

A green map of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire is centered on the page. The map shows the county boundaries and is overlaid with a grid of horizontal lines. The text 'DERBYSHIRE & NOTTINGHAMSHIRE' is printed in large, bold, white capital letters across the center of the map.

DERBYSHIRE & NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Local Skills Improvement Plan - Progress Report June 2024

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This progress report has been prepared in accordance with Local Skills Improvement Plans: Stage 2 Guidance (dated November 2023) and is intended to review progress against the local skills improvement plan published in August 2023. This report was produced in June 2024 but publication was delayed due to the pre-election period.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank everyone that has supported the aims and priorities of the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). This includes, but is not limited to, the LSIP Steering Group members, management and staff of the region's training providers, stakeholders, employers, businesses, and other partners across the region who have ensured that the LSIP is not only on track but is continuously monitored to achieve best results.

The Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) project group has also worked tirelessly to ensure that budgets are spent in a timely manner and that the best equipment, training, and support is being sourced and made available to enhance skills across the D2N2 area. We are grateful to them for their regular updates and consultation with us.



James Illsley

Development Manager for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire,
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WHO IS THIS PUBLICATION FOR?

The Department for Education has set out a requirement for designated Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) to produce and publish a progress report in June 2024 and in June 2025.

As the ERB for the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire LSIP¹, the Federation of Small Businesses has therefore compiled this report, which sets out progress made in the area against the actionable priorities identified in the LSIP. This report highlights the impact that the LSIP is already having, and the ongoing engagement with employers, training providers, stakeholders, and other relevant bodies. As this is an interim report, we also detail what still needs to be achieved and what we are learning throughout the project as an iterative process.

The progress report clearly explains:

- The actions/changes set out in the LSIP that have been achieved to date;
- What the impact and benefits of these have been; and
- What still needs to be achieved, including plans for obtaining any new or more granular intelligence and specific actions that will help achieve this.

The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) Progress Report is aimed at a range of stakeholders across the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire (D2N2) area. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Employers** who have engaged in the development and/or implementation of the LSIP. This is to understand how their engagement has supported the process and what has been achieved following this.
- **Employers** who have not yet engaged in the development and/or implementation of the LSIP. This is to understand what is happening, how they might benefit from the LSIP and learn how they can get involved.
- **Training Providers**² who have engaged with the activities of the LSIP/LSIF to date, to ensure they understand overall progress in delivering the LSIP/LSIF and have sight of new or more granular intelligence on employer skills needs that can help shape their decisions around provision planning.
- **Training Providers** who have not yet engaged in the development and/or implementation of the LSIP/LSIF. This is to understand what is happening, how they might benefit from involvement with the LSIP, and learn how they can get involved.
- **Other local stakeholders**³ with an interest in skills and who are playing, or could play, an important role in the implementation of the LSIP and its actionable priorities.

1 Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Local Skills Improvement Plan, published August 2023: <https://www.fsb.org.uk/derbyshire-and-nottinghamshire-lsip.html>

2 Further Education (FE) Colleges, Sixth Form Colleges, Designated Institutions, Independent Training Providers (ITPs) and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that deliver English-funded post-16 technical education and training, schools, 16 - 19 academies (also known as 'sixth form college academies'), local authority providers and supported employment providers.

3 Combined County Authorities, and local authorities (LAs); other employer organisations, sectoral bodies, and centres of innovation such as Catapult centres; the Jobcentre Plus network and career, education, information advice and guidance (CEIAG) providers; and other organisations that understand the needs of employees and learners.

SUMMARY OF THE LSIP

In 2023, the Department for Education designated the Federation of Small Businesses as the Employer Representative Body (ERB) responsible for developing the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, encompassing Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, and Nottinghamshire, also referred to in this report as 'the region'.

FSB is a non-profit, non-partisan organisation that supports small businesses in the UK by offering advice, financial expertise, support, and representing their interests in national and regional government. Throughout 2023, FSB engaged in discussions with a wide range of employers, providers, and other stakeholders to establish skills needs and identify a series of actionable priorities to address them.

Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire boast a rich history of vibrant communities and diverse landscapes that have shaped their identities. From the rural, picturesque areas of the Peak District, to the rapidly developing urban cities of Derby and Nottingham, both counties offer a unique blend of beauty, heritage, vitality, and economic opportunity and are home to over 2.2 million people.⁴

The Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire LSIP was published in August 2023 and identified 18 actionable priorities based around five prominent cross-cutting themes that could improve the region's existing skills provision:

- Digital Skills
- Net Zero
- Essential and Transferable Skills
- Local Skills System
- Local Socio-Economic Conditions

In addition to the 18 actionable priorities, the LSIP also included recommendations around skills needs and priority occupations in digital and green where we aim to work with providers to determine current supply, as well as what should/could be done to increase volumes where appropriate.

The purpose of the LSIP is to place the region's employers at the heart of the local skills system, helping to increase engagement and allowing them to build stronger relationships with local training providers.⁵ However, the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire LSIP is more than just a plan; it's a process that fosters dialogue and enables stronger relationships within the local skills system. Through this process, the region will develop the skills it needs to thrive and support the growth of individuals and businesses through targeted provision.

The importance of collaboration between employers, education and/or training providers, and other stakeholders such as local authorities, was identified to be of utmost importance to drive significant change and ultimately lead to successful implementation of the LSIP across the region.

⁴ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/imp/lep/1925185580/report.aspx>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/identifying-and-meeting-local-skills-needs-to-support-growth/local-skills-improvement-plans-lsips-and-strategic-development-funding-sdf>

STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT UPDATE

Since the publication of the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire LSIP, there are some changes in the strategic and economic landscape to note.

The most significant change for the area is approval of a deal for regional devolution, which was signed by the four upper tiers of Derbyshire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Derby City Council and Nottingham City Council in November 2022⁶, paving the way for the creation of the new East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA). The creation of the EMCCA saw an associated £1.14 billion of funding over 30 years⁷, alongside devolved powers in areas such as the Adult Education Budget, transport, and skills, with local powers to tackle challenges specific to the area. The first meeting of the EMCCA took place in March 2024⁸ and Mayoral elections were held on Thursday 2nd May 2024, with Claire Ward subsequently elected as Mayor.⁹

In the past year, centralised funding for the 28 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) has been withdrawn. The D2N2 LEP transferred its staff into the EMCCA during June 2024.¹⁰ The EMCCA will have responsibility for developing a new adult skills strategy, with initial stakeholder meetings having already taken place. FSB has met with representatives of the new authority, to ensure the priorities identified in the LSIP are considered within the new strategy.

As a direct result of the skills priorities identified in the LSIP, the region has benefitted from £6.6 million of LSIF investment.¹¹ Eight local colleges and training bodies have planned and used the money to directly address the major themes of the LSIP. As of March 2024, the most urgent capital allocation was spent by LSIF partners, to provide new technology, software, and facilities to better train local learners in line with the LSIP's most pressing priorities - all based on employer feedback - that fall into their remit. They are also able to significantly upskill teaching staff to deliver new programmes and adopt the technology used daily by the region's businesses.

The UK's first commercial nuclear reactor, the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP)¹² prototype fusion energy plant, is due for construction on the site of the former coal-fired plant at West Burton in north Nottinghamshire. It is likely that this will have a significant impact on the future skills requirements of businesses in the D2N2 and neighbouring regions, as well as those in its supply chain.

The UK's only inland freeport, East Midlands Freeport, became fully operational in 2023.¹³ Covering an area of 45km, centred on East Midlands Airport, the freeport encompasses three designated investment zones, two of which fall into the D2N2 area.¹⁴ The East Midlands Freeport is spearheading the drive to improve higher level skills needed to support the hydrogen economy in the region.¹⁵ The provision of STEM education in the region has also been enhanced by the East Midlands Institute of Technology site opened in Derby in September 2023.¹⁶

6 About East Midlands Devolution: <https://www.eastmidlandsdevolution.co.uk/about-east-midlands-devolution/>

7 East Midlands devolution deal. Policy Paper: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/east-midlands-devolution-deal/east-midlands-devolution-deal>

8 <https://www.eastmidlandsdevolution.co.uk/news/historic-first-meeting-for-new-east-midlands-combined-county-authority/>

9 Vote for the Mayor of the East Midlands: <https://www.eastmidlandsdevolution.co.uk/>

10 <https://d2n2lep.org/the-d2n2-lep-staff-team-joins-the-east-midlands-combined-county-authority-emcca/>

11 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-skills-improvement-fund-lsif-lead-providers-2023-to-2025/lead-applicants-for-lsif-by-region>

12 <https://step.ukaea.uk/>

13 <https://www.emfreeport.com/faqs>

14 <https://www.visitleicester.info/invest/news/read/2023/09/east-midlands-freeport-the-uks-only-inland-freeport-b334>

15 <https://www.great.gov.uk/international/content/investment/opportunities/east-midlands-freeport/>

16 <https://www.derby.ac.uk/news/2023/first-east-midlands-institute-of-technology-site-opens-in-derby/>

March 2024 also saw the announcement of the East Midlands Investment Zone (EMIZ), which will focus on the advanced manufacturing and green industries sectors across Derby, Derbyshire, and Nottinghamshire.¹⁷ Further details on the operation of the EMIZ will be issued by government in due course.

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/investment-zones-in-england>

PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS (ROADMAP)

Sector	Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Digital skills	1. Promote and communicate (and develop if necessary) the area's existing digital skills offer to employers more widely and work with colleges and ITPs (in consultation with D2N2 LEP, BROs and/or similar partners) to assess the effectiveness.	<p>Establishment of a Digital Skills Exchange Hub.</p> <p>Consult with a range of employers and other stakeholders to identify and understand specific digital skills requirements.</p> <p>Provide training to upgrade Digital Literacy Skills to staff and students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Collaboration Group (Oversight) • Business Representation Organisations • Colleges – Hub Lead Derby Colleges Group • D2N2 LEP / MCCA • ITPs • Employers • Careers Advisors 	Q1 2024 - Q1 2025	LSIF - Establishment of a Digital Skills Exchange Hub. Use of the 'hub and spoke' model to encourage collaborative working and share knowledge.	<p>LSIF KPI Monitoring.</p> <p>Quarterly meetings with updates / reports to ERB and Stage 2 LSIP Steering Group.</p>	<p>In Progress</p> <p>Digital Skills Exchange Hub Established (Project Lead: DCG).</p> <p>Consultation with employers/stakeholders complete. A range of digital skills identified. Relevant skills on track to be integrated into courses from September 2024.</p> <p>FE colleges regularly using VR technology to enhance learning experiences for students and staff.</p>
	<p>2. Integrate a digital component into relevant post-16 vocational programmes, apprenticeships and AEB vocational courses, where not already present.</p> <p>3. Assess the volume and take up of digital skills online/ short course programmes against relevant occupations, or introduce where not present.</p>	<p>Integrate Digital Skills in education. Each course should have a digital aspect to help individuals gain a comprehensive understanding of digital tools and how they can be applied in a variety of settings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Collaboration Group (Oversight) • Business Representation Organisations • Colleges – Curriculum Leads • D2N2 LEP/EMCCA • ITPs • Employers • Careers Advisors 	Q1 2024 - Q1 2025	<p>Digital Skills Exchange Hub meetings.</p> <p>Updates/reports to ERB and Stage 2 LSIP Steering Group.</p> <p>One to one meetings with providers.</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings with updates / reports to ERB and Stage 2 LSIP Steering Group. One to one meetings with providers.</p>	<p>In Progress</p> <p>Development and delivery of Micro credentials accreditation across a range of digital competencies. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning in the Digital Era • IT software fundamentals • Using IT to increase productivity • Essential digital skills • Digital Marketing <p>Substantial 'bootcamp' provision evident from a range of local providers in all priority areas.</p>

Sector	Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Net Zero Skills	4. Develop and implement industry specific “Achieving Net Zero” online/workshop-based programmes for staff and managers, with a focus on relevant occupations.	<p>Improve understanding of climate literacy for both students in the education system and places of work.</p> <p>Produce a roadmap of the region’s existing Net Zero offer and develop peer-to-peer networks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Collaboration Group (Oversight) • Business Representation Organisations • Colleges – Hub Lead Nottingham College • ITPs 	Q1 2024 - Q1 2025	LSIF - Establishment of a Green Skills Exchange Hub. Use of the ‘hub and spoke’ model to encourage collaborative working and share knowledge.	LSIF KPI Monitoring. Quarterly meetings with updates / reports to ERB and Stage 2 LSIP Steering Group.	<p>In Progress</p> <p>Green Skills Exchange Hub Established (Project Lead: Nottingham College).</p> <p>Carbon Literacy project implemented across Nottingham College.</p>
	5. Collaborate to produce a roadmap of the region’s existing Net Zero offer and develop peer-to-peer networks.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Collaboration Group • Business Representation Organisations • Colleges • D2N2 LEP / EMCCA • ITPs • Employers • Careers Advisors 	Q1 - Q4 2024	LSIF Research Project.	LSIF KPI Monitoring. Quarterly meetings with updates / reports to ERB and Stage 2 LSIP Steering Group.	<p>In Progress</p> <p>Nottingham Trent University have been commissioned to undertake research in net zero jobs and the existing skills pathways into each of them. This is going to be focussed on sustainable construction.</p> <p>Peer-to-peer networks are being developed through the Green Productivity Hubs model.</p>
Essential and Transferable Skills	6. Explore the implementation of a D2N2 wide skills framework to define consistent approaches to essential skills system, offering examples of what employers can expect at each level.	Develop and implement an employer-driven competency framework for essential and transferable skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Collaboration Group (Oversight) • Essential Skills Project Team – Lead RNN Group • Business Representation Organisations • Colleges • D2N2 LEP/EMCCA • ITPs • Employers • Careers Advisors 	Q3 2023 - Q3 2024	LSIF Project Team Research. Information gathered from employers at, for example, quarterly forums, to establish whether skills identified in the LSIP as being in-demand are still appropriate.	LSIF KPI Monitoring. Quarterly meetings with updates / reports to ERB and Stage 2 LSIP Steering Group. Feedback from research.	<p>In Progress</p> <p>Essential Skills Project Group formed. (Project Lead: RNN Group).</p> <p>Mixed methods research carried out by member of the project team across D2N2. Established LSIP skills needs were largely still appropriate.</p>

Sector	Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Essential and Transferable Skills	7. Providers to co-produce a comprehensive guide that explains placement requirements for all vocational courses, and what employers can expect or contribute as part of the placements.	<p>Develop a sub-region wide, employer driven D2N2 Employability Passport that recognises individual achievement of key essential skills, which is recognised across the locality and holds value with industry.</p> <p>Increase pre-16 engagement to teach basic employability skills that they can focus on for work readiness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Collaboration Group (Oversight) • Essential Skills Project Team – Lead RNN Group • Business Representation Organisations • Colleges • D2N2 LEP/EMCCA • ITPs • Employers • Careers Advisors 	Q2 2024 - Q4 2024	LSIF Project Team	<p>LSIF KPI Monitoring.</p> <p>Quarterly meetings with updates / reports to ERB and Stage 2 LSIP Steering Group.</p> <p>Employer Feedback - Quarterly Forums.</p>	<p>In Progress</p> <p>Mapping exercise currently being carried out on the region’s existing qualifications and short courses that address the Essential Skills identified by employers.</p> <p>This will then lead to an Essential Skills Matrix across the region, ensuring a consistent approach, identifying current gaps in provision and partner coverage, thus enabling sharing of resource to address identified need.</p>
	8. Develop and implement a common employability/ essential skills framework for all AEB and Boot Camp programmes.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Collaboration Group (Oversight) • Essential Skills Project Team • Business Representation Organisations • Colleges • D2N2 LEP/EMCCA • ITPs • Employers • Careers Advisors 	Q3 2023 - Q4 2024	LSIF Project Team		<p>There is currently a very limited appetite from providers to implement a region-wide employability ‘passport’. Instead, providers are implementing/have implemented their own systems of tracking transferable skills. Communication of the meaning of these to employers is underway.</p> <p>Substantial ‘bootcamp’ provision evident from a range of local providers in all priority areas. Employers continue to be consulted as to their relevance at quarterly forums.</p>

Sector	Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Essential and Transferable Skills	9. Develop and implement an essential skills short course programme for employed staff.	Map the region's existing qualifications and short courses that address the Essential Skills identified by employers. Develop a D2N2 Essential Skills Matrix, based on the above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Collaboration Group (Oversight) • Essential Skills Project Team • Business Representation Organisations • Colleges • D2N2 LEP / EMCCA • ITPs • Employers • Careers Advisors 	Q1 2024 - Q1 2025	Establish impact of short courses developed and how this addresses the essential needs of employers in the region.		
Local Skills System	10. Explore/increase collaborative bidding and delivery partnership with the region's FE colleges, universities, and key partners.	The region's seven FE colleges should work together to bid for funding. Form a D2N2 FE Collaboration Group consisting of senior leaders from partner organisations, LSIP representatives, and local stakeholders to provide strategic oversight of the projects linked to LSIP actionable priorities. Appoint Project Managers to lead individual projects and ensure effective co-ordination and implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Collaboration Group • Colleges • ITPs 	Q3 2023 - Q3 2024	Establishment of an FE collaboration group.	FE Collaboration Group monitoring. LSIF KPIs. Quarterly meetings with updates / reports to ERB and Stage 2 LSIP Steering Group.	In Progress FE collaboration group formed and active. Project Managers in place for individual projects.
	11. Actively review employer standards with employers when negative feedback received. Work with them to articulate what (if anything) is wrong/missing or needs to be added. Providers can add content locally and report content for removal to IFATE but removal from a standard locally is not possible.	Co-design courses with local employers to sense check the provision of training, e.g., myth busting around construction and engineering roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Collaboration Group • Colleges • ITPs • Employers 	Q1 2024 - Q1 2025	FE Collaboration Group Overview. Review with Employer Engagement Groups	FE Collaboration Group monitoring. Feedback from research.	In Progress Significant employer engagement underway. Working groups established and partnerships between employers and providers is evident.
	12. Develop a collaborative initiative to increase the supply of teachers/trainers in priority occupations and review/ improve their training if needed. An area approach could be advantageous.	Support closer industry teacher collaboration including secondments from industry and shared industrial teaching support across provision where there are shortages in specialist staff and where industry is changing rapidly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers • FE Collaboration Group • Colleges • ITPs 	Q1 2024 - Q1 2025	FE Collaboration Group Overview. Appropriate initiatives at a local level.	Quarterly meetings with updates / reports to ERB and Stage 2 LSIP Steering Group.	In Progress Colleges are engaging in several different schemes in a drive to recruit specialist teachers. Despite being in the early stages, positive signs of the impact of these 'grow your own' models, in areas such as construction, are evident.

Sector	Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Local Skills System	13. Develop recruitment and retention packs and/or workshops for employers, especially SMEs, to aid broadening candidate search. Utilise the skills of existing students to deliver. 17. Offer short courses to employers that highlight barriers to employment for marginalised groups and those furthest from the labour market in priority occupations and provide training for employers, accordingly, highlighting where possible mental health support.	Encourage changes to employers' approaches to recruitment to make it easier to recruit those furthest from the market and marginalised groups. Job adverts need to be more inclusive and accessible. Increase employment prospects for marginalised groups. Employers to explore opportunities to hire people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB • CITB • Aspire • B Global • Nottingham Universities • FE and HE • Employers – to aid design • DWP 	Q1 2024 - Q4 2024	<p>Establishment of a project team with a range of local stakeholders.</p> <p>Mapping of existing provision to identify gaps.</p>	Project team reporting to LSIP Steering Group.	<p>In Progress</p> <p>Project team established (to address AP 13 and 17) in early 2024. Mapping exercise of local provision completed. Team is currently looking into the best way to disseminate information gathered to employers and wider stakeholders. Some challenges around resourcing need to be overcome.</p>
	14. Further develop the Careers Hub and similar services and communicate their existence more widely.	<p>Establish a skills hub/centre within the region. Establish a one stop shop for upskilling, can provide many services that can be accessed by anyone at any stage of their career.</p> <p>An online community that could also be formed in conjunction with the LSIP could be a place where the good work that has already been happening across the geography is stored (e.g., D2N2 careers hub).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers Enterprise Company • Business Representation Organisations (B6) • D2N2 LEP / EMCCA 	Q4 2024 - Q1 2025	<p>D2N2 Careers Hub – collaborative initiatives with schools and employers.</p> <p>Measurement against Gatsby benchmarks.</p>	<p>Updates / reports to ERB and Stage 2 LSIP Steering Group.</p> <p>One to one meetings with providers.</p>	In Progress and awaiting further discussion with the Careers Hub.
Local Socio-economic	15. Assess the extent of current social value agreements in public procurement and work collaboratively with Local Authorities to develop further and share knowledge with employers.	Work to understand social value commitments. For example, major projects often have large social value commitments around contractors and suppliers hiring apprentices but how are training providers linked into this to understand need, pipeline etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB • Local Councils 	Q3 2024 - Q4 2024	LSIP sub-group.		<p>Not Yet Started</p> <p>Delayed. Project group formation discussed at May's LSIP steering group meeting, but still to be formed. Will be formed before Q3 2024.</p>
	16. Define a set of key occupations that require people to be upskilled. For example, junior people already in the digital sector, could help fill shortages in cyber roles, by upskilling, rather than looking for new people to move into the roles which will require a greater lead time. Providers then focus on the training that enable people to be upskilled.	Support progression in the workplace. Offer workforce development and succession planning to employers to support retention and progression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Collaboration Group • Colleges • ITPs • Enterprise & Careers Company • Careers Advisors 	Q4 2023 - Q3 2023	Employer voice. LSIP/LSIF Research Projects.	LSIP Steering Group reports.	<p>In Progress</p> <p>Key occupations identified from regional research. Provision map of upskilling provision completed. Work still to be done on communicating this provision and availability.</p>

Sector	Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Local Socio-economic	18. Seek opportunities to partner with groups such as Youth Social Action to develop transferable skills for T-Levels and apprenticeships. As transferable skills built into work placements assist employers with creation.	Consider place specific experiences shared by all vocational leaders that build employability skills such as team building, resilience, and planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB • Local authorities (upper tier) • DWP • ITPs 	Q1 2024 - Q1 2025	Establishment of collaboration groups. See also APs 6-9.	Reports to LSIP Steering Group.	In Progress Partnership working now evident across the region. Strong transferable skills provision (see APs 6-9). Transferable skills being embedded into courses.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED SO FAR?

As the ERB, FSB has carried out significant work with a range of stakeholders. An extensive curriculum mapping exercise has been conducted alongside a specialist agency to track data on course starts across Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and map against the LSIP's main vocational and technical themes. Following initial data analysis, individual meetings have, and continue to be, held to add more detailed understanding of the information gained. These meetings have been held between FSB and further and higher education providers, independent training providers, representatives from a range of local business organisations, local, district and county councils, public bodies, and employers of different sizes. Meetings are continuing, and further analysis will take place when data sources are updated, to ensure the priorities of the LSIP evolve and remain appropriate to the skills needs of the region and influence provision.

Throughout 2024, FSB is hosting a series of events designed to update employers at key locations across the region on LSIP's activities and progress, examine remaining and new challenges, and highlight how employers can play a vital role in shaping the interventions. They will also explore new innovations and solutions and communicate the findings of further deeper dive investigations. These events are an opportunity for employers and other stakeholders to come together and feed back into the process. A further event is booked for October 2024,¹⁸ with events also in the pipeline for December 2024 and March 2025. We invite all employers to attend these events and have their say on the LSIP's priorities.

There has been considerable integration of the LSIP priorities into the provision offered by the region's Further Education providers. The period since the publication of the LSIP has seen considerable enhancement in course provision, as providers respond to the current and future skills needs of the D2N2 region. The LSIF investment in the region has had significant impact on the ability of providers to invest to address the skills needs of the areas they serve. These providers have developed plans to ensure the investments made as part of the LSIF have a long-lasting and sustainable impact to the delivery of training across the region.

The D2N2 FE Collaboration Group (strategic level steering board) was formed to provide effective oversight of the project aims. The group is represented by a senior leader from each partner organisation and each representative will inform their respective Governing Body of the programme's progress and involve them in decisions relating to the alignment of provision across the region.

FE colleges are making excellent use of their employer connections and working closely with them to develop their curriculum offerings. This approach has seen benefits for both colleges and local companies in, for example, the construction sector, where colleges are using waste material from building sites to teach the next generation of students and, as a result, achieving financial and environmental benefits for both parties. Not only do these relationships provide a voice for employers to feed into the local skills system, but they also allow providers to recruit new employers to host placements for students.

In response to the region's LSIP, local colleges have partnered with each other, as well as other training providers, to deliver skills development initiatives for priority sectors. Knowledge Exchange Hubs have been created in the priority areas of Digital and Green, where small or medium-sized enterprises, and micro businesses, can experiment with new and innovative technologies and help their staff to develop the higher-level digital skills that bolster productivity and growth.

¹⁸ <https://www.fsb.org.uk/event-calendar/derbyshire-and-nottinghamshire-local-skills-improvement-plan-quarterly-workshop-mansfield-3rdoct24.html>

Significant planning has gone into the investment made as a result of the LSIP priorities, to ensure that it meets current requirements, but additionally builds capacity for the longer-term. The Green Productivity Hub, led by Nottingham College, has been established and equipped, with the needs of the community in mind. For example, investment has been made in an electric van, so provision can be taken to where it's most needed. Partnerships with other organisations, such as Inspire Learning, has also led to an increase in provision, with investment in its High Pavement site resulting in improved resources for its hospitality, catering and construction courses, as well as artificial intelligence and Virtual Reality. Inspire has also been able to address some socio-economic challenges by providing IT equipment and hotspot dongles, so learners can access course materials and complete homework tasks when not on site.

Digital Skills

As identified in the LSIP, technology plays a crucial role in today's modern workplace, and there is significant demand from employers for individuals with both general and specialised digital skills.

Digital Skills are increasingly becoming integrated into all courses in a contextualised way. Providers are increasingly embedding ICT elements in all programmes of study to ensure that learners are effectively prepared to use the technology likely to be encountered in their chosen field. Improved Digital Skills have been made possible by the introduction of new technologies. For example, using Virtual Reality at Chesterfield College, where students from a wide range of sector areas can learn in an immersive, safe, and futuristic way. Skills around setting up the hardware, software and its impact on information retention has all been seen to improve.

Several new initiatives have been established across the region with the help of LSIF funding. Nottingham College has developed an immersive training room, and invested in artificial intelligence to enhance the continuous professional development of its staff. The theme of partnership working is also prevalent in the digital space, with some providers partnering with other local institutions, such as Chesterfield College's partnership with Chesterfield Royal Hospital to offer digital courses to hospital staff, and West Nottinghamshire College's partnership with Sherwood Forest Hospitals Foundation Trust.

A Digital Skills Exchange Hub has been established under the leadership of Derby Colleges Group, which comprises 24 stakeholders from across the region, who meet regularly to discuss and understand the digital skills needed by business. These discussions then input into the design and delivery of courses to meet those skills gaps. The hub has also facilitated many strategic partnerships. For example, Derby-based Bloc Digital, one of the world's leading immersive digital technology studios, have been supporting industry placements and contributed to Derby College's Digital Industry Week activities. They also sit on further education employer advisory panels and co-design short courses in programming language skills. This partnership has also created the opportunity for students to become involved in real-world projects, such as writing the software that drive the new immersive rooms at the college.

The LSIF is enabling partners to build capacity throughout the region to enable the future delivery of several level 3 and 4 qualifications and "micro credentials" which are linked with LSIP priorities. This will enable individuals to complete regular bite size training which is linked to their job role and will add value throughout their professional development. These credentials are currently being delivered across a range of digital competences, including Learning in the Digital Era, IT Software Fundamentals, Using IT to Increase Productivity, Essential Digital Skills, and Digital Marketing.

Through the Digital project alone, significant investment has been made in capital, and development resources. This investment has facilitated the upgrading of equipment and enabled the purchase of specialised items such as Hydrogen Cars and 3D Printers. It has also facilitated the renovations of learning spaces across the region, equipping them with the latest cutting-edge IT and software, replicating the technology students will use in their future careers.

Net Zero

As with Digital Skills provision, training providers are making great strides in integrating net zero skills into a wide range of courses in a contextualised way. For example, joinery students at Chesterfield College have engaged with and participated in community tree-planting schemes along the banks of the Chesterfield Canal. Not only does this highlight the green impact of their chosen careers, it also facilitates greater pride in their local community as they have engaged with several environmental enhancement and clean-up initiatives in the area. Chesterfield College staff have participated in two sustainability fairs, with most students attending. All learners have participated in research and design projects based around the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, with the aim of promoting green skills and climate literacy that people can contextualise back into their personal and professional lives. To support this, online resources have been designed and built that are interactive and accessible to all on any PC or mobile device.

In more specialist roles, providers are now reporting full integration of relevant green skills in priority sectors. These are now an integral and compulsory component of courses rather than being an option. These include, but are not limited to, retro and new fit in Construction, Electric Vehicle Maintenance in Automotive and net zero technologies in Agriculture. Vision West Nottinghamshire College are currently undertaking significant investment in remodelling their Station Park site to effectively teach modern methods of construction. Nottingham College has also effectively developed a wide range of partnerships, for example with Elmhurst Energy, to provide appropriate retrofit provision at level 3, thereby creating a more distinct pathway for learners between level 1 and higher education and significant investment has been made in a range of green skills courses to meet the needs of the automotive industry in terms of Electric and Hybrid Vehicle maintenance^{19, 20}. RNN Group has worked with Matrix Energy Systems around green tech installer provision and developed some short bespoke level three courses.

LSIF funding has led to the launch of industry-specific Achieving Net Zero online workshop-based programmes. Year one money has been used by Nottingham College to purchase an off-the-shelf solution which has been deployed rapidly and will be assessed throughout year two to evaluate its effectiveness.

A roadmap of the existing net-zero offer has also been created, via a research project with Nottingham Trent University. Although time constraints meant this was Nottinghamshire-specific, it produced some actionable information from which to develop provision, particularly around retrofit in construction.

19 <https://www.nottinghamcollege.ac.uk/about-us/news/nottingham-college-unveils-electric-vehicle-training-courses-to-future-proof-the-automotive-sector>

20 <https://www.nottinghamcollege.ac.uk/about-us/news/nottingham-college-goes-green-with-2-6million-funding-for-decarbonisation-roll-out>

As a result of the priorities identified in the LSIP, and associated LSIF funding, training providers across the region have strengthened their links with employers in all of the priority areas. One example of a partnership that emerged has been in the area of heat pump innovation, where world-leading heating manufacturer Vaillant, with its Belper-based UK headquarters, have worked with Derby College to deliver the UK's first low carbon heating technician apprenticeships.

Upskilling of existing teaching staff across the region has also taken place. Nottingham College, in partnership with the Carbon Literacy Trust, has delivered a certified staff awareness workshop to its staff. Investment in facilities through the LSIF fund, but also by partner employers, has enabled the region's training providers to provide facilities for teaching staff to use to teach learners those skills that are in demand from employers. This is particularly evident in construction, heat-pump technology and electric vehicle maintenance.

CASE STUDY: Vaillant UK and Derby College

There has been considerable integration of the LSIP priorities into the provision offered by the region's Further Education providers, with regular referencing of them in their Accountability Statements. The period since the release of the LSIP has seen considerable enhancement in course provision, as providers respond to the current and future skills needs of the region. Employer involvement in the design and delivery of courses is now commonplace – an excellent example of which is Vaillant's partnership with Derby College in the green sector.



Vaillant was established in 1874 and are the world's leading heating manufacturer. The company is at the forefront of heat pump innovation and remains strongly committed to initiatives to improve the climate.²¹

Vaillant has partnered with Derby Colleges Group to deliver the UK's first low carbon heating technician apprenticeships accredited with the King's Standard and made a major investment in a Low Carbon Centre providing training in the latest heating technologies.

In early 2024, Derby College welcomed the UK's first cohort onto the Level 3 Low Carbon Heating Technician, a course developed in partnership with Vaillant,²² supporting the UK Government's target of installing 600,000 heat pumps a year by 2028.²³

This partnership between Vaillant and Derby College Group is just the beginning, as more collaboration is being planned. The aim is to develop stronger, low carbon opportunities for those coming into the industry and to provide training for thousands of people, including experienced business owners.

21 https://www.vaillant150.com/en_GB/current-mission

22 <https://www.derby-college.ac.uk/news/vaillant-and-derby-college-group-welcome-the-uks-first-ten-low-carbon-heating-technician-apprentices/>

23 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-security-bill-factsheets/energy-security-bill-factsheet-low-carbon-heat-scheme>

Essential and Transferable Skills

Training providers across the region are responding to the needs of the learners attending their institutions in different and tailored ways. Nottingham College has designed and implemented a bespoke 'Mind the Gap' course, to teach office etiquette to their learners, after discovering that many had limited awareness of appropriate behaviour in an office environment.

While there is limited appetite from training providers for a region-wide approach to transferable skills provision, some providers have aligned themselves with national schemes, such as Vision West Nottinghamshire College, who integrated the Skills Builder Framework²⁴ into their courses, while others have made significant investment in bespoke systems. Where these are being used, the views of employers have been considered during their development and care has been taken to communicate their meaning to the region's employer base.

The eight education providers involved in the essential skills project carried out a range of different research to establish the most in-demand transferable skills across the region. Due to differences in team sizes within the partnership it was agreed that partners would undertake their research in an objective way that worked for their organisations. Across the partnership, multiple methods were used to collate the information by following a common framework of questions. Some partners carried out face-to-face meetings, engaged with external agencies for support or distributed electronic surveys via emails and social media. 214 responses were received across multiple industries. Each partner was required to provide the top 5 Essential Skills by sector, based on the priorities identified in the LSIP and wider industries in the D2N2 area. Identified sectors are:

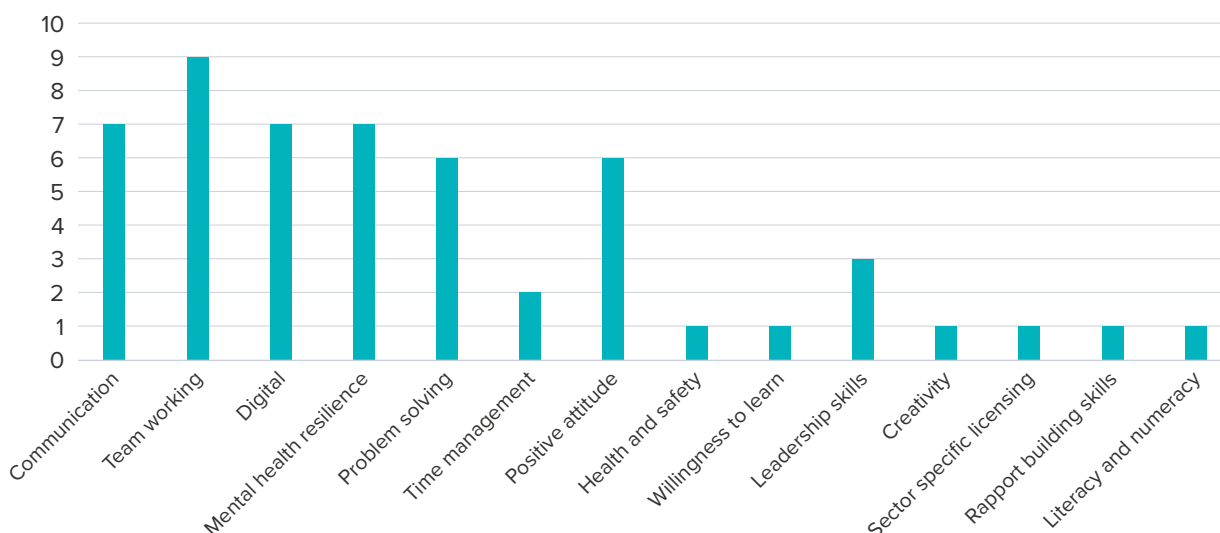
- Adult Social Care
- Construction
- Digital
- Transport and Logistics
- Manufacturing
- Visitor Economy
- Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services

Across these sectors, the top five Essential Skills identified by the LSIP selected sectors are:

- Teamworking
- Communication
- Digital
- Mental Health Resilience
- Problem Solving

24 <https://www.skillsbuilder.org/>

Wider industries skills need



When comparing the top five essential skills, identified in the LSIP to the skills needs of wider industries, the top five are identical, with the addition of positive attitude. This was considered vital by many employers. The top six essential skills were:

- Team Working
- Digital
- Communication
- Mental Health Resilience
- Problem Solving
- Positive Attitude

The Essential Skills project team have now commenced the mapping of existing qualifications and short courses currently being delivered within the region that address the above list of essential skills that were identified by employers. This will lead to the development of an Essential Skills Matrix for the region, ensuring a consistent approach, identifying current gaps in provision and partner coverage, thus enabling sharing of resource to address the need.

The following objectives have been set for Year Two of the Essential Skills Project:

- Establish impact of short courses developed and how this addresses the essential needs of employers in the region.
- Providers to co-produce a comprehensive guide that explains placement requirements for all vocational courses, and what employers can expect or contribute as part of placements.
- Have a Virtual Learning Environment Platform available to all providers.

Local Skills System

Significant work is being undertaken by a range of partners, to aid the broadening of the candidate search and highlight potential barriers to employment of those furthest from the labour market. These range from industry-specific schemes, such as those provided by Construction Industry Training Board²⁵, to UK Government schemes^{26, 27, 28} and more localised initiatives to help targeted groups of people.²⁹ A mapping exercise of the region's provision has been carried out and information is currently being organised and collated by LSIP partners, to aid the region's employers in accessing previously under-used areas of the labour market.

The D2N2 Careers Hub continues to develop its provision, with a range of in person and virtual events to strengthen the links between the education system and the world of work. Its 'Teacher Encounters Programme' gives educators the opportunity to engage directly with employers and discover how their subject can be applied practically in business. The programme also enhances knowledge and understanding of pathways into employment, particularly technical and vocational routes such as apprenticeships and T-levels.

Colleges across the region are mindful of the recruitment and retention of specialist teachers in several priority areas. Industry knowledge and practical experience is highly valued, in order to deliver best value to learners. For example, Chesterfield College is working with a range of delivery partners across the region on a recruitment drive to secure specialist teachers into education and training. An example of this is in construction, where different possibilities for engagement have been discussed, such as an employer releasing an employee in their final year in the workplace to work shadow a current teacher and experience a potential new career, sharing their recent industry knowledge and having a real impact on students' learning experience.

Local Socio-Economic Conditions

As described in the LSIP report, local socio-economic conditions significantly influence skills access and attainment within communities. Economic disparities and limited infrastructure for internet provision and public transport access, particularly in rural areas, were found to further hinder skills acquisition. Training providers have initiated a range of schemes to try and reduce these barriers. As mentioned above, Inspire Learning has also been able to address some socio-economic challenges by providing IT equipment and hotspot dongles, so learners can access course materials and complete homework tasks off site. West Nottinghamshire College have teamed up with local bus operators Stagecoach and Trent Barton to offer discounted bus passes to its students. For those studying T-level qualifications the pass is free, which enables students to attend their mandatory workplace placements without financial burden.³⁰

Local partners also continue to work closely to address a number of socio-economic challenges,

25 <https://www.citb.co.uk/levy-grants-and-funding/grants-and-funding/>

26 <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

27 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/restart-scheme>

28 <https://www.gov.uk/work-health-programme>

29 <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/business/disability-employer-engagement-derbyshire/disability-employer-engagement-derbyshire-deed.aspx>

30 <https://www.wnc.ac.uk/Support-and-services/west-notts-college-travel-pass.aspx>

particularly in rural areas of the region. Rural Action Derbyshire's 'Wheels to Work' scheme aims to provide transport solutions, such as CBT training and bicycles/electric bikes, to those furthest from the labour market³¹, where a straightforward public transport solution does not exist. The lack of affordable housing in these areas also creates an issue, meaning travel to access work and volunteering opportunities is essential for people to access the labour market.

A project group has been formed to address actionable priorities 13 and 17 from the LSIP. This examines the provision of training and resources to employers, especially small and medium-sized businesses, to aid them in broadening the candidate search to include those furthest from the labour market and highlighting where sources of support for mental health are available. Mental health issues emerged as a common concern in respondents to the LSIP research. Nervousness and fear about the workplace, especially among young people, were reported, along with low self-esteem and high levels of anxiety that hindered learners and employees from completing courses or attending work. Lack of confidence and poor mental health were found to create barriers in securing interviews, succeeding in applications, or even showing up to work. A map of the region's provision in this area has been created, that includes internet resources and details of relevant schemes administered by the UK Government and the Department for Work and Pensions, as well as sector-specific projects such as those conducted by the Construction Industry Training Board. There are also a range of city and county council-led schemes and events across the region that also have the aim of increasing employment prospects for marginalised groups. The project group is currently assessing the most effective way to communicate these to employers.

³¹ <https://www.wheelstowork.org/>

WHAT STILL NEEDS TO BE ACHIEVED?

Despite the positive steps taken to address the region's skills gaps and training providers evolving their offer in response to local needs, there is still work to be done. Recruitment and retention of staff continues to be one of the major challenges facing businesses across Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. Engagement of the next generation with a range of industries is vital, and it is pleasing to see this starting to happen at an increasingly early stage in people's lives, through the activities of the Careers Hub and a range of industry bodies.

Further research into the skills provision in the region also needs to be undertaken. Not only will this provide more granular information, but it will help the LSIP partners ensure that appropriate skills needs are, and continue to be, identified and actions put in place to address any emerging gaps. This is particularly needed in the digital skills area, but also in the region's emerging needs, such as hydrogen and nuclear. Plans are also in place to regularly update the curriculum mapping data and use this as a framework to engage in further discussions with providers, thereby ensuring that intelligence gathered is relevant, up-to-date and appropriate for the skills requirements of employees in the region.

It is also critical that the region's employers continue to be made aware of, and are involved at the heart of, initiatives to inspire the next generation and provide improved outcomes for young people and address future skills needs. It is important that simple and actionable next steps are provided for employers to promote their early engagement with the education sector and help develop talent pipelines. Small and medium-sized businesses also need to be able to understand the benefits of engagement with their future workforces and why they should engage with national schemes such as the Employer Standards Framework.

As already mentioned in this report, a wide range of factors have a significant impact on skills acquisition and the addressing of needs of employers across the region. Despite the headlines of devolved powers for the East Midlands Combined County Authority in areas such as the adult skills budget, transport, decarbonisation, and housing, it is essential that these areas are not treated in isolation, but instead a joined-up approach is taken, building on the collaborative efforts from a range of stakeholders that have been evident so far.

Actionable Priorities (AP) Next Steps:

AP1: Continued Digital Exchange Hub meetings, allowing employers and training providers to discuss current and future skills needs in the area.

AP2 and AP3: Digital Hub team to continue to review skills needs and facilitate the provision of appropriate courses, incorporating labour market information.

AP4: Continued Green Skills Exchange Hub meetings, allowing employers and training providers to discuss current and future skills needs in the area.

AP5: Review research findings. Continue the development of peer-to-peer networks to facilitate knowledge exchange.

APs6-9: Continued meetings of the Essential Skills Project Group. Regular feedback from localised mixed methods research between team members and their local employer base. Examine the current detail of bootcamp provision and establish courses to fill any gaps that exist.

AP10: Regular meetings of the FE Collaboration Group, with a view to working collaboratively to attract funding in priority areas.

AP11: Continued engagement with employers to increase understanding of relevant standards and provide feedback.

AP12: Training providers will continue to work together to explore and action innovative ways of attracting industry professionals into the teaching profession.

AP13 and AP17: Following the collation of relevant local provision, the project group will continue to meet and examine the best way to cascade the information to employers and other relevant bodies.

AP14: D2N2 Careers Hub will continue to develop its on and offline provision to enable students to encounter a range of careers options as early as possible in their lives.

AP15: Form and organise a project group of appropriate professionals to take forwards.

AP16: Continue with the identification of priority areas that require training provision. Refresh earlier research to ensure its findings are still relevant.

AP18: ERB to continue to meet with project groups to discuss partnerships and monitor progress.

ANNEXES

Annex A: LSIP Annual Priorities at a glance.

The following table provides a summary of progress to date against the actionable priorities identified in the LSIP and uses the following key:

R	Action not started/significant revision needed
A	Started but incomplete with further/ongoing development work needed
G	On target and to be achieved by the project end date

Area	Priority	Rating
Digital Skills	1. Promote and communicate (and develop if necessary) the area's existing digital skills offer to employers more widely and work with colleges and ITPs (in consultation with D2N2 LEP, BROs and/or similar partners) to assess the effectiveness.	G
	2. Integrate a digital component into relevant post-16 vocational programmes, apprenticeships and AEB vocational courses, where not already present.	G
	3. Assess the volume and take up of digital skills online/ short course programmes against relevant occupations, or introduce where not present	A
Net Zero Skills	4. Develop and implement industry specific "Achieving Net Zero" online/workshop-based programmes for staff and managers, with a focus on relevant occupations.	A
	5. Collaborate to produce a roadmap of the region's existing Net Zero offer and develop peer-to-peer networks.	G
Essential and Transferable Skills	6. Explore the implementation of a D2N2 wide skills framework to define consistent approaches to essential skills system, offering examples of what employers can expect at each level.	A
	7. Providers to co-produce a comprehensive guide that explains placement requirements for all vocational courses, and what employers can expect or contribute as part of the placements	A
	8. Develop and implement a common employability/essential skills framework for all AEB and Boot Camp programmes.	A
	9. Develop and implement an essential skills short course programme for employed staff.	A
Local Skills System	10. Explore/increase collaborative bidding and delivery partnership with the region's FE colleges, universities, and key partners.	G
	11. Actively review employer standards with employers when negative feedback received. Work with them to articulate what (if anything) is wrong/missing or needs to be added. Providers can add content locally and report content for removal to IFATE but removal from a standard locally is not possible.	A
	12. Develop a collaborative initiative to increase the supply of teachers/trainers in priority occupations and review/ improve their training if needed. An area approach could be advantageous.	A
	13. Develop recruitment and retention packs and/or workshops for employers, especially SMEs, to aid broadening candidate search. Utilise the skills of existing students to deliver.	A
	14. Further develop the Careers Hub and similar services and communicate their existence more widely.	A
Local Socio-economic Conditions	15. Assess the extent of current social value agreements in public procurement and work collaboratively with Local Authorities to develop further and share knowledge with employers.	R
	16. Define a set of key occupations that require people to be upskilled. For example, junior people already in the digital sector, could help fill shortages in cyber roles, by upskilling, rather than looking for new people to move into the roles which will require a greater lead time. Providers then focus on the training that enable people to be upskilled	A
	17. Offer short courses to employers that highlight barriers to employment for marginalised groups and those furthest from the labour market in priority occupations and provide training for employers, accordingly, highlighting where possible mental health support.	A
	18. Seek opportunities to partner with groups such as Youth Social Action to develop transferable skills for T-Levels and apprenticeships. As transferable skills built into work placements assist employers with creation.	A

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