



Teaching Intensive, Research Informed

# Bolton College

Part of the University of Bolton Group



Strategic Plan  
2018 - 2023





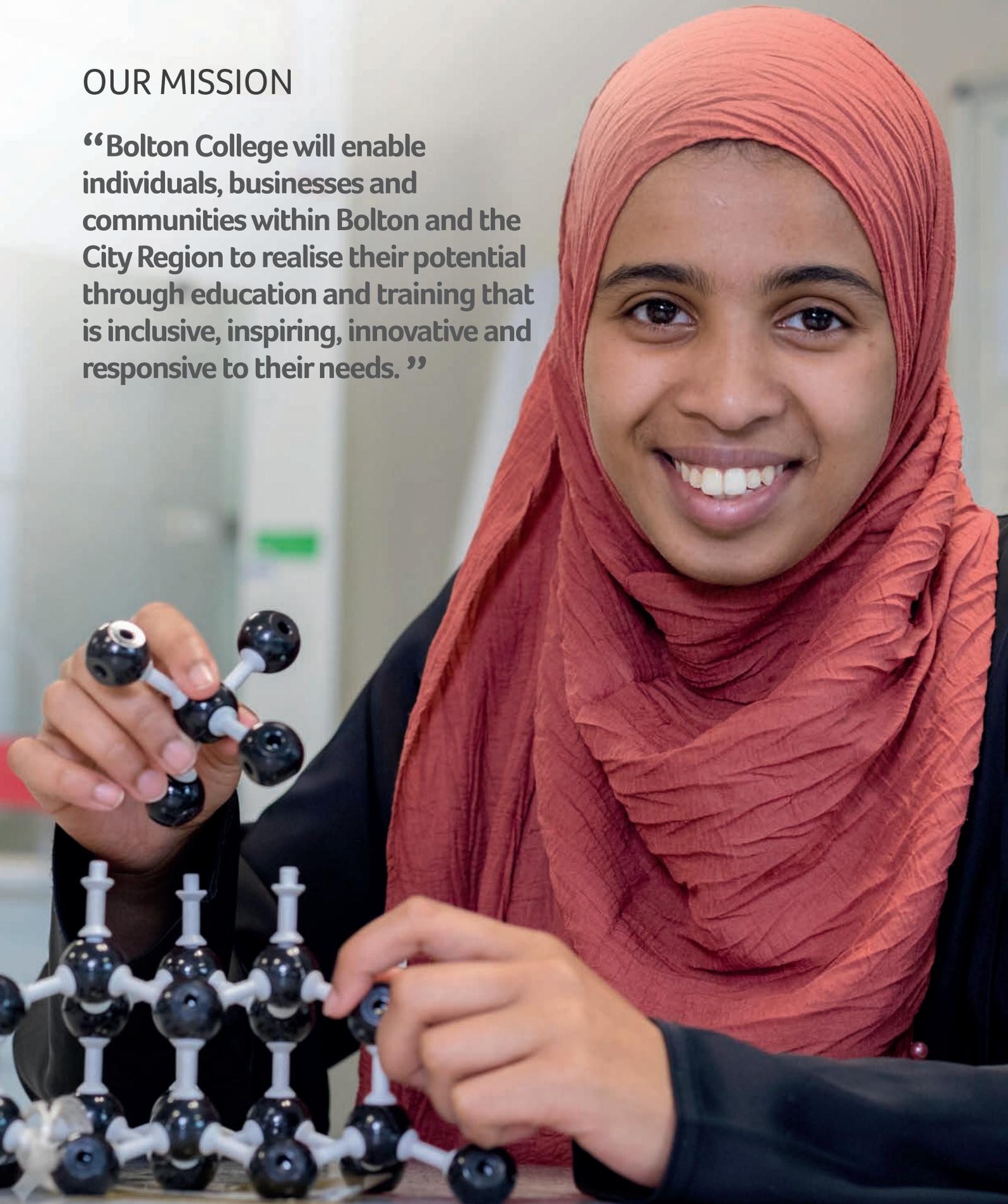
## OUR VISION

### Partnership – we will:

- Continue to work with a wide range of public and private sector organisations to meet the education and training needs of Bolton
- Optimise our relationship with the University of Bolton, as part of the group, and ensure learners have pathways from any point of the curriculum to reach their potential
- Fulfil our commitment to Bolton’s wider ‘Vision 2030’ agenda of growth, partnership and protection of the vulnerable
- Continue on the road to ‘outstanding’ driven through a high quality learning organisation with a ‘digital future’ agenda
- Continue to put learner employability as a central goal

## OUR MISSION

**“Bolton College will enable individuals, businesses and communities within Bolton and the City Region to realise their potential through education and training that is inclusive, inspiring, innovative and responsive to their needs.”**





## OUR VALUES

### Our key values are:

- Excellence in all we do
- Ensuring learning and the student are at the heart of everything we do
- Equality of opportunity and celebration of diversity
- Serving our community
- Honesty and professionalism
- Caring for the environment and the communities we serve



## Current Position

Bolton College is well placed to ensure that, not only the hard earned position of being an Ofsted ‘good’ provider is secured, but also the foundations are laid to move towards ‘outstanding’.

The recent move to ‘Designated Institution’ status, as part of the University of Bolton Group, is a significant achievement. The first merger of its type in England will give a high level of security and new opportunities for both staff and learners. The long term goal of a genuine ‘cradle to PhD’ seamless education route is now a step closer.

Bolton College is the major provider of vocational learning in the borough of Bolton. Our staff have a diverse range of experiences and skills which they bring to the College and the wider Group. As an organisation, the actions and approaches we

take reflect our commitment towards the learner being at the heart of everything we do; our staff demonstrate this in what they do, whilst working on our journey towards being outstanding.

Local demographics give further opportunity with the number of 16 year olds starting to increase, year on year, from 2020. The opportunities arising from devolved adult funding also come on stream from that year and will cement our commitment to the adult and community markets.

There will be a stronger and group-wide approach to engaging with employers to fulfil their needs in key areas such as Apprenticeships, Continuing Professional Development and resources support. The aim is to keep all academic areas as close to key employers as possible.

The final section of this document gives details of the local Bolton context (Please see page 20).





## Strategic Priorities

1. Optimising opportunities across the merged group
2. Focusing efforts on the road to outstanding
3. Ensuring financial sustainability
4. Becoming a truly 'digital college'
5. Being responsive to the communities we serve in Bolton and the City Region

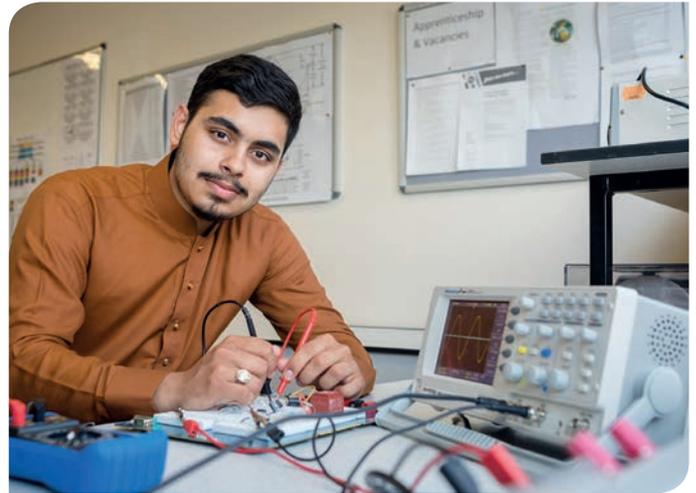




# Strategic Priority One

## Optimising Merger Opportunities

Bolton College has worked hard in close collaboration with the University of Bolton to achieve 'Designated Institution' status. This outcome, arising from the Greater Manchester Area Based Review, has taken over two years to achieve. However, the partnership has flourished during this period and many of the benefits of the merger are already in place, for example in the alignment of curriculum, student and staff opportunities and a strong governance model. The next 'post-merger' phase will see further integration and formalising of opportunities around student progression routes, staff development and employer engagement.



## Indicative Actions

### Align Curriculum

- Ensure all courses have a 'line of sight' route to higher level learning, Apprenticeships or employment
- Confirm new course developments with relevant academic cross-institution teams
- Ensure employer input to curriculum

### Staff Development

- Develop cross institution opportunities for staff learning and career development
- Provide work experience opportunities

### Digital

- Develop integrated platforms where appropriate

### Employers

- Provide a seamless offer to all employers through an integrated group offer on areas such as Apprenticeships and Continued Professional Development.



# Strategic Priority Two

## The Road to Outstanding

2017 saw a return to our Ofsted 'good' rating; a key success and a reflection of the work put in by the staff. Further work was identified by Ofsted in our Adult Education programmes and in the Council led Community Education, run through the College. Much of this work is now completed and becoming embedded. The road to outstanding is more than simply an Ofsted grade; it is a philosophy that we aim to embed into the culture and fabric of the College. In essence it requires a constant process of review and improvement which puts the learner at the very heart of everything we do.



## Indicative Actions

### Achievement

- Achievement will remain consistent with performance of the top 25% of General Further Education colleges

### Learner Feedback

- Continual improvement is informed by the views of learners
- Adult skills are linked to the wider education and employment landscape which meets local needs and ambitions

### Employer and Partner Feedback

- Continual improvement is informed by the views of employers and partners
- The College is the destination of choice for Apprenticeships

### Reputation

- The College's brand is clear and develops a 'first choice' goal for learners

### Parent and Carer Feedback

- Continual improvement is informed by the views of parents and carers



# Strategic Priority Three

## Ensuring Financial Stability

To be able to achieve our strategic goals it is essential that the College remains in good financial health. The pressures to generate reserves and invest are fundamental to ensure our continued excellent facilities and environment; our digital college ambitions and relevant investment in new curriculum are kept up-to-date.

The continued freeze on any growth in unit funding and limited access to new capital have created a challenging environment for the whole sector. The specific financial structure of Bolton College currently makes it challenging to generate the desired surpluses.



## Indicative Actions

### Provider Review

- Achieve minimum 'Good' in the provider review

### Cash Generation

- Generate £2M of cash per annum to meet debt servicing and investment requirements

### Local Employer of Choice & Reward Staff Accordingly

- In line with local and national expectations



# Strategic Priority Four

## Becoming a Truly 'Digital College'

Bolton College has a significant strength in the development and application of its in-house learning technologies. It has been externally recognised for its work in student focused artificial intelligence and this gives a potential strategic advantage. However, the full benefits of the digital college concept also require excellent and fully integrated internal systems, designed to support staff and minimise duplication of effort and unnecessary administration.

From a learner perspective it is also essential to ensure that all areas of curriculum are up-to-date, industry standard and flexible to be in line with a fast moving employment situation. This requires careful planning to optimise capital expenditure.



## Indicative Actions

### Information Learning Technology

- Learners can access material and information that enhances their learning in a fully flexible way

### Curriculum

- Curriculum has appropriate digital content which is clearly relevant to future employment

### Back Office

- College systems are fully integrated and designed to support staff



# Strategic Priority Five

## Being Responsive to the Communities we serve in Bolton and the City Region

2018 saw Bolton College sign up to the 'Bolton 2030' vision, a collaborative effort of the wider Bolton family, led by the Council, to be active, connected and prosperous.

The core principles laid out of inclusive growth and prosperity, protecting the most vulnerable and reforming our services in partnership align well with the College.

In the broadest sense, communities means not only localities and groups and individuals, but also employers and the public sector. The College is already well embedded in these networks and will now seek to fully capitalise on the new opportunities they afford.

### Destinations

- Positive outcomes for all learners

### Provider of Choice

- Bolton College is the provider of choice for learners and employers
- The College serves key areas within our borough through continuation of delivery of the Community Learning contract

### Reach

- The College optimises its reach into the key areas of the borough





Bolton  
at Home

Bolton  
at Home

# Changes in the Sector

The post-16 education sector is critical to the government's strategy of raising productivity and economic growth, and its focus has been on driving up the quality of the post-16 offer, including introducing the implementation of the Sainsbury Review and the Post-16 Skills Plan and the reforms to Apprenticeships.

## The Sainsbury Review of Technical Education and the Post-16 Skills Plan

Plans for a radical overhaul of post-16 education, involving the creation of 15 new technical education pathways, have been unveiled. The wide ranging reforms announced in July 2016 are based upon the recommendations of an independent panel on technical education, chaired by Lord Sainsbury.

After they have completed their GCSEs, students will have to choose whether to take an academic or technical pathway. Under the latter, they can opt for either a two-year, college-based programme (including compulsory work experience), or an employment-based programme – most likely an Apprenticeship. After this, they can progress to higher technical education, a degree Apprenticeship or a higher Apprenticeship.

The plans will replace what the government describes as the “current outdated system of more than 20,000 courses provided by 160 different organisations” with new “high-quality routes, with the content for those streamlined routes and standards developed and respected by employers”.

The first routes will be made available for students who sit their GCSEs in 2019.







## Apprenticeship Reforms

The government has set out its ambition to increase the quality and quantity of Apprenticeships through a transformational programme of change. By delivering benefits for individuals, businesses and the economy, the Apprenticeship Reform will also help address growing skills shortages by ensuring significant numbers of higher quality Apprenticeships that meet employer's needs.

Apprenticeships are already successfully operating and providing significant returns to individuals, employers and the government. A number of key challenges were identified that the Programme has been established to address; these challenges were acknowledged in the 2012 Richard Review of Apprenticeships. All new Apprenticeship standards are designed by employers, around singular occupations.

The reform has informed broader changes to the Apprenticeships system including:

- Changes to the funding rules, methodology, levy and voucher scheme
- Creation of the Institute for Apprenticeships
- Government target for 3 million Apprenticeships starts
- Legislation to protect the term Apprenticeship in the Enterprise Bill
- Launch of the Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS)

The original scope of the reform would have overseen the change from the current Apprenticeship frameworks to Apprenticeship standards (those designed by employers around singular occupations with specific end-point assessment) by 2017. This has now softened, however, so that the ambition for change is now for this to occur by 2020 for all Frameworks. Business, Innovation and Skills decision early on to allow the reform to operate under an 'open policy' has had both a positive and negative impact. It has allowed the reform and its processes to be flexible and change following feedback from both employers and other stakeholders. Conversely, it has led to numerous changes in the processes.

Recent updates and formulation of a stronger policy direction has done much to address the issues around governance, sustainability and quality. The formation of the Institute for Apprenticeships in 2017 should support these issues. The introduction of the Register of Apprenticeships Assessment Organisation in 2017 is aiming to provide a firm base for quality processes.

# Greater Manchester Devolved Adult Education Budget

Greater Manchester is progressing toward the full devolution of the Adult Education Budget by initially setting out its approach to procuring training provision for Greater Manchester residents. A Prior Information Notice (PIN) has been issued to test Greater Manchester's approach and proposals with training providers as part of a wider consultation process and our College has participated in a formal market engagement event.

Devolution of the Adult Education Budget formed a key part of Greater Manchester's ground-breaking 2015 devolution deal. Under the deal, Greater Manchester will gain control of the Adult Education Budget from the 2019/20 academic year. For the first time, this gives local leaders a unique opportunity to ensure that skills training fits the needs of the City-Region.

Greater Manchester's Adult Education Budget will:

- Help more Greater Manchester residents to gain experience, skills and knowledge relevant to local job opportunities
- Ensure our residents have the essential skills they need for life, using skills to promote social inclusion, raise aspirations and realise full potential to progress in learning and work
- Respond to changing needs of businesses due to Brexit
- Empower residents with digital skills so that they can actively contribute to the changing nature of the world of work

As well as making sure that Greater Manchester equips people with relevant skills that employers across the region need, the devolved Adult Education Budget will be used to focus more on positive outcomes around employment and further training. The aim is to create a pipeline of talent and improve social mobility to make sure nobody is left behind as the region continues to benefit from economic growth and success.

These changes to the way some adult skills will be procured and delivered will set the agenda for change in Greater Manchester and will form the basis of a more stable, high quality and effective work and skills system.





# The Bolton Context

## Understanding the Bolton Context

### Population

Approximately 284,000 people live in Bolton and it is the fourth largest district in Greater Manchester. This large resident population provides the borough with a key economic asset that has driven growth. Bolton's population is expected to grow by 6% between 2012 and 2022, according to the latest projections from the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

### Deprivation

Bolton is ranked 4th in GM and 36th in the UK in terms of deprivation. It has areas of high levels of deprivation and has a higher unemployment rate than both the North West and the UK as a whole.

The latest Indices of Deprivation (2015) provide a set of relative measures of deprivation based on seven different domains:

- Deprivation of income;
- Deprivation of employment;
- Deprivation of education skills and employment;
- Health and disability;
- Crime;
- Barriers to housing;
- Services and living environment.

Bolton College recruits a large majority (69%) of its learners from these areas of deprivation. Many of its learners face a number of barriers to their learning and the College is successful in supporting them to achieve through a wide range of mechanisms.

### Employers

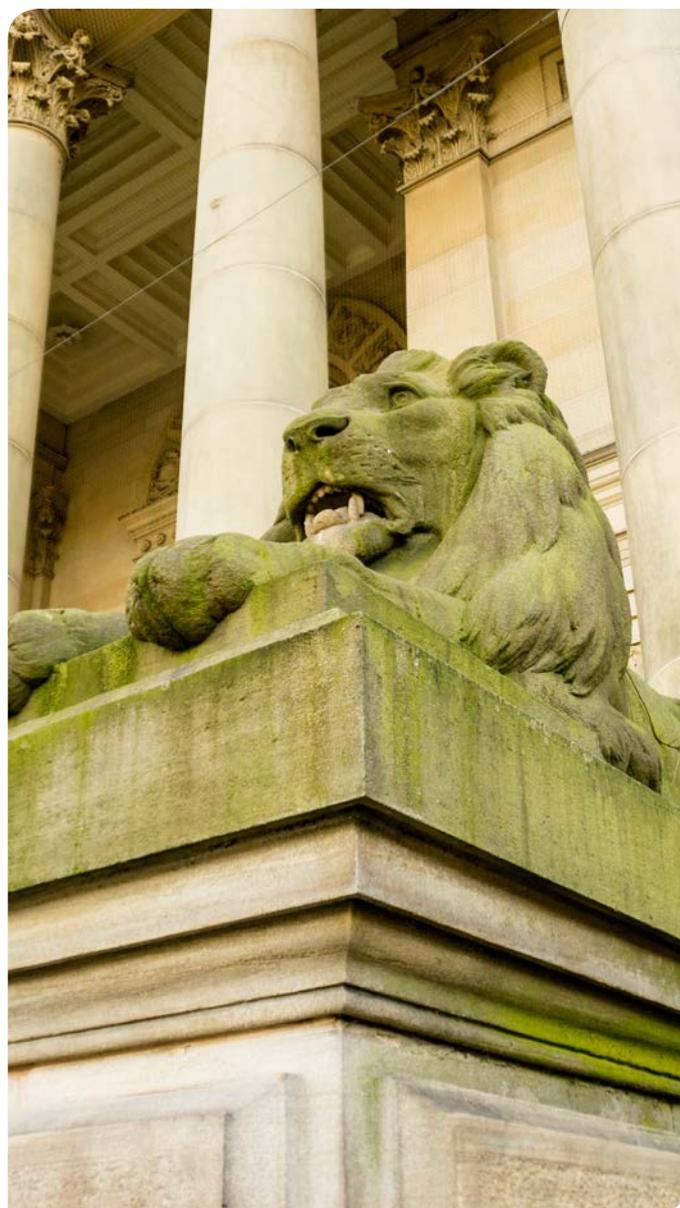
Within Bolton, the majority (88%) of businesses are micro (0 – 9 employees) which is broadly in line with GM (89.2%) and the UK more generally. 0.4% of companies in Bolton have 250 or more employees, which is again in line with the trends across GM and the UK.

### Employment and Investment Projects

It remains important to address economic inequalities across the borough in order to enable more of Bolton's residents to share in the benefits arising from future growth.

### Key Facts:

- Bolton's labour market still has higher levels of Job Seeker's Allowance ("JSA") claimants (2.7%) compared with GM and national averages (2.4% and 2.2%, respectively);
- Bolton's unemployment rate remains higher than in both GM and the UK: the latest Nomis data (March 2018) gives unemployment data for those aged 16 and above. The rate for Bolton was 5.8%, compared with 4.8% and 4.3% for GM and the UK respectively;
- Bolton is forecast to see a 0.8% year-on-year increase in employment between 2014 and 2024 (Bolton Local Economic Assessment [www.bolton.gov.uk](http://www.bolton.gov.uk)), equivalent to 10,800 additional jobs over the decade. Business, financial & professional services (6,200) is expected to be the largest contributor;



- Both average workplace (£22,068 pa) and resident (£22,819 pa) wages in Bolton are below those of Greater Manchester (£25,108 and £24,945 respectively);
- A greater percentage of Bolton residents have Level 3 & 4 qualifications than in recent years with an increase of 3.8% at L3 and an increase of 3% at L4 in the last three years (Nomis, March 2018). These increases are a positive steps towards addressing local skills gaps at these levels.

In contrast, the volume and percentage of residents with no formal qualifications has also increased from 9.7% to 12% in the last three years. This is out of trend with both GM and national figures where the percentage is showing a year on year decline over a three year period.

This worrying trend highlights the desperate need for our entry level and community provision and reaffirms our commitment to provide pathways to qualifications for our local people.

- Key sites for future development in Bolton include Rivington Chase and Logistics North, both of which have the potential to generate significant employment opportunities for the borough. Development of the former Horwich Loco Works site will see the £260m scheme deliver a mix of uses including up to 1,700 new homes and employment uses.

The former Cutacre Colliery site, now known as Logistics North, will be the largest distribution, logistics, and employment site in GM. Aldi is one of the first occupiers to sign up to a new build

440,000 sq ft distribution centre on a 35 acre plot to support growing operations in the North of England.

- The redevelopment of Bolton’s transport interchange has acted as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the town centre. It combines transport, retail and commercial space.

### Travel to Work

Bolton is a relatively independent area compared to other parts of GM with lower levels of commuting into the conurbation core.

### Key Facts:

- 18,556 Bolton residents commute to Manchester, Bury and Salford;
- The main inflows of workers into Bolton come from Wigan, Bury and Salford (the adjacent boroughs) indicating Bolton’s importance as a source of employment for other local authorities in the north; and
- With just over 106,000 people working in the borough, Bolton has gained 1,800 jobs since 2010, reflecting its ongoing recovery from the economic downturn.



## Skills and Qualifications

Skills are a critical issue for reducing deprivation and unemployment alongside stimulating business growth. In order to maximise the advantage of the size of its economy and resident population, Bolton needs to increase the proportion of its residents attaining higher-level skills. The latest vacancies data for Bolton (and the wider GM conurbation) highlight the availability of higher value vacancies on the jobs market (professional, managerial roles etc. If this trend continues and residents of Bolton are able to access these, it will help an increased proportion of the local population to work in higher level roles.

### Key facts:

- Around one third of the population aged 16+ in Bolton hold an NVQ4 qualification or above which is below both GM's and the national average;
- The proportion of people aged 16+ in Bolton holding an NVQ4+ qualification has grown from 25.2% in 2013 to 34.3%;
- In June 2018 the local council provided data about 16 and 17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs). 3.63% of Bolton's young people fall into this category and as a college we respond by offering tailored foundation provision with starting points throughout the academic year.





THE VAULTS EST. 1855

CREAMS

CREAMS

the light  
cinema experience



Bolton College  
 Deane Road  
 Bolton  
 BL3 5BG  
 01204 482 000  
 info@boltoncc.ac.uk  
 www.boltoncollege.ac.uk

/company/bolton-college  
 /boltoncollege  
 @boltoncollege  
 /boltoncollege  
 +boltoncollege

