

Employment and skills framework

June 2021

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Tracy Brabin

Mayor of West Yorkshire

Making sure everyone in West Yorkshire has the skills they need to secure good work and enjoy the benefits our region has to offer is at the heart of what the West Yorkshire Combined Authority stands for.

As we look to the long recovery from the pandemic and the effects of historic under-investment in our towns, cities and communities, it's clear that we need to become a higher skilled, more productive workforce with good jobs accessible to all.

Even before the pandemic, over 270,000 people across the region were not in 'good work' in terms of high quality, secure, well-paid employment. What's more, around 380,000 people have low or no qualifications.

Low skills all too often go hand in hand with disadvantage - the health, social and environmental challenges that we need to overcome to give everyone the best quality of life. Without efforts to provide relevant training and skills, we risk setting back countless people's careers, stalling progress and diminishing opportunities.

We need a recovery based on skills that is able to make the most of the new opportunities being created in the digital and green economy and raise living standards, not on a race to the bottom on pay.

That's why, as Mayor I have pledged to prioritise skills and training, and supporting good local businesses with the skills they need to thrive as our region recovers. I want to increase the number of businesses paying the Real Living Wage and help lift 200,000 people in our region out of low pay.

I will also support young people, who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, with the promise of a job, education or training if they have been out of work for more than six months, alongside securing a fairer deal on how our region spends its share of the national Apprenticeship Levy.

Looking to how the workplace is changing, I will boost vital digital skills by spearheading a Digital Academy. To meet our ambitious target of West Yorkshire becoming a net zero carbon region by 2038, we need the right construction and engineering skills to retrofit our homes and public buildings as well as build green, affordable housing.

As this report sets out, we are putting in place support to help people find new jobs and build the skills they will need for the kinds of roles that will be in demand as the economy recovers and the changes we expect to see over the coming years and decades.



Sir Roger Marsh OBE DL,

**Chair of the Leeds City Region
Enterprise Partnership**

There has never been a more important time to invest in skills and training. The pandemic has thrown into sharp relief major structural transformations taking place in our economy that our skills and training programmes must respond to. Indeed, in many ways it has turbo-charged this process, with whole industries and sectors being changed beyond recognition in a frighteningly short amount of time.

It has also highlighted the inequalities among our workforce. The impact of the pandemic has fallen most heavily on those people already disadvantaged in the labour market. Without targeted help with upskilling and retraining in sectors where there is current and future demand, we risk damaging the life chances of a whole generation.

Investing in skills is also essential for the future prosperity of our region's businesses and our economy. Yet too many employers do not see how investing in training and development may be of benefit. What training does take place is often about meeting statutory requirements rather than developing the potential and productivity of their workforce.

We also need to start building the skills for the industries of tomorrow. Over the coming years and decades, West Yorkshire has the potential to create thousands of good jobs in the zero-carbon economy and in the health and digital sectors. These are areas where our region can make a real contribution to the UK recovery as well as addressing global challenges, but only if we support them with the right skills.

The rewards of investment speak for themselves. The £1 billion Growth Deal the LEP secured with Government in 2014 - the largest agreement of its kind - has helped to unlock our region's potential as the growth engine for the North, generating an estimated £4 of private investment and £10 in added value for every £1 of public money spent through it.

I believe that a similar investment in the potential of our workforce can pay as rich a dividend, leading to improved living standards and a stronger economy that works for everyone. This all starts with people and equipping them with the right skills for now and the future.



Rashik Parmar,

**IBM Fellow and Vice President, Technology
Chair of Employment and Skills Panel**

Our new Education and Skills Framework is designed to promote skilled people, good jobs and strong businesses across West Yorkshire.

It aims to boost investment in skills, training and education, and encourage employers to develop their workforce, leading to stronger, more innovative, productive and resilient businesses. Ultimately, its goal is to improve the quality of life for all our residents.

Developed following a review of the existing Education and Skills Plan 2016-20 and extensive consultation with key partners across the region, the Education and Skills Framework builds on the excellent progress we have made over the past few years in understanding the skills our economy needs.

As I hand over responsibility for education and skills to my colleague Cllr James Lewis, our new framework will guide how the Combined Authority and LEP supports education and skills in the future, and sets out an overarching vision for our region, backed up with refreshed strategic priorities.

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

Supporting this are our five strategic priorities: quality technical education; great education connected to business; progression towards, and adaptability and resilience in good work; creating a culture of investment in workforce skills; and driving innovation and productivity through high level skills.

Already the Combined Authority and LEP have made significant progress against several of these priorities, taking on more power and responsibility through our devolution deal, working with colleges to make sure courses reflect the skills our economy needs, and implementing the recommendations of the Future-Ready Skills Commission.

The long-term prosperity of our region depends on having people with the right skills to get back into work and be ready for new opportunities, and employers who recognise the value of developing their workforce. We will continue to do more over the coming years as this framework evolves to reflect the changing education and skills environment as our economy recovers.

Our vision

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



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

We want West Yorkshire to be a place where:



There are no barriers to people taking up, progressing and succeeding in learning and work, and where they are supported into good employment



Employers recognise the value of a diverse workforce and invest in their talent to develop the skills that will improve productivity and support progression in the workplace



Individuals value lifelong learning and are able to make decisions about their development, informed by quality, relevant careers information based on the reality on the ground



World class teaching and training provides flexible learning opportunities that align to the strategic needs of the local economy

Skilled people, good jobs, strong businesses



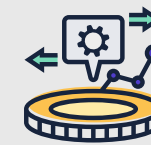
Quality technical education



Great education connected to business



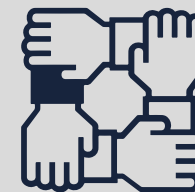
Accessing and progressing in good work



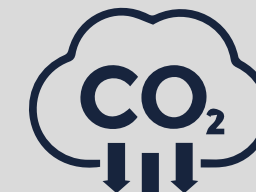
Creating a culture of investment in workforce skills



Driving innovation and productivity through high level skills



Inclusive Growth



Net Zero Carbon



Digital skills



Engineering and manufacturing



Infrastructure



Digital



Health and social care

Strategic Economic Framework

Employment and Skills Framework

Informed by Future Skills Commission, Labour Market Report and State of the Region Report.

High level skills

Over 50s

Green skills

Delivery agreements

AEB strategy

Digital skills plan

Local Skills Report

Economic recovery plan

Proposed In development Published

This Employment and Skills Framework is a key document of the **Strategic Economic Framework** (SEF). The SEF sets out five priorities that will contribute to the Combined Authority’s vision for West Yorkshire ‘to be recognised globally as a place with a strong, successful economy where everyone can build great businesses, careers and lives supported by a superb environment and world-class infrastructure.’ The Combined Authority’s **Economic Recovery Plan** includes Skills and Training as one of three key action areas for economic recovery. The Skills response for economic recovery, re-imagining and resilience is set out in the Economic Recovery Plan.

The Employment and Skills Framework sets out the strategic priorities and indicative actions for employment and skills in West Yorkshire. It has been developed with our key partners, stakeholders and residents in West Yorkshire. The latest research and intelligence produced in our annual Labour Market Report, State of the Region report and the national Future-Ready Skills Commission, has been integral to developing the Framework. **The Local Skills Report** has been informed by this Framework.

In order to remain flexible to the changing needs of our region, the Framework enables the development of detailed plans as part of the LEP and Combined Authority’s ongoing employment and skills agenda, such as the Adult Education Budget Strategy.



Future-Ready Skills Commission

The **Future-Ready Skills Commission** was an independent group supported by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and made up of experts from industry, thinktanks and education. In September 2020, the Commission set out how a devolved post-16 skills system can work better for employers, individuals and institutions. The Commission reviewed a range of evidence before setting out its final blueprint and recommendations:

Our Blueprint for a Future-Ready Skills System



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

Where are we now? Delivery strengths

Young People

FutureGoals

Campaign to inspire and inform young people about careers.

Employment Hub

Providing support for all 15-24 year olds with individual advice, guidance, apprenticeship and employment opportunities

School Partnership

Matching business volunteers for promotion of pathways and labour market information, raising aspirations of young people

Adults

FutureGoals

Campaign to inspire and inform adults about careers and support them to upskill or change career

re[boot]

Courses for individuals to retrain and upskill in the digital, construction, manufacturing and engineering and production sectors

Adult Education Budget

The devolved AEB will support West Yorkshire residents who are unemployed to gain sustained employment and increase the skills for employed individuals to progress whilst in work

Employment Hub

Linking all age groups with training/retraining, employment/apprenticeship opportunities and self employment

Businesses

Employment Hub

Provides businesses with access to employment/recruitment support (including apprenticeships) and a talent matching service for individuals seeking employment

Skills for Growth

Supports business skills and growth needs by engaging with the wide range of education establishments in the region

Enterprise Adviser Network

Engaging employers to volunteer as an Enterprise Adviser to develop careers support in schools or support the Give an Hour campaign

West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges

Offer businesses a gateway to programmes supporting skills development in the Leeds City Region.

Apprenticeship Levy Transfer

Support to help businesses and training providers get the most out of the apprenticeship levy

Quality technical education



Ambition statement

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

Key points

Apprenticeships and technical education are key to addressing employer skills needs and providing sustainable careers. Those completing an apprenticeship at level 4 or above earn £150,000 more on average over their lifetime than those with level 3 vocational qualifications.

Those who are disadvantaged are less likely to access apprenticeships. Only 8% of pupils entitled to Free School Meals go into an apprenticeship after Key Stage 5, compared with 10% of pupils overall at this transition point.

The levy is a key source of apprenticeship funding. 60% of apprenticeship starts in 2019/20 were levy-funded and proportion is growing.

Overview

Technical education provides opportunities for individuals to progress learning with a line of sight to a job, but adult participation in further education has fallen over recent years, and those qualified at levels 4 and 5 remain low in our region. There is an over-supply in some qualifications and shortages in others and so there is more work to be done to ensure that demand and provision match the local skills needs.

Local labour market analysis shows that some groups do not take up technical training routes in equal measure. Alongside this, COVID-19 has had an adverse impact with a sharp decrease in apprenticeship starts which is most pronounced amongst the under-19s and intermediate apprenticeships. Levy-funded starts accounted for 60% of the total in 2019/20 and saw a smaller reduction, falling by 13% compared to 30% for non-levy-funded starts. In 2019/20, more than three quarters of both higher apprenticeships and adult apprenticeships were levy-funded¹. The number of apprenticeships offered by SMEs, and therefore less likely to be funded by the apprenticeship levy, remains a challenge nationally as well as for the City Region.

Technical education offers a good opportunity for employers to engage with the training and

education system, but we need to collectively address the challenges that SMEs face in engaging with the system so that it is responsive to the local skills needs.

Apprenticeships represent a key opportunity to address our City Region's specific skills gaps, particularly in the digital and health sectors with further opportunities in the growing green economy. The recent apprenticeship reforms have sharpened employer appetite, and in Leeds City Region we have developed a range of support services with our partners to match demand and supply issues and increase uptake.

The introduction of T-levels, the national skills fund with its adult entitlement to level 3 qualifications that are 'valued by employers', and adult skills provision that offers short yet focussed unaccredited training will all be important to complement the Adult Education Budget Strategy.

With further reforms planned for the FE sector, established partnerships between employers, training providers, colleges and universities will be key to supporting the success of the reforms and delivering improvements for technical education.

Objectives



Support individuals to take up technical qualifications and access high quality work placements



Work with employers to offer more technical work placements to support technical education routes



Work with employers to maximise apprenticeship levy investment in West Yorkshire



Work with providers to ensure a range of provision that meets employer needs and as a route to a rewarding career

Delivery Agreements

Taking an early lead in aligning skills supply to demand, the Leeds City Region publishes annual labour market data reports, sharing widely with stakeholders and developing Delivery Agreements with our FE colleges. These agreements are a national first, aligned to our Employment and Skills priorities to address sector skills gaps and are regularly refreshed, and will be extended to AEB providers in our region.

A review of the progress against the Delivery Agreement aspirations can be found [here](#).

What more could be done?

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

Economic Recovery:

- Enhance Employment Hub provision to support and signpost those recently unemployed or furloughed

Great education connected to business



Ambition statement

Locally-rooted careers information and learning, informed by employers, that **inspires and enables informed choices to support personal ambitions and progression in work.**

Key points

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.

Attainment by young people is low in West Yorkshire. 78% of young people in West Yorkshire achieve level 2 by age of 19 compared with 83% nationally; for level 3, figures are 52% and 60%.

Deprivation / disadvantage impacts on career outcomes. Disadvantaged pupils are less likely to achieve academically and they have poorer career outcomes in terms of entering a sustained positive destination when leaving education.

Overview

High quality careers support is not only pivotal in giving young people the best start in life, but is increasingly important in our rapidly changing economy as adults need to upskill and reskill to meet the demands of major economic transitions such as decarbonisation and automation.

To make informed decisions about investments in learning and training, individuals need to understand more about the skills, behaviours and qualities that employers value and that are needed to be successful in the workplace. Flexibility, creativity and resilience will be key and alongside a demand for higher level skills there is a growing demand for fusion skills².

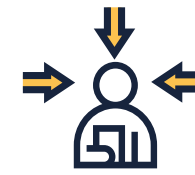
Students who have considerable experience of careers education and employer engagement from a young age are more likely to demonstrate broader careers expectations and aspirations and are less likely to make early compromises as a result of societal and/or familial pressures³. There is positive correlation between employer contacts at school and an individual's career

confidence, their likelihood of being not in employment, education or training (NEET) and their future salary⁴.

Employers will need to continue to play a central role in careers progression, through effective talent management and investment in training. The skills system will also need to respond to increased demands placed on it, including the growing need for digital, fusion and higher level skills. We need to develop new provision at pace to ensure that it remains current, accessing cutting edge industry expertise to deliver education and training.

Careers information needs to be locally rooted and careers support must contribute to individual motivation, career readiness and resilience, employability and social capital. This individual capability leads to the improved operation of the labour market, with a direct link to productivity growth, higher pay and increased employment participation.

Objectives



Ensure careers information takes account of local labour market information to support informed decision making and lifelong learning



Enable equal participation in the take up of careers educations for people of all ages, backgrounds, and career stage to support personal ambitions



Embed careers support and career management into key transition points in life



Increase the number of employers providing experiences of the workplace and work placements

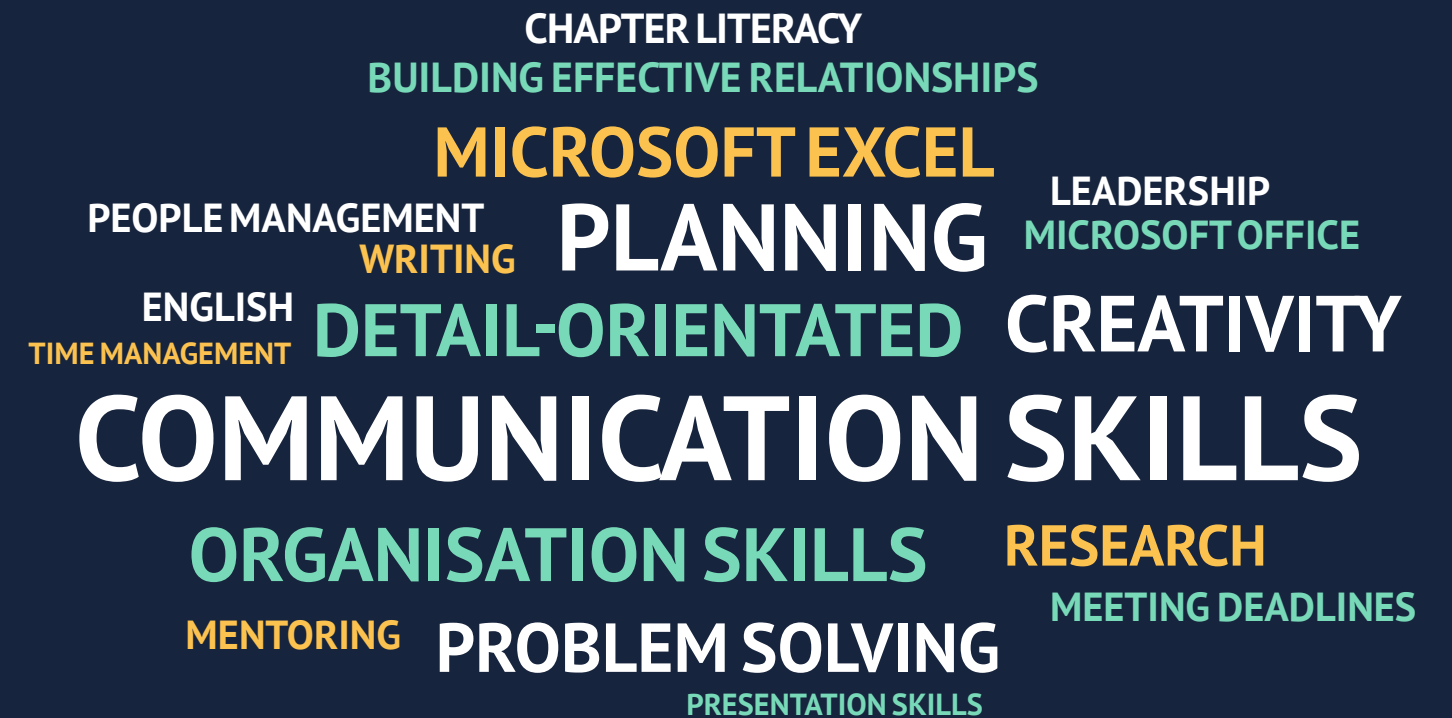


Figure: "Baseline" skills in greatest demand, West Yorkshire, March 2020 to February 2021 (inclusive)

What more could be done?

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

Economic Recovery:

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

Accessing and progressing in good work



Ambition statement

Everyone has the skills to be able to access good work and is supported to take up training in the workplace that enables **progression and development of transferable skills.**

Key points

Many people are locked into low-paid work; low skills hamper career prospects. A fifth of jobs in the City Region pay less than the Real Living Wage.

There is evidence of demand from individuals for re-skilling as a result of COVID-19. According to You Gov polling, 26% are likely to retrain in another sector in the near future⁵.

Significant national resources are being targeted on reskilling. £375m investment in National Skills Fund, including Skills Bootcamps and Lifetime Skills Guarantee, with an additional investment of £13.5m from West Yorkshire Combined Authority Funds.

Overview

While unemployment remained relatively low pre-pandemic, it began to escalate quickly during the early stages of the crisis and the overall pattern is changeable. Those that fall out of the labour market often find it difficult to re-connect. Even before unemployment began to rise, too many people were already locked in low-skilled, low paid work.

Alongside interventions for those who have recently left the labour market, we need to break cycles of deprivation with new models of longer-term support that progress people towards the labour market and then onto sustained work with progression opportunities.

People need personalised, compassionate support to access quality jobs and incrementally develop employability skills, such as literacy, numeracy, creativity and team-working. Staying in work not only benefits individuals by supporting their wellbeing and earning power, but helps tackle the challenge of an ageing society; healthier people can both increase productivity

through their economic contribution, and reduce costs for the region's services as they age.

Training and support for employers will also be crucial in ensuring effective support within the workplace, including sharing of good practice of priority business behaviours such as wellbeing and health.

There are positive signs of an increase in take-up of learning, particularly for online learning and short courses which are valued by employers but not always accredited. The national FE reforms have a significant focus on resourcing progression of skills in technical qualifications.

Devolved adult skills budgets provide an opportunity to align provision with local labour market needs. The Adult Education Budget⁶ is one of many ways in which adult training is funded and skills are developed: its principal purpose is to engage adults and provide them with skills and learning needed for work, an apprenticeship and/or further learning.

Objectives



Support the unemployed to gain and sustain employment



Coordinate and provide access to training, work placements and job matching with SMEs for those unemployed



Unlock progression opportunities and career adaptability through skills, particularly for those on low wages or in insecure job roles



Ensure employment opportunities are widely available and accessible for all to apply



Support people from all backgrounds to access self-employment opportunities and explore opportunities for new business start-ups



Improve West Yorkshire's resilience by identifying and delivering the skills needed for the future

The landmark West Yorkshire devolution deal has secured a number of strategic priorities for employment and skills, including the devolution of the Adult Education Budget from August 2021 and delegation of the adult level 3 entitlement through the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

The devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) will enable us to:

Make the skills system more responsive and accessible through stronger local influence with all training providers

Deliver a more efficient system by focussing on quality of provision and the impact it has on learners

Focus on our 'place', and ensure that the right training and support offers are made to fill the skills gaps which are most prevalent locally

Work closely in partnership with providers to bring together planning of the wider skills and post-16 education system

Ensure that learning opportunities are joined up to local progression opportunities in life and work

What more could be done?

- Ensure that the UK Community Renewal Fund and Single Prosperity Fund succeed the ESF funded unemployed and NEET reduction programmes, with increased flexibility
- Work with Restart providers to ensure engagement with all communities and complementarity across provision
- Coordinate activities of key stakeholders (e.g. unions, the National Careers Service (NCS), recruitment agencies, etc.) to ensure adults access locally relevant careers and employment advice and support
- Work with NHS key strategic organisations to support regional workforce strategies
- Use the AEB to equip individuals with the confidence needed to launch their careers through community learning
- Support delivery of level 3 qualifications needed by the local labour market

Economic Recovery:

- Support young people into well paid, skilled work
- Deliver the Employment Hub, working closely with key agencies such as Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and NCS to coordinate and provide access to training, work placements and job matching for individuals
- Expand the non-accredited, employer-led adult skills training offer to support people who have become recently unemployed to upskill and re-train into new, good job opportunities, particularly in priority areas with potential for job creation and growth, including digital, health tech and the green economy

Creating a culture of investment in workforce skills



Ambition statement

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

Key points

Employers acknowledge that they under-invest in skills. Around two-fifths of employers would like to invest more in training – but face barriers in terms of cost and time.

A minority of businesses have a skills plan. Only 36% have training plan and 29% a training budget.

Digital skills gaps are a key issue for businesses. Around a third of medium-sized businesses say they need to improve basic digital skills to meet business objectives.

Overview

Employer investment in skills is far greater than public and individual investment, although levels remain lower than most OECD countries⁷. Many employers acknowledge that they under-invest in skills and only a minority of businesses have a skills plan in place. Workforce skills are an important factor in increasing productivity at an organisation level and within the wider economy.

Automation, artificial intelligence, the climate emergency and the ageing workforce will create a re-skilling requirement to ensure that people can either adapt to the changing requirements of specific roles or change careers.

Access to training in the workplace is unequal, and opportunities to access workplace training beyond mandatory training such as health & safety are often limited in low paid positions. Whilst workers who are already qualified to a high level (level 4+) are almost twice as likely to receive training than their less qualified colleagues.

We must increase the skills of leaders and managers to change business behaviours,

creating new opportunities and demand for higher level skills which will drive the region's future economy.

SMEs do not always have access to the same resources as larger employers to raise business performance. Recent efforts to co-design national qualifications such as apprenticeship standards have not always captured the breadth and diversity of the local pattern of skills needs. More employers need to be persuaded by their peers to take up a range of practices to make the best use of the skills of their workforce and create diversity in the workplace, particularly within leadership and management. Many employers have developed their talent recruitment and retention practices, including running training academies to re-train and convert skills.

We need greater numbers of employers to demonstrate increased levels of productivity and innovation as a benefit of increased investment in and utilisation of workforce skills, thus contributing to economic growth and better living standards that benefit everyone.

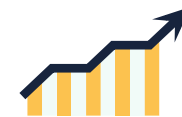
Objectives



Investment in and development of technical training facilities to ensure future needs of employers, individuals and the wider economy are met



Increase leadership and management skills to support skills utilisation in the workplace



Encourage employers to invest and have a workforce skills plan in place to drive skills for staff at all levels



Increase digital enterprise by helping small businesses and charities upskill their employees and increase their digital capabilities so they can take advantage of the productivity gains that technology provides



Increase the number of people in work with basic skills, including digital



Support employers to retain older workers in fulfilling work for longer

What more could be done?

- Provide independent skills support offers for employers, particularly SMEs, that promote investment in their workforce and ensure that pay and conditions are good for workers, such as implementing a skills plan in line with a Good Work Standard
- Encourage employer collaboration with each other and with providers to create solutions to skills and training needs
- Support small businesses and charities to upskill their employees and increase their digital capabilities so they can take advantage of the productivity gains that technology provides
- Consider how gaps in workers' literacy and numeracy skills can be addressed through workplace programmes and flexible / modular provision
- Raise awareness of the benefits of staying in work for longer to both individuals and employers
- Support the development of leadership and management skills and other practices such as mentoring and networking that foster leadership development
- Support the retention of graduates in the Region, and the take-up of employing graduates in SMEs
- Promote take up of the AEB digital entitlement

Economic Recovery:

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

Driving innovation and productivity through high level skills



Ambition statement

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

Key points

The output per hour worked is only 85% of the national average, demonstrating a weak local performance on innovation and productivity. Research and development spend in Yorkshire and the Humber is the lowest in the country.

Disadvantaged individuals are less likely to access higher level skills. 41% of all pupils go into higher education in West Yorkshire but for FSM pupils it's only 24%.

There is a deficit of higher-level jobs – especially STEM. 47% of people in employment in West Yorkshire are in higher skilled roles compared with 50% nationally.

Overview

Our clean growth ambitions and adaptation of AI within workplace practices are likely to have radical impact on the future workplace. New technologies and techniques will change the products, processes and supply chains involved in every aspect of industry - businesses within our key towns and cities of Wakefield, Huddersfield and Bradford are particularly susceptible to the impact as the 4th industrial revolution evolves. Having declared a climate emergency, we are committed to becoming a net zero-carbon city region by 2038. We must address the challenge that our City Region's skills supply does not currently reflect the skills needed to meet these challenges until the deficit of higher-level skills / qualifications is tackled. Currently around 33% of labour force of West Yorkshire are qualified to level 4+ compared with national average of 40% -this equates to 100,000 people in real terms.

Strengthening local business leadership and management and engendering change in business behaviour is critical in view of business performance and shifting out of the low

skills/low productivity equilibrium. There is a widespread skills gaps among managers. A fifth of employers with skills gaps say management staff are affected. Leadership mindset and skills, within SMEs in particular, need to be addressed in order to encourage the adoption of innovation and technology, raise aspiration, demand higher skills, stimulate growth potential and develop a continuous training culture.

We know that successful regions are those that create a culture of innovation that enables SMEs, larger firms, entrepreneurs and institutions to create, accelerate, champion and retain innovation. We want Leeds City Region to have the strongest innovation ecosystem in the UK; one that enables businesses to compete successfully on the global stage, retains talent and attracts investment.

Objectives



Attract talent to key areas of economic growth for West Yorkshire, including health tech, digital and the transition to a net zero carbon economy



Increase take-up of STEM subjects at all levels to meet future demand, particularly on the clean growth agenda



Remove barriers and ensure equality of access so that learners progress towards higher levels of learning



Maximise collaboration between higher education institutions, further education colleges, training providers and employers to establish training needs and responsive provision that supports higher level skills in areas of strength for West Yorkshire and the North, supporting job creation and safeguarding



Continue to make the case to government for a regionally accountable and driven post-16 skills system



Develop innovation and enterprise skills in the workplace to boost productivity and economic growth

What more could be done?

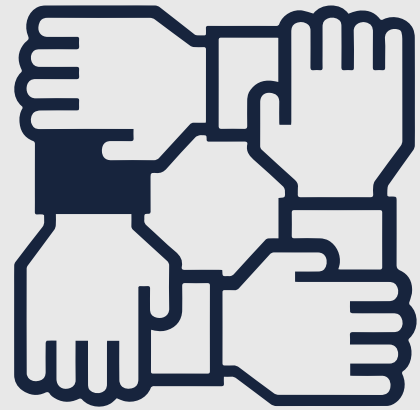
- Work with the West Yorkshire Innovation Network to create a programme of enterprise and innovation activities
- Establish a West Yorkshire Green Skills Partnership
- Increase higher level and degree apprenticeships take up by SMEs
- Produce annual labour market information to identify the region's skills needs
- Support activities that develop leadership and management capabilities
- Create a digital offer for young people, supported by business.
- Create role models and champions to inspire and mentor individuals while studying to support career progression and address diversity in the workforce
- Raise awareness amongst employers of the benefits of employing graduates
- Employer-led careers and inspiration activities that raise awareness of the importance of STEM skills for future jobs

Economic Recovery:

- Deliver a community based entrepreneurial development programme

Cross Cutting Themes





Inclusive Growth

Q Why is this important for West Yorkshire?

The City Region is below average in both basic and higher-level skills, and almost a quarter of jobs across the City Region pay less than the Real Living Wage. Under-investment in training and development over the years has affected living standards and makes it hard for many people to find a route to higher-quality work.

Specific groups of disadvantaged people in our most deprived places have low social mobility due to no or low-level formal skills qualifications. In Yorkshire and the Humber, people with disabilities are three times as likely to have no formal qualifications as those without a disability.

Across all local authority areas in West Yorkshire, school pupils on free school meals are less likely to enter sustainable employment, training, higher education, or apprenticeships than other pupils.

Too few people in the region have access to flexible working arrangements. Where employers do not offer part-time opportunities, including those combined with higher skilled jobs, they are not benefitting from the pool of talented, qualified and motivated potential employees that can only work on a part-time basis.

Q Who is this most important for?

The 22% of West Yorkshire residents living in neighbourhoods considered to be the most deprived in the UK.

- Individuals working in 20% of local jobs which pay less than the Living Wage Foundation's Living Wage rate⁸.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnicities for whom the employment rate lags behind the national average⁹.
- People without essential digital skills.
- Individuals aged 16-64 whose highest qualification is below level 2, or who have no formal qualifications.

Q What is the Combined Authority already doing?

- **Adult training programmes** support those who are employed, furloughed, facing redundancy or looking for a career change to re-train and upskill in areas that are likely to see growth or skills gaps in the future.
- The **Employment Hub** programme provides careers support and a job matching service.
- The **Enterprise Adviser Network** works with secondary schools and colleges to improve the destinations of young people.
- **Careers Hubs** provide enhanced and targeted activity for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities).
- The **Raising Aspirations pilot** fund has created employer co-designed provision targeted at students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The **Skills for Growth programme** enables small and medium enterprises to access education providers in a simple one-stop approach with localised delivery.
- The devolved **Adult Education Budget** provides adults with the skills needed for entering and sustaining work, an apprenticeship, a traineeship, or other further learning, with priorities to support those who are unemployed, on low wages or in insecure work. providers in a simple one-stop approach with localised delivery.

Q What more could be done?

- + Support people from all backgrounds to access self-employment opportunities and explore opportunities for new business start-ups.
- + Coordinate and provide access to training, work placements and job matching for unemployed with SMEs.
- + Remove barriers and ensure equality of access so that learners progress towards higher levels of learning.
- + Increase participation from under-represented groups in the take up of careers educations for people of all ages, backgrounds, and career stage to support personal ambitions.
- + Increase the number of employers providing experiences of the workplace and work placements.



Digital Skills

Q Why is this important for West Yorkshire?

West Yorkshire has a fast-growing digital sector and has grown by 16,000 jobs since 2015 – an almost 50% increase, outstripping the national pace of growth. This makes the development of digital skills a key focus area to ensure we can support this growth and provide future employment opportunities into this sector, where demand for specialist skills in SQL, Microsoft C# and JavaScript is high. Digital is not just a sector – it cuts across all industries, innovating process, practice and boosting productivity. Digital skills are required across a range of roles and are an increasingly key part of modern-day life for everyone.

Over 80% of jobs currently require the minimum of basic digital skills, yet

over 23% of the Yorkshire and Humber population does not have basic digital skills needed for life¹⁰, therefore facing barriers to employment. Across West Yorkshire the lack of digital skills is impacting individuals to engage in modern society but is also impacting upon their income with the No of lower paid roles in the region, aligning to the lack of digital skills acquired by the working age population.

Therefore, providing opportunities for all to develop their digital skills will enhance business productivity, create a more inclusive society, increase income levels and support growth across the region's economy.

Q Who is this most important for?

- Digital skills are important for **all**, but in particular for those from disadvantaged backgrounds such as low income, low education households; those with disabilities; those from ethnic minority groups; those from older age groups; and those with English as an additional language.
- Digital skills enhance everyone's chances of future employment and provides opportunities to enter "better jobs" through upskilling or reskilling. This is particularly relevant for those underemployed, unemployed, furloughed or at risk of redundancy, who may lack digital skills or have the potential to access a digital career.

Q What is the Combined Authority already doing?

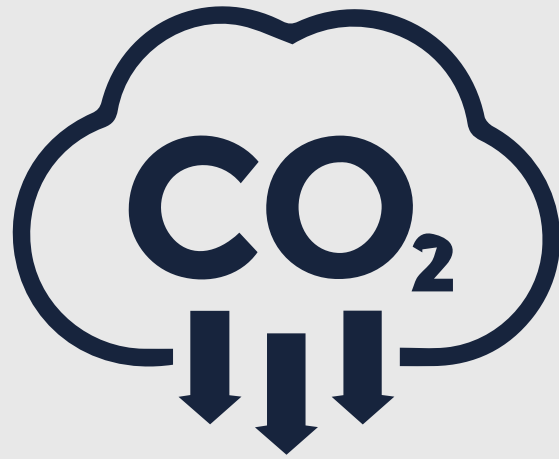
- The **Local Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP)** was recently launched to work with key partners across all sectors to coordinate provision, tackle digital exclusion and maximise the potential of the region through supporting the growth of digital skills.
- **Adult training programmes** support those who are employed, furloughed, facing redundancy or looking for a career change to re-train and upskill.
- The **Enterprise Adviser Network** works with secondary schools and colleges to improve the destinations of young people, ensuring that careers education is tailored to the local labour market.
- The **Skills for Growth** programme enables small and medium enterprises to access education providers in a simple one-stop approach with localised delivery.
- The devolved **Adult Education Budget** provides adults with the skills needed for entering and sustaining work, an apprenticeship, a traineeship, or other further learning, including digital skills.
- **FutureGoals** is the Leeds City Region's all age careers inspiration platform. It seeks to inspire and inform a variety of audiences, including young people and those seeking opportunities and information to re-train, upskill, change career or take steps to get back into the labour market.
- The **LEP Growth Service** supports SMEs to evolve their digital skills, encouraging their sustainability and growth.

Q What more could be done?

- + Coordinate and signpost the digital skills offer in the City Region through the LDSP
- + Build a sustainable programme for donations of digital devices to support those who are most disadvantaged across the region and don't have access to hardware at present, thereby allowing them the opportunity to engage in the increasingly digital society
- + Support disadvantaged communities out of data poverty through broadband or bespoke data packages
- + Coordinate and provide digital skills provision to support the growth of a digitally inclusive society and ensure adults have the 'Essential Digital Skills for Life'
- + Influence leadership and management in SMEs to embed digital skills and transformation as a key element of their business strategy, driving greater employment levels, great efficiency, productivity and growth
- + Develop a structured programme of support aimed at small and micro businesses to enhance their knowledge, understanding and adoption of the Essential Digital Skills for the workplace, thereby driving greater resilience, sustainability and growth
- + Raise awareness of the importance of digital skills in education settings and within careers campaigns, particularly to encourage the engagement of underrepresented groups, such as girls.
- + Increase the number of activities available for young people to engage in technical digital skills, such as coding clubs.

What are digital skills?

There are many varied definitions of what digital skills are. Put simply, digital skills are any skills related to digital literacy and are the skills needed to use digital devices. **The Essential Digital Skills framework** is often used as a reference point for the minimum level of digital skills competency to be achieved in both life and work.



Net zero carbon

Q Why is this important for West Yorkshire?

Employers need skilled workers to deliver against immediate and longer-term challenges in meeting West Yorkshire's ambitious target to become a net zero carbon economy by 2038.

The Local Government Association¹¹ suggests the creation of approximately 71,000 new clean growth jobs in West Yorkshire by 2050 – potentially more than any other area in England. The study estimates that 40,000 of these will be required by 2030, with the largest need in the alternative fuels industry sector (17,291 jobs).

Scaling Up Better Homes Yorkshire¹² suggests that, in domestic retrofits alone, 30,000 jobs will be required in West Yorkshire by 2028, with 5,000 by 2024. The same report provides the evidence on construction trades and roles needed to deliver

retrofits, yet it remains unclear where the pipeline of skilled workers will come from

With radical future changes to the economy come opportunities and new high skilled jobs. The transition to net zero carbon will create a need to reskill workers within high-carbon sectors to meet skills demands for new technologies. This will affect approximately 60% of construction jobs and 49% of manufacturing jobs in Yorkshire and the Humber, with significant impact on Wakefield (23% of all jobs affected)¹³. By focusing on increasing STEM skills and reskilling opportunities, we can support a strong transition from old to new technologies where the skills of our workforce are sustainable and fit for the future.

Q Who is this most important for?

Decarbonisation will impact upon all West Yorkshire residents and its workforce, with a particular need to support:

- Individuals at risk of unemployment as a result of decarbonisation, who may be looking to retrain or upskill.
- Business owners with a need to upskill and re-train staff as part of the transition.
- Young people to ensure a strong and diverse future talent pipeline.
- Employers and training providers in strengthening their collaboration and engagement to improve and expand training programmes.

Q What is the Combined Authority already doing?

The Employment and Skills Panel has convened interested parties in a roundtable forum of employers and skills providers to share intelligence and review the actions required in West Yorkshire through a **Green Skills Partnership**.

Q What more could be done?

- + Establish a West Yorkshire green skills development plan through the Green Skills Partnership.
- + Establish peer networks to enable the sharing of best practice.
- + Strengthen collaboration and engagement between employers and training providers to improve and expand their training programmes
- + Undertake skills audits with SMEs and skills providers to establish need and opportunity for behaviour change
- + Ensure that relevant 'green' courses are on offer for young people, with particular emphasis on constructionconstruction and engineering skills
- + Explore opportunities for supply chains that are not necessarily in the 'green market' to share their green credentials
- + Bursaries or incentivised training for individuals to undertake re-training opportunities.
- + Establish an internship programme, connecting skilled interns / students with organisations development low-carbon technologies
- + Coordinate a programme of careers and inspiration activities with employers to raise awareness of the importance of STEM skills and to address the future demand for green jobs.

Local Digital Skills Partnership and Green Skills Partnership

The [West Yorkshire Local Digital Skills Partnership](#) and Green Skills Partnership aim to influence specific aspects of the skills landscape. Both are important to the cross-cutting themes of this Employment and Skills Framework.

The aspirations of the West Yorkshire Digital Skills Partnership are:



To inspire the growth of digital skills across West Yorkshire by reducing the digital divide to create opportunities for all



To transform digital skills through adoption across the SMEs of West Yorkshire to grow the local economy and boost productivity



To inspire and influence the workforce of the future by collaborating with educators and employers to ensure the future generation have the skills to meet the needs of the economy.

The Green Skills Partnership

The Green Skills Partnership was convened following discussion at the Skills Advisory Panel with the task to undertake an assessment of what is currently happening and what more we need to do in partnership to achieve target net zero carbon by 2038. The Partnership comprises employers, education and training providers and industry bodies and is chaired by the chair of the Employment and Skills Panel.

Its initial focus is on:



Skills opportunities in the local area related the net zero carbon agenda



The skills provision needed



Assessing any known current gaps in training provision

Sectors



Introduction

Each year, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority produces a labour market report and State of the Region report that identifies the labour market strengths and opportunities in the City Region.

The assessment of labour market needs is valued and widely used by our partners to:

- Support strategy and policy development, particularly around areas of market failure in the local labour market that require intervention.
- Influence the focus / profile of local learning delivery with reference to evidence of labour market demand and the wider learning supply picture.
- Inform careers choices by individuals by providing clear and robust information on labour market opportunities.
- Inform action by local employers (including through collaborative action) to address the skills needs of business.
- Support policy development and action on skills by local authority districts within West Yorkshire.

Specific labour market requirements for sectors can be found in [the latest version of these reports](#) and will provide the reader with a thorough technical analysis of the current labour market and can be read in conjunction with this Framework.



Engineering and manufacturing



Infrastructure skills



Digital skills



Health and social care

These STEM-intensive segments were selected because they make a major contribution to productivity and will play a central role in the development of the regional economy, while at the same time being constrained by skills deficits.

Work undertaken to develop a local industrial strategy for the region identified the health sector, including associated activities in health technologies and innovation, as an economic priority. This segment of the economy also faces acute skill shortages.

Manufacturing, digital, and healthcare and innovation are also priorities within the region's investment strategy as areas of strength which offer distinctive opportunities for potential inward investors. Clearly, a comprehensive skills offer needs to be in place to support prospective investors.

These largely STEM-based skill areas are also distinctive in that education and training provision is technical in nature and tends to be relatively expensive, requiring specialist facilities and equipment and specialist teaching staff.

Sectoral approach

The approach to sector engagement we will apply through the Employment and Skills Framework takes account of the following:

- Sectors containing high-productivity activities that are severely constrained by skills deficits, including engineering and manufacturing, infrastructure / construction, digital and health.
- Consideration will also be given to high employment sectors, which have limited potential for productivity growth but will be particularly important to the economic recovery.

Key employment sectors

Although high productivity sectors will be prioritised in some contexts it is important to recognise that high employment sectors, which often have limited potential for productivity growth, also play an important role in the economy and to inclusive growth, particularly in terms of providing entry routes into employment for young people, labour market returners and other groups. These sectors include hospitality, retail, social care and leisure.

These sectors will play an important role in the economic recovery from COVID-19, in some cases offering a destination for those displaced from employment and in others being the focus for support to help them to adapt to a changed economy.

The recovery aside their importance as a source of employment means that they cannot be ignored as part of efforts to enhance job quality in the regional economy.

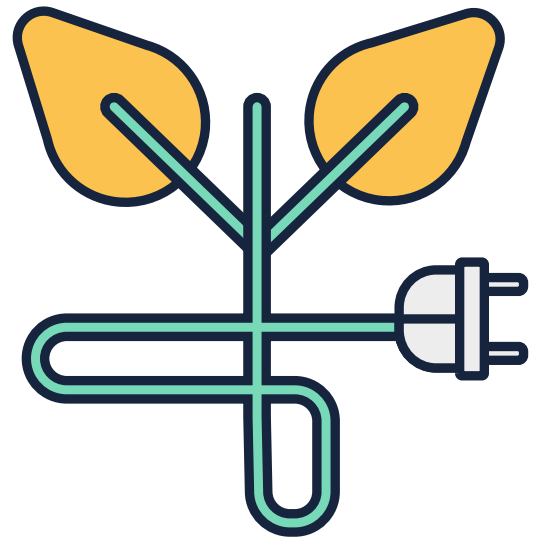
Sustainability

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

This includes:

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

Promoting decarbonisation and sustainability within the economy has skills implications across a wide range of sectors, however, including for manufacturing (chemicals, food, mineral processing etc) passenger transport, freight, automotive and financial services. Skills needs also extend to generic fields including carbon literacy and broader management skills.



Digital

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



Key skills system themes and the sectoral approach

Theme	Sector Approach
Labour Market Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target intelligence gathering and analysis on sectors known to face most acute and damaging skills deficits including engineering / manufacturing, digital, health in order to better understand nature of skill requirements, including those linked to sustainability and net zero
Enterprise in Education and school engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage firms from across the regional economy to support the development of career readiness and employability skills, while promoting specific priority opportunities relating to Net Zero and Digital • Address specific barriers to careers such as low entry rate of females into many STEM occupations and sectors linked to gender stereotyping • Develop resources showing clear career and learning pathways for comprehensive range of occupations / sectors of significance to the region
Learning and Training Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise the development of specialist facilities to address technical skill shortage areas including digital, construction engineering and health • Support institutions in accessing the supply of specialist teaching staff needed for these disciplines
Apprenticeships and technical education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the availability and take-up of apprenticeships across all relevant disciplines and levels, as a broad-based route into a high quality career • Support the further development / recovery of capacity in technical subjects including construction, engineering and manufacturing and digital, with appropriate progression routes linked into these opportunities, including into higher apprenticeships
Higher education – university and college engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the region’s wide ranging teaching and research capability as part of place marketing to a range of sectors, linked into the region’s investment strategy • Strengthen technical education routes at levels 4 and 5 in conjunction with FE colleges and universities with a focus on the development of an Institute of Technology focused on digital or another STEM discipline • Focus on raising graduate retention in scientific and technical disciplines to support the upgrading of the region’s innovative capability, particularly in key sectors like health and innovation
Adult Education Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased focus on retraining may need to respond to people displaced from sectors like hospitality and retail • Strong existing focus of AEB provision on health and care disciplines to be maintained • Skills for Net Zero in construction sector (including retrofit) likely to become an increased focus of AEB
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target bootcamp provision on identified sectors / occupations that are most receptive including digital, construction / infrastructure • Develop Sector-based Work Academy and similar solutions to meet sector-specific recruitment needs in support of economic recovery
Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance job quality, progression, tackle skills gaps and address under-utilisation of skills in low productivity / low pay sectors through sharing of best practice around effective talent management / high performance working practices • Develop innovative, co-designed training, working with employers and providers, that keeps pace with the rate of technological change in fast-moving industries such as digital, advanced manufacturing and health tech

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Get involved

Find out more about what we do at

www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/growing-the-economy/strategic-economic-framework/policies-and-strategies/employment-and-skills/

www.the-lep.com/business-support/skills-and-training/

Or follow us on Twitter [@LeedsCityRegion](https://twitter.com/LeedsCityRegion)

If you'd like to work with us on delivering against our priorities for skilled people, good jobs, strong businesses contact us on:

customerfeedback@westyorks-ca.gov.uk

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