

Dumfries and Galloway College Economic and Wellbeing Impacts

A report to



March 2026





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Executive Summary

In 2024/25, Dumfries and Galloway College generated significant benefits in Scotland

The impact of Dumfries and Galloway College includes:

- **£18.5 million** in operational impacts
- **£58.4 million** in wellbeing impacts
- **£46.4 million** in social value of qualifications
- **£19.0 million** in wage premiums



For every **£1 in funding** received, the College generated a total of **£12 in benefits**

Dumfries and Galloway College has a key role in enabling the region to capture the economic benefits of emerging sectors, consequently retaining the working age population and supporting economic growth



Study Background

Dumfries and Galloway College (DGC) commissioned BiGGAR Economics to assess its economic and wellbeing impacts

This report:

- Outlines the local economic context of Dumfries and Galloway (D&G) in which DGC operates;
- Describes DGC's economic and wellbeing impacts;
- Quantitatively estimates DGC's impacts, with respect to Gross Value Added (GVA), jobs, wellbeing (WELLBYs); and
- Provides sources of data and assumptions.





Methodology

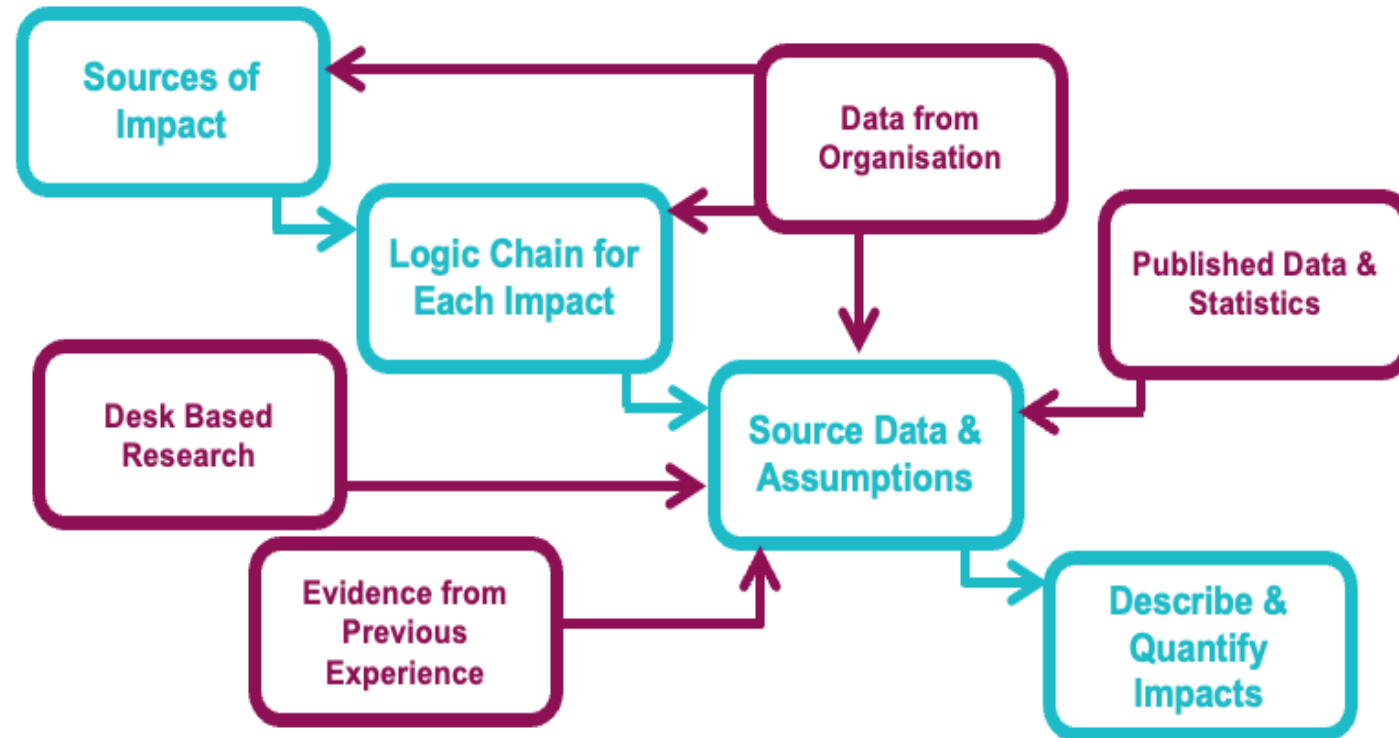
The approach to identifying and measuring impacts





Approach and Methodology

This study aims to identify and, where possible, quantify the impacts of DGC





Methodology

Approach to assessing the impacts of DGC



The quantitative economic assessment covers:

- **Direct Impact:** including direct employment.
- **Supply Chain Spending:** goods and services
- **Capital Expenditure Impact:** specialist equipment
- **Staff Spending:** employees support the local economy through their expenditure

Economic impacts are presented in terms of:

- **Gross Value Added (GVA)**
- **Employment (Jobs)**

The impacts are presented at the level of the **Scottish Economy**.

Estimates are inclusive of the **indirect** (supply chain) and **induced** (spending of staff wages) impacts and are based on publicly available statistics, including the **Scottish Annual Business Statistics** and **Input-Output Tables**.

The **social impact** of the college has been measured using Wellbeing-Adjusted Life Years (**WELLBYs**), which represent a one-point change in life satisfaction (on a 0–10 scale) per person, per year.

Recommended by HM Treasury, WELLBYs quantify wellbeing benefits in monetary terms, with **one WELLBY valued at £15,958** in 2023 prices.

Further information on the key assumptions and sources used can be found in an appendix at the end of this report.



Local Economic Context

The socio-economic conditions of D&G and DGC's role in addressing challenges in the area

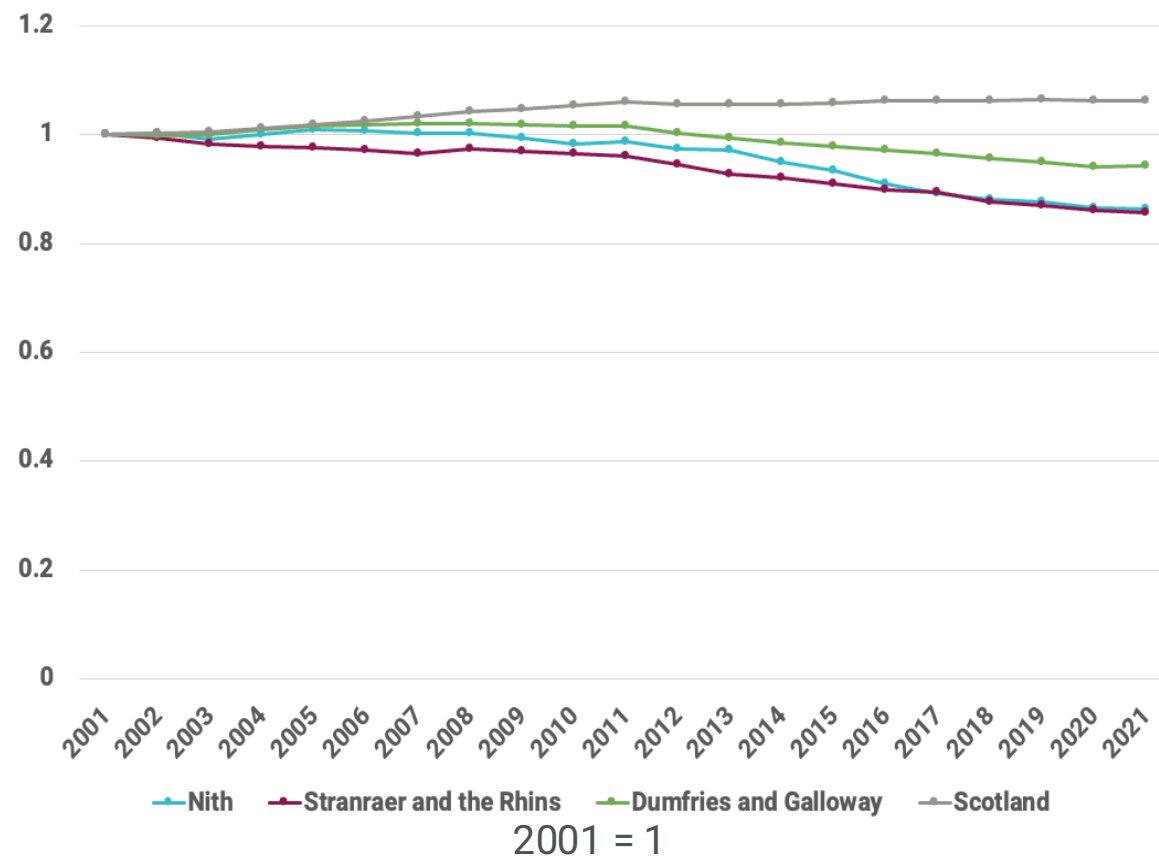




Historic Working Age Population Decline

The number of working age people in D&G fell by 5,239 between 2001 and 2021

- This is equivalent to a reduction in the working age population of 5.7%
- During the same period, the working age population:
 - Fell by **13.6%** in Nith;
 - Fell by **14.2%** in Stranraer and the Rhins; and
 - Increased by **6.3%** across Scotland as a whole
- This suggests significant out-migration, both locally and from the region as a whole

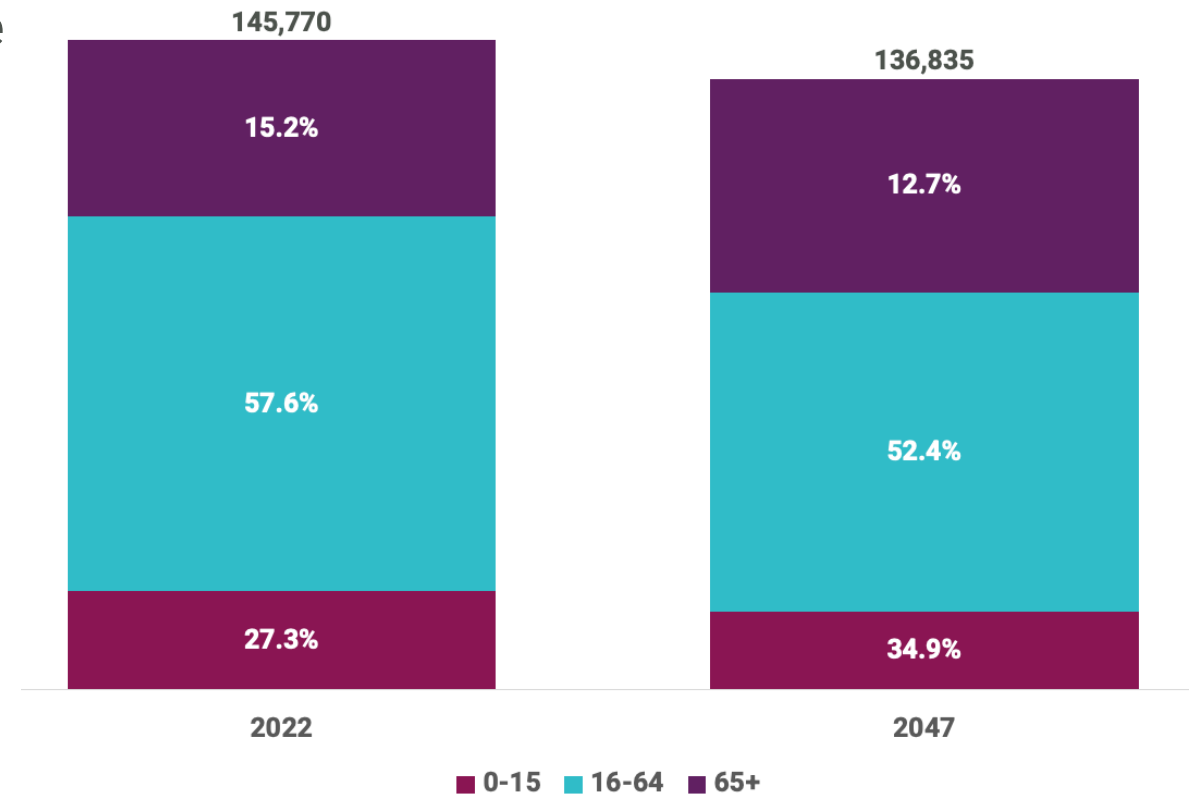




Population Projections

Projections suggest that the region's working age population will continue to fall

- Between 2022 and 2047, it is projected that the total population of D&G will fall from **145,770** to **136,835**
- During the same period, the share of the population accounted for by working age people is projected to fall from **57.6%** to **52.4%**
- The working age population is projected to fall by **14.8%**
 - This is equivalent to a reduction of **12,451 working age people**

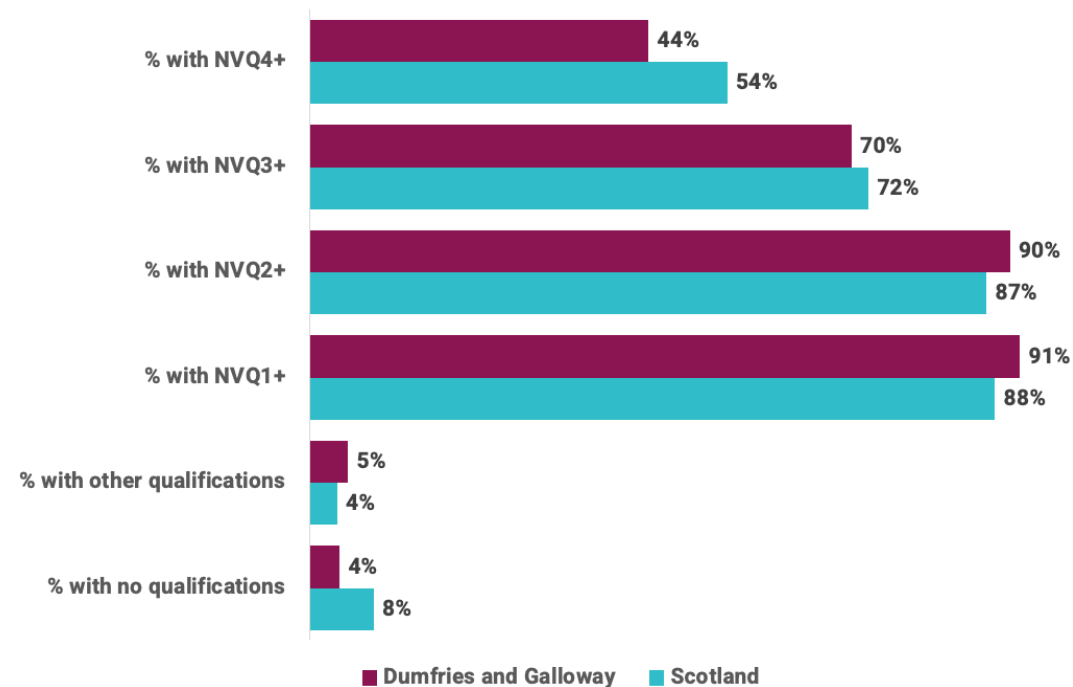




Qualifications

Attainment data suggests people with further or higher education qualifications leave D&G

- D&G residents are less likely to have qualifications at the NVQ Level 3 (Highers or SCQF Level 6) compared to the national average
 - 54% of 2023/24 school leavers in the region had an SCQF Level 6 qualification or better, compared to 57% across Scotland
- The region also has a lower proportion of residents with NVQ Level 4+ qualifications (Advanced Highers or SCQF Level 7) than Scotland as a whole
 - 16% of D&G school leavers had an SCQF Level 7 qualification or better, compared to 19% across Scotland



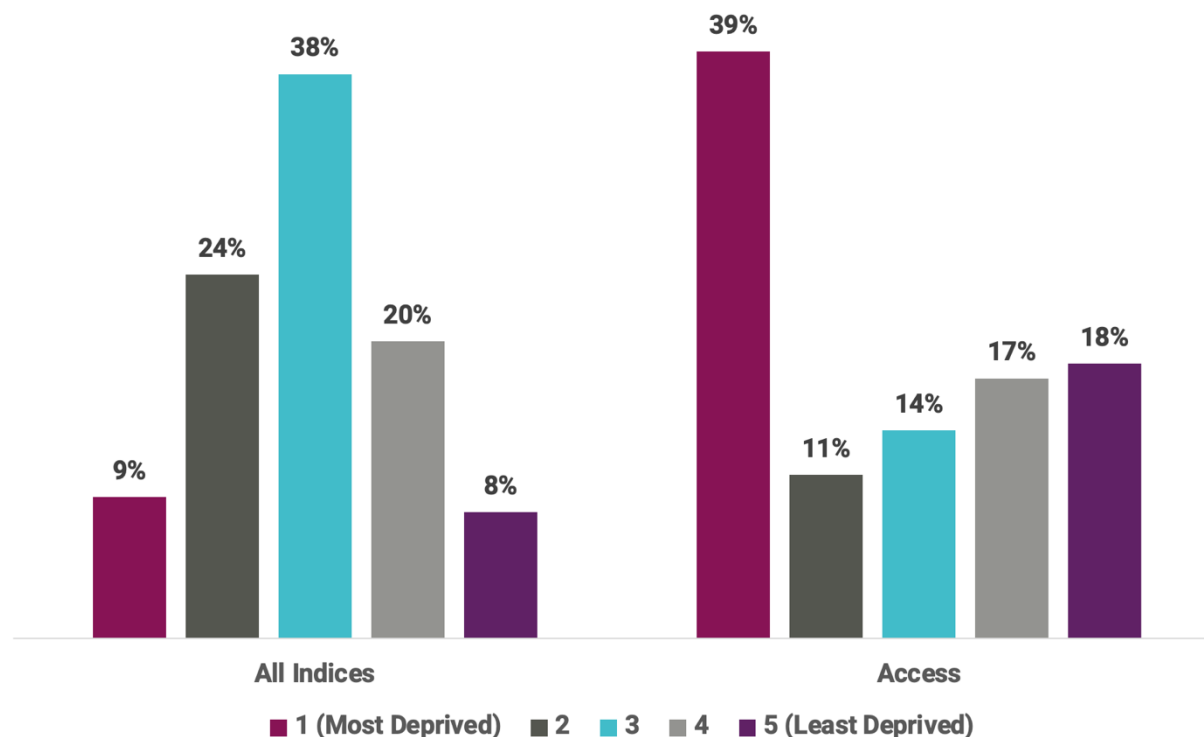
Data for residents aged 16-64



Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

Despite relatively low overall deprivation, D&G experiences significant access deprivation

- Across D&G, the Access domain, which accounts for the accessibility of services like education, is the main area of deprivation
- **39% of the region's small areas are in Quintile 1** for this index
 - This means that 39% of small areas in D&G are in the 20% most access deprived areas of Scotland
- **Without the presence of DGC, access deprivation would be even higher**

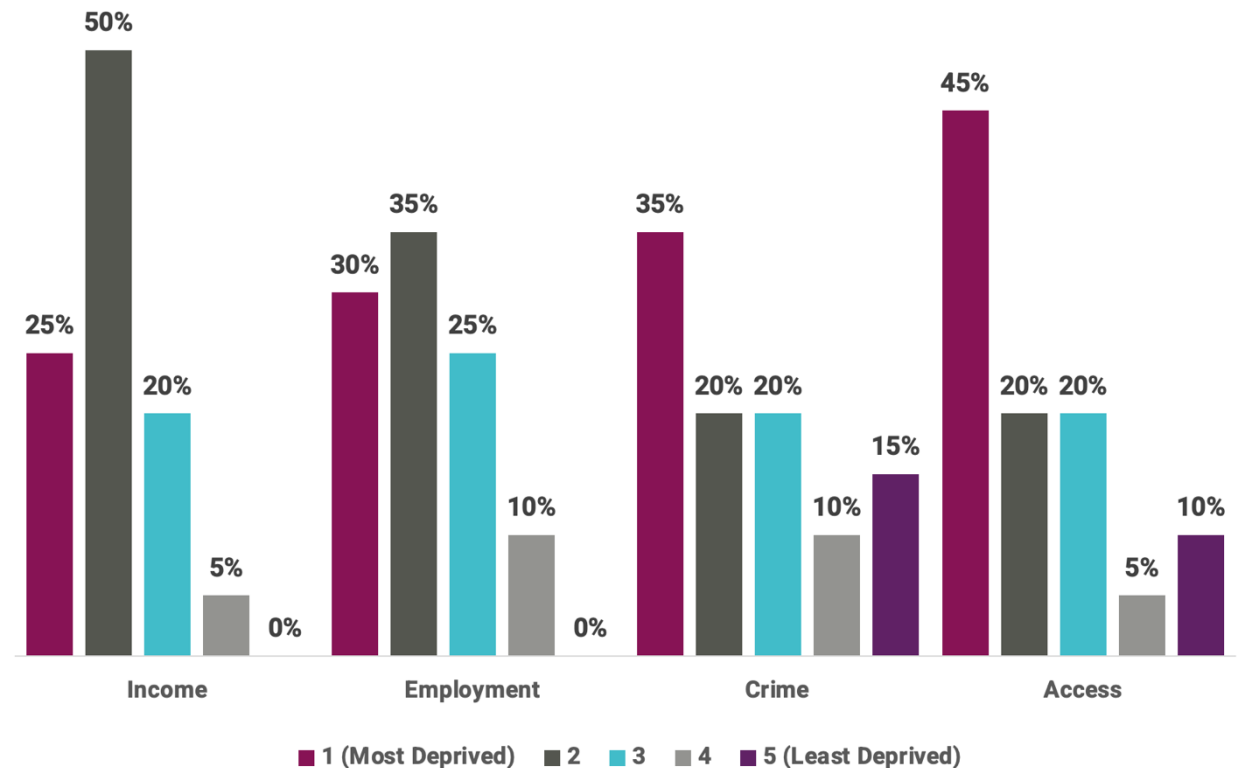




Stranraer and the Rhins Indices of Deprivation

The area experiences above average levels of deprivation across a number of indices

- Stranraer and the Rhins has a higher-than-average share of areas in Quintile 1 across the indices of:
 - Income (25%);
 - Employment (30%); and
 - Crime (35%).
- Access deprivation is even more pronounced in Stranraer and the Rhins, with **45% of small areas in Quintile 1** for this measure

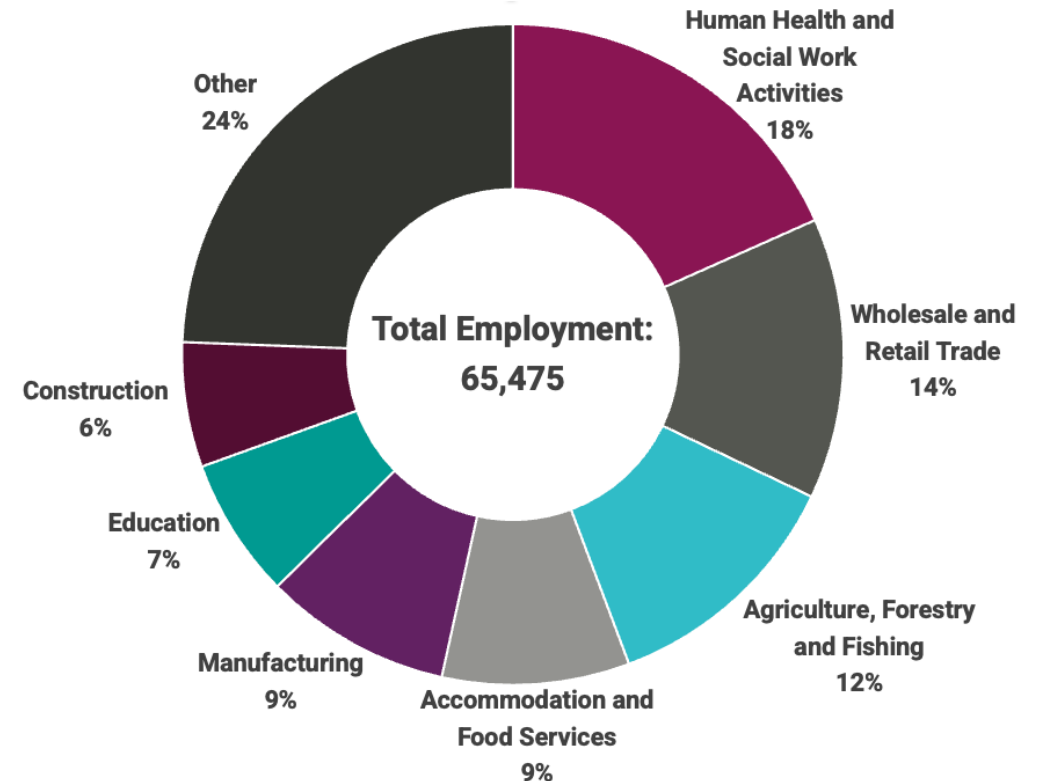




Employment and Industrial Structure

Total employment in D&G was 65,475 in 2024

- The most significant employer in the region was the human health and social work activities sector (18%)
- The share of employment in wholesale and retail trade is also above average in the region
- Employment in the professional, scientific and technical sector is below average in D&G, accounting for 5% of employment in the local authority, compared to 7% across Scotland overall

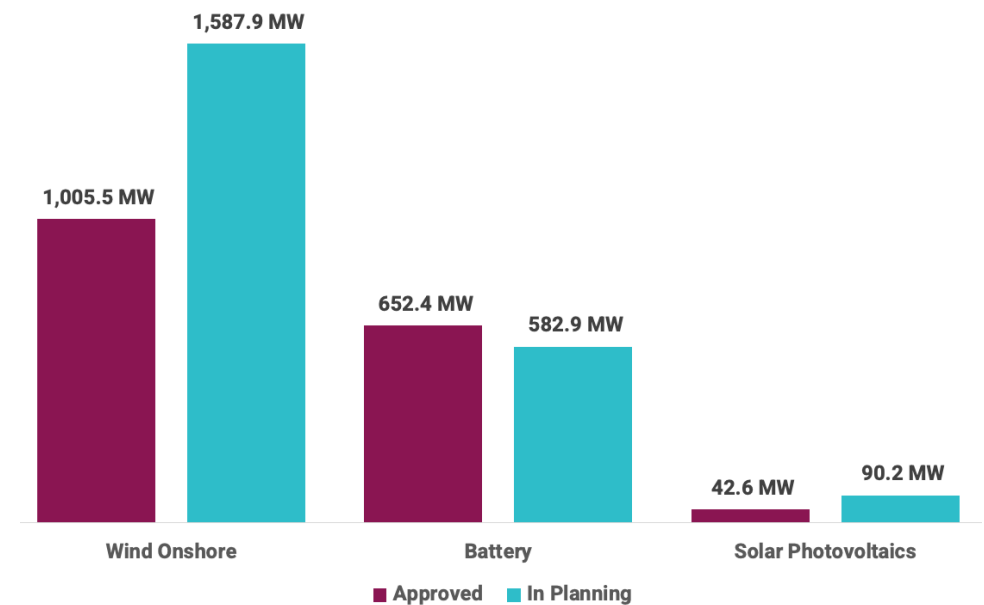




Regional Opportunities

The region is expected to experience significant expansion in renewable energy

- The median annual gross pay of workers in D&G is 14% lower than Scotland,
 - 12.4% of people employed in D&G earn below the living wage (11.3% across Scotland)
- As of December 2025, approved renewables projects in D&G included:
 - 18 onshore wind farms (1,005.5MW);
 - 14 battery storage projects (652.4MW); and
 - 12 solar photovoltaic projects (42.6MW).
- An additional 36 renewable energy projects with a total installed capacity of 2,261.0MW are currently in planning
- These projects represent a significant opportunity for employment and higher wages for people in D&G, improving incentives to work in the region





Socio-Economic Context Summary

The data demonstrates significant challenges and opportunities for the area

- In last two decades, the working age population of the region fell by 5,239 and it is expected to fall by a further 12,451 by 2047
- The share of people aged 16-64 with NVQ3 and NVQ4 level qualifications suggests that outmigration from the region is in part driven by people seeking both for education and work after qualifying at this level
- The region is reliant on relatively low-productivity sectors, with 8,000 workers earning below the real living wage
- 'Access to services' (including education) is the main area of deprivation across the region, particularly in Stranraer and the Rhins
- There are major areas of opportunity for D&G, particularly in the renewable energy sector





The Role of DGC

DGC is well placed to address socio-economic challenges in the region

- DGC is the region's main provider of further education, and can address disparities between the qualifications of school leavers in D&G compared to Scotland as a whole, delivering improved outcomes and a higher graduate premium compared to other college's
- By providing local and accessible further and higher education, DGC can retain students and working age people who may otherwise leave the region for qualifications
- By engaging with industry and to meet skills demands, the college can ensure that growing sectors can recruit locally
 - **This has the potential to support the delivery of high quality, well-paid jobs, encouraging more people to stay in the region and improving population retention amongst the working age demographic**





Operational Impacts

The impacts of DGC's day-to-day operations, including its direct impact, its expenditure on supplies and capital investment, and the spending of staff in the economy





Operational Impacts

DGC generates GVA and employment impacts through its operations

2024/25 Impacts	D&G	Scotland
GVA (£ millions)		
Direct Impact	11.9	11.9
Supply Chain Impact	0.3	1.1
Staff Spending Impact	3.3	5.2
Capital Investment Impact	<0.1	0.3
Total	15.6	18.5
Jobs		
Direct Impact	256	256
Supply Chain Impact	5	20
Staff Spending Impact	25	40
Capital Investment Impact	<5	5
Total	290	320

The impacts of DGC's operations include:

- **Direct Impact:** the value an organisation adds through its operations;
- **Supply Chain Impact:** increasing turnover and supporting employment of supplier businesses;
- **Staff Spending Impact:** supporting economic activity where staff live when they spend their income; and
- **Capital Investment Impact:** increasing turnover for the construction sector and businesses which supply equipment.



Staff Wellbeing Impacts

The impacts generated by DGC through its creation of high-quality local jobs





Staff Wellbeing Impacts

DGC provides high-quality local jobs that generate wellbeing benefits for its staff

- As an accredited Scottish Living Wage employer, DGC is an **important local employer**
- The College offers excellent employment conditions, characterised by a **high proportion of permanent contracts** and strong, **above-average pay**
- Job security and high remuneration are contributors to job satisfaction and bring about wellbeing benefits for staff
- In total, employment at the College has a **wellbeing impact of 167.7 WELLBYs, worth 2.7 million**

2024/25 Impacts		Scotland
	WELLBYs	£m
Staff	167.7	2.7





Human Capital Impacts

The impacts generated by DGC's accredited courses, which build human capital (the skills and knowledge of individuals), include enhanced productivity, higher wages, increased social value, and improved lifetime wellbeing





Human Capital Impacts – Wage Premium

The College delivers nationally accredited courses that drive local skills development and enhance productivity, resulting in higher wages

- DGC represents an investment in people that **enhances lifetime opportunities**
- A key priority is enhancing skills that meet regional needs, delivering courses that enable people to do their jobs effectively and contribute meaningfully to society
- The increase in productivity that College brings about can be captured using the **wage premium** – the expected personal earnings increase from obtaining a qualification. **This is expected to be higher for DGC owing to lower than average regional rates of attainment of Highers amongst school leavers**
- In total, based on the College awarding 2,502 SCQF Levels 1-6 and 822 SCQF Levels 7+ in 2024/25, the College had **a total wage premium impact of £19.0 million**

2024/25 Impacts	Scotland
	£m
Wage Premium	19.0





Human Capital Impacts – Social Value

The College addresses societal needs by equipping people with the skills to pursue high-social-value careers

2024/25 Impacts	Scotland
	£m
Social Value	46.3



- DGC actively supports the community through **directly generating social value**
- Whilst the wage premium captures the productivity gains from College qualifications, it fails to reflect the full value of the work undertaken
- Many of these qualifications **empower people to pursue careers of high social value**, work not solely measured by wage uplift, including essential roles in health and social care, teaching, engineering, and computing
- In total, based on the College awarding SCQFs in health and social care (416), teaching (254), engineering (938), and computing (92) in 2024/25, the College that had **a social value impact of £46.3 million**



Human Capital Impacts – Wellbeing

Beyond the benefits to wages and society, obtaining a nationally accredited qualification directly enhances wellbeing across a person's lifetime

- Alongside the benefits of higher wages and social value, the qualifications gained at the College help to secure **a lifetime of personal wellbeing benefits for individuals**
- Gaining a new qualification provides indirect wellbeing benefits through, for example, increased wages and better mental health
- However, once these indirect gains are factored out, direct wellbeing benefits remain, arising from a person having better life skills and increased confidence
- In total, based on the 3,307 SCQFs awarded in 2024/25, the College generated a **lifetime of wellbeing benefits worth £52.8 million**

2024/25 Impacts	Scotland	
	WELLBYs	£m
Lifetime Wellbeing	3,306.8	52.8



Human Capital Impacts – Net Zero Transition

The College delivers the skills required for renewable energy development



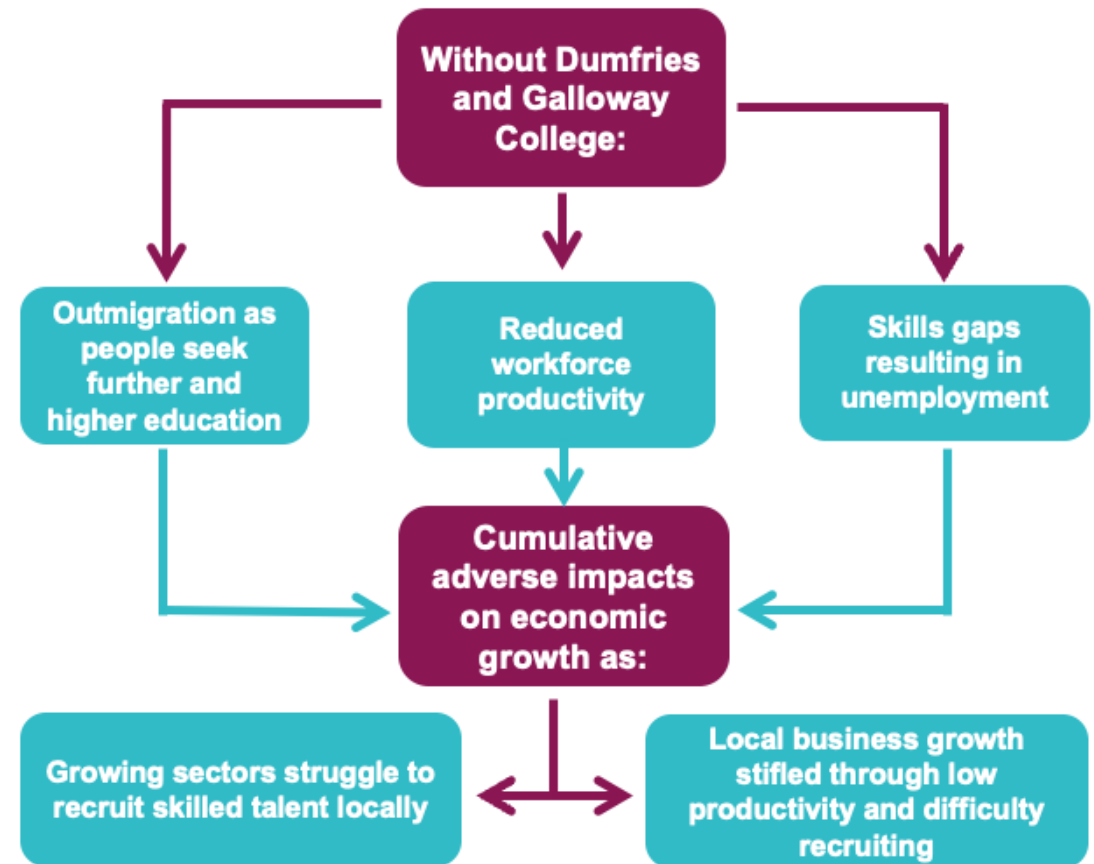
- DGC has identified the need to work with renewable energy developers and upskill the population in order to ensure the region can meet growing demand for skills
- The College delivers a number of courses delivering these skills including:
 - **Introduction to Engineering and Renewable Energy:** teaching engineering skills required for modern industry, with a project on renewable engineering;
 - **Renewable Energy Practical Skills:** students learn the skills required to design, build and evaluate alternative energy production and storage systems; and
 - **Electric Energy Storage Systems (EESS):** qualified electricians, technicians and engineers learn how to install EESS, complementing the development of renewables.
- DGC also developed a course in partnership with the operator Natural Power, not only ensuring that the college delivers relevant skills but also creating a direct path to employment for students, with all those who complete the course guaranteed an interview with the developer



Human Capital Impacts

DGC supports regional economic growth through skills provision

- DGC identifies sectors with growth potential across the region and the wider Scottish economy
- DGC runs courses targeting emerging demand for skills relevant to early education & childcare, cybersecurity, construction and engineering
- By aligning its curriculum with industry needs, the college ensures a pipeline of skilled, productive workers who enable growth sectors and local businesses to recruit within the region





Education & Learning Impacts

The impacts generated by DGC from the core student experience and supporting wider learning across the region





Education & Learning Impacts - Student Wellbeing

DGC creates opportunities for people in the region that wouldn't otherwise exist, bringing wellbeing benefits

2024/25 Impacts	Scotland	
	WELLBYs	£ m
Engagement in Education	110.7	1.8



- Being a student is comparable (in wellbeing terms) to being employed **offering meaning and purpose, opportunities for growth and learning, and social connection**
- The College creates wellbeing benefits by engaging students, who might otherwise be out of work in line with local rates
- In addition, the College strives to **provide support for students' health and wellbeing**, with dedicated staff to support counselling services, safeguarding support, and student advice, as well hardship funds
- In total, based on 9,000 students in 2024/25, some of whom some may otherwise be unemployed, the College generated **wellbeing benefits worth £1.8 million**



Education & Learning Impacts - College Courses

The College offers courses that support community learning, which generate wellbeing benefits

2024/25 Impacts	Scotland	
	WELLBYs	£ m
Open Learning	29.9	0.5
Senior Learners	14.1	0.2
Non-SCQF College Courses	16.5	0.3
Commercial Courses	6.9	0.1
Total	67.4	1.1

- Alongside its role as a formal education provider that generates substantial human capital impacts, DGC also supports community learning
- By providing open learning initiatives, programs for senior learners, and non-accredited courses, while also hosting external commercial training, the College creates an inclusive environment for those who might otherwise be left out of the learning community
- This helps people to **develop skills and confidence** that will bring wellbeing benefits to people's lives and offers a potential **pathway into formal education**
- In total, based on the 3,651 non-SCQF courses in 2024/25, the College generated **wellbeing benefits worth £1.1 million**



Community Impacts

The wider impacts in the local area generated by DGC through its work supporting training and development, hosting sporting activities, and offering public access to its campus facilities





Community Impacts

The College enriches the local community by supporting training and development, hosting sporting activities, and offering public access to its campus facilities

- DGC is a hub for community activities, including:
 - *Supporting large scale community events*, such as the Dumfries Half Marathon and NHS Inspiring Futures;
 - *Education and outreach*, such as SMART STEM and Developing the Young Workforce;
 - *Hosting local sporting activities*, such as the Dumfries and Galloway Disability Sport team, a local hockey team;
 - *Hiring out College space*, such as to Scottish Prison Service, Grimdark Gamers, SDS; and
 - *Allowing public use of facilities*, such as their hospitality restaurant, hair & beauty facilities
- These activities bring about wellbeing benefits through enabling learning and participation that might not otherwise happen, bringing **a wellbeing benefit worth £0.1 million.**





Summary and Conclusion

Summarising the impacts generated by DGC





Summary of Quantifiable Impacts

Grouped by impact type, in 2024/25, Dumfries and Galloway College generated:

- **£18.5 million** in operational impacts
- **£58.4 million** in wellbeing benefits
- **£46.3 million** in social value of qualifications
- **£19.0 million** in wage premiums

Total benefits in Scotland = **£142.1 million**

2024/25 Impacts	Scotland
	£ millions
Direct GVA	11.9
Supply Expenditure	1.1
Staff Expenditure	5.2
Capital Expenditure	0.3
Total GVA Impacts	18.5
Staff wellbeing	2.7
Student wellbeing	1.8
Lifetime graduate wellbeing	52.8
Education and learning wellbeing	1.1
Community wellbeing	0.1
Total Wellbeing Benefit	58.4
Social Value	46.3
Wage Premium	19.0





Conclusion

Dumfries and Galloway College mitigates regional challenges and captures the full benefit of emerging economic opportunities

- By providing local and accessible further and higher education, Dumfries and Galloway College directly addresses the region's main area of deprivation and curbs outmigration of students and working-age people
- DGC actively works to identify growth sectors, such as renewable energy, cybersecurity, early education & childcare, construction and engineering, and tailors its curriculum in partnership with industry to deliver in demand skills and strengthen the region's human capital, thereby:
 - facilitating local recruitment;
 - enabling regional business growth; and
 - supporting the retention of the working age population
- Together, these impacts act as a catalyst for economic growth across Dumfries and Galloway





Key Assumptions and Sources





Operational Impacts

Assumption	Value
Income	£15.1 million
SFC Income	£12.1 million
Headcount staff	256
D&G	95%
Scotland	5%
Staff Costs	£12.4 million
Supply Expenditure	£3.2 million
D&G	14%
Scotland	36%
Average Annual Capital Expenditure	£0.5 million
D&G	10%
Scotland	84%



Human Capital Impacts

Assumption	Value
The number of students leaving with SCQF Levels 1-6 2024/25	2,502
Of which are full-time	550
The number of students leaving with SCQF Levels 7+ 2024/25	822
Of which are full-time	237
Including qualifications in:	
Health and Social Care	416
Teaching	254
Engineering	1,054
Computing	92
Proportion of leavers going on to employment	
Higher Education	30.8%
Further education	30.8%



Human Capital Impacts

Assumption	Value
Wage premium by qualification	
SCQF Levels 1-6	£16,435
SCQF Levels 7+	£24,652
Wage Premium adjustment to account for low regional rates of attainment	2%
Social value by SCQF Levels 7+ Qualification	
Health and Social Care	£32,147
Teaching	£393,442
Engineering	£76,756
Computing	£85,786
Wellbeing per qualification per year of student's life	0.025 WELLBYs
Total lifetime wellbeing per student	1.0 WELLBYs



Staff Satisfaction Impacts

Assumption	Value
Headcount staff	256
Wellbeing benefit of one DGC job (based on higher than the UK average pay and job security)	0.66 WELLBYs
Value of one WELLBY	£15,658



Student Satisfaction and Learning Impacts

Assumption	Value
Number of students	9,000
D&G unemployment rate	3.6%
D&G employment rate	67.8%
Number of students taking non-SCQF courses	3,651
Wellbeing benefit of undertaking a learning course across one year	0.035 WELLBYs
Additionality for commercial courses	10%



Community Impacts

Assumption	Value
Community Training and Development	
Number of attendees to external training and development events held at the College	1148
Wellbeing benefit of undertaking a learning course across one year	0.035 WELLBYs
Additionality for external training and development events held at the College	10%
Community Sporting Events	
Number of attendees to community sporting events	920
Wellbeing benefit of one-off use of sports facilities	0.0009 WELLBYs
Additionality for community sporting events	Between 10% and 100%
Facility and service use	
Number of people having a meal at the hospitality restaurant	960
Benefit of a subsidised meal	£20



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