

SKILLS PLAN & ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT 2026/27

copc.ac.uk/about-us/key-documents





VALUES

Be Collaborative

Be Aspirational

Be Respectful

Be Empowered

Be Supportive

VISION

The College of choice for Portsmouth and our region, recognised for excellence in all we do

MISSION

Creating a better future by unlocking the potential of our learners

STRATEGIC GOALS

- 1. Create an aspirational, inspirational, and inclusive environment for learning and work**
- 2. Offer a world-class curriculum**
- 3. Excellence in all we do**
- 4. Be a trusted partner for the communities we serve, fostering collaboration and engagement**
- 5. Ensuring a sustainable future – balancing growth, investment and community service**

Plus, five enablers:

- 1. Strong finances**
- 2. Excellent quality**
- 3. Outstanding staff**
- 4. A modern estate, future-proofed IT infrastructure and robust information systems**
- 5. Excellent marketing and communications**

CONTENTS

1.	Purpose	5
2.	Context and Place	5
2.1	Location	6
2.2	Students and our communities	6
2.3	Demography	6
2.4	Employers and businesses	7
2.5	Travel to Learn	8
3.	Approach to developing the Accountability Statement	9
3.1	Informed by Labour Market Intelligence (LMI)	12
4.	Strategic Skills Goals – progress update for 2025/26	13
5.	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2026/27	22
6.	Establishing Impact	28
7.	Local Needs Duty	28

COLLEGE ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

City of Portsmouth College (CoPC) presents this Accountability Statement 2026/27 as evidence of its central position in delivering local, regional and national skills priorities. It has been prepared according to 2026/27 guidance provided by the Department for Education (DfE) and supports the annual documentation outlining the funding that the College will receive to provide training.

1. Purpose

The College is a key anchor institution supporting economic growth, social mobility and workforce development in Portsmouth and the wider Hampshire and Solent region. This Accountability Statement establishes this important role, whilst also setting out the focus of curriculum development over a 2-year period and highlighting the objective of ensuring clear progression into employment, apprenticeships and higher-level study. It is closely informed by the development of the College's new Strategic Plan 2026-2030, which is due to be completed and confirmed by the Corporation in October 2026.

This document also fulfils the statutory Local Needs Duty, as set out in Section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and subsequently amended by the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022.

Equally, the College contributes to the national ambition for two-thirds of young people to access higher-level education by age 25 through its Level 4+ offer including Higher Apprenticeships.

2. Context and Place

City of Portsmouth College operates within the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority (HSCCA) and the Hampshire and Solent LSIP footprint, ensuring alignment between skills provision and labour market need. Portsmouth is a dense urban economy with strong sectors in maritime, construction, health, creative industries and tourism. However, significant challenges remain including deprivation, low qualification levels in some communities, and a rising risk of young people becoming NEET.

In August 2021, Highbury College and Portsmouth College merged to form the City of Portsmouth College. CoPC is a general further education college in Portsmouth, Hampshire, England. The city sits at the heart of the Solent Region, alongside the other major centre of population in Southampton and the various interconnected towns in the surrounding conurbation that stretches across southern Hampshire and into parts of West Sussex. Both Portsmouth and Southampton are currently unitary authorities; however, plans for local government reorganisation would see Portsmouth amalgamated with Fareham, Gosport and Havant into a wider authority.

Full details of regional devolution and local government reorganisation are included in the labour market intelligence, insight and research report, which can be found [here](#).

Many businesses from throughout the area are enrolled with Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, which served as the Employer Representative Body (ERB) for the development of the Solent's first Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). The Chamber also had the lead role in the creation of the LSIP for the northern part of the county, referred to as Enterprise M3. CoPC actively supported Hampshire Chamber in preparing the initial LSIP for the Solent and is also proactively informing the revised iteration of this crucial regional document, a substantial draft of which has already been shared with stakeholders, and which is due for publication in July 2026. Details of the College's involvement in this process are included in Section 3 below.

The CEO and Principal for City of Portsmouth College chairs the Solent Skills Group, the skills arm of the Solent Growth Partnership, working alongside the Hampshire and Solent County Combined Authority (HSCCA) as we transition to devolved funding.

The City of Portsmouth College delivers educational and training solutions for the businesses and communities of the city and the local region. The College has more than 60 years of experience, during which time it has built a strong reputation for academic, technical and professional programmes. It also has close relationships with those working in various industries which ensures the ever-changing needs of employers in the area are met.

CoPC provides vocational and academic education and training, from first-step courses to Level 4+ professional programmes, specialised services for business, and education in the community. Courses include A Levels, T Levels, vocational diplomas (BTECs), GCSEs, apprenticeships, dedicated SEND provision and unaccredited leisure courses. The College actively promotes lifelong learning and delivers a wide range of adult courses at more than 50 community venues in and around Portsmouth, as well as at four College campuses. The College is also a provider of apprenticeship training in the southeast and currently offers apprenticeships in more than 20 subject areas.

CoPC works closely with other colleges from the Solent region, as well as with the city's premier provider of higher education, the University of Portsmouth, and these collaborative relationships have been strengthened further by a series of combined funding bids and curriculum projects.

2.1 Location

CoPC has four campuses, delivering a range of education and training opportunities:

- Highbury Campus specialises in delivering vocational and technical education.
- North Harbour Campus specialises in delivering construction courses, building services and other trades. It is also the home of the Net Zero Training Hub.
- Sixth Form Campus specialises in delivering a range of academic programmes including the broadest range of A Levels in the city of Portsmouth.
- Arundel Campus, located in the city centre, specialises in delivering English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses, childcare (including early years), and employability programmes for the local community.

2.2 Students and our communities

Students and apprentices have access to a broad range of resources across the College's campuses, including world-class learning and sports facilities. CoPC offers a cohesive and broad curriculum offer, which has been carefully planned to ensure there are clear ladders of progression leading to positive outcomes and next steps for our students. Provision is available to support learners of all ages, whilst meeting local and national skills needs. The College also delivers a city-wide careers and course advice service to assist every member of the community in their lifelong learning decisions.

Working in partnership with schools and parents, City of Portsmouth College gives expert advice and individualised support to promote appropriate and informed choices. The breadth and depth of provision means that the College has the right programme of study for everyone.

2.3 Demography

Portsmouth is the most densely populated city in the UK with an estimated population of 212,700 in 2024. This figure represents a 2.2% increase on the 208,100 residents recorded in the 2021 Census and the city was predicted to reach 222,300 inhabitants this year. The population is forecast to continue growing, although the rate of increase should slow towards the end of the decade.

The city has a high proportion of young people (18-24) compared to the average for England, due in part to the city's University and college campuses (11.3% of Portsmouth's population against 6.1% nationally). The number of Year 11 students in Portsmouth secondary schools is also set to rise over the next five years.

This projected further increase in the number of residents, especially amongst young people, has seen considerable construction work take place in the city. To meet the anticipated need, Portsmouth's housing stock has seen significant increase so far this decade and it will continue to grow over coming years.

Nonetheless, the proportion of the population accounted for younger citizens will fall, as the total numbers increase, since overall, the city has an ageing population. Despite currently having a median age of 35, which is well below that for the country as a whole, the largest section of Portsmouth's population is aged 40-60, and by 2043, 19% of residents are expected to be aged 65+, compared to 14% in 2021.

Demographic studies have also shown that Portsmouth has several areas of high deprivation, most particularly Charles Dickens ward in the centre of the island, which, along with Paulsgrove, finds itself in the top 10% most deprived areas in England. Certain sections of the population face economic and social challenges across the city with total income deprivation standing at 13.4%.

At the same time, there is significant and growing ethnic diversity in Portsmouth, especially amongst the younger generations. In the 2021 Census, 85.2% of the city's population identified as White, down from 88.4% in 2011, and a large number of young adults were from ethnic minorities (30% aged 18-39).

Portsmouth South is the most ethnically diverse of the city's localities (North, Central and South) with 22% of the population belonging to minority ethnic groups. Across Portsmouth, 25% of primary and secondary school students were of non-White British ethnicity, whilst in Portsmouth South, this figure was 33%.

In terms of health, 19.2% of residents are disabled, higher than the national average, with 19.6% of the city's population and 25% of school-age students having a declared disability. Portsmouth has a high concentration of 16-18 and 19-24 NEETs in the City, and the college is leading an integrated multi-agency taskforce approach to tackle this systemic multigenerational issue.

Inclusion Mainstream Fund (IMF)

Given the high number of NEETs, SEN and disadvantaged young people and adults in Portsmouth, the college will use the IMF allocation in 2026/27 to embed the school leaver data sharing agreement now in place with Portsmouth City Council i.e. recording and sharing the data received from schools effectively to support leaders and managers, teaching staff and support staff to implement effective support strategies from the first day of learning with the college for "at risk" students, create and embed our new "at risk" and inclusion dashboard and target training for teachers and support teams to enable them to further strengthen strategies used to improve achievement and progression.

2.4 Employers and businesses

CoPC engages actively with employers from all sectors and responds proactively to their training needs. Through Employer Advisory Boards (EAB) associated with each area of the curriculum, companies and business organisations can influence the study options on offer in the city and provide direct input towards building the future workforce and economy.

There are opportunities for employers to use the world-class facilities for their own training needs and to access bespoke training for their staff, organised by the College. Employers and businesses can help shape the talent pool by offering work experience opportunities and industry placement activities, which will strengthen the supply of potential employees.

CoPC works with over 500 businesses in Portsmouth and the wider Solent region, a significant majority of which are SMEs. Employer engagement seeks to inform and support the intent and implementation of the curriculum to ensure that the College delivers the desired impact for all students. Key employer partners include:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| ■ The Abri Group | ■ KA Watts Electrical | ■ Portsmouth Football Club |
| ■ Compass | ■ Mountjoy | ■ Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust (Queen Alexandra Hospital) |
| ■ Global Ceramics | ■ National Maritime Systems | ■ RJC Mechanical |
| ■ HBS Group | ■ National Air Traffic Systems (NATS) | ■ South Coast Refrigeration Services |
| ■ H M S Collingwood | ■ National Health Service (NHS) | ■ Spinnaker Tower |
| ■ Halfords | ■ PMC Construction and Development | ■ Taylor Wimpey |
| ■ Hampshire Plumbing and Heating | ■ Pompey in the Community | ■ VIVID Housing |
| ■ Horizons Carpentry and Joinery | ■ Portsmouth City Council (PCC) | |



2.5 Travel to Learn

The College offers a comprehensive curriculum, minimising the need to travel, and drawing on expertise from across its campuses.

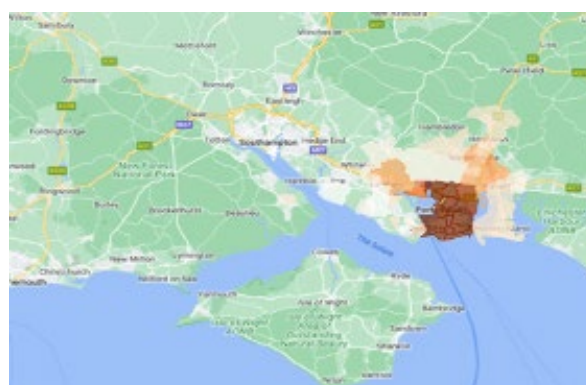
APPRENTICESHIPS

The majority of apprentices live and work in Portsmouth:



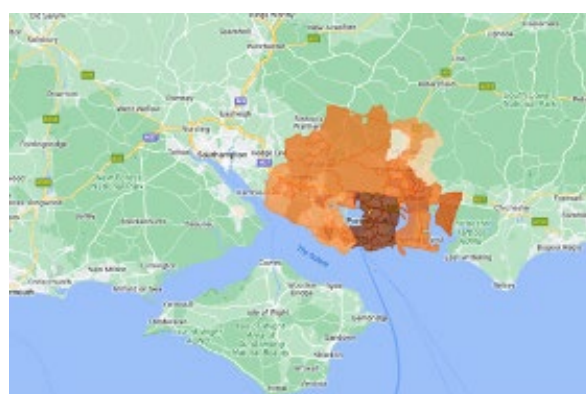
16-19 STUDY PROGRAMME

The significant majority of young people studying at the college live in Portsmouth, with a concentration in Southern and Eastern parts of the city:



ADULTS

A significant proportion of adult students live in Portsmouth, but the College has a wider geographical reach for this group due to the particular nature of the provision (e.g. FE, Access and L4+ online courses):



3. Approach to developing the Accountability Statement

The College has worked very closely with Hampshire Chamber of Commerce (ERB) to inform the LSIP Refresh 2026, contributing through consultation activity, stakeholder engagement and employer forums on a wide variety of occasions, the most prominent of which are listed below:

EVENT / ACTIVITY	DATE	ATTENDEE / RESPONDENT
Solent Growth Partnership Skills Group – presentation by Ross McNally, CEO Hampshire Chamber of Commerce	04/02/2026 information fed back to LSIP development	Katy Quinn, CEO & Principal (Chair of Solent Growth Partnership Skills Group)
Chamber of Commerce survey	Jan 2026	Darren Coventry, Asst. Principal Apprenticeships & Business Development
Shape the Future of Hampshire and Solent Skills LSIP FE & HE Leadership Focus Group	06/03/2026 Fareham College	Katy Quinn, CEO & Principal Matt Phelps, Deputy CEO & Deputy Principal
Solent Growth Partnership Skills Board	18/05/2026 + earlier meetings	Katy Quinn, CEO & Principal led workshop



Through the joint role of Katy Quinn, CEO & Principal, as Solent Growth Partnership Skills Board member and Chair of the Solent Growth Partnership Skills Group, City of Portsmouth College has had a leading position in the development of the LSIP Refresh.

In addition to the above engagements, Katy wrote a letter on behalf of the Skills Group to Dr Ruth Adams (CEO of HSCCA, CEO of Hampshire Chamber, CEO of Federation of Small Business, Chair of Solent Growth Partnership and CEO of HTTP Training College) and enjoys a very positive professional relationship and regular strategic discussions with Jane Lamer of Portsmouth City Council (Head of Economic Development & Skills Economy, Planning and Transport).

Although this Accountability Statement will need to be submitted (31 July 2026) before publication of the new LSIP, close collaboration with the Chamber in its development has ensured that it suitably reflects the regional priorities emerging from these detailed discussions.

Curriculum planning is informed by labour market intelligence, employer advisory boards and partnerships with key stakeholders including local authorities and employers.

In arriving at the objectives for the coming year, the College has considered a wide range of supporting information including:

- Vector local market intelligence – used throughout the curriculum planning process
- Portsmouth City Council Economic goals
- Solent LSIP outcomes
- Portsmouth Skills and Employment Strategy
- National and local steering documents (see labour market intelligence, insight and research report [here](#))

The various ways in which the College engages with stakeholders to plan, develop and deliver education, training and support are set out in the college's curriculum strategy and supporting sub strategies relating to Employer Engagement, Schools Liaison and Apprenticeships. Key Employer Partners, who assist Curriculum Planning and sequencing of the curriculum for the college in a variety of ways, are reflected later in this statement, and more specifically through the separate employer engagement strategy.

The College works collaboratively with other local providers and partners in the city and wider county area, notably through formal and informal local networks, including the Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP), Portsmouth Schools Network, Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, Business South, Shaping Portsmouth, and projects led by the local authorities for the region.

The College has close relationships with local universities in particular the University of Portsmouth for which we work collaboratively to support student progression.

The schools in the Portsmouth area are predominantly 11-16. While there is a University Technical College offering post 16 provision, their offer is specialist. The College therefore has an important role in working with schools to ensure young people are well informed about the full range of post 16 options available, progression routes, and the employment and career opportunities that are open to them.

The College has worked in partnership with other local colleges in the Solent area to ensure the skills gap around NetZero is decreased. In conjunction with this we have also worked with Shaping Portsmouth on the Decarbonisation plans for Portsmouth and Unloc to support the youth of Portsmouth and surrounding area to understand the requirements of NetZero.

ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS PROFILE (2026-27)

The Hampshire and the Solent Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) area is one of the UK's most economically significant regions, characterised by high productivity, a diverse business base, and strong educational infrastructure. However, headline strength masks a more complex and evolving picture shaped by demographic change, uneven productivity, changes in recruitment activity, and skills mismatches.

In 2023, the Hampshire and the Solent area generated £72.6 billion in gross value added (GVA), accounting for 21% of the South East's total output. Labour productivity is above the national average: North Hampshire is the most productive sub-area outside of London and Rushmoor is the most productive local authority in England. That said, productivity growth has slowed since 2019, and disparities persist across the area, particularly in places such as the Isle of Wight and Gosport.

The business base is dominated by small and micro firms, supported by a wide network of business support organisations. However, patterns of business growth and survival vary across the area, reflecting differences in sector mix, local infrastructure, and access to skills.

Employment within Hampshire and the Solent is concentrated in Local Services, followed by High Value Added Traded Services and Primary and Secondary Industries. The area has notable strengths in sectors such as Marine and Maritime, Aerospace and Defence, Construction, Health and Social Care, Life Sciences and Digital and Technologies. More recent trends show growth in Health and Social Care and the Visitor Economy. Employment in computing, IT services and telecoms has contracted in recent years. However, the IS-8 creative sector has experienced strong growth relative to the regional and England averages since 2019.

Overall, employment growth across most sectors has lagged behind both national and regional averages. While Digital and Technologies is identified nationally as a priority growth sector, and employment concentration is strong in the area (especially in North Hampshire and parts of Central Hampshire), local performance has been weaker, highlighting an ongoing challenge in realising digital opportunity.

The labour market remains tight. In 2024, the Hampshire and the Solent area had a larger workforce, more people in employment, and fewer unemployed people than in 2019. The labour market, while relatively resilient compared to pre-pandemic levels, has shown signs of softening, with employment rates declining and unemployment edging upward since 2023. Economic inactivity, however, has increased in most areas, with the exception of Portsmouth, largely driven by long term ill health and disability. Gender and age disparities persist, with lower participation among younger and older workers, and women disproportionately represented among the economically inactive. An ageing workforce is expected to place further pressure on labour supply and workforce replacement in coming years.

Labour demand (online job postings) has returned to pre-pandemic levels, following strong growth post-pandemic, with demand falling sharply in 2025. High skilled occupations account for around a third of job demand, though this remains below national averages. Education, Health and Social Care, and Hospitality are the largest career areas by demand, with Construction and Transport and Logistics showing continued growth.

With just under half of residents holding qualifications at RQF Level 4 or above, this places the area below regional and national averages and could constrain growth in some higher value sectors. Attainment and participation also vary significantly, with parts of Gosport, Havant and the Isle of Wight lagging behind. While GCSE and post 16 attainment is strong in much of Hampshire, outcomes are weaker in Southampton and Portsmouth. Participation in further education and skills – particularly among adults – has declined.

Skills shortages remain widespread, particularly in Health and Care, Education and Construction. Around a third of vacancies are reported as hard to fill due to skills shortages, while skills gaps affect around one in five employers. At the same time, skills underutilisation is common, with a substantial proportion of employers reporting staff with qualifications above those required for their roles.

The area is relatively prosperous, with over half of working age residents employed in higher skilled occupations. However, strong commuting links to London and other high wage areas create challenges for local employers in attracting and retaining skilled workers. Pockets of deprivation persist, particularly among lower and mid skilled residents and those in sectors more exposed to automation and technological change. The increasing use of artificial intelligence is expected to reshape skills demand, particularly in graduate entry roles, with future job growth projected to be modest and driven largely by replacement demand rather than expansion.

3.1 Informed by Labour Market Intelligence (LMI)

City of Portsmouth College has undertaken a significant amount of research which has informed the 2026/27 Accountability Statement. In summary:

- Approximately 80% of businesses are SMEs, limiting apprenticeship and training capacity.
- Strong demand exists in construction trades, digital skills, health and social care and engineering.
- Around 13% of residents have low or no qualifications.
- Economic inactivity is driven in part by long-term health conditions.
- NEET Levels remain a concern, requiring earlier and targeted intervention.

Strategic Implications for COPC:

- Strengthen progression pathways into employment
- Expand community and flexible provision
- Increase employer co-design of curriculum
- Target support to vulnerable and at-risk learners
- Embed employability, digital and green skills across all provision

The full labour market intelligence, insight and research report can be found [here](#).



4. Strategic Skills Goals – progress update for 2025/26

STRATEGIC SKILLS GOAL 1

Further develop the COPC curriculum offer in Health and Social Care in response to (a) Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) sector deep dives and (b) Skills England report.

We have strengthened our Health and Social Care offer to align directly with employer-led skills needs.

LEVEL 2 TRANSFORMATION

All students now complete the Nurse Cadets programme, aligned to the Care Certificate, ensuring they are job-ready on completion. This is reinforced through a targeted employability week, including employer engagement, industry visits, mock interviews, first aid, and communication skills training.

CURRICULUM BREADTH AND PROGRESSION

- AAQ Health and Social Care (Cambridge OCR) offered at SFC (1-year or 2-year pathway).
- Full vocational pathway at HC (Levels 1–3 plus T Level in Health and Nursing).
- Access provision includes classroom-based Health and Human Sciences and online pathways to Nursing and Midwifery.

DEEPENED EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS

- Strong collaboration with Portsmouth and Isle of Wight University Hospital Trust ensures curriculum relevance and work readiness; T Level students are guaranteed interviews for Nursing apprenticeships.
- Partnership with Portsmouth City Council has expanded placement capacity and co-designed curriculum elements, including public health workshops and employability activities. PCC is also supporting progression through a Level 6 apprenticeship pathway.

Impact:

Curriculum design is now closely aligned with workforce demand, improving student preparedness for employment, apprenticeships, and further study.

2025/26 KPI

5 repurposed H&SC courses	Our Health curriculum has successfully been repurposed to reflect the skills needs identified by sector employers	Achieved
---------------------------	---	----------

STRATEGIC SKILLS GOAL 2

Further develop the COPC curriculum offer in Creative Industries in response to (a) Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) sector deep dives and (b) Skills England report.

We have significantly enhanced our Creative offer through high-impact employer and HE partnerships.

NEW PROVISION

The CertHE Architecture has been co-designed with the University of Portsmouth, a qualified architect, and industry partners including Reformat LLP, ensuring strong alignment with professional practice.

PERFORMING ARTS RELAUNCH

In partnership with Portsmouth Theatres (Kings Theatre and Theatre Royal), we successfully reintroduced the BTEC Performing Arts course in 2024.

INDUSTRY-LED DELIVERY

Students train both on campus and in professional theatre environments, gaining hands-on experience of live productions, rehearsals, and technical theatre. The curriculum is co-designed and co-delivered with theatre professionals, embedding real industry practice.

STUDENT OUTCOMES AND RECOGNITION

- Outstanding student feedback and external verification recognising the programme as best practice.
- Students successfully auditioning for live theatre productions.
- Final assessment includes an original musical performed in a professional theatre setting.

IMPACT ON LEARNER DEVELOPMENT

Students benefit from direct exposure to industry experts, significantly increasing confidence, skills development, and career readiness.

SUSTAINED GROWTH

- Enrolments increased from 14 (2024/25) to 17 (2025/26).
- Applications for 2026/27 have risen to 27, demonstrating growing demand.

Impact:

A revitalised, employer-led curriculum is driving improved student engagement, progression opportunities, and sustained growth in Creative Industries provision.

2025/26 KPI

1 new CERTHE Architecture course developed collaboratively with UoP course	This course has been developed in collaboration with UoP and employers	Partially Achieved
1 repurposed course – Performing Arts	On the BTEC course, students are taught both onsite at the COPC Sixth Form Campus and at both theatres, whereby students gain first-hand experience of live theatres and productions. Students train, learn and rehearse on both main stages and take part in a whole range of enrichment of behind-the-scenes theatre activities. Two members of the Kings Theatre staff currently teach on the programme, and the course is co-designed by staff from COPC and Portsmouth Theatres to provide an in-depth stakeholder informed curriculum.	Achieved

STRATEGIC SKILLS GOAL 3

Further develop the COPC curriculum offer in Professional and Business Services in response to (a) Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) sector deep dives and (b) Skills England report.

Strengthen the Professional and Business Services curriculum in response to LSIP priorities and Skills England insights.

We have enhanced our curriculum through strong employer partnerships, embedding sustainability, innovation, and digital professionalism.

- **Industry engagement and real-world learning:**
Collaboration with Carey’s Manor Hotel & SenSpa enabled students to explore sustainable business practice, including energy efficiency, waste reduction, ethical sourcing, and customer wellbeing. Learners gained insight into how sustainability drives commercial decisions and customer expectations.
- **Development of employability skills:**
Students developed key behaviours and skills required in modern service industries, including resilience, adaptability, communication, teamwork, and commercial awareness. Exposure to industry challenges (e.g. cost-of-living pressures, shifting demand) strengthened understanding of innovation, agile business models, and strategic decision-making.

- **Digital and professional skills:**
A LinkedIn and personal branding masterclass (Delivered Social) enhanced students' digital professionalism, helping them build early professional networks, manage online presence, and understand the impact of digital identity on employability.

IMPACT OF MINDFUL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

- Successful launch (January 2025) has driven growth and improved outcomes in AAT provision, with stronger engagement, pass rates, and first-time exam success.
- A flexible blended learning model has increased accessibility and participation, particularly for adults and part-time learners.
- Provision directly addresses regional skills shortages in finance, accounting, and business administration, supporting progression into employment and higher-level study.
- Employers benefit from flexible workforce development, while learners develop independence, digital skills, and resilience.

T LEVEL IN MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

- First cohort nearing completion following 2024/25 launch.
- Sector leadership: Hosted a regional T Level Success Day with the Education and Training Foundation, sharing best practice and strengthening employer engagement.
- Employer input (Delivered Social) has refined industry placements and highlighted the need to embed AI skills across the curriculum.
- Curriculum development and investment in facilities demonstrate a strong commitment to high-quality technical education.

Impact:
An employer-informed, future-focused curriculum is equipping learners with the technical, professional, and digital skills required for progression into employment, apprenticeships, and higher-level study, while addressing regional workforce needs.

2025/26 KPI

1 new T Level course	The T Level in marketing has been pushed out to 2027/28 delivery.	Delayed
3 new Apprenticeship courses (ME)	Mindful Education has been introduced and is used to deliver to both adults and apprentices. Level 2 accounts/finance assistant. Level 3 assistant accountant. Level 4 professional accounting technician.	Achieved

STRATEGIC SKILLS GOAL 4

Further develop the COPC curriculum offer in Digital Technologies in response to (a) Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) sector deep dives and (b) Skills England report.

We have enhanced our digital provision through industry collaboration and employer-led enrichment.

T LEVEL DIGITAL SUPPORT AND SECURITY

Partnership with WorldSkills and industry expert Toby Bell has strengthened assessment readiness and raised aspirations. Three students reached competition qualifiers, including two progressing from the T Level to FdSc—demonstrating strong progression and high-level skills development.

INDUSTRY-STANDARD TECHNICAL EXPERIENCE

Collaboration with Forefend InfoSec has enabled the development of a secure offline server environment, allowing students to practice advanced cyber security techniques, including penetration testing and SQL injection.

CURRICULUM INNOVATION

Agile-based project delivery has been embedded across Level 3 IT, Digital Media, and FdSc programmes, improving students' practical, collaborative, and problem-solving skills.

CYBER SECURITY INTEGRATION

Although the BTEC IT AAQ does not include a dedicated pathway, cyber security is delivered through a specialist unit, ensuring all learners develop foundational knowledge in this critical skills area.

Impact:

An industry-informed, technically rigorous curriculum is developing high-level digital and cyber skills, improving progression to higher education and strengthening alignment with employer needs.

2025/26 KPI

2 new digital technologies courses	T Level in Digital Support & Security The AAQ was developed and launched in 2025/26 with 36 students enrolled.	Partially Achieved
---	--	--------------------

STRATEGIC SKILLS GOAL 5

Continue working closely with the City Council, in supporting the development of the first Digital City, reducing adult digital poverty, and promoting progression to employment.

- Our provision targets those most at risk of digital exclusion, including beginners, individuals furthest from the labour market, and ESOL learners.
- Inclusive pathways: A structured digital curriculum builds confidence, skills, and clear progression routes.
- Integrated delivery: Embedding digital skills within ESOL and community provision ensures learners develop both language and workplace-ready capabilities.
- Employability focus: Learners gain essential digital skills for everyday life and work, opening access to further training and employment opportunities.

Impact:

Targeted, inclusive provision is reducing digital inequality, empowering residents, and supporting local economic growth through improved access to skills and employment.

2025/26 KPI

500 IT/digital taster and advanced course enrolments for adults in the community (22/23 baseline 252 enrolments)	951 enrolments with a focus on digital. ■ 46 Step up (Mixture of Word, Spreadsheet, File Management, PowerPoint & Computing) ■ 43 Introduction (Mixture of Word, Spreadsheet, File Management, PowerPoint & Computing) ■ 32 Advanced (Mixture of Word, Spreadsheet, File Management, PowerPoint & Computing) ■ 586 Digital Skills ■ 146 Internet Safety ■ 73 Basic IT ■ 25 Libre Office Delivering to: ■ Two Saints ■ ANA Rehabilitation Centres ■ ESOL Groups ■ Unemployed groups at ALH ■ Portsmouth City Council Well-being Team ■ Better Innovations ■ Cosham & Southsea Libraries ■ Carers Centre Portsmouth	Achieved
---	--	----------

STRATEGIC SKILLS GOAL 6

To be recognised as the lead provider of clean energy education and training in the Solent region, specifically Air Source Heat Pumps and Retrofitting practices

We have strengthened our position through the development of a Centre of Excellence for Construction and Building Services.

APPRENTICESHIP GROWTH

Increased enrolments in green-focused standards across Electrical, Gas, RAC, Plumbing, and Plastering/Drylining, with 97 starts in 2025/26.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

Refocusing on core strengths in Construction and Building Services has improved quality of education, employer partnerships, and the apprentice experience, with a clear plan for growth in 2026/27.

FUNDING CONTEXT

Skills Bootcamps in Net Zero were not delivered due to overlapping funding restrictions between Hampshire County Council and Portsmouth City Council, following a successful HCC bid.

QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

- Achievement rates improving: 56% overall (up from 50%), with current 2025/26 performance at 61.2%.
- Learner feedback: Strong overall satisfaction; improvement focus on balancing on/off-the-job training, feedback, and target setting.
- Employer feedback: Positive, with targeted improvements identified in communication, progress reviews, and engagement

Impact:

A focused, high-quality apprenticeship offer is driving improved outcomes, strengthening employer confidence, and positioning the college as a regional leader in green skills and clean energy training.

2025/26 KPI

75 new apprenticeship starts in Electrical, Gas, RAC and Plumbing and Plastering / Drylining.	97 Apprenticeship enrolments	Achieved
3-star rating (Good) on Find an Apprenticeship site (22/23 baseline Good)	College does have 3 stars; however, response rate is very low	Achieved
Employer & Apprentice Survey results	Overall results are very positive; however, to identify areas for improvement, focus will be placed on questions where agreement fell below 95%, specifically the balance between on- and off-the-job training (assignments), feedback, and target setting.	Achieved
Overall apprenticeship achievement rate 56% (22/23 baseline 50%)	Achievement rate of 56%	Achieved. On target for
Construction and Building Services Apprenticeship provision graded Good through self-assessment process (22/23 baseline Requires Improvement)	We are tracking as good for 2025/26; all Apprentice Accountability Framework measures are now good.	Achieved
2 Skills Bootcamps to be developed and delivered in 2025/26.	Not delivered. Hampshire County Council awarded COPC two Bootcamp contracts, ESOL and Construction, but then changed the terms of engagement regarding postcodes we were allowed to recruit students from, rendering the contracts undeliverable (contracts terminated prior to delivery taking place).	Partially Achieved

STRATEGIC SKILLS GOAL 7

Develop Science, Engineering, Maths and IT curriculum to reflect the current and emerging skills needs of the Maritime and Aerospace industries in the Solent region, specifically in Satcomms and Hardware Engineering.

We have strengthened curriculum relevance through extensive employer and community partnerships, including Admiral, Sky, BAE Systems, NATS, University of Portsmouth, and WorldSkills UK.

EMPLOYER-LED CURRICULUM DESIGN

Industry partners have shaped delivery through live briefs, agile project work, and real-world scenarios, embedding professional standards, technical skills, and workplace behaviours.

ENHANCED WORK EXPERIENCE AND ENRICHMENT

Students benefit from work experience, industry workshops, competitions, and portfolio development, supported by partners such as UNLOC, Delivered Social, and XPARK Games.

STEM EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

- Maths: STEM careers events with BAE Systems, NATS, and the Office for National Statistics.
- Science: Guest speakers from leading organisations including NHS, BAE Systems, and University of Portsmouth.
- Engineering: Employer-set projects and renewable energy-focused curriculum development.

PROGRESSION AND CAREERS INSIGHT

Employers support mock interviews, careers guidance, and insight into degree apprenticeships, with direct engagement from organisations such as BAE Systems. University taster days further support informed progression.

EMPLOYABILITY FOCUS

A structured Employability Skills Programme, co-delivered with employers, ensures students develop work-ready skills aligned to industry expectations.

Impact:

An employer-driven, sector-aligned curriculum is enhancing technical skills, strengthening progression pathways, and preparing learners for careers in high-growth Maritime and Aerospace industries.

2025/26 KPI

Existing Science, Engineering, Maths and IT curriculum to be repurposed to reflect the skills needs identified by sector employers, working with key local partner such as QinetiQ, Carnival UK, Electrogear, BAE and Airbus	Provision has been repurposed and the college is now working with a range of employers including Admiral, Chillblast / Vulpine, Sky, Swan Retail, Shaping Portsmouth, UNLOC, Delivered Social, BIMM, WorldSkills UK and local schools.	Achieved
--	--	----------

STRATEGIC SKILLS GOAL 8

Refine and relaunch Personal Development to ensure all students and apprentices have the skills required to progress onto their next steps.

We have significantly strengthened personal development and enrichment, driving sustained growth in learner engagement and work readiness.

INCREASED PARTICIPATION

Engagement has risen from 8% (2022/23) to 30% (2023/24) and now 55% overall, with 30% sustained participation, demonstrating strong impact and momentum.

HIGH-IMPACT ENRICHMENT

Cross-college activities (e.g. Culture Day, guest speakers, Turing Scheme) are developing key employability skills including confidence, communication, resilience, and cultural awareness.

DIGITAL INNOVATION

Launch of the FE Tech platform provides flexible, modular learning (e.g. Green Skills, wellbeing, finance), accessible across all provision and enabling robust tracking of engagement and impact.

REDUCING BARRIERS TO PROGRESSION

Introduction of DVSA Driving Theory resources supports access to employment, particularly in vocational sectors where a driving licence is essential.

EMPLOYER-RELEVANT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Enrichment activity builds transferable skills such as adaptability, independence, teamwork, and professional behaviours, supporting progression into employment, apprenticeships, and further study.

STRATEGIC NEXT STEPS

- Embedding enrichment within curriculum delivery from 2026/27 through planned enrichment weeks.
- Introducing digital badging (iDEA) to strengthen learner CVs and progression.
- Aligning enrichment more closely with curriculum through cross-college planning.

Impact:

A coordinated, skills-led personal development model is increasing engagement, strengthening employability, and ensuring learners are better prepared for their next steps.

2025/26 KPI

30% (488) full-time FE students engaged in extra-curricular enrichment activities (E6) – 22/23 baseline 8%	In 2025/26, 55% of students demonstrate overall engagement across the college, with 30% of individual learners engaging on a sustained basis to date.	Achieved
Environmental and digital programmes embedded into enrichment offer	The FE Tech digital platform has now been fully developed and is ready for roll-out, providing a broad range of accessible, modular programmes aligned to learner needs and curriculum areas.	Partially Achieved
Enrichment offer to be contextualised to curriculum areas to increase the number of students participating in personal development programme and enrichment activity	While enrichment is not yet fully contextualised to curriculum areas, preparatory work is underway through an Assistant Principal (AP) project group, with initial mapping exploring how curriculum provision and the EDGE enrichment offer can be aligned. This will ensure learners clearly recognise the skills, experiences and employability benefits enrichment provides alongside their main programme.	Partially Achieved

STRATEGIC SKILLS GOAL 9

Continue working collaboratively with the regional education providers to ensure a high quality, responsive and co-ordinated education and training offer for the Solent and wider region.

We have significantly expanded partnership working with the University of Portsmouth (UoP) and local schools to support progression and informed student choice.

HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

UoP has supported 9 events this year, including UCAS drop-ins, 1:1 application support, and parent-focused sessions on student finance. Students also accessed scholarship events and online guidance, with 177 registrations for finance support sessions.

EXTENSIVE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

Delivered 138 school engagement activities, including assemblies, careers events, mock interviews, and bespoke workshops (e.g. T Levels). Early engagement with Year 10 students has strengthened preparation for progression decisions.

ENHANCED TRANSITION AND RECRUITMENT

Increased participation in taster days, with 21 schools engaged and 13 bringing entire Year 10 cohorts, supporting more informed course choices and improved learner confidence.

Impact:

A highly collaborative regional approach is strengthening progression pathways, improving student decision-making, and ensuring a coherent, high-quality education and training offer.

2025/26 KPI

125 planned school engagement events (22/23 baseline 50) of which 5 to be undertaken as a collective group of Solent colleges	To date, we have been to 138 school engagement events since September 2025.	Achieved
1 new Higher Education course developed for a Sept 25 enrolment (22/23 baseline 2 new Higher Education courses)	1 new CERTHE Architecture course developed collaboratively with UoP course	Partially Achieved

Strategic Skills Goals 2026/27

The progress outlined against the 2025/26 KPIs informs the strategic priorities and KPIs set out below for 2026/27.

The College has identified five strategic priorities for 2026/27:

- Curriculum alignment to labour market demand
- Development of technical, digital and employability skills
- Increased participation and inclusion
- Improved progression into employment and higher-level study
- Strengthened partnership working to deliver the four strategic priorities above (enabler)

These priorities are informed by the progress made in 2025/26 and respond directly to LSIP priorities, national policy and local labour market need.







5. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2026/27

STRATEGIC SKILLS GOALS	COPC STRATEGIC PLAN LINK	CONTRIBUTION TO LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SKILLS	26/27 ACTIONS	26/27 KPI
Ensure curriculum is fully aligned to labour market demand and employer need	Strategic goal 2: World class curriculum	Ensures that curriculum provision is aligned to priority sectors identified through LSIP, Skills England and local economic strategies, supporting economic growth and addressing skills shortages across key sectors: • Health and Life Sciences • Construction and Clean Energy • Digital Technologies • Creative Industries • Marine Aerospace and Defence • Business, Professional and Financial Services • Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing • Foundational Sectors i.e. Automotive, Hair and Beauty, Leisure and Tourism and Retail	A college-wide approach to employer engagement and curriculum co-design will be embedded through Employer Advisory Boards and Sector Cluster meetings. Curriculum planning will be informed by labour market intelligence and employer input.	85% of provision aligned to local and/or national priority sectors 100% of curriculum areas co-designed and validated with employers 100% of curriculum areas engaged with employer advisory activity 8 Sector Cluster meetings run bi-annually Employer satisfaction ≥90% 100% of courses mapped to skills, job roles and progression routes which can then be more clearly articulated and understood by students, parents/ carers, staff and stakeholders (Skills Bridge)

STRATEGIC SKILLS GOALS	COPC STRATEGIC PLAN LINK	CONTRIBUTION TO LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SKILLS	26/27 ACTIONS	26/27 KPI
Develop learners' technical, digital and employability skills to meet employer expectations	Strategic goal 2: World class curriculum	Supports the development of a highly skilled workforce with the technical, digital and employability skills required across all sectors, addressing employer-reported gaps in work readiness, communication and problem-solving.	Employability, digital and technical skills will be embedded across all programmes. Employer-led projects, industry placements and enrichment activity will be expanded. A structured employability skills framework will be implemented across all provision.	100% of programmes include applied technical, digital and employability skills 80% of learners participate in employability and enrichment activity 70% of learners complete industry placements, projects or employer-led activity 100% of learners complete employability skills framework Measurable improvement in key employability skills (measured by stakeholder voice)

STRATEGIC SKILLS GOALS	COPC STRATEGIC PLAN LINK	CONTRIBUTION TO LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SKILLS	26/27 ACTIONS	26/27 KPI
Increase participation and access to learning in priority sectors and communities	Strategic goal 4: Trusted partner for the communities we serve	Supports economic inclusion by increasing participation in learning, particularly among adults and underrepresented groups, addressing digital poverty, low skill levels and barriers to education in deprived communities.	Community-based, flexible and modular provision will be expanded, particularly in digital and priority sector skills. Targeted engagement will focus on adults, disadvantaged learners and priority wards.	25% increase in adult participation in priority programmes 600 adult enrolments in digital/community provision 50% of adult and community learning provision delivered flexibly Increased participation from priority wards, reducing 16-18 and 19-24 NEET numbers in Portsmouth. Effective deployment of Construction Placements Fund (£96k) and Mainstream Fund (£350k) to support inclusive access and participation for SEND and Construction students.

STRATEGIC SKILLS GOALS	COPC STRATEGIC PLAN LINK	CONTRIBUTION TO LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SKILLS	26/27 ACTIONS	26/27 KPI
Improve progression into sustainable employment, apprenticeships and higher-level study	Strategic goal 2: World class curriculum	Ensures that learners progress into sustained employment, apprenticeships and further study, contributing directly to local workforce development and productivity in priority sectors.	Progression pathways will be strengthened through employer partnerships, apprenticeships and curriculum alignment. Targeted support will improve transition into employment and priority sectors.	80% progression into employment, apprenticeships, HE or further study (measure: longitudinal actual destination data) 15% year-on-year improvement in progression into priority sectors 150 apprenticeship starts in priority trades and sectors

STRATEGIC SKILLS GOALS	COPC STRATEGIC PLAN LINK	CONTRIBUTION TO LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SKILLS	26/27 ACTIONS	26/27 KPI
Increase the number and depth of strands of new collaborative provision working in partnership with regional education providers and stakeholders to support a coordinated skills system	Strategic goal 4: Trusted partner for the communities we serve	This supports the development of a coordinated, employer-led skills system across the Solent, improving progression opportunities and alignment between education and employment.	Partnerships with the University of Portsmouth, employers and regional networks will be strengthened to co-design curriculum and develop progression pathways, especially in the context of flexible, modularised provision as requested by local employers.	5 active strategic partnerships influencing curriculum – including Shaping Portsmouth, Portsmouth International Port, Fujitsu, Mountjoy, Portsmouth Creates and Portsmouth City Council. 100% of curriculum areas engaged with employer advisory activity 8 Sector Cluster meetings run bi-annually 2 jointly delivered programmes Measurable increase in progression into local employment



6. Establishing Impact

Impact will be measured through improved progression outcomes, increased participation in priority groups, employer satisfaction and growth in priority sector provision.

Performance will be monitored and used to inform continuous improvement.

7. Local Needs Duty

From the moment it was established following merger, City of Portsmouth College has laid out a clear vision for the part we will play in ensuring a successful future for the city of Portsmouth – its businesses, its communities and its people. The coming together of our four campuses under a single college for all the people of Portsmouth has put the provision of 16-18 courses, apprenticeships and adult education in a stronger position than ever before.

We now have an established and central role in achieving this aim, alongside our many key local partners, who share these aspirations. One great college for one great city. The College's strategic objectives confirm our commitment to growing the scale and quality of our curriculum, as the leading provider of courses and apprenticeships. With a clear identity, an impactful leadership team and the expertise of our talented staff, we look to the future with confidence and optimism.

The Corporation has been actively engaged with the development of this document. The Board of Governors confirms that this Annual Accountability Statement has been approved as the College's statement of purpose, aims and objectives for 2026/27 and that the document explicitly fulfils the statutory Local Needs Duty under Section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 as amended by the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022.

The Governors of City of Portsmouth College are able to fulfil their responsibility of meeting the Local Needs Duty through:

- a. regular participation in EABs and Cluster Connections meetings
- b. each having been assigned as link governors for specific skills and careers areas (as agreed at the 2024 meeting)
- c. using intelligence and data gleaned from the above roles to triangulate senior leaders' decisions regarding curriculum planning, development and mix.
- d. reviewing College provision at Committee meetings, considering labour market intelligence, government policy goals, LSIP priorities and other market forces.

The contribution of senior staff to skills development across the Solent, as detailed in Section 3 above, is further strengthened

by collaboration and collective review of the Local Needs Duty with stakeholders in the area, including considering governance, regional skills challenges, and supply/demand issues.

A significant event in this process took place on 18 May 2024 with key representatives from the county's public sector organisations gathering to discuss their goals and objectives for skills growth in Hampshire in the context of the Local Needs Duty. Chairs and CEO's/Principals from the Solent region's General Further Education Colleges, and most Sixth Forms/post-16 Multi Academy Trusts came together with representatives from Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council and the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce to discuss skills gaps and to determine where increased collaboration might prove productive.

The meeting, which included a review of projects funded by the Strategic Development Fund and Local Skills Improvement Fund, concluded that skills priorities were being met in Engineering, Health & Social Care and Childcare, even if there was more work to do in measuring the impact on progression into employment. The local offer was, however, seen as generic and not as extensive in other areas, with greater engagement with employers necessary to clarify their precise requirements.

Whilst the 2024 event has not been repeated on the same scale, it proved to be pivotal for the region's response to the Local Needs Duty, as many of the successes emerging from the first LSIP can be traced back to decisions and commitments made by all parties at this meeting. The determination to address the skills need demonstrated on this auspicious occasion has underscored actions taken across the region in the ensuing 24 months, laid the groundwork for the targets integrated into the revised and reformulated LSIP 2026-2029, and set the ambitious agenda for strategic development at City of Portsmouth College for the years ahead.

Signed:

Katy Quinn – CEO and Principal

Tim Jackson – Chair of Governors

Date: June 2026

List of supporting documents

1. The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy

www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy-2025

2. Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper

www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-education-and-skills-white-paper

3. Plan for Change

www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-change

4. CoPC Strategic Plan

[copc-strategic-plan-2022-2026-screen.pdf](#)

5. CoPC Financial Statements and Annual Report 2024-25

[COPC Financial Statements and Annual Report 2024-25](#)

6. Economic Strategy for Hampshire 2025-2027

documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/Economic-Strategy-For-Hampshire-2025-27-FINAL.pdf

7. Economy and Growth Plan for Hampshire 2025-2027

[Economy and Growth Plan for Hampshire](#)

8. Solent LSIP Skills and Improvement Plan

[Solent-Local-Skills-Improvement-Plan.pdf](#)

9. The 'Get Solent Working' Strategy

[Get Solent Working](#)

10. Solent 2050 Strategy

[Solent 2050 - Solent Growth Partnership](#)

11. Portsmouth City Council Skills and Labour Market Strategy 2026-2030

[Skills and Labour Market Strategy 2026-2030](#)

12. The Growth and Skills Levy

find-employer-schemes.education.gov.uk/interim/growth-and-skills-levy

13. Lifelong Learning Entitlement

www.gov.uk/government/publications/lifelong-learning-entitlement-lle-overview/lifelong-learning-entitlement-overview

14. Skills England - Report

assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66ffd4fce84ae1fd8592ee37/Skills_England_Report.pdf

15. Skills England – Assessment of Priority Skills to 2030

www.gov.uk/government/publications/assessment-of-priority-skills-to-2030





Highbury Campus

Tudor Crescent
Portsmouth
PO6 2SA

Sixth Form Campus

Tangier Rd,
Portsmouth
PO3 6PZ

North Harbour Campus

Unit One, Harbourgate
Southampton Road
Portsmouth
PO6 4BQ

Arundel Campus

49 Arundel Street
Portsmouth
PO1 1SA

023 9238 3131

info@copc.ac.uk

copc.ac.uk



**City of
Portsmouth
College**

City of Portsmouth College publications are available in alternative easily accessible formats, please call **023 9238 3131** or email **info@copc.ac.uk**