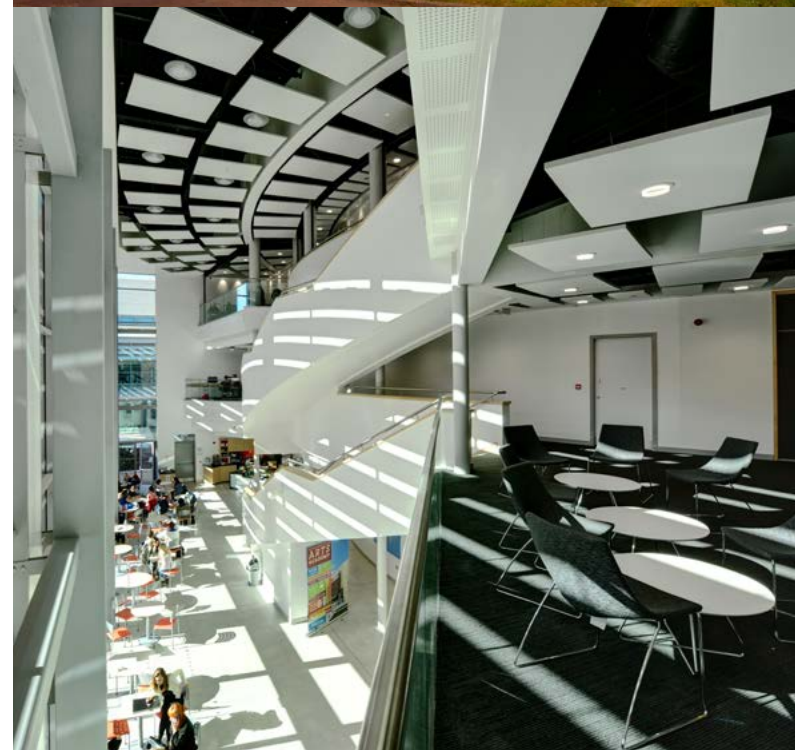
Provides entry to level 6 in academic and technical further/higher education. Travel to learn is from Sunderland City and immediate surrounding areas. Provision links to 4 out of 10 strategic economic areas. Pathways to higher education or apprenticeships cater for 2 out of 5 NE LSIP priority areas.

- **Northumberland College Ashington Campus, Ashington, Northumberland.**

Provides entry to level 6 in technical further/higher education provision. Travel to learn is mainly from the town of Ashington and the surrounding areas in South East Northumberland. Provision links to 10 out of 10 strategic economic areas. Pathways to higher education or apprenticeships cater for 5 out of 5 North of Tyne priority areas.

- **Northumberland College Kirkley Hall Campus, Ponteland, Northumberland.**

Provides entry level to level 6 technical further and higher education provision. Travel to learn is mainly from the south-east and north of Northumberland and immediate surrounding areas, although as a national land-based campus with residential provision, travel to learn patterns do extend beyond the local authority area. Provision links to 3 out of 10 regional strategic economic areas. Pathways to higher education or apprenticeships cater for 2 out of 5 NoT LSIP priority areas. However, provision specifically links to 8 out of 12 national land-based disciplines.



Approach to developing an annual accountability statement.

Key priorities within this accountability agreement are already included within the strategic plan for Education Partnership North East (EPNE). This was developed following extensive consultation with internal and external local, regional and national stakeholders. It was shaped following formalised stakeholder research led by a third party in Sunderland, Northumberland and Hartlepool, obtaining formative contributions from the North East England Chamber of Commerce, community partners, industry/ employers, education providers, staff, students, governors and others.

EPNE's curriculum portfolio and delivery underpin the group's strategic plan. All curriculum is robustly planned and delivery is informed and specifically mapped to Standard Occupational Classification Codes and labour market data trends before approval. Employer advisory boards linked to specific industry/sectoral areas actively feed into the shaping of curriculum for the skills needs of today and tomorrow.

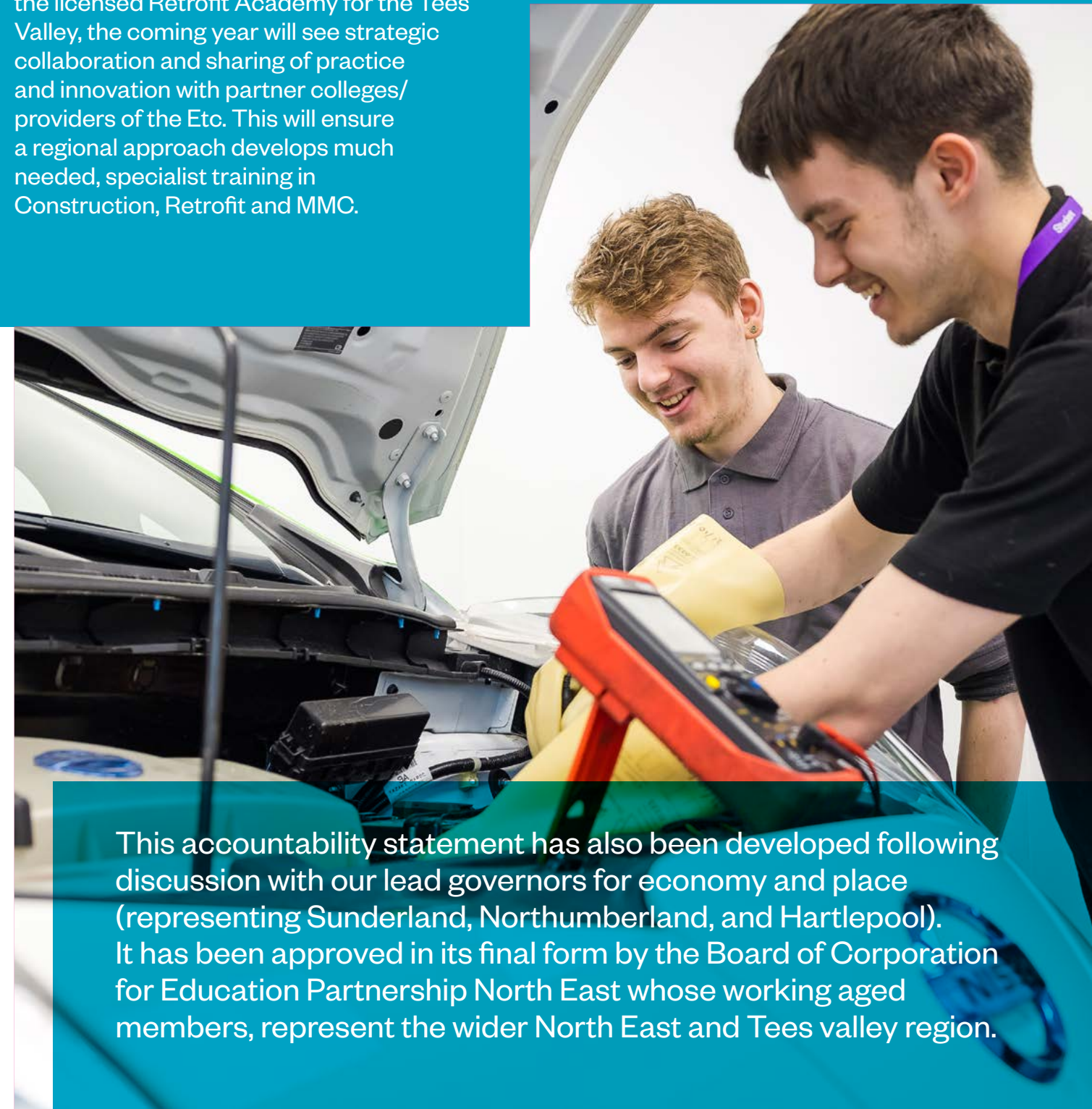
Curriculum linked to specific industry priority areas such as in Health and Social Care, have also been developed through internationalisation supported by the Education and Training Foundation, NELEP, and education partners in Ireland and the USA. These providers have supported EPNE to develop a community connected approach to curriculum intent and implementation. EPNE subsequently gained Future Learning Leader status in 2021.

Additionally, EPNE's specific priority areas have been developed through industry partnerships and provider collaborations via the Strategic Development Fund Programme, Bootcamps, and extensive engagement with local authorities, private training providers, further education colleges, charities, schools and employers. This work is specifically prevalent in the high demand and technical priority areas of Manufacturing, Engineering, Automotive and Logistics, Energy and Construction Industries, including digital construction, retrofit and modern methods.

More recently and adding a new layer to our approach and accountabilities, Education Partnership North East, together with other equally important providers have co-created purposeful strategic alliances with the breadth, expertise and capacity to shape, develop and deliver real, valuable and impacting systemic change within existing and emerging LSIP priority industry/skills areas.

For example, with respective accountability agreements in mind, following the successful appointment of EPNE as the licensed Retrofit Academy for the Northeast and the Etc, as the licensed Retrofit Academy for the Tees Valley, the coming year will see strategic collaboration and sharing of practice and innovation with partner colleges/ providers of the Etc. This will ensure a regional approach develops much needed, specialist training in Construction, Retrofit and MMC.

The aforementioned is one example of how EPNE, as a regionally focussed group, is investing in meaningful pan-regional strategy with preferred visionary partners to develop much-needed, collaborative and cohesive specialist localised training pathways. Similar approaches are being developed in other key economic areas such as within manufacturing, engineering, automotive/ logistics and green skills. For example, a new industry-provider led Nissan Academy is set to open, along with a new green skills alliance from 2023 onwards.



This accountability statement has also been developed following discussion with our lead governors for economy and place (representing Sunderland, Northumberland, and Hartlepool). It has been approved in its final form by the Board of Corporation for Education Partnership North East whose working aged members, represent the wider North East and Tees valley region.

Our contribution to national, regional and local priorities.

Already the annual economic contribution of Education Partnership North East to the local business community in the region is £444.5 million and the average annual return on investment to students is 16.9% in higher wages and to society is 19.6%. Contribution is delivered through our Strategic Plan 2019-2025 which prioritises a bold, coherent and employer led curriculum strategy. This is and will continue to be underpinned by our career focussed curriculum plan, which sets out 4 clear and ambitious statements defining the College's high level, broad and balanced curriculum intent.

- › **Innovative:** An innovative, quality, careers focused curriculum that supports student and college success.
- › **Inclusive:** Clear progression pathways including for the most disadvantaged, to ensure all our students can succeed in life and employment.
- › **Relevant:** Appropriately informed by market intelligence, responsive and relevant to the key regional and national markets.
- › **Coherent:** Meticulously planned and sequenced logically to develop students' long-term knowledge and skills development.



Reflecting regional and local priorities including specific areas of relevant LSIPs (included in the Strategic Plan for Education Partnership North East), the following are examples of some of our aims and targets:

1. Construction Industries (LSIP for North East and NoT)	
1.1	Soft launch the opening a new partnership led Housing Innovation and Construction Skills Academy (HICSA) – a skills hub for Sunderland.
1.3	Further develop, share and deliver essential new skills focussed curriculum in partnership with a newly formed strategic alliance to meet the emerging energy/green agenda within construction and the built environment and to meet an upskilling and reskilling agenda.
1.3	Deliver a new future focussed model of further education and skills to that of traditional further education approaches (in partnership with Schools, SMEs, Local Authority, HEIs and Industry).
1.4	Soft launch a planned spoke of HICSA at Northumberland College (Ashington), to become part of a new MMC build in partnership work with the Department for Education (enabling integration of net zero principles within resources and curriculum)

The overall intended impact is creation of a new skills-based curriculum leading to an increase in the pipeline of employees trained within and beyond traditional trades.

2. Engineering, Manufacturing, Chemical, Automotive and Logistics (LSIP, TVCA, North East and NoT)	
2.1	Launch the opening a new education and skills academy and employer led curriculum in Sunderland in partnership with other providers.
2.2	Develop, share and deliver essential new skills curriculum in partnership with an industry led strategic alliance to meet skills needs of the International Advanced Manufacturing Park in Sunderland and to support wider tier 1 suppliers.
2.3	Further progress a spoke of the academy in Hartlepool (inc. Chemical) and Northumberland.

The overall intended impact is the establishment of a new and growing employer endorsed strategic alliance capable of delivering a comprehensive skills response within the region's Engineering, Manufacturing, Chemical, Automotive and Logistics sectors.

3. Green Skills (LSIP, North East and NoT)	
3.1	Support the national and regional economic and skills agenda through the lens of unitised green and sustainability skills development and curriculum delivery.
3.2	Align, design and deliver unitised green skills curriculum relevant to LSIP priority areas
3.3	Work with an alliance of providers to deliver meaningful skills solutions

The overall intended impact is the successful delivery of short or unitised cross cutting skills delivery linked to several LSIP priority areas and an increased % of individuals into employment.



4. Progress and enhanced approach to supporting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged	
4.1	Embed a new collaborative alliance specifically focussed on a comprehensive programme of engagement to support economic and social inclusion.
4.2	Establish new delivery models to drive positive change and impact within low skills/ workless communities.
4.3	Deepen our expertise in delivery for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged across our communities

The overall intended impact is the creation of new local pathways to education and/or employment to progress those furthest from the labour market into a positive destination.

5. Embedding Technical Reform (LSIP, TVCA, North East and NoT)	
5.1	Complete roll out a full suite of T Levels across Sunderland, Northumberland and Hartlepool in line with economic priority areas
5.2	Design and implement well planned HE Pathways in partnership with preferred university and higher education providers
5.3	Reshape level 1 and level 2 curriculum across Sunderland, Northumberland and Hartlepool to support student success at level 3

The overall intended impact is to build on the group's progress to date and deliver a comprehensive programme of T -levels with positive destinations to employment or higher education.

Corporation statement.

The Board of Education Partnership North East is committed to complying with our duty under a new section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 to review provision in relation to local needs, as proposed in the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill 2022.

Approval of this accountability statement was granted on 4 July 2023
(subject to board approval)

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Supporting Documentation

[Education Partnership North East Strategic Plan](#)

[NELEP Strategic Economic Plan](#)

[Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan](#)

