



Cheshire College
South & West



Public Consultation

on the Proposed Merger of Cheshire
College – South & West and
Macclesfield College





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Chairs' Foreword

On behalf of the Boards of Cheshire College – South & West and Macclesfield College, we are proud to embark on a journey to create a single, merged college that will serve our region and its communities. This proposed merger offers a unique opportunity to unite two complementary institutions, enhancing the quality and breadth of education and vocational training for both young people and adults.

By combining our strengths, we aim to deliver the most inclusive and comprehensive post-16 offer, supporting learners to achieve their ambitions and contributing to the prosperity of our wider communities. As Chairs' of these colleges, we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of excellence while expanding our capacity to meet the evolving needs of learners and industry partners.

We value the views, ideas, and aspirations of our stakeholders, and we invite you to take part in this consultation process to help shape our shared vision: **Stronger Together.**



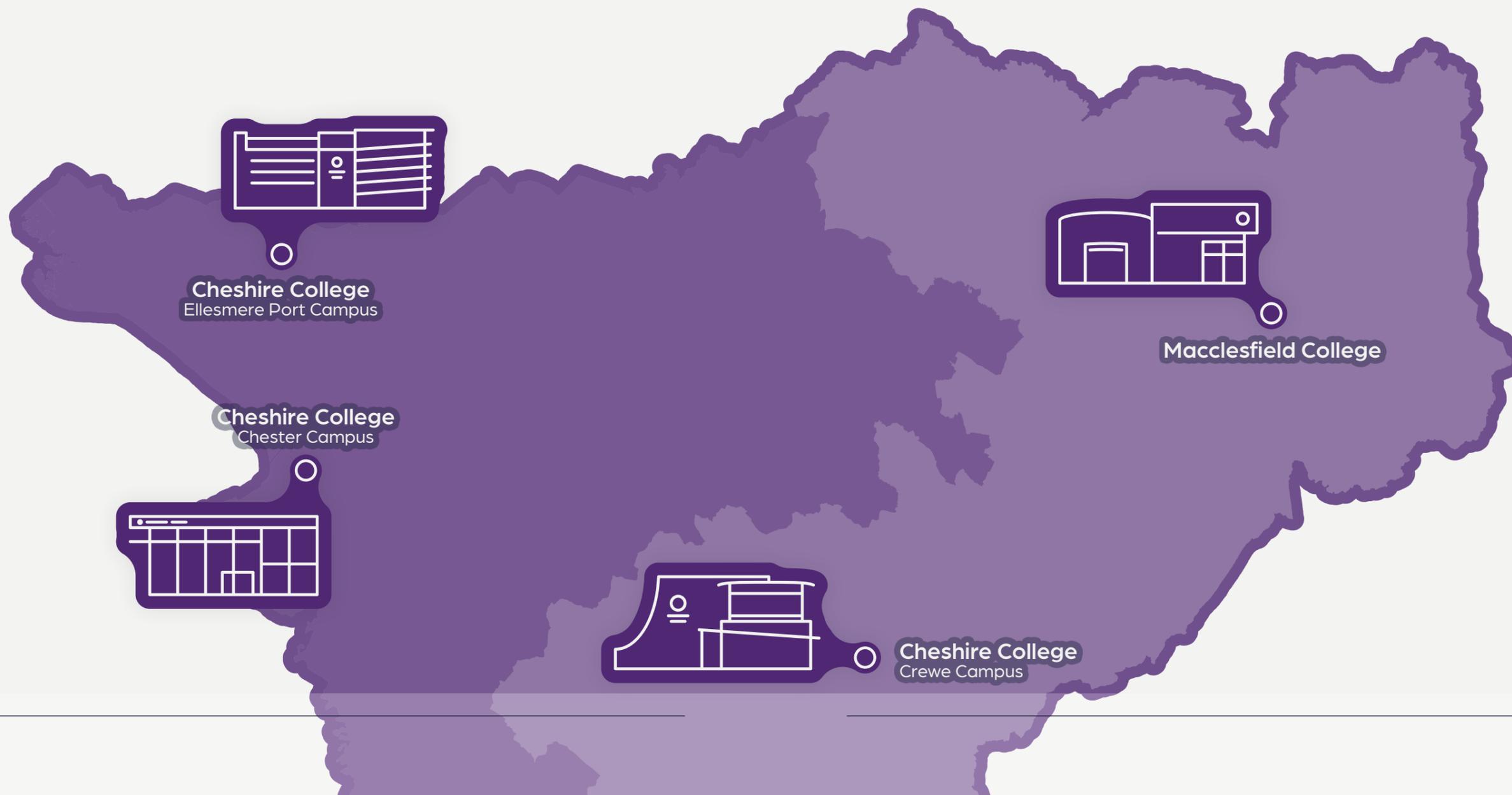
Lesley Davies

Chair of Corporation
Cheshire College – South & West



Ceri Johns

Chair of Corporation
Macclesfield College



Who we are

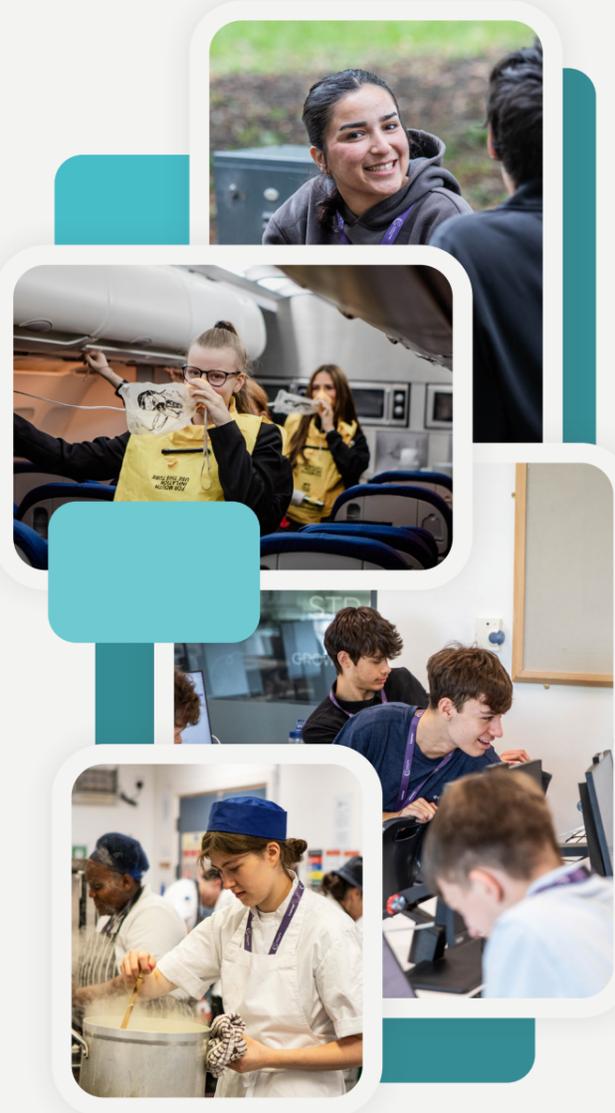
Cheshire College – South & West

Cheshire College – South & West is a large and inclusive further education provider with campuses in Crewe, Chester and Ellesmere Port. The College serves learners, employers and communities across the region, delivering high-quality education and training that supports progression into further study, higher education and employment. Its mission centres on raising aspirations, widening opportunities and ensuring learners develop the skills and confidence needed for their future.

The College offers a broad and responsive curriculum, including A Levels, T Levels, vocational and technical qualifications, apprenticeships, higher technical education and adult learning. The College supports 11,000 learners, employs 650 staff and operates with an annual turnover of £53 million. This extensive provision enables individuals of all ages to access pathways aligned to their interests, abilities and career ambitions, while supporting the skills priorities of the local and regional economy.

Strong partnerships with employers, universities, schools and regional agencies underpin the College's approach. These relationships help shape curriculum design, provide meaningful industry engagement and ensure alignment with emerging workforce needs, particularly in key sectors such as engineering, digital, health and sustainable technologies. The College plays a central role in regional skills development through initiatives such as the Institute of Technology and Local Skills Improvement Fund projects.

Modern facilities, industry-standard environments and dedicated support services create an inclusive and aspirational learning experience. Through focus on excellence, innovation and strong community relationships, the College supports individuals to achieve their goals and contributes positively to the region's economic and social development.



Macclesfield College

Macclesfield College is a well established and ambitious values led organisation, with a clear mission of empowerment through learning. Serving Macclesfield and the wider area, the College has, for over 110 years, provided high-quality education and training. Learners sit at the heart of everything it does, with a strong focus on helping people achieve their ambitions in work, further study and life.

The College offers a broad range of programmes designed to meet local and regional skills needs. Learners can choose from A Levels, T Levels, BTECs, Apprenticeships, Higher Technical Education and a range of adult learning courses. In 2024/25, Macclesfield College supported 3,676 learners, employed 275 staff and operated with an annual turnover of £16 million. This wide curriculum enables learners to select courses that reflect their individual abilities, aspirations and interests, with clear routes into employment or further study.

The College has invested significantly in modern facilities, including the Technical Automotive Skills Centre developed through the Local Skills Improvement Fund. A standout feature is its hydrogen-powered training vehicle, one of only five in the UK. Further investment through the Cheshire & Warrington Institute of Technology strengthens higher-level technical provision aligned to employer needs.

Strategic partnerships are central to the College's approach. It maintains strong relationships with local employers and stakeholders to provide meaningful work experience and ensure the curriculum remains aligned with current and future workforce needs. These partnerships are complemented by established links with schools across Cheshire, Stockport and Derbyshire, supporting progression, collaboration and shared opportunities for young people and adult learners alike.



Our Vision

Stronger Together: Empowering People, Enriching Communities.

Our united colleges will champion inclusion, excellence, and opportunity for all. By working collaboratively with learners, staff, employers, and communities, we will build a college that **transforms lives, supports social mobility, and contributes to regional prosperity**. Together, we will create a culture where **every learner can thrive and every community can flourish**.

This merger represents a unique opportunity to tackle regional skills gaps and strengthen high-demand industries, ultimately boosting local employment. It will also enable us to invest further in our learners by prioritising cutting-edge facilities and technologies, creating an enriched, learner-centred environment.



Inspire a new generation of learners through bold, innovative, and world-class post-16 education that shapes the future of skills locally, regionally, and nationally.



Empower every individual to thrive, unlocking potential through a culture of excellence, collaboration, and shared ambition.



Lead transformative partnerships with employers, communities, and stakeholders, driving inclusive growth and positioning our region as a beacon of opportunity and progress.

Your feedback on our vision, Stronger Together, is vital. This document outlines the key details of our proposal and provides information at the end on how you can share your views.

Consultation Process and Timeline

The public consultation process is a critical step in the proposed merger. Ensuring that stakeholders have the opportunity to provide feedback and express their views. The proposed merger timeline is:



25 March 2026

Consultation Period Start



28 April 2026

Consultation Period End



26 June 2026

Consultation Outcome Published



1 August 2026

Proposed Merger Date



Rationale for Merger

Stronger Together

The proposed merger between Cheshire College – South & West and Macclesfield College is driven by a shared ambition to create a stronger, more resilient organisation that delivers exceptional education and skills training across Cheshire.

By combining resources, expertise, and strategic vision, the merged college will enhance opportunities for learners, staff, employers, and communities, ensuring long-term sustainability and growth. This unified approach will position the new college as a leading force for innovation, collaboration, and regional development.

The newly merged college, with a combined turnover exceeding £69 million, serving over 15,000 learners (including 6,300 full-time 16–19 learners and 1,500 apprentices), supported by 900 staff, will have the scale, expertise, and regional footprint to respond powerfully to both local and regional economic priorities. It will also be well-positioned to attract capital investment, including transformational projects.

As we move forward with the proposed merger, we want to reassure colleagues that the interests and wellbeing of staff remain a key priority. The merger aims to strengthen our organisation while creating new opportunities for professional development, career progression, and collaboration across both colleges. We are committed to supporting staff throughout the transition and ensuring a positive, stable, and inclusive working environment as we bring our teams together.



Investment and Regeneration

A unified strategy to drive investment and economic regeneration, in partnership with local authorities, employers, and other stakeholders, delivering long-term benefits for local communities and the region. We are committed to investing in a state-of-the-art construction centre at the Macclesfield Campus by 2030, strengthening the provision for learners and employers.



Talent Development and Workforce Stability

A focus on professional development and internal career progression will support staff retention, enhance organisational capability, and ensure continuity and quality in learner experience.



Proven Excellence in Collaboration

A partnership built on a strong track record of successful delivery in education and skills, with a shared commitment to high-quality outcomes for learners and employers.



Regional Representation and Strategic Scale

A college with the scale, influence, and strategic capability to represent Cheshire effectively in regional and national forums, and the agility to scale operations in response to emerging needs.



Efficiency and Cohesion

Reduced duplication and internal competition will allow for a more streamlined, coordinated skills offer across Cheshire, aligned with regional priorities.



Enhanced Financial Resilience

The creation of a financially stronger, larger institution able to respond effectively to sector-wide funding pressures and future economic uncertainty.



Strategic Workforce Planning

With a workforce of over 900 staff, the merged college will implement robust succession planning and horizon scanning to future-proof provision and explore new opportunities for growth and innovation.

Benefits to Merger

Benefits to Learners and Apprentices

Exceptional Learner Experience

The merger will enable significant investment in curriculum and learner life, ensuring every individual enjoys a high-quality, well-rounded, and enriching experience while achieving nationally recognised qualifications.



Our Commitment:

This merger will protect learner choice, maintain a broad curriculum, and create new educational pathways, ensuring every learner has the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

Benefits to Staff and Organisational Culture

A Culture of Excellence

The merger will build on best practice from both colleges to create a culture of high expectations, collaboration, and innovation. This shared ethos will strengthen our ability to deliver outstanding education and support for learners.

Key Benefits:



High quality information, advice and guidance will continue to direct learners to appropriate levels and courses, thereby sustaining strong achievement rates



Broader Progression Opportunities: Access to a wider range of courses and pathways, including A Levels, Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), and specialist vocational routes.



Expanded Curriculum Offer: The scale of the new college allows the introduction of new subject areas and innovative programmes.



Enhanced Support and Resources: Greater access to academic, pastoral, and enrichment support, leading to improved outcomes for all learners.



Specialist Facilities and Technology: State-of-the-art learning environments designed to mirror real-world settings, equipping learners with industry-ready skills and behaviours.



Employer Partnerships: Strong links with local and regional employers will create opportunities for work experience, apprenticeships, and employment in high-demand sectors.



Enrichment and Extra-Curricular Activities: A wider range of academies, competitive sports, and cultural opportunities to complement classroom learning.



Inclusive Access Across the Region: Cheshire-wide solutions for High Needs Education, Adult Learning, Apprenticeships, and Higher Technical Education will deliver improved outcomes for all communities.



Comprehensive Careers Advice: A Cheshire-wide service offering guidance for lifelong learning and career progression.

Key Benefits:



Enhanced Professional Development: A more extensive programme of training and development will be available, enabling staff to build new skills in areas such as online learning, higher education, apprenticeships, and curriculum design.



Career Progression Opportunities: The scale of the new organisation will provide greater opportunities for advancement, including leadership development and specialist roles.



Collaborative Networks: Staff will benefit from wider peer support, sharing best practice and innovative teaching methods across the college and with key local and national partners.



Access to Modern Facilities: Shared use of industry-standard facilities and specialist resources will enrich teaching and learning experiences.



Financial Stability and Resilience: A stronger, more sustainable organisation will provide improved pay, conditions, and job security in a challenging funding landscape.



Recognition and Culture: Building on the culture the college will prioritise staff wellbeing and engagement.



Sector Leadership: Combining expertise will position the merged college as a leader in multiple curriculum areas, attracting employer partnerships and creating opportunities for staff to work on innovative projects.



Contribution to Social Impact: Staff will play a key role in driving social mobility and inclusion, supporting regional economic growth and transforming lives within our communities.

Benefits for Employers, Partners, Communities and Stakeholders

Stronger Partnerships and Engagement

The merger will create a more resilient, innovative organisation that works collaboratively with employers, schools, and community partners to meet local and regional needs.

Key Benefits:



Enhanced Employer Engagement: Increased capacity to respond to business needs through tailored training, apprenticeships, and workforce development solutions.



Sector Leadership: A wider curriculum offer and multiple sector specialisms will enable employers to influence course design, ensuring alignment with Local Skills Improvement Plan priorities and future workforce requirements.



Access to Modern Facilities: Employers will benefit from industry-standard facilities across campuses for staff training, conferences, and bespoke development programmes.



Networking and Recruitment Opportunities: A larger talent pool and coordinated employer engagement will provide more opportunities for placements, work experience, and recruitment of skilled, work-ready learners.



Innovation and Growth: The merged college will act as a hub for innovation, supporting regional economic development and piloting cutting-edge projects that adapt to local needs.



Community Impact: Improved education standards, workforce readiness, and social mobility will strengthen local communities and contribute to economic prosperity.



Adult and Higher Technical Education: A broader offer for adult learners and higher-level qualifications will increase opportunities for upskilling and retraining across the region.



Policy Influence and Regional Development: The new organisation will leverage its scale and expertise to shape education and skills policy, driving initiatives that benefit employers and communities alike.

Statutory Notice

Macclesfield College: Statutory Notice Further and Higher Education Act 1992

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by the Corporation of Macclesfield College (Park Lane, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 8LF), in accordance with the Further Education Corporations (Publication of Proposals) (England) Regulations 2012 and the provisions of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (as amended), of the proposal for the transfer of its property, rights and liabilities to the Corporation of Cheshire College – South & West (Crewe Campus, Dane Bank Avenue, Crewe CW2 8AB) and the subsequent dissolution of the Corporation of Macclesfield College.

The dissolution of the Corporation of Macclesfield College is proposed in order to enable a merger with Cheshire College – South & West. This merger will create a strong, financially sustainable institution delivering high-quality education and skills training for learners and employers across Cheshire and the wider region, under the shared vision of "Stronger Together."



All learners at both colleges who have not completed their course of study by the date of the proposed dissolution will continue their education within the merged college. This will affect approximately 7168 learners: 5,602 16–18-year-olds (FE learners), 1,303 apprentices and 263 adults.

The proposed date for the dissolution of the Corporation of Macclesfield College is **1st August 2026**

A copy of the consultation document on these proposals is available free of charge and can be accessed via the college websites at www.ccsw.ac.uk and www.macclesfield.ac.uk or in writing to **Executive Office, Macclesfield College, Park Lane, Macclesfield SK11 8LF**

The consultation period runs from 25 March 2026 to 28 April 2026.

All responses and representations must be received by the closing date through:

- completing the online response form at www.ccsw.ac.uk/merger or www.macclesfield.ac.uk/merger
- or email to merger@ccsw.ac.uk or merger@macclesfield.ac.uk

A summary of the feedback and the outcome will be published on 26 June 2026 on the Macclesfield College and Cheshire College – South & West websites. A copy of the document will be available free of charge to any person who requests it.

Your Views

We want your feedback

The Governing Boards of Cheshire College – South & West and Macclesfield College invite you to share your views on the proposed merger and the creation of a new college group under the vision “Stronger Together.”

Your feedback is essential in helping us understand the perspectives and priorities of learners, staff, employers, and the wider community.

How to Respond:

 Complete the online feedback form at:
www.ccsw.ac.uk/merger or www.macclesfield.ac.uk/merger

 Email your response to:
merger@ccsw.ac.uk or merger@macclesfield.ac.uk

 Alternatively, post your response to:

Executive Office Cheshire College – South & West Dane Bank Avenue Crewe CW2 8AB	Executive Office Macclesfield College Park Lane Macclesfield SK11 8LF
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Deadline for responses:

All feedback must be received by 28 April 2026 to be considered as part of the consultation process.

Please include the following details in your response:

- **Name**
- **Address and postcode**
- **Organisation** (if applicable)
- **Category that best describes you** (e.g., learner, parent/carer, staff, employer, community representative, other)

Further details of the proposed merger are outlined in this consultation document and on both college websites. Once you have reviewed the information, please share your views on the proposed merger.

Your Feedback Matters

Please share your views on the proposed merger between Cheshire College – South & West and Macclesfield College by answering the following questions:

1. Do you support the proposed merger? (Please select one)
Yes | No | Unsure

2. Please give us your feedback on the proposed merger.

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Please tell us about yourself:

- **Name:**
- **Address and Postcode:**
- **Organisation** (if applicable):
- **Category** (please select all that apply):
 - Learner
 - Parent/Carer
 - Employer/Local Business
 - Cheshire College Staff
 - Macclesfield College Staff
 - School
 - Trade Union Representative
 - Local Government
 - Government Body
 - Private Training Provider
 - Other (please specify)

FAQs

1 What is being proposed?

Cheshire College – South & West and Macclesfield College are proposing to merge to form a single, larger college serving Cheshire and the surrounding region. The aim is to create a stronger, more resilient organisation delivering high-quality education and skills training under the shared vision **Stronger Together**.

2 Why are the colleges exploring options including merger?

Colleges regularly review how they can best serve learners, employers and communities. Exploring options including closer collaboration or merger, is part of responsible long-term planning. The merger is driven by a shared ambition to:

- Strengthen education and skills training across Cheshire
- Improve long-term financial resilience
- Tackle regional skills gaps
- Invest in modern facilities and technology
- Better meet employer and community needs



3 How big will the merged college be?

The merged organisation would:

- Serve 15,000+ learners
- Include around 6,300 full-time 16–19 learners
- Support around 1,500 apprentices
- Employ approximately 900 staff
- Have a combined turnover of over £69 million

4 How will the proposed merger affect learners in the 2026–27 academic year, including those applying for September 2026?

Learners and those applying for provision for September 2026 will continue their courses and qualifications as planned. Learners who have not completed their studies by the merger date will continue their education within the merged college.

It is the firm belief of both colleges that the benefits of merger outweigh any potential risks which have been identified.

As part of our planning process, we have developed a risk register and mechanisms to manage those risks should they occur. We have engaged an experienced project manager who is working closely with the CEOs. The merger process is overseen by a Transition Steering Group with governor representatives from both colleges.

5 What stage is the merger process at?

The colleges are progressing through the formal merger process, including due diligence and a public consultation. Key dates are:

Consultation starts: 25 March 2026

Consultation ends: 28 April 2026

Outcome published: 26 June 2026

Proposed merger date: 1 August 2026



Privacy Statement

Cheshire College – South & West and Macclesfield College take the security of your personal data seriously. Both organisations have robust policies and controls in place to ensure your information is protected from loss, misuse, unauthorised access, or disclosure. Access to your data is restricted to employees who need it to perform their duties.

Any comments or responses you provide as part of this consultation may be published anonymously, but your personal information will never be shared publicly. Personal data will be retained for 12 months following the end of the consultation and then securely destroyed.

As a data subject, you have the following rights:

- **Access your data** and obtain a copy on request.
- **Request correction** of inaccurate or incomplete data.
- **Request deletion or restriction** of your data where it is no longer necessary for processing.
- **Object to processing** where the organisation relies on legitimate interests as the legal basis.
- **Lodge a complaint** with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) regarding how your data has been processed.
You can do this at: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint>.

If you have any questions about how we process your data or wish to exercise your rights, please contact our Data Protection Officers:

- **Cheshire College – South & West:** dpo@ccsw.ac.uk
- **Macclesfield College:** dpo@macclesfield.ac.uk

Our Data Protection Policy is available on our websites and can be provided on request via the email addresses above.