

EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

**MEETING TO BE HELD AT 12.30 PM ON THURSDAY, 15 FEBRUARY
2024
IN MEETING ROOM 1, WELLINGTON HOUSE, WELLINGTON STREET,
LEEDS LS1 1DE**

A G E N D A

Please note that this meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Combined Authority's internet site. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. Generally, the public seating areas will not be filmed; however, by entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting. If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Governance Services on 0113 251 7220.

- 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 13 JULY 2023**
(Pages 1 - 6)
- 5. CHAIR'S UPDATE**
Lead Member: Cllr Cathy Scott
- 6. ECONOMIC AND SECTOR REPORTING**
Lead Director: Felix Kumi-Ampofo, Lead Author: Peter Glover

(Pages 7 - 34)
- 7. SKILLS SYSTEM REVIEW**
Lead Director: Felix Kumi-Ampofo, Lead Authors: Michelle Burton

(Pages 35 - 42)

8. DIGITAL BLUEPRINT AND DIGITAL INCLUSION

Lead Director: Felix Kumi-Ampofo, Lead Authors: Marianne Hewitt.

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9. DEVOLVED ADULT SKILLS

Lead Director: Felix Kumi-Ampofo, Lead Author: Pippa Syers

(Pages 97 - 102)

10. SKILLS SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS

Lead Director: Felix Kumi-Ampofo, Lead Author: Michelle Burton

(Pages 103 - 118)

11. BUSINESS PLAN SUMMARY 2024-25

Lead Director: Felix Kumi-Ampofo, Lead Authors: Michelle Burton

(Pages 119 - 122)

For Information

12. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting will be Thursday 14 March 2024.

Signed:



**Chief Executive
West Yorkshire Combined Authority**



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY, 13 JULY 2023 AT MEETING ROOM 1,
WELLINGTON HOUSE, WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS LS1 1DE**

Present:

Councillor James Lewis (Chair)	Leeds City Council
Professor Shirley Congdon (Deputy Chair)	Private Sector (LEP Board)
Councillor Silvia Dacre	Calderdale Council
Councillor Eleanor Thomson	Leeds Council
Councillor Graham Turner	Kirklees Council
Tim Craven	Private Sector Representative
Colin Booth	Advisory Representative (Further Education)
Dr Peter O'Brien	Advisory Representative (Higher Education)
Jo Ledgard (Advisory Representative)	DWP
Tim Thornton	Advisory Representative (West Yorkshire Skills Partnership)
Martin Hathaway	Advisory Representative Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce

In attendance:

Michelle Burton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Michelle Hunter	WYCA
Sonya Midgley	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Phillipa Syers	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Philip Witcherley	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

41. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from cllr Khan, Cllr Kilbane, Milton Brown, Orlagh Hunt, Clare Paxman, Nav Chohan, and Alex Miles

42. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

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

There were no items that required which required the exemption of the press and public.

44. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 23 March 2023

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting be approved.

45. Chair's Update

The Chair started the meeting with an overview of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Pillar 3 – People and Skills.

The proposals for £14m of funding for people and skills had been aligned with the pipeline of programmes overseen by the Committee and had been tested at a sounding group on 28th June with over 200 stakeholders in attendance.

Members had the following questions and comments:

- That it was important to avoid duplication with the skills offer from local authorities and to address gaps. Work had been undertaken with partners to mitigate this risk and the focus would be on complimentary activity.
- Members welcomed the focus on practical help for individuals in the pipeline of projects.
- Members discussed the practicalities of match-funding and the how it could pose difficulties for those bidding the funding. Officers would bring a response back to a future meeting on the issue.

46. Governance Arrangements

Members considered a report that set out the governance arrangements approved at the Combined Authority annual meeting.

The TUC advised the Committee on changes to their advisory representative for the Committee.

Members suggested that the chairs of local skills boards should be invited to the Committee as advisory representatives.

Members questioned the cross working arrangements with other committees and whether there could be more comprehensive collaboration across the different agendas.

Resolved: That the governance arrangements approved by the Combined Authority at the Annual Meeting on 22 June 2023 be noted.

47. Influencing the System

Martin Hathaway provided a verbal update on the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) which had been submitted to the

Department for Education for approval by the Chambers of Commerce in West Yorkshire.

LSIPs aimed to increase the voice of the employer in the skills system as a key stakeholder to identify current and future skills needs and to date around 900 businesses had been consulted.

Members had the following questions and comments:

- Members asked for a full breakdown on the 900 employers consulted, including by the size of the business as well as the sector.
- The Committee asked at what point they would be able to see the LSIP in full. It was noted that the draft plan was being reviewed by the Department for Education before it could be shared more widely. It was agreed that the next stage of the plan would be presented to the Committee for comment.
- Members discussed some of the feedback given by the businesses consulted to date, particularly that several responses indicated that business did not value qualifications. Members stressed that public funding should be used to provide training for individuals to help them progress their careers.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

48. Devolved Adult Skills

Members considered a report that provided an update on the work underway on adult skills programmes.

On Multiply members noted that year one delivery met 82% of the DfE target in terms of engagement with individuals and providing numeracy support which equated to 57% of the financial profile.

An independent review had been carried out on AEB funded Community Learning. The review found considerable good practice amongst West Yorkshire providers and to improve the impact of the funding it was proposed to move towards a needs-based methodology in the allocation of community learning funding.

Members discussed the move towards a needs-based methodology and the possible reduction of the funding allocation to Calderdale Council and asked about the transitional arrangements. When moving towards a needs based methodology (such as UKSPF %s), WY grant provider allocations could be protected by allocating £125k top up of CL funds for WY. This will allow a 'top up' for Leeds, Bradford and Kirklees without reducing the financial allocation for Calderdale and Wakefield.

Members discussed methodology to address delivery of provision in significantly reduced guided learning hours (GLH). This included submission of planned hours, and a system to examining justification when planned hours are below 70% of GLH. 100% pure distance learning should be exempt to allow for further consideration. There was endorsement that we

should move towards a policy around guided learning hours with the intention of supporting quality training. This was strongly supported.

Resolved:

- (i) That the actions proposed following the Community Learning review be recommended.
- (ii) That the Multiply programme year 1 performance be noted.

49. Current and Future Employment Support activity at the West Yorkshire level

Members considered a report which provided an update on the development and performance of employment support services coordinated at a regional level.

Resolved:

- (i) That ongoing collaboration between DWP and West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and the opportunities this relationship presents with regards to better supporting service users accessing employment support provision across the region be noted.
- (ii) That the continued intention to use an allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Funding to fund the second year of delivery of Employment West Yorkshire, in order to allow the programme to continue in providing vital employment support across Local Authority areas be noted.
- (iii) That the approach to UKSPF commissioning be endorsed.
- (iv) That officers begin to develop an Employment Support Blueprint for West Yorkshire for discussion with this committee in the Autumn, which will allow residents to be better served through employment support services.
- (v) That key stakeholders be consulted during the development of the Employment Support Blueprint be considered and agreed. A draft Blueprint will come back to Employment and Skills Committee at a later date.

50. Development and Delivery of Regionally Coordinated Careers Activity

Members considered a report which provided an update on the development of careers support activity.

The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) had been awarded a £2.6 million contract from the Department for Education to deliver career-related learning programme.

The CEC had offered the combined Authority £32000 grant with a requirement for match funding. Members were critical of the amount of the grant offered by the CEC, which the committee felt was derisory and would have little impact on an important area.

Members noted the work underway to develop a West Yorkshire All Age Careers Blueprint which would intend to influence government and help guide delivery.

Resolved:

- (i) That the update provided to the Committee on developments and performance of careers support services coordinated at the regional level be noted.
- (ii) That the Committee's view with regards to the Careers & Enterprise Company's award to deliver a career related learning programme aimed at primary schools be noted.
- (iii) That the of the development of a West Yorkshire All Age Careers Blueprint be endorsed

51. Skills support for employers

Members considered a report that provided an update on the delivery of programmes to support employers to upskill and create a talent pipeline.

Members noted the update on the Skills for Growth programme as well as the development of the Workforce Development and Growth Skills package and Skills for Business interventions.

Resolved: That the approach set out in the report be endorsed.

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Report to:	Employment and Skills Committee
Date:	15 February 2024
Subject:	Economic and Sector Reporting
Director:	Felix Kumi-Ampofo, Director of Inclusive Economy, Skills and Culture
Author:	Peter Glover, Economic Evidence Manager

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 type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an update on labour market and skills situation in West Yorkshire, highlighting key issues that are pertinent to the work of the Committee.

2. Information

Monitoring arrangements

- 2.1 At its meeting on the 29 October 2021, the Employment and Skills Committee agreed a new approach to monitoring and reporting. The Committee approved a set of indicators relevant to its remit and agreed to receive regular reporting against these indicators, with this topic becoming a standard item on the Committee's agenda. These are the key regional indicators that measure the outcomes that the work of the committee is seeking to improve. Indicators will be reported on by exception i.e. when fresh data becomes available for each indicator, allowing the analysis to be updated.
- 2.2 The State of the Region indicators are intended to provide a high level, strategic picture of performance rather than a detailed examination of operational performance of specific projects. The indicators have also been incorporated into the West Yorkshire Plan as

part of a wider basket of indicators selected to measure progress towards the Plan's Vision and Missions.

Key messages from State of the Region indicators

- 2.4 The core State of the Region indicators agreed by the Committee are set out below. A headline overview of performance against these indicators is provided in Appendix 1:
- Employment rate
 - Jobs paying below the real living wage
 - Employment rate gaps (employment equality)
 - Unemployment
 - Quality work
 - People qualified at Level 4 and above (higher level qualifications)
 - People with no / low qualifications (qualified below level 2)
 - Apprenticeship take-up
 - NEETs.
- 2.5 Key messages relating to these indicators are set out below.
- 2.6 The main employment indicator used in State of the Region suggests that the overall level and rate of employment in West Yorkshire is below its pre-pandemic level, reflecting the national position and has remained flat for a number of periods. However, this may reflect technical issues with this ONS dataset, as HMRC admin-based statistics indicate that the count of employees in the region is well above the level recorded immediately before the health crisis.
- 2.7 West Yorkshire faces challenges relating to inclusivity of employment, with key groups, including women, people from ethnic minorities and disabled people still facing employment rate gaps. However, these groups have seen improvements in their employment rates in recent years and the figures suggest that the ethnicity employment rate gap has narrowed over time in West Yorkshire.
- 2.8 Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) face an increased likelihood of unemployment, low wages, or low-quality work later in life. The proportion of young people who are NEET in West Yorkshire increased between 2021/22 and 2022/23 and is above the national average, with significant variations at local authority level. Updated figures for 2023/24 will be available shortly.
- 2.9 The proportion of jobs paying below the Real Living Wage remained largely unchanged in West Yorkshire in 2023, according to recently released figures. Around 14% of employee jobs pay below the Real Living Wage threshold in West Yorkshire compared with the national average of 13%. The proportion rises to 17% for both Bradford and Kirklees.

- 2.10 Turning to the quality of jobs available, most jobs in West Yorkshire offer satisfactory hours and the worker's desired contractual status. However, large majorities of West Yorkshire employees say that their job does not offer opportunities for career progression and does not offer good employee engagement.
- 2.11 Over the last two decades West Yorkshire's working age population has steadily become better qualified. It is difficult to discern whether this has continued on the basis of the latest data for 2022 due to a break in the timeseries to take account of the shift to the Regulated Qualification Framework. A substantial gap remains with the national average with regard to the proportion of people with higher qualifications (Level 4 and above). Performance against this indicator is highly variable at local authority level, with Wakefield lagging well below the West Yorkshire average. Meanwhile, 15% of West Yorkshire's working age population either lack any qualifications or are qualified below Level 2; this is higher than the national average of 12%.
- 2.12 Apprenticeships provide an important pathway into sustainable careers whilst enabling employers to address their core skill needs. West Yorkshire has strong take-up of apprenticeships relative to its population base compared with many other areas. However, take-up apprenticeships (as measured by apprenticeship starts) remained static in the 2022/23 academic year, remaining well below 2018/19 (pre-pandemic) levels. However, there was year on year growth for higher apprenticeship starts and for starts in *ICT and Health, public service and care* subjects; whilst Bradford and Kirklees also saw overall growth in starts in 2022/23.

Key messages from labour market indicators

- 2.13 In addition to the State of the Region indicators, analysis of a range of more timely indicators is also included in the appendix to provide the most up to date picture of labour market conditions in West Yorkshire. Alongside this an overview of the national picture provides important context. These indicators provide a picture of a labour market that is starting to cool at West Yorkshire and national levels, as reflected in the following:
- Plateauing of the employee count across West Yorkshire, suggesting that the sustained employment growth seen since the pandemic has at least paused.
 - Signs of levelling off of growth in median pay, contributing to a picture of softening labour demand as higher interest rates impact on the economy. Although the picture is complicated by the latest flash estimate (subject to revision) which points to renewed pay growth in December, both nationally and for West Yorkshire.
 - Moderate growth in the count of claimant unemployed across West Yorkshire.
 - Indications of a decline in job openings (online job postings) across the region, although levels of postings remain high in historic terms and the West Yorkshire labour market remains tight (based on ratio of unemployed claimants to count of job postings).
 - Emergence of a general pattern of decline in job postings across occupational areas.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 There are no implications for tackling the climate emergency directly arising from this report. However, further analysis undertaken by the Combined Authority indicates that demand for “green skills” is increasing as evidenced in online job posting data. Occupational groups that are key to the transition to net zero, including engineering roles and skilled trades in construction, for example, are currently affected by skill shortages.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 A number of the State of the Region indicators have direct relevance to an inclusive economy, including unemployment, NEETs and jobs paying below the real living wage. The evidence shows that improving inclusiveness, in terms of access to jobs and the education and training system, is key to supporting growth and achieving the wider economic agenda for West Yorkshire. If the labour market continues to cool this could lead to a general deterioration in employment opportunities that is likely to impact more severely individuals and groups who are already disadvantaged.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 Some of the indicators provide direct measures of equality and diversity, most notably the comparison of employment rates for different groups, which shows significant inequality in terms of participation in employment. The full State of the Region report examines equality issues in more detail. The general picture provided is one of a continuing need to promote quality and diversity in respect of both employment and in terms of access to education and training opportunities.

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 is 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

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1: Indicator report

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West
Yorkshire
Combined
Authority

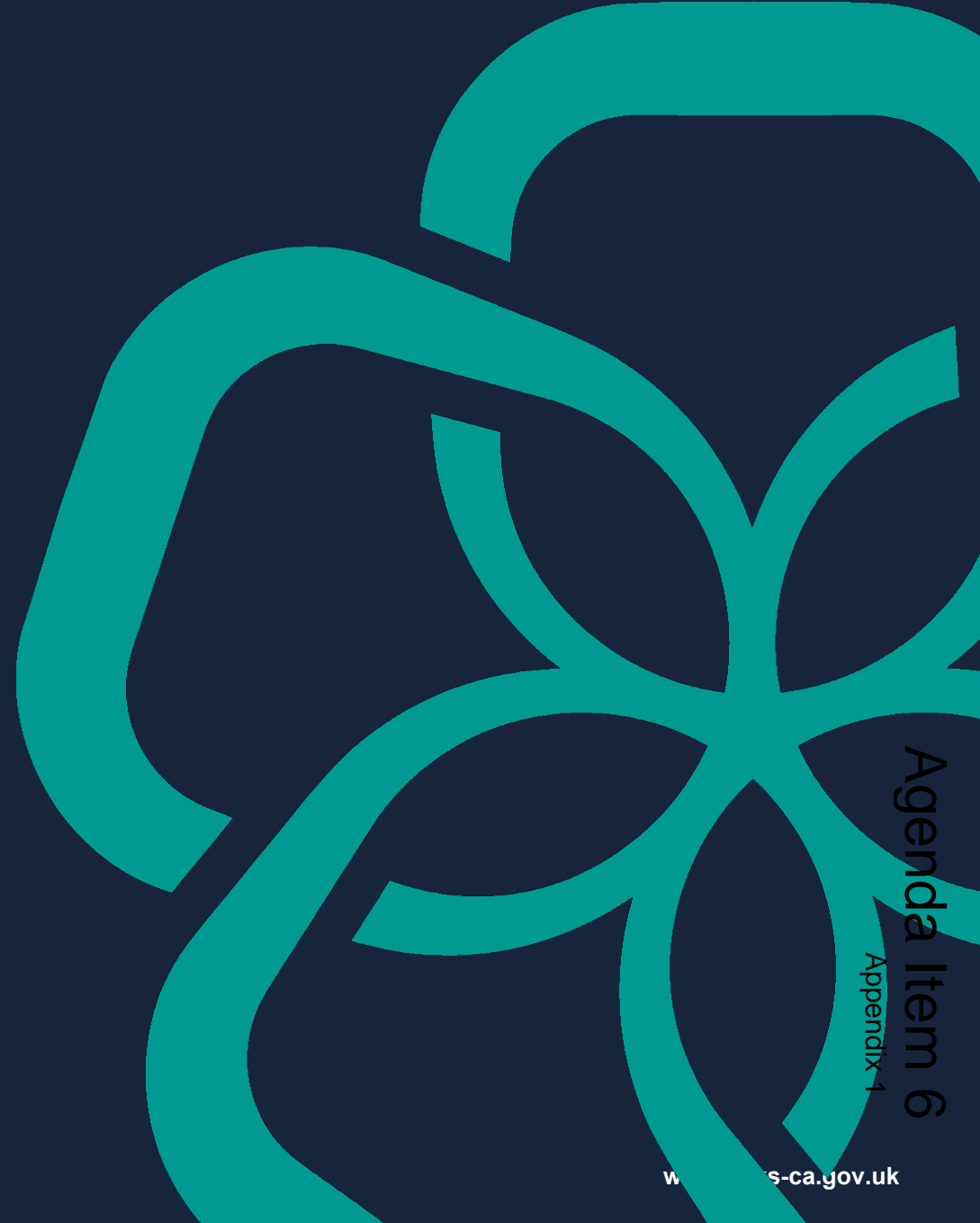
Tracy
Brabin
Mayor of
West Yorkshire

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Appendix 1: Indicator report

Employment and Skills Committee

15 February 2024



Agenda Item 6
Appendix 1

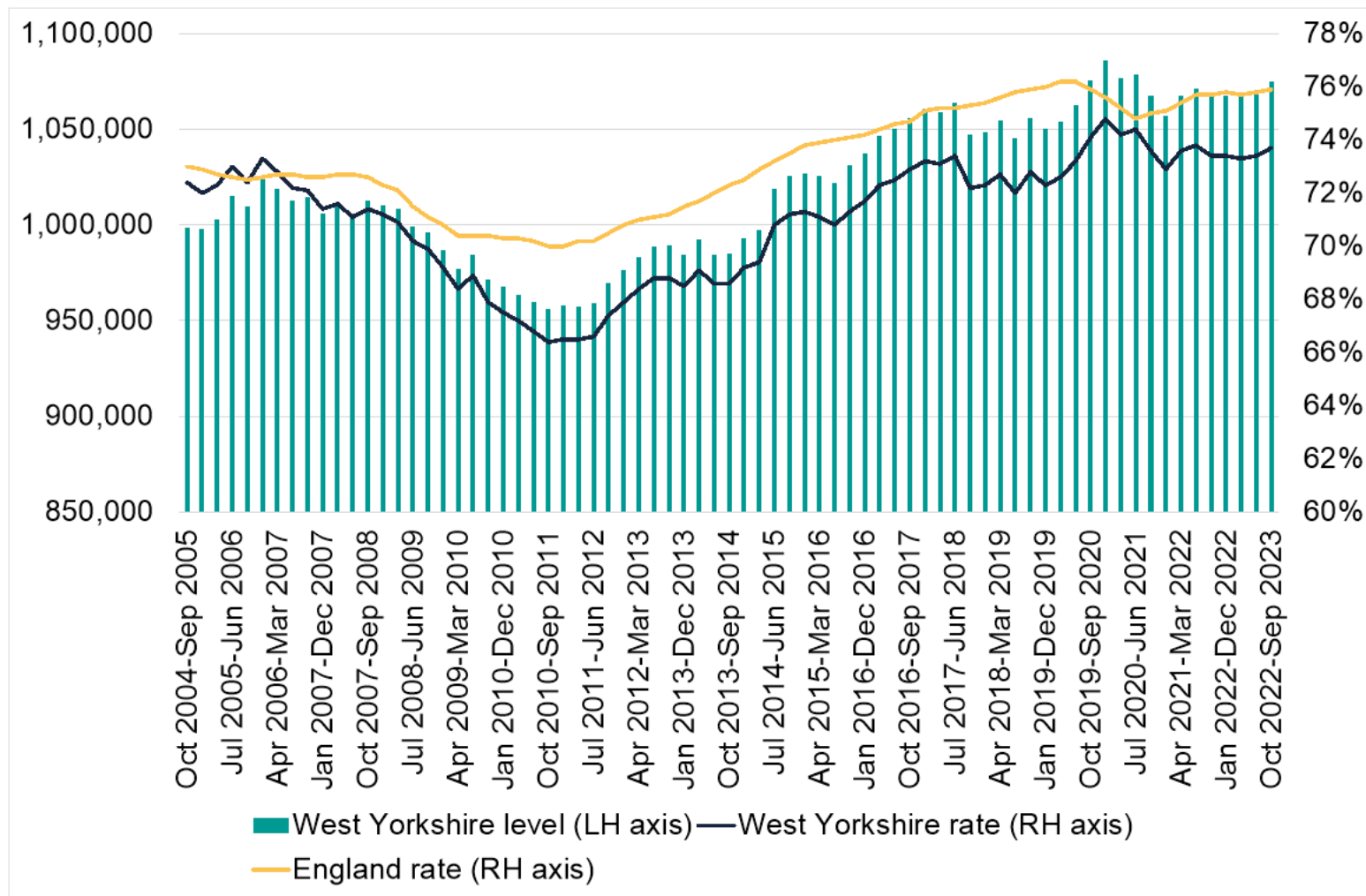
Introduction

- The following slides provide an overview of West Yorkshire's performance and progress against the headline indicators for State of the Region
- A subset of indicators has been presented, reflecting those most directly relevant to the Employment and Skills agenda.
- For some indicators there has been no change in the available data but the latest figures are contained in the pack for consistency.
- The pack also contains an update based on more timely labour market indicators, including payrolled employees, claimant count and vacancies (online job postings).

State of the Region indicators

West Yorkshire's employment rate has remained flat since the pandemic

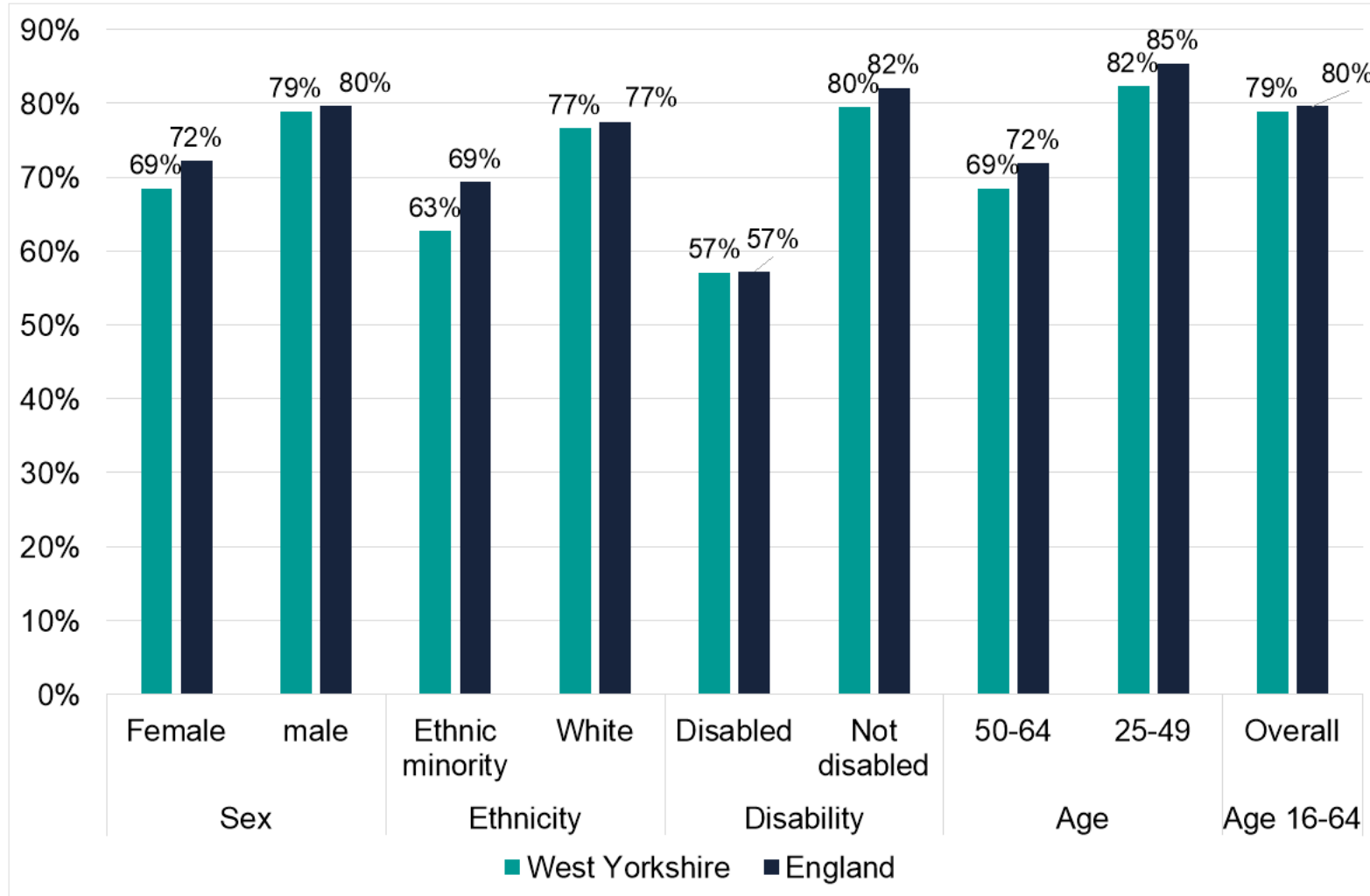
Figure: Trend in employment rate and number of people in employment (people aged 16-64)



Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS

Some population groups face substantial employment rate gaps

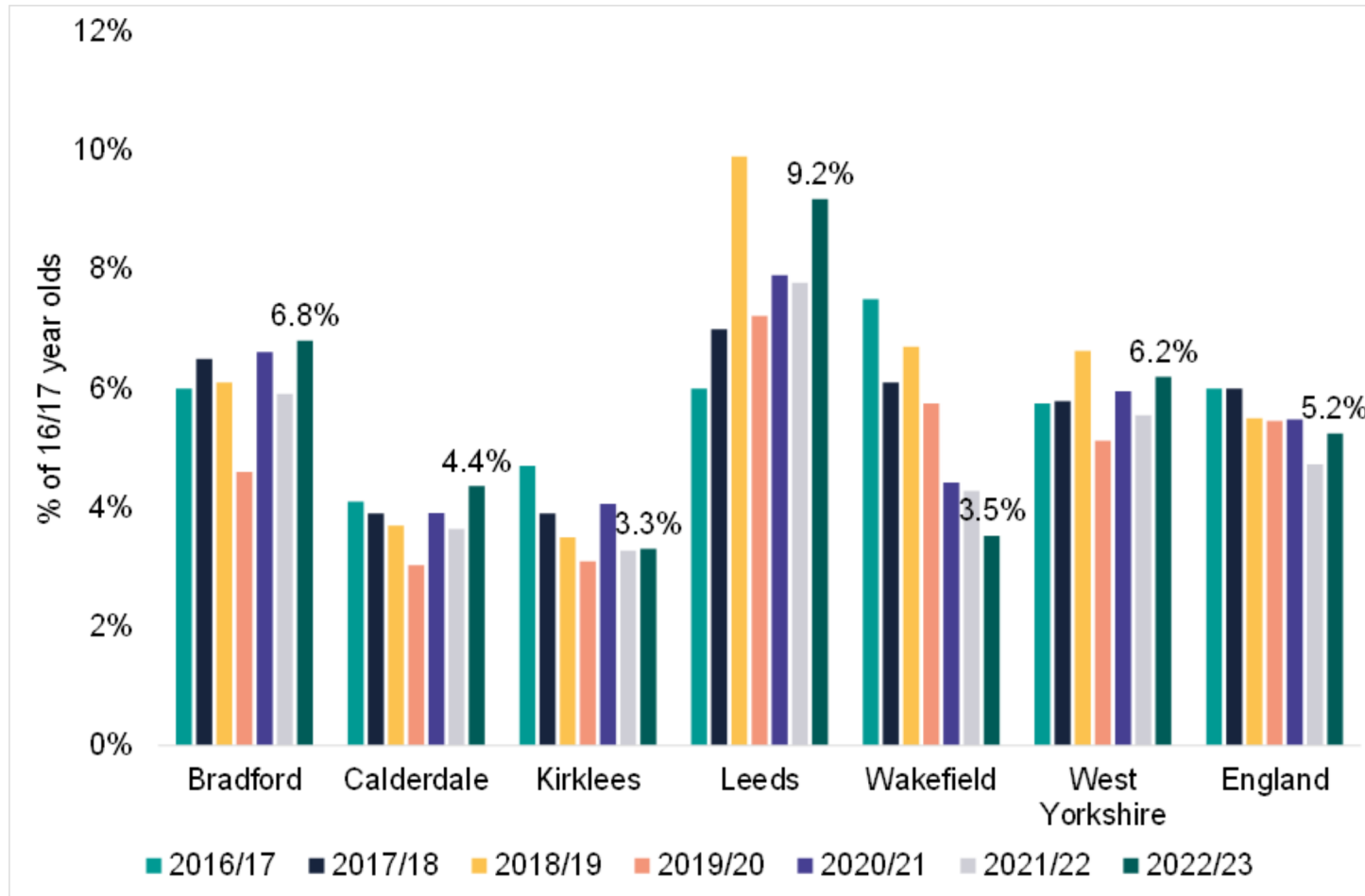
Figure 2: Employment rate by group



Source: Annual Population Survey, October 2022 to September 2023

West Yorkshire's prevalence of NEET young people is above the national average

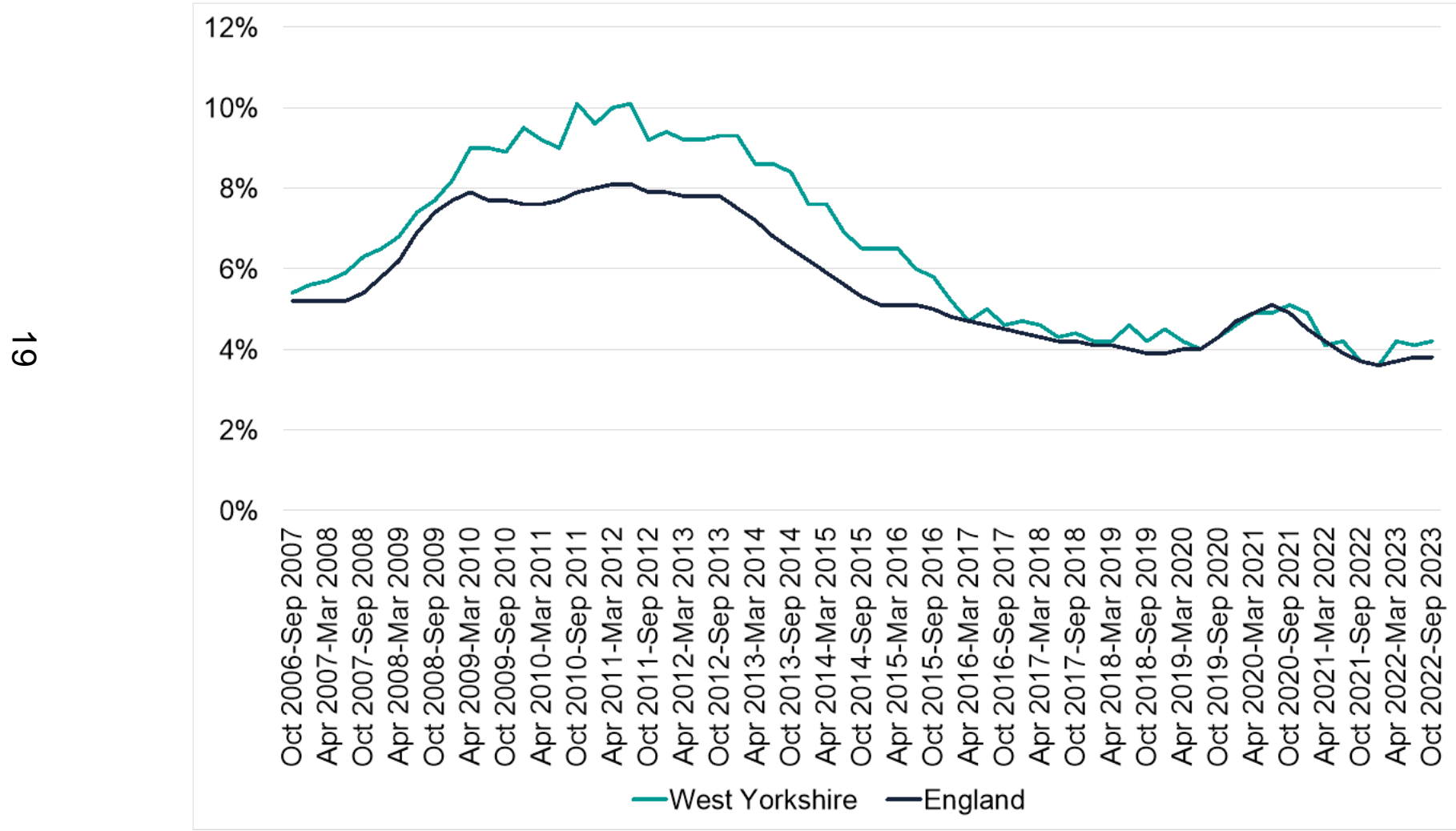
Figure 3: Trend in proportion of 16- and 17-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known



Source: NEET and participation: local authority figures, Department for Education

There are signs of an increase in the unemployment rate, although there is a lag in the data

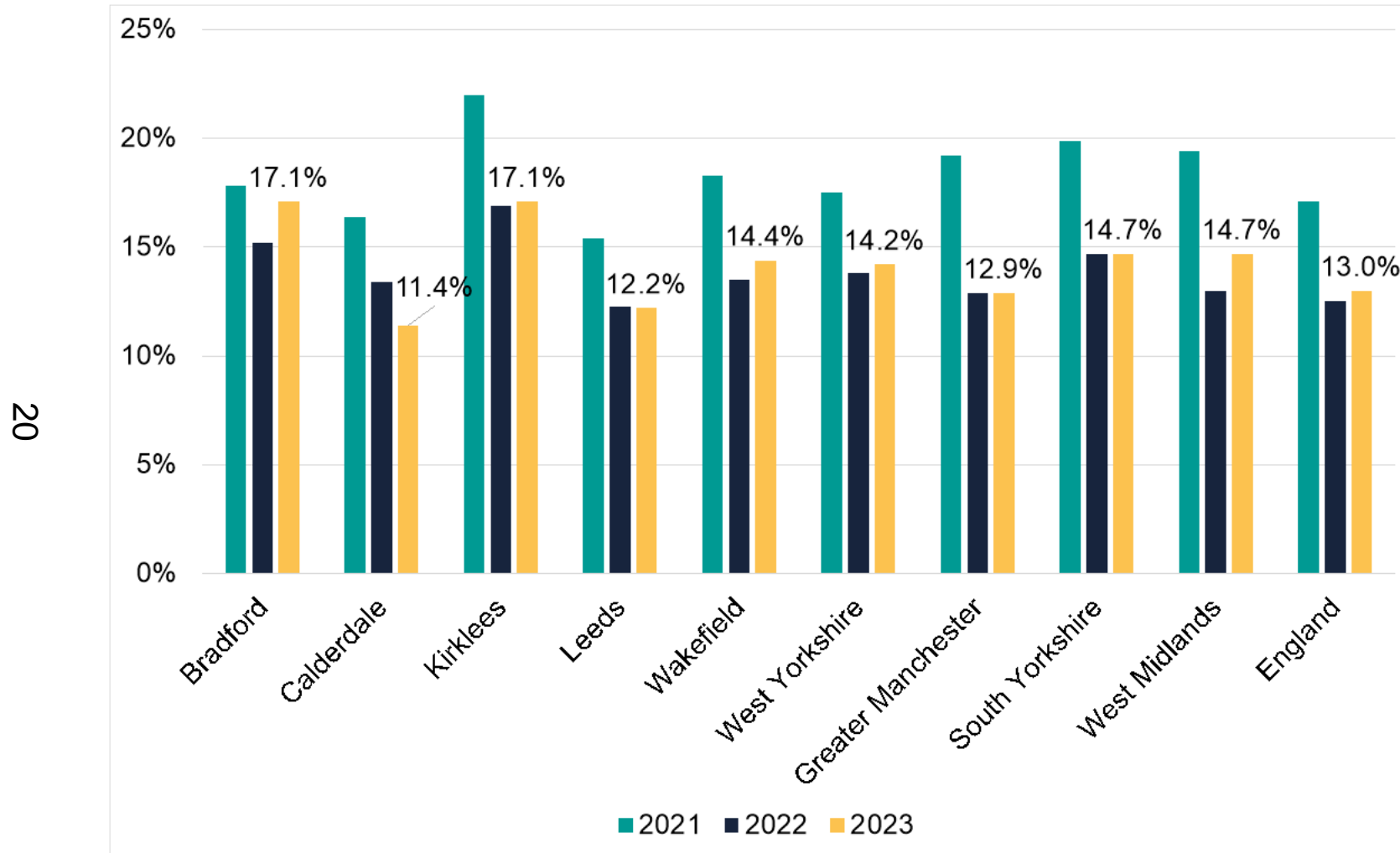
Figure 5: Trend in unemployment rate - % of economically active population aged 16+



Source: Annual Population Survey

The % of jobs paying below the Real Living Wage in remained largely unchanged in 2023 but is above the national average

Figure 6: Proportion of all employee jobs paying below the Real Living Wage rate

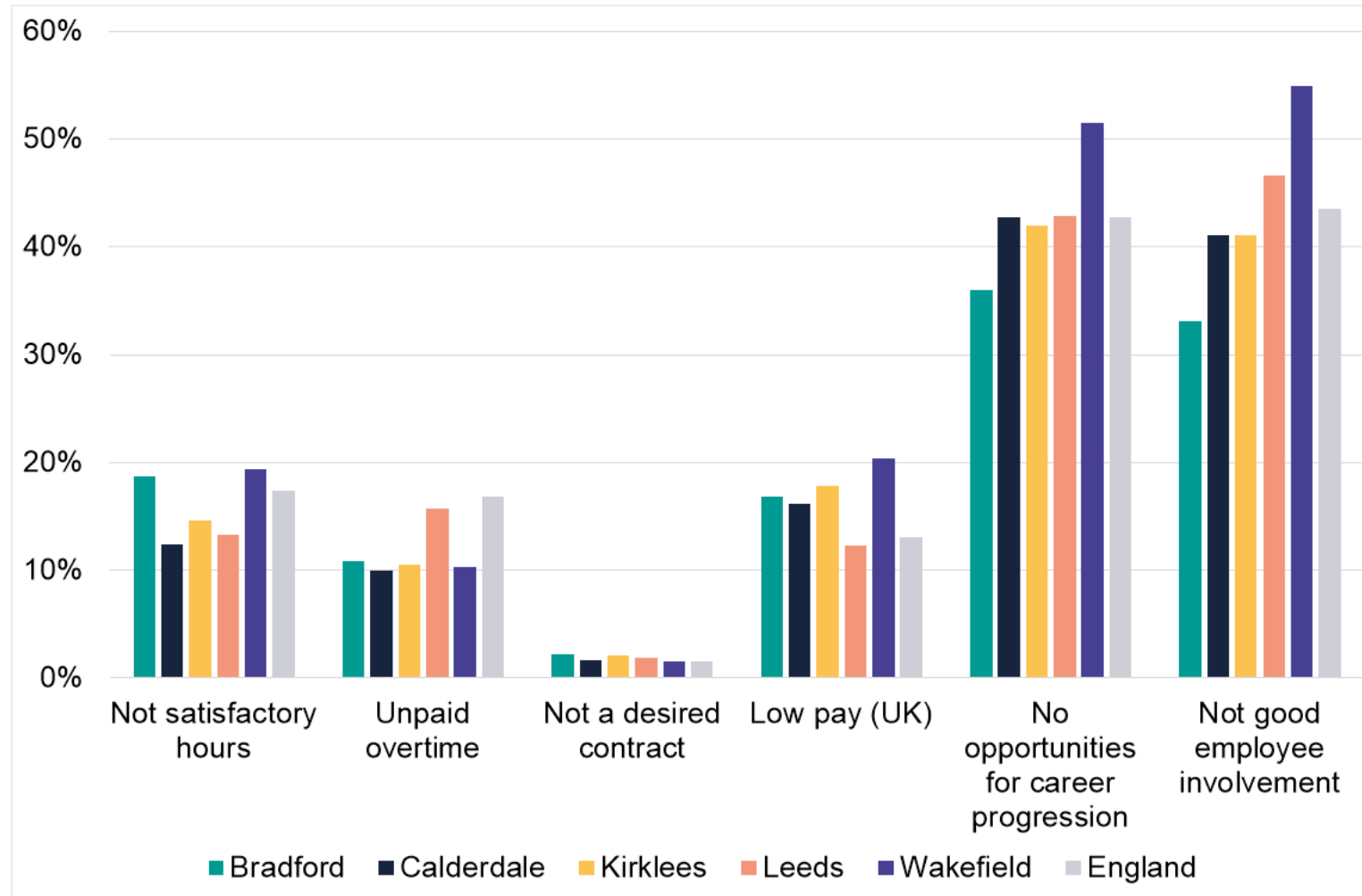


The data presented relate to Real Living Wage rate of £10.90, the prevailing rate for jobs outside London in April 2023.

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS

Opportunities for career progression and employee involvement are key issues in terms of job quality

Figure: Job quality indicators by local authority, January to December 2021

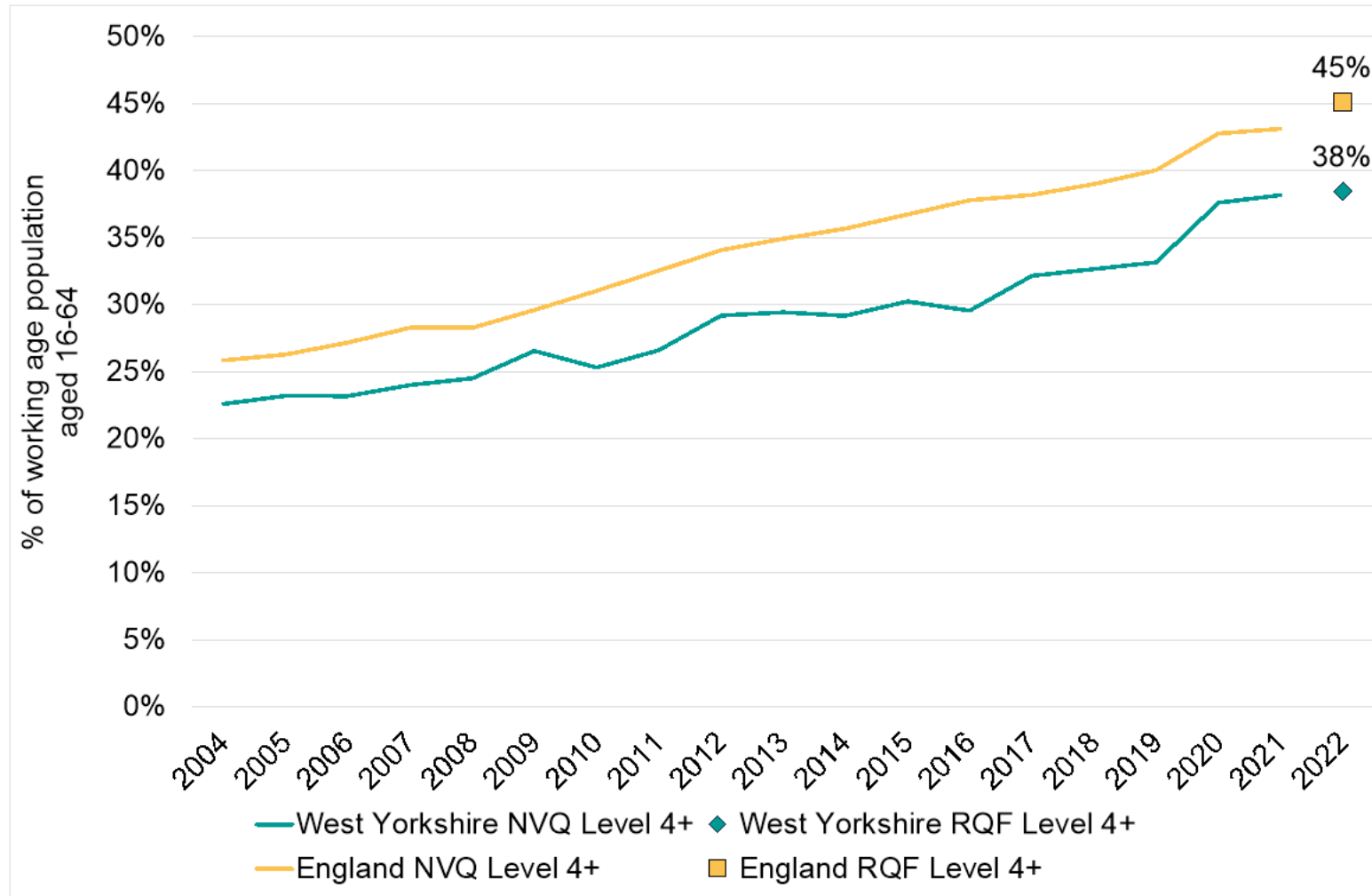


Source: Jobs quality indicators in the UK, 2021, Office for National Statistics

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The proportion of people with a higher level qualification has been on an upward trend but a sizeable gap remains with the national average

Figure 7: Trend in proportion of working age population qualified at Level 4+

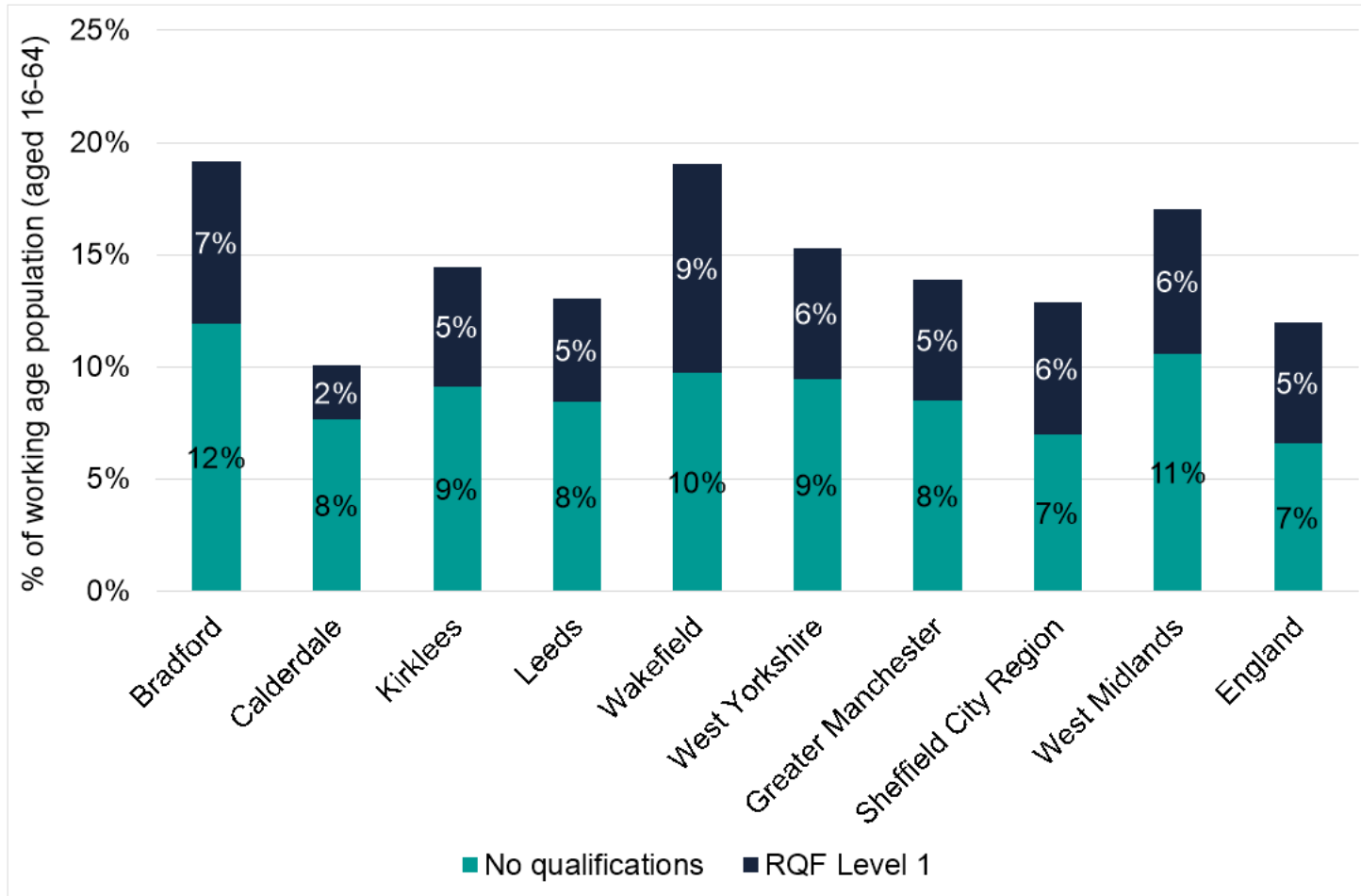


For the latest qualification profile estimates National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) estimates have been replaced with estimates on a Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) basis, which means that there is a break in the time series and the current estimates cannot be compared on a consistent basis with earlier ones.

Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan – Dec periods

15% of people in West Yorkshire have no qualifications or are qualified to a low level, with higher proportions in Bradford and Wakefield

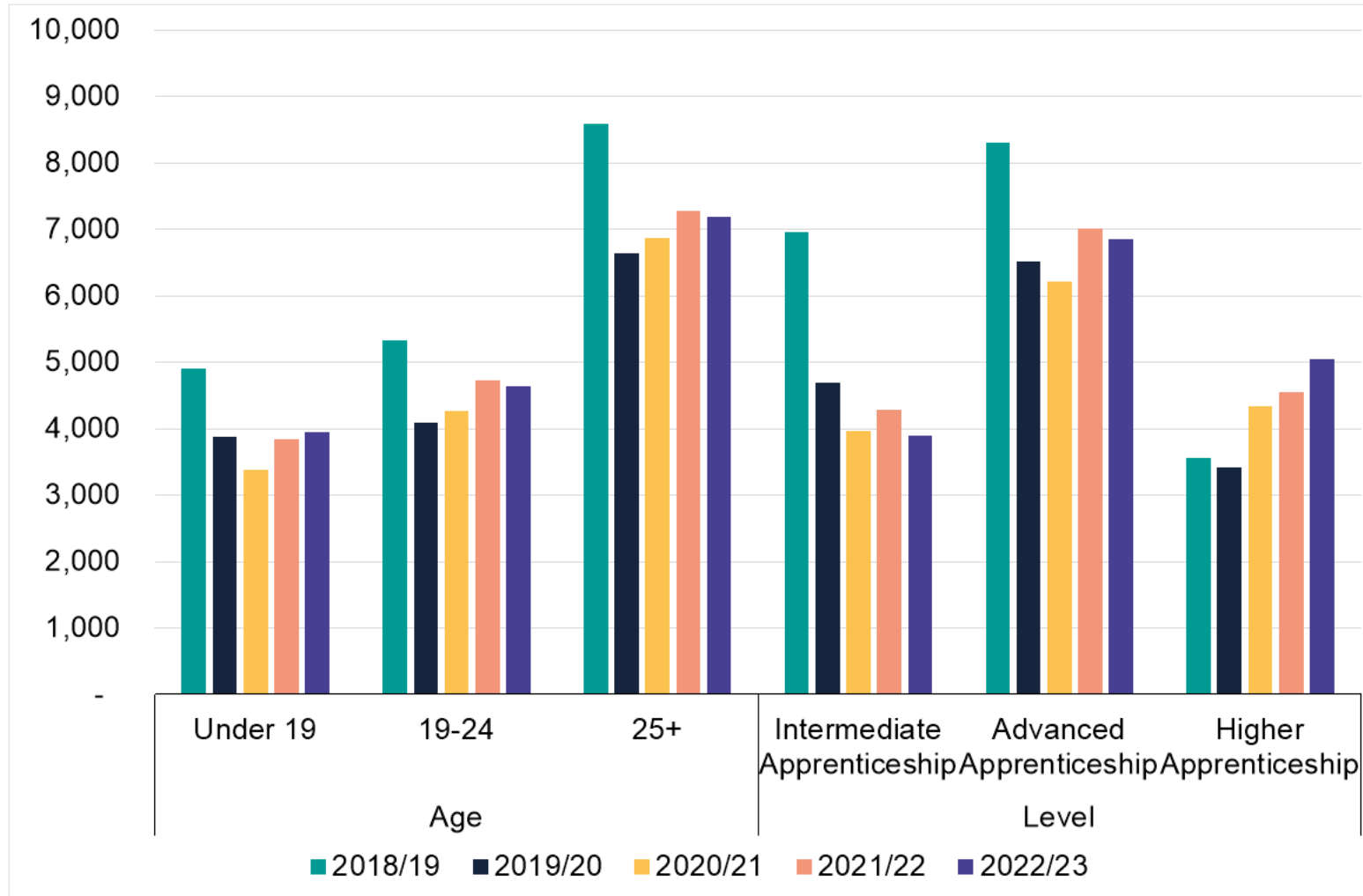
Figure 8: Proportion of working age population with no qualifications / qualified below Level 2



Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan – Dec 2022

Apprenticeship starts were static in 22/23 and well below pre-pandemic levels – except higher apprenticeships

Figure 9: Trend in apprenticeship starts by age and level, West Yorkshire

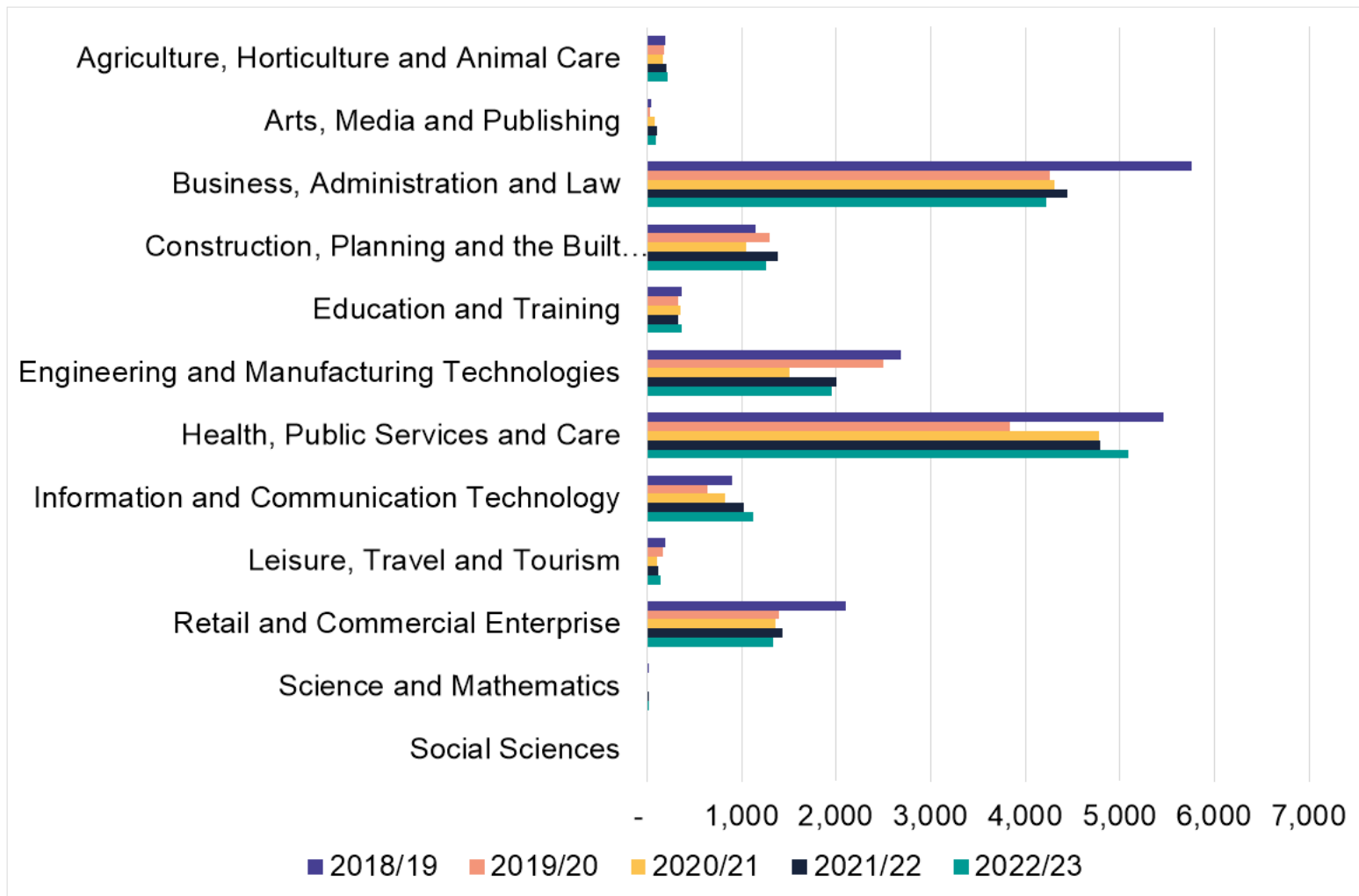


Source: Department for Education

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Biggest year on year growth in apprenticeship starts was for *Health, public services and care* and *ICT*

Figure: Trend in apprenticeship starts by subject, West Yorkshire

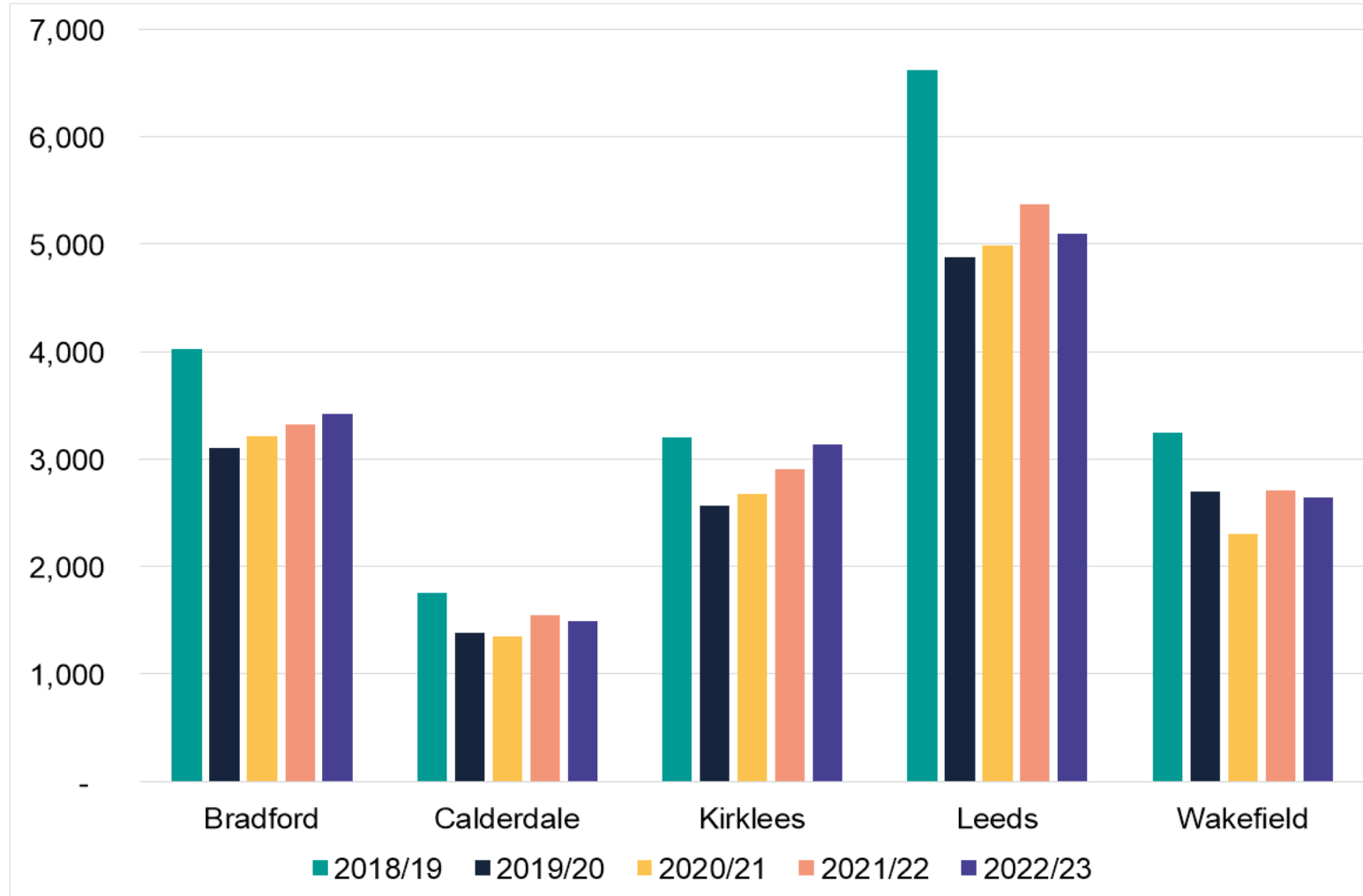


Source: Department for Education

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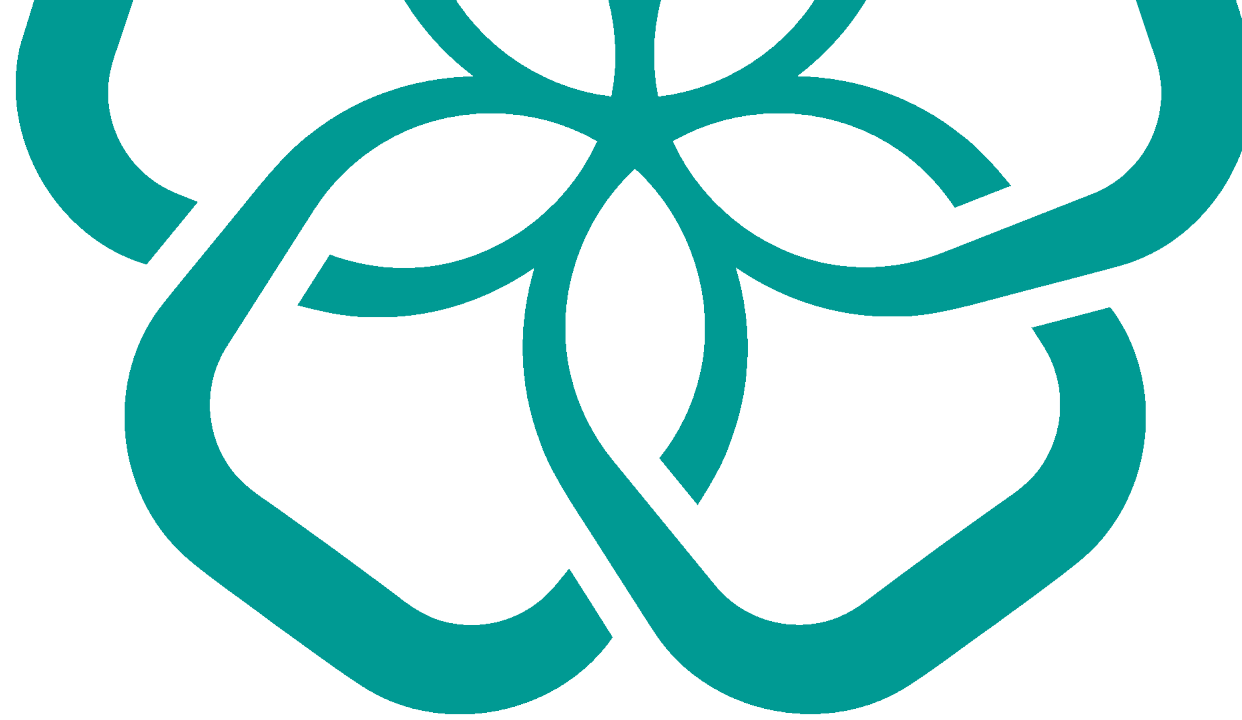
Only Kirklees and Bradford saw growth in apprenticeship starts in 2022/23

Figure: Trend in apprenticeship starts by local authority, West Yorkshire



Source: Department for Education

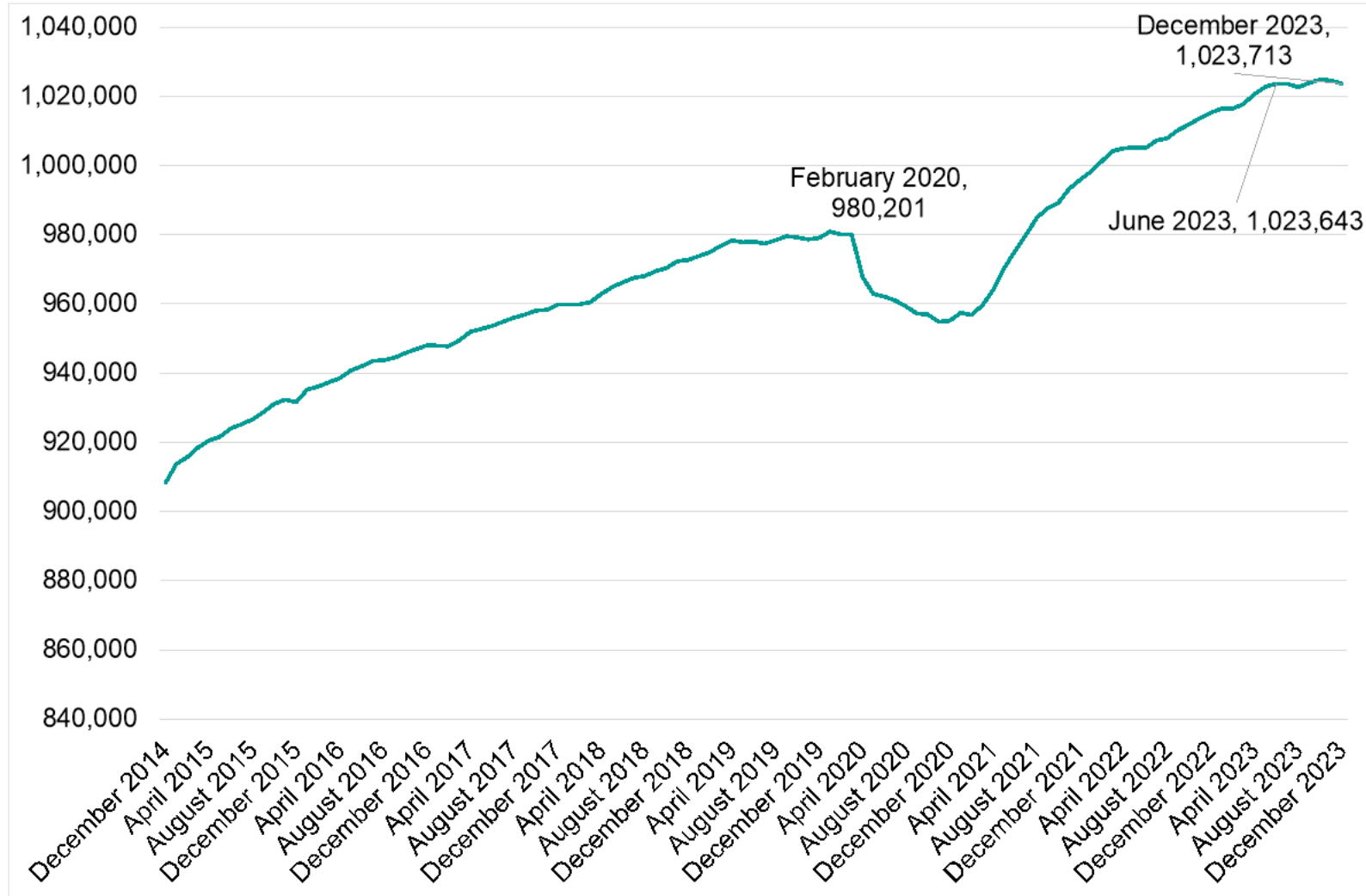
26



Labour market reporting

West Yorkshire's employee count has been flat since summer 2023 following 2 years of post-pandemic growth

Figure: Count of payroll employees from PAYE Real-time information (seasonally adjusted)



NB: December's figure is a flash estimate and subject to revision

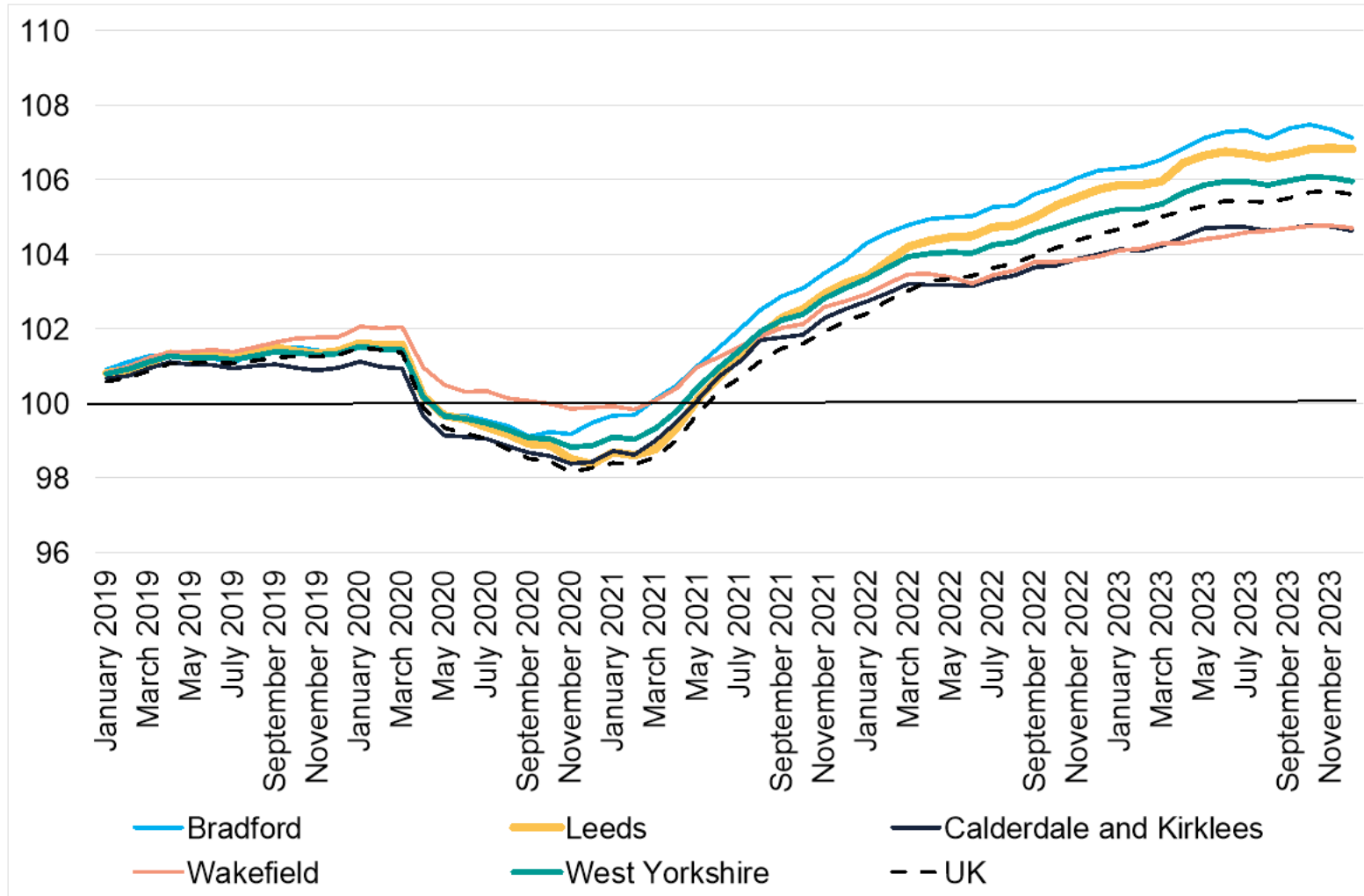
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Source: HMRC

The employee count has also remained flat across much of West Yorkshire since the summer

Figure: Trend in seasonally-adjusted count of payrolled employees by NUTS3 areas; index: average of 2018=100

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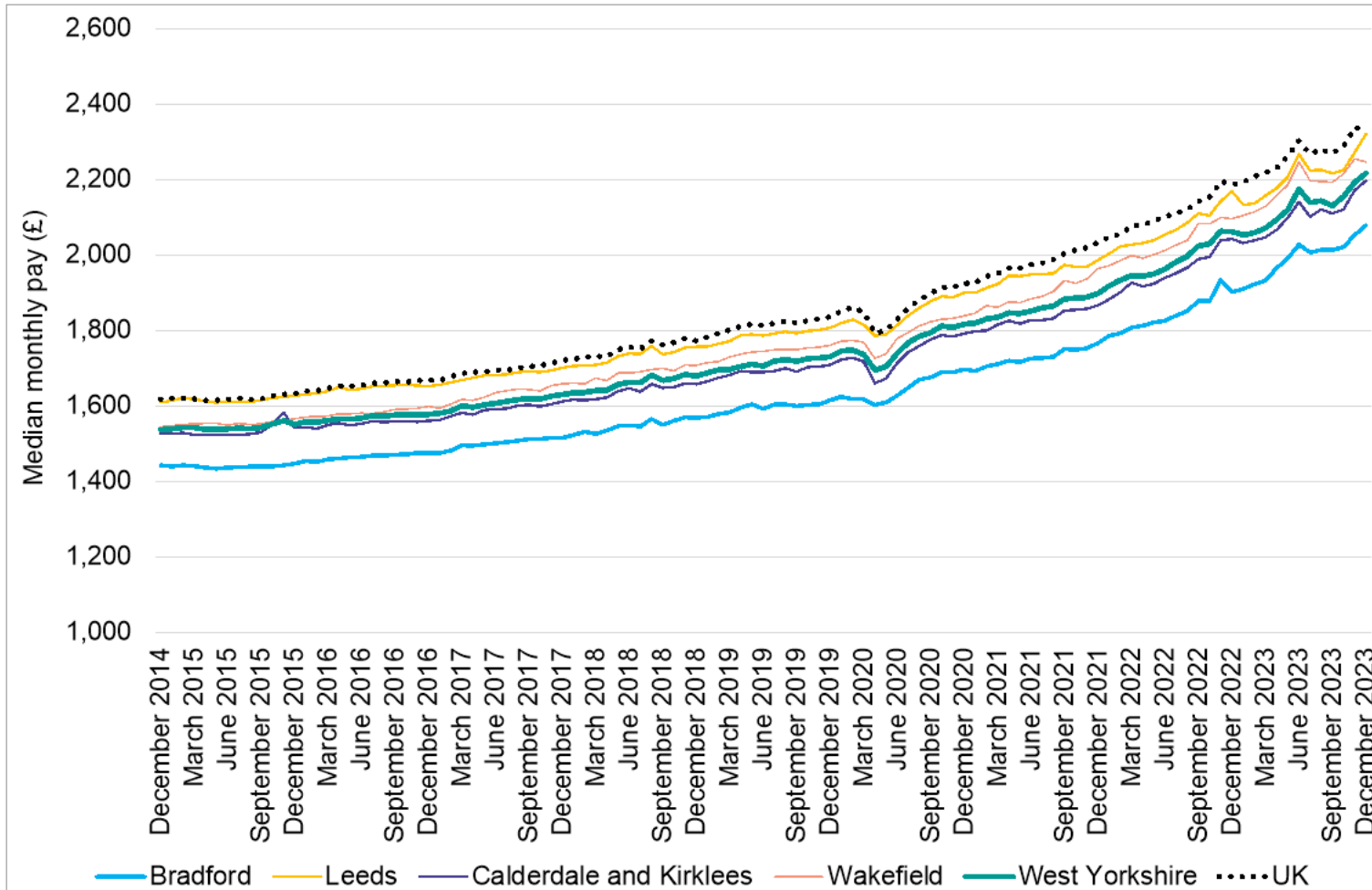


NB: December's figures are based on flash estimates and subject to revision

Source: HMRC

Latest flash estimate suggests pay growth in December following levelling off in previous months

Figure: Trend in median monthly pay for employee jobs (£)



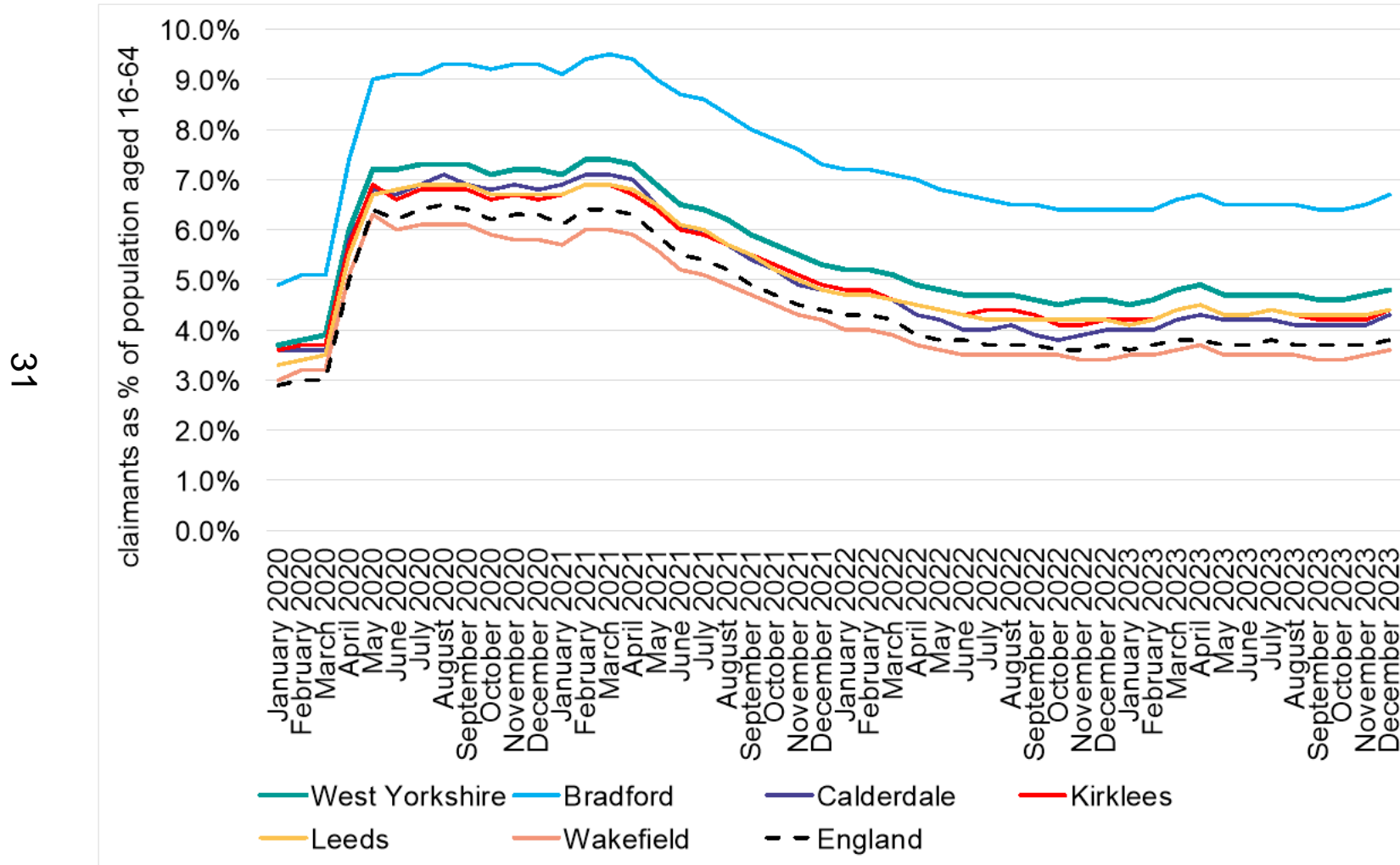
NB: December's figures are based on flash estimates and subject to revision

30

Source: HMRC

West Yorkshire's Claimant count rate has increased to a moderate degree since late 2022

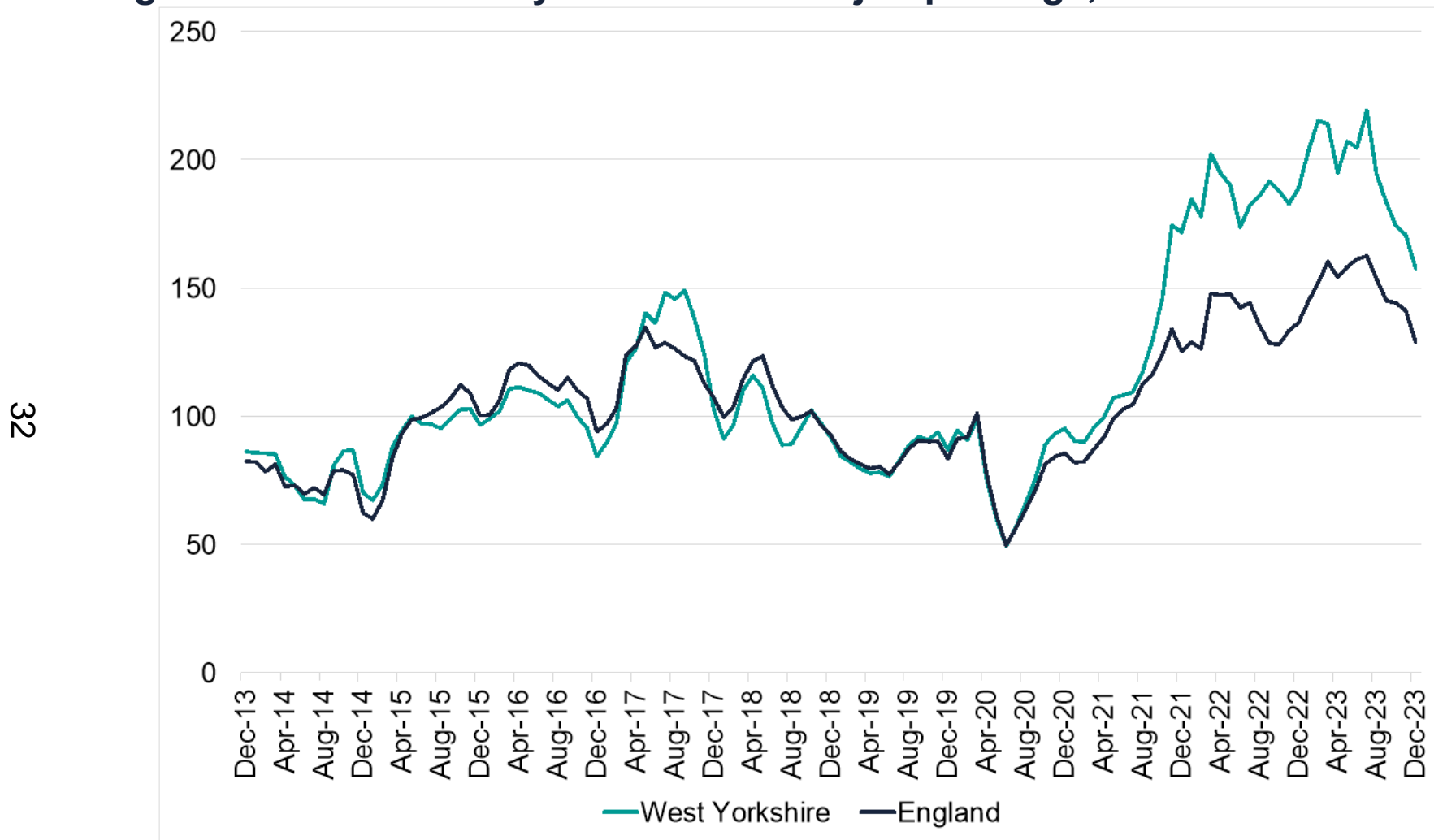
Figure: Claimant unemployment rate trend, West Yorkshire



Source: NOMIS

The level of job postings remains high in West Yorkshire although with signs of sustained decline in recent months

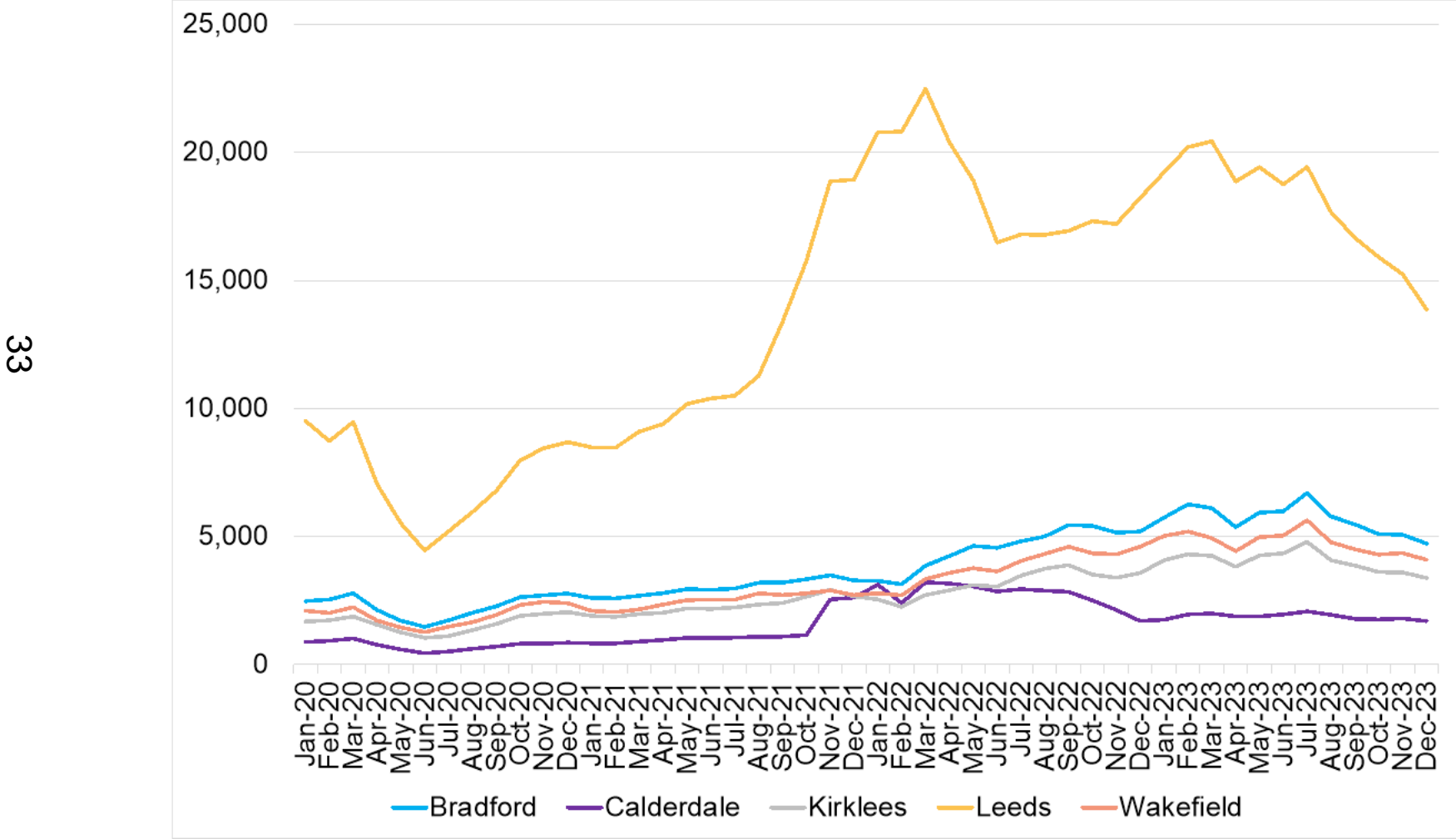
Figure: Index of monthly count of online job postings, three month moving average (2012 = 100)



Source: Lightcast

There is has also been decline in job postings across the local authorities in recent months, most notably in Leeds

Figure: Monthly count of online job postings, three month moving average

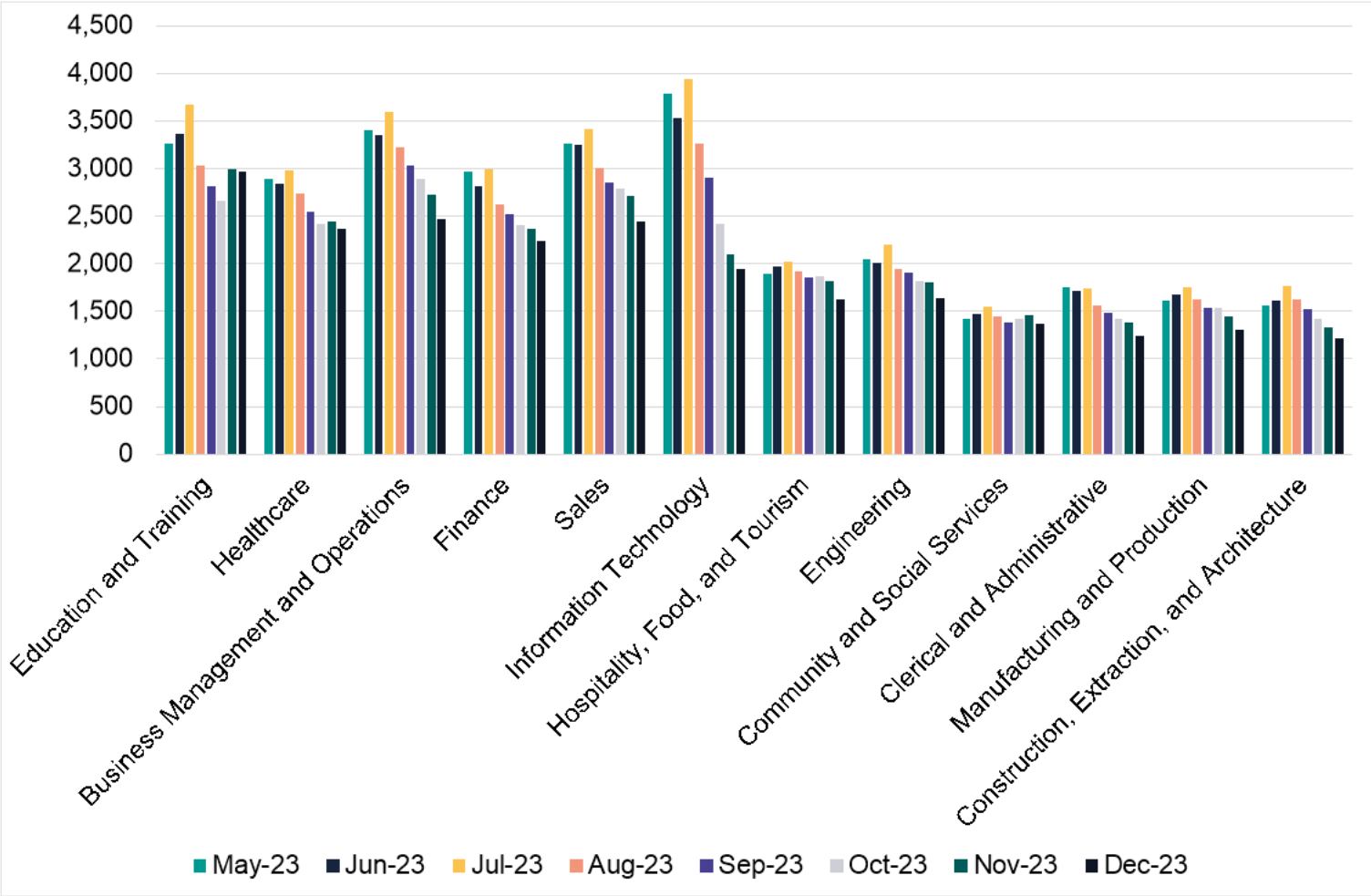


Source: Lightcast

Job postings now in decline across the board in terms of occupational groups

Figure: Monthly count of online job postings by Top occupational groups, three month moving average, West Yorkshire

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Source: Lightcast

Report to:	Employment and Skills Committee
Date:	15 February 2024
Subject:	Skills System Review
Director:	Felix Kumi-Ampofo, Director of Inclusive Economy, Skills and Culture
Author:	Michelle Burton, Head of Employment and Skills

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

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update the Committee on planned work in the context of potential deeper devolution on the Employment and Skills agenda.
- 1.2 To seek the Committee's views on whether a more consistent approach to how local Employment and Skills Boards are constituted is needed and how best to engage with these where they exist.

2. Information

Review of devolved employment and skills "operating model"

- 2.1 Since the publication of the Employment and Skills Framework, the Future-Ready Skills Commission and the AEB Strategy (see appendix), the context has changed considerably with the scale of regionally delivered Employment and Skills activity having grown rapidly. While some funding streams are devolved (AEB, Gainshare), others are delegated (Free Courses for Jobs, UKSPF) or contracted to the Combined Authority (Skills Bootcamps, Careers Hubs).

- 2.2 Operating models vary with some activity being delivered via Local Authorities including employment support and digital inclusion, some regionally commissioned including adult skills, and a small amount of activity being delivered at a regional level (Skills Advice for Business, Careers Hubs – albeit closer joint working with LAs is already being explored).
- 2.3 With deeper devolution potentially imminent, a review of the operating model for Employment and Skills in West Yorkshire is timely. Political leaders have committed to the principle of subsidiarity, meaning that activity should be carried out at the lowest appropriate level to deliver efficiency, reach and impact.
- 2.4 The five West Yorkshire local authorities and the Combined Authority agree that the opportunity is right for a review of officer-level governance and their respective roles with a view to maximizing the opportunities presented by devolution (current and future) for the benefit of the people, employers and communities of West Yorkshire. Specifically, the six authorities are seeking to develop an operating model for employment and skills that is more joined up and identifies what the most appropriate role is for each partner in regard to employment and skills. In addition, the six authorities are seeking to develop a model for interconnected governance of officer groupings, particularly in the context of potential level 4 devolution.

Local Employment and Skills Boards

- 2.5 Of the five LA areas, four have Employment and Skills Boards. They vary in their make-up, decision-making responsibilities and chairing arrangements. While one is private sector chaired, the others are chaired by education or careers providers or senior Council officers. Senior Combined Authority officers are represented on two of the Boards. There is currently no formal representation from these boards on the Employment and Skills Committee and members are asked to consider how best to engage with them and whether a more consistent approach to how they are constituted may be beneficial. Formal engagement options could include:
- Asking elected members on the Employment and Skills Committee to represent the views of the local partnerships
 - Asking one of the Chairs to represent the 4 Boards on the Committee, subject to the agreement of the Chair of the Employment and Skills Committee, the Mayor, and the Combined Authority Board.

Furthermore, the Committee may also want to consider if it may be beneficial to engage with local local areas to consider whether there ought to be greater consistency in the terms of reference, make-up and remit of the local boards.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 While there are no climate emergency implications directly arising from this report, it is essential that the approach taken to devolved employment and skills prioritises the skills needed in order to achieve the region's climate aspirations.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 A key consideration of the Skills System Review must be to ensure that the most disadvantaged individuals and communities can benefit from employment and skills support.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 A key consideration of the Skills System Review must be to ensure that people from all backgrounds can benefit from employment and skills support, and that we particularly target those that are disadvantaged in the labour market due to protected characteristics.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The cost of the externally commissioned report will be reported to the Committee.

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 endorses the proposed review of the skills system and indicates whether and/or how it would like to input.
- 10.2 That the Committee considers how best to engage with local Employment and Skills Boards where they exist and whether a more consistent approach to how they are constituted and governed may be beneficial.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

12.1 Regional Policy Context.

APPENDIX Regional policy context

In May 2023, the Combined Authority formally adopted the West Yorkshire Plan as the overarching strategic framework for the region. The West Yorkshire Plan sets out the vision of “A brighter West Yorkshire - a place that works for all. An engine room of ideas and creativity, where anyone can make a home.” The West Yorkshire Plan includes five missions which all require skills input particularly the first, “A prosperous West Yorkshire – an inclusive economy with well paid jobs”. Beneath the West Yorkshire Plan, the existing policy framework includes a suite of policies and strategies aligned to areas of delivery. The Combined Authority is currently consulting on the development of a new Economic Strategy.

The [Employment and Skills Framework](#) was published in June 2021 setting out the following priorities:

- 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

and cross-cutting themes:

- Inclusive growth
- Digital skills
- Net zero carbon

In September 2020, following the West Yorkshire Devolution Deal, the Combined Authority published its [Adult Education Budget Strategy](#).

Future-ready Skills Commission

The Future-Ready Skills Commission was an independent commission made up of experts and leading thinkers from business, education, local government and think tanks. Chaired by Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe, Leader of Bradford Council, and supported by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, the Commission conducted an in-depth examination of the UK skills system, from post-16 education through to adult skills and career development and collated national and international examples of best practice over a two-year period.

In September 2020 the Commission issued its final report, [A Blueprint for a Future-Ready Skills System](#), which contained nine key recommendations to create a devolved skills system focused on people, businesses and local economies.

The report offers a vision of a skills system where employers are able to recruit the talent they need, and individuals can better access opportunities, leading to more resilient, flexible and dynamic local labour markets that work for all.

The recommendations were:

1. 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
2. Empower areas to design services around the individual to address complex and interrelated health, employment and skills issues
3. Everyone should have the right to quality information about jobs and careers, no matter what their stage in life
4. 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
5. 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
6. Recognise that areas are best placed to understand their own skills requirements and implement statutory five-year strategic skills plans to make it happen
7. 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
8. 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
9. 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

Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

2.6 In West Yorkshire the LSIP process has been led by the Chambers of Commerce and the [final report and action plan](#) were published in May 2023. This was built on data and evidence from the Combined Authority, consultation with the sector, and extensive work with employers. The LSIP identified the following key sectors demanding technical skills input to support growth, transformation, and increased productivity in West Yorkshire:

- Health & Social Care
- Construction
- Low Carbon
- Financial and Professional Services
- Education
- Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing
- Creative Industries



- Transport and Logistics
- Digital & Technology

In addition, it also identified cross-cutting themes in respect of: Net zero/sustainability; transferable skills; equality, diversity and inclusion; leadership and management; and digitisation and automation. Through the research, many employers expressed a wish for more flexible delivery of training modules rather than a focus on full qualifications and stressed the importance of soft skills in addition to the above priorities.

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Report to:	Employment and Skills Committee
Date:	15 February 2024
Subject:	Digital Blueprint and Digital Inclusion
Director:	Felix Kumi-Ampofo, Director Inclusive Economy, Skills & Culture
Author:	Marianne Hewitt, Programme Development Lead (Digital)

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. This report provides a draft of the new Digital Blueprint. Committee members' feedback, and endorsement, are sought.
- 1.2. This report provides an update on progress in the year since the Digital Skills Plan was launched, including the West Yorkshire Digital Inclusion initiative.

2. Information

Background

- 2.1. This paper begins with a request for feedback on the draft of the Digital Blueprint. The Blueprint is a development of the Digital Skills Plan, which places skills as an enabler of the wider digital system. Next, this paper updates on West Yorkshire's progress in digital skills since the launch of the Digital Skills Plan (December 2022) and the interventions that the Combined Authority has led in that time. One of the interventions is the Digital Inclusion West Yorkshire initiative, which this paper focuses on in the final section.

Digital Blueprint

- 2.2. An update of the Digital Blueprint and its approach was brought to the last Employment and Skills Committee on 19 October 2023 (as well as the Business, Economy, Innovation Committee on 9 November 2023 and the Place Committee on 26 October 2023.)

2.3 Feedback endorsed the direction of travel within the alignment of the Economic Strategy. Officers have incorporated this feedback, alongside the previous input from LEP Board members, private and public sector digital experts, private sector employers, academics and Local Authority members, to build our approach to the Digital Blueprint. All private sector members of the Employment and Skills Committee (alongside Place Committee, Business, Innovation and Economy Committee, and LEP Board) were invited to a September workshop to help shape the themes of the Digital Blueprint as it was developed.

2.5 A public consultation was live for four weeks from late October until late November 2023. This received 121 responses. The draft Digital Blueprint includes some initial results.

A Reminder of the Digital Blueprint's Approach

2.6 The Digital Blueprint focuses on the 'horizontal' or 'levers' of:

- 'Place', which refers to smart city initiatives, infrastructure development, connectivity and connected places.
- 'People and Education', which refers to digital: skills; inclusion; workforce development; educational pathways.
- 'Business and Organisations', which refers to digital: transformation; investment; entrepreneurship; innovation and research; trade and export promotion.

2.7 Interwoven with the horizontal, are 7 'vertical' or 'cultural' themes, all of which affect/are affected by the 'horizontal'. The verticals are as follows, in the order prioritised by the private sector committee member consultation: advanced technologies; showcasing West Yorkshire; hybrid digitisation; digital inclusion; convening; data; sustainability.

2.8 Pending the endorsement of ESC, BEIC and Place Committees, the Digital Blueprint will be taken to the Combined Authority Committee, ahead of approval and publication.

2.9 The Committee is asked to consider the following:

- Is the content of the Digital Blueprint reflective of the digital skills needs in the region?
- Are the outcomes, as they relate to people and education, ambitious enough? If not, how could they be bolder?
- Do you have any other feedback or advice on how the Digital Blueprint could be improved, ahead of going to design?

Digital Skills One Year On

2.10 The Digital Blueprint is an evolution of the region's first Digital Skills Plan, published in December 2022 under the steer of the Local Digital Skills Partnership.

- 2.11 The Digital Skills Plan aimed to increase the numbers of residents with Essential Digital Skills for Life (75%) and Work (59%) to match the leading region's 82% and 69%, respectively, by 2025 (data published in 2021). In line with the Equality Act (2010), diversity metrics were embedded throughout our targets. Over the last year, Lloyds and IPSOS MORI have removed the pre-requisites from the Essential Digital Skills Framework.*¹ Within the new bands of the framework, the 2023 statistics are as follows: Essential Digital Skills for Life (95%), making Yorkshire and the Humber the leading region, and Essential Digital Skills for Work (85%), just 1% behind the leading region.
- 2.12 Prior to the launch of the Digital Skills Plan, West Yorkshire had made progress in digital skills largely through the DCMS-funded Local Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP), created as part of the devolution deal. The LDSP brought together skills provision, acted as a test-bed for offers, and was a conduit to bring together stakeholders and partners to add value to the region's digital skills growth. Much of the LDSP's work took place during the covid lockdowns and convened and monitored the following:
- 2,310 individuals enrolled on community or foundation ICT courses
 - 34,000 laptops/devices were donated to children or residents
 - 938 individuals enrolled in Skills Connect digital courses
 - 8,103 students and teachers took part in virtual work experience
 - 4,890 individuals enrolled or qualified from Computing or ICT HE/FE and apprenticeships
 - 23 schools were supported by 18 Enterprise Advisers in digital roles/sectors via Schools Partnerships
 - 671 SMEs received digital support through Business Support / Skills for Growth
 - 1,720 SMEs took part in digital events run by private partner organisations
 - £728,000 of levy was pledged for digital apprenticeships. 22 businesses were supported by the apprenticeship levy re digital
 - 15,422 views on futuregoals.co.uk
 - Launch of IBM SkillsBuild platform

¹ Previously, an individual had to have the Foundation level to be eligible for EDS for Life, and had to have EDS for Life to be eligible for EDS for Work. Now, someone can start their digital journey in any of the framework areas and will be counted within the measure.

- 2.13 Nationally, the LDSP funding has now ceased. West Yorkshire is continuing its legacy through the development of the Digital Blueprint.
- 2.14 Appendix 2 gives an overview of the initiatives have been delivered or developed since the launch of the Digital Skills Plan, which aim to turn the dial on digital skills shortages and gaps.

Digital Inclusion

- 2.15 The West Yorkshire Digital Inclusion initiative aims to address the following challenges: 5% of residents in Yorkshire and the Humber do not have essential digital skills for life. The close association between digital exclusion and other dimensions of inequality underpins an urgent social and economic need to act. Delivering the right interventions to support those who are digitally excluded will have wider social benefits on people and communities, such as health, regeneration and education, thus requiring a collaborative, community-based approach and a resilient third sector. As well as social and ethical reasons to add benefit to the community, there is a strong economic case to be made for digital inclusion. It has been estimated that if everyone in the UK was able to go online, it would add another £63 billion to the economy.
- 2.16 The objectives of the initiative are to: boost the capacity of community organisations in each Local Authority area of West Yorkshire to deliver digital inclusion, equitably and within a flexible model appropriate to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion needs of each LA area; enable staff and volunteers within organisations in West Yorkshire to support digitally excluded residents; develop the digital inclusion system within each Local Authority; enable community organisations to financially support their beneficiaries to access broadband, devices and courses; gather insight into what works to encourage the digitally excluded to gain digital skills.
- 2.17 £746,000 of Gainshare funding has been approved (at the CA Committee in June 2023) to achieve these objectives. Via Grant Funding Agreement, the funding will be used to appoint Digital Inclusion Officers until March 2026 in City of Bradford District Metropolitan Council, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council, Kirklees Council and Wakefield Council and to boost the capacity of the 100% Digital Leeds City Council service.
- 2.18 This approach has been developed with nominated officers in each Local Authority and ensures that existing Digital Inclusion programmes within each Local Authority retain their identity whilst demonstrating a regional collaboration. It takes the learnings and best practice from the model established by 100% Digital Leeds and applying them flexibly in other areas.
- 2.19 The programme was soft-launched at the [West Yorkshire Innovation Festival](#) by the Mayor and Leonardo Tantari (the pioneer of the 100% Digital Leeds model). 70 participants attended from health organisations, charities, community organisations in West Yorkshire and other regions, many of whom have expressed their interest in getting

involved as a beneficiary of the initiative. Recruitment and the set up of the Steering Group will take place in early 2024, with delivery expected to commence from April 2024.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 The Digital Blueprint aims to tackle the climate emergency through inclusion of elements such as evolution of digital skills supporting sectors developing and innovating their sustainability, support of 'better jobs', skills training for retrofitters of fibre and copper (internet access) and smart homes. The Blueprint covers elements of adoption of digital tech by businesses and organisations which will facilitate efficiency and reduce waste, and refer to the opportunities for remote working (which has implications on reducing travel and paper). Digital and smart infrastructure will contribute to reduced energy use, such as smart street lamps, electric vehicles etc. Data capture from smart infrastructure – and local area energy plans and grids - will help with efficient and sustainable planning. Asset mapping allows delivery alignment and strategic sequencing to ensure we 'dig once', which saves on carbon.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1. Recommendations outlined in the Digital Blueprint will have implications for West Yorkshire residents, businesses and organisations, aimed at catalysing inclusive growth using digital.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 Inclusion will underpin the Digital Blueprint as one of the 7 themes, and will be interwoven throughout. The Blueprint will include recommendations regarding demographic information about those who are digitally excluded because of lack of access to skills, resources, or infrastructure.
- 5.2 The Digital Inclusion initiative has clear positive impact regarding protected characteristics. It will help beneficiaries of a range of charities and community organisations, such as Housing Associations, Care Homes, Addiction Services. These cohorts will learn how to use digital to manage their finances, navigate the health system, apply for jobs, access housing and benefits, enjoy leisure activities and improve their mental wellbeing.

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 notes the progress made since the publication of the Digital Skills Plan, particularly on the West Yorkshire Digital Inclusion initiative.

10.2. That the Committee endorses the Digital Blueprint, with current progress in mind.

10.3. In the case of outstanding feedback from members, that the Committee delegates endorsement to the Chair, ahead of the final design.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Digital Blueprint Draft.

Appendix 2 – Digital Skills Plan, one year on



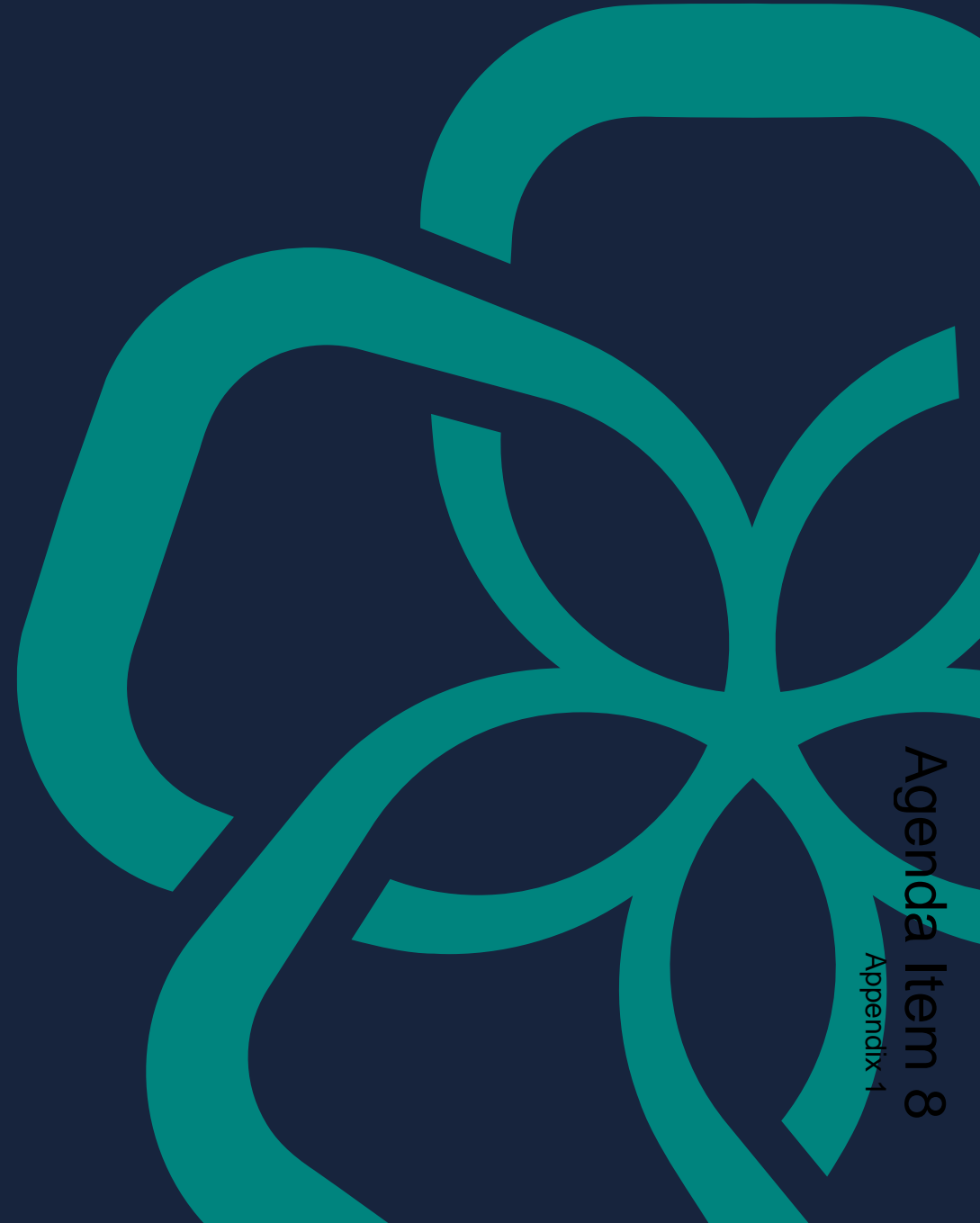
West
Yorkshire
Combined
Authority

Tracy
Brabin
Mayor of
West Yorkshire

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West Yorkshire: Digital Blueprint

Agenda Item 8
Appendix 1



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Foreword from the Mayor

“West Yorkshire is the most inclusive place to be digital.”

Aims

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- Create an inclusive society and thriving economy through the growth of digital skills for all.
- Be a leading region for high-speed gigabit-capable broadband connectivity and mobile coverage (5G) and be pioneers in our approach to connected places.
- Build one of the best digital sectors in the UK and grow the prevalence of digitally enabled businesses.



One pager/Executive Summary

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Guided by this Digital Blueprint, we will...

Showcase West Yorkshire as the UK's premier inclusive and digitally connected tech destination.

Elevate WY to become a global leader in **advanced technologies** and create a thriving ecosystem where businesses and communities flourish.

Empower West Yorkshire residents and organisations to embrace the **hybrid-digital era** and thrive in a hyperconnected world, where seamless connectivity fuels informed decision-making and unlocks a world of possibilities.

Foster a digitally **inclusive** West Yorkshire by embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles into digital skills initiatives, promoting inclusive practices among digital and tech businesses, and collaborating for universal high-quality connectivity.

Harness digital innovation to empower West Yorkshire as a global leader in **sustainability**, contributing to our aim to achieve net zero by 2038.

Transform West Yorkshire into a **data-driven** powerhouse, enabling businesses and individuals to harness the power of data for innovation, growth, and informed decision-making.

Convene an open and collaborative tech ecosystem in West Yorkshire and beyond, where best practices are shared, emerging challenges are addressed, and regional opportunities are coordinated and maximised. 4

Defining 'Digital'

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The YourVoice Survey



Tom Loosemore

@tomskitomski

Digital: Applying the culture, practices, processes & technologies of the Internet-era to respond to people's raised expectations.

To create this strategy, a public consultation was circulated in October-November 2023. 121 respondents fed back their views on digital. These views are incorporated throughout this Blueprint. 72% of respondents were members of the public, giving their views as individuals. 23% were responding on behalf of, or as a representative of, a business or organisation. (5% other).

With regards to their digital knowledge, 7% consider themselves to be expert; 63% average; and 30% expert.

Full results and demographic splits of the respondents can be found in the appendix.

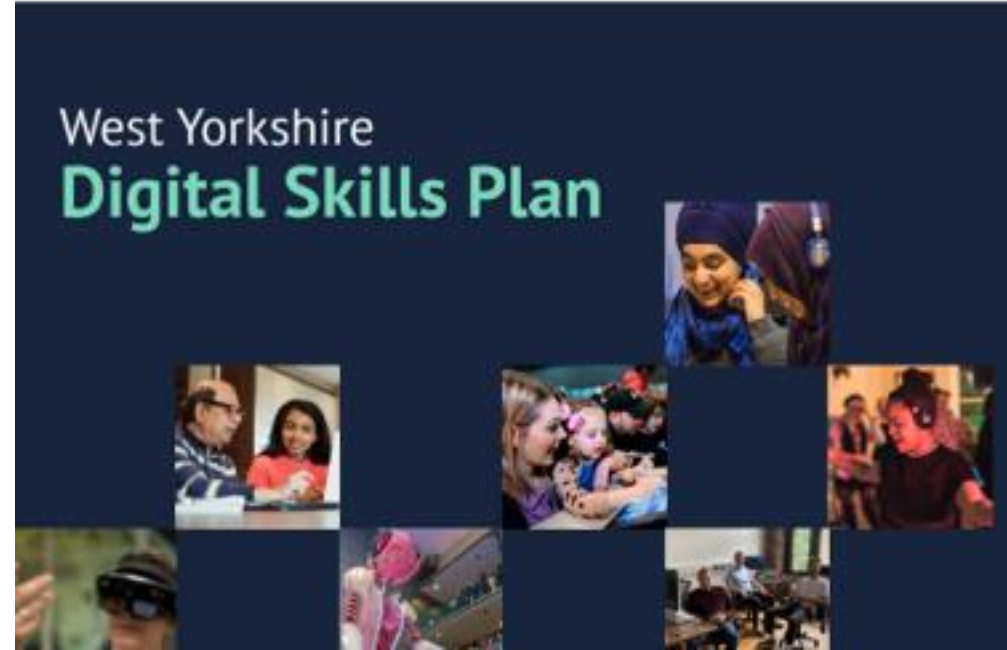
Digital Skills Plan

This blueprint builds on the [Digital Skills Plan](#) (December 2022)

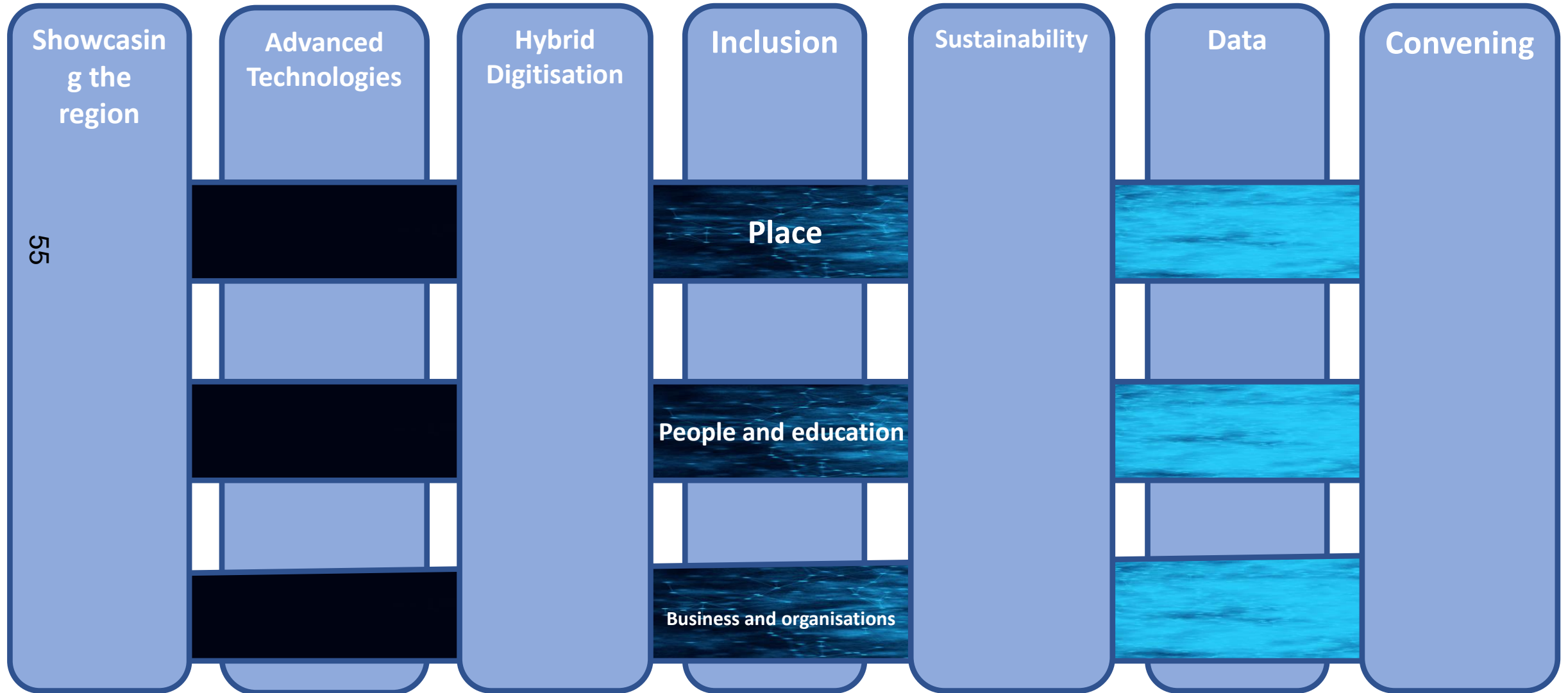
The West Yorkshire Digital Skills Plan outlines inclusive digital skills provision as a key priority for the Mayor. This Plan is our footprint for delivery to support everybody, from the residents who want to use digital to connect with their families, to the businesses looking to grow and innovate here, to the people looking for opportunities to work in our thriving tech sector. This Digital Blueprint updates the Digital Skills plan statistics and actions and considers the position of digital skills as enablers for the wider digital economy.

The Digital Skills Plan aimed to increase the numbers of residents with on Essential Digital Skills for Life (75%) and Work (59%) to match the leading region's 82% and 69%, respectively, by 2025 (data published in 2021). In line with the Equality Act (2010), diversity will be embedded throughout our targets. Over the last year, Lloyds and IPSOS MORI have removed the pre-requisites from the Essential Digital Skills Framework.*

Within the new bands of the framework, the 2023 statistics are as follows: Essential Digital Skills for Life (95%), making Yorkshire and the Humber the leading region, and Essential Digital Skills for Work (85%), just 1% behind the leading region. Previously, an individual had to have the Foundation level to be eligible for EDS for Life, and had to have EDS for Life to be eligible for EDS for Work. Now, someone can start their digital journey in any of the framework areas and will be counted within the measure.



Matrix of change – Across the 3 policy areas of Place, People and Education and Business and organisations, we have identified 7 priority themes to take action to influence change and to make West Yorkshire a digital destination.





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SHOWCASING THE REGION

Why WY is a Great Place for Digital

West Yorkshire is a region boasting a rich heritage in innovation and is now a place of high-level ambition and a digital destination for businesses, individuals and families:

PLACE

- West Yorkshire is a region boasting a rich heritage in innovation and is now a place of high-level ambition and a digital destination for businesses, individuals and families. The region outperforms the national average with statistics including:
 - 85% of premises have gigabit-capable internet connections, 7 percentage points higher than the national average. Bradford and Leeds have the highest proportion of properties connected to full fibre, and Calderdale the lowest.
 - 4G mobile coverage is growing in West Yorkshire and exceeds the national average. 91% of premises are covered by all providers, compared with 85% nationally.
 - Leeds has the highest coverage at 92% and Wakefield has the lowest, at 87%, but this is still 2 points above the national average (85%).
- West Yorkshire is a great place to live, work and raise a family, with a life satisfaction rating increasing by 0.25 points, compared to 0.15 points on average.
- Between 2015 – 2020, the West Yorkshire economy grew above the UK average (excluding London).
- West Yorkshire is strategically well-placed in the UK, with the M62, M1 and A1 running through the region. Major rail infrastructure secures links between West Yorkshire and major cities such as Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield. This enables opportunities to collaborate, share information and access to supply chains and workforce.

Why WY is a Great Place for Digital

PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

- According to the YourVoice survey, people and education was of great significance. When asked, ‘What do you think is the biggest thing the Government can do to support the West Yorkshire digital sector 79% of respondents selected either ‘Ensure everyone has access to digital technologies, despite barriers such as cost, skills, infrastructure, location’ (Digital Inclusion) or ‘Increase the skills of our residents to increase the digital talent pool.’
- West Yorkshire’s biggest asset is its inclusivity within the digital system. Our skills programmes are set up to have a broad reach, ensuring a diverse talent pipeline and our businesses embody the theory that diversity in the workplace is better for innovation and productivity.
- In West Yorkshire, we understand that everyone has a role to play in creating a more diverse and inclusive tech industry. As of the latest census, 23% of the population of West Yorkshire now identifies as being from an ethnic minority. Across WY, approximately one third of households accommodate at least one disabled person. 49% of people in West Yorkshire are female
- In a sector that is typically dominated by men, a third of apprenticeship starts in West Yorkshire in 2021/22 were women, up from just 18% in 2017/18. People from ethnic minorities are well represented – 21% of digital apprenticeship starts are people from an ethnic minority
- Employment in specialist digital disciplines continues to grow strongly. Annual average employment growth for digital occupations has been 7% over the last decade in Yorkshire and the Humber, compared with 1% for the overall economy.
- The percentage of people in West Yorkshire with high digital capability is above the national average (65% vs 63%)

BUSINESS AND ORGANISATIONS

- In Yorkshire, we're known for getting things done, doing them well, and then moving on to the next big project. Our region takes the lead in developing subsectors in line with the UK Government's goals for growth. This includes areas like geospatial information, space technologies, FinTech, AI, HealthTech, RegTech, AgriTech, and more.
- Just under half of respondents to the YourVoice consultation (46%) believed that more investment into the tech sector would positively impact their life, which can be encouraged with effective showcasing of the region.

Leeds – Consulting & Computer software. 99% of University of Leeds's computing research activity is either “world –leading” or “internationally excellent”.

Bradford – Strengths in EdTech and boasts highest postgraduate enrolments in applied artificial intelligence and data analytics in the UK.

Wakefield – Creative digital and gaming strengths. Home to Production Park, a live entertainment space which has hosted artists such as Beyonce, Ed Sheeran and Lady Gaga.

Kirklees – Home to the University of Huddersfield and 3M BIC. Centre for enterprise and innovation for businesses across the region, with a strong focus on SMEs. Strengths in Computer hardware and Computer software.

Calderdale – Strengths in consulting and computer software. Home to two very significant Digital Health organisations: The Health Informatics Service (an NHS organisation providing digital and IT services to health and care providers) and VISFO (makes evidence-based decisions for pharma and biotech).

Showcasing – CASE STUDY

West Yorkshire Innovation Festival

Created in 2020, the West Yorkshire Innovation Festival is a celebration of innovation across West Yorkshire. It brings together academics, businesses of all sizes, entrepreneurs and experts to share resources, showcase innovative ideas and to cast a spotlight on our region's most ingenious success stories. From workshops and panel events to masterclasses and talks, the festival is a great opportunity to learn about the latest trends in digital innovation, and to connect with other businesses and organisations that are working to make a difference in their sectors and the region.

Showcasing intended outcomes

People and Education – Establish West Yorkshire as the most inclusive place for digital and tech

Advocate for further devolution of employment and skills powers and funding in order to deliver best outcomes for West Yorkshire in digital skills

Celebrate as role models those in the digital sector who are embodying greater representation and diversity

Work with partners to maximise the skills in the region in terms of advanced technologies, digitisation of day-to-day services, sustainability, and data, all in a digitally-inclusive way.

Ensure promotion and positive narratives around the successes of the continued delivery of the region's first [Digital Skills Plan \(2022\)](#)

Business and Organisations - Promote West Yorkshire globally as an inclusive, thriving tech destination through trade missions, Mayoral events, and by supporting international businesses to invest here and supporting indigenous businesses to export.

Establish a West Yorkshire tech representative on the Mayor's Business Board to act as a figurehead for all things digital in the region, appearing at events, presenting West Yorkshire as a great place for digital and expanding networking both in the digital space and other sectors.

Develop a West Yorkshire Inward Investment Strategy, establishing digital as a high opportunity area with potential policy interventions to boost investment into the sector. A digital focus would also be relevant to other strong areas such as the financial, health and creative sectors.

Form partnerships with leading digital hubs from around the world, which could facilitate trade missions, shared learnings and collaborative projects, showcasing digital in West Yorkshire on the global stage.

Place – Make West Yorkshire a well-connected region, with world class digital infrastructure, where businesses and communities thrive

Ensure everyone has access to quality gigabit-capable broadband to enable people to work from home, for the self-employed, for businesses, schools and the public.

Work with our partners to support and highlight the community services already in place to increase reach and impact to ensure no one is left behind.

Work with our partners to support communities with access to myth busting terminology to help enhance understanding and take up of infrastructure products on the market.



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ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES

Advanced Technologies

This displays how we are benefitting from advanced technologies such as AR/VR/AI/IoT. This includes higher level skills, sub-sector strengths and the role of smart cities and innovation.

PLACE

- West Yorkshire supports new and innovative advanced technologies and can shift to new opportunities to benefit the region.
- To be fully prepared for future technologies we need to facilitate the infrastructure and connectivity landscape to unlock opportunity. West Yorkshire is already in a great position with an average coverage of 85% across the region. Types of coverage are suboptimal, however.
- Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) figures in West Yorkshire are mixed with only 17% in Calderdale and 52% in Bradford. Having more FTTP coverage alongside other gigabit capable solutions would enable better connection speeds, meaning that individuals, businesses and communities can access more benefits from advanced technologies such as IoT, AI, AR, VR – all of which can play a part in supporting connected places.
- Having the infrastructure that enables connectivity and data transfer will unlock incredible opportunities for Connected Places infrastructure and ecosystem.
- According to the Your Voice survey 17% of people are excited by new technologies. Respondents felt that there was a potential for impact on individuals, communities, their work and day to day life.

Advanced Technologies - Context

PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

- West Yorkshire's higher-level skills provision is extensive with 9 universities, 7 colleges and numerous Independent Training providers.
- The University of Leeds is joint 9th in the country for Computer Science Research Quality (REF 2021). The University of Bradford has the highest number of Applied AI and Data postgraduates in the country.
- The Combined Authority (CA), working with employers, is building a talent pipeline. We have supported almost 200 schools and colleges to improve careers support and destinations for students, including teacher Continuous Professional Development (CPD), teaching resources for digital skills, and digital careers factsheets for students. The CA reaches 2.5 million people each year through our all-ages career platform, providing local knowledge on West Yorkshire's growing sectors, fresh job opportunities, and the best pathways into good, well-paid jobs. The Combined Authority also offer targeted, intensive employment support to people of all ages to help move those furthest from the labour market closer to, enter or return to work or progress within their current work, including linking residents directly to jobs in local businesses.
- In West Yorkshire, there were 1,370 qualifiers from digital courses in higher education in 2021/22. There were 3,120 enrolments on foundation level ICT courses in further education in 2021/22, 6% higher than in 2019/20. There were 170 Skills Bootcamp starts on ICT courses in the first half of the 2022/23 academic year. With 1022 digital apprenticeship starts in 2021/22, digital apprenticeship starts are well above pre-pandemic levels, growing strongly at Advanced and Higher Level.
- The digital skills gap prevails, with digital skills provision not meeting the growth of the digital sector. This national problem is estimated to cost the UK economy nearly £63 billion a year in GDP.

BUSINESS AND ORGANISATIONS

- Advanced technologies are becoming pivotal in streamlining operations, enhancing productivity and driving innovation. West Yorkshire has the potential to lead in this area with institutions like NHS Digital and NHSC. The region also boasts over 600 health and life sciences firms, 250 MedTech companies and 65 digital health ventures.
- According to DCMS' 'Assessing the UK's regional digital ecosystems' report, Yorkshire's digital sector shows strong growth in economic output (6.5%, 2014-2019), faster than the UK's Digital Sector. The strong growth in digital sector employee jobs, at 8.2% per annum, surpasses any other UK region. The recent digital occupation growth rate, at 6.7% per annum, is also in the top quartile of UK regions.
- The CA has given free, impartial skills advice to over 1000 businesses and over £ 6 million pledged from businesses in apprenticeship levy transfers.

Advanced Technologies - Context

BUSINESS AND ORGANISATIONS

- West Yorkshire's prowess extends to sectors as varied as finance, logistics, manufacturing, and agriculture.
- The UK has up to 234,000 data vacancies, signalling a growing demand for machine learning expertise.
- Leeds has been ranked eighth outside London in AI-readiness, showcasing the region's commitment to digital advancement. The rapid adoption of AI is leading to growing emphasis on AI development to be transparent, ethical and responsible. This ensures that as the region advances technologically, it remains rooted in values that prioritise the well-being of its citizens.
- Despite the recent press surrounding AI, ONS found that between 3 to 16 April 2023, just 16% of businesses across the UK are currently using at least one of the AI technologies asked about in the survey, meaning more needs to be done to increase the appetite for businesses to engagement with advanced technologies.
- ⁹As advanced technologies could help include:
 - ⁴ Decision-making: AI & ML helps businesses make smarter decisions. By analysing large amounts of data, they can offer calculable insights into future sales, customer behaviours and finance risks.
 - Operational efficiency: AI boosts efficiency. It can handle repetitive tasks, manage inventory, and predict when equipment needs repairs, reducing work delays.
 - Customer experience: AI improves customer service. Chatbots offer round-the-clock support, and ML tailors shopping experiences based on customer preferences.
 - Immersion: AR and VR revolutionises experiences. Retailers can create 3D virtual showrooms, and businesses can train employees in immersive environments. AR also lets customers virtually "test" products in real life. From product design to testing and customer interaction, AR & VR is the reinvention of environment
 - Innovation: AI and ML will enable smarter problem-solving and idea generation by analysing patterns and data that might be invisible to the human eye. These technologies not only redefine existing products and services but also pave the way for entirely new offerings. In this tech-driven era, businesses leveraging these tools are better positioned to lead in innovation, ensuring they're not just adapting to the future, but shaping it.
- 14.8% of business respondents to the YourVoice consultation said they were not looking to implement new software systems, AI, machine learning, digital machinery, or cloud-based services. There is potential to better present how one or more of these technologies can help all businesses and organisations in the region.

Advanced

Technologies – Case

Study

Skills Connect

The benefits of the Skills Connect programme is that the training is unaccredited, and employer endorsed, where the Combined Authority has the flexibility to commission activity based on labour market information and using intelligence gathered by employers and steering groups, without the need for commissioning an established qualification on the RQF.

Training is commissioned to support individuals to progress into new employment, or to support individuals to access increased responsibilities as a result of the training. Courses are delivered with a clear line of sight to improved labour market status for learners.

To date, over 1,000 learners have been supported via the Skills Connect programme, with delivery due to take place until March 2025.

Examples of the digital courses are Essential Digital Skills, Creative Technologies, IT Roles, Technical Skills, Digital Management Roles, Ethical use of AI.

Advanced Technologies intended outcomes

Place –West Yorkshire as a place that supports and encourages new and innovative advanced technologies and can shift to new opportunities to benefit the region.

Increase gigabit capable coverage, including FTTP which is lower powered and future proof. Connectivity should be an essential utility that is resilient.

Develop a mechanism to explore how we prepare and future proof infrastructure projects and programmes to save public money.

Use existing assets in the region to catalyse growth in tech, research and data to improve access to facilities and services.

Explore how Smart Cities Infrastructure, including IoT technology can offer opportunities to make our places function better. Examples include using technology to enhance traffic management and road space allocation, as well as monitoring and mitigating climate impacts such as flood impacts, high temperatures and air quality.

People and Education – Increase the higher level digital skills in West Yorkshire to support advances in technology for social, transport and career purposes

Inspire school-aged students to consider digital careers, based on the four pillars of digital in schools, as advised by our education partners: Functional IT (e.g. Excel, Word), Media and creative, Computer Science (e.g. Software, coding), Tech support (Cyber security, networks, AI)

Encourage more digital apprenticeship starts among 16-18 year olds, as this age bracket is lower than other age brackets

Raise awareness of the availability and high-quality higher level skills courses in our region, and the increase in quality of life (high salaries in these sectors)

Support the use and culture of AI addressing concerns in communities. Educate and embrace, frame it as positive rather than negative.

Ensure promotion of AI and skills training that arise through the Investment Zone

Continue to encourage apprenticeship starts from diverse backgrounds with a focus on underrepresented groups

Business and Organisations – Support businesses to increase productivity through embracing AI, and bolster businesses against the threat of AI

Encourage businesses to use [New advisory service to help businesses launch AI and digital innovations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) via the CA's Growth Hub

Develop challenge competitions focusing on solving advanced technology problems and creating innovative solutions, creating interest in advanced technologies and potentially providing businesses with the tangible benefits they bring.

Provide fiscal and non-fiscal support for businesses and organisations looking to adopt advanced technologies that may not have the required expertise to effectively implement them.

Integrate advanced technologies into Combined Authority services, which as well as modernises our offer to the region, acts as an example to businesses and organisations as to how advanced technologies can be utilised outside of their specific sectors.

Ensure promotion of AI opportunities for businesses that arise through the Investment Zone



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HYBRID DIGITISATION

Hybrid Digitisation

How digital makes day-to-day life easier for West Yorkshire residents and businesses, and how we make day-to-day services more accessible (without removing the need for humans).

PLACE

- Digital is fully embedded in our society. In 2022, in the UK, 58% of people believed that on balance, digital technologies had made their lives better. As such, we need to better understand what this means for our communities, homes, leisure spaces and work.
- We understand that technology should never fully replace human-to-human contact. Instead, it should enhance, simplify and facilitate better communication and productivity between all.
- 🌀 West Yorkshire, we want to support our region and prepare all for change, whether that be systems or infrastructure.
- When it comes to ways digital technologies help you live your life, the YourVoice consultation showed that technology can help in many ways. Common responses included daily working, the booking and planning of travel, communication and shopping - with technology speeding up these activities.
- For transport, hybrid digitisation includes higher level of automation during ticket purchasing and journey planning, as well as broader connectivity with information relating to travel. For West Yorkshire this means the ability to purchase tickets and plan onward journeys whilst on the go. The digital transformation of transport works together with other services also. Digital technologies such as AI and IoT provide information needed to address transport problems such as traffic jams, utilisation of vehicles and pollutant levels. This data collection helps better identify causes of problems and find solutions such as new public transport services and routes.

Hybrid Digitisation

PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

- In an increasingly digital society, digital is often the solution to help people manage their careers, money, health, housing, leisure, career, and mental wellbeing.
- As of 2023, 95% of adults in Yorkshire and the Humber have essential digital skills for life. This is a significant increase from 75% in 2021. Essential Digital Skills for Life include using video call technology to socialise, searching for work via online platforms, or safely using comparison websites to help them save money when shopping for large-ticket items such as insurance.
- In 2023 data, 85% of adults in Yorkshire and the Humber have the full range of essential digital skills for work, up from 59% in 2021. Essential Digital Skills for Work include using the email address book in their organisation to 'cc' in colleagues; working remotely using a virtual private network (VPN); using document formats such as PDFs; using video-conferencing platforms.
- When it comes to behaviour, the YourVoice consultation showed that new technologies such as artificial intelligence 'means nothing' to 6%, 'scares' 19%, 'intrigues' 57%, 'excites' 18%. Ensuring that the one quarter who are scared or unsure of the benefits and threats of technologies such as AI and leveraging the excitement and intrigue of the remaining three quarters, will be key in supporting people to partake in society more effectively and efficiently.

BUSINESS AND ORGANISATIONS

- Only 77% of SMEs within Yorkshire and Humber have high digital capability. The 23% of SMEs with low digital capability are less likely to: have Essential Digital Skills among their staff; offer their own website; use email to communicate with customers; use social media to interact with customers and suppliers; use government services; use Internet Banking; use online accounting software.
- Digital platforms have connected West Yorkshire businesses more than ever. UK-wide studies show that over 60% of SMEs collaborated with other businesses digitally in 2021, reflecting inter-business networking and growth.
- Digital tools have substantially improved operational efficiency. According to a 2019 UK report, businesses that adopted digital tools saw a 20% increase in productivity compared to those that didn't.
- Remote work saw a significant boost due to the pandemic. By mid-2020, 46.6% of people in employment in the UK did some work at home. This shift has allowed businesses in West Yorkshire and beyond to tap into a broader talent pool and offer greater flexibility, which often correlates with increased employee satisfaction. ONS data from 2022 tells us that around 25% of employees in the Yorkshire & Humber region work from home at least some of the time.

Hybrid

Digitisation –

Case Study

MCard

The MCard is one of the largest travel smartcard schemes outside London's Oyster card. It simplifies travelling across West Yorkshire. MCards can be loaded with a range of multi-operator bus and train travel products, including weekly or monthly tickets and day-savers. Over 11,000 people in West Yorkshire have downloaded the MCard app that enables them to buy and load travel tickets anytime, anywhere straight from any Android smartphone.

Hybrid intended outcomes

Place – Enable high-speed gigabit-capable broadband connectivity and mobile coverage capitalising on smart technology and connected places which allow people to navigate their surroundings making informed choices as they go.

Continue to work for better quality and reliable infrastructure which will support the following:

Enable and support hybrid working, ensuring that the tech that enables this is a viable and preferred option, allowing for great flexibility in people's work/life balance.

Champion and continue to explore hybrid transport systems, including the tech that facilitates the rollout of Autonomous Vehicles but in a safe environment with driver operated traffic.

People and Education – Enable the residents of West Yorkshire to benefit from the advantages of an increasingly digitised society

Increase the percentage of residents who can access digital services (whether that's broadband access / skills) e.g. to apply for Universal Credit, housing, manage finances.

Ensure AI does not replace jobs, but enhances the workforce.

Enable education about new technologies for those who are scared or unsure of the benefits and threats of them.

Leverage the buy-in of those who are excited and intrigued by new technologies to promote the benefits to others in the region.

Business and Organisations – Empower businesses to foster digital innovation and digitally upskill their workforces to increase productivity

Increase the percentage of businesses and organisations engaging in digital transformation activities.

Enable access to digital transformation support – provide fiscal and non-fiscal support for traditional businesses to engage in digital transformation initiatives, measured by increased productivity, efficiency gains, or the development of innovative digital products and services.

Fund and promote hybrid workspaces, where businesses can access meeting rooms, digital tools and workshop space all in one building.

Ensure jobs are enhanced rather than replaced by new technologies.

Encourage use of new developments / empty buildings / retrofit older buildings and offices in the wider region.



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INCLUSION

Inclusion

Going from digital exclusion to digital inclusion for all. Ensuring West Yorkshire has 100%, affordable internet connectivity and enables all communities to access and use the internet as they wish

PLACE

- Our definition of digital exclusion refers to those who are not able to use the internet to participate fully in modern society. Digital disparities are not only a moral obligation we need to tackle but are undermining efforts to “rebalance and grow the UK economy” and will mean “the UK will struggle to maintain competitiveness” as a result (HoL, Digital Exclusion report 22/23).
- Digital connectivity is a utility, yet, of households earning £25,000 or less, 1 in 5 never use the internet, rising to 1 in 3 with disabled people and 1 in 2 of those aged 65+.
- Digital Poverty is a vicious circle. Those without digital connectivity lose out and become financially poorer. According to ONS, 1 in 3 people are not using the internet due to cost, despite Internet providers being legally required to provide affordable ‘social tariffs.’ It is suggested that the tariffs offered by providers provide basic speeds which on many occasions are not viable for a typical family and can attract stigma.
- Digitally excluded groups: Disabled people, older people, those from BAME backgrounds must be represented in datasets that inform algorithmic decision-making. Increasing usage of digital tools and learning patterns and behaviour must result in redressing any imbalances and in-built biases in data.

Inclusion

PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

- Who is most likely to be digitally excluded? A homeless person trying to move into permanent housing while overcoming addiction and mental health challenges; An older person approaching end of life in a care home; An asylum seeker learning English and applying for settled status; A working person on a low income or a person who is unemployed; A person with health conditions or disability. Anyone facing and dealing with challenges in their everyday life.
- Nationally, the figures of those who regularly get online have fallen from 99% to 95% this year. Although the pandemic had accelerated the shift to digitally centred lives, the more recent costs of living challenges has further exacerbated the challenges with internet affordability – a key concern for many people.
- In Yorkshire and Humber 4% of people remain offline. 5% of adult residents of Yorkshire and Humber don't have Essential Digital Skills for Life.
- Up to 19 million people face digital poverty in the UK. There is a strong correlation with age, employment and housing status, and Digital Poverty. 1 in 2 older adults are in digital poverty, and 1 in 5 are in severe digital poverty. 20% of children are in digital poverty. Unemployed people are nearly 2-3 times more likely to be in digital poverty (West Yorkshire's official unemployment rate is 4%)
- The West Yorkshire Digital Inclusion initiative has responded to this urgent social and economic need to act. West Yorkshire will use devolved funding to deliver digital skills and access, via community organisations, to the digitally excluded.
- In the YourVoice survey, when asked 'Thinking about people you know that don't access things online, what are the reasons for this?', only 20 of the 120 respondents to this question selected, 'I don't know anyone that isn't online.' The remaining 83% of respondents know someone who is offline, for reasons such as behavioural: 'they don't know how/they are scared/they just don't want to' and related to access, 'an internet connection is too expensive for them/lack of available service where they live/they don't own a computer or smartphone'.

BUSINESS AND ORGANISATIONS

- 23% of SMEs in Yorkshire & Humber have low digital capability. These businesses are missing out on the opportunity to improve productivity, cost efficiency, accessibility, innovation, increase customer base (83% of business have a website) and increase access to the talent pool (online recruitment).
- In West Yorkshire's dynamic third sector, an estimated 12,000 organisations and groups employ 29,700 full-time equivalent individuals. These organisations play a crucial role in addressing social disparities and delivering essential services to communities across the region, and their total economic added value is estimated between £3.1bn and £4bn. Serving as a lifeline for vulnerable groups grappling with poverty, homelessness, disability, or discrimination, these organisations are steadfast in their commitment to social inclusion and empowerment, including digitally-focused initiatives.
- There is a lack of diversity in venture capital investment. Digital inclusion includes breaking down the barrier female entrepreneurs face when accessing VC investment (only 3% of VC funding went to all female teams, compared to 68% to all male teams – report by Extend Ventures).
- Underrepresentation in the tech industry is still commonplace. For example, in the UK tech market, only 26% of workers are women. Tech has a marginally higher proportion of BAME people than the labour market as a whole, 11.8% for all occupations, and 15.2% for tech. However, this does not represent the UK population, where, according to the 2011 Census, 20% of people living in the UK are BAME. Around 19% of the UK's working population has a disability but this is not reflected among employees working in the tech sector. Tech now accounts for around two million jobs in the UK but only 9% of all IT specialists have a disability.

Inclusion – Case

Study

Digital Inclusion West Yorkshire Leeds

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority is launching a regional offer to tackle Digital Inclusion across West Yorkshire.

Digital Inclusion West Yorkshire will be coordinated regionally to level up the region, provide support and wider context, enable the sharing of best practice and delivered locally to tackle local challenges and priorities. The programme will build on the success of 100% Digital Leeds, which is one of the most successful, high-profile and well-respected digital inclusion programmes in the country. Digital Inclusion Officers will be based in each Local Authority to help the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector across the region to tackle digital poverty.

Inclusion intended outcomes

Place – Work with partners to ensure high quality connectivity across West Yorkshire

Enabling accessibility of digital connectivity for all by addressing the not spots and understanding the reasons for market failure and working with the commercial sector to address.

Work with the commercial sector to drive low-cost internet access to ensure anyone, anywhere can access low-cost, high-speed internet connection.

Work with local authority partners to help expand methods for getting online, including opportunities to use public sector assets to get communities connected at home, in a digital hub or through public Wi-Fi.

Engage government to ensure there is ongoing new national approaches and funding to tackle digital poverty and the broader issue of digital inclusion.

Skills and Education - **Continue to ensure Equity, Diversity and Inclusion are firmly embedded in any digital skills initiatives delivered in West Yorkshire.**

Tackle digital exclusion in West Yorkshire through the Digital Inclusion West Yorkshire programme and monitor the success of the Digital Inclusion West Yorkshire programme.

Address the problem of diversity in tech talent pipeline, through programmes such as the Mayor's Diversity in Digital Initiative, devolved Skills Connect digital courses and Department for Education digital bootcamps.

Business and Organisations – Encourage digital and tech businesses in West Yorkshire to apply inclusive practices, and benefit from inclusive practices

Diversify VC investment and brokerage for access to finance for digital businesses.

Encourage businesses to advertise tech roles following inclusive practice e.g. a transparent salary and to describe the performance objectives of a role rather than a 'check list'.



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SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability

How digital is working towards supporting, accelerating and transitioning towards net zero goals in West Yorkshire, and how the West Yorkshire Combined Authority is enabling this:

- The Combined Authority has a bold and ambitious target of reaching Net Zero by 2038. Digital sustainability and sustainable digital technologies can help to reduce emissions and improve resource efficiency.

PLACE

- Digital technologies and data can make significant contributions to achieving our climate and environment goals. It was found by the World Economic Forum that digital solutions can reduce global emissions by 20% by 2050
- Sustainable forms of connectivity: fibre optic cables have a longer lifespan than traditional copper cables. They require less power to operate and have lower energy transmission which results in reduced carbon emissions. Digital therefore has a part to play in our target of West Yorkshire becoming a carbon free region by 2038. Evidently, fibre cables have a longer life span compared to traditional copper networks. They're durable, which minimises the need to frequent replacements, and will stand the test of time as we continue to experience changing weather patterns and more frequent heatwaves and flooding events.
- Work-place: high-speed connectivity opens the possibility of hybrid working. The hybrid model of working, accelerated in its implementation during the pandemic, is being adopted by many companies after finding employees were just as effective working from home, as they were in the office. Flexibility in working leads to a happier workforce.
- Applications: help us to better understand what activities and actions we can take to reduce or offset our impact on the environment. For example, often the biggest water waste is due to leaking pipes. Sensors and analytics could cut those losses by having better access to information. In fact, Beijing reduced deadly airborne pollutants by roughly 20% by tracking sources of pollution and regulating traffic and construction accordingly. Sharing real-time air-quality information with the public via smartphone apps enables individuals to take protective measures. This can reduce negative health effects by 3-15%, depending on current pollution levels.

Sustainability

PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

- The crosscutting work on digital, covering people, places and business will support work tackling the climate emergency. When it comes to sustainability, digital skills are an enabler, supporting movement into productive and emerging jobs within the region, such as those committed to by the Mayor's 1,000 Green Jobs Pledge.
- Evolution of digital skills to support all sectors will be key to helping businesses develop their sustainability and therefore cut costs, cut carbon emissions, and enhance their productivity. This includes innovation skills required across the 'green sector' to tackle climate challenges.
- The emerging technologies within Place will require a workforce that has the skills to implement and embed them. For example, growth in sustainable infrastructure will increase demand for people who can retrofit fibre and copper wiring (to improve internet access) and install smart homes safely (to help save energy and reduce waste). For this reason, the Combined Authority has approved a £7.5m package of skills support to focus on green and digital skills, for businesses and individuals.
- ⁷⁹West Yorkshire can ensure that it reaches its net-zero target by investing in digital skills. This is achieved through:
 - Digital skills plan will support 'better jobs' and more productivity.
 - Upskill people to retrofit fibre and copper infrastructure and installation of smart homes to help save energy and reduce waste
 - A £7.5m Gainshare programme focused on green and digital skills.

BUSINESS AND ORGANISATIONS

- Digital Interactions: With over 70% of businesses in the region adopting online services, traditional customer-business interactions have changed. This shift has led to a potential reduction in regional travel emissions by up to 5%, making both business and leisure interactions more eco-friendly.
- Going Paperless: As the modern workplace in West Yorkshire evolves, there's been a significant 40% decline in paper usage. Beyond the immediate benefit of saving trees, this transition cuts down the broader environmental footprint associated with paper production.
- Cloud Storage Benefits: As about 60% of local businesses transition to cloud storage, the region experiences energy conservation. These centralised cloud solutions offer up to 30% more energy efficiency compared to conventional data storage, reflecting a broader shift towards green tech solutions.
- Efficient Deliveries: In a region with bustling trade and commerce, the use of digital mapping for deliveries has led to a marked 15% decrease in fuel consumption, optimising routes and making every trip count.
- Greater adoption of digital tech by business will facilitate efficiency and reduce waste e.g. WFH & hybrid work balance

Sustainability –

Case Study

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LoRaWan

As part of the West Yorkshire Flood innovation programme (WY FLIP), of which the CA is a contribution partner, one of the projects being led by Wakefield Council is the Digital surface water flood warning system – LoRaWan (Long Range Wide Area Network).

Surface water flooding is a growing problem across West Yorkshire, it can be unpredictable and fast flowing causing not only damage to properties but also health risks. The aim of this project is to improve the response to surface water flooding events by exploring the use of LoRaWan to provide a flood warning system which uses accurate, real-time information. Rolling out a network of sensors across West Yorkshire would evolve current flood responses to surface water flooding which are reactive to becoming proactive. The network of sensors would transmit real-time surface water levels to a central hub and create early warning systems of potential flooding, helping operational local teams to direct resources to where they are most needed to take preventative action.

Sustainability intended outcomes

Place – Use digital capabilities and opportunities to create a more sustainable and climate ready West Yorkshire.

Work with partners to promote the use of digital and smart infrastructure. Using innovative approaches to reduce energy use.

Work with partners to capture and use Data from smart infrastructure to help with planning and identify blockers to progress. Work towards and support more information sharing.

Build on GIS capabilities to help plan renewable deployment (Solar mapping) Asset mapping, allowing delivery alignment and strategic sequencing to ensure we 'dig once'.

Support the development of High-quality Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) using analysis of robust local, regional, and national datasets to digitally interrogate opportunities regarding energy performance certificates, insulation, and possibilities for heat pump installation etc.

Work with partners to share information and knowledge of the benefits of Smart energy appliances, smart tariffs (Kraken system), online advice.

People and Education – Create a West Yorkshire where everyone has the skills and mindset to innovate for sustainability.

Promote awareness of the benefits of digital skills supporting growing sectors to develop and innovate their sustainability.

Promote schemes that offer green and digital skills training, such as WYCA's £7.5m Gainshare projects focused on Green and Digital

Work with industry to develop digital and green skills that are fit for purpose for the jobs and infrastructure of the future

Offer equitable access to advanced high level digital skills so that all in West Yorkshire have the skills and mindset required to innovate with sustainability as the goal, linking through to schemes such as KTPs

Use digital technologies e.g. social media, to raise awareness of sustainability issues and to encourage people to adopt more sustainable behaviours.

Business and Organisations – Establish West Yorkshire as a beacon of digital sustainability by setting ambitious regional targets, promoting sustainable practices, and incentivising eco-friendly technologies and waste management.

Develop a regional digital sustainability target for businesses and organisations.

Promote digital sustainability initiatives as part of West Yorkshire's business offer.

Green technology incentives for businesses and organisations adopting energy-efficient digital technologies, such as renewable energy sources, low-power computing equipment and energy-efficient data centres.

E-waste recycling programmes for businesses and organisations to responsibly dispose and recycle electronic equipment.




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DATA

Data

'Data is the driving force of the world's modern economies.' It is important that we understand data, know how to use and collect it and store it safely. We need to also understand and support digital data skills, as well as understand the architecture of data.

PLACE

- Whether looking at 5 star reviews, to choosing a restaurant, data has transformed our everyday lives. But we need data and data sources to be secure, safe, good quality, timely to access, and, have integrity.
- Data infrastructure is the systems and services that store, process and transfer data e.g. cloud compute, data centres, servers. Data infrastructure is a vital asset and supports our economy, delivers public services and drives growth.
-  Smart Cities: use data and digital technology to improve decision making and improve the quality of life and resource efficiency. To ensure that data is appropriate and usable we need three layers
 1. A technology base e.g. smartphones, sensors, high-speed communication networks
 2. Specific applications e.g. data translation into alerts, insights and action.
 3. Usage e.g. cities, businesses can use smart technology to improve experiences.
- Data storage: we must have robust systems in place to protect people. We must also make our region data rich to respond to community and business needs.
- AI: Incomplete, insecure or biased data risks failing to solve problems and even worsening or entrenching disadvantage. AI and data will be useful if we ensure data sets are not misused, are transparent and the purpose and use of the data is transparent. Clear accountability, governance and oversight on any decision and projects are also key to ensuring fairness in data usage.

Data

PEOPLE & EDUCATION

- Data Analyst and Data Technician apprenticeship starts are in the top 4 digital apprenticeship starts in the region, demonstrating the strength of the talent pipeline for data in the area. Nevertheless, growth in specialism such as AI and cyber are driving demand for supply of broader data skills at foundational level to feed the pipeline of advanced skills and to provide businesses with foundational skills they need to work with data.
- As data and technology change the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed from people in different sectors also change, and simultaneously increases the demand for technology-driven roles e.g. data architects and scientists. This requires us to have a greater understanding of and support in place for data skills. In 2019 PwC reported that 69% of employers were predicted to demand data and analytics skills from job candidates in 2021, but only 17% of UK workers were “data literate”.
- There is significant demand for data skills with UK companies recruiting for 178,000 to 234,000 roles requiring hard data skills. 48% of businesses are recruiting for roles that require hard data skills but 46% have struggled to recruit for these roles over the last 2 years. The supply of graduates with specialist data skills from universities is limited. While many companies undertake to train their own workers internally, half of all workers surveyed reported they had not received any data skills training within the last two years despite considerable interest in undertaking training.
- Yorkshire and the Humber has better ‘machine learning’ and ‘data literacy’ skills compared to the rest of the UK. Yorkshire and the Humber is strongest, in ‘basic IT skills’ (83%), ‘industry/sector expertise’ (76%) and ‘data literacy’ (75%) skills.
- [As of 2020, DMCS-commission analysis](#) predicts data analysis will be the fastest growing digital skills cluster over the next five years. Exponential growth in the demand for advanced applications of data science and machine learning will occur in all sectors of the economy.
- Use of data and behaviour must be acknowledged. Fear of cyber hacks is one of the barriers stopping those who are digitally excluded from accessing the internet. In the YourVoice survey, when asked, ‘Thinking about people you know that don’t access things online, what are the reasons for this?’, the most common responses were ‘they don’t know how’, ‘they are scared to use the internet.’
- In the YourVoice survey, only 21% of respondents said they were ‘very confident’ to keep themselves safe online, even though 30% consider themselves to be ‘experts’. 13% of respondents said they are not confident to keep themselves safe online, yet only 7% believe themselves to be ‘beginners’ when it comes to using the internet. This shows a discrepancy in the perceived skill levels of general digital usage versus online safety.

BUSINESS

- Effective use of data will benefit businesses through boosting productivity, encouraging competition, creating new businesses and jobs, improved public services and position the UK as the forerunner of the next wave of innovation. Overall, the UK will be highly attractive to multinational companies to situate or headquarter themselves.
- West Yorkshire was recognised as a High Potential Opportunity in Artificial Intelligence and Big Data by the UK Government. With expertise in data analytics draws a range of world-ranging organisations.
- 31% of SMEs in West Yorkshire do not use data to aid decision-making (FSB, 2021). Of the SMEs in West Yorkshire that use data to make business decisions, 59% said that data analytics has helped them to increase sales, 68% said it has helped them to improve customer service, and 64% said it has helped them to reduce costs.
- There is a large disparity in data analytics between small and large businesses. In Yorkshire and Humber, only 22% of businesses with fewer than 10 employees are using data analytics, compared to 63% of businesses with more than 250 employees. (2021)

Data – Case Study

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Data Bootcamp

Bootcamps offer intensive training, targeted at career changers, funded by the DfE. For example, a data bootcamp run by Generation. Generation Data Bootcamp helps build the roadmap to employment and aims to build confidence in its applicants. It provides participants with support via instructors and mentors in 1-1 sessions. Here participants can receive help with personal bio writing and interview preparation in order to help them secure a job. The support on-programme is followed by post-programme support.

Data intended outcomes

Place – Access and use good quality safe data to help make well informed decisions which will benefit West Yorkshire.

Ensure data is collected for the right reasons and used in the right way.

Use place-based data to inform decision making, understanding limitation and biases.

Share data and information where appropriate to help partners and stakeholders to make informed robust evidence-based decisions. Support and lead ethical data usage, by examining our own approaches and building guidelines.

People and Education – Make West Yorkshire the UK's leading region for data skills, supporting businesses and individuals to thrive in the data economy.

Deliver and promote adult skills training and upskilling opportunities in data

Leverage the existing success of specialist data apprenticeships by further promoting the opportunities

100% Digital will deliver community-based interventions that increase confidence and motivation to start engaging with digital (such as cyber security training) as secondary learning.

Raise awareness and confidence of online safety and protection of data for the residents of West Yorkshire.

Business and Organisations – Empower West Yorkshire businesses and organisations with data-driven innovation and collaboration

Facilitate the development of regional data hubs and cloud-based platforms, providing businesses with secure and accessible data storage solutions.

Develop data-sharing agreements to facilitate secure and ethical data sharing among businesses, research institutions, and government agencies, fostering collaboration and innovation.

Promote open data initiatives that encourage businesses to make non-sensitive data available to the public and other organisations, fostering transparency and innovation.

Provide training and resources to help businesses, particularly SMEs, harness the power of data analytics for informed decision-making and improved competitiveness.

Develop initiatives for businesses to undertake data-driven research and innovation projects, encouraging the development of data-driven solutions and products.



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CONVENING

Convening

The role of CA, district partners, central government, the private sector and the public need to be aligned, agile and pull in the same direction in order to fully embed digital in all of West Yorkshire

PLACE

- The West Yorkshire Plan sets out our vision of making West Yorkshire an engine room of ideas where anyone can make a home.
- Our region has many opportunities for growth and is a test bed of innovation and ideas. Our extensive, trusted and established partnerships will harness our assets to generate opportunities for the people and places of the region, thus creating a brighter West Yorkshire that works for all.
- West Yorkshire is ready to negotiate further devolution of funding and powers. The current system is time consuming and stifles innovation due to siloed, restrictive and competitive funding pots. Devolution will drive efficiencies by reducing and removing government bureaucracy. It will further empower the region by enabling local authorities more freedom to deliver for the people.



PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

- **Digital Skills:** The digital learning space is complex and dynamic; therefore, it is crucial to convene stakeholders and work with partners in the area to ensure West Yorkshire is offering comprehensive and navigable digital skills training for all.
- There is currently not a single-entry portal that includes all provision from online only providers, state funded colleges and training organisations, universities, and large employers.

BUSINESS AND ORGANISATIONS

- A key aspect of unlocking potential in our region is to further develop our partnership with national government and the national and international private sector. These relationships can help shape our regional offer to businesses and organisations.
- There is not currently a provision map in one location for all digital initiatives for businesses and organisations in West Yorkshire.

Convening – Case

Study

LDSP

The LDSP played an important role in convening, coordinating and influencing digital skills in West Yorkshire, especially during the pandemic, where the partnership ensured donation of tech to families who needed to get online. The LDSP was also the partnership responsible for the delivery of the Digital Skills Plan, which has influenced the development of £7.5 million of funding for digital, green and skills for business funding. The LDSP also formed a platform of digital advocates and experts to speak directly to central government to influence national policy. The funding for LDSPs has ended, leaving gaps in the landscape and a lack of regional representation to national policy makers, which West Yorkshire Combined Authority intends to fill.

Convening intended outcomes

Place

Support and highlight issues with regulators and central government.

Funding simplification.

Use the Mayor's leadership and relationships to implement positive change, to help service users and customer understand products and get more benefits from digital transformation.

Work with local authority partners and the commercial sector to ensure we deliver the best outcomes for our region.

People and Education

Convene stakeholders and work with partners in the area to ensure that West Yorkshire is offering comprehensive and navigable digital skills training, accessible at all levels, leveraging the success of the Local Digital Skills Partnership.

Business and Organisations

Provide one place for businesses, particularly SMEs and those which have potential to increase their digital capacity, to view digital-related business support information would simplify the vast array of existing platforms to provide this.

Cross-matrix: Establish a group of digital stakeholders across West Yorkshire

This group will:

- Drive delivery of the interventions in development through the Digital Blueprint and oversee their implementation.
- Act as an open forum and intelligence hub where the West Yorkshire tech ecosystem can flag and troubleshoot emerging issues, concerns, or challenges.
- Share best practice by attracting national and global experts.
- Coordinate regional opportunities for the sector, relating to people and education, business and organisations, and place.

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Glossary

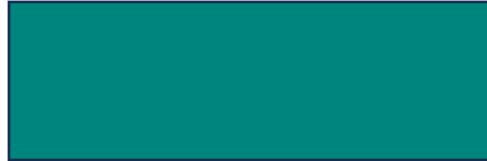
- **Data** – Information that has been processed into a format that machines can read and understand.
- **5G** – The fifth, and most recent, generation of cellular networks. Allows for faster data rates and less transmitting delays.
- **4G** – The fourth generation of cellular networks, preceding 5G.
- **FTTP** – Fibre to the Premises. A broadband technology that provides very fast internet speeds. Allows for a fibre-optic cable installed from the street cabinet into your home.
- **Digital Technologies** – Tools, systems and devices that can generate, create, store or process data. Examples include 5G, Artificial Intelligence, and Video Technologies.
- **Digital Transformation** – The process of using digital technologies to create or modify business processes to meet changing business and market requirements.
- **AI** – Artificial Intelligence. A simulation of human intelligence processes by machines (especially computer systems) to perform cognitive functions.
- **Cyber Security** – Protection of computer systems and networks from online attacks.
- **Hybrid** – A combination of digital and traditional methods.
- **Climate Emergency** – A situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change in hope to avoid irreversible damage to our environment.
- **Smartphone** – A mobile phone with highly advanced features, and can perform many of a computer's functions.
- **Broadband** – Data connection that is able to support interactive services without the use of a telephone line.
- **Connected Places / Smart Cities** – Places which use information and communication technologies to increase operational efficiency.
- **Virtual Reality** – Computer-generated environment with scenes and objects that appear real.
- **Phone Service** – a company or public utility that provides reception in order to transmit information.
- **Smart Cities / Connected Places** – These are communities that make use of digital technologies to deliver new services. Examples of the benefits can include:
 - Improved transportation, traffic management and route finders.
 - Safer communities, such as smart street lighting, technology that captures information in real time (licence plate recognitions).
 - Data and information to help make better decisions such as quickest travel route that avoids traffic.
 - Quicker and easier engagement with businesses, local government and central government, such as getting better deals or access to services.
 - Reduced environmental footprint such as monitoring consumption, sensors to identify poor air quality. Access to technology driven amenities, such as booking tables or an appointment at a hair salon.
 - Economic growth and innovation, attracting investment, create jobs and training opportunities

Key

- Place



- ⁹³ People and Education



- Business and Organisation



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Appendix 2 – Digital Skills Plan, one year on

	Completed delivery	Strategic development
Social Digital Inclusion	Soft launch of West Yorkshire Digital Inclusion programme 1498 essential digital skills qualifications delivered via Adult Education Budget to individuals in West Yorkshire without essential digital skills.	West Yorkshire Digital Inclusion initiative (£.75m Gainshare), <i>detailed in the following section of this paper</i> Digital Inclusion embedded in Community Grants SPF3 call Via the West Yorkshire Digital Inclusion development, Kirklees LA Officers and West Yorkshire JobcentrePlus have developed a prototype business case to leverage DWP Flexible Support Funding for digital inclusion, with the LA facilitating introductions to suitable community organisations to invite applications for a pilot. Coding in prisons Skills Connect course
Workforce for the Future	Secondary school teacher digital CPD and student factsheets Go Higher West Yorkshire digital resources	Digital skills in secondary schools (£1m Gainshare) co-development with Local Authorities Mayor’s Diversity in Digital Initiative (Skills Connect) AI careers advice is to be piloted in Leeds College of Building, Calderdale College, Leeds City College. This chatbot will support learners such as SkillStart adult learners, ESOL students, and groups that are difficult to engage in careers.
SME and Third Sector Growth	Launched Digital Enterprise Range of digital Skills Connect courses procured and delivered (1000 Skills Connect participants) supporting upskilling of individuals to access higher level job opportunities. Mayoral support of external support for digital businesses, e.g. Google Skills to Go, Leeds Digital Ball, Digital Universities	Investment Zone (Digital and Life Sciences) announced for West Yorkshire (£160m) Skills Support for Business focus on digital businesses and Essential Digital Skills for Work upskilling

	<p>Series of Digital Leadership Dinners for influential women in digital roles, hosted by the Mayor, sponsored by Lloyds Bank, Cognizant and Amazon Prime Video</p> <p>WYCA participation in Leeds Digital Festival, including Tech UK Fireside Chat with UK Tech News and Mayor Tracy Brabin</p> <p>West Yorkshire Innovation Festival events focused on digital, including AI for West Yorkshire; AI for Creative Industries; How to use AI industry overview; Halifax Digital Festival</p> <p>37 SMEs overall have enrolled employees on Skills Bootcamps across both Waves 3 and 4 so far with a promotional campaign ongoing to promote the programme</p>	
Simplifying the Digital Offer	<p>Audit of Higher Level Digital Skills demands, in partnership with Yorkshire Universities</p> <p>Mapping of digital clusters and digital skills provision in the region to inform LMI</p> <p>Persuaded Lloyds and IPSOS MORI offer separate West Yorkshire (rather than Yorkshire and Humber)-level data on digital capability (65% in 2022)</p>	Digital as dual focus (with green) of Adult Skills campaign
Impacts	Raised awareness of the need for digital skills and the CA offer of digital skills provision. Larger evidence-base to shape delivery	More incoming provision to increase the numbers of West Yorkshire residents with digital skills

Report to:	Employment and Skills Committee
Date:	15 February 2024
Subject:	Devolved Adult Skills
Director:	Felix Kumi-Ampofo, Director of Inclusive Economy, Skills and Culture
Author:	Pippa Syers, Interim Adult Skills Manager

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

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide updates on the Combined Authority's work on adult skills programmes and ask the Committee for a steer on work in this area going forward.
- 1.2 Specifically, the report will update on:
 - The year 2 performance of Adult Education Budget (AEB)
 - Skills Bootcamp Wave 5
 - Changes to the residential uplift
 - Community Learning allocations

2. West Yorkshire Adult Education Budget

- 2.1 The devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) is targeted at individuals who have low level skills and/or are unemployed or on a low wage. The fund is £66.8 million for academic year 2023/24. It supports learners through a range of programmes and access points, supporting them to increase their skills, and connecting them to further learning and employment opportunities.

- 2.2 The delegated Free Courses for Jobs funding (£4.7 million in academic year 2023/24) is managed alongside AEB, given the significant alignment. This funding supports level 3 (A level equivalent) courses only, with flexibility on 50% of provision while 50% of courses are approved centrally by the Department for Education.
- 2.3 As with 2021/22 the West Yorkshire AEB operated on a substantial scale in 2022/23.
- There were around 81,000 starts (new enrolments on courses) during the year. Nearly three-quarters of starts (73%) were in the Adult Skills strand, a quarter in Community Learning and 2% in Free Courses for Jobs.
 - 44,000 individual learners enrolled on new courses during the year (“new learners”), rising to 47,000 learners participating on the programme when continuing learners from the previous year are also included.
 - Around 55,000 course achievements have been recorded to date during 2022/23.
- 2.4 There has been significant growth in starts and learners during 2022/23 compared with the previous academic year.
- The total number of starts increased by 5% or around 3,900 in absolute terms.
 - The total number of new learners grew by 3% (+1,300).
- 2.5 The growth in starts was driven primarily by the Adult Skills strand (+3,900 or +7%) whilst the number of starts on Community Learning fell by 5% or 1,200 year-on-year. Free Courses for Jobs starts grew by more than 300%, albeit from a small base, reaching a total of 1,500.
- 2.6 An important piece of context is that a 10% funding uplift was implemented during the 2022/23 academic year to offset increasing costs of delivery faced by providers. In spite of this, delivery volumes, in terms of starts and new learners, increased compared with the previous year which is a testament to the effectiveness of the West Yorkshire AEB programme in supporting learners.
- 2.7 All five local authority areas saw growth in the number of residents engaged through Adult Skills in 2022/23 compared with the previous academic year, with the growth rate ranging from 4% in Calderdale to 22% in Kirklees. The number of learners engaged in the remaining authorities grew by 6% in Leeds, 17% in Bradford and 13% in Wakefield.
- 2.8 There has been a significant increase of Free Courses for Jobs utilisation from 20% in 21/22 to over 80% in 22/23. This has resulted in 593 learners achieving a level 3 qualification. For 87% of these learners this was their first level 3 qualification, enabling them to reskill or upskill.
- 2.9 The AEB Strategy detailed the following key outcomes, the table below details how we are applying the funds to address these.

Key Outcomes	Evidence of Impact
Support the unemployed to gain and sustain employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employment status profile of Adult Skills learners shifted slightly, with unemployed individuals accounting for a bigger share in 2022/23. • The proportion of unemployed learners increased from 49% of learners to 51% year on year. • Employed learners accounted for a reduced share, decreasing from 35% to 33% • The proportion of economically inactive learners remained the same at 14%.
Unlock progression opportunities and career adaptability through skills, particularly for those on low wages and with insecure work.	<p>The devolved AEB programme makes special provision for learners in employment who are paid below the Real Living Wage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6,660 Adult Skills starts were supported through the low wage pilot during the academic year. • A further 510 starts were supported through the low wage offer for Free Courses for Jobs (level 3) learners.
Make learning more inclusive to support disadvantaged residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion of learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability and/or health problem remained the same at 17%. There is recognition across providers that this number is not a true reflection as learners do not always disclose whether they have a learning difficulty or disability. Analysing Learning Support usage alongside this will demonstrate a more accurate picture of engagement. • The proportion of learners residing in the most acutely deprived neighbourhoods (IMD decile 1) was 41%, the same percentage as in 2021/22.
Increase the supply of skills to support key sectors in West Yorkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecoms and Rail Engineer skills training delivery with industry links and high levels of progression into jobs. 85% of individuals who achieved a qualification in Telecoms Engineering gained employment. • Collaboration with DWP has led to bespoke skills training in construction, logistics and security with progression targets into employment.
Improve West Yorkshire's resilience by identifying and delivering the skills needed for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital skills are increasingly essential in the modern workplace. • Starts on Essential Digital Skills courses, which the target the fundamental skills needed for work and life, grew by

	<p>more than 80% compared with the previous year, rising to 1,290.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The broader digital subject area saw the biggest increase in starts during 2022/23, growing by 1,600 across all programme strands compared with the previous year and increasing its share of total starts from 6% in 2021/22 to 8% in 2022/23.
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2.10 Skills Bootcamps

Approval has been granted at the Combined Authority Board on the 7th of December 2023, to proceed with an additional year's funding of the Department for Education grant-funded Skills Bootcamp programme, with delivery due to start from April 2024.

- 2.11 The approval at Combined Authority Board followed a request for permission to apply for the funding opportunity, to upskill 1,000 additional learners and to accept £5,000,182.38 of grant funding to support learners across West Yorkshire. The funding can be used to provide upskilling support across a number of core sector areas, stipulated nationally by the Department for Education, including Digital, Construction, Creative and Design and Project Management.
- 2.12 Engagement has taken place with Local Authority colleagues to ringfence £450,000 of funding per Local Authority area, and to develop a Skills Bootcamps programme, representative of the skills needs within their local area.
- 2.13 This ringfenced allocation will either be procured by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority on behalf of Local Authority areas or will be granted to Local Authorities to procure courses. Ongoing engagement will ensure that there is no duplication in provision across the West Yorkshire region and that the offer for learners is clear and accessible.

2.14 Residential Uplift

Northern College is one of two residential Colleges in England which receive 4.7 uplift for eligible individuals who stay residentially. Residential uplift has been under national review for two years, and on 16 October 2023 the DfE confirmed that a phased reduction of the 4.7 uplift will be implemented.

- 2.15 Northern College receives an AEB allocation to support West Yorkshire learners who would benefit from an immersive residential adult experience.

2.16 The AEB Funding Rules mean that West Yorkshire will mirror the national approach and provide:

- A continuation of the residential uplift of 4.7 for new learners in 2023/24,
- Replacement of the residential uplift with a nightly rate in 2024/25, and
- A commitment that the College will not be financially disadvantaged through changes to the funding regime in both 2023/24 and 2024/25 and will receive AEB indicative allocations for the remainder of both years.

2.17 It is proposed that additional conditions are applied, including:

- Reviewing Community Learning throughout 2023/24 to measure impact and value for money.
- Reviewing Community Learning Allocation in 2024/25.
- Exploring cross border arrangements with South Yorkshire MCA for 2024/25.

2.18 This approach will maintain some stability for the provider in line with ESFA and South Yorkshire MCA, while also providing clarity and a timeline for action.

2.19 Community Learning

The Employment and Skills Committee recommended in July 2023 to move towards a needs-based methodology for allocating Community Learning funding at local authority level. There is a particular need to address historic under-investment in Kirklees and Bradford as highlighted in the Community Learning review.

2.20 Various indicators have been explored, including population, deprivation, rurality, those with no or low qualifications, unemployed/economically inactive and those limited by long term health condition. This data highlights significant under-investment in Kirklees and Bradford, with low or no engagement on Community Learning provision across several wards despite high levels of deprivation and low skills attainment.

2.21 Targeted growth funding is already allocated to address “cold spots” in provision through the AEB Responsiveness pot which will be used to address this issue, working with all Community Learning providers across these areas to address the needs.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 Skills development is a critical component in tackling the climate emergency implications. Each adult skills programme provided by the Combined Authority, and the majority commissioned nationally provide a level of support in increasing green skills.

3.2 The decision and discussion topics of this paper do not pose any immediate change to climate change curriculum or programmes.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 All adult skills programmes aim to support those residents who have a skills deficit and need to access learning opportunities to progress them towards further learning, employment or a better way of life. Through delegated and devolved funding, we specifically target investment of funds towards disadvantaged areas and underrepresented groups where the skills deficit is most pronounced.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

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 notes the progress of the devolved Adult Education Budget and provides any steer on how performance could be improved or what changes it feels may be needed in the period ahead.

11. Background Documents

[West Yorkshire AEB Strategy \(September 2020\)](#)

12. Appendices

None.

Report to:	Employment and Skills Committee
Date:	15 February 2024
Subject:	Skills Support for Businesses
Director:	Felix Kumi Ampofo, Director of Inclusive Economy, Skills and Culture
Author:	Michelle Burton, Head of Employment and Skills

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 update the Committee on the development and delivery of activity to support employers to create a pipeline of talent and to encourage employer investment in skills.
- 1.2 To seek the Committee's views regarding the development of support for emerging skills (particularly digital and green) through co-investment with employers.

2. Information

Context

Key points regarding economic and labour market context for this paper are summarised below (and set out in more detail in the appendix):

- 2.1 Although there are now signs of cooling, the West Yorkshire labour market remains relatively tight, with high levels of vacancies (job postings) in historic terms and a low ratio of unemployed claimants to vacancies. Employers also continue to report recruitment difficulties.

- 2.2 The strongest demand in the labour market is currently for higher skilled technical roles, including Information Technology professionals and Engineering professionals, as well as business roles, including sales and marketing and finance professional occupations. There are also large numbers of vacancies for teaching roles. Lower down the occupational spectrum, there is strong demand in respect of retail, administrative and caring personal service occupations.
- 2.3 Skills mismatches are at an all-time high, with more than a third of vacancies in West Yorkshire difficult to fill due to a lack of candidates with the required skills. The situation is even more acute in sectors like Construction. Employers also face skills deficiencies among their existing staff – skills gaps – and these are also at historically high levels.
- 2.4 The evidence shows that a small proportion of employers use further and higher education institutions as a source of support to address their skills needs, with most employers using private providers for external training. The key barrier to engaging with both further and higher education is a perceived lack of relevance of the curriculum offer and of the subject matter of specific courses.
- 2.5 Higher skilled workers in digital, engineering and health disciplines are in strong demand in the local labour market and are susceptible to acute skill shortages. Higher skilled STEM workers in disciplines like engineering, together with skilled tradespeople in construction, electrical trades etc are also required to support the development of the green economy but are already in short supply. In addition, many workers lack the digital skills that are increasingly important to proficiency across a wide range of roles. These issues are examined in further detail in Appendix 1.

Emerging skills

- 2.6 Funding of £1.5m has been secured to support emerging skills (particularly digital and green) through co-investment with businesses to March 2026 and options for the implementation of this funding will be brought to this Committee at a future date. In order to shape this thinking, Committee members are asked to provide a steer on how best this funding can be targeted to address high demand from employers for highly skilled technical roles, skills mismatches and projected growth in emerging skill areas.

Fair Work Charter

- 2.7 The Mayor of West Yorkshire pledged to introduce a Charter to recognise the many employers in the region that are committed to Fair Work, and to encourage others to follow suit. The Charter was formally launched on 24th November 2023 in Bradford with a number of early adopters and Leaders sharing the stage to promote the benefits of Fair Work to employers and employees.
- 2.8 Over 40 businesses have signed up as early adopters across West Yorkshire so far. They are across sectors including manufacturing and food; creative and digital industries; health and medical; education; voluntary, community, social enterprise; Public Sector;

Police; Public Transport and wholesale food warehouse and distribution. The delivery partner to support business adoption is now on board and progress in rolling this out across the region will begin.

Strategic business/education engagement

- 2.9 The regional CBI has offered to co-host with the Combined Authority an event in Feb/March to convene a group of employers to articulate current and future skills needs. The agenda will include regional labour market, a think-piece on future of work the scoping of co-investment models for emerging skills, and an overview of the current regional offer to businesses.

Skills advisory support

- 2.10 The part ESF-funded Skills for Growth programme has now completed and is being closed down. The programme supported 544 employers over 3 years to engage with the full breadth of the education and training landscape via an impartial diagnostic approach. An evaluation is underway and early findings are that businesses supported through the programme generated an average of 5.7 jobs each, of which 41% (or 2.3 jobs per business) could be attributed to the programme. This results in £18.3 million of GVA and represents £10.18 of benefits for every pound spent delivering the programme, representing very high value for money.
- 2.11 Following the success of the Skills for Growth programme, eight Business Skills Advisers have been retained by the Combined Authority to provide impartial advice and support to employers to engage with education skills and training in order to create a pipeline of talent and address recruitment challenges. The advisers are full embedded in the wider business support landscape and will work closely with business-facing staff in Local Authorities as well as the LSIP team currently being recruited by the Chambers of Commerce.
- 2.12 The Mayor's Graduate Pilot will soon be commissioned to support SMEs to recruit graduates, addressing the lack of understanding among residents of the career opportunities in SMEs and improving local businesses' ability to attract graduate talent.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 While there are no climate emergency implications directly arising from this report, support for emerging skills – particularly green – is a key focus of business engagement. This includes the implementation of the Mayor's Green Jobs Taskforce.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 While there are no inclusive growth implications directly arising from this report, targets are being developed to ensure effective reach of businesses located in the most deprived

neighbourhoods in West Yorkshire. The Fair Work Charter in particular aims to encourage employers to adopt more inclusive employment practices.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 While there are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report, programmes aim to encourage employers to adopt more inclusive recruitment practices and to recruit a more diverse pool of talent.

6. Financial Implications

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

7. Legal Implications

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

8. Staffing Implications

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

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 That the Employment and Skills Committee notes the update on the development and delivery of activity to support employers to recruit a pipeline of talent and to encourage employer investment in skills.
- 10.2 That the Committee discusses the potential scope of funding to support co-investment by employers in emerging skills.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

- 12.1. West Yorkshire Business Board and the Mayor's Business Advisor

Appendix 1 - West Yorkshire Business Board and the Mayor's Business Advisor

The outcome of the LEP review and the changes to statutory requirements have provided an opportunity to review how the Mayor and the Combined Authority engage with the private sector. The LEP Board has provided a key convening role over the years to ensure the voice of the private sector is heard, particularly around business issues. The thematic committees, including the Employment and Skills Committee, also provide this strong connection with the private sector, ensuring the private sector voice is heard across a range of agendas and within the decision-making process.

Extensive engagement has taken place with new and existing 'LEP Board' members and business representative groups to inform and shape a new public private partnership.

- The LEP Board is now known as the West Yorkshire Business Board (WYBB).
- Some meetings of the Board are to be held in private to allow for more informal discussions and debates. Supporting notes will be prepared to support these meetings. Reports will be taken to committees and the Combined Authority on the outcome of these discussions. In line with the current requirements of Article 10 of the Constitution, the Board will hold a minimum of one meeting each year in public.
- The WYBB will provide thought leadership on a range of regional issues, focusing on business and the economy.

To ensure the Mayor and the Combined Authority are maximising engagement channels with a range of larger business and thought leaders, it is planned to establish a Mayor's Council. Chaired by the Mayor, it is proposed that this will convene some of the largest and most influential businesses and stakeholders in the region to provide the voice of large business in the region.

To support the above, a new Mayoral Business Advisor (MBA) has been appointed to provide leadership and advice on a range of business issues. Mandy Ridyard, as new MBA will also chair the West Yorkshire Business Board meetings.

In addition to this new public private partnership to replace the LEP Board, and the new Mayoral Council, a Business Engagement Framework is being developed to further strengthen all engagement with the private sector.

At the last meeting of the LEP Board and first meeting of the new business board, members particularly highlighted recruitment in a tight labour market as a key issue facing employers of all kinds. They were keen to work with the Employment and Skills Panel to explore how business-education collaboration could help facilitate the development of the next generation of talent.

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Appendix 1

Evidence base on Skills Support for Business

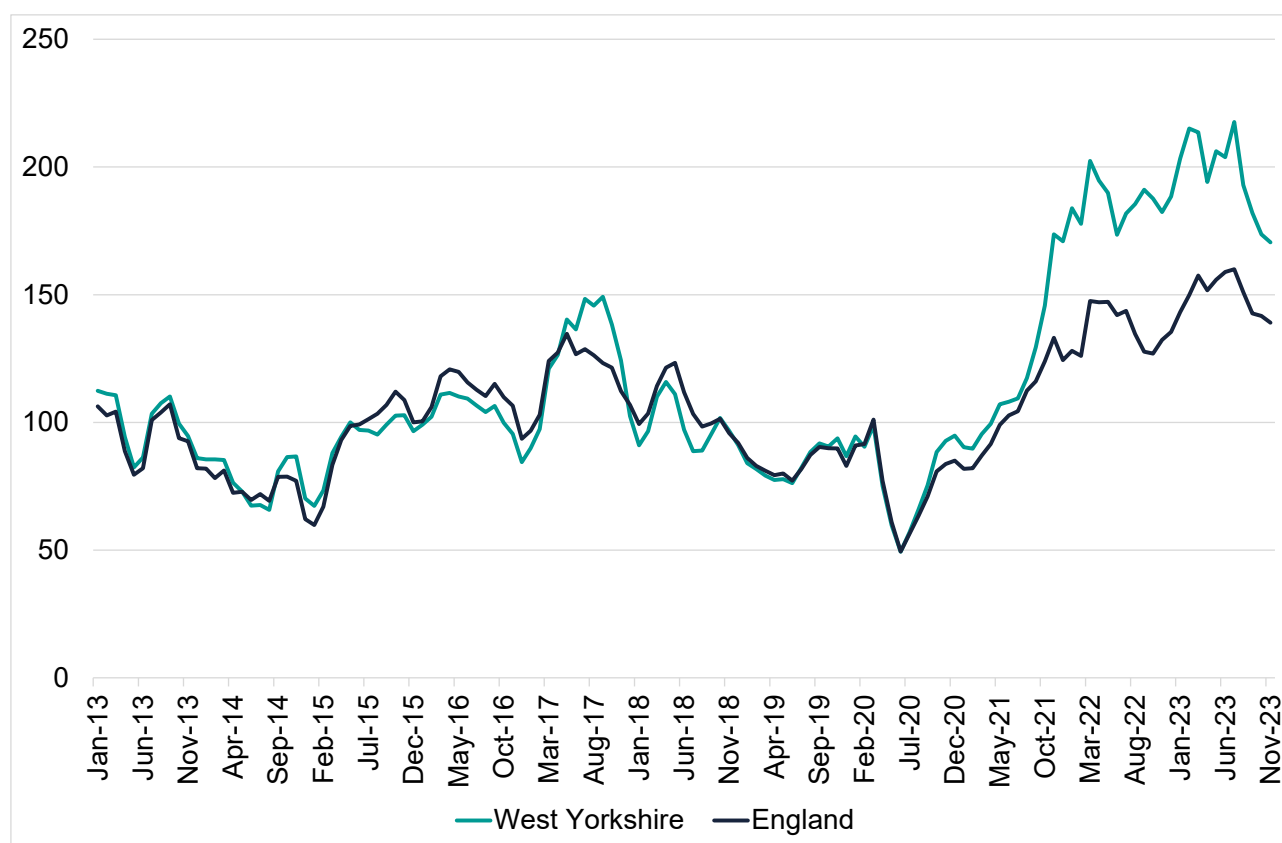
This appendix provides additional detail with regard to the issues raised in the context section of the paper around tightness of the labour market, the current profile of demand in the labour market, skills mismatches and employer engagement with the skills system.

Tightness of labour market

Although there are now signs of cooling, the West Yorkshire labour market remains relatively tight with high levels of vacancies (job postings) in historic terms and a low ratio of unemployed claimants to vacancies. Employers also continue to report recruitment difficulties.

The monthly count of online job postings, both in West Yorkshire and nationally, fell sharply during the pandemic but soon began a sustained recovery, reaching a peak level in summer 2023. Since then, the trend has been downwards.

Figure1: Index of monthly count of online job postings, three month moving average (2012 = 100)



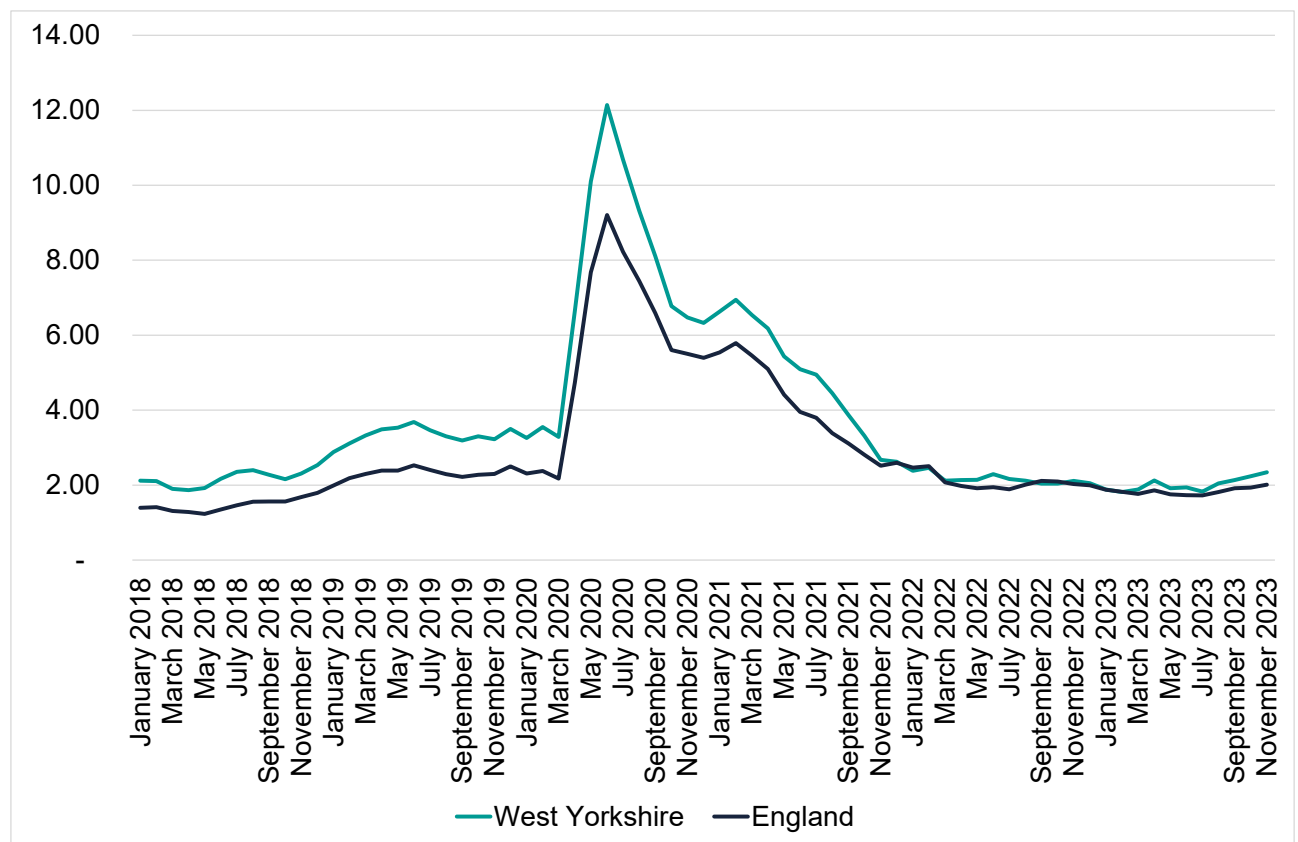
Source: Lightcast

In West Yorkshire, the level of postings as of November 2023 is around a fifth lower than at its peak and 10% lower than a year earlier in November 2020. Nonetheless, postings remain relatively high in historic terms and are around 80% higher than before the pandemic (November 2019). West Yorkshire has also performed more strongly than the wider national (England) picture; the latter being just over 50% higher in terms of level of postings compared with November 2019.

The ratio of the number of claimant unemployed people and the number of online job postings provides an insight into the tightness of the labour market, showing the number of jobless people who are actively seeking and available for work relative to the number of opportunities open to them.

This shows that at the height of the pandemic the number of claimants per job opening soared to more than 10 but quickly fell, as the economy re-opened, to around two in early 2022. This tightening of the labour market was driven by a steady fall in the claimant count in West Yorkshire from March 2021 onwards combined with growth in the count of online job postings. The ratio of postings to claimants has remained fairly constant since then, although there are tentative signs of softening due to a modest increase in claimants since late 2022 coupled with a decline in the monthly count of job postings.

Figure2: Trend in number of claimant unemployed per online job posting



Source: ONS and Lightcast

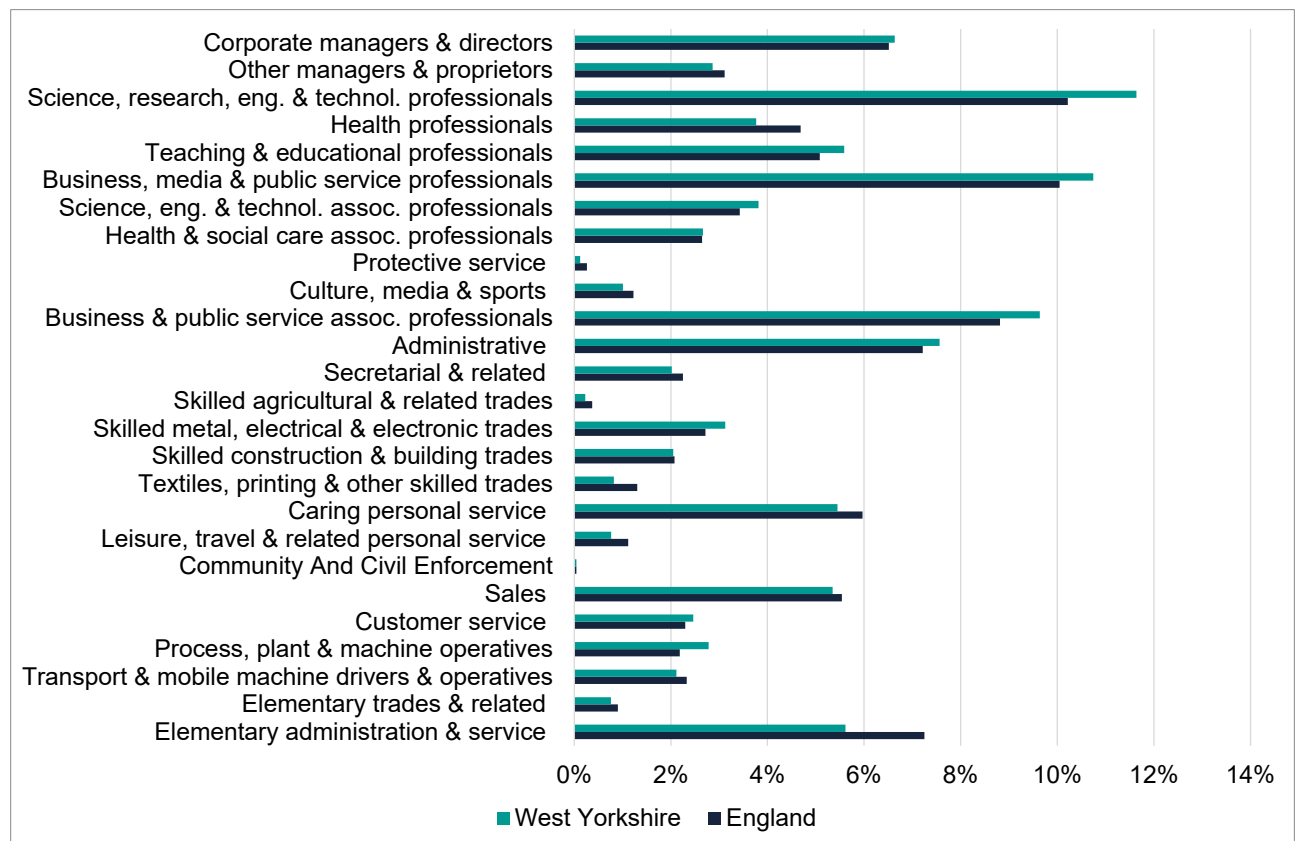
As the chart shows, the national labour market consistently had a lower number of claimants per job posting prior to the pandemic but that there has been a convergence between the West Yorkshire and national ratios in early 2022, which has been broadly sustained since then.

The strongest demand in the labour market is currently for higher skilled technical roles. Higher skilled occupations are ranked highest in terms of volume of postings

As the figure, below, shows, the occupational categories with the greatest number of postings in the last year are mostly higher skilled, professional and associate professional groups, with the top ranked being Science, research, engineering and technology professionals, Business, media and public service professional and Business and public

service associate professionals. Administrative occupations are ranked fourth, reflecting the high level of employment in this occupation within West Yorkshire.

Figure: Occupational profile of online job postings, December 2022 to November 2023



Source: Lightcast

Drilling down into these top-ranked categories in more detail provides a picture of the specific occupations and associated skills that are in greatest demand:

- *Science, research, engineering and technology professionals* are driven primarily by strong demand for *Engineering Professionals* and *Information Technology Professionals*)
- *Business, Media and Public Service Professionals* are driven by strong demand for *Legal Professionals, Architects / Surveyors* and *Welfare Professionals*).
- *Business and Public Service Associate Professionals* is largely based on postings for *Finance Associate Professionals, Business Associate Professionals, Sales, Marketing and Related Associate Professionals* and *HR, Training and Other Vocational Associate Guidance Professionals*).

Skills mismatches

Skills mismatches are at an all-time high, with more than a third of vacancies in West Yorkshire difficult to fill due to a lack of candidates with the required skills. The situation is even more acute in sectors like Construction. Employers also face skills deficiencies among their existing staff – skills gaps – and these are also at historically high levels.

Skill shortages occur when employers find it hard to fill their vacancies because the available candidates lack the necessary skills, qualifications and experience to do the job.

The Department for Education’s Employer Skills Survey provides information on the number of vacancies and skill shortage vacancies that employers have at a single point in time.

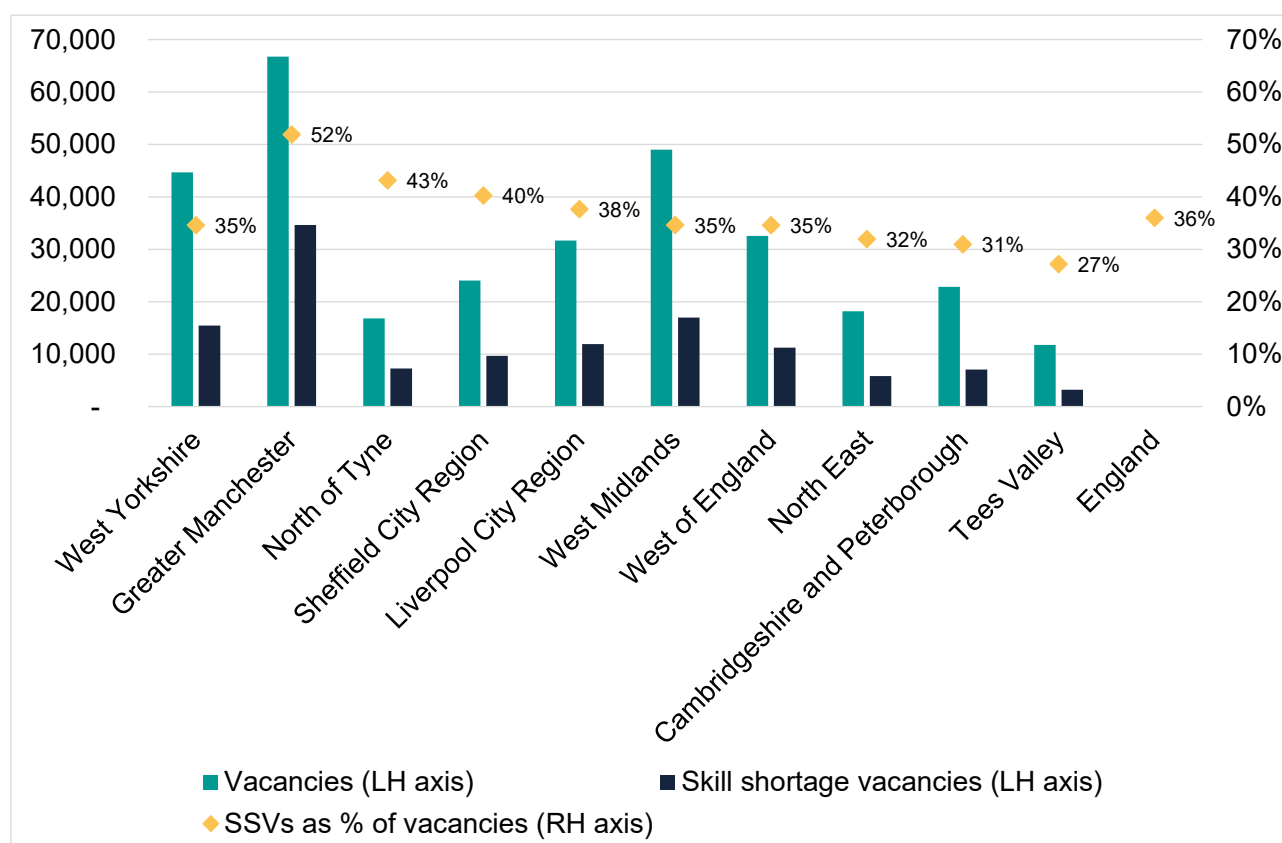
The latest figures from the Employer Skills Survey relate to 2022. It is important to note that the UK economy was still emerging from the effects of the pandemic at this point. The period was characterised by high levels of recruitment activity and worker shortages as employers sought to rebuild their staffing complements.

More than a third of all vacancies were skill shortage vacancies in West Yorkshire in 2022

According to the 2022 Employer Skills Survey there were 15,500 skill shortage vacancies in West Yorkshire at the time of the survey, with 11% of employers reporting one or more shortage.

The number of skill shortage vacancies nearly doubled from its previous 2019 level of 8,100, while the incidence of shortages reported by employers increased from 6% to 11% for the same period.

Figure: Vacancies and skill shortage vacancies by Mayoral authority



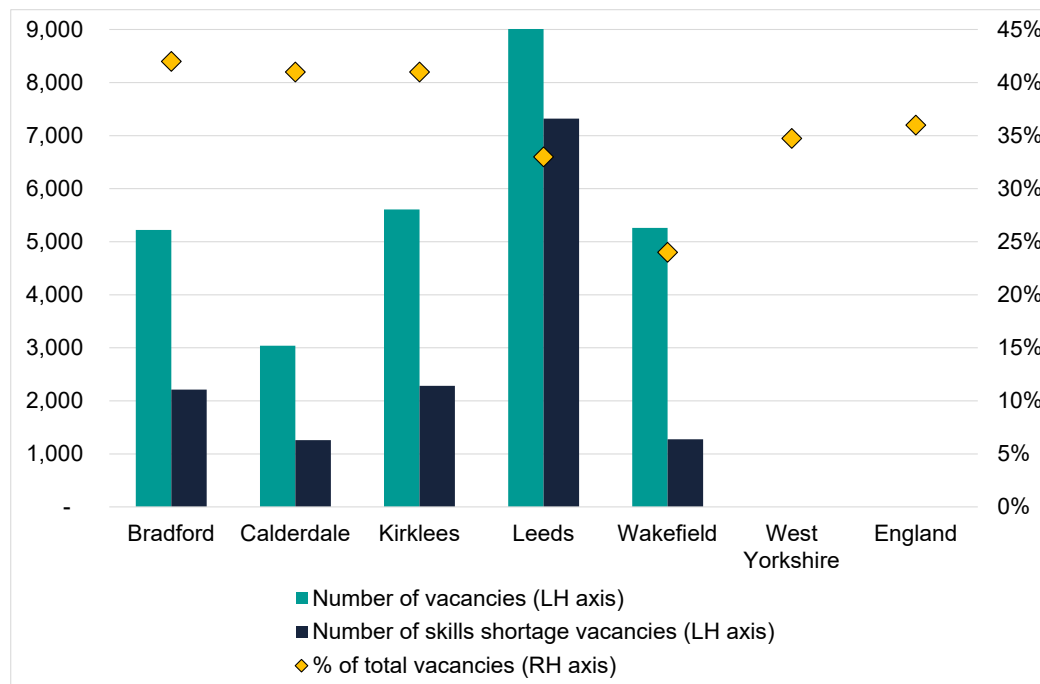
Source: Employer Skills Survey, 2022

More than a third (35%) of all vacancies in West Yorkshire were skill shortage vacancies, similar to the national average of 36% and a substantial increase on the previous estimate (for 2019) which was only 24%, reflecting the tightening of the labour market in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Data at local authority level indicate that in Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees skill shortages accounted for more than 40% of vacancies, above the averages for West Yorkshire and

England. Leeds was similar to the national average and Wakefield was lowest, but still with a skill shortage rate of 25%.

Figure: Vacancies and skill shortage vacancies by West Yorkshire local authority

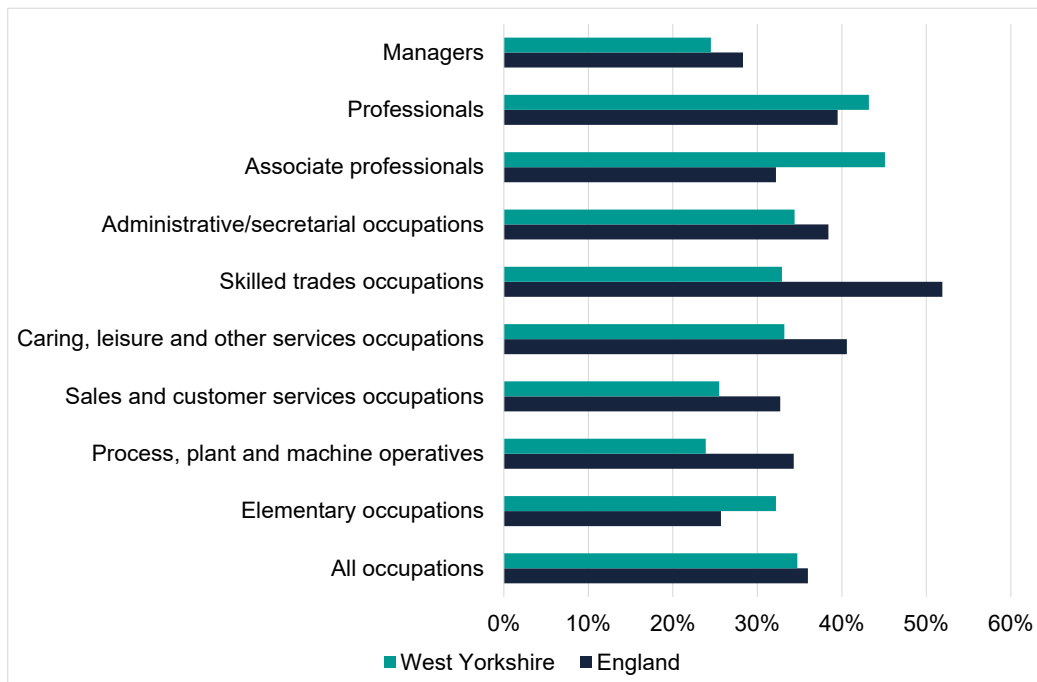


Source: *Employer Skills Survey, 2022*

The latest data show that shortages have a significant prevalence across all occupational categories, ranging from 24% for *Process, plant and machine operatives* to 45% for *Associate professional and technical occupations*.

Shortages are most acute in West Yorkshire for jobs that require higher level technical skills, specifically *Associate professional and technical* and *Professional* occupations. These occupations often require skills that take an extended period to develop and, in some cases, depend on training and development in a workplace setting.

Figure3: Skill shortage vacancies as a proportion of total vacancies by occupational major group



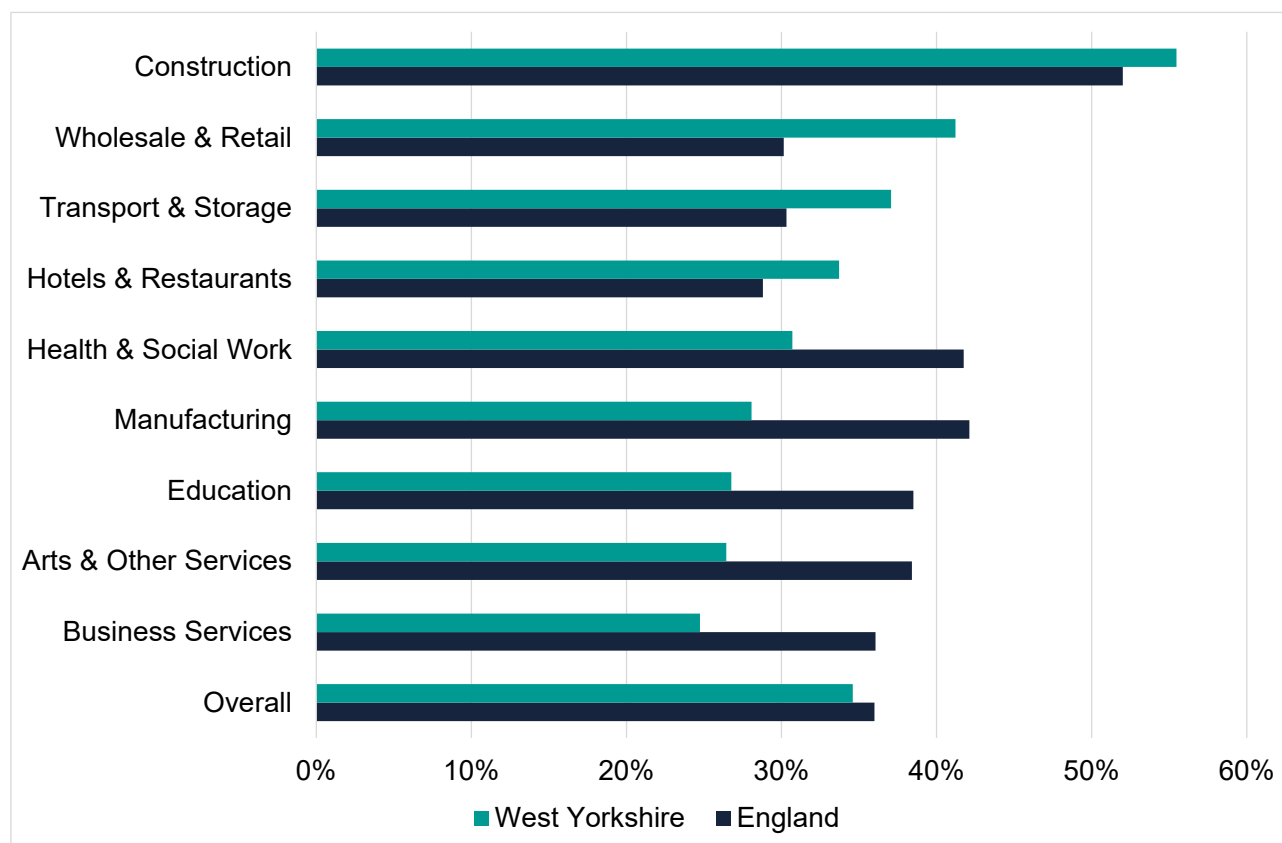
Source: *Employer Skills Survey, 2022*

The main difference between West Yorkshire and the national picture is in respect of Skilled Trades, an occupational area with a long history of acute skill shortages due to the same difficulties in developing required skills as highlighted above. The prevalence of shortages is much higher at national level for Skilled Trades at more than 50% but still substantial at around a third in West Yorkshire.

Construction has the highest prevalence of skill shortage vacancies both in West Yorkshire and nationally, accounting for more than 50% of vacancies in the sector. Shortages have a substantial presence across all sectors: even in Business Services, which has the lowest prevalence, around a quarter of vacancies are classed as skill shortages.

The pattern of shortages by sector differs from the national picture in West Yorkshire. For example, the prevalence is lower in Manufacturing and Health and social care but higher in Wholesale and retail and Transport and storage.

Figure: Skill shortage vacancies as a proportion of total vacancies by industry sector, 2022



Source: *Employer Skills Survey, 2022*

With regard to the skills that employers found difficult to obtain from applicants, specialist, occupation-specific skills and knowledge required to perform the role are the type most commonly highlighted (for 59% of shortage vacancies). A deficit of technical or practical skills of some kind is highlighted by employers with reference to more than 80% of skill shortage vacancies. However, other skills including customer handling, team-working and time management were also highlighted.

Skills gaps are another form of skills mismatch that come about when existing employees within an organisation are not fully proficient in their job and are not able to make the required contribution to the achievement of business objectives. The pattern of skills gaps provides a useful indication of employers' needs in terms of workforce development.

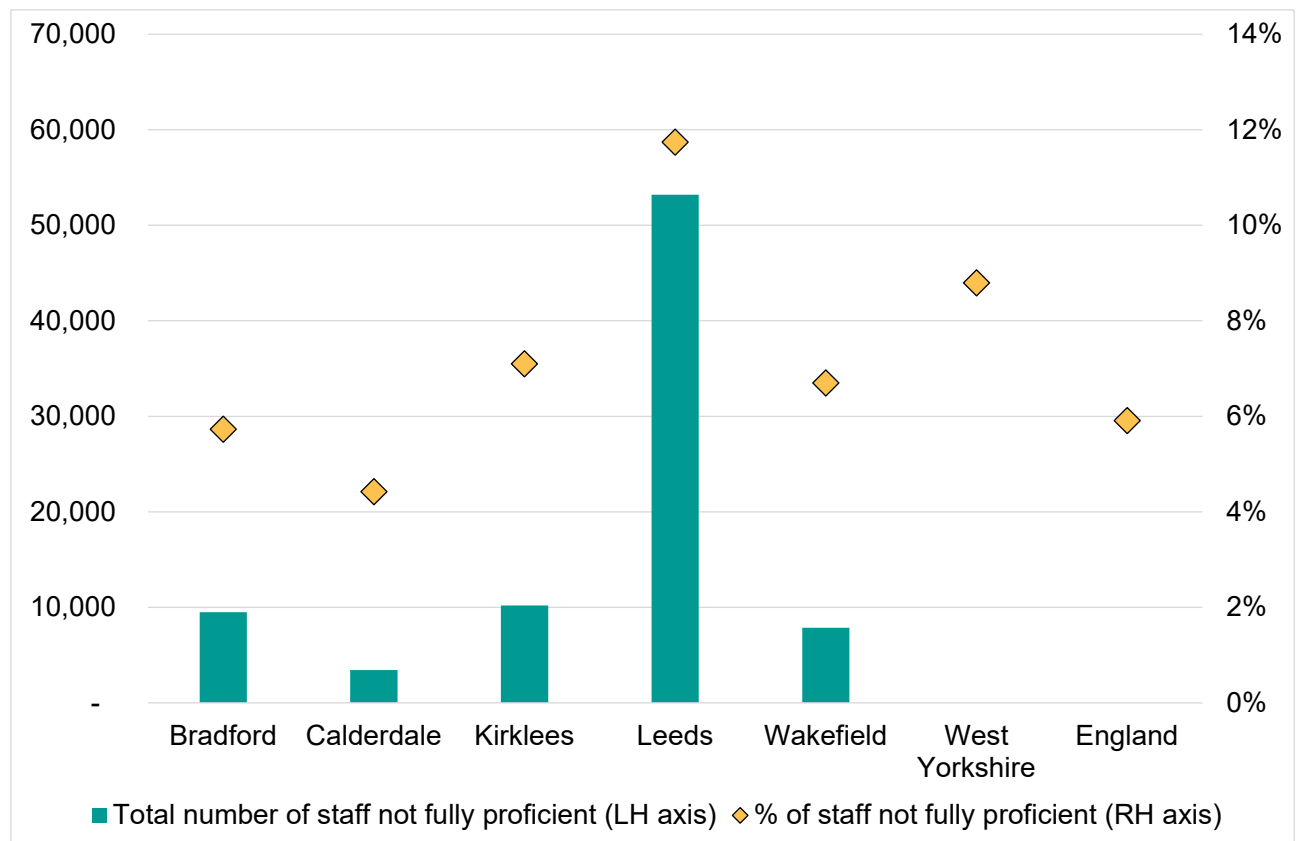
According to the latest data, 19% of employers in West Yorkshire report that they have one or more skills gaps. There are approximately 90,000 gaps, equivalent to 9% of total employees in employment. This is well above the national average in terms of both the proportion of employers (England average: 15%) and staff (6%) affected.

The incidence and prevalence of skills gaps remained fairly constant within West Yorkshire between 2011 and 2019, but increased in 2022 from 15% to 19% and 5% to 9% respectively.

The prevalence of skills gaps (as a proportion of total staff) is uneven across West Yorkshire. Not only does Leeds have the highest volume of skills gaps, which is to be expected in view of the large size of its employment base, it also has the highest prevalence

of gaps with 12% of staff estimated to lack full proficiency. This is well above that average for the region of 9% and double the national average of 6%.

Figure4: Volume and prevalence of skills gaps by local authority



Source: *Employer Skills Survey 2022*

Wakefield and Kirklees are also slightly above the national average in terms of the proportion of staff lacking full proficiency, with Bradford similar to the average and Calderdale somewhat below.

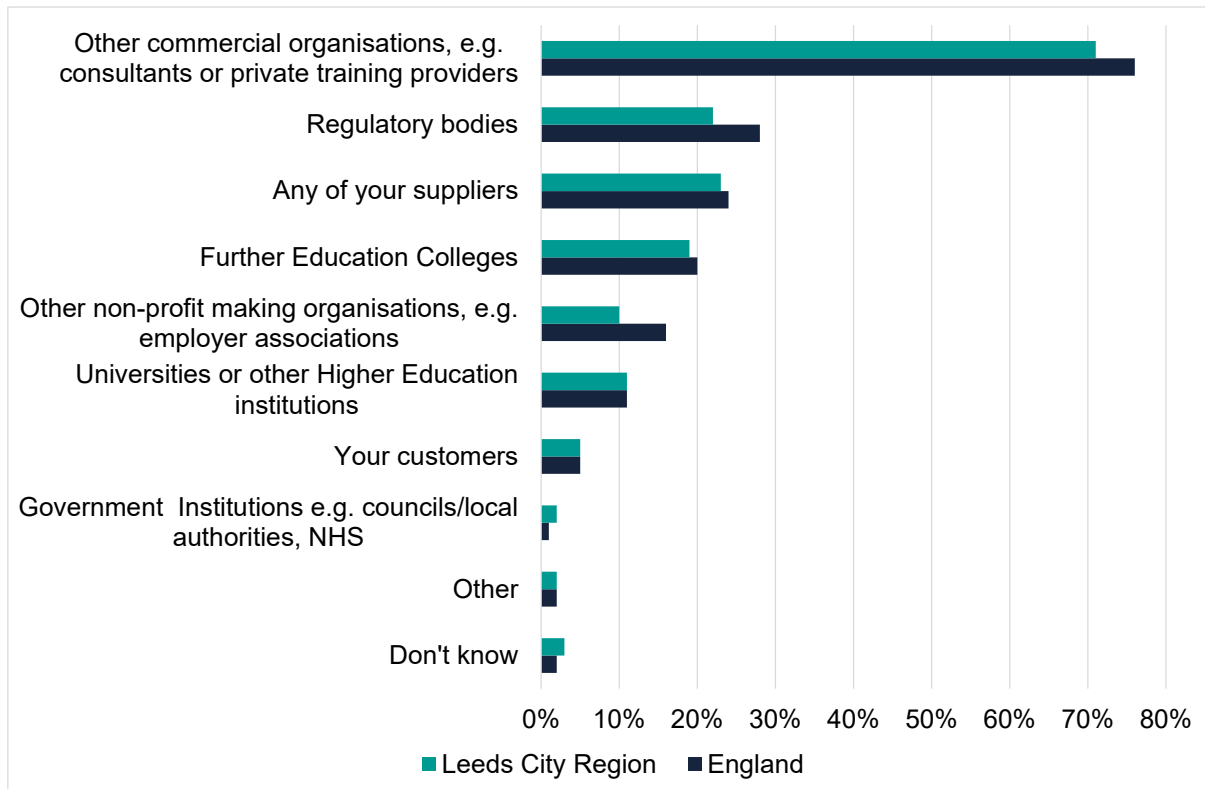
Employer engagement with the skills system

Survey data indicates that a majority of employers in the region use private sector / commercial sources of support to meet their external training needs.

Around a third (32%) of employers in West Yorkshire invest in externally provided training, with the remainder relying on internal training exclusively or do not provide training at all. Among those employers who do draw on external training, around 70% say that they use commercial organisations such as consultants or private providers.

Just under one-fifth (19%) use further education colleges and 11% use higher education institutions, including universities. In total, 23% of employers say they use any public source to meet their external training needs. The likelihood of employers using these sources of training at West Yorkshire level is similar to the national average.

Figure: External training sources used in last 12 months: % of employers who provide external training, West Yorkshire



Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022

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Report to:	Employment and Skills Committee
Date:	15 February 2024
Subject:	Business Plan summary 2024/25
Director:	Felix Kumi Ampofo, Director of Inclusive Economy, Skills and Culture
Author:	Michelle Burton, Head of Employment and Skills

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 share with the Committee the headline business plan priorities for Inclusive Economy, Skills and Culture directorate of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, recently agreed by the Combined Authority Board.

2. Information

- 2.1 Based on an outcome-led approach introduced in 2023/24, the service-area business plans are led by a series of multi-year outcomes as set by the outcome-Directorates, which align with the Corporate Objectives and ultimately the five aims of the West Yorkshire Plan. For the employment and skills agenda, this outcome is: *through system leadership, co-investment by employers, and strategic commissioning, everyone across West Yorkshire, particularly the most disadvantaged, can access high quality support and training to prepare for and make progress in their careers, reach their full potential, and lead healthy and happy lives.*
- 2.2 The planning process for this cycle has been led by Directors setting out the multi-year outcomes that drive each directorate's focus of work.

2.3 A 'plan on a page' for the Inclusive Economy, Skills and Culture outcome-Directorate is provided here for the Committee's attention.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 Support for emerging skills – particularly green – is a key focus of the business plan.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

4.1 Targets are in place to proactively engage the most disadvantaged groups in West Yorkshire.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 Targets are in place to proactively engage with diverse 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 Employment and Skills Committee notes the plan on a page and provides any steer deemed necessary to deliver agreed outputs and outcomes.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

12.1. Appendix 1 – Outcome Focused Directorate – Inclusive Economy, Skills and Culture

OUTCOME FOCUSED DIRECTORATE | INCLUSIVE ECONOMY SKILLS AND CULTURE

ENABLING A DIVERSE, SKILLED WORKFORCE AND ACCESSIBLE LEARNING FOR ALL

DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INNOVATION TO ENABLE GOOD JOBS

CHAMPIONING AND INVESTING IN CULTURE, SPORT AND CREATIVITY

MULTI-YEAR OUTCOMES

- A thriving and globally recognised business and innovation ecosystem where collaboration and partnerships across the public and private sectors enables all individuals and businesses to be healthy and succeed within a community of fair, responsible and purposeful employers.
- Through system leadership, co-investment by employers, and strategic commissioning, everyone across West Yorkshire, particularly the most disadvantaged, can access high quality support and training to prepare for and make progress in their careers, reach their full potential, and lead healthy and happy lives.
- More people (above the national average) participate in and enjoy culture, heritage, and sport with increased co-investment in assets and infrastructure and elimination of access barriers.
- Create a regenerative economy via a progressive and persuasive response to the climate emergency which delivers a shift in mindset, prioritises sustainability and enables investment in green technologies and services that support a just transition and puts us on track to achieving a net-zero carbon economy by 2038.
- Based on the Economic Strategy, agree the Combined Authority's core offer to West Yorkshire with regards to skills and training, business and innovation, culture, heritage, and Sport and how net zero targets will be achieved in a fair, just and equitable way which enables the economy to thrive and improve quality of life for all.

OUTPUTS EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

System leadership and strategic partnerships. Articulate a radical, innovative, and appropriate approach to the employment and skills challenges and opportunities as part of the Economic strategy. Articulate and agree how the employment and skills opportunities and implications of transformational programmes like Mass Transit, Bus Reform and Better Homes Hub will be fully explored and exploited.

Strategic commissioning, provider management and assurance of Adult Skills. Support circa 50k adults to upskill or retrain, with 504k qualifications achieved and 9,700 accessing or progressing into work or training (targets embedded to specifically support ethnic minority groups, learners with a disability or learning difficulty, female learners, and unemployed learners). Review the Adult Skills offer (commence Q1) to address labour market mismatches and emerging skills needs; pilot innovative approaches; stimulate demand for training and support so that more adults choose to engage, particularly the most disadvantaged.

All-age careers. Transforming the careers destinations of people across West Yorkshire (particularly targeting diverse and disadvantaged groups): support over 180 schools to provide high quality careers education; co-design and implement an all-age careers offer; establish the Combined Authority's role in primary / early years.

Skills for employers. Provide an impartial advisory service for employers, supporting them to engage with education and training to create a talent pipeline; continue to operate a levy transfer service to support small to medium enterprise (SME) apprenticeships; launch the Mayor's Graduate Pilot (appoint supplier Q1) and targeted funding for employers to support digital transformation and green skills; 1000 engagements through Skills for Business.

Employment support. Ensure more people can move towards, secure and progress within sustained and meaningful employment, delivering targeted employment support at the most appropriate level (particularly to diverse and disadvantaged groups); supporting 4,300 adults to access employment or self-employment; establish the CA's role as a system leader on the employment and adult skills agenda, including establishing appropriate governance across region.

OUTPUTS BUSINESS INNOVATION AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

Thought leadership. Develop, launch, and implement the Economic Strategy by end of Q2 through consultation and engagement with diverse stakeholders across and beyond the region. Articulate and agree how opportunities and implications of transformational programmes like Mass Transit, Bus Reform and Better Homes Hub will be fully explored and exploited.

Promotion of West Yorkshire. Monthly communications to promote the region; varied and deliberate business engagement and thought leadership events; secure attendance/speaker opportunities at events and trade shows; represent West Yorkshire at 25 priority sector and market partner events to increase inward investment and export activity.

Strengthened partnerships and convening. Develop a varied set of investment and funding mechanisms and models, strengthen the role of the West Yorkshire Innovation Network and Healthtech Cluster; creation of a network of ambassadors and champions, renew focus on changing business behaviours (sustainability) and enterprise/start up investment to drive inclusive growth.

Build a coalition of purposeful employers. Promote the Fair Work Charter across all relevant CA and partner activities and engagements. Adoption of the Charter will be a prerequisite of receiving Combined Authority support with an initial Year one target of over 200 employers. Promote and celebrate purposeful employers. Champion and enable the growth of alternative business ownership models including coops and employee ownership.

Increase trade and inward investment activity. Provide account management of 120 large UK and foreign owned businesses; 30 project successes and 1,500 new and safeguarded jobs, encouraging investment that aligns with the CA's clean growth goals. Foreign owned businesses in the UK are 69% more productive, contribute more than 50% of UK exports and spend on research and development, making a huge impact on the region's economy.

Successful delivery of existing programmes. Transform business investment and growth service and key account management offer to ensure clarity, consistency, ease, and simplicity for business. Enable businesses to access the ecosystem via the Growth Hub; provide direct support on sustainability, productivity, innovation, and export. 3000 business supported via the Growth Hub to navigate and access support to innovate and grow.

OUTPUTS CULTURE HERITAGE AND SPORT

Publish the Culture, Heritage and Sport framework and translate into the Investment Plan. Consultation across the Combined Authority, partnering Local Authorities and the sector to agree priorities after the Years of Culture.

Explore and develop a co-investment model with arm's length bodies. Through stakeholder workshops and other engagement, develop proposals to maximise our world-class culture, heritage and sports assets, secure national and global events in West Yorkshire and widen participation.

You Can Make It Here Skills and Business Support for the Creative Industries. Success will be measured by the number of creative businesses engaged from Investment Priority 6 (IP6) funded activity. Quality of engagement, and what businesses are enabled to do, will be measured alongside quantity, enabling the sector to become more resilient, with increased economic activity, and diversity and accessibility.

Years of Culture. Targeted support to Local Authorities in Year of Culture activities; increased diversity in the Creative Industries sector with through engagement with events (success measured by the number of audience engagements with events and workshops).

Creative Health Investment. Support the establishment of a West Yorkshire-wide Creative Health Hub through co-investment in a system that enables collaboration between stakeholders (Integrated Care Board, Local Authorities, Higher Education, community groups), increases capacity for creative health provision, increases creative health co-investment, and diversifies employment opportunities for practitioners.

Local Visitor Economy Partnership. Coordinate stakeholders and resources in the region to support the local visitor economy, against three priority workstreams: 1) increase awareness and appeal; 2) develop our product and places; 3) effectively manage our visitor economy.

Grow and diversify the Creative Industries sector. Work collaboratively to broker opportunities for training to meet sector need, including Creative Industries Bootcamp and Skills Connect activity.

BUDGET

Revenue:
£150,975,000

Capital:
£3,765,000

OFFICER RESOURCING NEEDS

c. 240 fte's

The Corporate Centre staff enabling the delivery of the IESC's outcomes are reflected in this figure.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Through system leadership, strategic commissioning, and delivery, drive a verifiable improvement in the quality of life of the most disadvantaged residents of West Yorkshire, particularly people from diverse backgrounds. Consistently ensure that a diverse range of residents and business leaders are engaged in and benefit from the design, development and delivery of policy and programmes to support inclusive growth ambitions.

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