

Marches Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

Progress Report – Annex C

June 2025





Marches LSIP

Local Skills Improvement Plan

Education Delivered Across the Marches

A Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is an employer focused plan to better match training provision to local employer skills demands through research, engagement and collaboration.

The following pages are provided to help the reader understand, in more detail, the action and activities that have been carried out, or are to be carried out.



TERMINOLOGY KEY

2021 Census	National Population Census for England & Wales	LA	Local Authority
BID	Business Improvement District	LSIF	Local Skills Improvement Fund
C&Eco	Careers & Enterprise Company	LSIP	Local Skills Improvement Plan
DfE	Department for Education (UK Government)	Marches	Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin
DWP	Department for Works & Pensions	MEP	Marches Education Partnership
ERB	Employer Representative Body (Shropshire Chamber)	MLSIP	Marches Local Skills Improvement Plan
FE	Further Education	MSPN	Marches Skills Provider Network
HCA	Hereford College of Arts	NMITE	New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering
HE	Higher Education	NOMIS	Part of the Office for National Statistics
HLNSC	Hereford, Ludlow and North Shropshire College	SAP	Skills Advisory Panel
HTQ	Higher Technical Qualifications	SCG	Shrewsbury Colleges Group
HWGTA	Hereford & Worcester Group Training Association	SLT	Senior Leadership Team
ITP	Independent Training Provider	T level	Technical Levels
ICS	Integrated Care System	UKSPF	UK Shared Prosperity Fund



Educational Overview

Across the Marches there is a wide range of training providers, large FE and HE institutions, private training providers and specialist training providers. The following pages will give you a brief look at just some of those providers, and how they have worked to meet the Marches LSIP Priorities and continue to do so. Examples of collaboration show how this can benefit employers, training providers, students, those seeking employment or those looking for niche training.



Hereford, Ludlow and North Shropshire College (HLNSC)

Website: [Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College - Home](https://www.hlnc.ac.uk/)



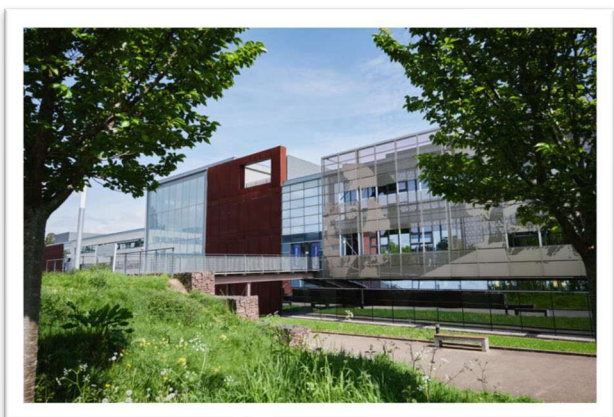
Herefordshire,
Ludlow & North
Shropshire College

Extract from the Colleges Accountability Statement

There is a statutory duty for colleges to annually complete an Accountability Statement, this document covers several topics. Included is their contribution to Local Skills Priorities, as well as national priorities. Below is the 2024 extract, their next statement will be published during summer 2025.

Aim		Current Position	Target No.	Milestone	Priority		
					LSIP	LA	UK
Increase the amount of training delivered in low carbon technologies	Complete and fully equip the LCTTC (Low Carbon Technology Training Centre)	Phase one – Complete Phase two – On schedule	NA	Oct 24	X	X	X
	Increase the uptake of short course provision for industry	63 businesses / employees trained to date	124	July 25	X	X	X
	Increase the number of Plumbing (Environmental Pathway Standard) Apprenticeships	8 enrolled in 2023/24	18	July 25	X	X	X
Increase the number of students engaging with employer-led Level 3 provision (T Levels)	Develop T Level in Health Care Assistant	Not currently available	NA	July 25	X	X	X
	Implement the delivery of T Levels in Animal Management	Course developed in 2023/24. Currently recruiting to programme	93	Sept 24		X	X
	Implement the delivery of T Level in Business Administration	Course developed in 2023/24. Currently recruiting to programme	39	Sept 24	X	X	X
	Increase the number studying Building Engineering Services	Currently 12 students on programme	16	Sept 24	X	X	X
	Increase the number studying Early Years Educator	Currently 23 students on programme	36	Sept 24		X	X
Provide a wider range of courses at levels 4 and 5	Recruit a greater number of students to study HTQs (Higher Technical Qualifications)	HTQ courses developed in Computing, Community Coaching, Modern Methods of Construction and Leadership and Management.	76	Oct 24	X	X	X
	Introduce the L5 Learning and Skills Teacher apprenticeship	Currently delivering the Diploma in Education and Training	12	July 25		X	X
	Introduce modular delivery. 8 individual units to be developed.	Engaged with the Modular Acceleration Programme pilot throughout 2023/24	64	July 25	X	X	X
Continue to work in partnership to address identified local skills needs	Successful delivery of: Year 3 of the SDF (2) Environmental Technology Year 2 of the LSIF Retrofit and Engineering	Programmes are in development / delivery and on-track.	NA	July 25	X	X	X





HLNSC has the widest geographical footprint of any of our colleges, with sites as far apart as Oswestry in north west Shropshire and Holme Lacy, south east of Hereford, with strong connections both into Worcestershire and Powys. Rated Good by Ofsted. Courses are wide ranging from T levels to vocational courses, from entry level to university level.

The college has worked hard to embrace the Marches LSIP Priorities. Apart from their obvious involvement in both LSIF projects they have, or are addressing, many of the other priorities and continue to do so. Starting 'Meet Your Future Careers' to bring students in contact with local employers from different sectors to understand the local career opportunities to aid retention locally. Working to highlight the college offer to local employers using revised language to ensure employers understand what is available. The college has been actively involved in providing training in employment skills to those economically inactive to support growing the local workforce.

Increasing the use of online systems to provide employer web talks to students, initiated through department staff and their contacts within their sectors. Herefordshire Council have instigated a new Skills Board, and the HLNSC Principal was appointed chair, allowing the college to benefit from the collective knowledge and understanding of that Board. A specific activity was carried out to ensure staff in both the Construction and Business faculties are using clear collaborative messaging when dealing with employers.

The college has increased its T levels offer to support the employers call for students to have greater workplace awareness through the use of more vocational teaching methods. The college actively embraced the trial of the Modular Accelerator Programme courses (MAP). In addition to MAP the college is also now offering blended learning, short and bespoke courses, all methods employers prefer, to reduce lost working hours when releasing staff. The college has also introduced a range of upskilling activities for staff to ensure that the provision supports local employers and their sector needs.



Shrewsbury Colleges Group (SCG)

SHREWSBURY
COLLEGES GROUP

Website: [Courses](#) | [Training](#) | [Shrewsbury Colleges Group](#)

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Priority	National	LSIP	LEP	SCG SP	Actions
Construction	X	X	X	1.1/ 2.3 3.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New L3 Construction Support Technician Apprenticeship 2. Deliver four HTQ modules in Methods of Modern Construction through the Modular Accelerator Programme 3. Secure investment for the Renewable Construction Centre
Health and Social Care	X	X	X	1.1 1.1/ 2.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Two new T Level pathways in: Midwifery; and Mental Health 2. Deliver two HTQ modules in Health Professional through the Modular Accelerator Programme 3. New Health Education Suite as part of a £1.3mn investment
Engineering and Manufacturing	X	X	X	1.1/ 2.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver four HTQ modules in Engineering through the Modular Accelerator Programme 2. New HTQ Engineering with four pathways in: general engineering, electrical/electronic; mechanical; & manufacturing 3. New L3 Safety and Health Technician for engineering companies
Business and Professional		X	X	1.1/ 2.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New HTQ in Leadership and Management 2. Deliver two HTQ modules in Leadership and Management through the Modular Accelerator Programme 3. Extend Project Search to a second cohort with the focus to include Business Administration
Tourism and Visitor Economy			X	1.1 1.1/ 2.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Further Travel and Tourism Extended Diploma provision 2. Introduction of L2 Commis chef and L2 Production chef apprenticeships
Digital	X		X	1.1/ 2.3 4.1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New HTQs, in Digital Technologies and Computing 2. Deliver four HTQ modules in Digital Technologies and Computing through the Modular Accelerator Programme 3. New Digital Media Suite as part of a £1.3mn investment
Science and Maths	X			3.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. STEM Centre
Communication skills		X		1.1 1.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AI Moodle course added to tutorial programme



Shrewsbury Colleges Group has three sites across Shrewsbury. Drawing students from a wide geographical area. Rated Outstanding by Ofsted in March 2025. Courses are wide ranging from full time A and T levels to vocational courses, from entry level to university level. The college runs a variety of successful well attended



employer led Skills Advisory Panels. These have been established to work on the LSIF courses and LSIP priorities, but also to support the wider curriculum offer and aid future planning through clear understanding of local employer needs by sector.

The college has enhanced its careers provision through specific employer focused events, helping employers to understand the value and workings of apprenticeships. The colleges are now using both Labour Market Information and LSIP research to drive the focus for careers events to ensure local sectors are understood by students.

The college is part of the Construction Excellence Group, working closely with the CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) and other bodies to support construction as a career path. College has recently become a CITB Approved Training Organisation (ATO) to ensure the best possible training opportunities for the local area. SCG are a gold member of Made in the Midlands, who champion British industry in the manufacturing and engineering sectors. SCG has a partnership with Veissmann to jointly offer Air Source Heat Pump training.

In response to employer preferences, they offered MAP modular courses as well as other modular, short, and bespoke course styles. SCG in conjunction with Shropshire Chamber are working to create an Engineering network group.

SCG is working on a project with Shropshire Council to assist young people with learning difficulties into work. The College was actively involved in the Multiply contract to offer one to many training across the area to improve adult numeracy.

SHREWSBURY COLLEGES GROUP

Fact: Shrewsbury Sixth Form College is the county's largest A Level provider, consistently ranked in the top 20 of sixth form colleges nationally. It offers nearly 40 A Levels, the widest in the county, to over 1,800 full time students aged 16-19 years, including students from countries all over the world.



Telford College

Website: [Telford College](https://www.telfordcollege.ac.uk)



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Skills Priority	Marches (LEP Skills Advisory Panel)	West Midlands (WMCA)	National Skills Priorities (DfE guidance)
Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering	X	X	X
Agri-tech	X		
Business & Professional services, Management & Leadership	X	X	
Construction	X	X	X
Digital/Cyber & Technology	X	X	X
Education	X		
Electrification		X	
Enviro-tech/Green/Retro-Fit	X	X	
Haulage & logistics	X		X
Health & Social Care	X	X	X
Mathematics			X
Science			X
Visitor Economy	X		



Telford College has two sites, soon to be three, all in Telford. The main campus, which is of university standard, is to the north west of the town centre. The new digital, cyber and AI learning centre is in the Quad, in Telford’s town centre Station Quarter development, and allows Telford College to work alongside Harper Adams University who also have a secondary location there. Now underway is the transformation of

the Council offices, also in central Telford, into a cutting edge sixth form centre ready for 2026, freeing up space on the main campus to expand vocational facilities.

Recently rated Good by Ofsted, the college serves students and employers from a wide area.

Courses are wide ranging from full time A and T levels to vocational courses, from entry level to

university level. Telford is one of the fastest growing towns in England, and with an above average density of manufacturing companies.

Careers advice is delivered in many ways, using tutorials to highlight local career paths and employers. Based on the feedback from employers the college has reimagined its employer messaging to remove course levels and other jargon to make the information accessible.

The college has gained value from the T level employer placement companies, by asking them to come into college to talk directly to groups of students to help them understand what work will involve in a specific sector, as those students start their careers. A new senior college post is being created specifically to increase the interaction with employers, to give them even greater involvement in the curriculum going forward. The college already has a range of employer Skills Advisory Panels.

The new start of the art Medical and Nursing Suite has allowed Telford College to partner with Keele University, the Integrated Care System and the NHS to offer much needed health, social work and social care training locally. A new additional use for the medical mobile classroom has been found, it is also now used for live, off-site careers events, to highlight the careers opportunities in health and care. This facility is shared with Shrewsbury Colleges Group to maximise use and value.



The college is also partnering with Dulson Training and others to provide employment programmes, which has proved highly successful with 190 gaining a Class 2 HGV Licence and obtaining employment. Having strong relations with local employers has allowed the college to

invite employers to provide assignments for students, providing real life scenarios and which the employers evaluate. Community courses in Excel and basic IT, both skills that employers reported, through the LSIP, needed improvement.

The college was part of the trials of the Modular Acceleration Programmes (MAP) provision, providing a step up to higher education. Grouping together with Harper Adams, Telford & Wrekin Council and In-Comm Training to help deliver a clear message on the local training offer.

Though very difficult to release teaching staff, the college is managing to get staff out on 'back to industry' days.



Hereford College of Arts

Website: [Hereford College of Arts | Home](#)



The campus stretches over two sites in Hereford, one ultra-modern, and the other an architectural historic masterpiece. The college has a rich 170-year history, making the Arts College a unique institution. This specialist college offer excellent facilities, teaching and equipment allowing creativity to thrive.

The new Digital Skills Centre (opened April 2024) at the College Road campus is a key element of the city-wide Stronger Hereford initiative, and provides a significant resource for digital skills development identified locally and nationally as priorities. The Digital Skills Centre is a direct and tangible response to the digital skills needs highlighted in the Marches LSIP as an area for development. The Centre includes a larger open-access area - the Courtyard Studio - which has a mixture of high specification PCs and Macs, together with medium and large format printing. This area is also the base for our Digital Demonstrators who provide advice and training alongside



academic staff. Two further digital studios contain dual-screen, Gaming Specification PCs, and the fourth is a dedicated Mac suite. The Courtyard Studio is open to students from across disciplines, so supports the core digital skills development that is increasingly important across industry and career pathways.



Two new specialist degree courses are based in the Digital Skills Centre:

- BA (Hons) Games Design
- BA (Hons) Digital Content Creation

These degrees were developed in response to growth in the creative industries, and the digital sector in particular, but also in response to digital skills shortages across many other industry sectors. They also provide a local progression route for students from our successful FE Diplomas in Creative Media Production & Technology, which also have a strong industry focus.

An extensive range of industry-standard software is supported, including the Adobe Creative Suite, Unreal Engine, and 3D CAD software. Students also use facilities for photography, video, interactive media, virtual reality, vlogging, video-editing, and digital fabrication. Digital skills developed across many of the programmes align with LSIP priorities, including those required for manufacturing, where 3D CAD designs are developed which can be prototyped in physical form in our workshops via 3D printing or laser cutting. Students on the digital programmes develop skills in coding, web development and content generation, alongside administrative and planning capabilities, which also align with Marches LSIP and National Skills priorities.

Digital skills are developed via practical knowledge application through collaborative industry projects or 'live briefs'. Their Creative Digital Media Production and Technology FE course, for example, has recently developed a new relationship with the fire service. They help students to identify and communicate their skills and abilities throughout their study, promoting this has included developing our HCA Empower skills taxonomy, which links with locally, nationally and internationally defined employment skills requirements.



Students at Hereford College of Arts have engaged in 'live projects' or industry related projects set by external colleagues for many years. These projects are broad, wide ranging, and take place frequently across all levels and subject areas within both FE and HE courses. They have worked with large and national key partners like the National Health Service and The National Trust, local organisations

like Herefordshire Council, Museums and Library Service and Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and more recently have been working with external clients from non-creative industries to generate projects for the students, emphasizing the soft or transferable skills gained through the arts education pathway, as well as sharing the critical need for creativity across sectors.

In broadening the range of industries with which they work, they can encourage students to recognise their transferable skills and look beyond the creative industries for careers, as well as within them.

A recent example is a new relationship that the Creative Media Production and Technology course has recently developed with the Fire Service (see case study 1 below).

June 2025 will mark the 3rd year of a timetabled 1 week off site employer engagement opportunity for our Level 3 Art, Design and Communication students. When researching work experience they actively encourage students to think broadly as to how their creative and transferable skills can be applied before consolidating their external placements.

Case Study 1

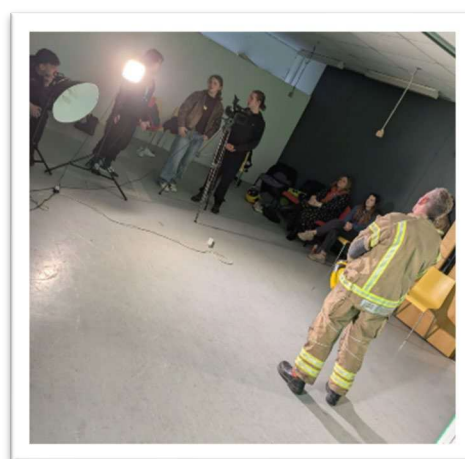
As part of their Moving Image brief, UAL Creative Media Production and Technology students at Hereford College of Arts were given a series of live briefs to complete. This included filming external pop-up arts events, live streaming music gigs and capturing performing arts events for HCA college courses. In addition, students worked with external clients, The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire Service to create a series of short social media clips to help promote awareness and recruitment to the volunteer fire service.



Fire Service volunteers dedicate significant time around their main occupation to be on call for emergency responses. The marketing and communication team at the service wanted our students to help create some short social media pieces to help raise awareness of this role and increase people willing to give their time to this vital part of the service. Students working on Level 3 Creative Media spent the day with three volunteer fire fighters in our video studio filming them on the green screen. Students gave direction based on pre-developed concepts and captured a

range of video content. Following this they explored a post-production workflow, replacing the greenscreen with a range of backgrounds, adding logos and text to aid in the call to action in line with the brand guidelines of the fire service.

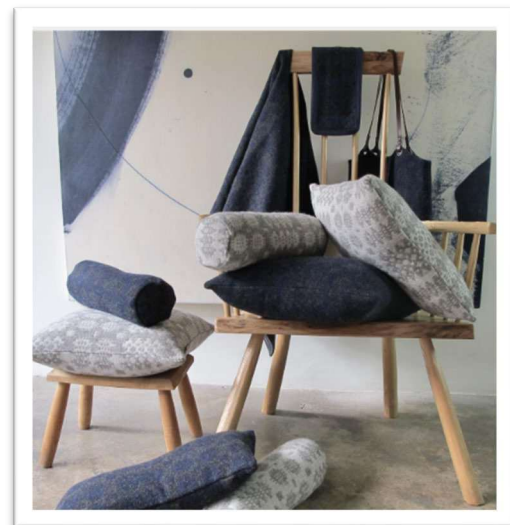
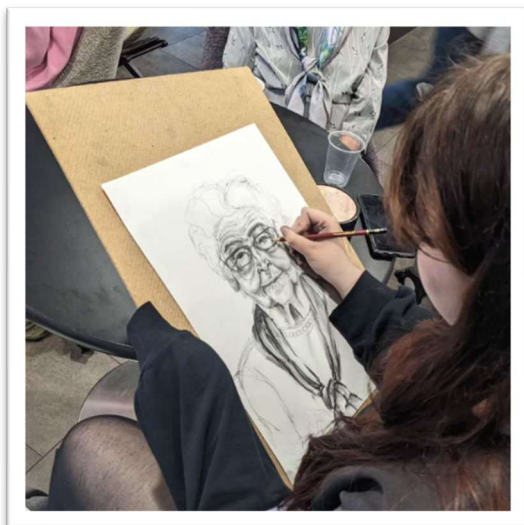
This project helped students to approach a live brief with an external facing client. Transferable skills such as communication, tight time management and project management were joined with technical skills to produce the required outcomes to a high standard. The marketing and communication team for the Fire Service provided valuable feedback on the production which contributed to the students' assessment and ensured the resulting grades were given with professional practice in mind.



Case Study 2

Students on the Level 3 Diploma in Art, Design & Communication independently researched, sourced and selected an off-site work experience placement. Placements included a range of retail outlets, film and media, nurseries, primary schools and secondary education settings, small businesses (including interior design, ceramics, floristry, film and media), food and catering industry, health and care providers, digital, journalism and printing to name but a few. Employers fed back on a list of comprehensive skills including:

- Motivation and being able to take action independently
- Leadership skills
- Reliability (trustworthy and dependable)
- Learning on placement (being able to understand concepts and methods used in the employers' practice)
- Communication and Teamwork (and working towards company goals)
- Self-management (minimal supervision needed)
- Emotional intelligence (sensitivity, empathy, working with others, active listening and enquiry)
- Creativity (delivering unique outcomes in response to employer tasks).





“Using her visual skills to source and select furniture, materials and fixtures, XXX was able to confidently help support the team in designing a house interior for a client” Violet and George Interiors

“We run many & varied sports & activities events and XXX took some amazing photos during these events. She was creative, independent & understood the brief. We have and will use the photos from the events. XXX worked hard and took some great images during the placement. She was polite, friendly and positive when we were running our School Games events. XXX was proactive in her work and we have used the high-quality photographic outcomes that XXX took on our social media etc, so XXX was a great help. Thank you”. Dene Magna School

“The students on placement were given a personal project brief (either print or web-based, depending on their interests). They conducted their own research, which was of a good standard and delivered the project via presentation/pitch, with guidance and feedback from our design team, great work”. Orphans Press, Leominster

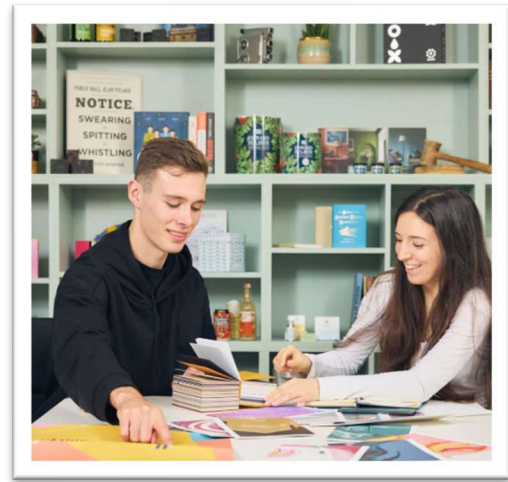
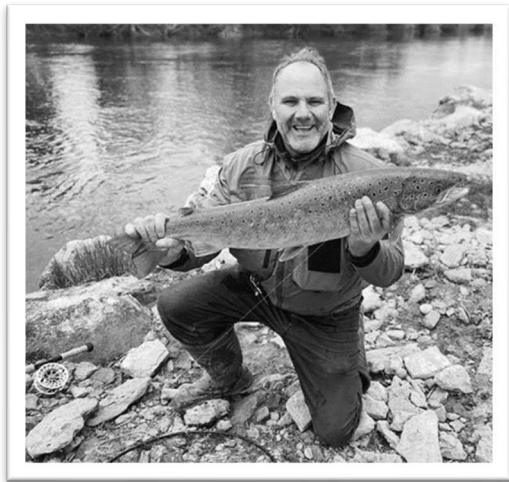
“The HCA students that came to work with our residents were very kind, creative and engaging. Brockington House were happy to have them on site, and we look forward to projects with the college in the future”. Brockington House - Dormy Care

“Our HCA work placement student has been very enthusiastic and proactive and has produced multiple photographic outcomes of our fishery, all of which we would be happy to use as promotional material. She took the time to take photos of each area and included some of the fishermen which was lovely”. Dawley Estates Ltd

“HCA Student designed their own artwork to render onto furniture, was thoughtful about how each section worked together and was flexible and creative around meeting timescales”. Beans Business Worcester

“XXX was thrown in at the deep end, was a quick learner and carried out all tasks asked of her very well”. The Welsh Girl, Hay on Wye





HCA are looking forward to welcoming Herefordshire high school children to their digital skills centre at the College Road campus later this month where they will be hosting a newly created digital work experience placement. They are excited to encourage engagement with school aged learners to develop digital vital skills using their state of the art, industry level resources. This pilot project will help to inform about this new careers initiative, with the plan to roll out more widely to schools and community groups next year.



Universities



Though the Marches area currently has only one institution with the title University, we have other institutions that offer degree and post graduate courses, directly or through partnerships with other Universities. The Marches is home to some unique institutions, offering students a broader range of opportunities, and employers a diverse range of skills to access, as highlighted in the previous section. Hereford Arts College is a perfect example, as they offer education levels from entry to post graduate, their course offering is broad, and provides their students with skills that are needed in multiple sectors, not just art and culture.

Agriculture is of course a vital sector for the region being such a rural landscape in the main, but the Marches also has strong roots in art and culture, military, tourism and engineering from agri engineering to advanced manufacturing, along with many other sectors such as health and social care. Providing a more diverse skills pipeline than in many other regions. The key is to raise awareness amongst employers of the offering they have locally, and to highlight to students the broad range of sectors they could enter. The Marches LSIP, alongside other stakeholders, is already working to highlight these options, working for example with Hereford College of Arts to help students to see how creative has a place, therefore a career in health and social care.



Harper Adams University

Website: [Harper Adams University - Home](#)



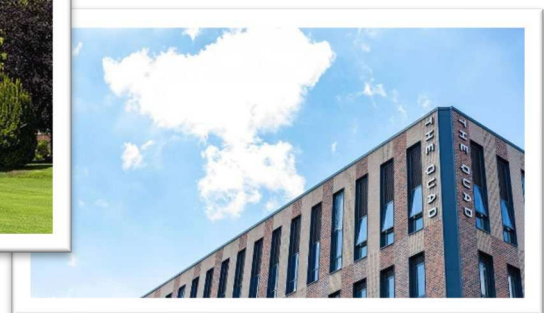
Harper Adams University

Harper Adams University with the main campus in Newport, Shropshire, and a satellite campus in central Telford. The new Telford campus is a dedicated hub for digital courses, focusing on future technologies, engineering, business and career development. Harper Adams University has been named as one of the top 100 institutions globally for the study of Agriculture and Forestry by QS, with an employer reputation score of 94.8%. The University also works closely with other local educational institutions and the Local Authorities, to enhance the local offer, nurture local innovation and embrace the Marches LSIP priorities.

Land-based activities and their associated sectors are crucial to the Marches, from farming to large scale food manufacture, and much more. To have Harper Adams University at the heart of this is hugely important for the area.

“Advancing knowledge, inspiring learners and equipping people to find creative, sustainable solutions to the economic and environmental challenges facing our planet – now and in the future. Real change is possible through a united vision and shared agenda.”

Harper Adams University



Harper Adams is the University for food production and technology, animal health and wellbeing, and their contribution to sustainable, living environments for our planet's inhabitants. This is supported by our departments, curricula, and research specialisms in: Science, Technology, Agriculture, Business, Economics, Food, Land Management, Environment, Engineering, Entomology, Plant Science, Animal Wellbeing, Veterinary Science, Zoology, Farming, Sustainability, Enterprise, Digital, Data Science, Policy.

Project: Sustaining Shropshire, a UKSPF funded (Shropshire Council) project that provided free expert advice to small and medium sized entrepreneurs in Shropshire's flourishing agri-tech, food and drink sectors, to develop pioneering new ideas and boost sustainability. This project came on the heels of the successful ARGI project.

NMITE – New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering

Website: [NMITE Engineering and Technology degrees](#)



The campus is based over two sites in Hereford. NMITE is ever increasing its offer, such as the new Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Construction Management. Working directly with industry on live real-world projects to ensure the graduates have not only work experience, but the skills to be a productive addition to any company from day one. Even the entry requirements break the norm of the traditional institutions. NMITE meet the LSIP priorities head on, as employers want work ready graduates that can turn learning into actions from day one. Aside from the degree courses, NMITE is involved with local projects and supporting the local community.



“NMITE has challenged *everything* in existing higher education, except for one very important thing – quality. We are, by design, a (politely) disruptive game changer!”



Though a relatively new entrant, NMITE is having a big impact. Model was born in 2009, registered as a new higher education provider 2020, first students recruited 2021 with the OU as the validating partner, 2023 granted degree awarding powers.

The Concept: *“The NMITE Difference is not simply change for change’s sake: the need to educate passionate, curious, resilient, and agile engineers equipped with the skills and motivation to solve pressing problems has never been more urgent.*”

There’s a surplus of sustainability problems in the world today, crying out for talented engineers capable of fully understanding problems, and all the complex considerations required to find solutions. From climate change to poverty, clean water to energy scarcity – there’s no shortage of challenges to overcome, yet there’s a shortage of engineers entering the workforce.

It’s clear these problems require a new approach to education. They need an NMITE engineer.”

NMITE



Project: Hosting events, especially for the military and veteran community, to support that community with pathways to education, skills and employment or self-employment. An activity key for the area with Herefordshire having a long association with the military.

“Many residents, estimated at around 25% of the whole population of Herefordshire, have a strong and proud connection to the military. Numbers suggest that as a population it is rising, particularly the veteran community; returning service leavers and those choosing to retire to Herefordshire.” Herefordshire Council



**NEW MODEL INSTITUTE FOR
TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING**

Private Training Providers (ITPs)

There are numerous independent providers across the Marches, many specialising in one area, be it apprenticeship or IT skills, others specific to a sector or statutory requirements such as health and safety. ITPs come in many forms from a Chambers of Commerce offering short business courses to industry bodies such as Partners in Care delivering to the social care sector. As small entities they often can offer the agility and customer service that it would be impossible for a large institution, with thousands of students, to offer. Therefore, they play a very important role in the education system of the Marches. To follow--- are just three examples of local ITP's to give you, the reader, a flavour of the types of provision available.



Herefordshire & Worcestershire Group Training Association

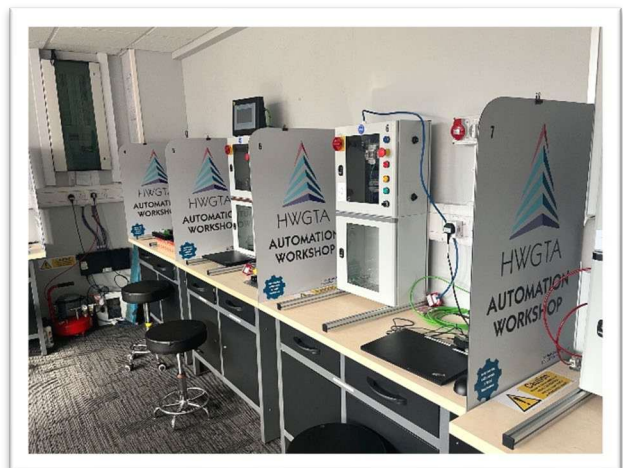


Website: [HWGTA | Apprenticeships & Courses, Training Provider](#)

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Group Training Association (HWGTA) is an employer led, not for profit training provider offering bespoke apprenticeships and training to local businesses and communities. HWGTA has over 50 years of experience in delivering excellent training across the two counties, consistently rating above the national average for learner success rates, holding “Outstanding” grading from Ofsted and maintaining successful, long-term relationships with local employers. HWGTA is part of the Marches Education Partnership, benefitting from the LSIF fund.

“The LSIF project has made a significant difference to the skills provision HWGTA are able to offer. The LSIF has facilitated a new Automation Workshop and populated it with the latest Siemens PLC and UR Cobot equipment, enabling us to deliver training on the latest technologies to meet the skills needs of local employers.” Nigel Morgan, CEO, HWGTA

The teaching staff created the teaching rigs to accommodate the new equipment, to ensure that they could get maximum value and equipment from the funding. They also refurbished and created new learning spaces.



The Marches LSIP has worked with HWGTA to highlight the priorities, with the new training on offer very much meeting skills priorities. The Marches LSIP team witnessing employer engagement first hand, to understand how HWGTA was using the skills and knowledge of their largest employers to decide on the content of courses and the equipment to buy. This not only ensured the right equipment, but spread the spend further when employers insights helped HWGTA purchase less expensive equipment, while still delivering to the latest standard, so that students encounter equipment that mirrors what they will find at their employers premises.



In-Comm Training

Website: [Engineering Apprenticeships and Business Training - In-Comm Training](#)

Their Vision & Values...to be a leading catalyst for skills and competency excellence, driving innovation and growth in engineering and manufacturing.

Committed to bridging the 'gap', they aim to equip businesses and individuals with cutting-edge training solutions, fostering a workforce prepared to meet the challenges of modern-day manufacturing.

Through strategic partnerships, state-of-the-art facilities, and a focus on continuous improvement, In-Comm Training and their partners strive to create a sustainable future for UK industry.

Rated Outstanding by Ofsted, In-Comm has two state of the art training centres, one in the Marches and one close by at Aldridge in the West Midlands.

Empowering the Future of Advanced Engineering in Telford through Cutting-Edge Automation Training

In-Comm Training has made a landmark investment in the future of engineering skills with the unveiling of a £200,000 state-of-the-art automation cell at its Telford Technical Academy. Backed by the Local Skills Improvement Framework (LSIF) and Marches Education Partnership (MEP), this development marks a significant boost for the region's advanced manufacturing and engineering capabilities.

Designed in collaboration with local employers and technology specialists, the cell replicates a real-world production environment, giving learners access to industry-standard 6-axis ABB robotic automation, PLC programming, component sensing, conveyor system integration, and robotic operation.

As industry across Telford accelerates towards greater automation and digitalisation, there has been growing demand for engineering training that reflects real-world technology, not just textbook theory. Companies – from SMEs to global OEMs – voiced a need for practical, modular courses that equip staff with job-ready automation and robotics skills.



In-Comm Training responded by consulting directly with employers, including Collins Aerospace, HS Marston, Magna Cosma Casting, Autoneum, CEL Sheet Metal, and VA Technology, to co-design both the hardware and course content. These industry discussions revealed a need for:

- Flexible, modular training options
- Realistic, hands-on learning environments
- Upskilling routes for existing staff
- Entry-level exposure for new engineers

Partnering with Telford-based Bauomat, In-Comm developed a bespoke, highly adaptable automation cell. Bauomat's input ensured the system was scalable and versatile enough to meet a broad spectrum of industry needs, from high-volume automotive manufacturing to precision aerospace assembly.

The automation cell was officially unveiled at a showcase event attended by over 45 industry leaders. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with several course bookings secured on the day.

Since the launch, more than 100 learners have already interacted with the robotic cell—ranging from full qualifications to short introductory sessions. This includes apprentices, experienced engineers upskilling into automation, and those attending taster workshops or employer-led demos.

A team from Telford based Magna Cosm Castings have recently attended the Level 3 Programming training, and all commented how satisfied they were with the training, technology and offering they were able to get from In-Comm.



Moving forward, it's anticipated that over 200 individuals annually will benefit from the facility across the following offerings:

- One-day Level 3 Cell Operator course
- Four-day Level 3 Robotic Programming course
- EAL-accredited Industrial Robotic Technology qualification
- BTEC Level 4 in Automation, Robotics & PLCs

Participants come from a range of sectors, including manufacturing, aerospace, automotive, and logistics—proving the wide applicability of the skills being taught.

This project is a powerful example of how training providers, employers, and industry partners can collaborate to shape a future-ready workforce. In-Comm Training's investment not only fills a skills gap—it actively positions Telford and the Marches at the forefront of the UK's manufacturing innovation.

With demand growing and the courses already making an impact, this is only the beginning of a transformative journey for hundreds of engineers—and the companies they power.



SBC Training

Website: <https://www.sbc-training.co.uk/>



SBC Training has been delivering high quality training programmes and apprenticeships for more than 40 years. Thousands of individuals have been supported into permanent employment and in their journey towards the achievement of their career goals, contributing to the economic wellbeing of the area. Based on two sites in Shrewsbury.

We listen to what employers are telling us and continue to invest in resources that enable us to focus on training for the future needs of business, without losing sight of the need to respect traditional values and ethics. This has resulted in:

- Very high levels of employer satisfaction
- Success rates above national average
- 98% of apprentices continuing in to permanent employment

Through the Marches Education Partnership, SBC can now offer new cobot welding courses. The cobot will be set up to do precision MIG training. Topics this course covers includes, Industrial Robot Technology, Principles of Robotics, Programming of Robotics, offline simulation.

SBC's manufacturing and engineering department can also offer training in the following pathways:

- Maintenance roles
- Mechanical manufacturing engineering
- Fabrication and welding
- Technical support roles
- Manual and CNC machining
- Fluid power/Mechatronics



There are so many different private training providers based in the Marches, that it would be impossible to list them all. We have specialist large providers, such as Derwen College, with four



locations across the Marches. They offer students with special educational needs and disabilities, the opportunity to learn vocational and independence skills. These include employment routes, with training through the Colleges various commercial outlets, which include a restaurant, garden centre, café and charity shop.



Dulson Training, who offer training in driver, workplace and warehouse skills, multi sited across the Marches, are the subject of a case study in a separate annex. Dulson work closely with many partners, from private employers who need to upskill or reskill staff, to the longer-term unemployed moving towards the world of work offering joint programmes with the DWP – Job Centres.

If you want to find a wider range of local providers please visit the Skills Provider Portal for the Marches.

[Skills Training Locator](#)

Local Apprenticeships and Training Providers

Across the Marches there are a wide range of locally based providers offering training or apprenticeships to employers, their staff, as well as students of all ages and those returning to work, covering the range from school leavers to post graduates.

[CLICK ON](#) the maps below to find providers in your selected area.



Contact information:

Employer Representative Body (ERB) for the Marches Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce

Telford 01952 208200