



Strategy 2030



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Introduction

The role of NCFE

NCFE is the most historic technical and vocational awarding organisation in the UK, originally established in 1848, forged in the furnace of innovation and progress of the first industrial revolution. Whilst much has changed since this time, some things have not. We're still a charity, centred on our purpose of 'promoting and advancing learning', helping to create a fairer, more inclusive society. We continue to be synonymous with technical and vocational education, awarding and assessment, and this is where our core business activities are still focused today. Our role spans from tapping the 'source code' of what employers need to building productive and sustainable workforces for the future. From designing and developing qualifications that meet the diverse needs of all learners to quality assuring and supporting our centres to deliver transformational learning experiences. Finally, our most important role is to recognise outcomes for learners, providing robust, reliable and valid assessments, and certifying their achievements – essentially providing learners with a 'passport to progression' and hopefully, future success.

Strategy 2030

In recent years, we've strived beyond the bounds of a traditional awarding organisation to seek out opportunities that deliver greater impact for our beneficiaries. We've done this through investing in innovation, strategic partnerships and initiatives, developing new products and services, and finding new and better ways to set up our centres, educators and learners, for success. These are all things that we will continue to do, in our new strategy period to 2030.

Now, as we're in the midst of the fourth industrial revolution, the speed and nature of changes we're experiencing politically, economically, societally and technologically are unprecedented and seemingly, shifting at an ever-increasing speed. Change is the only constant. Uncertainty is one of very few certainties. The world of work, the labour market and the current and future skills needs of employers are continuously and dynamically shifting. There have been many policy and regulatory changes that have tested our sector to respond; to adapt and improve quality, whilst also being more efficient, robust and reliable. Whilst we hope our next strategy period will be more stable, we will continue to improve our ability to navigate inevitable change and uncertainty. Strengthening our organisational resilience will be a major focus of our efforts, including investing in our systems, processes and people.



In times of such profound change, there are, of course, many challenges for systems, organisations and individuals to navigate a path to future prosperity. As was true of the first industrial revolution, these phases of super-charged change can also create incredible opportunities for rapid advancement and growth. However, history has taught us that whilst talent and potential are somewhat evenly distributed, opportunities are not. We believe in the unique and boundless potential within everyone but, our current, increasingly standardised measures of success mean that many will fail to realise their true potential. Both of these factors must change. This is why, during our new strategy period, we will increasingly seek to understand, and hold ourselves to account for, the impact of the value we deliver for learners. We'll challenge ourselves to find new and better ways to support those who are under-served, under-supported and have the greatest needs, whilst also providing a wide range of qualifications and programmes that support learners, whatever their starting point and however modest or ambitious their goals.

Central to our strategy to 2030 is the recognition of the parallels between what we want for our beneficiaries and what we want for our people. Put simply, we want every NCFE learner and every NCFE colleague to be enabled to make great choices about their career, finding rewarding work. This means that each individual must have the opportunity, means and motivation to continuously learn, progress and ultimately, achieve their true potential. We recognise that our people are our most crucially important enabler for the long-term success of NCFE and our learners. So, we'll continue to invest in nurturing a vibrant, caring and productive culture, providing the

resources that colleagues need to make a significant contribution to NCFE's cause. We aspire to become a sector leader in developing and sustaining deep, technical expertise in the many key technical disciplines and occupations within awarding and assessment. Therefore, we will continue to invest in and drive sector-wide and NCFE initiatives to open up new, diverse talent pools, as well as investing in helping our current colleagues to develop their expertise.

We're hugely excited to launch our new strategy to 2030, and also, incredibly grateful to all those colleagues and partners who have invested their time in helping to shape our path to the future. The collaborative effort, the clear connection to our purpose and the commitment to the success of the millions of learners that we'll support over the coming years, has been both humbling and inspiring. Together, let's make this chapter of our long and intriguing story the very best one yet!

David Gallagher
Chief Executive Officer



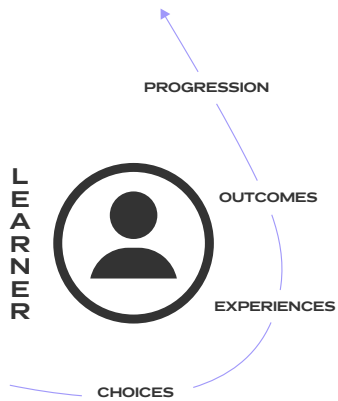
Our impact

We believe that through shaping smarter learning, we can help to create a fairer society, facilitate excellent learning experiences, create opportunities to progress and change lives for the better. This means helping more individuals to realise their true potential – in turn delivering sustainable communities.

Theory of change

We designed a Theory of Change model to help us understand our impact at each level, engaging key stakeholders to measure our performance against these impacts. The model will support us to reflect, improve, and progress towards our ambitious goals as an educational charity and leader in vocational and technical learning.

A Theory of Change model maps backward from an organisation's ultimate impact goal to its inputs, to create a clear chain between inputs, activities and outputs. Mapping these helps us to define the mechanisms that need to be in place for impact to occur.



IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES

<p>LEARNER</p> <p>Good learning and employment progression opportunities for NCFE learners.</p> <p>NCFE learners gain a holistic experience spanning course specific skills, transferable skills; as well as mental resilience and well being.</p> <p>Supporting learners to make the best possible choices on their education journey, increasing the likelihood they return to NCFE for future qualifications.</p>	<p>INSTITUTIONS AND EDUCATORS</p> <p>Institutions and educators are equipped with leading resources to enable them to deliver transformational learning experiences.</p> <p>Institutions are better able to meet local community needs and local labour market/economic needs.</p> <p>Institutions see NCFE as 'an improvement partner'.</p> <p>Educators more skilled in delivering qualifications.</p>	<p>SYSTEM, SECTOR AND NCFE</p> <p>Shape and influence the debate as a recognised, respected voice in the education sector.</p> <p>Learning and careers support offered beyond the time of study.</p> <p>Leading digital disruption in education.</p>	<p>SOCIETY AND ECONOMY</p> <p>Help improve the lives of disadvantaged people through education and improved employment prospects.</p> <p>Learners' economic impact: contribution to a more productive economy.</p> <p>Learners' societal impact: through the beneficiaries of their skills, e.g. children, people receiving health and social care.</p>
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OUTPUTS

<p>Predict the needs of our customers and their communities, harnessing this knowledge to shape smarter solutions.</p>	<p>Develop innovative products and services that deliver personalised experiences to every type of customer.</p>	<p>Deliver a frictionless and seamless customer journey across our portfolio of products and services.</p>	<p>Sustained loyalty and trust in our brand through high quality products.</p> <p>Diversified portfolio of businesses and investments, stretching across content, data and technology.</p>
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ACTIVITIES

<p>Identify needs and gaps in the regulated and unregulated markets.</p>	<p>Engage and consult with stakeholders including government, employers, other third parties.</p>	<p>Develop appropriate education solutions to address needs gaps up to the age of 18 and throughout a persons lifetime.</p>	<p>Preprogramme, on programme formative, end point/summative assessment of learners.</p> <p>Publish, research reports, articles, think pieces.</p> <p>Continuously investigate methods and innovative education solutions.</p> <p>Social and charitable investments designed to promote and advance learning.</p>
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INPUTS

<p>Staff motivated by the purpose-led vision.</p>	<p>Talented, digitally enabled staff, culture of high performance.</p>	<p>Effective organisational process designed around our business model.</p>	<p>Technology and processes fit for purpose enabling the organisation to deliver on its vision.</p> <p>Collaborative relationships with institutions, employers and third party organisations.</p> <p>Compliant and financially sustainable organisation.</p>
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Building on our existing collaborations

We are committing to continuing to support the following organisations, which will span across our previous and new strategy:

Campaign for Learning

Our investment ensures that we can work together with **Campaign for Learning** as they continue to deliver highly impactful campaigns, training programmes, research projects and policy work.

WorldSkills UK

We've invested in the teaching workforce and collaborated with **WorldSkills UK** to create the innovative **Centre of Excellence** programme to advance vocational learning practice.

Ufi Voc Tech Trust

NCFE and **Ufi Voc Tech Trust** will foster innovation and advance learning around the role technology can play in creating assessment methods and models.

CACHE Alumni

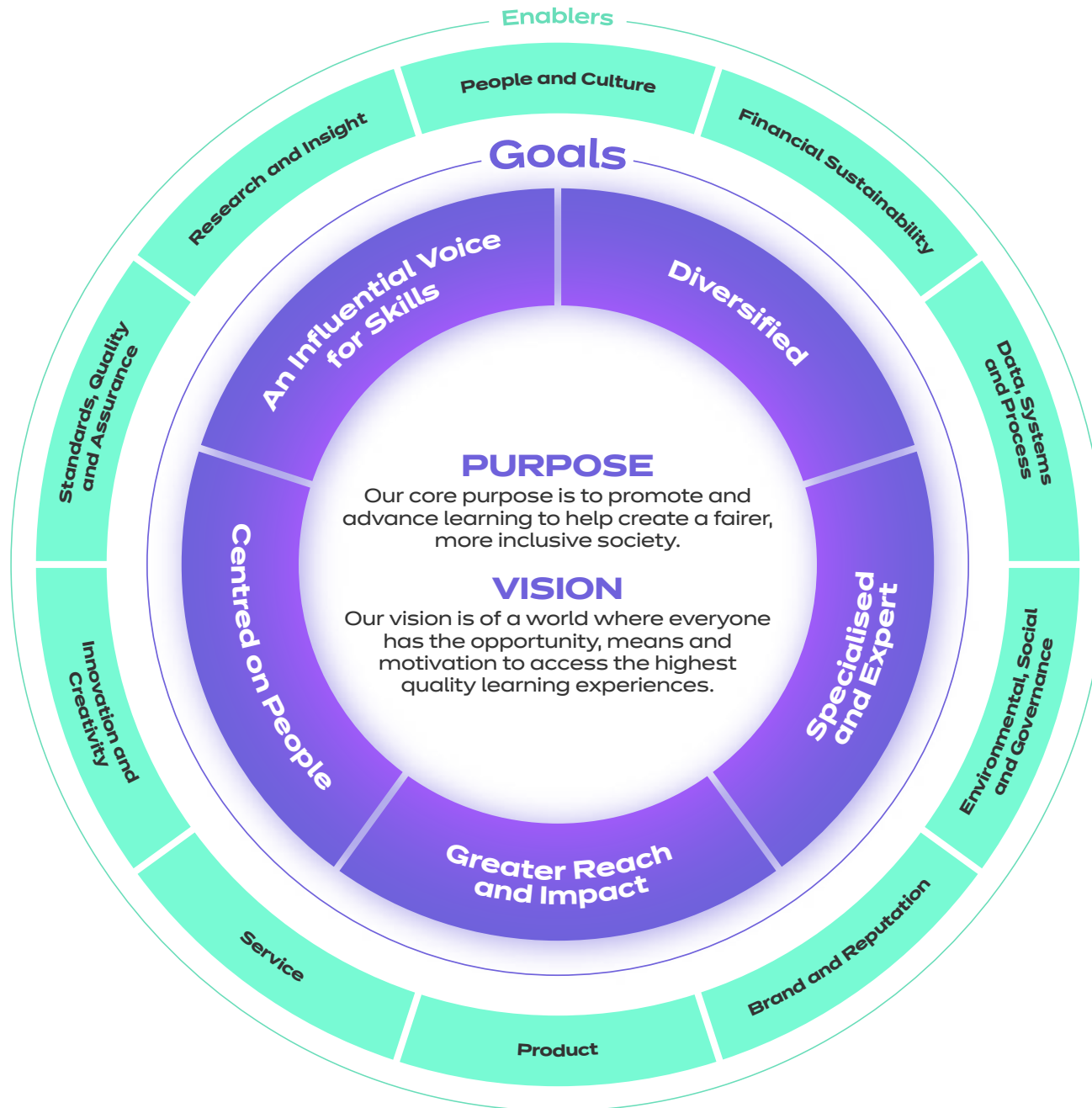
CACHE Alumni is a membership service for professionals within the care, health and education sectors, powered by NCFE.

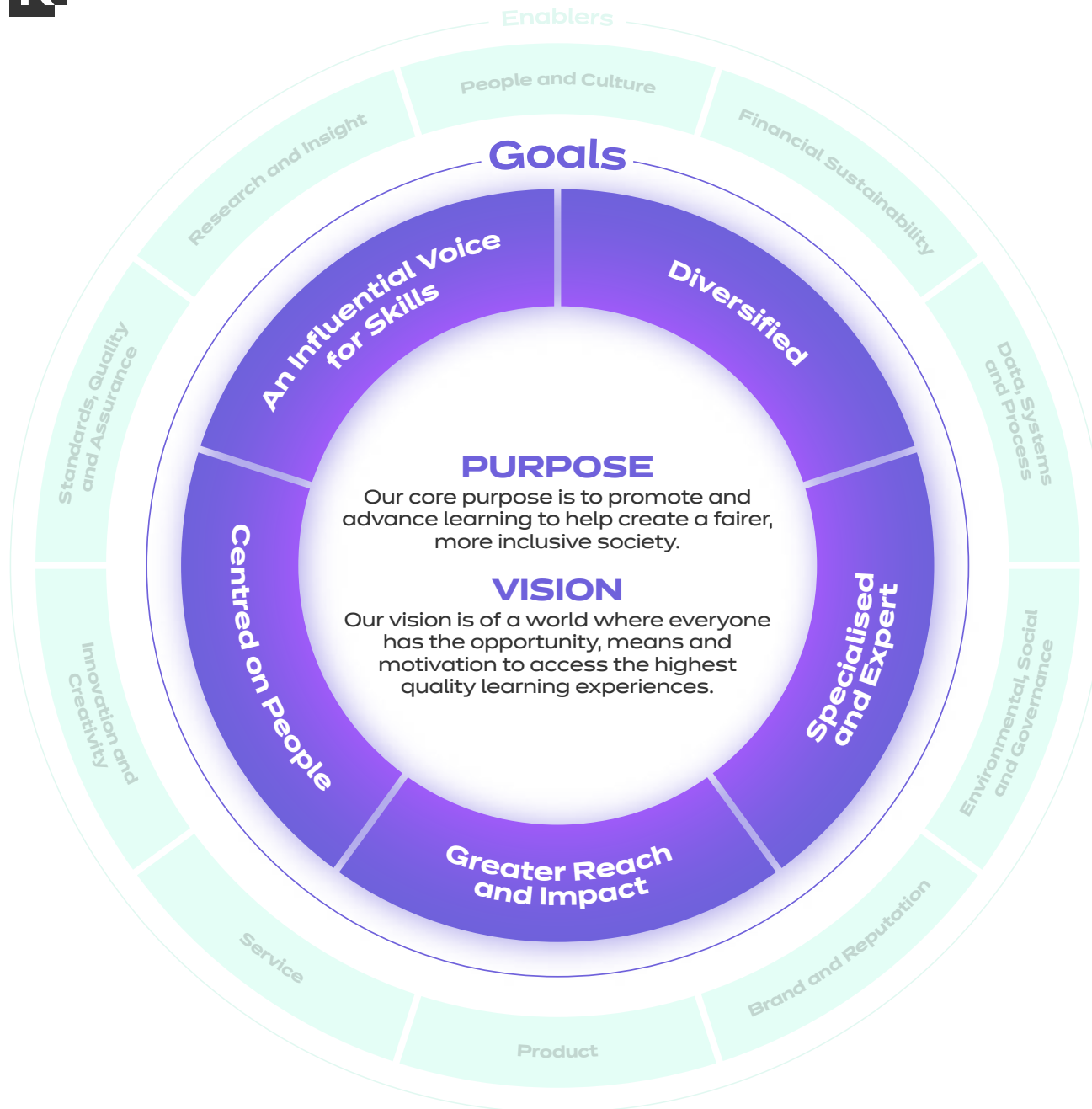
Assessment Innovation Fund

We're on a mission to break boundaries in assessment with our **Assessment Innovation Fund** initiative, which is helping to pilot innovative new assessment ideas aimed at improving fairness, accessibility and inclusion.

Think Further

Think Further is a thought-leadership initiative, in partnership with **Association of Colleges**, that offers a platform for the FE sector to provide deep insight and informed debate on a range of topics.





Strategic goals

Our strategic goals are the high-level, long-term outcomes that we aim to achieve.



Greater reach and impact

We will reach more learners each year and enable them to experience transformational learning experiences that will equip them to flourish in their careers and lives. We'll hold ourselves to account for delivering positive impacts for learners by measuring the difference we make to their choices, experiences and outcomes. We will continuously seek better ways to create inclusive, fair and high-quality learning and assessment for all. To do this, we'll focus on finding creative ways to engage with those who are most under-served and have the greatest needs. We aim to grow our reach to one million learners by 2030.

We will achieve this through:

- growing proactively and organically through our core operations and non-regulated activities
- proactively seeking growth, allowing us to reach more beneficiaries
- working with partners to build a clearer picture of our beneficiaries and their learning wants, needs, goals and journeys and outcomes. We will use this to increasingly target our offer at learners who are underserved and under supported, whilst continuing to provide high quality qualifications for a diverse range of learners in terms of age and prior attainment
- identifying longitudinal outcomes for our learners, giving us the insight we need to make informed decisions about where we should focus our efforts to deliver maximum value
- focusing on quality and assurance, being a trusted, high quality and continuously improving partner for our stakeholders and customers/centres.

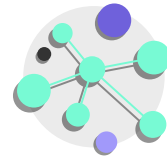


Specialised and expert

We will increasingly specialise in aspects and areas of learning where we know we can deliver the maximum value to learners. We'll do this by developing and maintaining deep expertise, and sector networks, focusing on meeting sector specific needs. Our specialisms will enable us to concentrate our resources on supporting learners over their career and a lifetime of learning through delivering coherent and high-quality progression pathways. We'll build upon existing areas of deep domain specialism, and strengthen NCFE's position as experts in assessment. We'll also continue to support our customers and learners with existing high-quality products and services outside of our specialisms.

We will achieve this through:

- leveraging our growing expertise in summative assessment, as well as our credibility and expertise beyond our traditional role as an awarding organisation
- prioritising key vertical sectors in education and childcare, health and social care and sports and active leisure – helping us to deliver skilled workers to areas of growing or constant need in the labour market
- developing a discreet, threaded and embedded offer for our horizontal priorities; English, maths, digital, sustainability and essential skills
- reducing the size and complexity of our portfolio of qualifications to offer customers a coherent, high quality, streamlined offer.



Diversified

We will continuously strive to find new, different, and better ways to support learners to experience transformational learning experiences and achieve the best possible outcomes. This will be achieved, in part, through diversification of our products and services to create new opportunities outside of our core qualification and end-point assessment services. Through achieving this objective, we'll also reduce our dependency on government funded, regulated qualifications, providing us with a healthier mix and balance of income that will enable the charity to have a more stable, secure and sustainable future.

We will achieve this through:

- growing our accreditation services and micro-credentials offer to support employers and their workforce
- growing our international business and across the four home nations and devolved regions
- proactively seeking opportunities to grow our non-regulated income, for example through formative assessment
- exploring opportunities to add greater value across the 'Skills Value Chain' such as; careers advice, CPD for educational practitioners and direct to learner services.



Centred on people

We will place the people we serve at the heart of our decision-making. We'll continue to draw on the parallels between wanting every NCFE learner and colleague to flourish throughout their working career, enabled by our high-quality learning and development opportunities and solutions. We will continue to build rich and deep insight into what is needed to enable people and businesses to prosper and fulfil their potential, and we'll utilise this insight to inform the development of products and services that will deliver maximum value for all customers and beneficiaries within our reach.

We will achieve this through:

- ensuring our systems enable us to work smarter and unlock efficiencies, reducing stress for colleagues and removing friction for our customers
- ensuring that all colleagues consider our customers and learners at every part of the journey, facilitating excellent customer experiences and outcomes
- investing in colleague experience and a culture of continuous learning, in order to grow our organisational expertise, standards and competencies to achieve the best possible outcomes
- developing our 'adaptive capacity' through implementing new, different and better capabilities, and mobilising our people resources to ensure that we continuously improve the value and impact of our work.

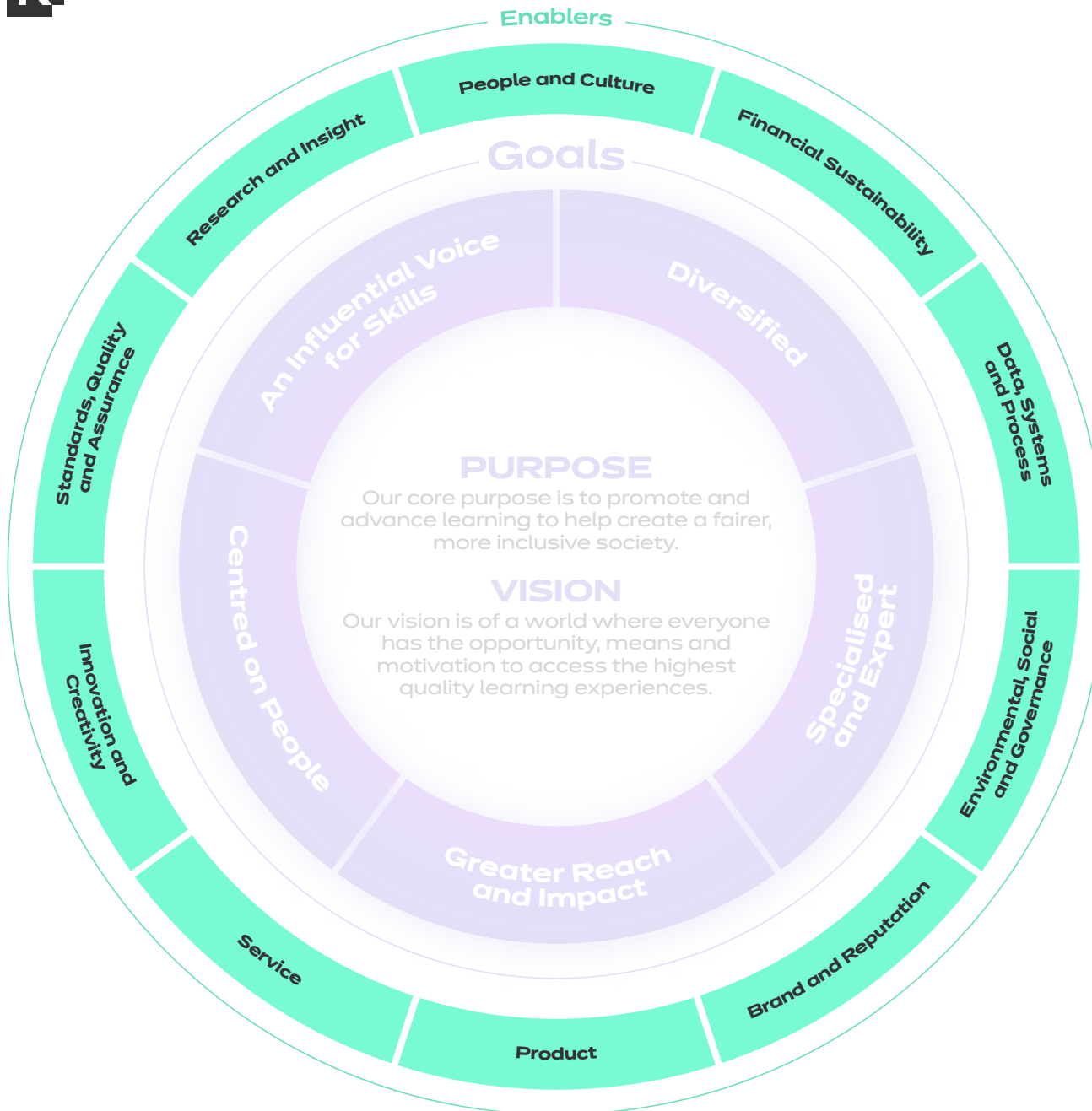


An influential voice for skills

We will leverage our position as one of the largest vocational and technical awarding organisations, advocating for what is best for learners through using our vast experience, heritage, deep expertise, and rich sources of data and insight. We'll build an even stronger understanding of employers, respond to their needs and support them to create healthy, vibrant and productive workplaces. Our approach will be evidence-based to 'what works', whilst also challenging current practices through research and innovation. We'll collaborate with like-spirited organisations and people, seeking to harness the collective intelligence and resources from our sector, and beyond, helping to shape a system that is fair, inclusive, high-quality and fit for the future.

We will achieve this through:

- leading the skills system towards changes that we know will positively impact our beneficiaries by working with partners and through thought leadership, innovation and highly impactful initiatives and events
- leveraging strategic partnerships for the benefit of our learners and customers
- amplifying learner, customer and employer voices to influence positive change in policy and practice becoming a leading voice for innovation to facilitate better outcomes across the further education sector
- becoming a leading voice for innovation to facilitate better outcomes across the further education sector
- becoming the qualification body of choice for employers in our priority sectors.



Enablers

Our enablers are the capabilities and attributes that underpin our strategic goals. We will develop strategies and plans for each enabler and ensure that colleagues and teams work together to deliver on the desired outcomes.



People and culture

Our people vision is to inspire colleagues with the means and motivation to access high quality learning, work and career experiences. We strive to optimise the health, wellbeing and performance of our people and organisation.

Financial sustainability

Through our next strategy period, we will capitalise on everything that we've learnt through the recent financially challenging years, experienced both across the sector and at NCFE. We have invested heavily, utilising the charity's reserves to improve our systems and capabilities but also in extending our reach and impact by funding high-profile, sector initiatives such as the Centre of Excellence, in partnership with WorldSkills UK, and our Assessment Innovation Fund (AIF). As we continue to reshape NCFE to be fit for the future, we will ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the charity.

Data, systems and process

We will implement efficient processes that will deliver a better experience for our colleagues and empower them to deliver consistent service excellence for our customers. We have many different processes that are a result of our growth across different business units. We'll redesign our ways of working with greater consistency, efficiency and high quality, providing colleagues with the tools and resources they need to do their jobs effectively, making it easy for customers of any kind to do business with us.

Environmental, social and governance

We want to ensure that we equip our learners to make a positive impact as citizens, whilst leading by example and holding ourselves to account for our social and environmental impact through strong governance.



Brand and reputation

We will strengthen NCFE's position as a leading awarding organisation, educational charity and thought leader, with increased brand recognition for our expertise and specialisation, including our non-regulated portfolio. We'll drive up employee engagement, building pride in our purpose and creating internal and external brand advocates and ambassadors, ensuring colleagues are equipped to deliver consistently exceptional experiences to our valued customers. Each of these experiences will support us to increase our reach and impact, as learners and customers increasingly have trust and confidence in us and see how we enable them to achieve their goals.

Product

We will continue to develop and improve a market leading portfolio of qualifications, assessments and solutions, that support the needs of the wider education and employer landscape, ensuring the needs of learners and customers continue to be our main focus. We want to ensure that each centre or learner has the opportunity to undertake valid, high-quality qualifications with a clear route of progression from entry to tertiary levels of study.

Service

We will continue to strive towards the delivery of consistently excellent levels of service across the customer journey, underpinned by a deep understanding of our customers. We will provide colleagues with the data, information and tools required to identify and solve issues and make improvements on an ongoing basis.





Innovation and creativity

We will drive innovation and make strategic investments to enhance our educational impact and support long-term financial sustainability. By harnessing emerging technologies, fostering innovation in teaching, learning and assessment, and making strategic investments, we aim to provide transformational learning experiences that empower learners and educators. By adopting these strategies, we'll foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, ensuring that NCFE remains at the forefront of educational excellence and impact.

Standards, quality and assurance

We will continue to build our standing and reputation as a high-quality and robustly compliant regulated organisation, with an embedded culture of continuous improvement. In this culture, all colleagues will play their part in helping us to maintain compliance, and will actively seek opportunities to make improvements that have a positive impact on NCFE, our customers and regulators.

Research and insight

We will build our understanding of our learners, customers, employers and our impact through ongoing, proactive research and insight. We'll seek out the information we need to inform strategic decision making, identify opportunities and threats, and demonstrate our value.



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