

EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

**MEETING TO BE HELD AT 2.00 PM ON FRIDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2021
IN PRINTWORKS CAMPUS, LEEDS CITY COLLEGE, HUNSLET ROAD,
LEEDS LS10 1JY**

A G E N D A

This meeting will be held in The Printworks Campus, Leeds City College, Hunslet Road, Leeds.

There will be very limited capacity for observers of the meeting. If you would like to attend to observe the meeting in person, please email: governanceservices@westyorks-ca.gov.uk to request a place, clearly stating the name, date and start time of the committee and include your full name and contact details, no later than 24 hours before the meeting begins. Please note that the pre-booked places will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis and once pre-booked capacity has been reached there will be no further public admittance to the meeting. On receipt of your request, colleagues will provide a response to you.

Coronavirus is still circulating so please follow all the Covid safe rules. Even if you have had the vaccine but have Coronavirus symptoms: a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste, you should NOT attend the meeting and stay at home and get a PCR test. For those who are attending the meeting, you are encouraged to bring a face covering.

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**
- 3. EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**
- 4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 FEBRUARY 2021**
(Pages 1 - 6)
- 5. EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE**

ARRANGEMENTS

(Pages 7 - 14)

6. DATA MONITORING & EVIDENCE BASE FOR COMMITTEE

(Led by: Alan Reiss, Author: Peter Glover)

(Pages 15 - 44)

7. MAYORAL PLEDGE

(Pages 45 - 50)

8. FORWARD PLAN

(Led by: Michelle Burton, Author: Sonya Midgley)

(Pages 51 - 60)

9. FE REFORMS

(Led by: Liz Hunter, Author Sonya Midgley)

(Pages 61 - 98)

10. AEB PROGRAMME

(Led by: Brian Archer, Author: Lindsey Daniels)

(Pages 99 - 114)

11. WEST YORKSHIRE DIGITAL SKILLS PARTNERSHIP

(Led by: Liz Hunter, Author Sonya Midgley)

(Pages 115 - 128)

12. EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PROGRAMME DELIVERY

(Led by: Brian Archer, Author: Michelle Burton)

(Pages 129 - 136)

Signed:



**Managing Director
West Yorkshire Combined Authority**



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2021 AT HELD AS A REMOTE
MEETING.**

Present:

Rashik Parmar MBE (Chair)	IBM EMEA
Martin Booth	Witt UK Gp
Mark Cowgill	Exa Networks
Orlagh Hunt	Yorkshire Building Society
Richard Mason	
Liz Needleman	BT
Claire Paxman	Paxman Coolers
Glynn Robinson	BJSS
Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Council
Councillor Peter McBride	Kirklees Council
Colin Booth (Advisory Representative)	Leeds City College
Nav Chohan (Advisory Representative)	Leeds City Region Skills Network
Alex Miles (Advisory Representative)	West Yorkshire Learning Providers
Dr Peter O'Brien (Advisory Representative)	Yorkshire Universities
Tim Thornton (Advisory Representative)	LCR Skills Network

In attendance:

Sandy Needham	Chamber of Commerce
Sophie Collins	West Yorkshsire Combined Authority
Peter Glover	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Michelle Hunter	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Catherine Lunn	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sonya Midgley	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Alan Reiss	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ben Still	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ian Smyth	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Mark Temple	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Janette Woodcock	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

61. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peter McBride, Councillor Ian Cuthberton and Councillor Patrick Mulligan.

62. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

There were no items of disclosable pecuniary interests.

63. Exempt Information - Exclusion of the press and public

There were no items on the agenda requiring the exclusion of the press and public.

64. Minutes of the meeting of the Employment and Skills Panel held on 25 November 2020

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2020 be agreed and signed by the Chair.

65. Chair's update

The Chair welcomed Sandy Needham as a guest to the meeting representing Chamber of Commerce and gave an update to the Panel on the following:

LEP Board 20 January 2021

Skills was a big topic, including discussion on qualifications and their recognition follow EU Exit and an overview is included in Agenda Item 6. The LEP Board also endorsed the inclusive Growth Framework which will be an Agenda Item at the next meeting of the Panel on 18 May. It was agreed that Inclusive Growth in the same way Clean Growth is now will be a cross-cutting theme so each report now considers contributions to the Agenda as a central assurance mechanism that is part of all panels.

LEP Board 24 February 2021

The Skills Framework is an Agenda item at the meeting and a verbal update is to be presented on the White Paper.

Advisory Member

A proposal to add TUC as an advisory member to this panel is being taken to the next CA Board in March – if approved, a representative will be invited to join the Panel from the next meeting in May.

66. Economic Recovery and Response

The Panel considered a report to update on developments around economic recovery and European Union Exit, including the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan, the delivery and development of products and services in response, and the additional £13.5 million prioritised by the Combined Authority for employment and skills and the progress on devolved budgets and programmes.

The Panel was asked to note the latest update around the economic impacts of COVID-19 and progress on the delivery and development of the response to the crisis, including on the economic recovery plan.

Since the last meeting of the Panel, West Yorkshire have seen the end of a period of national restrictions in November. West Yorkshire was placed into Tier 3 (Very High) restrictions over the December and New Year period and entered Tier 4 (Stay at Home) on 6 January 2021 as part of a national lockdown that included the closure of school buildings to most students. Additional mandatory business closures included non-essential retail and leisure and sports facilities.

Although it is still highly uncertain what will happen to the economy over the coming months, response work and recovery planning to date has responded to evidence and intelligence on the key issues.

Resolved: That the contents of the report be noted

67. Devolved Programmes Update

The Panel considered a report on the devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) preparation and next steps and the LDSP programme and next steps and was asked to note the progress.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the progress and next steps for the devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) be noted
- (III) That the progress and next steps for the LDSP programme be noted.

68. L3 Entitlements /Lifetime Skills Guarantee

The Panel considered a report on Level 3 (L3) entitlements and was asked to review the analysis of take up and propose additional qualifications for submission for inclusion on the published Department for Education (DfE) list.

The new level 3 entitlement will allow adults of any age to achieve a qualification in an area valued by employers from April 21 2021. The funding will be delegated to MCAs, and in West Yorkshire that will be from 21 September 2021.

The Panel was presented with an overview of the entitlement and current take up in West Yorkshire, and an outline of the next steps ahead of a discussion.

The Panel discussed

- Is there scope to offer more of the DfE L3 qualifications locally?

- Are there other qualifications not on the DfE list that are valuable and should be put forward for inclusion?

The Panel also felt the following qualifications were missing from:

- Skills based IT
- Teaching
- Green Energy
- Engineering and Manufacturing

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report and presentation be noted.
- (ii) That the proposals and views of the Panel for additional L3 qualifications for submission to DfE be noted.

69. FE Reform `Skills for Jobs`

Sandy Needham representing Chamber of Commerce was invited as a guest to speak to the Panel and Agenda Item 9 was discussed as the first item before Agenda Item 6.

The Panel considered a report to update on the White Paper published on 21 January setting out 35 reforms across 5 areas on FE Reform 'Skills for Jobs' and was asked to comment on the next steps proposed for West Yorkshire.

Panel members were asked to consider the following questions:

- How can we build on our existing strengths and work together in West Yorkshire to support implementation of the trailblazer pilots?
- How do we ensure that all sectors and sizes of employers are represented in pilots?
- What are the successful elements of a trailblazer pilot and how can we build on what is already in place?
- How will LSIPs align with the strategic economic priorities identified in the SEF and Employment and Skills Plan?

It was noted that Panel members considered the questions and provided feedback.

The Chair thanked Sandy for her time in attending the meeting.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That Officers continue conversations with senior government officials to

support implementation of the trailblazer pilots be recommended.

70. Local Skills Report

The Panel considered a report to update on the process for producing the Local Skills Report which highlighted the opportunity for Panel members and partners to contribute to the content of the report and the arrangements to sign-off of the report.

The Panel was also presented with an overview of the draft report as Skills Advisory Panels have been asked by the Department for Education (DfE) to submit a local skills report by the end of March.

The Panel was asked to consider the next steps of the report, which will be circulated to members ahead of publication by end of March.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report and verbal update be noted.
- (ii) That the process, timescales and next steps for production and publication of the report be noted.

71. Employment and Skills Plan Refresh

The Panel considered a report on the final stage of the Employment and Skills Plan refresh and a presentation was shared at the meeting to cover the key elements and design proposals for the framework.

Business Innovation and Growth Panel and Employment and Skills Panel held a joint workshop on 21 January 2021 building on the work of ESP and to finalise the priorities of the refreshed plan.

In recognition of the progress that has been achieved and to give flexibility to develop detailed plans it is proposed that the plan becomes a framework that sets out the strategic priorities for employment and skills.

The panel was asked to endorse the framework and next steps for publication.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report and presentation be noted.
- (ii) That the framework and next steps for publication be endorsed.

72. Employment and Skills Programmes

The Panel considered a report to update on the progress of delivery of LEP-led employment and skills programmes in the Leeds City Region and how they

have been adapted to support COVID-19.

Resolved: That the contents of the report be noted.



Report to: Employment and Skills Committee

Date: 29 October 2021

Subject: **Governance Arrangements**

Director: Angela Taylor, Director, Corporate and Commercial Services

Author: James Young, Governance Services Team Leader

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To advise the Employment and Skills Committee of the governance arrangements approved by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (the Combined Authority) at the Annual Meeting on 24 June 2021 in respect of the committee.

2. Information

- 2.1 At the Combined Authority meeting on 22 April 2021, the Combined Authority considered proposals for changes to the Combined Authority's decision-making arrangements in the context of the new functions and funding arising from the West Yorkshire devolution deal. An overview of the principles and options highlighting the key elements was provided in the submitted report. It was considered that the proposed new arrangements would better reflect the changed role and responsibilities of the Combined Authority following the election of a Mayor for West Yorkshire.
- 2.2 Consequently, at its Annual Meeting on 24 June 2021, the Combined Authority resolved to appoint the Employment and Skills Committee on the terms of reference attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

- 2.3 The quorum of the Committee is three voting members to include two Combined Authority members of the Local Authority co-optees.
- 2.4 The Combined Authority also appointed Councillor James Lewis as Chair of the Committee and Rashik Parmar as deputy.
- 2.5 The Combined Authority also agreed meeting dates for the Committee as follows:
- 13 July 2021
 - 29 October 2021
 - 24 January 2022
 - 12 April 2022

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 The terms of reference require this, and all committees, to promote tackling the climate emergency implications in its actions.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 The terms of reference require this, and all committees, to promote inclusive growth in its actions.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 The diversity of the committee will be kept under review and steps will be taken, in future recruitment campaigns, to ensure as far as possible that the membership is representative of the population we serve.
- 5.2 Going forward, a lead committee member on inclusivity will be identified. The inclusivity lead will be responsible for ensuring that the regional priority of enabling inclusive growth is fully considered in all decisions and that new opportunities are considered and implemented where appropriate and where they can add value to the agenda of the committee

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the Employment and Skills Committee note the governance arrangements approved by the Combined Authority at the Annual Meeting on 24 June 2021.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference for the Employment and Skills Committee

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Terms of Reference

Employment and Skills Committee

The Employment and Skills Committee is authorised:

1. To carry out any Non-Mayoral Function¹ of the Combined Authority relating to **employment, skills² and adult education**, including:
 - a) progressing the elements of the Strategic Economic Framework that fall within the remit of this committee, by:
 - approving, amending or revoking any policy, investment priorities, strategy or plan,³ or
 - delivering, monitoring and reviewing the outcomes and impact of any policy, investment priorities, strategy or plan.
 - b) progressing those elements of the Mayor's pledges that fall within the remit of this committee, ensuring alignment with the Strategic Economic Framework where appropriate,
 - c) submitting bids for devolved and other funding,
 - e) working with key partners to:
 - develop and promote a shared understanding of and approach to the demand for employment and skills,
 - influence the provision of employment, education and training provision, and
 - develop and promote coherent strategies and policies.
 - f) delivering and overseeing any project or programme in accordance with

¹ Functions in this context are to be construed in a broad and inclusive fashion, and as including the exercise of the ancillary powers under Section 113A of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

² The Employment and Skills Committee is the Skills Advisory Panel for the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership

³ With the exception of any major policy, investment priorities, strategy or plan reserved to the Combined Authority - see further Section 2.2 of Part 3 of the Constitution - and subject to any direction by the Mayor that any decision on a policy, investment priorities, strategy or plan be referred to the Combined Authority for determination.

- the governance and assurance arrangements for administering the adult education and skills functions of the Adult Education Budget⁴, or
- the Leeds City Region Assurance Framework, including the following where authorised by a bespoke approval pathway and approval route for a scheme (after decision-point 2 only):
 - making a decision to progress the scheme^{5,6} or
 - making any recommendation to the Combined Authority⁷ or the Mayor⁸ about progressing the scheme, and
 - reviewing the scheme's impact.

with the **exception** of

- any function which requires a Statutory Consent⁹ where that consent has yet to be given¹⁰,
- any matter related to a Non-Mayoral Function conferred by the 2021 Order, which the Mayor has directed should be referred to the Combined Authority for determination¹¹, and
- any function which is reserved to the Combined Authority¹².

2. To advise the Combined Authority in respect of any Non-Mayoral Function which relates to, or impacts on employment, skills or adult education.

⁴ The Combined Authority has separately approved governance and assurance arrangements for adult education functions which reserve specified functions to the Combined Authority and delegate specified functions to the Managing Director – see further the Leeds City Region Assurance Framework.

⁵ including determining change requests

⁶ with the exception of any decision which would result in a revised financial approval which exceeds the cumulative total of the financial approval and tolerance threshold agreed by the Combined Authority at decision point 2 (or decision point 3) by more than 25%, in which case the decision must be referred to the Combined Authority

⁷ or to any other committee or relevant officer with delegated authority to make the decision

⁸ The Mayor will determine any aspect of a scheme which is a Mayoral Function

⁹ These are specified functions conferred by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (Election of Mayor and Functions) Order 2021 - see further the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution

¹⁰ In relation to any function in respect of which a Statutory Consent has been given, the Committee must exercise their authority in accordance with the terms of any Statutory Consent

¹¹ The 2021 Order provides that these matters require the support of the Mayor.

¹² The functions reserved to the Combined Authority are set out in Section 2.2 of Part 3 of the Constitution, and include the approval of any major policy, investment priorities, strategy or plan, including the Adult Education Budget Strategy.

3. To advise the Mayor in respect of any Mayoral General Function¹³ which relates to, or impacts on employment, skills or adult education.
4. To liaise with the Business, Economy and Innovation Committee to secure jobs, skills and training and ensure good employment.
5. To promote, in collaboration with other committees,
 - equality and diversity,
 - inclusive growth,
 - tackling the climate emergency, and
 - the strategic alignment of the Combined Authority's policies, investment priorities, strategies and plans.
6. To respond to any report or recommendation from an overview and scrutiny committee¹⁴.

Document version control	
Municipal Year:	2021-22
Version:	1 - 21/22
Document approved by:	<i>The Combined Authority</i>
Date:	<i>24 June 2021</i>
To be of effect from:	<i>24 June 2021</i>

¹³ Mayoral General Functions are the functions of the Combined Authority which are exercisable only by the Mayor, other than PCC Functions. These are conferred by the 2021 Order (see further Table D in Section 3.1.1 of Part 3 of the Constitution), or other legislation.

¹⁴ That is, any overview and scrutiny committee of the Combined Authority (in accordance with Scrutiny Standing Orders in Part 4 of the Constitution) or of any Constituent Council

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Report to: Employment and Skills Committee

Date: 29 October 2021

Subject: **Data Monitoring and Evidence Base for the Committee**

Director: Alan Reiss, Director of Strategy, Communications and Policing

Author: Peter Glover, Economic Evidence Manager

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the latest evidence and intelligence for the Committee, including performance against the Combined Authority's headline Strategic Economic Framework indicators and a summary of more timely intelligence showing current trends in the labour market.
- 1.2 To propose a standard approach to intelligence reporting for future Committee meetings.
- 1.3 To set out plans for intelligence work covered by the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Education in respect of the region's Skills Advisory Panel.
- 1.4 To outline the forward plan for conducting the Combined Authority's annual labour market analysis.

2. Information

Employment and Skills Evidence

- 2.1 A presentation of key messages from employment and skills evidence and analysis will be given at the meeting to inform discussion. The following items are appended to this paper:
 - Summary of the latest position against the Combined Authority's Strategic Economic Framework headline indicators, focusing on those that are directly relevant to the employment and skills agenda.
 - Overview of current trends in the labour market based on the most timely data available for West Yorkshire.

Future reporting arrangements

- 2.2 In addition to annual reporting against the SEF indicators and more in-depth review of the findings of the annual labour market analysis we propose to

provide timely, regular reporting to each Committee meeting based around a standard set of indicators. The analysis of current trends appended to this paper focuses on the following elements / indicators:

- Key developments in the national labour market
- Employment trends in West Yorkshire (based on HMRC real-time information for payrolled employees)
- Vacancy trends (based on online job postings)
- Claimant count (count of people on out of work benefits)
- In-year provisional figures for take-up of further education and skills programmes in West Yorkshire (including apprenticeships).

- 2.3 We propose to report against these elements as a standard item for future Employment and Skills Committee meetings. The Committee are invited to review this proposal and provide suggestions for any additional coverage or indicators.

Skills Advisory Panel

- 2.4 Earlier in 2021 the Department for Education announced a third annual round of funding to the value of £75,000 for all local areas to enable them to deliver the key objectives of the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) programme. The key purpose of the programme is to ensure that local skills provision better meets labour market needs, now and in the future.
- 2.5 Panels bring together local employers and skills providers to develop a shared understanding of local skills needs and to define clear skills priorities grounded in high quality labour market analysis. The Employment and Skills Panel of the LEP and Combined Authority originally acted as the SAP for our region and successfully met DfE's governance and analytical standards for SAPs. This remit has now been transferred to the Employment and Skills Committee.
- 2.6 The Skills for Jobs White Paper published by the DfE in January 2021 committed to build on SAPs and go further in putting employers at the heart of local skills systems through new Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) developed by employer representative bodies (ERBs).
- 2.7 The stated aim of this year's funding is for SAPs to continue to produce high quality, local-level skills analysis, maintain their local relationships and to refresh their Local Skills Report.
- 2.8 The Combined Authority has provided details of its planned activities via a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department. The proposed approach, focuses on supporting the Mayor's pledges and addressing identified information gaps, with costed activities proposed in the following areas:
- Assessment of digital skills needs, including primary research to examine existing digital capability of local residents (this also links to a headline indicator in the Strategic Economic Framework)

- Deep dive into skills needs of West Yorkshire's creative industries with a view to supporting expansion of this sector of the region's economy and meeting the needs of local business and prospective inward investors
 - Develop pack of careers resources that will build understanding of West Yorkshire's labour market and its opportunities across a range of user groups, including young people and adults considering career changes
 - Deep dive assessment of NEETs (not in education, employment or training) situation in West Yorkshire, exploring dynamics of this issue using longitudinal data. Results will inform action to ensure that young people can participate fully in the economic recovery.
- 2.9 These activities are intended to provide added value to our existing analytical and policy programme of work, which includes the annual labour market report, Employment and Skills Framework and assessment of skills implications of net zero.
- 2.10 In addition, there is a mandatory requirement within the MoU for LEPs and MCAs to refresh their Local Skills Report. Local Skills Reports set out each area's unique skills landscape, their progress on skills-related activities, any successes or challenges they have faced, as well as future local skills plans. The Local Skills Report for West Yorkshire was published at the end of March 2021. The refreshed version will be published by January 28th 2022.
- 2.11 There was no opportunity to submit the proposals to the Employment and Skills Committee for review prior to the Department's deadline for MoUs of 31 July. However, there is scope to modify the activities set out in the MoU should it be deemed necessary, although any expenditure would need to be completed by the end of March 2022.

Labour Market Analysis

- 2.12 The purpose of the labour market intelligence work is to provide robust analysis of the region's labour market and skills needs to influence planning and action. As well as being used to support strategy and policy development by the LEP and Combined Authority, the analysis is used to shape the focus of local learning delivery with reference to evidence of labour market demand and to inform careers choice by individuals by providing clear and robust information on labour market opportunities.
- 2.13 The work is produced to an established annual cycle which centres on the publication of a labour market report in the autumn, usually in October, accompanied by a series of workshops to communicate key messages. One of the key factors underlying the timing of the report is the need to align with the curriculum planning cycle of further education colleges.
- 2.14 The established schedule for the production of the analysis has been disrupted by the pandemic. The publication and dissemination of the most recent report took place in February 2021 rather than late 2020 due to extreme conditions faced by the local and national economies and a lack of timely data at local level. The labour market situation remains highly volatile at the present time as the economy adjusts to the lifting of Covid1-19 restrictions. This makes it difficult to provide an assessment of employment and skills needs in the medium to longer-term.

- 2.15 We therefore propose to publish the next labour market report in February 2022, before returning to the previous cycle, with the subsequent report being published in October 2022. We will supplement this with a webinar in late November 2022 (date TBC) to provide Committee members with an assessment of the employment and skills challenges and opportunities presented by the recovery.
- 2.16 The dates of the dissemination workshops (likely to be delivered as webinars) will be confirmed in due course but are expected to be in mid to late February.
- 2.17 Prior to the publication of the annual labour market report, timely intelligence on the labour market is being shared via the LEP's weekly economic dashboard and fortnightly economic monitoring report.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 Proposed future analytical work will include a focus on employment and skills aspects of the climate emergency. For example, the forthcoming labour market report will incorporate an assessment of skills needs linked to achieving net zero.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 Inclusive growth is a key cross-cutting theme for employment and skills. This is reflected in a number of the SEF indicators presented alongside this paper. These indicators reflect the extent to which the labour market is inclusive in terms of access to good quality employment and access to the skills needed for work and career progression. The indicators that are particularly central to inclusive growth are:
- Unemployment
 - Proportion of jobs that pay the Real Living Wage
 - proportion of people with no qualifications / qualified below Level 2
 - Attainment of digital skills
 - Differences in employment rates for disadvantaged groups
 - % of young people who are NEET
 - Proportion of people who are in quality employment.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 Equality and diversity is also a key issue within the employment and skills agenda. Certain disadvantaged groups are much less likely to be in employment than average and there are also marked differences in educational attainment by gender, ethnicity and disadvantage status. The intersection of multiple characteristics can mean some groups face intense inequality. In future analytical work this will be considered from a range of perspectives including inequalities in access to skills for different groups as well as inequalities in terms of labour market outcomes.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

10.1 The Committee are asked to note the latest intelligence relating to employment and skills in West Yorkshire and the current performance of West Yorkshire against the Strategic Economic Framework indicators.

10.2 The Committee are asked to note the activities that are planned under the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Education.

10.3 The Committee are asked to note the proposed schedule for the production and publication of forthcoming labour market analysis reports.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of performance against Strategic Economic Framework indicators: Employment and skills

Appendix 2 – Labour Market Reporting October 2021

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SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST STRATEGIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK INDICATORS: EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

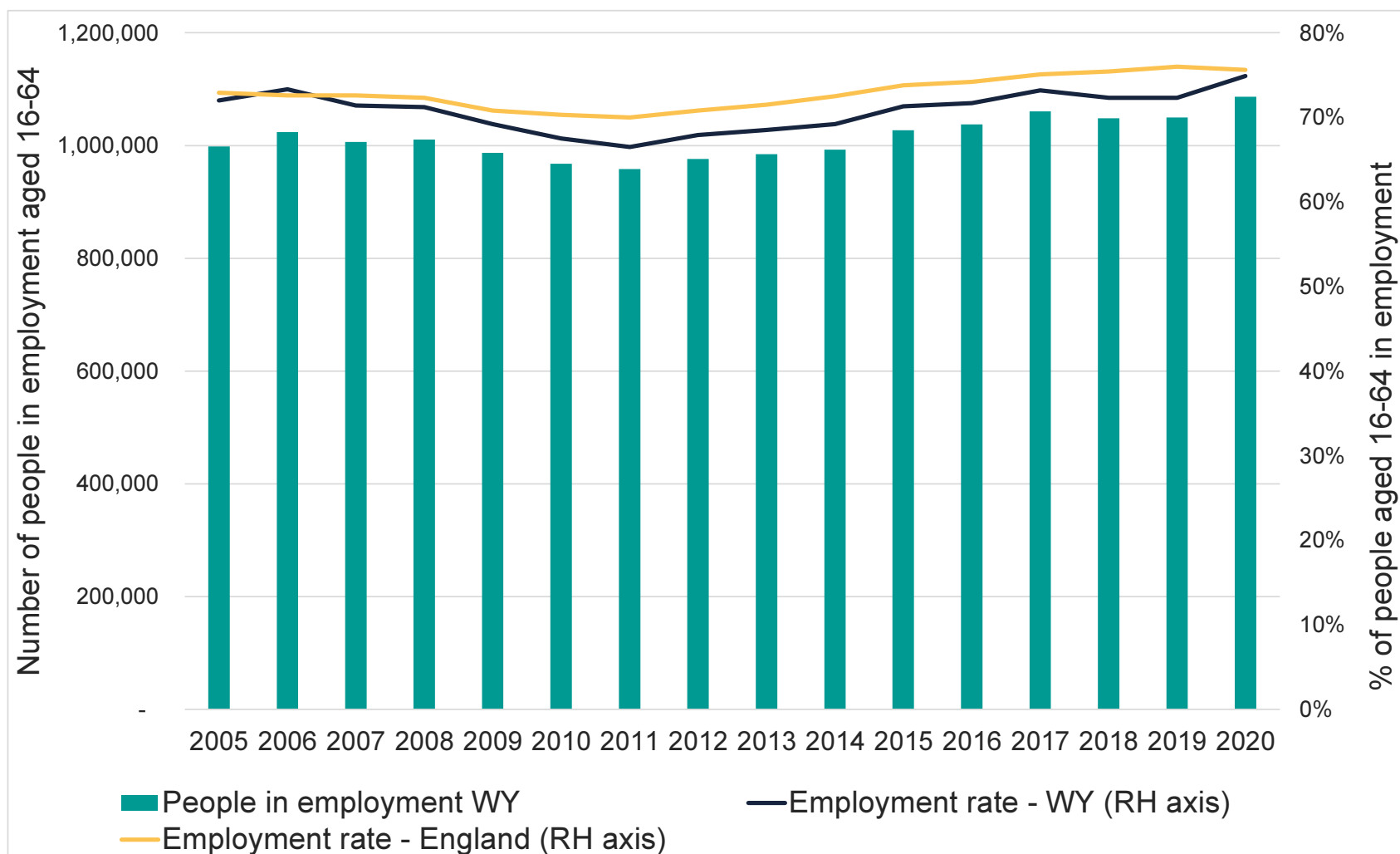
EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS COMMITTEE, 29 OCTOBER 2021

Introduction

- The following slides provide an overview of West Yorkshire's performance and progress against the headline indicators for the Combined Authority's Strategic Economy Framework
- A subset of indicators has been presented, reflecting those most directly relevant to the Employment and Skills agenda.
- An assessment of progress against the full range of indicators is provided in the forthcoming State of the Region report.

West Yorkshire's employment rate has been on an upward trend in recent years

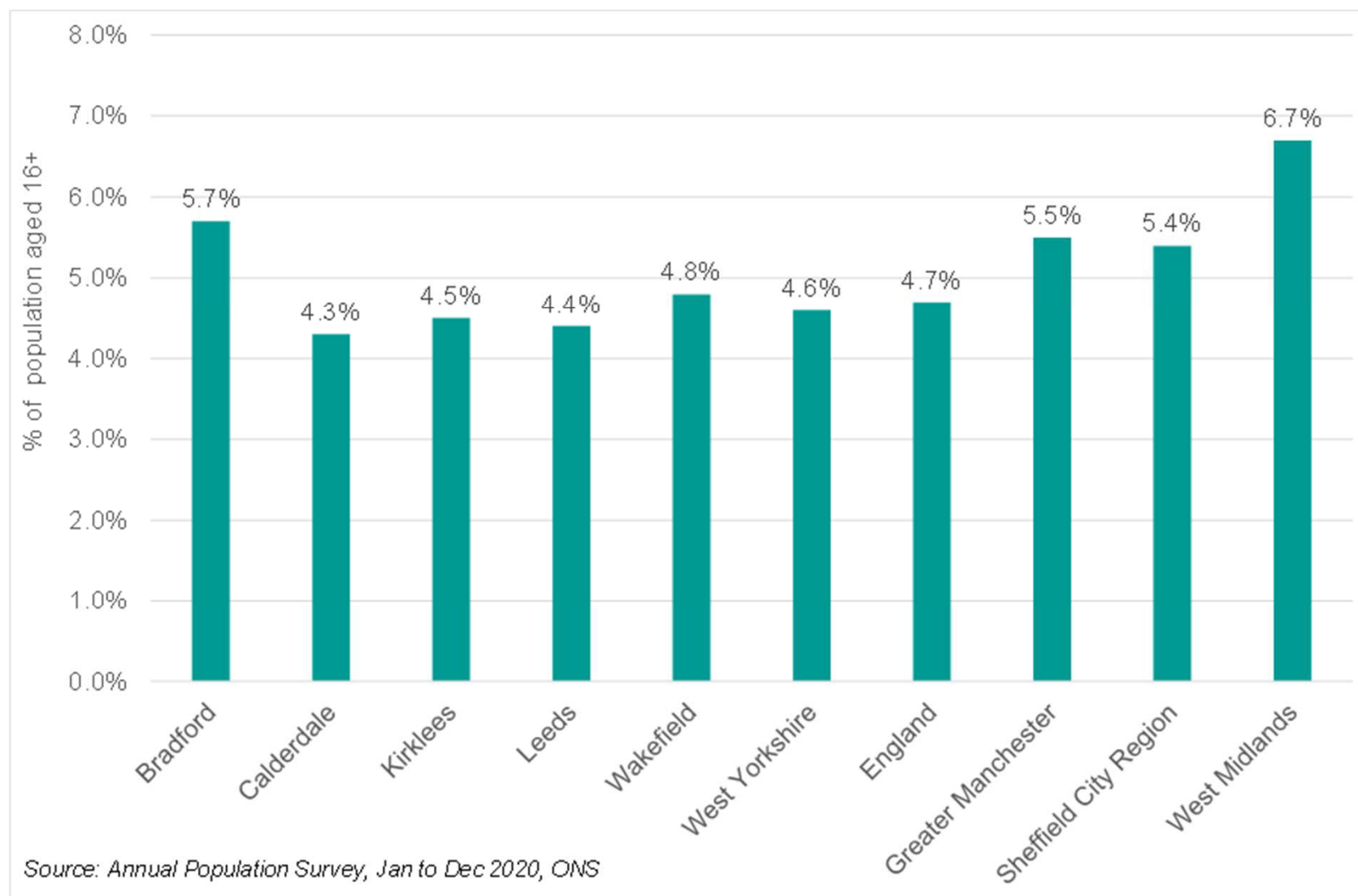
Figure: Trend in employment rate and number of people in employment)



Source: Annual Population Survey, (January to December datasets), ONS

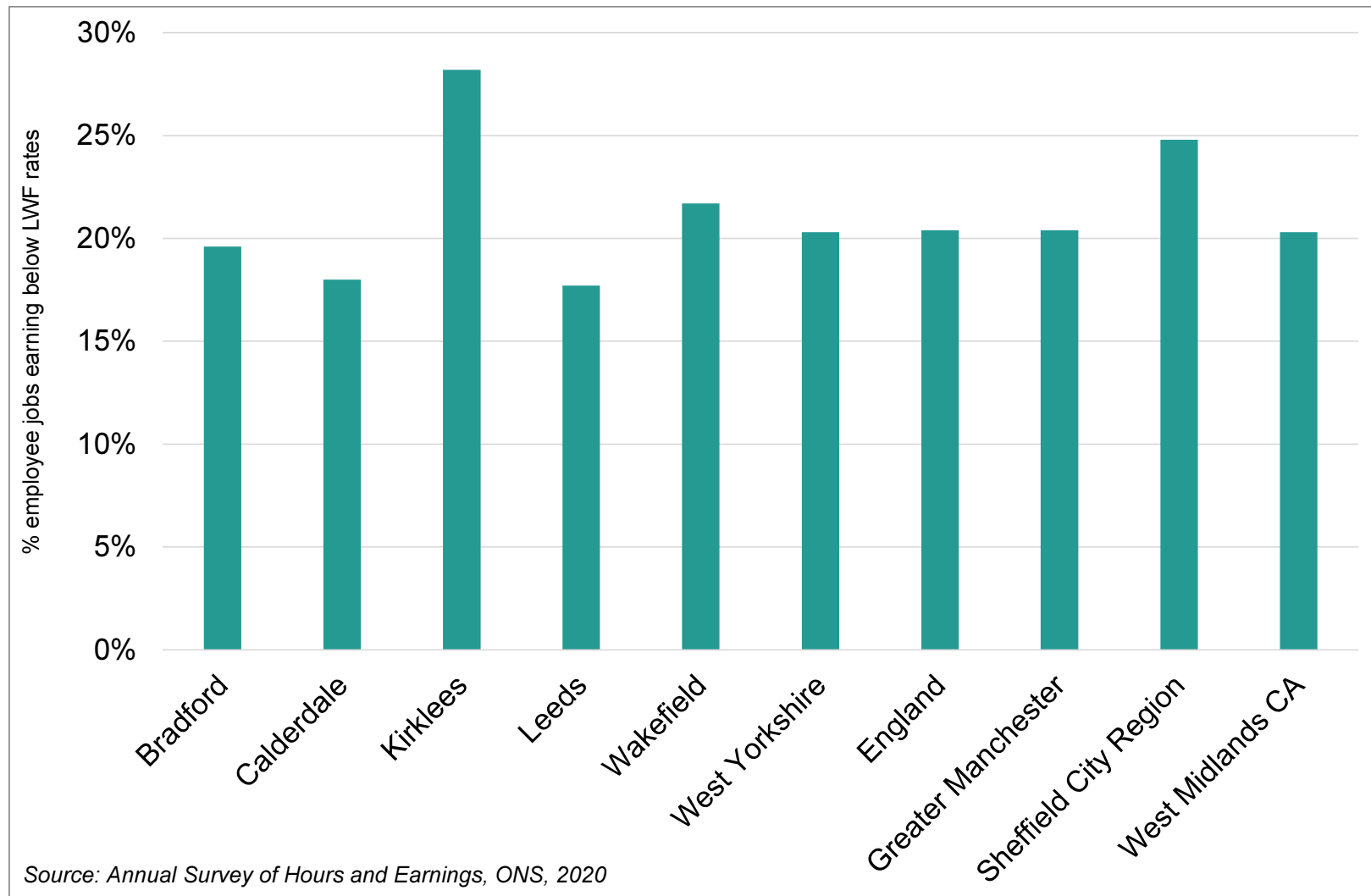
West Yorkshire's unemployment rate is at near parity with the national average

Figure: Unemployment rate - % of economically active population aged 16+



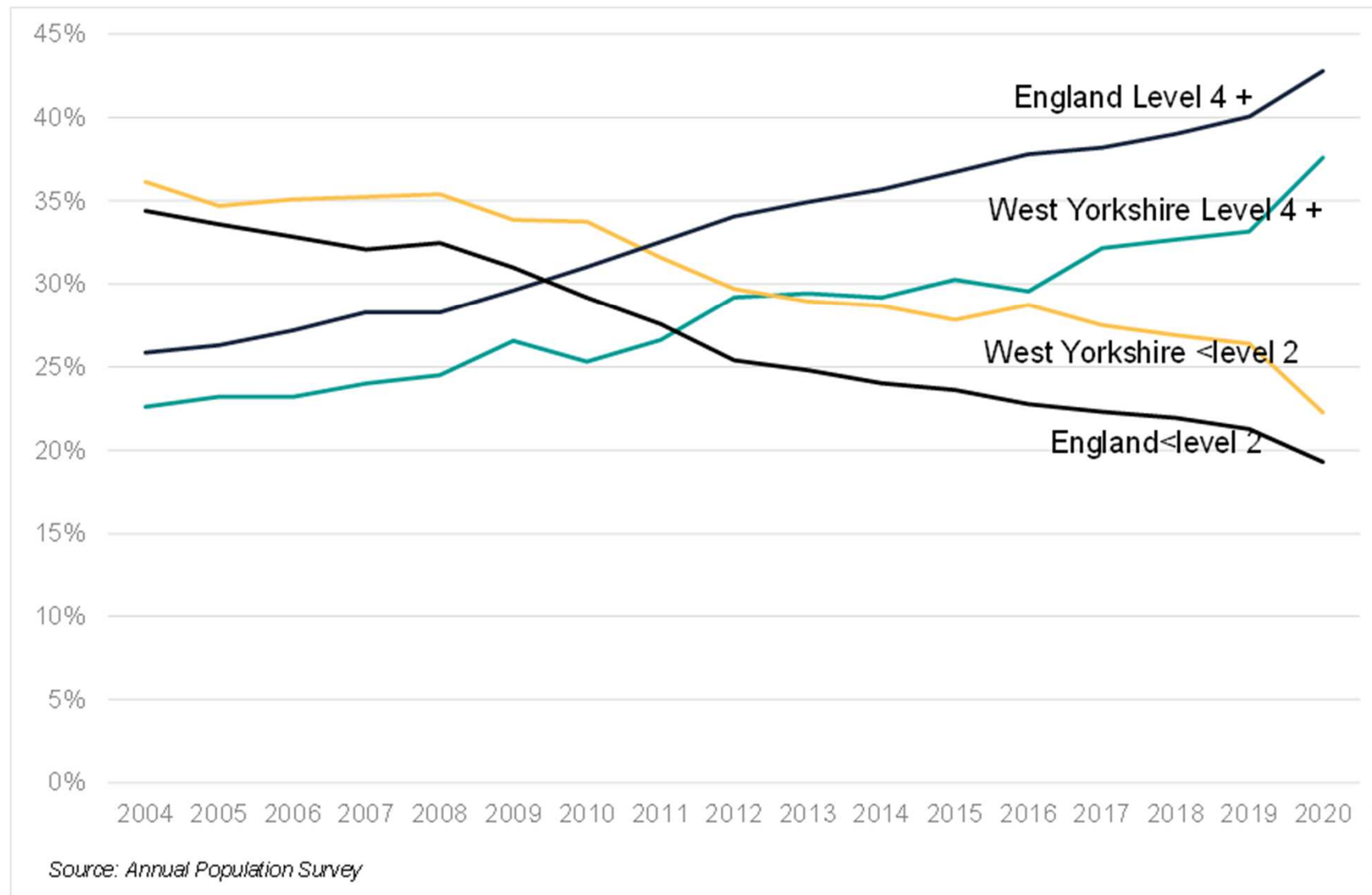
20% of jobs in West Yorkshire pay below the Real Living Wage

Figure: Proportion of all employee jobs paying below the Living Wage Foundation's real living wage rate



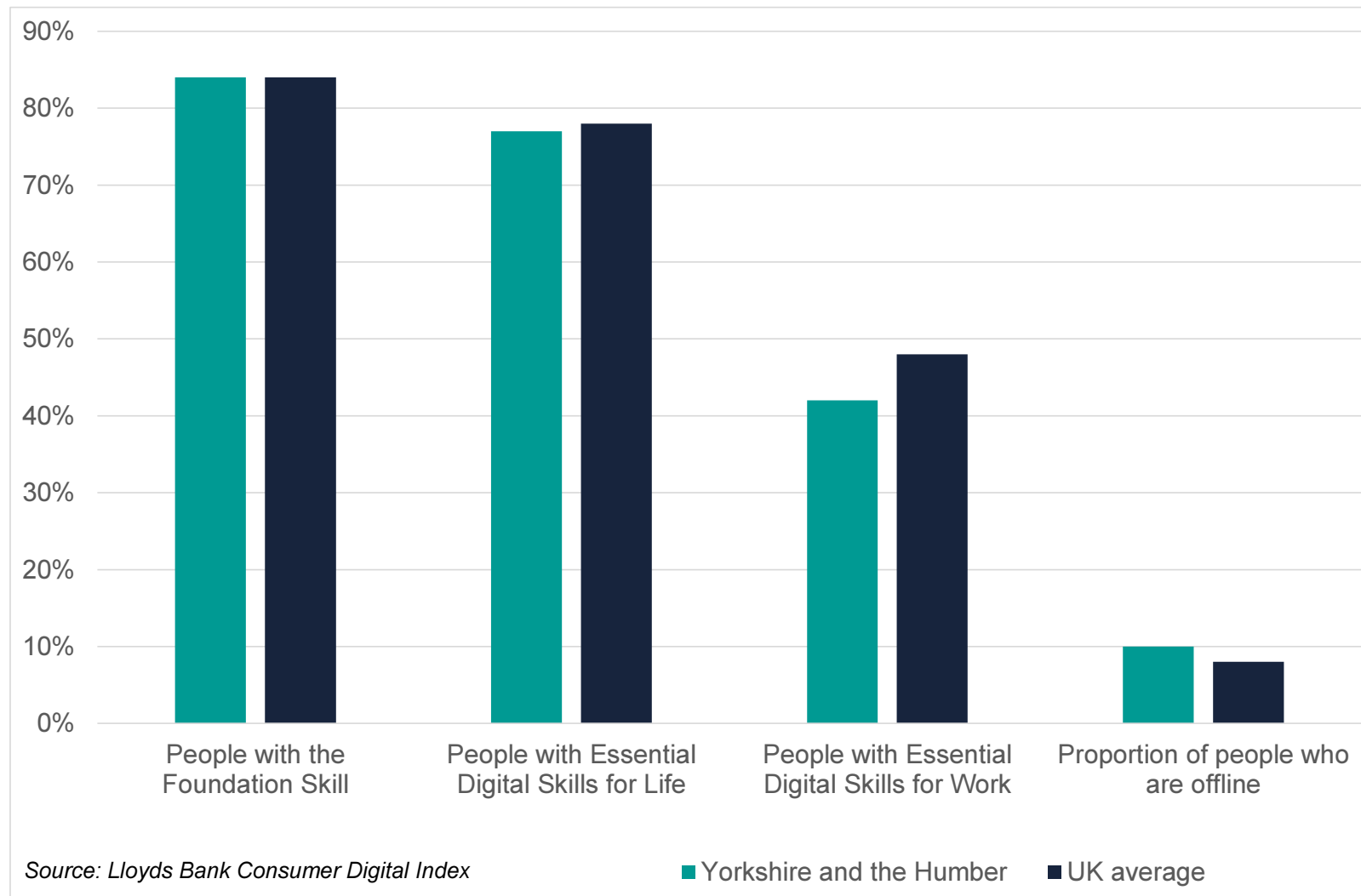
West Yorkshire has narrowed the gap with the national average on its qualification profile

Figure: Trend in proportion of working age population qualified at Level 4+ versus proportion with no qualifications / qualified below Level 2



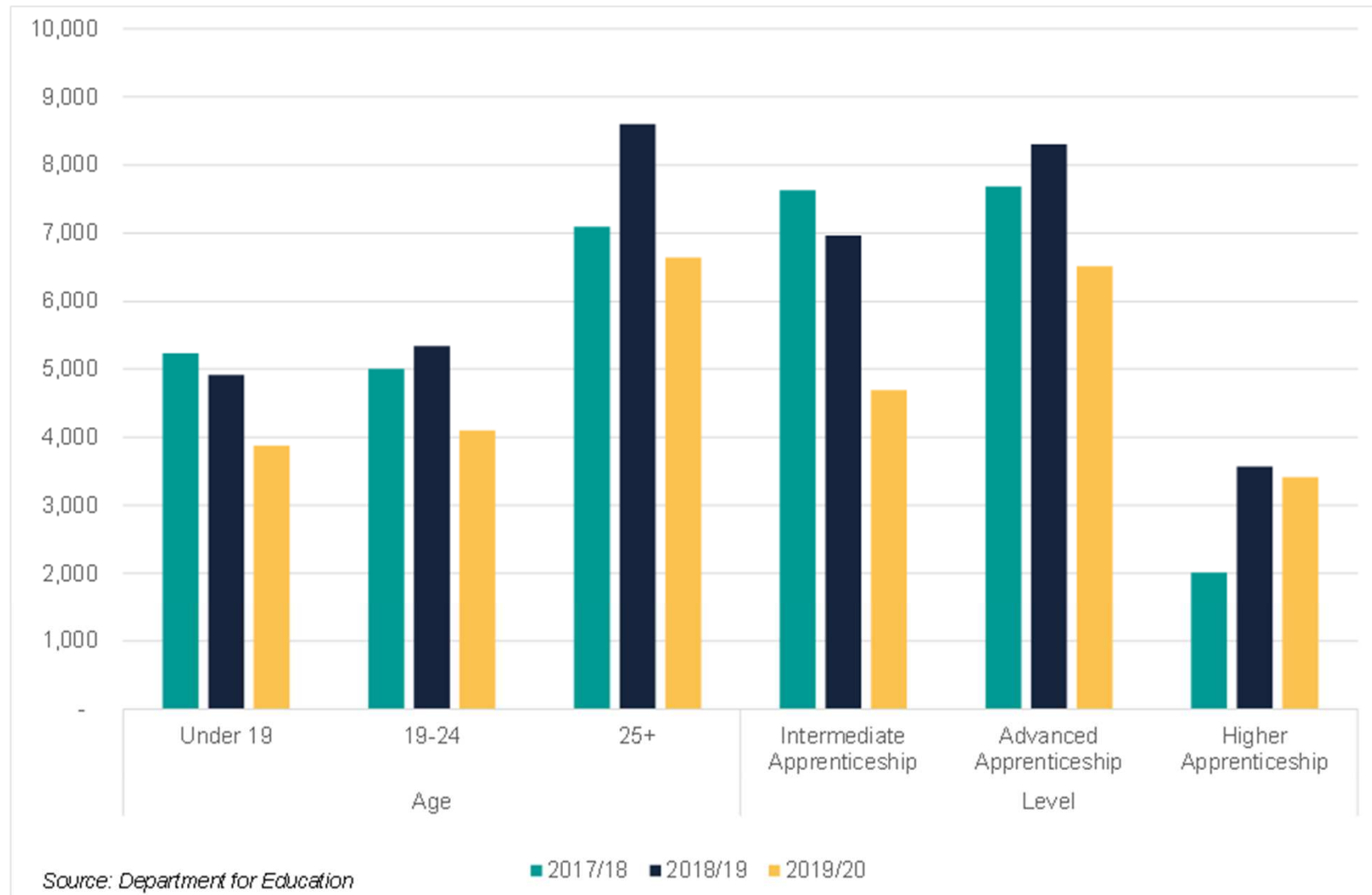
More than half of people lack the full range of essential digital skills for work

Figure: Digital skills – proportion of people aged 15+ who have each skill level



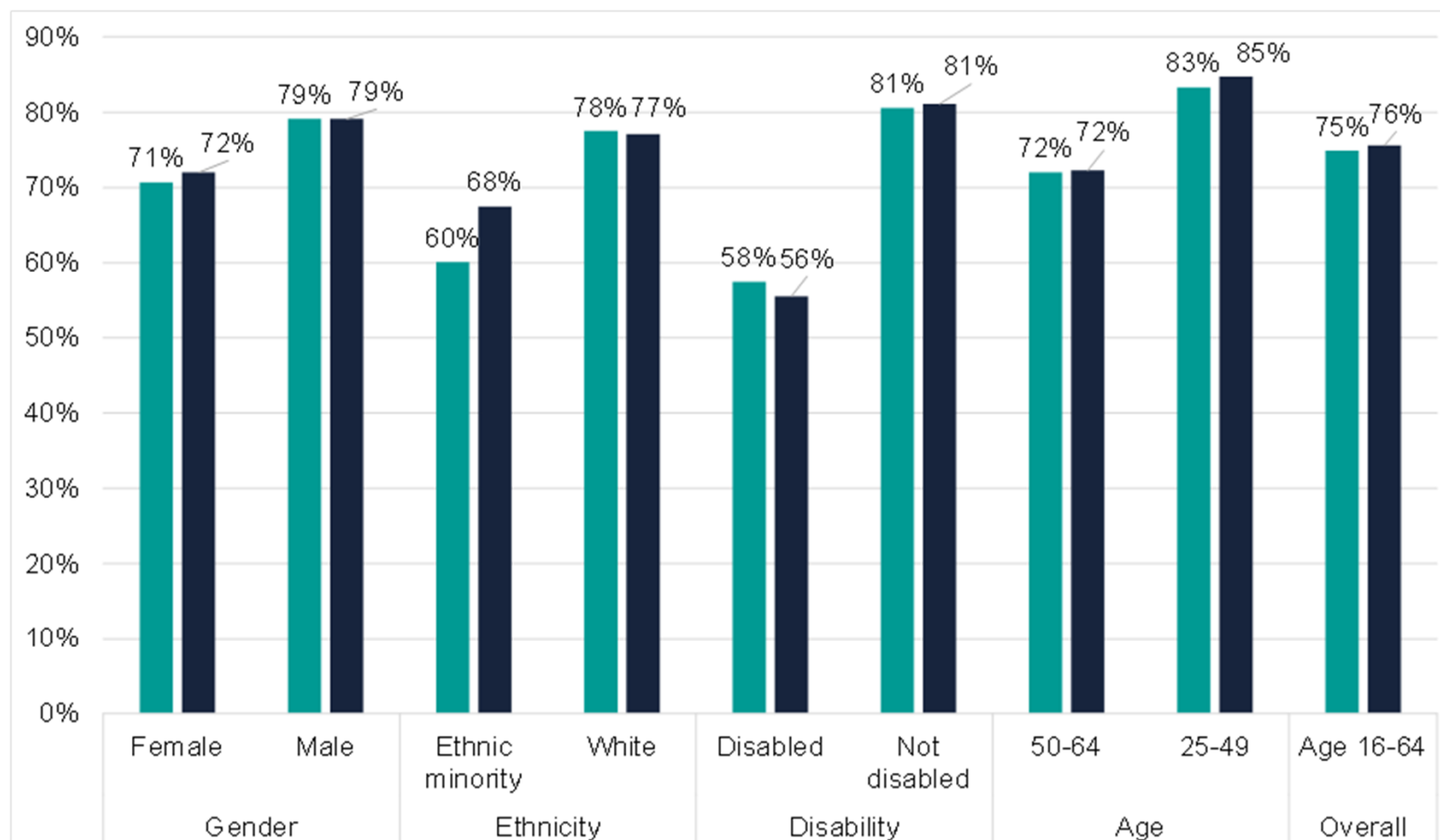
There has been a negative effect on apprenticeship starts from COVID-19 and the apprenticeship reforms.

Figure: Trend in apprenticeship starts by age and level, West Yorkshire



Inequality in the labour market is reflected in differences in employment rates

Figure: Employment rate by group

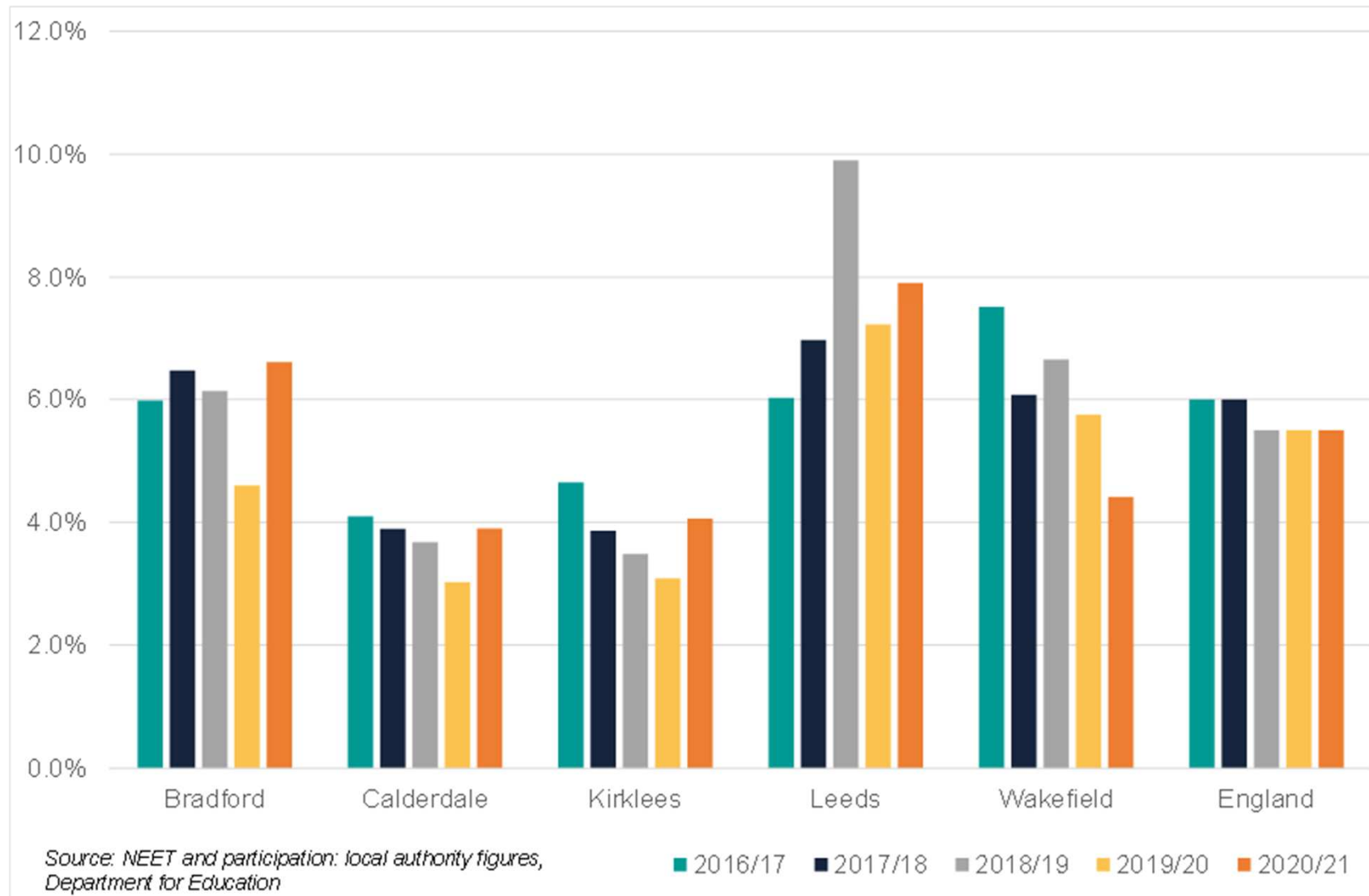


Source: Annual Population Survey,
Jan 2020 to Dec 2020

■ West Yorkshire ■ England

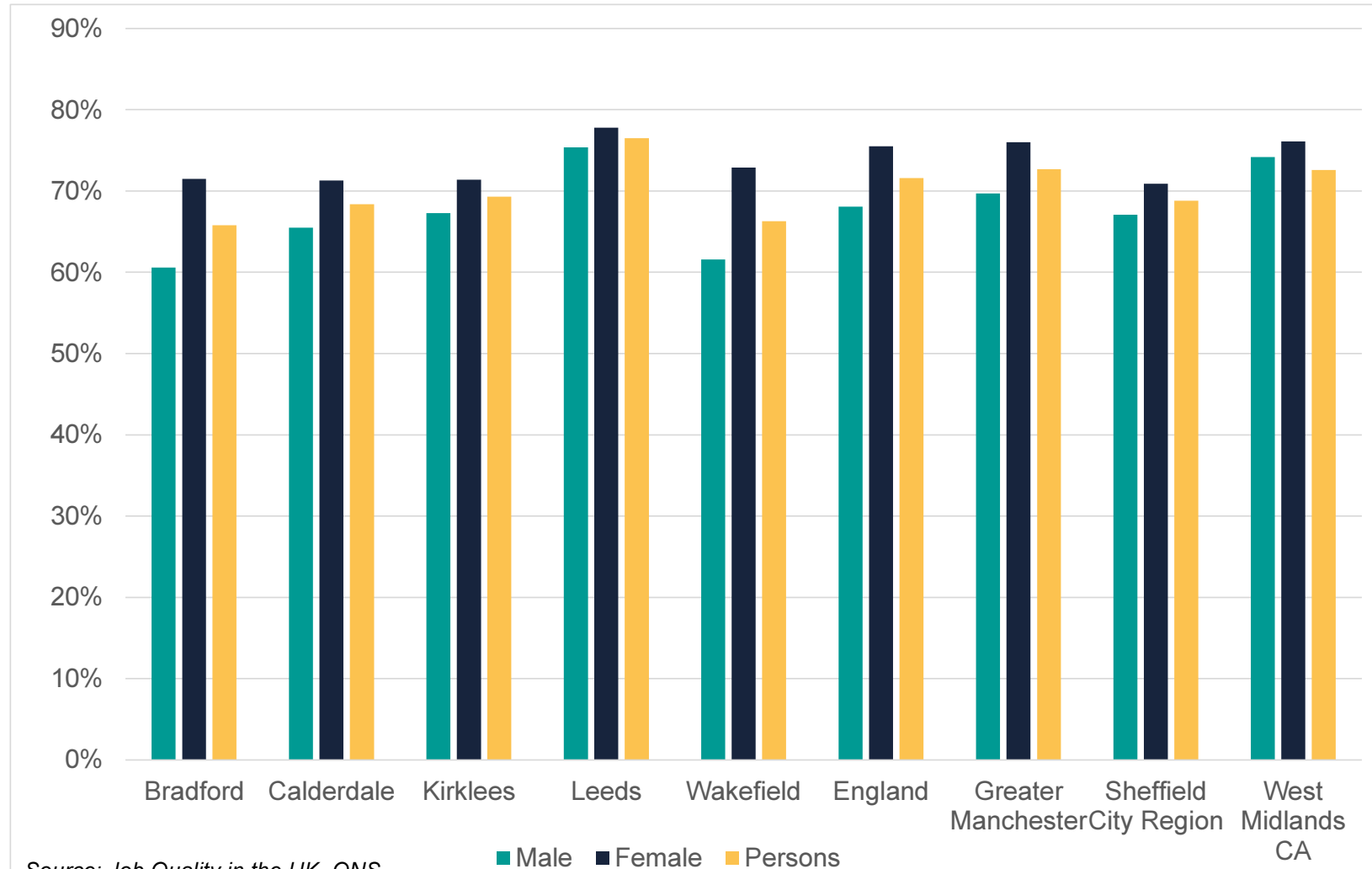
% of young people who are NEET in West Yorkshire is slightly above the national average

Figure: Trend in proportion of 16- and 17-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known



All local authorities in West Yorkshire except Leeds are below the national average on quality work

Figure: Proportion of residents who are employees in quality work by sex, 2018



Source: Job Quality in the UK, ONS

Conclusions

- The latest data indicate that West Yorkshire has seen recent positive improvements in terms of growth in employment and reductions in unemployment.
- There has also been progress on the longstanding issue of West Yorkshire's weak skills, as the qualification gap with the national average narrowed in 2020.
- However, there are issues around the quality of work that is available in the region and also in respect of access to employment for disadvantaged groups.
- The indicators also show that the pandemic has had an adverse effect on the skills system, reflected in the sharp fall in apprenticeship starts.

LABOUR MARKET REPORTING, OCTOBER 2021

EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS COMMITTEE, 29 OCTOBER 2021

Introduction

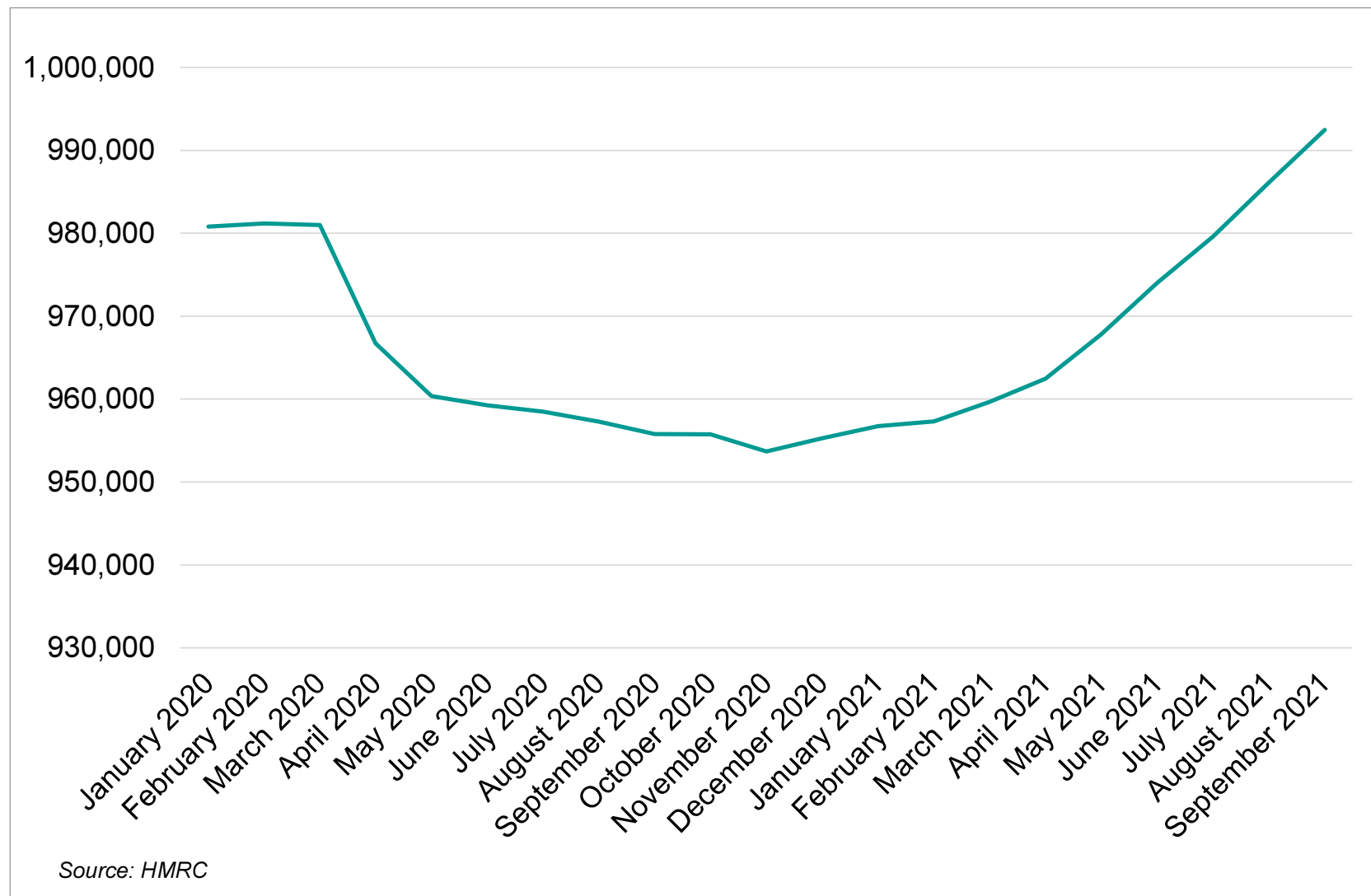
- The following slides provide an overview of the latest indicators relating to the performance of West Yorkshire's labour market
- A subset of indicators has been presented, reflecting those most directly relevant to the Employment and Skills agenda.
- An assessment of progress against the full range of indicators is provided in the forthcoming State of the Region report.

National context

- Vacancies at record levels
- Unemployment now falling on official measure and long-term unemployment has levelled off
- Employment rate recovering
- No sign of redundancies rising
- Shortage of workers: number of people in labour force is almost 1m lower than it should be based on pre-pandemic trend
- Overall, extremely tight labour market

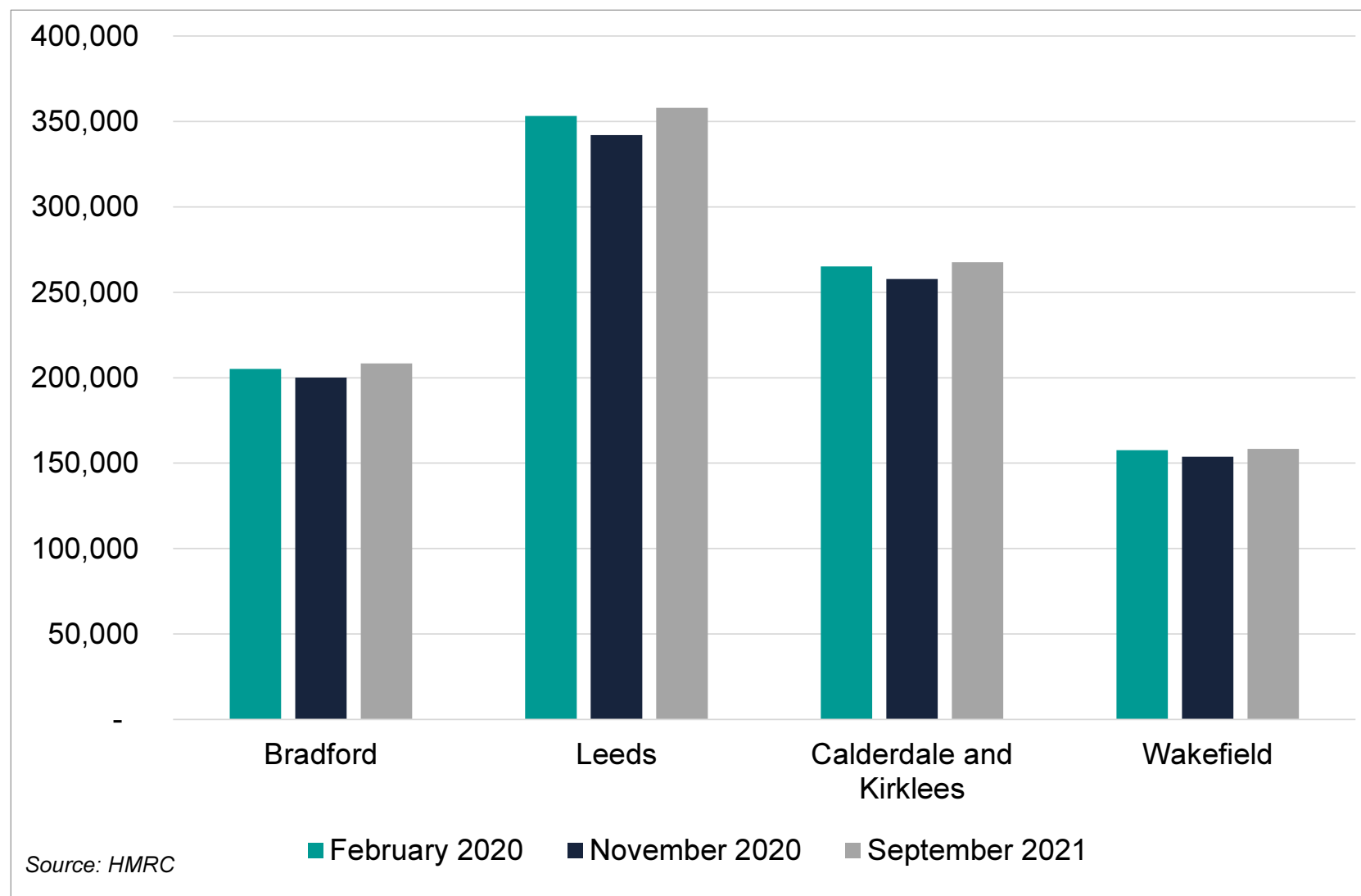
Strong recovery in employment continues

Figure: Count of payrolled employees from PAYE Real-time information (seasonally adjusted), West Yorkshire



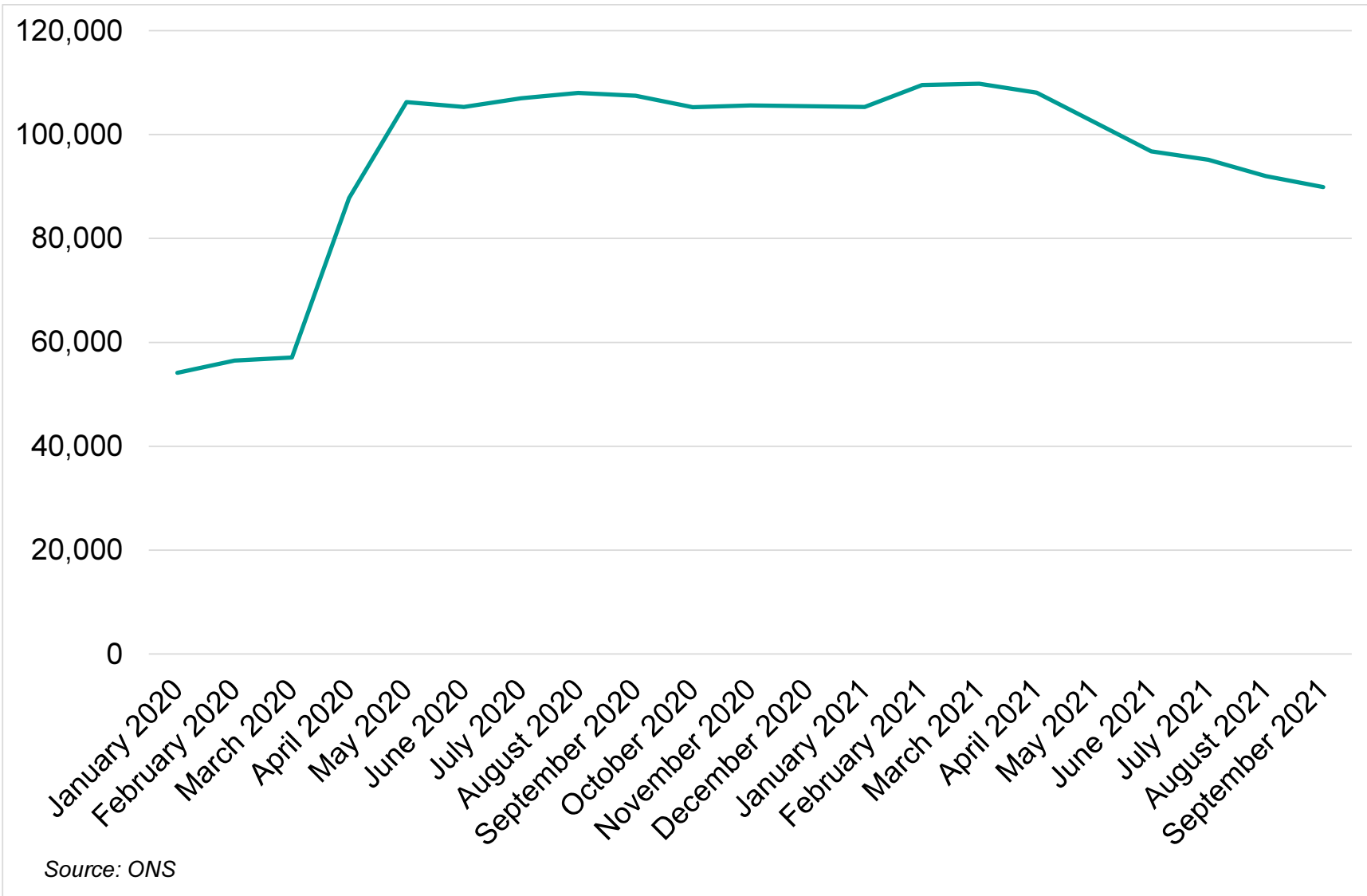
All parts of West Yorkshire have returned to pre-pandemic levels of employment

Figure: Count of payrolled employees from PAYE Real-time information (seasonally adjusted), by NUTS 3 area



The claimant count (out of work benefits) is falling steadily

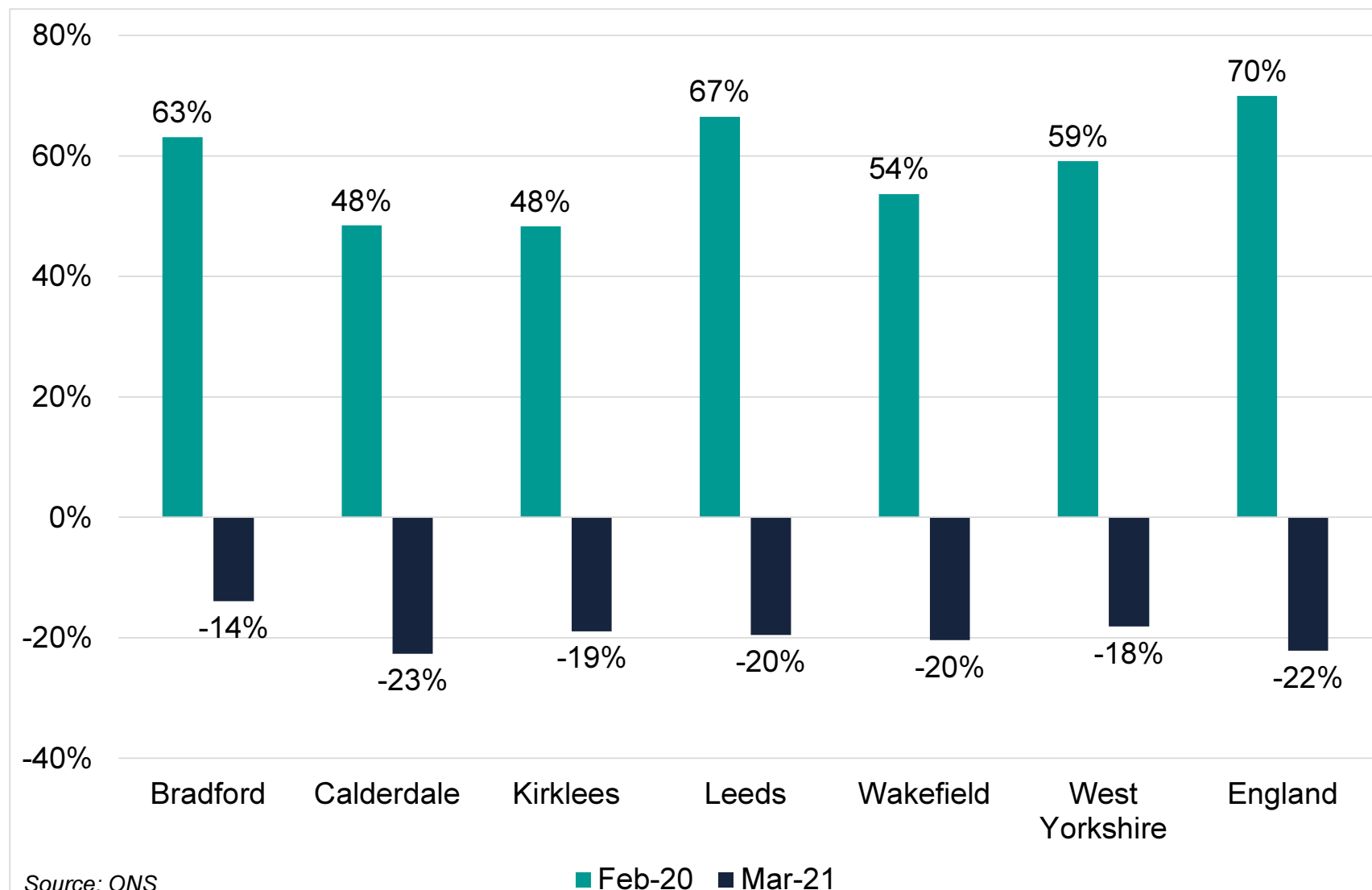
Figure: Trend in claimant count, West Yorkshire



Source: ONS

Claimant count remains particularly high in Bradford and Leeds relative to pre-pandemic levels

Figure: Change in claimant count – September 2021 vs March 2021 and February 2020

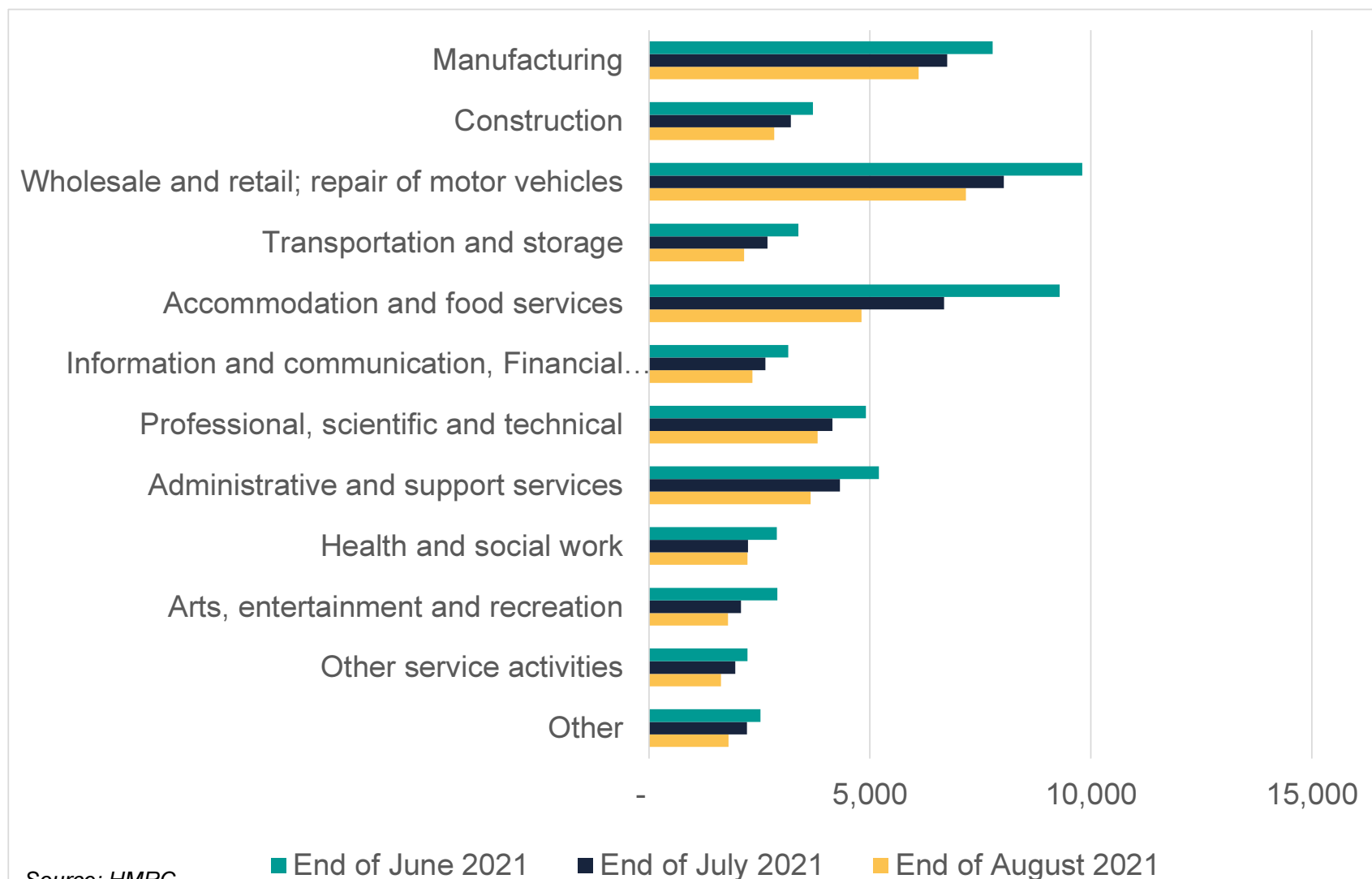


Source: ONS

■ Feb-20 ■ Mar-21

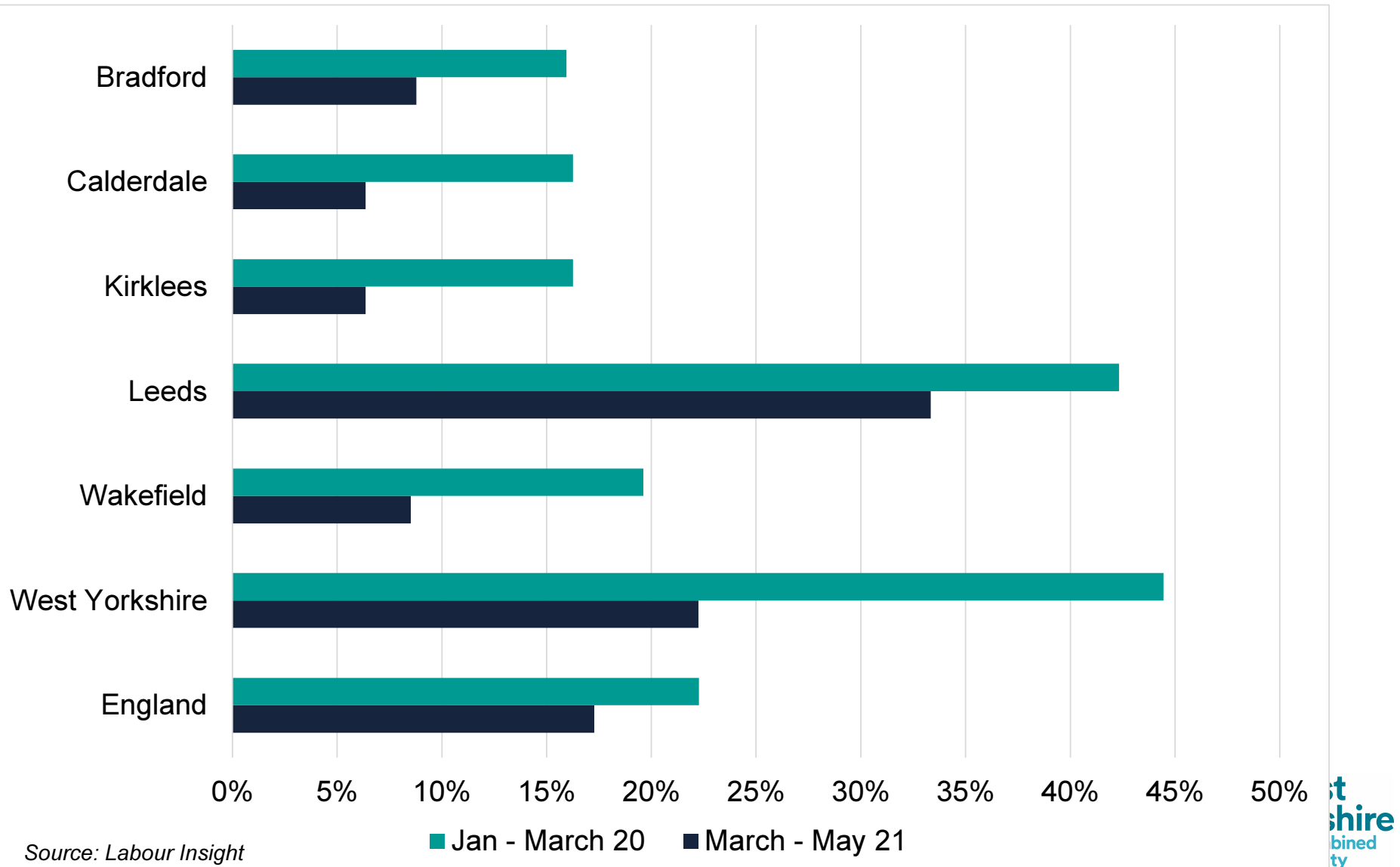
In spite of declines in recent months there were still 40,000 people on furlough in WY at the end of August

Figure: Number of furloughed employments by sector, West Yorkshire



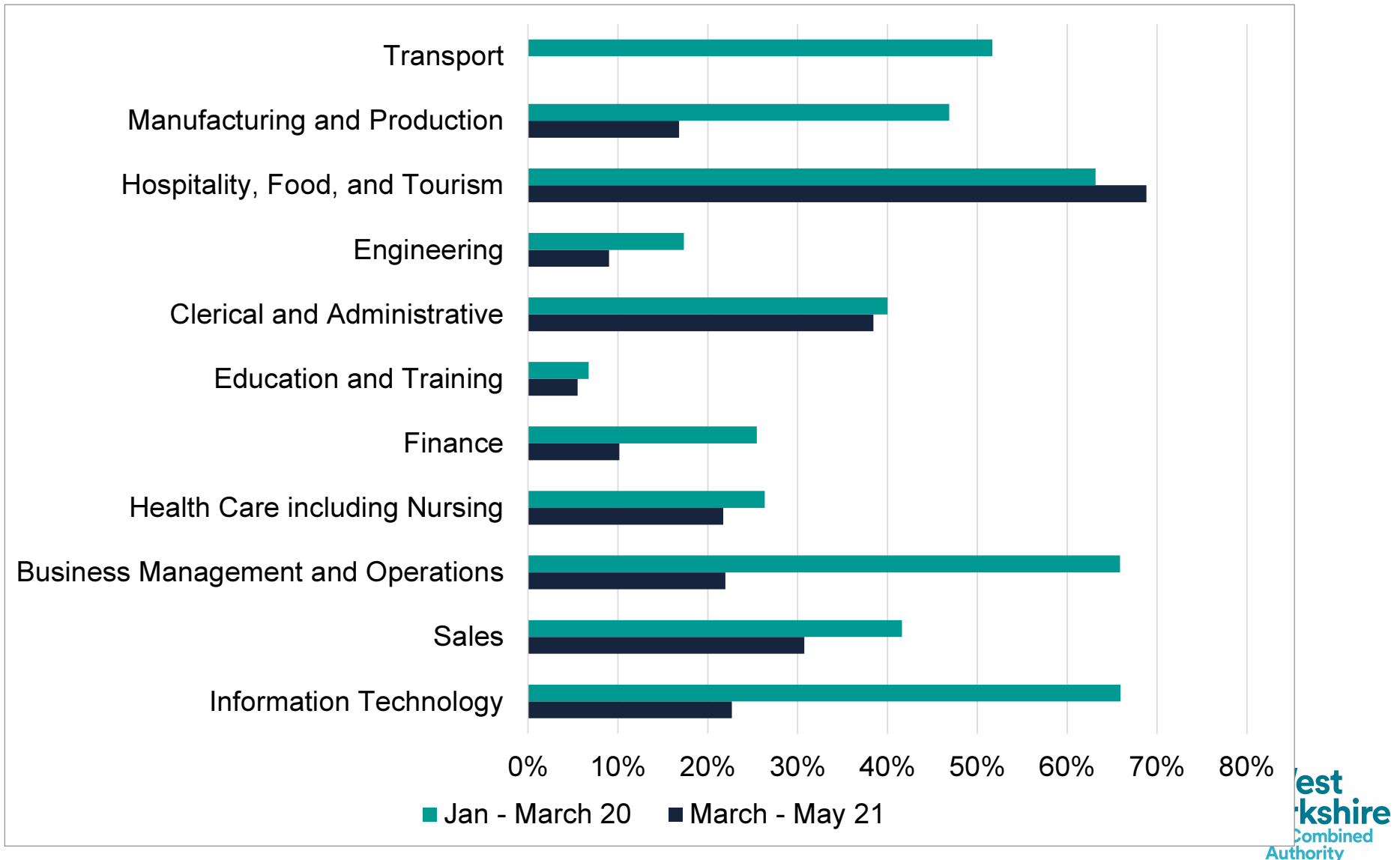
Leeds has seen a strong recovery in vacancies since the lifting of restrictions in the summer

Figure: 3-month average of online job postings: Jul-Sept 2021 vs March-May 21 and Jan- March 21



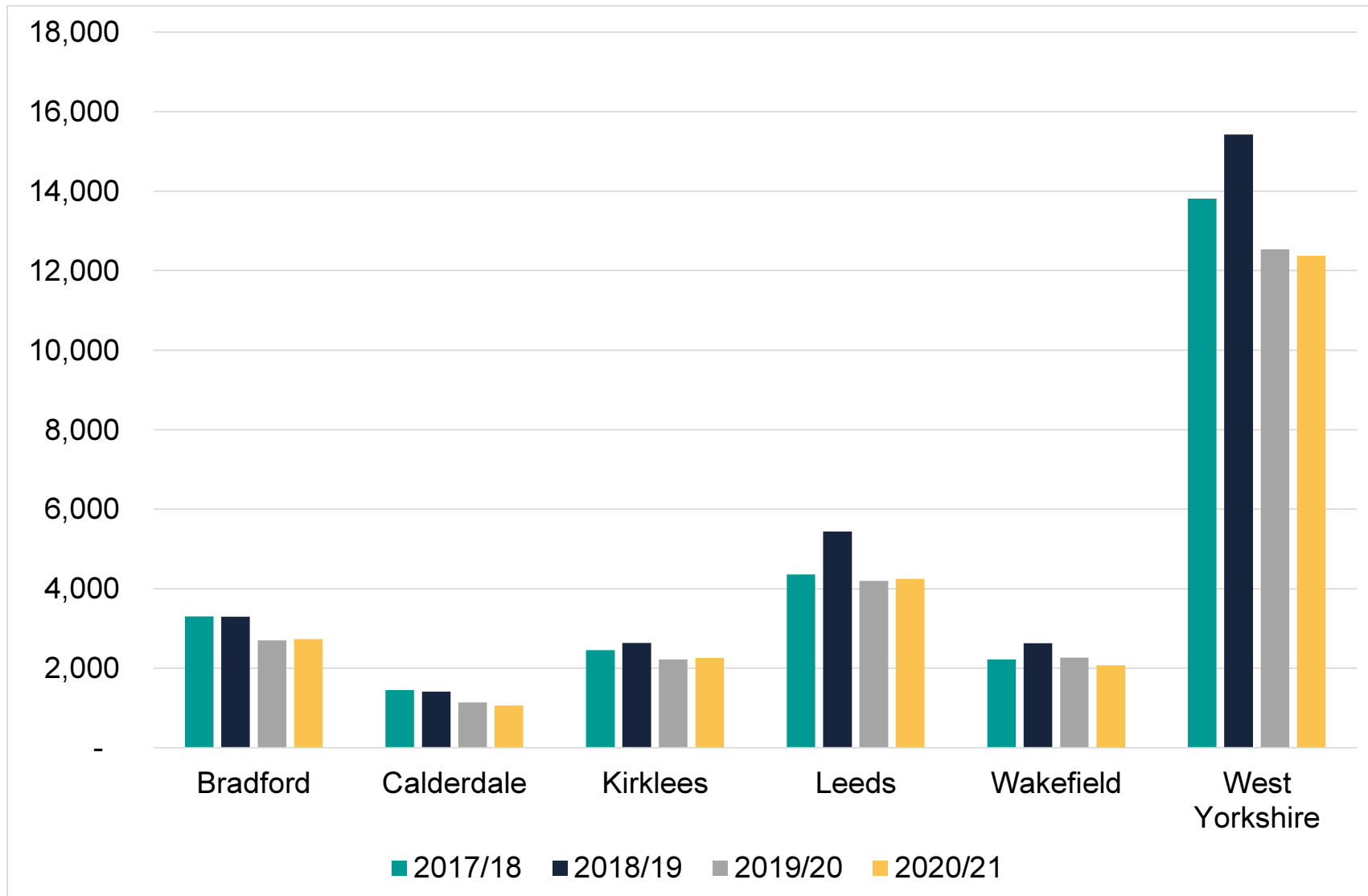
Hospitality and clerical have recovered strongly since the lifting of restrictions

Figure: 3-month average of online job postings: Jul-Sept 2021 vs March-May 21 and Jan- March 21



Apprenticeship starts remain below pre-pandemic levels as of the end of Q3 of the 2020/21 academic year

Figure: Apprenticeship starts at end of academic year Q3



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Report to: Employment and Skills Committee

Date: 29 October 2021

Subject: **Mayoral Pledge Development**

Director: Liz Hunter, Director of Policy and Development

Author: Sonya Midgley, Head of Skills Policy

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the development of the mayoral pledge workstreams and its alignment with the Employment and Skills Framework.
- 1.2 To seek the Committee's recommendations on the next steps for pledge development.

2. Information

Create 1,000 well paid, skilled, green jobs for young people

Overview

- 2.1 The Mayor pledged to create 1,000 well paid, skilled, green jobs for young people, supporting progress against the Combined Authority's commitment to a net zero carbon economy for West Yorkshire by 2038, with significant progress by 2030. The pledge also recognises the disproportionately negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth unemployment over the past 18 months.
- 2.2. At their meeting on 24 June 2021, the Combined Authority indicatively approved £500k funding to support scheme development relating to employment and skills support for 16-30 year olds. Following recommendation from the Programme Appraisal Team, final approval for the development funding proposal will be sought from the Combined Authority at their meeting on 22 October 2021.

Green Jobs Taskforce

- 2.3 In August 2021, the Mayor announced the creation of a West Yorkshire Green Jobs Taskforce, which will bring together experts from business, education and training, and the third and public sectors. Its goal is to position West Yorkshire as a leader and set out a roadmap to deliver the skills and jobs needed to address the climate emergency.
- 2.4 It is proposed that the workplan of the Taskforce is considered in two phases.

Phase 1:

- A review of the existing landscape to identify the job opportunities for roles in both the green sector, and in relation to greening the economy. The review will begin with a desktop review of existing evidence and expert interviews, followed by further commissioned research to support the Taskforce in determining the sectors / areas of greatest opportunity in WY and supporting activities in phase 2.
- As part of the review, the Taskforce will agree key definitions and success criteria.
- It is expected that working groups will be formed to explore key areas of opportunity or challenge.

Phase 2:

- The intelligence in phase 1 will inform the development of programmes and activities to support the delivery of the pledge and address the wider skills challenges for creating green jobs for people of all ages.
- Proposals will be developed, including:
 - How can the CA enhance / adapt existing delivery to support the greening of our economy through green skills and jobs?
 - New delivery programmes or activity to tackle challenges and gaps identified in phase 1.
- Additional funding will be sought for new proposals as appropriate, with separate business cases being developed and progressed through the assurance process individually.

Mayoral Green Jobs Gateway

- 2.5 The Mayoral Green Jobs Gateway was also launched in August 2021, providing an online portal for employers wishing to pledge jobs to support the Mayor's pledge of 1,000 well paid, skilled, green jobs for young people.
- 2.6 As part of their proposed workplan, the Green Jobs Taskforce may consider the need for further development of the Mayoral Green Jobs Gateway and potential impacts.

Prioritise skills and training to ensure everyone in West Yorkshire has the skills they need to secure work

Overview

- 2.7 Under this pledge, the Mayor made specific commitments to:
- Spearhead a campaign to make West Yorkshire a Living Wage Region, boosting the number of businesses paying the real living wage.
 - Spearhead a **Digital Academy**, supported by business and academics to ensure our young people have the skills required to be the entrepreneurs, innovators, engineers and creatives of the future.
 - Establish a West Yorkshire **Digital Skills Partnership** to develop digital skills programmes, tackle digital exclusion and maximise the potential of the region.
 - Widen the Leeds **Digital Festival** to a West Yorkshire wide festival, showcasing the talented workforce needed.
 - Support a 'Gold Standard' **West Yorkshire wide Careers** Advice Service delivered in-line and in person, using mentors and businesses to excite and inform the next generation about the exciting opportunities available to them.
- 2.8 Development of the Fair Work Charter for West Yorkshire has begun, supporting a commitment to paying the Living Wage in West Yorkshire.
- 2.9 The West Yorkshire Digital Skills Partnership is established with a high-profile Board membership who have developed key priorities based around social digital inclusion, SME digital inclusion, development of the workforce of the future and building coordinated skills/learning provision. The LDSP partnership will evolve a strategic digital skills plan to support these priorities and publish in early 2022.
- 2.10 Delivery options are in development for a West Yorkshire Digital Festival and Academy, with key partners included in developing proposals. A verbal update on the status of these options will be given at the meeting.

Role of the Committee in Mayoral Pledge Development

- 2.11 The new Employment and Skills Framework overseen by this Committee was launched by the Mayor at the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges (WYCC) annual conference.
- 2.12 There is clear alignment between the priorities of the Framework and the ambitions within the mayoral pledges. This is described in detail in Appendix One of Item 8 – the Forward Plan of the Committee
- 2.13 The Combined Authority has committed £500k to the development to the '1,000 skilled, green jobs for Young People' and 'Skills and training' pledges. This includes a proposal to build capacity, commission research and intelligence to support the development of these two pledges. Including the development of a project pipeline for employment and skills to include specific

mayoral manifesto commitments and to deliver the priorities with the strategic Employment and Skills Framework.

- 2.14 The pipeline will focus on new areas of intervention building on evidence based best practice. It will focus on where there is an evidence base for the need for intervention at a regional level. The pipeline should complement existing service delivery and be informed by consultation with key partners in the employment and skills eco-system.
- 2.15 Through the partnership role of the Combined Authority, early consultation and engagement is taking place with key strategic partners in the region to ensure that these principles are adhered to.
- 2.16 This Committee is asked to oversee a pipeline of project and programme development of these two pledges through its forward plan and as a standing item to future Committee meetings. This includes through new and existing programme delivery of employment and skills programmes; adult education budget, adult skills bootcamps, skills for growth, employment hub, and adults and school careers and enterprise education'
- 2.17 The Committee also has an important role in supporting the development of the remaining pledges with regard to the employment and skills elements with further updates provided at future meetings, they are:
- Support local businesses and be a champion for our local economy
 - Lead a Creative New Deal to ensure our creative industries are part of our broader recovery strategy
 - Appoint an Inclusivity Champion to ensure that the region's recovery benefit's us all
 - Put women and girls at the heart of the Mayor's policing plan
 - Recruit 750 more frontline police officers and staff to fight crime
 - Bring buses back under public control, introduce simpler fares, contactless ticketing and greener buses
 - Build 5,000 affordable and sustainable homes
 - Tackling the Climate Emergency and protecting our environment
- 2.18 The Committee will play an important role in shaping the delivery of the Fair Work Charter. The preceding Employment and Skills Panel held an in-depth workshop on the Charter at a workshop in May, further progress includes:
- The Combined Authority in June approving £600,000 over three years to support development and implementation of the Charter.
 - Establishing a Steering Group of partners and stakeholders chaired by the LEP Diversity Champion Kate Hainsworth.
 - The proposed terms of reference of the Steering Group, which meets for the first time on 11 October, are:
 - To lead the development of a West Yorkshire Fair Work Charter through co-design, consultation and research into appropriate measures to enhance fairness in the workplace.

- To take such steps as are necessary to enable its launch and implementation by March 2022.
 - The draft Charter will be developed over the coming months, including through a public consultation to be undertaken later in the year.
- 2.19 The Committee will have the opportunity to consult further on the Fair Work Charter at its meeting in January.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 The Committee has a lead role in considering the skills and employment element as a key commitment of the mayoral pledges to tackle the climate emergency.
- 3.2 This includes oversight and support for the development of the Green Jobs Taskforce and Gateway which will provide 1,000 well paid, skilled green jobs for young people.
- 3.3 Addressing tackling the climate emergency through the skills and employment pipeline will also be a key consideration in order to meet the ambitious next zero target by 2038, and support education skills and training organisations and businesses to achieve this.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 Appointing an Inclusivity Champion is one of the key Mayoral Pledges. The Inclusivity Champion will have a key role in ensuring inclusivity in key strategies and plan including Economic Recovery. The Committee will engage with the Champion, when appointed.
- 4.2 The Green Jobs Gateway launched in August 2021 to support local employers to provide well paid, skilled, green jobs for young people in West Yorkshire, in support of the Mayor's pledge. Young people were disproportionately affected by unemployment during the pandemic. As part of its review, the Green Jobs Taskforce will also consider the development of the Gateway and the potential to maximise impact on disadvantaged or underrepresented communities.
- 4.3 The Fair Work Charter will encourage good pay, fair and flexible working conditions, and promoting diversity and social mobility within the workforce.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 Equality and Diversity is at the forefront of the Mayoral agenda and manifesto.
- 5.2 Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as part of scheme development within the pipeline for the supporting employment and skills pledges to ensure that as schemes progress through Assurance Framework and that equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded. This will also ensure that engagement takes place prior to commencement of delivery, and involve

engagement with potential end user beneficiaries from underrepresented groups.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 At their meeting on 24 June 2021, the Combined Authority indicatively approved £500k funding to support scheme development relating to employment and skills support for 16-30 year olds. Following recommendation from the Programme Appraisal Team, final approval for the development funding proposal will be sought from the Combined Authority at their meeting on 22 October 2021.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 The Committee is asked comment on the approach to delivering against the Mayoral Pledges, in particular the approach to:
- The Green Jobs Taskforce, and its proposed work programme
 - The verbal update on the West Yorkshire Digital Festival
 - The skills and training pledge and any initial thoughts on proposals for pipeline development linked to the manifesto and Employment and Skills Framework
 - How the Committee would like to work on across all the Mayoral pledges as part of its forward work programme, and in supporting other Committees to support all pledges.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. Appendices

None

Report to: Employment and Skills Committee

Date: 29 October 2021

Subject: **Employment and Skills Committee Forward Plan**

Director: Brian Archer, Director of Economic Services

Author: Sonya Midgley, Head of Skills Policy

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To propose a list of topics for a forward workplan for the Committee to July 2022 for discussion, comment and agreement.

2. Information

- 2.1 A proposed list of substantive topics is based upon areas identified as priorities in the region as set out in the Employment and Skills Framework and that support Mayoral pledges.
- 2.2 In June, the Mayor launched the new framework which has been developed closely with partners and stakeholders and overseen by the Employment and Skills Panel.
- 2.3 The vision statement for the Framework is *‘Our vision for West Yorkshire is to be a world-leading region where investment in skills training and education, and support for employers go hand in hand to create a diverse, inclusive and highly skilled workforce with good jobs, leading to sustained improvements in the quality of life for all’*
- 2.4 The Framework outlines five priorities for West Yorkshire, to deliver skilled people, good jobs and strong businesses:
- Quality technical education
 - Great education connected to business
 - Accessing and progressing in good work
 - Creating a culture of investment in workforce skills
 - Driving innovation and productivity through high level skills.

- 2.5 There are three themes cut across all priorities: inclusive growth, digital skills and net zero carbon.
- 2.6 The Framework was launched by the Mayor. The Mayor manifesto pledges commit and align with the priorities in the framework including boosting digital skills, spearheading green jobs and tackling disadvantage and promoting inclusion. A document mapping this alignment is appended for reference.
- 2.7 This Committee will have oversight for the development of mayoral pledges and the pipeline of projects that support them as outlined in Item 8 – Mayoral Pledge Development
- 2.8 Agreeing a forward plan and suggested topics supports the planning of agenda for future Committee meetings, including preparation of reports with input from a range of sources to support informed discussion and decision making by the Committee.
- 2.9 Alongside these key topics of interest, it is proposed that in order for the Committee to remain responsive to economic need and policy contexts, some standing items are on agenda for each meeting that will be able to accommodate the need for flexibility, these will include:
- Data monitoring and labour market performance
 - Employment and Skills programmes
 - Employment and Skills policy including mayoral pledge development
- 2.10 Additional proposed key areas of interest include:
- Green Skills and Jobs; development of future skills and jobs needed for a net zero carbon economy and ensure a just transition for jobs at risk from decarbonisation – focus on job creation in a growth sector and connecting those facing labour market disadvantage to the new employment opportunities
 - Review of the Future-Ready Skills Commission, its recommendations and next steps
 - Education/careers and employment support with a focus on prevention of youth unemployment and NEETs and supporting the skills needs of our most vulnerable communities.
 - Support older workers (over 50) back to work and to stay in work longer where recently made unemployed – targeting the 10,000 people aged 50-64 who are unemployed, and those who are at risk of redundancy.
 - Support growth in SMEs through provision of digital – addressing digital exclusion and ensuring open access for all to avoid further disadvantage and an increase of the digital divide.

- Address the low take up of STEM subjects – improving skills levels amongst key groups who do not traditionally take up STEM.
 - Skills support for employers to encourage high performing workplace practices that make best use of skills within the workforce, address skills shortages, and support recruitment practice with a focus support progression into work for young people and graduates who have the fastest growth in claimant numbers.
- 2.11 In addition, a joint workshop with the Business, Economy and Innovation Committee to consider the annual labour market report will also be organised between Committee meetings.
- 3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**
- 3.1 The work of the Green Jobs Taskforce and Gateway will provide 1,000 well paid, skilled green jobs for young people and will ensure that West Yorkshire's workforce has the talent pipeline and skills required to support the greening of our economy and to meet the CA's ambitious target of a net zero carbon economy by 2038.
- 4. Inclusive Growth Implications**
- 4.1 All reports prepare as part of the forward plan will consider Inclusive Growth and how employment and skills can improve outcomes for individuals
- 5. Equality and Diversity Implications**
- 5.1 All reports prepared for the forward plan will consider EDI as a core element to support evidence-based decision making
- 6. Financial Implications**
- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising for this report
- 7. Legal Implications**
- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.
- 8. Staffing Implications**
- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.
- 9. External Consultees**
- 9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 The Committee is asked to consider the list and identify their preferences for future meetings.

11. Background Documents

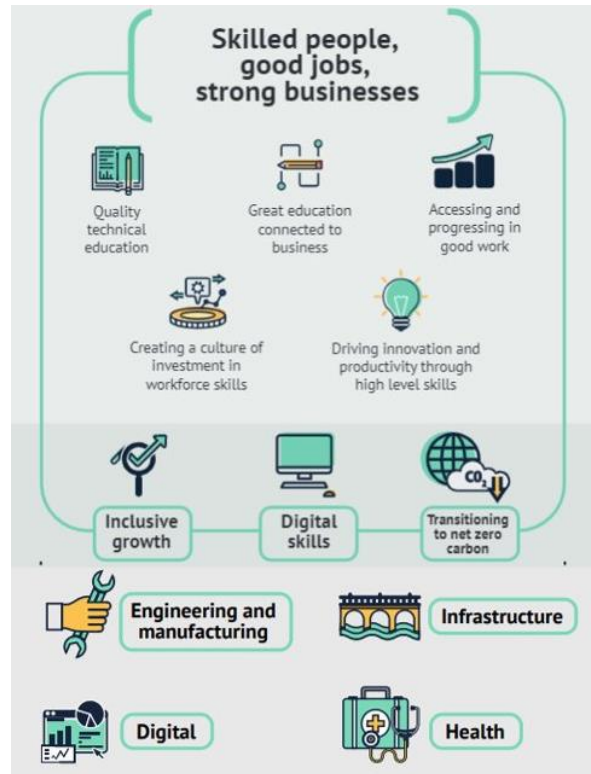
None.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Employment and Skills Framework and Mayoral Pledges.

Annex 1 – Employment and Skills Framework

Employment and Skills Framework plan on a page



How the Employment and Skills Framework supports the Mayoral pledges and commitments

Create 1,000 well paid, skilled jobs for young people.

‘Accessing and progressing in good work’ is one of the five priorities for the Employment and Skills Framework, with the ambition: Everyone has the skills to be able to access good work and is supported to take up training in the workplace that enables progression and development of transferable skills.

Creating 1,000 for young people will contribute to the following objectives for this priority by ensuring that young people, who have been disproportionately affected by rising unemployment rates during the pandemic, have access to well-paid, skilled work:

- Ensure employment opportunities are widely available and accessible for all to apply.
- Support the unemployed to gain and sustain employment.
- Improve West Yorkshire’s resilience by identifying and delivering the skills needed for the future.

Under this priority, there is also an action to support young people into well-paid, skilled work as an action to support economic recovery.

Prioritise skills and training to ensure everyone in West Yorkshire has the skills they need to secure work.

The Employment and Skills Framework prioritises investment in and access to skills and training as a means to '*skilled people, good jobs and strong businesses*' through each of the five priorities (see figure 3).

The existing ESF Employment Hub programme, delivered in partnership with the five West Yorkshire Local Authorities is already working closely with DWP and Jobcentre Plus locally to cohere and align employment support services for young people through a single point of contact. Continued delivery of this programme has been included as an action under the 'Accessing and progressing in good work' priority, to continue to provide access to training, work placements and job matching for young people who are unemployed.

A number of objectives and actions reflect the significance of the devolved Adult Education Budget and delegated level 3 budget in ensuring that West Yorkshire residents have the skills needed to secure good work. For example, the Quality Technical Education Priority outlines an indicative action to:

- Use traineeships and AEB to equip individuals with the confidence and basic skills, such as English, maths and essential digital skills, needed to progress onto an apprenticeship.

Lead a Creative New Deal to ensure our creative industries are part of the broader recovery strategy.

The Economic Recovery Plan has been revised to include the addition of a fifth West Yorkshire distinct proposition on Culture and Creative Industries, which recognises the important contribution they make to our places, quality of life and the economy.

FutureGoals, the Leeds City Region's all-age careers inspiration and information platform, has resources dedicated to encouraging 'career starters' and 'career changers' of all ages to consider a career in the creative industries. Developed in collaboration with the Burberry Foundation, a series of 'Spotlight' resources and a Creative Toolkit seek to strengthen the knowledge of both young people and educators about the scale of careers in the creative sector in the Leeds City Region. The resources also support young people from all backgrounds to recognise their creative talents and interests.

Creativity has been identified as one of the top ten 'baseline' skills in greatest demand from employers in West Yorkshire. The Employment and Skills Framework prioritises 'Great education connected to business', which outlines the importance of individuals understanding more about the skills, behaviours and qualities that employers value and that are needed to be successful in the workplace, including the growing demand for fusion skills.

A skills audit will be undertaken as part of this work to provide an evidence base to inform the design of interventions.

West Yorkshire has an above average number of graduates from Higher Education Institutions from creative arts and design subjects (just over 10% in the 2018/19 academic year) than the England average (around 8.5% in the same year). The proportion of graduates is high compared to the proportion of job openings in the same subject area in West Yorkshire. The Employment and Skills Framework suggests the action under the priority 'Creating a culture of investment in workforce skills':

- Support the retention of graduates in the Region, and the take-up of employing graduates in SMEs.

Increased retention of graduates from creative arts and design subjects would support the imbalance of available jobs to graduates and the pledge to 'build a skilled craft workforce' in the region.

Spearhead a Digital Academy, establish a West Yorkshire Digital Skills Partnership and widen the Leeds Digital Festival

Digital skills is a cross-cutting theme in the Employment and Skills Framework, reflecting its significance across all sectors and all five priorities (see figure 3). There are two key dimensions to digital skills:

- developing the basic ICT skills needed to undertake the majority of job roles across the regional economy.
- skills for specialist digital occupations, such as developers and programmers, and roles that increasingly depend on higher level digital skills, such as in digital marketing, data analysis and design.

Under this theme, the Framework outlines 'what more could be done' in tackling digital skills challenges, including:

- Raise awareness of the importance of digital skills in education settings and within careers campaigns, particularly to encourage the engagement of underrepresented groups, such as girls.
- Increase the number of activities available for young people to engage in technical digital skills, such as coding clubs.

The existing West Yorkshire Digital Skills Partnership works with key partners across all sectors to coordinate provision, tackle digital exclusion and maximise the potential of the region through supporting the growth of digital skills. A Digital Skills action plan is currently being developed and will outline the next steps to be taken in the Region to increase digital skills.

The Framework also recognises the need to:

- Encourage employer collaboration with each other and with providers to create solutions to skills and training needs.

This action sits under the 'Creating a culture of investment in workforce skills' priority, supporting collaborative solutions such as a Digital academy.

Spearhead a campaign to make West Yorkshire a **Living Wage Region**, boosting the number of businesses paying the real living wage.

Inclusive Growth is a cross-cutting theme in the Employment and Skills Framework, recognising its importance in reducing inequalities across the region and ensuring all can both benefit from and contribute to economic growth in our towns and communities.

Almost a quarter of jobs across the Leeds City Region pay less than the Real Living Wage. Under-investment in training and development over the years has affected living standards and makes it hard for many people to find a route to higher-quality work. The Employment and Skills Framework recognises the need to invest in skills for the benefit of West Yorkshire residents and businesses through two priorities:

- Creating a culture of investment in workforce skills
- Driving innovation and productivity through high level skills

Each of these priorities encourages employers to see the benefits of a diverse, well-paid, skilled workforce with good standards of work in ensuring their business' growth.

The Mayor launched her 'Fair Work Charter' during her first 100 days in office. The Charter is dedicated to genuine levelling-up across West Yorkshire – encouraging good pay, fair and flexible working conditions, and promoting diversity and social mobility within the workforce. The Charter is being developed by a working group and will be launched in 2022.

Ensure there are the relevant **Green Courses** on offer for young people to get the skills to support the delivery of net zero carbon by 2038, with particular emphasis on construction and engineering skills.

Support projects to develop a **hydrogen economy which could provide zero carbon solutions for heavy vehicles and heating**. These programmes can create thousands of jobs.

Net zero carbon is identified as a cross-cutting theme in the Employment and Skills Framework, reflecting the significance of the impact of the transition across all sectors and all five priorities. The theme outlines an action to ensure that relevant green courses are on offer for young people, as well as actions to

- Strengthen collaboration and engagement between employers and training providers to improve and expand their training programmes
- Undertake skills audits with SMEs and training providers to establish need and opportunity for behaviour change.

The Mayor launched her Green Jobs Taskforce as part of her first 100 days in office. The Taskforce has membership from a wide range of organisations representative of different sectors and types and will be supported by task and finish groups. The Employment and Skills Committee will have oversight of the development of the '1000 well paid, skilled jobs for young people' pledge that this taskforce will address in detail.

The Mayor has also invited employers to pledge their support to create 1,000 new jobs via [1000 Green Jobs in West Yorkshire - Combined Authority | Unlocking potential, accelerating growth \(westyorks-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/1000-green-jobs)

Establish a **Manufacturing Task Force**, taking West Yorkshire's manufacturing sector forward with a plan to boost exports, and ensure young people have the skills to become the engineers and designers of the future.

The Framework recognises the need for investment in skills and training under the priority 'Creating a culture of investment in workforce skills', including actions to:

- Encourage employer collaboration with each other and with providers to create solutions to skills and training needs.

Collaboration between employers and with providers of education and training ensures that the breadth and diversity of the local pattern of skills needs is captured in the design of skills and training solutions, such as through a Manufacturing Task Force. Engineering and Manufacturing is identified as a key priority sector for employment and skills.

The Manufacturing Taskforce has been created and will be Chaired by Andrew Wright, Deputy Chair of the Business, Economy and Innovation Committee with invitations and the date of the first meeting to follow.

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Report to: Employment and Skills Committee

Date: 29 October 2021

Subject: FE Reforms

Director: Liz Hunter, Director of Policy and Development

Author: Sonya Midgley, Head of Skills Policy

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Committee on the latest FE Reforms and the subsequent Skills and Post 16 Education Bill.
- 1.2 To seek the Committee's views and comments on the reforms and proposed legislation.

2. Information

Background Information

- 2.1 The DfE published the White Paper 'Skills for jobs; lifelong learning for opportunity and growth' in January, with a number of ambitious reforms to revolutionise post-16 education.¹
- 2.2 The White Paper sets out 35 different reforms to be implemented to improve the post-16 skills system so that it is more responsive to employers and local labour markets. The reforms can be grouped into five key areas:
 - 1. Putting employers at the heart of post-16 skills
 - 2. Providing the advanced technical and higher technical skills the UK needs
 - 3. A Flexible Lifetime Skills Guarantee
 - 4. Responsive providers, supported by effective accountability and funding
 - 5. Supporting outstanding teaching

¹ The full paper is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-for-jobs-lifelong-learning-for-opportunity-and-growth

- 2.3 The three stated main policy aims of the paper are:
- Putting employers at the heart of the system
 - Enabling people to upskill and retrain
 - Creating greater flexibility and accountability
- 2.4 Some reforms, including some those that are part of the 'Lifetime Skills Guarantee' including bootcamps (short, employer designed courses), and a new Level 3 entitlement had already been implemented, others are dependent on future budget confirmation. The Level 3 entitlement budget of c £4.5m has been delegated to the Combined Authority.
- 2.5 In April, 'Skills Accelerator', made up of two key proposals from the White Paper; Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) trailblazers and Strategic Development Fund (SDF) were announced.
- 2.6 A national competition for pilot areas for Skills Accelerator pilots was limited to Business Representative Organisations, with Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships not eligible to apply. West Yorkshire has not been selected as a pilot. An evaluation of LSIPs is expected shortly after the end of the pilot phased concludes at the end of March 2022.

Consultations on the reforms

- 2.7 Over the summer, DfE have published two on-line consultations. The Combined Authority has submitted responses to both consultations and the narrative is appended to this report.
- 2.8 The first consultation was the £2.5bn National Skills Fund focussed on combining the existing elements of the adults skills offer (Lifetime Skills Guarantee) including skills bootcamps, level 3 qualifications and further short courses into a single fund as well as the design, intent and outcomes for individuals and employers. The policy intention is to help adults gain valuable skills to improve job prospects and to create responsive and flexible provision to meet current and future labour market needs. There is no intention to remove devolved responsibilities for adults skills funding such as AEB and Level 3 from MCAs through these proposals.
- 2.9 The second consultation was on Funding and Accountability which intends to seek opinion on reforming the complex post-16 funding arrangements so that learner outcomes can be improved through strengthened accountability for those outcomes, including means of intervention.
- 2.10 Neither consultation allowed for any flexibility in responses. As such, there was little opportunity to address fundamental strategic points including those set out clearly by the Future Ready Skills Commission, including addressing the significant decline in investment in adults skills and the opportunity to build upon devolved roles and responsibilities.

- 2.11 The responses that were submitted were limited to the specifics of the proposals in the consultations. To address this the Mayor has written a letter to the Secretary of State, Nadim Zahawi, to highlight areas where the MCA could support the Department shape the reforms and has requested further discussions. The letter will be shared with members of the Panel when finalised.

Skills and Post 16 Education Bill

- 2.12 Subsequent to the publication of the White Paper, the Government published the [Skills and Post-16 Education Bill](#) on 18 May 2021 in the House of Lords. The Bill implements proposals set out in the Government's Skills for Jobs White Paper and makes provision for a number of statutory changes to post-16 education in England. The Bill has now finished committee state and has reached report stage which means that is a further opportunity for amendments to be made at around mid-October and before its third reading in the House of Lords.
- 2.13 The Bill makes a number of provisions relevant to the GLA and MCAs, but two are priorities for concern:
- The Bill "Provide[s] for a statutory underpinning for local skills improvement plans (LSIPs), introducing a power for the Secretary of State for Education to designate employer representative bodies to lead the development of the plans with duties on providers to co-operate in the development of and then have regard to the plans".
 - The Bill "Enable[s] the Secretary of State for Education to make regulations to provide for a list of post-16 education or training providers, in particular Independent Training Providers ("ITPs"), to indicate which providers have met conditions that are designed to prevent or mitigate risks associated with the disorderly exit of a provider from the provision of education and training"
- 2.14 Officers from Greater London Authority and Mayoral Combined Authorities including West Yorkshire have been engaged in conversations with civil servants at DfE to address concerns, particularly as there might be an impact on the Mayoral and MCA statutory functions devolved through Adult Education Budget, including the commissioning and availability of provision deemed required in a regional area. DfE officers have been clear that there is no intention to use new powers to change existing devolved arrangements.
- 2.15 There is some concern, however, that without a meaningful role for existing strategic stakeholders such as MCAs and the GLA, there is a risk that this will considerably undermine work underway to increase the coordination and integration of skills and employment provision in regions at a time when it is increasingly important to have local understanding and coordination powers
- 2.16 Furthermore, a new list of independent training providers will be created, any provider not on the list will not be granted funding agreements or be allowed to

subcontract with another provider who is on the list. This could mean that the GLA and MCAs would be prohibited from funding any provider that does not appear on the Secretary of State's new list of approved providers. This could preclude funding for high quality specialist commercial training providers and the subcontracting prohibition could have a particular impact on local voluntary and community services and social enterprises delivering vital initial engagement and outreach provision responding to local need.

2.17 Discussions between GLA, MCAs and DfE officers are ongoing

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 The new powers to the Secretary of State if enacted could impact on local flexibility of current devolved arrangements.

3.2 The proposal of a new a nationally approved list of providers restricts commissioning of adult education budget provision to this list and might destabilise local provision where certain providers are not included on the list.

3.3 The national list could also affect the local capacity to innovate and specialist providers that continue to address specific local skills needs in emerging areas such as demand for green skills and training.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

4.1 The new powers could restrict the availability of local provision where this is nationally managed through a provider list and hamper specialist local provision.

4.2 The Lifetime Skills Guarantee offers a funded progression route to higher level skills for adults without a L3 qualification in economically valuable areas. This will be monitored to ensure that learner outcomes do lead to progression.

4.3 There is a greater emphasis on employers in the reforms, through an employer-led skills system which might mean over reliance on a small number of employers that have the capacity and goodwill to engage with the system and having a comprehensive understanding of future labour market needs.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 Flexibilities devolved through funding of adults skills are key to focussing on outcomes and to ensuring that all neighbourhoods and citizens benefit from lifelong learning.

5.2 Further Education Colleges play an important role in their communities and to support social outcomes. The new powers provide for the Secretary of State to intervene locally where they assess local needs are not being met and this could mean they 'close or set up college corporations, bring about changes to membership or composition of governing bodies or review leadership, or take other actions where there are long term weaknesses. With

no clear local role in any intervention this could significantly disrupt the landscape should it happen.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are some possible legal implications of the skills and post-16 education bill with the devolved powers to the MCA which are being explored.

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

10.1 The Committee is asked to comment on the paper.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Final Responses to the Funding and Accountability consultation
Appendix 2 – Final responses to the National Skills Fund consultation

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Full consultation

[Skills for Jobs: A New Further Education Funding and Accountability System](#)

Overview of Timescales to write the response

Response to be submitted by: 6 October 2021

Suggested WYCA Response:

Recommendation to E&S Committee to submit a light touch response to the consultation for the record, and for the Mayor to respond to consultation by letter and aligned to MCA response. Responses to the questions should be limited to those that are most relevant to the findings of the FRSC e.g. on national skills fund and future UKSPF.

Full list of questions:

Part 1 -

Our objectives in reforming the adult skills funding system

Q1. Do you agree with our objectives for reforming adult skills funding?

Following successive changes to the FE system to inform its improvement, the Future-Ready Skills Commission set out the key changes required for the system to work more effectively for learners, business and training providers.

We would also like to see better alignment and integration of the whole system in reforms e.g. apprenticeships. In general, a more ambitious and integrated approach is needed than the one proposed, that truly addresses the current fragmentation of the system and which provides for a more holistic approach to the devolution of funding and powers. The proposed objective of a simpler and more streamlined funding system is not reflected in the detail of the proposed reforms..

Consideration also needs to be given to the overall level of funding and investment for the adult skills system. Spending on adult education is nearly two-thirds lower in real terms than in 2003–04 and about 50% lower than in 2009–10. Structural reforms to the system can only succeed and ambitious objectives realised if there is sufficient investment to enable institutions to deliver the high quality technical provision that is required.

Restoration investment to real-terms seen a decade ago would also serve to raise and broaden participation in adult education, strengthening the prestige and credibility of the system among all sections of the community.

The Department also need to be mindful of the pressing need for a period of stability in the further education sector, following the almost constant introduction of attempted reforms over recent decades. In the past reforms have been entered into too lightly. We need to ensure that the proposed reforms are truly sustainable this

time and that they are introduced in a controlled, phased manner that minimises the disruption for key players within the system.

Greater coherence should be another key principle. There is little consideration of how changes to funding and accountability in further education, designed to get more people into high quality work will align with the wider support landscape, particularly employment support delivered through Jobcentres and careers

Q2. Do you agree with our reform objectives for an adult skills funding system, or are there other principles that should be included?

The devolution of funding and powers is not sufficiently central and integral to the proposals. There is reference made to decisions being made in the right place. If we are seeking to meet local needs then accountability of colleges to local stakeholders should be a key principle. The Department needs to demonstrate a real commitment to devolution as a guiding principle for reform.

A focus on quality of provision is implicit within the objectives but this critical element is not given sufficient weight within the detail of the proposals in terms of ensuring sufficient investment is available.

The consultation does not place enough emphasis on the aspirations of individual learners including those relating to personal development and well-being as well as vocational development. This is one of the main drivers that shapes the profile of provision under the current approach to adult skills. Although learner demand does not fully align with the needs of employers and the wider labour market it cannot be disregarded. A greater emphasis on high quality careers education and, information, advice and guidance is vital to ensuring that the market for learning operates effectively and that a balance can be struck between economic need and learner choice.

True local accountability should be a guiding principle of the reforms. The consultation document rightly emphasises the importance of colleges' role in serving local communities but there is only limited scope for democratically-accountable MCAs and local authorities to participate in the proposed accountability system.

New Skills Fund

Q3. How can non-qualification-based provision most effectively be funded in the future?

Alongside other mainstream funding mechanisms for non-accredited learning, traditionally the European Social Fund has played a key part in supporting those who lack formal qualifications to take the first step to learning. Any successor funding, possibly through the new UKSPF, will need to continue to be offered alongside mainstream funded provision. Locally designed and delivered non accredited provision has a strong track record of meeting the requirements of employers and individuals seeking to progress into, within work or to allow them to change roles. For example, the ESF funded bootcamps in West Yorkshire have been oversubscribed by almost twice the amount of people that places available and have achieved success through the outcomes they have achieved. They have built local

capacity of delivery providers, and have delivered skills required by employers locally. National Skills Fund bootcamps should follow this example to ensure coverage and to meet the needs of local labour markets.

There needs to be continued scope for local flexibility along the lines of the existing Adult Education Budget funding rules.

Q4. How can we ensure this provision is of high-quality?

Department for Education have an important role to play in conducting a national evaluation of non-qualification provision in order to develop a robust evidence base around what works.

Ultimately though, responsibility for skills programmes needs to be devolved in an holistic manner so that local players can ensure that provision is reflective of local needs.

For example, devolving the funding for non-accredited provision and giving accountable bodies such as Mayoral Combined Authorities the responsibility to commission provision locally will ensure only that which best meets local need is selected. Mayoral Combined Authorities work closely with partner local authorities in shaping regional priorities to ensure that the needs of the region and each district are met. Local commissioning will go hand in hand with robust quantitative and qualitative monitoring and evaluation frameworks. This will ensure high quality provision is maintained and continues to evolve and improve over time, by seeking regular feedback on the effectiveness of such provision for both individuals and employers.

In 2020, West Yorkshire Combined Authority secured an ambitious devolution deal, including recognition of its landmark partnership with West Yorkshire colleges setting out a joint plan to align college training provision with the need of the Leeds City Region economy, including the £65 million per annum Adult Education Budget. The partnership, formalised through unique 'Delivery Agreements' for each college, is pioneering in its degree of collaboration and its comprehensive targets and actions, making it the first of its kind in the UK. Developed in partnership between the Combined Authority and each of the seven colleges, the agreements publicly outline how each college will contribute to the Leeds City Region Employment and Skills Plan objectives, Skilled People, Better Jobs 2016-2020 and subsequently the needs of the City Region economy. The targets set for each college aim to address the acute skills shortages faced by the City Region's key sectors: manufacturing and engineering, health and care, infrastructure and digital. The agreements mean the colleges will increase levels of apprenticeships starts, pledging to also increase higher and degree apprenticeship provision within these sectors. Benchmarking provision, alongside the ongoing partnership conversation creates the right conditions for the continuous improvement, through monitoring and evaluation.

The current system of adult and community learning within the FE sector is already the best in the sector with 92% of community learning providers rated Good or Outstanding with Ofsted. Adult and community learning providers are held to the same high standards as colleges within the sector and subject to the same

inspections by Ofsted, the FE Commissioner, Awarding Bodies, IFA etc and this should continue to remain so. There must be a consideration within the reforms for the current quality system of recognising and recording progress, achievement and progress (RARPAP) for non-accredited provision which ensures a high level of quality within those courses which do not have national standards attached to them.

Q5. We would welcome your ideas – particularly from employers – on how we could fund providers for innovative provision currently not funded by the system.

The Future Ready Skills Commission argued for greater devolution of post-16 skills funding in order to drive more innovation in provision so that it can be designed with local employers. To support this, both greater investments in capital and to support staff development and retention in the sector is needed, alongside greater flexibilities in funding streams.

The funding model is also key to innovation, good funding design should drive the right behaviours. Too often output driven provision has led to the wrong behaviours, and to be innovative requires an element of risk which requires a flexible approach to funding where it is aligned to the needs of the labour market.

The consultation

Skills Fund Design

Q6. We would welcome your views on our proposal for a single Skills Fund: do you agree that we should formally merge the existing AEB including community learning, and National Skills Fund (NSF) investment into a single stream of funding?

We welcome the proposal for a single Skills Fund, comprising AEB, community learning and the National Skills Fund as a step forward. This integrated fund should be devolved to MCAs as a single pot. However, we feel that this proposal does not go nearly far enough and there needs to be greater integration of activity in the adult skills space, not least of largely unco-ordinated activity sponsored by different government departments. Adult community learning holds both social and economic benefits, including health and wellbeing, and supporting individuals furthest away from the labour market to re-engage.

Consideration needs to be given to the future role of community learning within the Skills Fund and the role of adult education in re-engaging disadvantaged individuals, not necessarily with a direct connection to entry into a job. We need to ensure that protection is afforded to this type of provision within the funding system and maintain a focus on key objectives around personal development, community cohesion and family learning. Erosion of family learning would negatively impact on school outcomes for example and there would be wider effects on health and wellbeing.

Whilst in West Yorkshire AEB is devolved, Level 3 fund is delegated and with no scope of flexibilities. A delegated funding approach of the kind used for the Level 3

adult offer severely limits the value that MCAs can add in terms of developing local capacity and capability to meet local needs.

The skills bootcamps element of the National Skills Fund should also be devolved alongside the other elements.

Whilst European Social Fund (ESF) is out of scope for the National Skills Fund, once Government confirm the eligibility rules for the new UKSPF, it will be important to ensure the 'people' strand of UKSPF and the respective eligible interventions, are fully aligned to the NSF. In this way this valuable resource and successor funding will complement and add value, key to future economic growth and the government's levelling up agenda which employment and skills is integral to.

Q7. How can we implement this Skills Fund in a way which best supports individuals to access skills which meet the needs of local employers?

There is a case for an elected and accountable regional role in convening employers and employer representative bodies who are often inundated with skills offers so that they can be better served through a coordinated skills offer. This would support employers, particularly SMEs, to better navigate the landscape, address skills gaps and recruitment issues faced by employers and industry sectors. Currently, only 36% of businesses have training plan and 29% a training budget.

Access to training in the workplace is unequal: workers who are already qualified to a high level (level 4+) are almost twice as likely to receive training than their less qualified colleagues.

Q8. We would welcome your views on our proposal to fund devolved authorities through a needs-based relative assessment. Do you agree with this approach?

In order to fulfil levelling up ambitions, a needs-based approach to devolution of funding would be supported. As this could significantly change the funding envelope in some areas, a transitioned approach should be co-designed and agreed between the Department and devolved authorities.

Q9. What elements do you think are important to include in such an assessment?

Funding for learners in non-devolved areas: [do not answer]

For funding of learners who are funded directly by the Department, rather than devolved authorities:

Q10. Do you agree that an activity-based system of funding colleges based on the learners they provide for should be continued or are there other approaches which would be more effective or should be considered? Q11. What are your views on the potential elements (set out above) to include in a simpler funding formula? Are there other elements which should be included? Q12. Do you agree that we should use the same needs-based formula between all areas of the country? How should we balance responsiveness to activity delivered and equal opportunity to access training? Q13. How can we introduce these changes most effectively?

Simplifying funding for disadvantage, learning and learner support through a single additional needs' 'element' as part of the formula

Q14. Do you agree with our proposal to bring together disadvantage funding, learning support and learner support into one element?

We agree with this proposal in principle but practical mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure that the funding is distributed in a fair manner to the different groups within scope of disadvantage funding.

In principle, we agree with simplification of the funding system and the removal of administrative and audit costs to focus funding onto the learner – aligned to a strategic plan. The strategic plan must recognise and guide the need to ensure that this funding is improving the life outcomes for our residents who are disadvantaged and/or in need of additional support.

We welcome the recognition that learners who have been out of work for a sustained period often require additional support – alongside those with learning needs and those residing in disadvantaged areas.

Q15. Are there likely to be unintended consequences we would need to manage?

The current system of 'disadvantage uplift' ensures that funding follows the learner living within a disadvantaged area. This often incentivises providers to work with disadvantaged learners and to target provision in disadvantaged areas. While intended to provide flexibility, providing this as block funding based on demographic data might remove this incentive, particularly where audit and evidence requirements are being relaxed.

If a block funding allocation is to replace this (based on area demographics), this needs to be monitored alongside the number of disadvantaged learners actually supported – ensuring that the provision matches demographic proportions, and need is being met.

Q16. Is there a different approach we should explore?

As above, we are in broad agreement with the simplification proposal and the reduction of funding lost in administration costs associated with calculating, evidencing and auditing individual funding values. While we welcome the flexibility this approach affords providers to deliver support as per their own area needs, we need to ensure there are clear measures of participation, support and outcomes in place to demonstrate the impact and value of this funding. In short – we must be able to ensure that this funding is improving the life outcomes of our residents who are disadvantaged and/or in need of additional support.

We would be happy to engage in future consultations on this matter

Q17. What factors do you think should be incorporated in a measure of additional needs?

The proposed factors are sound: learning difficulties, disabilities, disadvantaged backgrounds, economic status, length of unemployment, travel to learn/access support.

Each organisation should be able to make a case for any additional factors/characteristics within their own support policy, as detailed in paragraph 73.

Q18. Will this help reduce requirements on colleges and enable them to support their learners better?

It will provide an initial additional requirement and cost to the organisation during transition: determining it and rolling out their policy. Support should be provided to Colleges/providers to ensure they embrace and utilise the full flexibility and opportunity this change provides in order to better support learners.

The end reduction of requirements on colleges/providers will remain to be seen, depending on what other outcome measures/evidence might be required. Undoubtedly, the proposal should reduce current administration and evidencing costs.

Funding on lagged learner numbers

Q19. Do you think we should move to a lagged system for the core funding or continue with the current “allocation and reconciliation” approach?

The proposal for a lagged system is broadly sensible and supported.

Q20. Is there another method, not outlined here, that you would prefer?

Upfront funding for growth areas

21. Do you agree with our proposal for a mechanism within the Skills Fund to provide up-front funding for specific growth areas?

One of the challenges colleges face is that they are hampered by the funding post being reliant on last years’ numbers which makes growth harder to fund and therefore deliver so this approach is welcome and should be applied across all funding pots.

Funding for priority growth areas should be properly devolved to MCA areas rather than delegated, as per current arrangements for the Level 3 Offer. MCAs should have greater flexibility around what provision is commissioned, over what time period. The current Level 3 Offer has been hampered by the lack of lead-in time given to providers to gear-up to deliver a narrow and specialised range of qualifications and by the limited time available in which those qualifications need to be completed. There was little consideration of capacity and capability on the ground in the design and implementation of the Level 3 Offer. Allocating a defined envelope of resources to MCAs in order to deliver outputs in line with local employer

need and government's growth objectives would be a more effective approach to achieving the desired outcomes. In line with the general thrust of the consultation, devolved areas should be given greater freedom to determine how best to achieve national priorities using dedicated funding pots.

Q22. Are there other mechanisms which we could explore to achieve this aim of supporting growth in specific skills areas?

Multi-year funding

Q21. Do you agree with our proposal for a mechanism within the Skills Fund to provide up-front funding for specific growth areas?

Yes, this would support growth and a degree of flexibility of funding that is needed to give colleges and other providers (e.g. local authorities) accountability for their provision.

Q22. Are there other mechanisms which we could explore to achieve this aim of supporting growth in specific skills areas?

MCAs are already using their devolved powers to test and trial a variety of mechanisms, including funding flexibilities, for promoting take-up of courses in economically valuable disciplines and in response to emerging and growing needs. This could provide valuable lessons for future approaches in this area.

Funding Eligibility Rules

Q25. Which entitlements and eligibility rules should be maintained in the new system, and why?

Although devolved areas have some power to set their own entitlements and eligibility rules it is vital that the national approach is fundamentally right to ensure coherence across the skills system.

Existing rules seem broadly right in context of limited funding pot. People who are already well-qualified or can afford to do so should take responsibility for their own personal development and expect to pay for their own learning. This should also apply to employer training. Employer investment in skills is far greater than public and individual investment, although more employers need to be persuaded by their peers that there is a connection between increased productivity and a range of practices to make the best use of the skills of their workforce including creating diversity in the workplace, particularly within leadership and management. However, there is a need to think about how we promote wider demand for learning e.g. among those in employment who need to reskill.

There is an argument for broadening eligibility and reinstating previous entitlements for a full level 2 and level 3 for all adults, particularly for qualifications in growth sectors or skills shortage areas. These types of qualification are closely associated with positive labour market outcomes and as the Augar Review notes, the removal of the associated entitlements has contributed to a large-scale reduction in participation.

Q26. If entitlements and rules are significantly reduced in number, in the context of an activity-based and lagged system, how would you expect colleges to allocate funds when the available budget is limited? Are there specific additional rules that you think should be introduced to constrain their activity?

Funding for Independent Training Providers (ITPs) and other providers

Q27. In what circumstances should direct procurement of skills provision be used by government?

In devolved areas, MCAs should continue to hold responsibility for procurement of provision. It is our general view that it is beneficial to have a “mixed economy” of provision, comprising independent training providers as well as colleges and local authorities. We will not be adopting the model hinted at in the consultation of colleges assuming a lead provider / co-ordinatory role and sub-contracting specific elements of provision to independent providers. In the context of a policy shift towards provision that is more responsive to the needs of employers, we feel that independent training providers have an important part to play in meeting specialised needs through responsive delivery models, complementing the broader capacity and capability of colleges. This is reflected in the important role played by independent training providers in the delivery of apprenticeships.

Q28. How can government improve the way it procures provision to ensure it complements existing areas of provision delivered by colleges and local authority providers and improves value for money?

The white paper and consultation imply a reduction in the role of independent training providers and an increased role for colleges in commissioning a wider range of provision at local level. The case for change needs to be more fully evidenced in terms of the scale and nature of any current issues and in respect of the benefits it will bring.

A strong independent training provider sector needs to be maintained in order to drive competition, performance and value for money in the adult skills sector and maximise spill-over benefits from the apprenticeship training sector.

This can be best be achieved through a transparent and open approach to commissioning linked to a clear statement of requirements (such as the forthcoming Local Skills Improvement Plan). In non-devolved areas the full range of local stakeholders need to be fully involved in overseeing these processes.

Q29. How can we support colleges to improve how they commission and oversee provision by providers they will commission from?

The notion that colleges should act as lead provider in an area, delivering and commissioning skills provision funded directly by government, is a relatively novel one and places a greatly increased responsibility on colleges, creating a need for significantly enhanced capacity and capability. In some ways the move to colleges as lead providers runs contrary to the existing direction of travel in skills policy. This is particularly the case since colleges have been running down subcontracted provision in recent years.

If colleges are to take responsibility for commissioning in non-devolved areas this needs to be carefully piloted in advance, otherwise there is a risk that local training ecosystems could be disrupted and needs not met. Few colleges offer a range of provision that is sufficiently comprehensive to meet the full range of needs in a local area. Careful evaluation also needs to be undertaken to show that this approach offers performance benefits and value for money compared to existing commissioning approaches.

In devolved areas MCAs and their partners will seek to fulfil this commissioning role themselves and will be subject to full local accountability in their performance of this role. It could be argued that the proposed lead provider approach bypasses these mechanisms in non-devolved areas.

Needless to say, full transparency arrangements around procurement need to be put in place for large scale commissioning activity, along with measures to ensure there is no conflict of interest and that the best providers in a given discipline receive funding to deliver that provision.

Q30. How can we best support this arrangement for providers that are commissioned by colleges?

The new subcontracting rules developed by the ESFA for adult provision need to be implemented. Management fees need to be minimised to ensure that the maximum amount of funding reaches the learner. As noted above procurement processes need to be open and transparent.

Supporting changes in provision

Q31. How can we best support local areas to improve and expand their offer to better meet current and future skills needs?

Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs), introduced by DfE, are advisory with no specific levers to improve the responsiveness and relevance of education and training provision. Whilst they have a diverse membership representative of the key stakeholders in the system they have no specific resources to incentivise behaviour change.

To develop this model, each region should have a statutory responsibility to produce a five-year skills plan for their area. This would immediately raise awareness of the regional skills agenda among key audiences and lend greater prestige and credibility to the work of Panels. It would also provide a focus for accountability with all key partners in the region signing up to the Plan.

Devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) is a welcome step in moving towards responsive provision for those areas that have received it, but AEB is a declining budget and represents only a small part of the skills landscape, and there is a need for influence and co-ordination on a holistic level, including careers, apprenticeships and loan-funded adult education provision. At present these are run centrally with limited co-ordination at national level between different programmes.

The five year skills plan would serve as the mechanism for a more efficient and effective joined up approach across these different programmes and would provide the basis for addressing the current lack of regional and local direct powers to address gaps in provision. Once a gap is identified a business case needs to be presented to ESFA to make a decision on whether to put the relevant requirement out to tender. This is a protracted and bureaucratic process, which negatively affects the credibility of partners' leadership role in the regional skills system and their perceived ability to bring about change. Five-year skills plans need to come with a discretionary funding pot that would enable regional partners to take an agile approach to ensure that local provision is responsive to emerging needs.

Chapter 2: an accountability system focussed on outcomes

A new performance dashboard

Q32. What measures are most suitable in showing how well colleges are delivering good outcomes? Which measure do you think best matches the purpose we have described in this section?

The details of the technical approach to be adopted for the dashboard indicators are not set out in the consultation and this needs to be clarified before a genuine assessment can be made of the value and feasibility of this approach.

In principle, we support the proposed shift to a greater emphasis on labour market outcomes and measuring responsiveness to local needs in the performance and accountability framework. Indeed, West Yorkshire Combined Authority has already adopted a similar approach as part of its Delivery Agreements with West Yorkshire colleges.

We agree with the suggestion that student outcomes, including employment and further learning outcomes are of central importance. Measuring career progression (in terms of increased earnings and other indicators) is important as is progression within education (from community learning to a level 2 qualification, for example).

Student outcomes including confidence, health and wellbeing, self-esteem, communication and engagement should also be recognised in adult and community learning. [Program-level impact \(the impact that individual services have on the people who directly participate in them\) and community-level impact \(the impact that many different partners, working in collaboration, have on a specific community\) should also be considered.](#)

There are additional more direct measures that could be employed, such as the level of income generated by colleges from commercial sources, including levy and fee income from employers. This gives an insight into college responsiveness to employer needs.

The details of the technical approach to be adopted for the dashboard indicators are not set out in the consultation and this needs to be clarified before a genuine assessment can be made of its feasibility. The Department's outcome-based

success measures for further education show that this kind of approach is hugely technical and complex.

However, a range of fundamental issues need to be overcome if outcome data are to be used to inform performance management in the way that is envisaged. Most notably, student outcomes are not purely determined by the curriculum offered by an institution: there are a whole range of other drivers. Variation in sustained employment and sustained learning rates appear to be heavily dependent on factors such as the age of the student, level of study, provider type, level of deprivation and whether they have a learning difficulty/disability. This needs to be taken account of in the calculation of performance to ensure that a fair picture is presented for each institution. Standard practice in economic studies is to use complex regression methods but this may not be feasible here

Q33. Of the outcome measures you have suggested above, how effective would they be at assessing college performance in a timely way?

Although outcomes measures are of key importance, they do not provide a timely indication of performance since a sufficient time period needs to be allowed for outcomes to be realised. This supports the case for a balanced scorecard of measures, including more timely indicators of quality of provision such as qualification achievement rates.

Q34. Do you agree that underperforming on the skills measure (described in paragraph 120) should be taken into account for planning an Ofsted inspection?

This measure could potentially be used in this way, providing that the measure is felt to be sufficiently robust. In view of the quality of local labour market statistics on which such a measure would be based this would need to be applied cautiously with a range of supporting evidence. It is difficult to answer the question in hypothetical terms until further technical details are provided.

Q35. Do you agree that we should publish colleges' financial health ratings in the Dashboard, as we do not currently publish these?

This could lead to unintended consequences such as an impact on the number of learners choosing an institution and therefore fewer students attending. It is unclear what the benefits of this would be.

Autonomous colleges

Q36. Do you agree with our proposal for new Accountability Agreements?

Accountability framework needs to take into account regional governance and priorities as well as broad based national ones. Achieving net zero may look differently in each local area depending on a region's industrial strengths. It is not enough to only set out the national priorities here. Furthermore, as MCAs are responsible for devolved funding, their determination in the overall accountability of that funding needs to be woven into accountability – creating a separate arrangement for devolved funds is not the best option. There should be overall

national objectives that are locally tailored where there is elected leadership and governance. Under the current proposal colleges in devolved areas face a lack of integration and coherence together with an added burden, arising out of the need to work within multiple performance systems. Overall, the proposed role of MCAs in these arrangements is too narrow and there is insufficient recognition of local accountability. This is surprising in view of the importance that is placed on colleges' role in serving local communities and meeting local needs.

There is benefit in coherently developing shared outcomes and plans within a local labour market, these can still be innovative and led by colleges but allow for consistency in strategy (see response to Q4 for how this works in West Yorkshire)

Q37. Do you agree that Accountability Agreements should incorporate and replace Funding Agreements?

As a devolved area we would seek to reserve the right to continue with funding agreements for adult skills provision.

Exploring an enhanced role for Ofsted

Q38. Which of the options above, or combination of options, would have the biggest impact on shifting college behaviour towards meeting local skills needs?

Q39. How do you think Ofsted can best make meeting local skills needs a more prominent feature within its inspection framework?

This would be welcomed, although the value of this would rely on how consistently it was applied. A key consideration here is how local governance e.g. LEPs and MCAs, can support and be involved in inspections to triangulate the information and data..

Q40. Are there any other changes to Ofsted's inspection approach that would support improvement in this aspect of college performance?

A recognised role for MCAs with FE Commissioners could also be considered

How the system will work for other post-16 providers

Q41. Do you agree that our accountability proposals should apply to all grant funded providers on a proportionate and relevant basis?

Yes, but working with regions to ensure that the right mix of provision is available to meet the outcomes needed across the range of provision available.

Apprenticeships

Q42: How might apprenticeships best feature in the new accountability system?

Support and intervention

Q43. Do you agree with our plan to give the FE Commissioner this role with a renewed focus on driving improvement and championing excellence?

In principle yes and with a strengthened link with MCAs and LEPs through a formalised role in working with FE Commissioners

Q44. What lessons can we learn from our current approach to formal intervention to help us design this new approach?

Q45: Do you agree with our proposals to create a simpler and straightforward three stage approach to improve college performance?

Q46: What specific actions do you think we need to take to ensure that performance issues are dealt with quickly and effectively?

Improving data and reporting

Q47. Do you agree with our high-level proposals to improve student data collection?

Audit and assurance

Q48. How do you think we should go about achieving our objective of keeping requirements to a minimum while maintaining confidence in the system?

Implementation and next steps

Equalities Assessment

Q49. Please provide any information that you consider we should take into account in assessing the equalities impact of these proposals for change. (For example, do you believe any groups with protected characteristics will be impacted by the changes and if so, how?)

An emphasis and focus on employment outcomes as a key measure of accountability and funding will lead to a risk of exclusion of those with protected characteristics who may rely on additional support from than qualifications and skills training in order to progress towards, secure and stay in work.

National Skills Fund Consultation

<http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations>

Responses to be submitted by 17th September 2021

Suggested WYCA Response:

Recommendation to E&S Committee for Mayor to respond to consultation by open letter and aligned to MCA responses. Consultation responses are limited to questions that are most relevant to MCAs, as detailed below.

Section 1: Free level 3 qualifications for adults

Q10. What do you think will be the key barriers to adults taking up the free level 3 qualifications?

In the current economic context, it is imperative that the National Skills Fund is flexible to local economic need to ensure that upskilling and reskilling opportunities are directed towards those individuals most in need, aiding sectors and businesses to recover from the impact of economic shocks following the COVID-19 crisis. The National Skills Fund should also have a clear focus on re-skilling and upskilling, aspiring to tackle underlying workforce challenges such as 'insecure' work (part-time, zero hours and temporary roles), the ageing workforce, immigration caps and it should also be reflective of the skills needs of the regions. There is also a clear lack of linkage between attainment of qualifications and rationale behind why individuals should take onboard this challenge, so greater clarity to employability would be beneficial.

This last aspect calls into question one of the barriers to adults taking up free level 3 qualifications and that is the lack of clear learning pathways to engage them into this provision, with many regions having a significant number of adults with low degrees of attainment, therefore the gap to level 3 qualifications is a challenge that many will see as difficult to overcome, therefore there is a requirement to support more directly those who in this position with the learning pathway noted.

Learners may also be lacking in the view of the opportunities/benefits these qualifications can bring and as such, bringing career pathways to life with clarity are crucial to engage individuals and ensure the learning opportunities are meaningful and relevant.

Other barriers are that not all of qualifications are eligible and are predominantly technical skills training which may prevent individual engagement.

In addition, there needs to be enhanced flexibility around prior attainment of qualifications, perhaps means testing achieved qualifications from extended timescales prior to encourage more individuals to access relevant L3 courses that are needed now.

Regionally there remains a funding challenge, both re the provision and access to, as well as the fact that the provider base is lacking in readiness to deliver the

required learning program which needs to be addressed and a wider and more robust provider base created.

Q11. This is a question for providers: a. How do you currently advertise your learner support offer? b. To what extent does the current learner support offer enable you to address the financial barriers which could stop adults participating or continuing in learning? c. Which financial barriers do you find it hardest to address and what is the reason for this? Please provide examples and/or evidence for your response. - **N/A**

Q12. How easy is it for adults to find out whether they are eligible for the current learner support offer? a. Really easy b. Easy c. Neutral d. Difficult e. Really difficult Please provide an explanation for your answer

D- This is heavily reliant on the providers to explain and there are no simple documents for learners to read or download on learner support. The success of any program will only be driven by ease of access and engagement on a local basis and as such experience regionally indicates the need to simplify and make more explicit the eligibility for the learning.

Success is also reliant upon individuals understanding what a Level 3 qualification is and whether they are eligible and where it is available and none of these aspects are being made easy for all to understand and explore opportunities.

Q13. Are there any other ways through which it would be useful to publicise learner support? Please set out what these other ways are and explain why they might be useful.

It is important that promotion should be appropriate to the needs of the learners within the local market, so this may be as simple as to promote more on .GOV and provider websites for wider outreach. However, to maximise the reach and inclusivity of the offering it is essential to utilise more sector specific routes, such as through trade bodies, but also for those furthest from the workplace organisations such as libraries and community ventures should be provided with awareness to provision. Similarly, engagement through employment hubs and job centre plus sites are a route which can reach many and publicise learner support to those most in need and perhaps the hardest to reach.

Individual information, advice and guidance is important to supporting individuals' ambitions, and for it to resonate it needs to be locally rooted in the local labour market – for local areas to support the take up of learning provision and progress in work. An example of this is through the Futuregoals platform, a locally developed all-ages careers platform which supports greater awareness of career pathways and supports better decisions to be made about careers- campaigns throughout 2019/20

were seen over 2million times by individuals and has subsequently signposted 5500 individuals to re:boot adult retraining courses.

Role of unions can also be significantly expanded to support employee learning and publicise the opportunities available. As a trusted source the engagement is likely to see a stronger take up from members.

Essentially there is an opportunity to better connect the national offer through empowering and enabling regions to work with local areas and communities to tailor and support the uptake of the offer

Q14. How do you think that government can support providers to deliver best practice in communicating and providing the current financial support for adults? Please explain your answer and, where possible, provide evidence for your response.

A more distinct campaign driven nationally through Government to highlight the current financial support for adults, bringing to life the opportunities can bring to those engaged in learning. The communications must be multi platformed to ensure inclusive engagement, so traditional as well as digital marketing campaigns to inform a wider audience.

This would then be supplemented by a more regionally focused approach to reach out through a range of regional platforms to reach the audience required, this could be through engagement with Job Centre Plus sites, Employment Hubs, Community Ventures to provide awareness and education of the offerings by providers. It is imperative that providers do not simply rely upon a digital marketing campaign due to the number of people who still do not have this degree of digital engagement.

Q15. For the non-financial flexibilities below, please select which you think are valuable: • Flexible start dates • Breaks in learning • Flexible modes of delivery • Weekend and evening learning • Recognition of prior learning • Other which is not listed (please specify)

The ability to have greater regional governance of programs and be able to adapt and flex to the changing needs is a key in grow engagement in programs and deliver impactful learning for more individuals.

- Flexible start dates – providers must be able to provide more flexible roll on roll off programmes, rather than being restrained to term time provision. To ensure greater inclusivity the opportunity to provide at times to suit the local needs and demographics of the learners is hugely important.
- Flexible modes of delivery – blended learning, distance learning and face to face programmes need to be available to accommodate the learners work life balance as well as varying learning styles to maximise the impact for individuals.
- Weekend and evening learning options must be more available as per the previous point. This would encourage more employees to engage and look to

progress learning for enhanced career progression into better jobs, but may also engage parents looking to return to work etc.

- Recognition of prior learning must be more robust, so to avoid repeat in learning and experienced learners. VRQ/NVQ's should be made eligible to observe competition, and then knowledge delivered to fill the gaps.

There are a range of options that can be considered to ensure greater opportunity to engage more people, the potential to accommodate learning around seasonal working maybe a consideration

Q16. Are there any barriers which might make it difficult to use or deliver the existing non-financial flexibilities? Please set out what these barriers are and, where possible, suggest ways that these barriers may be overcome.

Many of the barriers highlighted or the ability to provide non-financial flexibilities are aligned more to the provision from HE/FE as opposed to those independent training providers. The increased flexibility and ability to adapt at pace that ITP's bring over HE/FE provision means they can deliver a wider range of the flex noted above, whereas the HE/FE providers have a more structured approach which makes in more challenging, but still possible to adapt and pivot to meet changing demands.

Q17. This is a question for providers: What could encourage providers to deliver these non-financial flexibilities more often? 33 Please set out which of these non-financial flexibilities your answer refers to (e.g., "all the non-financial flexibilities above" or "flexible start dates only").- **N/A**

Q18. If you have any further comments or reflections on 'Accessibility (Section 1: Free level free qualifications for adults)' you can add them here.

The National Skills Fund should focus on flexibly supporting both employed and unemployed individuals to improve their prospects. It must support delivery which has clear line of sight to employment opportunities in the local area and be driven by the local market insight to ensure provision is timely, relevant, and meaningful but not always to be bound to qualifications, with the flexibility to support provision co-designed and/or endorsed by employers. It must also allow local areas to develop programmes to address economic challenges/opportunities, e.g., specific skills gaps and growth sectors

Employer led programmes are key to employee progression. As noted previously the provision must be as much about delivering skills to enhance employability as they are to delivering skills to provide progression into better jobs.

Q19. Different sectors may use the offer in different ways, depending on their skills needs. How do you think different sectors might make use of the offer

and why? If you are answering as an employer, you might want to talk about how your specific sector could use the offer.

Q20. How might we adapt the offer to better meet the needs of employers, including those from a range of different sectors, and a range of sizes? Where possible, please set out the proposed adaptation and which types of employers it would suit.

The focus of the offering remains on level 3 provision, and this will certainly bring significant learning benefits to those that engage. However, the challenge remains in many regions on how to provide for those who don't yet have any qualifications or have low level attainment and to support these individuals into employment or better jobs. As such the offer would meet more of the regional requirements by having greater flexibility in providing Level 2-4 courses to encourage a wider range of individuals to enhance their learning and meet the needs of the regional labour market accordingly.

Q21. How else can we encourage employers to use the free level 3 qualifications for adults to train or upskill their workers? Please set out your suggestion and, where possible, provide a reason and/or evidence for your response.

The benefits of training at this level need to be articulated more and are clearly evident to employers and individuals. For both parties there must be clear pathways to the learning provision and clear pathways beyond this provision to truly engage all parties. For employers it is important to bring to life the benefits such as enhanced efficiency, greater productivity, reduced costs, increase turnover/profitability, increase in work force confidence and competence, enhanced staff retention and the opportunity grow and expand the business are some of the more obvious "reasons for engagement". These are challenges currently faced in encouraging the growth of digital skills within business, as the lack of a clear learning strategy, a business growth strategy and lack of leadership understanding are holding back growth, therefore greater education on the benefits, the impacts and the opportunities that upskilling employees brings is required as a pathway to greater engagement.

Q22. If you have any further comments or reflections on 'Employer Involvement (Section 1: Free level 3 qualifications for adults)' you can add them here.

Priorities and entitlements for the National Skills Fund should be set nationally but commissioning and implementation should be undertaken at the level of the functional economic area. This will enable delivery to align with priorities set out in

strategic Employment and Skills priorities overseen by elected governance, with a degree of flexibility to develop new provision aligned to local labour market needs. In West Yorkshire only 36% of businesses have training plan and 29% a training budget.

Q23. This is a question for providers: What prior learning requirements (if any) do you have for someone taking a level 3 course? Please set out the prior learning requirements and how those requirements differ between different courses and sectors (if at all). For example, you may require an adult to have gained the equivalent level 2 qualification before taking a level 3 course. Do the prior learning requirements differ depending on the sector at which the course is aimed? **N/A**

Q24. This is a question for employers: Are there any particular requirements for learners looking to achieve a level 3 qualification in an area that supports your sector? Please set out these requirements and, where possible, provide a reason and/or evidence for your response. **N/A**

Q25. How else can providers best support adults without a level 3 to access the level 3 qualifications available through the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, given that they may lack some prior learning or experience? Please provide evidence and/or examples to illustrate your response.

To support those without a level 3 to access these qualifications, providers can offer progression platforms from sector specific RQF training to progress on to the level 3 qualifications. For many learners, the leap to level 3 qualifications can be daunting and may indeed discourage some from progressing, therefore the clarity in learning pathways, the benefits through career pathways must be evident to the learner to engage and motivate them in equal measures.

There may indeed be interim learning required, for example developing essential digital skills for life or for the workplace as an early stage on the learning pathway, will engage and encourage learners and support their development into more technically developed learning.

Q26. How else can we achieve the best impact for adults with the most to gain from the free level 3 qualifications for adults, alongside funding the courses? Please provide a reason and/or evidence for your response

Supporting adults through level 3 qualifications as noted above will significantly enhance the impact, providing the clarity of learning and career pathways but also providing a flexible and adaptable program of learning to ensure the learning is meaningful and impactful.

Q27. If you have any further comments or reflections on ‘Pathways to free level 3 qualifications for adults (Section 1: Free level 3 qualifications for adults)’ you can add them here.

Support for adults to achieve level 3 qualifications and beyond will increase their confidence progress into better jobs and to move into emerging sectors such as green or digital and creative and increase their household income and support local economic growth.

Take a broader view of the manufacturing industry and future requirements for Ind4.0 based on traditional skills

Q28. If you have any further comments or reflections on ‘Section 1: Free level 3 qualifications for adults’, you can add them here.

The Adult Education Budget should maintain a focus on Level 2 and below qualifications, maintaining the basic education entitlements, alongside prioritising funding towards the unemployed and those on the low wage pilots. The Adult Education Budget should provide the core basic training needs to move people to sustainable and progressive employment, while other skills funding unlocks targeted resources and flexibilities which will help meet adult re-training needs, fill skills gaps and tackle inequality.

Section 2: Skills Bootcamps

Q29. Which current aspects of the Skills Bootcamps do you think are most valuable? Select all that apply. • Short, intensive courses • Industry-specific training, designed to meet the needs of employers • Focused on in-demand skills • Fast-track to an interview • Line of sight to a job • Recruitment pipeline for employers • Flexible delivery model • Emphasis on improving diversity in technical skills. • Other – please specify 35 Please explain the reason for your response.

The most valuable aspects are as follows: -

- Industry-specific training, designed to meet the needs of employers
- Line of sight to a job
- Flexible delivery model

The Bootcamp delivery model ultimately should meet the needs of three entities; individuals, employers, and the local economy/labour market in the area in which it is being delivered. Bootcamps must be flexible both in terms of content and delivery to address rapidly changing needs and achieve employment and economic growth. The ability to flex bootcamps to delivery for employers is also crucial in enabling content to change. Providing a flexible offer that works around those in and out of work is also essential with clear line of sight to a job.

The Bootcamp model should be locally defined and endorsed by local employers alongside alignment to other programmes across the local landscape is crucial. The provision of Bootcamps in West Yorkshire has seen high numbers of diverse learners from BAME communities and women undertaking training opportunities in technical bootcamps such as rail. The Bootcamps have provided clear progression pathways for the learners. The providers have been proactive in engaging with employers to challenge their recruitment practices and encourage them to create opportunities for individuals who have accessed the bootcamps, therefore retaining that outcome focused approach throughout.

Q30. If you have any further comments or reflections on ‘Expansion of Skills Bootcamps (Section 2: Skills Bootcamps)’ you can add them here.

Regionally there is lots of positive evidence of performance, data, outcomes, case studies from wave 1 Bootcamp which is currently been provided to DfE and remain in consultation about longer term monitoring/tracking and the success of the Bootcamps due to them being delivered locally and being responsive to local need, versus nationally delivery led programmes. Noting the success of the regionally focused bootcamps, driven by local insight and local employer input, the future desire would be looking for a greater degree of devolved activity in future as we are able to evidence the local demand and the benefit of locally driven provision, through the success from wave 1.

Within West Yorkshire we have a proven track record of designing and delivering effective skills programs for individuals and employers, working effectively with the training provider network. The needs are built utilising strong and effective labour market insight into the learning needs of the region. Examples of this are re:Boot, a program developed to support L2-4 learning in a range of subjects which has seen all courses be over-subscribed and in excess of 150 individuals gain qualifications thus far.

Similarly, the locally developed Skills service for employers, supported and co-designed by West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges, through provision driven by evaluation of training needs analysis in key sectors, has seen skills provision to over 1400 SMEs, impacting nearly 8000 individuals.

There is national evidence of the need for and access to short, non-accredited, provision with local flexibility and this should very much be considered in any further expansion of Bootcamps.

In West Yorkshire, the Bootcamp pilot has been oversubscribed, just over half of the individuals applying for a bootcamp were able to secure a place.

Bootcamps have attracted high percentages of females and individuals who are BAME and underrepresented in digital and technical sectors across West Yorkshire.

38% of Learners have secured a progression as part of the bootcamp, this includes:

- Formal promotion with current employer
- Continuing in current role with additional responsibilities
- Gaining new role with new employer (including gaining Apprenticeship)
- Becoming self-employed
- Continuing to be self-employed with new opportunities for business growth

The table below provides a breakdown of the bootcamp delivery in West Yorkshire.

Training Delivered by	All Totals
Bootcamp Name	
Jan - Mar	
Learner Capacity	632
Number of applicants to date	994
Number completed to date	388
% female completed	35.7
% BAME	32.2
Number undertaken interview	156
% undertaken interview	38.4
Number confirmed progression	194
% confirmed progression	52.0
Apr - Jun (Extension)	
Learner Capacity	237
Number of applicants to date	515
Number completed to date	212
% female completed	31.6
% BAME	44.6
Number undertaken interview	32
% undertaken interview	15.6
Number confirmed progression	20
% confirmed progression	9.7
Overall	
Learner Capacity	897
Number of applicants to date	1509
Number completed to date	600
% female completed	33.2
% BAME	36.5
Number undertaken interview	187
% undertaken interview	28.6
Number confirmed progression	214
% confirmed progression	38.1

Q31. **This is a question for providers:** What do you think are the challenges in delivering Skills Bootcamps? Where possible, please provide evidence for your response. **N/A**

Q32. **This is a question for providers:** How best do you think we might help providers to overcome the challenges to delivering a Skills Bootcamp? Please refer to the challenge you have set out in answer to the previous question. Where possible, please provide evidence for your response. **N/A**

Q33. If you have any further comments or reflections on **‘Providers** (Section 2: Skills Bootcamps)’ you can add them here. **N/A**

Q34. **Skills Bootcamps currently run for up to 16 weeks. Other than the length of the courses, do you think we could adapt Skills Bootcamps in any other way to: a. Support adults to access this training more easily? b. Support adults who are self-employed to access this training and use what they learn to benefit their business? c. Better meet the needs of employers, including those from a range of different sectors, and a range of sizes? Where possible, please detail the proposed adaptation and which types of employers it would suit. Please provide a reason and/or evidence for your responses.**

The allure of the Bootcamps is their flexibility; short, sharp interventions designed specifically around the needs of a cohort of learners or around the skills needs of a group of local employers to address current vacancies or develop a talent pipeline. Some Bootcamps will ‘design themselves’, where a particular skills need can be identified and addressed in a shorter delivery model with Bootcamp graduates moving directly into vacancies. Other Bootcamps will need to be broader, addressing a mixture of underpinning knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours.

These, building block, ‘taster’ Bootcamps would be effective in addressing entrenched recruitment issues through a lack of sector awareness, in particular health and construction. Health care is about doctors and nurses, and all construction employees are bricklayers.

We are investigating the potential of some taster Bootcamps initially in care where we would screen participants for the values for care and address value-based competencies. Input from a wide range of healthcare professionals would highlight the myriad roles within the sector and further aptitude and skills input would identify potential job roles and entry routes for progression. We would develop content pitched around Level 3 in line with DfE aims (noting previous comments on the benefits of broader provision to L2-4) and tailor the practitioner input to roles that do not need extended, formal qualifications as a traditional entry route. These may include digital roles in health informatics and data analytics. The Bootcamp would be joined-up

through collaboration between NHS and private healthcare service providers and associated employers ensuring participants can be signposted to their most appropriate next step be it further bespoke or individualised training, or into employment.

We see this model as a particularly attractive option for career changers and those returning to the workplace, possibly after their own caring responsibilities have ended. A similar model with multiple taster elements would be equally effective for the construction sector.

Progressions into employment from the taster Bootcamps would undoubtedly be fewer and slower than those from the more targeted versions but we would be addressing historic recruitment issues within two of the region's key sectors. Accreditation could also be problematic, but we are investigating where individual units of a taster might form part of an 'accredited' employer recognised, qualification as part of an evidence portfolio which would follow the learner.

One additional flexibility we might want to see allowed through the funding would be the opportunity for a participant to attend two Bootcamps. This would be an exception where the taster Bootcamp 'unearthed a gem' who would benefit from an additional fast-track Bootcamp into employment.

The current provision and structure of the Bootcamps in West Yorkshire has worked well thus far and has been well received by individuals, employers, and providers alike.

Noting this success, future programmes will benefit by being more adaptable to the changing needs of the learners, the demographics, the sectors etc. We need to ensure we do not exclude the holistic, pastoral and softer skills elements of the Bootcamps. These are seen as equally important by employers as the skills and competencies. For those that have been away from the labour market for a while, pastoral support might include a greater emphasis on CV building and interview skills

Adaptions to current bootcamps can be made to support the self-employed. A self-employed Bootcamp might include training around pitching to a client or social media marketing optimisation.

Bootcamps are designed with the participant and employer at the centre. We have tried to ensure that teaching and learning methods are as inclusive as possible, although a 100% virtual delivery model does have its limitations. We have also trialled a condensed format keeping the GLH the same but reducing the number of weeks to complete. This increased flexibility is attractive to both learner and business allowing learning to fit around work and life patterns.

Q35. Skills Bootcamps are designed to give adult learners the skills they need to fast-track them to an interview for a specific job. Do you think Skills Bootcamps courses should continue to be a maximum of 16 weeks long? Please explain and provide evidence for your answer.

Through the experiences we have had thus far 16 weeks could be too long – the economic landscape can change at a rapid pace and employers engaged in the bootcamps so far have voiced a reluctance to “hold” vacancies whilst waiting for participants to complete a bootcamp.

There should be the option once again to have a more regionally nuanced offering to be able to provide for a flexible offer that meets the needs of the employer or the labour market relative to sector, needs, skills required etc.

Q36. What is the minimum length of time that you think a Skills Bootcamp course should be? Please provide evidence for your response. Providing evidence: If you are an adult learner, you might want to think about how much time you would be willing to commit to training through a Skills Bootcamp, including how many hours per week. If you are an employer or provider, you might want to give an example of a technical skills needed for a specific job and set out how many weeks it would take to learn that skill on a full-time basis.

There needs to be a distinction in this question between guided learning hours (GLH) and self-directed learning hours (SDLH). Any bootcamp, to provide adequately in-depth training, would need to be a minimum of 12 GLH, with that at least matched by an equal number of SDLH. However, this could be spread over anything from 1 to 12 weeks as dictated by the urgency of the skills need and requirements of the demographic of the participants as well as the complexity of the learning.

It should also be noted that in addition to the above, each Bootcamp should offer several hours of pastoral support to participants to enable them to have a positive progression and to meet the needs of the regional labour market.

Q37. If you have any further comments of reflections on Accessibility (Section 2: Skills Bootcamps) you can add them here.

It has been referenced throughout, but the ability to have locally led programs, which are driven by the needs of the local labour market, have the needs of the local employer and learner at its heart and have a flexible approach that again meets the requisite needs at that time, meets the needs of the sector and provides added value to the employer and the learner alike in providing employability opportunities.

The style of learning must also be reflective of the needs of the sectors, with a greater degree of flexibility to provide modular and industry recognised provision including micro-credits, therefore delivering the skills that are most in demand within the industry at that point in time.

Q38. This is a question for employers: We understand that how an employer is required to make this financial contribution could have an impact on them – for example whether employers are required to make an upfront payment before the start of the course. Are there any ways that we could make the mechanism for contributing as easy as possible? **N/A**

Q39. For all stakeholders, it may be valuable if employers could also make non-financial contributions to training. These non-financial contributions could be made by both those employers who are using a Skills Bootcamps to retrain their current workforce, in addition to the 30% contribution where they are using Skills Bootcamps to train existing employees, and by those who are not. Please select the non-financial contributions below that you think it would be most valuable for employers to make, and add any other contributions not listed that you think would also be valuable. • Providing space for training. • Providing technical equipment for learning. • Helping delivery of the training – e.g., providing some learning materials or teaching part of the course content. • Giving their workers time to learn. • Any other additional non-financial contributions not already listed that you think would be valuable. Please specify

The non-financial contributions are all relevant, but the actual value would be driven by the actual employer and their current circumstances, as such once again the benefit of being able to flexible in the provision/offering is critical to engage as many employers as possible.

In the current climate, many employers are cutting back on employee CPD, therefore the opportunity to utilise non-financial contributions may be seen as a positive step towards supporting skills development of employees.

Other aspects that may be included within the options, could be supporting learning through learner mentoring to support the embedding of learning but also to reaffirm the clear learning pathways towards “better jobs” that these programs deliver. The knowledge of the local partners will be critical in being able to offer such additional support.

Q40. This is a question for employers: Would you be willing to make a non-financial contribution to training? Please explain your response. **N/A**

Q41. How do you think that we can encourage more employers to make non-financial contributions? Where possible, please give examples and explain your answer.

Employers need to have a clarity on the additional value they will derive from these programs, the fact that the programs have been designed and built to match the

local needs and deliver to a bespoke regional challenge and that the skills being developed are needed by the employer, which is being evidenced through the successful provision in Wave 1. As always, the benefits must be meaningful for the employer to engage, and the opportunity must have the flexibility that allows a broad range of employers to engage and contribute in a manner appropriate to their business.

Q42. If you have any further comments or reflections on ‘Employer Involvement (Section 2: Skills Bootcamps)’ you can add them here.

Employers should continue to have a real and proactive involvement in the codesign of bootcamps and be able to show clear line of sight to jobs through the provision, therefore ensuring they address their own skills gaps and derive direct benefit whilst ensuring that the learners receive the learning required for future employability and are motivated to be engaged due to the line of sight to jobs evidenced.

Q43. What further learning do you think a Skills Bootcamp should enable adults to progress onto? • No further learning. • Job-based training in the workplace. • A higher technical qualification. • An apprenticeship. • Other further training and/or learning opportunities not already listed which you think a Skills Bootcamp should enable adults to progress onto. Please specify.

As part of the desire to grow life-long learning, skills bootcamps should not be seen as the end of the learning journey. For all learners there must be a vision and clear view of the learning pathway, which in turn must be meaningful through the clarity of a career pathway, whether this be through new employment or progression in current role.

Skills bootcamps needed to be signposted to for those who have not yet achieved level 1 qualifications and provision should also look to address these gaps but beyond the bootcamps there needs to be a range of opportunities that are relevant and meaningful for the individual but also the potential or current employers. The examples noted above are all potential routes, but once again the specific routes need to be identified and developed based up local knowledge and insight and engagement with the employers.

The desire to drive greater life-long learning should also mean that the future learning must also be reflective of the learners and their aspirations, needs, learning styles etc, so may be online learning which can be completed remotely to suit lifestyles, maybe interactive to match learning styles etc to ensure an inclusive and engaging approach and ensuring any barriers to future learning are removed.

Q44. We welcome any further comments on how we can best enable progression from Skills Bootcamps onto further training and/or learning, such as apprenticeships or higher technical education.

A ringfenced proportion of the fund should be focussed on L3+learning. This is likely to provide more relevant/needed technical skills within sectors and should help to dovetail with Adult Education Budget and other regional provision. This will provide additional learning pathways for individuals participating in Bootcamps allowing them to progress on to apprenticeships etc.

This learning progression will also be reliant upon the engagement of the employers within the bootcamp program supporting the further training and providing opportunities for their “new” employees to continue their learning.

The future learning must continue with the principles of addressing the local market challenges as well, and not simply be a non-specific provision to ensure the impact is a positive one for local labour market, the employer and individual alike.

Q45. If you have any further comments or reflections on ‘Pathways leading on from Skills Bootcamps (Section 2: Skills Bootcamps)’ you can add them here

need to be developed with employers – line of sight to employment vs taster sessions for larger employers such as NHS for example

Q46. If you have any further comments or reflections on ‘Section 2: Skills Bootcamps’, you can add them here.

Skills Bootcamps can and should provide huge benefit to both employers and learners alike if we can ensure the needs of both are met and that the flexibility of delivery and design is built into future offerings, and they are reflective of the local needs in their provision. It is also imperative that they complement the alternative skills programs across the region and must not simply act as a “top-up” to adult education budget activity for example.

Section 3: Meeting critical skills needs

Q47. Are there any current critical skills gaps below degree level and in particular sectors, occupations, or locations that you think the skills system will not meet, either now or in the next five years? For example, some sectors might have specific skills needs which have emerged since exiting the European Union, whereas other sectors might encounter skill needs in the future – for instance, because of new technologies linked to transitioning industries or our ambition to reach net zero by 2050. a. What are these skills gaps? Please set out what these skills gaps are and specify whether they apply to a particular sector, occupation, or location. b. What level are these skills gaps at? c. Is this a current skill gap, or something that you see emerging in the future? If in the future, please detail when you think this skill need is likely to arise. Why do you think the skills system does not meet this skills gap?

Skills gaps will always be a constant, however the ability to react and adapt to these is critical in the provision of learning. There is an increased focus at present on Level 3+ qualifications, however through pandemic impact and Brexit impacts, the need for lower-level skills is becoming even apparent and not just in emerging sectors.

Current insight indicates that there are a range of skills lacking in lower-level tech skills, with elements such as Microsoft suite learning being one of the highest in-demand skills by employers, at a level equivalent to L1-2. In addition, lower-level skills in more traditional sectors such as construction are seeing skills gaps, along with high profile shortages at present for HGV drivers. Manufacturing is another sector which is seeing a level of skills shortages at present driven by both Covid and Brexit.

In all these instances the skills gaps are at the lower level (L1-2) as opposed to the focus of L3+.

Looking beyond the present skills gaps, the changing needs of the labour market will constantly evolve, and insight indicates a significant move towards automation and the need for skills provision to adapt to these demands, noticeably within digital and green skills provision, but within these technical skills there also needs to be a focus on the softer skills requirements to match the projected needs of the labour market.

Once again, these skills needs are below degree level in the first instance, as the base point for learners is low and therefore provision needs to reflect the needs of the learners, to provide the clear learning pathways based around local insight and local labour market needs.

Q48. If you have any further comments or reflections on ‘Critical Skills (Section 3: Meeting critical skills needs)’ you can add them here.

Q49. Are there any particular sectors or occupations which would benefit from improved access to shorter courses? Please set out which sector or occupation and, where possible, provide a reason and/or evidence for your response.

Skills fund should include unitised, modular and industry-recognised provision – including micro credits / qualifications that can be combined. Funds should be targeted to increase staff skills and capacity to develop more flexible methods of delivery, taking advantage of learning technology and can be complemented by providing and developing small, locally determined, innovative pilots which test new methods and tackle skills deficits

The recent pandemic has truly highlighted the importance of utilising the differing forms of delivery and how the use of learning technology can engage a more diverse and inclusive range of learners which will have wider benefits to the local labour market.

In addition, employers are beginning to be reflective of the change in learning styles and becoming more accepting of bespoke modular learning, most notably in the digital sector but not exclusively, where modular learning is addressing specific skills gaps and providing employment opportunities as result.

The needs of the labour market will continue to change over the coming years with much more focus on automation and embedding of technology, therefore skills needs will need to be adaptive at pace to these changing needs, which lends itself to a greater focus on intensive shorter courses or more modular learning programs.

The evolving markets such as green skills will also benefit from a similar approach to be adaptive and reflective of local needs and allow courses to be developed and designed to meet the specific local needs.

Individuals currently working in high carbon sectors would benefit from improved access to training which supports upskilling and re-training in the use of new and emerging green technologies. This is particularly important in supporting a just transition to a net zero carbon economy, ensuring that high carbon workers are supported to progress or re-train, and that skills shortages are minimised.

There are constant emerging needs; the recent pandemic has demonstrated how quickly a skills response is needed. Working with key partners and employers MCAs are well placed to quickly pivot to respond to these changing needs and it is key that as bootcamps continue to evolve through the pilots MCAs continue to have a role in their commissioning and roll out so that they respond to local labour market needs.

Q50. Could more options for shorter courses or more modular learning opportunities help adults to overcome barriers to learning? Please explain your answer and, where possible, provide evidence for your response.

The recent pandemic has highlighted that the use of a range of learning provisions, whether these be modular learning, unitized learning etc have attracted a more diverse audience of learners. The use of broader learning technology platforms has also removed many barriers to learning, allowing more under-represented sectors to engage in learning which has significant benefits to inclusion and providing a more diverse workforce.

Providers being more flexible in their provision, whether this be through use of technology, length of course, style of learning, specific timings of course (evenings/weekends) also assist in removing barriers to learning and supporting those furthest from the workplace.

It is also important that recognition is made for other sectors such as those with disabilities and those where English is not a first language to ensure they are provided with equal learning opportunities.

Q51. This is a question for providers: Are you currently delivering short courses (under 12 months) or modules outside of full qualifications? If you answered yes, please specify a. What courses/modules you are delivering. b. What level these

short courses/modules are. c. Why you chose to deliver these short courses or 39 modules. d. How you designed these short courses or modules. For example, did you work with employers to do so? **N/A**

Q52. This is a question for employers: Have you funded short courses (under 12 months) or modules outside of full qualifications? If you answered yes, please specify a. What short courses/modules you have funded, and why. b. Whether you worked with the provider on the design of any of these courses. **N/A**

Q53. This is a question for employers: Do you have any skills needs that you think might be met by a short course or module outside of a full qualification? If you answered yes, please set out what these are. **N/A**

Q54. Considering the provision, we have already made available through National Skills Fund investment, do you think there are any further gaps below degree level in adult skills provision which would benefit from targeted support? If you answered yes, please: a. Specify what these gaps are. b. Provide evidence for your answer, including evidence on the impact of this gap. c. Suggest ways that these gaps in provision might best be met

As noted previously, the provision remains focused at L3 skills and there is a substantial number of people regionally and nationally who as yet do not have L1 or L2 skills, therefore the challenge to achieve L3 qualifications can be daunting for many, so as part of the wider offering, development of clear learning pathways to engage learners and steer to L3 qualifications is critical. Alongside this is ensuring that there is a wraparound support through National careers Service which is coordinated locally and meets the labour market needs.

The National Skills Fund must allow for local flexibility and focus to drive support to those that are most in need and for those looking to reskill/upskill as well as looking to return to employment. It should also allow flexibility to engage those on zero hours contracts and in temporary roles to support progression into better jobs.

The nature of the labour market at present is volatile due to recent impacts from Brexit and Covid and as such the local lens will be hugely important in being able to identify local needs, engage providers and support those most in need to engage in learning.

Q55. If you have any further comments or reflections on ‘Shorter Courses (Section 3: Meeting critical skills needs)’ you can add them here.

Q56. If you have any further comments or reflections on ‘Section 3: Meeting critical skills needs’, you can add them here.



Report to: Employment and Skills Panel

Date: 29 October 2021

Subject: **Adult Education Budget (AEB)**

Director: Brian Archer, Director Economic Services

Author: Lindsey Daniels, AEB Manager

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update the Panel on progress with devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) now the fund is devolved and under delivery

2. Information

Adult Education Budget

- 2.1. The Implementation project for the devolved Adult Education budget is now closed. The Combined Authority utilised 95% of the budget for this project, providing a saving of £56,000. The agreed 'Readiness conditions' have now been completed and are being signed off by the Department for Education. West Yorkshire has implemented and begun delivery of AEB in a shorter timescale than any other MCA.
- 2.2. The procurement of Contracted Training Providers is complete with 18 organisations contracted to deliver training provision in addition to the 20 Grant Providers. This is a considerable reduction from the 268 providers previously operating in West Yorkshire in 2018/19, with a much more focussed delivery partnership. **Appendix A** outlines all providers who have a grant or contract to deliver training in West Yorkshire.
- 2.3. All contracts are now signed and in place and delivery has commenced across West Yorkshire. Every provider, whether funded by a grant or contract for services, has a detailed delivery plan in place which outlines anticipated learner numbers, courses and geographical areas of delivery. Subcontractors are declared within the delivery agreements. Through the commissioning approach we have reduced the value of Subcontracted provision from

£9million to £1.5million, making considerable reduction of funding 'lost' in the system for management fees.

- 2.4. Recruitment has been undertaken and the majority of the AEB team are now in post. Key Account Managers are undertaking inception meetings with all providers and setting regular performance review meetings to ensure that delivery continues to meet the agreed delivery plans.
- 2.5. Management Information Systems are now in place and include:
- An automated payment system which translates the Education and Skills Funding Agencies detailed 'occupancy report' data into provider payments, and support integration to identify funding errors.
 - A 'Power BI' site which provides up to date information on delivery including learner numbers, success rates, geographical delivery and course type.
 - A Client Relationship Management tool which connects these systems and supports performance management.
- 2.6. We have now received two Occupancy Reports¹ from the ESFA (August and September delivery). Payments to Grant providers and Contracted providers have been made on time and in line with contracts, using the processes developed during the implementation project. Performance data has been provided in **Appendix B**.
- 2.7. It should be noted that a number of Grant providers are yet to supply data returns for their work in 2021/22. This is in line with their annual business cycle, and typical of sector trends. It does not pose an immediate concern regarding delivery, but should be noted that it affects the balance of the performance data. We anticipate that these data returns will be made by the November cut-off point.

Strategic Input

- 2.8. Now that delivery plans are in place for all providers, we are able to measure performance to date against these forecasts. While completion of delivery plans has been a new function for both Grant and Contracted providers, combined into an area delivery plan they provide significantly more understanding of planned delivery, which will be instrumental in reacting in-year to fill gaps and meet emerging needs.
- 2.9. The AEB management team are meeting with Local Authorities to analyse area delivery plans and further our strategic collaboration on the fund. Local Authorities have a unique line of sight into the needs of their local area, and are helping to examine the provision available, consider performance to date and identify any gaps in provision.

¹ Occupancy Reports provide the Combined Authority with delivery data attributed to providers, breaking down their learning provided into learners, learning and any support funding. These are used to understand delivery performance and to calculate payments

- 2.10. Following this, Partnership meetings will be scheduled in each local authority area to bring together our Local Authorities and Colleges with contracted providers who work in a common area, alongside other key stakeholders who can advise on demand, such as Jobcentre Plus, Careers Service, etc, in order to improve the link between provision and demand, and to increase the progression linkages within the AEB delivery partnership.

Responsive Work

- 2.11. Given the current call to support HGV driver training to ease the sector shortage, we intend to amend the West Yorkshire funding rules in line with the national policy to allow providers to claim the cost of HGV and Medical license.
- 2.12. We are working with our existing provider base to understand where additional training opportunities might be provided.

Next Steps

- 2.13. There are approx. £3 million uncommitted AEB funds remaining within the Adult Education Budget for AY2021/22.
- 2.14. In line with 2.7, the Combined Authority will work with Local Authorities to develop a proposal to utilise the remaining funds most effectively across the Region. This will also include any underspend that is identified through performance management. This will consider:
- 2.14.1. A Responsiveness fund, which considers post-covid skills needs alongside the Mayoral Pledges
 - 2.14.2. A clear and transparent process for Growth Awards, where providers are exceeding profiled delivery and can demonstrate demand
 - 2.14.3. Contract Tolerances, where providers fulfil their delivery plan
- 2.15. As we have successfully implemented the first commissioning cycle at considerable pace, and following the election of the Mayor and implementation of a new governance structure, this is a natural time to review and refresh the approach being taken for the devolved funding. The five Local Authorities, working with their local FE Colleges, have commenced work on a proposed approach to the future commissioning and allocation of AEB that aims to recognise the strategic as well as the delivery role of Local Authorities. The proposal may have implications for future devolved budgets. Further meetings have been arranged to discuss the detail of the proposed approach, operationalise the principles and clarify mechanisms, and partners' roles, accountabilities and responsibilities. An update report will be presented to the January meeting of the Committee.

Lifetime Skills Guarantee – Level 3 (delegated funding)

- 2.16. Given the issues cited in 2.6, we have limited performance data on the level 3, however we have already been notified by two providers that they will not fulfil their Level 3 allocations. Given the initial proposals from providers exceeded the funding available, it is suggested that this funding is initially reallocated amongst the existing provider base, assuming strong performance is demonstrated in the November data return.
- 2.17. If underperformance in this area continues, we will look to procure additional Level 3 provision through a mini-competition with identified underspend. The Lifetime Skills Guarantee budget is delegated, not devolved, and therefore subject to clawback.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 There are no climate emergency implications directly arising from this report.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 The overall aim of AEB funded provision is to support those citizens who have a skills deficit and need to access learning opportunities to progress them towards further learning, employment or a better way of life.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report. Initial enrolment statistics are reported below, and this will be expanded to include achievements when as delivery progresses.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1 The majority of the AEB Management team has now been recruited, with ongoing vacancies in audit.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken in the past 6 months.

10. Recommendations

10.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress to date and agree the following next steps:

- A proposal for how the Combined Authority will utilise the remaining funding and any identified underspend for AY2021/22 will be worked up with the Local Authorities and brought to the next Employment and Skills Committee as outlined in 2.7.
- Remedial action should be taken on all providers who underperform against profile in line with the Performance Management Framework, ensuring funds can be reallocated in-year to maximise AEB impact.
- For the Level 3 Allocation, the identified underspend will be distributed amongst existing provider, assuming performance is demonstrated in the November return. Additional procurement will be considered if the existing provider base is unable to utilise the contract values.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. Appendices

Appendix A and B

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Appendix A – WY Providers

Provider Name	Learner numbers by LA					Training Offer
Grant Providers	B	C	K	L	W	
Local Authorities						
Bradford City Council Total: 1183	1183	0	0	0	0	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training, ESOL & Other
Calderdale Council Total: 3006	0	3006	0	0	0	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training, ESOL & Other
Kirklees Council Total: 888	0	0	888	0	0	Preparation for Work & Other
Leeds City Council Total: 6300	0	0	0	6300	0	Preparation for Work & Other
Wakefield Council Total: 3646	0	0	0	0	3646	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training, ESOL & Other
Colleges	B	C	K	L	W	
Bradford College Total: 4802	4402	200	175	25	0	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training, ESOL & Other
Calderdale College Total: 1777	391	1244	89	53	0	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training & ESOL
Kirklees College Total: 6573	400	465	5183	368	157	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training, ESOL & Other
Leeds City College (Luminate) Total: 7787	990	23	67	6621	86	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training, ESOL & Other
Leeds College of Building Total: 800	0	0	0	800	0	English, Maths, ICT, Vocational Training & ESOL
Shipley College Total: 2028	1906	15	18	89	0	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training, ESOL & Other
Wakefield College Total: 2022	5	3	129	170	1715	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training, ESOL & Other
Leeds City Region Providers	B	C	K	L	W	
City Of York Council Total:	-	-	-	-	-	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training, ESOL & Other
Ashkam Bryan College Total: 324	50	24	47	58	53	English, Maths & Preparation for Work
Barnsley College Total: 90	0	0	15	5	70	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training, ESOL
Craven College Total: 1220	939	13	68	170	30	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, ESOL & Other
Northern College Total: 602	49	46	161	180	166	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work & Other
Selby College Total: 120	10	10	10	40	50	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training & ESOL
York College Total: 123	7	0	0	110	6	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training & ESOL

Workers Education Association (WEA) Total: 3061	922	390	429	676	644	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training & ESOL
Contract For Services	B	C	K	L	W	
Aim2Learn Total: 21	0	0	21	0	0	English, Maths & ICT
Back2Work Complete Training Ltd Total: 806	272	0	0	307	227	English, Maths, Preparation for Work & Vocational Training
B-Skill Ltd Total: 218	0	0	0	0	218	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work & Vocational Training
Business Training Ltd (Potential4Skills) Total: 368	368	0	0	0	0	English, Maths, ICT & Preparation for Work
CECOS Total: 749	282	0	0	282	185	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work & ESOL
DIP Batley Total: 225	0	0	225	0	0	English, Maths, ICT & Preparation for Work
Learning Curve Group Total: 1051	221	220	180	210	220	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training & ESOL
Pathway First Total: 961	383	192	97	192	97	English, Maths, ICT & Preparation for Work
People Plus Total: 991	472	0	267	0	252	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work & ESOL
Realise Learning & Employment Ltd Total: 694	340	0	354	0	0	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work & ESOL
Talented Training Total: 178	0	21	0	157	0	English, Maths, ICT & Preparation for Work
The Portland Training Total: 714	0	0	0	180	534	ICT, Preparation for Work & Other
The Skills Network Total: 1503	300	105	291	577	230	English, Maths, ICT & Preparation for Work
Think Employment Ltd Total: 60	0	0	0	60	0	English, Maths, ICT & Preparation for Work
Total Training Provision Total: 590	250	0	90	250	0	English, Maths, Preparation for Work & Vocational Training
Waltham International College Ltd Total: 268	90	0	88	90	0	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training & ESOL
West Yorkshire Learning Providers Total: 19	0	0	19	0	0	Preparation for Work & ESOL
Woodspeen Training Ltd Total: 783	526	132	0	0	125	English, Maths, ICT, Preparation for Work, Vocational Training & ESOL

Headline Numbers

Funding Year to Date

£1.2M

Total Funding

£2.0M

Starts

2,619

Learners

1793

Community Learning

1094

Funding % Del. Plan

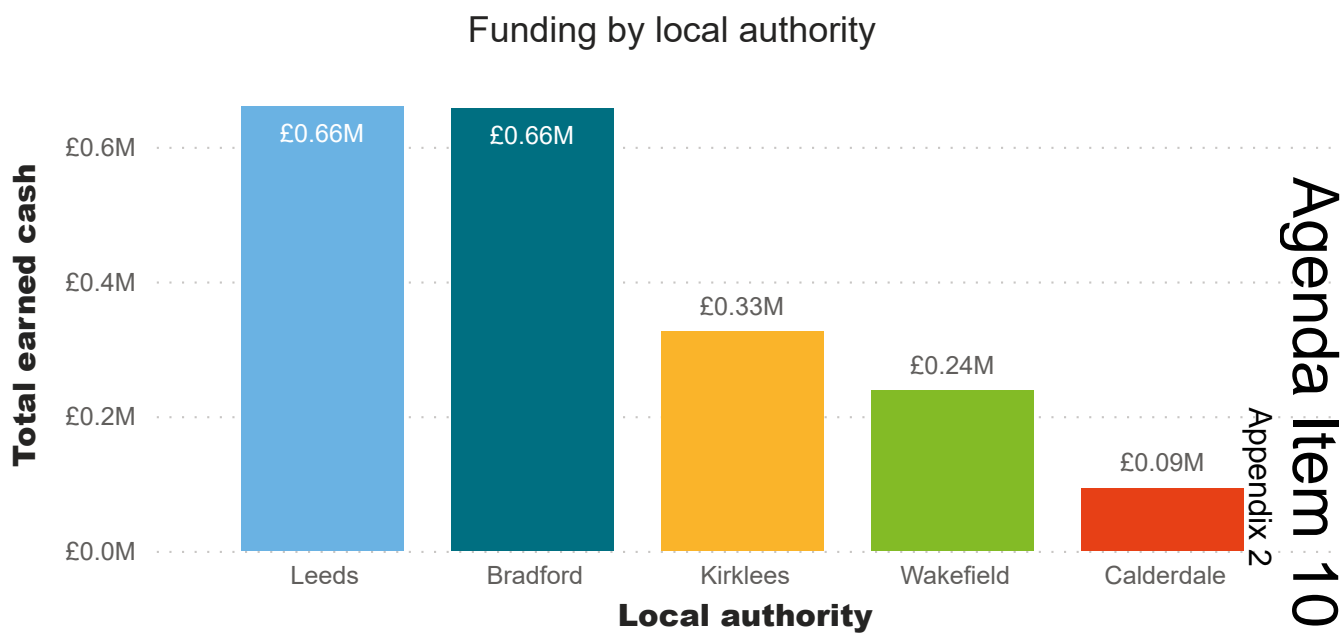
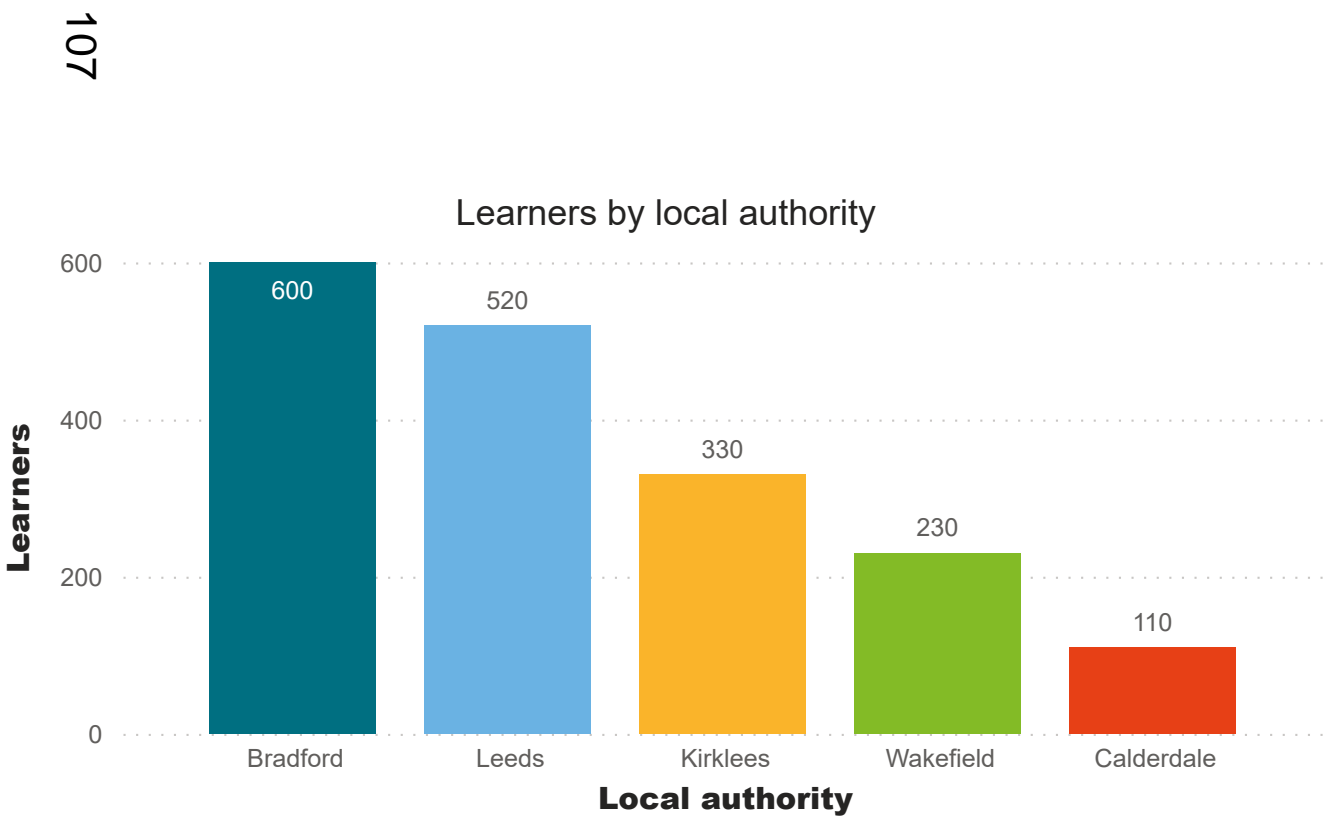
3.68%

Starts % Del. Plan

2.95%

Lifetime Skills Guarantee

46

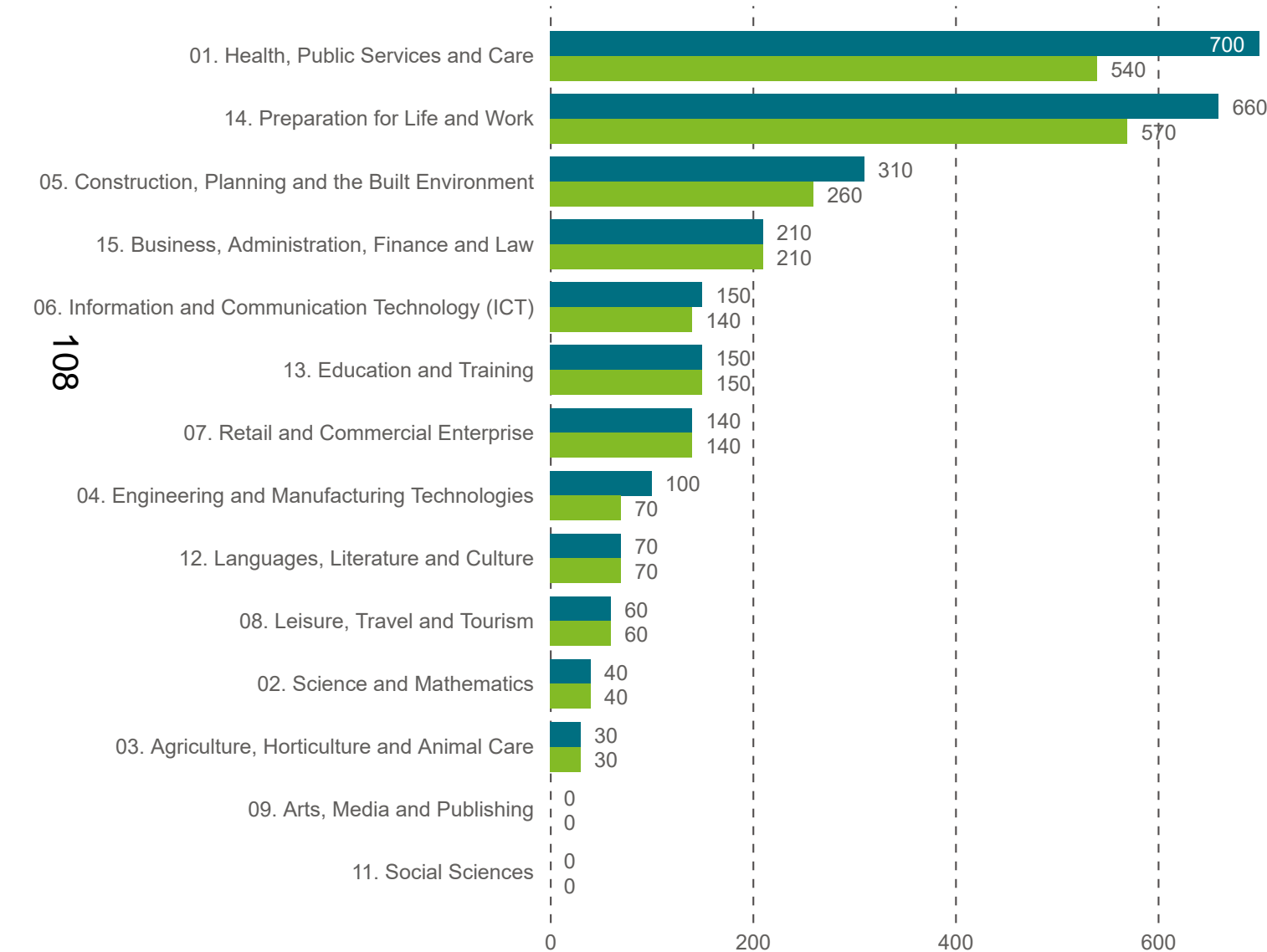


Sector Subject Area & Type

See all aims ▶

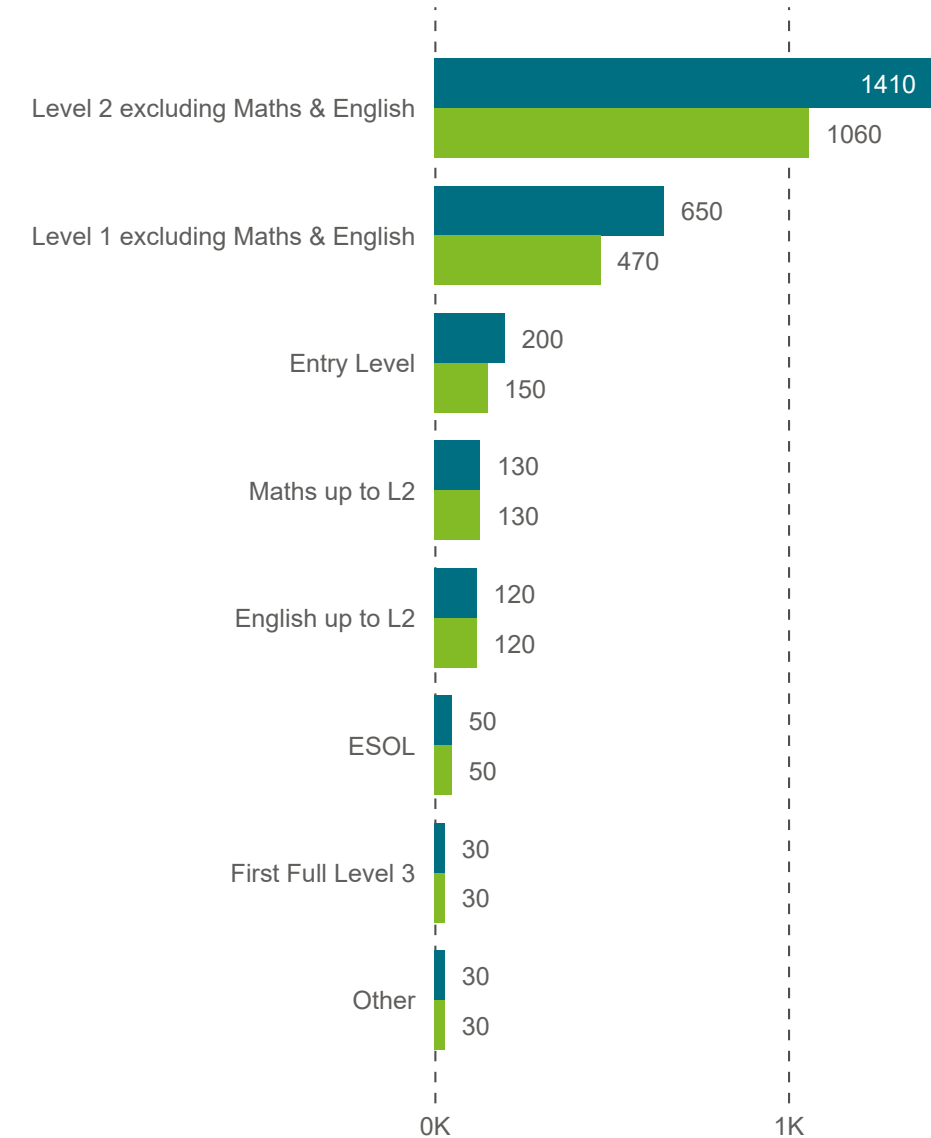
Sector Subject Area

Starts Learners



Provision Type

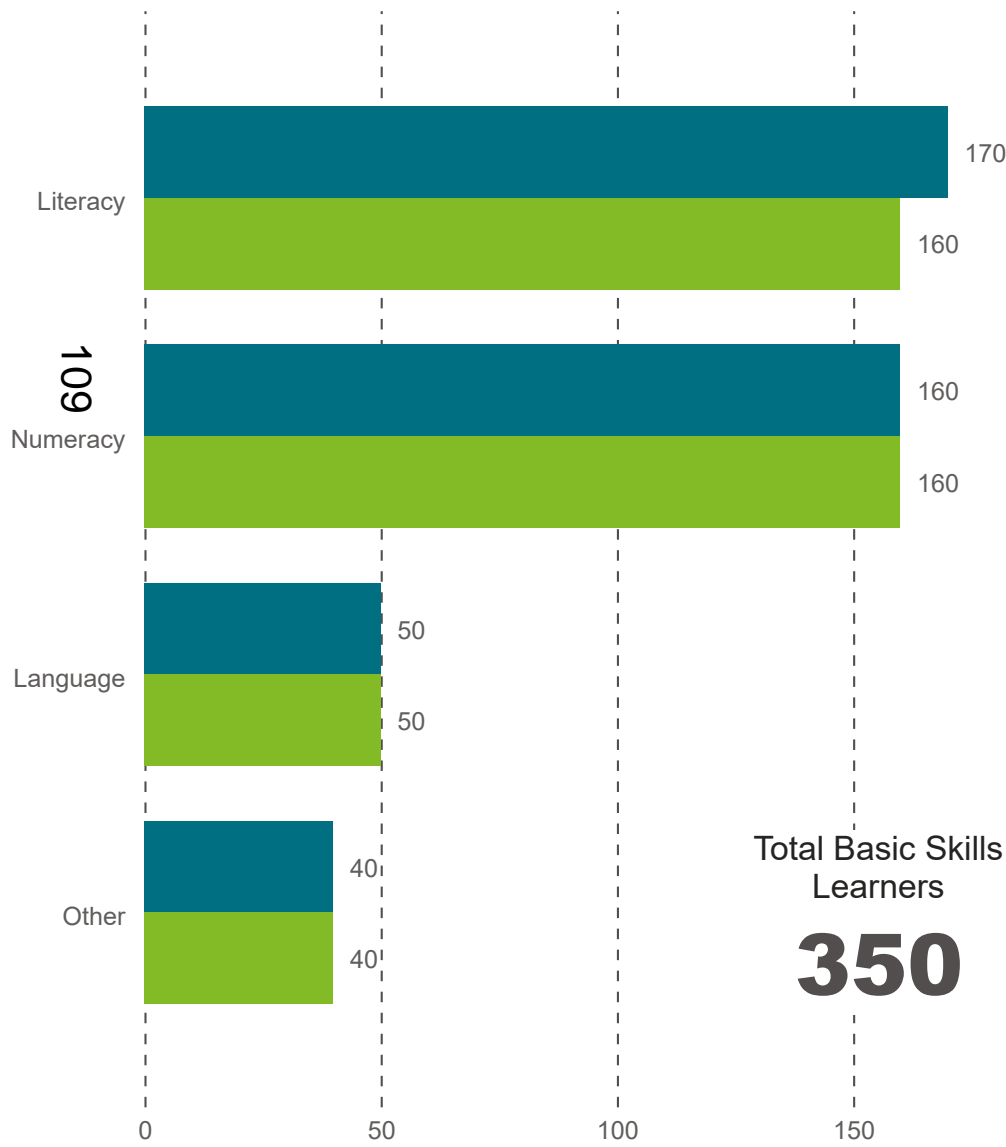
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Basic Skills Broad Type

Basic Skills Broad Type

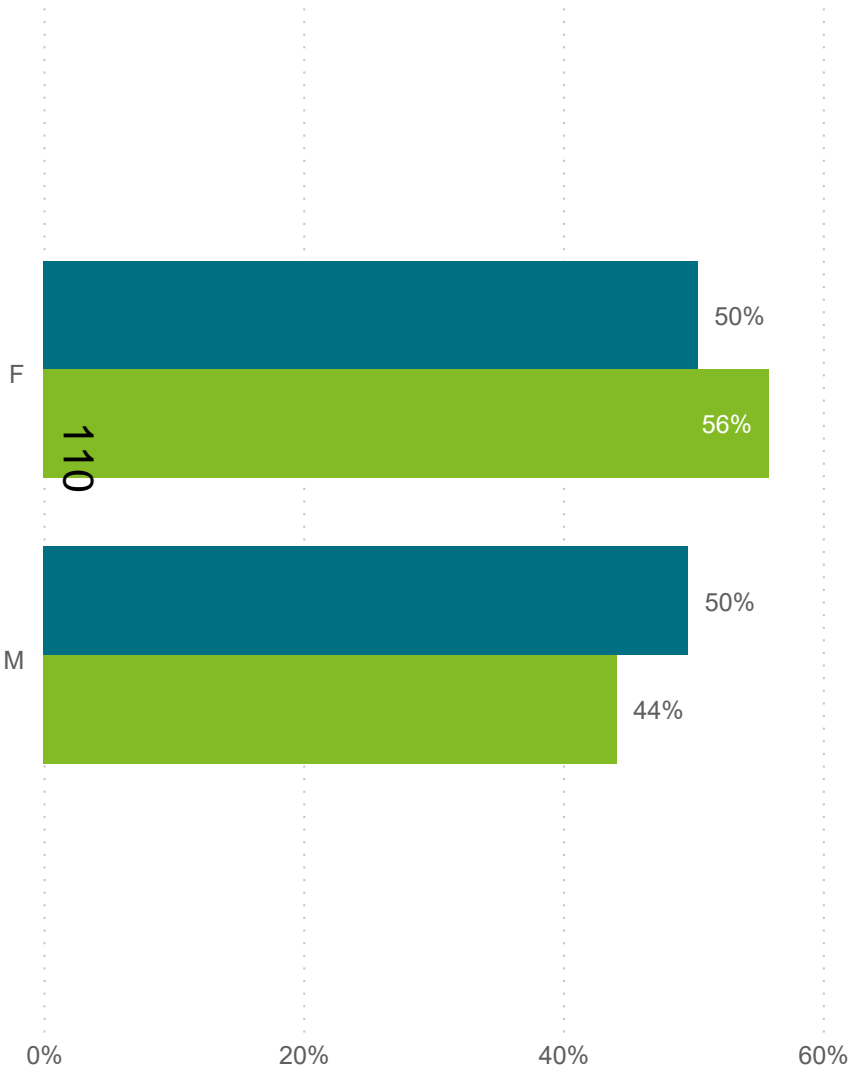
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Demographics

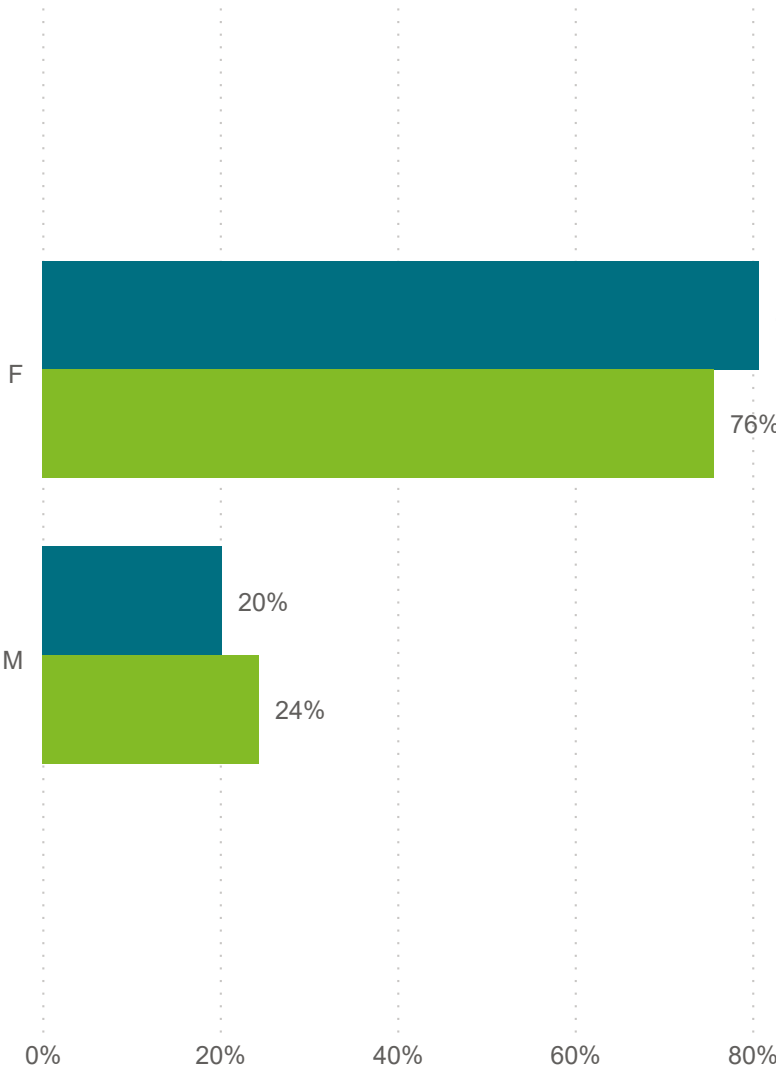
Gender AEB

● Starts ● Learners



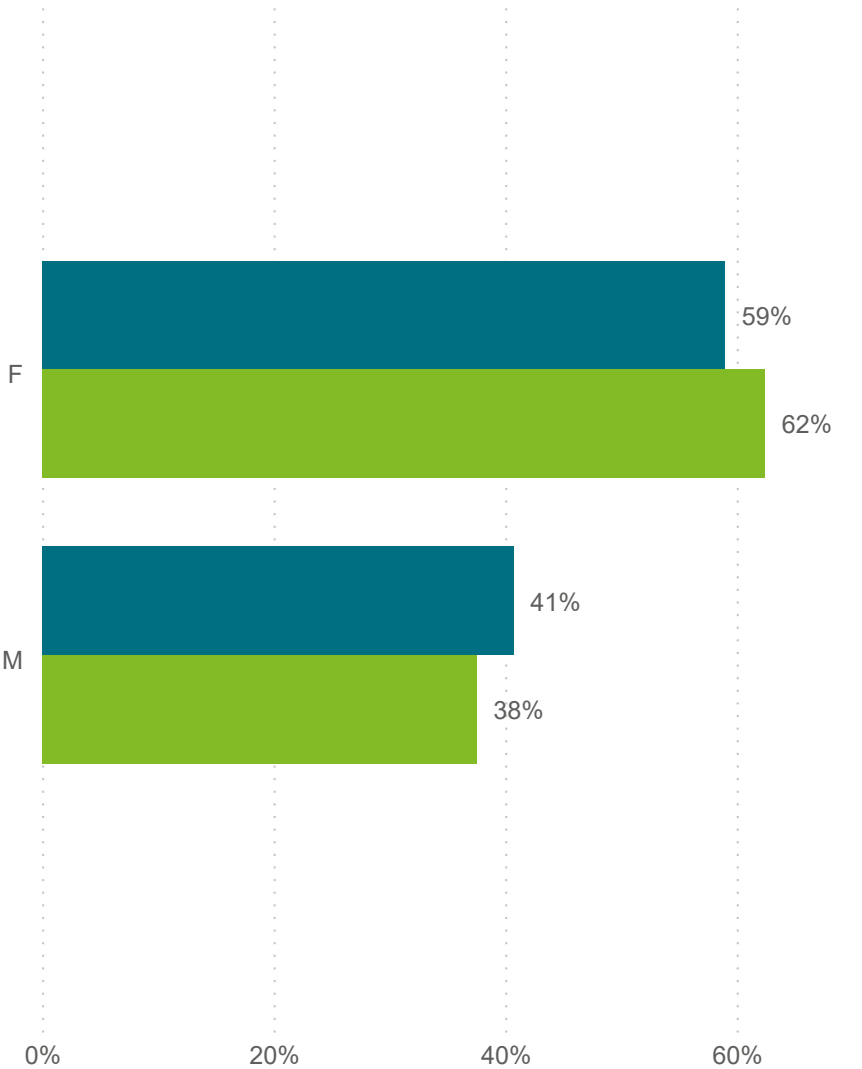
Gender CL

● Aims ● Learners



Gender All

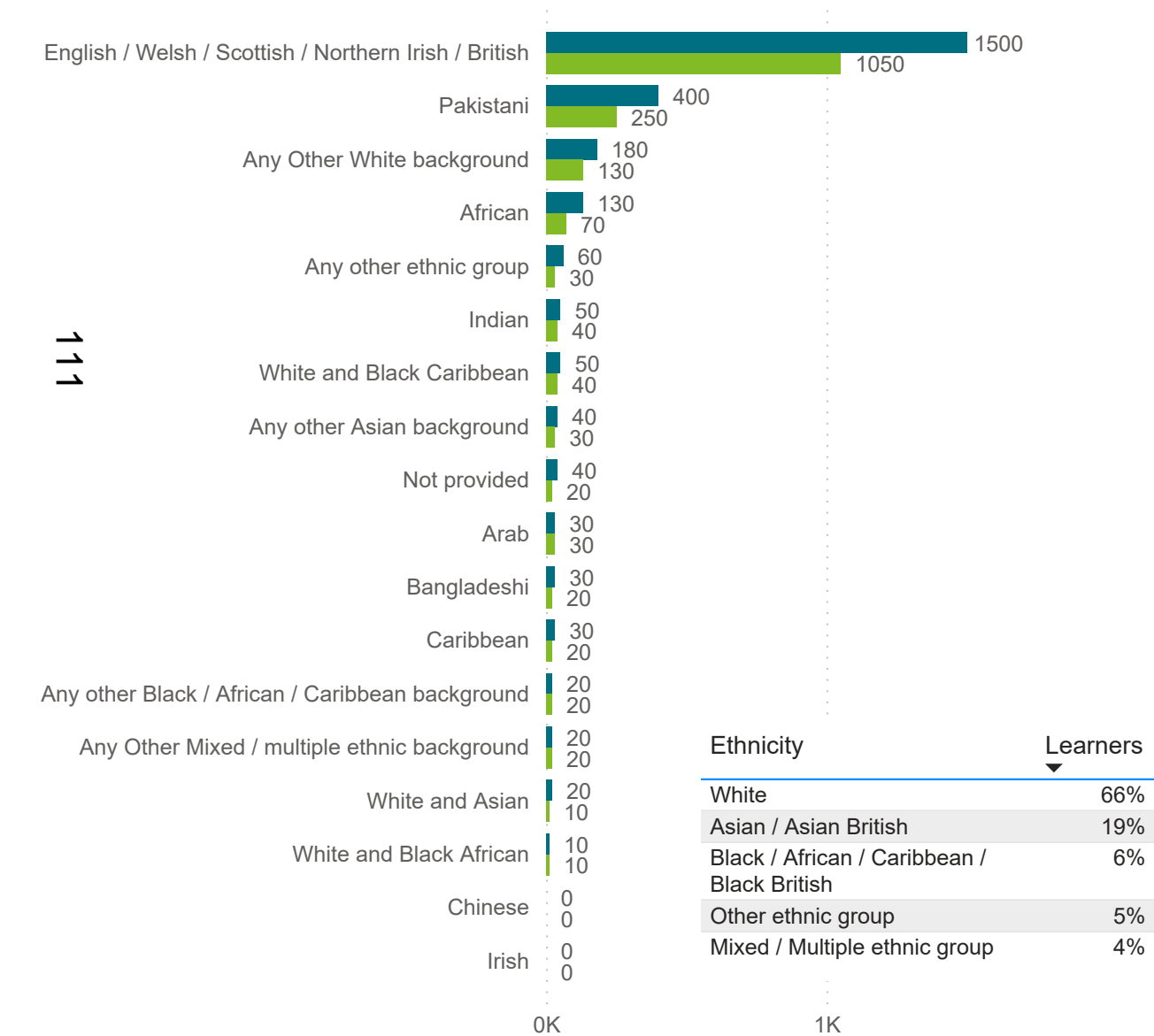
● Aims ● Learners



Demographics

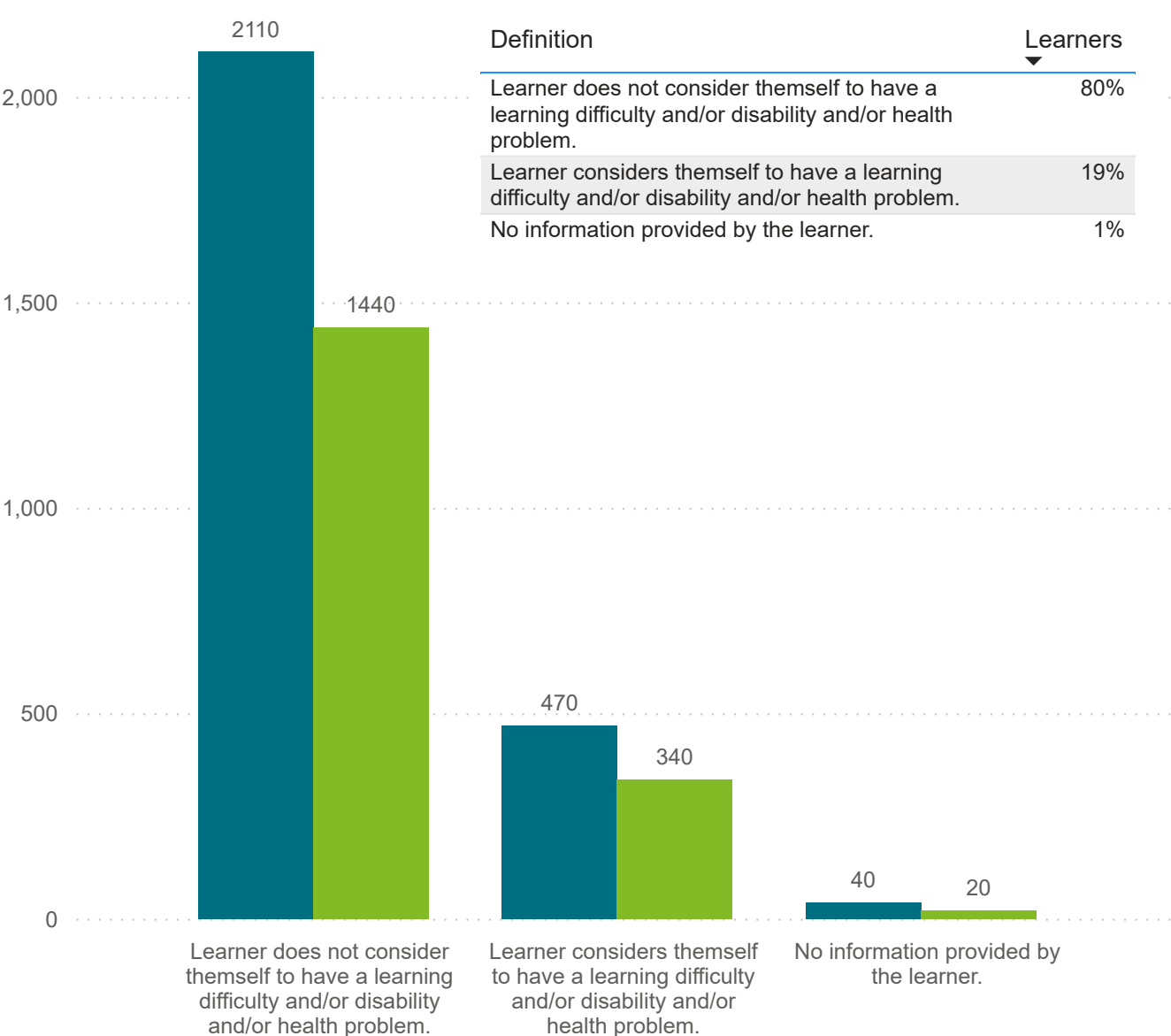
Ethnicity

● Starts ● Learners

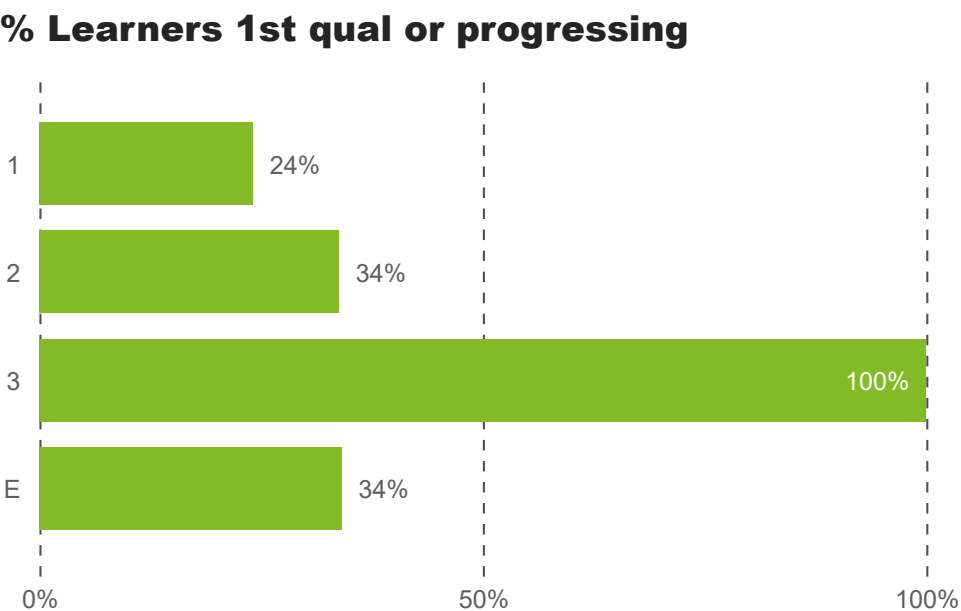
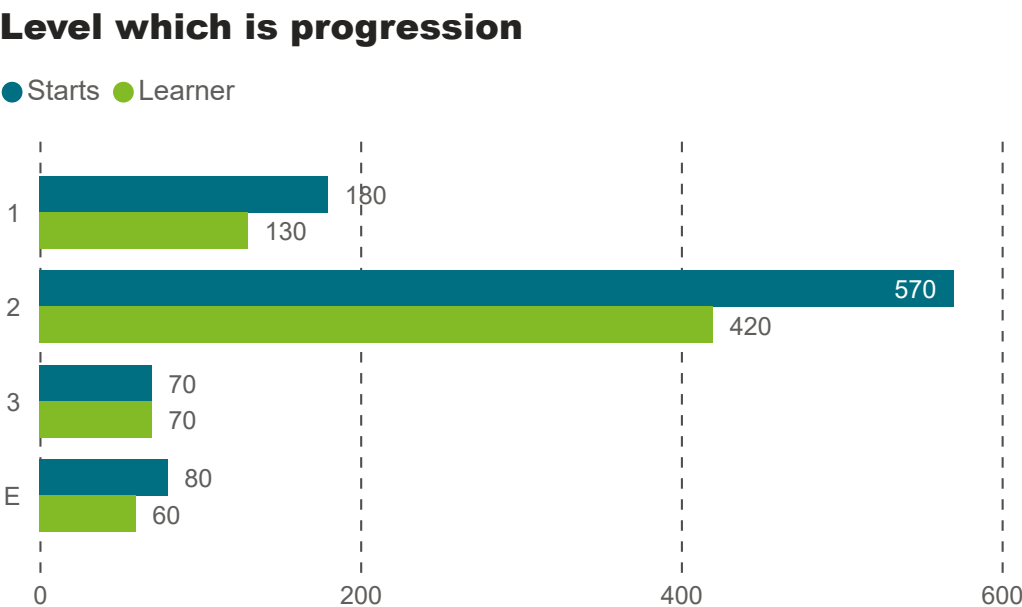
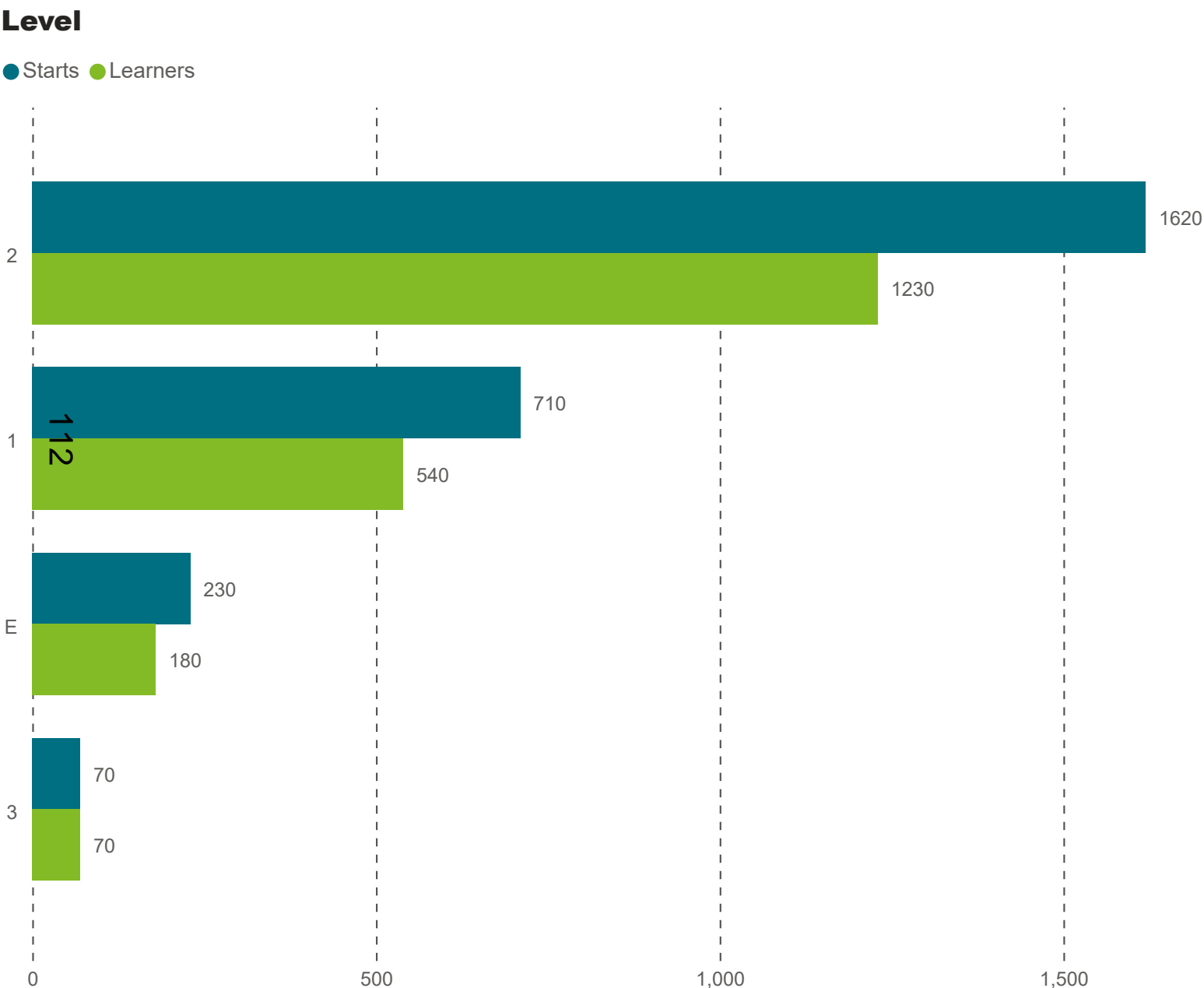


Learning Difficulty, Disability or Health Problem

● Starts ● Learner

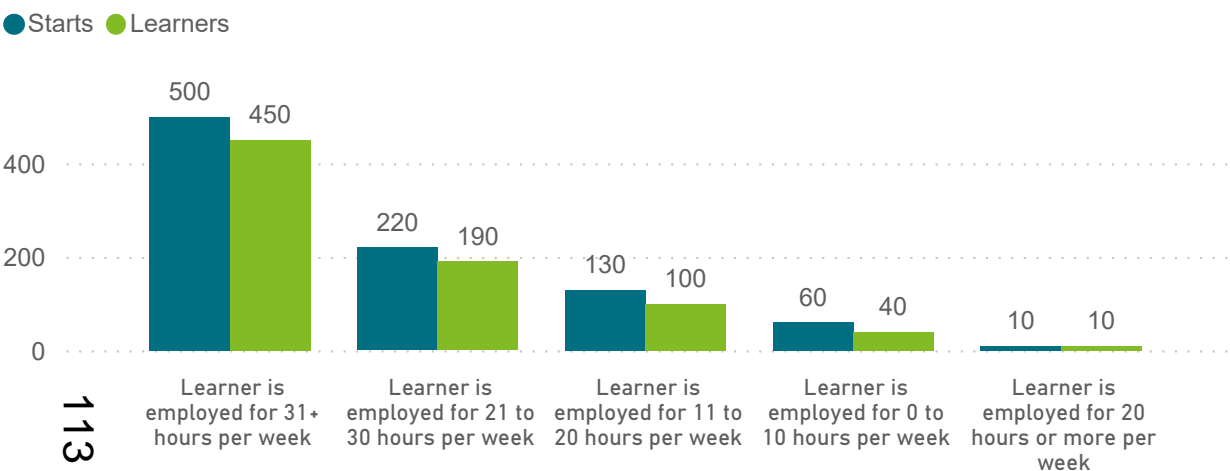


Level & Progression



Employment Status & Prior Attainment

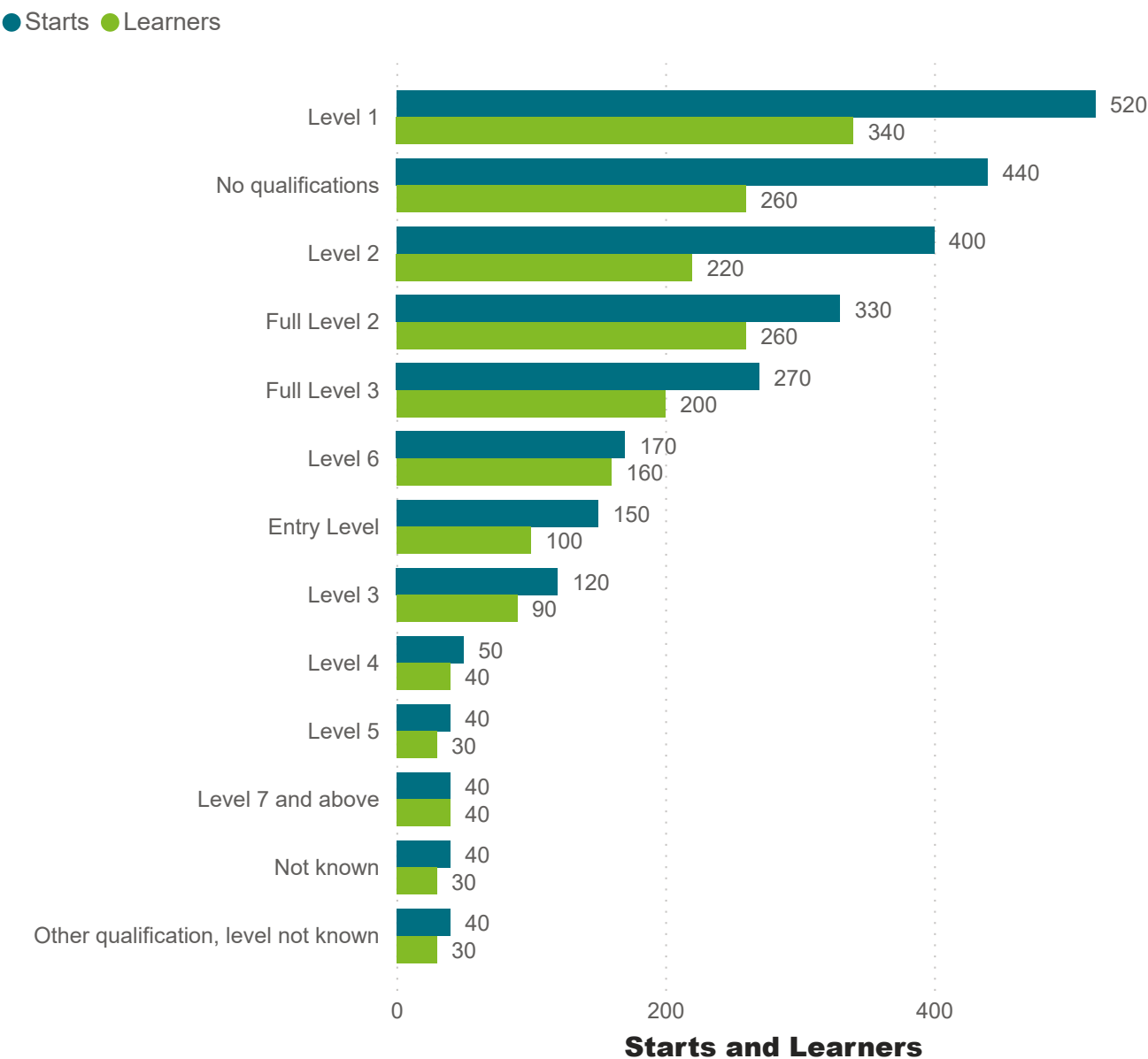
Employment Intensity Indicator



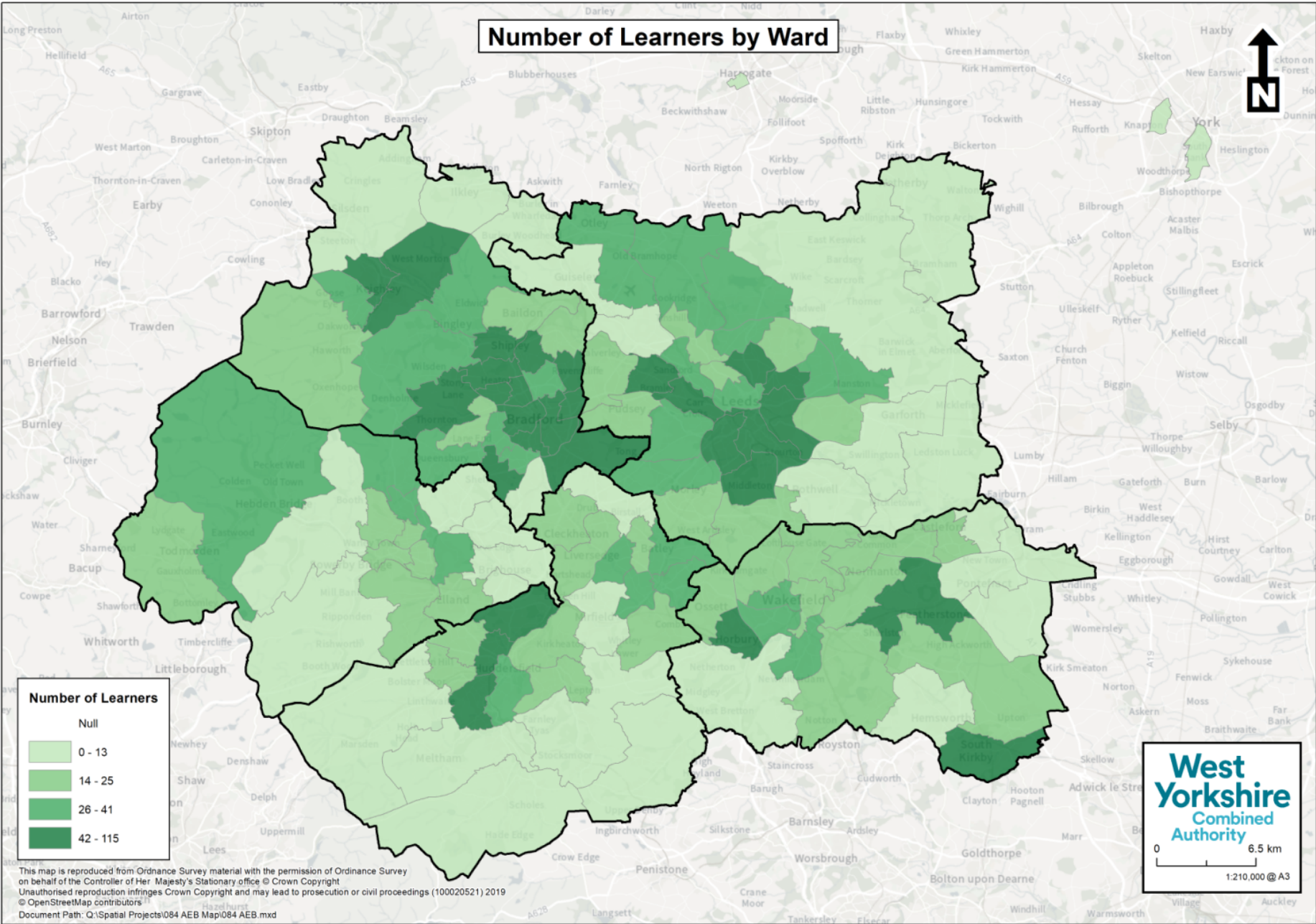
Starts and Learners by Employment Status



Prior Attainment



Map





Report to: Employment & Skills Committee

Date: 29 October 2021

Subject: **West Yorkshire Digital Skills Partnership**

Director: Liz Hunter, Interim Director of Policy & Development

Author(s): Sonya Midgley, Head of Skills Policy

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. To provide the Employment & Skills Committee with an update on the West Yorkshire Digital Skills Partnership, including the Digital Skills Plan and the next steps towards its publication and its launch
- 1.2. To seek the Committee's endorsement on the proposed vision statement and high-level priorities in the plan.

2. Information

Local Digital Skills Plan

- 2.1. The Local Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP) was created as part of the West Yorkshire Devolution deal. The LDSP brings together skills provision, acts as a test-bed for offers, and is a conduit to bring together stakeholders and partners to add value to the region's digital skills growth.
- 2.2. The LDSP's aspirations support the Mayoral pledges to:
 - Prioritise skills and training to ensure everyone in West Yorkshire has the skills they need to secure work
 - Support local businesses and be a champion for our regional economy
- 2.3. The Digital Skills Plan will support the development of these Mayoral pledges and deliver the agreed priorities in the Combined Authority's Economic Recovery Plan.
- 2.4. The Digital Skills Plan also supports the delivery of Employment and Skills Framework and its cross-cutting themes as well as the Digital Framework, particularly the 'digital skills for all' priority.

- 2.5. In February the Employment & Skills Panel members held a workshop to develop to shape and develop the priorities which will be a key focus within the plan.
- 2.6. Since that meeting the Digital Skills Plan has been developed through consultation with the LDSP board, with the support of key workstream groups which have included a diverse and broad membership.
- 2.7. Further consultation with senior employment and skills officers in local authorities has also supported defining the key priorities and actions.
- 2.8. This activity has supported the LDSP in shaping the plan, which is defined by the following vision statement and high-level priorities.
- 2.9. The vision statement for the Digital Skills Plan is:

“Creating a fully inclusive society and a thriving economy through the growth of digital skills for all.”

This means making West Yorkshire a region where:

- **There are no barriers** to people taking up, progressing and succeeding in learning and work, a place where they are supported into “good” jobs through the provision digital skills learning
 - **Where no individual is left behind** and all are supported to engage in an increasingly digital society through accessible and inclusive provision of digital skills training
 - **SMEs realise the potential** of digital to transform our economy and build economic resilience and growth
 - **Where people are inspired** and driven to engage in STEM learning to succeed and progress to be the workforce of the future into the “jobs of the future”
 - **That works collaboratively** to create and deliver digital skills provision that is both accessible and meaningful to all.
- 2.10. The following thematic workstreams have been established to focus on high-level priority areas in the Digital Skills Plan:
- Workstream 1 SME and Charity Digital Growth
 - Workstream 2 Social Digital Inclusion
 - Workstream 3 Workforce for the Future
 - Workstream 4 Simplifying the Digital Offer
- 2.11. This paper will be supplemented by a presentation at the meeting on the key priorities and actions proposed for the plan.

- 2.12. A final version Digital Skills Plan will be shared with the Committee ahead of its publication early next year.

Local Digital Skills Partnership Update

- 2.13 The Combined Authority has agreed to partner with IBM Skills Build. The platform support individuals to access a range of careers support tools, learning pathways and access to training. The platform uses machine learning to build a personalised pathway for individuals to achieve their career goals
- 2.14 The platform will be connected with the existing adult careers site www.futuregoals.co.uk to ensure a single point of contact for individuals and embed referral routes and signposting to existing project and programmes.
- 2.15 In partnering with IBM, this unlocks additional content for West Yorkshire residents and also give access to reporting on take-up from residents in West Yorkshire.
- 2.16 As report in Item 10 Mayoral Pledge Update, the Local Digital Skills Partnership Board will a key group to consult and engage in supporting the development of mayoral pledges including **Digital Skills Academy** and **Digital Skills Festival**

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1. The Digital Skills Plan will support growth of digital skills and therefore movement into “better jobs” and more productive jobs within the region. This will include growth of skills across the region to enhance innovation across green sector to support climate challenges.
- 3.2. The Digital Skills Plan will also support ‘digital first’ business growth through greater social digital inclusion provision. This will support climate challenges by enabling customers to make first contact online, reducing the need to travel.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1. Supporting digital skills development will positively contribute to recovery from the impact of the pandemic.
- 4.2. Delivery of the regional Digital Skills Plan will support inclusive growth across West Yorkshire. We expect to demonstrate progress in the following areas set out in the *Strategic Economic Framework*:
- % Qualified below level 2
 - Unemployment rate
 - % of employees in quality work
 - Apprenticeship starts
 - Jobs paying below Real Living Wage
 - Employment rate gap for disadvantaged groups
 - Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 In 2020, 23% of the adult population within Yorkshire & Humber lacked essential digital skills for life, with 17% of the population lacking Foundation digital skills. 11% were unable to turn on a digital device.¹
- 5.2 The pandemic has accelerated the rate at which our lives have moved online, increasing our reliance on access to digital services. The close association between digital exclusion and other dimensions of inequality exposes the urgent need for greater digital inclusion.
- 5.3 The Digital Skills Plan seeks to directly address socio-economic inequalities facing our population. Digital Inclusion is a central tenant of the plan, to be achieved through the growth/provision of digital skills and supporting the resolution of data poverty and the ongoing challenge of accessibility and connectivity.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1. There are no staffing implications.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1. None as a direct result of this report.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1. The Committee is to comment on the work to date on a Digital Skills Plan for West Yorkshire.
- 10.2. The Committee is asked to endorse on the vision statement, high-level priorities of the West Yorkshire Digital Skills Plan.

11. Background Documents

- 11.1. None.

¹ These statistics are from the 2020 Consumer Digital Index by Lloyds which provides these breakdowns at regional levels. Updated figures for 2021 are due to be published late October 2021.

12. **Appendices**

12.1. Appendix 1 Digital Skills Plan

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West Yorkshire Digital Skills Plan | ESC Update

Vision

"Creating an inclusive society and a thriving economy through the growth of digital skills for all"

Scope

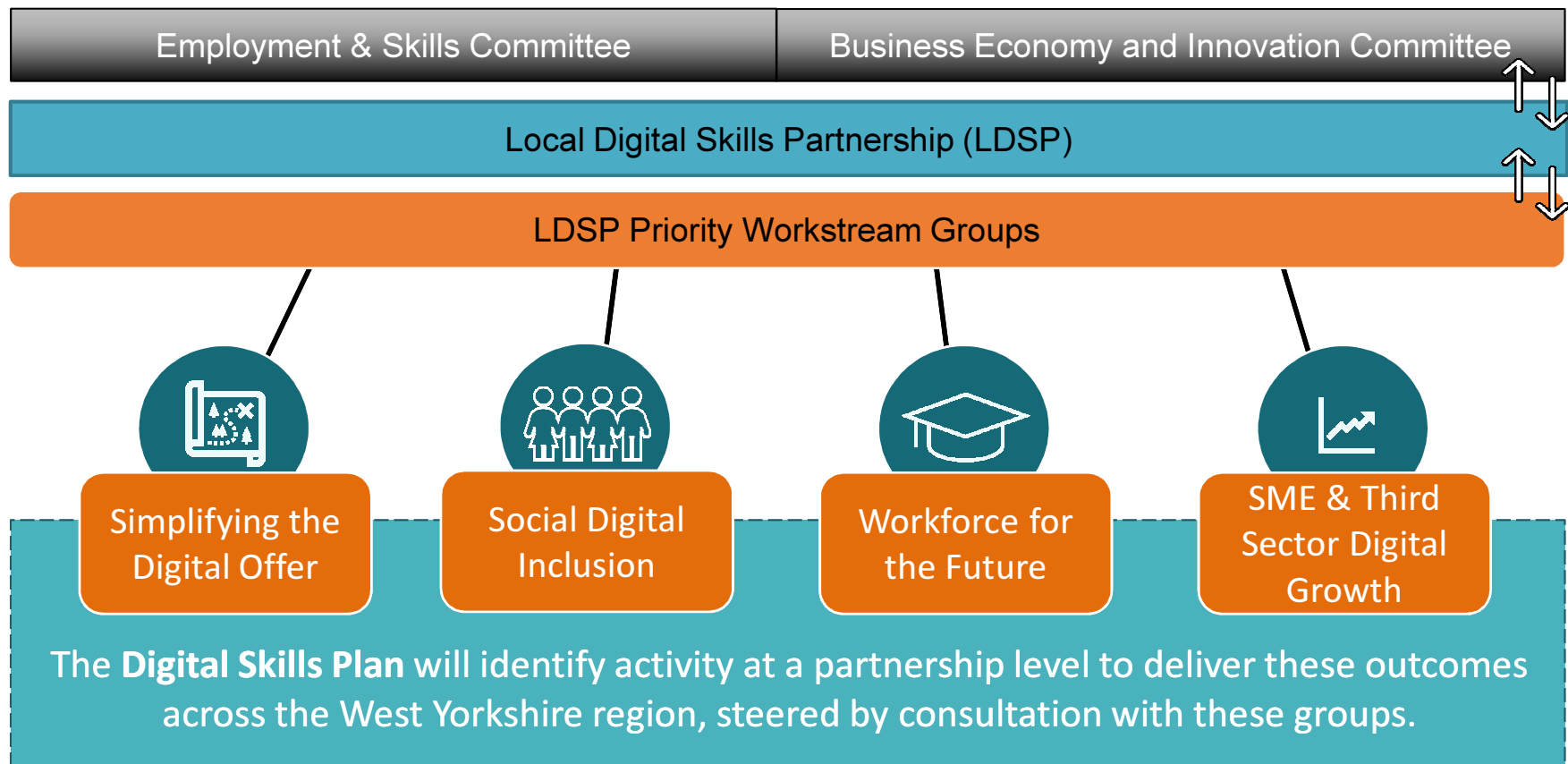
The Digital Skills Plan will need to set out the priorities and actions needed to support inclusive skills growth and digital engagement in West Yorkshire. The Plan is to be developed in partnership with business, education, the third sector and local government organisations.

The Digital Skills Plan must align with the following principles:

1. **Be evidence based**, using the best available data, information and knowledge to guide decisions
2. **Be bold and ambitious** outlining the actions required to deliver the plan's vision
3. **Be strategic and practical** in content and design so that it is accessible to key audiences of business, education and individuals
4. **Be time bound**, with a review after 3 years
5. **Reflect the geographies** of the Mayoral Combined Authority
6. **Ensure** equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of the plan
7. **Set out the shared ambitions and priorities** for the region for digital skills
8. **Describe the actions** that can be taken by the Combined Authority and others to deliver the shared ambition and priorities.
9. **Provide a blueprint** for stakeholders and partners to integrate their own priorities and delivery and be responsive to emerging needs in the region.
10. **Align** with the Mayor's Pledges, Strategic Economic Framework, Digital Framework, Employment & Skills Framework and the Economic Recovery Plan and Net Zero Carbon agenda.

Priorities (Thematic Workstreams)

The West Yorkshire **Local Digital Skills Partnership** was the 7th established, made up of passionate digital advocates and leaders from business, education, local communities and third sector organisations, who have proposed regional priorities for delivery:-



Ambitions & Outcomes



Simplifying the Digital Offer

One of our biggest challenges is that those without digital skills are unclear on what training they need, and where and how to access appropriate learning. Yet, 2 in 3 of those without digital skills would like to improve their skills if they knew what skills were needed and where they are available.

Ambition

“Demystifying the regional provision of digital skills by understanding current provision, current and future needs, and ensuring provision is easy to access for all residents.”

Outcomes

- **Universal and simplified regional access** to a widely used and valued digital skills provision.
- **Collaborative work** to create and deliver digital ecosystem that is both accessible and meaningful to all.
- **Residents understand** how to access digital careers guidance and digital skills training for any stage of life or work.

What is happening already? (examples)

- Digital Navigators Pilot
- IBM SkillsBuild: Strategic Partnership for West Yorkshire
- ‘Let's Talk Real Skills’ Digital Collaborative Skills Partnership
- FutureGoals Platform

Potential Activity in this space (examples)

- **Mapping** of regional and national digital skills provision
- **Design** of a model for a simplified/‘one stop’ access to the full digital skills offer in the region.

Ambitions & Outcomes



Social Digital Inclusion

21% of West Yorkshire residents do not have essential digital skills for life, that means things like turning on a device, navigating the internet and communicating with others. 4% remain completely offline. The close association between digital exclusion and other dimensions of inequality underpins an urgent need to act.

Ambition

“To support the growth of digital skills needed for social inclusion, addressing the ongoing challenge of accessibility and connectivity.”

Outcomes

- **No individual is left behind** as all are supported to engage in an increasingly digital society through accessible and inclusive provision of digital skills training
- **Addressing the digital divide** for disadvantaged learners, by ensuring that all communities in the region are able to access digital learning, and experience the economic benefits.

What is happening already? (examples)

- Digital Navigators Pilot
- Digital Champions Network
- Excellent initiatives within pockets of the region (e.g. 100% Digital Leeds)

Potential Activity in this space (examples)

- **Growing a region-wide network** of trusted places where people can get community help with digital inclusion.
- **Growing a regional ecosystem** of coordinated and easy to access skills provision, ensuring it is inclusive through face-to-face provision as well as virtual.

Ambitions & Outcomes



Workforce for the Future

Over 80% of all jobs currently require the minimum of basic digital skills, yet digital education is in dangerous decline with a 40% drop in young people studying ICT GCSEs and the take up of digital apprenticeships also falling by 29%. West Yorkshire has a fast-growing digital sector (now the largest outside of London), yet unmet vacancies continue to be a challenge.

Ambition

“To support greater alignment between business and education to enable growth in digital skills and promotion of digital careers to deliver the workforce for the future, ready for the ‘jobs of the future’.”

Outcomes

- **Greater uptake of STEM and digital subjects** including by underrepresented groups.
- **More students** leaving education with the digital skills needed to thrive in the modern workplace that aren’t currently available through the national curriculum.
- **Growth** of graduate skills retention in the region.
- **More individuals** with the digital skills to support key regional sectors, including STEM and Digital.
- **Individuals are able to digitally upskill and reskill** to support career progression and/or changes across any sector.

What is happening already? (examples)

- ‘Teen Tech’ Initiative
- West Yorkshire Innovation Festival
- FutureGoals
- Digital Bootcamps
- Digital Enterprise
- P-Tech
- T-Levels

Potential Activity in this space (examples)

- **Growing partnerships** between businesses and educators to inform curriculums, facilitate work experience and grow technical routes
- **Supporting educators and students** to improve and increase digital skills

Ambitions & Outcomes



SME & Third Sector Digital Growth

36% of the workforce lack essential digital skills needed to thrive in the modern workplace, and those working at small and microbusinesses are the least likely to have them. Furthermore, digital capability is essential for businesses to compete, succeed and grow their productivity and workforce.

Ambition

“To support SMEs & Third Sector increase productivity through the growth of digital skills in their workforce, improving the resilience and sustainability of organisations.”

Outcomes

- **SMEs & Third Sector are supported to realise** the value of investing in digital skills for their workforce to transform their businesses and build economic resilience and growth
- **Stronger relationships between SMEs, Third Sector and training providers** with good quality digital skills and training opportunities

What is happening already? (examples)

- Amazon Small Business Accelerator
- Digital Boost
- Clockwork City
- Digital Enterprise
- Made Smarter
- Health-tech and ICS digital transformation
- Help to Grow

Potential Activity in this space (examples)

- **Supporting business leaders** understand the benefits of digital transformation and growth of digital skills.
- **Working with** large businesses to support their SME supply chain in digital transformation and skills development

Report to: Employment and Skills Committee

Date: 29 October 2021

Subject: **Employment and Skills Programme Delivery**

Director: Brian Archer, Director of Economic Services

Author: Michelle Burton, Head of Employment and Skills

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the progress of delivery of LEP and Combined Authority-led employment and skills programmes in the Leeds City Region and how they have been adapted to support COVID-19.

2. Information

Apprenticeships and Employment

- 2.1 Interest in the **Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Service** from pledging Employers continues to grow. Over £1.8 million has been pledged to date. The service has supported 189 apprentices and 40 businesses.
- 2.2 Digital explainer animations have been developed to target levy payers and training providers.
Training provider <https://vimeo.com/597799578/8cafbf0337>
Levy payers <https://vimeo.com/593198930/692ecea97f>,
- 2.3 There is still 3 months of delivery remaining on the ESF-funded **Employment Hubs**. The service continues to support as many people as possible and efforts are being made to reach people from all communities particularly as a response to the end of furlough and possible redundancies.
- 2.4 For Quarter 2 performance, as required/reported to DWP as part of the funding requirements (as at 1 July 2021):
- Engaged 4952 15-24 year-old participants against a Q2 2021 profile of 5843 (85%). Of these:
 - 1615 participants, against a profile of 707 (%), were recorded as being from ethnic minorities

- 993 participants declared they had disabilities against a target of 527 (188%)
- 1589 participants are recorded as having no basic skills qualifications against a target of 1269 (125%)
- Of the participants starting the programme 1418 have been supported with finding education/ training, employment or self-employment against a target of 2239 (63%).

2.5 A significant number of referrals have come from Jobcentre Plus and there are an increasing number of jobs fairs both actual and virtual. The Employment Hubs have been able to support people into hard to fill vacancies and Kickstart opportunities.

School Partnerships

2.6 The **School Partnership team** has continued to support **Enterprise Advisor Network** members (senior business people who volunteer to work with a nominated school to support their careers programmes). The team has launched new training to support business volunteers with over 50 taking up this opportunity in the first round.

Over the summer additional funding has been secured for two projects to start in the 2021 Academic year. The additional funding will enable the team to expand its services to target and support more of our most disadvantaged young people as well as carrying out thorough evaluation of the support/ project to create an evidence base of “what works” which will be shared nationally.

- Project One: “The Effective Transitions Fund” will support approximately 150 disadvantaged female students, over a 30 month period. The project will deliver a programme of targeted Careers activity to both the students themselves and their key influencer (parents and staff) to support them in achieving high quality post 16 destinations.
- Project Two: “The Hub Incubation Fund” is designed to test innovation within Careers Hubs with a view to test innovative practice that can be expanded and shared across the country. This Project is a small scale pilot working with 6 schools from the Leeds City Region Special Education Need and Disability (SEND) Careers Hub to establish alumni networks of former SEND students to support career activity using the alumni as positive role models.

2.7 **The Special Educational Needs and Disability Careers Hub (SEND)** is progressing well and has started to create a SEND specific virtual work experience to help reach young people who experience the greatest barriers to gaining experience of the workplace. In **Bradford Opportunity area (BOA)** was launched by the government in 2017 with an aim to understand and tackle the various challenges and barriers children and young people faced in the Bradford district) compass completions [compass is a self-assessment tool which evaluates careers activity] and percentage of institutions achieving encounters with employers is above national average, which is excellent

despite lockdown implications. A successful project working with Bradford Council has been completed enabling meaningful encounters of the world of work. Over 580 pupils were engaged at 5 schools, including a SEND specialist school and a Pupil Referral Unit.

- 2.8 The **Kirklees Careers Hub** continues to see success and an increase in reach from the new Parental Resources launched last year. Calderdale will join Kirklees Careers Hub, the SEND hub membership will increase and a Regional Hub will launch. This means 120 Schools and College will be part of a Careers Hub for 2021/22.

Careers

FutureGoals

- 2.9 To enable stakeholders and partners to make better use of the **annual labour market report**, an interactive platform has been developed to enhance the FutureGoals website and ensure everyone can access Labour Market Information. The interactive report is currently live and can be found here: [Our Region | Future Goals](#)

In September 2021 the FutureGoals website was relaunched. The site is now more user friendly, more accessible and has had additional resources added to it, including the [Buzz Quiz](#).

Over the course of a year between August 2020 and August 2021 the increase in users visiting the site has increased by 56%. A large part of this is due to campaign to relaunch the site and the range of resources we're promoting on the website.

Adult Training

Adult skills training Framework

- 2.10 Delivery will begin in late October for the Combined Authority's Gainshare funded Adult Skills Training Framework. The Framework will work with 5 lead suppliers who will deliver innovative and responsive employer-led training across the region to 4,500 individuals between October 2021 – April 2023.

The 5 lead suppliers are: West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges, West Yorkshire Learning Providers, Aspire-Igen (The Opportunity Group) and Leeds Trinity University representing the West Yorkshire Universities.

The training is designed to address skills shortages in the region through employer endorsed training and will be responsive and flexible to address the needs of employers and the needs of individuals looking to upskill or career change.

The framework is made up of funding lots including digital, health, construction and green skills, graduates and individuals who are at risk of

redundancy. The lots link specifically to the needs of the local labour market and support economic recovery. The framework could support employers who are facing difficulties attracting the right skills to and talent to their sector by shaping appropriate training provision.

An umbrella brand and marketing campaign will be designed to promote the training and create a consistent brand identity for adult skills programmes.

Reboot

- 2.11 The Combined Authority's adult re-training programme, **[re]boot**, is part-funded through European Social Fund (ESF) and gives adults the chance to upskill, gain new skills/qualifications and improve their employment options particularly within key regional sectors, focused on construction, digital, manufacturing and engineering and the fast-growing creative sector. Since its launch in November 2019, the programme has supported 720 individuals to upskill.

A Project Change Request has been submitted to the funding manager – DWP – to address the training delivery lost through the pandemic. To maximise the offer to learners a request has been put in to ask for a three-month extension to the contract with delivery being extended from 31st December to March 31st, 2022. The extension will give the programme the chance to make up for time lost when face to face training could not be delivered and achieve the maximum number of outputs up until March.

Planned monthly marketing campaigns are taking place between Oct and December to target those affected by the end of furlough, careers starters and the 50+. The [re]boot courses and content are accessed on the FutureGoals website [\[re\]boot courses](#).

In Aug - Sept, the [re]boot page received 1,371 page views; 7.2% of all website traffic. The Combined Authority created a targeted marketing campaign to encourage greater participation of women in training programmes. This generated over 3,000 website visits to the FutureGoals [re]boot page that were 100% female, with a high demographic of 25–34-year-olds.

Digital bootcamps

- 2.12 The Department for Education (DfE) funded **Digital and Technical Skills Bootcamp Pilot** went live in January 2021 and had a further extension to continue delivery until the end of July 2021. Throughout the seven months, thirteen digital and technical bootcamps were delivered and were influenced by employers to address skills shortage needs. The Pilot also tested delivery models in a small, directed way to develop innovative and highly responsive courses that link directly to the local digital and technical economy. Provision was not bound by existing accreditation and offered the flexibility to meet needs of employers directly, building on the success of existing programmes and relationships.

The bootcamps supported individuals from underrepresented groups such as BAME, women and those unemployed due to COVID-19 or those looking to upskill. At the close of the reporting period for the Bootcamps delivered in January – March 2021, 53.4% of participants for whom it was appropriate had a job interview with an employer and 64.3% of participants secured positive career progression* as a result of skills acquired through their Bootcamp.

- 2.13 At the end of August, the Combined Authority submitted a proposal to DfE to extend provision and increase the value of the contract by £650,000.00 to deliver a further series of Bootcamps between October 2021 – March 2022. The DfE have awarded the funding which will support a further 250 individuals. The extension to the contract is currently going through the CA's project approval process.

**This includes becoming or continuing to be self-employed, a new role with current or new employer or continuing in current role with additional responsibilities and progression prospects.*

Delivery Agreements

- 2.14 Plans are in place to refresh/renew Delivery Agreements as reflected in the AEB strategy during autumn/winter 2021. Consideration will be given in development to how new Delivery Agreements will complement new review and reporting requirements of the FE sector around how they are working with and responding to business skills needs and other proposed activities within the Skills Bill including the proposals for Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and any recommendations from the current pilot programmes.

Skills for Business

- 2.15 The ESF funded [Skills for Growth](#) programme is on track to meet its business engagement targets. The projects/activities with education providers remain limited due to ongoing Covid restrictions on events. Business Partnership Advisers are working closely with SMEs to address skills gaps and recruitment needs, with particular demand for internships, placements and graduate recruitment. Businesses are also being referred to other support programmes, for example, the Employment Hub, the LEP Growth Service, and the Enterprise Adviser Network, to provide bespoke support based on businesses' immediate and longer term needs.
- 2.16 Performance up to the end Q3, as required/reported to DWP as part of the funding requirements (as at 30 September 2021):
- 154 (target 144) businesses have completed an Education Engagement Plan and are planning to work with a local college or university
 - 54 (target 76) projects have been completed with a college or university
 - 376 (target 304) individuals from a college or university have participated in a project

- 2.17 The team is working closely with Trade and Investment colleagues to support new businesses in the region. Graduate recruitment and training/upskilling management are key requirements when discussing establishing a business in the region. There is high demand for high level digital skills and manufacturing.
- 2.18 The **Entrepreneurial Package of Support** is a three-step “ladder” of enterprise support intended to increase the numbers of people considering self-employment/enterprise, particularly from groups underrepresented among start-ups.

The steps of the ladder will be

- Pre-startup support – marketing campaign, workshops, school programme
 - Start-up support of all new enterprises including social enterprises, cooperatives, and all sectors (including those not traditionally supported by the LEP due to funding restrictions such as retail and hospitality)
 - Support for innovative entrepreneurs – providing intensive support for individuals with the potential to become successful innovative entrepreneurs and / or businesses.
- 2.19 The Employment and Skills team will deliver the pre-startup support which will include:
- **A regional campaign** raising awareness of enterprise opportunities particularly targeting demographics including graduates, women and communities that may be less likely to consider starting their own business.
 - **A series of free workshops** (delivered one to many at different locations around the region and virtually), covering subjects including: idea development, , market research, networking
 - **A young people’s enterprise awareness programme** delivered in primary and secondary schools and colleges with practical experiences.
- 2.20 Officers from Calderdale and Kirklees are assisting with the procurement of the pre-startup programme and have approved providers for the regional campaign and workshop delivery. The schools programme will be procured by the end of the year.
- 2.21 The programme will launch on the 3rd November with an online event for partners and providers. The Mayor and Sir Roger Marsh will launch the programme and support community-based activities across the region to engage underrepresented groups including women, ethnic minorities and people who identify as disabled.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 There are no climate emergency implications directly arising from this report.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 Schools engagement activity specifically targets cohorts of young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 Programmes will actively engage with BAME individuals from the across the region and groups considered to be disadvantaged in the labour market and in specific sectors.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1 Recruitment of a number of key posts is currently underway to support Employment and Skills programme delivery and compliance.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 The Panel is asked to note and comment on the progress of delivery of employment and skills programmes in the Leeds City Region.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. Appendices

Digital Skills Plan

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