



**Funded by
UK Government**

**West Yorkshire
Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)**

**PROGRESS REPORT
JUNE 2025**

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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 initial local skills improvement plan published in August 2023, and the annual review, published in July 2024

1 - Who Is This Publication For?

This report is intended give an update on the second year of implementing the West Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), published in August 2023. The purpose of the LSIP is to help ensure that post-16 education and training aligns with the specific needs of the local job market, ultimately boosting local economic growth and making the workforce more employable.

This report is of interest to businesses who are investing time and energy in supporting skills development for their current staff and for the future workforce. This could include a range of contributions such as offering work placements for T level students, employing Apprentices, working towards better leadership and management practices or investing in skills that promote sustainability, use new digital technology or ensure greater well-being for their staff – to name but a few.

This update will enable business advocacy and representative bodies who were key to developing the LSIP and have been important supporters of the journey over the last two years (such as the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) , the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and of course, the West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce and Mid-Yorkshire Chamber, to understand the progress we have made and what still remains to be worked on.

The Further Education (FE) colleges, Independent Training Providers, Apprenticeship Providers, and commercial skills providers are fundamental to the skills world and have been driving change through tireless commitment to making the LSIP Roadmap a reality.

We also hope that this report will be of interest to the many stakeholders in the area who have been instrumental the LSIP journey from the outset.

The West Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) sets out:

- 1. Details of progress against specific actions and priorities agreed in the report published in August 2023.
- 2. The impact and benefits of this activity with examples and case studies of key successes, achievements and good practice. Also demonstrating the role that the ERB and LSIP has played in this.
- 3. An update on the West Yorkshire Strategic and Economic context which impacts on skills demand and supply.
- 4. What still needs to be achieved, and any actions required to achieve this.

2 - Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) - Summary

The West Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) was published in August 2023 and 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).

Over the three years from 2023 to 2026 the LSIP development process will include 1 - Articulating employers’ skill needs, 2 - Translating employer needs into priority changes in provision and 3 - Addressing learner demand and employer engagement, alongside revising the skills priorities in line with local and national changes.

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 consider other local areaal 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
- Become more proactive in planning and investing their workforce development activities over a longer period.
- Develop a more inclusive approach to addressing their skills needs, working with providers to open opportunities and skills and recruitment pipelines.

The ultimate outcomes of the LSIP are to Support providers to:

- 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.
- Align and develop provision to respond to identified needs.
- Develop new ways of delivering to improve take-up of provision by employers of all sizes.

The ultimate outcomes of the LSIP are to 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. INTRODUCTION

We are making strong progress against the priorities set out in the LSIP, with convincing evidence of employers playing a key role in changing the skills landscape. It is evident that the LSIP is providing a useful framework for targeted actions across the West Yorkshire skills infrastructure, with the LSIF funding supporting supply-related changes that were needed. A total of £6.9 million of LSIF funding has been invested across West Yorkshire to translating employer needs into priority changes in provision. 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.

4. STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The skills landscape has undergone significant change over the past 12 months, with a new Labour Government, the introduction of [Skills England](#), a [curriculum and assessment review](#) the [Devolution White Paper](#), and recognition of getting more people back into the workforce in line with the [Get Britain Working White Paper](#). There is also a reform of Careers, Advice and Guidance to provide a [New All Age Careers Service](#). Central Government actions have the intention to increase skills provision and accelerate the levelling up agenda locally.

However, [Changes to National Insurance from April 2025](#), and [Significant reforms to employment rights](#) affect costs for employers and our recent Quarterly Economic Survey indicates less propensity to recruit and invest in skills for their workforce at present.

Skills remain unequal locally and remain key to ensuring economic prosperity and a better outcome for all. As well as upskilling, improvements in lower-level skills will help to ensure better progression routes.

Further integration of businesses within the skills system remains key and the Local Skills Improvement Plan plays a key role in understanding the future skills needs of local businesses to help ensure that skills providers deliver the right courses to meet these. Employer engagement is supported through LSIP stakeholders, including the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), Confederation of British Industry (CBI), as well as local councils, colleges and universities.

A key focus for year 3 of the LSIP is to address learner demand and employer engagement alongside revising the skills priorities in line with local and national changes.

Whilst existing skills priorities remain, the landscape is changing and the new [Industrial Strategy](#) will set out the need to focus on the sectors which offer the highest growth opportunity for the economy and business, including:

- advanced manufacturing
- clean energy industries
- creative industries
- defence
- digital and technologies
- financial services
- life sciences
- professional and business services

Moving forward LSIP Priority areas must also be aligned with those identified within local growth plans, the first of which has been published in [The West Yorkshire Plan](#), and will be further developed in growth plans developed by the local authorities in 2025. The West Yorkshire Growth Plan identifies skills as a priority area and one that is holding back the potential of West Yorkshire. Stating “while the local area has seen growth in highly skilled occupations, higher level skills are not in line with the national average. The extensive higher education provision across the local area presents an opportunity to further strengthen graduate talent retention and growth, through skills education and partnerships with employers to cultivate the value of our existing diverse higher education provision across our growth sector priorities.

Poor health alongside barriers such as accessing high-quality childcare is hampering labour market participation”. See: <https://y-pern.org.uk/early-years-education-and-childcare-system-in-west-yorkshire-report/>. The plan outlines a 10-year vision for creation of an area of learning and creativity, equipping people with the qualifications, skills and support they and the economy need, ensuring inclusion, health and wellbeing and sustainability.

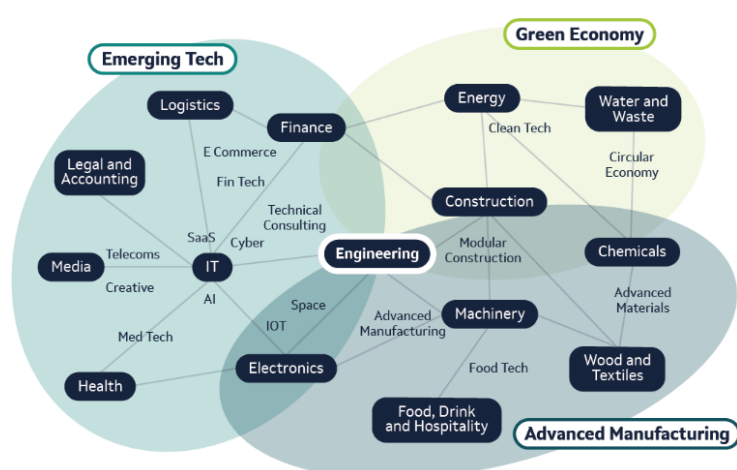
The Local Growth Plan identifies 5 priorities for growth:

- Priority 1: Unlock growth in sectors and clusters
- Priority 2: Enable all businesses to succeed
- Priority 3: A local area of Learning and Creativity
- Priority 4: An integrated transport network
- Priority 5: Support thriving places

As part of creating a local area of learning and creativity, the Combined Authority pledges that everyone in West Yorkshire will be able to gain technical and soft skills throughout their lives. They pledge to work with businesses through:

- Technical pathways and employability skills
- Addressing gaps in skills provision
- Early years workforce and tackling tutor shortages
- All-age, person-centred careers support
- Employer investment in skills
- Developing pipelines of talent

Delivery of the Local Growth Plan has the potential to halve the number of people locally, with low or no qualifications, generate an additional £26 billion in GVA and increase employment by 33,000 by the end of the ten-year period. The [West Yorkshire Growth Plan](#), published in early 2025 identifies the following high growth clusters:



It states that major opportunity lies in the local areas high-growth sectors in digital and tech, financial and professional services, health and life sciences, advanced manufacturing and engineering, creative and cultural and the green economy. As well as the delivery of transformational investment programmes including Mass Transit and housing retrofit.

5. COLLABORATION, COORDINATION AND PROMOTION OF SKILLS

The LSIP was developed through an existing and strong infrastructure of key stakeholders. It has addressed the need to better coordinate and promote skills development and provision and to enable employers to gain a better understanding.

The LSIP involves a range of key stakeholders, working to address these priorities:

1. The West Yorkshire LSIP Advisory Board: meets quarterly and forms the basis for communications between key skills stakeholders across West Yorkshire
2. Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF): A consortium of over 30 providers have delivered £6.9 million of funded activity and capital investment to address LSIP priorities. This has driven growth and collaboration between West Yorkshire’s providers and employers. FE colleges have delivering against their specialisms, maximised funds, reduced duplication and improved coordination to better support employers. Outcomes from the programme are detailed in the [LSIF Brochure, 2024](#) and summarised in Appendix 5.

An area of focus moving forward should be increasing the integration between FE and HE. This can be supported through the Mayors FE and HE Compact agreement.

LSIF funded delivery has complimented other local provision, including that funded through the [Adult Education Budget](#), [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#), [Free Courses for Jobs](#), [Skills Bootcamps](#) and [multiply development](#). LSIP stakeholders have communicated with employers to help simplify the landscape.

Priority skills areas include:

A workforce of 1.2 million is employed across a diverse range of sectors, with high numbers of jobs in health, manufacturing and financial and professional services. We are making excellent 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.

It is evident that the LSIP is providing a useful framework for targeted actions across the West Yorkshire skills infrastructure, and is utilised in planning at an organisational, local level. Year 2 has predominantly focused on supply-related changes that were beneficial. 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.

All Further Education providers and 6th form colleges across the local area set out how they will meet LSIP skills priorities in their Accountability Statements (see links in the bibliography), which are updated annually. The majority of skills providers demonstrate good employer involvement in course design across all areas of skills delivery. This is a regulatory requirement in Further Education driven by the department for education, it is not stipulated in the same way for Higher Education but there is an ambition to address this locally.

Effective Delivery through the Local Skills Improvement Fund

LSIP priorities were strongly supported through delivery of the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF). This built on the strengths of previous Strategic Development Funding to:

- Advance new skills within the context of 'Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence'
- Establish specialist hubs and satellite sites across West Yorkshire
- Build capacity to meet local skills priorities through collaboration
- Increase skills provision linked to priorities of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)
- Supporting employer engagement and business innovation
- Drive up quality and responsiveness
- Provide examples and case studies of progress and successes
- Progress thematic and sector-specific priorities and actions

It had an ethos of sharing a collaboration, which has helped to embed collaborative working across the further education (FE) sector and enhanced business engagement.

6 - WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED SO FAR

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

West Yorkshire was named as both a Trailblazer and Accelerator and will receive £37m delivered by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (£10m), Connect to Work (£16m) and the NHS West Yorkshire ICB (£11m). **Leeds ICB** will be receiving around £2.9m to support 552 more people to stay in or return to work through health orientated interventions. West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and the NHS (West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership), are working closely to maximise impact and boost economic activity. **The funding is initially for one year.** Programme delivery will be very fast paced.

There are 167,000 jobs in the health sector in West Yorkshire or 15% of overall employment. Among the largest employing sectors in West Yorkshire, Health and social work has generated the strongest growth rate in recent years.

- Further Education colleges and providers in West Yorkshire continue to work collaboratively with key sector organisations. These relationships are contributing to course development.
- LSIF partners have supported the creation of e-learning platform, digitising a suite of key topic areas to assist learners. There has been significant LSIF investment to develop capability of staff through shared CPD.
- Universities are strongly engaged and committed to supporting health and care skills development. They work closely with NHS England, Integrated Care Boards and Place Based Partnerships to support health and care skills development. They also support student progression with local schools and colleges.
- An example of such collaboration is the Leeds Health and Care Academy Careers Compass <https://www.careercompassleeds.co.uk/> - which presents a connected approach across HE, FE and the

NHS to support skills growth, opportunities and talent development.

- The West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership People Plan strives to create careers for all, aiming to ensure that West Yorkshire will have the ability to offer all incoming employees across the system 'a career for life', be that in a clinical setting, social care or an administrative role. It aims to inspire the next generation of workforce through consistent engagement with schools and college.
- A new Health and Care Pathways Project has also been developed that provides secondary and post-16 school pupils with the opportunity to consider the diverse range of careers available within the Kirklees Health and Care System. Funded by Health Education England (HEE), this initiative brings together a network of key health, care and education partners across the district, providing a holistic approach to strengthening the talent pipeline and addressing labour deficits.
- Shipley College has recently introduced a precursor for the Apprenticeship Route, with a Level 1 course, Introduction to Health and 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.
- LSIF Investment in Health and Social Care has been led by Shipley College. LSIF funding will be used to enhance specialist clinical health and social care provision and upskill the health and care workforce. The focus will be on the evolving use of artificial intelligence, machine learning and wearable technologies that are permeating traditional clinical and care disciplines. The project will develop the necessary skills to operate programmable and augmented reality robotics that simulate clinical diagnostics, childbirth, emergency medicine, minor surgeries and personal and geriatric care conditions.

ENGINEERING AND ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing makes up one of the largest sectors of employment in West Yorkshire, with 113,000 jobs, making up 10% of local area employment and generating over £7 billion a year. West Yorkshire also has a world-leading space cluster with a focus in Bradford. 10% of all apprenticeships in West Yorkshire are in Manufacturing companies. UK manufacturing contributes 11% of GVA (Gross Value Added) and is strongly represented in West Yorkshire relative to the national benchmark. In proportionate terms it is almost 1.4 times larger than nationally, although the level of employment in the sector has remained relatively static in recent years. Manufacturing specialisms in West Yorkshire which are significant in absolute terms include, manufacture of food, textiles and clothing, chemicals, fabricated metal products, machinery and furniture. West Yorkshire has over 6000 manufacturing and engineering businesses. Many are specialists in advanced processes, R&D and product development.

- According to KPMG's UK report on Jobs, skills shortages reported within the sector in early 2025 include: Design Engineers, DSP Engineers, Electrical Engineers, Engineering General Engineering Management, Engineers Fire & Security Roles FM Engineers, Industrial Engineers, Mechanical Engineers, Mechatronics Senior Electronic Engineers, Technicians Test Engineer.
- Chris Black, President of Leeds Chamber of Commerce and Managing Director of Jukebox manufacturer Sound Leisure, said:
"Manufacturing faces a significant shortage of skills which has become more acute in recent years. The rapid pace of technological innovation has transformed manufacturing processes, requiring workers with advanced digital skills. An ageing workforce is exacerbating the skills shortage, which results in companies witnessing production delays, decreased efficiency, and higher operational costs, ultimately eroding competitiveness in the global market".
- West Yorkshire Manufacturers reported difficult trading conditions in the recent Quarterly Economic Survey, saying that sales decline by 32%. This poor performance was also seen in manufacturers' order books, which also declined to their lowest levels in four years. They reported a 35% decline in hiring intention and little planned investment, including in training staff. Whereas replacing an aging workforce and boosting productivity and growth requires employer investment.
- Closing the productivity gap will require new manufacturing-related specialisms. A recent skills survey of local manufacturers revealed that the majority had their skills needs met, had succession planning in place and were training apprentices. However, when it came to training their needs were quite specific and they needed very specific courses or niche training provision, rather than generic skills provision.
- Locally there is a need for Engineering Apprenticeships training provision at Level 7, with employers currently sending Apprentices for Degree Apprenticeships to Nottingham and Sheffield Universities. Wakefield College and Bradford University are both in the process of launching a Level 7 Apprenticeship for Engineering, although withdrawal of government funding for level 7 apprenticeships could impact delivery.
- West Yorkshire has a network of established academic and research centres of manufacturing excellence. Institutions like the 3M Buckley Innovation Centre in Huddersfield offers a place where businesses can innovate and grow through access to technology, grow-on space and research & collaboration opportunities. Research at the Universities of Bradford and Leeds demonstrates the collaborative and open approach our local area takes to the future of manufacturing processes.
- The West Yorkshire Manufacturing Task force brings together representatives from Manufacturing companies and alliances to support the growth of the sector. Areas of focus for the recommendations report include:

- Driving sustainability
- Increasing innovation and productivity
- Future proofing the skills pipeline
- Boosting international trade
- Digitalisation and adoption

- Initiatives such as Made in Yorkshire, Bradford Manufacturing Weeks and Leeds Manufacturing Festival also help to champion the sector and help introduce young people to career opportunities.
- Manufacturing estimated to be the biggest source of CO2 emissions intensity (by sector) in West Yorkshire – around 3,200 tonnes, and so, importantly the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges Green Skills Service provides a range of green skills provision and events to businesses to support businesses to make the journey to carbon efficiency.
- £1.2 million was invested through LSIF in new technologies, skills provision and green skills for manufacturing.
- Kirklees College is leading the advanced manufacturing and engineering project, working with Bradford College and Luminate Education Group. Funded projects include the development of new interactive and immersive learning.
- The collective aim is to develop new skills to stimulate and support the rapid growth of the UK's advanced manufacturing sector. New skills are essential to support the transition into digital solutions and autonomous robotic systems. The project will focus on robotics, additive manufacturing and advanced process manufacturing.

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Creative industries in Yorkshire encompasses: Advertising and Marketing, Architecture, Crafts, Design, Film and Media, IT, software and computer services, museums, galleries and libraries, music, performing and visual arts and publishing.

- Home to almost 9,000 creative businesses, adding almost £2 billion to our economy, West Yorkshire's creative sector is one of the fastest growing in the UK. According to the White Rose Universities Report: Mapping the Scale and Scope of the Creative Industries in Yorkshire and the Humber (2019) there were about 1.35 million people working in Great Britain's creative industries which amounts to 4.6% of the working population. Around 67,000 (5%) of these people were based in Yorkshire and the Humber which is 2.7% of the total employment in the local area (ONS 2018).
- The economic importance of culture has long been underestimated, however by nurturing cultural clusters and building on local assets, we can develop stronger economies, address inequalities, and connect local people to high-quality, fulfilling job opportunities.
- The presentation of a new PEC North of England Creative Industries Briefing, identifies the potential opportunity for a cross-local area all creative industries super-cluster; 'A Northern Creative Corridor', that could match the GVA and growth of creative industries in the south east of England, and could add £27bn and 500,000 jobs to the Northern economy.

- Exciting developments are taking place with creative businesses embracing new technologies, from live streaming to augmented reality. FE Colleges and businesses are increasingly using AI as a tool, building immersive worlds, and developing virtual production, which, moving forwards will inspire even more incredible content.
- As well as supporting new talent into the creative sector, support is available to those within the sector that want to upskill, such as [masterclasses for creative freelancers and microbusinesses](#).
- The local area's creative industries are supported by both further education and higher education institutions. As detailed in the [Creative Industries Showcase Report, 2023](#) our local area boasts two world-class business schools, seven universities and seven further education colleges producing over 33,000 graduates a year. Our institutions offer internationally recognised courses in the arts and the creative industries, giving students the required technical skills.
- Leeds Arts University is the only specialist arts university in the North of England. The University of Leeds's Cultural Institute develops partnerships between arts professionals, researchers and students from all disciplines. Leeds Beckett University's Leeds School of Arts is an anchor institution for creative education in the North. The University of Bradford's media courses include a Filmmaking MA in partnership with UNESCO City of Film that attracts students from all over the world. Leeds College of Music became a Conservatoire in 2020, reflecting its immense expertise.
- Yorkshire Universities has been instrumental in drawing together and mapping the [contribution of our local areas universities to the Creative Industries](#) as part of the 'One Creative North' initiative – ensuring that our diverse university provision continues to thrive in retaining creative skills and talent across our local area. [Creative Industries Briefing](#)

The LSIF Creative Industries project includes the development of a new skills hub that promotes the journey of digitalisation within the Creative Industries. Opened in September 2024 in Dean Clough Mills, Halifax, Calderdale College's 'Mill Studios' offers a creative skills space that brings the very latest digital technologies to the local area. Focusing on game design, esports, film and TV production, and digitising curriculum content, delivery and assessment. Kirklees College and Luminate Education Group are investing in some of the latest equipment for music and theatre courses.

Example of BBC Drama made in Yorkshire:
<https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/2025/bradford-premiere-virdee>

Example of skills bootcamp boosting gigs and live events in Yorkshire: <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/all-news-and-blogs/new-skills-bootcamp-to-boost-gigs-and-live-events-in-west-yorkshire/>

DIGITAL AND TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

The UK faces a pressing challenge: a significant shortage of digital skills that the economy requires. There is a clear need to work with educational institutions to deliver these. There are specialisms across local areaal universities, such as AI and cyber security. Yorkshire Universities is currently mapping AI capabilities amongst member Universities. FE colleges help learners to upskill and to progress into graduate-level tech roles. There is more that schools can do, many students emerge from the education system without sufficient digital skills. Digital and soft skills are something IBM seek to support through their free [IBM Skills Builder platform](#), aiming to roll this out to 30 million people as part of their CSR agenda.

- The [West Yorkshire Digital Skills Plan](#) commits to provision of higher level skills needed for the Tech Sector, the skills needed for all business and provision of the basic digital skills needed for the workforce. Digital inclusion officers work within each local authority to help to build the local skills base.
- West Yorkshire has a wide range of funded Skills Bootcamps. Many of which support Digital Upskilling. And LSIF funding has made significant progress towards addressing the digital skills gap.
- Our universities are collaborating with businesses to provide graduates with the digital capabilities, adaptability and resilience to learn new technologies. They offer upskilling opportunities as students transition through their studies. For example, Leeds Beckett University's collaboration with FinTech North provides students with an understanding of their potential to build a career in this growth sector, and to develop new skills and sector knowledge to meet employer needs. Universities are also driving new course provision which supports employer CPD and career conversion in this sector.
- Funding has been secured to [support digital inclusion across West Yorkshire](#).
- More needs to be done to change cultures in businesses that are slow to adapt in terms of digitisation and automation. One business fed back: "There needs to be a greater understanding of the benefits and capabilities of digital amongst the wider workforce and having people that can communicate that. Selling the benefits of digital possibilities to the business is a gap. SMEs generally need to catch up in this and are generally unaware or unwilling to fully explore the benefits of digital, whether that be in process efficiency, automation or customer engagement."
- 400,000 adults in West Yorkshire lack foundation digital skills and 500,000 workers lack essential workplace digital skills.
- As an Employer Representative Bodies (ERB), West & North Yorkshire Chamber hosts a quarterly Digital Skills roundtable with Bradford Council and local stakeholders, to see how Digital transformation can support economic growth.
- The LSIF created a West Yorkshire digital innovation project, which has achieved significant transformation across all priority skills sectors, with over 4,447 learners using new facilities or equipment funded by LSIF.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- There is wealth of talent, inspirational individuals, expertise and excellent teaching practices across our local areaal education institutions. Ofsted inspections for skills judgements range from sufficient to strong and inspectors look for businesses to be involved in co-design of course materials as well as supporting the delivery to students.
- Universities can play a strong role in driving Further Education and Sixth Form teaching as a career pathway and in meeting tutor shortages. For example, Leeds Beckett University is currently partnered with Notre Dame College, exploring opportunities for Law students to support teaching of a new Law T Level qualification during their degree placement year.
- There are a huge range of excellent apprenticeship providers across the local area. FE and sixth form colleges also provide a wide range of T Level qualifications, which offer students 45 days of in-business learning.
- However, Further Education and sixth form colleges face workforce and recruitment challenges across the UK. Organisations have lobbied government to increase the pay award for Tutors. FE tutor pay is 19% less than for teachers in schools, and significantly less than industry pay. There is a collective will across educational establishments and close working with industry, however the pay differential has resource implications and means that tutor shortages exist in areas that are key to the Government's growth strategy, such as digital and construction, despite substantial efforts of FE institutions to find creative staffing solutions.
- It is important to take measures to ensure the Further Education (FE) Workforce is at capacity and has the right industry skills to deliver the Government's missions and optimise economic growth. This requirement is recognised by local authorities and West Yorkshire Combined Authority however significant investment is needed to address pay challenges.
- The FE sector is continuously experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in certain sectors. Sectors aligned with Government's missions are the areas most affected: construction (including trades); engineering (mechanical and electrical); health and social care; green technologies; digital; Maths; and English. To achieve the missions of Government, we recommend intervention and funding be put in place to ensure the FE workforce is at capacity.
- Insufficient provision to learners is also exacerbated by lack of capital funding causing constraints in space, with learners being turned away in some subjects where there are skills shortages. For example, Leeds College of Building cannot currently meet demand for groundwork and brick work students. Demand for these skills' shortage areas will continue to rise to meet home building targets, retrofit and Mass Transit requirements.
- In some cases, colleges are not able to accommodate all learners, resulting in waiting lists and increasing concerns as to whether potential students would become NEET.
- Competition between FE providers is significant in order to fill vacancy gaps, meaning staff move from one to another, thus re-locating the problem, causing disruption to learners and incurring unnecessary cost.
- The administrative expectations, and safeguarding requirements of the FE workforce can be deemed as excessive and increase the workload, thus resulting in seeking alternative careers or not considering working in FE as a career.
- However, some excellent teacher CPD, supported by the LSIF, has been put in place across the colleges. At Luminate Group, Digital Skills training has been delivered to 100+ staff. 180 spaces have been offered for Google Educator training to small Independent Training Providers. They have also provided 400+ staff with AI foundation training across the group.
- Short term funding does not fully support the upskilling of the FE workforce. For example, the Local Skills Improvement Fund has provided a welcome investment to providers across England, however the split of revenue has created difficulties in ensuring staff are equipped with the relevant skills to be able to use the new capital investment. Further revenue funding is requested to maximise benefits from the initial capital investment.
- We cannot forget the importance of independent training providers when we discuss skills provision as they are faced with their own challenges, such as limited access to funding and are experiencing similar difficulties in recruitment of training staff. Furthermore, the increase in National Insurance impacts independent training providers. One states: "this will increase our costs by £1.5 million next year and has put 40 jobs at risk of redundancy". They request that national insurance cost be waived for training that is delivered to public sector employers in line with national insurance waiver for cleaners for the public sector. Independent training providers are calling for a more even playing field with access to capital funding to help expand their provision in line with public sector providers.

Education Providers work hard to overcome challenges, as well as the combined authority, partners and ERBs offering their support to this agenda.

Equipment funded through the LSIF is used to make more efficient use of teaching resources and to enhance the learner experience. VR content has been created across multiple institution and disciplines, and content is embedded into existing courses, meeting the theme of digitisation and enhancing provision in priority skills areas.

TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

Automotive

The [Institute of Motor Industry Labour Market Report 2024](#) indicates that vacancies in the automotive labour market are at a two decade high, with significant skills shortage facing the sector, compounded by the urgent need to adapt to new technologies and meet the net-zero challenge. The automotive industry is one of the UK's major economic contributors, generating £37 billion and employing 760,000 people in 2023. West Yorkshire employs 28601 individuals, which equates to 3% of jobs. Repair of motor vehicles makes up 1% of employment across West Yorkshire.

There is significant growth required in data and digital roles in Automotive in West Yorkshire, including in data analyst, IT business analysts, architects and systems designers, programmers, software development professionals, cyber security professionals, web and graphic and electronics engineers. 16% growth in data and digital secondary roles is also predicted by 2032.

As electrical vehicles continue to gain widespread acceptance, the demand for technicians with specialised training in handling EVs is increasing. FE Colleges have used LSIF funding to put appropriate facilities and training in place to address the need for hybrid and electric vehicle qualifications.

Due to their central location, transport and storage jobs are most heavily represented in Wakefield, making up 2.25% of employment. Wakefield College, part of Heart of Yorkshire Group plays a central role in delivery of transport and logistics training. To support transport and logistics, a Large Goods Vehicle Skills Bootcamp was piloted in Wakefield. Helping to address diversity and skills gaps, the course is aimed at unemployed individuals. The college has also developed a course in Basic Automotive Skills for Women.

Bradford College offers a range of Engineering and Motor Vehicle courses from Level 1 to 5 and are developing Level 3 training in hydrogen vehicles as well as Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS). They deliver a range of Hybrid and Electric vehicle qualifications, helping to bridge the skills gap in electric vehicle engineers. Hydrogen vehicles will be soon coming on board to support the governments net zero targets, and the college are up skilling of staff who would be repairing these vehicles.

Rail

- [West Yorkshire Rail Strategy](#) indicates a commitment to:

- Expand Leeds Railway Station
- Create a new through station for Bradford
- Improve connectivity between West Yorkshire and Sheffield and the Midlands
- Electrify of the Calder Valley line between Bradford, Halifax, Preston and Manchester Victoria
- Improve services in the Penistone line
- Improve rail services to Pontefract, Castleford, Knottingley, Normanton and Featherstone and reverse cuts to Bradford services

- Whilst this increasing connectivity within our communities, it also has resource implications, including the requirement for electrical and construction skills. The Rail Collaborate Skills Partnership (CSP) is a partnership with colleges in the local area. Their regular meetings welcome employers and industry bodies to help understand the industry skills needs.
- With 28.3% of Yorkshire and the Humber's rail workforce set to retire by 2030, it is crucial that colleges work with the rail industry to upskill existing and new employers.
- The CSP has been working with universities in the local area, such as The High-Speed Rail Institute led by the University of Leeds, to better understand new technologies within the sector and where gaps lie in training provision. Partnering with NSAR (National Skills Academy for Rail), the CSP has produced reports on the local area's workforce demand.
- The [Rail-Sector-Skills-Delivery-Plan 2017 V8.pdf](#) set out plans to increase diversity in the industry, deliver clear career paths and create 30,000 apprenticeships in transport nationally, raising skill levels.
- The Government's Industrial Strategy sets out a [Rail Sector Deal](#) which indicates that to support growing use of the railways for both passenger transport and freight More than £48bn will be spent over the next five years on maintaining and upgrading the existing network to sustain growth. It also recognises the need for digitally innovative careers in the sector. There is a need to upgrade technical and digital skills across the sector and improve diversity.
- There are plans to develop an Education and People Strategy, which will improve promotion of the rail sector.
- The strategy also sets out plans to raise the intensity of research and development and Innovation (RD&I) in UK Rail.
- West Yorkshire also has plans to deliver a £2.5 billion [Mass Transit Scheme](#) across Leeds And Bradford, with spades in the ground by 2028. The skills plan to support Mass Transit will be commissioned soon.
- Bus: More than 100 new bus drivers have secured new employment in West Yorkshire following a specialist training programme funded by [West Yorkshire Combined Authority](#)

LOW CARBON

- Climate change is widely recognised as one of the greatest, most urgent challenge. A range of training exists in this area, including [Carbon Literacy for Businesses](#), delivered by Luminate, alongside other courses through [The Green Consortium](#), a network of colleges which aims to work towards Sustainable Development Goals across the local area.
- A key agenda for The Leeds Anchor Network is to support the city's carbon zero agenda.
- The [Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission](#) also lead a range of reporting and initiatives around this agenda.
- West Yorkshire Mayor Tracy Brabin has funded an [innovative sustainability programme](#) to 'inspire young people'.

- Most FE courses deliver training relating to NET Zero, with staff also being trained on this agenda. Leeds College of Building has launched a Low Carbon Heating Technician Apprenticeship Standard to support the transition from gas boilers to Heat Pumps. In addition, they deliver short courses on Heat Pumps for already qualified engineers.
- At Leeds University a new Project Leadership for Sustainable Futures course has been developed, which is applicable to all the priority sectors, but especially Low Carbon, Construction and Transport & Logistics.
- Bradford College has recently launched an innovative Green Skills Centre, funded by LSIF, positioning itself at the cutting edge of sustainable technology education and professional training and helping to develop a skilled workforce capable of implementing and maintaining advanced renewable energy systems.

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Financial and insurance activities are well-represented in Calderdale and Leeds but are poorly represented in Kirklees and Wakefield. As the sector continues to evolve through developments such as legal and fintech, use of digital technology and AI has increased, and the shortage of skills required is evident. A deep dive Financial and Professional Services Report was produced through the LSIF to gain further insight to the sector. The report supported providers to develop courses that provide the future skills identified in Y&H Financial and Professional Services Skills Commission.
- Through the LSIF £550,000 has been invested into skills to support the financial and professional services industry, which employs over 149,000 people and generating over £11.8 billion in the local area. Recommendations were made by the commission to ensure the sector in the local area can maintain its success and adapt to sector challenges.
- A five-point plan recommends collaboration and actions for employers, education providers and government in key areas. The commission hopes the recommendations will lead to a fundamental shift in the skills of the local workforce.
- However proposed changes nationally to Level 7 Apprenticeship Funding (equivalent to a master's degree) are causing concerns within the industry. As highlighted by the Law Society, Level 7 apprenticeships will no longer be funded by the growth and skills levy. This is currently the only apprenticeship route to qualify as a solicitor in England.
- It is important that skills provision is seamless and co-ordinated, for example from Legal T Levels, being developed at Notre Dame College, through FE College Apprenticeships and into HE provisions, such as the new course BA Hons Business with Financial Services, being rolled out at Huddersfield University. It is complex for both learners and businesses to identify the range of courses available and is incumbent on the role for careers advice and guidance to help to navigate the wide range of offers across the local area.

CONSTRUCTION

- CITB's Construction Skills Report for Yorkshire and the Humber, 2024 -2028 highlights that an extra 26,600 workers will be needed in the local area from 2024 to 2028.
- Construction apprenticeship starts in Yorkshire & the Humber picked up strongly after Covid-19 lockdown, however, they dropped in 2022/23 by 12% and a further fall of 5% in 2023/24.
- The local area is well served for construction skills and has the country's only dedicated building college, Leeds College of Building. There is significant construction provision in other colleges across the local area, and a range of construction degrees across our universities. However more people are needed into the industry to meet new infrastructure projects and home builder targets, and this required space and trained tutors to support them.
- Leeds College of Building is at capacity for some areas of delivery, such as bricklaying and groundworks and more space and resource is required to expand provision.
- CITB have excellent skills provision into construction, through their skills levy and have recently produced a suite of digital courses to upskills existing workforce.
- There has been recent recognition of the additional skills requirement to the sector by central government, with £650 million pledged to support skills within the sector. However, change takes time and there are areas where provision can be improved through collective and strategic action.
- There are particular areas of skills shortages as well within the sector. Nikki Davis, Principle of Leeds College of Building described the situation for electricians as being at crisis point "There aren't enough people in industry, so people can charge what they want, employers don't take on apprentices, its costly and takes time and there are not enough tutors, so we have a waiting list of students".

Nikki said what they need is:

- Financial support for employers to take on apprentices (generally not eligible for CITB grants as out of scope).
- Larger employers taking on more apprentices.
- Pay for teachers to close the gap to schools as a minimum, but closer to industry would be better - this can be done by increasing funding rates for apprenticeships.
- More support for newly qualified teachers so they are not lost back to industry.
- Changes to procurement so contracts are longer, guaranteeing work for the duration of the student apprenticeship.

Summary

Delivery of the LSIF funded projects up to March 2025 culminated in an LSIF skills summit, launch of an FE Compact and production of case studies on the success of LSIF partnerships. However, the work is not finished. Further funding is needed to continue to enhance skills provision, to continue to address skills gaps in key sectors, to continue to ensure employer-led training and to ensure the continued progress and use of technology and

innovation in education. It is also important that this is inclusive conversation with HE providers, who also provide higher level skills into the local area - helping employers to navigate the breadth of higher-level skills education establishments.

3.3 WEST YORKSHIRE EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND THE ROLE OF BUSINESS

- Employer engagement remains a key priority, set out by the LSIP. Whilst some employers are highly engaged with the skills agenda, only a third of employers offer work experience and 39% need to invest more in training their workforce. There are a range of ways that employers can get more involved, offering work experience, T Level placements, in schools talks, site tours, apprenticeships, upskilling staff through in house or external training, becoming school governors and more.
- The Combined Authority works with 181 secondary schools to improve careers performance through engagement with employers and has launched a [portal to facilitate engagement](#)
- All FE colleges and sixth form colleges are subject to Ofsted Inspection, which includes a skills judgement. It is important they can demonstrate that employers are engaged in all areas of curriculum, including in co-design and teaching delivery.
- A key LSIP priority, 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.
- Several skills events and interventions have taken place to ensure this through the LSIP and skills providers, including initiatives like Bradford Manufacturing Weeks, Leeds Apprenticeship Fair and Bradford Business Unlocked. Also, all FE colleges have employer steering groups across multiple areas of curriculum.

Other examples of successful engagement include:

- [West Yorkshire Manufacturing Task Force](#), [Calderdale and Kirklees Manufacturing Alliance](#), [Leeds Manufacturing Festival](#) and [Bradford Manufacturing Weeks](#), helping to inspire learners to enter the manufacturing industry and to upskill the existing workforce.
- Employers proactively planning for their skills needs, as seen by the [Construction Industry Training Board \(CITB\)](#), who distribute levy payments to employers for training and have launched both a business and skills provider network.
- Employers collaborating with providers to support the development of [Skills Bootcamps](#) specific skills provision.
- 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.

The Role of Business

Investment in training by employers is crucial to developing the local skills base since the vast majority of the 2030 workforce are already in employment. Employers already make a substantial investment in this area, estimated at £1.9bn per annum in West Yorkshire. However, only 57% of employers provide training, with 60% of staff receiving training. There has been no sign in recent years of an improvement in performance against these indicators and both proportions are lower than those recorded by the previous survey in 2019. In sectoral terms, business services, education, wholesale and retail and health and social care are responsible for the largest volumes of training (days of training) with health and social care having the highest training prevalence (% of staff trained).

Work experience and work inspiration are important ways in which the world of business can engage with education, supporting an effective transition into the world of work by helping individuals to understand and meet the requirements of employers. By contributing to improved career-readiness and employability these activities have a positive influence on local labour supply. Although most employers consider that relevant work experience is an important factor in recruitment decisions, only 31% of West Yorkshire employers had provided a work experience placement in the previous 12 months. A small minority of employers (8%) had engaged with an educational institution to offer inspiration activities such as careers talks, site visits, mentoring, mock interviews, enterprise competitions and input to curriculum.

Work experience / inspiration opportunities are still limited. A minority of local employers offer work experience and work inspiration opportunities –36% and 11% respectively; 18% offer placements to school pupils, 14% to college students. (Source: <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/6573/employment-skills-framework-final.pdf>). There are also a large number of universities in the local area with students across a diverse subject portfolio also seeking and benefitting from placements with local employers.

The Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) is a brilliant example of collaboration. £6.9 million has been secured and invested into FE providers across West Yorkshire over the past 2 years to help meet the demands that have been identified within the local area's Local Skills Improvement Plan. Examples of the impacts this has achieved for businesses are included in Appendix 5.

3.4 IMPROVING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

- Policies such as the Equality Framework for Local Government and West Yorkshire's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan 2022-2025 set out how Councils must address diversity and ensure good quality outcomes.
- Wakefield is the largest city in England without a university. Fewer residents there have Level 4 qualifications compared to either the local area or national average. Wakefield Council is working with support of the Combined Authority to fully understand the barriers to higher-level skills and higher education and the potential solutions to access. Wakefield has also joined Kirklees as the second UNESCO Learning City in West Yorkshire.
- The WYCA commissioned Adult Education Budget (AEB) programme, with a priority to focus on making learning more inclusive to support disadvantaged residents, is making significant in-roads in addressing EDI.
- Local Councils also have initiatives in place to engage with businesses in ensuring placements for students with additional support requirements, such as care leavers or SEND.
- Well established and now in her second term as mayor, Tracey Brabin has launched a range of skills related initiatives across West Yorkshire, which are highly proactive in addressing the skills agenda. The Fair Work Charter, launched in Autumn 2023, is aimed to help organisations develop their people and boost performance and productivity. It has been designed for employers of all sizes and across all sectors, to promote and recognise the positive impact of fair work on businesses and their people. Fair work can include good pay, fair and flexible working conditions, as well as greater wellbeing, diversity, and social mobility within the workplace. The 45 employers who adopted the charter on the day of its launch include small, medium and large businesses such as Haribo, Suma Wholefoods, Huddersfield Town A.F.C, and the local area's five local authorities.
- West and North Yorkshire Chamber as the ERB also run annual Raising the Bar Awards, which encourage and celebrate the positive impact of businesses locally around community, education and environment.
- However, there will always be work to be done to enhance equality and diversity, for example there are very low proportions of women in employment sectors such as manufacturing and construction.
- In Bradford, for example, there are longstanding challenges such as high youth unemployment and low social mobility. With more than 25% of the population under 18, and over 330,000 people of working age, there is a need to prioritise upskilling, which is addressed in the Bradford District Plan 2021-2025.
- There are some central government initiatives to address this, such as Women into STEM. There are also some good networks within the local area, such as Women in West Yorkshire, however there will always be more that can be done.

- 4447 learners using new facilities / equipment created under LSIF
- 711 learner starts on new courses at Levels 3-5
- £96,948 savings made through shared costs, including facilities, curriculum design, delivery and other collaboration activities
- 312 teaching staff benefitting from CPD activity
- 18 new teaching facilities created
- 28 new courses created at levels 3-5

- Pockets of acute deprivation are widespread across West Yorkshire – it has twice its “fair share” of the most deprived neighbourhoods nationally - and deprivation is particularly prevalent in Bradford. Education, skills and training deprivation is a key issue, with Bradford, Wakefield and Leeds facing the biggest challenges. Adult skills deprivation is more commonplace in all West Yorkshire local authorities except for Leeds, where, despite a thriving city centre and excellent HE and FE provision; education and skills and training deprivation affecting children and young people is more widespread. (source: <https://wnychamber.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/wyca-lmi-report.pdf>)
- Our universities across the local area proactively provide differentiated support for students in the delivery of the Access and Participation Plan's which are focused on addressing the inequality gaps that they identify across their student lifecycles, which includes their progression into graduate level employment. These initiatives complement our focus in the LSIP to support EDI.

SIGNIFICANT IMPACT SO FAR

Over the past 2 years significant changes have achieved because of the LSIP and LSIF Funding. This has included:

- A strong partnership formed and significant progress against the skills agenda. Strong collaboration across skills partners with LSIF funding model strongly supporting collaboration and the cost savings and joint procurement and training that can bring. This has not been the case previously, where often FE providers had to compete for funding.
- FE providers have focused on their areas of strength to ensure a strong spread of skills provision across the local area. In addition to supporting FE, the LSIP has brought together skills providers from independent training providers, FE Colleges, Yorkshire Universities with Local Authorities and the Combined Authority, and with business representative organisations including CBI, FSB, Textile Centre for Excellence and the Chamber of Commerce to ensure strong progress on the skills agenda, with the collective voice being far stronger than its individual parts. This is demonstrated by 22 of the 23 skills road map objectives being delivered, or on track to deliver.
- Local area accountability and engagement with the business community, strongly supported by all partners in the LSIP.
- Support to businesses to engage with the skills agenda and convening businesses on the skills agenda to inform skills provision. E.g. skills survey, quarterly

economic survey, consultation and lobbying on investment into construction skills, consultation and lobbying on investment into Further Education, consultation and lobbying of changes to Maths and English in Apprenticeships for adult learners.

- Support to skills providers to engage with businesses. Many of them have become chamber members and will engage with senior level business contacts through our leadership, property and transport forums across the local area. For example, our recent Leeds Chamber Dinner focused on family run businesses and how that influences the business culture, succession planning and the skills agenda.

WHAT STILL NEEDS TO BE ACHIEVED

West Yorkshire has significant skills strengths with seven Universities, seven FE College Groups and some excellent independent training providers across our local area: enrolling 10,000 students and producing around 35,000 graduates a year. However, as well as celebrating successes this report focuses on skills improvements. West Yorkshire is home to 2.4 million people, with a £66 billion economy and a workforce of 1.2 million. But its economy is £11 billion smaller than it should be, and that gap is projected to widen. This is because the local area has fewer jobs overall and lower productivity per job.

The skills agenda plays a significant role in addressing growth and productivity. In recognition of some of these challenges, West Yorkshire Combined Authority has set out its plans for a Local area of Learning and Creativity as part of the Local Growth Plan. Setting out how they will maximise skills utilisation and graduate retention within the local area, for example learning from the Graduates West Yorkshire pilot, intended to support skilled graduates into SME job opportunities within the local area.

From the LSIP roadmap and observations across the skills partnership, the areas yet to be fully addressed are:

1. Addressing the FE tutor skills provision, improving capacity of FE and ensuring that the capital investment from LSIF can be maintained and utilised to maximum benefit through further revenue funding. A lack of educators is directly impacting the availability of skilled workers in some of West Yorkshire's key industries. Industries impacted include advanced manufacturing, construction and the green economy which will play a significant role in enabling economic growth and vital infrastructure development.
2. Collaborative working to raise awareness of the benefits of digitisation and automation. LSIF funded initiatives have made excellent progress in addressing this and ensuring that skills providers are equipped to meet employer needs, however the scale of change needed to fully address this is so significant that we cannot yet say this has been fully achieved.
3. Further work is required to convene and fully engage employers around the skills agenda and to ensure that they have sufficient skills and succession planning in place within their organisations.
4. Whilst progress has been made over the past two years, West Yorkshire still has a relatively weak skills base. Despite the need for skilled workers, the estimated employer investment in training has fallen

over the last decade. There is a persistent deficit of people with high-level qualifications and a relatively large proportion of people with low-level qualifications. West Yorkshire's skills deficit extends to the employed as well as the unemployed.

5. Equality and inclusion – there are still low levels of attainment within the local area, particularly on areas such as Maths and English GCSE. Whilst some excellent initiatives are in place around soft skills, including initiatives like STEM 7 at Luminare College Group and the Mayor's West Yorkshire Promise for residents, soft skills have yet to be fully addressed within the workforce.
6. During the next phase, alongside existing priorities, skills priorities will be revised in line with new emerging needs, such as industrial strategy, local growth plan and the changing needs of employers, for example around digital, automation and green skills.
7. Careers and business support is being improved, and measures are in place to make it easier for employers and individuals to navigate. However, further work and effective communication is needed to make it more accessible to all.
8. While the local area has seen growth in highly skilled occupations, higher level skills are not in line with the national average. Poor health alongside barriers such as accessing high-quality childcare is hampering labour market participation. The new Health and Work Strategy, due to be released by WYCA in 2025 will help to address issues around encouraging residents back to the workforce.
9. There are persistent low levels of residents with higher level skills in areas such as Wakefield, which affects life outcomes and even life expectancy. There is currently work in place seeking to understand and address this. Wakefield Futures Commission
10. Employer engagement is a challenge, with only 1/3 of employers in the local area engaging with work experience and huge demands being placed on employers, particularly to meet the placement needs for T Level. The need for effective work experience for all is well recognised, however achieving this for all residents, particularly those with additional needs, or those that have been away from the workplace for some time remains challenging.
11. Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) face an increased likelihood of unemployment, low wages, and low-quality work later in life. The proportion of young people who are NEET in West Yorkshire has increased and is now above the national average.
12. A key agenda for the LSIP moving forward, which would complement the West Yorkshire Growth Plan and the Industrial Strategy would be to further support pathways to progression - a means by which we can draw together FE and HE to raise awareness of the value of a diverse tertiary education sector in the local area.

Further action to address skills requirements

1. The ERB and other LSIP Partners continue to work closely with employers to engage them around the skills agenda, with more activities planned to support this over the coming year.
2. We continue to make the case for additional funding to Further Education to increase capacity and address ongoing skills gaps.
3. WYCA has created a significant number of initiatives to address skills gaps, in line with national priorities, the Local Skills Improvement Plan and the Local Growth Plan. A significant amount of delivery will contribute to the above priorities. Adult Skills Fund will focus on pipeline and underpinning skills, whereas bootcamps and other employer focussed work will focus on filling vacancies and bridging skills gaps in key sectors. The commissioning for 2025/26 is dependent on DfE allocations, which have been issued in late February. Detailed commissioning plans are therefore currently undergoing approval.
4. WYCA are currently exploring how they can use devolved funding to enhance leadership and management skills within SMEs. Strengthening leadership and management capabilities in West Yorkshire SMEs will improve business resilience and help to drive sustainable local areaal growth.
5. All LSIP Partners regularly convene employers to help address the skills agenda, whether that be at local areaal, local or education provider level or through the business partner organisations in the partnership, including Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and The Chamber of Commerce.

Conclusion

In conclusion, significant progress has been made on the skills agenda during the past 2 years, through the LSIP and other initiatives. With the LSIP and related LSIF funding providing a useful initiative in supporting change within the skills system, ensuring collaboration across providers, ensuring accountability of delivery partners, creating transparency for employers and helping them to navigate what can be a complex system. Its value and the benefit of it being driven by an independent employer representative body is recognised by Skills England and hence their commitment to maintaining the LSIP to support future improvements.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Delivering the LSIP Priorities (Roadmap)

Appendices 2 – 6 Download this separate document

Appendix 2 – Bibliography

Appendix 3 - Business skills research – Skills questionnaire and QES

Appendix 4 – West Yorkshire Combined Authority: Adult Education Budget (AEB) Annual Report 2023-2024

Appendix 5 - Local Skills Improvement Fund Impact and West Yorkshire Colleges

Appendix 6 – Business case studies

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 2024 - October 2025	ERB directly delivering. Clear structures, full buy-in from partners. In September 2025 Governance and board will be revised for closer partnership working with West Yorkshire Combined Authority from October 2025. Businesses will have greater representation on the LSIP board.	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 - September 2024	There is significant provision of sector groups across the local area. We have mapped provision of these and on an ongoing basis support their cohesion and sharing of best practice through events, attending existing partnerships, partner discussions, monthly skills newsletters, appropriate in person and online skills business boardroom events. There are ongoing discussions with WYCA about expanding these but no intention to duplicate existing provision. LSIF activities ensured strong collaboration across FE colleges, all ensure employer engagement around curricular development, as indicated in Ofsted skills judgements.	Notes shared from groups, reflect on impact to curricula development feedback to the board. Cross reference between groups.	Completed, A wide range of sector groups take place across the local area and partners input from these to LSIP reporting.
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, Yorkshire Universities, Sector Specialists, Local Authorities	As required from October 2024 - March 2025	ERB collaborating with Cross-colleges consortium/ provider groups. Clarity on gaps/ duplication; Accountability agreements clearly informed; Greater understanding of gaps informing curricula development. Comprehensive reporting from Yorkshire Universities on skills delivery by local areaal Universities.	Accountability Statements are well informed on skills requirements, reflecting LSIP Priorities.	Completed, strong local areaal partnerships exist across independent training providers, FE Colleges and HE, with a clear understanding of how they fulfill the skills agenda and complement each other's provision. £7million of Skills Bootcamp funding is available to meet more specific and flexible employer needs.
Responsiveness to skills needs.	Review of FE Accountability Agreements as part of provision mapping to check what plans are in place for new provision	Chamber, West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges, skills specialists, WYCA, providers	October 2024 - Annually	ERB collaborating with Cross-colleges consortium. Maintain understanding of marketplace; Increased course availability to meet demand; Benefits from 2024/25 academic year; Career pathways clearer.	As part of the annual accountability agreement review cycle lead by WYCA; One to one from WYCA to colleges as part of negotiations	Strong progress, Regular one to one and group meetings with colleges and training providers. Responsiveness to skills needs hampered in some cases by tutor shortages.

COURSE ENHANCEMENTS Responsive and up to date provision	Identify opportunities to retain/secure Level 2/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	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;	Strong progress, this is ongoing in its nature. Excellent progress was made through LSIF funded activities including additional learning opportunities and digitisation of learning, new pathways being developed and ongoing collaborative working.
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	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	Good Progress: LSIF collaborative working, building on previous ESF & SDF activities. Colleges agree with specialist areas and are sharing expertise. Overseen by Principals meetings. 5000 learners using LSIF funded equipment and 711 new starts on Level 3-5 courses. Increase in capacity now requires some additional tutor recruitment.
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	Ongoing	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.	Completed: Employer engagement activities contributing to gap identification. Skills providers have strong employer engagement. ERB carry out ongoing employer surveys and discussions.
Employer engagement	Develop resources in colleges/Independent Training Providers to support greater collaboration with employers, including curriculum development and placements.	Providers, Independent Training Providers, WYCA, Yorkshire Universities employers, business representative bodies	Ongoing	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.	On track, Employer engagement activity informing curriculum development, including through bootcamps/LSIF, e.g. thematic events to showcase investments/ activities & engage employers. Events taking place for Manufacturing Weeks (Bradford, Leeds).

Responsive and up to date provision	Increase provision at Level 4 & 5 in modular & flexible format in priority sectors - e.g. low carbon technologies – collaborative working across provider base to offer different pathways and specialisms.	Providers, Independent Training Providers, WYCA, Business representative bodies	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.	Completed Provision development supported by LSIF/Skills Boot camps, building on previous Strategic Development Fund activities.
Responsive and up to date provision	Increase provision in small, bite-size and introductory format in priority, technical sectors	Providers, Independent Training Providers (ITPs), WYCA, Business representative bodies, employers, Local Authorities, Yorkshire Universities	October 2024 - Summer 2025	WYCA, Cross college /provider groups & Universities. Skills Bootcamps/LSIF. Increased access to local sector- specific courses; Speed learners can upskill and 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,	Completed, Provision development supported by LSIF/Skills Boot camps e.g. Calderdale College bootcamps, providing individuals with skills and coded qualifications in fabrication & welding.
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	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	On track, Provision development supported by LSIF and mainstream funds. More needs to be done but impacted by funding requirements.
Responsive and up to date provision	Increase boot camp style provision to help mid-career individuals transfer into key labour shortage occupations.	Providers, Employers, Job Centre Plus, WYCA, other career guidance providers.	September 2024 - summer 2025	WYCA, Local Authorities & providers. Skills Bootcamps/Gainshare. Reduction in skills gaps in digital/technology 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	On track, Total of £5m funding allocated to support skills bootcamp provision to meet skills shortages/gaps, with a further £7 million secured. Trailblazer and Accelerator funding secured to support The Work and Health Program and Get Britain Working initiatives.

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 /Department of Work and Pensions, Course outcomes from providers.	Strong Progress, Fintech Partnership developed within FE, new Advanced Manufacturing Degree Apprenticeships developed, however potentially hampered by changes to L7 Apprenticeship Funding, causing concerns in the professional services sector and potential impact on EDI outcomes.
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, Yorkshire Universities	September 2024 - 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.	Good progress, Evidence of promotion of Leadership and Management provision, via WYCA portal and individual provider portals. Supported by Bootcamp funding. However, a more coordinated approach will reap greater benefits, planned for phase 3.
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,	Strong Progress, LSIF investment has supported equipment and staff training to support digitisation and automation within colleges. Joint event hosted by Yorkshire Learning Providers and supported by LSIF & LSIF (in both West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire) took place in June. LSIF Funding has supported 4447 learners using new facilities, 711 learners on new courses, and over £96,000 in savings. However, onboarding all businesses around digitization and automation is a significant task.