

# **Local Skills Report**

**Leeds City Region**

January 2022

## Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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# 1 Skills Advisory Panels – Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of this report

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Skills Advisory Panels: the national context**

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

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

## **1.2 Governance**

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

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

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

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

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

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

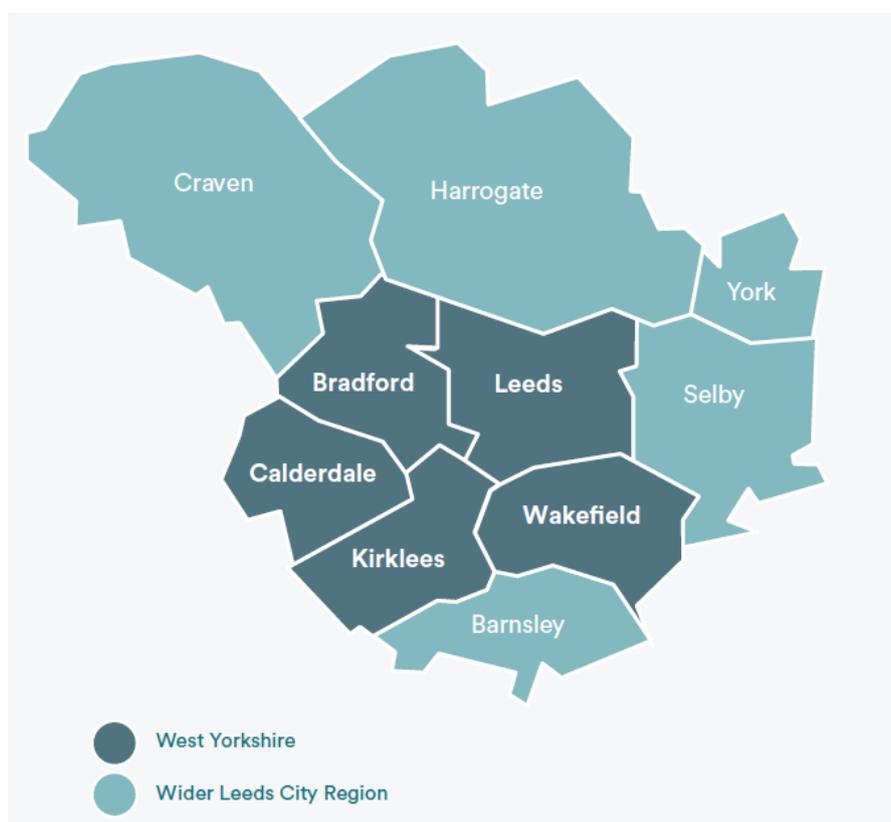
In addition to this, the Employment and Skills Committee has an important new role in overseeing the implementation and ongoing management of the devolved Adult Education Budget in West Yorkshire.

### **1.3 Geography**

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

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

**Figure 1: Geography of the Leeds City Region**



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

#### **1.4 Further information and getting in touch**

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

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

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

## 2 Skills strengths and needs

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

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

### Summary of strengths and needs

#### Strengths

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

#### Needs

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

## 2.1 Skills needs

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 2.2 Mismatches

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 2.3 Responsiveness of the system

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

Although parts of London and the South East of England have seen the greatest direct disruption from COVID-19, areas like Leeds City Region potentially face a greater challenge in terms of their ability to recover from the crisis because of a lack of local resilience, reflected in weak performance on output and employment in the period leading up to the crisis<sup>1</sup>. Leeds City Region's relatively weak skills base is likely to be a disadvantage as the regional economy seeks to adjust to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and Brexit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 3 Skills strategy

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

### 3.1 Strategic Economic Framework

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

The SEF has 5 priorities:

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

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

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

### 3.2 Employment and Skills Framework - Vision

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

#### **Vision:**

Our Vision is for West Yorkshire to be a world-leading region where investment in skills, training and education, and support from employers go hand in hand to create a diverse, inclusive, and highly skilled workforce with good jobs, leading to sustained improvements in the quality of life for all.

We want West Yorkshire to be a place where:

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

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

## Consultation process for the Employment and Skills Framework

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

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

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

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

### 3.3 Employment and Skills Framework - priorities

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

**Table 1: Draft Employment and Skills Framework priorities**

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

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

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

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



### 3.4 Economic Recovery Plan

Long-term planning for the economic recovery of West Yorkshire has been overseen by the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Board<sup>2</sup>, which is a working group of the Combined Authority and brings together the Mayor, five West Yorkshire Leaders and LEP Chair with partners from the private sector, health, trade unions, business representative organisations, public bodies and the third sector.

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

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

#### Employment and Skills Support

Significant progress has been made on implementing the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan<sup>3</sup>. This includes delivering support and programmes funded by national COVID-19 interventions, but also regional schemes being delivered from resources allocated from the West Yorkshire Single Investment Fund to economic recovery.

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

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

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

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

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

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

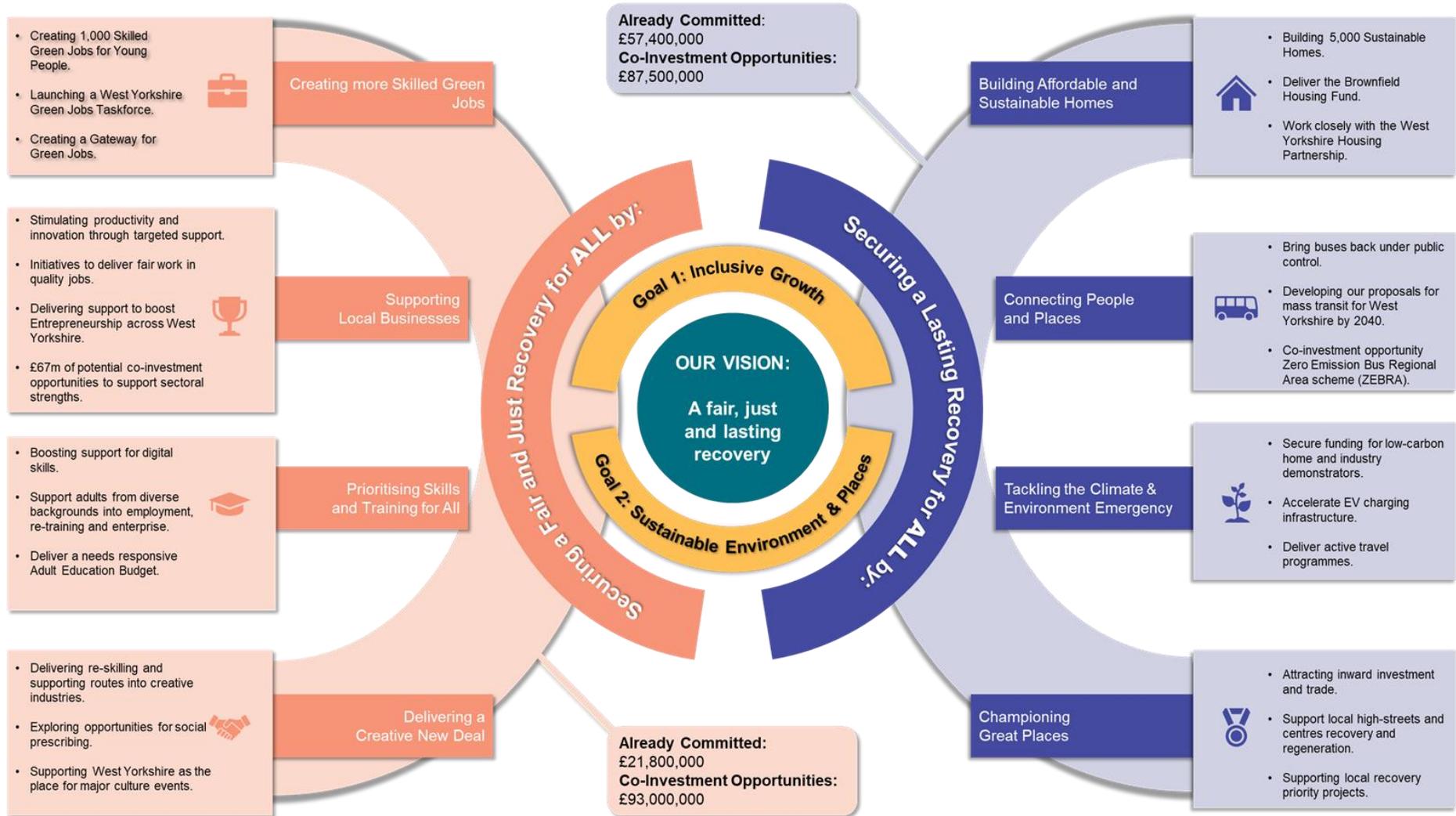
- Of the participants starting the programme 1,910 have been supported with finding education/ training, employment or self-employment against a target of 2706 (71%).

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

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

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

**Figure 3: West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan – Overview**



## 4 Skills action plan

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

### 4.1 Quality technical education

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

**Objectives:**

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

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

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

**Economic Recovery:**

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

## 4.2 Great education connected to business

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

### **Objectives:**

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

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

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

### **Economic Recovery:**

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

### 4.3 Accessing and progressing in good work

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

#### **Objectives:**

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

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

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

#### **Economic Recovery:**

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

## 4.4 Creating a culture of investment in workforce skills

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

### **Objectives:**

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

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

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

### **Economic Recovery:**

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

## 4.5 Driving innovation and productivity through high level skills

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

### Objectives:

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

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

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

## 4.6 Sector Focus

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

- Engineering and manufacturing
- Infrastructure skills
- Digital skills.

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

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

- Construction sector – immediate priorities identified in the Emission Reduction Pathways report<sup>4</sup> include the skills needed to retrofit energy efficiency measures such as loft and cavity wall insulation plus the skills need to install heat pump heating systems.
- Energy sector – meeting the challenge of transitioning to low carbon energy generation is likely to intensify skill shortages in a sector that is already highly susceptible to such shortages in respect of professional roles, such as engineers, but also for skilled trades<sup>5</sup>.

Digital skills are also a cross-cutting priority in the framework, with two key dimensions: developing the basic ICT skills needed to undertake the majority of job roles across the regional economy; skills for specialist digital occupations, such as developers and programmers; and roles that increasingly depend on higher level digital skills, such as in digital marketing, data analysis and design (CAD, BIM etc). Although developers and programmers are in greatest demand in specialised firms within the Information and Communication sector, there is a need for these workers across all parts of the regional economy.

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

#### 4.7 Taking the action plan forward

Work is underway to develop a project pipeline for employment and skills to include specific mayoral manifesto commitments and to deliver the priorities with the strategic Employment and Skills Framework. This is considered in more detail in the section on Mayoral Pledges (see below).

##### **Employer role in taking forward the Employment and Skills Framework priorities**

*The contribution needed from employers to make the plan a success*

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

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

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

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

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

Finally, projects, programmes and investments of significant scale in the employment and skills space will be evaluated as part of the Combined Authority's evaluation strategy<sup>6</sup>.

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

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

## 5 Mayoral Pledges

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

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

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

### Mayoral Pledges

10 Pledges to West Yorkshire:

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

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

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

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

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

In August 2021, the Mayor announced the creation of a West Yorkshire **Green Jobs Taskforce**, which will bring together experts from business, education and training, and the third and public sectors. Its goal is to position West Yorkshire as a leader and set out a roadmap to deliver the skills and jobs needed to address the climate emergency.

The work of the Taskforce will have two phases.

- A review of the existing landscape to identify the job opportunities for roles in both the green sector, and in relation to greening the economy.
- This intelligence will inform the development of programmes and activities to support the delivery of the pledge and address the wider skills challenges for creating green jobs for people of all ages.

The **Mayoral Green Jobs Gateway** was also launched in August 2021, providing an online portal for employers wishing to pledge jobs to support the Mayor's pledge of 1,000 well paid, skilled, green jobs for young people.

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

Under this pledge, the Mayor has made specific commitments to:

- Spearhead a campaign to make West Yorkshire a Living Wage Region, boosting the number of businesses paying the real living wage.
- Spearhead a **Digital Academy**, supported by business and academics to ensure our young people have the skills required to be the entrepreneurs, innovators, engineers and creatives of the future.
- Establish a West Yorkshire **Digital Skills Partnership** to develop digital skills programmes, tackle digital exclusion and maximise the potential of the region.
- Use the **West Yorkshire Innovation Festival** to incorporate additional digital innovation and skills/SME transformation aspects.
- Support a 'Gold Standard' **West Yorkshire wide Careers** Advisory Service delivered in-line and in person, using mentors and businesses to excite and inform the next generation about the exciting opportunities available to them.

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

The West Yorkshire Digital Skills Partnership is established with a high-profile Board membership who have developed key priorities based around social digital inclusion, SME digital inclusion, development of the workforce of the future and building coordinated skills/learning provision. The LDSP partnership will evolve a strategic digital skills plan to support these priorities and publish in early 2022.

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

## 6 Assessment of progress

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

### 6.1 Taking a local leadership role

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

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

The Employment and Skills Committee will oversee a pipeline of project and programme development in support of the **Mayoral Pledges** through its forward plan and as a standing item to future Committee meetings. This includes through new and existing programme delivery of employment and skills programmes; adult education budget, adult skills bootcamps, skills for growth, employment hub, and adults and school careers and enterprise education'. A budget of £500,000 has been committed to the development of the '1,000 skilled, green jobs for Young People' and 'Skills and training' pledges. This includes a proposal to build capacity and to commission research and intelligence to support the development of these two pledges.

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

The aspirations of the West Yorkshire Digital Skills Partnership are:

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

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

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

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

## Our Blueprint for a Future-Ready Skills System



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

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

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

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

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

## 6.2 Enhancing local knowledge

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **6.3 Impact on local skills provision**

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

#### **Bootcamps**

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

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

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

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

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

#### **(re)boot**

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

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

## Skills Connect

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

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

## Skills Capital funding

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

## Delivery Agreements

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

## **Employment Hub**

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

## Enterprise West Yorkshire

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

## Levy transfer service

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

## Skills for Growth

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

## FutureGoals

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

## School Partnerships

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

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

### **6.3.1 Adult Education Budget**

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

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

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

The procurement of Contracted Training Providers is complete with 18 organisations contracted to deliver training provision in addition to 20 Grant Providers. This is a considerable reduction from the 268 providers previously operating in West Yorkshire in 2018/19, with a much more focussed delivery partnership.

Every provider, whether funded by a grant or contract for services, has a detailed delivery plan in place which outlines anticipated learner numbers, courses and geographical areas of delivery. The AEB Strategy priorities have been reflected in the content of delivery plans agreed with all grant-funded and contracted providers, resulting in a direct impact on the learning that is being delivered in 2021/22 academic year.

Provider delivery plans have been combined into area delivery plans, which will be instrumental in reacting in-year to fill gaps and meet emerging needs. Meetings with Local Authorities are taking place to analyse area delivery plans and further strategic collaboration on the fund. Partnership meetings are also taking place in each local authority area to bring together Local Authorities and Colleges with contracted providers who work in a common area, alongside other key stakeholders who can advise on demand, such as Jobcentre Plus, Careers Service, etc, in order to improve the link between provision and demand, and to increase the progression linkages within the AEB delivery partnership.

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

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

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

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

Source: LEP management information

## 7 Case studies/positive impact stories

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 8 Looking forward

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Co-ordinating regional plans with national policy**

#### *Examples of how we will co-ordinate with national policy*

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

## **8.1 How to get involved: education and training providers**

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

### **West Yorkshire Skills Partnership**

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

### **West Yorkshire Learning Providers**

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

### **Yorkshire Universities**

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

### **Go Higher West Yorkshire**

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

### **Support for educators and careers professionals**

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

## **8.2 How to get involved: employers**

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

### **Local Digital Skills Partnership**

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

### **Engage with education and Skills for Growth**

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

### **Apprenticeship Levy Support**

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

### **Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Business Support Service**

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