

INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF THE EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

**TO BE HELD AT 2.00 PM ON MONDAY, 24 JANUARY 2022
DUE TO COVID-19, THIS INFORMAL MEETING WILL BE HELD
REMOTELY AND WILL BE LIVESTREAMED HERE:
[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/CHANNEL/UCAZJNSGPQZZT41VIBN2
ZK9A/LIVE](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAZJNSGPQZZT41VIBN2ZK9A/LIVE)(COPY AND PASTE THE LINK IN YOUR BROWSER)**

A G E N D A

- 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 29 OCTOBER 2021**
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- 5. EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PROGRAMME DELIVERY**
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- 6. ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET**
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Led by: Peter Glover
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- 8. STATE OF THE REGION UPDATE**
Led by: Peter Glover
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- 9. INTEGRATED CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY**

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10. MAYORAL PLEDGES

Led by: Sonya Midgley
(Pages 139 - 146)

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SM', with a horizontal line underneath.

WYCA Managing Director



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2021 AT PRINTWORKS CAMPUS,
LEEDS CITY COLLEGE, HUNSLET ROAD, LEEDS LS10 1JY**

Present:

Councillor James Lewis (Chair)	Leeds City Council
Rashik Parmar MBE (Deputy Chair)	IBM
Councillor Kayleigh Brooks	Leeds City Council
Councillor Ian Cuthbertson	City of York Council
Councillor Silvia Dacre	Calderdale Council
Councillor Imran Khan	Bradford Council
Liz Needleman	BT
Amanda Stainton	Portakabin
Bill Adams (Advisory Representative)	TUC
Sam Alexander (Advisory Representative)	Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Colin Booth (Advisory Representative)	Further Education Representative
Nav Chohan (Advisory Representative)	West Yorkshire Skills Partnership; Chair
David Cooper (Advisory Representative)	Leeds City Region Headteachers Network Representative
Alex Miles (Advisory Representative)	West Yorkshire Skills Partnership; Deputy Chair
Tim Thornton (Advisory Representative)	West Yorkshire Skills Partnership Deputy Chair

In attendance:

Chris Joyce	DWP
Brian Archer	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Michelle Burton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sophie Collins	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Lindsey Daniels	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Peter Glover	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sonya Midgley	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Janette Woodcock	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Peter McBride, Cllr Richard Foster, Sam Alexander, Martin Booth, David Cooper, Mike Curtis, Orlagh Hunt, Richard

Mason, Peter O'Brien, Claire Paxman, Glynn Robinson, and Sue Soroczan

2. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no items of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

3. Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no items exempt to the press and public

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 February 2021

Resolved : That the minutes of the Employment and Skills Panel held on 23 February 2021 be approved.

5. Chair's introduction and Update

Councillor Lewis welcomed members and new members from Local Authorities to the first Employment and Skills Committee and said it was a new Committee but builds on the great work of the former Employment and Skills Panel led by Rashik.

As the new Chair, with Rashik continuing his input to the Committee as deputy, he is looking forward to working with members to shape this Committee and agenda and whilst there is a regular schedule of meetings, is keen to allow engagement and input in between meetings and with members of other Committees.

As deputy mayor for Tracy Brabin, Councillor Lewis said he is committed and supportive of employment and skills to unlock the potential we have in the Region and believes it is a true enabler to inclusive growth, so is looking forward to working with members on this agenda. This Committee will only work if all commit to attending and contributing where we can and that to this end, he is keen that wherever possible, we prioritise attendance in support of this agenda.

The Chair said that as part of the update he wanted to share with members a few key areas as follows: -

Budget and Comprehensive Review

Many of the announcements on skills had already been made prior to the speech, and the detail on how much will be spent in the different packages is not entirely clear.

There was a lot missing from the budget including employment support, and some important details are yet to emerge – particularly around UK SPF as the successor fund to ESF

The main skills announcements were:

- a new £560m 'Multiply' programme through UK SPF for adults with low numeracy skills
- £1.6bn to expand and increase the T Level offer
- £554m for short courses and skills bootcamps (a commitment from the manifesto)
- £1.5bn for capital investments linked to high value courses
- £500m from the new health and social care levy will be for skills
- AI scholarship programme

Further announcements of interest around education include funding for a new 'Start for Life' early years programme, funding for more 16-19 places, recovery programme, extension of school holiday activities and food programme

There are also further investments in Work Coaches

Union Learning Fund

The Union Learning Fund (ULF) was originally set up in 1998 to support trade unions to widen access to learning and training in workplaces.

The fund supported workplace projects across England and was coordinated by the TUC. Each year around 200,000 workers were supported into learning or training with union support through the ULF and the TUC. The government withdrew funding for the TUC Union Learning Funding from March 2021 (annually circa £11m), in order to refocus use of the funds to support FE colleges as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee announced by the Prime Minister in autumn 2020.

Union learning reaches people that other DfE programmes do not reach. For example, take up of English and maths qualifications (up to level 2) by adults declined by around 30 per cent from 2010–11 to 2017–18 despite a fully funded government entitlement. In contrast, ULF-supported projects continually exceed their annual targets for these learners.

The TUC have submitted a request for £170k over two years to fund a post in The region to coordinate and raise of awareness in the workplace of the benefits of training and development for employees and employers.

Bill Adams, TUC representative, gave a verbal update and the Committee was invited to consider the proposal and funding opportunities to support the request.

In noting the Committee discussed the update and said this was a critical resource with everyone working together and members supported the proposal.

The Chair thanked members for their feedback.

6. Employment and Skills Committee Governance Arrangements

The Committee considered a report and overview from the Director of Economic Services to advise 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 Employment and Skills Committee and the terms of reference for the Committee attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

It was advised that the Employment and Skills Committee is a decision-making Committee, and the **quorum** is 3 voting members to include 2 Combined Authority members or Local Authority co-optees.

The Combined Authority also appointed Councillor James Lewis as Chair of the Committee and Rashik Parmar as Deputy.

Resolved: That the Employment and Skills Committee governance arrangements approved by the Combined Authority at the Annual Meeting on 24 June be noted.

7. Data Monitoring & Evidence Base for Committee

The Committee considered a report and overview by the Economic Evidence Manager on the latest evidence and intelligence which included a presentation of key messages from employment and skills analysis to inform discussion and information on the Skills Advisory Panel and to propose a list of topics outlined in the report for a forward workplan discussion and agreement.

The presentation included a 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 and an overview of current trends in the labour market based on the most-timely data available for West Yorkshire.

In addition to annual reporting against the SEF indicators and more in-depth review of the findings of the annual labour market analysis it is proposed to provide timely, regular reporting to each Committee meeting based around a standard set of indicators. The analysis of current trends appended to the report focussed on the following elements / indicators. It is proposed to report against these elements as a standard item for future Employment and Skills Committee meetings.

- Key developments in the national labour market
- Employment trends in West Yorkshire (based on HMRC real-time

- information for pay-rolled 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)

The Committee was invited to review the proposal and provided suggestions for any additional coverage or indicators.

The Economic Evidence Manager was thanked for his comprehensive report and in noting members said they understood the skills shortage is a complex issue and a diverse recruitment policy has never been so important. They would support everything that can be done to encourage people back to work.

The Committee was also asked to consider the following list and identify their preferences for future meetings.

- The Green Jobs Taskforce, and its proposed work programme
- The verbal update on the West Yorkshire Digital Festival

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the latest intelligence relating to employment and skills in West Yorkshire and the current performance of West Yorkshire against the Strategic Economic Framework Indicators be noted.
- (iii) That comments and feedback by members be noted.
- (iv) That the activities that are planned under the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Education and the proposed schedule for the production and publication of forthcoming labour market analysis reports be noted.

8. Mayoral Pledge

The Committee considered a report with an update on Mayoral pledge activity in relation to the Committee and alignment to broader Strategic Economic and Employment and Skills Framework. The Committee was asked for their recommendations on the next steps for pledge development.

The Chair said this is a really exciting opportunity for this Committee to shape how we see the two pledges of '1000 well-paid, skilled green jobs for Young People' and 'Prioritise skills and training to ensure everyone in West Yorkshire has the skills they need to secure work.

With the impacts of COVID and skills shortages impacted by Brexit, it is important that we make sure there is the right support in place to support more people into and within good work.

The Committee was asked to

- Provide feedback on The Green Jobs Taskforce, and its proposed work programme
- Provide feedback on the proposed West Yorkshire Digital Festival
- Give Initial thoughts on proposals for pipeline development linked to the manifesto and Employment and Skills Framework
- Discuss how the Committee sees its role in promoting Inclusive Growth through the pledges?
- Provide feedback on how the Committee would like to engage with the Mayoral pledges as part of its forward work plan, including those that will be led on by other Committees of the Combined Authority.

In noting the Committee discussed and agreed that these were good pledges and supported. Members were conscious that a lot is already happening throughout the Local Authorities and there is a need to push for continuity in the long term.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That members discussed the Mayoral Pledges and in particular the approach and feedback and comments be noted.

9. Forward Plan

The Committee considered a report with a verbal update to propose a list of topics for a forward workplan for the Committee to July 2022.

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.

In his introduction to the Forward Plan item the Chair said we need to drive investment in skills by individuals and employers, based on locally rooted careers information and guidance, we need to tackle areas with specific skills gaps including digital and green skills as well as manufacturing * engineering, digital and health and social care sectors whilst ensuring they are accessible to everyone and are inclusive.

We must create the conditions for good work both by supporting development and implementation of the Fair Work Charter but also by supporting business to have good working practices and that are engaged with the skills system.

Through this agenda we must also work to develop stronger links to the place based, skills and net zero agendas and the committees driving work on those issues. Ultimately, we want to support people to get good jobs and have successful careers that support them to fulfil their personal ambitions, we want strong business that provide good jobs for the residents of West Yorkshire. We will therefore need to regularly review progress on the Employment and Skills Framework, AEB strategy as well as the Digital Skills Plan that we will discuss later so that we can ensure as many people as possible can access education, work and take part on everyday activities that increasingly rely on having these skills.

The Committee was asked to discuss and agree the role of the Committee, the priorities for the Committee to both the Mayoral pledges and the broader regional strategic framework

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the feedback and comments be noted.
- (iii) That the role of the Committee and priorities for the Mayoral pledges and the broader strategic framework be agreed.

10. FE Reforms

The Committee considered a report to provide an update to the Committee on the latest FE Reforms and the subsequent Skills and Post 16 Education Bill.

The Committee was thanked for its input to the two consultations that took place over the summer on the National Skills Fund and Funding and Accountability. This was a good example of working together outside of the formal meetings to help shape the response together from West Yorkshire. The White Paper on FE Reforms covered 35 different reforms and the Committee was advised there will be more to come, and that Officers will be seeking support to shape a response.

On noting the Committee provided views and comments on the reforms and the proposed legislation to be completed

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the comments and views of the Committee on the proposed legislation to be completed be noted.

11. AEB Programme

The Committee considered a report and a verbal update by the AEB Manager

on progress with the devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) now the fund is devolved and under delivery.

Devolution of the Adult Education Budget offers us an opportunity to align this £65m fund with the needs of the regional economy and to deliver better outcomes for learners. It is important that we recognise the strategic as well as the delivery role of Local Authorities and officers are working hard to ensure that they balance these dual roles. A strategic skills group of LAs and the Combined Authority will be meeting on 12 November to discuss joint working in the context of skills devolution, including a draft paper which has been led by colleagues from Bradford Council.

The Committee was 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 of the report.

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.

In noting members provided feedback and comments and said that they were looking forward to the report containing up to date data to be brought to the next meeting to be held on 24 January 2022 and was happy with the recommendations. It was also noted that ITP's should be consulted.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted
- (ii) That feedback and comments from members be noted.
- (iii) That the progress and next steps be noted and agreed.

12. West Yorkshire Digital Skills Partnership

The Committee considered a report and verbal update on the West Yorkshire Digital Skills Partnership including the Digital Skills Plan and the next steps towards its publication.

Digital skills are vital to accessing everyday activities as well as work. The most recent Lloyds Digital Index shows that whilst the number of people

without essential digital skills for life – that’s being able to turn on a device, navigate the internet and communicate with others, has fallen it still remains at around 21%. It’s not just individuals but small business too that needs support. The Local Digital Skills Partnership has brought together a number of leaders from across sectors over the past year and has already coordinated a number of support programmes that have supported around 7000 individuals in the region. This plan sets out the key priorities and what needs to be done next to close the digital skills divide.

The Committee was asked to comment on the work to date on a Digital Skills Plan for West Yorkshire and endorse on the vision statement, high level priorities of the West Yorkshire Digital Skills Plan

In noting members said this was an excellent report.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That members comments on the work to date on a Digital Skills Plan for West Yorkshire be noted.
- (iii) That the vision statement, high level priorities of the West Yorkshire Digital Skills Plan be endorsed.

13. Employment and Skills Programme Delivery

The Committee considered a report and a verbal update by the Head of Employment and Skills 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.

The paper provided a summary of the broad range of activity that the Combined Authority is delivering, working closely with partners, on the Employment and Skills agenda. This includes activity funded from different sources including European Social Fund and new programmes being delivered utilising the gainshare funding secured as part of the WY devolution deal.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted
- (ii) That member’s feedback and comments be noted.
- (iii) That the progress of delivery of employment and skills programmes in the Leeds City Region be noted and agreed.

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Report to: Employment and Skills Committee

Date: 24 January 2022

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, summarised in the graphic below.

Employment and skills offers delivered by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership



Young People				
FutureGoals Campaign to inspire and inform young people about careers.	Employment Hub Providing support through individual advice, guidance, apprenticeship and employment opportunities.	Schools Partnership Matching business volunteers to schools and colleges for promotion of career pathways and labour market information and raising aspirations for young people in West Yorkshire.	SEND Support Careers resources to support those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), educators within SEND schools and colleges, parents and carers and businesses.	
Adults				
FutureGoals Campaign to inspire and inform adults about careers and support them to upskill or change career.	Skills Connect Courses for individuals to retrain and upskill in key sectors including digital, construction, manufacturing and engineering and creative sectors.	Adult Education Budget The devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) supports West Yorkshire residents who are unemployed to gain sustained employment and increase the skills for employed individuals to progress whilst in work.	Employment Hub Linking all age groups with training and retraining, employment and apprenticeship opportunities and self-employment.	Enterprise West Yorkshire Supports individuals from diverse communities to find out if starting a business is right for them and learn how to run a start-up business.
Business				
Employment Hub Provides businesses with access to employment or recruitment support including apprenticeships and a talent matching service for individuals seeking employment.	Skills for Growth Supports business skills and growth needs by engaging with the wide range of education establishments in the region.	Enterprise Adviser Network Engages employers to volunteer as an Enterprise Adviser to develop careers support in schools or support the Give an Hour campaign.	Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Supports businesses not spending all of their levy funding, to transfer up to 25% of their annual contribution to fund apprenticeships in other organisations.	Enterprise West Yorkshire Supports start-up businesses from diverse communities to grow through online and face to face workshops and tailored advice.

2. Information

Apprenticeships and Employment

- 2.1 Interest in the **Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Service** from pledging employers continues to grow. Over £2.2 million has been pledged from 11 levy paying businesses. Discussions are underway with a further 10 levy paying companies re future pledges. To date 50% of the pledged funds have been allocated to support 228 apprentices, of which 49 were new opportunities.
- 2.2 Delivery of the ESF funded **Employment Hub** programme has now come to an end. Employment Hub 2 funded via Gainshare, will pick up a similar service supporting individuals across the West Yorkshire geography who are seeking support to access and secure employment, training/retraining or self-employment.
- 2.3 Final data for the ESF funded programme will not be available until Spring 2022. However, performance to 14 December 2021, indicates the following:
- Engaged 5679 15-24 year-old participants against a programme profile 6294 (90%). Of these:
 - 1861 participants, against a profile of 800 (233 %), were recorded as being from ethnic minorities
 - 1101 participants declared they had disabilities against a target of 566 (195%)
 - 1754 participants are recorded as having no basic skills qualifications against a target of 1384 (127%)
 - 236 participants were from a single adult household with dependent children against a target of 252 (94%)
 - Of the participants starting the programme 1910 have been supported with finding education/ training, employment or self-employment against a target of 2706 (71%).
- 2.4 **Employment Hub 2** contracts for delivery (gainshare funded) began on 1 August 2021 and will run until March 2023. Data on performance on Employment Hub 2 is limited to date as our local authority delivery partners have concentrated on the final quarter delivery of Employment Hub 1. However, provisional data shows 666 participants have been engaged during October and November 2021 against an overall programme profile of 5,500.

School Partnerships

- 2.5 The **School Partnership** team has doubled Career Hub membership this year, with the majority of schools/ colleges now benefiting from enhanced support (120 Schools and College will be part of a Careers Hub for 2021/22). The team is actively recruiting new volunteers to the **Enterprise Adviser Network** for 2022 (senior business people who volunteer to work strategically with a nominated school to support their careers programmes).

New projects have successfully commenced in term one and will target and support some 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.

- 2.6 The new **Regional Careers Hub** has successfully launched with 28 members with a focus on using exploring labour market information and embedding good practice. **The Special Educational Needs and Disability Careers Hub (SEND)** is progressing well and is working hard to share learning across the whole network and planning to launch a new resource in March 2022: Employer Engagement toolkit. This will help employers explore the many benefits that working with people with special educational needs can provide to their business and employees.
- 2.7 The **Kirklees and Calderdale Careers Hub** has integrated their new members and continues to see success and an increase in reach from the new parental careers resources launched last year. There is a focus on governor briefings to elevate the importance of careers in schools.
- 2.8 York Consulting have now completed an **evaluation** of a number of strands of school partnerships activity delivered by the Combined Authority. In particular, the report assessed the impact of the **Raising Aspirations** pilot which was a grant fund (£227,900 allocated funding) for schools to deliver projects that aim to increase social mobility for disadvantaged students by providing innovative careers interventions and connecting with employers. The pilot saw 4278 disadvantaged learners (5847 total beneficiaries) benefit from the project. Schools have reported that learners were in a significantly stronger position to make a more informed choice around careers because of the investment. Schools have also reported stronger relationships with employers within skills shortage and economic priority sectors which has led to learners progressing into work experience within these sectors. At another school there has been a 60% increase in employer engagement activities since, and as a consequence of, the pilot. The evaluation also found that schools within the **Kirklees Careers Hub** have seen an overall increase against 5 out of the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks since inception in 2018 as well as schools reporting back a ‘high level of satisfaction’ from being part of the Careers Hub. See appendix 1 for full report.

Careers

FutureGoals

- 2.9 The FutureGoals site is seeing a month on month increase in the number of individuals it is reaching across West Yorkshire. In November the site had a 42% increase in traffic compared to November 2020 and there was a 50% increase in new users again compared to November 2020. There is also an increase happening in conversion (people clicking through from the posts to the FutureGoals website) from the social media campaigns which is increasing the number of citizens from West Yorkshire accessing resources and free training through the website.

- 2.10 In the new year, FutureGoals will also become a platform that will support individuals to access employment opportunities in the region. The add on will be called FutureGoals – Jobs and will provide a comprehensive source of real-time vacancies and courses as well as Kickstart opportunities. Once live, FutureGoals Jobs will promote local employment hub services on the website which will make direct referrals for individuals seeking employment.

Adult Training

Skills Connect

- 2.11 The West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the LEP have launched free Skills Connect training courses to help adults gain skills for job roles in the digital, construction, health and social care, and environmental sectors.
- 2.12 All courses have been designed by local employers to align with local skills needs and job vacancies. Anyone over the age of 19 and living in West Yorkshire can sign up for a course. There will be opportunities for participants to learn directly from industry and business professionals with guaranteed post-training interviews available in some courses, linking them directly to current vacancies. The first courses available will boost digital skills including Cyber Security, Digital Marketing, Data Analytics and many more. From the new year, there will be many other courses available in health and social care, construction, and green jobs.

futuregoals.co.uk/skillsconnect

Reboot

- 2.13 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.
- 2.14 A Project Change Request (PCR) has been approved in principle by the Managing Agent, DWP, to give the programme the chance to make up for time lost during the pandemic when face to face training could not be delivered, and achieve the maximum number of outputs up until March. In particular, there is a focus on addressing the target of females gaining improved labour market status by offering a women only Team Leader / Line Management course.

Digital bootcamps

- 2.15 The Department for Education (DfE) has awarded a further £650,000 to the Combined Authority to extend delivery of the Digital Skills Bootcamps pilot until March 2022, allowing training to be offered to an additional 285 participants, on the basis of the success of the original pilot in West Yorkshire. The bootcamps support individuals from disadvantaged groups such as

BAME, women and those unemployed due to COVID-19. They create an opportunity to develop innovative and responsive adult training that addresses the needs of unemployed adults and those who need additional skills to progress in their current employment.

- 2.16 From January 2022, the Department will release details on the next wave of bootcamp funding which will be implemented across the country from March 2022. MCAs who were in receipt of pilot funding will be offered the opportunity to engage in consultation sessions to influence how funding will be allocated. The CA has been lobbying DfE for funding to be devolved in order to deliver locally designed adult training aligned to the regional labour market.

Creative Skills Programme/Beyond Brontes

- 2.17 Continuation funding from the Mayor's Creative New Deal Fund was agreed at October's Combined Authority, to fund another year of Screen Yorkshire's Beyond Brontës. This will support 2 cohorts across the 12 months, 72 participants in total (32 in cohort 1, 40 in cohort 2).
- 2.18 It was agreed the name would be changed from Beyond Brontës to **Beyond Brontës: The Mayor's Screen Diversity Programme**, providing greater meaning to the programme's aims and objectives around diversity and inclusion and supporting Mayor Brabin's Creative Industries pledge. It was also agreed that the eligible age criteria would be increased from 18-24 to 18-30, providing opportunities for those slightly older who might be looking for a career change or who have not followed the standard route (school, university, graduate-level job), facilitating a 'second start' and encouraging diversity in the screen content industries.
- 2.19 A Grant Funding Agreement is now in place with Bradford Council which is leading on the delivery with Screen Yorkshire.
- 2.20 Targets include recruitment from disadvantaged groups (gender, ethnicity, disability and social class), reach across the 5 West Yorkshire districts, retention of participants who complete the programme, progress of participants and conversion onto further training / apprenticeships / work placements / employment, as well as alignment with relevant Employment and Skills and Kickstart programmes.
- 2.21 Recruitment took place in the autumn and delivery for cohort 1 is due to begin in January 2022. Participants were shortlisted as follows:
- 155 applications (almost 5 times over-subscribed)
 - 34 shortlisted and offered places
 - District split and gender/ethnicity/disability/social class numbers largely all hit above the targets set, as follows;

District split:

- Bradford - 9 (7)
- Calderdale - 3 (4)
- Kirklees- 8 (6)

- Leeds - 8 (10)
- Wakefield - 6 (5)

Gender Identity:

- Men - 11 (17)
- Women - 20 (15)
- Non-Binary - 3 (no target set)

Ethnicity:

- BAME - 18 (13)

Disability:

- Yes - 13 (5)

Social class/disadvantage:

- Not upper class/don't know/prefer not to say - 28 (21)

Skills for Business

- 2.22 Since the ESF-funded [Skills for Growth](#) programme started in September 2020, the team has had contact with over 700 businesses in the Leeds City Region. Of these businesses, 500 have accessed some form of support, either through connecting with education providers or through referrals to other business support programmes.
- 2.23 The programme has exceeded targets for business engagement and number of participants engaged. The number of projects created between businesses and education providers is increasing and the programme is on track to meet this target during the next quarter.
- 2.24 Performance up to the end Q3, as reported to DWP as part of the funding requirements:
- Number of supported micro, small and medium sized enterprises: 153 (against a target of 144) 106%
 - Number of small and medium sized enterprises successfully completing projects (which increase employer engagement; and/or the number of people progressing into or within skills provision): 59 (against a target of 76) 78%
 - Total number of participants: 610 (against a target of 424) 144%
- 2.25 The Skills for Growth offer provides the first point of contact for businesses who want to support the mayor's 1,000 Well Paid, Green Skills Jobs Pledge. To date, 22 businesses have signed up to support the pledge.
- 2.26 Businesses receiving a grant from the LEP, are expected to sign up to one or more commitments to drive forward inclusive growth. The LEP and its network of partners can help businesses access products and services that will help them to take positive actions. The Skills for Growth programme is a core part of the offer to support businesses who have received LEP grants to achieve

their **Inclusive Growth Commitments**. To date, we have worked with almost 70 businesses to meet their commitments, engaging with schools, universities and apprenticeship support.

Enterprise West Yorkshire

- 2.27 The Entrepreneurial Package of Support (**Enterprise West Yorkshire**) is a 'ladder of enterprise support' across three inter-connected workstreams that will help individuals in the region to explore enterprise as a career choice and establish new businesses. A primary focus of the programme is Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and clear 'minimum floor' targets have been set to ensure that the support available is taken up by females, people from BAME backgrounds and people with disabilities, as well as people from our more economically disadvantaged communities and localities.
- 2.28 Enterprise West Yorkshire was officially launched by the Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin, on 3 November 2021 at an on-line event with over 150 attendees. Within 48 hours of the launch, the website for the programme had over 400 hits, which has since risen to over 1,000.
- 2.29 There has been additional promotion of the programme via Lloyds Banking Group Black Entrepreneurs Conversation event on the 14th November and JCP Advisers Enterprise launch event on 9th December. The team has also started engagement with Higher Education institutions to support graduates to explore choosing the option of starting a business, freelancing or becoming self-employed after graduation.
- 2.30 To date, over 100 referrals have been made to Enterprise West Yorkshire (mostly in to Workstream Two) from Ad:Venture and the Growth Service Gateway. Over 40 clients have been signed up to the support, just under half of whom are female and 35% of whom are from BAME backgrounds.
- 2.31 Delivery of the workshops for workstream 1 and 2 will start in January 2022.

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. Programmes targeting individuals are designed to engage with those groups that are most disadvantaged in the labour market.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 All programmes actively engage with diverse groups and include targeted activity for engagement with BAME individuals, women, over 50s from the

across the region and groups that are the most 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 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1 Market research was carried out with target groups into the Skills Connect brand prior to its launch.

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

Appendix 1 Enterprise in Education Activity Evaluation Report



Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

November 2021

Prepared for the West Yorkshire Combined Authority

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1 INTRODUCTION

About this report

- 1.1 In September 2019, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority commissioned York Consulting LLP to evaluate a series of school-based Enterprise in Education activities being delivered across the Leeds City Region. The evaluation was based around a programme of primary research with school staff, Enterprise Advisers (EAs), Enterprise Co-ordinators (ECs) and school students, alongside analysis of school-level Gatsby Benchmark data. This is the draft final report from the evaluation.
- 1.2 The evaluators would like to thank everyone that agreed to be consulted for the purposes of the evaluation. Thanks are also owed to the client team at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority for their support and assistance throughout the work.

Context for the evaluation

- 1.3 The Leeds City Region covers ten local authority districts: Leeds, Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield. It has a population of approximately 3 million people, a resident workforce of approximately 1.4 million people and an economy worth more than £69 billion¹. Since 2012, the activities of the Leeds City Region have been co-ordinated by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.
- 1.4 The evaluation had within its scope four distinct strands of activity, each of which has a separate chapter in this report²:
 - **Enterprise Adviser Network:** a network of senior business volunteers supporting schools and colleges to embed employer engagement within their careers and enterprise provision.
 - **Raising Aspirations Pilot:** a £345,000 funding pot for schools and colleges to provide opportunities that aim to improve social mobility for disadvantaged young people.
 - **Kirklees Careers Hub:** a partnership of 35 schools and colleges in Kirklees working alongside universities, training providers, employers and careers professionals to improve performance against the Gatsby Benchmarks and improve outcomes for young people.
 - **SEND Careers Hub:** a partnership of 45 schools, colleges and alternative education providers in West Yorkshire working alongside universities, training providers and careers professionals to improve outcomes for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

¹ Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (2018) Leeds City Region and the Northern Powerhouse. Here: <https://www.the-lep.com/why-leeds-city-region/northern-powerhouse/>

² The original scope also included FutureGoals but this was taken out of scope following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

- 1.5 The rationale for each of these strands of activity is grounded in research evidence. Mann (2012)³, for example, found that young people who could recall four or more employer engagement activities at school were five times less likely to be Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET). On average, they also earned 16% more than young people who could not recall any employer engagement activities. Hughes et al (2016)⁴ demonstrated that young people who underestimate the level of education required for their chosen career path are more likely to become NEET (highlighting the importance of good quality advice and guidance). The same authors explained the economic benefits of work experience, careers provision and mentoring, and demonstrated the link between good quality careers education and educational attainment.
- 1.6 The importance of good careers guidance was highlighted by the Gatsby Foundation's Good Career Guidance report⁵ in 2014 and subsequently recognised by government via the adoption of the Gatsby Benchmarks as statutory guidance in 2018. The Benchmarks provide a framework for schools and colleges to develop and improve their careers programme. The eight Benchmarks are:
1. A stable careers programme.
 2. Learning from career and labour market information.
 3. Addressing the needs of each pupil.
 4. Linking curriculum learning to careers.
 5. Encounters with employers and employees.
 6. Experiences of workplaces.
 7. Encounters with further and higher education.
 8. Personal guidance.
- 1.7 Schools and colleges can use the Careers and Enterprise Company's (CEC) Compass online tool⁶ to assess progress against the Benchmarks. As of March 2020, schools and colleges in England were fully achieving an average of 3.8 of the eight Gatsby Benchmarks⁷, the same as the average for schools and colleges in West Yorkshire at that time⁸.

³ Mann, A. (2012). It's who you meet: Why employer contacts at school make a difference to the employment prospects of young adults. London: Education and Employers Taskforce.

⁴ Hughes et al (2016) Careers Education: International literature review. Education Endowment Foundation: July 2016: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/publications/2016/hughes_et_al_2016_eef_lit_review.pdf

⁵Gatsby Foundation. (2014) Here: <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf>

⁶Careers and Enterprise Company. Evaluation and planning tools. Here: <https://tools.careersandenterprise.co.uk/oauth/login/classic>

⁷ Careers and Enterprise Company (2020). Careers education in England's schools and colleges 2020. Here: https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/osbd2av3/1244_careers_ed_2020_report18_0.pdf

⁸ Compass returns September 2018 – March 2020.

Evaluation objectives

- 1.8 The overall purpose of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness and added value of the four Enterprise in Education activities outlined above. Sitting beneath this were the following four objectives:
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Enterprise in Education activities in terms of their contribution to the achievement of key outcomes around career inspiration, career readiness, employability and academic attainment.
 - To assess the added value of a localised/personalised approach to Enterprise in Education in the context of the Leeds City Region.
 - To document the experiences of specific institutions and to identify specific items of good/best practice through the development of school case studies.
 - To review the effectiveness of the Enterprise in Education activities in targeting support at disadvantaged students and reaching those schools most in need of assistance with regard to careers and enterprise activities.
- 1.9 The evaluation was originally intended to conclude in December 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in particular the closure of schools, the timeframe was extended to September 2021.

Evaluation approach

- 1.10 Summarised in Table 1.1, the evaluation was structured into two phases. The first phase took place between November 2019 and June 2020 and culminated in the submission of an interim report. The second phase took place between April 2021 and August 2021.

Table 1.1: Summary of the evaluation work programme

Strand	Phase 1: Nov 2019 – Jun 2020	Phase 2: Apr 2021 – Aug 2021
Enterprise Adviser Network	<p>One-to-one qualitative consultations with four EAs.</p> <p>Facilitated focus group with ECs.</p> <p>Analysis of 2019/20 Compass data.</p>	<p>One-to-one qualitative consultations with three EAs.</p> <p>Facilitated focus group with ECs.</p> <p>Analysis of 2019/20 and 2020/21 Compass data and data on delivery volumes.</p>
Raising Aspirations Pilot	<p>Analysis of 2020 feedback forms from 13 participating schools (one form per school).</p> <p>One-to-one qualitative consultations with three non-participating schools.</p>	<p>Analysis of 2021 feedback forms from 13 participating schools (one form per school).</p> <p>One-to-one and group consultations with staff and (in one case) students at three participating schools.</p> <p>Analysis of 2019/20 and 2020/21 Compass data.</p>
Kirklees Careers Hub	<p>One-to-one qualitative consultations with two strategic stakeholders.</p> <p>Analysis of 2019/20 Compass data.</p>	<p>One-to-one and group consultations with staff at two participating schools.</p> <p>Analysis of 2019/20 and 2020/21 Compass data and data on delivery volumes.</p>
SEND Careers Hub	<p>Online survey of Careers Leaders in schools (17 responses).</p> <p>One-to-one consultations with five stakeholders.</p>	<p>One-to-one and group consultations with staff and students at one participating school.</p> <p>Qualitative consultation with two ECs.</p> <p>Analysis of 2019/20 and 2020/21 Compass data.</p>

Source: York Consulting, 2021.

2 THE ENTERPRISE ADVISER NETWORK

Introduction

- 2.1 The Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN) matches business volunteers – EAs – with schools and colleges such that they can provide strategic support and advice on careers and enterprise provision. Supported by ECs, the EA role may include helping schools and colleges to develop a careers strategy, facilitating links with businesses and/or providing advice about local and national skills needs.
- 2.2 EAs in the Leeds City Region come from a variety of industry sectors, the most common of which include manufacturing, science and technology, finance and construction. As at mid-2021, 139 schools and colleges – 70% of state-funded schools and colleges in the Leeds City Region – were matched with an EA.

Motivations and relationships

- 2.3 Based on the information provided for this evaluation, there appear to be four main reasons why people put themselves forward to become an EA. These are:
- To have a positive impact on the lives of young people from their local area.
 - To help young people develop a better and more accurate understanding of jobs and careers available locally.
 - To work with schools in a more structured and/or strategic way than they have been able to in the past.
 - To contribute to their organisation’s corporate social responsibility objectives and/or to raise the profile of their company in the local area.
- “I liked the idea of what it stands for in terms of providing direction and impact in young people’s lives.” (Enterprise Adviser)*
- “It’s about focusing on one school and doing it well, rather than trying to support lots of schools and doing it poorly.” (Enterprise Adviser)*
- 2.4 As at mid-2021, the consensus view from the EAs contributing to the evaluation was that:
- They had been matched with an appropriate school.
 - The school had shown an interest in developing and/or embedding the relationship and appeared to value the insight and experience the EA could bring.
- 2.5 Whilst the evaluation has only been able to obtain input from a small subset of EAs (a product of it covering several strands of Enterprise in Education), this is an encouraging finding. It is made more encouraging still by the fact the EAs’ views were notably less positive earlier in the evaluation, where they reported difficulties in forming relationships with schools and voiced concerns about the delay and drift. They attributed this mainly to staff turnover in schools, teachers’ workloads and their

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nominated contacts within the schools requiring authorisation/approval for operational decisions.

“Some schools seem switched on and recognise how they can benefit from the opportunity, but others seem hesitant, or it shifts down their priority list as day-to-day pressures take over.” (Enterprise Adviser)

- 2.6 More recently, however, they reported improved communication and a willingness from schools to commit time and resources around shared objectives.

“The school has been fantastic. They genuinely interact and take on board ideas. It’s clear that they value the support, which is important.” (Enterprise Adviser)

- 2.7 EAs were also very complimentary about the support they had received from ECs. Whilst earlier in the evaluation some concern and frustration had been expressed about the turnover of ECs, the view in mid-2021 was more upbeat. In particular, the EAs highlighted:

- The regularity and promptness of communications from the ECs.
- The support and advice the ECs had provided, particularly in terms of establishing and maintaining relationships with schools.
- The contacts and networks they have formed with other EAs as a result of being introduced by the ECs.

“They [ECs] have such passion and commitment. They are very knowledgeable about what they do.” (Enterprise Adviser)

- 2.8 It is also of note that average attendance at EA network meetings has increased since the meetings were moved online following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK. This has benefited the EAN and has reinvigorated what had become, in the eyes of several stakeholders, a programme of meetings that was delivering relatively little added value.

Activities

- 2.9 EAs reported having delivered a range of activities with, and on behalf of, their partner schools. However, only in a minority of cases has this constituted strategic support, with examples including mapping careers provision across curriculum areas and providing critique and feedback on schools’ proposals for strengthening their employer interactions.

- 2.10 More commonly, the EAs’ input has tended to be more operational. Examples include (although are not limited to):

- Working with students to develop their coding skills and demonstrating typical roles and responsibilities of a software engineer.
- Running a mini-project with students through which they developed ideas for insurance products and how they could be marketed.

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- Giving presentations to students about different roles in their sector and the skills and attributes they require.
- Undertaking mock interviews with students and running workshops on employability skills and workplace professionalism.
- Hosting students for workplace visits and providing opportunities for work experience.

Impact of COVID-19

- 2.11 The COVID-19 pandemic had a fundamental impact on the volume and type of activities that could be delivered through the EAN. With schools prioritising remote learning and making their physical environments safe for those who were attending in person, it was inevitable that they would have less time to commit to careers work. By way of example, one EA explained that they had been matched with a school shortly before the onset of the pandemic but did not subsequently have any meaningful contact with them until November 2020. The EA in question was fully accepting of the situation, but it nonetheless highlights the significant hiatus imposed by the pandemic.
- 2.12 Many EAs also found themselves in situations where all available resources had to be channelled into their core business activities. They also had to manage furlough arrangements and ensure that staff could work from home, or could work safely in the workplace. Where EAs became less active during the pandemic, it appears not to have been because they lost faith or interest in the relationship they had established with their school, but because they (and the school) had little choice but to concentrate on other issues.
- 2.13 That is not to say that the EAN ground entirely to a halt in the Leeds City Region during the pandemic. It is testament to those involved that an array of careers-related activities, such as presentations, workshops and meetings, were moved online. Questions naturally arise about whether activities delivered remotely act as a genuine substitute for face-to-face interaction (the general consensus is that they don't) but at a time of almost unprecedented upheaval, it should be applauded that employer interactions remained available for a considerable number of students.

Outcomes

Compass data

- 2.14 The EAN has four intended outcomes, the first two of which relate to Gatsby Benchmarks:
- 70% of schools/colleges achieve Gatsby Benchmark 5 (encounters with employers and employees)
 - 55% of schools/colleges achieve Gatsby Benchmark 6 (experiences of the workplace)
- 2.15 Compass data for the 2020/21 academic year is available for 110 of the 139 schools/colleges matched with an EA during that year. Of these 110 schools/colleges,

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60% report having fully achieved encounters with employers and employees (Benchmark 5), whilst 35% report having fully achieved experiences of the workplace (Benchmark 6).

- 2.16 As explained above, the COVID-19 pandemic had a fundamental impact on both the EAN and careers related activity in schools and colleges. Its impact on these Benchmarks should therefore not be understated. What is more, Benchmarks 5 and 6 have typically been the most challenging for schools and colleges to meet, even with a fully functioning EAN, so it comes as little surprise that these targets are not being met.
- 2.17 That said, average Benchmark 5 scores amongst the EAN schools and colleges, at 82 out of 100, are relatively high. The average Benchmark 6 score is 68 out of 100. Whilst notably lower than Benchmark 5, this is nonetheless higher than the average score for Benchmark 6 across schools that are not involved with the EAN (46 out of 100).

Qualitative insight

- 2.18 The third and fourth intended outcomes of the EAN are as follows:
- Careers education is more embedded within the curriculum and learning.
 - Stronger links exist between schools/colleges and employers.
- 2.19 It is difficult to objectively assess the first of these outcomes, as the evaluation has not obtained input directly from schools/colleges engaged with the EAN. Feedback from ECs is, however, largely positive, although the extent to which the ECs observe the delivery of the curriculum within school settings is understandably limited.
- 2.20 Anecdotal evidence against the second outcome is also positive, although once again the absence of direct input from schools has to be noted. EAs variously commented that:
- Since joining the EAN, they believe that the impact they are able to have on students' experiences of careers-related activity has increased significantly.
 - Schools have given them positive feedback on the activities they have arranged/delivered and, in several cases, are keen to run them again in the future.
 - They have been able to establish stronger and more productive relationships with schools than was the case before they became an EA.
- "[Without the EAN] we would have had less effective connections with schools, and activities would have been limited to CV writing and interview skills support." (Enterprise Adviser)*

Recommendations from EAs

- 2.21 EAs put forward a range of suggestions for how, in their view, the EAN could be strengthened or improved. Those cited with the greatest regularity are listed below:

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- Improve business-to-business links within the network.
- Provide more opportunities for EAs to share ideas, best practice and common challenges.
- Improve EAs' knowledge of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) strategy and its wider vision/priority for Enterprise in Education.

Looking ahead

- 2.22 The School Partnership team at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority will continue to recruit, train and deploy EAs in schools and colleges across the region (a clear finding from this evaluation is that the team has made significant progress over the past 12 months in retaining EAs and recruiting new ones).
- 2.23 The Leeds City Region Employment and Skills Framework outlines the importance of roles such as the EA in the 'Great Education Connected to Business' priority. To enable the role of an EA to assist in delivering the objectives linked to this priority, the Combined Authority will continue to deliver the EA Induction to better equip and prepare businesses to work alongside education in a strategic capacity. The Combined Authority will also look at the EA journey and how volunteers can be better utilised within the network.

3 RAISING ASPIRATIONS PILOT

Introduction

- 3.1 The Raising Aspirations Pilot aimed to increase social mobility for disadvantaged students by providing funding directly to schools and colleges for careers and enterprise activities⁹. The intention was that these activities would strengthen school and college engagement with employers and connect young people with local role models working in City Region's priority sectors.
- 3.2 A total of £345,000 was available for the Raising Aspirations Pilot. Schools and colleges could apply for between £7,000 and £50,000 to deliver projects that would help them to demonstrate progress against Gatsby Benchmark 5 and Gatsby Benchmark 6. Specifically, Raising Aspirations sought to fund projects that would provide:
- Work insight and experience days, in partnership with local employers.
 - Employer encounters for SEND students.
 - Opportunities to remove barriers to social mobility through parental engagement.
 - Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers related to local labour market information and activities that link careers to curriculum learning.
 - Encounters with further education, higher education and apprenticeship providers.
 - Support for students at key transition points.
- 3.3 Projects had to demonstrate employer input and benefit young people aged 11 to 18 (or up to 25 for SEND students) from disadvantaged backgrounds. Alongside standard measures of disadvantage (e.g. Pupil Premium¹⁰), schools and colleges could identify disadvantaged cohorts through other metrics, such as Post-16 bursary eligibility or higher education participation statistics¹¹. In addition, schools and colleges were required to have a named and sufficiently trained Careers Leader with direct links to their senior leadership team.
- 3.4 Funding totalling £277,917 was provided to 16 schools through the Raising Aspirations Pilot, at an average of £17,370 per school (whilst total funding requested in the applications exceeded £345,000, a number of applications did not meet the above eligibility criteria). The remaining funds will be allocated to five schools/colleges during a second phase of the Raising Aspirations Pilot, explained in more detail under 'Looking Ahead' at the end of this chapter.

⁹ West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Raising Aspirations Pilot: Guidance for secondary schools and colleges.

¹⁰ Pupil Premium is a government grant given to schools to improve education outcomes for disadvantaged children. Schools receive an amount of money per pupil based on certain eligibility criteria, such as whether a child receive free schools meals or is in local authority care.

¹¹ Office for Students. Young participation by area. Here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/young-participation-by-area/>

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- 3.5 Thirteen of the 16 schools funded through Raising Aspirations completed an evaluation feedback form capturing delivery volumes and qualitative insight into activities, challenges and outcomes. The feedback forms were submitted towards the end of the 2020/21 academic year.

Delivery volumes

- 3.6 Raising Aspirations had a target of supporting 6,500 disadvantaged students via direct encounters with employers (these students are termed 'direct beneficiaries'). As shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**, the 13 schools that submitted a feedback form reported a total of 5,847 direct beneficiaries (85% of which came from five schools) at an average of 450 direct beneficiaries per school. The data implies that 4,278 of these students were disadvantaged, although this figure will contain some double counting where students appear in more than one of the different categories of disadvantage.
- 3.7 Just over a third (36%) of the direct beneficiaries were Pupil Premium students, 19% spoke English as an Additional Language and 15% had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP¹²) or SEND. Nearly a quarter (23%) of the direct beneficiaries in Year 12 and 13 were eligible for the Post-16 bursary.

Table 3.1: Students benefiting from direct employer encounters

	Total no. students (including non-disadvantaged)	Pupil Premium	EHCP and SEND	English as an additional language	Post-16 bursary
Year 7	1,025	421	169	219	0
Year 8	933	359	137	134	0
Year 9	1,032	408	227	205	0
Year 10	1,122	408	161	304	0
Year 11	1,040	326	136	165	0
Year 12	348	96	35	59	81
Year 13	347	82	24	41	81
Total	5,847	2,100	889	1,127	162

Source: York Consulting. Base: 13 schools.

- 3.8 By way of illustration, if the other three schools for which no data is available were representative of the 13 that completed a feedback form, the number of disadvantaged students supported through Raising Aspirations would rise to an estimated 5,265 (although potential double counting once again needs to be acknowledged). This would be 81% of the original target of 6,500 disadvantaged students.
- 3.9 Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 is the overriding reason behind the target for direct beneficiaries not being met. However, given the impact of COVID-19 across almost all

¹² An education, health and care plan (EHCP) is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support.

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aspects of life and work, it is to be commended that four schools hit their own project-level targets and two actually exceeded them.

- 3.10 In addition to reporting on direct beneficiaries, schools were also asked to state how many ‘indirect beneficiaries’ they had supported. An indirect beneficiary is defined here as a student that did not participate in an employer encounter, but who may, for example, have participated in careers-related lessons delivered by a teacher who took part in a training session as part of the project¹³. As shown in Table 3.2, a total of 1,810 indirect beneficiaries were reported at an average of 140 per school.

Table 3.2: Students benefitting indirectly

	Total no. students (including non-disadvantaged)	Pupil Premium	EHCP and SEN	English as an additional language	Post-16 bursary
Year 7	288	137	133	31	0
Year 8	286	132	136	31	0
Year 9	526	217	214	51	0
Year 10	542	191	210	52	0
Year 11	97	54	38	9	0
Year 12	26	6	18	0	18
Year 13	45	5	14	20	37
Total	1,810	742	763	194	55

Source: York Consulting. Base: 13 schools.

Activities and target groups

- 3.11 Schools have delivered a diverse range of Raising Aspirations projects, reflecting the Combined Authority’s wish to have both variety and innovation within the suite of funded activities. Several of the projects have included school-based talks or workshops delivered by employers, but that aside there have been few common themes (a positive evaluation finding rather than a negative one).
- 3.12 Around half the participating schools established new, distinct projects that targeted specific groups of students. Examples include:
- A carpentry and bike maintenance workshop, providing work-related experiences for students with SEN or Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.
 - Mentoring and employer engagement activities for a group of Year 9 students at risk of becoming NEET.
 - Work experience activities delivered by local employers for Year 10 students.
 - A series of employer engagement activities and workshops for Year 7 Pupil Premium students.

¹³ Three schools reported the same numbers for direct and indirect beneficiaries. It was clear from their more detailed breakdown of beneficiaries per activity that the figure for direct beneficiaries was correct. For these three schools, we have therefore removed the number reported for indirect beneficiaries, to ensure the two categories remain mutually exclusive.

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- An after-school film making club run by Leeds Young Film.
- Production of virtual reality/360° employer engagement videos for students with SEN or SEMH needs.
- A programme of after-school enrichment activities focused on careers and employability.

3.13 The other schools used their Raising Aspirations funding to deliver a range of careers activities across several year groups. These included:

- Various workplace visits and, in one case, a career-focused residential trip to London for disadvantaged students.
- Whole year group enterprise days, with students designing, marketing and selling their own products.
- Careers fairs involving a range of local employers.
- Visits to local further and higher education providers.
- Mock interviews conducted by business volunteers.
- Staff CPD, e.g. training staff to become a 'Curriculum Careers Ambassador', with each staff member paired with a local employer.

Impact of COVID-19

3.14 Schools faced significant challenges in delivering their Raising Aspirations projects during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the considerable pressure on staff time, the pandemic severely limited opportunities for face-to-face engagement with employers and education providers. As this engagement was a core element of the Raising Aspirations projects, most schools were forced to either delay or significantly alter their delivery plans. Key challenges included:

- **Social distancing:** restrictions on student numbers and the need for student 'bubbles' led to reductions in the numbers of students engaging in planned activities. For example, fewer students were able to access the aforementioned bike maintenance workshop because of the need for social distancing.
- **Employer engagement:** a considerable number of workplace visits and in-school workshops and talks could not take place. This was not only because of the limits placed on face-to-face contact, but also because employers had to prioritise core business activities and could not dedicate the amount of time they had originally planned to Raising Aspirations.
- **Remote delivery:** it proved difficult to schedule online Raising Aspirations activity around schools' remote lessons. Some students (particularly those that are disadvantaged) had issues over IT connectivity and equipment. In addition, schools found that where remote sessions with employers could be scheduled, they needed several members of school staff to be involved in order to keep the students focused and engaged. There was a general acceptance amongst school staff that, whilst commendable efforts had been made, and whilst they feel that

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value and benefit was derived from the remote sessions, they were not a like-for-like replacement for face-to-face delivery.

3.15 That said, almost half the schools also highlighted positive features of remote delivery. These included:

- Enabling more students to access employer talks/presentations than if they had been delivered in person.
- Giving more students the opportunity to experience workplaces and further/higher education providers (albeit remotely).
- Allowing students to access the above more than once and on-demand (e.g., via Google classroom).

Example: Joseph Norton Academy

Joseph Norton Academy is a KS2 – 4 special school for children with complex SEMH needs. Approximately 60 children attend the academy, 80% of whom are eligible for free school meals.

The school's Raising Aspirations project involved the production of 12 employer insight videos, featuring interviews with staff members and tours of the workplace filmed using a 360° camera. The aim of the project was to support the school in meeting Gatsby Benchmark 5. Due to the students' complex SEMH issues, it was felt they would struggle with in-person workplace visits or employer presentations. The virtual employer insight videos would give them the opportunity to experience different workplaces in a more secure environment, providing meaningful encounters and making future in-person visits easier to manage.

The school commissioned a local production company to engage employers and make the videos. The pandemic significantly disrupted filming, meaning only three of the 12 films had been made at the time of writing. However, filming restarted in July 2021 with the intention of completing the remaining nine videos by the end of the year. The school plans to integrate the films within the careers curriculum and share them with other schools.

For full case study, see appendix.

Outcomes

3.16 The Raising Aspirations Pilot had the following intended outcomes:

- Generate examples of innovative and good practice in targeting careers education at the most disadvantaged students.
- Students are in a better position to make informed choices about their future education and careers plans.
- Increased number of schools/colleges achieving Gatsby Benchmarks 5 and 6.
- Stronger links between schools/colleges and employers.

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- 3.17 Regarding the first of these, feedback from schools provided for the evaluation clearly points to careers education being targeted at disadvantaged students and, in some cases, of it being innovative or distinctly different from what might be considered the norm. Without a school-by-school deep dive of student characteristics and demographics, it is difficult to say objectively whether the *most* disadvantaged students have been prioritised, although the case studies (provided in the appendix to this report) suggest that is likely to have been the case.
- 3.18 The findings are also positive against the second intended outcome: ten of the feedback forms indicated that students are in a position to make more informed choices following the Raising Aspirations project. In addition, students interviewed for the case studies commented that their Raising Aspirations project had informed their current thinking about career options, either through helping them to rule out certain pathways or enabling them to better understand particular roles and sectors.

"Disadvantaged students have benefitted from visits to prestigious engineering companies which they would never have done before. This has given them insight into what is required in a modern engineering business to such an extent that two of them have applied for work experience in engineering." (Feedback form – secondary school)

"After an employer engagement event, a group of high ability Pupil Premium students are now attending an employability skills enrichment to receive support in applying for apprenticeship opportunities with the employer." (Feedback form – secondary school)

- 3.19 The third outcome is assessed via Compass data. As shown in Table 3.3, the number of Raising Aspirations schools meeting Benchmark 5 has decreased since the 2019/20 academic year, as is also the case for Benchmark 6. Linked to that, average scores against each of those Benchmarks have also reduced (Table 3.4).

Table 3.3: Number of schools achieving Benchmark 5 and 6 – Raising Aspirations

	2019/20	2020/21	Change
Benchmark 5	13	10	-3
Benchmark 6	8	5	-3

Source: Compass data 2019 - 2021. Base = 15 schools.

Table 3.4: Average Benchmark 5 and 6 scores – Raising Aspirations

	2019/20	2020/21	Change
Benchmark 5	97	93	-4
Benchmark 6	82	74	-8

Source: Compass data 2018-2021. Base = 15 schools.

- 3.20 COVID-19 is evidently the central reason for the above. A common theme across the feedback forms provided in 2021 was that the COVID-19 restrictions had prevented schools from achieving the outcomes they had intended through their Raising Aspirations projects. That said:

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- Ten schools reported that the aspirations of disadvantaged students had been raised.
- Ten schools also reported that disadvantaged learners have had more opportunities to learn about the world of work.
- Eleven schools reported that disadvantaged students have had more experiences of the world of work.
- Both of the schools that targeted their project specifically at students with SEND stated that it had raised the aspirations of those students.
- The three schools that identified parental engagement as an important feature of their Raising Aspirations projects all reported that, in their view, parents had become better able to support their children in making informed career decisions.

“Data from the careers tracker shows that our students have raised their aspirations and are making informed ‘good choices’ for their options and next steps.” (Feedback form – secondary school)

*“Students have been immersed in different activities. One student, who usually barely manages to complete half a day in school, stayed for the full day to complete her stop-motion animation.”
(Feedback form – secondary school)*

“All parents who attended [a parent and student trip to Leeds University] had never been to a university and were surprised that it could be a viable option for their children, as they believed prior to this that it wasn’t financially possible.” (Feedback form – secondary school)

- 3.21 There is also evidence of knock-on benefits and catalytic effects. For example, at one school, an employer who delivered a workshop through the Raising Aspirations project has since become involved with the school’s Year 12 enterprise club. At another school there has been a 60% increase in employer engagement activities since, and as a consequence of, the Raising Aspirations project.

Example: Project Altitude @ Parkside

Project Altitude aimed to provide early intervention support for 12 students in Year 9 at risk of becoming NEET. It involved one-to-one business mentoring, workplace visits and employability skills workshops. Delivered between November 2019 and February 2020, the project sought to inform students' GCSE decision-making and develop their employability skills.

The school had an existing relationship with a local engineering company (the managing director of the company supports the school as an EA). This provided the foundation for the project and enabled a range of activities to be undertaken between November 2019 and February 2020. These included visits to the employer's factory, business mentoring sessions, a visit to Jaguar Land Rover and the creation of StartProfiles¹⁴ for each student.

Students said the employer visits had given them an insight into different jobs. In the main, they expected this to benefit them when making decisions about post-compulsory study and career pathways. Staff at the school reported (what they consider to be) a direct link between the project and an increase in the self-confidence of the participating students. This was particularly apparent during the end-of-project presentations.

For full case study, see appendix.

Looking ahead

- 3.22 The Raising Aspirations Pilot Fund has been matched funded by the Burberry Foundation for 2021/22 academic year. This will enable five additional schools/colleges to deliver a Raising Aspirations project focused on inspiring learners with SEND to pursue roles in the creative industries.
- 3.23 It is hoped that the outcomes and learning summarised in this report will create an evidence base for building financial capacity within schools and colleges to deliver sustainable, innovative and effective careers programmes focussed on employer engagement with disadvantaged learners. The Combined Authority aims to use this evaluation report, alongside a report relating to the delivery in 2021/22, to showcase and share best practice amongst school and college networks both inside and outside of the region.

¹⁴ StartProfile. Here: <https://careers.startprofile.com/page/home-page>

4 KIRKLEES CAREERS HUB

Introduction

- 4.1 Co-funded with LEPs and the CEC, Careers Hubs are groups of between 20 and 40 secondary schools and colleges located in the same area, working in partnership with employers, universities, training providers and careers professionals to improve outcomes for young people. A primary focus for Careers Hubs is supporting schools and colleges to achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks, with a particular focus on Benchmarks 5 and 6.
- 4.2 The Kirklees Careers Hub was launched in 2018 as part of the first wave of 20 Careers Hubs established across the country. Involving all 35 secondary schools and colleges in the Kirklees area, the Kirklees Careers Hub provides access to employer engagement opportunities and promotes collaboration between school and college Careers Leaders. Key features of the Kirklees Careers Hub include:
- A Hub Lead who, with ECs, supports schools and colleges to develop careers plans and forge relationships with employers.
 - A network of EAs providing strategic support to schools and colleges.
 - Cornerstone Employers who support school and college careers provision and encourage other businesses to engage with the Hub.
 - Access to training bursaries for Careers Leaders to participate in training programmes delivered by the CEC.
 - A Central Hub Fund equivalent to £1000 per Hub member.
 - A 'virtual wallet' of £3,700 per school or college, used to purchase activities from careers education and guidance providers.
- 4.3 The Hub includes a Lead School (Batley Girls School) that works closely with the Hub Lead and the ECs to facilitate collaboration with other schools and colleges. Other key stakeholders include Huddersfield University, Go Higher West Yorkshire, C&K Careers and the Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce.

Motivations and delivery volumes

- 4.4 The evaluation evidence suggests there are two main reasons why Careers Leaders wanted their school to become involved with the Hub:
- Opportunities for collaboration and partnership building with other schools.
 - Access to high quality resources, CPD and student opportunities.
- 4.5 Evidenced in part through the following data, there has been strong buy-in and engagement with the Hub from most of the schools in Kirklees:
- 34 schools have accessed the 'virtual wallet', mainly to fund work with local careers-related organisations such as C&K Careers and Ahead Partnership.

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- 29 schools were matched with an EA in the 2020/21 academic year.
- 13 schools have used digital careers packages such as Morrisby and CASCAID.
- 11 schools have accessed funding for Careers Leader training. This has included accredited qualifications at Level 6 and 7.

4.6 In addition, there has been strong engagement with the Hub’s CPD offer which aims to support teachers to embed careers within the curriculum. Table 4.1 shows the number of schools participating in 2019/20. Notably:

- Only one school did not take part in any of the CPD sessions.
- Most schools took part in more than one.

4.7 CPD activities were, in the main, put on hold following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. One session on delivering virtual work experience took place and was attended by representatives from 17 schools, whilst a session for Careers Leaders on preparing for Ofsted inspections was attended by 12 schools.

Table 4.1: Schools engaging with Kirklees Careers Hub CPD in 2019/20

CPD	No. schools
PSHE	9
Textile design	8
Geography	11
English	12
STEM	19
Physics	10
Maths	9

Source: Hub delivery data, 2019/20. Base: 35 schools/colleges.

Hub schools have also met on a termly basis to discuss the delivery of careers education, education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) delivery and to share ideas and effective practice. Table 4.1

4.8 Table 1.1 shows the number of schools represented at each of those meetings in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years. It is of note that five of the seven meetings for which data is available had representation from more than half the schools in the Hub. In addition, each school in the Hub attended at least one meeting in 2019/20. Attendance fell – predictably so – in 2020/21 – although an average attendance of 14 schools per meeting in that year should be seen as a positive outcome given the challenges and disruptions facing schools.

Table 4.2: Schools attending CEIAG meetings in 2019/20 and 2020/21

CEIAG meetings	No. schools 2019/20	No. schools 2020/21 (online)
Term 1	18	12
Term 2	20	17
Term 2 (online) ¹⁵	30	No meeting
Term 3 (online)	19	13

Source: Hub delivery data, 2019-21. Base: 35 schools/colleges.

Feedback on the Kirklees Careers Hub

- 4.9 The feedback gathered for the evaluation paints a very positive picture of the Kirklees Careers Hub. School staff expressed a high level of satisfaction, agreed that the Hub has a clear vision and that its activities are focused and purposeful. These would be important findings at any time, but are made more so by the fact that schools have been, and continue to be, faced with difficult choices about which activities and priorities to pursue and which to place on hold.
- 4.10 ECs appear integral to the effective operation and success of the Hub. Consistently highlighted by school staff as a key source of support, their responsiveness and flexibility has been noted and their weekly newsletters well received. In particular, school staff have valued the local labour market information contained in the newsletters, alongside funding information, Compass return deadlines and CPD opportunities.

“They send newsletters with lots of things to connect to. You can pick and choose aspects which work for your school, e.g. visits to universities or CPD courses.” (Careers Leader)

“You can often get bombarded with opportunities, but you know that things sent from the Hub are good quality.” (Careers Adviser)

- 4.11 The virtual wallet also appears to have been well received and in some cases has acted as the catalyst for schools to become involved with other aspects of the Hub’s offer. More generally, but of no lesser importance:
- School staff have valued the opportunity to grow their professional network, share ideas and discuss common challenges with their counterparts from other schools.
 - The Hub has, to quote one Careers Leader, a “genuinely collaborative feel”, with members invited to provide feedback and suggestions on new resources and materials (examples include the Kirklees Top 100 Brochure and plans for an employability skills programme aimed at girls). This is very important in the context of schools being able to justify their ongoing involvement and is likely to be central to the future success of the Hub.

¹⁵ Additional Term 2 meeting held shortly after the first UK lockdown in March 2020.

Example: networking

Through the Careers Hub, one school accessed a free trial of Morrisby advice and guidance tracking software to use alongside the CEC Compass tool. The school's EC also facilitated visits to other schools so the Careers Leader could find out about the guidance software other schools were using and discuss the pros and cons of the different options.

Impact of COVID-19

4.12 While schools have not been able to participate in Hub meetings and activities to the same extent during the COVID-19 period, the general consensus from those that contributed to the evaluation is that the support provided through the Hub has actually become more effective, rather than less. They attribute this to:

- Information and opportunities shared with schools becoming more targeted and purposeful (in recognition of the constraints on the time and availability of school staff).
- The transition to online delivery (for certain meetings and activities) making it easier for school staff to take part. One Careers Leader, for example, suggested that online meetings to share practice had been more productive and efficient than previous face-to-face meetings and had brought them into contact with schools from outside of their normal network.

“Really pleased with how the provision has been sustained and enhanced in spite of COVID. It’s the energy that’s gone into adapting the existing provision to an online infrastructure. It’s obviously very difficult to get off the ground, but now it is off the ground, it’s going to make things much easier for schools, employers and the Hub going forward.” (Careers Leader)

Outcomes

4.13 The Kirklees Careers Hub has five intended outcomes:

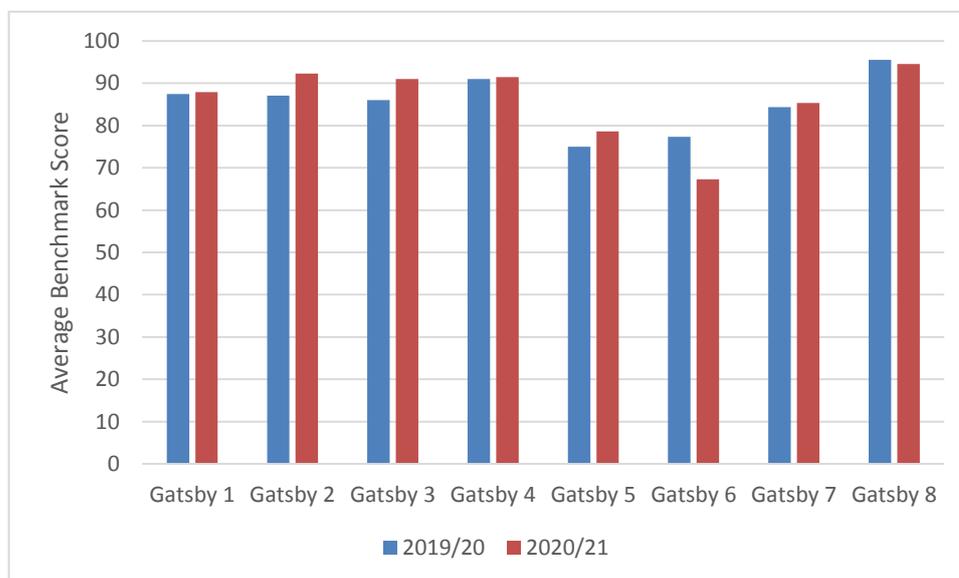
- Improved careers provision across the 35 schools/colleges.
- Increased number of schools/colleges achieving Gatsby Benchmarks 5 and 6.
- Students are in a better position to make informed choices about their future education and careers plans.
- Stronger links between schools/colleges and employers.
- Improved parental engagement with careers education.

4.14 Compass data and feedback from careers staff at schools in the Hub enables an assessment of progress against the first four of the outcomes listed above. It is more difficult to provide commentary on the outcome relating to parental engagement.

Improved careers provision

- 4.15 Whilst there is no individual Benchmark that provides an indication of overall improvement in careers provision, change in average scores per Benchmark can be used as a proxy. As is shown in Figure 4.1, average scores have increased against five of the eight Benchmarks for schools within the Hub between 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Figure 4.1: Average Benchmark scores for schools in the Kirklees Careers Hub



Source: Compass data 2019-2021. Base = 31 schools.

- 4.16 Alongside the above, qualitative feedback from school staff suggests that their involvement with the Hub has helped raise the profile and priority of careers education. They also point to the benefits of the Hub-led CPD in terms of enabling them to stay abreast of new developments and opportunities, developing a better understanding of different industry sectors and better embedding careers in the curriculum.

“Schools needed a lever and push to make careers a priority and the Hub has done this.” (Careers Leader)

It’s about being part of something much bigger and there are a lot of opportunities that come with that. It’s the culture it creates.” (Careers adviser)

“The shift in careers has been massive. Compass returns have improved.” (Careers Leader)

- 4.17 Gatsby Benchmarks 5 and 6

- 4.18 Table 4.3 shows that the number of Hub schools achieving Benchmark 5 decreased by one between 2019/20 and 2020/21. Over the same period, the number of Hub schools achieving Benchmark 6 decreased by six.

Table 4.3: Kirklees Careers Hub schools achieving Benchmarks 5 and 6

	2019/20	2020/21
Benchmark 5	17	16
Benchmark 6	18	12

Source: Compass data 2019-2021. Base = 31 schools.

- 4.19 The COVID-19 pandemic has evidently contributed to this decrease. Despite the measures taken by the Hub during the COVID-19 period, it has been challenging for schools to prioritise careers provision – either strategically or operationally – to the extent they would have liked, especially where that involves direct contact with employers. A truer test of the Hub will therefore be the number of schools achieving Benchmarks 5 and 6 over the medium term.

Students making informed choices

- 4.20 Whilst there is no individual Benchmark related to student choices, Benchmark 2 (learning from career and labour market information) acts as a reasonable proxy. Between 2019/20 and 2020/21, the number of Hub schools meeting Benchmark 2 increased by two schools, from 21 to 23. In addition, the average Benchmark 2 score for Hub schools increased from 87 to 92 (out of 100).
- 4.21 Alongside the Benchmark 2 improvements, Careers Leaders provided examples of how their engagement with the Hub had supported students in making more informed choices. These include more students expressing an interest in, and applying for, apprenticeships and the Hub facilitating connections with organisations providing individual careers guidance.

Stronger links between schools/colleges and employers

- 4.22 The decrease in the number of schools achieving Benchmarks 5 and 6 could indicate poor progress against this outcome. However, examples exist of where employer engagement has worked very well during the pandemic. One such example is summarised in the shaded box below.

Example: opportunities for students

During the pandemic, one school took advantage of a range of opportunities promoted through the Hub and now regularly accesses resources available through the PwC Employability Hub. Feedback from students about these resources has been positive, particularly regarding virtual interviews.

The school has also provided virtual work experience opportunities through the Springpod platform. These opportunities have reportedly been very well received by those involved.

Looking ahead

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- 4.23 A central priority of the Kirklees Careers Hub is to integrate new members from the neighbouring local authority area of Calderdale, with these schools and colleges being invited to join the Hub from September 2021. Alongside this, the Hub will focus on gaining a consistent standard across schools and colleges, and ensuring that resources are embedded through the sharing of 'what works' and good practice. In addition, the Hub is in a strong position to lead on good practice in parental engagement and will continue to develop this and share across the wider network.
- 4.24 Senior leadership and governor engagement remains an ongoing area for development, as does ensuring that each Hub member has an effective Careers Link Governor.
- 4.25 Wider priorities include the expansion of Careers Hubs to other areas in the Leeds City Region. The January 2021 Skills for Jobs White paper proposed the roll-out of Careers Hubs everywhere and, building on current successful Careers Hubs, the Combined Authority has recently finished a consultation exercise with Hub members to support this ambition. In addition to the expansion of the Kirklees Careers Hub and the SEND Careers Hub, funding has been secured for a third Careers Hub comprising secondary schools and colleges across Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield. After a transition period in the 2021/22 academic year, all EAN members will be invited to join a Careers Hub during 2022/23.

5 SEND CAREERS HUB

Introduction

- 5.1 Established in 2019, the SEND Careers Hub is based on a similar model to the Kirklees Careers Hub but has a specific focus on improving careers provision for SEND students. The SEND Careers Hub aims to create a network of mainstream and special schools and colleges that work together with employers, universities and training providers to share resources, learning and good practice. The SEND Careers Hub's Cornerstone Employers support employer engagement activities tailored to SEND students and provide strategic support through the Hub's steering group.
- 5.2 The SEND Careers Hub covers the local authority areas of Leeds, Wakefield, Calderdale and York. As at mid-2021, 29 schools and colleges were engaged with the Hub, with a further 16 schools set to join during the 2021/22 academic year. The lead school for the Hub is the Lighthouse School – a special free school for students with an autism diagnosis.
- 5.3 Like the Kirklees Careers Hub, the SEND Careers Hub is supported by ECs who facilitate partnerships between schools, colleges and employers. These ECs work solely with SEND Careers Hub schools and colleges, co-ordinating working group and networking meetings and promoting relevant opportunities through a half-termly newsletter.

School and employer engagement

- 5.4 In the first year of the SEND Careers Hub, the main priorities were stakeholder engagement and establishing a forward programme of work. ECs worked with a consultant (a former headteacher) to secure buy-in from schools and colleges and recruit Cornerstone Employers. A stakeholder engagement event was held in January 2020 which, based on information gathered for the evaluation, proved useful for networking and sharing practice. Following the event – and influenced significantly by on the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic – progress on the SEND Careers Hub slowed. Whilst recognising the reasons for this, the stakeholders that contributed to the evaluation nonetheless expressed some disappointment that the early momentum had been lost.
- 5.5 Covered in turn below, the SEND Careers Hub's activities in the 2020/21 academic year were focused on three key themes (feedback gathered during the evaluation suggests that this clarity of focus helped with school engagement and participation):
- Establishing a SEND alumni network.
 - Improving employer engagement.
 - Developing a community of schools and colleges that can support each other to improve careers provision for SEND students.
- 5.6 The first two of these themes were led by working groups comprising school Careers Leaders and employers (with support from ECs). The third theme was led by the ECs.

SEND alumni network

- 5.7 The SEND Careers Hub worked with the University of Derby to develop a toolkit of resources to support schools in establishing a SEND alumni network. The aim was that the network would help schools to inspire their students by giving them insight into the range of career paths that their predecessors had followed.
- 5.8 The resources are based on a four-stage model for creating and maintaining an alumni network (develop, recruit, retain and review). Training on the model was delivered in October 2020 and was attended by representatives from approximately half the 29 SEND Hub schools. The intention was to formally launch the resources at this event, but a delay in finalising them meant that this was pushed back to January 2021. ECs felt that this contributed to the loss of momentum described above.
- 5.9 Nonetheless, both the training and the resources have been well received by schools and have since been used by Careers Hubs in Lancaster and the South East of England. At the time of writing, the only notable recommendation put forward by schools for improving the resources was to make them less text-heavy.

Employer engagement

- 5.10 The SEND Careers Hub commissioned Lighthouse Futures Trust to develop resources to support schools and employers to deliver successful employer engagement activities with SEND students. The resources included a calendar of national career-related events, letter templates for outreach work with employers and employer insight videos.
- 5.11 The resources are set to be launched in the winter of 2021 and will be available on the FutureGoals website. Building on the learning from the alumni network project, this launch will coincide with dedicated training sessions to support the use of the resources.

Developing a community

- 5.12 This project has focused primarily on the creation of a directory of Careers Leads to facilitate networking across the Hub. The directory contains the names and email addresses for each Careers Lead, shows how long they have been in post and lists their areas of expertise. It also indicates whether they have resources to share and if their school or college has a Careers Link Governor.
- 5.13 The directory was officially launched in the spring of 2021. At the time of writing, use of the directory was still in its early stages, although the intention is that it will be used more widely in the 2021/22 academic year and will help to foster new partnerships and working relationships across the Hub. In particular, it has the potential to engender practice sharing between special and mainstream schools.

Impact of COVID-19

- 5.14 The COVID-19 pandemic has placed significant constraints on the capacity of schools to engage with the SEND Careers Hub, as it has on employer engagement and

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participation more widely. One of the Cornerstone Employers, for example, felt it necessary to reduce their involvement with the SEND Careers Hub and focus on core business operations (they are a hospitality business).

- 5.15 However, the shift to online working has, in one regard, benefitted the SEND Hub. Prior to the pandemic, working group meetings were held face-to-face and were usually in Leeds. This could make it challenging for schools from other areas to attend and meant that numbers were often quite low. With the meetings now held online, attendance is typically much higher and includes both Careers Leaders and employers. The breakout-room facility within the video conferencing software has also allowed for focused discussion around specific topics.

Outcomes

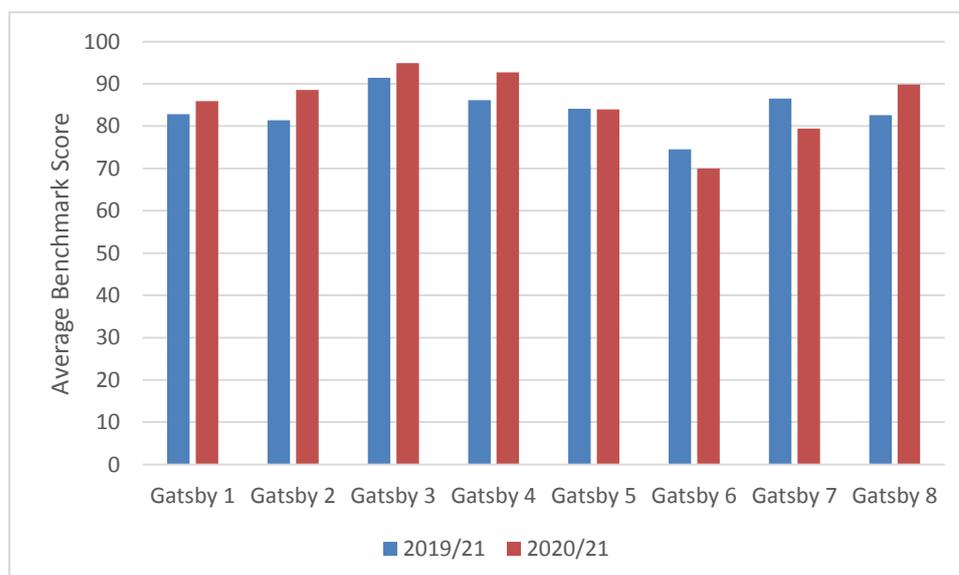
- 5.16 The SEND Careers Hub has five intended outcomes, the first two of which are as follows:

- Improved careers provision across the participating schools/colleges.
- Increased number of schools/colleges achieving Gatsby Benchmarks 1, 5 and 6.

Improved careers provision

- 5.17 Between 2019/20 and 2020/21, the average number of Benchmarks achieved by SEND Careers Hub schools has increased by half a Benchmark, from 4.0 to 4.5 Benchmarks¹⁶. In addition, the number of schools meeting Benchmark 3 (addressing the needs of each pupil) has increased from 14 in 2019/20 to 18 in 2020/21.
- 5.18 Over the same period, average scores for five of the eight Benchmarks increased amongst SEND Careers Hub schools (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Average Benchmark scores for the SEND Careers Hub schools



Source: Compass data 2019-2021. Base = 28 schools/colleges.

¹⁶ For 1 of the 29 SEND Careers Hub schools, Compass data was not available for the 2019/20 academic year.

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- 5.19 The inference from this data is that, overall, careers provision at SEND Careers Hub schools has improved between 2019/20 and 2020/21. It is not possible, within the confines of this evaluation, to prove that conclusively, nor to comment on the extent to which the SEND Careers Hub is responsible, but the signs nonetheless appear encouraging.

More schools/colleges achieving Benchmarks 1, 5 and 6

- 5.20 As above, Compass data shows that, on average, SEND Careers Hub schools have improved against Benchmark 1, but not against Benchmarks 5 and 6. This is explored in more detail in Table 5.1, which shows that two more schools had fully achieved Benchmark 1 in 2020/21 than in 2019/20, whilst three and one fewer schools respectively had achieved Benchmarks 5 and 6.

Table 5.1: Number of SEND Careers Hub schools achieving Benchmarks 1, 5 and 6

	2019/20	2020/21	Change
Benchmark 1	9	11	2
Benchmark 5	19	16	-3
Benchmark 6	13	12	-1

Source: Compass data 2018-2021. Base = 28 schools/colleges.

- 5.21 COVID-19 is once again the overriding reason behind the Benchmark 5 and 6 data. If anything, and bearing in mind the disruptions to all aspects of school life caused by COVID-19, it is a positive finding that average Benchmark 5 scores actually remained the same across the two years, while the reduction in average Benchmark 6 scores was relatively small.

Qualitative insight

- 5.22 The other three intended outcomes of the SEND Careers Hub are as follows:
- Improved employer engagement links with schools/colleges to support students with SEND.
 - Increased range of positive destinations and pathways represented to students with SEND.
 - Students are in a better position to make informed choices about their future education and career plans.
- 5.23 It is difficult to comment on the extent to which these outcomes have been achieved, given that the evaluation scope enabled only very limited interactions with SEND Careers Hub stakeholders in the 2020/21 academic year.
- 5.24 That said, there are clearly some positive messages. For example, the shaded box below provides school-level insight into how effective employer engagement has led to high quality support for SEND students (more detail is provided in the appendix to this report). If such examples are, or can become, commonplace across the schools involved with the Hub, then its outcomes and impact over the coming years could be considerable.

Example: Cockburn John Charles Academy

Mock interview day

The school worked with Ahead Partnership to organise a day of mock interviews for Year 10 SEND students. Volunteers from NatWest conducted the interviews with 44 students, providing verbal and written feedback on their performance.

“They were nervous but it’s good for them, it brings the outside world closer. It’s helpful for them to work on professional language, to put that into practice.” (School staff)

“The volunteers were so impressed with the students’ professionalism.” (School staff)

Partnerships with colleges

The school has developed strong links with Leeds City College and Go Higher West Yorkshire to support the provision of information, advice and guidance for SEND students related to further education. This has also included campus tours of the college for SEND students from the school.

Business partnerships

The SEND Careers Hub EC has helped the school develop a relationship with a local bed manufacturing company. Discussions are now taking place about bespoke activities for SEND students in the 2021/22 academic year, including visits to the workplace and mock interviews.

For full case study, see appendix

Refocusing EC resource

- 5.25 During the first year of the SEND Careers Hub, four ECs each worked with approximately five schools in the Hub as well as other schools outside of it. During the second year, this was changed such that two ECs supported all 29 SEND Careers Hub schools (a third EC is joining the team for the 2021/22 academic year) whilst not working with any other schools. Feedback from the ECs suggests that this has enabled them to provide more focused and effective support to schools, as they are able to focus solely on SEND Careers Hub activities.

Looking ahead

- 5.26 Focusing the work of the SEND Careers Hub on three core themes over the past year means the SEND Careers Hub team have greater confidence and direction going into the 2021/22 academic year. Key priorities going forward are:
- Diversifying the range of employers engaged with the SEND Careers Hub and improving the relevance and quality of employer engagement opportunities for students with SEND.
 - Supporting the 16 new schools and colleges joining the SEND Careers Hub.

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- Supporting careers provision and strategy for students with SEND by continuing to develop communities of practice and providing bespoke training and development opportunities for school and college leaders.
- Supporting schools and colleges to shape regional sustainable projects which seek to solve problems faced by SEND learners in careers education and the world of work.
- Through the alumni project, increasing the aspirations of SEND young people within schools and colleges.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

- 6.1 The evaluation concludes that the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Enterprise in Education activities have been, and continue to be, a valuable addition to the careers landscape across the Leeds City Region. Whilst each of the four strands within the scope of the evaluation has experienced challenges, each also enjoys strong stakeholder support. This support is underpinned by a shared view that each strand has delivered positive outcomes and should be continued going forward.
- 6.2 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fundamental impact on the Enterprise in Education programme. It has affected delivery volumes, delivery models and school and employer engagement. It has resulted in lost momentum and has forced the postponement or cancellation of exciting and innovative activities to which schools and employers had committed valuable time. It is to the credit of all those involved, and to the ECs in particular, that virtual/remote activities could take place and that a dialogue about careers provision could be maintained, despite all the constraints.
- 6.3 The pandemic has also impacted on the design and delivery of this evaluation and, in particular, on the conclusions that can be drawn about impact. Where Enterprise in Education activities have been delivered, the feedback provided to the evaluators has been almost unanimously positive. An array of anecdotal examples has been provided about student benefits which, without doubt, should be celebrated. However, that does not constitute an objective assessment of impact, which ideally would require control groups, larger research samples and multiple episodes of primary research with the same individuals. None of this has been possible, so whilst the overall tone of this evaluation is rightly positive, it is difficult to talk definitively or accurately about impact.
- 6.4 What can be said with certainty, however, is that the pandemic has generated valuable learning in the context of managing and delivering Enterprise in Education programmes. Remote meetings for example, while initially viewed only as a fallback, have actually stimulated greater participation amongst both schools and employers. Remote sessions involving students and employers have tended to work less well, either because of technological issues or because they have required schools to commit a considerable amount of supervisory resource. These are, however, very useful experiences that can be built into the future design and delivery of Enterprise in Education activities across the Leeds City Region.
- 6.5 On that topic, it is encouraging that a clear plan and set of priorities is in place for each of the four strands. Equally encouraging is the willingness of the Combined Authority team to learn from stakeholder feedback, acknowledge challenges and translate those into development priorities. The plans will not necessarily be straightforward to achieve, especially if the COVID-19 situation worsens once again. However, the proactivity and enthusiasm of the teams responsible for implementing the plans is a significant finding from this evaluation.

Recommendations

- 6.6 The evaluation does not have sufficient evidence to propose fundamental or strategic changes to any of the Enterprise in Education activities within its scope. That is not to suggest that any such changes are needed, just that the light-touch nature of the evaluation means that any programme-wide recommendations are unlikely to be well informed.
- 6.7 Operationally, the Combined Authority is advised to consider the following:
- **Blended approaches:** it has been proven during the pandemic that certain aspects of Enterprise in Education delivery can work well when administered remotely and, in particular, that remote communications/meetings are preferred by many stakeholders. Blended approaches would therefore seem advisable going forward and may lead to a reduction in running costs.
 - **Scope of the EA role:** the evaluation evidence suggests that many EAs take an operational or hands-on approach to the role. That is not unusual and mirrors findings from elsewhere, plus it can give students greater exposure to the world of work. However, it can also prevent schools from receiving strategic, private sector-led input that would benefit their careers programmes over the longer term and across the whole school. Taking steps to ensure that the EAs putting themselves forward for the role are not attracted *only* by the operational or hands-on aspects is therefore advisable.
 - **Longer term outcomes:** some of the Raising Aspirations projects have the potential to generate significant positive outcomes over the longer term, e.g. through follow-on or repeat projects undertaken with employers, through students progressing into different study/career options, or through the outputs from the projects being cascaded across the City Region. It would be a shame for these outcomes to go unnoticed and the Combined Authority may therefore wish to repeat the feedback form exercise at the end of the 2021/22 academic year. This would not require additional evaluation activity, but would be a less formal exercise and could be administered in-house. It has the potential to demonstrate that Raising Aspirations has generated positive outcomes well beyond the end of its funding period – something which would stand the Combined Authority/LEP and its partners in good stead when preparing future funding bids.

APPENDIX: RAISING ASPIRATIONS CASE STUDIES

Parkside School: Project Altitude

About the school
<p>Parkside School is a maintained 11–18 secondary school in Cullingworth, near Bradford. At 17%, the proportion of SEN students at the school is above the national average, whilst the proportion of students eligible for free school meals (20%) is slightly below the national average.</p>
Project summary
<p>The aim of Project Altitude was to provide early intervention support for Year 9 students at risk of becoming NEET. The school was already running successful employer engagement activities for Year 10 students through its Aspire2Be programme, and felt that a similar intervention targeted at Year 9s (prior to them selecting their GCSEs) would be beneficial.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“If we get them engaged with what’s out there in the world of work, they’re going to be more engaged in school and they’ll ultimately be more successful learners.”</i> (School staff)</p> <p>Suitable students were identified based on various factors including Pupil Premium eligibility, deprivation (using home addresses), academic progress and ‘risk of NEET’ indicators. This generated a long-list which was then reduced to a group 12 students which senior leaders thought would derive the most benefit from being involved.</p> <p>The school had an existing relationship with a local engineering company (the managing director of the company supports the school as an EA). This provided the foundation for the project and enabled a range of activities to be undertaken between November 2019 and February 2020. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A launch event at the school featuring students, parents and staff from the employer. • Two visits to the employer’s factory, with a focus on the development of employability skills. • Three business mentoring sessions with staff from the employer. The mentors helped students to consider different job and career options and supported them to develop CVs. • A visit to the Jaguar Land Rover factory at Halewood. • Creation of StartProfiles for each of the students. • A celebration event where the students gave presentations on what they had learned over the course of the project.
Impact of COVID-19
<p>The pandemic did not significantly affect the project as most activities had been completed by February 2020. However, neither parents nor staff from the employer could be invited to the celebration event. In addition, the school had intended to run more mentoring sessions with the</p>

employer in mid-2020, and had planned to repeat the project in the 2020/21 academic year, but neither of these could go ahead.

Engagement and outcomes

Staff at the school reported strong engagement from parents (attendance at the launch event was very good). Student interest in the project at the outset was mixed, but increased significantly following the first employer visit.

Students providing feedback for the evaluation described the mentoring as “helpful” and said the employer visits had given them an insight into different jobs. In the main, they expected this to benefit them when making decisions about post-compulsory study and career pathways.

Staff at the school reported (what they consider to be) a direct link between the project and an increase in the self-confidence of the participating students. This was particularly apparent during the end-of-project presentations.

“Had we said to them at the beginning that they were going to give a presentation, well over half of them would have said ‘absolutely not, there’s no way I’ll stand up in front of people’. But they prepared really well and practiced at home. To be able to stand up and speak in front of their peers, to reflect honestly about what they’ve taken away from the project – that speaks volumes of them and the progress they’ve made.” (School staff)

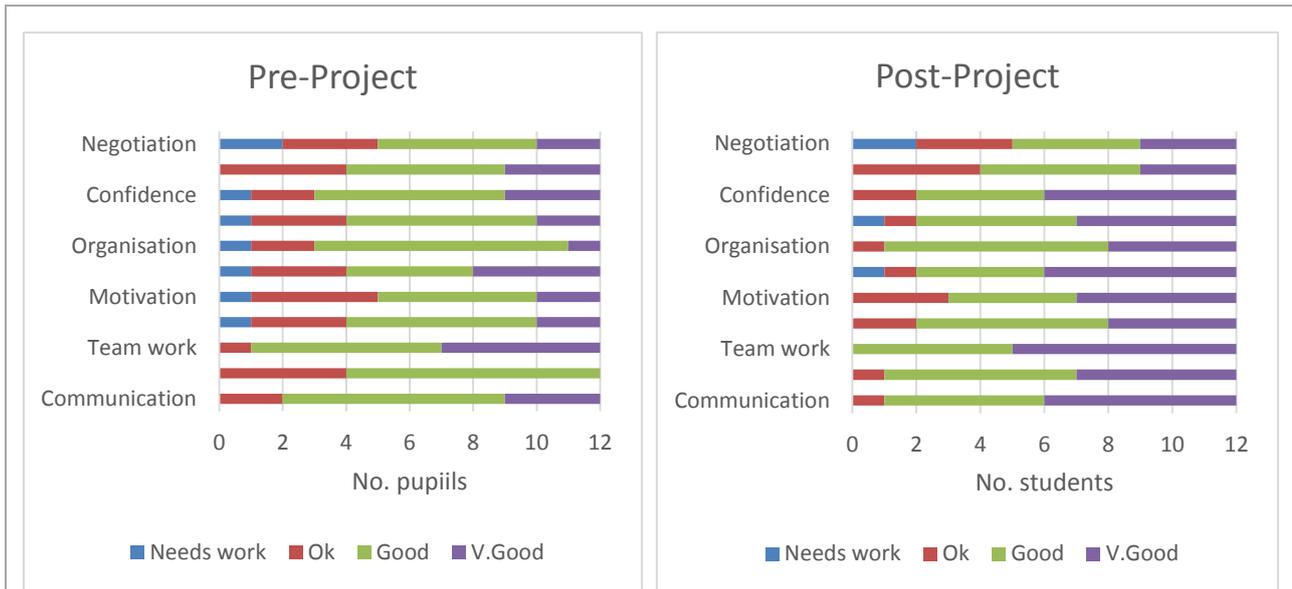
Parents were similarly positive, commenting on improvements in behaviour, motivation and decision making. One parent explained that the project helped their child to decide on a career in graphic design and that they are now actively researching apprenticeship opportunities in that field.

School evaluation

The school undertook an internal evaluation of the project, asking students to complete a questionnaire at the start and end of the project. Students gave a score out of 10 to indicate how motivated they felt to pursue a career, with the mean score across the group of students increasing from 6.3 to 7.3 between the start and end points.

The graphs below show that across the different employability skills covered by the questionnaire, students were more likely to rate themselves ‘good’ or ‘very good’ at the end of the project than at the start. ‘OK’ and ‘needs work’ responses became less common.

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region



Success factors

Funding: the Raising Aspirations funding helped pay for the employer's staff time, the mentoring training provided by the local authority, expenses associated with the visits and a three-year subscription to StartProfile. Without the funding, the project would have had to rely much more heavily on the good will of the employer's staff and is unlikely to have had such regular or high-quality input.

Employer engagement: strong buy-in and engagement from the employer was central to the project's success. In recognition of this, the school nominated the managing director for a local Outstanding Business Engagement award, which she won.

School project lead: the Assistant Careers Leader at the school clearly committed (and was able to commit) a considerable amount of time to the project. Without this support from senior leaders at the school, it seems unlikely that the project would have been as successful.

Looking forward

The school would like to embed a project of this kind within the Year 9 careers programme, although they recognise that without the funding, certain aspects of the project (such as workplace visits) may need to be delivered differently.

Joseph Norton Academy: Virtual Employer Insight

<p>About the school</p>
<p>Joseph Norton Academy is a 7-16 special school for children with complex SEMH difficulties. It is located near Huddersfield and is run by the Wellspring Academy Trust. Approximately 60 children attend the academy, 80% of whom are eligible for free school meals.</p>
<p>Project summary</p>
<p>The school’s Raising Aspirations project involved the production of 12 employer insight videos, each featuring interviews with staff members and workplace tours filmed using a 360° camera.</p> <p>The aim of the project was to support the school in meeting Gatsby Benchmark 5 – meaningful encounters with employers and employees. Due to the students’ complex SEMH difficulties, it was felt that physical workplace visits would not be suitable for most of the students and had the potential to heighten their anxieties and trigger what an employer might construe as poor behaviour. The school’s Careers Lead therefore proposed virtual employer visits through film. The idea was that students could watch the films numerous times and become familiar with the environment, which in turn would make a future ‘physical’ visit more manageable.</p> <p>A local film company was awarded the contract following a competitive tendering exercise (a key factor in them winning was that they offered to recruit the employers – something which would have been very time consuming for the school).</p> <p>Each of the films covered (or will feature) a different sector/area of work: textile manufacturing, insurance, engineering, television, film production, emergency services, horticulture, hospitality, digital, transport, construction and distribution. The first three films are already made and available to watch here.</p> <p>Each film features a short clip of a senior employee introducing the organisation, as well as a 360° view of the workplace and footage of employees at work. Funding for the project included the purchase of virtual reality headsets, which enable the students to watch the videos in a more immersive way.</p>
<p>Impact of COVID-19</p>
<p>Three of the 12 films were completed prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. After this, government restrictions meant that employers could not allow film crews into the workplace. Even after some of the restrictions were lifted, filming remained a challenge as many companies were relying on home-working and/or found it hard to commit time to non-essential activities. On occasion, film shoots that had been arranged had to be postponed at short notice due to members of staff testing positive for COVID-19. Despite these setbacks, most of the employers remain committed to the project. The intention is to have all 12 films completed by December 2021.</p> <p>Initial plans for the project also included selected students gaining work experience through being involved in producing the films. However, the pandemic made this too difficult to achieve in practice.</p>

Engagement and outcomes

At the time of writing, the school had shared the three completed films via the school's blog, Twitter and on the Leeds City Region LEP website. They have also been promoted across the other 24 schools in the Wellspring Academy Trust and with nearby special schools. Feedback has been almost universally positive.

"They [staff at another school] loved using them with the students. It may not be an option for them in terms of employment, but it's nice for them to have a look round just like every other child." (School staff)

"The students tend to have quite a limited view of the world, so it's about creating an awareness of what the world of work is like." (School staff)

When all 12 films are complete, they will be integrated into the careers curriculum. A launch event is being planned, to which all the featured employers will be invited.

Leeds Co-op Academy: Film Club

About the school

Leeds Co-op Academy, part of the Co-operative Academies Trust, is an 11–18 secondary school in Leeds. It has approximately 900 students, 50% of whom are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of students at the school who speak English as an additional language, at 73%, is well above the national average.

Project Summary

The school's Raising Aspirations project was developed from a four-year programme (Burberry Inspire) in which they were already involved. This programme, delivered by Burberry in partnership with the Ideas Foundation, aims to give Year 7-9 students an insight into creative careers. In the first year of the Burberry Inspire programme, the school worked with Leeds Young Film to develop students' filming and photography skills. This proved such a successful partnership that the school was keen to continue the relationship beyond the Burberry Inspire programme.

“Trying to increase the number of students going into creative careers doesn't stop in Year 9. And if you do stop in Years 10 and 11, they'll pick something else.”
(School staff)

Film Club

Delivered by two film makers from Leeds Young Film, the aim of the club was for students to create their own fictional short films, from concept development and scriptwriting, to filming and editing. Through this process, the students would develop an understanding of the different stages of film making and the variety of roles involved. Prior to the pandemic, the intention was for a wider group of students studying GCSE drama, music and art to be involved in the later stages of film production.

Staff CPD

Leeds Young Film delivered staff training on how film can enhance classroom-based learning and engagement.

Movie Con

Movie Con aimed to bring aspects of the Leeds Young Film Festival to the school through workshops on stop motion animation, stunt fighting, stage make-up and special effects. The workshops were repeated so that each student in the school took part in at least one activity. Each workshop involved a talk from the workshop leader about their own career and how they got into the industry. The foyer of the school was also decorated with a red carpet alongside a 'magic selfie mirror' that sent students' selfies to their email inbox.

Impact of COVID-19

The project was placed on hold during the 2020-21 academic year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Attempts were made to deliver Film Club online through Google Classroom, but this proved difficult due to technology issues.

Engagement and outcomes

Film Club

Between 15 and 20 students regularly attended Film Club, with high levels of engagement and enthusiasm reported by staff. Students would often come to the sessions with ideas they had written down or been working during the preceding week.

“It was so nice to see them engaged and really wanting to do something.” (School staff)

The students developed a strong sense of ownership over the film-making process and a good group dynamic emerged.

“If you’d asked me to pick the students, I wouldn’t have put them together. But they worked so well as a group.” (School staff)

One student was said to have completely changed her career aspirations as a result of being involved in Film Club. Described as “very able”, the student had not previously considered a career in film, but is now studying film studies at A-level and applied for a paid position with a film crew. She was selected for interview from more than 70 applicants, and although she was not offered the position, she was nonetheless offered a work shadowing placement.

“It unlocked skills she didn’t know she had.” (School staff)

As well as greater awareness of creative careers, the students involved in Film Club are reported to have gained new skills in:

- **Problem solving, teamwork and communication:** the students often had lots of ideas for what to include in the story and worked well together to fit these within the constraints of the project (budget, location, available resources etc.).
- **Literacy:** students learnt what makes a good character and a compelling narrative through discussing ideas and script writing.
- **Digital:** students learnt how to use the cameras and film editing software. Some have since put these skills into practice in other areas of the school by volunteering to take and edit photos for school trips and events.

Staff also reported that Film Club provided some of the more isolated students, who perhaps did not have a large friendship group, to share their ideas and have a ‘voice’ in the school. For example, staff described the impact Film Club had on one Year 8 student who, when she first joined, was quite isolated and appeared to lack confidence:

“She joined film club and she was like a different person. You could see a spark; she was given space to be herself and have her ideas valued by the group.” (School staff)

Movie Con

Staff commented that students engaged well with Movie Con, due in particular to the interactive nature of the workshops. They also appreciated having been given insight into the different roles available within the creative industries.

Staff CPD

One staff CPD workshop was delivered prior to the onset of COVID-19 in March 2020. Whilst staff felt the workshop was useful, they did not feel able to comment on its impact.

Success factors

Funding

The project would not have been possible without the Raising Aspirations funding, not least because of the technical expertise and equipment involved. Despite Leeds Young Film offering a lot of their time on a pro bono basis, there were still significant expenses.

The school plans to run the project next year, including Movie Con, using funds saved whilst the original project was on hold during the pandemic. The school's Careers Co-ordinator is looking to source additional funding to sustain the project over the longer term.

Project management

The school Careers Co-ordinator has been key to the success of the project, handling a host of important issues such as securing consent for filming, engaging students and reminding them of tasks and deadlines, and completing health and safety checks. The project is unlikely to have had the momentum or success in their absence.

Cockburn John Charles Academy (SEND Careers Hub case study)

About the school

Cockburn John Charles Academy is an 11-16 secondary school in Leeds, and is part of the Cockburn Multi Academy Trust. Approximately 1,100 students attend the school, 47% of whom are eligible for free school meals and 22% of whom have SEND. Over half of the students speak English as an additional language.

Engagement with SEND Hub

Staff from the school attended the SEND Hub launch event in January 2020. Since then, their involvement with the Hub has involved the following:

Mock interviews

The school worked with Ahead Partnership to organise a day of mock interviews for Year 10 SEND students. Volunteers from NatWest conducted the interviews with 44 students and provided verbal and written feedback on the students' performance. Students were asked questions about their favourite subjects and hobbies, their future aspirations and how their teachers were likely to describe them. The interviews were undertaken online due to COVID-19 restrictions (although school staff also noted that more interviews are likely to be undertaken remotely in the future and it was therefore a valuable learning exercise).

Links with colleges

The school works with Leeds City College and Go Higher to provide students with information, advice and guidance about further education. Plans are also being made for face-to-face campus tours at Leeds City College for SEND students from the school.

Business partnerships

The SEND Careers Hub EC has helped the school develop a relationship with a local bed manufacturing company. Discussions are now taking place about bespoke activities for SEND students in the 2021/22 academic year, including visits to the workplace and mock interviews.

Outcomes

Staff spoke very positively about how well the students engaged with the mock interviews. Every student was on time for their interview and the NatWest volunteers were impressed with their professionalism.

"The students were amazing; there was a real buzz about the school." (School staff)

Staff commented that a significant benefit of the activity was that the interviews were conducted by people from outside of the school. Their view was that, had the interviews been conducted by teachers or other school staff, students would not have taken them as seriously.

"They were nervous, but it's good for them, it brings the outside world closer. It's helpful for them to work on professional language and to put that into practice." (School staff)

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

The students that contributed to the evaluation said they enjoyed the interviews and felt comfortable (after some initial nerves) speaking with the NatWest volunteers. They found the opportunity to prepare in advance very helpful – one student practiced her answers with a friend whilst another wrote down how he might answer the practice question.

The students were pleased with the feedback they received from the volunteers. They were told that they had given good answers and had been polite and professional. The most common advice they received was to try and speak with greater confidence when answering questions.

The students agreed that they would feel more confident in a real-life interview having taken part in the activity.

Success factors

Coordination of the mock interview process by the school Careers Adviser was key to the success of the activity, especially given the challenges associated with them being online. Staff also commented that the enthusiasm of the NatWest volunteers was key and helped to put the students at ease.

“The volunteers were phenomenal.” (School staff)

The school hopes to repeat the activity with future Year 10 groups.



Report to: Employment and Skills Committee

Date: 24 January 2022

Subject: **AEB Programme**

Director: Brian Archer, Director of Economic Services

Author: Lindsey Daniels, AEB Manager

Is this a key decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" 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 update the Committee on progress with devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) now the fund is devolved and under delivery.
- 1.2 To seek the Committee's approval for actions which will further improve the responsiveness of AEB delivery and improve the utilisation of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee (Level 3) delegated funds.
- 1.3 To seek the Committee's comments on proposed high-level principles for collaboration on the Employment and Skills agenda.

2. Information

Adult Education Budget

- 2.1. The Combined Authority has now received five Occupancy Reports¹ from the ESFA (August to December 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. Detailed performance data has been provided in **Appendix A**. The attached appendix has also been produced for each Local Authority area and shared with key stakeholders to better understand delivery on a more local level.
- 2.2. The volume and value of data returned has increased substantially since the last report at R02, providing much more visibility of training delivery and the support being made available to West Yorkshire residents. The data platforms developed allow us to analyse performance on provider by provider basis, as well as within specific geographies, and also consider the demographics of learners supported with AEB funding. Dashboards have been developed that are shared with providers and stakeholders to inform delivery and strategic input.
- 2.3. Broadly, provision is behind provider profiles, although some strong performance is evident through both grant and contract for service providers. Significant underperformance is already being addressed through recovery planning, and this paper proposes mechanisms which will allow the Combined Authority to manage funds more responsively.
- 2.4. The pandemic continues to affect the context in which providers are operating: hard to reach learners continue to be more hesitant to engage, blended learning approaches are utilised to support more learning from home. While the MCA seeks to manage funds effectively and responsively, it is mindful of calls from the provider base and stakeholders to be sensitive to the difficulties learners and providers are facing, particularly in light of new variants and a possible increase to restrictions. It should also be noted that remote learning is not the preferred, nor the most effective method of engagement for many of the more disadvantaged WY residents.
- 2.5. Key Account Managers in the Combined Authority's AEB team are developing strong relationships with their provider base, implementing performance management, providing advice and guidance on funding usage and creating links across the AEB partnership. A number of variation requests have been considered and those with clear strategic rationale have been approved to support provider responsiveness.
- 2.6. Partnership meetings have been held in 4 of the 5 Local Authority areas, with the final meeting due in February. These meetings brought together Local Authorities, providers and key stakeholders to share information on provision and learner needs. Future meetings are planned quarterly, with the next round

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

focusing on a variety of topics as designated by the group, including digital access, links to local strategy and ESOL.

Partnership and Strategic input

- 2.7. With the fundamental logistics of AEB management in place, significant work has been undertaken since the last committee meeting to reflect on the WY AEB strategy's intent and strengthen the partnership work intended to improve the effectiveness of AEB management, recognising and further defining the strategic role of Local Authorities.
- 2.8. A Strategic Skills Workshop was also held with Directors of Development/equivalents from each Local Authority. All parties at the workshop recognised the progress made to build a spirit of collaboration on this agenda and identified other ways to strengthen partnership-working, including open two-way communication, transparency and the sharing of intelligence. Attendees agreed that through collaboration, there is an opportunity to have much greater influence over government departments and national policy-making that impacts West Yorkshire residents.
- 2.9. **Appendix B** outlines a series of asks developed by local authorities and colleges, and documents proposals that have been agreed as suitable across the partnership, following highly detailed discussions regarding AEB operation and the governance structures needed to provide local strategic oversight of provision.
- 2.10. Building on the work that has been done to develop a governance structure for AEB which reflects the unique place-making role of LAs while mitigating against conflicts of interest, there is now an appetite to develop high level operating principles to be determined between the MCA and LAs. From these principles, more detailed roles and responsibilities can be defined specifically to future devolved streams, taking into account any conditions of devolution, and creating a solution-oriented delivery structure. AEB continues to be a 'working example' of partnership activity which can be used to inform future devolution models.
- 2.11. In addition to the above-mentioned development and strengthening of the partnership work and local strategic input to WY AEB, consultations have been held with stakeholders, grant providers and contract for service providers regarding a number of proposals referred to in the previous committee paper. These proposals group into 'performance management' functions and opportunities for responsiveness. The proposals are outlined below for information and approval. Rationale and the context of consultation have been included.

Performance Management proposals

- 2.12. **Tolerance:** in line with calls from the sector to reduce the bureaucracy and uncertainty associated with reconciliation – a 3% tolerance will be applied to

underspend only. A financial value cap will not be applied to this percentage tolerance in 2021/22, reflecting the context in which providers are operating this year. Provider behaviour and the variance to tolerance will be monitored with recommendations made for 2022/23 regarding a future cap.

2.13. **In-year contract growth:** We will provide a clear mechanism whereby successful providers can increase their contract value, to help ensure we maximise the utilisation and potential impact of AEB funding in West Yorkshire. At the mid-year point, all providers will be able to present a simple business case for contract growth providing a range of criteria are met, including:

- They are at or above 95% of their financial delivery profile
- Delivery is in line with their delivery profile in terms of learner numbers, sector and geographical areas
- Deliverer has adhered to the AEB key values and behaviours
- Delivery focuses on AEB entitlements and/or key strategic needs

2.14. Growth requests will be prioritised against strategic need, and in the Local Area geographies with low uptake.

2.15. A sliding scale for contract growth will ensure that growth allocations are both viable and proportionate.

2.16. Growth requests will be accepted initially at the mid-year return (R06), and repeated throughout the year where funding permits, based on reallocation of funds.

2.17. Growth requests for Community Learning will not be accepted until after the Community Learning Review has taken place to inform decisions in an evidenced based manner.

2.18. **Managing Underperformance:** underperformance will be addressed and allow reallocation of funding to successfully performing providers. The sliding scale tapers towards year-end, supporting providers who need time to gain momentum. The scale will be applied to provider delivery plans, although significant variance to ESFA national profile will be highlighted.

Return	R04	R06	R08	R10	R12
Tolerance to national profile	85%	90%	95%	95%	97%

2.19. As per the existing Performance Management framework, underperforming providers will be given 2 months of 'recovery planning' in order to support a return to profile before funding values are removed. It should be noted that some providers have already entered the 'recovery planning' stage, in anticipation of this.

- 2.20. For contract reduction, the % of underperformance against provider profile will be applied to contract value – although consideration of performance improvement and a ‘de minimus’ regarding reduction value will be considered in each case.
- 2.21. **Provider stability:** to support provider sustainability and partnership development the following actions are recommended:
- 2.21.1. Grant providers will be offered a 3 year notational allocation for 2022-25 on the condition that they: Continue to provide a diverse range of programmes that meet a wide range of learner needs, develop delivery plans and contribute to forward planning, participate in the upcoming Community Learning Review
- 2.21.2. Contract for Service providers are recommended for continuation in AY2022/23, as opposed to reprocurring the provider base, with reassurance that an extension for AY2023/24 will also be made, performance and funding dependant.

Responsiveness proposals

- 2.22. There are approx. £4 million uncommitted AEB funds remaining within the Adult Education Budget for AY2021/22. As stated in the strategy, this funding will be utilised respond to emerging needs and/or support allocation growth for providers who are successfully meeting existing demand.
- 2.23. The Responsiveness Pot for AY2021/22 will:
- 2.23.1. Support growth for successful providers to target strategic needs
- 2.23.2. Provide multiple opportunities for providers to tender for specific opportunities (as determined by the MCA and LAs)
- 2.24. New opportunities tendered will span multiple academic years to ensure programmes have sufficient longevity to create an impact. Opportunities will be released individually as and when rationale is clear to increase responsiveness and allow development time for more complex issues.
- 2.25. Initially the AEB Team will work with stakeholders to develop specifications which meet the following needs which have already been identified:
- 2.25.1. ESOL provision
- 2.25.2. Digital Access
- 2.25.3. Addressing the Bus Driver Shortage
- 2.25.4. Green Skills

2.25.5. 'Free courses for Jobs' (see paragraph 2.33)

- 2.26. The team will develop future 'Responsiveness' calls as needs emerge. Calls must demonstrate that they are meeting a specific gap within a local authority area and/or addresses the mayoral pledges.
- 2.27. The Combined Authority and Local Authorities will work closely to identify, agree and develop responsiveness calls, taking into account any conflicts of interest at the initial planning stage.
- 2.28. Where commissioned responsiveness activity involves a flexibility within the Performance Management rules, the Combined Authority will consider whether appropriate to open up this flexibility to the wider provider base. Displacement of wider AEB provision will be the primary concern in this case.

Lifetime Skills Guarantee – National Skills Fund Level 3 (delegated funding)

- 2.29. We have received reassurance from DfE that these funds will continue to be made available and delegated to West Yorkshire for AY2022/23. This has provided comfort to existing providers delivering longer programmes which span multiple years.
- 2.30. Following budget announcements, it is expected that the eligibility of these funds will be expanded in April 2022 to include all adults who are unemployed or earning below the National Living Wage, irrespective of prior qualification levels. The offer will be rebranded 'Free Courses for Jobs'
- 2.31. The uptake of the current offer has been low in West Yorkshire. This reflects the National picture, and the situation reported by other MCAs. In West Yorkshire the funding was made available by Grant agreements to the 7 FE Colleges, whose initial forecast outstripped the value of funding available. Funding eligibility and qualification approvals have reduced these organisations' ability to connect the funding opportunity to learners, and a number have voluntarily lowered their contract value.
- 2.32. In the previous meeting the Committee approved the allocation of these funds to the existing grant providers. This action has been taken, however there remains a surplus of funding which should be made available to our residents where possible.
- 2.33. We propose the following action is taken:
 - 2.33.1. The existing provider base should be permitted to subcontract their current Lifetime Skills Guarantee where there is a strategic rationale. These arrangements should meet all due diligence and contractual conditions, and be approved through existing AEB governance structures.

2.33.2. The surplus funding available will be opened for wider grant providers to submit a business case for an allocation.

2.33.3. A specification will be developed as part of the responsiveness work to commission contracts for services that will address market gaps. This is expected to align with the eligibility expansion when allocation values for AY 2022/23 are known. Contracts will be awarded to span 2021-2023, supporting longer, meaningful programme delivery.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 There are no climate emergency implications directly arising from this report. However, in the proposal to support “green skills” through AEB, there is an opportunity to grow the skills base required in order to tackle the climate emergency.

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, although as per item 4 – this fund seeks to address inequality in skills acquisition. 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 approve the following actions which will improve the responsiveness of AEB delivery and improve the utilisation of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee (Level 3) delegated funds:
- 10.1.1 Apply a 3% tolerance to underperformance at the end of AY2021/22
 - 10.1.2 Update the Performance Management framework and enact the growth and underperformance mechanisms as outlined in 2.13 – 2.20
 - 10.1.3 Provide stability to the AEB delivery partnership for both Grant and Contract for Service providers as per 2.21.
 - 10.1.4 Allocate responsiveness funds through provider growth and new opportunities as outlined in 2.22-2.28.
 - 10.1.5 Increase resident access to Free Courses for Jobs funds (Lifetime Skills guarantee - Level 3) as outlined in 2.33.
- 10.2 The Committee is asked to note the progress and provide comment on partnership work, in particular the strategic input of stakeholders as defined in Appendix B and on the proposed high-level principles for collaboration on the Employment and Skills agenda.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. Appendices

Appendix A – AEB R05 Delivery Data

Appendix B – Partnership asks and proposals

Headline Numbers

Funding Year to Date

£13.8M

Total Funding *

£22.5M

Starts

27,931

Learners

17,961

Community Learning

5,613 **

Lifetime Skills Guarantee

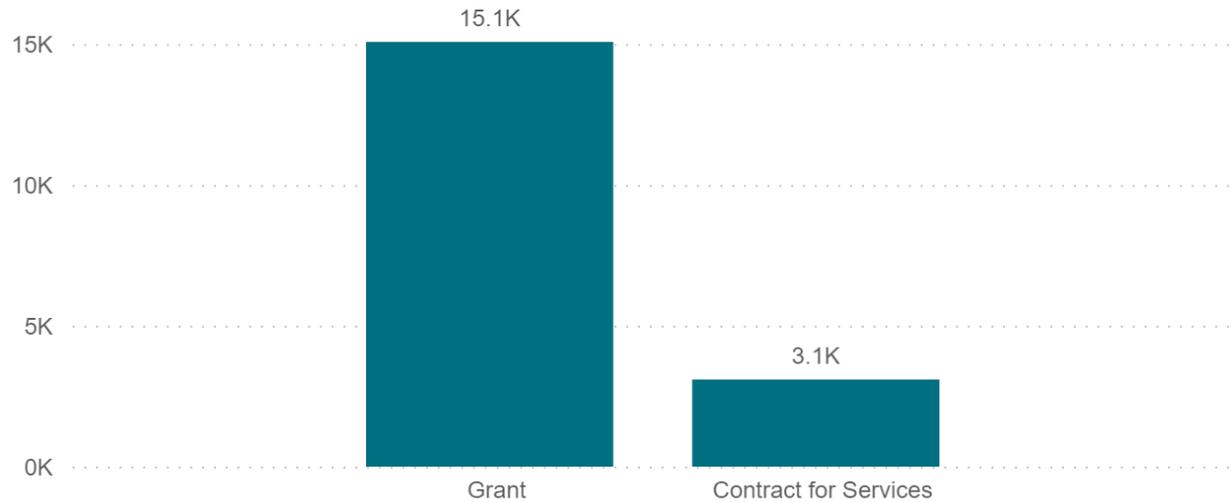
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* Relates to Formula funded provision only, omitting achievement payments

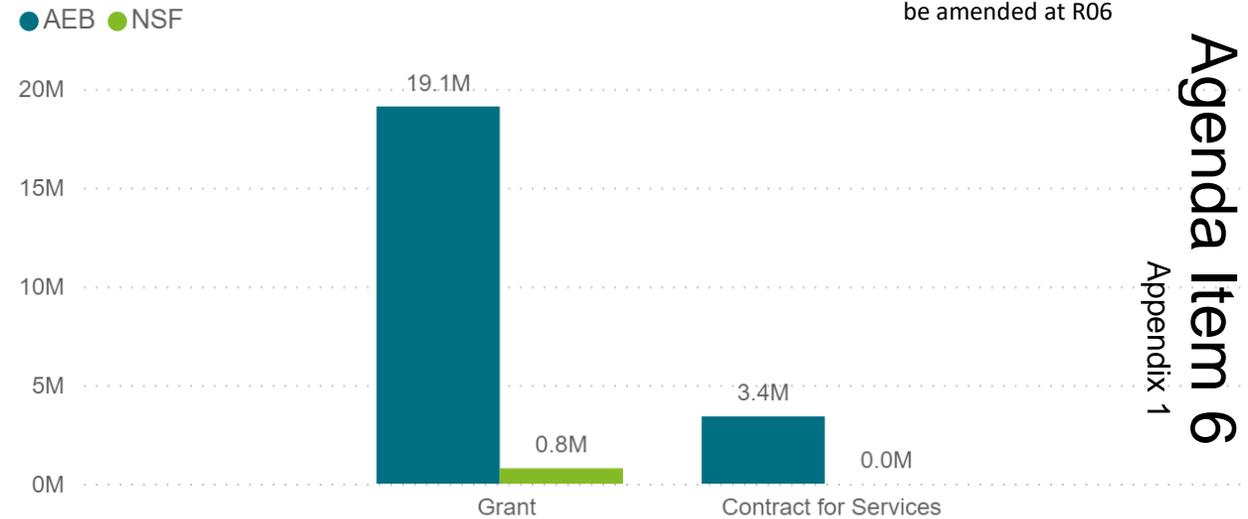
** Community Learning start numbers are understated due to a data reporting issue which will be amended at R06

	Target	% of Target
Learners	37,320	48%
Starts	60,273	46%
Funding	£45,853,501.59	49%

Learners

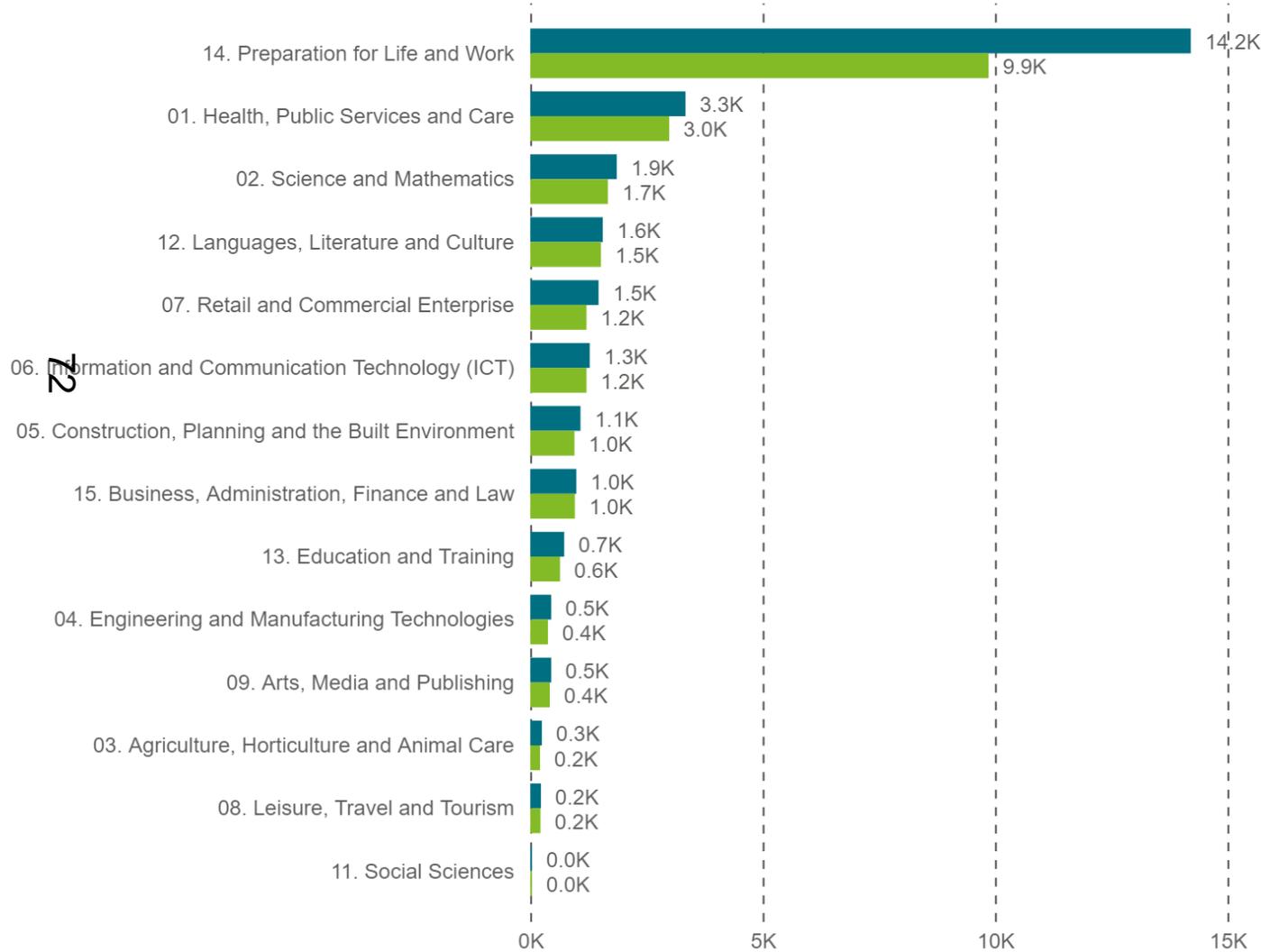


Funding



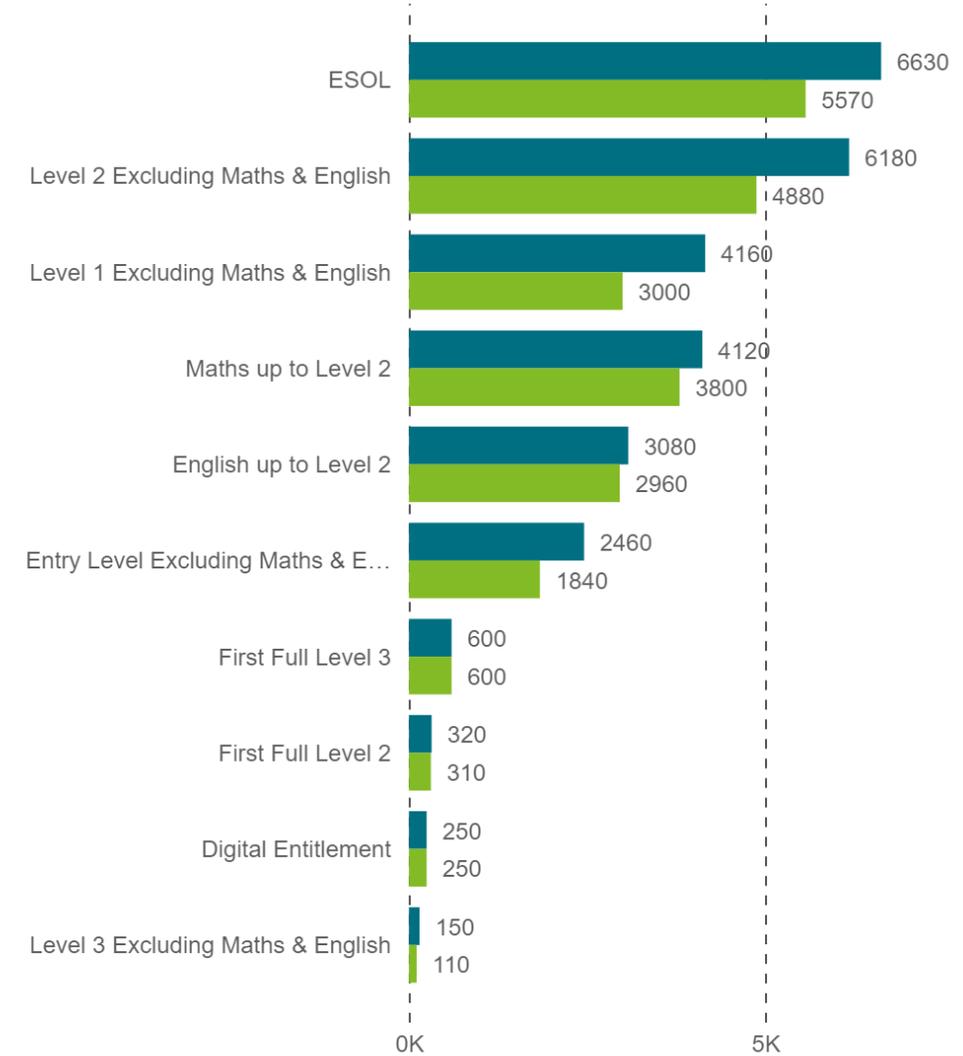
Sector Subject Area

● Starts ● Learners



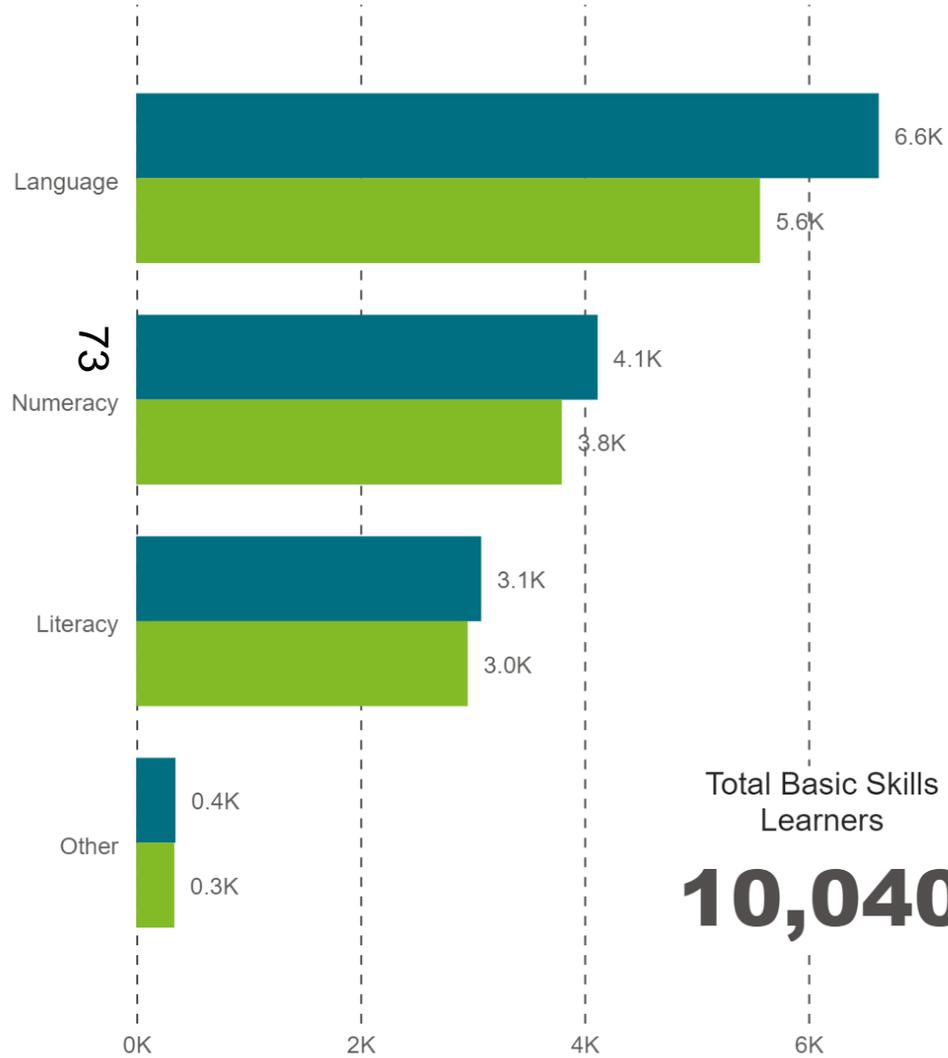
Provision Type

● Starts ● Learners



Basic Skills Broad Type

● Starts ● Learners

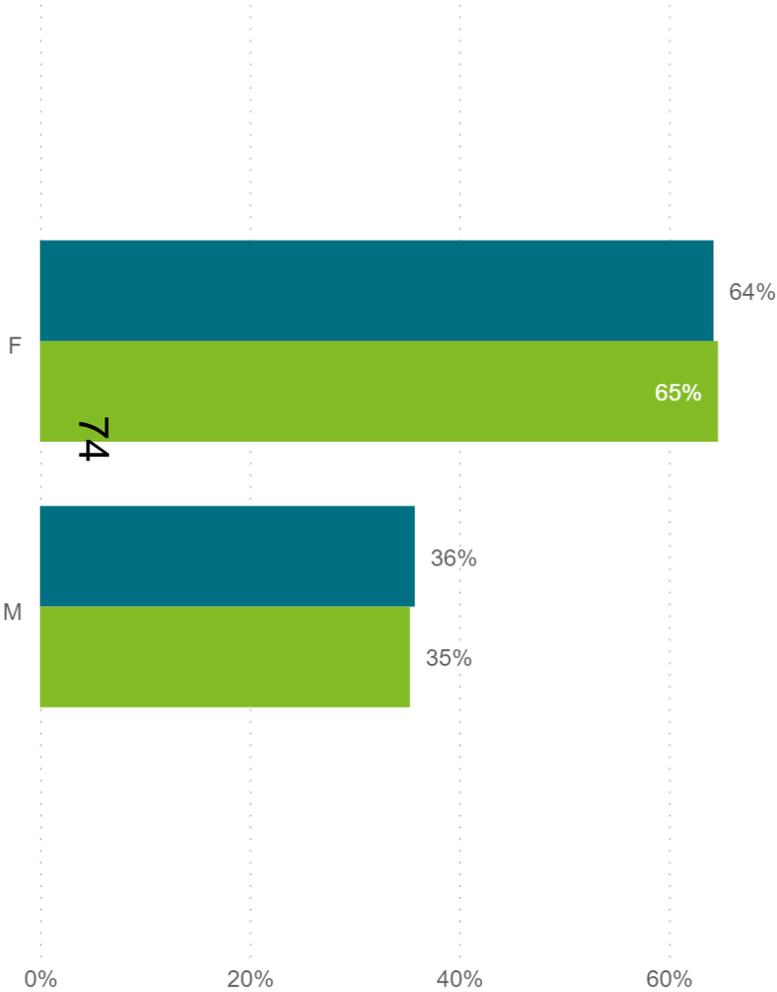


Total Basic Skills
Learners
10,040

Demographics

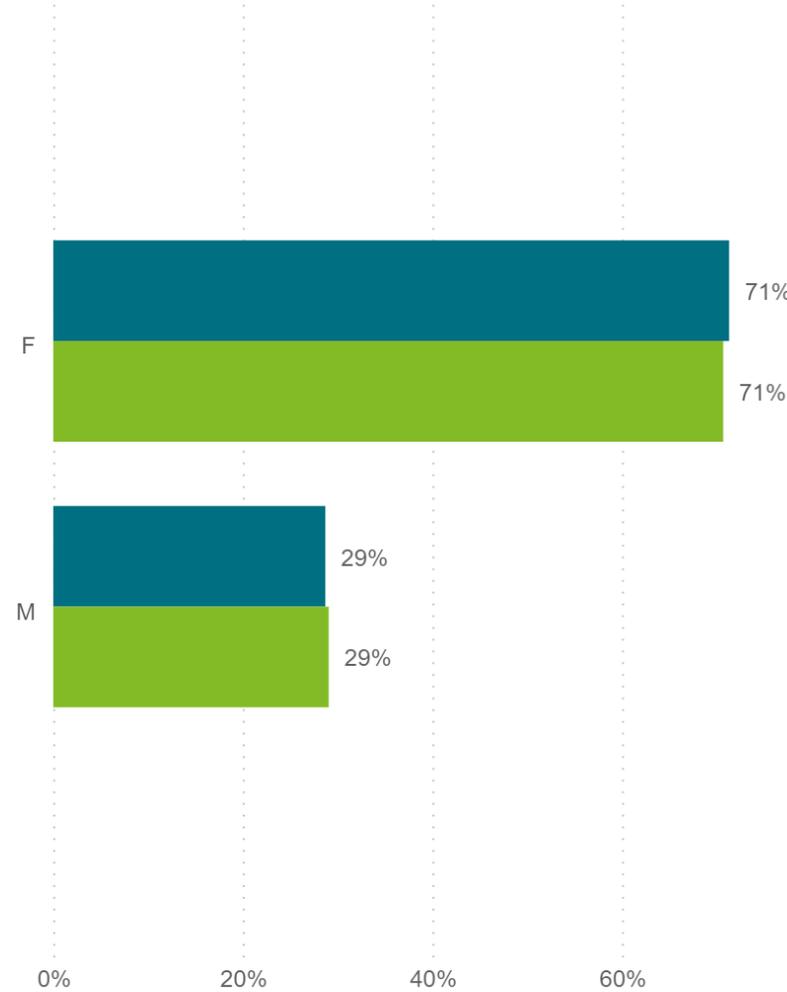
Gender AEB

● Starts ● Learners



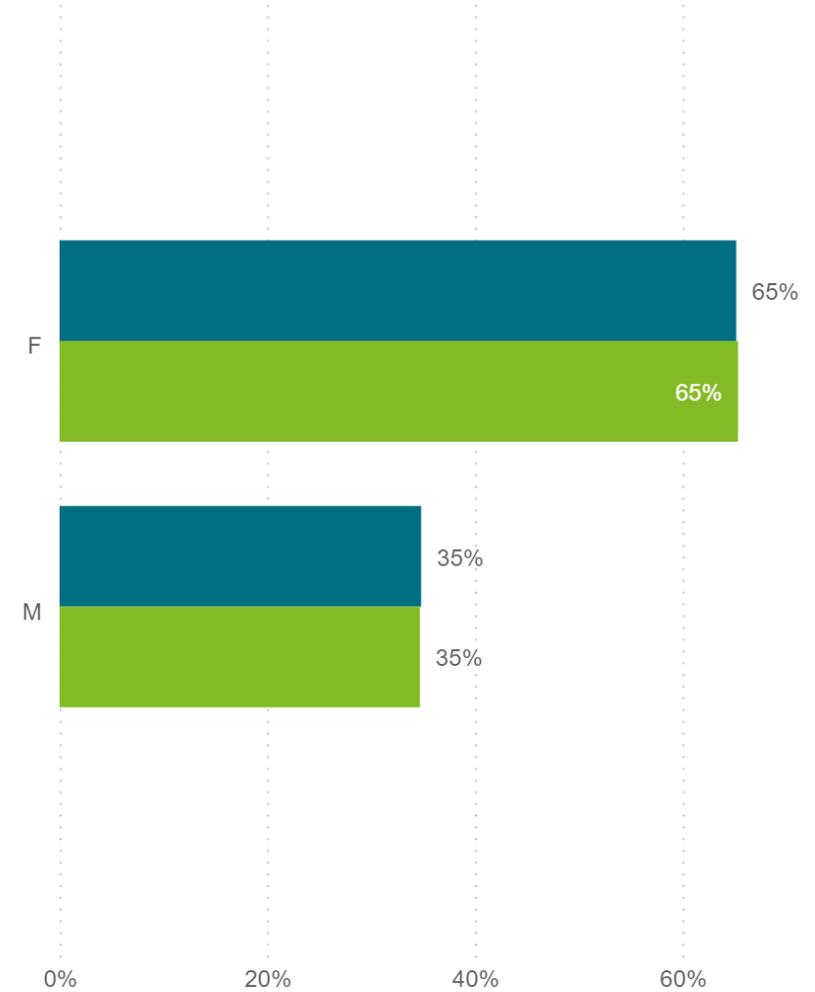
Gender CL

● Aims ● Learners



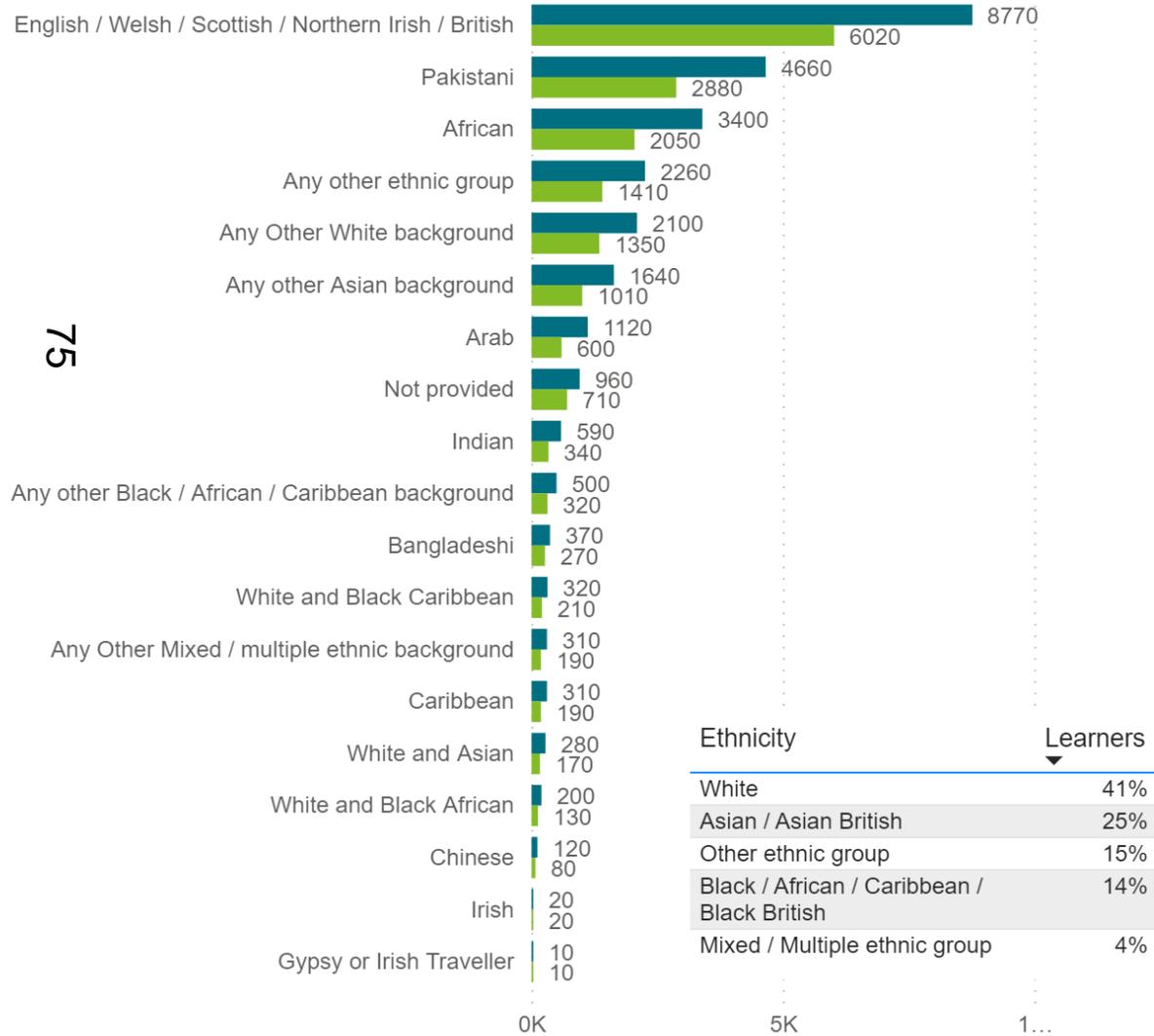
Gender All

● Aims ● Learners



Ethnicity

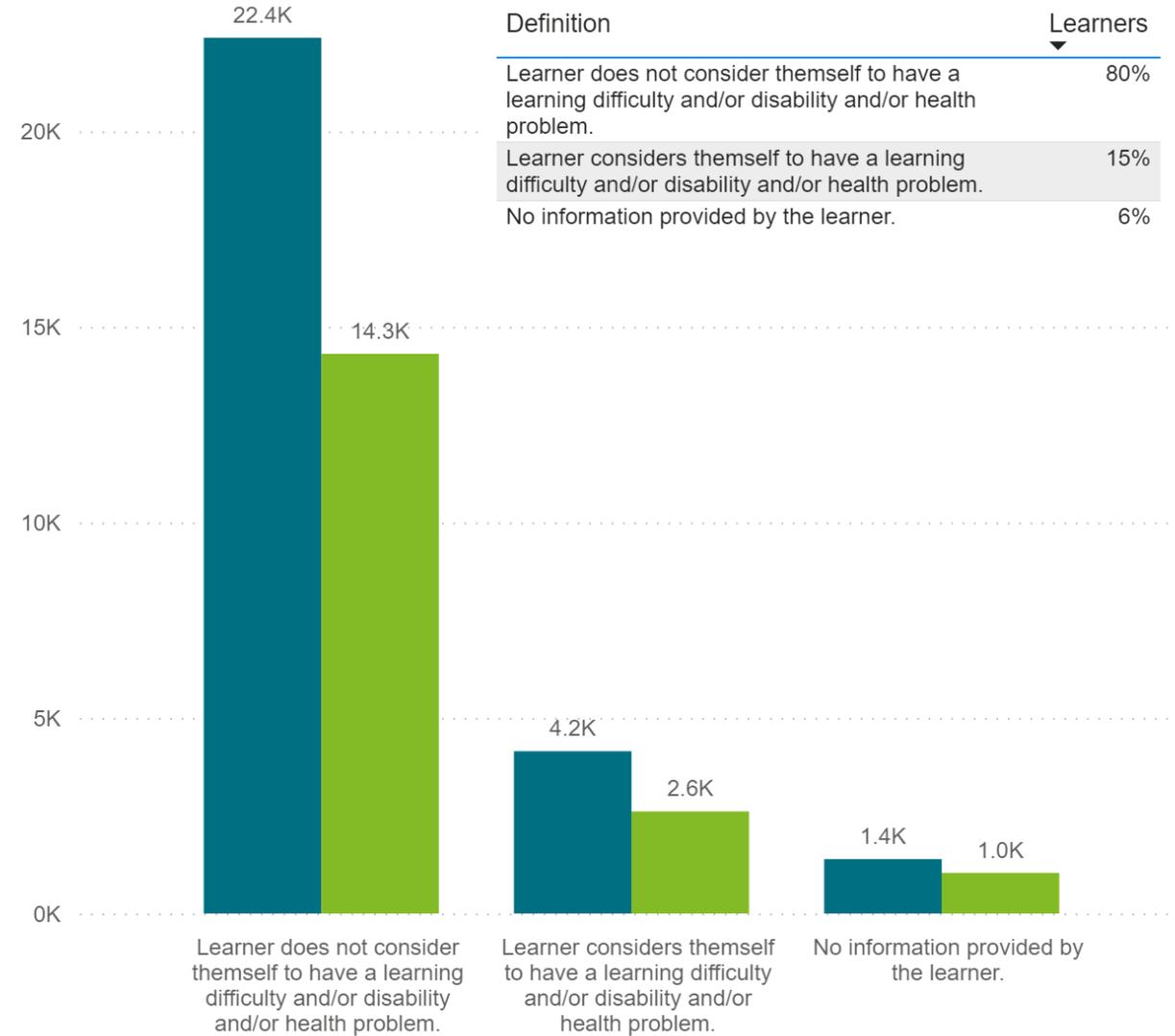
● Starts ● Learners



75

Learning Difficulty, Disability or Health Problem

● Starts ● Learner



Definition

Learner does not consider themselves to have a learning difficulty and/or disability and/or health problem.

Learner considers themselves to have a learning difficulty and/or disability and/or health problem.

No information provided by the learner.

Learners

80%

15%

6%

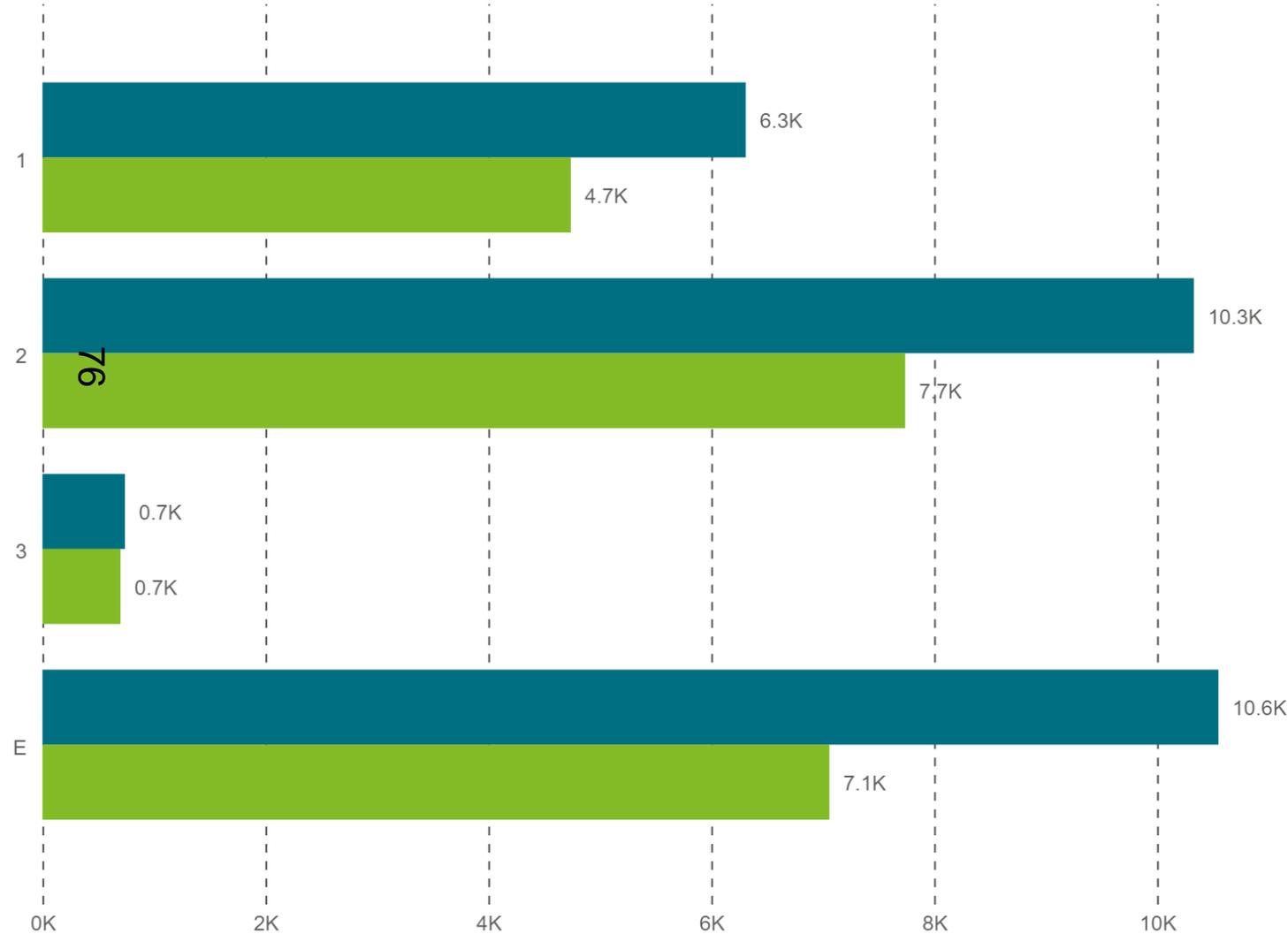
Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Learners
White	41%
Asian / Asian British	25%
Other ethnic group	15%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	14%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic group	4%

Level & Progression

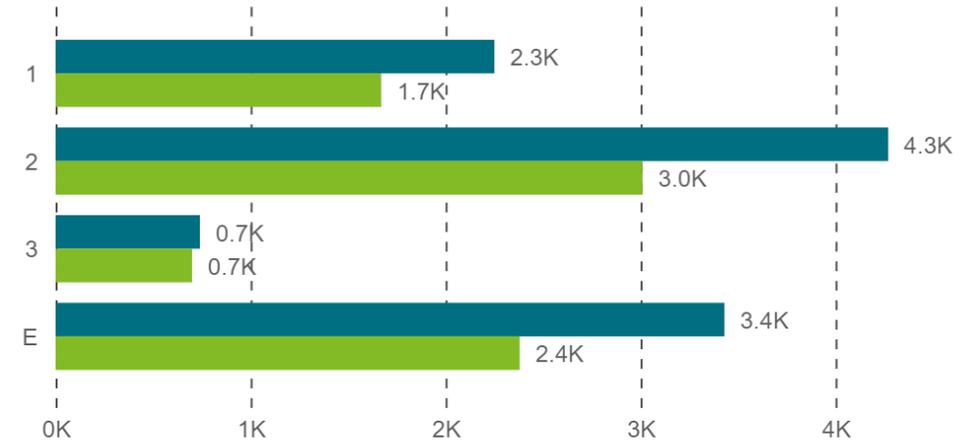
Level

● Starts ● Learners

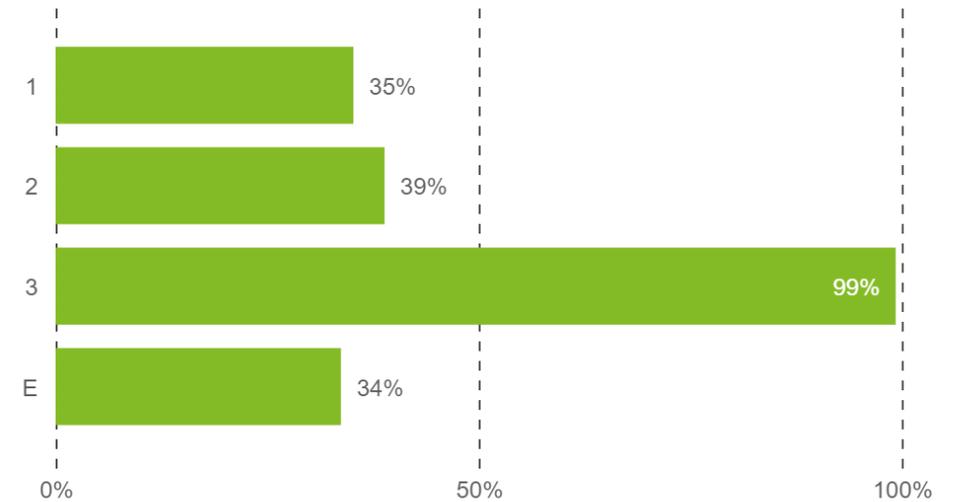


Level which is progression

● Starts ● Learner

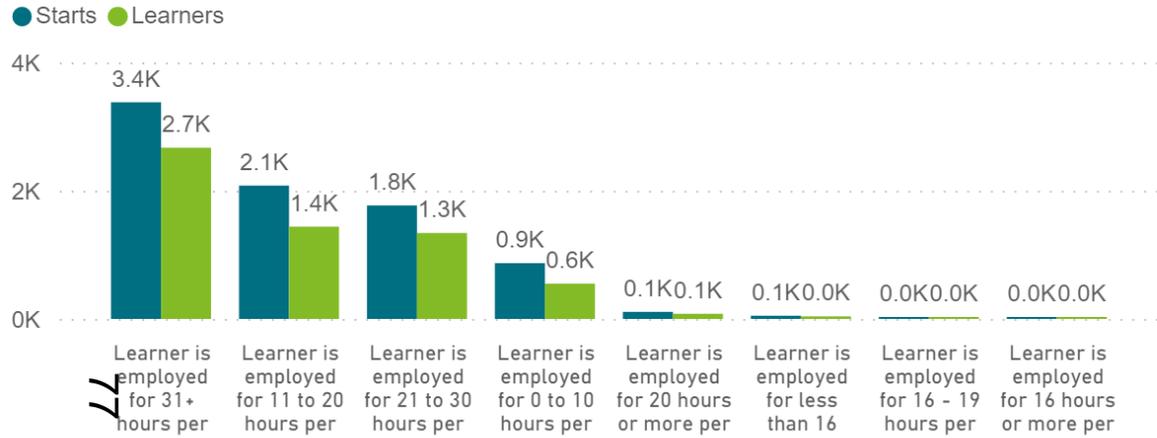


% Learners 1st qual or progressing

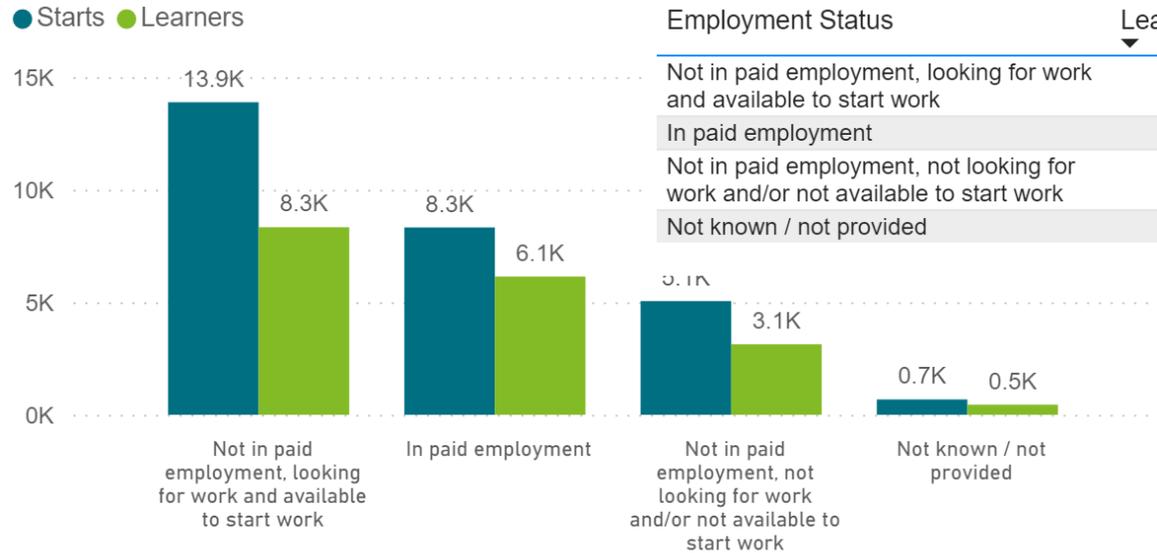


Employment Status & Prior Attainment

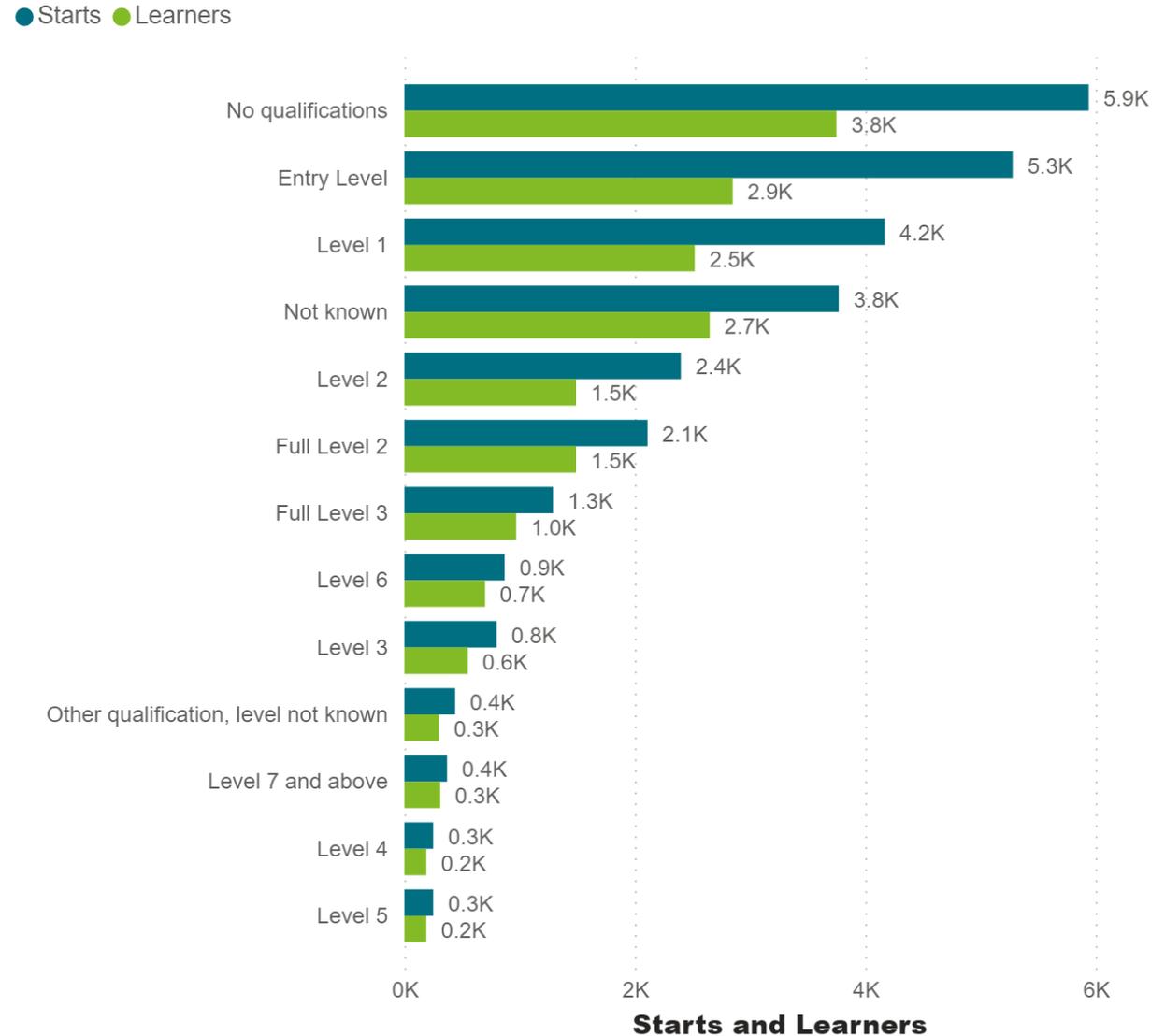
Employment Intensity Indicator



Starts and Learners by Employment Status



Prior Attainment



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Appendix B – Partnership working ‘asks’ and agreed way forward

Asks	Challenge	Proposal
1. Grant agreements to be developed reflecting longer-term delivery against local strategic priorities	Allocation can only be agreed annually	3 year proposal with <i>notional</i> funding agreed for 2022-2026 for LAs and Colleges
2. Offer reflects the full (national) strategic intent for AEB. CA/LA advocate for community / family provision	Limited metrics on Community Learning itself to measure impact, which can mean that its activity is undervalued	Community Learning Review planned in 2022 to understand and advocate the role of Community Learning to E&SC – focus on impact and understand cost differentiation
3. CA reviews approach to tolerance and financial stability	Agreed that this strategic aim should be reviewed	Tolerance proposal to be consulted in Nov/Dec, with proposal to E&SC in January
4. Shared evidence base to inform policy/priorities	<p>Availability of data</p> <p>Timing of information share during procurement</p> <p>Needs to be two way</p>	<p>Monthly sharing of performance data by area with LAs</p> <p>Ongoing 1:1 Strategic discussions with LA's to identify duplication, gaps and areas we need to challenge with providers</p> <p>Monthly Employment and Skills Officer discussion on AEB performance and strategic direction</p> <p>Monthly consultations with Principals group on AEB performance and responsiveness</p> <p>Consultations with ITPs on AEB performance and responsiveness</p> <p>LAs & Colleges to move to monthly uploads of ILR data from Oct onwards in 2022/23</p> <p>CA to look at other labour market data that could be shared to inform Partnership Group discussions and co-design</p>

Appendix B – Partnership working ‘asks’ and agreed way forward

5. LA to be involved in local commissioning by CA, and vice-versa where LAs commission	<p>Need to ensure that conflicts of interest are mitigated against</p> <p>Considerable resource to undertake assessment</p>	<p>LAs to be involved in designing and shaping responsiveness pot</p> <p>LA officers to be involved in CA commissioning process where appropriate, and vice-versa regarding subcontracting</p> <p>Further consideration of the role of CA and LAs in-market stimulation</p>
6. LAs/FE set out 3 year plans; CA commission gaps/areas of insufficient capacity	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Need realism on capabilities and capacity balanced alongside strategic ambition</p>	<p>Agreed – discussion needed as to what these plans look like to ensure effective and meaningful</p> <p>As per point 4 – need to have clear shared evidence base and intelligence</p> <p>Should fit into business cycle proposed at 7</p>
7. New business cycle to be implemented	<p>Caution on the timing of this cycle and the burden this places on both Colleges and LAs</p> <p>Needs to take account of availability of intelligence: evidence-based approach</p>	<p>Agree with the general motion towards LA/College planning delivery early and ITPs building upon this plan</p> <p>Timetable needs to be co-developed, but commitment to move towards this for 23/24 delivery.</p>
8. Flexible approach to grants enabling innovation	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>Open discussions being held with all providers as to additional flexibilities that would help meet strategic/residents’ needs –</p>

Appendix B – Partnership working ‘asks’ and agreed way forward

		discussion via Key Account Manager and through strategic input forums outlined in 4.
9. Local governance arrangements enable monitoring of progress against local strategies	Agreed	<p>LAs to have strategic role in Partnership meetings (and moving towards a local chair)</p> <p>Colleges attending as anchor provider for area</p> <p>Partnership meetings to have reporting lines with LA Skills Boards (or equivalent) to ensure strategic link up</p> <p>LAs appraised of contractor change requests, where impacting on area delivery (i.e. subcontracting, growth and underperformance)</p>
10. Relationship/grant management to reflect trusted and strategic status of anchor organisations	<p>Agreed – but we all need to be assured of funding usage.</p> <p>Critical we fully utilise AEB in 21/22 with priority learners and areas</p> <p>Limited data availability in first quarter impacts performance confidence</p>	<p>Monthly management meetings vary between grant and contracted providers in light of differing relationships and provision breadth</p> <p>Assurance of LAs should reflect relationship and nature of the organisation</p> <p>Underperformance will still be monitored and challenged, but acknowledges the sector trends for data return</p> <p>Financial performance of Community Learning not performance managed throughout 2021/22 returns (although subject to assurance). Community Learning review advising on future management.</p>
11. Clear progression pathways prioritised and safeguarded	Agreed	Partnership Meetings planned to develop this understanding and map pathways across the delivery base

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Report to: Employment and Skills Committee

Date: 24 January 2022

Subject: **Local Skills Report**

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

Author: Peter Glover, Economic Evidence Manager

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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 type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To seek comments from the Committee on the draft Local Skills Report refresh for West Yorkshire.
- 1.2 To seek approval for the publication of the refreshed report subject to comments received.

2. Information

- 2.1 The LEP published its first Local Skills Report in March 2021. The purpose of Local Skills Reports is to set out each area's unique skills landscape and skills needs. They also cover progress on skills-related activities and set out how local partners can support local skills plans. They are required to present information in a consistent way across all Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs). The overall aim is to maximise SAPs' influence, engage local partners and feed intelligence into central government and the national-level Skills and Productivity Board (SPB).
- 2.2 As noted at the October 29 meeting of the Employment and Skills Committee, the LEP is required to publish a refreshed Report under its current Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Education by the end of January 2022. Since there has been a short period since the publication of

the previous report DfE guidance calls for a light-touch update of the content of the report rather than a re-write.

2.3 The Department for Education's guidance indicates that SAPs are expected to obtain SAP Chair sign off on their Local Skills Reports. For West Yorkshire this equates to sign off by the Chair and wider membership of the Employment and Skills Committee, which serves as the Skills Advisory Panel for the local area.

2.4 The draft refreshed Local Skills Report for 2022 is appended for review. Members of the Committee are asked to provide comments on the report content. Assuming that the content of the report is deemed to be broadly acceptable by the Committee, comments will be incorporated into the report and the final document re-circulated to Committee members prior to publication.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 The draft Local Skills Report considers the skills implications arising out of the climate emergency and the actions that partners are taking to address these skills needs.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

4.1 The Local Skills Report considers the role of employment and skills in fostering inclusive growth and the ways in which current policy and action promote inclusion.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 The report considers issues of equality and diversity from the perspectives of access to opportunities in the labour market and access to education and training for different groups.

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 Committee provides comments on the refreshed Local Skills Report.
- 10.2 That the Committee approves the draft Local Skills Report for publication on the Combined Authority website, subject to any comments received.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Local Skills Report

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Local Skills Report

Leeds City Region

January 2022

Foreword

The employment and skills agenda is more crucial than ever as we face the challenge of working for an economic recovery and building back better. People need high quality support to get them into work and the right skills to enable them to take their first step, change or progress in their chosen career.

More broadly, equipping people with the right skills is key to achieving our vision of transforming the regional economy and addressing our priorities around boosting productivity, fostering inclusive growth and tackling the climate emergency.

Long-standing employment and skills challenges facing the region have been a key factor in holding back the area's progress not only in terms of the ability of its firms to innovate and increase their productivity but also the ability of individuals to break out of longstanding cycles of deprivation, connect with good quality work and progress their careers.

The latter part of 2021 has demonstrated that the path to recovery is an uneven one, with the re-opening of the economy triggering a range of challenges, including reduced participation in the labour market and acute labour shortages in some sectors and occupations. Moreover, the Omicron variant shows the continuing potential of Covid-19 to disrupt the economy and to hamper the operation of the education and training system. Our approach needs to be flexible and agile in the face of future volatility.

We will also need to contend with profound and lasting changes resulting from the pandemic, which the evidence suggests are likely to include a permanent increase in remote working, acceleration of digitalisation and changes to the economic role of town and city centres.

The Election of the West Yorkshire Mayor, Tracy Brabin, provides an unprecedented opportunity to make progress on employment and skills issues as part of a devolved approach to transforming the regional economy. It gives local control of at least £1.8 billion of funding to be spent on the things that make a difference to the people of West Yorkshire, including substantial funding for adult education. We can use our understanding of regional needs to inform decision-making and the development of tailored employment and skills solutions.

But how can we best make a difference in this area? This report brings together and summarises the work of the LEP and our strategic partners in the field of employment and skills, describing regional skills needs, our plans to address them and the progress that is being made.

We have firm foundations to build on with the LEP's long-standing analytical capability, its expertise in developing and implementing employment and skills programmes and the strong support of partners from across the spectrum.

Our Skills Advisory Panel is at the centre of all these key developments, providing expert and informed input from a full range of strategic partners.

The publication last year of the Department for Education's White Paper 'Skills for Jobs' signals a changing policy landscape, with implications for the way in which employers are engaged by and with the skills system and the manner in which skills plans are formulated locally. We remain committed to working in partnership to foster a more responsive employment and skills system that can make the fullest contribution to our ambitious strategy to transform the regional economy.

In the course of this report we provide links to relevant resources. In addition, the LEP's [website](#) provides comprehensive information about activities to address employment and skills needs in the region.

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1 Skills Advisory Panels – Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

This Local Skills report has been produced by West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership to detail the work of its Skills Advisory Panel. It is a refreshed version of the first Local Skills Report that was published in March 2021.

The purpose of Local Skills Reports is to provide a clear and consistent view of the work that is being done by Skills Advisory Panels across the country to address their local skills needs.

They bring together information about local skills needs, local plans to address those needs and provide a review of the progress that is being made in addressing skills challenges.

They also serve to communicate local intelligence to central government and the national-level Skills and Productivity Board (SPB).

Local skills reports are intended to be useful and informative for a wide variety of audiences, including education and training institutions, employers, local government, as well as the wider public.

The structure of the rest of the report is as follows:

Skills strengths and needs. A summary of the skills landscape and key skills needs of the local area.

Skills strategy. An outline of the SAP's strategic approach to addressing local skills needs.

Skills action plan. An overview of the actions the SAP and local partners intend to take to address the skills priorities.

Assessment of progress. A critical look at progress made against the SAP's skills strategy and action plan.

Case studies / positive impact stories. A selection of success stories / case studies that show how skills mismatches are being addressed in the region.

Looking forward. Sets out the SAP's future agenda and provides a clear message for providers and employers on how they can support and contribute.

Skills Advisory Panels: the national context

Since 2018, Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) have been bringing together employers, skills providers and key local stakeholders to better understand and resolve skills mismatches at a local level. SAPs are part of Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships and there are 36 in total across England. The Department for Education (DfE) has supported SAPs with grant funding primarily to produce high-quality analysis of local labour markets and publish Local Skills Reports, which set out the local skills strengths and needs and how the SAP proposes its area addresses its key priorities.

This second iteration of SAPs' Local Skills Reports comes at a time when DfE is Trailblazing new Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), in eight areas of the country. Developed by Employer Representative Bodies, LSIPs are part of a suite of reforms launched in DfE's "Skills for Jobs" White Paper that aim to put employers more firmly at the heart of the skills system. An evaluation of the eight Trailblazers will inform the national roll out of the programme. In the meantime, and before LSIPs are rolled out across the country, it is DfE's intention that Skills Advisory Panels and this Local Skills Report should continue to influence the behaviour of local partners and feed intelligence to central government, including to sectoral focussed skills teams and the national-level Skills and Productivity Board (SPB).

1.2 Governance

Since the publication of the first Local Skills Report, we have entered an important new stage in the work of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and its partners – work that aims to transform the performance of the region. The election of the first West Yorkshire Mayor, Tracy Brabin, provides a new focal point for the region, championing it with Government and the rest of the world. It enables us to move forward with our devolution deal with government, granting us greater influence over investment in skills, transport, housing and business support. It will also give us local control over at least £1.8 billion to spend on the things that matter to the people of West Yorkshire. Most importantly, the mayor is directly accountable to the people of West Yorkshire and will ensure that the priorities of residents are reflected in the decisions the Combined Authority makes.

New governance arrangements have been put in place that better reflect the changed role and responsibilities of the Combined Authority following the election of the Mayor. One of the key changes is that the thematic committees known as advisory panels have become decision making 'portfolio' committees. Unlike, the previous advisory panels, the committees are decision making in relation to project spend and delivery in accordance with the Combined Authority's Assurance Framework, with scope and terms of reference amended to reflect these changes.

One of the 'portfolio' committees is the Employment and Skills Committee (ESC), which brings employers together with local authorities and education and training providers. This supersedes the Employment and Skills Panel. Under its [terms of reference](#) the Panel provides local leadership that drives improvements in skills and employment by overseeing development of policies and projects to address skills gaps in the City Region. The work is driven by the needs of employers and the region's economy.

The Combined Authority's Employment and Skills Committee serves as the Skills Advisory Panel for Leeds City Region

In carrying out its role as the Skills Advisory Panel, the Employment and Skills Committee has the following specific responsibilities and objectives, as set out in a [protocol](#) to its terms of reference:

1. Understanding current and future skills needs as well as the skills and employment support provision in the area
2. Understanding wider dependencies – ensuring that the ‘People’ element is integrated effectively with the wider work of the LEP and the Combined Authority
3. Linking to Careers Advisory services – ensuring that people are informed about potential career routes in the region, and that careers support is informed by up-to-date local labour market information
4. Raising the profile of apprenticeships
5. Advising on employment support provision
6. Sharing analysis and best practice as widely as possible
7. Co-ordinating skills providers in the region by fostering co-operation and encouraging them to use relevant analysis to inform the development of their provision.

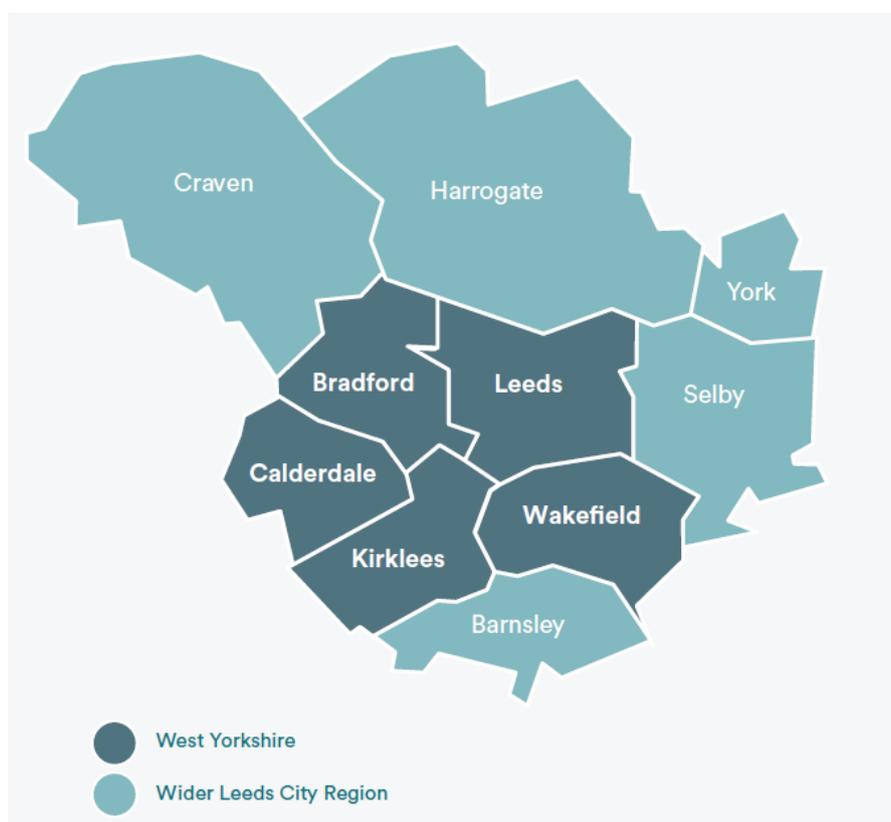
In addition to this, the Employment and Skills Committee has an important new role in overseeing the implementation and ongoing management of the devolved Adult Education Budget in West Yorkshire.

1.3 Geography

The prime geographic focus of the LEP is the West Yorkshire local authority areas of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. However, working with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, the LEP manages a number of programmes that are delivered over a wider geography, including our Leeds City Region Growth Deal-funded projects, business support and our efforts to boost trade and inward investment.

The LEP’s European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Strategy sets out how EU funding allocations will be invested to achieve the best economic outcomes across the wider City Region (excluding Barnsley). ESF is one of three types of funding involved in the ESIF programme, focusing on improving employment opportunities, promoting social inclusion and investing in skills by providing the help people need to fulfil their potential.

Figure 1: Geography of the Leeds City Region



We work in close partnership with our neighbouring Local Enterprise Partnerships and our partner councils in Barnsley, Craven, Harrogate, Selby and York to ensure our work has the greatest possible benefits for the functional economic area of Leeds City Region.

1.4 Further information and getting in touch

The Employment and Skills Committee meets on a quarterly basis and an up-to-date schedule of meetings can be found [here](#).

Full terms of reference and membership details can be found [here](#)

Enquiries about the work of the Skills Advisory Panel including meetings can be directed to our [governance services inbox](#)

2 Skills strengths and needs

This chapter sets out some of the key characteristics of the region's labour market and skills landscape and highlights key challenges and opportunities, including those arising from the Covid-19 crisis.

Our understanding of skills needs in the region has been clouded by the disruption caused by COVID-19. It is important to distinguish the longer-term, underlying structural trends in demand from the shorter-term effects of COVID-19 but there is a great deal of uncertainty about what the lasting effects of the crisis will be and how they will interact with the impact of the UK's Exit from the EU.

Summary of strengths and needs

Strengths

- Higher skilled jobs have been the main driver of recent employment growth and this is expected to continue into the future.
- Broad-based employment growth (prior to the health crisis) in terms of sectors, with manufacturing and services sharing in the growth.
- Role of Leeds city as an economic hub and as one of the most vibrant labour markets in the north.
- Strong availability of intermediate level skills (levels 2 and 3) which are a key requirement for some inward investors.
- Digital employment growing rapidly presenting a key opportunity to boost the performance of the regional economy and create opportunities for individuals.
- Future infrastructure investment presents an opportunity to connect people in the region to jobs related to the construction and operation of such schemes.
- Large and diverse higher education sector attracting a significant net inflow of students each year.

Needs

- Skills levels at level 4+ are below the national average and there is significant over-representation of people with low / no qualifications .
- Large numbers of people lack basic literacy and numeracy skills that provide a basis for further learning and progression. English language proficiency (ESOL) also an important issue.
- Endemic skill shortages for technical roles at professional, skilled trades and technician levels constraining firm-level productivity and the performance of the wider economy.
- Need to increase the graduate retention rate from regional higher education institutions and colleges to increase access to higher level skills in the regional economy.
- Under-investment in skills and training across many businesses with few having a structured approach to managing their talent.
- A significant proportion of workers lack the full proficiency to do their jobs. Among the skills that need improving are management skills, basic digital skills, functional literacy and numeracy and “soft” / interpersonal skills.
- Potential for labour shortages as the economy recovers, particularly in sectors like hospitality, partly due to a deficit of labour market participation following the health crisis.
- Under-utilisation of skills a widespread issue and affected workers need options to re-focus their portfolio of skills to better align with available opportunities, whilst employers need to increase their capacity to make use of graduate level skills to drive enhanced business performance.

2.1 Skills needs

The continued **broad-based growth in the number of higher skilled jobs** in Leeds City Region presents a major opportunity for the area, although it still faces an overall deficit of higher skilled employment compared with the national average. Appropriate progression routes need to be put in place to enable people who are starting from a lower point on the skills hierarchy to take advantage of higher skilled job openings. With a few exceptions, job openings for higher skilled occupations have been relatively resilient to the COVID-19 crisis, just as they were during the previous recession and this suggests that the underlying upward trend in demand is likely to continue.

There are other examples where the effect of COVID-19 may serve to intensify existing labour market trends. For example, job openings for **care workers** have remained relatively strong during the crisis, building on longer-term growth in employment for this occupational area and the potential for labour shortages has not gone away. Conversely, demand for Administrative and secretarial and Sales and customer service workers appears to have been hard hit, perhaps reflecting an acceleration of an existing downward trend.

In some instances, changes in the pattern of demand for skills brought about by COVID-19 are less likely to persist. For example, job openings in the **Culture, media and sport** occupational category have reduced markedly, partly as a result of the impact of the restrictions on the arts and entertainment and leisure sectors. Since this category was one of the fastest growing in the economy in employment terms prior to the crisis it is likely to recover in the medium-term.

Demand for **goods drivers and for storage trades** has been strong during the crisis as e-commerce has grown in importance, with acute labour shortages emerging for driver roles as the economy re-opened. Whether this will be a lasting effect is difficult to gauge. Even if the shift to online shopping is maintained automation could continue to impact on some of these roles in the medium to longer term.

Demand in the labour market for **green economy skills** linked to energy and the environment is strongly associated with vacancies for engineering roles but also with openings for a wide range of occupations including project managers, sales managers and electricians, as well as specialised roles such as environmental engineer, environmental scientist and water engineer.

Digital skills are becoming increasingly important to the economy and to individual employability. Demand for digital specialist workers with higher level skills has been robust during the COVID-19 crisis. Meanwhile the need for basic digital skills for the workplace (often relating to effective use of Microsoft Office packages) is becoming an almost universal requirement. Modelling suggests that demand for basic digital skills will intensify and that there is potential for widespread skills gaps to open up over the next decade.

2.2 Mismatches

There are a number of key areas of current market failure where supply is not meeting demand.

The available evidence suggests that the pattern of **skills shortages** has not been fundamentally changed by the crisis and will persist into the future, particularly since many of the occupational areas most susceptible to shortages have seen resilient demand in recent months as measured by the volume of online job postings.

Acute shortages affecting higher skilled roles such as nurses, engineers and digital professionals and a range of skilled trades (including construction trades, vehicle trades and electrical / electronic trades) seem likely to continue and could act as a constraint on economic recovery. These underlying issues have been compounded by more widespread

labour shortages that emerged following the re-opening of the economy in summer 2021. As well as the high profile shortages of goods drivers, employers across services and manufacturing have faced intense recruitment difficulties. Much of this may prove to be a short-term effect as the economy re-adjusts but there is some evidence of longer-term structural issues in the labour market.

Shortages relating to higher skilled “STEM professional” roles, including engineering roles, are concentrated in the Manufacturing sector but also in Business Services as higher level technical activities are increasingly undertaken on a consultancy basis. Although fewer in number, shortages of this kind have a high intensity in the Energy / utilities sector, which is crucial to the achievement of the area’s transition to Net Zero carbon.

Shortages relating to skilled trades occupations are a particular issue in the Manufacturing, Construction and Energy / utilities sectors. Again, the additional skill requirements associated with the transition to Net Zero could intensify the skills problems in these segments.

Shortages of digital professionals are primarily concentrated in the Information and Communication sector but are also spread across other parts of the economy, including Business Services, Public Administration and Financial Services. Not surprisingly, shortages of Nurses and Health professionals are concentrated in the Health sector.

Since **skills gaps** particularly affect lower-skilled occupations with high rates of labour turnover, many of which have been directly affected by COVID-19, it seems likely that this issue has been dampened down by the COVID-19 crisis. However, widespread skills deficiencies relating to digital skills (see above), problem-solving, basic literacy and numeracy and a range of “soft” skills are likely to continue to be an ongoing challenge for the regional economy.

Turning to the occupational profile of skills gaps, **functional literacy and numeracy** (in terms of reading and understanding written instructions and basic numerical skills) are most likely to be in need of improvement among Machine operatives, Elementary staff and Caring, leisure and other services staff.

Skills gaps relating to **computer literacy and basic IT skills** are widespread across the occupational spectrum and are not confined to lower skilled roles. Many managers and professional level staff with skills gaps need to improve their basic IT skills. In sectoral terms, a high proportion of skills gaps in the Health and care sector are due to a deficit of computer literacy, as well as in other sectors such as financial services.

A need to improve complex problem-solving skills is particularly important among workers in higher skilled Management, Professional and Associate professional roles.

The latest evidence points to a continuing widespread **lack of proficiency among managers**. This has implications for business performance and for the way in which the wider workforce is managed and developed, particularly at a time when organisations need to be effective in response to major external challenges.

Skills under-utilisation (particularly among graduates) co-exists alongside acute skills shortages in Leeds City Region. Under-utilisation may worsen as recent graduates struggle to compete for suitable opportunities in the labour market.

Looking beyond areas of net growth and decline in the regional labour market, **replacement demands** will continue to drive a broad-based positive recruitment requirement that extends to most sectoral and occupational areas, including those that are expected to see a net reduction in employment over time. This means that there will continue to be a significant volume of demand for skills associated with declining occupations like Skilled trades, Administrative occupations and Sales and customer service.

2.3 Responsiveness of the system

COVID-19 has caused considerable disruption to both the demand and supply sides of the regional labour market and the economic recovery will present new challenges to the employment and skills system in Leeds City Region.

Although parts of London and the South East of England have seen the greatest direct disruption from COVID-19, areas like Leeds City Region potentially face a greater challenge in terms of their ability to recover from the crisis because of a lack of local resilience, reflected in weak performance on output and employment in the period leading up to the crisis¹. Leeds City Region's relatively weak skills base is likely to be a disadvantage as the regional economy seeks to adjust to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and Brexit.

In the longer-term Leeds City Region will need to tackle its **structural demand-side weaknesses**. For example, although higher skilled employment is growing in the region it still has a relative deficit of high skilled jobs and the high skilled jobs that it has are relatively poorly paid and less likely to be in STEM areas. Addressing this issue means raising the demand for skills by shifting the regional business base to one that is founded on higher value market strategies through the LEP's economic strategy.

Although claimant unemployment remains at relatively high levels following the large increase seen at the beginning of the pandemic there has not been the severe employment crisis that some feared and long-term structural unemployment has not worsened. Instead, there is evidence of a **crisis in labour market participation**, with large numbers of older people withdrawing from the labour force on health and other grounds. This situation, should it prove to a lasting issue, threatens to compound labour shortages and hamper the recovery and creates a need for employment support to encourage people to re-enter the labour market. Employers need to play their part by offering terms and conditions that are attractive to potential candidates.

Moreover, the re-opening of the economy has prompted increased dynamism within the labour market with **job-to-job moves** recently reaching record levels according to national data. Individuals need access to relevant and flexible training provision in order to make the most of potential career opportunities whilst at the same time addressing the needs of the economy.

The impact of COVID-19 has increased the barriers and **challenges that face young people** in making the transition into the world of work, and older workers to stay in fulfilling work. Claimant unemployment among young people remains high and there is evidence of a participation crisis among older people and some sections of younger people following the health crisis. Access to employment opportunities for education leavers has been severely disrupted whilst the employment prospects of young people already in work have also been affected. The career landscape that young people will need to navigate in future has been disrupted by COVID-19 and there could be further shifts in the future. Existing occupational pathways for young people in sectors like retail are likely to be disrupted by structural changes to the economy brought about by COVID-19 and the information, advice and guidance provided to young people needs to be re-calibrated. Action to address youth unemployment is critically important because being unemployed when young leads to a higher likelihood of long-term 'scarring' in later life, in terms of subsequent lower pay, higher unemployment and reduced life chances.

Although the labour market has been subject to disruption and turbulence as a result of COVID-19, a focus needs to be maintained on **disadvantaged groups that were**

¹ Social Market Foundation (2020) Levelling down: The medium term local economic impact of coronavirus. Available at [Levelling down: the medium term local economic impact of coronavirus - Social Market Foundation \(smf.co.uk\)](https://www.smf.co.uk/levelling-down-the-medium-term-local-economic-impact-of-coronavirus)

struggling in the labour market before the crisis hit and who without support risk long-term dislocation. This includes disabled people, people from ethnic minorities, older people and lone parents. The evidence shows that the employment rate gaps faced by these groups are mitigated when individuals have improved skills and qualifications.

The picture is a complex one, but there is evidence of **misalignment between the subject profile of further and higher education delivery and the profile of demand in the regional labour market**. The main determinant of the profile of take-up of FE and HE is individual demand, which suggests that an important mechanism for addressing the misalignment is a stronger focus on careers support in order to improve learners' understanding of the relative employment and pay prospects associated with different occupational pathways.

Acute **deprivation** is widespread across Leeds City Region's communities and is closely associated with a lack of skills within those neighbourhoods. The impact of COVID-19 will make it all the more difficult for residents of these areas to compete in the labour market. There is an opportunity to target these communities through a holistic package of support to address an often-complex range of individual challenges, including skills, health and transport.

Take-up of **higher apprenticeships** has been relatively resilient in the face of the COVID-19 crisis, partly reflecting the fact that the majority are funded through the levy and many are provided to existing staff rather than new recruits. This shows that the levy is a powerful mechanism for driving the development of higher-level skills. However, higher apprenticeships remain narrowly focused in subject terms and there are relatively few starts in subject areas associated with the most acute skill shortages such as engineering, construction and ICT.

However, this raises the issue of the sustainability of apprenticeships for SMEs and for the types of apprenticeship that are less likely to be levy funded, including those for the under-19s and intermediate apprenticeships both of which have been heavily impacted by COVID-19 in terms of take-up during 2019/20. It is important that apprenticeships provide an entry point for young people and those with lower level skills.

Getting the large number of people recently made **jobless back into work** will be a key challenge for Leeds City Region. Available resources for skills development need to be more closely aligned with defined entry routes into employment, including through bootcamp-style approaches. The labour shortages affecting many parts of the economy present an opportunity to integrate disadvantaged people into employment.

Employers play a central role in developing the skills that the economy needs, although many acknowledge that they under-invest and the evidence suggests that the trend in **job-related training** is static at best. The key to tackling this issue is to encourage employers to adopt talent management systems that enable them to identify their skills needs and to deploy those skills effectively in the workplace to achieve business objectives. The disruption brought about by COVID-19 and EU Exit will make this more important as firms seek to adapt to changing business conditions and to realign their workforce, while adjusting to other developments like the shift to remote working. Projections suggest that skills gaps will intensify and become more widespread in future, in areas like basic digital and management skills, and that an increase in workplace training will be essential to addressing this.

Lack of proficiency in **basic literacy and numeracy** is one of the key challenges facing Leeds City Region and employers indicate that many of their staff lack the basic skills needed to operate effectively in the workplace. There is relatively little workplace provision available that focuses on basic skills and engaging prospective learners through their employer has proven problematic in the past.

Take-up of education and training opportunities, including apprenticeships and further education courses, has seen significant reductions as a result of COVID-19. Some subject areas that are linked to sectors and occupations with a bigger exposure to the crisis have been particularly hard-hit. There is a concern that technical and work-based routes could see lasting damage as a result with implications for efforts to support the economic recovery and to roll-out T-Levels and other interventions.

Leeds City Region's large **higher education** sector is one of its key assets but there is a continuing challenge of how to connect graduates from regional institutions with the growing number of high skilled jobs in the area. As noted above, higher apprenticeships are an important tool in addressing technical skills shortages at professional and associate professional level. However, the broader range of higher-level technical provision, including that delivered through further education colleges, will play an increasingly important role.

Lack of access for the disadvantaged to education and training opportunities, including apprenticeships and higher education is a key barrier to inclusive growth and social mobility. A key element of the strategy to improve Leeds City Region's skill levels must be investment in the enterprise in education agenda, in order to increase the exposure of pupils and students to the world of work. This is a crucial part of developing career readiness and employability skills as well as raising individual aspiration with a view to improving attainment.

One of the potential implications of COVID-19 is an acceleration of the existing trend towards digitalisation. Jobs with the lowest skill requirements (e.g., elementary occupations) are typically the most exposed to future **automation**. These jobs are often based on a narrow range of routine tasks and skills and they generally have few "compatible" roles – alternative jobs that require similar skills and knowledge. This implies a larger investment in reskilling to enable the affected individuals to develop new skills to make the transition into new career opportunities.

3 Skills strategy

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has set out its priorities for employment and skills for 2021-2025 in its Employment and Skills Framework.

3.1 Strategic Economic Framework

The Employment and Skills Framework sits within the wider [Strategic Economic Framework](#) (SEF). The SEF is an agile and flexible framework – it is presented online and will evolve over time. It brings together policies and strategies that together help realise an ambitious vision and it supports a more holistic evidence-based approach to policymaking.

The SEF has 5 priorities:

- Boosting productivity
- Enabling inclusive growth
- Tackling the climate emergency
- Delivering 21 century transport
- Securing money and powers.

The Employment and Skills Framework contributes in various ways to all of these priorities. For example, connecting people to good quality jobs through employment support and skills interventions is central to fostering inclusive growth, as is the promotion of inclusive human resource practices within businesses. In addition, a strong supply of high skilled people is essential to the processes of innovation that help to drive productivity growth, whilst the availability across a range of sectors of people with the right skills will be crucial to tackling the climate emergency.

The primary geographic focus of the refreshed framework is the five districts of West Yorkshire rather than the wider City Region.

3.2 Employment and Skills Framework - Vision

West Yorkshire is the largest labour market in the Northern Powerhouse, with strengths in manufacturing, financial and professional services, and the rapidly developing fields of digital and healthcare technology. Our diversity, rich cultural heritage and geography makes West Yorkshire one of the country's best places to live, study and work.

Vision:

Our Vision is for West Yorkshire to be a world-leading region where investment in skills, training and education, and support from 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.

We want West Yorkshire to be a place where:

- There are no barriers to people taking up, progressing and succeeding in learning and work, and where they are supported into good employment
- Employers recognise the value of a diverse workforce and invest in their talent to develop the skills that will improve productivity and support progression in the workplace
- Individuals value lifelong learning and are able to make decisions about their development, informed by quality, relevant careers information based on the reality on the ground
- World class teaching and training provides flexible learning opportunities that align to the strategic needs of the regional economy.

The Employment and Skills Framework contains five priorities, which build on those set out in the original 2016-20 plan.

Consultation process for the Employment and Skills Framework

An extensive consultation process has been conducted to guide the development of the Employment and Skills Framework.

Between June – December 2020, over 200 key stakeholders and partners were consulted on the strengths, challenges and priorities for employment and skills in West Yorkshire. Officers engaged with independent training providers, colleges, universities, employers and representative bodies, local authority partners, third sector organisations and other organisations operating in the skills landscape, in order to gain an understanding of the employment and skills priorities, challenges and barriers for those living, working and providing services in West Yorkshire.

An online [Your Voice survey](#) ran for four weeks (11 August – 6 September 2020) and received 113 responses from individuals, businesses, education and training providers, and third sector organisations with an interest in the employment and skills landscape. The survey provided an opportunity for engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders to inform a representative and inclusive refreshed Employment and Skills Framework.

The final report detailing full analysis of survey responses can be found [here](#). Comments received during all consultation and engagement activity have been used to inform the Employment and Skills Framework 2021-2025.

3.3 Employment and Skills Framework - priorities

Five draft priorities have been developed which will contribute to the achievement of the Framework's Vision. Each priority consists of a clear ambition statement.

Table 1: Draft Employment and Skills Framework priorities

Priority theme	Ambition
Quality technical education	Technical education is a choice with clearly developed pathways that meet the needs of employers
Great education connected to business	Learning supports preparation for and progression in work, it is informed by employers. Locally rooted careers information inspires and enables informed choices to support personal ambitions
Accessing and progressing in good work	Everyone has the skills to be able to access good work and is equally supported to take up training in the workplace that enables progression and development of transferable skills.
Creating a culture of investment in workforce skills	Every employer has a skills plan and invests in the workforce at all levels leading to reduction in skills gaps reported and increased productivity at firm level

Priority theme	Ambition
Driving innovation and productivity through high level skills	To increase the qualification levels, particularly in STEM, of working age adults, foster a culture of enterprise and innovation and widen the talent pool for employers

The action plan that falls out of this strategy is set out in the following section.

Figure 2: Employment and Skills Framework 2021-2025: Plan on a page



3.4 Economic Recovery Plan

Long-term planning for the economic recovery of West Yorkshire has been overseen by the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Board², which is a working group of the Combined Authority and brings together the Mayor, five West Yorkshire Leaders and LEP Chair with partners from the private sector, health, trade unions, business representative organisations, public bodies and the third sector.

The refreshed, locally led, and locally resourced Economic Recovery Plan has West Yorkshire's citizens at the centre of it. It utilises new devolved powers and access to funding secured in the £1.8 billion Devolution Deal. It sits alongside locally led plans across each of the five West Yorkshire local authorities, adding value where collective action can work best. It has two main areas of focus: to deliver inclusive growth for everyone across the region and ensuring that our plans tackle the climate and environment emergency (see Figure 3).

Employment and skills priorities are central to the plan, including specific commitments to creating 1,000 skilled green jobs and prioritising skills and training for all; however, all action areas within the plan have an employment and skills dimension.

Employment and Skills Support

Significant progress has been made on implementing the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan³. This includes delivering support and programmes funded by national COVID-19 interventions, but also regional schemes being delivered from resources allocated from the West Yorkshire Single Investment Fund to economic recovery.

The Combined Authority and LEP continue to support individuals to better equip them in the labour market as part of economic recovery activity, including through the £13.5m strategic employment and skills package agreed by the Combined Authority on 27 November 2020.

The **Employment Hubs**, delivered by local authorities and delivery partners, support people into work, training/retraining, or self-employment. The original ESF funded programme, established to support in the main 15–24-year-olds, has now come to an end. However, through devolved gainshare funding, the service has been expanded to support people of all ages across West Yorkshire seeking help with finding training or retraining, or to identify, apply for and secure employment or self-employment. Face to face delivery is starting to happen across the region (and will continue to depend on government guidance and restrictions). The all-age programme aims to support a further 5,500 people by April 2023.

Final data for the ESF funded programme will not be available until Spring 2022. However, performance to 14 December 2021, indicates the following:

- Engaged 5,679 15-24 year-old participants against a programme profile 6294 (90%). Of these:
 - 1,861 participants, against a profile of 800 (233 %), were recorded as being from ethnic minorities
 - 1,101 participants declared they had disabilities against a target of 566 (195%)
 - 1,754 participants are recorded as having no basic skills qualifications against a target of 1384 (127%)
 - 236 participants were from a single adult household with dependent children against a target of 252 (94%)

² Further details on the full membership and terms of reference: <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/erb>

³ The [West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan](#) was updated at the Combined Authority meeting in September 2021, and will remain under review to respond to evolving situation.

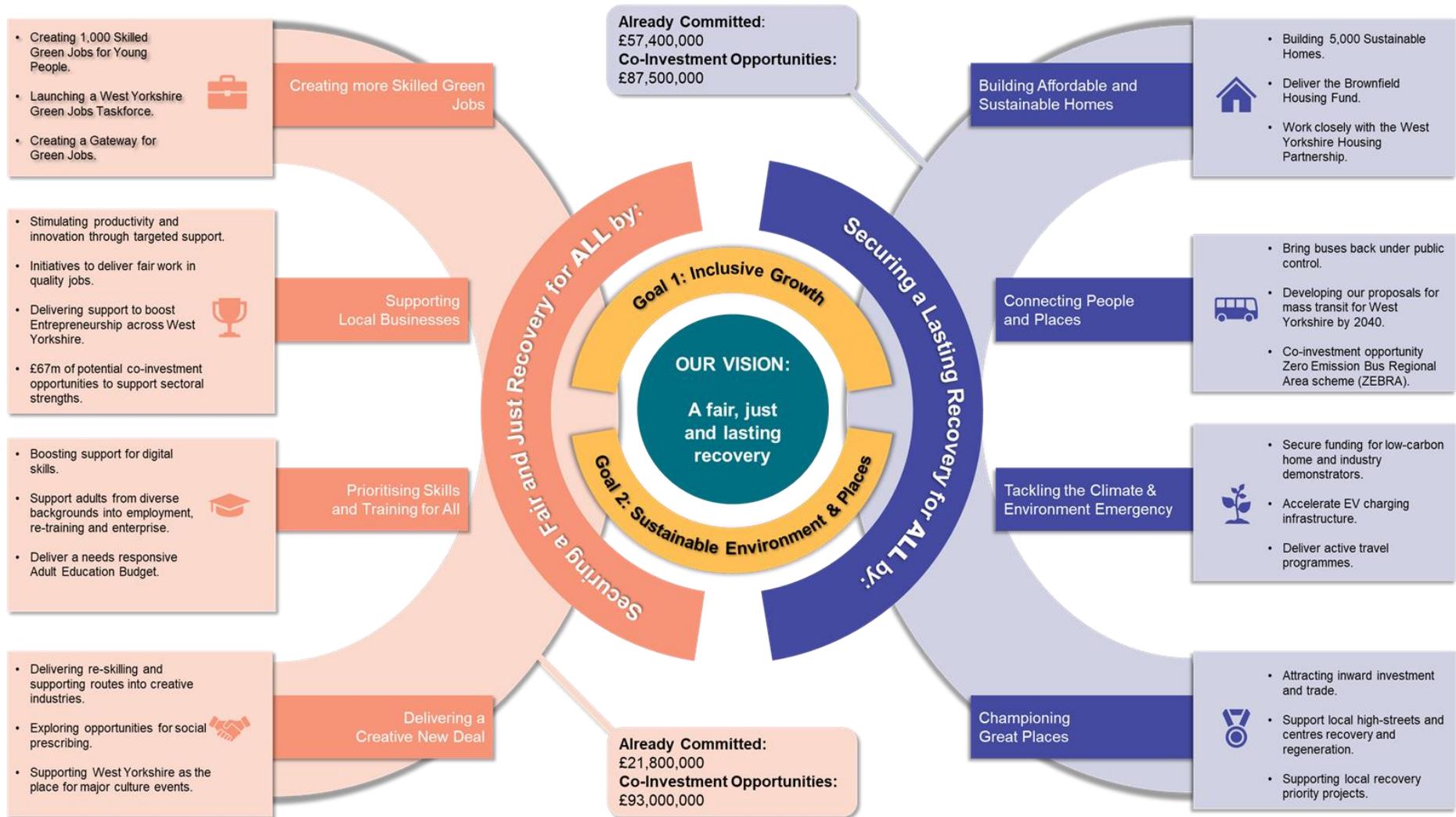
- Of the participants starting the programme 1,910 have been supported with finding education/ training, employment or self-employment against a target of 2706 (71%).

Employment Hub 2 contracts for delivery (gainshare funded) began on 1 August 2021 and will run until March 2023. Data on performance on Employment Hub 2 is limited to date as local authority delivery partners have concentrated on the final quarter delivery of Employment Hub 1. However, provisional data shows 666 participants have been engaged during October and November 2021 against an overall programme profile of 5,500.

The second element of the gainshare-funded Covid recovery package aims to build a training offer that is flexible and responsive to demand from career-changers and employers, and to changes in the labour market. In this regard, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the LEP have launched free [Skills Connect](#) training courses to help adults gain skills for job roles in the digital, construction, health and social care, and environmental sectors.

All courses have been designed by local employers to align with local skills needs and job vacancies. Anyone over the age of 19 and living in West Yorkshire can sign up for a course. There will be opportunities for participants to learn directly from industry and business professionals with guaranteed post-training interviews available in some courses, linking them directly to current vacancies. The first courses available will boost digital skills including Cyber Security, Digital Marketing, Data Analytics and many more. In future, there will be many other courses available in health and social care, construction, and green jobs.

Figure 3: West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan – Overview



4 Skills action plan

The following section sets out the five priorities contained within the Employment and Skills Framework and details the specific objectives and associated actions.

4.1 Quality technical education

Ambition Statement: *Technical education is a choice with clearly developed pathways that meet the needs of employers.*

Objectives:

- Support individuals to take up technical qualifications and access high quality work placements
- Increase the number of opportunities to take up technical education as a route to a rewarding career
- Work with employers to maximise apprenticeship levy investment in West Yorkshire
- Work with providers to ensure a range of provision that meets employer needs.

What we will do to address this - indicative actions for West Yorkshire partners:

- Use labour market information to inform provision of technical qualifications at levels 4-7
- Support businesses to offer apprenticeships, traineeships, internships and work placements
- Work closely with partners to ensure progression routes towards and within technical education
- Use traineeships and AEB to equip individuals with the confidence and basic skills, such as maths, English and essential digital skills, to progress onto an apprenticeship
- Ensure that a full range of apprenticeship opportunities are available to support inclusion, including the disadvantaged, young people and people with lower-level skills
- Work with levy-paying organisations to highlight the benefits of levy transfer within West Yorkshire.

Economic Recovery:

Enhance Employment Hub provision to support and signpost those recently unemployed including referrals to Kickstart.

4.2 Great education connected to business

Ambition Statement: *Learning supports preparation for and progression in work, it is informed by employers. Locally rooted careers information inspires and enables informed choices to support personal ambitions.*

Objectives:

- Ensure careers information takes account of local labour market information to support informed decision making and lifelong learning
- Enable equal participation in the take up of careers education for people of all ages, backgrounds, and career stage to support personal ambitions
- Embed careers support and career management into key transition points in life
- Increase the number of employers providing experiences of the workplace and work placements

What we will do to address this - indicative actions for West Yorkshire partners:

- Produce high quality careers materials based on local labour market information for individuals of all ages and for practitioners and organisations that support them
- Create a high-quality careers infrastructure and network that support key transition points for individuals of all ages in learning and work
- Raise aspirations amongst Early Years and primary school aged pupils and activities to counteract early stereotypes and reinforce messages throughout school journey
- Support more business to take up technical placement opportunities including apprenticeships, traineeships and T-levels placements
- Target interventions designed to engage a more diverse audience than those who traditionally engage with careers education (e.g. BAME and girls) and support personal ambitions
- Embed careers into key life transition points to support informed decision-making
- Extend the Careers Hub model.

Economic Recovery:

- Deliver a virtual work experience and employer engagement offer including mock interviews, job application preparation etc.
- Deliver interventions to reduce NEET and youth unemployment numbers.

4.3 Accessing and progressing in good work

Ambition Statement: *Everyone is able to access to good work and is equally supported to take up training in the workplace that enables progression and development of transferable skills*

Objectives:

- Support the unemployed to gain and sustain employment
- Unlock progression opportunities and career adaptability through skills, particularly for those on low wages and with insecure work
- Support people from all backgrounds to access self-employment opportunities and explore opportunities for new business start-ups
- Coordinate and provide access to training, work placements and job matching with SMEs for unemployed
- Ensure employment and self-employment opportunities are widely available and accessible for all to apply
- Improve West Yorkshire's resilience by identifying and delivering the skills needed for the future

What we will do to address this - indicative actions for West Yorkshire partners:

- Ensure that UK CRF and SPF succeeds the ESF funded unemployed and NEETs programmes, with increased flexibility
- Use AEB to equip individuals with the confidence needed to launch their careers through community learning
- Work with Restart providers to ensure engagement with all communities and complementarity
- Promote adoption of inclusive recruitment practices among SMEs
- Support delivery of level 3 qualifications needed by the regional labour market
- Coordinate activities of key stakeholders (unions, National Careers Service, recruitment agencies etc) to ensure adults access locally relevant careers and employment advice and support

Economic Recovery:

- Support for young people in unemployment
- Deliver the Employment Hub, in partnership with Local Authorities, working closely with key agencies such as JCP and NCS to coordinate and provide access to training, work placements and job matching with SMEs for individuals who are unemployed
- Expand the non-accredited, employer led adult re-training, upskilling 'bootcamp' offer in priority areas with potential for job creation and growth including digital, green economy and health tech
- Deliver a community based entrepreneurial development programme
- Work with NHS on workforce strategies and priorities in health and social care

4.4 Creating a culture of investment in workforce skills

Ambition statement: *Every employer has a skills plan and invests in the workforce at all levels leading to reduction in skills gaps reported and increased productivity.*

Objectives:

- Focus investment in and development of technical training facilities to ensure future needs of employers, individuals and the wider economy are met
- Increase leadership and management skills for improved skills utilisation in the workplace
- Encourage employers to invest and have a workforce skills plan in place to drive productivity and innovation for staff at all levels and to support a diverse approach within workforce development
- Develop innovation and enterprise skills in the workplace to boost productivity and economic growth
- Increase digital enterprise by helping small businesses and charities upskill their employees and increase their digital capabilities so they can take advantage of the productivity gains that technology provides
- Increase the number of people in work with basic skills, including digital
- Support employers to retain older workers in fulfilling work for longer.

What we will do to address this - indicative actions for West Yorkshire partners:

- Provide independent skills support offer for employers, particularly SMEs, that promotes investment in their workforce and increases good workforce practices such as having a skills plan e.g. through a 'Good Work Standard'
- Support the development of leadership and management skills and other practices such as mentoring and networking that foster leadership development
- Encourage employer collaboration with each other and with providers to create solutions to skills and training needs, providing a clear offer to business and reduced bureaucracy
- Raise awareness of the benefits of staying on in work for longer to individuals and employers
- Support small businesses and charities to upskill their employees and increase their digital capabilities so they can take advantage of the productivity gains that technology provides
- Promote take up of the AEB digital entitlement
- Consider how gaps in workers' literacy and numeracy skills can be addressed through workplace programmes and flexible / modular provision.

Economic Recovery:

- Pilot approaches to high performing workplace practices, including elements of the 'Good Work Standard'

4.5 Driving innovation and productivity through high level skills

Ambition statement: To increase the qualification levels, particularly in STEM, of working age adults, foster a culture of enterprise and innovation and widen the talent pool for employers.

Objectives:

- Attract talent to key areas of economic growth for WY, including health tech and transition to net zero economy and digital
- Increase take up of STEM subjects at all levels to meet future demand, particularly on the clean growth agenda
- Remove barriers and ensure equality of access so that learners progress towards higher levels of learning
- Maximise collaboration with HEIs, FECs, training providers and employers to establish training needs and provision that supports higher level skills in areas of strength for WY and the North that supports job creation and safeguarding
- Continue to make the case to government for a regionally accountable and driven post-16 skills system.

What we will do to address this - indicative actions for West Yorkshire partners:

- Work with the West Yorkshire Innovation Network to create a programme of enterprise and innovation activities
- Promote coordinated access routes into HEIs for business, such as Nexus and 3MBIC
- Create role models and champions to inspire and mentor individuals whilst studying to support career progression and address diversity in the workforce
- Establish a West Yorkshire Green Skills Partnership
- Raise awareness amongst employers of the benefits of employing graduates
- Increase higher level and degree apprenticeship take up with SMEs
- Support employer-led careers and inspiration activities that raise awareness of the importance of STEM skills for future jobs
- Focus on graduate retention as part of the region's place marketing and inward investment strategy
- Produce annual labour market information to identify the region's skills needs.

4.6 Sector Focus

In the previous Employment and Skills Plan, three skills segments were prioritised for action:

- Engineering and manufacturing
- Infrastructure skills
- Digital skills.

These segments were selected because they make a major contribution to productivity whilst at the same time being constrained by skills shortages. For this same reason they remain an important focus for action under the new framework.

Skills for Net Zero have been identified as a cross-cutting priority within the Framework. However, specific vertical sectors will need to be targeted to address this priority. This includes:

- Construction sector – immediate priorities identified in the Emission Reduction Pathways report⁴ include the skills needed to retrofit energy efficiency measures such as loft and cavity wall insulation plus the skills need to install heat pump heating systems.
- Energy sector – meeting the challenge of transitioning to low carbon energy generation is likely to intensify skill shortages in a sector that is already highly susceptible to such shortages in respect of professional roles, such as engineers, but also for skilled trades⁵.

Digital skills are also a cross-cutting priority in the framework, with two key dimensions: 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 (CAD, BIM etc). Although developers and programmers are in greatest demand in specialised firms within the Information and Communication sector, there is a need for these workers across all parts of the regional economy.

In contrast with the highly targeted approach under the previous Employment and Skills Plan we will adopt a broader-based and more thematic approach to engaging with sectors and occupations which will be set out when the final framework is published.

4.7 Taking the action plan forward

Work is underway to develop 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. This is considered in more detail in the section on Mayoral Pledges (see below).

Employer role in taking forward the Employment and Skills Framework priorities

The contribution needed from employers to make the plan a success

- Contribute to policy and strategy development through formal consultations and bodies like Green Jobs Taskforce and Local Digital Skills Partnership
- Share best practice around talent management and people development practices
- Offer apprenticeships, traineeships, internships and work placements
- Invest in skills of their staff at all levels to support improved business performance and individual career progression, including for those at risk of redundancy
- Contribute to employer-led careers and inspiration activities and help to develop young people's digital, creativity and enterprise skills
- Put forward job vacancies through boot camp and Employment Hub programmes
- Collaborate with education and training providers around curriculum development
- Serve as role models for young people to promote career aspiration and commit to actively promoting diversity in the workforce
- Consider how higher skilled workers could be utilised effectively in their business in the form of higher and degree apprenticeships
- Support / access the local arrangements for levy transfer
- Work with the Employment Hub to get staff affected by the crisis back into employment.

⁴ West Yorkshire Combined Authority (2020) Tackling the Climate Emergency: Emission Reduction Pathways report [Emission-reduction-pathways-report.pdf \(westyorks-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/emission-reduction-pathways-report.pdf)

⁵ West Yorkshire Combined Authority (2018) Towards a zero-carbon Leeds City Region Energy Delivery Plan [leeds-city-region-energy-strategy.pdf \(westyorks-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/leeds-city-region-energy-strategy.pdf)

The Employment and Skills Framework will be evaluated through a programme of activity. First of all, it will be monitored and evaluated as part of wider arrangements for the West Yorkshire [Strategic Economic Framework](#) (SEF). Monitoring and impact indicators relevant to the employment and skills agenda are set out under each of the five SEF priorities. The first State of the Region report provides a comprehensive stock take of the region's economic performance, including progress against employment and skills indicators.

The impact of the devolved Adult Education Budget will be evaluated annually, focusing on the contribution of this investment to meeting regional skills priorities will also inform our thinking.

Finally, projects, programmes and investments of significant scale in the employment and skills space will be evaluated as part of the Combined Authority's evaluation strategy⁶.

The SAP / Employment and Skills Committee will receive regular monitoring updates against the new framework as a standard recurring agenda item in future meetings as has been the case with the previous plan and a review of performance will be prepared towards the end of the planning cycle.

⁶ West Yorkshire Combined Authority (2020) Evaluation Strategy [01-wyca-evaluation-strategy.pdf](#) (westyorks-ca.gov.uk)

5 Mayoral Pledges

The most important development since the publication of the first Local Skills Report in March 2021, is the election in May of the Tracy Brabin as the first Mayor of West Yorkshire.

The Mayor of West Yorkshire is a focal point for the region, working with the Mayoral Combined Authority, council leaders, business representatives and partners to prioritise issues that really matter to people and communities in the region. The Mayor is bringing the region greater influence within Government at national level, including on economic recovery, the power to shape Government policy and access further funding.

A number of the Mayor's pledges directly address employment and skills issues, whilst most others have an employment and skills dimension.

Mayoral Pledges

10 Pledges to West Yorkshire:

- Create 1,000 well paid, skilled jobs for young people.
- Prioritise skills and training to ensure everyone in West Yorkshire has the skills they need to secure work.
- Support local businesses and be champion for our regional economy.
- Lead a Creative New Deal to ensure our creative industries are part of the broader recovery strategy.
- Appoint an Inclusivity Champion to work to ensure that the region's recovery benefits us all.
- Recruit 750 more frontline police officers and staff to fight crime.
- Put keeping women and girls safe at the heart of my policing plan.
- Bring buses back under public control, introduce simpler fares, contactless ticketing and greener buses.
- Build 5,000 sustainable homes including council houses and affordable homes
- Tackle the climate emergency and protect our environment.

Work is well under way on a series of workstreams to support the delivery of the mayoral pledges and to ensure full integration with the Employment and Skills Framework. The primary focus is on two of the pledges, which have the most explicit focus on employment and skills:

- Create 1,000 well paid, skilled, green jobs for young people
- Prioritise skills and training to ensure everyone in West Yorkshire has the skills they need to secure work.

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

The Mayor has 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. At their meeting on 24 June 2021, the Combined Authority indicatively approved £500,000 funding to support scheme development relating to employment and skills support for 16-30 year olds.

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.

The work of the Taskforce will have two phases.

- 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.
- This intelligence 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.

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.

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

Under this pledge, the Mayor has 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.
- Use the **West Yorkshire Innovation Festival** to incorporate additional digital innovation and skills/SME transformation aspects.
- Support a 'Gold Standard' **West Yorkshire wide Careers** Advisory 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.

Development of the Fair Work Charter for West Yorkshire has begun, supporting a commitment to paying the Living Wage in West Yorkshire.

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.

Delivery options are in development for a West Yorkshire Digital Festival and Academy, with key partners included in developing proposals.

6 Assessment of progress

The following section reviews the progress that has been made in addressing regional employment and skills objectives, with specific reference to the role of the Skills Advisory Panel in this. Particular consideration is given to the leadership role provided by the Panel, its role in enhancing local knowledge of skills needs, its impact on regional skills provision and the part that it has played in Covid-19 recovery and renewal plans.

6.1 Taking a local leadership role

The SAP/ESC takes an important leadership role with regard to the regional employment and skills agenda; this extends to strategic and operational matters, as set out in the following key examples.

The SAP led on the refresh of the Employment and Skills Framework, which provides strategic objectives for the development of future skills programmes. The SAP has overseen the workplan throughout the process, including external consultation and shaping key elements of the framework including the content of the strategic priorities.

The Employment and Skills Committee will oversee a pipeline of project and programme development in support of the **Mayoral 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'. A budget of £500,000 has been committed to the development of the '1,000 skilled, green jobs for Young People' and 'Skills and training' pledges. This includes a proposal to build capacity and to commission research and intelligence to support the development of these two pledges.

The SAP also oversees the work of two recently-formed bodies, the [Local Digital Skills Partnership](#) and the [Green Jobs Taskforce](#) that aim to influence specific aspects of the skills landscape. Both are important cross-cutting themes of the forthcoming Employment and Skills Framework.

The aspirations of the West Yorkshire Digital Skills Partnership are:

- To inspire the growth of digital skills across West Yorkshire by reducing the digital divide to create opportunities for all
- To transform digital skills through adoption across the SMEs of West Yorkshire to grow the regional economy and boost productivity
- To inspire and influence the workforce of the future by collaborating with educators and employers to ensure the future generation have the skills to meet the needs of the economy.

The Green Skills Partnership was convened following discussion at the Skills Advisory Panel with the task to undertake an assessment of what is currently happening and what more we need to do in partnership to achieve target net zero carbon by 2038. The work of the Partnership will now be taken forward by the [Green Jobs Taskforce](#), chaired by the Mayor, which will seek to position West Yorkshire as a leader for green skills and jobs and set out a roadmap to deliver the skills and jobs needed to address the climate emergency.

The SAP contributed to the work of the [Future-Ready Skills Commission](#). The Commission has had a clear influence on national policy-making including the content of the new skills White Paper. A number of members of the SAP (both employers and education

and training providers) served on the Commission and the SAP also took responsibility for drawing out the implications of the Commission’s recommendations for the City Region.

Our Blueprint for a Future-Ready Skills System



Ensure the funding system offers fair access regardless of age, level of attainment, background and learning route alongside reversing the long-term decline in adult training



Empower areas to design services around the individual to address complex and interrelated health, employment and skills issues



Everyone should have right to quality information about jobs and careers, no matter what their stage in life



Employers should take greater ownership of their talent management and skills development, aided by a joined-up approach to business support that means they can find the help they need, regardless of the route they take to find it



In order that people can gain the right skills needed for good quality work in their area, all adult skills and careers funding needs to be devolved



Recognise that areas are best placed to understand their own skills requirements and implement statutory five-year strategic skills plans to make it happen



To ensure that training meets the current and future skills needs of regional labour markets, delivery agreements with skills providers should be put in place, supported by investment funding



Large-scale public infrastructure projects designed to level up areas should include an additional skills premium of up to 5% of the total budget to maximise their economic potential



The Apprenticeship system needs national review to make it work more effectively, and this should include recognising and resourcing areas as the key route to employers and individuals

The SAP offers an important channel for high level dialogue with regional skills providers. A broader range of provider voices than previously is being represented in the membership of the SAP. Several of these members attend on behalf of wider representative bodies, including the [West Yorkshire Skills Partnership](#), [West Yorkshire Learning Providers](#) and [Go Higher West Yorkshire](#).

[European funding](#) is a key lever for shaping skills programmes regionally. The Leeds City Region was allocated £338 million of funding from the European Union to support business growth and create jobs for people in the region. The LEP plays a key role, working alongside other stakeholders, in determining how this funding should be invested to create the best economic outcomes for our City Region. The LEP has used labour market intelligence and partnership sounding groups to shape local rounds and contribute to national thinking on the shape of the forthcoming UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Its infrastructure for sharing best practice through communication and networks includes a Skills Partnership which comprises Independent Training Providers, voluntary and community sector organisations, FE Colleges, Universities and wider stakeholders, and a forum with Local Authority Employment and Skills officers. Both meet quarterly and feed into the SAP / ESC.

The SAP / ESC also works closely with other portfolio committees on topics of shared interest. For example, meetings of the Business, Economy and Innovation Committee have a standing agenda item on links to the work of the Employment and Skills Committee, reflecting the importance of employment and skills to the innovation and growth agenda.

6.2 Enhancing local knowledge

The LEP has invested in regional labour market intelligence from its inception, producing an annual labour market assessment report throughout this period.

Its latest assessment can be found [here](#). A summary of the area’s position and performance against consistent, core indicators is provided in Annex A.

With the introduction of the SAP, a greater emphasis and focus has been placed on labour market analysis. The resources provided through its Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Education have enabled the LEP to raise its capacity and capability in this area, as detailed below.

An ongoing intelligence programme has enabled the SAP to develop a comprehensive understanding of the local labour market and skills needs and to put in place effective mechanisms for dissemination. It is the LEP's view that directly influencing decision-making by players in the labour market through high quality intelligence is the most effective way of increasing the responsiveness of the skills system. Key activities include the following:

- Annual [dissemination workshops](#) targeting a wide range of stakeholders are held to convey the key messages from the labour market report. More than 200 delegates registered for the session held in February 2021 to launch the latest report.
- Tailored dissemination sessions are also provided to individual colleges and universities, usually to inform their strategic and curriculum planning.
- A detailed analysis of adult education provision was produced for the SAP as part of the supporting evidence base for the [Adult Education Budget strategy](#).
- Distillation of labour market intelligence into accessible and tailored careers content as part of the ongoing [Futuregoals](#) all age careers campaign.
- Dedicated dissemination sessions with [Enterprise Advisers](#) to broaden their understanding of the labour market, as part of their role to bring real business experience to schools and young people.
- Development of Futuregoals-branded [interactive resources](#) to improve the accessibility and usage of the labour market intelligence report for educational practitioners. This work is being funded through the SAP MoU with the Department for Education.
- Fortnightly Covid-19 [Economic Bulletin](#), setting out the ongoing impact of the crisis on the regional economy (includes labour market analysis).
- Close partnership working with York and North Yorkshire LEP around the production of labour market analysis. This has resulted in the publication of an [annual labour market report](#) in 2020 and 2021. A [deep-dive analysis](#) of York and North Yorkshire's Adult Education Budget funded provision has also been produced.
- Collection and structured analysis of information on skills needs from Leeds City Region companies as part of the diagnostic process of [Skills for Growth](#). This provides finely grained detail about the challenges that employers face in accessing the skills they need to meet business objectives.
- Production of an annual [State of the Region](#) report, providing a comprehensive overview of the performance of West Yorkshire against key socio-economic indicators, including those relating to employment and skills.

Although the LEP is in a strong position in terms of its labour market analysis capability there are a number of planned areas for further work:

- Development of a user guide for educational practitioners to enable them to make the most of labour market intelligence in the context of informing curriculum planning etc.
- Sectoral and occupational deep-dives – to include primary data collection around detailed skills needs plus examination of related curriculum in regional HE and FE sectors.

- Preparation of a more extensive assessment of higher-level skills in the region, to be undertaken in conjunction with Yorkshire Universities and with input from the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges on higher level technical provision.

6.3 Impact on local skills provision

The SAP has a key role in developing interventions to shape the local skills offer as well as being involved in the planning or commissioning of provision in certain areas. The objective is to ensure there is a rounded skills offer that is responsive to the needs of regional employers, individuals and the wider economy, whilst taking account of the practical issues faced by providers. Key initiatives are summarised below.

Bootcamps

In autumn 2020 the Combined Authority was successful in securing £1.3m from the Department for Education to pilot free skills bootcamps to support adults to retrain and upskill in the digital and technical sectors and support the economic recovery. This focus reflects the skills needs and priorities identified by the SAP's analysis.

The 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 ethnic minorities, 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.

The Department for Education (DfE) has awarded a further £650,000 to the Combined Authority to extend delivery of the Digital Skills Bootcamps pilot until March 2022, allowing training to be offered to an additional 285 participants, on the basis of the success of the original pilot in West Yorkshire.

The Combined Authority has been lobbying DfE for future funding to be devolved in order to deliver locally designed adult training aligned to the regional labour market.

(re)boot

The part ESF-funded [re]boot programme offers individuals over the age of 18 the chance to upskill, gain new skills or qualifications and enter employment within the key sectors of digital and creative, engineering and manufacturing, and construction and infrastructure. Again, these sectors reflect priority skill areas set out in the LEP's labour market analysis.

In response to the Covid-19 crisis Leeds Trinity University, West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges and Go Train offered free online courses, targeted at people who had been furloughed or were looking for a new project whilst at home.

Skills Connect

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the LEP have launched free Skills Connect training courses to help adults gain skills for job roles in the digital, construction, health and social care, and environmental sectors.

All courses have been designed by local employers to align with local skills needs and job vacancies. Anyone over the age of 19 and living in West Yorkshire can sign up for a course. There will be opportunities for participants to learn directly from industry and business professionals with guaranteed post-training interviews available in some courses, linking them directly to current vacancies. The first courses available will boost digital skills including Cyber Security, Digital Marketing, Data Analytics and many more. From the new year, there will be many other courses available in health and social care, construction, and green jobs.

Skills Capital funding

Skills Capital funding through the Growth Deal has enabled regional FE colleges to invest in world-class facilities to meet current and future skills demand, including the Leeds City College Quarry Hill campus and Kirklees College's Process Manufacturing Centre. The funding is expected to deliver £600m impact on the region's economy.

Delivery Agreements

The Local Skills Improvement Plans reflect the [delivery agreements](#) already in place between the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership and the seven West Yorkshire FE colleges, ensuring that delivery and curriculum are planned to reflect the region's skills priorities. The white paper suggestion that these are extended to independent training providers is in line with WY AEB strategy and Skills Commission. The work undertaken to date with our FE colleges on Delivery Agreements provides a good building block for developing the longer-term relationship and approach as suggested in the white paper.

Employment Hub

The Employment Hub supports individuals across the West Yorkshire who are seeking support to access and secure employment, training/retraining or self-employment. Delivery of the ESF funded Employment Hub programme has now come to an end (see section 3.4 for details of Hub outputs). Employment Hub 2 funded via Gainshare, will pick up a similar service in future.

Enterprise West Yorkshire

Enterprise West Yorkshire is a 'ladder of enterprise support' across three inter-connected workstreams that helps individuals in the region to explore enterprise as a career choice and establish new businesses. A primary focus of the programme is Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and clear 'minimum floor' targets have been set to ensure that the support available is taken up by females, people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people with disabilities, as well as people from our more economically disadvantaged communities and localities.

Levy transfer service

The LEP's levy transfer service supports businesses wishing to transfer their unused levy, the sourcing of training providers and managing applications for support from SMEs. To date, over £2.2 million has been pledged and funds have been allocated to support 228 apprentices, of which 49 were new opportunities. Pledging organisations say they prefer the personal approach so that their pledge can be directed against their corporate priorities and the collaboration with WYCA provides opportunity for promotion of their CSR activity.

Skills for Growth

Skills for Growth helps local businesses to navigate the skills system and access appropriate offers to meet local needs. The programme is also working to encourage employers to collaborate with education providers on projects such as graduate recruitment fairs, placements and careers resources. Since the ESF-funded programme started in September 2020, the team has had contact with over 700 businesses in the Leeds City Region. Of these businesses, 500 have accessed some form of support, either through connecting with education providers or through referrals to other business support programmes. The Skills for Growth offer provides the first point of contact for businesses who want to support the mayor's 1,000 Well Paid, Green Skills Jobs Pledge.

FutureGoals

FutureGoals is the LEP's careers inspiration and information platform and campaign, that showcases jobs and careers to help people of all ages choose their career paths, using resources linked to local labour market information and developed in collaboration with employers and education. A specialist platform has been launched to support stakeholders and partners to understand and make better use of the LEP's annual labour market report. FutureGoals will also become a platform that will support individuals to access employment opportunities in the region. The add on will be called FutureGoals – Jobs and will provide a comprehensive source of real-time vacancies and courses as well as Kickstart opportunities.

School Partnerships

The Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hubs continue to support secondary schools and colleges to make good progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks of good careers guidance and create employer engagement strategies with links to local labour market information.

Figure 4 (see below) provides details of the performance of the LEP's employment and skills programmes against agreed KPIs in 2020/21.

6.3.1 Adult Education Budget

The SAP is also responsible for **oversight of the devolved Adult Education Budget** in West Yorkshire, shaping and signing-off on the [AEB Strategy](#), which was published in September 2020 and which forms part of the Employment and Skills Framework. The strategy sets out a series of specific priorities for the devolved programme, taking account of the wider strategic context of the area. The strategy seeks to:

- Increase the supply of skills to support key sectors in West Yorkshire
- Improve West Yorkshire's resilience by developing skills for the future
- Make learning more inclusive to support disadvantaged residents
- Support the unemployed to gain and sustain employment
- Unlock progression opportunities and career adaptability through skills, particularly for those on low wages and with insecure work.

The agreed AEB 'Readiness conditions' have been completed and signed off by the Department for Education and West Yorkshire has implemented and begun delivery of AEB in a shorter timescale than any other MCA.

The procurement of Contracted Training Providers is complete with 18 organisations contracted to deliver training provision in addition to 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.

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. The AEB Strategy priorities have been reflected in the content of delivery plans agreed with all grant-funded and contracted providers, resulting in a direct impact on the learning that is being delivered in 2021/22 academic year.

Provider delivery plans have been combined into area delivery plans, which will be instrumental in reacting in-year to fill gaps and meet emerging needs. Meetings with Local Authorities are taking place to analyse area delivery plans and further strategic collaboration on the fund. Partnership meetings are also taking place in each local authority area to bring together 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.

The SAP / ESC plays a key role in overseeing the delivery of the devolved Adult Education Budget, including decisions about the principles that govern funding allocations and the approach to performance management of education and training providers.

Relatedly, the SAP has also overseen the implementation of delegated funding for the government's National Skills Fund **Level 3 adult offer**, including consideration of additional qualifications that are required to meet regional needs.

Figure 4: Performance against LEP employment and skills key performance indicators during 2020/21 financial year

Measure	Annual target	Result	Definition	Result notes
Disadvantaged schools and colleges from deprived areas engaged to improve performance towards good careers benchmarks.	92	93	Action plans agreed with schools to improve performance towards Gatsby measures of good careers education. Schools are those in the 20% most deprived wards nationally.	Action plans have been successfully completed with identified schools and have been well received by schools and colleges as a supportive measure.
Businesses influenced to engage with education, apprenticeships, sector skills initiatives and new employment opportunities	800	1,036	Businesses influenced through the following projects: Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE), Employment Hub, Schools Partnerships, [re]boot.	The total business engagement annual target was exceeded.
Number of people reached with information on careers linked to labour market information, thus promoting better informed choices.	250,000	2,104,028	People reached by: futuregoals campaigns, including website views and students attending futuregoals assemblies. delivery of teacher Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sessions	Target exceeded
Number of individuals supported to upskill in skills shortage areas.	1,000	1,612	Individuals supported to upskill through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [reboot • Employment Hub • Teacher CPD sessions 	Target exceeded.

Source: LEP management information

7 Case studies/positive impact stories

The following section explores key examples of the ways in which regional partners have worked together to make progress on the employment and skills agenda and to address the priorities identified by the SAP and presented in the Employment and Skills Framework.

Delivery Agreements with West Yorkshire colleges – strengthening the link between college provision and local employment and skills priorities

Delivery agreements are a two-way accord between the LEP / Combined Authority and education and training providers, with aims and targets that align with the priorities in the LEP's Employment and Skills Plan and forthcoming Framework. They are designed to influence a range of college provision, strengthening broader relationships with providers and influencing the curriculum to meet the needs of businesses, individuals, and communities.

Delivery Agreements include agreed actions, and an annual review process enables FE colleges to identify the support they need as well as requiring them to be responsive to requests for specific skills delivery. An additional benefit is that the relationship between the FE colleges and local authorities has been strengthened by a West Yorkshire-wide response.

For the LEP, Delivery Agreements provide “a great opportunity for us to influence the curriculum to meet the needs of employers and economy”. The colleges involved in the Agreements have undertaken a curriculum review based on the labour market analysis provided.

The use of data and monitoring across the Combined Authority has meant it is able to see and question what is working and what is not. An example of this is the low take-up of digital apprenticeships, despite it being a thriving sector in the region. The Combined Authority, providers and employer groups identified a mismatch between apprenticeship standards, which were separated by digital skillsets (for example software development, networking and marketing and design), and the needs of SME employers, which make up the bulk of employers in this sector. These employers require employees in digital roles to be able to fulfil all of these skillsets at Level 3.

The Combined Authority found that Delivery Agreements gave local authorities a better understanding of what was being delivered in its area, facilitating discussions around future need and progression.

Let's Talk Real Skills – enabling employers to shape the local curriculum

Funded by the European Social Fund and managed by West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges (WYCC), Let's Talk Real Skills aims to make significant improvements in skills provision through collaboration between businesses and education. WYCC has formed Collaborative Skills Partnerships to understand current provision and common skills need across ten key sectors identified in the LEP's labour market analysis report, Employment and Skills Plan, and forthcoming Employment and Skills Framework: construction, creative, digital, engineering and manufacturing, health and social care, low carbon, MedTech, rail, textile manufacturing, and TV and film production.

Each partnership will deliver improvements to the skills offer in the Leeds City Region, collectively creating new training provision to better meet the skills requirements of employers over the next five to ten years. The programme encourages collaboration

between education and training providers, employers, intermediaries and stakeholders, working closely to identify the skills needed by SMEs in the region and take a stepped approach to changing the skills landscape.

The Let's Talk Real Skills programme is being utilised to support Bradford College's industry leading Future Technologies programme that has seen the development of an Employer and Stakeholder Board, alongside the launch of three employer driven hubs. These hubs are developing future curriculum to meet employer demand which to date has seen the Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS) qualification designed and ready for delivery and a Modern Building Techniques Study Programme proposed.

Leeds Beckett University – equipping students with skills for the digital sector

Leeds Beckett University have shaped their employability strategy to include a direct response to the Leeds City Region Strategic Economic Plan (2016-2036) strategic priority two (skilled people, better jobs) and the priorities of the Employment and Skills Plan (2016-2020). Reviewing the strategies, colleagues identified a set of industry sectors and talent pipeline objectives which they believed could be more effectively supported by introducing new skills programmes alongside the existing Careers & Employability offer.

A series of student training programmes have been developed to support the fast-growth digital industries sector, which equip students from any discipline with skills required for the most significant emerging sectors which are driving new regional growth or being impeded by skills shortages.

Over the last two years, five separate skills programmes have been developed in close collaboration with experts from industry partners and regional agencies to support the fast-growth digital industries sector. Each programme is based on a series of student workshops run by employers and external experts, offering students core skills and foundational training. Students gain understanding of the scale and scope of digital and tech in the Leeds City Region, develop typical recruitment attributes that digital companies seek, gain some coding experience with an employer and become familiar with terminology that is used in the sector.

Feedback to these industry-responsive programmes is highly positive, and businesses are keen to engage with these initiatives. By introducing a much broader range of industry-related career development programmes, the university has seen a significant increase in the levels of student interaction with employability support, with a 50% increase in student applications to employability support programmes in the past year and 200 students completing the industry-related training programmes.

[re]boot – tackling skills shortages and supporting career progression

Part funded by ESF, [re]boot offers adults over the age of 18 the chance to upskill, gain new skills/qualifications and improve their employment options, particularly within key regional sectors, including construction, digital, manufacturing and engineering and the fast-growing creative sector. Designed to respond to skills shortages identified by regional employers, [re]boot provides relevant content and practical courses to address the skills shortages in the City Region.

Local data and monitoring are used to identify appropriate training solutions for sector-specific skills shortages. Courses are designed to meet the immediate demand from employers for specific sector skills, engaging with industry to help shape course content and providing a larger talent pool in the key growth sectors in Leeds City Region. [re]boot helps

to improve the overall skill level of the workforce by enabling individuals who are typically marginalised from accessing higher level skills. Training has been designed to drive progression, in particular from Levels 2 to 4 providing an essential springboard for participants looking to progress in priority sectors.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, both national and regional datasets were used to identify immediate and emerging needs. For example, the identification of high numbers of individuals on furlough encouraged the LEP and delivery partners from Leeds Trinity University, Go Train and West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges to adapt the skills schemes to be delivered online, whilst also opening up fully funded courses to those at risk of or facing redundancy.

Amy Herdman, a [re]boot learner on a TV Production Skills Course at Leeds Trinity University said:

“I’d been in the same career for nearly 9 years doing a role that I no longer found fulfilling and I knew the TV industry was where I wanted to be.

[re]boot enabled me to meet TV industry professionals where I could get one to one advice on how to take the first step to getting a TV production role and learn the skills needed by local employers. It was great meeting other likeminded people on the course too, giving me more confidence and shared knowledge.

The fact the [re]boot course was free and I was able to continue working full time as the course was held in the evenings, meant there were no financial implications to doing the course and took any worries out of just giving it a go. I have no regrets and for me it’s really paid off as I’m now already working in industry doing a job I love.”

8 Looking forward

As the previous sections show, Leeds City Region faces a range of deep-rooted labour market and skills challenges requiring a comprehensive strategic approach to address them, covering action on employment support, higher level skills, technical education, workplace training and enterprise in education.

Many of these challenges are particularly urgent in view of the need to support economic recovery in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. The employment and skills agenda will play a key role in promoting a fair, just and lasting recovery for all. By supporting adults from diverse backgrounds to enter re-training, employment and enterprise, boosting support for digital skills and prioritising a needs responsive devolved Adult Education Budget we can make a major contribution to inclusive growth.

By creating more skilled green jobs we can contribute to the achievement of our net zero ambitions and support the goal of sustainable environment and places, at the same time as promoting sustainable career opportunities for individuals and positioning West Yorkshire as leading centre for green technologies and services.

The City Region has seen sustained improvement across many measures relating to the skills supply side, including an increased number of residents with higher level skills, but although there has been some evidence of a narrowing, there is a continuing gap with the national average against these measures. The number of higher skilled jobs has been growing strongly also but this has been accompanied by persistent skill shortages for higher skilled technical roles that are crucial to performance on productivity.

To make progress against these issues and to secure the increases in productivity and living standards that are the goals of our ambitious economic strategy we need to align the full range of regional stakeholders around our Employment and Skills Framework and the Mayoral Pledges. This section sets out some of the ways in which stakeholders can connect with the work that the SAP is leading.

A key element of context is the major developments in national policy that are in train, both in response to the Covid-19 crisis and with regard to the longer-term approach to identifying and addressing skills needs at regional and national levels. There have been major announcements on the Plan for Jobs, National Skills Fund and the new [white paper](#).

We look forward to developing a dialogue with the newly formed Skills and Productivity Board, both from the point of view of feeding in intelligence about the distinctive aspects of our local labour market and skills needs but also from the viewpoint of tapping into rich evidence about the courses and qualifications that make the greatest contribution to meeting employer and wider economic needs.

More broadly, we stand ready to support the Department for Education in testing and evaluating new approaches to giving employers a greater input into the skills system, raising performance on higher level technical skills and implementing a flexible, lifetime skills guarantee.

Crucially, the election of the mayor in May 2021 brings increased democratic accountability to the work of the LEP and Combined Authority. This democratic mandate, in turn lends greater focus and urgency to efforts to transform the economic performance of West Yorkshire, with the employment and skills agenda being central to this. It also brings a responsibility to demonstrate the benefit and value for money of devolved arrangements not least in the skills sphere. We are committed to full transparency in this area and the SAP,

with its variety of stakeholder perspectives, will provide an important mechanism for advice and scrutiny during the devolution journey.

Co-ordinating regional plans with national policy

Examples of how we will co-ordinate with national policy

- Ensure that national funding targeted on local areas (Levelling Up Fund, Towns Fund, Community Development Fund and Shared Prosperity Fund) is used to deliver maximum benefit in the employment and skills space.
- Make most of apprenticeships, traineeships and T-Levels to enhance technical skills base and get people into work
- Work with Job Centre Plus and others to ensure there is a co-ordinated employment support offer regionally
- Use local Employment Hub to prepare and signpost individuals who have been made redundant / unemployed to Kickstart provision
- Work with Restart providers to ensure that all local communities are engaged and that the Restart programme complements existing provision in the area
- Work with National Careers Service to make information, advice and guidance provision available via the local Employment Hub
- Consider ways to promote higher level technical provision
- Work with NHS on workforce strategies and priorities in health and social care
- Maximise benefit of delegated funding for Level 3 adult offer from National Skills Fund.

8.1 How to get involved: education and training providers

Education and training providers have the opportunity to work through representative bodies that are directly represented on the SAP, presenting them with the opportunity to shape regional thinking on skills. This is particularly important at a time when skills policy is in a state of flux and collaboration is needed to set clear priorities and provide the basis for a coherent response to potentially competing demands.

West Yorkshire Skills Partnership

This is a network of further education colleges, universities, private and voluntary sector skills providers and employability providers. Managed by the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges and funded by the European Social Fund, its members work together to meet the needs of employers and the Leeds City Region economy by providing access to skills and training.

West Yorkshire Learning Providers

WYLP operates the single largest employment and skills network in the Yorkshire region and provides a strong voice for its members on FE and Skills issues.

Yorkshire Universities

Since 1987, Yorkshire Universities (YU) has been the regional voice for higher education (HE) in Yorkshire. YU represents eleven universities and one specialist higher education institution (HEI). Yorkshire Universities is a partnership based on a shared commitment to strengthen the contribution that universities and HEIs make (individually and collectively) to the economic, social, cultural and civic life and well-being of people and places in Yorkshire.

Go Higher West Yorkshire

Go Higher West Yorkshire is a consortium of HE providers, working together to ensure that higher education in all its forms is open to all who can benefit, regardless of background. The core aim of the partnership is to connect partners to improve access to, success in and progression from higher education, for those from under-represented groups.

Support for educators and careers professionals

As part of the Futuregoals campaign, educators and career professionals can access free careers resources based on local labour market information. There is also support for careers leaders to improve careers provision in schools and colleges.

8.2 How to get involved: employers

Employers can help to shape the regional skills agenda through a variety of bodies linked to the Skills Advisory Panel. They can also engage with support and services to help them make an effective investment in the skills of their staff.

Local Digital Skills Partnership

The West Yorkshire Local Digital Skills Partnership launched in October 2020 as part of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's ambitious devolution deal. The partnership provides a unique and exciting opportunity to influence the digital skills landscape across the region. The Partnership brings together passionate digital advocates and leaders from business, education, local communities and charity sector organisations, to create collaborative partnerships to support the region's vision to transform lives through digital tech.

Engage with education and Skills for Growth

Enterprise Advisers bring real business experience to schools and their young people. Giving back and sharing experiences, career advice, and knowledge of job roles and industry can really impact a young person's life. In addition, the Give an Hour provides an opportunity for small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) to make a difference to the futures of young people in Leeds City Region by offering an hour of their time to help young people prepare for the fast-changing world of work.

Apprenticeship Levy Support

The LEP brings together employers and training providers to ensure apprenticeship opportunities are available to people across the area. Its levy transfer service enables businesses with unspent levy to transfer funds to support apprenticeships in other organisations, potentially within their own supply chain or sector.

Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Business Support Service

The Business Support Service provides a central point of contact and support for businesses in the City Region and serves as an access point for all services and interventions including those focusing on employment and skills.



Report to: Employment and Skills Committee

Date: 24 January 2022

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 State of the Region indicators and a summary of more timely intelligence showing current trends in the labour market.

2. Information

Employment and Skills Evidence

- 2.1 At the last meeting of the Committee (October 29 2021) it was agreed that regular reporting would be provided to each Committee meeting, based around a standard set of indicators.
- 2.2 A presentation of key messages from employment and skills evidence and analysis will be given at the meeting to inform discussion. Much of the relevant data will be published on 18th January 2022. The following items will be circulated to the Committee shortly after the publication of the data:
- Summary of the latest position against the Combined Authority's State of the Region 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.

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 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.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 Equality and diversity is also a key issue within the employment and skills agenda. The State of the Region indicators show that 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.

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 State of the Region indicators.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. Appendices

To be circulated to the Committee following publication of source data on 18th January 2022.

Appendix 1 – Summary of performance against State of the Region indicators: Employment and skills

Appendix 2 – Labour Market Reporting January 2021

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Report to: Employment and Skills Committee

Date: 24 January 2022

Subject: **Integrated Care Workforce Strategy**

Director: Liz Hunter, Director of Policy and Development

Author: Sophie Collins, Policy Officer

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the Integrated Care Strategy proposal for West Yorkshire. This aims to support wider work across the region to help ensure that the Health and Social Care workforce work aligned across partners and promotes inclusive growth.
- 1.2 To seek the Committee's views on the proposal.

2. Information

Overview

Breaking Barriers Innovations

- 2.1 Breaking Barriers Innovations (BBI) was formed to help support the transition of UK Health and Social Care into place-based planning making full use of all community assets with service users and front-line practitioners at the heart of the design process. The programme is chaired by Lord Patel of Bradford OBE.
- 2.2 The BBI Playbook Programme is collaborative programme of work to better align strategy and outcomes for workforce and impact on the social

determinants of health. Its aim is to enable long term support by employers in the region, skills providers and anchor institutions in driving good employment. The programme uses an evidence-based approach to develop shared action plans for local authorities, combined authorities, NHS, third sector, and industry partners to take forward. The programme has the following principles:

- **Focus;** Through an examination of local conditions and the environment, determine the optimal “dominant strategy” for a place based approach- i.e.: identify the most prescient strategy that lends itself to place based as opposed to siloed approaches in the location
- **Build Beyond Healthcare;** Develop across the locations within the programme a place-based approach that reflects a chosen relevant social determinant of health in shaping the proposed plans
- **Workforce needs;** Shape the place-based approach with front line practitioners to understand needs for future workforce planning
- **Local Learning into National Planning;** Shared learning from across the locations that can be applied to long-term planning alongside devolution of services to local government
- **Co-developed;** Test approaches with industry innovation that can be prioritised and applied into the implementation phase.
- **Ambition into action;** The end product is an evidence-based action plan

2.3 Breaking Barriers Innovations will present information on the Playbook programme and the proposal for West Yorkshire at the Employment and Skills Committee meeting on Monday 24 January 2022.

Integrated Care Workforce Strategy for West Yorkshire

2.4 Phase one of the Playbook programme involves extensive stakeholder engagement across the region and districts. This will result in the strategic alignment of a plan for anchor institutions to enable good jobs being accessible to local people, leading to a productive and inclusive workforce in West Yorkshire. This will serve as an effective tool to attract external investors by setting out clarity on the region’s collaborative approach. It will also set out the parameters for the next stage which will involve robust community engagement and coproduction of solutions that will be validated by measurable evaluation.

2.5 The five West Yorkshire local authority areas each have existing approaches to health and care workforce strategies for their districts. Combined Authority officers have met with local authority colleagues and have agreed that the BBI Playbook programme should seek to add value to existing interventions or strategies or identify strategic gaps to be addressed at a West Yorkshire level.

Proposal

2.6 Phase one of the programme is made up of three modules of activity:

- Define programme scope
- Strategic alignment
- Programme launch

- 2.7 In the first module of activity, the programme's focus and primary audience would be identified, and a review of existing programmes in the relevant area would be undertaken. A working group would be agreed to review project development.
- 2.8 The strategic alignment module will engage with system leadership, national stakeholders, regional employers, and education and skills providers to identify clear, shared areas of focus and investment, gaps in partnership working, support and opportunities, and how we can plan for future workforce needs.
- 2.9 The final module of activity in phase one will produce an evidence-based action plan, to be co-developed as part of phase two and then implemented in phase three. The action plan would be presented to senior leaders by the BBI Chair, Lord Patel of Bradford, as part of a series of events to take place over two days in West Yorkshire.
- 2.10 The proposal has strong links to the priorities of the Employment and Skills Framework and the Economic Recovery Plan, each of which indicate that working with NHS key strategic organisations to support regional workforce strategies would contribute towards West Yorkshire's ambitions.

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 programme goal is to achieve 'a productive and inclusive workforce in West Yorkshire', with aims to use anchor institutions to address health inequalities and identify how we can plan at a system level for future workforce needs, therefore ensuring more inclusive accessibility and take up of good employment opportunities.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 As part of the strategic alignment activity module in phase one, the programme will work with education and skills providers to identify support and opportunities for diverse groups of young people, including NEET young people. It will also consider current levels of interest in education and training, and the impact of the pandemic on delivery of training.

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 Committee shares its views on the proposal for phase one of the programme of work.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

None.



Report to: Employment and Skills Committee

Date: 24 January 2022

Subject: **Mayoral Pledges**

Director: Liz Hunter, Director of Policy and Development

Author: Sophie Collins, Policy Officer

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

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 was received 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. The Green Jobs Taskforce will meet for the first time in early 2022.

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

- 2.4 Under this pledge, the Mayor made specific commitments to the following activities. Updates since the last meeting are then provided below.
- 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.

Gold-Standard Careers

- 2.5 The Mayor committed to supporting a 'gold-standard' West Yorkshire wide careers advice service, delivered online and in-person, using mentors and businesses to excite and inform the next generation about the exciting opportunities available to them.
- 2.6 Young people were disproportionately affected by the negative impacts of the pandemic, including marked effects on unemployment and apprenticeship opportunities, significant learning loss, and reduced opportunities to gain work experience as part of a study programme or in a part-time capacity. Young people are also much more likely to face long-term 'scarring' effects of unemployment, in terms of subsequent lower pay, higher unemployment, and

reduced life chances.

- 2.7 The Local Authority Directors of Development and Directors of Children's Services have commissioned a review into NEETs and youth unemployment, led by C&K Careers. The work will help identify priorities at the individual local authority and West Yorkshire level with a focus upon addressing the unequal outcomes of specific groups. The commission emphasises the requirement to co-produce these proposals with the West Yorkshire Local Authorities and Combined Authority.
- 2.8 Productive discussions have been held between officers from the five Local Authorities and the Combined Authority, in which all parties have come together to share best practice, learning, and challenges.
- 2.9 Discussions will continue to agree recommendations that are aligned with existing strategies, take into account different levels of investment across the region and contribute to long-term ambitions for progress in reduction and prevention of NEETs.

Digital Academy

- 2.10 The Mayor has pledged to 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. Work is underway to consider the options.
- 2.11 West Yorkshire Combined Authority have agreed to partner with IBM to utilise the "SkillsBuild" platform to provide a learning and careers pathways for all West Yorkshire residents. This provision is progressing through due diligence and should be accessible in Quarter 1 of 2022.

Digital Festival

- 2.12 The Mayor has agreed that the delivery of the sub pledge to 'turn the Leeds Digital Festival into a West Yorkshire wide festival' should be realised through the delivery of the West Yorkshire Innovation Festival – incorporating more digital innovation and skills/SME transformation aspects than were evident in the 2021 festival. The aim is to showcase the amazing talent and level of innovation within the region. In addition, the festival will provide an opportunity to place a focus on the need to grow digital skills across West Yorkshire and the impact both elements will have on residents, SMEs and the wider economy and provide a platform to showcase West Yorkshire as a driving force nationally and internationally as a centre for innovation.

Local Digital Skills Partnership

- 2.13 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 testbed for offers, and is a conduit to bring together stakeholders and partners to add value to the region's digital skills growth.

2.14 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

2.15 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.

2.16 The Digital Skills Plan also supports the delivery of the Employment and Skills Framework and its cross-cutting themes, as well as the Digital Framework, particularly the 'digital skills for all' priority.

2.17 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.

2.18 Further consultation with senior employment and skills officers in local authorities has also supported defining the key priorities and actions.

2.19 This activity has supported the LDSP in shaping the plan, which is defined by the following vision statement and high-level priorities.

2.20 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.

2.21 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

2.22 A final version Digital Skills Plan will be shared with the Committee ahead of its publication.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 The Committee has a lead role in considering the employment and skills strengths, challenges, and needs in tackling the climate emergency and meeting the ambitious target of net zero by 2038.

3.2 This includes through 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 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.

3.4 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 The Green Jobs Gateway was 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. 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.

4.2 Young people were disproportionately affected by unemployment during the pandemic. Both the Green Jobs Taskforce and the commissioned review into NEETs and youth unemployment will consider the potential to maximise impact on disadvantaged or underrepresented communities.

4.3 Digital skills development will positively contribute to recovery from the impact of the pandemic.

4.4 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 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, 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 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 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 a recommendation from the Programme Appraisal Team, final approval for the development funding proposal was received 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 to comment on the progress made on the skills-related Mayoral pledges above.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

None.

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