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1. Purpose

The College's Vision is to:

- Consistently be recognised as a national leading vocational centre dedicated to delivering outstanding teaching & learning.
- Deliver courses that continue to reflect local and regional industry needs and be in fields where we have a proven track record.
- Train and educate learners who will be seen as the first choice by employers.

The College's Mission is:

To provide high quality education, learning and training which, through partnership working, offers young people and adults the opportunity to achieve their potential, and contribute to the success of the community.

The College's provision is important in helping to resolve short term skills shortages, in providing unique specialist training and, probably most importantly, in developing a talent pipeline of young people who will have not only the transferable skills required for modern jobs which cannot yet be envisaged, but the strong behaviours for employment that are demanded in every sector.

The College's expressed **intent** is to achieve this by:

1. Working closely with stakeholders in the design of the College's provision, and shaping its delivery, so that skills priorities are reflected strongly in our offer.

Although it is not always possible for stakeholders to influence either the design of qualifications, or the selection of programmes which receive public funding, the College leadership and its Governors use their influence in National employer groups, with awarding bodies, education collaborations and with local skills networks to establish and preserve a curriculum which meets the region's skills needs.

In the Curriculum Areas, leaders engage as frequently and as widely as possible to involve stakeholders in the delivery of programmes and ensure that their needs are reflected in their decisions over assessment design, resource planning and delivery.

2. Providing, where appropriate, specialist courses and bespoke provision to respond to the needs of stakeholder groups, such that skills gaps are effectively addressed.

Where we have a good or better track record in a specialism, can attract and retain sufficient high calibre staff, and we can offer value for money, the College seeks to provide education and training programmes (e.g., short courses or tailored delivery patterns) which respond to local employer and community skills' needs. The College also seeks to develop innovative provision to meet emerging skills needs in subjects where our expertise can be diversified and expanded and will test the feasibility of programmes which respond to new curriculum and industry developments. Where this is not possible, leaders actively engage and collaborate with regional skills' providers to help establish an effective skills provision in the region (e.g., through referrals or support to other providers, or collaborative delivery such as our DET Level 3 programme).

3. Continuously enhancing programmes of study to reflect the wider transferable and employability skills needs of stakeholders, resulting in learner progression and destinations which are strong.

We recognise that since by far the largest areas of our provision are in education programmes for young people, our biggest impact in meeting skills needs can be: a) the extent to which learners who leave North Kent College have the specific knowledge and skills the region needs; b) to what extent they exhibit the general behaviours they need for employment and/or to make a positive contribution to their community, and c) to develop and master the wider transferable skills that learners need to be adaptable to changes in the employment landscape. This is reflected by our leavers in very high rates of either employment/voluntary work, or in progression to meaningful next steps in education.

The College's skills self-assessment evaluates the contribution it makes to meeting the skills needs of the local and regional economy. This has been reviewed by Governors, and concludes that this aspect is a **strong** feature of the College's provision.

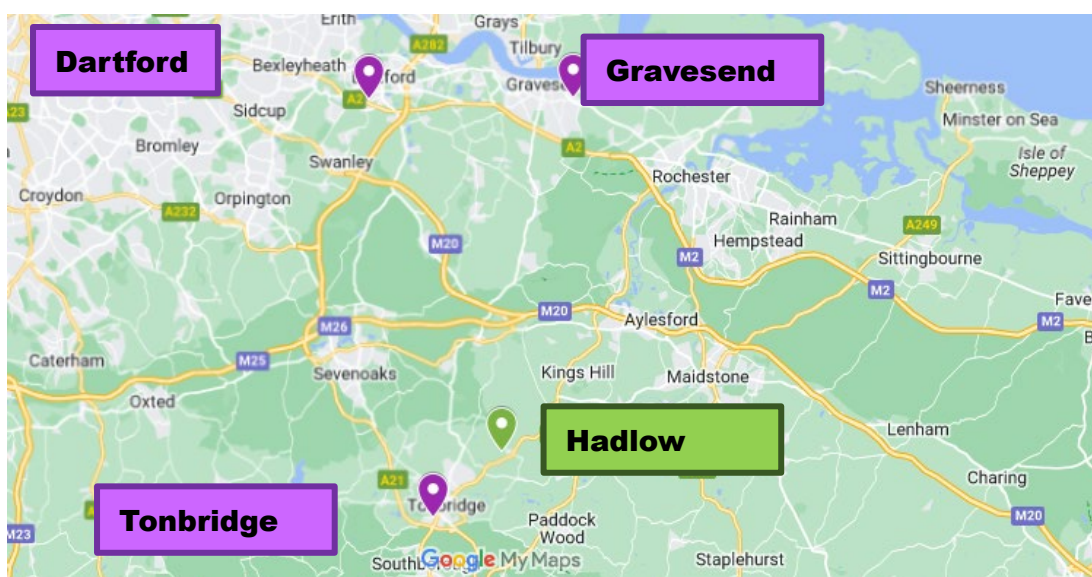
This is further validated in Ofsted's most recent monitoring report which states:

Leaders have set a clear strategic direction for the college with a strong focus on further developing the provision to meet local priorities. Leaders and managers have strengthened links with local employers. They use these links well to ensure that the new curriculum responds to emerging skills deficits in the area. For example, they have used funding from the Skills Accelerator Programme to develop the focus on agriculture, construction and engineering, with a shared thread of decarbonisation.

2. Context and Place

North Kent College ('NKC') is one of three general further education (GFE) Colleges in Kent, sitting at the centre of three distinct geographies: London, North and West Kent, and the Thames Gateway.

We have four main operational locations - three large GFE campuses at Dartford, Gravesend, and Tonbridge, together with the Land-based College at Hadlow. In addition to this there are small specialist facilities at Thameside (Maritime), at the Bluewater retail park (The Learning Shop), and an Equine campus at Greenwich.

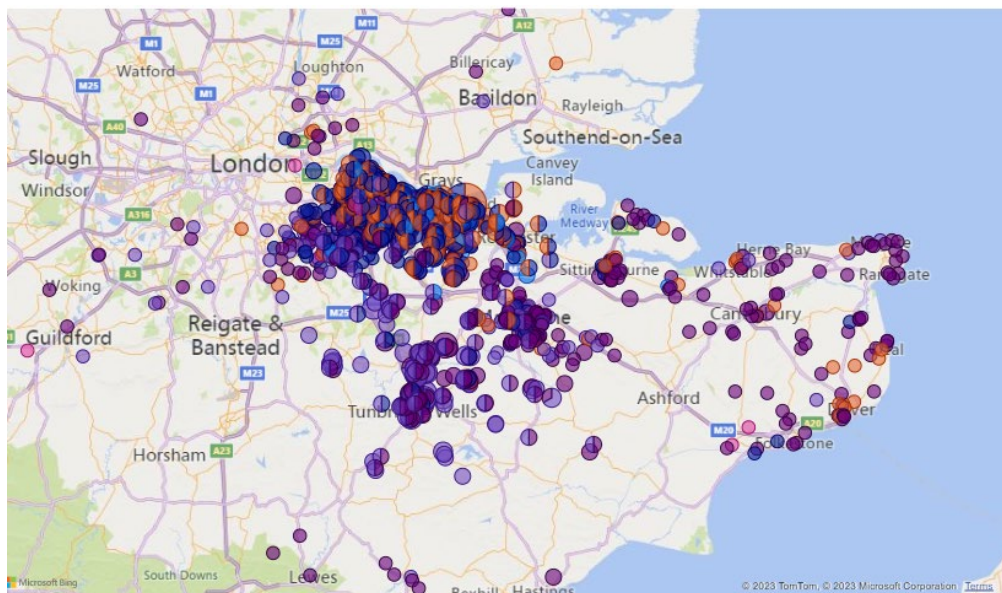


The college has around 4,200 learners aged 16 to 18, 360 adult learners and 300 apprentices. Of these around 350 learners have special educational needs and 250 are in receipt of high needs funding. Courses are offered from entry level to degree level with a range of full and part-time courses.

In Gravesend, we offer specialist training with our National Maritime Training Centre, a firefighting facility, and Hall Training Centre for specialist Refrigeration and Airconditioning courses. As one of a handful of colleges offering Maritime provision in the UK, the College draws its learners from both national and international locations. With over 30 years' experience, the Hall Training Centre is one of only a few of City & Guilds approved F-Gas specialist refrigeration training centres in the UK. At Dartford we have an exceptional reputation for our Arts specialism areas, particularly in Performing Arts and with the new build that opened in March 2022, we are starting to build even more on this specialism moving forward. Tonbridge also has a strength in its Arts provision with greater emphasis on the creative Arts, including Art and Design. Hadlow College is Kent's only Land Based College which includes a beef herd, sheep farm, horticultural production, a large animal management centre, fisheries lakes, a machinery and land-based technology facility and equine centres.

3. Communities we serve

The college draws its learner population primarily from the districts of Bexley, Bromley, Dartford, Sevenoaks, Gravesham and Tonbridge & Malling. We also have significant pockets of full-time learners who travel from Medway, Swale and Tunbridge Wells, with apprentices employed further into East Kent. A current postcode “heatmap” for learners active in the 22/23 academic year is illustrated below.



The communities we serve fall almost exclusively into the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) region of Kent and Medway. This was an LSIP trailblazer region, in which Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce leads as the Employer Representative Body.

The LSIP for Kent and Medway is published here [Local Skills Improvement Plan - March 2022 - Local Skills Improvement Plan \(kentemployerskillsplan.org\)](https://kentemployerskillsplan.org)

Key characteristics of the areas served by the college are summarised below:

- Working age population growth was 15% between 2010 and 2020, compared to 11% nationally, and is projected to grow significantly faster than the rest of the country.
- Relatively high economic activity rates, with unemployment rates slightly lower than national average, leading to a tight labour market with skills in short supply in some sectors.
- Attainment of skills qualifications at level 3 and 4 in Kent and Medway lags the UK national rate.
- Concentrations of employment are widely dispersed across the region, with a small majority concentrated into the areas which North Kent College primarily serves.
- Sectorally, the employment base is diverse, with the largest overall sectors in Health and social care, education, retail, and business administration, but the College campuses are located close to important clusters in construction, and in professional, scientific, and technical services.
- Agriculture, Retail and Motor Trades are over-represented sectors compared to the national profile.
- There are pockets of deprivation (LSOA's in top 10% for national Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019) in communities we serve in Dartford and Gravesham, and more significantly in the south-east London boroughs and Medway towns.

This points to a picture of diverse employment opportunities, widely geographically spread, and not dominated by large employers. There is a need for upskilling the existing workforce and preparing the new workforce for higher level technical jobs where skills are in high demand.

4. Approach to developing the annual accountability Statement

In preparing a set of strategic and operational objectives to meet local and regional skills needs, we engage frequently and collaborate with a wide range of relevant stakeholders to understand these needs and ensure the curriculum is planned accordingly.

This includes working closely with Kent County Council (KCC) and Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce (KICC), via Kent Further Education (KFE), a collaboration of all the colleges in Kent, and the SELEP (South-East local enterprise partnership), to ensure that the priority local skills-needs of the region are reflected strongly in the College's strategic curriculum planning.

The College's leaders have been very active members of the research and economic development groups (e.g., Greater North Kent Partnership, Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, Gravesham and Dartford Borough Councils) which developed the Kent & Medway Workforce Skills Evidence Base 2022 and paved the foundations of the LSIP trailblazer for Kent.

We worked closely with the local Employer Representative Body (KICC) to shape the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) trailblazer for Kent, and to develop new resources (funded through the Skills-accelerator Development Fund - SDF) to meet its priorities in collaboration with the KFE group. We are actively represented in the overall LSIP solutions panel, and in the specialist sector networks.

In addition to Civic and Local Government bodies, and (naturally) a wide range of employers, the College engages with the relevant sector representative bodies, skills councils, qualification awarding organisations, professional institutions, and training boards to ensure that its curriculum is relevant and current.

In order to evaluate gaps in provision, and better understand progression pathways for learners, we engage widely with education establishments (secondary schools via the Kent Association of Headteachers and membership of the Kent Schools Funding Forum, and the local Higher Education Institutions – University of Greenwich, Canterbury Christchurch University and University of Kent), and with independent training providers (via Kent Association of Training Organisations).

Through the Kent Further Education (KFE) Colleges' forum, we have strong relationships with the other Kent FE providers (East Kent College group and Mid Kent College). Our Chief Executive and Deputy Principals have formal termly meetings with their counterparts, and there are work streams for Teaching and Learning, Senior NHS Collaborative Development, Adult High Needs, Safeguarding, Universities, Staff Recruitment, and Efficiency, Finance & Procurement. Our most recent collaborations through the Strategic Development Fund include in SDF1 a Mental Health Project and extensive developments in Decarbonisation in Agriculture, Home Energy and Vehicle Technology, and in SDF2 a Digital Skills Curriculum and Immersive Technology rooms on all Kent College campuses. This has resulted in a collaboration to enhance use of technology with a common approach across all Colleges and an initiative to jointly develop teaching content. The KFE group has been the lead provider voice in the LSIP trailblazer and has established sector-based solutions panels on which the College works with employers and training providers across Kent to provide innovative solutions to the region's skills needs (for example the Sector Based Work Academy in Food & Drink sector piloted in April 2023).

All of our curriculum is informed by the needs of stakeholders through effective partnership with awarding bodies and where relevant, industry boards. In most curriculum areas there are also strong links with local employers, education organisations, civic and community groups which shape the delivery of programmes to meet the skills needs of stakeholders.

We work with stakeholders such as the Department for Work and Pensions, the local Maritime Sector and the region's building services sector to deliver bespoke, highly specialised programmes to meet their skills needs. These include:

- Retail and Construction Specific SWAP's in partnership with DWP from The learning Shop at Bluewater which lead to high rates of employment within these sectors.
- A successful provision for Refrigeration and Air Conditioning installation and maintenance, and the development of full-time programmes for learners leading to employment in low carbon heating and cooling technologies.

- Apprenticeships and bespoke training in maritime safety, operations, and engineering for local businesses on The River Thames and national logistics and passenger ship operators.

Curriculum Leaders involve stakeholders to plan ambitious programmes of study for young people and adults. These effectively develop the wider skills and behaviours that learners need to progress well in education and become the employees of choice for local and national employers, or to become positive contributors to the community. Current industry practice is reflected in many areas through teachers who also practise in their field.

Programme leaders and teachers use stakeholder intelligence to ensure that learners can identify personalised targets to meet the specific skills demands of the industry sector they have chosen, and to develop the wider skills and behaviours expected by all employers.

The College's approach to learner progression to the next level of their study reflects very high expectations in discipline, work ready attitude, and behaviours that promote employability.

The Governing Body has a wide representation across the industry sectors that are important to the College, and it continues to actively recruit to widen this. Expert Governors provide intelligence in their sectors, and through strong links with regional economic development networks, they effectively challenge whether our contribution to meeting skills needs is sufficient.

5. Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities

The collaborative work we have engaged in to-date as part of the LSIP development, and engagements with key employers in the region have informed our current strategic skills priorities. These focus on the Construction, Manufacturing, Health and Social Care, Food Production and Agri-tech sectors, with cross cutting themes of Decarbonisation, enhancing Digital Skills, and workforce readiness through Employability skills.

North Kent College's key aims and objectives in meeting the local, regional, and national skills needs of the economy are set out in the table below:

Aims & Objectives	Target(s)	Intended Impact: Contribution to Skills Priorities
<p>Aim 1: Develop and experiment with models of co-delivery of programmes with employers at L3 and L4, and where realistic and relevant, use substantial work placements to improve progression pathways for learners.</p> <p>Objective: Expand T-Level provision and further develop L4 provision in skills gap areas for occupations with strong employer support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development of digital surveying resources and 50% expansion of the T- Level in Construction to with at least 15 successful programme completers in Design, Surveying and Planning in Jun 2025. • Design and implement factory automation resources (incorporating latest Industry 4.0 automated production and supply management) at Gravesend campus, enabling 100% expansion of the T-Level in Engineering and Manufacturing and at least 18 successful programme completers on Design and Development pathway in Jun 2025. • Further develop the college's level 4 provision in Computing, Engineering and in Land Based programmes. Introduce at least one new Higher Apprenticeship programme by Sep 2025. Expand full and part time Higher Education courses in these priority areas by 50% (using where possible and appropriate, relevant HTQ's). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the LSIP priorities in Construction for increased supply of Skills in Building Information modelling (BIM), progression into Chartered Surveying and professional membership (RICS). • Supports skills shortage identified by LSIP for advanced manufacturing skills for SME's and applies to the priority sector in Food & Drink production. • Supports College strategic objective to grow apprenticeship provision and sustain HE in the face of strong competition from universities. Contributes to national priority to increase attainment of L4/L5 qualifications for skills in shortage areas.

Aims & Objectives	Target(s)	Intended Impact: Contribution to Skills Priorities
<p>Aim 2: Work in collaboration with KFE colleges to highlight innovative use of technology and increase the general level of digital skills available to employers.</p> <p>Objective: Enable employers to access digital technology to train their own employees and to better engage with the training of learners in colleges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the KFE Colleges to achieve SDF2 project outcomes, complete the development of skills training packages in: effective e-commerce and cybersecurity, improving use of data analytics and visualisation (e.g. Power BI), efficient workflow design using computer applications (power Apps) and use of AR/VR technology. Promote the delivery of these programmes to our employer network, apprentices, and full-time learners such that 450 short courses are completed by March 25. Establish use of our immersive classroom technologies, coupled with Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technology, to allow more effective engagement from employers in the delivery of all areas of our curriculum at multiple campuses. At least 4 employers engaged with curriculum and course delivery across Engineering, Construction, Health and Social care, and Creative Digital Design by June 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to LSIP priority in improving access to digital skills training for business productivity and growth. Supports more efficient and collaborative use of employers' technical skills to engage in delivery of FE programmes, helping to solve the crisis in the availability of technical training staff.

Annual Accountability Statement 2023

Aims & Objectives	Target(s)	Intended Impact: Contribution to Skills Priorities
<p>Aim 3: Engage with priority employer sectors and projects to identify skills gaps and establish provision to address these.</p> <p>Objective: Engage with major project skills groups and the LSIP solutions panels, and sector focus groups to deliver short courses, promote the free courses for jobs offer, and develop skills bootcamps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The establishment of a Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) for the food and drink production sector in partnership with the Growing Kent and Medway consortium and National Skills Academy for Food and drink, piloted with at least one cohort of 10-20 and evaluated by Jun 2023. • Continue work with major local infrastructure and commercial development projects such as National Highways (Lower Thames Crossing), the London Resort and Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (Ebbsfleet Garden City) to develop skills partnerships and curriculum which reflects the arising skills needs – ensure that NKC curriculum offer reflects these and is included in the skills plans for each by the respective deadlines for Develop Consent for each projects (March 23 to June 25). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was a planned deliverable in conjunction with KICC and the GK&M consortium which came out of the LSIP Solutions panel and Food and Drink Production employer focus group. • This supports these developments with a long-term talent pipeline, and wide engagement across all providers ensures that Kent as a whole develops the capacity to deliver these skills.

Aims & Objectives	Target(s)	Intended Impact: Contribution to Skills Priorities
<p>Aim 4: Establish strong sector advisory panels to promote careers opportunities in skills shortage areas and develop resources and training capacity to deliver new programmes.</p> <p>Objective: Increase employer participation in the design, resourcing and delivery of programmes in the LSIP skills priority sectors. Use remote delivery across multiple campuses and Colleges wherever possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with the Education and Training Foundations collaborative resource development and curriculum design projects across the KFE Colleges, and with the skills academy formed to support the Kent and Medway NHS Integrated Care Partnership. Deliver at least 1 event in 2023 to expose learners to career opportunities in the Health and Care sectors and its use of digital technology with associated science and engineering roles. Develop at least 1 resource in preparation to deliver the T-Level in Health and Care in Sep 24, resulting in a 25% expansion in L3 learner numbers in the curriculum area. Use the colleges leadership position in the Construction and Built Environment education advisory committee, and its participation on the Construction Leadership Council, to engage at least 1 new employer in direct delivery of L3 construction programmes in 2024 (up from 1 in 2023). Further develop links with BAE systems and National Skills Academy for Food & Drink to involve at least 1 employer in direct delivery of advanced manufacturing skills in the full time Engineering curriculum. Further develop the use of industry-practitioner led delivery in skills programmes to meet the needs of the Thames Estuary Creative Production Corridor utilising our £13M SELEP funded Performing and Production Digital Arts Facility at our Dartford campus, such that enrolments in these curriculum areas grow by 10% by Sep 25. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This addressed the acute skills need in the H&SC sector by promoting career opportunities and progression (rather than just vacancies), and develops awareness use of innovative technology in the sector to attract learners from non-traditional backgrounds. Increased participation by employers in delivery of these programmes is required if the identified skills shortages are to be addressed. Increased participation by employers in delivery of these programmes is required if the identified skills shortages are to be addressed. This supports Thames Estuary Growth Board roadmap in its plan for the creative production corridor.

Annual Accountability Statement 2023

Aims & Objectives	Target(s)	Intended Impact: Contribution to Skills Priorities
<p>Aim 5: Establish a curriculum which prepares learners for the introduction of new low carbon technologies.</p> <p>Objective: Introduce new decarbonisation technology content in the curriculum across relevant sectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop curriculum offer around newly acquired teaching resources for decarbonisation in Construction, Agriculture and Motor Vehicle (the concept orchard at Hadlow, Refrigeration and Airconditioning provision at Gravesend and Electric Vehicle Technology at Hadlow and Gravesend), increasing learner numbers across these curriculum areas by 10%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This addresses the cross-cutting theme of decarbonisation in LSIP priority sectors.
<p>Aim 6: Ensure that all learners are exposed to a broad programme of employability skills development which reflect employers demands.</p> <p>Objective: Improve positive progression and learner destinations into employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that positive learner destinations for progression to next steps in education or to employment continue to improve year-on-year until they reach 90% by June 2025. Further develop the Passport to Employability programme using employer feedback, increasing the number of Distinction outcomes by 25%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This addresses the cross-cutting theme of the need for improved transferable skills and behaviours for employment identified in the LSIP.

6. Corporation statement

On behalf of the Corporation Board of North Kent College, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the corporation at their meeting on 18th of May 2023.

Mr Keith Norman

Mr David Gleed

Chair of Governors

Principal/Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

Dated: 22nd May 2023

This accountability statement is published on North Kent College's website at the URL below:

<https://www.northkent.ac.uk/about-us/policies/corporate-board/127-accountability-statement-2023/file>

7. Supporting documentation

KICC published the Local Skills Improvement Plan for Kent and Medway in March 22:

[Local Skills Improvement Plan - March 2022 - Local Skills Improvement Plan \(kentemployersskillsplan.org\)](https://kentemployersskillsplan.org/)

Other useful reference documents include:

The Kent and Medway Workforce Skills Evidence Base

[Workforce Skills Evidence Base 2021 - Local Skills Improvement Plan \(kentemployersskillsplan.org\)](https://kentemployersskillsplan.org/)

The Greater North Kent Workforce Skills Evidence Base

[SMRC-Report-GNKP-Workforce-Skills-Evidence-Base-FINAL-website.pdf \(greaternorthkent.gov.uk\)](https://greaternorthkent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/SMRC-Report-GNKP-Workforce-Skills-Evidence-Base-FINAL-website.pdf)

Summary data for the Kent County Council context:

[Summary of facts and figures - Kent County Council](https://www.kentcc.gov.uk/media/1000/Summary-of-facts-and-figures-Kent-County-Council.pdf)

Further information regarding deprivation in Kent:

[The Index of Multiple deprivation \(IMD2019\): Headline findings for Kent](https://www.kentcc.gov.uk/media/1000/The-Index-of-Multiple-deprivation-IMD2019-Headline-findings-for-Kent.pdf)

North Kent Colleges most recent Ofsted monitoring report refers to the contribution the College makes to local skills provision, and can be found at:

[50173964 \(ofsted.gov.uk\)](https://www.ofsted.gov.uk/monitoring-visit-reports/50173964)