

DERBYSHIRE & NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Local Skills Improvement Plan - Annexes

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Federation of
Small Businesses

ANNEX A: LOCAL STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Annex A

Figure 1: Percentage of micro and small businesses by district

Source: <https://lightcast.io/>, <https://docs.lightcast.dev/>

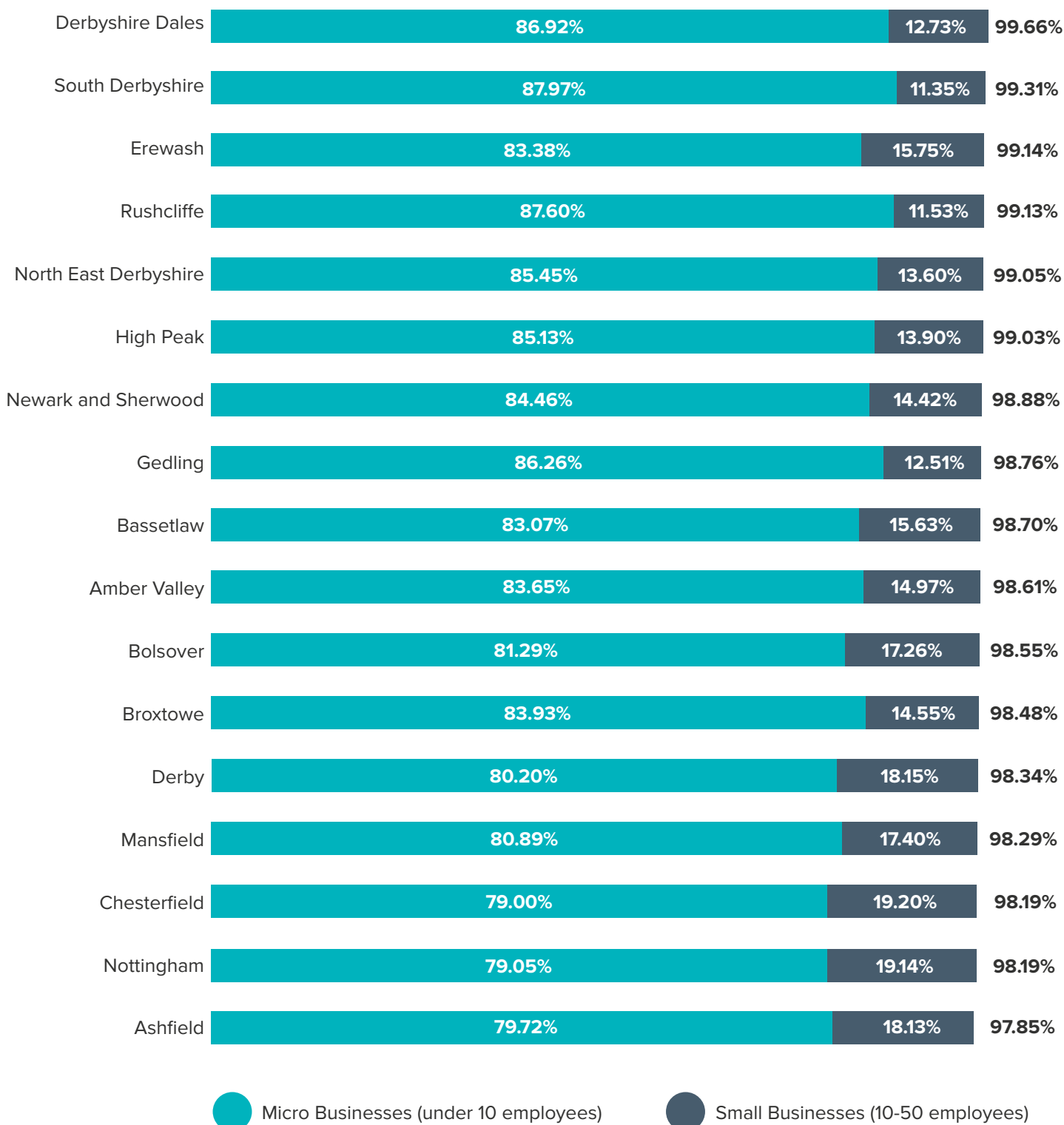


Figure 2: Indices of deprivation by area

Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019) – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - <https://data-communities.opendata.arcgis.com/search?q=IMD&sort=-modified>

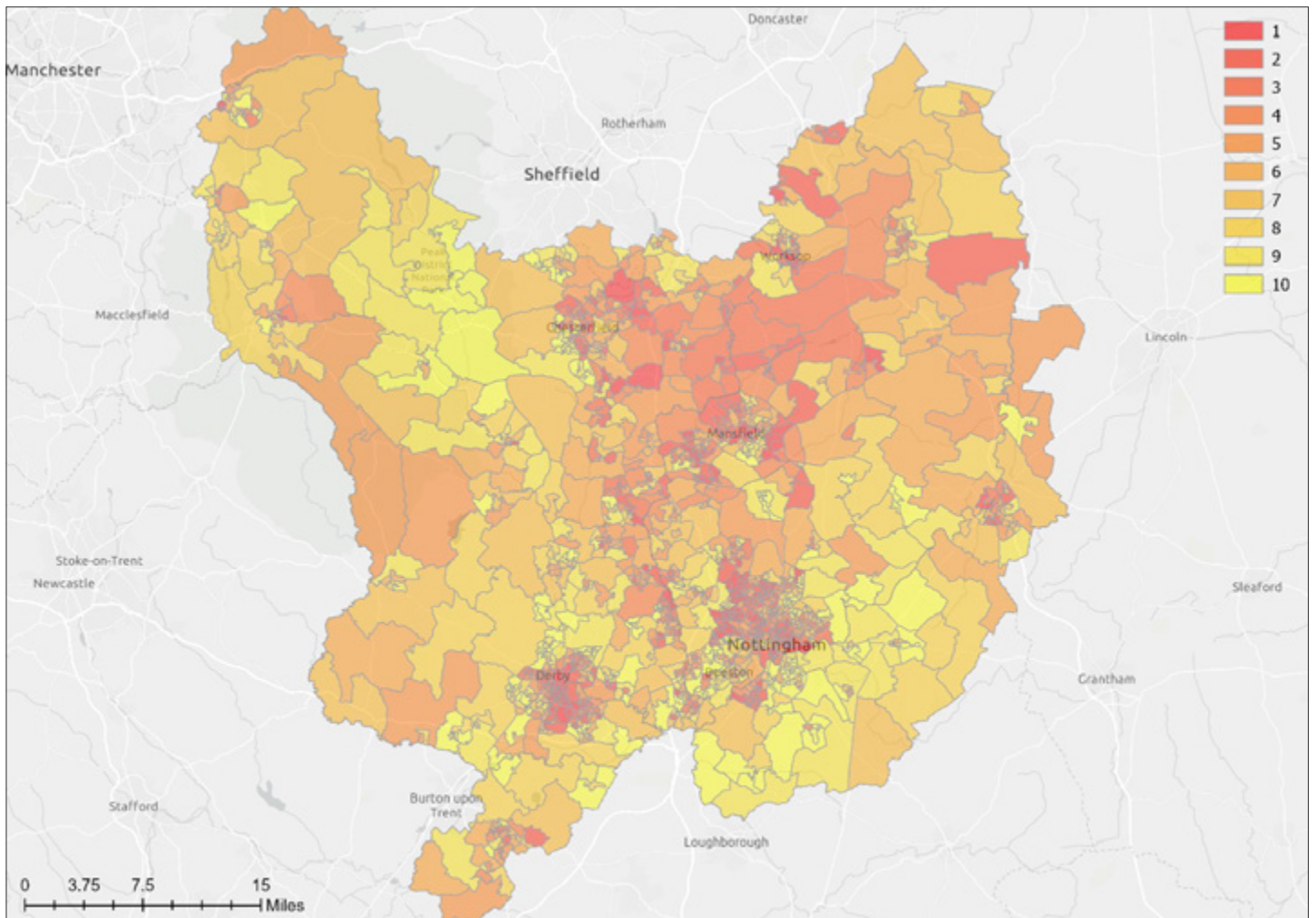


Figure 3: Highest level of qualifications

Source: Qualification Levels – Census 2021 (ONS) - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/bulletins/educationenglandandwales/census2021>

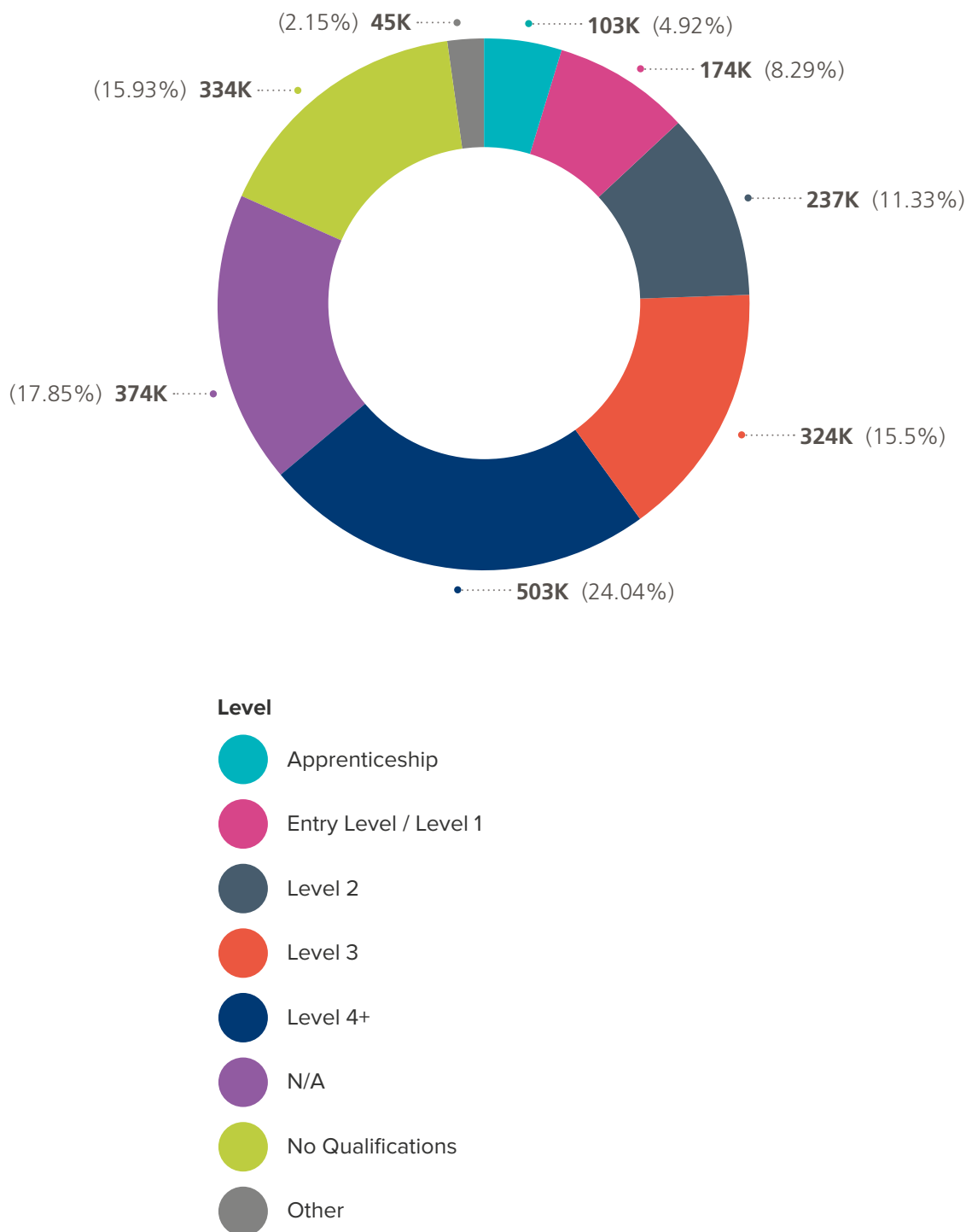


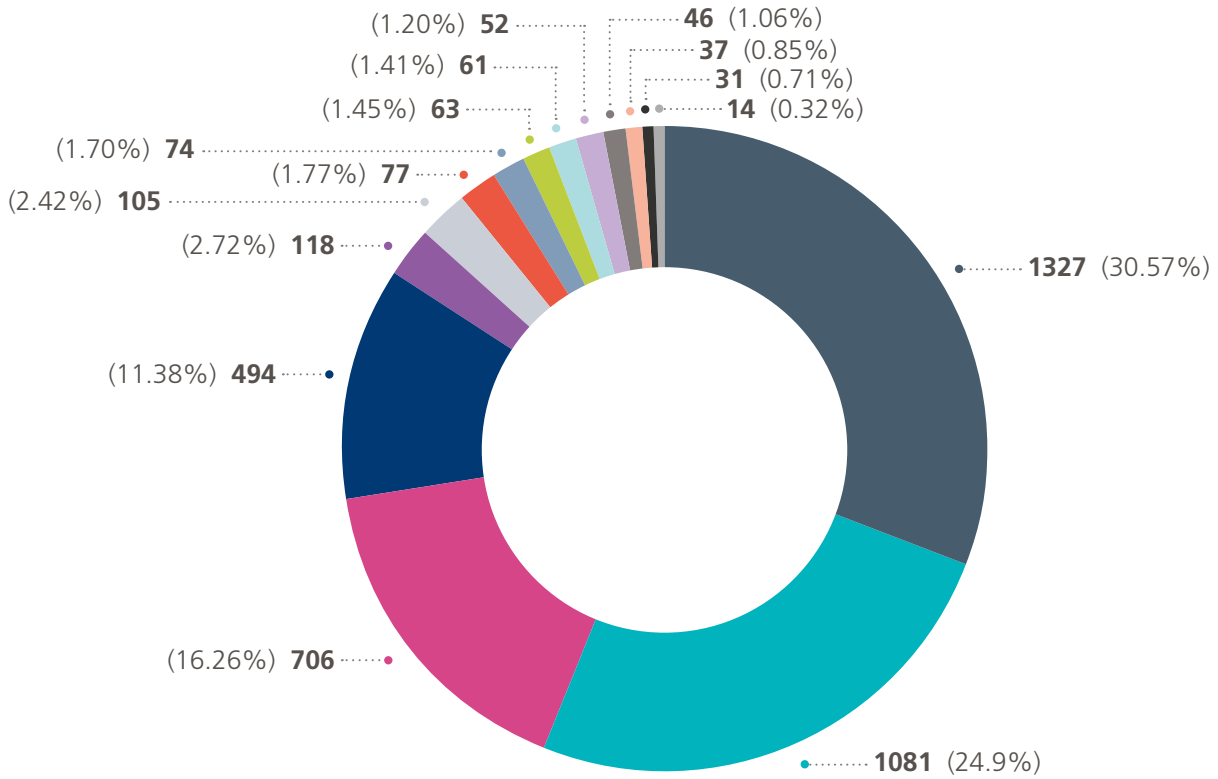
Figure 4: Digital occupations

Source: Lightcast API - <https://lightcast.io/>, <https://docs.lightcast.dev/>

Occupation (SOC4)	Level	2021 jobs	2025 jobs	Change	Change %
Programmers and software development professionals	6	7488	7917	429	5.7%
IT specialist managers	6	5642	5873	231	4.1%
IT user support technicians	3	4171	4285	114	2.7%
Information technology and telecommunications professionals n.e.c.	6	4138	4300	162	3.9%
IT operations technicians	3	2998	3098	100	3.3%
IT business analysts, architects and systems designers	6	2815	2933	118	4.2%
IT project and programme managers	6	2518	2640	122	4.8%
Information technology and telecommunications directors	6	2308	2425	117	5.1%
Telecommunications engineers	3	1703	1859	157	9.2%
IT engineers	6	1251	1265	15	1.2%
Web design and development professionals	6	1235	1277	42	3.4%

Figure 5: Digital districts

Source: Lightcast API - <https://lightcast.io/>, <https://docs.lightcast.dev/>



Delivery Area

- Mansfield
- Nottingham
- Derby
- Ashfield
- Chesterfield
- Bassetlaw
- Broxtowe
- High Peak
- Amber Valley
- Newark and Sherwood
- Gedling
- Rushcliffe
- Erewash
- Bolsover
- Derbyshire Dales
- South Derbyshire

Figure 6: Digital occupation gender split

Source: Lightcast API - <https://lightcast.io/>, <https://docs.lightcast.dev/>

Occupation (SOC4)	% Male 2021	% Female 2021
Telecommunications engineers	95.62%	4.38%
IT engineers	94.70%	5.30%
Programmers and software development professionals.	87.64%	12.36%
Information technology and telecommunications directors	84.60%	15.40%
Information technology and telecommunications professionals n.e.c	83.24%	16.76%
IT business analysts, architects and systems designers	82.64%	17.36%
IT specialist managers	82.44%	17.56%
IT user support technicians	80.21%	19.79%
IT operations technicians	75.57%	24.43%
Web design and development professionals	73.64%	26.36%
IT project and programme managers	68.11%	31.89%

Figure 7: Digitalised specialist skills**Source:** Lightcast API - <https://lightcast.io/>, <https://docs.lightcast.dev/>

Top Specialised Skills	Unique Job Postings (2017-2022)
SQL (Programming Language)	43420
Agile Methodology	42060
JavaScript (Programming Language)	42059
C# (Programming Language)	38618
Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)	38618
HyperText Markup Language (HTML)	23623
Microsoft Azure	20450
Software Development	17913
Java (Programming Language)	17623
Software Engineering	17413
Angular (Web Framework)	15802
Application Programming Interface (API)	14893
Amazon Web Services	14272
Automation	14044
.NET Framework	13850
Git (Version Control System)	12512
Technical Support	11406
Python (Programming Language)	9989
Active Directory	9809
Scrum (Software Development)	9652

Figure 8: Net Zero Occupations

Source: Lightcast API - <https://lightcast.io/>, <https://docs.lightcast.dev/>

Occupation (SOC4)	Level	2021 jobs	2025 jobs	Change	Change %
Sales accounts and business development managers	6	15,873.91	16267	393	2.5%
Production managers and directors in manufacturing	6	10,717.64	10833	116	1.1%
Metal working production and maintenance fitters	3	7,959.41	8099	140	1.8%
Electricians and electrical fitters	3	7,808.24	8108	299	3.8%
Food, drink and tobacco process operatives	2	7,747.08	7976	229	3.0%
Business and financial project management professionals	6	5,329.11	5452	122	2.3%
Business and related associate professionals n,e,c.	3	4,368.39	4484	115	2.6%
Engineering professionals n.e.c.	6	4,197.96	4189	-9	-0.2%
Information technology and telecommunications professionals n.e.c.	6	4,138.13	4300	162	3.9%
Production managers and directors in construction	3	3,860.58	3986	125	3.2%
Electrical and electronic trades n.e.c.	3	3,568.86	3720	151	4.2%
Plumbers and heating and ventilating engineers	3	3,518.96	3577	58	1.6%
Engineering technicians	3	3,444.49	3484	40	1.2%
Carpenters and joiners	3	3,410.51	3517	107	3.1%
Farmers	2	2,832.84	2978	145	5.1%
IT business analysts, architects and systems designers	6	2,815.35	2933	118	4.2%
Design and development engineers	6	2,763.32	2770	7	0.2%
Routine inspectors and testers	3	2,715.05	2766	51	1.9%
Laboratory technicians	4	2,687.03	2803	116	4.3%
Biological scientists and biochemists	6	2,677.48	2761	84	3.1%
Metal working machine operatives	2	2,639.79	2565	-75	-2.8%
Social workers	6	2,627.99	2665	37	1.4%
Mechanical engineers	6	2,518.82	2466	-53	-2.1%
Farm workers	2	2,457.47	2542	84	3.4%
Assemblers and routine operatives n.e.c.	2	2,322.60	2337	15	0.6%
Construction operatives n.e.c.	2	2,320.09	2381	61	2.6%
Construction and building trades n.e.c.	3	2,292.29	2343	50	2.2%
Civil engineers	6	1,943.98	1963	19	1.0%
Electrical engineers	6	1,918.31	2012	94	4.9%

Occupation (SOC4)	Level	2021 jobs	2025 jobs	Change	Change %
Plastics process operatives	2	1,805.54	1778	-27	-1.5%
Construction project managers and related professionals	6	1,713.69	1748	34	2.0%
Assemblers (electrical and electronic products)	2	1,703.97	1754	50	3.0%
Welding trades	3	1,658.05	1683	25	1.5%
Gardeners and landscape gardeners	2	1,599.75	1612	12	0.7%
Refuse and salvage occupations	1	1,589.71	1544	-46	-2.9%
Construction and building trades supervisors	3	1,586.61	1616	30	1.9%
Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades supervisors	3	1,522.47	1576	54	3.5%
Chemical and related process operatives	2	1,445.60	1,478	32	2.2%
Quality assurance technicians	3	1,444.41	1,447	3	0.2%
Assemblers (vehicles and metal goods)	2	1,442.25	1,460	18	1.2%
Office supervisors	3	1,436.05	1,480	44	3.1%
Mobile machine drivers and operatives n.e.c.	2	1,316.69	1,314	-2	-0.2%
Chartered surveyors	6	1,272.23	1,292	20	1.6%
Plant and machine operatives n.e.c.	2	1,266.69	1,239	-27	-2.1%
Painters and decorators	3	1,259.46	1,213	-47	-3.7%
Groundsmen and greenkeepers	2	1,229.13	1,259	30	2.4%
Other skilled trades n.e.c.	2	1,223.62	1,187	-37	-3.0%
Draughtspersons	3	1,166.91	1,137	-30	-2.5%
Science, engineering and production technicians n.e.c.	3	1,162.91	1,208	45	3.9%
Sewing machinists	2	1,066.31	1,048	-19	-1.7%

Figure 9: Net Zero Occupation by gender

Source: Lightcast API - <https://lightcast.io/>, <https://docs.lightcast.dev/>

Occupation (SOC4)	% Male 2021	% Female 2021
Plumbers and heating and ventilating engineers	99.45%	0.55%
Welding trades	98.72%	1.28%
Carpenters and joiners	98.51%	1.49%
Electrical and electronic trades n.e.c.	98.49%	1.51%
Electricians and electrical fitters	98.28%	1.72%
Electrical engineers	97.77%	2.23%
Construction operatives n.e.c.	97.48%	2.52%
Metal working production and maintenance fitters	97.16%	2.84%
Mobile machine drivers and operatives n.e.c.	97.02%	2.98%
Construction and building trades supervisors	96.62%	3.38%
Groundsmen and greenkeepers	95.95%	4.05%
Refuse and salvage occupations	95.70%	4.30%
Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades supervisors	95.42%	4.58%
Construction and building trades n.e.c.	94.92%	5.08%
Engineering technicians	94.82%	5.18%
Painters and decorators	94.59%	5.41%
Mechanical engineers	94.48%	5.52%
Plastics process operatives	92.43%	7.57%
Other skilled trades n.e.c.	91.94%	8.06%
Farmers	90.75%	9.25%
Gardeners and landscape gardeners	90.39%	9.61%
Metal working machine operatives	90.17%	9.83%
Production managers and directors in construction	89.61%	10.39%
Design and development engineers	89.53%	10.47%
Production managers and directors in manufacturing	88.59%	11.41%
Civil engineers	87.06%	12.94%
Plant and machine operatives n.e.c.	86.89%	13.11%
Draughtspersons	85.28%	14.72%
Chemical and related process operatives	84.26%	15.74%

Occupation (SOC4)	% Male 2021	% Female 2021
Information technology and telecommunications professionals n.e.c.	83.24%	16.76%
Chartered surveyors	82.93%	17.07%
Farm workers	82.85%	17.15%
Construction project managers and related professionals	82.77%	17.23%
IT business analysts, architects and systems designers	82.64%	17.36%
Assemblers (vehicles and metal goods)	81.61%	18.39%
Engineering professionals n.e.c.	80.40%	19.60%
Assemblers and routine operatives n.e.c.	72.17%	27.83%
Routine inspectors and testers	70.61%	29.39%
Food, drink and tobacco process operatives	65.28%	34.72%
Sales accounts and business development managers	62.93%	37.07%
Science, engineering and production technicians n.e.c.	62.40%	37.60%
Assemblers (electrical and electronic products)	59.12%	40.88%
Quality assurance technicians	59.09%	40.91%
Business and financial project management professionals	57.05%	42.95%
Business and related associate professionals n.e.c.	48.25%	51.75%
Laboratory technicians	46.91%	53.09%
Biological scientists and biochemists	46.10%	53.90%
Office supervisors	40.95%	59.05%
Social workers	19.32%	80.68%
Sewing machinists	14.00%	86.00%

Figure 10: Internet provision

Source: – Lightcast API - <https://lightcast.io/>, <https://docs.lightcast.dev/>

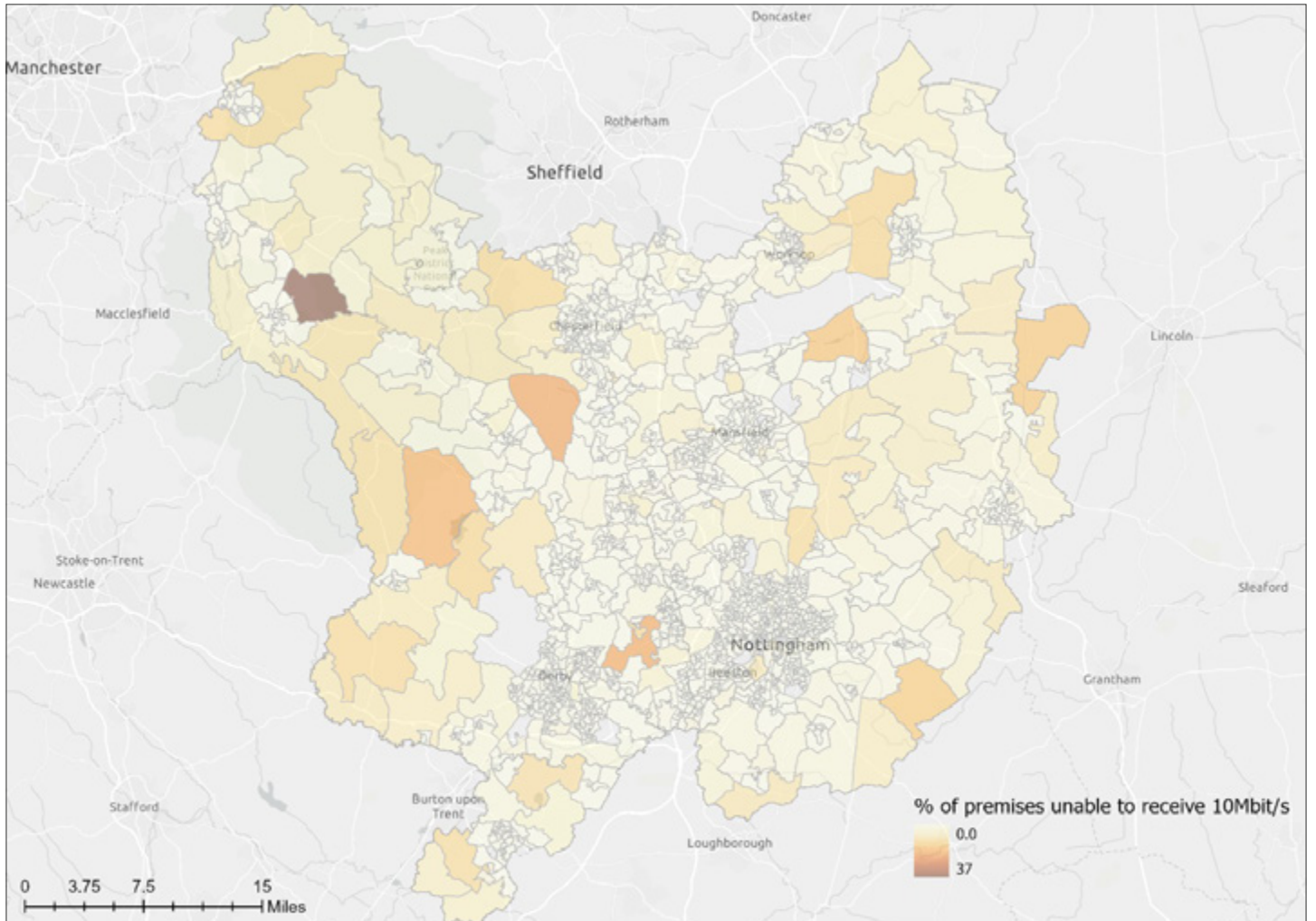


Figure 11: Public transport access points

Source: – Lightcast API - <https://lightcast.io/>, <https://docs.lightcast.dev/>



ANNEX B: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Stakeholder and Provider engagement

Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Steering Group Overview

The steering group is composed of various stakeholders from different categories and areas, all focused on promoting business engagement and skills development in the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire regions. The group is chaired by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), represented by Natalie Gasson-McKinley, Development Manager, who specialises in small and medium-sized business engagement. The vice-chair position is held by small business owner, Dawn Edwards from Challenge Consulting, an independent training provider. Other key members include the Chief Operating Officer of Confetti Media, B-Global (a business engagement organisation focusing on Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic business owners), and Visit Peak District (a visitor economy organisation). Additionally, there are representatives from construction forums, health and social care, and food and drink industries, Further Education colleges, local authorities, the Department for Work and Pensions, higher education institutions, and other business representation organisations. The steering group is a diverse and comprehensive assembly, ensuring collaboration between employers, providers, job seekers, and wider stakeholders to drive economic growth and skills development in the region.

Category	Area	Specialism	Organisation	Role of person representing organisation
Employers	Derbyshire	Visitor Economy	Visit Peak District	Managing Director
Employers	Derbyshire	Construction	Construction Forum	CITB Customer Engagement Manager
Employers	Derbyshire	Construction	Construction Forum	CITB Customer Engagement Manager
Employers	Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire	Business Engagement - Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic	B-Global	Co-Founder
Employers	Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire	Business Representation Organisation	CIM Spa	Lead Skills Hub Manager
Employers	Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire	Business Representation Organisation	Food and Drink Forum	Senior Projects and Engagement/Customer Relationship Management
Employers	East Midlands	Business Engagement - large and medium	Chamber of Commerce	Chief Executive Officer
Employers	Nottinghamshire	Creative and Digital	Confetti Media Group	Chief Executive Officer
Employers	Nottinghamshire	Business Representation Organisation	Nottingham University Hospitals	Apprenticeships and Widening Participation Lead

Category	Area	Specialism	Organisation	Role of person representing organisation
ERB	Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire	Business Engagement - small and medium	Federation of Small Businesses	Chair
ERB/providers	Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire	Independent Training Advisor	FSB / Challenge Consulting	Vice Chair
Job seekers	Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire	Department for Work and Pensions	DWP	Strategic Partnership Manager
Providers	Derbyshire	Further Education	Chesterfield College	Chief Executive Officer
Providers	Derbyshire	Further Education	Derby College	Deputy Principal
Providers	Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire	Adult Education	Inspire	Learning Director
Providers	Nottinghamshire	Adult Education	Futures Group	Head of Business Development & Stakeholder Partnerships
Providers	Nottinghamshire	Further Education	Nottingham College	Group Director of Apprenticeships and Employer Services
Providers	Nottinghamshire	Further Education	West Nottingham College	Principal and Chief Executive
Providers	Nottinghamshire	Further Education	West Notts College	Deputy Principal
Wider stakeholders	Derbyshire	Local Authority	Chesterfield District Council	Skills Delivery Officer
Wider stakeholders	Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire	Local Enterprise Partnership	D2N2 LEP	Head of People and Skills
Wider stakeholders	Nottinghamshire	Local Authority	Nottingham City Council	Head of Employment, Skills and Economic Strategy
Wider stakeholders	Nottinghamshire	Higher Education	University of Nottingham	Director of the NTU Mansfield HE Hub and UK College Partnerships

Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Providers Group Overview

In accordance with LSIP Statutory Guidance, we not only invited providers to join the LSIP Steering Group, but also conducted two dedicated meetings for providers to contribute to the development of actionable priorities for the LSIP. As LSIPs offer an avenue for providers to collaborate with employers and other stakeholders in a structured manner to enhance skills provision and address local needs, it was crucial for us to foster a collaborative approach, enabling providers to gain insights from employers

and establish a starting point for the initial draft of actionable priorities.

Throughout the early stages of the project, providers actively participated in the LSIP process and attended two exclusive meetings on April 19th and May 16th. The April 19th meeting lasted for two hours, during which each actionable priority was individually reviewed, and providers had the opportunity to provide comments and suggest amendments. These comments and amendments were taken into consideration, resulting in adjustments to the actionable priorities. The May 16th meeting served as a final feedback session for providers to approve the updated actionable priorities. All the revised actionable priorities received approval.

The table below displays the list of providers who attended either one or both of these meetings. We ensured representation from the entire region, with participation from both Further Education and Adult Education providers in both counties.

Area	Specialism	Organisation	Role of person representing organisation
Derbyshire	Further Education	Burton and South Derbyshire College	Deputy Principal
Derbyshire	Further Education	Chesterfield College	Chief Executive Officer
Derbyshire	Adult Education	Derby City Local Authority	Head of Service Delivery
Derbyshire	Further Education	Derby College	Deputy Principal
Derbyshire	Adult Education	Derbyshire County Council	Family Learning Curriculum Group Leader
Derbyshire	Further Education	DN Colleges	Vice Principle
Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire	Adult Education	Inspire	Learning Director
Nottinghamshire	Adult Education	Futures Group	Chief Executive Officer
Nottinghamshire	Further Education	Nottingham College	Group Director of Apprenticeships and Employer Services
Nottinghamshire	Further Education	Nottingham College	Director of Bids, Projects and Planning
Nottinghamshire	Further Education	West Nottingham College	Principal and Chief Executive
Nottinghamshire	Further Education	West Notts College	Deputy Principal

RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY – EXTRACT FROM ARUP REPORT¹

1. Statement of Engagement

1.1 Purpose of the report

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has been appointed by the Department for Education as the designated Employer Representative Body to prepare a Local Skills Improvement Plan (hereafter referred to as “the LSIP”) for the Nottingham, Derby, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire area, covered by the D2N2 local enterprise partnership. Arup has been commissioned by FSB to undertake engagement activities to seek feedback from local employers, training providers and strategic stakeholders to inform the LSIP. This report summarises the approach taken to engagement, the feedback gathered, and how evidence-based, actionable priorities have been developed to inform the LSIP.

LSIPs identify key priorities and changes needed in a designated area to make post-16 technical education or training more responsive and closely aligned to local labour market needs. LSIPs are informed by robust evidence, and meaningful dialogue between employers, training providers, and strategic stakeholders, including local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and local authorities. LSIPs are both a process and a plan for making provision more responsive to employers’ skills needs. The process of developing the plan is as important as the LSIP itself. This is done by creating dialogue, and stronger and more dynamic relationships within the local skills system.

LSIPs differ from previous skills plans by giving employers a clear and strengthened role in shaping the local skills provision. It is recognised that substantial economic change and the skills needs of employers will play out in different ways across the county. Therefore, the LSIP for the D2N2 area will take a place-based approach to address the skills needs of local employers and economies within the geography. The LSIP will shape the future skills and local provision to ensure businesses and individuals have the skills they need to thrive and progress.

1.2 Report structure

This report is set out as follows:

- Section 2 reviews the statutory guidance for LSIPs and how the engagement and data collection activities are aligned with Government guidance.
- Section 3 describes the engagement approach and methodologies used to carry out the data collection and analysis.
- Section 4 provides a summary and conclusion of our findings.
- Section 5 summary of iterative process engagements.

2. Policy and Guidance

The engagement approach we have used aligns with the Department for Education’s (DfE) ‘Statutory Guidance for the Development of a Local Skills Improvement Plan’ (October 2022).² DfE is overseeing

1 Full Arup report is available on FSB LSIP webpage: <https://www.fsb.org.uk/derbyshire-and-nottinghamshire-lsip.html>

2 Local skills improvement plans - statutory guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)

and funding the development of LSIPs across the UK. LSIPs are a key part of achieving the aims set out in the Skills for Jobs White Paper³, which looked to put employers more firmly at the heart of the skills system. National policy recognises that the coming decade will see substantial economic change. As the economy changes, so will the skills needs of employers, across sectors and geographies.

The process of developing, approving and implementing an LSIP is led by a locally designated employer representative body (ERB). For the D2N2 area, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) was appointed during 2022 as the ERB.

FSB is a non-profit and non-party political organisation, led by members, providing small businesses with services including advice, financial expertise, support and a powerful voice in national and regional government across the UK. FSB, as the ERB, is responsible for engaging with employers, providers and other stakeholders to convene meaningful discussions to determine skills needs and associated actionable priorities to address these.

LSIPs provide an opportunity for employers to express their skills needs and shape provision, and for providers to work with employers and others to improve skills provision to better meet identified local needs. The Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022⁴, places duties on specific providers of post-16 technical education or training to co-operate with the designated ERB and have regard to these plans, and associated guidance from the Secretary of State, when considering their post-16 technical education or training offer.

With respect to this duty, providers should have regard to and contribute to meeting local skills priorities alongside other aspects of their provision. Accountability is evidenced through subsequent Accountability Agreements that set out how providers have engaged with employers and responded to LSIPs. Certain providers may also have a duty to review how well the education or training provided by their respective institution meets local needs, and consider what action their institution might take to better meet those needs.

A range of other national and local bodies and agencies can play an important role in supporting and facilitating the development and implementation of LSIPs as part of a collaborative process.

The statutory guidance outlines that LSIPs should:

- set out the key priorities and changes needed in a local area to make post-16 technical education or training more responsive and closely aligned to local labour market needs;
- represent an employer view of the skills most needed to support local economic growth;
- set out actionable priorities to better meet these skills needs, that employers, providers and stakeholders in a local area can get behind;
- not attempt to cover the entirety of provision within an area but focus on the key changes and priorities;
- focus on a 3-year period and be reviewed and updated as appropriate during this time;
- avoid making recommendations regarding national skills policy and focus on what can be done locally; and

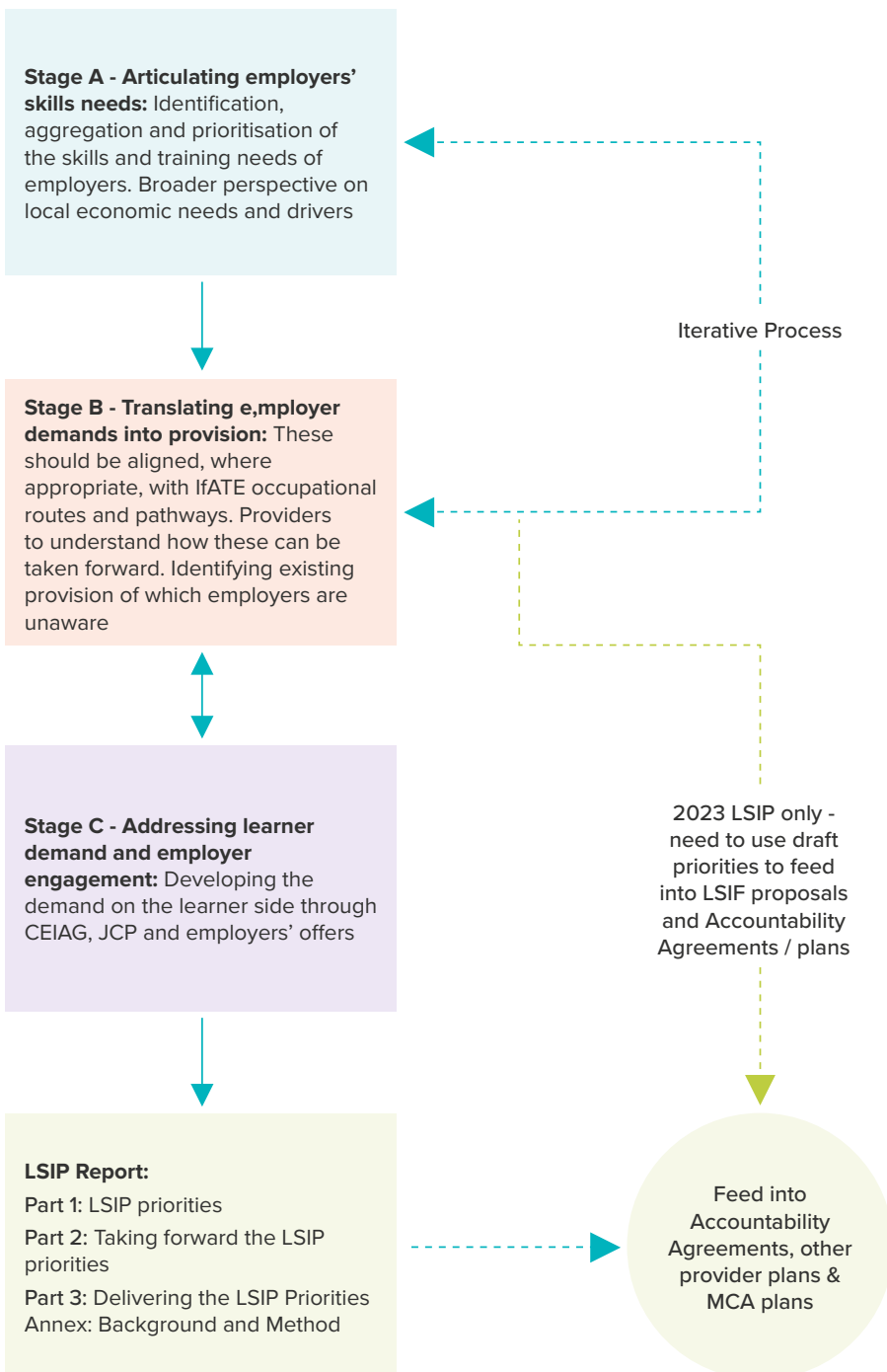
³ 2 Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth (publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/en/ukpga/2022/21/contents/enacted>

- describe how skills required in relation to jobs that directly or indirectly support Net Zero targets,
- adaptation to Climate Change or meet other environmental goals have been considered.

Figure 1, which has been taken from the relevant statutory guidance, outlines the process of creating an LSIP. The process of creating and implementing an LSIP is an iterative one and requires engagement from many different stakeholders in the region.

Figure 1: The LSIP process and report



In accordance with the statutory guidance, our engagement activities (described in Section 3), have enabled employers, training providers and strategic stakeholders to contribute to the identification of challenges and opportunities in the local skills system, and to seek consensus on associated actionable priorities. Following the LSIP guidance, Section 4.3 of the report highlights the cross-cutting issues affecting employers.

3. Approach to Engagement

3.1 Objectives

In accordance with the LSIP statutory guidance, a range of engagement activities were undertaken to gather stakeholder insights. The objectives of the engagement activities were as follows:

1. To enable employers, training providers and strategic stakeholders to contribute to the LSIP at a formative stage of the process, in accordance with their respective duties.
2. To deliver inclusive engagement and capture the views of stakeholders from different sectors and geographies.
3. To collect quantitative and qualitative data about the skills challenges and opportunities in the local area and agree actionable priorities to address these.
4. To identify actionable priorities to inform accountability agreements being developed by colleges.
5. To bring together employers, training providers and other stakeholders, developing and nurturing relationships and encouraging collaborative working to deliver the outcomes of the LSIP.

3.2 Engagement activities

A combination of the following four engagement activities were undertaken between 5 January and 17 March 2023:

1. Online focus group sessions on 10, 11, 12 and 13 January.
2. In person focus group sessions on 25, 26, 27 January and 8, 9, 28 February.
3. Online survey, running from 5 January to 20 February.
4. One to one interviews, held between 23 January and 17 March.

Sections 3.2.1 – 3.2.4 below describe the approach taken to each engagement activity.

3.2.1 Online surveys

Three online surveys were produced to target each of the following stakeholder groups: employers; training providers; and strategic stakeholders. The surveys contained a combination of open and closed questions to gather qualitative and quantitative information. The online surveys were made publicly available via Microsoft Forms and disseminated through FSB's and the Steering Group's networks across the region. The surveys were structured into five sections:

- organisation details, including quantitative questions to gather background data on each participant and their organisation;

- skills supply and demand, to understand if and where soft and technical skills gaps exist;
- training provision, to gain an insight into the current training available and barriers and enablers to training;
- collaboration with others, to identify if and how employers, training providers and strategic stakeholders are working together to address challenges and opportunities; and
- drivers of change, to identify and seek to address socio-economic issues which may be affecting skills provision and employers.

A total of 38 survey responses were received, comprised of 18 employers, 16 training providers, and 4 strategic stakeholders.

3.2.2 Online focus groups

Four facilitated online focus group sessions were held via Microsoft Teams early in the engagement period to gather initial insights from employers, training providers, and strategic stakeholders in relation to:

- skills, capabilities and expertise requirements;
- recruitment and retention;
- training requirements; and
- socio-economic drivers of change.

A total of 28 stakeholders attended the sessions, comprised of 20 employers and 8 training providers.

Attendees were split into virtual breakout rooms to facilitate focussed discussions on each topic. Feedback was recorded using the Miro interactive whiteboard tool.

Feedback gathered from the session was analysed early in the engagement period to identify emerging cross-cutting themes, to inform the approach to subsequent in person focus group sessions. The following four cross cutting themes were identified:

- work readiness and soft skills;
- digitalisation;
- recruitment and retention; and
- approach to training provision.

3.2.3 In person focus groups

Following the online focus group sessions, four in person sessions were held across the D2N2 area to capture feedback from different localities, as it is recognised that the economic landscape and business needs differ significantly across the region. Sessions were therefore conducted in Chesterfield, Derby, Mansfield, and Nottingham, for employers, training providers and strategic stakeholders.

To grow the level of employer engagement, following lower than desired participation early in the research period, three additional employer focussed sessions were held, in partnership with external organisations.

These sessions were:

- a dedicated session in Newark on 8 February, organised by Newark and Sherwood District Council to target local businesses;
- an agenda item as part of The Midlands Green Innovation Network's 'Skills for the Green Revolution' event on 9 February to target businesses in the low carbon and sustainable technology sector; and
- a dedicated session in Nottingham on 28 February hosted by B-Global, to target business representatives from the Black, Asian and ethnic minority community.

A subsequent session held by FSB, with a mix of employers, providers and stakeholders, inviting feedback on the emerging findings document was also held and comments have been analysed as an in person focus group for the purposes of this report.

A total of 87 participants attended the sessions, which comprised 33 employers, 34 training providers and 20 strategic stakeholders. This total includes participant attendance from the Arup facilitated focus group events.

During each session attendees were divided into breakout groups to facilitate focussed discussions around the emerging findings (referenced above) and associated actionable priorities. Where possible, breakout groups comprised of a combination of employers, training providers and strategic stakeholders from different sectors and geographies. The events also provided networking opportunities to enable stakeholders to meet, forge relationships and collaborate.

3.2.4 Interviews

One to one interviews were held with 9 employers, 7 training providers and 4 strategic stakeholders, totalling 20 organisations. The interviews were conducted via a combination of Microsoft Teams and telephone, dependent on the interviewee's preference. For those interviews conducted via Microsoft Teams, the majority were recorded using the transcript function, with consent from interviewees.

The majority of interviews followed the structure of the online surveys described above, however others took a more conversational format providing the opportunity to delve into specific topics where necessary.

Where additional information was provided by stakeholders following their interview, this has been combined with feedback received during the interview.

3.2.5 Other engagement

In addition to the formal engagement activities described in sections 3.2.1-3.2.4 above, our team also attended the LSIP Steering Group meetings to ensure that members were kept updated and to seek their agreement at key milestones. Follow up engagement with Steering Group members also took place and where relevant, this feedback has formed part of the data analysed in this report.

3.2.6 Total participation

A raw total of 189 participants were recorded to have contributed to the stakeholder engagement activities conducted by Arup, broken down as follows:

- 80 employers;
- 73 training providers; and
- 36 strategic stakeholders.

However, this includes some participants who contributed to more than one engagement activity. With these instances omitted, the residual total of individual participants is 162, broken down as follows:

- 18 online focus group attendees;
- 37 online surveys respondents;
- 87 in-person focus groups attendees; and
- 20 telephone interviewees.

3.3 Data analysis

Feedback received from the focus group sessions, interviews and surveys has been compiled and a coding exercise undertaken to inform the subsequent analysis.

The analysis identified key issues and opportunities in the local skills system and associated actionable priorities.

4. Summary and Conclusions

The full version of this report outlines the feedback received from engagement and discusses the themes and key priorities for action. Below is a summary and conclusion of engagements.

The engagement activities have successfully responded to the 'Statutory Guidance for the Development of a LSIP' and captured feedback from key stakeholders across the skills system in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. An unrestricted approach has allowed stakeholders to openly share issues and opportunities they experience or foresee, without limitation. This has enabled the identification of reoccurring themes which have in turn informed actionable priorities which will be taken forward in Accountability Agreements and the LSIP. Importantly, the engagement has been an opportunity to bring together employers, training providers and strategic stakeholders and seek consensus on key priorities which they can drive forward through continued collaboration and partnership working.

The objectives set out for the LSIP engagement activities have been achieved in the following ways:

1. Employers, training providers, and strategic stakeholders have been empowered to contribute to shaping the LSIP, at a formative stage of the process. This collaborative approach has fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility among stakeholders.
2. The inclusive engagement undertaken has successfully captured stakeholders' views from across sectors and geographies, culminating in a comprehensive understanding of key priorities for the local skills system over the next three years.
3. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data was collected which enabled stakeholders to share issues and opportunities, as well as ideas regarding how to address these. These recommendations have been used to shape actionable priorities that will be pivotal in informing future decision-making and resource allocation.

4. The actionable priorities developed utilising feedback from the engagement process will provide a solid foundation for training providers to develop their Accountability Agreements. These agreements will ensure that education and training responds to the LSIP's objectives and addresses the identified skills gaps and opportunities in the local skills system.
5. The engagement activities have fostered relationships and encouraged further collaborative working amongst employers, training providers, and strategic stakeholders. This collaborative approach is essential in delivering the outcomes of the LSIP, as it ensures that all parties are working together towards a common goal and leveraging their collective resources and expertise.

The feedback identified several key focus areas for the skills system over the three year lifespan of the LSIP. This includes recognition of a skills gap between employee skills and employer's requirements. There is a particular need to improve work readiness and soft skills, which are valued and required by employers, through dedicated training provision. There is also a particular need for training provision to respond to the continuing digitalisation of the economy and address the skills gap in basic digital skills, including computer literacy and use of Microsoft Office along with widening the breadth of exposure to use of technologies and computer skills, so that those entering the workplace have adaptability and confidence to grow their learning.

Feedback demonstrates that specific focus is also needed in the following sectors to bridge skills gaps and ensure that education and training programmes are aligned and respond to the evolving needs:

- digital sector;
- low carbon and sustainable technology sector;
- hospitality sector;
- health and social care sector;
- construction sector;
- engineering sector;
- business administration and support sector;
- teaching sector;
- creative industry sector;
- agricultural sector;
- logistics sector; and
- manufacturing sector.

Sector-specific issues and opportunities must be addressed by developing targeted initiatives and resources for each sector, particularly in the digital and low carbon and sustainable technology sectors, which have been identified as having the most growth potential.

Whilst the research noted several capacity and capability constraints that training providers and employers face in delivering training, it also highlighted multiple opportunities to enhance provision in the future. This includes a potential to transition to shorter bursts of training and development of

specific training for supply chains and SMEs. Tailored and flexible training programmes are essential to ensure they cater to the diverse needs of employers and learners, emphasising digital skills and work readiness-relevant training, which have been identified as critical areas for workforce development.

Feedback demonstrates that local socio-economic conditions have exacerbated challenges within the skills system. For example, COVID-19 has negatively impacted the development of soft skills, and resulted in employees making career changes or choosing to leave employment entirely. Socio-economic inequalities amongst learners, employees and unemployed individuals also continue to pose barriers to accessing education and employment.

Recruitment and retention of employees is a consistent challenge across the geography, which is symptomatic of the cost of recruitment, outdated approaches to recruitment, a small candidate pool within the area, and competitive benefits packages encouraging individuals to move to other organisations. However, the engagement identified a series of demographic groups that have significant potential to further engage in the labour market to address these challenges. This includes older persons, disabled people, ex-military personnel, those returning from long-term absence or childcare leave, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, migrants or minority communities.

Feedback also demonstrates that there is already positive collaboration and a wealth of initiatives and resources available within the geography, but that often there is a lack of awareness from employers, employees and learners of the support on offer. The focus is therefore on supplementing and promoting the assets that already exist, rather than reinventing the wheel. By fostering strong partnerships, sharing best practice, and engaging in transparent communication, the region can strengthen its overall skills ecosystem, better prepare learners for employment, and contribute to economic growth and development in the long term.

5. Iterative Development with Providers

As set out in the LSIP Guidance, iterative testing of the priorities and actions with providers and stakeholders took place on these dates:

15-Feb	Steering Group meeting on emerging themes
14-Mar	Steering Group meeting on draft actionable priorities
22-Mar	Steering Group follow-up meeting on actionable priorities
17-Apr	Updating Nottingham Growth Board and DWP on emerging themes
18-Apr	Updating People and Skills Board and Nottingham College on emerging themes, prep for meeting with providers
19-Apr	Meeting with providers only on draft actionable priorities
20-Apr	Updated Derbyshire City Partnership
2-May	Steering Group meeting on feedback from partner and provider meetings
16-May	Final meeting with providers on updated actionable priorities

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