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West Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), 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.

1 - Who Is This Publication For?

This report is intended to provide details of progress against priorities agreed and set out in the [West Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan \(LSIP\)](#) , published in August 2023.

It sets out:

- Information about activities delivered by West Yorkshire’s skills infrastructure and learning providers, to address specific challenges that were identified by local employers and other stakeholders. (Section 2)
- The impact and benefits of this activity with examples and case studies of key successes, achievements and good practice. (Section 3)
- An update on the West Yorkshire Strategic and Economic context which impacts on both skills supply, and skills demand by local employers. (Section 4)
- Progress against specific actions and priorities, including who is involved in and timescales for activities. (Section 5)
- What still needs to be achieved, taking into account changes in skills needs and context. (Section 6)

The report is aimed at employers, learning providers and wider stakeholders including Local Authorities, business representative organisations, and sector-specific networks and partnerships.

Employers will find this report useful, enabling:

- Those that have been involved in developing and implementing the LSIP, to understand how their engagement has contributed to changes and improved skills availability.
- Those who are not yet engaged, to see how their involvement could potentially support improvements in the skills landscape to their benefit.

Information provided in the report will also be beneficial to providers and other local stakeholders, informing local strategies and enabling them to shape provision planning.

It will contribute to improved communications with and employers, providers and stakeholders all being more aware of developments in skills across West Yorkshire and its key sectors.

2 - Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) - Summary

The West Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) was published in August 2023 after consultation with local businesses, stakeholders and skills providers.

It is intended to address the needs of businesses and stakeholders across the West Yorkshire area, which covers the local authority areas of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield, and the West Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (WYCA).

The LSIP sets out the following **aims, objectives and priorities**:

- To enable employers and individuals to access the technical skills they need to support growth, transformation and increased productivity in our key sectors, defined as:
 - Health and Social Care
 - Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing
 - Financial and Professional Services
 - Low Carbon
 - Digital and Technology

- Creative Industries
- Education
- Construction
- Transport and Logistics.
- To enable employers to increase their responsiveness and resilience to changes, including emerging regulatory challenges and changing socio-economic circumstances, by addressing thematic skills needs, with themes defined as:
 - Net zero transition and sustainability
 - Transferable skills
 - Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
 - Leadership and management
 - Digitisation and automation.
- To work in collaboration with key stakeholders to jointly address the skills-specific issues, focusing on the occupations/activities where there are significant local skills shortages alongside gaps in, or limited take-up of, locally available provision.
- To build upon the strengths in the existing collaborative working arrangements and post 16 skills ecosystem across West Yorkshire, to make the necessary changes to better respond to the shifting needs of employers and the West Yorkshire labour market.
- To facilitate practical interventions that are achievable on the local level, and take into account other regional and national strategies, plans and activities; ultimately ensuring the local workforce is equipped with the skills that employers need now and in the future.

The ultimate **outcomes** of the LSIP are to:

- Help employers to:
 - Better understand and communicate their skills needs.
 - Overcome barriers to accessing suitable provision.
 - Become actively involved in influencing curriculum development.
 - Increase awareness of what provision is available to them.
 - Become more proactive in planning and investing their workforce development activities over a longer period of time.
 - Develop a more inclusive approach to addressing their skills needs, working with providers to open up opportunities and skills and recruitment pipelines.
- Support providers to:
 - Align and develop provision to respond to identified needs.
 - Collaborate amongst each other to jointly address curriculum areas that are niche and may not be feasible for a single organisation; or alternatively, where demand is significant in several areas and may benefit from each organisation taking a specialism to ensure provision is available locally.
 - Develop new ways of delivering to improve take-up of provision by employers of all sizes.
- Provide funders with:
 - A clear strategic imperative for allocating resources to support skills development.
 - Clarity on the potential benefits and impact of skills investment on individuals, employers and the wider West Yorkshire economy.

3 - What Has Been Achieved So Far?

3.1 INTRODUCTION

We are making good progress against the priorities set out in the LSIP, with convincing evidence of employers playing a key role in changing the skills landscape, collaborating closely with providers, strategic and operational skills stakeholders and employer representative bodies.

There is a strong commitment to delivering the LSIP priorities, and it is evident that the LSIP is providing a useful framework for targeted actions across the West Yorkshire skills infrastructure, currently focusing on supply-related changes that are needed. The alignment of the LSIP with other skills and sector-specific strategies and plans is enabling actions to be implemented quickly and further enhanced, building on the work already undertaken.

Examples and case studies of our progress, successes and achievements delivered against both thematic and sector-specific priorities and actions are provided in this section.

3.2 COLLABORATION, COORDINATION AND PROMOTION OF SKILLS

The LSIP was developed through an existing and strong infrastructure of key stakeholders, with input from employers, employer-led organisations, local authorities, and a range of local further and higher education providers. However, there was a recognition that more needed to be done to better coordinate and promote skills development and provision, to **enable employers to gain a better understanding and awareness of funding and provision**.

We are working with key stakeholders to address these priorities, through:

- ✓ **West Yorkshire LSIP Advisory Board:** this is in place and will form the basis for communications between all key skills stakeholders across West Yorkshire, ensuring strategic linkages and informing on-going developments. Members have agreed terms of reference and fully recognise ownership of the LSIP and their role in implementing actions to address the priorities. Collaborative working and coordination will be further facilitated by **sector groups**, led by the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges (WYCC), as part of the LSIP activities, and enhanced by organisations that participated in the sector-specific consultations for the LSIP development.
- ✓ **Future Goals:** West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) is leading on and investing in the development of the Future Goals portal (<https://www.futuregoals.co.uk/>) as a central source of labour market information to support employers, learners, educators, parents and carers. In addition to careers information supporting understanding and promoting pathways into local priority sectors, the portal provides details of courses (WYCA commissioned resources including Adult Education Budget (AEB) and the employer-led Skills Connect programme) for those looking to improve their skill levels and/or change careers.
- ✓ **Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF):** Calderdale College leading a consortium of over 30 providers, and supported by the WYCC, successfully submitted a proposal for £6.9m of LSIF resources. LSIF is specifically addressing LSIP priorities and is a key driver of improved collaborative working between West Yorkshire's providers and employers. The FE college partners have agreed and are promoting and delivering against their specialisms, thus maximising funds, reducing duplication and improving coordination to better support employers in the priority sectors. Examples from this programme are included below.

3.3 EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

A key priority, set out in the LSIP, was to see improved employer engagement with a focus on helping employers to proactively plan for their workforce skills needs; contribute to curriculum development to ensure provision met their needs; and supporting learners via placements, enhancing access to future recruitment pipelines.

All our skills stakeholders actively engage with employers for a variety of reasons. Examples of successful engagement include:

- ✓ Employers proactively planning for their skills needs, as seen by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) supporting K Rouse (a Leeds-based Civil Engineering company) with setting up their own skills bootcamp (funded via WYCA resources - see [Annex A](#) for details about WYCA skills bootcamps) to upskill and train staff in Pipe Laying, addressing both a gap in provision for this certain aspect of training, as well as skills gaps in their workforce.
- ✓ Employers collaborating with providers to support the development of Skills Bootcamps provision that focus on specific skills needs, for example, courses that integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR) into course design and delivery for Motor Vehicle and Advanced Manufacturing.
- ✓ Employers increasingly seeing the benefits of offering placement opportunities to learners as evidenced by the work Kirklees College has undertaken to develop good relationships with local care homes and care providers to offer work placements.

3.4 IMPROVING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

- Wakefield has joined Kirklees as the second UNESCO Learning City in West Yorkshire. UNESCO define these as *a city that: effectively mobilises its resources in every sector to promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education; revitalises learning in families and communities; facilitates learning for and in the workplace; extends the use of learning technologies; enhances quality and excellence in learning; and fosters a culture of learning throughout life*. The 'Learn Wakefield District' partnership aims to ensure that all residents and businesses encourage, engage, and celebrate learning for life, learning for work and learning for learning's sake.
- The WYCA commissioned Adult Education Budget (AEB) programme, with a priority focusing on *Make learning more inclusive to support disadvantaged residents*, is making significant in-roads in addressing EDI¹. An example of this is the procurement of specialist providers to engage employers with vacancies and deliver telecoms, digital infrastructure and rail engineering skills, focusing on learner groups that are underrepresented in the sectors, e.g. women in telecoms. The activity resulted in 85% of learners progress into employment.

3.5 HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

- Our Further Education colleges and providers in West Yorkshire are continuing to work collaboratively with key sector organisations which include NHS Teaching Hospitals (in Leeds and Bradford), Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Ambulance Service and Dementia UK. These relationships are contributing to course development, funded through LSIF, Skills Bootcamps and Gainshare; and support career mapping and pathways for Health and Social Care professionals within West Yorkshire.
- LSIF partners have supported the creation of e-learning platform, digitising a suite of key topic areas to assist learners alongside their Health and Social Care programmes. This is

¹ For detailed reporting on AEB see <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/12136/adult-education-budget-annual-report-y2-final.pdf>

providing flexible learning and additional resource to learners, thus addressing the priority **flexible skills provision to increase access and take-up**. Additional resource through this e-learning platform will enable the learners to cover specific topic areas in their own time and or provide a different mode of learning that the learner is able to do in their own time and at their own pace.

CASE STUDY:

LSIF funding has enabled Shipley College to build on their Health and Social Care specialism and enhance their existing clinical wards and social care environments with innovative mixed reality simulation technology. This investment is crucial for cultivating the future professional readiness of Healthcare and Social Care practitioners in West Yorkshire.

In addressing the need to use the latest technologies to ensure learners' skills are relevant to the workplace, they are first college in the UK to procure the latest HAL Simulator, the most advanced multidisciplinary adult simulator. They will break new ground by combining the simulators with AI-driven patient interaction software that helps students practise engaging with patients. The lifelike experiences facilitated by our 4D immersive rooms and AI-powered patient simulators offer safe yet realistic training solutions for high-stakes, real-world scenarios.

This comprehensive preparation equips their students to excel as the next generation of the NHS and Social Care workforce.

- Planning is underway for course development to include precursor courses for the apprenticeship route, including Introduction to Health, Preparing to Work. For example, Shipley College is exploring development of pre-access course to their Access Health & Social Care to build learner skills and confidence. These contribute to the LSIP action of **creation of alternative shorter courses to provide pathways into the sector**.
- There has been significant LSIF investment to develop capability and capacity of staff through shared Continuous Professional Development (CPD). This has included:
 - ✓ An AI conference hosted by Shipley College bringing teaching staff across all colleges together as well as connecting with employers.
 - ✓ An Immersive Learning Experience to showcase its capabilities working with Metaverse (the EdTech specialist). The day covered the technological advancement within the Health Care sector and how this can be effectively harnessed within teaching and assessment.

3.6 ENGINEERING AND ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

- A wide range of Additive Manufacturing, Automation and Virtual Reality (VR) in Motor Vehicle training and CPD is underway for staff at Kirklees College, Luminare Education Group, Bradford College and Heart of Yorkshire. Courses range from Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) systems to Additive Manufacturing and aim to address the **skills gaps in providers**, ensuring they are fully competent in using the latest technology.
- Kirklees College, with their specialism in this sector, has appointed a Specialist Knowledge facilitator to support with employer engagement and understand skills gaps. This facilitator will work on behalf of all partners and feed intelligence into course design. This approach has supported the development of new apprenticeships to address skills gaps in furniture manufacturing (See [Annex B](#) - case study).

- LSIF has contributed to the investment into new equipment and development of new interactive, immersive learning and skills in areas which have been dominated by traditional manufacturing and engineering methods. There has been a focus on: Additive Manufacturing - 3D Printing; Automation (Fluid Power Automation Software); and Artificial Intelligence (VR Technology in Motor Vehicle Engineering). This activity is addressing the issue of **delivery equipment being out of date**, and as a result **providers not being able to offer up to date and relevant courses**.

CASE STUDY:

Local stakeholders have been working together for several years to promote the manufacturing priority sector and career pathways in Leeds and Bradford.

The Leeds Manufacturing Festival is delivered by Leeds Manufacturing Alliance, and is supported by a range of sponsors, including Leeds City Council and Leeds City College, and employers. This collaborative approach has fostered stronger relationships which have in turn supported the wider curriculum development within the College of Engineering and further embedded their relationships within businesses.

Similarly, in Bradford, the Chamber and their Manufacturing alliance deliver Bradford Manufacturing Weeks, supported by Skills House at Bradford Council, Bradford University and the Further Education Colleges. Led and influenced by local manufacturers, Bradford and Keighley Colleges specifically, along with Appris Training, continue to develop long standing links within industry and support local companies with their current and future training needs for their existing workforce, whilst influencing the next generation. Keighley College increasingly welcomes in staff from business to train on machinery in addition to companies donating old “kit” for teaching purposes, thus ensuring their facilities are as up to date as possible with industry. .

These activities have connected 15,000 students in the region to the manufacturing sector, highlighting different career pathways and opportunities, and supporting recruitment pipelines and progression into careers in this important sector.

- Our colleges are displaying the new courses and new equipment such as the 3D Printers and VR to promote the sector to businesses and new entrants, helping to **promote the different types of careers in Engineering**.

3.7 FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (FPS)

- Work is underway led by Luminate Education Group via the LSIF partnership, to address the need for **employers to attract new entrants into the sector**. The partners are working with key sector employers to develop a series of career videos. With a focus on five specific careers, they are aimed at learners in college and school who may be considering a career in FinTech, and those already within the industry seeking career change. The videos will capture the type of work currently undertaken by employees and the skills they require to do well in these roles.
- Connecting with key sectoral stakeholders is essential to successfully deliver the LSIF and address our skills priorities. Work by FinTech North has brought the skills needs of this sector to the fore. They have developed a skills steering group which includes Luminate Education Group and Tech Skills UK as partners and are leading on the development of a Degree Apprenticeship in FinTech to be ready for study by September 2025, to respond to the priority

of **creating alternative pathways into the sector**. The steering group will also develop a series of short courses, skills bootcamps, FPS bespoke courses by 2025.

- Responding to limited **detailed understanding of the skills needs** in this sector, in depth research has been undertaken by Whitecap Consulting, on behalf of the LSIF FinTech partnership. The resulting research report was launched on 14th May setting out the findings of consultations with employers in the Financial Services, Legal and Accounting sub-sectors, including FinTech, across West Yorkshire. Partners will use it to inform future skills planning, course development and collaborative working between providers and employers to respond effectively to the rapidly changing skills needs in FinTech. The report will also form the basis for the development of a specialist FinTech academy on a hub and spoke model, which is aimed at sharing knowledge, teaching provision and peer support to develop high value curriculum across partners and employers.

3.8 LOW CARBON

- WYCA have commissioned Green Skills for Construction Bootcamps with ICON that will be delivered from the Forging Futures campus from June/ July. These will support the **upskilling** priority for this sector.
- Bradford College is addressing the priority of **adding pathways to existing qualifications** in the absence of relevant apprenticeships standards. They offer short commercial courses such as ‘Sustainable and Renewable Energy’ to complement the existing qualifications.

3.9 DIGITAL AND TECHNOLOGY

CASE STUDY:

Bradford Tech Fests’ aim is to showcase digital careers pathways and develop STEM and Digital Skills, whilst also raising the aspirations of young people in the district, helping them to embrace technology and addressing the increasing need for businesses to have improved or good levels of digital skills in the workplace. . Partners led by Bradford Council, included the National Science & Media Museum, Future Transformation and Exa Networks.

Increasingly diverse students from primary to university age have participated in activities to support awareness of pathways into Tech careers.

Activities and workshops at the event in October 2023 included:

- Gaming Festival, involving local businesses, Impact Gamers, the Exa Foundation and Future Transformation hosting two days for over 200 students and their families, exploring the gaming sector.
- Cyber Security, a workshop held with the cyber security experts ECSC introducing jobs in the Tech industry.
- Tech for Good - an event focused on inspiring females into STEM.
-
- AI Pathways - events designed to support learners and businesses on the use of AI, to future proof businesses.

- Collaboration led by Yorkshire Learning Providers (YLP) across both West Yorkshire and York and North Yorkshire LSIP and LSIF will deliver a joint event focusing on the future of Learning through AI and Digital Technology. The conference planned for 7th June, will, display digital technologies purchased through LSIF; and bring providers, employers and other

stakeholders together to discuss and share good practice and techniques for adopting AI and digital technologies to develop skills.

- The Leeds Learning Alliance Digital Progression Partnership brings partners together to develop resources and provide coordinated opportunities to demystify the digital offer. Examples of activities include Leeds Digital Festival and Leeds Digital Careers Festival.

3.10 CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

CASE STUDY:

Calderdale College has developed courses in Esports, TV & Film Production and Games Design, including a T-level in Media. All are identified as skills shortage areas in industries with growth potential. Each vocation requires a mix of contemporary Technical Skills, Arts and Computing.

In developing the courses, they engaged with employers and utilised industry partnerships to support the creation of a contemporary curriculum, for example Impact Gamers participated in shaping the Game Design course, and the British Esports Federation supported the curriculum for Esports.

This curriculum design activity is being underpinned by the development of a digital hub and new campus within easy reach of creative and digital businesses, at Dean Clough in Halifax. The new Mill Studios facilities, funded by LSIF, including professional workspaces, studios and gaming classrooms, will enable learners to gain the skills needed by this dynamic sector, using state of the art equipment.

Industry partnerships have also supported the development of this hub, for example, alongside advice from suppliers, Screen Yorkshire have advised on the design of the TV & Film Studio Space, also on the application of equipment, lighting and green screen technology.

The studios and equipment will also be available for local businesses and community use, also supporting enterprise and freelancers in the sector, and contributing to a creative hub enabling businesses/industry and education to collaborate.

- Bradford College work closely with local and regional creative art organisations, such as Kala Sangam, to try and open pathways into the creative industries for students. Kala Sangam supports students to gain experience in the sector, providing regular performance opportunities, and their staff have supported students through mentoring, talks and advice sessions. This relationship has supported learners to progress into freelance employment opportunities and provides **good practice to support increased employer involvement in offering placements**.
- Kirklees Council has established the PACE programme to support the development of skills in the creative industry in the district. The programme supports participants with gaining an understanding about the creative arts sector, and the many roles and opportunities available. Support is available for sector-specific skills development, access to work experience and employment opportunities. The programme also delivers **enterprise skills** needed to enable growth in the sector, as identified in the LSIP.
- A key barrier to delivering provision to meet needs for this sector is the 'niche' nature of the skills and the resulting small cohorts, meaning that course feasibility is often an issue. Skills Connect courses that can support smaller groups of learners (funded via Skills Bootcamps and Gainshare resources) are now available fully funded to individuals and at a co-funded rate for Employers. This includes XR/VR for the creative/cultural sector bootcamp, delivered

by Mastered Studios; and Stage and Screen Rigging bootcamp, delivered by the Academy of Live Technology.

3.11 EDUCATION

CASE STUDY:

Collaborative CPD is at the core of the LSIF Teaching and Learning project strand, addressing the priority of **CPD for employees to enable them to keep up with technology/techniques and developments**. This includes:

- ✓ Industry experts involved in the delivery CPD for specialist digital skills.
- ✓ The development of a pool of 'Digital Innovators' to support sharing of knowledge and expertise across the West Yorkshire providers.
- ✓ Specialist Knowledge Facilitators (expert educators and industry leaders) to embed innovation techniques and practices into learning.
- ✓ 'Influencer' / AI Champion Roles identified to cascade and embed digital innovation into learning, with ongoing plans of digital skills toolkits to aid a culture shift and change into digitisation, and ensuring teaching staff have the necessary resources and training.
- ✓ Development of shared CPD calendar to aid skills-sharing to effectively use and capitalise resources and knowledge transfer across the FE skills infrastructure.

- Calderdale College has developed a bootcamp to provide training for individuals wanting to support teaching and learning within the Early Years sector. This addresses the skills gaps for Early Years identified in the LSIP.

3.12 CONSTRUCTION

- Addressing the priority of **more Tier 1 courses** to help people into the sector, Calderdale College have collaborated with employers to develop a multi-trades bootcamp. This is designed to provide individuals with an introduction into Construction trades, to gain skills and help individuals to determine which trade is the right one for them. The bootcamp covers, Bricklaying, Joinery, Electrical and Plumbing. It will also have additional wraparound support including CV workshops, interview and employability skills. Kirklees College also run a Sector Based Work Programme for General Builder/Groundworkers.
- Leeds College of Building (LCB), as LSIF Construction sector lead is collaborating with partners and employers to update delivery methods using immersive classrooms, and developing a combination of practical workshops, addressing the need for more **flexible and accessible delivery models** in the sector. This approach enables students to learn the skills from an immersive setting before moving onto the practical step. The digital innovation element removes textbook learning, placing skills in a 'live' construction site.
- LCB is also working with WYCA to develop a programme for L2 Groundworker Apprenticeship Standards, to meet the workforce demands and significant future opportunities for the new Mass Transit System. This demonstrates how providers are working to **flex the standards** to needs in the local economy.
- The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) have identified that there is still a huge gap in provision for Roofing skills, and there is a national skills shortage for Solar Panel and Retrofit work. In addition, there are too few new entrants into the trade. To address these issues, and with the aim of students at Leeds College of Building transferring into the trade, they supported current Joinery students with sessions on Roofing led by The Purple Roofing Company.

3.13 TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

- In LSIP consultations it was evident that there was limited provision to support the sector, despite significant skills gaps and needs. Since then, Heart of Yorkshire Group have increased provision and worked extensively to engage with employers, helping them to develop a longer-term view on skills development.
- A regional shortage of bus drivers is being addressed through the Adult Education Budget resources, with WYCA contracting with the independent training provider, Realise Training, to deliver driver training through its Route to Success programme. This two-stage programme has been co-designed with the Confederation of Passenger Transport, with endorsement from the sector, and has resulted in over 100 learners becoming employed with local bus operators. The good practice model has now been adopted across other combined authorities.

3.14 CONCLUSION

The above examples evidence the commitment, by local skills stakeholders, to respond to the LSIP skills priorities and actions. Diverse organisations are actively collaborating with other providers, sectoral stakeholders and with employers to make infrastructure, provision and cultural changes (particularly embracing different ways of working) to address the skills needs in West Yorkshire. It should be stated that the details reported do not fully reflect the breadth of work that is currently taking place across all stakeholders and provider sectors (Further Education and Higher Education organisations) and across diverse funding streams (including mainstream funding, UKSPF, and apprenticeships), to address the priorities.

We are encouraged by the responses to the LSIP to date, however, we recognise that there is more work to be done, and that it will take time to make the lasting changes needed. Nevertheless, we are confident that working collaboratively across West Yorkshire that we can achieve the priorities, aims and objectives set out in the LSIP.

4 - Strategic and Economic Context Update

The LSIP, published in August 2023, was informed by data collected through consultations with employers and skills stakeholders, underpinned by a diverse range of strategic and economic documentation, and labour market information. To identify and understand any changes to the strategic and economic context, which might impact on skills needs and the priorities set out in the LSIP, we have once again collected input from the key stakeholders and reviewed strategic and economic plans and labour market information.

Key relevant updates are summarised below:

4.1 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS AND POLICY

- A new Economic Strategy to deliver the West Yorkshire Plan 2040 is in development², with a vision for *A brighter West Yorkshire - an engine room of ideas and creativity, where anyone can make a home*. The strategy aims to build upon West Yorkshire's diverse economy, with specialisms such as Manufacturing, alongside knowledge-based specialisms. It will involve maximising the comparative economic advantages of its sectors and clusters (including those that are already identified in the LSIP), focusing on the opportunities provided via three overlapping groups of sectors, defined as Advanced Manufacturing, Emerging Tech and Net Zero.
- The Devolution Level 4 provides for new powers under skills, and the draft areas for action (under the Economic Strategy) includes an *ambition to fully integrate business and skills working with local employers to understand their current and future skills needs and make sure our schools, colleges, universities and training providers deliver the right courses to meet these*. Actions will follow a full review of the skills system but is likely to include agreements for increased flexibilities under the Adult Skills (non-apprenticeship) funding, a central convening role for Careers and discussions for a potential role employment support programmes working with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority 10 Mayoral Pledges, providing direction and opportunities for skills development, including:
 - Create 1,000 well paid, skilled jobs for young people.
 - Prioritise skills and training to ensure everyone in West Yorkshire has the skills they need to secure work.
 - Support local businesses and be a champion for our regional economy.
 - Lead a Creative New Deal to ensure our creative industries are part of the broader recovery strategy.
 - Tackle the climate emergency and protect our environment.
- The Government has announced an Investment Zone for West Yorkshire³. The Investment Zone will attract £160m in 2024-2025 to support further developments in HealthTech and the Digital sector, drawing on the existing strengths in Life Sciences and Digital and Technology sectors. The investment will support infrastructure development and improvements in innovation facilities, i.e. both capital and revenue spend. The investment is expected to impact on the creation of over 7,000 jobs within the sector, and demand for more skilled people in due course. The revenue funding will complement the capital projects and focus on supporting business start-up, growth and innovation activity across the health and

² <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/growing-the-economy/economic-strategy/>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/boost-for-uks-life-sciences-sector-as-west-yorkshire-hosts-englands-third-investment-zone>

wellbeing and digital sectors and to accelerate the commercialisation of research. Details of the revenue programme have yet to be finalised, although the programme will include a skills fund to support demand led courses and high-level skills delivered via innovation focused industrial PhDs. Plans being developed, are aligning with the LSIP, with courses being driven by the skills the employers 'needs, focusing on the Health Innovation and Digital Tech cluster. The plans recognise that the LSIP has Digital and Technology as one of the priority sectors, although this skills fund will address the niche Health Innovation skills needs.

All the above are in discussion/development and are largely aligned with the LSIP priorities. Communication channels are in place to ensure continued alignment, and/or responsiveness of the LSIP to any significant changes.

4.2 LABOUR MARKET CHANGES

Overall, there are few changes to the labour market conditions since the publication of the LSIP in August 2023, as evidenced in the Labour Market Report 2024, published by WYCA. Changes to note are:

- Skills mismatches are higher than previously reported.
 - Over one third of vacancies are difficult to fill.
 - Skills gaps in existing workforce are also reported at historically high levels, with around 90,000 gaps (9% of total employment in the area). The number of gaps has increased from 51,000 in 2019.
- An increased demand for teaching, hospitality, retail and skilled trades roles and a reduced demand for STEM and associate professional occupations.
- Higher apprenticeship starts, grew by 11% during 2022/23. Apprenticeships at levels 4, 6 and 7 all grew, 74% of starts are concentrated in *Business, Administration and Law* (primarily management apprenticeships) and *Health, public services and care*.

5 - Priorities and Actions (Roadmap)

Priority (across sectors)	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements ⁴	Progress Status
Governance and LSIP management	Agree reviewed Terms of Reference for WY LSIP Board Road Map implementation phase	Chamber project team, all current membership	September 2023 - November 2023	ERB directly delivering. Clear structures, full buy-in from partners	Annually	Completed
Coordination and management.	Set up/expand sector-based steering groups with local representation to drive collaboration, reduce duplication, support provision mapping and progression routes	Chamber, providers, employers, WYCA, Business representative bodies	October 2023 - April 2024 <i>End date revised to September 2024</i>	ERB collaborating with Cross-colleges consortium; LSIF. Establish groups with appropriate leads; Increased comms/ understanding of what is in place in delivery of skills training; Increased sharing between providers on course delivery options; Increased input to curricula by employers.	Notes shared from groups, reflect on impact to curricula development feedback to board. Cross reference between groups. C	Agreed to build on LSIF sector groups, engaging more stakeholders to avoid duplication. In progress , and on track to deliver by revised end date.
Understanding of skills needs.	Deep dive provision mapping against our sector priorities to establish good practice, duplication and gaps (include Higher and Degree Apprenticeships)	WYCA, Chamber, Providers, YU, Sector Specialists, LAs	As required from October 2023 - March 2024 <i>End date revised to November 2024</i>	ERB collaborating with Cross-colleges consortium/ provider groups. Clarity on gaps/ duplication; Accountability agreements clearly informed; Greater understanding of gaps informing curricula development	Ad hoc working group overseen by board, individual feedback, A,B,C	Work started around Accountability Statements; more work needed, completion by revised end date. In progress.
Responsiveness to skills needs.	Review of FE Accountability Agreements as part of provision mapping to check what plans are in place for new provision	TBC, Chamber, WYCC, skills specialists, WYCA, providers	October 2023 - Annually	ERB collaborating with Cross-colleges consortium. Maintain understanding of marketplace; Increased course availability to meet demand; Benefits from 2023/24 academic year; Career pathways clearer.	As part of annual accountability agreement review cycle lead by WYCA; One to one from WYCA to colleges as part of negotiations; A, B	Review and workshop undertaken; further workshops planned in advance of 2025 statement development. On track.

⁴ Monitoring key: **A** - Annual report; **B** - updates commissioned to/from LSIP board, including potential cascade of information; **C** - updates or case studies shared on LSIP website; **D** - cascade according to comms plan including social media/newsletters.

COURSE ENHANCEMENTS Responsive and up to date provision	Identify opportunities to retain/secure L2/L3 funding in priority sectors where required, to ensure pathways to work are maximised (with a focus on Social Care).	WYCA, Provider networks, providers, Chamber, Business representative bodies	September 2023 - TBC Revised to ongoing	Cross college/provider groups. Mainstream funding. Ensuring EDI for learners regardless of qualifications undertaken; Options for returners to work/career change are enhanced; vacancies in affected roles are reduced.	WYCA data reports, open data reporting; B, D	Some examples of pathways being developed, but further collaborative working, and discussions needed. In progress.
Increasing capacity	Collaborative working across the provider network to address specialisms within sectors to share expertise for niche areas, explore co-running of courses/cross college delivery.	Providers, Employers, WYCA, other career guidance providers, Chamber	January 2024 - ongoing	Cross college/provider groups. LSIF & mainstream funding. Increased efficiencies in course delivery/ provision availability; sharing expertise enabling employers' needs to be met; Students to report increased access to courses; Impact from 24/25; Cost effective delivery of courses previously unable to run.	Course data/ achievement data, specific facilitation of provider group, A,B,C, D	LSIF collaborative working, building on previous ESF & SDF activities. Colleges agree specialist areas /sharing expertise. Overseen by Principals meetings. On track.
Responsive and up to date provision	Support identification and communication of gaps in training identified by employers to provider base to inform curriculum planning.	Chamber, WYCA, Employers	September 2023 - summer 2025	ERB working with Sector & cross colleges/provider groups & employers. Better understanding of course marketplace/ funding opportunities maximised; employers find providers more responsive to need; Improved relationships employers - providers.	Updates from business engagement team, LSIP board, track feedback to providers, update on ongoing basis via comms to provider network, A, D	Employer engagement activities contributing to gap identification. Business survey to go live in May to update on skills provision/progress. On track.
Employer engagement	Develop resources in colleges/ITPs to support greater collaboration with employers, including for curriculum development and placements.	Providers, ITPs, WYCA, YU, employers, business representative bodies	November 2023 - summer 2025	Cross college/provider groups, collaborating with employers & ERBs; mainstream skills funding/LSIF. Co-designed new courses tailored to local need; higher quality resources available for delivery/access by students; Increased availability of placements; Students feel impact on study; Employers see benefits of training for staff. Impacts start within 3 months of development.	Survey of businesses, reporting by colleges/ITP providers, A,B,C,D	Employer engagement activity informing curriculum development through bootcamps/LSIF, e.g. thematic events to showcase investments/ activities & engage employers. Events taking place for Manufacturing Weeks (Bradford, Leeds).

						On track
Responsive and up to date provision	Increase provision at L4 & L5 in modular & flexible format in priority sectors - e.g. low carbon techs – collaborative working across provider base to offer different pathways and specialisms.	Providers, ITPs, WYCA, Business representative bodies	August 2023 - TBC Revised to ongoing	Cross college/provider groups & Universities. LSIF. Increased access to local provision; Training courses designed for specific sectors and occupations.	Provider network, feedback via WYCA, course review, A	Provision development supported by LSIF/Skills Boot camps, building on previous SDF activities. More work needed. In progress.
Responsive and up to date provision	Increase provision in small, bite-size and introductory format in priority, technical sectors	Providers, ITPs, WYCA, Business representative bodies, employers, LAs, YU	October 2023 - summer 2025	WYCA, Cross college /provider groups & Universities. Skills Bootcamps/LSIF. Increased access to local sector-specific courses; Speed learners can upskill increased & can fit learning into down time more easily; Use of new skills in workplace more rapidly supported.	Course pass rates, outputs from providers/ITPs to WYCA, employer surveys, feedback in communications to providers/ITPS, A,B,C,D	Provision development supported by LSIF/Skills Boot camps e.g. Calderdale College bootcamps, providing individuals with skills and coded qualifications in fabrication & welding. On track.
Responsive and up to date provision	Creation /maintenance of alternative shorter courses to provide pathway into key sectors, for those who may not be ready to access T-levels, incorporating transferable skills.	Providers, WYCA, Chamber, Employees	April 2024 - TBC Revised to ongoing	WYCA, Cross college /provider groups. Mainstream funding - AEB. Increased numbers of workforce and job applicants able to show skill sets for key sectors, and roles; Increased progression to.	Uptake of courses via provider data/destination data/WYCA, A,B,D	Provision development supported by mainstream funds. More needs to be done but impacted by funding requirements. In progress.
Responsive and up to date provision	Increase boot camp style provision to help mid-career individuals transfer into key labour shortage occupations.	Providers, Employers, JCP, WYCA, other career guidance providers.	September 2023 - summer 2025	WYCA, LAs & providers. Skills Bootcamps/Gainshare. Reduction in skills gaps in digital/tech related sectors; More swift progression from one career to another; Reduction in labour shortages; Greater success in securing employment for unemployed individuals.	Course data from colleges, employment data, A, B	Total of £5m funding to support skills bootcamp commissioning to meet skills shortages/gaps e.g. Kirklees Council commissioning for manufacturing skills. On track.

Responsive and up to date provision	Increase Apprenticeship (incl degree) opportunities and pathways into skills shortage occupations e.g. Legal Degree Apprenticeships	TBC, YLP, Universities, Business representative bodies, employers	March 2024 - ongoing	Cross college/provider groups & Universities, with Employers. Mainstream funding. Clearer career pathways; More diverse learning experience opportunities/ routes into employment; More rapid transition to earning from learning; Improved EDI outcomes enabled as need to self-fund for degree reduced, access pathways to work expanded.	Employment statistics from WYCA/ Open data /DWP, Course outcomes from providers, A,C, D	FinTech collaborate with partners on developing degree apprenticeships. 3 new apprenticeships developed by LCB for construction. More work to be done in other areas. In progress.
Responsive and up to date provision	Raising awareness of Leadership & Management provision & support employers to plan for their workforce skills and influence development of resources.	Providers, WYCA, Chamber, Employer, YU	September 2023 - ongoing	Marketing & promotion. Access to training to upskill staff; Potentially bite-sized freely accessible material and more in-depth funded/paid for courses; More effective & efficient staff at all levels; Internal promotion opportunities enhanced; More long-term planning leading to fewer shortages/less down-time resolving issues; Enhanced teamwork.	Skills Hub/Brokerage network feedback, business survey, Feedback from provider business engagement teams, direct feedback via business engagement team, A,B,C,D	Evidence of promotion of L&M provision, via WYCA portal and individual provider portals. Still lacking in coordinated approach for supporting employers. In progress.
Changing culture and increasing capacity to deliver	Collaborative working to raise awareness of the benefits of digitisation & automation. Ensure associated provision is in place to meet needs.	Providers, Chamber, WYCA	October 2023 - ongoing	Marketing & promotion. Access to training to upskill staff; Potentially bite-sized freely accessible material & more in-depth funded/paid for courses; More effective & efficient staff at all levels; Internal promotion opportunities enhanced; More long-term planning leading to fewer shortages/less down-time resolving issues; Enhanced teamwork.	Completion of relevant student destination stats, survey of businesses, A,D	Joint event hosted by YLP and supported by LSIP & LSIF (in both West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire) to take place in June, with employer event in September. More work needed to promote to employers. In progress.
SUPPORT FOR DELIVERY OF TRAINING Increasing capacity	CPD for employees based within education sector, to enable them to keep up with technology/	Providers, Chamber, WYCA, employers, YLP, WYCC, YU	September 2023 - summer 2025	Cross college/provider groups & sector specialists with Employers. Tutors with up-to-date knowledge; Increased number of experts in the field feeding into learning experience;	Survey, feedback on staffing, reports, Ofsted/other inspection, direct comms to	LSIF project strand on Teaching and Learning embeds CPD across all sectors. On track.

	techniques and developments.			Providers more able to offer tailored courses to latest tech; Learner confidence in current knowledge of tutors increased; Real-life application of learning more readily articulated; Employers/providers relationship strengthened.	providers/links with employers, business engagement team, A, D	
Increasing capacity	Train the trainer programme development, including Tutor Bank, to fill tutor gaps in both industry (within employers) and education across priority sectors.	Providers, employers, universities, YU, YLP, WYCC	March 2024 - ongoing	Cross college/provider groups & sector specialists Relief Tutors with current knowledge; Train the trainer courses for specific occupations; Enhancing work-based support for apprenticeships/in-work delivery; Enhanced support for apprenticeship/ placement students; skills enhanced & better quality delivery; Within organisations coaching /training enabling knowledge cascade.	Feedback from providers/employers, course completion stats, direct comms, A,C,D	Train the trainer built into LSIF delivery. E.g. train the green trainer from Bradford College. More work is needed to address gaps, alongside CPD; and to develop the Tutor Bank. In progress.
Increasing capacity	Create a modular teaching qualification for subject matter experts to do hybrid teaching.	Providers, employers, universities, YU, YLP, WYCC	January 2024 - ongoing	Cross college/provider groups & Universities. Increased end of career /mid-career pathways for experts to incorporate teaching into work portfolios, including potential to move into teaching full time without taking a full year out for teacher training; Increased availability of people to deliver tuition in latest technologies /workplace application.	Course completion data, tracking teaching vacancies, student/employer feedback on courses, A, C	Some examples but more collaborative working needed. Little collaborative progress to date.
NET ZERO SUPPORT Changing culture	Ensure 'green' modules are added to existing qualifications in priority sectors	Providers, WYCA, CITB	October 2023 - ongoing	Cross college/provider groups & WYCA & Universities. LSIF. Additional modules within existing courses/stand alone for upskilling to enhance carbon neutral targets; Access to training to upskill staff; Greater understanding for non-specialist staff; Enhanced skills for delivery of practical	Course completion data, courses available data, business skills survey results, ongoing skills survey, sharing of case studies and communications direct to	Some examples of this, but not consistent (or not promoted). More work is needed. In progress.

				actions to support net zero working practices, engines, workspaces, homes.	partners/stakeholders, A, C, D	
Changing culture	Programmes to support businesses and organisations to embed sustainable work practices	WYCA, Providers, CITB	February 2024 - ongoing	ERB, WYCA, WYCC (Green Skills Service) & Universities. LSIF. Access to training to upskill staff; Greater understanding of carbon neutral for non-specialist staff; Enhanced skills for delivery of practical actions; Enhanced business efficiencies/ reduced costs.	Skills surveys to businesses, ongoing feedback from Skills Hub conversations, A,B,C,D	Supported through SDF activities, resulting in Green Skills Service (WYCC). Targeted programme developed by WYCA. On track.
PROMOTION OF EXISTING INITIATIVES Better understanding and awareness of provision and funding	Review options in relation to an independent brokerage service to enable signposting to courses, i.e. central contact point to identify business need, translate it into training and find the best local provider.	Chamber, WYCA, Providers	September 2023 - December 2023	WYCA, LAs, Providers & ERB. Increased take-up of local provision; Increased understanding of courses available; Clear referral pathways between services; Businesses report ease of access to information; Business engagement advisers across services share info.	Working group overseen by board, ongoing feedback from Skills Hub conversations, A,B,C,D	Discussions on options prior to LSIP. Feedback suggests more work is needed. In progress.
	Establish local, shared process for brokerage.	Chamber, WYCA, Providers, WYCC, YU	December 2023 - ongoing			
Careers guidance awareness	Coordination with existing CIAEG infrastructure to support promotion of priority sector careers– careers myth-busting/ positive role modelling for new labour market entrants/ career-changers.	TBC, JCP, WYCA, other career guidance providers, business representative bodies, Chamber, REC.	October 2023 - Summer 2025	WYCA, NCS, JCP, LAs & Providers. Coordinated promotion of local opportunities; Improved information for citizens; Ease of access to information on career change increased positive stories.	Monitor of positive stories/applications, B,D	Devolution Level 4 and WYCA role, are likely to impact activities going forward. Further discussions are planned. In progress

6 - What Still Needs To Be Achieved?

As stated above, we are making good progress against the priorities developed and set out in the LSIP in August 2023. There is clear commitment from skills stakeholders in West Yorkshire to work collaboratively to respond to the skills needs identified. Alignment with other skills strategies and plans has allowed us to build upon existing activities and maximise resources to implement the LSIP.

However, there are limits to what can be achieved in the space of less than a year and more work needs to be done. This considers the longer-term nature of some activities in order to change cultures and ways of working, and the fact that some actions will never be completed, due to the dynamic nature of skills. There will always be more courses that need to be developed to respond to employer skills needs across the priority sectors, more CPD that needs to be undertaken to develop capacity in the provider base, more activities to increase diversity and participation in learning and the workforce, and more investment in equipment and learning resources to reflect changes in technology in the workplace.

Nine of the twenty-three priorities/actions on the LSIP Roadmap, have been completed or are on track. Thirteen are in progress and most of these will take time to fully complete, as stated above.

For example, the actions relating to the establishment of a skills brokerage service will require more work. We have brokerage services developed both at local levels and at the West Yorkshire level, however, there are indications that they are not widely understood or used by employers. There is agreement from across the stakeholders that what we need to do is increase awareness and ensure feedback on them by employers is captured and implemented into service design. Going forward, discussions also need to incorporate funding to ensure sustainability of both the infrastructure and to support flexible and tailored provision, building on previous good practice models and responding to the demand from employers for relevant funding support.

The remaining action relating to the modular teaching qualification is not expected to be delivered in full within the timescales of the funding, but some progress can be made through collaborative agreements amongst the relevant stakeholders and providers, and building on existing activities.

Annex A: WYCA Skills Bootcamps Case Study

West Yorkshire Combined Authority have been working with a range of specialist training providers to develop and offer Skills Bootcamps to meet specific skills gaps. This activity is contributing to skills priorities across a range of the priority sectors and the roadmap priority action of: *Increased access to local provision, training courses that have been designed for specific sectors and occupations.*

Since the initial allocation of funding from the Department for Education in 2020, 1765 of West Yorkshire's residents and employees have benefited from the training, through courses including:

Health and Social Care: e.g., Care with Confidence; and Trauma and Decompression for Employees.

Digital: e.g. Digital Marketing and Content Creation; Data Analytics; and Web Design and Development.

Construction: e.g. Site Management Safety ; and Real Site Skills.

WYCA's activities have contributed to both the LSIP Low Carbon priorities to provide specialist technical skills; and to the Mayor's Green Skills Task Force activities, supporting skills development to meet opportunities and projected labour market needs for green jobs.

Five Skills Connect and Skills Bootcamp courses related to green skills and jobs have been delivered in the current financial year (2023-24), providing free training in:

- Hybrid vehicle maintenance.
- Installation and maintenance of heat pumps.
- Project management with sustainability.
- Construction and green skills for females.
- Organisational sustainability champion training.

To date, 104 individuals have been trained. Across all Skills Connect and Skills Bootcamp programmes, 46 participants have progressed into green jobs.

Recent commissioning of the bootcamps includes the Skills Bootcamp for Live Events that will equip local people with the skills they need to step into the rising number of creative opportunities.

In addition to WYCA led commissioning, the Local Authorities have also been allocated funding to commission Skills Bootcamps to meet local needs, not being addressed at the West Yorkshire level.

Annex B: Furniture Manufacturing Case Study

This case study demonstrates how one of the West Yorkshire Further Education providers is working with priority sector employers to develop relevant curriculum to meet their specific skills needs. This, in turn, is encouraging these employers to offer apprenticeships - a priority identified in Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing sector consultations.

Over the last couple of years, Kirklees College has been working closely with a range of employers in Dewsbury to identify local skills gaps in the furniture manufacturing sector. The result of this consultation project is the college's new Level 2 Furniture Making apprenticeship with HSL (High Seat Ltd) and the first intake of apprentices started in October 2023.

The apprenticeship offers two pathways, working towards qualifying as a wood machinist, or modern upholsterer. Both pathways will develop apprentices' understanding of the furniture manufacturing process and where they fit into it, from selecting the right materials and hand-crafting pieces, through to meeting customer expectations and quality standards.

The apprentices will study at Kirklees College's Brunel Construction Centre during their college hours, where a brand-new specialist CNC machine has just been installed to help train the budding furniture makers. It is hoped that the course will not only equip apprentices with specialist skills, but with a wide range of skills needed to work in a number of roles within the sector.

Steve Plumstead, Head of Faculty for Construction at Kirklees College said:

"It has been a pleasure working with HSL to develop the Furniture Making apprenticeship. We hope to generate a lot of interest in the apprenticeship and help kick-start many careers in this thriving local industry. Our specialist training facilities at Kirklees College will help support the apprentice's learning and development of skills during their college hours and we will be here to support them throughout the course."

Steve Radley, HR Business Partner at HSL Furniture has also played a pivotal role in getting the apprenticeship up and running. Regarding the course, Radley commented:

"HSL are delighted to be enrolling our intake of apprentices onto courses provided by Kirklees College. It is great there is now a local provider to meet the training requirements for our furniture manufacturing business."

Source: Kirklees College